Major Changes

# **Vigor**

Vigor is a point-based resource that all player characters have. It can be used in two ways: Healing Surges and Action Surges.

* **Healing Surge** - once per encounter, or whenever a move says they can, a player may spend any number of vigor to gain the same number of D4 in healing.
* **Action Surge** - once per encounter, a player may spend one vigor to reroll both D6. They must keep the new roll.

Most classes have 4+CON max Vigor, which is restored after a decent night’s rest, with food and shelter. Aside from being spent on surges, Vigor can be lost as the result of a spell, a bad roll, etc. Almost all forms of healing, magical and mundane, require the use of the Healing Surge. Once all Vigor is lost, it becomes very hard to heal.

*If you weren’t the right class, and didn’t have a healing potion, you had no way to heal during an encounter.. That felt overly punishing for parties who didn’t take those classes. Additionally, those who could heal themselves and others provided a difficult situation for the GM - how to prevent healspamming. Obviously the GM can make moves on a roll of 9-, but constantly coming up with narrative reasons why a character wouldn’t be able to cast their spells is frustrating, to say the least. It can feel equally frustrating, as a player, when your attempts at healing only lead to more danger. Vigor and Healing Surges are my solution to this problem. Players have greater control over when they heal, but they are mechanically limited in how often they can do so. Healing Surges can also be used throughout an adventuring day, which alleviates the desire to Make Camp after a battle. Nobody likes the 15 minute adventuring day.*

*Action Surges provide an alternate use for Vigor, and give players an additional tool in deciding which rolls are most important to them. The once per encounter limit should prevent players from becoming untouchable.*

# **Spellcasting**

Clerics and Wizards do not need to memorize their spells in advance. They can cast any spell they know, at will. On a missed casting roll, the spell backfires. On a 10+, the spell is cast without problems. On a 7-9 the spell is cast, but the caster must choose a drawback.

* The spell demands personal sacrifice
* Lose the spell until you Make Camp
* The spell is weaker, or much stronger than you intended
* The spell draws unwanted attention or exposes you to danger

If the spell is of the highest level that the Cleric or Wizard is able to cast, then the GM chooses an *additional* drawback, regardless of the caster’s roll. Cantrips never backfire - instead the GM chooses a drawback and the spell goes off successfully.

*Vancian spellcasting punishes players who don’t know what they’re going to be doing, and can make a caster nearly useless in an ambush. The one-hour memorization time was a definite improvement over Dungeons and Dragons, but it still encouraged Wizards and Clerics to take one-hour breaks in the middle of adventuring. Aside from interrupting the flow of the adventure, it forces the unfortunate spellcaster’s Player to convince their party to stop on their behalf, and provides the GM an opportunity to throw a wandering monster or some-such at the players, which feels doubly punishing for the poor caster attempting to be useful to their party.*

*To keep balance, since a caster is now able to use all their highest level spells whenever they want, the GM can choose an additional drawback whenever the player casts a spell of the highest level available to them. This makes casting high level spells inherently risky, and allows the GM to assert a bit of control over the more narrative-breaking spells.*

*The old drawbacks for a 7-9 spellcast were both harsh and boring, in my opinion. Attract danger often translates to “get hit”, and the other two made the caster just plain worse at casting. Imagine if rolling a 7-9 on a Hack and Slash caused you to take -1 Ongoing to Hack and Slash. Insanity! The new options give the player more variety.*

*I also expanded the spell lists of both Clerics and Wizards, to try to provide more varied and interesting options.*

Class Changes Overview

# **Barbarian**

*I thought the basic mechanic of Herculean Appetites was too hard to keep track of as a GM, was too confusing given that the “complication or danger” was often just as bad as rolling a 7-9, and was also frankly a bit superfluous with the addition of Action Surge. So instead I gave Barbarians one of the only abilities in the game that allows a player to regain Vigor without making camp. I also increased their damage die to a d12, which felt appropriate.*

# **Bard**

*I expanded the versatility of Arcane Art, and added several moves that allows Bards to become versatile combatants, mixing their Arcane Art effects with melee and ranged attacks.*

# **Cleric**

*I expanded the Deity move to make it a more significant and flavorful aspect of a Cleric’s identity. Moves like “turn undead” are reworked so that they instead protect against whatever the cleric’s god hates most: undead, demons, thieves, murderers, etc. I also made Cleric spellcasting more in line with Wizard spellcasting: both know a limited number of spells, but gain additional spells by leveling up. Clerics can also gain spells by performing services to their god.*

# **Druid**

*I wasn’t a fan of the old Shapeshifter move. It forced the players to rely on npc moves, which I’m not a fan of; they feel rigid and unnatural, and it forces the GM to stop the game and come up with moves every time the Druid shapeshifts. I changed it to be more freeform, and built potential costs directly into the shapeshifting roll.*

# **Fighter**

*My focus for Fighter was reducing their number of static damage/armor increases, and increasing their situational bonuses and out of combat options. I also added the possibility of an Agility based Fighter with a ranged Signature Weapon.*

# **Immolator**

*I reworked Burning Brand to try to make it more variable and powerful. Instead of having a limited number of uses, it now has a limited number of charges, where each charge can be spent to temporarily empower it (giving it range, an area of effect, or greater damage).*

*They also had an extremely limited selection of moves, which I aimed to expand.*

