

ADVENTURERS' GUIDE TO ROLE PLAYING



Might and Magic® VII

This Book

The *Adventurers' Guide To Role Playing* is written to provide you with an introduction to this game—covering the general sorts of things one should know about computer role playing and the Might and Magic system. The other book, the Player Manual, has all the nitty gritty info about how the interface works, statistical tables, and such.

Role Playing in the World of Might and Magic VII

What is a role playing game? Well, consider this example:

You are a swordsman in a world where magic works and medieval technology is state of the art. Your king has asked you to deliver a sealed message to his cousin, a baron who rules the mountain territories. The journey will take several days by foot, and takes you across a deep river gorge, which would be otherwise impassible were it not for a narrow bridge. Packing food, water, the message scroll, and your sword, you set off. You travel without event until you reach the bridge.

When you arrive, you find a war party of goblins preparing to cross the bridge from the opposite side. They are heavily armed and, as you know from past experience, no friends of your people. You quietly duck behind some rocks while you consider your options. Should you wait for them to pass and continue your journey? Run back and warn your king? Confront the goblins to find out what they're up to? Set up an ambush? What do you do?

"What do you do?" is the essential question of a role playing game. Players take on the parts of characters and must decide what they do in reaction to new situations as they occur—very much like improvisational acting. In the case of Might and Magic VII, the characters involved are knights, thieves, wizards, and other adventurers who live in the magical fantasy world of Erathia. In the game, you control the actions of a group of four characters as they travel through the world.

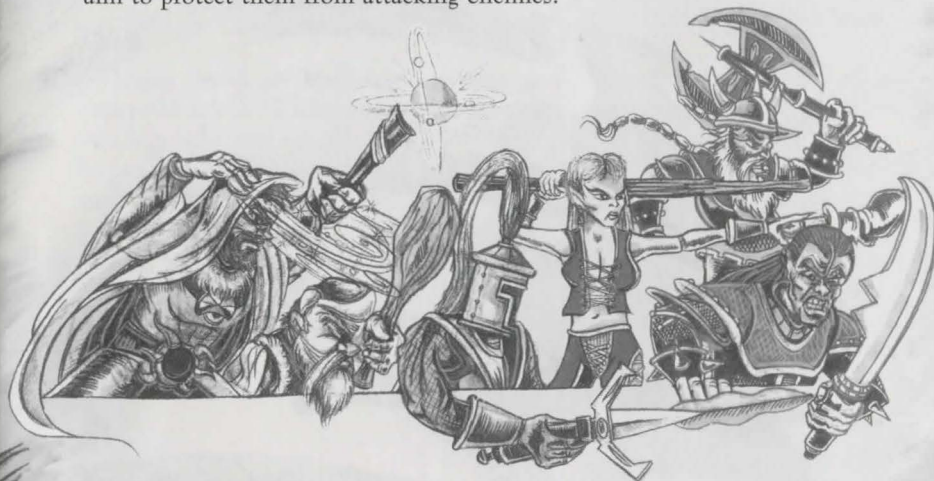
The Story

An uneasy peace has fallen upon Erathia. When the human king, Nicolas Gryphonheart, died, great battles were fought as the elves, hinterland tribes and other factions all made their moves to take advantage of the ensuing turmoil (This is all resolved in *Heroes of Might and Magic® III*). Things have settled for the moment, and hopefully for a long time.

No longer consumed with running a war, Lord Markham has turned his attentions to other pursuits. Among them has been the organizing of a great contest. Scant as it is on information, his invitation has nevertheless proven an irresistible draw to a certain small, and slightly down on its luck, party of adventurers. Gathering their meager equipment, they board the ship provided by Lord Markham and set sail to Emerald Island, the site of this contest.

The Party

Your four characters make up the party and travel together as an inseparable group, offering a unified front to the world. By sharing the strengths and covering the weaknesses of individual members, the party can be quite effective in facing the widest variety of challenges. Each character can specialize in a small area of skills and abilities and count on the others to do what he or she cannot. Thus the thief can pick the locks, the sorcerer can work mighty magic, and both can count on the knight's strong sword arm and the archer's keen aim to protect them from attacking enemies.



Races

Before you start the game, you will have an opportunity to create your party by choosing and modifying its character members. Each character has their own race, class, attributes, and skills as described below.

