

# For Love or Power



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## Credits

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# For Love or Power

For Love or Power deals with the idea of romance in an RPG and it also looks at the medieval reality of marriage as well. There are certain assumptions already made and they are the following:

1. The campaign has room for it without disrupting everything else. For example, romance will probably not fit into a typical “kick the doors in” campaign where role-playing of any kind is minimized. Other types of campaigns might have good or bad reasons to include romance and there may be better times to include it than others.

2. Every one of the players and the GM has agreed that romance that should be in the game. The maturity level in the group is high enough to accept it without causing the game to break down. The amount of romance can vary in every campaign. Is the main plot, a occasional sub-plot or does it only take place during in between adventures or perhaps only played out when some of the players cannot make it. The agreement is very important because disinterest or distrust can quickly derail the game.

Another potential problem is simple embarrassment. This can come from different sources such as not having any romantic feelings between the players and/or GM, having players already having a PC of the opposite gender, or perhaps there is the possibility that it will be laid out in an farcical manner and then the romance is cut while the GM/players swear never to try it again. In any case, the assumption in this supplement is that the players can handle the romance along with being able to play a different gender if need be.

3. The physical side of the relationship is behind the curtain or fade to black. That is, the game doesn't stop to describe such terms in long detail and displaces the campaign. The focus of the game is on the relationship itself.

4. The idea of courtly love was a concept introduced very late in the era. Peasants were limited by other factors such as distance, status and religious edicts. Adventurers stand out and have more romantic options than what the culture would normally allow. They can either marry for love or for wealth and power. The PC may also play the field for either of the above. They may have to face overwhelming odds but they should have the opportunity (but not guaranteed success).

5. This supplement will not be dealing with how to handle PC to PC romance. The best advice is to know your group and use that knowledge to determine how to proceed with this. It will probably be awkward at first but the first RPG session had its snags too.

## *How to Introduce Romance into the Game*

There is a time and place for this element of the game. The first possibility is that romance is the main theme for the campaign. For example, perhaps the GM has already talked to another player and he agrees that his PC is love with the princess. The entire campaign is geared around seeing if the PCs can make this happen. Everyone is done to further this goal. It could involve sneaking through the castle grounds to serenade her to going through the dungeon to find the rare nightshade roses she adores.

The goals of the PCs should tie directly into the romantic theme or easily dove-tail. For instance, the PCs are part of a group who champions courtly love or vow to help each other find true love. Another variant could connect to the previous paragraph. One PC gets the princess, another is appointed as the court wizard, the rogue gets a huge reward and the cleric is blessed by his deity for making this happen.

The motivation of the campaign may center on romance even if the PCs don't directly interact with the NPC they are interested in. The PC or PCs may love someone from afar or perhaps all of their loved ones were captured and are being help prisoner. The PCs may adventure to be noticed by the NPC or to free their loved ones. Trickle in messages or rumors from the princess. An escapee from the prison may talk about seeing their loved ones. In other words, remember to remind the PCs why they are doing what they are doing.

Another possibility within wanting to make romance a very important part of the game is that the campaign has already existed up to this point and romance has not been emphasized. One solution would be to wait until the current adventure is done and introduce romance at the beginning of the next adventure. However, with some work, you can at least setup the backdrop in the current adventure.

For instance, the informant that is meeting the PCs might be a suitable partner for one of the PCs. A passing noblewoman briefly mentioned in one adventure might be the main focus in the next adventure. Even if the current campaign does not have room for the PCs to have direct romance, they could see others in this state and including

those kinds of details can add a bit more verisimilitude and additional motivation for the PCs.

The target of any romance should be someone that the GM will trust. In addition, the ideal candidate will be able to handle it without feeling uncomfortable. The start can be subtle or more overt, based on how well the PC is picking up the GM's cues. Some PCs will respond with only hearing the GM say a certain woman has been staring at them for awhile. Others may need the NPC to introduce themselves and ask them if they want to dance. The PC may turn down the proposal. If so, that's okay. Just try again at a later time.

If romance is going to be less important, it is still important to remember what romance can do for the game. Its inclusion can make the character more real in terms of personality. It can also lead to opportunities for breaks, wealth and power. Getting the Baroness to marry you, even if this relationship is only in the background, can lead to great wealth and power. Having a connection to a former flame can add up to getting boons for a PC. The reverse is true as well. Finally, if you desperately need a hook for the next game, then romance can be used as a hook if it isn't a main part of the campaign.

### *Development of Romance in the Game World*

Working on some of the customs in the campaign world will certainly give it some depth. Use real world examples to guide how to add them to the game. Perhaps one area considers the rose as the ultimate symbol of love while in another, it means that the recipient has been just been challenged to a duel. Winking in one area is okay for a woman but if a man does it, it is vulgar.

