

Courtship

Characters may encounter potential mates, and decide to woo them instead of treating them as disposable. Here is a quick and fun way for the DM to be impartial in determining how it goes. A few quick rolls, used at the table. (The DM can also choose.)

The DM can assign social standing, wealth, allies and enemies, family situation, and all that as being appropriate for the context; this process does not generate the paramour, it focuses on the relationship. Whether the potential mate is a countess or a bar maid, the following three categories can be used.

Maximum Commitment	Trustworthiness (for you)	Primary Source of Attraction
1. Get another chance.	1. Secret enemy.	1. Wealth (comfort)
2. Enjoyable company.	2. Liar.	2. Excitement (stories)
3. Lover.	3. Flake.	3. Violence (safety)
4. Exclusive lover.	4. Honest.	4. Looks (physical)
5. Partner.	5. Decent.	5. Intellect (problem solver)
6. Center of the World.	6. Unshakeable.	6. Connection (personality)

A DM with the spare time and wits is welcome to roll twice on each list; once for what the mate says, and once for what is true. This may result in the same thing, and any discrepancies can be explained by a lying paramour or a paramour's self-deception, whichever proves to be most amusing to the DM.

The commitment is for the DM to know and the character to guess. A mate may gush about wanting to be partners in life (5), but really be stuck at lover (3) with roving eyes. Or, a mate may fall head over heels, and tell the character they will get another chance (1) when really the character has become the center of the world (6).

Likewise, trustworthiness is how trustworthy the potential mate is for the character, not in general. Otherwise honorable people can neglect commitments to their lovers, lie to protect themselves, and even grow to resent and despise a partner. The most soiled of wretches may betray everyone in the world but that one who owns their hearts.

There is no system for handling how committed and trustworthy characters are. That's for the players to decide.

The Mating Dance

If the character has established a courting relationship, and the character gains a level, the player rolls 1d6 on "maximum commitment."

- If the roll is lower than the current commitment level, the relationship loses a level.
- If the roll is equal to the current commitment level, roll for "trustworthiness" instead. A roll equal to the current level there means there is no change overall, otherwise trustworthiness increase or decreases.

- If the roll is higher than the current commitment level, the commitment level increases by one.

Every time trust or commitment increases a level, the character gains [new level x 50] experience points. This compensates the player and character for enduring the difficulties of courtship, and if a relationship has a lot of ups and downs it grants more experience than a stable relationship. If a DM wants to preserve the mystery, the DM can arrange for a different advantage than experience, like a gift of an enchanted item or a local honor. *A character may woo more than one paramour at once, but will only gain experience if focused on one.*

Once a relationship reaches 4 or higher, maximum commitment is only rolled if there is danger to the relationship from stress, or if the character wants to escalate the relationship.

The DM can make up circumstances to make the result appropriate. An argument, counsel from friends, shifting circumstances, a social misstep; a relationship with a potential mate can be as unpredictable and treacherous to navigate as the most brutal killer dungeon.

To gain a roll between leveling up, the character must determine what the primary source of attraction is for the potential mate, then exploit it. If it is wealth, get a big haul and lavish gifts on the paramour. If it is violence, enter a bare-knuckle match for sport (and win), or thrash some muggers with the partner present. If it is looks, dress up fine and give the paramour some sweet loving. And so on.

A grand gesture can also work regardless of the source of attraction; proposal for marriage, slaying the paramour's foe, buying a house, etc.

The player can ask for a roll, but the DM puts a modifier on that roll based on how well the character performs (defaulting to no modifier.)

Danger to the relationship. If powerful forces try to break a relationship, then the character can make a saving throw with a die assigned by the DM, trying to roll equal to or less than the relationship's rating. If the pressure or event is severe, the whole courtship can be broken off. Otherwise, it loses a point of maximum commitment, and possibly one in trustworthiness. Influences can include the character caught cheating, a threat to cut off the paramour's family connections if the relationship persists, blackmail by a third party, the character rejecting a relationship ultimatum, and that sort of thing.

Relationship currents are unpredictable. The DM can choose to automatically grant increases and decreases in relationship commitment and trustworthiness. However, sometimes confessing deception increases trust and commitment. Sometimes a major victory makes a partner feel overshadowed and insecure. People react strangely, and do not usually understand how events will affect their emotions. Letting the dice tell the story can be very satisfying as the DM interprets the results in the relationship instead of letting the relationship take a predictable course.

Each lover besides the character grants -1 on maximum commitment rolls.

Marriage. A covenant or vow, like marriage, is not listed here. It is certainly possible at any level from 1 on, as marriages can be arranged even between strangers, and are not always taken seriously by those in them. Those who neglect courtship after being married may find their relationship deteriorating; the status of relationships only freezes if the DM doesn't care to continue exploring them.

Marriage grants +1 on maximum commitment rolls.