Each character can be from one of the following four races:

Humans

The great generalists among the four player races, Humans might not be the strongest, fastest, or smartest characters, but they also don't tend to have any particular weaknesses. Their pioneering nature has led them to spread their settlements throughout the land, much to the chagrin of other races.

Elves

Elves have developed their culture around values of aesthetic refinement. While they are not the most physically powerful of people, Elves do tend towards higher intelligence and have great hand/eye coordination. Elves usually live in their own communities built in harmony with woodland settings.

Dwarves

Another race, Dwarves, keep to themselves in mountain settlements. The generations spent perfecting their mining and stoneworking crafts have given members of the Dwarven race naturally higher levels of strength and endurance. They also tend to have weaker eyesight and to move at a slower, more deliberate pace.



Goblins

Making a relatively more recent appearance in Erathia, the Goblins have quickly established themselves and control vast regions of the wild hinterlands. They are a warrior race possessed of great strength and speed, but as such have not spent a great deal of energy developing either their intellectual potential, nor their sense of civility. In other words, they tend to rub people the wrong way.

Classes

Each character in your party has a vocation, or class. There are nine to choose from.

Knight

Knights are specialists at fighting. They excel at the use of weapons, particularly the sword and spear, and can wear any armor. While they cannot learn to cast magic spells of any sort, they can learn a wide variety of other martial and adventuring skills.

Sorcerer

Sorcerers are specialists in the use of the elemental magics of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, which gives them a good range of powerful offensive capabilities. Since they are little concerned with military pursuits, they tend to be less durable than other characters, and can only fight with staves, daggers and bows, and can only wear leather armor.

Thief

Thieves excel at stealing, detecting and disarming traps, and other underworld skills. While they are not specialists at combat, they can hold their own in a fight, and are able to use a wide range of weapons and armor. As they become more experienced, they can learn the rudiments of elemental magic spell casting.

Monk

Monks train themselves in the arts of unarmed combat and self-development. They can deliver powerful blows with their fists and can dodge attacks with great success. At higher levels of advancement, monks can learn the fundamentals of Mind, Spirit and Body magic.

Paladin

Paladins are warriors in the service of a holy order. Their skills combine those of fighters and holy men. They can use all weapons and armor, and can also cast the spells of Mind, Spirit and Body magic. At the highest levels, they can also dabble in Light and Dark magic.

Archer

Archers specialize in the use of ranged weapons—bows and crossbows. While they can use other hand-to-hand weapons, they are best with the two-handed spear, which is good because they can't carry a shield. Nor can they use armor heavier than chain mail. They can use Elemental magic, and at higher experience levels, Dark and Light magic.

Ranger

Rangers are individualistic woodsmen, and jacks-of-all-trades. They can use any weapon except the mace, can wear any armor save plate, and can learn all magic except for Light and Dark. Beyond that, they can learn all other skills.

Druid

Druids are priests of naturalistic orders who concentrate on the learning of magic. They can cast all magic types except for Light and Dark spells. Like sorcerers, they tend to be a bit fragile, and can use only a few weapons, though, unlike sorcerers, they can use shields and maces.

Cleric

Clerics specialize in the learning of magic of the self—Mind, Spirit and Body. They do possess martial abilities, but may only wield staves, bows, and maces. They can wear leather or chain armor, and can carry a shield.

Attributes

Each character has numerical values that describe how strong, fast, smart, charismatic, and lucky they are. These statistics are called attributes. The higher the number of the attribute, the greater the trait in the character.

Might

Might is a measure of a character's raw strength. It mostly comes into play when figuring the damage done in hand-to-hand attacks, so this is a key attribute for fighters.

Endurance

A character's endurance reflects how physically tough the character is. It affects how much damage he or she can take. While this is important for all characters, it is particularly important for fighters.

Intellect

This indicates a character's ability to reason and understand complex ideas. Intellect affects how many spell points (a measure of magical energy) sorcerers, archers, rangers, thieves and druids have.

Personality

Personality reflects a character's charm and strength of will. It affects the number of spell points for clerics, paladins, rangers, monks and druids.

