

# MAZE RATS PLAYING THE GAME

## INTRODUCTION

*Maze Rats* is a fantasy adventure game (also known as a roleplaying game, or RPG) of exploration, problem-solving, and survival. One player acts as the **Game Master** (GM) while the remaining players take on the role of **Player Characters** (PCs).

Although paper, pencils, and dice are involved, the core of the game is a conversation; the GM tells the players what is happening, the players tell the GM what their characters do in response, and the GM describes how their actions in turn affect the world.

The GM is the game's host and facilitator. This job is the most difficult, but also the most rewarding. A good GM is someone with a great imagination and good people skills, who enjoys improvising and helping others have fun. Their primary duties include: playing the roles of all of the **Non-Player Characters** (NPCs), creating and running the fictional world, establishing concrete situations for the players to interact with, adapting to the unpredictable choices of the players, making rulings on how and when to apply rules in a particular situation, and finally inventing, altering or entirely removing game rules if it improves the game.

If this sounds challenging, it is! But don't worry, *Maze Rats* offers plenty of tools, advice, and useful content for making running the game as smooth and stress-free as possible.

In contrast to the GM, the players' jobs are simple: roleplay the personalities and choices of their PCs, interact with the situations presented by the GM, and work together to stay alive and hopefully prosper. Characters grow in strength the longer they survive, but *Maze Rats* presumes a world full of peril, so only the cleverest of players will see their PC live long enough to retire from the adventuring life and enjoy their ill-gotten gains.

## Danger Rolls

Whenever possible, a PC's actions should be resolved by its player simply describing what the character does. However, if the action is risky and difficult to resolve through description, the GM may call for a **Danger Roll**. The player rolls 2d (two six-sided dice), and adds the proper ability bonus. **If the total is 10 or higher** the PC avoids the danger. If not, the GM describes how things go wrong. Danger rolls usually fail, so players should do everything they can to make risky situations less so.

- **Add the Strength bonus (STR)** when using raw power, stamina, or physical resilience.
- **Add the Dexterity bonus (DEX)** when using speed, agility or precision.
- **Add the Will bonus (WIL)** when using force of personality, perception, or willpower.

If one character takes an action against another, the GM may decide to call for an **Opposed Danger Roll**. In this case, both characters make a danger roll, with each trying to beat the other's total instead of trying to roll a 10+. Defenders win ties.

## Advantage

If the risk of an action is reduced due to the PC's paths, preparation, or situational factors, the GM may grant **Advantage** to the roll. In this case, the player rolls 3d instead of 2d and uses the two highest dice. Attack rolls may also have advantage if the situation calls for it. Only one advantage die may be added to a roll. If several advantages apply to the PC's action, the action is usually no longer risky.

## NPC Reactions

If the PCs come across a monster or NPC whose disposition is unknown, roll 1d on the table below.

1	2-3	4-5	6
Hostile	Wary	Friendly	Helpful

**Hostile** NPCs will attempt to hinder, harass, or attack the PCs. **Wary** NPCs are unhelpful unless given significant motivation. **Friendly** NPCs will help as long as it doesn't inconvenience them. **Helpful** NPCs will help even when it's inconvenient.

## Initiative

Both sides roll a die when combat breaks out, re-rolling any ties. The side with the higher roll will act first during the first combat round, followed by the other side. After each round, reroll initiative. This may result in a side taking two consecutive turns.

On a side's turn, each of its characters, in any order, may move about 30 feet and take one action. Types of actions include: attacking a target within range, casting a spell (see the Magic page), drinking a potion, making a second move, etc.

If a group ambushes another group or NPC, it automatically gains initiative, as well as advantage on all attack rolls during the first round. The leader of the ambushed group may be permitted a WIL danger roll to avoid surprise.

## Combat

Characters have a base armor rating of 6. Light armor and shields provide +1 armor each, while heavy armor provides +2 armor. Shields use one hand and so cannot be used with two-handed weapons. Characters in heavy armor cannot gain advantage on DEX danger rolls or surprise attack rolls.

When one character attacks another, the attacker makes an **Attack Roll** by rolling 2d and adding their **Attack Bonus** (AB). Attacking with a ranged weapon is impossible while in melee combat.

Compare the attacker's attack total to the defender's armor. If the attacker's total exceeds the defender's armor, the attack hits and deals damage to the defender equal to the difference between the two scores. Heavy weapons add 1 to this damage (but not the initial attack roll), while unarmed attacks subtract 1 damage (but may not reduce damage to 0). If the attacker rolled double sixes, the roll is a **Critical Hit** and the total damage is doubled, or some other effect is applied at the GM's discretion. Subtract the damage from the defender's **Health**.

If the defender has a shield, they may choose to shatter it when they are hit by an attack to ignore all damage from that attack.

If a character ever has zero or less health, they are immediately slain. When a PC is slain, its player creates a new first level PC, or takes over a first level NPC hireling. The GM then has them rejoin the group as soon as possible.

## NPC Morale

When an NPC or hireling faces more danger than they were expecting, the GM may call for a WIL danger roll to see if they rout or beg for mercy.

Typical situations for making a morale check include when an NPC loses half of their force (when in a group), loses half of their health (when alone), loses their leader, or is attacked by magic.

Most NPCs should not get into fights that they cannot win, and should tactically retreat or sue for peace if it makes sense, even without a morale roll.

## Healing

PCs recover 1 point of lost health when the PC eats a meal and then gets a full night of rest. 24 hours of rest in a safe location restores all health. A dose of medicine restores 1 point of health, once per day.

## Encumbrance

All of a PC's items must have a recorded location: worn, in the backpack, on the belt, or carried in the hands. Belts carry up to two items, and backpacks can carry as much as a backpack could reasonably fit. Belt items can be grabbed in combat at any time, but backpack items take 1d rounds to find.

## Leveling Up

All PCs begin at level 1, and gain levels over the course of the campaign. At the end of each session, the GM awards 1-3 **Experience Points** (XP) to all PCs based on how much the party achieved.

- Showed up to the game: **1 XP**
- Overcame a difficult challenge: **2 XP**
- Overcame an impressive challenge beyond their expected ability: **3 XP**

When a PC has enough XP, they gain a level. After reaching level 7, the PC may retire and become an NPC. The player then makes a new level 1 PC.

## LVL XP Level Features

2	2	+2 max health, +1 to an ability bonus
3	6	+2 max health. <i>Pick one:</i> attack bonus +1, gain a new path, or gain a spell slot.
4	12	+2 max health, +1 to an ability bonus
5	20	+2 max health. <i>Pick one:</i> attack bonus +1, gain a new path, or gain a spell slot.
6	30	+2 max health, +1 to an ability bonus
7	42	+2 max health. <i>Pick one:</i> attack bonus +1, gain a new path, or gain a spell slot.

# CHARACTER CREATION

## Making a player character

Create your character at the beginning of a new campaign along with the other players. If your character dies during the game, you should make a new one right away. The random tables from the Characters pages can be used to flesh out your character if you want a bit more detail. Drawing a portrait of your character is highly encouraged, as is adopting a mannerism or two when speaking in your character's voice.

## Random tables

The tables that have 36 results are organized into 6 groups of 6 results each. To randomly pick an item from one of these tables, roll 2d separately. The first die points to a group, while the second die points to an item within that group. For example, rolling "4, 2" on the appearance table means group 4, item 2: Lanky. **Bolded items** refer you to another random table where you should roll again.

## 1. Roll or choose abilities

Your PC has 3 abilities: Strength, Dexterity, and Will. Roll 1d to find their starting values, or simply choose a row (with GM permission). You may raise one of your PC's abilities by one point at levels 2, 4, and 6. A PC's abilities may never be raised higher than +4.

1d	Strength	Dexterity	Will
1	+2	+1	+0
2	+2	+0	+1
3	+1	+2	+0
4	+0	+2	+1
5	+1	+0	+2
6	+0	+1	+2

If you want your abilities to be more randomized (and possibly unbalanced), the GM may also allow you to roll 1d for each ability separately.

1d	Ability Score
1-2	+0
3-5	+1
6	+2

## 2. Record maximum health

Your PC begins with 4 maximum health and 4 current health. PCs add 2 to their maximum health (but not current health) each time they gain a level.

## 3. Choose starting feature

Your PC begins with **one** of the following features:

- A +1 attack bonus (add 1 to all attack rolls).
- A single spell slot (cast one spell per day, generated from the tables on the Magic page).
- A single path from the four following options (gain advantage on related danger rolls):

**Briarborn:** Tracking, foraging, survival.

**Fingersmith:** Tinkering, picking locks or pockets.

**Roofrunner:** Climbing, leaping, balancing.

**Shadowjack:** Moving silently, hiding in shadows.

## 4. Roll or choose six items

Record the location of all items, armor, and weapons: hands, worn, belt, or backpack. Belts carry up to two items, and backpacks can carry as much as a backpack could reasonably fit.

Animal Scent	Chisel	Grease
Bear Trap	Crowbar	Hacksaw
Bedroll	Fishing Net	Hammer
Caltrops	Glass Marbles	Hand drill
Chain (10 ft.)	Glue	Horn
Chalk	Grappling Hook	Iron spikes

Iron tongs	Metal file	Ten Foot Pole
Lantern and Oil	Rations (3)	Tinderbox
Large Sack	Rope (50 ft.)	Torch
Lockpicks (3)	Steel wire	Vial of Acid
Manacles	Shovel	Vial of Poison
Medicine (3)	Steel mirror	Waterskin

## 5. Choose combat gear

PCs start with: light armor (+1 armor), a shield (+1 armor, 1 hand), and two weapons:

- **Light weapons (1 hand):** Axes, daggers, maces, short swords, flails, one-handed spears, etc.
- **Heavy weapons (+1 damage, 2 hands):** Spears, halberds, long swords, warhammers, etc.
- **Ranged weapons (2 hands):** Bows, crossbows, slings etc.

Characters have a base armor rating of 6. Wearing light armor increases it to 7, and holding a shield in one hand increases it to 8.

