Simpler Systems Options: Dark & Dangerous Sorcery for Knave

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Basic Rules:

Introduction:

Sorcery is rare and mysterious. Trained spell casters are few and far between. But all folk have heard tales of sorcery. It is dark and inherently dangerous. Sorcery was not meant for mortals, and this fundamental mismatch taints every casting with uncertainty. From beyond the Veil, magic draws the attention of dark and inscrutable forces, some of whom will find ways to impose their will upon you.

Magic is art, not science. Each work of magic, from casting a spell, to writing a scroll, to creating a potion, is something that must be done from scratch each time. Merely replicating what has already been done will never work.

A spell is a fairly standardized effect that has been repeatedly created by many spell casters. Mortal brains are not structurally designed to hold this information. There is no set "formula" for any particular spell. Take the spell Magic Dart, for instance. It is a very common spell, especially for traveling and adventuring Mages. If you were to look at the spellbooks of one hundred Mages containing Magic Dart, no formula of the spell would look the same.

Each spell formula is a combination of reference notes, philosophical debate against the universe, and gibberish scribbling. This serves one purpose. To trigger a dream state understanding within the Mage's mind. Nothing contained in a spellbook is a "how to" guide so much as an individual recipe for self induced hypnosis. All rules concerning Mages also applies to all other spell casters unless specifically noted.

In my campaign, magic is commonly know as sorcery. It is a feared and reviled field of study. The terms are used through out interchangeably.

Here are some common facts about sorcery:
- Using Divine Favors is not sorcery.
- Using Divine Sorcery is sorcery.
- Magic predates mortal beings and permeates the entirety of reality.
- Using sorcery allows these forces to be harnessed and manipulated by spell casters for their own purposes.
- Since ages long past the wellsprings of sorcery have been tainted by chaos.
- Miscasting, misreading the mystic environment, or drawing the attention of otherworldly beings may cause various negative effects that harm the spell caster.

Sensing Magic:

Any character may spend a minute attempting to sense magic in a 30' radius by making an Wisdom save. If successful the character senses there is magic either present or absent, perhaps as a tingling through their spine, a barely perceivable hum in the air, or some other fleeting quality that vanishes after only a moment. The sign is different for everyone, and most commoners are unaware of their own cues. If the character does not have the Sorcery skill, the check is made at disadvantage. Illusion magic cannot be detected in this way, part of its power includes fooling rudimentary detection methods of this kind.

Sorcery Skill/Talent Perk:

All spell casters learn the art of spell casting and arcane lore basics with their first class level. Sorcery is your knowledge of the workings and flow of magic. This skill may be improved by purchasing higher perk levels, see the perk system.

Empowering Spells:

Mortal brains may only empower, or fully load, a certain number of spells at a time. See the character class perks for the number and levels of spells. Divine casters prayer for and empower a specific list of spells per day. Mages empower spells from their spell book. Sorcerers empower their memorized spells. Casting a known arcane spell that is not empowered is much riskier than casting an empowered spell.

The Forms of Magic:

Spells are comprised of eight categories called forms of magic. Scholars, particularly wizards, apply these categories to all spells, believing that all magic functions in essentially the same way, whether it derives from rigorous study or is bestowed by a deity.

The forms of magic help describe spells; they have no rules of their own, although some rules refer to the schools.

- Abjuration spells are protective in nature, though some of them have aggressive uses. They create magical barriers, negate harmful effects, harm trespassers, or banish creatures to other planes of existence.

- Conjuration spells involve the transportation of objects and creatures from one location to another. Some spells summon creatures or objects to

the caster's side, whereas others allow the caster to teleport to another location. Some conjurations create objects or effects out of nothing.

- Divination spells reveal information, whether in the form of secrets long forgotten, glimpses of the future, the locations of hidden things, the truth behind illusions, or visions of distant people or places.

