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## Dungeon World

Dungeon World is a world of fantastic adventure. A world of magic, gods, demons, Good and Evil. Brave heroes venture into the most dangerous corners of the land in search of gold and glory.

You are those heroes. You go where others can't or won't. You conquer the unbeatable and laugh in the face of Death. There are monstrous things lurking in the world. Are you ready to face them?

### THE BARD

Sure, an adventurer's life is all open roads and the glory of coin and combat. Those tales that are told in every farmhand-filled inn have to have some ring of truth to them, don't they? The songs to inspire peasantry and royals alike—to soothe the savage beast or drive men to a frenzy have to come from somewhere.

Enter the Bard. You, with your smooth tongue and quick wit. You teller-of-tales and singer-of-songs. It takes a mere minstrel to retell a thing but a true Bard to live it. Strap on your boots, noble orator. Sharpen that hidden dagger and take up the call. Someone's got to be there, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the goons and the thugs and the soon-to-be-heroes. Who better than you to write the tale of your own heroism?

Nobody. Get going.

### THE CLERIC

The lands of Dungeon World are a gods-forsaken mess. They're lousy with the walking dead, beasts of all sorts, and the vast unnatural spaces between safe and temple-blessed civilizations. It is a godless world out there. That's why it needs you.

Bringing the glory of your god to the heathens isn't just in your nature—it's your calling. It falls to you to proselytize with sword and mace and spell. To cleave deep into the witless heart of the wilds and plant the seed of divinity there. Some say that it is best to keep god close to your heart. You know that's rubbish. God lives at the edge of a blade. Show the world who is lord.

### THE FIGHTER

It's a thankless job—living day to day by your armor and the skill of your arm. To dive heedlessly into danger. They won't be playing golden horns for the time you took that knife to the ribs for them in the bar in Bucksberg. No flock of angels to sing of the time you dragged them, still screaming, from the edge of the Pits of Madness, no.

Forget them.

You do this for the guts and the glory. The scream of battle and the hot hot blood of it. You are a beast of iron.

Your friends may carry blades of forged steel but, Fighter, you are steel. While your traveling companions might moan about their wounds over a campfire in the wilderness, you bear your scars with pride.

You are the wall—let every danger smash itself to nothing on you. In the end, you'll be the last one standing.

### THE PALADIN

Hell awaits. An eternity of torment in fire or ice or whatever best suits the sins of the damned throngs of Dungeon World. All that stands between the pits of that grim torture and salvation is you. Holy man, armored war machine, temple of the Good and the Light, right? The Cleric may say his prayers at night to the gods, dwelling in their heavens. The Fighter may wield his sharp sword in the name of "good" but you know. Only you.

Eyes, hands, and sweet killing blow of the gods, you are. Yours is the gift of righteousness and virtue. Of justice. Vision, too. A purity of intent that your companions do not have. So guide these fools, Paladin. Take up your holy cause and bring salvation to the wastrel world.

Vae victis, right?

### THE RANGER

These city-born folk you travel with. Have they heard the call of the wolf? Felt the winds howl in the bleak deserts of the East? Have they hunted their prey with the bow and the knife like you? Hell no. That's why they need you.

Guide. Hunter. Creature of the wilds. You are these things and more. Your time in the wilderness may have been solitary until now, the call of some greater thing – call it fate if you like, has cast your lot with these folk. Brave, they may be. Powerful and strong, too. You know the secrets of the spaces-between, though.

Without you, they'd be lost. Blaze a trail through the blood and dark, strider.

### THE THIEF

You've heard them, sitting around the campfire. Bragging about this battle or that. About how their gods are smiling on your merry band. You count your coins and smile to yourself—this is the thrill above all. You alone know the secret of Dungeon World: filthy filthy lucre.

Sure, they give you lip for all the times you've snuck off alone but without you, who among them wouldn't have been dissected by a flying guillotine or poisoned straight to death by some ancient needle-trap? So let them complain. When you're done with all this delving you'll toast their heroes' graves.

From your castle. Full of gold. You rogue.

## **THE WIZARD**

Dungeon World has rules. Not the laws of men or the rule of some petty tyrant. Bigger, better rules. You drop something—it falls. You can't make something out of nothing. The dead stay dead, right?

Oh, the things we tell ourselves to feel better about the long, dark nights.

You've spent so very long poring over those tomes of yours. The experiments that nearly drove you mad and all the botched summonings that endangered your very soul. For what? For power. What else is there? Not just the power of King or Country but the power to boil a man's blood in his veins. To call on the thunder of the sky and the churn of the roiling earth. To shrug off the rules the world holds so dear.

Let them cast their sidelong glances. Let them call you "warlock" or "diabolist." Who among them can hurl fireballs from their eyes?

Yeah. We didn't think so.

# 2

## Setting Up

To play Dungeon World, you'll need to gather yourself and 2–5 friends. A group of 4 to 5, including you, is best. Choose one person to be the GameMaster (hereafter: GM). Everyone else will be players, taking the role of the characters in the game. The players get to say what their characters say, think, and do. The GM describes everything else in the world.

You can play a single session or string together multiple sessions into a campaign. Plan accordingly. Each session will usually be a few hours and you'll be able to start playing right away within the first session.

You'll need to print some materials. Before you start a new game, print off at least:

- A few copies of the basic and special moves
- One copy of each class sheet
- One copy each of the cleric and wizard spell sheets
- One copy of the adventure sheet and GM moves

Everyone at the table will need something to write with and some six-sided dice. Two dice is the minimum but two dice per player is a good idea.

You'll also need some specialized dice: four-sided, eight-sided, and ten-sided. One of each is enough but more is better; you won't have to pass them around so much.

### USING DICE

When talking about dice, **dx** means a dice with X sides (d4, d6, d8, etc.). A number before the dice size means "roll this many and add them together," so 2d6 means "roll two six-sided dice and add them together." Sometimes you'll add something to the roll, maybe a static number or the result of another roll, add that to the total. If there's a ".b" at the end instead of adding them together you take the best one ('b' for 'best'), so 2d6.b+1 means "roll two six-sided dice and take the best one and add one to it." A ".w" at the end means you take the worst result, so 2d6.w means "roll two six-sided dice and take the worst one."

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## The Flow of Play

Playing *Dungeon World* is a conversation of sorts; I say something, then you reply, maybe someone else chimes in. We talk about the fiction, what's happening to the characters we imagine and the world around them. We also talk about the rules, how they come from and lead back to the fiction. There are no turns or rounds in *Dungeon World*, no forced order of when people talk, but a conversation means taking turns. *Dungeon World* is never a monologue, always a conversation.

The rules shape the conversation. While the GM and the players are having a conversation the rules and the fiction are having a conversation too. The rules affect the game when the fiction triggers them and a rule will always tell you when it's meant to trigger.

### MOVES

The basic unit of rules in *Dungeon World* is the **Move**. A move looks like this:

*When you **attack an enemy in melee**, roll +Str. On a 10+ you deal your damage to the enemy and avoid their attack. At your option, you may choose to do +1d6 damage but expose yourself to the enemy's attack. On a 7-9, you deal your damage to the enemy and the enemy makes an attack against you.*

Moves are rules that describe when they trigger and what effect they have. A move always depends on a fictional action and always has some fictional effect. "Fictional" means that the action and effect come from the shared imaginative space we're describing, not from us directly. In the move above, the trigger is "when you attack an enemy in melee." The effect is what follows: a roll to be made and differing fictional effects based on the outcome of the roll. Most moves rely on one of a character's **stats** which represent the character's innate abilities.

When a player says their character does something that triggers a move that move happens and its rules apply. Moves and dealing damage are the only times dice are rolled. The move will tell you what dice to roll.

The basic rule of moves is: **take the action to gain the effect**. To make the mechanical aspect of a move happen the character has to do something that triggers that move. Likewise, if the character does something that triggers a move the mechanical portion happens.

### MOVES ARE INDIVISIBLE

A character can't take the fictional action that triggers a move without that move occurring. For example, if Isaac tells the GM that his character dashes past a crazed, axe-wielding orc to the open door

he makes the **Defy Danger** move because its trigger is "when you act despite an imminent threat". Isaac can't just have his character run past the orc without making the **Defy Danger** move and he can't make the **Defy Danger** move without acting despite an imminent threat. The moves and the fiction go hand-in-hand to make up the game. When a move is made it falls to the GM and players to make sure that both of these things (fiction and rules) happen.

Taking a fictional action that should trigger a move and not applying it looks like this: Ben says "I run past the orc to the door," but doesn't make the **Defy Danger** move. In this case, the GM should suggest that the move applies: "So you're Defying the Danger of the crazed orc as he swings at you?" Ben then has to be a real adventurer and **Defy Danger** or back off and do something else; he can't take action that triggers the move without making the move. He can't "just" run past the orc without making the move that applies.

Trying to apply a move without taking the action that makes the move occur happens when a player jumps straight to the effects of the move. The **Hack and Slash** move has damage as one of its effects. Dan can't just say "I'm Hacking and Slashing! I rolled +Str and got a 10, I do 1d8 damage." That doesn't work because his character hasn't taken any fictional action. "Hack and Slash" isn't something a character does—it's a rule that happens when the character fulfills its trigger. The GM's response should be "okay, how do you do that?" or "what does that look like?"

The GM's questions are there to refine the action, not to deny it. It's still a conversation. The GM asks to make sure the everyone understands what's happening and the moves involved.

Some moves work a little differently—they just provide a bonus all the time. These moves are still saying something fictionally and mechanically. They're saying something the character is or has. For example, the **Thief** move **Cautious** gives a constant bonus. That's still a move, it's just one that's always happening; the **Thief** is particularly careful when looking for signs of traps. Maybe they've learned their lesson from being caught in a trap before.

### ROLLS AND RESULTS

Once a move applies, it's time to look at the effects. Most moves tell you to roll+something. The **roll** part means to take two d6s, roll them, and add them together. The **+something** part means to add the modifier associated with that stat. So, a character with Dex modifier of +2 who launches a **Volley** rolls two d6s,

adds them together, and adds two. Easy. The result of the roll falls into three categories: a 10+ is a **strong hit**. A 7–9 is a **weak hit**. A 6– is a **miss**.

Strong hits and weak hits are both **hits**. A hit means the character does what they set out to, more or less. A strong hit means they do it without much trouble or complications. A weak hit means complications and unpleasanties. Sometimes, a weak hit will mean you need to make a hard decision about what to do next. The move will always say what to do for a strong and weak hit.

A miss means that the character's action is unsuccessful or carries major consequences. Unless the move tells you what to do, all moves work the same on a miss—the GM takes action, doing something dangerous to the characters.

## TERMINOLOGY

Some moves use the phrase "**deal damage**." Dealing damage means you roll the damage dice for your class and modify it based on the weapon you were using for that move. You have to be wielding a weapon to use your class's damage dice. Default damage without a weapon is 1.

Some moves say "take +1 **forward**." That means to take +1 to your next move roll (not damage). The bonus can be greater than +1, or even a penalty, like -1. There also might be a condition, such as "take +1 forward to Hack and Slash," in which case the bonus applies only to the next time you roll Hack and Slash, not any other move.

Some moves say "take +1 **ongoing**." That means to take +1 to all move rolls (not damage). The bonus can be larger than +1, or it can be a penalty, like -1. There also might be a condition, such as "take +1 ongoing to Volley." An ongoing bonus also says what causes it to end, like "until you dismiss the spell" or "until you atone to your deity."

Some moves give you **hold**. Hold is currency that allows you to make some choices later on by spending the hold as the move describes. Hold is always saved up for the move that generated it; you can't spend your hold from Defend on Trap Sense or vice versa.

There are some moves that all the players have access to. These are the **Basic** and **Special** moves. Basic moves are the things that happen often—players will roll these a lot. Special moves are moves that come up less frequently, but everyone has access to them.

Each class also has some of its own moves. Some of these moves are **starting moves** that the class starts with. Others are **advanced moves** that the player may choose as their character

grows.