## 6. Roll or create appearance

Aquiline	Bullnecked	Furrowed
Athletic	Chiseled	Gaunt
Barrel-Chested	Coltish	Gorgeous
Boney	Corpulent	Grizzled
Brawny	Craggy	Haggard
Brutish	Delicate	Handsome
Hideous	Sinewy	Towering
Lanky	Slender	Trim
Pudgy	Slumped	Weathered
Ripped	Solid	Willowy
Rosy	Square-Jawed	Wiry
Scrawny	Statuesque	Wrinkled

## 7. Roll or create physical detail

Acid scars	Bronze skinned	Exotic accent
Battle scars	Burn scars	Flogging scars
Birthmark	Bushy eyebrows	Freckles
Braided hair	Curly hair	Gold tooth
Brand mark	Dark skinned	Hoarse voice
Broken nose	Dreadlocks	Huge beard
Long hair	Nine fingers	Sallow skin
Matted hair	Oiled hair	Shaved head
Missing ear	One-eyed	Sunburned
Missing teeth	Pale skinned	Tangled hair
Mustache	Piercings	Tattoos
Muttonchops	Ritual scars	Topknot

## 8. Roll or create background

A PC's background does not have any particular mechanical effects. The GM may take it into account, however, when deciding what the PC knows or who their contacts are.

Alchemist	Contortionist	Fence
Beggar-prince	Counterfeiter	Fortuneteller
Blackmailer	Cultist	Galley slave
Bounty-hunter	Cutpurse	Gambler
Chimney sweep	Debt-collector	Gravedigger
Coin-clipper	Deserter	Headman
Hedge knight	Peddler	Slave
Highwayman	Pit-fighter	Smuggler
Housebreaker	Poisoner	Street performer
Kidnapper	Rat-catcher	Tattooist
Mad prophet	Scrivener	Urchin
Mountebank	Sellsword	Usurer

## 9. Roll or create clothing

Antique	Decaying	Flamboyant
Battle-torn	Eccentric	Food-stained
Bedraggled	Elegant	Formal
Blood-stained	Embroidered	Frayed
Ceremonial	Exotic	Frumpy
Dated	Fashionable	Garish
Grimy	Oversized	Sigils
Haute couture	Patched	Singed
Lacey	Patterned	Tasteless
Livery	Perfumed	Undersized
Mud-stained	Practical	Wine-stained
Ostentatious	Rumpled	Worn out

## 10. Roll or create personality

Bitter	Cunning	Honor-bound
Brave	Driven	Hotheaded
Cautious	Entitled	Inquisitive
Chipper	Gregarious	Irascible
Contrary	Grumpy	Jolly
Cowardly	Heartless	Know-it-all
Lazy	Righteous	Spacey
Loyal	Rude	Stoic
Menacing	Sarcastic	Stubborn
Mopey	Savage	Stuck-up
Nervous	Scheming	Suspicious
Protective	Serene	Wisecracking

## 11. Roll or create mannerism

Anecdotes	Drawl	Interrupts
Breathy	Enunciates	Laconic
Chuckles	Flowery speech	Laughs
Clipped	Gravelly voice	Long pauses
Cryptic	Highly formal	Melodious
Deep voice	Hypnotic	Monotone
Mumbles	Rapid-fire	Street slang
Narrates	Rhyming	Stutters
Overly casual	Robotic	Talks to self
Quaint sayings	Slow speech	Trails off
Rambles	Speechifies	Very loud
Random facts	Squeaky	Whispers

## 12. Record name, level, and XP

Keep your name short and memorable. You begin at level 1 and with zero XP.

# MAGIC

## Generating spells

If a PC has spell slots, its player must generate spells to fill them. This is done during character creation and every morning in-game after the PC gets a full night of rest. Spells in spell slots cannot be removed except by casting them.

To generate a spell, the player first rolls 2d on the table below to find the spell formula. One die indicates the row, the other indicates the column.

	1-3	4-6
1	Physical Effect + Physical Form	Ethereal Element + Physical Form
2	Physical Effect + Ethereal Form	Ethereal Element + Ethereal Form
3	Ethereal Effect + Physical Form	Physical Effect + Physical Element
4	Ethereal Effect + Ethereal Form	Physical Effect + Ethereal Element
5	Physical Element + Physical Form	Ethereal Effect + Physical Element
6	Physical Element + Ethereal Form	Ethereal Effect + Ethereal Element

Once the player has found the spell formula, they roll on the two indicated magic tables to create the spell's name. The GM then tells the player the spell's general effects, based on its name. Offensive spells typically allow their targets a danger roll to resist or avoid the effects. If the spell includes damage, the GM can either set a flat damage rating, or rate the damage as a number of dice from 1 to 6.

Players may also suggest uses for the spell outside of the GM's description. If the suggested effect matches the spells name and the situation very closely, the GM should usually allow it.

The GM may also opt to roll random spells from spell lists written for other old-school games.

## Casting a spell

Casting a spell takes one action if cast during combat. The GM is the final arbiter of how the spell manifests and how it affects the current situation. After being cast, the spell is erased from the caster's spell slot and cannot be cast again.

## Physical Effects

Animating	Crushing	Fusing
Attracting	Diminishing	Grasping
Binding	Dividing	Hastening
Blossoming	Duplicating	Hindering
Consuming	Enveloping	Illuminating
Creeping	Expanding	Imprisoning
Levitating	Reflecting	Sealing
Opening	Regenerating	Shapeshifting
Petrifying	Rending	Shielding
Phasing	Repelling	Spawning
Piercing	Resurrecting	Transmuting
Pursuing	Screaming	Transporting

## Physical Elements

Acid	Clay	Glass
Amber	Crow	Honey
Bark	Crystal	Ice
Blood	Ember	Insect
Bone	Flesh	Wood
Brine	Fungus	Lava
Moss	Sand	Thorn
Obsidian	Sap	Vine
Oil	Serpent	Water
Poison	Slime	Wine
Rat	Stone	Wood
Salt	Tar	Worm

## Physical Forms

Altar	Chain	Elemental
Armor	Chariot	Eye
Arrow	Claw	Fountain
Beast	Cloak	Gate
Blade	Colossus	Golem
Cauldron	Crown	Hammer
Horn	Sentinel	Tentacle
Key	Servant	Throne
Mask	Shield	Torch
Monolith	Spear	Trap
Pit	Steed	Wall
Prison	Swarm	Web

## Ethereal Effects

Avenging	Compelling	Dispelling
Banishing	Concealing	Emboldening
Bewildering	Deafening	Encoding
Blinding	Deceiving	Energizing
Charming	Deciphering	Enlightening
Communicating	Disguising	Enraging
Excruiciating	Nullifying	Soothing
Foreseeing	Paralyzing	Summoning
Intoxicating	Revealing	Terrifying
Maddening	Revolting	Warding
Mesmerizing	Scrying	Wearing
Mindreading	Silencing	Withering

## Ethereal Elements

Ash	Ectoplasm	Light
Chaos	Fire	Lightning
Distortion	Fog	Memory
Dream	Ghost	Mind
Dust	Harmony	Mutation
Echo	Heat	Negation
Plague	Smoke	Thunder
Plasma	Snow	Time
Probability	Soul	Void
Rain	Star	Warp
Rot	Stasis	Whisper
Shadow	Steam	Wind

## Ethereal Forms

Aura	Bubble	Cone
Beacon	Call	Cube
Beam	Cascade	Dance
Blast	Circle	Disk
Blob	Cloud	Field
Bolt	Coil	Form
Gaze	Pyramid	Swarm
Loop	Ray	Torrent
Moment	Shard	Touch
Nexus	Sphere	Vortex
Portal	Spray	Wave
Pulse	Storm	Word

## Mutations

Use these results for magical curses, or spells that have gone wrong somehow.

Ages	<b>Animal</b> eyes	Cyclops
Attracts birds	<b>Animal</b> head	Extra arms
Child-form	<b>Animal</b> legs	Extra eyes
Corpulence	<b>Animal</b> mouth	Extra legs
Covered in hair	<b>Animal</b> skin	Forked tongue
<b>Animal</b> arms	<b>Animal</b> -form	Gender swap
Hunchback	<b>Monster Trait</b>	Shrinks
<b>Item</b> -form	No eyes	Shrivels
Long arms	No mouth	Skin boils
Lose all hair	<b>P. Element</b> -skin	Slime trail
Loses teeth	Second face	Translucent skin
<b>Monster Feature</b>	Sheds skin	Weeps blood

## Insanities

Results in quotation marks are things that are believed to be true by the insane character.

Always lies	Fears birds	Fears horses
Always polite	Fears blood	Fears iron
" <b>Animal</b> -form"	Fears books	Fears music
Cannot count	Fears darkness	Fears own hand
Cannot lie	Fears fire	Fears PC
Faceblind	Fears gold	Fears rain
Fears rivers	"Genius"	" <b>Mon. Feature</b> "
Fears silence	"Gorgeous"	" <b>Monster Trait</b> "
Fears sleep	Hates violence	Must sing
Fears sunlight	"Invisible"	New <b>Personality</b>
Fears the moon	"Invulnerable"	Says thoughts
Fears trees	" <b>Mon. Ability</b> "	Sees dead people

## Omens/Magical Catastrophes

All iron rusts	Dream plague	Fae return
Animals die	Endless night	Forest appears
Animals <b>mutate</b>	Endless rain	Forgetfulness
Birds attack	Endless storm	Graves open
City appears	Endless twilight	Lamentations
Deadly fog	Endless winter	Maggots
Mass <b>insanity</b>	Outsider enters	Shadows speak
Mass <b>mutation</b>	People shrink	Space distorts
Mass slumber	People vanish	Stones speak
Meteor strike	Plants wither	Total silence
Mirrors speak	Portal opens	Tower appears
No stars	Rifts open	Water to blood

# MONSTERS & ANIMALS

## Creating monsters

*Maze Rats* assumes a world where most of the NPCs are human or humanoid. Otherworldly, unnatural, or aberrant creatures should be kept to a minimum to increase their impact on the players and gameplay. They lurk in the dark, deserted places of the world, hiding from the light of civilization.

