

Duelling with Swords

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How the Duel proceeds

At the start of the duel, it should be determined how serious the duel is to be at the choice of the offended party, the duel could be:





- to first blood, in which case the duel would be ended as soon as one man was wounded, even if the wound was minor;
- till one man was so severely wounded as to be physically unable to continue the duel;
- to the death, in which case there would be no satisfaction until the other party was mortally wounded;

Both duellists choose their weapons. Usually the offender chooses first. The seconds then check the weapons to make sure they are suitably functional. An arbiter or the seconds start the duel. The offended party may declare the duel over at any time, even if the conditions of the duel have not been met (such as first blood, or wounding).

The Meaning of the Cards

Minor Arcana

The Minor Arcana cards are the basic blows made during the fencing bout. Each suit represents a different quarter of the attack-

	Staves (Clubs) left high quarter <i>tierce</i>		Swords (Spades) right high quarter <i>quarte</i>
	Chalices (Hearts) left lowquarter <i>seconde</i>		Coins (Diamonds) right low quarter <i>prime</i>

The numbers represent the degree of skill used to attack or defend with. The court cards have special meanings-

- **Jack** — Feint - Play another non-court card and nominate which suit it is (which quarter it attacks).

- **Knight** — Lunge - Play a non-court cards and ignore the skill limit (ie if you have Fencing of 5, and play a 10 of staves, it counts as a 10)
- **Queen** — Ballestra - Play two non-court cards of the same suit and add them together. Each card is limited by skill as normal.
- **King** — Flèche - Play a non-court card and double it, ignore the skill limit.

Major Arcana

The Major Arcana cards are used to represent movement and can be used to dodge attacks or make special manoeuvres.

- If the card contains a human looking left or right
 - If left, you move left and dodge any *quarte* or *prime* attack.
 - If right, you move right and dodge any *tierce* or *seconde* attack.
- If the card contains a human looking straight ahead
 - You move backwards and dodge all attacks.
- If the card contains multiple humans
 - You move to the side, dodge the attack and may then counter attack as though performing a **Lunge**
- If the card does not show any humans at all.
 - You disarm your opponent.

Fighting the Duel

The offended party usually attacks first. Each player in the duel should have a full hand of 5 cards.

To Attack

The attacker plays any minor arcana card they wish. The strength of the attack is equal to the value of the card, up to the maximum of their fencing skill level. A character without a fencing skill may normally only attack if they play a Knight or Queen card to perform a Lunge or Flèche, or if they play a major arcana card with multiple humans depicted.

To Defend

The defender may do one of two things-

1. **Dodge** — play a major arcana card to move out of the way
2. **Parry** — play a minor arcana card of the same suit as the attacking card.
 - If the card is less than the attacking card minus the defender's fencing skill level the attack gets through. (ie if the attack card is a 7, the defending card is a 3 and the defender's fencing skill is 3 or less)
 - If the card is greater than or equal to the attacking card minus the defender's fencing skill level the attack is parried. (ie if the attack card is a 7, the defending card is a 3 and the defender's fencing skill is 4 or more)
 - If the card is greater than the attacking card, the defender has **Riposted** and may

immediately play another minor arcana card as an attack, this attack card need not be of the same suit.

- This attack may be defended against in the normal way and may also be parried or riposted. See "To Attack" above. The only limit to how many ripostes there can be is the amount of cards in each player's hands that are relevant."

If the defender does not riposte, then it is now their turn to attack. If the defender did riposte, then the attacker is the last character NOT to have riposted.

New Cards

After each attack, both players may discard as many cards as they have left, and redraw up to their hand limit of 5.

The Palpable Hit

If the attacking card is not parried or dodged, a hit is scored.

- The value of the hit is equal to the numerical value of the attack minus any defensive card that was played.
- As stab wounds are less damaging than pistol shot, divide the resulting number by 4, and then compare it to Endurance as per the chapter on [Injury and Death](#).
- The area of the body that is hit is determined by the suit of the card.
- **Staves (Clubs)** - Weapon arm, shoulder, upper torso and neck
- **Swords (Spades)** - Neck, upper torso, non-weapon shoulder and arm
- **Chalices (Hearts)** - Weapon leg, lower torso, groin
- **Coins (Diamonds)** - Lower torso, groin, non-weapon leg

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