

d12 Monthly

Issue 1

May 2021

CREATURE
FEATURE

SURPRISE YOUR
PLAYERS WITH NEW
MONSTERS

D8 DUNGEON
GENERATOR

CREATE A 5-ROOM
DUNGEON IN 15 MINUTES!

COMPLETE
ENCOUNTER

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS
JUST LEVELLED UP

More NPCs and locations in the small town of Dolfar

The Dungeon Issue

d12 Monthly is a helpful resource for fantasy roleplayers everywhere.

Dungeons are such a big part of the game - it's even right there in the title! This issue will hopefully help you incorporate more dungeons into your campaign.

Happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM

<https://yumdm.com/>

https://twitter.com/yum_dm

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About Me

I have been roleplaying for over 30 years and DMing for most of those. I have played over 50 different roleplaying games, but my first love is fantasy - it's like coming home.

When I am not gaming, you can find me working as a digital marketer and helping raise two wonderful children.

Letters to the Editor

Want your words in print? Send me an email with your thoughts & rants on the last two issues. I will print two or three of the emails I receive. Send your emails to: russ@yumdm.com

Want to support this zine? I have a Patreon account: <https://www.patreon.com/yumdm>

D8 Dungeon Generator

A random dungeon in under 15 minutes

By Tale of the Manticore

Five-room dungeons are a great way to have a session or two of fun with a simple dungeon design.

The D8 Dungeon Generator is a quick way you can have a fleshed out dungeon in under 15 minutes - just in time for tonight's session.

This works best if you have a theme for the dungeon already in mind, like a ruined temple or a thieves' sewer den.

Steps:

1. Make a map of 5 rooms/areas that progress in a chain, so PCs cannot short circuit the map and get to the end early.
2. Pick a boss and put it in the room that the party will get to LAST.
3. Roll for the contents of the other four rooms on the table below.

Here's the secret recipe:

Adjective + Noun + Your imagination.

If possible, make the difficulty increase as the PCs get closer to the boss. If there has been no combat encounter by room 3, skip the rolls and insert one.



Dungeon Room Table

D8	Adjective	Noun
1	Empty/Dead	Person
2	Mundane	Animal
3	Dangerous	Monster
4	Helpful	Thing/Feature
5	Puzzling	Event
6	Disgusting	Barrier
7	Special	Treasure
8	Hidden*	Information

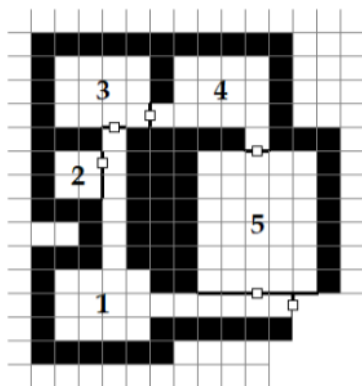
**Roll again on this list, rerolling an 8, before rolling for the noun.*



Example Dungeon: Orc Stronghold

The stronghold is a ruined keep. The entrance door and hallway look menacing but are actually unguarded. The door from the entrance hall to Room 5 is boarded up and impassable.

The Orc Stronghold



Room 1: (Puzzling Animal)

Kitchens. There is a shallow wooden bowl on a table in the center of this room with a large round shield over it serving as a lid. There is a loud scuttling sound inside the bowl. Chairs are pulled around the table. If the characters are foolish enough to disturb the shield they will find a fire beetle inside.

The orcs trapped it here and now use it for a kind of gambling game. There are 9 copper pieces in the bowl, too.



Room 2: (Disgusting Monster)

Storage room. 6 giant centipedes have made a nest here. The key to room 3 is hanging from a nail on the opposite side of the door. The orcs know to grab it quickly and get out. Entering the room and looking around will trigger a combat. There are a few rotting supplies here, like ropes, sacks and torches. A few of them are serviceable.

Room 3: (Hidden Helpful Animal)

Barracks. The door to this room is locked. This is where the orcs sleep. They are not here now, so the room is mostly empty apart from beds and some worthless belongings. A careful investigation of the room will turn up a mouse hole in which a silver and emerald ring has been hidden. The ring is worth 100gp. (This ring could have an inscription or design that leads to further stories. Who owned the ring? Can it be returned to its owner? Who once owned this keep?)