Monsters should also be surprising, unique, and present players with an interesting problem to solve: overcoming a foe whose true nature is unknown. As a result, monsters should be custom designed by the GM.

Creating a monster can be as simple as combining an animal with an **effect**, **element**, or **form** from the magic tables. However, if the GM desires additional detail, the monster tables to the right can be used to combine random animals, traits, abilities, features, tactics, weaknesses and personalities.

## Monster and NPC stats

**Health.** *Weak:* 1d. *Typical:* 2d. *Tough:* 3d. *Hulking:* 4d. *Colossal:* 6d.

**Armor.** *Unarmored:* 6 armor. *Light protection:* 7 armor. *Moderate protection:* 8 armor. *Heavy protection:* 9 armor. *Nigh impervious:* 10 armor. Note that armor can also be used to represent a monster's resistance to mundane weapons, or other factors that would make it difficult to harm.

**Attack Bonus.** *Untrained:* +0 AB. *Trained:* +1 AB. *Dangerous:* +2 AB. *Masterful:* +3 AB. *Lethal:* +4 AB.

**STR Bonus.** *Weak:* +0 STR. *Average:* +1 STR. *Strong:* +2 STR. *Powerful:* +3 STR. *Monstrous:* +4 STR.

**DEX Bonus.** *Slow:* +0 DEX. *Average:* +1 DEX. *Nimble:* +2 DEX. *Swift:* +3 DEX. *Blurred:* +4 DEX.

**WIL Bonus.** *Dimwitted:* +0 WIL. *Average:* +1 WIL. *Clever:* +2 WIL. *Brilliant:* +3 WIL. *Genius:* +4 WIL.

**Magic.** While some monsters may have spells and spell slots like a human, most are innately magical. These monsters do not follow the normal spellcasting rules, and may have abilities that are always active or that can simply be used at will.

## Monster Base

Roll once, or roll twice and combine the results.

1-2: Aerial | 3-4: Terrestrial | 5-6: Aquatic

### Aerial Animals

Albatross	Crane	Flamingo
Bat	Crow	Fly
Beetle	Dragonfly	Flying Squirrel
Bird of Paradise	Eagle	Goose
Butterfly	Falcon	Gull
Condor	Firefly	Hummingbird
Kingfisher	Moth	Rooster
Locust	Owl	Sparrow
Magpie	Parrot	Swan
Mantis	Peacock	Vulture
Mockingbird	Pelican	Wasp
Mosquito	Pteranodon	Woodpecker

### Terrestrial Animals

Ant	Caterpillar	Ferret
Ape	Centipede	Fox
Armadillo	Chameleon	Giraffe
Badger	Cockroach	Goat
Bear	Deer	Horse
Boar	Elephant	Human
Mole	Rat	Snake
Ostrich	Rhinoceros	Spider
Ox	Scorpion	Squirrel
Porcupine	Sheep	Tiger
Rabbit	Slug	Wolf
Raccoon	Snail	Wolverine

### Aquatic Animals

Alligator	Dolphin	Lobster
Amoeba	Eel	Manatee
Anglerfish	Frog	Manta Ray
Beaver	Hippopotamus	Muskrat
Clam	Jellyfish	Narwhal
Crab	Leech	Newt
Octopus	Sea Anemone	Squid
Otter	Sea Urchin	Swordfish
Penguin	Seahorse	Tadpole
Platyus	Seal	Turtle
Pufferfish	Shark	Walrus
Salamander	Shrimp	Whale

## Monster Features

Features can be used as loot. They can be crafted into items or sold to alchemists as ingredients for potions.

Antlers	Fangs	Legless
Beak	Fins	Long tongue
Carapace	Fur	Many-eyed
Claws	Gills	Many-limbed
Compound eyes	Hooves	Mucus
Eye Stalks	Horns	Pincers
Plates	Shell	Tail
Plumage	Spikes	Talons
Proboscis	Spinnerets	Tentacles
Scales	Spines	Trunk
Segments	Stinger	Tusks
Shaggy hair	Suction cups	Wings

## Monster Traits

Amphibious	Crystalline	Fearless
Bloated	Decaying	Fluffy
Brittle	<b>Ether. Element</b>	Fungal
Cannibal	Ethereal	Gelatinous
Clay-like	Ever-young	Geometric
Colossal	Eyeless	Hardened
Illusory	<b>Phys. Element</b>	Skeletal
Intelligent	Planar	Slimy
Iridescent	Reflective	Sticky
Luminous	Rubbery	Stinking
Many-headed	Shadowy	Tiny
Mechanical	Sharp	Translucent

## Monster Abilities

The GM should give the players clues about a monster's abilities to get them thinking about how to deal with it.

Absorbing	Duplicating	Gaze weapon
Acid blood	Electric	Hypnotizing
Anti-magic	Entangling	Impervious
Blinding	<b>Ethereal Effect</b>	Invisible
Breath weapon	Exploding	Life-draining
Camouflaging	Flying	Magnetic
Mimicking	Radioactive	Strangling
Mind-Reading	Reflective	Super-strength
Paralyzing	Regenerating	Telekinetic
Phasing	Shapeshifting	Teleporting
<b>Physical Effect</b>	Spell-casting	Vampiric
Poisonous	Stealthy	Wall-Crawling

## Monster Tactics

Ambush	Create barrier	Gang up
Call for support	Deceive	Gather strength
Capture	Demand duel	Go berserk
Charge	Disorient	Harry
Climb foes	Encircle	Hurl foes
Compel worship	Evade	Immobilize
Manipulate	Scatter foes	Target nearest
Mock	Stalk	Target richest
Monologue	Steal from	Target strongest
Order minion	Swarm	Target weakest
Protect leader	Target insolent	Toy with
Protect self	Target leader	Use terrain

## Monster Personality

Roll on this table or on the Personality table from the Characters page.

Alien	Devious	Fanatical
Aloof	Distractable	Forgetful
Bored	Educated	Generous
Cautious	Embittered	Hateful
Cowardly	Envious	Honorable
Curious	Erudite	Humble
Jaded	Meticulous	Psychopathic
Jovial	Mystical	Sophisticated
Legalistic	Obsessive	Touchy
Manipulative	Out of Touch	Unimpressed
Megalomaniac	Paranoid	Vain
Melancholy	Polite	Xenophobic

## Monster Weakness

Monsters do not have to have specific weaknesses, but it can be a good way to reward research and preparation.

Bells	Conversation	Heat
Birdsong	Deformity	Holy Icon
Children	Flattery	Holy Water
Cold	Flowers	Home Cooking
Cold Iron	Gifts	<b>Insanities</b>
Competition	Gold	Mirrors
Mistletoe	Puzzles	True Name
Moonlight	Riddles	<b>Val. Materials</b>
Music	Rituals	Weak Spot
<b>Methods</b>	Silver	<b>Weapon Items</b>
Phylactery	Sunlight	Wine
<b>Phys. Elements</b>	Tears	Wormwood

# CHARACTERS

## Civilized NPCs

Acolyte	Brewer	Courtier
Actor	Bureaucrat	Diplomat
Apothecary	Butcher	Fishmonger
Baker	Carpenter	Guard
Barber	Clockmaker	Haberdasher
Blacksmith	Courier	Innkeeper
Item-seller	Musician	Sculptor
Jeweler	Noble	Shipwright
Knight	Painter	Soldier
Locksmith	Priest	Tailor
Mason	Scholar	Taxidermist
Miller	Scribe	Wigmaker

## Underworld NPCs

Alchemist	Contortionist	Fence
Beggar-prince	Counterfeiter	Fortuneteller
Blackmailer	Cultist	Galley slave
Bounty-hunter	Cutpurse	Gambler
Chimney sweep	Debt-collector	Gravedigger
Coin-clipper	Deserter	Headman
Hedge knight	Peddler	Slave
Highwayman	Pit-fighter	Smuggler
Housebreaker	Poisoner	Street performer
Kidnapper	Rat-catcher	Tattooist
Mad prophet	Scrivener	Urchin
Mountebank	Sellsword	Usurer

## Wilderness NPCs

Apiarist	Explorer	Hermit
Bandit	Farmer	Hunter
Caravan Guard	Fisherman	Messenger
Caravaneer	Forager	Minstrel
Druid	Fugitive	Monk
Exile	Hedge wizard	Monster hunter
Outlander	Sage	Tinker
Tinker	Scavenger	Tomb raider
Pilgrim	Scout	Trader
Poacher	Shepherd	Trapper
Raider	Seer	Witch
Ranger	Surveyor	Woodcutter

## Female Names

Adelaide	Clover	Esme
Alma	Constance	Fern
Barsaba	Damaris	Hester
Beatrice	Daphne	Hippolyta
Bianca	Demona	Jessamine
Cleopha	Elsbeth	Jilly
Morgot	Pepper	Trillby
Minerva	Phoebe	Tuesday
Nerissa	Piety	Ursula
Odetta	Poppy	Vivian
Olga	Silence	Wendy
Orchid	Sybil	Zora

## Male Names

Balthazar	Destrian	Florian
Basil	Ellis	Fox
Bertram	Erasmus	Godwin
Blaxton	Faustus	Hannibal
Chadwick	Finn	Jasper
Clovis	Fitzhugh	Jiles
Jules	Oswald	Silas
Leopold	Percival	Stilton
Merrick	Peregrine	Stratford
Mortimer	Quentin	Tenpiece
Ogden	Redmaine	Waverly
Orion	Reinhold	Webster

## Upper Class Surnames

This table can also be used for upper-class first names, if you want them to sound extra snobby.