## STATS

The basic stats are:

**Strength** (Str). The character's physical force and muscle. Used for moves in melee combat and breaking things.

**Dexterity** (Dex). The character's precision and aim. Used for moves in ranged combat and avoiding things.

**Constitution** (Con). The character's health and ability to take a beating. Used for moves that endure things and surviving dangers.

**Intelligence** (Int). The character's accumulated knowledge and logical thinking. Used for moves that rely on remembered facts and casting some kinds of spells.

**Wisdom** (Wis). The character's keen senses and mental defenses. Used for moves that rely on noticing things and casting some kinds of spells.

**Charisma** (Cha). The character's force of personality and charm. Used for social moves.

Each basic stat has a **score** from 3 to 18 and a **modifier** from -3 to +3. When a stat is spelled out (like "Strength") that refers to the score, when the three letter abbreviation (like "Str") is used it refers to the modifier. The stat's modifier depends on the stat's score:

Score	Modifier
1-3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-11	0
12-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

There are also a few special stats:

**Bond** is how well your character knows another character. You use Bond to aid another character or interfere with their actions. Bond is about knowledge and not about how well you get along or how similar you are. Bond may also be asymmetrical: the Fighter might know the Wizard very well, but the Wizard doesn't pay much attention to the Fighter. Your Bond with someone starts based on your history with them. Each class has starting bonds with blanks to fill in names. When you roll +Bond, count the number of Bonds you have with that person and add that to the roll.

**Level** reflects how your character has grown. Your character starts at level 1, and may advance all the way to level 10. Your level tracks how far you've grown. As you advance in level you gain new moves.

## EQUIPMENT

Every adventurer needs stuff: weapons, spellbooks, armor, holy symbols, and the like. Each item says what it does. In general, weapons define the way a character deals damage with it and at what range they can do that damage. Armor and shields reduce damage taken. Other items have various effects.

Items say what they do through their **tags**. A tag is a word or phrase that indicates some common ability the item possesses. The Messy tag, for example, means the weapon does damage in a particularly devastating way.

All items, unless otherwise noted, are **mundane**. They're not magical in any way. Some items are enchanted—they work through arcane or divine tricks. These magic items are tougher to get, tougher to destroy, and more powerful to use.

Characters are limited in how much they can carry by their **Load**. Load is determined by class. Carrying items whose total weight is more than your load causes problems.

Some classes have other specific tools at their disposal like custom gear or ties to powerful entities or organizations. The rules for these are detailed with each class.

## DAMAGE AND HP

Dungeon World is a dangerous place in many ways, not least of which are the physical perils that await in the forgotten halls where adventurers explore. Each character has **HP**. HP is short for hit points; it's a number which reflects a character's condition. The character's HP value is determined by their class and Constitution score. Your HP doesn't automatically go up as you level, but if your Constitution score changes you update your HP as well.

When a character takes **damage** they reduce their current HP by that amount. If their current HP falls to zero it means they're dying and must immediately make the Last Breath move. HP never goes negative; if damage would take a character's HP below zero set it to zero instead.

Depending on the outcome of the Last Breath move a character may be **stable** at 0 HP. Stable means the character won't get worse on their own but they won't get better without care or time. If a stable character takes damage they stay at 0 HP but must make the Last Breath move again immediately.

Armor prevents damage. When you take damage you subtract your armor from the damage dealt.

The Cleric is all about healing HP. Without the Cleric's healing magics, adventurers are left at the mercies of bandages, poultices, and other crude medicines, plus the odd healing potion.

HP tracks the assorted bruises and cuts that accumulate but some wounds go deeper. These are **debilities**. Debilities give you a -1 to your modifier for one stat. They don't effect the base score (so being Weak won't effect your Load, just your Str modifier). They're tougher to heal than HP, your best bet is to get somewhere safe and spend a few days resting to get rid of them.

## ADVANCEMENT

Adventurers in Dungeon World grow and learn from their experiences. Eventually, with time and luck, they survive to level up.

Experience is tracked via **XP**. Players mark XP by keeping a tally on their character sheet. When they have XP marks equal to their current level + 7 they are ready to level up, but they do not actually level up until they have some downtime (usually in camp or in a nearby village). Gaining a new level means choosing a new move from your class. If your new level is 3rd, 6th, or 9th you also get to increase one stat by 2, adjusting the modifier to reflect the new score.

There are two times when you mark XP: when you roll a miss (6-) and when you make the End of Session move.

Whenever you roll a miss (a 6 or lower) when making a move you mark XP. These are the tough lessons of the adventuring life.

At the end of each session one of your Bonds may resolve. When a Bond is no longer applicable it can be resolved if the person you share that Bond with agrees. When a Bond is resolved you mark XP and write a new bond.

You also look back at your alignment over the session you just concluded. If you fulfilled your alignment at least once in the session you'll get XP.

The End of Session move also has three questions that all the players answer as a group. For each "yes" answer everyone gains XP.

## SESSIONS

A session of Dungeon World is one time you sit down to play. A session usually runs a few hours and may be a single adventure or part of a larger campaign.

The first session of a game starts off a little different. First you'll need to choose a GM. Once the GM is settled, everyone else will need to make characters. See the character creation chapter for more on that.

During character creation, the GM will be asking questions and making plans for how to start the game. A game of Dungeon World always starts with action, either action already underway or impending.

Such a situation will lead to the characters making moves, which will cause further moves. Moves lead to more moves. This snowballing action from move to move is what builds an exciting game. Once a few moves have been made, you'll find it easy to keep going. The moves will keep giving you ideas and prompts for further action which leads to more moves.

## WHY?

Why play Dungeon World?

First, to see the characters do **amazing things**. To see them explore the unexplored, slay the undying, and go from the deepest bowels of the world to the highest peaks of the heavens. To see them caught up in momentous events and grand tragedies.

Second, to see them **play off each other**: to stand together as a united front against their foes or to bicker and argue over treasure. To unite and fall apart and reunite again.

Third, because **the world still has so many places to explore**. There are unlooted tombs and dragon hordes dotting the countryside just waiting for quick-fingered and strong-armed adventurers to discover them. That unexplored world has plans of its own. We play to see what they are and how they'll change the lives of our characters.

# 4

## Character Creation

Making Dungeon World characters is quick and easy. You should all create your first characters together at the beginning of your first session. Character creation is, just like play, a kind of conversation—everyone should be there for it. It's somewhat likely your character may die along the way. If they do, no worries, the character creation process helps you make a new character that fits into the group in just a few minutes.

If you're the GM, your role during character creation is to help everyone, ask questions, and take notes. When a player makes a choice—particularly for their Bonds—ask them about it. Get more detail. Think about what these details mean.

The GM should also set expectations: the players are to play their characters as people. Skilled adventurers delving into dangerous places, but real people. The GM's role is to play the rest of the world as a dynamic, changing place.

Some questions commonly come up during character creation:

*Are the characters friends?* No, not necessarily, but they do work together as a team for common goals. Their reasons for pursuing those goals may be different, but they generally manage to work together.

*Are there other Wizards?* Not really. There are other workers of arcane magic, and the common folk may call them wizards, but they're not like you. They don't have the same abilities, though they may be similar. Same goes for any class: there's only one Cleric, though there are many with similar powers of divine servitude. There's only one Thief, but there are others that fight from the shadows and steal things.

*What's coin?* Coin's the currency of the realm. It's good pretty much everywhere. It'll buy you mundane stuff, like steel swords and wooden staves, but the special stuff, like magic weapons, isn't for sale.

*Is the GM trying to kill us?* Nope. The GM represents the world. It's a dangerous place, and yeah, you might die. But she's not trying to kill you.

Most everything you need to create a character you'll find on the character sheets. These steps will walk you through filling out a character sheet.

### 1. CHOOSE A CLASS

Look over the character classes and choose one that interests you. Everyone chooses a different class; there aren't two Wizards. If two people want the same class, talk it over like adults and compromise.

*I sit down with Paul and Shannon to play a game run by John. I've got some cool ideas for a Wizard, so I mention that would be my first choice. No one else was thinking of playing one, so I take the playbook.*

### 2. CHOOSE A RACE

Every class has a few race options. Choose one. Your race gives you a special move.

*I like the idea of summoning up Things From Beyond, so I choose Human, since that gives me a bonus to Summoning spells. I thought about being an Elf, but Shannon's playing the Cleric so I don't think we'll need more Cleric spells.*

### 3. CHOOSE A NAME

Choose your character's name from the list.

*Avon sounds good.*

### 4. CHOOSE LOOK

Your look is your physical appearance. Choose one item from each list.

*Haunted eyes sound good, since I've seen Things From Beyond. No good Wizard has time for hair styling, wild hair it is. My robes are strange, and I mention to everyone that I think maybe they came from Beyond as part of one of my summonings. No time to eat with all that magic: thin body.*

### 5. CHOOSE STATS

Look over the basic moves and the starting moves for your class. Pick out the move that interests you the most: something you'll be doing a lot, or something that you excel at. Put your 17 in the stat for that move. Look over the list again and pick out the next most important move to your character, maybe something that supports your first choice. Put your 15 in the stat for that move. Repeat this process for your remaining scores: 13, 11, 9, 8.

Alternatively, if everyone wants a little more randomness then you can roll stats. Roll 3d6 and assign the total to a stat—repeat this until you have all your stats.

If you want something really random you can roll for stats in order (Str, Dex, Con, Int, Wis, Cha). If you choose this method you get to roll before you choose your class.



*It looks like I need Intelligence to cast spells, which are my thing, so my 17 goes there. The Defy Danger option for Dexterity looks like something I might be doing to dive out of the way of a spell, so that gets my 15. A 13 Wisdom will help me notice important details (and maybe keep my sanity, based on the Defy Danger move). Charisma might be useful is dealing with summoned creatures so I'll put my 11 there. Living is always nice, so I put my 9 in Constitution for some extra HP. Strength gets the 8.*

## 6. FIGURE OUT MODIFIERS

Next you need to figure out the modifiers for your stats. The modifiers are what you use when a move says +Dex or +Cha. You won't actually use the raw scores much.

Score	Modifier
1-3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-11	0
12-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

## 7. SET STARTING HP

Your starting HP is equal to your class's base HP+Constitution score.

*Base 4 plus 9 con gives me a whopping 13 HP. I guess Summoning takes a toll on the body.*

## 8. CHOOSE STARTING MOVES

Some classes, like the Fighter, have choices to make as part of one of their moves. Make these choices now. The Wizard will need to choose spells for their spellbook. Both the Cleric and the Wizard will need to choose which spells they have prepared to start with.

*A Summoning spell is an easy choice, so I take Contact Spirits. Magic Missile will allow me to deal more damage than my pitiful d4 damage dice, so that's in too. I choose Alarm for my last spell, since I can think of some interesting uses for it.*

## 9. CHOOSE ALIGNMENT

Your alignment is a few words that describe your character's moral outlook. These are general and tend to guide your character's outlook rather than dictate their actions. Usually alignment is a single term declaring the character's allegiance to the forces of good, the hordes of evil, or the path of neutrality between.

The alignments are Good, Evil, and Neutral. Some classes may only be certain alignments. Choose your alignment—it gives you more ways to earn XP.

*Avon is all about the magical mysteries, which makes the Neutral alignment stand out. I'll go with that one.*

## 10. CHOOSE GEAR

Each class has choices to make for starting gear. Keep your Load in mind—it limits how much you can easily carry. Make sure to total up your armor and note it on your character sheet.

*I'm worried about my HP, so I take armor over books. A dagger sounds about right for rituals, I choose that over a staff. It's a toss up between the healing potion and the antitoxin, but healing wins out. I also end up with some rations.*

## 11. INTRODUCE YOUR CHARACTER

Now that you know who your character is, it's time to introduce them to everyone else. Wait until everyone's finished choosing their name. Then go around the table; each player gets to share their look, class and anything else about their character. You can share your alignment now or keep it a secret if you prefer.