# **Paladin**

*The vows in the Paladin’s Quest move were troublesome to remember as a GM, and punishing for the player to bring up. I reworked it into an Oath move, with the goal being that a Paladin’s Oath being tested should be something the player wants to engage with, as opposed to being purely restrictive.*

# **Ranger**

*I reworked the Ranger’s pet mechanics to make it clearer when the Ranger is using their pet, while adding an inherent cost in doing so. The new mechanic bears strong resemblance to the old Barbarian’s Herculean Appetites ability, where a pet can help the Ranger, but it can also get into trouble and need the Ranger’s help in return. Aside from that, I tried to push the idea of a Ranger as a sort of “batman of the woods”.*

# **Thief**

*The thief was already a strong class, so my main focus was on providing more options for archetype. I expanded the number of poisons a Thief starts with, but reduced the number of charges they can make, with the goal of forcing them to take a varied approach.*

# **Wizard**

*Wizards were underpowered, in my opinion. My solution was the spellcasting rework, as well as increasing their base damage to a d6, in line with Druid, Cleric, and Bard. I also added more concrete options to allow them to become gish-like spellswords.*

Move Changes Overview

# **Hack and Slash**

*A small change overall, but I add another option, and reworded the ability to try to make it clearer what the options are.*

# **Volley**

*Changed “take what you can get” penalty so that damage is guaranteed.*

# **Parley**

*Clarified the language.*

# **Under Pressure**

*I wanted to clarify what Defy Danger means. Now, Defy Danger is for when the player is purely attempting to avoid a danger. Under Pressure is for when they also simultaneously want to make their own move. A Druid shapeshifting into a bird to dodge an enemy’s attack would be an example of Under Pressure. Simply dodging the attack would be a Defy Danger.*

# **Defy Danger**

*Clarified that it’s only used when purely attempting to avoid a danger.*

# **Defend**

*Changed the deal damage option to be a flat D6, and added an option that allows the Defender to help their ward Defy Danger.*

# **Discern Realities**

*Changed so that instead of immediately asking questions, the player gains hold which they can spend. Also added the option to let them use hold to simply take +1 to a roll.*

# **Spout Lore**

*Changed so that the 6- penalty for Spout Lore is always “information you aren’t going to like”.*

# **Make Camp**

*Changed to work with the new Vigor system.*

# **Bond (new move)**

*I’ve had near zero real engagement with the old Bond system. My new system is intended to encourage more interaction with your alignment, and promote character growth and party conflict, cooperation, and roleplaying. I’ve seen other replacement systems for bonds. Flags seemed too cumbersome, as it relies on each player remembering their allies’ flags, of which there could easily be 6+.*

# **Bolster**

*Reduced time required if players have access to a fort, base, or other safe and well supplied center of operations. This synergizes with the Thief Hideout and Wizard Sanctum Sanctorum moves.*

# **Black Market (previously Supply)**

*Minor rewrite of the Supply move. The major differences are that you now roll+Money spent, and that the potential drawbacks give the players generally more options. Notably, rolling Black Market is a risk: you will lose money on your attempt whether or not you find what you’re looking for.*

# **Recover**

*Reworked due to Vigor.*

# **Carouse**

*Reduced the cost per +1 from 100 coin to 50 coin.*

# **Recruit**

*Changed so that players must accept what they get. On a 6-, their applicant won’t take no for an answer. What that means is up to the GM.*

# **End of Session**

*Changed due to Bonds and Spellcasting changes.*

# **Take Watch**

*If you roll a 7-9, you don’t have your armor on.*

#

Item and Tag Changes

# **Tags**

**Tiring**: -1 Max Vigor.

*Armor that was Clumsy is now also Tiring.*

**Clumsy**: -1 Ongoing to rolls made with DEX

*I didn’t see any reason for this to be as punishing as it was. -1 to everything is basically a sign telling you “don’t bother”. -1 DEX is still significant, since many Defy Danger rolls wind up being DEX. Especially when combined with Tiring.*

**Concentration**: concentration prevents you from doing anything complicated, like attacking, climbing, breakdancing, etc. If you can’t do it with your eyes closed, you probably can’t do it while concentrating. Certain things might break your concentration, unless you defy danger!

*This is a useful tag to have for spells.*

**Encounter**: an encounter is a period of intense action, during which the player characters generally don’t have time to stop and smell the roses, adjust their makeup, etc. If the players are sitting around tending to their wounds, catching their breath, or talking about what just happened, the encounter has probably ended

*Useful for defining how long certain bonuses and penalties should last.*

# **Item Changes**

*Many items had their cost slightly adjusted to provide (in my opinion) a better balance of cost to benefit. A few items had their function changed, and a few items were removed.*

* Bandages and Poultices and Herbs have been reworked. Bandages now provide the equivalent of a Cure Light Wounds spell, while P&H grant the potential to remove a debility.
* Healing from a doctor (chirugeon), now guarantees that you remove 1 Debility after 1 day spent in their care.
* New weapons: Hatchet, Matchlock Pistol, and Matchlock Rifle. Matchlock weaponry is more powerful than bows, but requires reloading and uses more expensive ammo.
* New armor: Brigandine and Fitted Plate. I wanted to add more tiers of armor, and make it more available for classes not designed to wear it.
* Flask of Alcohol added, which grants +1 Forward to do something scary, risky, crazy, or just plain stupid.
* Personal Feast grants +1 Max Vigor for about a day.

Dwarven Hardtack and Elven Bread were removed. With Race replaced by Background, there wasn’t a lot of purpose for them.