Room 4: (Meaningless Barrier)

Common room. There are no orcs here presently. (They are out on a raid and will not be back for a day... lucky!) The door on the other side of the room has a keyhole and can be locked. However, it is currently unlocked.

Room 5: The Orc Chief/Shaman. The orc chief and his 2 concubines are spending the day in the way that chiefs and concubines do. If the party has been quiet and not disturbed the door that connects this room to the front hall, grant them surprise. If they have been noisy, the chief and his concubines will be ready.

Levelling Up Your Encounters

The next three articles are all about breathing life into random encounters.

Corner Table gives you a random encounter table for an underground temple, *Encounter Distance* allows you to quickly understand how far away the encounter is, and finally, *What the Hell are the Monsters Doing?* gives you a good idea of what activity the monster is engaged in when encountered.

You can use these separately or together to provide yourself with a well fleshed-out encounter in seconds.

Example

A random encounter is called for as the PCs make their way into the lower depths of the temple. The DM rolls 2D8 for the encounter, plus a D6 for distance, plus 2D6 for what the encounter is doing.

2D8 (Encounter): Bugbears

D6 (Distance): Far Range

2D6 (What they are doing): Moving through area

The DM quickly rolls the number of Bugbears and comes up with just two. The DM tells the players the following:

“You see shadows flicker on the far side of the chamber, some 80 feet away, and as they round a pile of moss-covered rubble, you see the form of two solid shapes - the Bugbears you were warned about! They

look like they are being cautious, on their way somewhere.”

As you can see, with just a handful of dice, the encounter forms with just a little added description from the DM.



<https://taleofthemanticore.podbean.com/>



<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/350043/Journey>

Corner Table

By Russ & Tale of the Manticore

Random Encounter Table

This month's table lists encounters one may find in a ruined underground temple. The table presented here is suited for a party of four low-level characters.

Encounters in Underground Temple

2D8	Encounter
2	<i>Exceptional/magical feature</i>
3	An abandoned campsite, 1-2 days old.
4	2-4 Fire beetles
5	<i>Special NPC(s) (ranger, hermit, wizard, etc)</i>
6	Strange sounds or shadowy movement
7	2-4 Bugbears or Hobgoblins
8	3-6 Skeletons
9	1-2 Zombie Worgs
10	2-4 Weks (see the <i>Building a New Monster</i> article)
11	2-4 Ghouls
12	<i>A Ghost (can be beneficial or not)</i>
13	3-6 Gnolls with 2 Wek scouts
14	Strange symbols or totems
15	<i>Ancient graveyard/barrow mound</i>
16	<i>Green Slime</i>

Items in italics can only be encountered once.

Encounter Distance

Simple rules for any environment

By Russ

Random encounters are a big part of any game and can not only provide excitement at the table, they can also tie into storylines or provide simple side quests.

It is easy enough to determine what the encounter is, but one important factor which could determine how the encounter plays out is encounter distance.

You can do this arbitrarily, but it can be fun to randomly determine the distance.

OSR and old school DMs will know that encounter distance rules have existed for a long time, but I tend to find these overly complicated and they usually have two tables depending on whether the encounter was outdoors or in a dungeon setting.

I wanted to make this roll as simple as possible while encompassing all terrains on the one table. I also wanted to make this usable with grids or theatre of the mind.

Simply roll a D6 and consult the Encounter Distance table on the next page.

The result allows the GM to quickly see how far away the encounter is, and adjudicate the exact distance if needed.

This works well for both dungeons and outdoor areas.

Encounter Distance Table

D6	Encounter Distance
1	Signs only
2	Earshot
3	Far range
4	Close range
5	Melee range
6	Adjacent

Signs only indicate that the encounter is far enough away that only tracks or other recent evidence of the encounter is visible.

Earshot means the encounter is not visible but sounds can be heard, be it drifting on the wind or echoes in a dungeon.

Far range means that the encounter can be seen and is at long range for ranged weapons (factoring in the surrounding terrain).