Accuracy

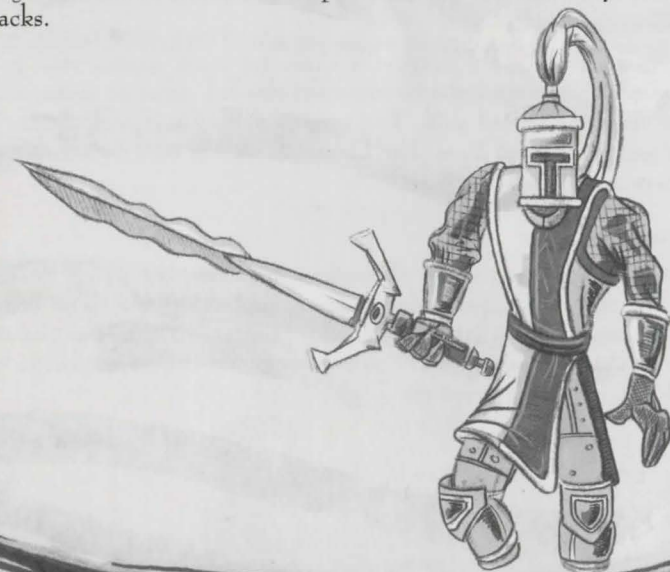
Accuracy is a measure of hand/eye coordination, and affects how often a character hits what he or she aims at in combat. This is important for fighters and archers, particularly for bow use.

Speed

A character's speed rating affects how quickly they perform actions—like how often they can cast spells and swing weapons.

Luck

Luck is a subtle factor that ties into many things. It most visibly affects how much damage characters take from traps and how resistant they are to magical attacks.



Hit Points

Hit points represent how much damage a character can take. How many each has is dependent on his or her level, class and endurance. When a character is hit by a sword, gets blasted by a spell, or falls off a cliff the damage is reflected as a reduction of hit points. If a character runs out of hit points, he or she can become unconscious or die.

Spell Points

Spell points indicate how much magical energy a character has. Each spell costs a certain amount of spell points to cast. The more powerful a spell, the higher its cost. A character's spell point maximum is based on class, level, and bonuses based on personality and/or intellect.

Armor Class

Armor class indicates how difficult a character is to hit. Many factors affect armor class, but primarily it is an indication of what type of armor is being worn.

Skills

Some actions require that characters possess certain skills before they can perform them. Each character starts the game with four skills—which skills depends on their class. New skills can be learned from teachers found throughout the land. Each character's skill has a skill level (a numerical value) and expertise level (normal, expert, master or grand master). Skill and expertise advancement are described in Character Advancement.

Weapon Skills

In order to use a weapon, a character must possess skill in that type of weapon. Thus, in order to use a broadsword, saber or rapier, a character has to have the Sword skill. The weapon skills are Sword, Staff, Dagger, Axe, Spear, Mace and Bow. The Unarmed skill is used by characters when they have no weapon in hand.

Armor Skills

As with weapon skills, characters must have the proper armor skill before they can don a particular item of protective gear. The armor skills are Leather, Chain, Plate, and Shield. Dodge skill increases the armor class of unarmored characters. No particular armor skill is needed to wear helmets, boots, cloaks or gauntlets.

Magic Skills

Each spell is part of a particular school of magic's lore. In order to cast a spell, a character must possess the matching magic skill. The skills are Fire Magic, Earth Magic, Water Magic, Air Magic, Body Magic, Spirit Magic, Mind Magic, Light and Dark magics.

Miscellaneous Skills

Alchemy: Allows a character to mix complex magic potions.

Arms Master: Improves a character's general abilities with weapons.

Body Building: Increases a character's hit points.

Identify Item: Allows a character to know what an item does.

Identify Monster: Characters with this skill can gain knowledge about the creatures they face.

Learning: Gives a character an experience point bonus (see Character Advancement).

Disarm Trap: Gives a character a chance to remove traps without setting them off.

Meditation: Increases a character's spell points.

Merchant: Improves a character's dealings with shopkeepers.

Perception: With this skill, characters can sense traps, hidden doors and treasures, and they take less damage from traps when they go off.

Repair Item: Allows a character to repair damaged equipment.

Stealing: Characters with this skill can pilfer items from shops and people.