This is also the time for the GM to ask questions. The GM's questions should help establish the relationships between characters ("What do you think about that?") and draw the group into the adventure ("Does that mean you've met Grundloch before?"). The GM should listen to everything in the description and ask about anything that stands out. Establish where they're from, who they are, how they came together, or anything else that seems relevant or interesting.

*"This is Avon, summoner of Things From Beyond! He's a human wizard with haunted eyes, wild hair, strange robes, and a thin body. Like I mentioned before his robes are strange because they're literally not of this world: they came through as part of a summoning ritual."*

## 12. CHOOSE BONDS

Once everyone has described their characters you can choose your Bonds. You must fill in one bond but it's in your best interest to fill in more. For each blank fill in the name of one character. You can use the same character for more than one statement.

Once everyone's filled in their bonds read them out to the group. When a move

has you roll+bonds you'll count the number of Bonds you have with the character in question and add that to the roll.

*With everyone introduced I choose which character to list in each Bond, I have Paul's Fighter Gregor and Shannon's Cleric Brinton to choose from. The Bond about prophecy sounds fun, so I choose Gregor for it and end up with "Gregor will play an important role in the events to come. I have foreseen it!" It seems like The Wizard who contacts Things From Beyond and the Cleric might not see eye to eye, so I add Shannon's character and get "Brinton is woefully misinformed about the world; I will teach them all that I can." I leave my last Bond blank, I'll deal with it later. Once everyone is done I read my Bonds aloud and we all discuss what this means about why we're together and where we're going.*



# 5

## Basic Moves

### HACK AND SLASH

When you **attack an enemy in melee**, roll+Str. On a 10+ you deal your damage to the enemy and avoid their attack. At your option, you may choose to do +1d6 damage but expose yourself to the enemy's attack. On a 7–9, you deal your damage to the enemy and the enemy makes an attack against you.

### VOLLEY

When you **take aim and shoot at an enemy at range**, roll+Dex. On a 10+ you have a clear shot—deal your damage. On a 7–9, choose one (whichever you choose you deal your damage):

- You have to move to get the shot placing you in danger of the GM's choice
- You have to take what you can get: -1d6 damage
- You have to take several shots, reducing your ammo by one.

### DEFY DANGER

When you **act despite an imminent threat or suffer a calamity**, say how you deal with it and roll. If you do it . . .

- . . . by powering through, +Str
- . . . by getting out of the way or acting fast, +Dex
- . . . by enduring, +Con
- . . . with quick thinking, +Int
- . . . through mental fortitude, +Wis
- . . . using charm and social grace, +Cha

On a 10+, you do what you set out to, the threat doesn't come to bear. On a 7–9, you stumble, hesitate, or flinch: the GM will offer you a worse outcome, hard bargain, or ugly choice.

### DEFEND

When you **stand in defense of a person, item, or location** under attack, roll+Con. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7–9, hold 1. So long as you stand in defense, when you or the thing you defend is attacked you may spend hold, 1 for 1, to choose an option:

- Redirect an attack from the thing you defend to yourself
- Halve the attack's effect or damage
- Open up the attacker to an ally giving that ally +1 forward against the attacker
- Deal damage to the attacker equal to your level

### SPOUT LORE

When you **consult your accumulated knowledge about something**

, roll+Int. On a 10+ the GM will tell you something interesting and useful about the subject relevant to your situation. On a 7–9 the GM will only tell you something interesting—it's on you to make it useful. The GM might ask you "How do you know this?" Tell them the truth, now.

### DISCERN REALITIES

When you **closely study a situation or person**, roll+Wis. On a 10+ ask the GM 3 questions from the list below. On a 7–9 ask 1. Take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- What happened here recently?
- What is about to happen?
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- What here is useful or valuable to me?
- Who's really in control here?
- What here is not what it appears to be?

### PARLEY

When you **you have leverage on a GM character and manipulate them**, roll+Cha. Leverage is something they need or want. On a hit they ask you for something and do it if you make them a promise first. On a 7–9, they need some concrete assurance of your promise, right now.

### AID OR INTERFERE

When you **help or hinder someone you have a Bond with**, roll+Bond with them. On a 10+ they take +1 or -2, your choice. On a 7–9 you also expose yourself to danger, retribution, or cost.

# 6

## Special Moves

### LAST BREATH

When you **redying** you catch a glimpse of what lies beyond the Black Gates of Death's Kingdom (the GM will describe it), then roll (just roll, +nothing—yeah, Death doesn't care how tough or cool you are). On a 10+ you're stable. On a 7–9 Death will offer you a bargain—take it and stabilize or refuse and pass beyond the Black Gates into whatever fate awaits you. On a miss, you are dead.

### ENCUMBRANCE

When you **make a move while carrying weight** up to or equal to Load, you're fine. When you make a move while carrying weight equal to load+1 or load+2, you take -1. When you make a move while carrying weight greater than load+2, you have a choice: drop at least 1 weight and roll at -1, or automatically fail.

### MAKE CAMP

When you **settle in to rest** consume a ration. If you're somewhere dangerous decide the watch order as well. If you have enough XP you may Level Up. When you wake from at least a few uninterrupted hours of sleep heal damage equal to half your max HP.

### TAKE WATCH

When you **you're on watch and something approaches the camp** roll+Wis. On a 10+ you're able to wake the camp and prepare a response, the camp takes +1 forward. On a 7–9 you react just a moment too late; the camp is awake but hasn't had time to prepare. You have weapons and armor but little else. On a miss whatever lurks outside the campfire's light has the drop on you.

### UNDERTAKE A PERILOUS JOURNEY

When you travel through hostile territory, choose one member of the party to act as trailblazer, one to scout ahead, and one to be quartermaster (the same character cannot have two jobs). If you don't have enough party members or choose not to assign a job, treat that job as if it had rolled a 6. Each character with a job to do rolls+Wis. On a 10+ the quartermaster reduces the number of rations required by one. On a 10+ the trailblazer reduces the amount of time it takes to reach your destination (the GM will say by how much). On a 10+ the scout will spot any trouble quick enough to let you get the drop on it. On a 7–9 each roles performs their job as expected: the normal number of rations are consumed, the journey takes about as long as expected, no one gets the drop on you but you don't get the drop on them either.

### LEVEL UP

When you **have downtime (hours or days) and XP equal to (or greater than) your current level + 7**, subtract your current level +7 from your XP, increase your level by 1, and choose a new advanced move from your class. If you are the Wizard, you also get to add a new spell to your spellbook.

If your new level is 3, 6, or 9, you also get to increase a stat by 2. Increase the base score of the stat of your choice by 2, adjust the modifier to reflect the new score. Changing your Constitution increases your maximum and current HP. Ability scores can't go higher than 18.

### END OF SESSION

When you **reach the end of a session**, choose one your bonds that you feel is resolved (completely explored, no longer relevant, or otherwise). Ask the player of the character you have the bond with if they agree. If they do, mark XP and write a new bond with whomever you wish.

Once bonds have been updated look at your alignment. If you fulfilled that alignment at least once this session, mark XP. Then answer these three questions as a group:

- Did we learn something new and important about the world?
- Did we overcome a notable monster or enemy?
- Did we loot a memorable treasure?

For each "yes" answer everyone marks XP.

### CAROUSE

When you **return triumphant and throw a big party**, spend 100 coin and roll + extra 100s of coin spent. On a 10+ choose 3. On a 7–9 choose 1. On a miss, you still choose one, but things get really out of hand.

- You befriend a useful NPC
- You hear rumors of an opportunity
- You gain useful information
- You are not entangled, ensorcelled, or tricked

### SUPPLY

When you **go to buy something with gold on hand**, if it's something readily available in the settlement you're in, you can buy it at market price. If it's something special, beyond what's usually available here, or non-mundane, roll+Cha. On a 10+ you find what you're looking for at a fair price. On a 7–9 you'll have to pay more or settle for something similar.

## RECOVER

When you **do nothing but rest in comfort and safety** after a day of rest you recover all your HP. After three days of rest you remove one debility of your choice. If you're under the care of a healer (magical or otherwise) you heal a debility for every two days of rest instead.

## RECRUIT

When you **put out word that you're looking to hire help**, roll. If you make it known...

- ...that your pay is generous, take +1
- ...what you're setting out to do, take +1
- ...that they'll get a share of whatever you find, take +1

If you have a useful reputation around these parts take an additional +1. On a 10+ you've got your pick of a number of skilled applicants, your choice who you hire, no penalty for not taking them along. On a 7-9 you'll have to settle for someone close or turn them away. On a miss someone influential and ill-suited declares they'd like to come along (a foolhardy youth, a loose-cannon, or a veiled enemy, for example), bring them and take the consequences or turn them away. If you turn away applicants you take -1 forward to Recruit.

## OUTSTANDING WARRANTS

When you **return to a civilized place in which you've caused trouble before**, roll+Cha. On a hit, word has spread of your deeds and everyone recognizes you. On a 7-9, that, and, the GM chooses a complication:

- The local constabulary has a warrant out for your arrest
- Someone has put a price on your head
- Someone important to you has been put in a bad spot as a result of your actions

## BOLSTER

When you **spend your leisure time in study, meditation, or hard practice**, you gain preparation. If you prepare for a week or two, 1 preparation. If you prepare for a month or longer, 3 preparation. When your preparation pays off spend 1 preparation for +1 to any roll. You can only spend one preparation per roll.



# The Bard

Sure, an adventurer's life is all open roads and the glory of coin and combat. Those tales that are told in every farmhand-filled inn have to have some ring of truth to them, don't they? The songs to inspire peasantry and royals alike—to soothe the savage beast or drive men to a frenzy have to come from somewhere.

Enter the Bard. You, with your smooth tongue and quick wit. You teller-of-foibles and singer-of-songs. It takes a mere minstrel to retell a thing but a true Bard to live it. Strap on your boots, noble orator. Sharpen that hidden dagger and take up the call. Someone's got to be there, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the goons and the thugs and the soon-to-be-heroes. Who better than you to write the tale of your own heroism?

Nobody. Get going.

## NAMES

*Elf*: Astrafel, Daelwyn, Feliana, Damarra, Sistranalle, Pendrell, Melliandre, Dagoliir

*Human*: Baldric, Leena, Dunwick, Willem, Edwyn, Florian, Seraphine, Quorra, Charlotte, Lily, Ramonde, Cassandra

## LOOK

Choose one for each:

Knowing Eyes, Fiery Eyes, or Joyous Eyes  
Fancy Hair, Wild Hair, or Stylish Cap  
Finery, Traveling Clothes, or Poor Clothes  
Fit Body, Well-fed Body, or Thin Body

## STATS

Assign these scores to your stats:

17 (+2), 15 (+1), 13 (+1), 11 (+0), 9 (+0), 8 (-1)

You start with 6+Constitution HP.

Your base damage is d6.

## STARTING MOVES

Choose a racial move:

### ELF

When you enter an important location (your call) you can ask the GM for one fact from the history of that location.

### HUMAN

When you first enter a civilized settlement someone who respects the custom of hospitality to minstrels will take you in as their guest.

You start with these moves:

### ARCANE ART (CHA)

When you weave a performance into a basic spell, choose an ally and an effect:

- Heal 1d8 damage
- +1d4 forward to damage
- Their mind is shaken clear of one enchantment
- The next time the target is Aided, on a hit they get +2 instead of +1

Then roll+Cha. On a hit, the ally gets the selected effect. On a 7-9, you also draw unwanted attention or your magic reverberates to other targets affecting them as well, GM's choice.

## BARDIC LORE

Choose an area of expertise:

- On Spells and Magicks
- The Dead and Undead
- Grand Histories of the Known World
- A Bestiary of Creatures Unusual
- The Planar Spheres
- Legends of Heroes Past
- Gods and Their Servants

When you first encounter an important creature, location, or item (your call) covered by your Bardic Lore you can ask the GM any one question about it, the GM will answer truthfully. The GM may then ask you what tale, song, or legend you heard that information in.