Belvedere	Dunlow	Gastrell
Bithesea	Edevane	Girdwood
Calaver	Erelong	Gorgon
Carvolo	Febland	Grimeson
De Rippe	Fernsby	Gruger
Droll	Fisk	Hitheryon
La Marque	Portendorfer	Stavish
Malmora	Romatet	Vandermeer
Miter	Rothery	Wellbelove
Oblington	Skorbeck	Westergren
Onymous	Slora	Wexley
Phillifent	Southwark	Wilberforce

## Lower Class Surnames

Barrow	Coffin	Gimble
Beetleman	Crumpling	Graveworm
Berrycloth	Culpepper	Greelish
Birdwhistle	Dankworth	Hardwick
Bobich	Digworthy	Hatman
Chips	Dreggs	Hovel
Knibbs	Rumbold	Slee
Midnighter	Rummage	Slitherly
Needle	Sallow	Stoker
Nethercoat	Saltmarsh	Tarwater
Pestle	Silverless	Tumbler
Relish	Skitter	Villin

## Assets

These are an NPC's strong points, attributes that make them a valuable ally.

Authority	Excellent liar	Gorgeous
Avoids detection	Extremely rich	Hears rumors
Calls in favors	<b>Faction</b> -leader	Huge family
Charming	<b>Faction</b> -member	Huge library
Cooks the books	Feared	Impersonator
Erases evidence	Fortified base	Interrogator
Knows a guy	Loyal henchmen	Pulls the strings
Knows a way in	Middling oracle	Secret lab
Launders money	Nothing to lose	Sells contraband
Learned	Owens the guards	Smuggles goods
Local celebrity	Powerful spouse	Spy network
Local knowledge	Procures gear	War hero

## Liabilities

These are an NPC's weak points, chinks in their armor that can be exploited to defeat them.

Addiction	Gambler	<b>Insanity</b>
Alcoholic	Glutton	Jealous
Corrupt ally	Greedy	Leaves evidence
Coward	Heretic	Many enemies
Decadent	Huge debts	Misinformed
Forbidden love	Imposter	Money trail
Narcissist	Protective	Temper
Needs medicine	Scandalous	Trusting
OCD	Softhearted	Vulnerable base
Paranoid	Strict routines	Wanted
Partyer	Superstitious	Weak-willed
Poor equipment	Suspicious	Widely despised

## NPC Goals

A better life	Enlightenment	Infamy
Acceptance	Fame	Infiltrate <b>faction</b>
Acquire <b>item</b>	Found <b>faction</b>	Justice
Craft <b>item</b>	Freedom	Kidnap <b>NPC</b>
Destroy <b>faction</b>	Glory	Lead <b>faction</b>
Destroy <b>item</b>	Impress <b>NPC</b>	Learning
Locate <b>NPC</b>	Resolve dispute	Serve evil
Love	Restore <b>faction</b>	Serve <b>faction</b>
Mastery	Reveal a secret	Serve ideology
Power	Revenge	Serve leader
Reach location	Sabotage <b>faction</b>	Serve the needy
Rescue <b>NPC</b>	Serve a deity	Wealth

## Misfortunes

Abandoned	Condemned	Discredited
Addicted	Crippled	Dismissed
Arrested	Cursed	Disowned
Blackmailed	Defrauded	Exiled
Burgled	Demoted	Famished
Challenged	Depressed	Forgotten
Framed	Mobbed	Replaced
Haunted	Mutilated	Robbed
Humiliated	Overworked	Sick
Impoverished	Poisoned	Sued
Kidnapped	Pursued	Suspected
Lost	Rejected	Transformed

## Missions

Use this table in combination with items, locations, NPCs, factions, and so on to generate missions for the PCs. You can also use it as a source of problems, rumors or nearby events to generate plot hooks.

Apprehend	Deface	Exfiltrate
Assassinate	Defraud	Extort
Blackmail	Deliver	Follow
Burgle	Destroy	Frame
Chart	Discredit	Impersonate
Convince	Escort	Impress
Infiltrate	Protect	Sabotage
Interrogate	Raid	Smuggle
Investigate	Replace	Surveil
Kidnap	Retrieve	Take Over
Locate	Rob	Terrorize
Plant	Ruin	Threaten

# CHARACTERS

## Methods

Alchemy	Charm	Eloquence
Blackmail	Commerce	Espionage
Bluster	Cronies	Fast-talking
Bribery	Debate	Favors
Bullying	Deceit	Hard Work
Bureaucracy	Deduction	Humor
Investigation	Negotiation	Rumors
Legal maneuvers	Persistence	Sabotage
Manipulation	Piety	Teamwork
Misdirection	Preparation	Theft
Money	Quick Wit	Threats
Nagging	Research	Violence

## Appearances

Aquiline	Bullnecked	Furrowed
Athletic	Chiseled	Gaunt
Barrel-chested	Coltish	Gorgeous
Boney	Corpulent	Grizzled
Brawny	Craggy	Haggard
Brutish	Delicate	Handsome
Hideous	Sinewy	Towering
Lanky	Slender	Trim
Pudgy	Slumped	Weathered
Ripped	Solid	Willowy
Rosy	Square-jawed	Wiry
Scrawny	Statuesque	Wrinkled

## Physical Details

Acid scars	Bronze skinned	Exotic accent
Battle scars	Burn scars	Flogging scars
Birthmark	Bushy eyebrows	Freckles
Braided hair	Curly hair	Gold tooth
Brand mark	Dark skinned	Hoarse voice
Broken nose	Dreadlocks	Huge beard
Long hair	Nine fingers	Sallow skin
Matted hair	Oiled hair	Shaved head
Missing ear	One-eyed	Sunburned
Missing teeth	Pale skinned	Tangled hair
Mustache	Piercings	Tattoos
Muttonchops	Ritual scars	Topknot

## Clothing

Antique	Decaying	Flamboyant
Battle-torn	Eccentric	Food-stained
Bedraggled	Elegant	Formal
Blood-stained	Embroidered	Frayed
Ceremonial	Exotic	Frumpy
Dated	Fashionable	Garish
Grimy	Oversized	Sigils
Haute couture	Patched	Singed
Lacey	Patterned	Tasteless
Livery	Perfumed	Undersized
Mud-stained	Practical	Wine-stained
Ostentatious	Rumpled	Worn out

## Personalities

Bitter	Cunning	Honor-bound
Brave	Driven	Hotheaded
Cautious	Entitled	Inquisitive
Chipper	Gregarious	Irascible
Contrary	Grumpy	Jolly
Cowardly	Heartless	Know-it-all
Lazy	Righteous	Spacey
Loyal	Rude	Stoic
Menacing	Sarcastic	Stubborn
Mopey	Savage	Stuck-up
Nervous	Scheming	Suspicious
Protective	Serene	Wisecracking

## Mannerisms

Anecdotes	Drawl	Interrupts
Breathy	Enunciates	Laconic
Chuckles	Flowery speech	Laughs
Clipped	Gravelly voice	Long pauses
Cryptic	Highly formal	Melodious
Deep voice	Hypnotic	Monotone
Mumbles	Rapid-fire	Street slang
Narrates	Rhyming	Stutters
Overly casual	Robotic	Talks to self
Quaint sayings	Slow speech	Trails off
Rambles	Speechifies	Very loud
Random facts	Squeaky	Whispers

## Secrets

Addicted	Cultist	Ghost
Artificial	Demigod	Has a child
Assassin	Evil lineage	Heretic
Bankrupt	Exile	High born
Beholden	Fence	Huge fortune
Counterspy	Fugitive	Illusion
Insurrectionist	Non-human	Serial killer
Low born	<b>NPC</b>	Smuggler
Married	Polygamist	Spy
Mind-controlled	Protects relic	Time traveler
<b>Misfortune</b>	Scandalous birth	Transformed
Monster hunter	Secret police	War criminal

## Reputations

*Reputations are not necessarily true. They are just how the local community perceives the character.*

Ambitious	Cheat	Honest
Authoritative	Dangerous	Hypochondriac
Boor	Entertainer	Idiot
Borrower	Gossip	Influential
Celebrity	Hardworking	Layabout
Charitable	Holy	Leader
Misanthrope	Partier	Riffraff
Miser	Pious	Scandalous
Neighborly	Proper	Slime ball
Nutjob	Prophet of doom	Terrifying
Obnoxious	Repulsive	Weirdo
Overeducated	Respected	Wise

## Hobbies

Archaeology	Collecting cats	Falconry
Art collecting	Cuisine	Fashion
Bad fiction	Dark lore	Fishing
Calligraphy	Dog breeding	Foreign cultures
Card games	Embroidery	Gardening
Clockwork	Exercise	History
Horseracing	Opera	Sculpture
Hunting	Painting	Sketching
Instrument	Poetry	Smoking
Knitting	Puzzle-solving	Theater
Lawn games	Riddling	Weaving
Mountaineering	Science	Whiskey

## Relationships

Adviser	Client	Idol
Blackmailer	Confidant	Informant
Business partner	Debtor	Master
Business rival	Disciple	Mentor
Buyer	Guardian	Nemesis
Captor	Henchman	Offspring
Parent	Right hand	Stalker
Patron	Romantic rival	Suitor
Political rival	Servant	Supplicant
Prisoner	Sibling	Supplier
Protégé	Social rival	Sweetheart
Quarry	Spouse	Unrequited love

## Divine Domains

*Use this table to generate divinities in your setting, or as a way to align NPCs with universal forces.*

<b>Animal</b>	Cycles	Judgement
Balance	Death	Love
Betrayal	Destiny	Memory
Chance	Dreams	Monsters
Chaos	<b>Element</b>	Moon
Conquest	Gateways	Motherhood
<b>NPC</b>	Schemes	The Sea
Oaths	Secrets	The Wild
Order	Storms	Time
Plague	Summer	Underworld
Purification	Sun	Wealth
Reason	The Forge	Winter

## After the Party

*After a long night of celebration, roll a random result if the PC fails a WIL danger roll.*

Absurd boasts	Elected to office	Inconvenient pet
Adopted a child	Given a quest	Insulted a noble
Awarded medal	Got married	Insulted <b>Faction</b>
Bought the inn	In a coffin	Joined a cult
Cursed	In love	Letter of thanks
Duel scheduled	In the stocks	Lost
Lost at gambling	Robbed	Spilled secrets
Lost reputation	Roof on fire	Started a cult
New identity	Shanghaied	Swindled
New tattoo	Sick	Thrown in jail
Poisoned	Signed contract	Unruly mob
Recruited	Someone died	Wrong clothes

# TREASURE & EQUIPMENT

Use the list of gold prices below as a guideline. Players may have to haggle for actual prices.