If customs like this are added, make sure the PCs know this if it is common knowledge for the world. If they are traveling abroad, then some Knowledge checks (local for peasants or Nobility for upper class are a couple of examples) should be allowed. The default rules will assume that the campaign is trying to include some medieval ideas of romance while assuming the PCs are step around some of these rules.

Of course, pure romance may not be in the cards for the group. There might be a PC who goes to every town and insists on carousing at each one. An opportunistic rogue may marry widows and then take them for their dowry before leaving them. If that is the case, remember there are consequences for this. The cad gets a reputation and the women in the area will learn to avoid them. Jealous exes could hire assassins and make life difficult for them.

## *Rules of Engagement*

Obviously one solution would be just to role-play this out. However, if the GM wants to add tension, unsure how to handle the relationship, or if the relationship is a minor component of the game, then this system will manage it.

The basis for starting a relationship, maintaining it, and getting married are managed by the diplomacy skill but the bluff and sense motive skill can come into play as well.

The PC will be probably be given opportunities for romantic attachments or they can ask for one as well. The GM will look at the station of the NPC (sorry folks, the historical medieval world saw love as less important than duty or material advancement until late in the medieval period). This sets up the initial DC.

**Table 1 - Social Status/Base DC**

<u>Social Status</u>	<u>Base DC</u>
Peasant	10
Free-worker	15
Rich Merchant	25
Minor Noble	35
Medium Noble	45
Major Noble	55

The PC can choose to do initial research on an NPC is interested in. If he chooses to do so, then he must spend 2d6 weeks doing so and he must spend some money. Once the time passes, then the PC can make a Diplomacy roll to see if he manages to get the right information. The PC uses the base DC of the NPC's station.

If the Diplomacy roll fails, then the money is wasted but the PC can still choose to romance the NPC. If he is successful, then the PC gets the chance to re-roll the match level. If he does so, he must take the second roll, even if it is worse.

### **Initial Research Costs**

<u>NPC Station</u>	<u>Amount of Money Spent</u>
Peasant	1d10 x 10 CP
Free-worker	2d6 x 10 CP
Rich Merchant	1d10 x 10 SP
Minor Noble	1d10 x 10 GP
Medium Noble	1d10 x 100 gp
Major Noble	1d10 x 1000 gp

Table 2 - Match Level (Personality)

<u>Die Roll</u>	<u>Match Level</u>
1	Awful
2 - 3	Poor
4 - 7	Fair
8 - 9	Good
10	Great

The next step is to roll and see how well the PC and NPC mesh together in terms of personality and how long any marriage would take. Roll a d10 and then modify the initial DC accordingly. Along with the modifier, the GM will be told to roll a certain die or dice and what the time frame is. The GM will then roll to see how long the relationship must last.

Awful = 2d6 years and +10 DC to every roll  
 Poor = 1d6 + 1 years and +5 DC to every roll  
 Fair = 4d6 months  
 Good = 2d12 months and -5 DC to every roll  
 Great = 2d6 months and -10 DC to every roll

Every game month, the PC will make a Diplomacy skill roll at the listed DC. If successful, then one month can be removed from the time total (must be kept in months). The PC can choose just to maintain. If they do, then do not remove one from the time total. This can come in handy if the PC wants the relationship but does not want to get married. If it fails by 4 or less, roll 1d3 and add the result to the time total. If it fails by five or more, the NPC calls it off since the PC made a major faux pas. The lowest DC possible for a roll is DC 5.

Once the total reaches 0, then the NPC will want to get married. Roll 2d6 and keep the result. This is how many months the couple will be engaged. The rolls continue but the DC is reduced by 5 due to being engaged. Once this second time total reaches zero, then the couple is considered married. At this point, the system stops measuring their progress. The PC and GM can decide if kids are involved and how the marriage progresses.

The use of Gifts can influence the significant other to feel good about their lover. The modifier generated is for one roll and it is for the amount listed. The PC can choose to spend more money on gifts in exchange for lowering the DC even more. The lowest DC that can be obtained is DC 10. In addition, if the PC has other goals (like trying to gain a dowry), then they can focus on that and can ignore certain personality traits.

Table 3 - Additional Modifiers

<u>Description</u>	<u>DC Modifiers</u>
Per 1000 gp of NPC dowry	+ 1 DC
Per 10 GP gift (Peasant or Free-worker)	- 1 DC for one roll
Per 100 GP (Rich Merchant or Minor Noble)	- 1 DC for one roll
Per 1000 GP (Medium Noble or Major Noble)	- 1 DC for one roll
Same Alignment	0
One Step (Close but different enough for interest)	- 5 DC
Two or more Align. Steps	+ 5 DC per step
For every "maintain"	+1 DC
Other goals	- 5 DC
Engaged	- 5 DC

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Want more romance? Need new challenges for your players? If so, you are in the right place!

For Love or Power gives advice on how to add romance to your campaign. It has a detailed system for a PC/NPC interactions. It accounts for social station, personality, values, and other romantic tactics.

If you want to spice things up, give For Love or Power a go!