## CHARMING AND OPEN

When you speak frankly with someone, you can ask their player a question from the list below. If they answer it truthfully they then get to ask you a question from the list below.

- Whom do you serve?
- What do you wish I would do?
- How can I get you to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?
- What are you really feeling right now?
- What do you most desire?

## A PORT IN THE STORM

When you return to a civilized settlement you've visited before, tell the GM when you were last here. They'll tell you how it's changed since then.

## ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

### GOOD

Perform your art to aid someone else

### NEUTRAL

Avoid a conflict or defuse a tense situation

**CHAOTIC**

Spur others to significant and unplanned decisive action

**GEAR**

Your Load is 5+Str. You have dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight). Choose one instrument:

- Your father's mandolin, repaired
- A fine lute, a gift from a noble
- The pipes with which you courted your first love
- A stolen horn
- A fiddle, never before played
- A songbook in a forgotten tongue

Choose your clothing:

- Leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Ostentatious clothes

Choose your armament:

- Dueling rapier (Close, Precise, 2 weight)
- Worn bow (Near, 2 weight), bundle of arrows (3 ammo, 1 weight), and short sword (Close, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring Gear (1 weight)
- Bandages (0 weight)
- Halfling pipeleaf (1 weight)
- 3 coin

**BONDS**

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

This is not my first adventure with \_\_\_\_\_

I sang stories of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ long before I ever met them in person.

\_\_\_\_\_ is often the butt of my jokes.

I am writing a ballad about the adventures of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ trusted me with a secret.

\_\_\_\_\_ does not trust me, and for good reason.

**ADVANCED MOVES**

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

**HEALING SONG**

When you heal with Arcane Art, you heal +1d8 damage.

**VICIOUS CACOPHONY**

When you grant bonus damage with Arcane Art, you grant an extra +1d4 damage.

**IT GOES TO ELEVEN**

When you unleash a crazed performance (a righteous lute solo, mighty brass blast, confusing interpretive dance) choose a target who can hear you and roll+Cha. On a 10+ the target flails in confusion dealing its damage to a creature of your choosing. On a 7-9 it deals its damage, but then takes +1d4 damage ongoing as the music invigorates it.

**METAL HURLANT**

When you shout with great force or play a shattering note choose a target and roll+Con. On a hit the target takes 2d6 damage and is deafened for a few minutes. On a 7-9 it's out of control: the GM will choose an additional target nearby.

**A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS**

When you successfully Aid someone you take +1 forward as well.

**ELDRITCH TONES**

When you use Arcane Art, you choose two effects instead of one.

**DUELIST'S PARRY**

When you Hack and Slash, you take +1 armor forward.

**BAMBOOZLE**

When you Parley with someone, on a hit you also take +1 forward with them.

**MULTICLASS DABBLER**

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

**MULTICLASS INITIATE**

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

**HEALING CHORUS**

Replaces: Healing Song

When you heal with Arcane Art, you heal +2d8 damage.

**VICIOUS BLAST**

Replaces: Vicious Cacophony

When you grant bonus damage with Arcane Art, you grant an extra +1d4 damage.

**UNFORGETTABLE FACE**

When you meet someone you've met before (your call) after some time apart you take +1 forward against them.

**REPUTATION (CHA)**

When you first meet someone who's heard songs about you, roll+Cha. On a 10+, tell the GM two things they've heard about you. On a 7-9, tell the GM one thing they've heard, and the GM tells you one thing.

**ELDRITCH CHORD**

Replaces: Eldritch Tones

When you use Arcane Art, you choose two effects. You also get to choose one of those effects to double.

**AN EAR FOR MAGIC**

When you hear an enemy cast a spell the GM will tell you the name of the spell and its effects. Take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

**DEVIOUS**

When you use Charming and Open you may also ask "How are you vulnerable to me?" Your subject may not ask this question of you.

### **DUELIST'S BLOCK**

Replaces: Duelist's Parry

When you Hack and Slash, you take +2 armor forward.

### **CON**

Replaces: Bamboozle

When you Parley with someone, on a hit you also take +1 forward with them and get to ask their player one question which they must answer truthfully.

### **MULTICLASS MASTER**

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.



The lands of Dungeon World are a gods-forsaken mess. They're lousy with the walking dead, beasts of all sorts, and the vast unnatural spaces between safe and temple-blessed civilizations. It is a godless world out there. That's why it needs you.

Bringing the glory of your god to the heathens isn't just in your nature—it's your calling. It falls to you to proselytize with sword and mace and spell. To cleave deep into the witless heart of the wilds and plant the seed of divinity there. Some say that it is best to keep god close to your heart. You know that's rubbish. God lives at the edge of a blade. Show the world who is lord.

## NAMES

*Dwarf* : Durga, Aelfar, Gerda, Rurgosh, Bjorn, Drummond, Helga, Siggrun, Freya

*Human* : Wesley, Brinton, Jon, Sara, Hawthorn, Elise, Clarke, Lenore, Piotr, Dahlia, Carmine

## LOOK

Choose one for each:

Kind Eyes, Sharp Eyes, or Sad Eyes

Tonsure, Strange Hair, or Bald

Flowing Robes, Habit, or Common Garb

Thin Body, Knobby Body, or Flabby Body

## STATS

Assign these scores to your stats:

17 (+2), 15 (+1), 13 (+1), 11 (+0), 9 (+0), 8 (-1)

You start with 8+Constitution HP.

Your base damage is d6.

## STARTING MOVES

Choose a racial move:

### DWARF

You are one with stone. When you Commune you are also granted a special version of Words of the Unspeaking which only works on stone as a Rote.

### HUMAN

Your faith is diverse. Choose one Wizard spell. You can cast and be granted that spell as if it was a Cleric spell. You start with these moves:

### DEITY

You serve and worship some deity or power which grants you spells. Give your god a name (maybe Helferth, Succellus, or Zorica) and choose your deity's domain:

- Healing and Restoration

- Bloody Conquest
- Civilization
- Knowledge and Hidden Things
- The Downtrodden and Forgotten
- What Lies Beneath

Choose one precept of your religion:

- Your religion preaches the sanctity of suffering, add Petition: Suffering
- Your religion is cultish and insular, add Petition: Gaining Secrets
- Your religion has important sacrificial rites, add Petition: Offering
- Your religion believes in trial by combat, add Petition: Personal Victory

## DIVINE GUIDANCE

When you fulfill your religion's petition your deity grants you some useful knowledge or boon related to their domain. The GM will tell you what.

## TURN UNDEAD

When you hold your holy symbol aloft and pray aloud for protection, roll+Wis. On a hit so long as you continue to pray and brandish your holy symbol no undead may come within reach of you. On a 10+ intelligent undead are momentarily dazed by the radiance of your god and mindless undead flee. If you move aggressively towards an undead creature while Turning them it breaks the effects and they are able to act as normal. Intelligent undead, vampires and so on, may still find ways to harry you from afar. They're clever like that.

## COMMUNE

When you spend uninterrupted time (an hour or so) in quiet communion with your deity, you lose any spells already granted to you and are granted new spells of your choice whose total levels don't exceed your own+1. You also prepare your rites; they don't count against your limit. You can't prepare spells that are higher level than you.

## CAST A SPELL

When you unleash a spell granted to you by your deity, roll+Wis. On a 10+, the spell is successfully cast and your deity does not revoke the spell, so you may cast it again. On a 7-9, the spell is cast, but choose one:

- You draw unwelcome attention or put yourself in a spot (the GM will describe it).
- Your casting distances you from your deity—take -1 ongoing to Cast a Spell until you Commune.
- After you cast it, the spell is revoked by your deity. You cannot cast the spell again until you Commune and



have it granted to you.

## ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

### GOOD

Endanger yourself to heal another

### LAWFUL

Endanger yourself following the precepts of your church or god

### EVIL

Harm another to prove the superiority of your church or god

## GEAR

Your Load is 7+Str. You carry dungeon rations (1 weight, 5 uses) and some symbol of the divine, describe it (weight 0). Choose your defenses:

- Chainmail (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Shield (+1 armor, 2 weight)

Choose your armament:

- Warhammer (Close, 1 weight)
- Mace (Close, 1 weight)
- Staff (Close, Two-handed, 1 weight) and bandages

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight) and dungeon rations (1 weight)
- Healing potion (1 weight)

## BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ has insulted my deity; I do not trust them.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ is a good and faithful person; I trust them implicitly.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ is in constant danger, I will keep them safe.

I am working on converting \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ to my faith.

## ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

### CHOSEN ONE

Choose one spell. You are granted that spell as if it was one level lower.

### INVIGORATE

When you heal someone they take +2 damage forward.

### THE SCALES OF LIFE AND DEATH

When someone takes their Last Breath in your presence they take +1 to the roll.

### SERENITY

You are able to divide your power effectively. When you cast a spell you ignore the first -1 penalty from ongoing spells.

### FIRST AID

Cure Light Wounds does not count against your limit of granted spells.

### DIVINE INTERVENTION

When you Commune you get 1 hold and lose any hold you already had. Spend that hold when you or an ally takes damage to call on your deity, they intervene in an appropriate idiom (a sudden gust of wind, a lucky slip, a burst of light) and negate the damage.

### PENITENT

When you take damage and embrace the pain, you may take +1d4 damage (ignoring armor). If you do, take +1 forward to Cast a Spell.

### EMPOWER

When you Cast a Spell, on a 10+ you have the option of choosing from the 7-9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these effects as well:

- The spell's effects are doubled
- The spell's targets are doubled

### ORISON FOR GUIDANCE

When you sacrifice something of value to your deity and pray for guidance your deity tells you what it would have you do. If you do it, mark experience.

### DIVINE PROTECTION

When you wear no armor or shield you get 2 armor.

### DEVOTED HEALER

When you heal someone else of damage, heal +your level damage.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

### ANointed

Requires: Chosen One

Choose one spell. You are granted that spell as if it was one level lower.

### VICIOUS

Requires: Inquisitor

When you do damage with a spell, you deal +1d4 damage.

### REAPER

When you take time after a conflict to dedicate your victory to your deity and deal with the dead, take +1 forward.

### PROVIDENCE

Replaces: Serenity

You ignore the -1 penalty from two spells you maintain.

### GREATER FIRST AID

Requires: First Aid

Cure Moderate Wounds does not count against your limit of granted spells.

### DIVINE INVINCIBILITY

Replaces: Divine Intervention

When you Commune you get 2 hold and lose any hold you already had. Spend that hold when you or an ally takes damage to call on your deity, they intervene in an appropriate idiom (a sudden gust of wind, a lucky slip, a burst of light) and negate the damage.

### MARTYR

Replaces: Penitent

When you take damage and embrace the pain, you may take +1d4 damage (ignoring armor). If you do, take +1 forward to Cast a Spell and add your level to any damage done or healed by the spell.

**DIVINE ARMOR**

Replaces: Divine Protection

When you wear no armor or shield you get 3 armor.

**GREATER EMPOWER**

Replaces: Empower

When you Cast a Spell, on a 10-11 you have the option of choosing from the 7-9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these effects as well. On a 12+ you get to choose one of these effects for free.

- The spell's effects are doubled
- The spell's targets are doubled

**MULTICLASS DABBLER**

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

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## Cleric Spells

### ROTES

#### Light Rote

An item you touch glows with divine light, about as bright as a torch. It gives off no heat or sound and requires no fuel but is otherwise like a mundane torch. You have complete control of the color of the flame. The spell lasts as long as it is in your presence.

#### Sanctify Rote

Food or water you hold in your hands while you cast this spell is consecrated by your deity. In addition to now being holy or unholy the affected substance is purified of any mundane spoilage.

#### Guidance Rote

The symbol of your deity appears before you and gestures towards the direction or course of action your deity would have you take then disappears. The message is through gesture only; your communication through this spell is severely limited.