**Light weapons:** 1 hand (20g)

**Heavy weapons:** +1 damage, 2 hands. (40g)

**Ranged weapons:** 2 hands. (20-40g)

**Shield:** One handed, +1 armor (10g)

**Light Armor:** +1 armor. (100g)

**Heavy Armor:** +2 armor, no advantage on DEX danger rolls or surprise attack rolls. (400g)

**Common Items:** Rope, candles, etc. (1-5g)

**Specialized Items:** Bear trap, key, etc. (5-20g)

**Luxury Items:** Book, mirror, potion etc. (20-100g)

**Animals:** Mule (20g), Horse (100g), Dog (5g), Bloodhound (100g), Chicken (5g), Trained falcon (1,000g).

**Transport:** Cart (30g), Wagon (100g), Coach (250g). Rowboat (50g), Fishing boat (500g), Caravel (5,000g), Warship (10,000g).

**Property:** Small House (1,000g), Tavern (2,000g), Guildhall (5,000g), Manor (10,000g) Fortified Outpost (25,000g), Estate (50,000g), Castle (200,000g)

**Hirelings (all prices are per day):** Servant (1-5g), Torchbearer (5-10g) Guide (10-20g) Sellsword (20-50g) Specialist (50-100g) Magician (100-200g)

## Miscellaneous Items

Players may find miscellaneous items when they loot dead bodies or pick someone's pocket.

Bowl	Drawing	Handkerchief
Brass bell	Foreign coin	Hinged box
Brooch	Game piece	Hourglass
Carved figurine	Glass eye	Human tooth
Cup	Glass jar	Hunting horn
Deck of cards	Hair comb	Loaded dice
Long fork	Purse	Sewing needle
Numbered key	Quill pen	Shaving razor
Oil lamp	Salve	Silver button
Old doll	Scissors	Skull
Paint pot	Scroll	Tobacco pipe
Pencil	Sealed letter	Wine bottle

## Worn Items

Belt	Cincture	Gauntlets
Blouse	Cloak	Glove
Boots	Coat	Gown
Bracelet	Dress	Hat
Breastplate	Earing	Helmet
Brigandine	Eyepatch	Hose
Leather armor	Plate mail	Shoes
Locket	Ring	Skirt
Mail Shirt	Robe	Slippers
Mask	Sandals	Socks
Necklace	Scarf	Trousers
Padded armor	Shirt	Veil

## Weapon Items

Arming sword	Crossbow	Halberd
Backsword	Cutlass	Hammer
Battleaxe	Dagger	Hatchet
Blowpipe	Flail	Horsebow
Claymore	Flanged mace	Hunting knife
Club	Glaive	Lance
Longbow	Scimitar	Stake
Longsword	Shortbow	Stiletto
Mace	Sickle	Throwing axe
Maul	Sling	Warhammer
Morningstar	Spear	Warpick
Pike	Staff	Whip

## Book Subjects

When a PC finds a useful book, roll 1d. The result is the number of questions the book can answer.

Alchemy	Cookbook	Hagiography
Art	Criminals	History
Astrology	Divination	Journal
Blackmail	Etiquette	Language
Charts & maps	Fashion	Laws
Conspiracies	Genealogy	Letters
Lost empires	Oratory	Sword fighting
Lost places	Propaganda	Theology
Love poems	Prophecies	Treasures
Monsters	Siegecraft	War chronicle
Mythology	Songs	Who's who
Odd customs	State secrets	Witch-hunting

## Tool Items

Acid flask	Crowbar	Grappling hook
Bear trap	Door ram	Grease
Bellows	Ear trumpet	Hacksaw
Bolt-cutters	Fire oil	Hammer
Chain	Fishing hook	Hand drill
Chisel	Goggles	Lantern
Lens	Needle	Rope
Lock/key	Pickaxe	Scissors
Lockpicks	Pitchfork	Shovel
Manacles	Pliers	Spikes
Metal file	Pole	Steel wire
Mortar/pestle	Pulleys	Tongs

## Potions

Figuring out what a potion does may require experimentation. Potions that have gone bad or prepared incorrectly may cause **mutations** or **insanities**.

<b>Animal-form</b>	Detect evil	Extra arm
Body swap	Detect gold	Flight
Camouflage	Detect hidden	Ghost-speech
Control animals	Direction sense	Heat vision
Control <b>element</b>	<b>Element-form</b>	<b>Insanity</b>
Cure affliction	<b>Element-skin</b>	Invulnerable

<b>Item-form</b>	<b>Mutation</b>	Super-jump
Magic immunity	Night vision	Super-strength
Mirror image	Random <b>spell</b>	Telekinesis
<b>Monster Ability</b>	Restore health	Tongues
<b>Monster Feature</b>	Speed	Water-breathing
<b>Monster Trait</b>	Stretchy	Water-walking

## Magical Ingredients

Use these ingredients for potion or poison making.

Ancient liquor	Coffin nail	Killer's hand
<b>Animal</b>	Corpse's hair	King's tooth
Blind eye	Crossroad dust	Last breath
Boiled cat	Cultist entrails	Liar's tongue
<b>Book page</b>	<b>Edible Plant</b>	Lightning bolt
Bottled fog	Exotic spice	Lodestone
Monk's vow	<b>Potion</b>	Thief's finger
<b>Monster Feature</b>	Pyre ember	Tomb flower
Newborn's cry	Queen bee	<b>Val. Material</b>
Oil portrait	Queen's blood	Wedding ring
<b>Phys. Element</b>	Ship's barnacle	Widow's tears
<b>Poisonous Plant</b>	Star-metal	Wizard skull

## Treasure Items

Alchemy recipe	Compass	Fine china
Amulet	Contract	Fine liquor
Astrolabe	Crown	Instrument
Blueprints	Crystal	Magical book
Calligraphy	Deed	Microscope
Carpet	Embroidery	Music box
Orrery	Royal robes	Silverware
Painting	Saint's relic	Spices
Perfume	Scrimshaw	Spyglass
Prayer book	Sextant	Tapestry
Printing block	Sheet music	Telescope
Rare textile	Signet ring	Treasure map

## Treasure Traits

Altered	Cultural value	<b>Element</b>
Ancient	Cursed	Embellished
Blessed	Damaged	Encoded
Bulky	Disguised	Exotic
Compact	Draws enemies	Extra-planar
Consumable	<b>Effect</b>	Famous
Forbidden	Intelligent	Political value
Fragile	Masterwork	Religious value
Heavy	Military value	Repaired
Immovable	Non-human	Royal
Impracticable	Owned	Toxic
Indestructible	Partial	Vile

## Valuable Materials

Alabaster	Bloodstone	Ebony
Amber	Bone China	Emerald
Aquamarine	Chalcedony	Fire Agate
Azurite	Cinnabar	Garnet
Beryl	Coral	Gold
Black Pearl	Diamond	Ivory
Jade	Onyx	Sapphire
Jasper	Opal	Serpentine
Jet	Pearl	Silver
Lapis Lazuli	Platinum	Star Iron
Malachite	Porcelain	Topaz
Moonstone	Ruby	Turquoise

# THE CITY

## City Themes

Animal	City Activity	Faction
Aristocracy	<b>City Event</b>	Festivals
Art	Crime families	Feuds
Bureaucracy	Cruelty	Intrigue
Castes	<b>District Theme</b>	<b>Low Cl. Building</b>
Catacombs	<b>Divine Domain</b>	Martial law
Meritocracy	Plutocracy	Thievery
<b>NPC</b>	Poverty	Trade
Opulence	Rituals	Tyranny
<b>Phys. Element</b>	Slavery	<b>Up. Cl. Building</b>
Pilgrimages	Spices	Wizardry
Piracy	Theocracy	Xenophobia

## City Events

Assassination	Curfew	Flood
Carnival	Discovery	Heavy fog
Conscription	Earthquake	Heavy taxes
Coronation	<b>Faction war</b>	Holy day
Coup	Fashion trend	Hysteria
Cult activity	Fire	Inquisition
Insurrection	Plague	Roundup
Invasion	Proclamation	Scandal
Jailbreak	Prohibition	Serial killer
Mass eviction	Public games	Shortage
Mass pardon	Refugees	Tournament
Negotiations	Rioting	Trial

## District Themes

Catacombs	Dining	Government
<b>Civilized NPCs</b>	Education	Graveyards
Construction	Entertainment	Green space
Crafts	Finance	Industrialization
Criminality	Foreigners	Judgement
Culture	Ghettos	Livestock
<b>Low Cl. Building</b>	Poverty	<b>Under. NPCs</b>
Marketplace	Punishment	<b>Up. Cl. Building</b>
Memorials	Religion	Vices
Military	Science	<b>Wild. NPCs</b>
Opulence	Trade	Wizardry
Pollution	Trash	Wonders

## Upper Class Buildings

Academy	Bookseller	Gallery
Alchemist	Castle	Garden
Archive	Clockmaker	Haberdashery
Art dealer	Clothier	Jeweler
Barber	Courthouse	Law office
Bookbinder	Furrier	Locksmith
Lounge	Physician	Taxidermist
Manor	Printer	Temple
Museum	Public baths	Tobacconist
Observatory	Restaurant	Townhouse
Opera house	Salon	Winery
Park	Stables	Zoo

## Lower Class Buildings

Apothecary	Catacombs	Forge
Asylum	Cheesemaker	Fortuneteller
Baker	Criminal den	Gambling hall
Brewery	Curiosity shop	Leatherworks
Butcher	Dock	Marketplace
Candlemaker	Fighting pit	Mason
Mill	Shipyards	Theater
Moneylender	Shrine	Veterinarian
Orphanage	Stockyard	Warehouse
Outfitter	Stonecarver	Watchtower
Prison	Tattooist	Weaver
Sewers	Tavern	Workshop

## City Activities

Use this table as inspiration when creating your random encounter table for each city district.