Close range means the encounter is within close range for ranged attacks.

Melee range means the encounter is close enough to attack with melee weapons.

Adjacent indicates the encounter is right next to or on top of the PCs, either bumping into them or walking over them, etc (assuming this is possible).

This system also allows the DM some flexibility when figuring out how this plays out.



What the Hell are the Monsters Doing?

By Russ

This article originally appeared on my website and lists those who helped me pull it together.
<https://yumdm.com/dnd-encounters-what-are-the-monsters-doing/>

Random encounter tables are great, but they only tell you one part of the story - what the encounter is. It doesn't tell you what that encounter - or monster - is doing.

Use the table below to decide what the monster is doing when encountered.

What the Hell is the Monster Doing Table

2D6	Monster is...
2	Caring for...
3	Trapmaking/Marking territory
4	Crafting/Sharpening weapons
5	Resting/Sleeping/Recreation
6	Moving through area
7	Patrolling territory
8	Eating/Cooking
9	Searching for...
10	Escaping from...
11	Trading with...
12	Fighting with...

A Lamia searching for... a sceptre

This magical beast is searching for a lost magical sceptre. It has used its Suggestion ability on some unfortunate victims and they are now compelled to search for it.

Building a New Monster

By Russ

There are books filled with monsters you can throw at your PCs, but to really put the fear and uncertainty (and surprise) back into your campaign, make up a new monster for them to encounter.

And the simplest way to do this is to use existing monsters for inspiration.

Let's take the humble kobold.

Traditionally, they are draconic beings (unless you play old school D&D, when they are more dog-like), but what if they were from the outer planes instead?

It's time to reskin the kobold into something else - something new.

Meet the Wek



While they resemble Kobolds, the Wek is a creature from the outer planes - a cast-off and monstrous combination of Gnoll and Demon blood (other than Yeenoghu).

The New Build

I like the idea of the Wek keeping the 1HD of Kobolds, but having a couple of powers that are above their power level, due to their demonic blood.

Too weak physically to survive the harsh outer planes, the Weks found a niche in the Material World. They can be found both underground and on the surface, but always like to keep hidden.

Making their homes in abandoned buildings and ruins, or caves, or small tunnel complexes underground.

Like Gnolls, they roam in packs and abhor work, so they have learned to attack enemies en masse, usually by surprise, and then scavenge what they can from their victims before disappearing back into the darkness.

They have also retained the Gnoll's bite attack (although this only causes D4-1 damage), but they mostly use scavenged weapons.

Due to their demonic blood they can cast the following spells once per day/long rest: *Darkness*, *Detect Good/Evil* and *Confusion*.

Can you imagine your PC's reactions when they spot a "Kobold" right before the lights go out and they start acting in erratic ways?

And you can easily continue, adding as many details as you like or need, breathing new life into your campaign world that will surprise and delight your players.

Building a Quick NPC

By Russ

In Issue 0 of *d12 Monthly*, I showed you how to easily create an NPC using the “MAP method” - giving them a description for Motivation, Appearance and Personality.

Below are some tables you can use to randomly create an NPC using this method. Simply roll 3D8 and consult the tables.

Motivation Table

D8	Motivation
1	Self-centred
2	Greed
3	Power or Dominance
4	Faith or Religion
5	Protect family or friend
6	Law or rules
7	Business interests
8	Helping others

Appearance Table

D8	Appearance
1	Large nose
2	Bald or very short hair
3	Long beard or hair
4	Large scar
5	Missing a finger
6	Colourful clothing
7	Dirty or foul odour
8	Obvious tattoo

Personality Table

D8	Personality
1	Gruff
2	Dour
3	Forlorn
4	Apathetic
5	Approachable
6	Jolly
7	Whimsical
8	Attentive

Feel free to change and expand on these tables to suit your campaign world.



As an example, above is Mishra of the Pale, who I rolled up as follows:

Motivation - Helping others

Appearance - Long hair

Personality - Attentive

Mishra of the Pale (Hu F LN, Helping others, Long hair, Attentive).

Location, Location, Location!

This continues our look at the small town of Dolfar from Issue 0.