### 1ST LEVEL SPELLS

#### Bless Level 1 Ongoing

You deity smiles on the target in combat. They take +1 ongoing so long as battle continues and they stand and fight. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### Cure Light Wounds Level 1

At your touch wounds scab and bones cease to ache. Heal an ally of 1d8 damage.

#### Detect Alignment Level 1

When you cast this spell choose an alignment: Good, Evil, or Neutral. One of your senses is briefly able to detect that alignment. The GM will tell you what here is of that alignment.

#### Cause Fear Level 1 Ongoing

Choose an intelligent target you can see and a nearby object. The target is afraid of the object so long as you maintain the spell. Their reaction is up to them: flee, panic, beg, panic, fight. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### Magic Weapon Level 1 Ongoing

The weapon you hold while casting does +1d4 damage until you dismiss this spell. Until you dismiss this spell you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### Sanctuary Level 1

You make an area holy to your deity. Walk the perimeter of the area. So long as you stay within that area you are alerted whenever someone acts with malice within the sanctuary (including entering with harmful intent). Anyone who receives healing within a Sanctuary heals +1d4 HP.

#### Speak With Dead Level 1 Death

A corpse converses with you briefly. It will answer any three questions you pose to it to the best of the knowledge it had in

life and the knowledge it gained in death.

### 3RD LEVEL SPELLS

#### Animate Dead Level 3 Ongoing

You invoke a hungry spirit to possess a recently-dead body and act for you. This forms a zombie that follows your orders to the best of its limited abilities. Treat the zombie as your character, but with access to only the basic moves. It has a +1 modifier for all stats and 1 HP. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to Cast a Spell. You get 1d4 of these effects:

- The zombie is talented. Give one stat a +2 modifier.
- The zombie is durable. It has +2 HP for each level you have.
- The zombie has a functioning brain and can complete complex tasks.
- The zombie is restored by magic—it does not appear obviously dead, at least for a day or two.

#### Cure Moderate Wounds Level 3

You staunch bleeding and set bones through magic. Heal an ally of 2d8 damage.

#### Darkness Level 3 Ongoing

Choose an area you can see: it's filled with supernatural darkness and shadow. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### Resurrection Level 3

Tell the GM you would like to resurrect a corpse whose soul has not yet fully departed this world. The GM will tell you "yes, you can resurrect them, but first..." or "yes, you can resurrect them now, but it won't be permanent until..." and then one to all of the things from this list:

- It's going to take days/weeks/months
- You must \_\_\_\_
- You must get help from \_\_\_\_
- It will require a lot of money
- You must sacrifice \_\_\_\_ to do it

#### Hold Person Level 3

Choose a creature you can see. Until you Cast a Spell or leave their presence they cannot act except to speak. If they're harmed this effect ends.

### 5TH LEVEL SPELLS

#### Revelation Level 5

Your deity answers your prayers with a moment of perfect understanding. The GM will explain the root cause of the current situation. When acting on the information, you take +1 Forward.

#### Cure Critical Wounds Level 5

Heal an ally of 3d8 damage.

#### Divination Level 5

Name a person, place, or thing you want to learn about. Your deity grants you

visions of the target, as clear as if you were there.

#### **Contagion Level 5 Ongoing**

While this spell is ongoing a target you can see suffers from the disease of your choice and you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### **Words of the Unspeaking Level 5**

With a touch you speak to the spirits within things. The non-living object you touch responds to three questions you pose, answering them as best it can.

#### **True Seeing Level 5 Ongoing**

While this spell is ongoing your vision is opened to the true nature of everything you lay your eyes on and you take -1 to Cast a Spell. You pierce illusions and see things that have been hidden. The GM will describe the area before you ignoring any illusions and falsehoods, magical or otherwise.

#### **Trap Soul Level 5**

When cast in the presence of a ghost or recently dead body this spell traps the soul in a gem you provide. While trapped the soul answers every question posed to it and can not resist your requests. Once released the soul is likely to hold a grudge against its captor.

### **7TH LEVEL SPELLS**

#### **Word of Recall Level 7**

Choose a word. The first time after casting this spell that you speak the chosen word, you and any allies touching you when you cast the spell are immediately returned to the exact spot you cast the spell at. Casting Word of Recall again before speaking the word replaces the earlier recall.

#### **Heal Level 7**

Touch an ally and you may restore up to your maximum HP to them.

#### **Harm Level 7**

Touch an enemy and strike them with divine wrath—deal 2d8 damage to them and 1d6 damage to yourself (ignores armor).

#### **Sever Level 7 Ongoing**

Choose an appendage on the target such as an arm, tentacle, or wing. The appendage is magically severed from their body, causing no damage but considerable pain. Missing an appendage may, for example, keep a winged creature from flying, or a bull from goring you on its horns. While you maintain the spell you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### **Mark of Death Level 7**

Choose a creature who's true name you know. This spell inscribes runes that will kill that creature, should they read them.

#### **Control Weather Level 7**

Pray for rain—or sun, wind, or snow. Within a day or so, your god will answer. The weather will change according to your will and last a handful of days.

### **9TH LEVEL SPELLS**

#### **Command Elements Level 9**

A mass of one element (earth, air, water, or fire) that you touch as you cast this spell takes on a form similar to yours and carries out one command you give it. Once the command is completed or a day passes the element retakes its old form.

#### **Repair Level 9**

Choose one event in the target's past. All effects of that event, including damage, poison, disease, and magical effects, are ended and repaired. HP and diseases are healed, poisons are neutralized, magical effects are ended.

#### **Divine Presence Level 9 Ongoing**

Every creature must ask your leave to enter your presence, and you must speak permission for them to enter. Any creature that you deny permission takes an extra 1d10 damage whenever they take damage in your presence. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### **Consume Undlife Level 9**

The mindless undead creature you touch is destroyed and you steal its death energy to heal yourself or the next ally you touch of damage equal to its current HP.

#### **Peace Level 9**

Choose one traumatic memory in the target's past. The target's memory of that event is calmly erased. If the target is a PC, they must be willing.

# 10

## The Fighter

It's a thankless job—living day to day by your armor and the skill of your arm. To dive heedlessly into danger. They won't be playing golden horns for the time you took that knife to the ribs for them in the bar in Bucksberg. No flock of angels to sing of the time you dragged them, still screaming, from the edge of the Pits of Madness, no.

Forget them.

You do this for the guts and the glory. The scream of battle and the hot hot blood of it. You are a beast of iron. Your friends may carry blades of forged steel but, Fighter, you are steel. While your traveling companions might moan about their wounds over a campfire in the wilderness, you bear your scars with pride.

You are the wall—let every danger smash itself to nothing on you. In the end, you'll be the last one standing.

### NAMES

*Dwarf* : Ozruk, Surtur, Brunhilda, Anika, Janos, Greta, Dim, Rundrig, Jarl, Xotoq

*Elf* : Elohiir, Sharaseth, Hasrith, Shevaral, Cadeus, Eldar, Kithracet, Thelian

*Halfling* : Finnegan, Olive, Randolph, Bartleby, Aubrey, Baldwin, Becca

*Human* : Hawke, Rudiger, Gregor, Brianne, Walton, Castor, Shanna, Ajax, Hob

### LOOK

Choose one for each:

Hard Eyes, Dead Eyes, or Eager Eyes

Wild Hair, Shorn Hair, or Battered Helm

Calloused Skin, Tanned Skin, or Scarred Skin

Built Body, Lithe Body, or Ravaged Body

### STATS

Assign these scores to your stats:

17 (+2), 15 (+1), 13 (+1), 11 (+0), 9 (+0), 8 (-1)

You start with 10+Constitution HP.

Your base damage is d10.

### STARTING MOVES

Choose a racial move:

#### DWARF

When you share a drink with someone, you may Parley with them with Con instead of Cha.

#### ELF

Choose one weapon—you can always treat weapons of that type as if they had the Precise tag.

### HALFLING

When you Defy Danger and use your small size to your advantage, take +1.

### HUMAN

Once per battle you may choose a damage roll (yours or someone else's) and reroll it.

You start with these moves:

### BEND BARS, LIFT GATES (STR)

When you use pure strength to destroy an inanimate obstacle, roll+Str. On a 10+ choose 3. On a 7-9 choose 2.

- It doesn't take a very long time
- Nothing of value is damaged
- It doesn't make an inordinate amount of noise
- You can fix the thing again without a lot of effort

### ARMORED

You ignore the Clumsy tag on armor you wear.

### SIGNATURE WEAPON

This is your weapon. There are many like it, but this one is yours. Your weapon is your best friend. It is your life. You master it as you master your life. Your weapon, without you, is useless. Without your weapon, you are useless. You must wield your weapon true.

Choose a base description, all are 2 weight:

- Sword
- Axe
- Hammer
- Spear
- Flail
- Fists

Choose the range that best fits your weapon:

- Hand
- Close
- Reach

Choose two enhancements:

- Hooks and spikes. +1 damage, but +1 weight.
- Sharp. +2 piercing.
- Perfectly weighted. +precise.
- Serrated edges. +1 damage.
- Glows in the presence of one type of creature, your choice.
- Huge. +messy, +forceful.
- Versatile. Choose another range.
- Well-crafted. -1 weight.

Choose a look:

- Ancient
- Unblemished
- Ornate
- Blood-stained
- Sinister

## ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

### GOOD

Defend those weaker than you

### NEUTRAL

Defeat a worthy opponent

### EVIL

Kill a defenseless or surrendered enemy

## GEAR

Your Load is 9+Str. You carry your signature weapon and dungeon rations (1 weight, 5 uses). Choose your defenses:

- Chainmail (1 armor, 1 weight) and Adventuring gear (1 weight)
- Scale armor (2 armor, 3 weight)

Choose two:

- 2 Healing potions (2 weight)
- shield (+1 armor, 2 weight)
- Antitoxin, dungeon rations (1 weight), and poultices and herbs (1 weight)
- 22 Gold

## BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ owes me their life, whether they admit it or not.

I have sworn to protect \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I worry about the ability of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ to survive in the dungeon.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ is soft, but I will make them hard like me.

## ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

### MERCILESS

When you deal damage, deal +1d4 damage.

### HEIRLOOM

When you consult the spirits of that reside within your signature weapon, roll+Cha. The spirits will give you an insight relating to the current situation, and might ask you some questions in return. On a 10+, the GM will give you good detail. On a 7-9, the GM will give you an impression.

### ARMOR MASTERY

When you take damage you can choose to let your armor take the brunt of it. The damage is negated but your armor or shield (your choice) is -1 armor until you get it repaired at a smithy or workshop.

### IMPROVED WEAPON

Choose one extra enhancement for your signature weapon.

### SEEING RED

When you Discern Realities during combat, you take +1.

### INTERROGATOR

When you Parley using threats of impending violence as leverage you may use Str instead of Cha.

### SCENT OF BLOOD

When you Hack and Slash an enemy, you take +1d4 damage forward against that enemy.

### MULTICLASS DABBLER

Get one move from another class. For the purposes of Multiclass Dabbler the Wizard's Spellbook, Prepare Spells, and Cast a Spell moves count as one move. The Cleric's Commune and Cast a Spell moves also count as one move. If you gain the ability to cast spells you cast them as if you were one level lower.

### IRON HIDE

You gain +1 armor.

### BLACKSMITH

When you have access to a forge you can graft the magical powers of a weapon onto your signature weapon. This process destroys the magical weapon. Your signature weapon gains the magical powers of the destroyed weapon. When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

### BLOODTHIRSTY

Replaces: Merciless

When you deal damage, deal +1d8 damage.

### ARMORED PERFECTION

Replaces: Armor Mastery

When you take damage you can choose to let your armor take the brunt of it. The damage is negated and you take +1 forward against the attacker but your armor or shield (your choice) is -1 armor until you get it repaired at a smithy or workshop.