- Enchantment spells affect the minds of others, influencing or controlling their behavior. Such spells can make enemies see the caster as a friend, force creatures to take a course of action, or even control another creature like a puppet.

- Evocation spells manipulate magical energy to produce a desired effect. Some call up blasts of fire or lightning. Others channel positive energy to heal wounds.

- Illusion spells deceive the senses or minds of others. They cause people to see things that are not there, to miss things that are there, to hear phantom noises, or to remember things that never happened. Some illusions create phantom images that any creature can see, but the most insidious illusions plant an image directly in the mind of a creature.

- Necromancy spells manipulate the energies of life and death. Such spells can grant an extra reserve of life force, drain the life energy from another creature, create the undead, or even bring the dead back to life. Creating the undead through the use of necromancy spells such as animate dead is not a good act, and only evil casters use such spells frequently.

- Transmutation spells change the properties of a creature, object, or environment. They might turn an enemy into a harmless creature, bolster the strength of an ally, make an object move at the caster's command, or enhance a creature's innate healing abilities to rapidly recover from injury.

Spell casters begin with a perk level of competent at in 1d3+1 forms. Each caster level gained grants 1d6 points to be allocated among the forms. Apply no more than 1 point per form per level. Each form's casting perk can be increased independently outside the usual level progression. Spells may only be learned to the level of your perk in that form of magic.

Spell Casting Rules:

Spell Casting Roll:

1. Spell casting roll = DC 15 + twice Spell Level on a d20. Your Caster Level + Caster Attribute Bonus + Sorcery Perk Level modify the roll. You may use all or some of your caster level. Higher caster levels are more effective, but may be more exhausting.

2. Modifiers:
   - Bonus: Spell implements/tools, extra casting time, etc.: see referee
   - Penalties: Distractions/conditions/heavy use of magic/impediments: see referee

Empowered Spells:

1. Spell is cast in spell level hours: Roll with advantage.
2. Spell is cast in spell level minutes: Roll normally.

3. Spell is cast spell level rounds: Roll normally with -2 per spell level.

Known but not Empowered Spell:

1. Spell is cast in spell level hours: Roll normally.
2. Spell is cast in spell level minutes: Roll normally with -2 per spell level.

3. Spell is cast spell level rounds: Roll with -2 per spell level and disadvantage.

Spell cast from Device: Scroll, Ring, Wand, Staff, etc.

1. Spell is cast in spell level minutes: Roll normally.

2. Spell is cast spell level rounds: Roll normally with -2 per spell level.

Spell Casting Roll Results:

1. Special Success: If you roll a natural 20 or succeed by ten or more, You cast the spell in a particularly awesome fashion. Choose one of the following:
   - Increase damage by an additional ½ (Round up).
   - Increase range by an additional ½ .
   - Increase number of targets or radius of effect by ½ .
   - Penalize savings throws against the spell by your Sorcery perk level + Arcane School level.
   - Personalize magic in your own dramatic fashion. This may not cause any of the above choices or inflict additional damage.
2. Success: You made your roll. The stars aligned or you read the local ley lines correctly. The spell operates as usual by the book.
3. Failure: You failed your roll. Reality hiccuped. You fail to complete the spell. This consumes all your casting time. You may continue the casting process into next round, minute, or hour. Apply a spell casting penalty of -1 to spell casting rolls. Additional failed rolls increase the penalty by -1 each. The penalty reduces by 1 each minute of no spell casting. Roll on the Spell Failure Table.
4. Special Failure: A special failure occurs when you roll a natural 1 or fail your roll by ten or more. Punishment befalls you for having starred to long into the abyss, drawing attention from beyond the veil, or having seriously misread the magical environment. Roll on the Spell Special Failure Table. You may continue the casting process into next round, minute, or hour. Apply a spell casting penalty of -1 to spell casting rolls. Additional failed rolls increase the casting penalty for all spells by -1 each. The penalty reduces by 1 after 10 minutes of no spell casting.
5. Track the number of Special Failures you make.
   - Roll on the Mutation Table every time the total equals a multiple of your Constitution bonus.
6. After successfully casting a spell:
   - Check for savings throw if allowed.
   - Apply spell results.
   - Make a Constitution save vs DC of 10 + Spell level + Caster level used for spell casting/effects or lose a level of exhaustion.