Abduct	Construct	Extinguish
Beg	Cook	Extort
Brawl	Dance	Follow
Burgle	Duel	Gamble
Celebrate	<b>Dun. Activity</b>	Haul
Chase	Execute	Interrogate
Marry	Play	Repair
<b>Mission</b>	Preach	Riot
Mourn	Process	Rob
Party	Proclaim	Search
Patrol	Protest	Sell
Perform	Release	<b>Wild. Activity</b>

## Building Rooms

Arboretum	Bed chamber	<b>Dungeon Room</b>
Atrium	Cabinet	Garden
Attic	Chapel	Garret
Aviary	Cloakroom	Greenhouse
Ballroom	Dining room	Junk room
Baths	Dressing room	Kitchen
Larder	Pantry	Smoking room
Library	Parlor	Spicery
Map room	Privy	Still room
Menagerie	Root cellar	Study
Mews	Saucery	Trophy room
Nursery	Scullery	Wardrobe

## Tactical Street Features

Combine this table with **City Activities** to add tactical elements to street combat and encounters.

Arcade	Carriages	Dead end
Awnings	Catwalks	Dense fog
Balconies	<b>City Activity</b>	Downpour
Barricades	Climbable walls	<b>Dun. Activity</b>
Bridge	Clotheslines	Flooding
Canal	Crowd	Food stalls
Fountain	Roof access	Steep streets
Gates	Roof gardens	Steps
Ladders	Sewer access	Torn up street
Livestock	Sinkhole	Vermin swarms
Muddy	Slick	Well
Overgrown	Steep roofs	<b>Wild. Activity</b>

## Tactical Building Features

Use this table to add challenges, access points, and other useful features to missions involving building interiors.

<b>Animal nests</b>	Cabinets	Echoing marble
Balconies	Carpeted floors	Hanging chains
Basement access	Chandeliers	Huge fireplace
Brightly lit	Crawlspaces	Narrow ledges
Broken furniture	Drain pipes	Open windows
Broken glass	Dumbwaiters	Ornate weapons
Overgrown	Rotting walls	Spyholes
Patrols	Screens	Staircases
Piles of trash	Servant passages	Tall bookshelves
Pillars	Sewer access	Unlit
Rotting ceiling	Shadowy alcoves	Watchdogs
Rotting floors	Skylights	Window drapes

## Factions

Art movement	Craft guild	Gourmand club
Beggar's guild	Crime family	Heist crew
Black market	Crime ring	Heretical sect
Brotherhood	Dark cult	High council
City guard	Explorer's club	Hired killers
Conspiracy	Free company	Local militia
National church	Religious sect	Spy network
Noble house	Resistance	Street artists
Outlander clan	Royal army	Street gang
Outlaw gang	Royal house	Street musicians
Political party	Scholar's circle	Theater troupe
Religious order	Secret society	Trade company

## Faction Traits

Bankrupt	Decadent	Esoteric
Bureaucratic	Decaying	Expanding
Charitable	Delusional	Hunted
Confused	Divided	Incompetent
Connected	Dwindling	Incorruptible
Corrupt	Efficient	Insane
Insular	Righteous	Thriving
Manipulative	Ruthless	Unpopular
Martial	Secret	Up-and-coming
<b>Personality</b>	Subversive	Wealthy
Pious	Suppressed	Well-prepared
Popular	Threatened	Xenophobic

## Faction Goals

Advise leader	Control politics	Destroy artifacts
Avoid detection	Create artifact	Destroy being
Awaken being	Create <b>monster</b>	Destroy villain
Collect artifacts	Defeat <b>faction</b>	Enforce law
Construct base	Defend borders	Enrich members
Control <b>faction</b>	Defend leader	Entertain
Exchange goods	Preserve lineage	Sell services
Hear rumors	Preserve lore	Share knowledge
Indulge tastes	Produce goods	Spread beliefs
Infiltrate <b>faction</b>	Promote arts	Summon evil
Map the wild	Promote craft	Survive
Overthrow order	Purge traitors	Transport goods

# THE WILD

## Wilderness Regions

Ashy	Dry lands	Forest
Badlands	Dune sea	Glaciers
Bay	Dust bowl	Heath
Beach	Fjords	Highlands
Delta	Flood lands	Hills
Desert	Foothills	Ice fields
Jungle	Plains	Taiga
Lowlands	Rainforest	Thickets
Mesas	Riverlands	Tundra
Moor	Salt Pan	Volcanic plain
Mountains	Savanna	Wetlands
Petrified forest	Steppe	Woodlands

## Wilderness Landmarks

Bog	Crater	Grove
Boulder field	Creek	Hill
Butte	Crossing	Hollow
Cave	Ditch	Hot springs
Cliff	Field	Lair
Crag	Forest	Lake
Lakebed	Pond	Rockslide
Marsh	Rapids	Spring
Mesa	Ravine	Swamp
Moor	Ridge	Thickets
Pass	Rise	Valley
Pit	River	Waterfall

## Wilderness Structures

Altar	Cairn	Ford
Aqueduct	Crossroads	Fortress
Bandit's camp	Crypt	Gallows
Battlefield	Dam	Graveyard
Bonfire	Dungeon	Hedge
Bridge	Farm	Hunter's camp
Inn	Outpost	Standing stone
Lumber camp	Pasture	Temple
Mine	Ruin	Village
Monastery	Seclusion	Wall
Monument	Shack	Watchtower
Orchard	Shrine	Waystone

## Wilderness Region Traits

Combine with **Wilderness Regions**.

Ashen	Creeping	Frozen
Blasted	Desolate	Haunted
Blighted	<b>Dungeon Trait</b>	Howling
Broken	Eternal	Jagged
Consuming	<b>Ethereal Effect</b>	Lonely
Corrupted	Forsaken	Misty
Perilous	Shifting	Thorny
Petrified	Shivering	Thundering
Phantasmal	Sinister	Torrential
Ravenous	Sinking	<b>Physical Effect</b>
Savage	Smoldering	Wandering
Shadowy	Sweltering	Withered

## Wilderness Discoveries

Blood stains	Cut ropes	<b>Item</b>
Bones	Dead animal	Lost <b>NPC</b>
Broken weapons	<b>Dun. Activity</b>	Magical effect
Burrow	Food scraps	Map
<b>City Activity</b>	Grave marker	Message
<b>Civilized NPC</b>	Human corpse	Migration
<b>Mutation</b>	Stunned <b>NPC</b>	<b>Under. NPC</b>
Nest	Supplies	<b>Wild. Activity</b>
Portal	Torn flag	<b>Wild. Landmark</b>
Resources	Tracks	<b>Wild. Structure</b>
Rift	Trap	<b>Wilderness NPC</b>
Strange plant	Treasure cache	Wizard fight

## Wilderness Activities

Use this table as inspiration when creating your random encounter table for the current wilderness region.

Ambush	<b>City Activity</b>	Eat
Argue	Convene	Excavate
Birth	Demolish	Feast
Build	Die	Felling
Bury	Duel	Fish
Capture	<b>Dun. Activity</b>	Flee
Forage	Sacrifice	Sleep
Hunt	Scout	Swim
March	Sing	Track
Raid	Skin	Trap
Rescue	Skirmish	Wander
Rest	Slay	Worship

## Wilderness Hazards

Use this table to create your own personalized table that fits the type of terrain the PCs are in.

Avalanche	Downpour	Forest fire
Blizzard	Drizzle	Hail
Brushfire	Dust storm	Heat wave
Cloudburst	Earthquake	Hurricane
Cyclone	Eruption	Ice storm
Dense fog	Flooding	Light mist
Locust swarm	Predator	Snow
Magma flow	Quicksand	Stampede
Meteor strike	Rain of frogs	Thunderstorm
Monsoon	Rockslide	Tsunami
Mudflow	Sandstorm	Whirlpool
Mudslide	Sleet	Windstorm

## Edible Plants

Use this table and the **Poisonous Plants** table when PCs forage for food in the wild.

Acorns	Cattail	Dead-nettle
Apples	Cherries	Elderberries
Asparagus	Chickweed	Fireweed
Blackberries	Chicory	Gooseberries
Blueberries	Clover	Hazelnuts
Carrots	Dandelion	Henbit
Hickory nuts	Mushrooms	Strawberries
Honeysuckle	Mustard	Walnuts
Leeks	Onion	Watercress
Milk thistle	Pecans	Wild garlic
Mint	Persimmons	Wild grapes
Mulberries	Raspberries	Wood sorrel

## Poisonous Plants

Angel's Trumpet	Cocklebur	Hemlock
Baneberry	Columbine	Hogweed
Belladonna	Crowncup	Holly
Black Truffle	Death Cap	Horse Chestnut
Bleeding Heart	Dumbcane	Hyacinth
Celandine	Foxglove	Ivy
Jessamine	Moonflower	Spindle
Kudu	Nightshade	Stinkhorn
Larkspur	Oleander	Waxcap
Mandrake	Ragwort	Wine-Cap
Mangrove	Reindeer Lichen	Wolfsbane
Mistletoe	Snakeweed	Wormwood

## Inn Adjectives

Combine an Inn Adjective and an Inn Noun, or just two Inn Nouns to create an inn name. For example, the *Ghostly Griffin* or the *Axe & Fork*.