### EVIL EYE

Requires: Seeing Red

When you go into a dangerous situation, roll+Cha. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold to make eye contact with an NPC present, who freezes or flinches and can't act until you break it off. On a miss, your enemies immediately identify you as their biggest threat.

### TASTE OF BLOOD

Replaces: Scent of Blood

When you Hack and Slash an enemy, you take +1d8 damage forward against that enemy.

### MULTICLASS INITIATE

Required: Multiclass Dabbler

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

### STEEL HIDE

Replaces: Iron Hide

You gain +2 armor.

### THROUGH DEATH'S EYES

When you go into battle, roll+Wis. On a 10+, name someone who will live and someone who will die. On a 7-9, name someone who will live or someone who will die. Name NPCs, not player characters. The GM will make your vision come true, if it's even remotely possible. On a 6- you see your own death and consequently take a -1 throughout the battle.

### **EYE FOR WEAPONRY**

When you look over an enemy's weaponry, ask the GM how much damage they do.

### **SUPERIOR WARRIOR**

When you Hack and Slash on a 12+ you deal your damage, avoid their attack, and impress, dismay, or frighten your enemy.



# 11

## The Paladin

Hell awaits. An eternity of torment in fire or ice or whatever best suits the sins of the damned throngs of Dungeon World. All that stands between the pits of that grim torture and salvation is you. Holy man, armored war machine, templar of the Good and the Light, right? The Cleric may say his prayers at night to the gods, dwelling in their heavens. The Fighter may wield his sharp sword in the name of "good" but you know. Only you.

Eyes, hands, and sweet killing blow of the gods, you are. Yours is the gift of righteousness and virtue. Of justice. Vision, too. A purity of intent that your companions do not have. So guide these fools, Paladin. Take up your holy cause and bring salvation to the wastrel world.

Vae victis, right?

### NAMES

Thaddeus, Augustine, Lux, Cassius, Hadrian, Lucia, Octavia, Regulus, Valeria, Sanguinus, Titanius

### LOOK

Choose one for each:

Kind Eyes, Fiery Eyes, or Glowing Eyes

Helmet, Styled Hair, or Bald

Worn Holy Symbol or Fancy Holy Symbol

Fit Body, Bulky Body, or Thin Body

### STATS

Assign these scores to your stats:

17 (+2), 15 (+1), 13 (+1), 11 (+0), 9 (+0), 8 (-1)

You start with 10+ Constitution HP.

Your base damage is d10.

### STARTING MOVES

You are human, so you get this move.

#### HUMAN

When you pray, even for a moment, to your deity and ask "What here is evil?" the GM will tell you, honestly.

You start with these moves:

#### LAY ON HANDS (CHA)

When you touch someone, skin to skin, and pray for your deity to cure them, roll+Cha. On a 10+ you heal 1d8 damage or remove one disease. On a 7-9, they are healed, but the damage or disease is transferred to you.

#### ARMORED

You ignore the Clumsy tag on armor you wear.

#### I AM THE LAW

When you give an NPC an order based

on your divine authority, roll+Cha. On a hit, they choose one:

- They do it
- They back away cautiously, then flee
- They attack you

On a 10+, you also take +1 forward against them. On a miss, they do as they please and you take -1 Forward against them.

### QUEST

When you dedicate yourself to a mission through prayer and ritual cleansing state what you set out to do:

- Slay \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_, a great blight on the land
- Defend \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ from the inequities that beset them
- Discover the truth of \_\_\_\_\_

Then choose up to two boons:

- An unwavering sense of direction to \_\_\_\_\_

- Invulnerability to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (ex: edged weapons, fire, enchantment, etc.)

- A mark of divine authority
- Senses that pierce lies
- A voice that transcends language
- A freedom from hunger, thirst, and sleep

The GM will then tell you what vow or vows is required of you to maintain your blessing:

- Honor (forbidden: cowardly tactics and tricks)
- Temperance (forbidden: gluttony in food, drink, and pleasure of the flesh)
- Piety (required: observance of daily holy services)
- Valor (forbidden: suffering an evil creature to live)
- Truth (forbidden: lies)
- Hospitality (required: comfort to those in need, no matter who they are)

**ALIGNMENT**

Choose an alignment:

**LAWFUL**

Deny mercy to a criminal or unbeliever

**GOOD**

Endanger yourself to protect someone weaker than you

**GEAR**

Your Load is 8+Str. You start with dungeon rations (1 weight, 5 uses), scale armor (2 armor, 3 weight), and some mark of faith, describe it (0 Weight). Choose your weapon:

- Halberd (Reach, +1 damage, two-handed, 2 weight)
- Long sword (Close, +1 damage, 1 weight) and shield (+1 armor, 2 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight)
- dungeon rations (1 weight) and healing potion

**BONDS**

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

---



---

\_\_\_'s misguided behavior endangers their very soul!

---



---

\_\_\_ has stood by me in battle and can be trusted completely.

I respect the beliefs of \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

...but hope they will someday see the true way.

---



---

\_\_\_ is a brave soul, I have much to learn from them.

**ADVANCED MOVES**

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

**DIVINE FAVOR**

You gain the Commune and Cast a Spell Cleric move. Your level for the purposes of that move is 1 + the levels you've gained since you took Divine Favor.

**BLOODY AEGIS**

When you take damage you can use your body to deflect the blow. If you do you take no damage but instead suffer a debility of your choice. If you already have all six debilities you can't use this move.

**SMITE**

While on a Quest you deal +1d4 damage.

**EXTERMINATUS**

When you speak aloud your promise to defeat an enemy, you deal +2d4 damage against that enemy and -4 damage against anyone else. This effect lasts until the enemy is defeated or you admit your failure and prove your worth.

**CHARGE!**

When you lead the charge into combat, those you lead take +1 forward.

**STAUNCH DEFENDER**

When you Defend you always get +1 hold. Even on a failure you get 1 hold.

**SETUP STRIKE**

When you Hack and Slash, choose an ally. Their next attack against your target does +1d4 damage.

**HOLY PROTECTION**

You get +1 armor while on a Quest.

**VOICE OF AUTHORITY**

Take +1 to Order Hirelings.

**HOSPITALLER**

When you heal an ally, you heal +1d8 damage.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

**EVIDENCE OF FAITH**

Requires: Divine Favor

When you see divine magic as it happens, you can ask the GM which deity granted the spell and its effects. Take +1 when acting on the answers.

**HOLY SMITE**

Replaces: Smite

While on a Quest you deal +1d8 damage.

**EVER ONWARD**

Replaces: Charge!

When you lead the charge into combat, those you lead take +1 forward and +2

armor forward.

**IMPERVIOUS DEFENDER**

Replaces: Staunch Defender

When you Defend you always get +1 hold. Even on a failure you get 1 hold. When you get a 12+ to Defend instead of getting hold the nearest attacking creature is stymied giving you a clear advantage, the GM will describe it.

**TANDEM STRIKE**

Replaces: Setup Strike

When you Hack and Slash, choose an ally. Their next attack against your target does +1d4 damage and they take +1 forward against them.

**DIVINE PROTECTION**

Replaces: Holy Protection

You get +2 armor while on a Quest.

**DIVINE AUTHORITY**

Replaces: Voice of Authority

Take +1 to Order Hirelings. When you roll a 12+ to Order Hirelings the hiring transcends their moment of fear and doubt to perform at the peak of potential.

**PERFECT HOSPITALLER**

Replaces: Hospitaller

When you heal an ally, you heal +2d8 damage.

**INDOMITABLE**

When you suffer a debility (even through Bloody Aegis) take +1 forward against whatever caused it.

**PERFECT KNIGHT**

When you Quest you choose three boons instead of two.

# 12

## The Ranger

These city-born folk you travel with. Have they heard the call of the wolf? Felt the winds howl in the bleak deserts of the East? Have they hunted their prey with the bow and the knife like you? Hell no. That's why they need you.

Guide. Hunter. Creature of the wilds. You are these things and more. Your time in the wilderness may have been solitary until now, the call of some greater thing – call it fate if you like, has cast your lot with these folk. Brave, they may be. Powerful and strong, too. You know the secrets of the spaces-between, though.

Without you, they'd be lost. Blaze a trail through the blood and dark, strider.

### NAMES

*Elf*: Throndir, Elrosine, Aranwe, Celion, Dambrath, Lanethe

*Human*: Jonah, Halek, Brandon, Emory, Shrike, Nora, Diana

### LOOK

Choose one for each:

Wild Eyes, Sharp Eyes, or Animal Eyes

Hooded Head, Wild Hair, or Bald

Cape, Camouflage, or Traveling Clothes

Lithe Body, Wild Body, or Sharp Body

### STATS

Assign these scores to your stats:

17 (+2), 15 (+1), 13 (+1), 11 (+0), 9 (+0), 8 (-1)

You start with 8+Constitution HP.

Your base damage is d8.

### STARTING MOVES

Choose a racial move:

#### ELF

When you undertake a Perilous Journey through wilderness whatever role you take you succeed as if you rolled a 10+.

#### HUMAN

When you Make Camp in a dungeon or city, you don't need to consume a ration. You start with these moves:

#### HUNT AND TRACK (WIS)

When you follow a trail of clues left behind by passing creatures, roll+Wis. On a hit, you follow the creature's trail until there's a significant change in its direction or mode of travel. On a 10+, you also choose 1:

- Gain a useful bit of information about your quarry, the GM will tell you what
- Determine what caused the trail to end

### CALLED SHOT

When you attack a defenseless or surprised enemy at range, you can choose to deal your damage or name your target and roll+Dex.

- Head – 10+: As 7–9, plus your damage; 7–9: They do nothing but stand and drool for a few moments.
- Arms – 10+: As 7–9, plus your damage; 7–9: They drop anything they're holding.
- Legs – 10+: As 7–9, plus your damage; 7–9: They're hobbled and slow moving.

### ANIMAL COMPANION

You have a supernatural connection with a loyal animal. You can't talk to it per se but it always acts as you wish it to. Name your animal companion and choose a species:

*Wolf, cougar, bear, eagle, dog, hawk, cat, owl, pigeon, rat, mule*

Choose a base:

- Ferocity +2, Cunning +1, 1 Armor, Instinct +1
- Ferocity +2, Cunning +2, 0 Armor, Instinct +1
- Ferocity +1, Cunning +2, 1 Armor, Instinct +1
- Ferocity +3, Cunning +1, 1 Armor, Instinct +2

Choose as many strengths as its ferocity:

*Fast, burly, huge, calm, adaptable, quick reflexes, tireless, camouflage, ferocious, intimidating, keen senses, stealthy*

Your animal companion is trained to fight humanoids. Choose as many additional trainings as its cunning:

*Hunt, search, scout, guard, fight monsters, perform, labor, travel*

Choose as many weaknesses as its instinct:

*Flighty, savage, slow, broken, frightening, forgetful, stubborn, lame*

### COMMAND

When you work with your animal companion on something it's trained in . . .

- . . . and you attack the same target, add its ferocity to your damage

- ...and you track, add its cunning to your roll
- ...and you take damage, add its armor to your armor
- ...and you discern realities, add its cunning to your roll
- ...and you parley, add its cunning to your roll
- ...and someone interferes with you, add its instinct to your roll

## ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

### CHAOTIC

Free someone from literal or figurative bonds

### GOOD

Endanger yourself to combat an unnatural threat

### NEUTRAL

Help an animal or spirit of the wild

## GEAR

Your Load is 6+Str. You start with dungeon rations (1 weight, 5 uses), leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight), and a bundle of arrows (3 ammo, 2 weight). Choose your armament:

- Hunter's bow (Near, Far, 1 weight) and short sword (Close, 1 weight)
- Hunter's bow (Near, Far, 1 weight) and spear (Reach, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight) and dungeon rations (1 weight)
- adventuring gear (1 weight) and bundle of arrows (3 ammo, 2 weight)

## BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

I have guided \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ before and they owe me for it.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a friend of nature, so I will be their friend as well.