Dolfar

Dolfar is a small town along the Snowmelt River. A perfect homebase for exploring adventurers.

Places of Interest

Here are two more places of interest within Dolfar.

Temple of the Long Road

The temple is a small, practical stone building dedicated to the Deity of Travel and Messengers. Conveniently located along the South Road, next to the inn, it has a well-stocked stable attached.

In addition to regular temple services, the priests of Dusrin hire out messengers to deliver urgent and private messages. For 10 CP per mile, a Dusrin messenger (usually an initiate of the church) will deliver a message anywhere in the Known World.

They can accomplish this due to the many shrines and small temples they have dotted about most of the Known World. This allows them to set up a relay service, resting horses & messengers along the way.

See *Personalities of Dolfar* below for information on the prelate. He is served by half-a-dozen messengers, and several priests. Issue 0 introduced the head priest.

Firststop Inn

The *Firststop Inn* was built 5 winters ago after the last inn mysteriously burnt down.

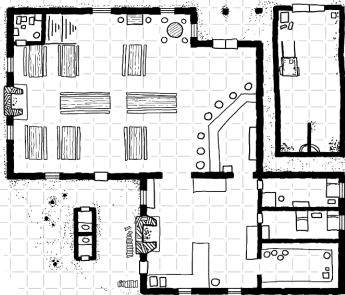
The current innkeep is Guthric Berryswill (see *Personalities of Dolfar* later in the zine), who runs a relatively clean and well kept establishment.

The inn sees many travelers along the road and river heading in both directions.

Upstairs



Ground Floor



For larger versions, visit my website:
<https://yumdm.com/d8-monthly-issue-1>

Personalities of Dolfar

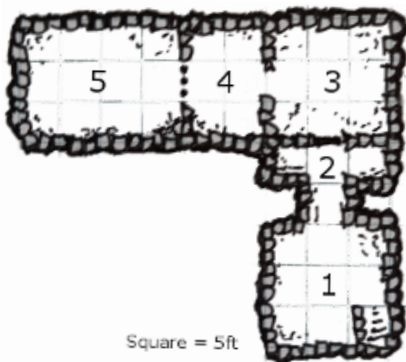
Adding to the list given in Issue 0, here are some of the other personalities in Dolfar. See *Shorthand Your NPCs* in Issue 0 for more information on the NPC write ups below.

Guthric Berryswill (Hu M LN; Forget his past, Bald, Reticent) is the current owner of the *Firststop Inn*. He moved here to forget his painful past.

Esra (Hu F NG; Stay out of trouble, Young, Frightened) is a stable girl who spends her days working at the *Firststop Inn*. She is scared of her newly found magical abilities.

Narse Fleetfoot (Dw M LG; Religious duties, Short neat beard, Stickler) is a priest, and prelate, of the church of Dusrin. He does not trust Quiss (See *Issue 0*), but has no evidence against him.

Quiss Wikman's Basement Dungeon



This was created using the D8 Dungeon Designer found earlier in this zine.

Dolfar (see *Issue 0*) is too small a town to have sewers, but many homes have basements, and Quiss' home is no exception. Quiss (also see *Issue 0*) has extended his basement however, to create a secret dungeon. He uses this to create poisons, store his weapons and other equipment, as well as any prisoners.

Room 1: This room is where Quiss makes his poisons. It is littered with vials, jars and implements for measuring and mixing. There are D6 finished random poisons.

Room 2: This is a small store room. The locked door to room 3 has a strong odour of death and decay emanating from it. Quiss has the key on him at all times.

Room 3: Quiss' latest, lifeless victim hangs from the wall, having been placed in manacles. He has been tortured to death, which is apparent from his wounds.

Room 4: This is the room of Ilkmin, Quiss' Gnome assistant (Gn M LE; Sadist, Sickly complexion, Cold). If he hears anyone in room 2 or 3, he will raise the portcullis to room 5 and release the animal residing there. The lever to raise the portcullis is next to it.

Room 5: Testing some of his oils requires live specimens and Quiss keeps those animals he can bring into this dungeon here. Currently there is a rabid giant weasel in a cage. If let out, it will attack until dead.

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