Spell Failure Table:		Spell Special Failure Table:	
1	Unable to cast this spell for 1d6+1 hours.	1	Roll on the spell casting glitch table.
2	Take 1d6 damage.	2	Unable to use magic for 1d3+1 minutes.
3	Roll on the spell casting glitch table.	3	Take 2d6 damage.
4	Lose 1 level of exhaustion.	4	Roll on the spell casting glitch table.
5	Unable to use magic for 1d3 rounds.	5	Unable to use magic for 1d3+1 hours.
6	Knocked prone. Stand in 1d3 rounds.	6	Lose 2 levels of exhaustion.
7	Unable to use magic for 1d3 minutes.	7	Roll on the spell casting glitch table.
8	Lose 1 level of exhaustion.	8	Take 3d6 damage.
9	Unable to cast this spell for 1 day.	9	Lose 3 levels of exhaustion.
10	Roll on the spell casting glitch table.	10	Roll on the spell casting glitch table.
11	Take 1d6 damage.	11	Take 4d6 damage.
12	Unable to use magic for 1d3 hours.	12	Roll on the spell casting glitch table.

	Spell Casting Glitch Table:		
1-4	Magic wracks you body. -Spell level+1d6 to all rolls for spell level rounds.	53-56	Magic wracks you body. -Spell level+1d6 to all rolls for spell level turns.
5-8	1 Charm overloads and is damaged.*	57-60	1 Charm overloads and is destroyed.*
9-12	1 Minor magical item overloads and is damaged.*	61-64	1 Minor magical item overloads and is destroyed.*
13-16	1 Moderate magical item overloads and is damaged.*	65-68	1 Moderate magical item overloads and is destroyed.*
17-20	1 Major magical item overloads and is damaged.*	69-72	1 Major magical item overloads and is destroyed.*
21-24	Take 2d6 exhaustion levels.	73-76	Take spell levels of exhaustion.
25-28	Dexterity save or drop anything important for spell level days.	77-80	Mutter incessantly, Disadvantage to all social rolls for spell level days.
29-32	Down & Out for 1d6 minutes.	81-84	Down & Out for 1d6 hours.
33-36	Rattled for 1d6 minutes	85-88	Rattled for 1d6 hours
37-40	Make a Constitution save now and hourly or lose 1 Constitution point. Stopped by making 3 saves. Regain 1 Constitution point per month.	89-91	Magic clouds you thoughts. Roll 1d20. If higher than spell level, act freely; otherwise stand and stare into the distance. Lasts spell level+1d6 turns.
41-44	Magic clouds you thoughts. Roll 1d20. If higher than spell level x2, act freely; otherwise stand and stare into the distance. Lasts spell level+1d8 turns.	92-94	Magic clouds you thoughts. Roll 1d20. If higher than spell level x3, act freely; otherwise stand and stare into the distance. Lasts spell level+1d10 turns.
45-48	Stare into the abyss. You are frozen and unable to act for 1d10 rounds. Make an Intelligence save or acquire a curse. GM's choice.	95-97	Magic muddles you brain and you are charmed by the enemy in battle or your worst enemy in a non combat setting. Make an Intelligence save daily to end.
49-52	Frozen in a loop. You are locked into the casting process for an additional 1d3 casting rounds, minutes, or hours.	98-100	You cannot cast empowered spells for spell level days+1d3. Empowered spells are cast as non empowered.
	*If not applicable, choose next higher item or re roll.		

