

Slaughter Quest

The Non-Proprietary RPG

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OOI

Coins

In a gaming system, I want to break out from what I don't know into what I do as fast as possible.

1 copper (1cp) = 1 Dollar (\$1)

1 silver (1sp) = 20 Dollars (\$20)

1 gold (1gp) = 1,000 Dollars (\$1,000)

1 gold = 50 silver = 1,000 copper

20 silver = 1 gold

50 copper = 1 silver

Hopefully, that's all clear. If not, this may not be the RPG Guide for you, as I'm going to assume a lot and go meta as quickly as possible.

Also, I write as of 2017. Thus, if I were to have made the same table back in 1980, I would have used different

values. Which is to say, the exact values hardly make any difference.

A single coin (say, a single gold piece) weighs 1 troy ounce and there are ten troy ounces to the pound. Hardly anyone cares about encumbrance. But if we are being reasonable, at five pounds, a mere fifty coins is quite the load to carry about. In historical times, no one ever did. Most transactions were based on custom, credit, and honor. I will not go into that here, but suffice to say, typically only strangers were made to pay in hard coin.

There is a difference between an ounce of gold and a coin. A coin is by definition the Coin of the Realm (whatever Realm we are talking about) and is worth more than the gold weight. Raw metals are only worth between 10-50% of corresponding coinage. While coinage from other Realms are worth slightly more (perhaps topping off at 75%). These are, of course, rough numbers. But the point is, a gold coin that's been in a Dragon's Horde (and thus, out of circulation) for 1,000 years isn't worth as much as something that has been newly minted, because no one knows it's gold content and (more importantly) because the King isn't necessarily willing to accept said coin when it's time to pay your taxes.

King's collect taxes in the Coin of the Realm (hereafter, for simplicity called gold).

King's pay their troops in gold.

The troops buy what they want with the gold (use your imagination).

But the only reason anyone accepts the gold in the first place is because eventually they will have to use it to pay their taxes back to the King.

Note the circle: citizens accept gold from the troops, so they can pay their taxes and the aforementioned troops don't use their swords to take everything the aforementioned citizens own.

Welcome to what we like to refer to as Civilization.

All of this is just an abstraction. Use whatever abstraction you are comfortable with. This works for me. I know that 1gp is worth \$1,000, so I can do quick mental gymnastics.

Question: How much does a night's lodging cost?

Answer: Well, almost anything. One can sleep in the park for free, get a room in a flop house for 1sp (real world: \$20), stay the night at a decent hotel for 5sp (\$100), or the week for 1gp (\$1,000) meals included. Of course, that's just the bottom of the line. It's easy to spend 1gp/day (\$1,000/day) or more. But now at least, we have a baseline for discussion. What did the player's have in mind?

A more interesting question might be: How much does a sword cost?

Answer: Well, if one uses a sword, they probably already have a sword, so let's not get bogged down in starting equipment. That aside, the best sword I ever owned cost me \$20 (so, 1sp in game terms). It was a length

of hard iron, sharpened to a razor's edge on one side with rope wrapped around the end as a pommel. It was sharp, light, and better than anything a typical City Guard could ever hope to own. Nowadays, it's easy enough to buy a replica of most any historical weapon for \$500 (25sp), while top of the line Samurai swords go for \$10,000 (10gp) and up. I hope you can see how meaningless a price list becomes. What is typically referred to as a thief in these games might have access to a fence (a source of stolen goods). Such a fence might be glad to sell said thief a sword for cents on the dollar. So, what does a top of the line sword cost said thief? Well, maybe a tenth the regular price... along with some chance (however small) that they will be called on it:

‘Hey, where did you get that sword?’

‘Someone stole that from me!’

Or, perhaps, worse, ‘That was Harry’s sword! See the nicks,’ brown twine, scratched rune, or whatever. And as we all know, Harry hasn’t been seen for months. ‘What did you do with Harry!’ Do you have an answer? Sorry, not quick enough. ‘Guards!’

A Samurai (or other fighter type) may well have an expensive sword gifted to them. And we need not address the continual costs for replacement and repair. Bashing a sword against steel clad opponents (not to mention Rock Golems) does tend to dull the blade. But that is a boring implementation detail.

I've never once seen someone deduct the price of a beer, sorry, the cost of a tankard of ale at a tavern from their treasure list. It just isn't done. And there is no reason for it.

Thieves will steal their drink.

Elves will sing for their drink.

Fighters will fight (and/or) arm wrestle for their drink.

Need I go on?

I have my own personal interpretation of Dwarves. Actually, I have several interpretations of Dwarves. After all, there are several different clans. But I have no problem whatsoever imaging a bunch of Dwarves, sitting around the fire, huddling close, drinking until dawn, with whoever is currently rolling in the dough, buying rounds for the lot.

'Drinks on me! I hit is rich!'

'Killed the dragon.'

'Hit a new vein.'

Whatever.

Sharing the wealth. And those not quite as fortunate joining in the celebration, signing the praises of the Dwarf of the Moment, knowing (or at least, hoping) someday, it will be their turn.

Of course, not every Dwarf pays it forward (or back). But then, that's the subject of a different entry. And I think I've said enough for today.

\$1,000 = 1 gold = 50 silver = 1,000 copper

Make the conversion from The Real into The Game however you want and/or the players see fit.