Bellowing	Cunning	Ghostly
Blazing	Copper	Golden
Bleak	Dancing	Helpful
Blessed	Dead	Hideous
Bloody	Drunken	Howling
Crimson	Flying	Hungry
Moldy	Romantic	Smoking
Muttering	Salty	Thirsty
Nimble	Singing	Wicked
Oozing	Shivering	Tipsy
Petrified	Shrieking	Whistling
Prancing	Silver	Wanton

## Inn Nouns

Axe	Bucket	Elephant
Barrel	Candle	Flea
Bear	Cock	Fork
Bell	Cow	Giant
Boot	Dragon	Griffin
Bowl	Egg	Hart
Hog	Monk	Spoon
Hound	Moon	Star
Lamb	Pipe	Swan
Lion	Prince	Sword
Mackerel	Rat	Whale
Maid	Skull	Wife

## Inn Quirks

100 years in past	Brand new	<b>Dungeon Form</b>
Always night	Cannibals	Expensive
Animal fights	<b>City Activity</b>	<b>Faction</b> hangout
Bard duels	Constant party	<b>Faction Traits</b>
Bigger inside	Dancing contest	Famous chef
Black market	Dead drop	Fey patrons
Fight club	Magic sword	Staff are kids
Five floors	Magically moves	Talking painting
Ghost staff	Mercs for hire	Underground
Haunted	<b>NPC</b> hangout	VIP lounge
Hideout	Preaching	Voice in well
<b>Inn/Building</b>	Secure storage	Women only

# THE MAZE

## Dungeon Entrances

All libraries	Cupboard	Giant book
Beaver dam	Dolmen shadow	Gypsy wagon
Behind waterfall	Down a well	Hollow tree
Chalk rectangle	Fiery pit	Huge keyhole
Chest bottom	Fog road	Iron maiden
Chimney	Forest spring	Living tattoo
Magic painting	Narrow alley	Tree roots
Man-shape hole	Rain door	Under the bed
Maze potion	Sewer grate	Unfolded map
Mirror	Sudden rift	Up a tree
Monster mouth	Tidal cave	Whirlpool
Monster wound	Tower top	Wine barrel

## Dungeon Forms

Arena	<b>Building Room</b>	Forge
Asylum	Casino	Garden
Aviary	Catacombs	Hideout
Bank	Cave	Hotel
Baths	Court	<b>L. Cl. Building</b>
Body	<b>Dungeon Room</b>	Laboratory
Library	Orphanage	Temple
Market	Palace	Theater
Mine	Prison	<b>U. Cl. Building</b>
Monastery	Sewer	University
Museum	Ship	Vault
Nursery	Slave pit	Zoo

## Dungeon Layout

Ant colony	Galleria	Intertwined
Central hub	Geometric	Isolated wings
Claustrophobic	Gonzo	Layered
Crisscrossing	Haphazard	Linear
Curved	Highly regular	Loops
Disorienting	Honeycomb	Many corridors
Mazes	Organic	Symbol shape
Mix of layouts	Oversized	Tall and narrow
Multiple hubs	Recursive	Themed zones
No corridors	Repetitive	Vertical
Open plan	Sprawling	Winding
Open voids	Suspended	Ziggurat

## Dungeon Ruinations

Arcane disaster	Curse	Explosion
Army invasion	Degeneration	Famine
Cannibalism	Earthquake	Fire
Civil war	Eruption	Flooding
Collapse	Evil unearthed	Fungus
Crystal growth	Experiments	Haunting
Ice	<b>Mutation</b>	Poison gas
<b>Insanity</b>	Outsider attack	Resources gone
Lava flow	Overgrowth	Revolt
Magical sleep	Petrification	Risen dead
Melted	Plague	Too many traps
Monster attack	Planar overlay	War

## Dungeon Rewards

*Not all dungeons have to have rewards, but they provide a good motivation for players to explore.*

Ancient lore	Enemy weakness	Instructions
Animal ally	Faction ally	Jewels
Army	Forewarning	Key
Blessing	Guide	Lost formula
Blueprints	Holy relic	Machine
Cultural artifact	Influential ally	<b>Magic item</b>
Magical ally	Piles of loot	Transport
Map	Planar portal	<b>Treasure Item</b>
Marital ally	Prophecy	Uncovered plot
Masterpiece	Renown	<b>Val. Material</b>
<b>Monster</b> ally	Spell	Vision
Oracle	Transformation	Weapon

## Dungeon Activities

*Use this table as inspiration when creating your random encounter table for the dungeon.*

Besiege	Deliver	Hide
Capture	Demolish	Hunt
<b>City Activity</b>	Escape	Loot
Collect	Feed	Map
Construct	Fortify	Mine
Control	Guard	<b>Monster Tactic</b>
Negotiate	Repair	Seize
Patrol	Rescue	Tunnel
Perform ritual	Research	Unearth
Purge	Revive	Vandalize
Question	Riddle	<b>Wild. Activity</b>
Raid	Scavenge	Worship

## Dungeon Rooms

Armory	Chasm	Fountain
Banquet hall	Courtyard	Gate house
Barracks	Crypt	Guard room
<b>Building Room</b>	Dormitory	Kennel
Catacombs	Fighting pit	<b>L. Cl. Building</b>
Cavern	Forge	Laboratory
Mess hall	Record room	Torture room
Mine shaft	Shrine	Treasury
Museum	Slaughterhouse	<b>U. Cl. Building</b>
Oubliette	Stables	Vault
Pool	Storeroom	Well
Prison	Throne room	Workshop

## Dungeon Room Details

Bas-relief	Corpses	Fading murals
Blood trail	Cracked beams	Faint breeze
Bones	Crumbling walls	Faint footsteps
Chains	Decaying food	Fallen pillars
Chalk marks	Decaying nest	Fungus
Claw marks	Dripping water	Furniture
Graffiti	Slime trails	Torn clothes
Mosaics	Spider webs	Tree roots
Recent repairs	Stalactites	Unusual smell
Rotting books	Stench	Vibrations
Rubble	Smoke stains	Vines
Shed skin	Thick dust	Whispers

## Dungeon Tricks

*Tricks are weird effects, puzzles or challenges tied to a dungeon area. They may be dangerous, amusing or anything in between. Use the categories below as inspiration.*

Absorption	Consumption	Exchange
Activation	Creation	Imprisonment
Animation	Curses	Instructions
Blessings	Deception	Interrogation
Communication	Duplication	Mind-control
Confusion	<b>Ethereal Effect</b>	<b>Mission</b>
Mood-alteration	Release	Theft
Nullification	Reversal	Time-alteration
<b>Physical Effect</b>	Rotation	Transformation
Planeshift	Scrying	Transmutation
Protection	Size-alteration	Transportation
Rejuvenation	Summoning	Wonder

## Dungeon Hazards

Acid drip	Deafening noise	Geysers
Bloodsuckers	Dense fog	Magma
Cave-in	Ensnaing vines	Magnetic field
Choking dust	Fallen floor	Mud flow
Crude oil	Flooding	Narrow ledge
Crystal shards	Freezing	Narrow passage
Poison goo	Rotten ceiling	Steam vents
Poison plants	Rotten floor	Strong winds
Precipice	Sinkhole	Tar pit
Quicksand	Slippery slope	Tight passage
Radiation	Spider webs	Toppling object
Rockslide	Spores	Toxic fumes

## Trap Effects

*A good trap should either already be active or should have a fairly obvious trigger. The challenge should come from avoiding the trap's effects, avoiding the trigger, or finding a way to deactivate it.*

Acid pool	Blunt pendulum	Falling cage
Adhesive	Boiling tar	Falling ceiling
Alarm	Collapsing floor	Fills with sand
Armor melts	Crocodile pit	Flooding
Bear trap	Crushing walls	Giant magnet
Blinding spray	Deep pit	Hard vacuum
Lava flow	Pendulum blade	Room freezes
Lightning	Poison gas	Room on fire
Living statues	Poison needle	Sleeping gas
Missile fire	Quicksand	Spiked pit
<b>Monster freed</b>	Rage gas	Tombs open
Net trap	Rolling boulder	Wall spikes

## Trap Triggers

Blow	Drain	Magic
Break	Eat	Melody
Burn	Insert	Noise
Choice	Kill	Open
Countdown	Knock	Phrase
Darkness	Light	Pour
Press	Remove	Slide
Proximity	Retrieve	Touch
Pull	Rudeness	Turn
Read	Shut	Unbalance
Reflect	Sit	Unearth
Release	Sleep	Write

# GAMEMASTER'S GUIDE

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## SAMPLE GAME

**GM:** You are awakened to the sound of breaking glass. Everything is still in the common room of the Sow & Spoon, but you can barely make out some whispering coming from the inn's kitchen.

**Sybil:** I look over at Jasper and motion towards the kitchen. Then I begin creeping in that direction, taking care to avoid the other sleeping patrons.

**Jasper:** I follow her.

**GM:** Sybil, make a DEX danger roll to stay undetected.

**Sybil:** I have the Shadowjack path, so I get advantage on this. [Rolls dice] A 2, 4, and 5. I take the 4 and 5 and add +2 from my DEX. 11! I succeed.

**GM:** Since Jasper is following right behind you and taking your lead, I'll rule that he stays silent as well.

**Jasper:** Ok, good. What do we see in the kitchen?

**GM:** Peeking around the corner, you see the innkeeper you met last night, Silas. He's asleep on the floor with a bottle of wine.

**Jasper:** I whisper, "Silas!" And shake him.

**GM:** He starts awake. "Huhh! Whah? What's going on?" I'll make a reaction roll. 2. He's wary of you guys and will need motivation before he helps you.

**Sybil:** "Silas, we heard a window breaking! I think someone's trying to burgle the inn!"

**GM:** Yeah, that's more than enough for him. He's sticking with you now, holding the wine bottle. You hear more whispering from the back storeroom.

**Jasper:** Let's sneak back there. DEX roll again?

**GM:** No, you did well on the first one, so I'll let that ride until something changes. Peeking into the storeroom, you see that the small window at the top has been broken. A cloaked man is standing in the room, helping another man climb down through the window.

**Sybil:** Let's take them by surprise! I rush forward to slash at the thief with my short sword.

**GM:** You've definitely taken him by surprise, so we don't need to roll initiative. You also have advantage on your attack rolls.

**Sybil:** [Rolls dice] 1, 1, and 5. Using the 1 and 5, and adding my +1 attack bonus, my total is 7.

**GM:** His armor rating is 6, so that deals 1 damage to him. He spins around, and his companion slips and falls into the storeroom on his back. Jasper?

**Jasper:** I want to cast my spell, *Blinding Beacon*.

**GM:** A prism of light crackles into being above your hand, then explodes in a flash directed at the thieves. They'll have to make WIL saves to avoid being blinded. [Rolls dice] And...the one that fell down failed. He's blinded. Erase the spell from your sheet, Jasper. Now the innkeeper attacks, [rolls dice] but he misses, shattering his bottle on the wall. It's the thieves' turn.

