

Mortal Combat's Healing Magic

(*Cobwebbed Dragon*)

Unlike some of its peer FRPGs, injury in Dragon Warriors can debilitate an adventurer for a long time – combat and traps are genuinely dangerous and such wounds are not easily laughed aside or healed. Sorcerous healing is a precious commodity to a Dragon Warriors adventurer and something on which it is easy, if available, to become dependent.

I have never liked the idea that magic is a predictable tool like a rope or a crowbar – there should always be a risk or a consequence to using it and it should never be depended upon. Mortal Combat's approach to healing magic introduces a couple of new elements of uncertainty that I thin would work well in Dragon Warriors – and could be exploited by the referee to create some interesting role-playing opportunities (and a healthier respect for magic).

Durational Healing Spells

Healing spells in Mortal Combat are durational. Within Dragon Warriors, when using magical healing, the spell is cast (or potion drunk), the target is healed, and the magic is gone. But in Mortal Combat, the spell is cast, the target is healed, and the magic holding those wounds closed lingers – presumably until the wounds heal naturally. The immediate game effect is the same: the target is restored and can return to rushing headlong into danger.

But...

Durational spells can be dispelled, both by the casting sorcerer or another using a *Dispel Magic* spell. For players using the optional rule that the death of the spellcaster ends their spells, this could also place additional emphasis on the party to keep their sorcerer alive.

The consequences may not be immediately apparent, but consider that any character currently being held together with magic will light up like a beacon to any mystic using *See Enchantment*. Also note that *Dispel Magic* affects all durational spells in the area of effect – if a character is affected by a hostile spell, should they attempt to dispel it and undo their healing magic too? This is particularly troublesome for a resurrected character.

This makes for a bit more bookkeeping for the referee, especially if the characters routinely get injured, heal using magic, and get injured again – just how long will all those separate wounds take to heal naturally? And it may not be worth it for the few niche situations in which the distinction between instant and durational healing spells make to the game, or maybe it is worth it, just for the look on the players' faces when they realise that magic is not the clinical and dependable tool they assumed it to be.

Healing that Harms

Mortal Combat healing magic also has two additional differences from Dragon Warriors healing spells. In Mortal Combat, a healing spell can be used to cause harm and that, in both forms of the spell (to

heal or harm), the target is entitled to a saving throw to resist the spell's effects (or test MAGICAL DEFENCE, in Dragon Warriors parlance). How much does the character trust the sorcerer (or the potion they are about to imbibe) not to cause harm and will they waive their resistance?

On the plus side, the harming version of the spell is also durational, so could be reversed with a Dispel Magic, although that might be a small mercy lost on the character whose skin is now tearing itself open after they drank what they thought was a healing potion...

More Durational Spells

Banquet, *Antidote*, *Cure Disease*, and even *Resurrect* could be turned into durational spells.

Imagine a character inflicted with a fatal poison, healed with the *Antidote* spell, and now desperate to find a real antidote before this magical stay of execution is dispelled. Having made some progress in his quest, the character learns that the sorcerer who cast the *Antidote* spell has been kidnapped, likely by an enemy of the baron he serves, and could be executed in days – should he continue to search for a natural antidote to his poison in the hopes of finding it before the sorcerer is executed or should he attempt to rescue the sorcerer? Is whether the death of the sorcerer would end his durational spells or not something the character would know or even risk?

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