

Nickel & Dime



The RPG to play
when asked,
“What’s a
roleplaying game?”



Roleplayers are sometimes asked about their hobby. Not every day, but it happens often enough that it’s handy to be able to give a five-minute demonstration that will hopefully pique their interest for more.

Nickel & Dime is just that: a demo game that’s a tiny example of a traditional RPG. It includes two five-minute encounters.

To play, you need two coins of different values. In these rules, the lesser value coin is called a *nickel* (5¢) and the greater a *dime* (10¢), but any two values will do.

Nickel & Dime is available in multiple genres. Pick one appropriate to the inquirer who is about to play the game. This front page is the same in each instance of **Nickel & Dime**, but page two is genre specific.

Setup

Once you have a match with the genre, help the player flesh out a character role as listed on p. 2. Then choose one of the Encounters.

Character Traits

There are three traits in **Nickel & Dime**:

Vigor represents feats of agility, strength, endurance, and combat. It includes knowledge appropriate to those areas.

Subtlety represents intelligence, but also stealth, spying, pickpocketing, burglary – but not armed robbery. (That’d be Vigor.)

Charm represents conviviality, persuasion, schmoozing, and generally getting people to trust and open up to you.

Trait Levels

There are two trait patterns available, *Specialist* and *Jack/Jill of All Trades*:

- **Specialist**: One trait at Level 2, one at Level 1, and one at Level 0.
- **JoAT**: All three traits at Level 1.

Let the player choose which pattern they want. If they want a Specialist character, let them pick the Levels for each trait, but some character types will have recommendations.

Task Resolution Success

- **Easy** tasks automatically succeed.
- **Average** tasks require a result of 2+.
- **Difficult** tasks require a result of 3+.
- **Very Tough** tasks require a result of 4+.

Give them +1 to their Trait Level for a clever idea, genre-appropriate action, or a good surprise move. Reward them for getting into character – make it fun!

At some point they’ll probably propose an unrealistic action. Be gentle – this is a potential future roleplayer! Say something like, “Oof! *That would be a Very Tough task and a -1 to your trait Level. Perhaps you can break that into two actions.*” If they understand your warning, allow them to change their plan. But if they really want to try it, let the coins fall where they may!

Give the player a nickel and a dime, and have them shake them in their cupped hands, and then slap them onto a table or other surface. Read the results as follows:

Coin Face:	Tail	5¢ Head	10¢ Head
Result:	0	1	2

The sum of the Results of the two coins yields a value from 0 to 3. (This is the same as 1d4-1 if you don’t have coins.)

Add the value from the coin toss to the appropriate trait level to see if they succeed at the task. **Critical Success**: if they roll two heads, let them roll again. Two more heads means success even at the aforementioned unrealistic action attempts!

Failed Action Attempts

Handle these carefully! Explain that a wound, getting captured, etc., in a full RPG can take a session (or even a new adventure) to recover from. But here, just wing it.

Credits, etc.

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Written Sept 28-29, 2015, as an entry in the 2015 rpggeek.com 24-Hour RPG Contest.

24-HOUR
RPG 2015

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Nickel & Dime



Page 2, Genre:

Robin Hood's
Band of Outlaws



Character Role Choices

There are three character types available in **Robin Hood's Band of Outlaws**. The recommended primary traits for Specialist are listed, but players **do** have free choice of all three Levels. Any of the types can be a *Jack/Jill of All Trades* if desired.

- **Woodsman Archer**, recommended primary trait: Vigor. This outlaw rarely leaves Sherwood Forest unless well disguised, or to a crowded special event.
- **Thief**, recommended primary trait: Subtlety. This outlaw ventures out of Sherwood Forest chiefly at night.
- **Tinker**, recommended primary trait: Charm. This outlaw daringly travels outside Sherwood Forest in broad daylight disguised as a traveling tinker, acting as Robin's "eyes and ears."

If there are multiple players, they can be different roles for a Sherwood Forest encounter, but may (or may not) want to be the same roles for encounters elsewhere. They can differentiate themselves by different secondary trait Levels if they wish.

Take a minute to get them into character, stressing the "rob from the rich, give to the poor" aspect of Robin's way of life.

Encounter 1: Lone Traveler

From a vantage point hidden in Sherwood foliage, the PC notices a lone traveler leaning on a tree by the road, eating bread and cheese with a knife. He's probably in his 30s, and has a sword and leather shirt. His horse, cropping grass by the side of the road, is of obvious quality, but the trappings are utilitarian rather than ostentatious.

Once you've described the situation, ask the player what his character wants to do. Some obvious choices include:

Robbery: jump out with ready weapon and demand their money.

Pickpocket: stealthily steal their purse from behind the tree he's leaning against.

Converse: make a friendly approach, possibly offering to share food, and chat.

Who is the Traveler?

GM's choice: he's an agent of the Sheriff, or he's an innocent soldier looking for a job.

The Sheriff's agent will try to fight if robbed (Difficult for the PC, or Very Tough if he let him draw his sword), will detect the pickpocketing on a failed Difficult Subtlety test, and is Difficult to Charm: on failure, he arrests you on suspicion! His purse carries enough to feed a poor family for a week. He is looking for the location of Robin's camp.

The innocent soldier is a decent sort – he left his last post because his commander is corrupt. He won't fight, his purse isn't worth stealing, and he knows about troop movements that Robin will want to hear.

Encounter 2: Nottingham Town

Robin sends you into Nottingham for information. There's a new wealthy merchant in town, and Robin needs to know where his heart is. Robin won't rob a good man, but otherwise ... the poor need food.

There's a festival in town, so any PC can go. But the crowds mean the town guards are on high alert – Sherwood Forest is close.

Two town guards confront the PC(s). It's an Average Subtlety or Charm test to avoid arrest (or at least pursuit) during the day; at night, it's Difficult. If pursued, it's a Difficult Vigor or Subtlety test to avoid being caught and thrown into prison.

Once past the town guards, it takes an Average Charm result to get pertinent information about the new merchant.

Who is the Merchant?

GM's choice: he's an archetypal greedy merchant with no charity for others, or he's secretly an agent of King Richard, trying to determine who is loyal to the imprisoned King, and who supports the King's usurping brother, Prince John and his Sheriff.

If greedy, he's well-guarded, and robbery/pickpocketing attempts are Very Tough.

If he's Richard's agent, he will be happy to donate to feed the poor, but only to Robin in person to sound him out on the issue of Richard. But the merchant is watched by Prince John's spies, and it takes a Difficult Subtlety test to avoid their scrutiny. Don't unwittingly lead them to Robin's hideout!