The blinded thief is terrified, so he has to make a WIL danger roll to see if his morale breaks. [Rolls dice] 2 and a 4, +1 WIL...he fails. He can't flee because he's blinded, so he just throws down his knife and begs for mercy. His partner tries to attack you with his longsword, Sybil. [Rolls dice] 11 total. What's your armor?

**Sybil:** I have light armor and a shield, so 8.

**GM:** You take 3 damage, +1 because he was using a heavy weapon, so 4 total.

**Sybil:** My health isn't that great, so I want to splinter my shield to block all of the damage.

**GM:** Your shield shatters, reducing your armor by 1. You take no damage, though.

**Jasper:** Is it our turn again?

**GM:** It's the start of a new round, so we have to roll initiative. [Rolls a die] I got a 5. Try to beat that, Jasper.

**Jasper:** I got a 4.

**GM:** Ok, the thief will go first this round. He sees his companion is out of commission, and decides that this fight isn't worth it any more. He tries to scramble out the back window. What do you do?

**Jasper:** I try to grab his feet and pull him back.

**GM:** That'll be a STR vs STR opposed danger roll. [Rolls dice] The thief isn't terribly strong, a +0, so his total is 5. Try to beat that to prevent him from getting away...

# PREPPING A SESSION

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# RUNNING THE GAME

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## Situations, Not Plots

Never prepare a plot for the players to follow. Instead, create a number of nearby situations that contain a reason to get involved, some problems to overcome, and optionally a threat that will worsen the PC's lives if not dealt with. The first campaign session should start in the middle of a high-energy situation in order to get the players hooked.

Don't overdo the preparation! Keep your situation ideas loose enough that they can be adapted to the PC's choices and the flow of the game. Remember that unused prep can always be recycled in later sessions. After each session, ask the players what they plan on doing next and prep a few situations related to that. The direction of the game should be guided by the player's decisions, not the GM's.

## Player Skill, Not PC Skill

*Maze Rats* PCs are very minimalistic because the character sheet is mostly there for when players make a mistake. Players are not meant to solve problems with die rolls but with their own ingenuity. Therefore, present them with problems that:

- Can be solved with common sense
- Have no simple solution
- Have many difficult solutions.

*Examples: Cross a moat full of crocodiles. There's a tiny octopus in your stomach that's biting you. A door in the bottom of a dungeon will only open if sunlight shines on it. Retrieve a key from the bottom of a lake of acid.*

## Tools, Not Upgrades

When you give players tools, you give them new ways to engage the world. A good tool doesn't increase PC's damage or add an ability bonus; it does an odd, very specific thing that is only powerful when used cleverly. This turns every problem into a puzzle and encourages creative solutions.

*Examples: A rope that becomes as rigid as steel on command. A coin that lands on any result you wish when flipped. A bell that produces a 1 foot sphere of silence around it. A ring that instantly grows you a different beard for each finger you put it on.*

## Be Fair and Impartial

- Roll your dice out in the open, so players can see you aren't fudging the results. Require the same thing from them. Never roll the dice if you aren't prepared to accept the results.
- As GM, you may add, remove, or alter game rules as you see fit, as long as you notify the players ahead of time. When you make a ruling on a specific case, apply that ruling consistently.
- If the dice say that someone is dead, they're dead. Protecting the PC's from death results in games that lack tension and players who only solve problems with brute force. When a PC dies, tell its player to roll up a new character and have them reenter the scene as soon as plausible.

## Reveal the World

- Don't hide important information from the players. If the PC could reasonably know something, tell the player and move on. The game is about making decisions, and players can't make good decisions without good information.
- The more dangerous something is, the more obvious it should be. No one likes to have their PC die without warning, so if something dangerous is ahead, give the players the chance to come up with a plan or avoid it altogether. In other words, when a PC dies it should clearly be their fault.

## Offer Tough Choices

- Make the players weigh risk versus reward. The deeper players go into the wilderness or dungeon, the more perilous things should become. Whether because their resources are running low (food, health, equipment, light, etc.) or because danger builds the longer they linger, keep the players asking if it is worth pushing their luck just a little bit farther. The greatest treasures are always the hardest to reach.
- Risk and reward are also at the heart of combat. The PC's low health is meant to push combat quickly towards the point where players ask themselves, "Should I retreat to fight another

day, or do I risk it all to finish them now?" The thrill of that choice is at the heart of combat.

- Look for situations where all obvious choices come with a heavy cost. These situations encourage unorthodox solutions and lateral thinking.

## Reward Clever Solutions

- Clever solutions to a problem should usually work, as long as they are within the realm of possibility. Be generous. If the action is unlikely or dangerous, call for a danger roll, but only forbid a creative solution if it is clearly impossible.
- Combat in *Maze Rats* is neither balanced nor fair, and PCs should encounter foes far more powerful and numerous than they are. Players should learn to treat combat like real-world warfare and use ingenuity, preparation, and underhanded tactics to rig the results in their favor. Train the players to outsmart and out-plan their enemies if they want to survive.

## Bring the World to Life

- *Maze Rats* is a game of improvisation and extrapolation, not rigid plots. During the game and in between sessions, think about how the other characters and factions would respond to what the PCs are doing, and develop them accordingly. Your guiding principle should be "What are the logical consequences?"
- Use the random tables included in *Maze Rats* (or ones you've made yourself) to keep the game fresh. The surprising twists that random tables add can bring an energy and mystery to the game that is hard to improvise.
- Treat NPCs like real people. Think about what NPCs want, especially in combat. NPCs want to stay alive, and will rarely start fights that they don't have a high chance of winning. Only fanatical NPCs will fight to the death; most will try to retreat or surrender if they are losing. Also, remember that enemies and allies can be made to switch sides if given the right motivation.
- Give the players a stake in the world. As the game goes on, players may accumulate a lot of money from completing jobs and looting treasures. Encourage them to use this money to buy property, hire retainers or found factions. Playing at this level can open up new ways for the players to interact with the world and affect its history.

# BUILDING THE WORLD

## The Dungeon

Dungeons are the classic adventuring environment: claustrophobic, tightly-focused settings (often underground) revolving around risk-taking, problem solving, exploration, and lurking dangers.

To make a dungeon, you'll need to draw a map. Try to write the contents of each room on the map itself to save you time running it, and remember to keep the map secret. If the players want a map, they'll have to draw their own as they explore.

Dungeons commonly contain some or all of the following: monsters to fight, traps to avoid, puzzles to solve, valuable or magical items to loot, weird effects and hazards to deal with, and NPCs to talk to. Make sure to put secret areas and hidden treasures in the dungeon to reward players who are especially thorough. Also, create a table of random encounters (usually dangerous). Every 10 in-game minutes, there is a 3 in 6 chance of the PCs having an encounter. This helps keep up the pressure and it keeps things interesting for you. Don't be afraid to put very dangerous monsters or large bands of enemies on there; the morale rules and reaction table will give the players options.

A good way to make a dungeon is the one-more-thing method. First put one simple thing in each room, keeping it pretty vague (a monster, a trap, a prisoner, a library). Next, look for connections between the things. How are they connected? How do they explain one another? What is their relationship? Then, go back and add one additional detail to each room based on what you now know. Repeat this process as many times as you like until you think the dungeon is finished.

Players should have lots of choices while exploring. Good dungeons are filled with loops, branching paths, secret passages, shortcuts, etc. This gives players the chance to use their surroundings strategically. They should be able to plan ambushes, avoid threats, and generally choose what kind of fun they want to have, rather than just marching down a linear sequence of rooms.

## The Wilderness

When designing the wilderness of your world, start out by mapping just the local area, with at least one safe haven (like a city or town) and a number of possible adventure locations: dungeons, ruins, mines, towers, camps, etc. Drawing your map on hex-grid paper can be useful in keeping track of distances. As the players venture further afield, expand the map in that direction.

If you decide to use a hex-grid for overland travel, consider making each hex 6 miles across from side to side. A PC can generally travel 18 miles per day along a road, 12 miles per day across open wilderness, and 6 miles per day through difficult terrain like forests or mountains. Make sure the players are aware of several possible routes to any destination, each with their own advantages and drawbacks.

Fill in the wilderness of your map with different types of terrain (forests, deserts, rivers, mountains, hills, swamps, plains, wastes etc.), and for each region create a table of random discoveries, including dangerous foes, neutral NPCs, and interesting sites. Each day and each night there is a 2 in 6 that the PCs will find something. Night encounters are often more dangerous. If they find something of a permanent nature, mark it on the map and replace that table entry with something new. Make sure to describe the weather as the PCs travel. Weather is a great source of interesting compilations, especially things like heavy rain, snow, or storms.

Place unique, hidden locations around your map that players won't find if are just passing quickly through. In order to find them, the PCs must either spend a whole day searching the area carefully or else know exactly where to look.

## The City

A good city is built around some distinct themes. Is it decadent and bureaucratic? A major pilgrimage site? Famous for wizards? All three? The themes you choose help to cement the feel of the city in the players' minds and let them know what to expect.

Decide what's going on in the city at present. Are there any notable events, such as disasters, festivals, assassinations, or conflicts? Polarizing events like this make cities easier to run, since everyone in the city will be affected by them. You can use that one event to decide what everyone is up to.

Break the city up into districts or neighborhoods and mark the connections between them. Each district should have a theme of its own that sets it apart from the rest of the city. This allows players some control over the kind of encounters they have. Mark down any well-known locations in each district that players will automatically notice, along with any major characters and factions present. Each district should also have a number of interesting features that only reveal themselves if players know where to look.

Finally, make a list of random encounters for each district, based on the district's themes. These encounters can be dangerous, but might also just be unusual events that the PCs can choose whether or not to engage. Each time players move through a district, there's a 1 in 6 chance that they'll run into one of its encounters. They also automatically find an encounter if they spend time looking for trouble.

Cities and towns are usually places where PCs rest and recuperate between expeditions and look for new jobs. Make sure that the PCs hear a couple of rumors about potential adventures every time they return to the city. As always, give the player options so they can choose missions that they'll enjoy.

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