Magic

Magic is a big part of playing the game. Your characters can learn spells and cast them, drink potions, and use items enchanted with magical properties. Magic effects can do things like cast bolts of lightning at monsters, give the party special knowledge of their surroundings, give characters protection against harm, heal disease and cause damage.

Learning and Casting Spells

Your characters each carry individual spell books. When they learn spells, they write them in their spell book. Spells are learned from special items called learning books. Each learning book contains one spell. Such is the nature of the transference of magical knowledge that a book can only be used once. The knowledge imprints itself on the reader and then is gone. Once a spell is transferred to a character's spell book, however, the character can cast that spell without it vanishing because the spell is now powered directly by the character.

Each spell costs a certain number of spell points to cast. A character can only cast a spell if he or she has the points to spend. Spell points can be regained by the drinking of potions and by resting.

Potions and Scrolls

All characters can drink potions to receive a variety of magical benefits. For example, a potion might heal lost hit points, increase a character's might, or act as an antidote to poison. Drinking a potion requires no particular skill. Characters with the Alchemy skill can mix potions from various potion reagents found throughout the game.

Scrolls also require no particular skill to use. Each scroll contains a single spell and is imbued with the power to cast it. To cast a scroll spell a character simply reads it. Once a scroll is read, it is used up and disappears. Scrolls and potions can be found as part of treasure or purchased from shops that deal in magical goods.

Magic Items

Many items in the game have been enchanted to give them special properties. A magic sword might give its user a better chance to hit, or a piece of armor might give its wearer greater resistance to fire. Wands can be charged up with magical power, making them able to fire off spell effects, like casting fireballs or rays of freezing cold. Very powerful items, called artifacts, are rare, valuable and are usually one-of-a-kind.

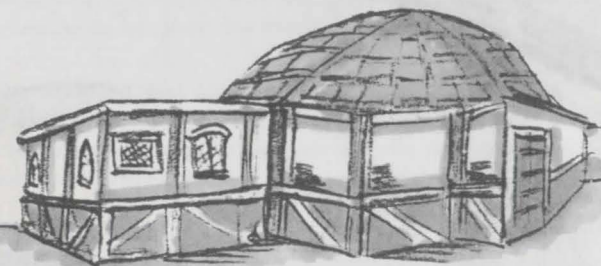
Combat

Erathia is a place full of peril which often takes the form of hostile people and creatures with whom you will frequently have to do battle. Attacks in battle can be broken down into three types: hand-to-hand, ranged and spell attacks. Hand-to-hand attacks are made at close range using open fists or with weapons like swords, clubs, spears, and maces. Ranged attacks use weapons that fire projectiles like bows and crossbows at distant targets. Characters can only make ranged attacks if nobody is directly in front of them. Spell attacks are made at either close or far range using spells cast from spell books, wands, or scrolls.

Whether or not a given attack hits its intended target depends on a number of things. At very long range, it may be possible to simply move out of the way of a projectile as it is flying through the air. Characters with the Dodge skill can do the same thing with all attacks regardless of range. A character's armor can also protect them from the impact of projectiles or blows. Finally, characters have magic resistance which protects them from the damaging effects of spells that hit them. Magic resistance can be increased by a number of things including racial characteristics, potion and spell effects, and magic items.

Physical damage is taken in the form of a reduction of hit points. A sword strike, for example, might do 15 points of damage when it hits. This means that the creature that was hit by the blow now has 15 less hit points than before. If a character runs out of hit points, they either become unconscious or die. Attacks may also produce other ill effects like paralysis, disease or poisoning.

Healing of physical damage can be accomplished by resting. When characters get a good night's sleep, they regain lost hit and spell points. Other damage may require the use of healing potions or spells. There are also healers located throughout Erathia that can heal damage for a fee.



Enemies

In its journeys, your party will encounter all manner of peoples and creatures willing to do battle—fanatic temple guardians, bloodthirsty bandits, vicious raiding parties, unfathomable monstrosities, and uncountable creatures out for a meal. While you will have to discover for yourself what waits for you out there, here are a few things you should know about the opponents you will face.

Animals

While most wilderness creatures have learned to keep to themselves for their own good, there are notable exceptions. Bats, rats, and spiders, for example, can attack in great numbers. You will often find them in abandoned buildings and other cavernous places.