\_\_\_\_\_ has no respect for nature, so I have no respect for them.

does not understand life in the wild, so I will teach them.

## ADVANCED MOVES

Take this move only if it is your first advancement

### HALF-ELVEN

Somewhere in your lineage lies mixed blood and it begins to show its presence. You gain the Elf starting move if you took the Human one at character creation or vice versa. When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

### WILD EMPATHY

You can speak with and understand animals.

### FAMILIAR PREY

When you Spout Lore about a monster you use Wis instead of Int.

### VIPER'S STRIKE

When strike an enemy with two weapons at once, add an extra 1d4 damage for your off-hand strike.

### CAMOUFLAGE

When you're still in natural surroundings, enemies never spot you until you make a movement.

### MAN'S BEST FRIEND

When you take damage and you allow your animal companion to take the blow the damage is negated and your animal companion's Ferocity becomes 0. If its Ferocity was already 0 you can't use this ability. When you have a few hours of rest with your animal companion its Ferocity returns to normal.

### BLOT OUT THE SUN

When you Volley you may spend extra ammo before rolling, for each point of ammo spent you may choose an extra target. Roll once and apply damage to all targets.

### WELL TRAINED

Choose another training for your animal companion.

### GOD AMIDST THE WASTES

You gain the Commune and Cast a Spell Cleric move. Your level for the purposes of that move is 1 + the levels you've gained since you took God Amidst the Wastes.

### FOLLOW ME

When you Undertake a Perilous Journey you can take two roles. You make a roll for each.

### A SAFE PLACE

When you set the watch for the night everyone takes +1 to Take Watch. When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

### WILD SPEECH

Replaces: Wild Empathy

You can speak with and understand any non-magical non-planar creature.

### HUNTER'S PREY

Replaces: Familiar Prey

When you Spout Lore about a monster you use Wis instead of Int. On a 12+ you get to ask the GM any one question about the subject.

### VIPER'S FANGS

Replaces: Viper's Strike

When strike an enemy with two weapons at once, add an extra 1d8 damage for your off-hand strike.

### SMAUG'S BELLY

When you know your target's weakest point your arrows have 2 piercing.

### STRIDER

Replaces: Follow Me

When you Undertake a Perilous journey you can take two roles. Roll twice and use the better result for both roles.

### A SAFER PLACE

Replaces: A Safe Place

When you set the watch for the night everyone takes +1 to Take Watch. After a night in camp when you set the watch everyone takes +1 forward.

### **OBSERVANT**

When you Hunt and Track, on a hit you may also ask one question about the creature you are tracking from the Discern Realities list for free.

### **SPECIAL TRICK**

Choose a move from another class. So long as you are working with your animal companion you have access to that move.

### **UNNATURAL ALLY**

Your animal companion is a monster, not an animal. Describe it. Give it +2 Ferocity and +1 Instinct, plus a new training.

# 13

## The Thief

You've heard them, sitting around the campfire. Bragging about this battle or that. About how their gods are smiling on your merry band. You count your coins and smile to yourself—this is the thrill above all. You alone know the secret of Dungeon World—filthy filthy lure.

Sure, they give you shit for all the times you've snuck off alone but without you, who among them wouldn't have been dissected by a flying guillotine or poisoned straight to death by some ancient needle-trap? So, let them complain. When you're done all this delving you'll toast their hero's graves.

From your castle. Full of gold. You rogue.

### NAMES

*Halfling* : Felix, Rook, Mouse, Sketch, Trixie, Robin, Omar, Brynn, Bug

*Human* : Sparrow, Shank, Jack, Marlow, Dodge, Rat, Pox, Humble, Farley

### LOOK

Choose one for each:

Shifty Eyes or Criminal Eyes

Hooded Head, Messy Hair, or Cropped Hair

Dark Clothes, Fancy Clothes, or Common Clothes

Lithe Body, Knobby Body, or Flabby Body

### STATS

Assign these scores to your stats:

17 (+2), 15 (+1), 13 (+1), 11 (+0), 9 (+0), 8 (-1)

You start with 6+Constitution HP.

Your base damage is d8.

### STARTING MOVES

Choose a racial move:

#### HALFLING

When you attack with a ranged weapon, deal +1 damage.

#### HUMAN

You are a professional. When you Spout Lore or Discern Realities about criminal activities, take +1.

You start with these moves:

#### TRAP EXPERT

When you spend a moment to survey a dangerous area, roll+Dex. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold as you walk through the area to ask these questions:

- Is there a trap here and if so, what activates it?

- What does the trap do when activated?
- What else is hidden here?

### TRICKS OF THE TRADE

When you pick locks or pockets or disable traps, roll+Dex. On a 10+, you do it, no problem. On a 7-9, the GM will offer you two options between suspicion, danger, or cost.

### BACKSTAB

When you attack a surprised or defenseless enemy with a melee weapon, you can choose to deal your damage or roll+Dex. If you roll, on a 10+ choose two, on a 7-9 choose one.

- You don't get into melee with them
- You deal your damage+1d6
- You create an advantage, +1 forward to you or an ally acting on it
- Reduce their armor by 1 until they repair it

### FLEXIBLE MORALS

When someone tries to detect your alignment you can tell them any alignment you like.

### POISONER

You've mastered the care and use of a poison. Choose a poison from the list below; that poison is no longer Dangerous for you to use. You also start with three uses of the poison you choose. Whenever you have time to gather materials and a safe place to brew you can make three uses of the poison you choose for free. Note that some poisons are Applied, meaning you have to carefully apply it to the target or something they eat or drink. Touch poisons just need to touch the target, they can even be used on the blade of a weapon.

- Oil of Tagit (Applied): The target falls into a light sleep
- Bloodweed (Touch): The target deals -1d4 damage ongoing until cured
- Goldenroot (Applied): The target treats the next creature they see as a trusted ally, until proved otherwise
- Serpent's Tears (Touch): Anyone dealing damage against the target rolls twice and takes the better result.

### ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

#### CHAOTIC

Leap into danger without a plan

#### NEUTRAL

Avoid detection or infiltrate a location

## EVIL

Shift danger or blame from yourself to someone else

## GEAR

Your Load is 5+Str. You start with one dungeon rations (1 weight, 5 uses), leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight), 3 uses of your chosen poison, and 10 coin. Choose your arms:

- Dagger (Hand, 1 weight) and short sword (Close, 1 weight)
- Rapier (close, precise, 1 weight)

Choose a ranged weapon:

- 3 throwing daggers (Thrown, Near, 0 weight)
- Ragged Bow (Near, 2 weight) and bundle of arrows (5 ammo, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight)
- Healing potion

## BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

I stole something from \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ has my back when things go wrong.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ knows incriminating details about me.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and I have a con running.

## ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

### CHEAP SHOT

When using a Precise or Hand weapon, your Backstab deals an extra +1d6 damage.

### CAUTIOUS

When you use Trap Expert you always get +1 hold (even on a failure you get 1 hold).

### WEALTH AND TASTE

When you make a show of flashing around your most valuable possession, choose someone present. They will do anything they can to obtain your item or one like it.

### SHOOT FIRST

You're never caught by surprise. When an enemy would get the drop on you, you get to act first instead.

## POISON MASTER

After you've used a poison once it's no longer Dangerous for you to use.

## ENVENOM

You can apply even complex poisons with a pinprick. When you apply a poison that's not Dangerous for you to use to your weapon it's Touch instead of Applied.

## BREWER

When you have you have time to gather materials and a safe place to brew you can create three doses of any one poison you've used before.

## UNDERDOG

When you're outnumbered, you have +1 armor.

## CONNECTIONS

When you put out word to the criminal underbelly about something you want or need, roll+Cha. On a 10+ someone has it, just for you. On a 7-9 you'll have to settle for something close or it comes with strings attached, your call. When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

## DIRTY FIGHTER

Replaces: Cheap Shot

When using a Precise weapon, your Backstab deals an extra +1d10 damage and all other attacks deal +1d6 damage.

## EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS

Replaces: Cautious

When you use Trap Expert you always get +1 hold (even on a failure you get 1 hold). On a 12+ you get 3 hold and the next time you discover a trap the GM will immediately tell you what it does, what triggers it, who set it, and how you can use it to your advantage.

## ALCHEMIST

Replaces: Brewer

When you have you have time to gather materials and a safe place to brew you can create three doses of any poison you've used before. Alternately you can describe the effects of a poison you'd like to create. The GM will tell you can create it, but with one or more caveats:

- It will only work under specific cir-

cumstances

- The best you can manage is a weaker version
- It'll take a while to take effect
- It'll have obvious side effects

## SERIOUS UNDERDOG

Replaces: Underdog

You have +1 armor. When you're outnumbered, you have +2 armor instead.

## EVASION

When you Defy Danger on a 12+ you transcend the danger. You not only do what you set out to but you the GM will offer you a better outcome, true beauty, or a moment of grace.

## STRONG ARM, TRUE AIM

You can throw any melee weapon, using it to Volley. A thrown melee weapon is gone, you can never choose to reduce ammo on a 7-9.

## ESCAPE ROUTE

When you're in too deep and need a way out, name your escape route and roll+Dex. On a 10+ you're gone. On a 7-9 you can stay or go, but if you go it costs you: leave something behind or take something with you, the GM will tell you what.

## DISGUISE

When you have time and materials you can create a disguise that will fool anyone into thinking you're another creature of about the same size and shape. Your actions can give you away but your appearance won't.

## HEIST

When you take time to make a plan to steal something, name the thing you want to steal and ask the GM these questions. When acting on the answers you and your allies take +1 forward.

- Who will notice it's missing?
- What's its most powerful defense?
- Who will come after it?
- Who else wants it?



# 14

## The Wizard

Dungeon World has rules. Not the laws of men or the rule of some petty tyrant. Bigger, better rules. You drop something—it falls. You can't make something out of nothing. The dead stay dead, right?

Oh, the things we tell ourselves to feel better about the long, dark nights.

You've spent so very long poring over those tomes of yours. The experiments that nearly drove you mad and all the botched summonings that endangered your very soul. For what? For power. What else is there? Not just the power of King or Country but the power to boil a man's blood in his veins. To call on the thunder of the sky and the churn of the roiling earth. To shrug off the rules the world holds so dear.

Let them cast their sidelong glances. Let them call you "warlock" or "diabolist." Who among them can hurl fireballs from their eyes?

Yeah. We didn't think so.

### NAMES

*Elf*: Galadiir, Fenfaril, Lilliastre, Phiros-alle, Enkirash, Halwyr

*Human*: Avon, Morgan, Rath, Ysolde, Ovid, Vitus, Aldara, Xeno, Uri

### LOOK

Choose one for each:

Haunted Eyes, Sharp Eyes, or Crazy Eyes

Styled Hair, Wild Hair, or Pointed Hat

Worn Robes, Stylish Robes, or Strange Robes

Pudgy Body, Creepy Body, or Thin Body

### STATS

Assign these scores to your stats:

17 (+2), 15 (+1), 13 (+1), 11 (+0), 9 (+0), 8 (-1)

You start with 4+Constitution HP.

Your base damage is d4.

### STARTING MOVES

Choose a racial move:

#### ELF

Magic is as natural as breath to you. Detect Magic is a rote for you.

#### HUMAN

Choose one cleric spell, you can cast it as if it was a wizard spell.

You start with these moves:

### SPELLBOOK

You have mastered several spells and inscribed them in your spellbook. You start out with three first level spells in

your spellbook as well as the cantrips. Whenever you gain a level, you add a new spell of your level or lower to your spellbook. Your spellbook is 1 weight.

### PREPARE SPELLS

When you spend uninterrupted time (an hour or so) in quiet contemplation of your spellbook, you lose any spells you already have prepared and prepare new spells of your choice from your spellbook whose total levels don't exceed your own+1. You also prepare your cantrips; they don't count against your limit.

