

Prototype Play Test Release 3 – Spells of Life and How to Learn Spells

To recap the general structure of magic, it revolves around sorcery specialisations. Each specialisation is needed for a small set of spells. Each spell can have a number of ways to be cast, each with differing complexity. Spells can also combine with other spells to achieve additional forms of casting. The specialisation provides aptitude for the casting of the spells that belong to it. The sorcery profession provides aptitude to the casting of any spell.

This prototype introduces how a character goes about learning spells.

Learning spells involves getting an "inkling" about a spell, followed by study or training and building your own spell scroll, or tome pages. Your writing can be useful when casting spells or when correcting memorisation errors with the spell.

At character creation, if your character has any magical specialisations then you may choose one, and only one, appropriate spell to have learned already, with an appropriate parchment containing your spell notes.

For a spell, where you have at least 1 aptitude in the specialisation for that spell, then the process of learning a spell is summarised as follows:

- 1) Gain an "inkling" about the spell
- 2) Complete 10 points of "learning" for the spell.

After those two steps are complete you will then have mastered the spell and may begin casting it. After you have an "inkling" about a spell you may try to cast it but the difficulty is always +2 more than normal casting of the spell, and failure should produce serious spell backfires.

Getting an "Inkling"

The easiest method is to spend an episode with someone who knows the spell and is willing to teach it to you, or reading the notes from a sorcerer about a spell that they know.

Other ways to gain an inkling is through experiencing the spell being cast or finding "natural clues" to the spell. (see below).

Completing Spell Learning Points

Once an inkling is gained the sorcerer must write it down. If an episode was spent gaining the inkling then the writing occurs at that time. If the inkling is gained by experiencing the spell or by natural clues then an episode in the same session must be spent writing it down. Inklings take 1 page of a tome or the a half a scroll.

It then takes the accumulation of 10 learning points to gain the spell as a known spell. Each learning point can be gained in the same way as an inkling, an episode with a knowledgeable sorcerer, reading from a sorcerer's tome or scrolls, or by having a study episode and writing notes after having experienced the spell in the field or finding further natural clues.

Clues

Clues are something a sorcerer gains in the field about spells, and then takes home to spend an episode incorporating it into their knowledge about a spell.

The first type of clue is when the sorcerer experiences a spell being cast. When this happens during an adventure a sorcerer notes down they have a clue for the spell.

The second type is natural phenomena that give clues to spells. Here the game master decides what such clues are, making them somewhat magical and related to specific spells. For example a clue for weather spells may be an outcrop of rock that is struck by lightning when the sorcerer is present. A clue for a spell of awareness may be an enchanted cocoa tree that grows in a dark grotto. Some clues may be encountered multiple times by the sorcerer, others may be more ephemeral.

Whatever the cause, when the sorcerer gets back to the village they may use an episode to write up an inkling or a learning point for the spells they have new clues for, doing some deliberation and mental exploration at the same time. No matter how many clues are encountered for a spell during a single adventure they only count as one when the sorcerer is writing her notes. The clues don't carry forward, and more clues will need to be gained in the next adventure. If they are not written up they are lost. So a sorcerer should often retain an episode for after the adventure.

For example the rock being struck by lightning when a sorcerer is present gives them a clue, which they go home and write up. In subsequent adventures they may visit the same rock and take note of the landscape, or the weather that day, returning home with yet another clue. And so on.

Episodes with another Sorcerer

Most sorcerers charge the equivalent of 1 gold crown (100 pennies) per episode spent learning from them. Estimate other costs for learning tools accordingly. e.g. A complete set of scrolls about a spell represents about 10 gold crowns worth of learning. However because of their reusable nature they will probably fetch at least twice that when sold privately, five times that when sold publicly.

Spell Casting Failures

When a spell casting is failed with a Miserable Failure or Disaster result then there are some negative impacts for the spell caster. To determine the impact make a Spell Failure Save.

Spell Failure Save. Difficulty based on level of spell failure : Mis = DN 12, Dis = DN 14. Use mentality. Results:

I – Immune to spell cast failure effects for this spell during the rest of this session.

X – no effect.

S – Spell misremembered and unusable. 1 learning point must be achieved to re-learn this spell.

F – Spell misremembered and unusable. 2 learning points must be achieved to re-learn this spell.

M – Spell misremembered and unusable. 4 learning points must be achieved to re-learn this spell.

D – Spell misremembered and unusable. 6 learning point must be achieved to re-learn this spell.

Additionally there is a spell backfire

Backfires

Backfire applies the spell effects to the caster, or to targets the caster would not want to effect, at the game master's discretion. If focus is possible then the backfire forces focus. The duration, unless otherwise broken, will be random d20/2 moments and the spell caster cannot release the focus for that time.

Struggles may still be used to cancel or take over the backfired spell. The sorcerer who cast the spell cannot avoid struggling to keep the backfire going, but is not required to use focus on the struggle. An ally may choose to take over the back fire via a struggle just so they may dismiss it.

Spells Marked "No Save"

Many spells are marked as "No Save". This means, if unopposed in a struggle, they affect the target as described. Magical struggles can still be used to oppose such spells.

Spells That Require Touch

Some spells are cast to effect a target that must be touched by the caster. Some spells allow touch to be a choice when cast, touch always being less complex than distance casting.

A touch spell does not need to be immediately applied after casting. It can be held ready on the fingertips by allocating a focus to keep it active until the spell is dismissed or discharged. As usual the focus is not used up by this, but may only be applied to one spell casting at a time.

If the target is trying to avoid the touch then there is a physical struggle, with the touch landing only if the sorcerer gains an Advance. The sorcerer must maintain focus until that time. If the target gains an Advance then the spell breaks and the casting is lost.