The Undead

Raised by powers of necromancy, skeletons, liches, zombies, and other creatures raised from the dead serve the dark purposes of their masters. Many spells do not affect the undead. Others are designed specifically to oppose them.

Fantastic Creatures

Spirits summoned from ethereal realms, monsters animated by magic, and creatures of myth and legend abound. All must be cautiously dealt with for they often possess special powers and immunities.

Dragons

Giant, flying, armored, intelligent, aggressive reptiles that breathe great goutts of fire, cold or pure energy. They don't like to be disturbed. Be sure you have a very good reason if you do so.

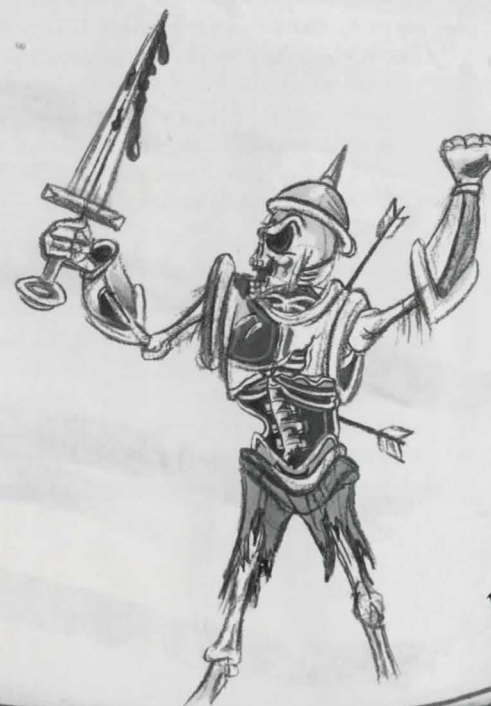
Other Characters

You will find that many who oppose you will have the same powers and abilities as your party members. Some will be quite powerful and, in fact, will be some of your deadlier opponents.

Exploring Erathia

The continuing game story is revealed as the party explores the land of Erathia. It is important to talk to people you meet and to explore the towns, castles and villages you find. By doing these things you find out about events happening around you. While some people will really have little to say, many will have important knowledge. Some will ask you to do things for them; these tasks are called quests. Completing quests is a major part of the game. Some quests are small things and completing them brings small rewards. Others cause bold changes for your characters and the story.

Another type of place to explore is called a dungeon. Dungeons are places like abandoned temples, enemy strongholds, ruined castles, and other aboveground or subterranean lairs. They are places full of peril and rewards. You are likely to encounter large numbers of hostile creatures and dangerous traps. You will also find secret stores of treasure—gold and valuable items.



Character Advancement

As you play, your characters develop. As they advance, characters will receive new skills and become better at the skills they already possess. They will also get more spell and hit points. Characters receive experience points for doing things like killing monsters and completing quests. Once a character gains enough experience points, he or she can train to advance a level by visiting a training hall. Gaining a new level gives a character more spell points and hit points. They also gain skill points that they can spend on increasing their abilities with the skills they possess. Consider the following example.

Gwendoleth the Archer is a new character with no experience points. She needs to gain 1000 points to qualify for her next level of training. She kills a bunch of spiders and rats, gaining 500 experience points, and then the party finds an amulet that Edgar the Jeweler asked them to find for him. They give the amulet to Edgar and everyone in the party receives 500 experience points.

Gwendoleth now has enough points for the next level. The party visits the local village training hall where she pays for training. As a result, she gains three hit points and one more spell point which will allow her to take more damage and cast more spells. She also receives five skill points which she spends on advancing her Bow skill (improving her accuracy with the weapon) and on her Fire Magic skill (making her Fire Magic spells more effective).

Learning New Skills and Skill Expertise

Each skill can be learned at different levels of expertise. Characters initially learn skills at the basic or normal level. Normal level skills are taught at various shops and guilds found throughout the game. Master teachers can teach characters to advance their skill knowledge to higher expertise levels—expert, master and grand master. Achieving higher expertise in a skill gives characters extra benefits when they use that skill.

Promotion

Each character class has different ranks. Characters start off at the lowest rank and can be promoted to higher levels. Achieving a higher rank allows the character to learn new skills, to learn skills at higher levels of expertise, and increases the number of spell and hit points they receive at new experience levels. Promotions are achieved by completing special quests.

The Seas of Erathia



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