Mutation Table: Roll 1d6. 1-3 roll on the left column. 4-6 roll on the right column.			
1	Your body pulses with chaos. Your healing times are doubled.	1	Your skin is covered with weeping lesions. -3 Constitution until healed.
2	Your nails become claws. You unarmed melee attack add 1d3 damage. You have -1 to rolls involving fine manipulation.	2	You have bat wings. Fly at half speed. Constitution save per minute or take 1 level of exhaustion.
3	Carnivore. You require fresh, raw meat.	3	Your eyes glow in the dark.
4	Your bones are thin and brittle. You take double damage from crushing weapon and falling damage.	4	Your demonic demeanor and appearance cause disadvantage on all social interactions with non Chaotic beings.
5	Your skin grows scales and stinks of fish. You grow gills on your neck and can breathe underwater. Social skills and Reactions throws suffer disadvantage.	5	You grow sharp horns. You may head butt for 1d8 but may not wear any helmet. You suffer disadvantage to social skills and Reaction throws.
6	You grow fangs. Speech is difficult.	6	Your voice becomes deep and gravelly.
7	You grow unnaturally obese. Double your weight. You need custom armor custom at double cost. You must double your food intake (but not double water).	7	Amphibian skin: You must submerge in water 1 hour each day or gain a level of exhaustion. Remove 1 exhaustion level for each 1 hour submerged in water.
8	Your arm, 1-3 Left 4-6 Right, Becomes a tentacle. You lose fine manipulation.	8	You become blind but can use echolocation out to 60'.
9	You become unsettling to animals. Dogs bark in fear at you. You have disadvantage to Reaction throws vs. all animals.	9	You gain an animal like stench. This causes -2 to Reaction throws for sentient beings but +2 to reaction throws for animals.
10	Battle madness. In battle throw 1d6. On 1 you do not act. On 2-4 you attack the nearest enemy. On a 5 you attack your nearest ally. On a 6 you act normally. The madness lifts when combat ends.	10	You become albino. You suffer -3 to attack rolls while in daylight. Exposure to direct sunlight causes damage to your skin. You take 1d6 damage per 4 hours of continuous sunlight exposure.
11	You take 1 HP per hour of sun exposure.	11	You bring blight to surrounding lands.
12	You emit a foul stench. You never surprise creatures with keen noses.	12	Your mutation is advantageous. Remove one mutation, or you have been spared.

Miscellaneous Spell Rules:

Focus: The character may not take other actions, including making a melee or ranged attacks until spell casting is complete.

Spell Interruption: Casting a spell requires steady concentration. If the caster suffers any damage or significant physical jostling prior to his casting a spell, add 1d6 to spell casting DC.

Canceling a spell: Roll on the Spell Failure Table if the caster chooses to cancel a spell prior to completing the casting process and making their spell casting roll.

Illusions: A number of spells and other magical effects create illusions or make one thing appear as another. Some illusions are more powerful than others, with stronger illusions fooling more senses over a wider area. No illusion can perfectly mimic the sense of tactile sensation however, and interacting with an illusion may reveal the ruse, for example by interacting with it. At any time, a character may attempt to disbelieve a suspected illusion, which may require an Intelligence save at the GM's discretion. If successful, the character pierces the illusion and observes it only as a transparent overlay covering the real creature, object or terrain. Some creatures may be immune to or automatically pierce certain kinds of illusions. For example, a bat using echolocation will not be fooled by an illusion covering a cave entrance, and some undead automatically detect living creatures. Mindless creatures are unaffected by illusions.

Corruption Points:

Seeing, doing, or experiencing certain things expose you to chaos. Roll on the mutation table for every Constitution corruption points you acquire. Remove 1 corruption point per 3 days spent at a lawful temple/retreat/monastery or remove 1 corruption point per week spent at a neutral temple/retreat/monastery.

Special thanks for inspiration & ideas.

Yrsa: Designed by Rosetta, Anna Giedryś, David Březina From Rosetta Type Foundry.

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