Spells That Require Focus to Maintain Once Cast

Several spells can keep their effects going against a target only by the use of focus. If the spell is initiated by touch or at targets within line of sight then if the caster wishes to be able to maintain focus when the target is no longer in line of sight, the casting of the spell is +1 complexity. If the spell is not cast with extra complexity then the focus breaks when the target is out of line of sight.

Don't forget that other sorcerers may detect a spell maintained by focus and start a struggle over the spell.

Specialisation: Life Spells

Life Spells are spells that alter or effect living things with corporeal bodies in some way that alters their biology.

Spell of Awareness

Casting: Magical Drowsiness

Complexity : 1 target = 1. 2-3 targets = 2. 4-6 targets = 3. 7 – 10 targets = 4. If all the targets are tired then reduce complexity by 1 (minimum 0).

Target : in line of sight.

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : as long as focus is maintained.

No save.

While the spell is in effect, any action by the target has the following effect applied to it:

- the target may not voluntarily use focus.
- After the results are determined, and the target has at least 1 focus available, then one focus is exhausted with no effect on the result.
- After the results are determined, and the target has no focus available, then the target must re-roll all their success dice once, and determine if they remain successes or become failures, then recalculate the action outcome.

Casting : Enchanted Sleep

Complexity : 1 target = 1. 2-3 targets = 2. 4-6 targets = 3. 7 – 10 targets = 4. If all the targets are tired then reduce complexity by 1 (minimum 0). If all the targets are under a magical compulsion to be drowsy reduce the complexity by 2 instead (minimum 0).

Target : in line of sight at the beginning of the spell cast and for at least half the spell casting time.

Cast Time : 1 hour : normal complexity, 30 minutes : +1 complexity, 1 minute : +2 complexity, 6 seconds : +3 complexity.

Duration : 1 hour enchanted sleep, extended by maintaining focus even if the target is no longer in line of sight. After enchanted sleep ends target will naturally sleep for 3 hours longer.

No save.

When cast successfully the targets fall into an enchanted sleep. Beings in an Enchanted sleep must make a DN 14 save, worst of determination or health, to respond to being awakened by any normal means.

Casting : Magical Awaken

Complexity : 1 target = 1. 2-3 targets = 2. 4-6 targets = 3. 7 – 10 targets = 4. If any target is in Enchanted sleep and there is a sorcerer maintaining it with focus then a struggle must be used to try and break their spell and advance this one.

Target : in line of sight.

Cast time: 6 seconds.

Duration: immediate.

No save.

All targets come fully awake when the spell is cast successfully.

Casting : Alert

Complexity : 1 target = 1. 2-3 targets = 2. 4-6 targets = 3. 7 – 10 targets = 4. If none of the targets are tired then reduce complexity by 1.

Target : in line of sight.

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : as long as focus is maintained and target remains in line of sight.

No save.

Target has any exhausted focus restored when spell is cast. While the spell remains focused on them the target need not use focus to re-roll fail dice on a result of failure or success. This applies even if the target has no available focus. Focus is exhausted for use in other results as normal. Focus that becomes exhausted while this spell is in effect remains so until they are restored by some other means such as rest, or a new casting of this spell is applied.

Spell of Bodily Health

Neutralise Poison / Suspend animation / Fertile / Barren

Casting : Lay on Hands

Complexity :

Injury is Minor, Nasty, Painful or Serious : 1

Injury is Incapacitated or Critical : 2

Injury is Mortal : 3

Target : touch

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : immediate

No save.

Touch a person with an injury. When successfully cast that injury heals by 1 level and sets a new healing check time.

While the spell is being cast any normal healing check is put on hold. If the cast fails then the healing check is made as normal immediately. If the spell is a success the sorcerer may bring on the healing check immediately or have it deferred to the next check time.

Casting : Sting

Complexity : 1

Target : touch

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : Immediate on touching the target.

If the target is touched they immediately gain a Serious wound as if from a weapon. Armour has no effect.

Casting : Smite

Complexity : 2

Target : touch

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : Immediate on touching the target.

No Save

If the target is touched they immediately gain a Critical as if from a weapon. Armour has no effect.

Casting : Paralyse

Complexity : 3

Target : touch

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : Immediate on touching the target, then ongoing saves at intervals.

No Save

If the target is touched they are immediately paralysed. Armour has no effect. A paralysed character may not voluntarily move limbs or speak. They collapse to the ground and are helpless.

The caster may maintain focus to hold them in this state.

When there is no focus being applied then every minute the target may make a save with the worst of health or determination at DN 14. A success breaks the spell.

Casting : Stop Poison

Complexity : 2

Target : touch

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : Immediate on touching the target.

No Save

When cast on a being that is poisoned the poisoning immediately halts and the target is no longer poisoned. Any lasting effects of the poison up to this point remain and must be dealt with.

Spell of The Senses

These spells alter a targets ability to sense through one of the five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell). The sense to effect must be nominated by the caster when the spell is cast.

Casting : Improve Sense

Complexity : 1

Target : touch, or Line of sight at +1 complexity.

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : Immediate and focus.

No Save

The target has +2 aptitude when performing an action that relies on the specified sense.

Casting : Diminish Sense

Complexity : 1

Target : touch, or Line of sight at +1 complexity.

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : Immediate and focus.

No Save

The target has -2 aptitude when performing an action that relies on the specified sense

Casting : Prohibit Sense

Complexity : 2

Target : touch, or Line of sight at +1 complexity.

Cast Time : 6 seconds.

Duration : Immediate and focus.

No Save

The target cannot use the specified sense at all.