### CAST A SPELL (INT)

When you release a spell you've prepared, roll+Int. On a 10+, the spell is successfully cast and you do not forget the spell—you may cast it again later. On a 7-9, the spell is cast, but choose one:

- You draw unwelcome attention or put yourself in a spot (the GM will describe it)
- The spell disturbs the fabric of reality as it is cast—take -1 ongoing to Cast a Spell until you Prepare Spells again.
- After it is cast, the spell is forgotten. You cannot cast the spell again until you Prepare Spells.

### SPELL DEFENSE

When you craft an ongoing spell into a makeshift shield of arcane energy to deflect an attack, the spell is ended and you subtract the spell's level from the damage done to you.

### RITUAL

When you draw on a place of power to create a magical effect, tell the GM what you're trying to achieve. The GM will tell you "yes, you can do that, but..." and then 1 to 4 of the following:

- It's going to take days/weeks/months
- First you must \_\_\_\_
- You'll need help from \_\_\_\_
- It will require a lot of money
- The best you can do is a lesser version, unreliable and limited
- You and your allies will risk danger from \_\_\_\_
- You'll have to disenchant \_\_\_\_ to do it

### ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

#### GOOD

Use magic to directly aid another

#### NEUTRAL

Discover something about a magical mystery

## EVIL

Use magic to cause terror and fear

## GEAR

Your Load is 5+Str. You start with your spellbook (1 weight) and dungeon rations (1 weight, 5 uses). Choose your defenses:

- Leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Bag of books (5 uses, 2 weight) and 3 healing potions

Choose your weapon:

- Dagger (Hand, 1 weight)
- staff (Close, two-handed, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- healing potion
- three antitoxin

## BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

---



---

will play an important role in the events to come. I have foreseen it!

---



---

is keeping an important secret from me.

---



---

\_\_\_\_\_ is woefully misinformed about the world; I will teach them all that I can.

## ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves. You also add a new spell to your spellbook at each level.

### PRODIGY

Choose a spell. You prepare that spell as if it were one level lower.

### EMPOWERED MAGIC

When you Cast a Spell, on a 10+ you have the option of choosing from the 7-9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these as well:

- The spell's effects are maximized
- The spell's targets are doubled

### FOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE

When you Spout Lore about something no one else has any clue about, take +1.

## KNOW-IT-ALL

When another player's character comes to you for advice and you tell them what you think is best, they get +1 forward when following your advice and you mark experience if they do.

## EXPANDED SPELLBOOK

Add a new spell from any class to your spellbook.

## ENCHANTER

When you have time and safety with a magic item you may ask the GM what it does, the GM will answer you.

## LOGICAL

When you use strict deduction to analyze your surroundings, you can Discern Realities with Int instead of Wis.

## ARCANE WARD

As long as you have at least one prepared spell, you have +2 armor.

## COUNTERSPELL

When you are affected by arcane magic you may attempt to counter the spell. Stake one of your prepared spells of equal or higher level on the defense and roll+Int. On a 10+, the spell is countered and has no effect on you. On a 7-9, the spell is countered and you forget the spell you staked. If the spell has other targets they are effected as usual.

## QUICK STUDY

When you see the effects of an arcane spell, ask the GM the name of the spell and its effects. You take +1 when acting on the answers.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

## MASTER

Requires: Prodigy

Choose a spell. You prepare that spell as if it were one level lower.

## GREATER EMPOWERED MAGIC

Replaces: Empowered Magic

When you Cast a Spell, on a 10-11 you have the option of choosing from the 7-9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these effects as well. On a 12+ you get to choose one of these effects for free.

- The spell's effects are doubled
- The spell's targets are doubled

## ENCHANTER'S SOUL

Requires: Enchanter

When you have time and safety with a magic item in a place of power you can empower that item so that the next time you use it its effects are amplified, the GM will tell you exactly how.

## HIGHLY LOGICAL

Replaces: Logical

When you use strict deduction to analyze your surroundings, you can Discern Realities with Int instead of Wis. On a 12+ you get to ask the GM any three questions, not limited by the list.

## ARCANE ARMOR

Replaces: Arcane Ward

As long as you have at least one prepared spell, you have +4 armor.

## PROTECTIVE COUNTER

Requires: Counterspell

When an ally within sight of you is affected by an arcane spell, you can counter it as if it effected you. If the spell affects multiple allies you must counter for each ally separately.

## ETHEREAL TETHER

When you have time with a willing or helpless subject you can craft an ethereal tether with them. You perceive what they perceive and can Discern Realities about someone tethered to you or their surroundings no matter the distance. Someone willingly tethered to you can communicate with you over the tether as if you were in the room with them.

**MYSTICAL PUPPET STRINGS**

When you use magic to control a person's actions they have no memory of what you had them do and bear you no ill will.

**SPELL AUGMENTATION**

When you deal damage to a creature you can shunt a spell's energy into them—end one of your ongoing spells and add the spell's level to the damage dealt.

**SELF-POWERED**

When you have time, arcane materials, and a safe space, you can create your own place of power. Describe to the GM what kind of power it is and how you're binding it to this place, the GM will tell you one kind of creature that will have an interest in your workings.

# 15

## Wizard Spells

### CANTRIPS

#### Light Cantrip

An item you touch glows with arcane light, about as bright as a torch. It gives off no heat or sound and requires no fuel, but it is otherwise like a mundane torch. You have complete control of the color of the flame. The spell lasts as long as it is in your presence.

#### Unseen Servant Cantrip

You conjure a simple invisible construct that can do nothing but carry items. It has Load 2 and carries anything you hand to it. It cannot pick up items on its own and can only carry those you give to it. Items carried by an unseen servant appear to float in the air a few paces behind you. An unseen servant that takes damage or leaves your presence is immediately dispelled.

#### Prestidigitation Cantrip

You perform minor tricks of true magic. If you touch an item as part of the casting you can make cosmetic changes to it: clean it, soil it, cool it, warm it, flavor it, or change its color. If you cast the spell without touching an item you can instead create minor illusions no bigger than yourself. Prestidigitation illusions are crude and clearly illusions; they won't fool anyone, but they might entertain them.

### 1ST LEVEL SPELLS

#### Contact Spirits Level 1 Summoning

Name the spirit you wish to contact (or leave it to the GM). You pull that creature through the planes, just close enough to speak to you. It is bound to answer any one question you ask to the best of its ability.

#### Detect Magic Level 1 Divination

One of your senses is briefly attuned to magic. The GM will tell you what here is magical.

#### Telepathy Level 1 Divination

You form a telepathic bond, allowing you to speak to the person you touch with this spell through your thoughts. You can only have one telepathic bond at a time.

#### Charm Person Level 1 Enchantment

The person (not beast or monster) you touch while casting this spell counts you as a friend until they take damage or you prove otherwise.

#### Invisibility Level 1 Illusion

Touch an ally: nobody can see them. They're invisible! The spell persists until the target attacks or you dismiss the effect. While the spell is ongoing, you can't cast another spell.

#### Magic Missile Level 1 Evocation

Projectiles of pure magic spring from your fingers. Deal 2d4 damage to one

target.

#### Alarm Level 1

Walk a wide circle. Until you prepare spells again your magic will alert you if a creature crosses that circle. Even if you are asleep, the spell will shake you from your slumber.

### 3RD LEVEL SPELLS

#### Dispel Magic Level 3

Choose a spell or magic effect in your presence: this spell rips it apart. Lesser spells are ended, powerful magic is just reduced or dampened so long as you are nearby.

#### Visions Through Time Level 3 Divination

Cast this spell and gaze into a reflective surface to see into the depths of time. The GM will reveal the details of a Grim Portent to you—a bleak event that will come to pass if not directly stopped. They'll tell you something useful about how you can interfere with the Grim Portent's dark outcomes. Rare is the Portent that claims "You'll live happily ever after." Sorry.

#### Fireball Level 3 Evocation

You evoke a mighty ball of flame that envelops your target and everyone nearby, inflicting 2d6 damage which ignores armor.

#### Mimic Level 3

You take the form of someone you touch while casting this spell. Your physical characteristics match theirs exactly but your behavior may not. This change persists until you take damage or choose to return to your own form. While this spell is ongoing, you lose access to all your wizard moves.

#### Mirror Image Level 3 Illusion

You create an illusory image of yourself. The next attack against you effects the illusory image, not you. The image then dissipates.

#### Sleep Level 3 Enchantment

1d4 enemies you can see of the GM's choice fall asleep. Only creatures capable of sleeping are effected. They awake as normal: loud noises, jolts, pain.

### 5TH LEVEL SPELLS

#### Cage Level 5 Evocation

The target is held in a cage of magical force. Nothing can get in or out of the cage. The cage remains until you cast another spell or dismiss it. While the spell is ongoing, the caged creature can hear your thoughts and you cannot leave sight of the cage.

#### Contact Other Plane Level 5 Divination

You send a request to another plane. Specify what you'd like to contact by location, type of creature, name, or title. You open a two-way communication

with that creature. Your communication can be cut off at any time by you or the creature you contacted.

#### **Polymorph Level 5 Enchantment**

Your touch reshapes a creature entirely, they stay in the form you craft until you Cast a Spell. Describe to the GM the new shape you craft, including any stat changes, significant adaptations, or major weaknesses. The GM will then tell you one or more of these:

- The form will be unstable and temporary
- The creature's mind will be altered as well
- The form has an unintended benefit or weakness

#### **Summon Monster Level 5 Summoning**

A monster appears and aids you as best it can. Treat it as your character, but with access to only the basic moves. It has +1 modifier for all stats and 1 HP. Choose the type of monster by choosing 1d6 statements from the list below. The GM will tell you the type of monster you get based on your choices:

- The monster has +2 instead of +1 to one stat
- The monster is not reckless
- The monster does 1d8 damage
- The monster's bond to your plane is strong, +3 HP for each level you have
- The monster has some useful adaptation

The creature remains on this plane until it dies or you dismiss it. While the spell is ongoing, you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

### **7TH LEVEL SPELLS**

#### **Dominate Level 7 Enchantment**

Your touch pushes your mind into someone else's. You gain 1d4 hold. Spend one hold to make the target take one of these actions:

- Speak a few words of your choice
- Give you something they hold
- Make a concerted attack on a target of your choice
- Truthfully answer one question

If you run out of hold the spell ends. If the target takes damage you lose 1 hold. While the spell is ongoing you cannot Cast a Spell.

#### **True Seeing Level 7 Divination**

You see all things as they truly are. This effect persists until you tell a lie or dismiss the spell. While this spell is ongoing, you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### **Shadow Walk Level 7 Illusion**

The shadows you target with this spell become a portal for you and your al-

lies. Name a location, describing it with a number of words up to your level. Stepping through the portal deposits you and any allies present when you cast the spell at the location you described. The portal may only be used once by each ally.

#### **Contingency Level 7 Evocation**

Choose a 5th level or lower spell you know. Describe a trigger condition using a number of words equal to your level. The chosen spell is held until you choose to unleash it or the trigger condition is met, whichever happens first. You don't have to roll for the held spell, it just takes effect. While you have a contingent spell, you can't gain another one.

#### **Cloudkill Level 7 Summoning**

A cloud of fog drifts into this realm from beyond the Black Gates of Death, filling the immediate area. Whenever a creature in the area takes damage it takes an extra 1d6 damage which ignores armor. This spell persists so long as you can see the affected area, or until you dismiss it.

### **9TH LEVEL SPELLS**

#### **Antipathy Level 9 Enchantment**

Choose a target and describe a type of creature or an alignment. Creatures of the specified type or alignment cannot come within sight of the target. If a creature of the specified type does find itself within site of the target, it immediately flees. This effect continues until you leave the target's presence or you dismiss the spell. While the spell is ongoing, you take -1 to Cast a Spell.

#### **Alert Level 9 Divination**

Describe an event. The GM will tell you when that event occurs, no matter where you are or how far away the event is. If you choose, you can view the location of the event as though you were there in person. You can only have one Alert active at a time.

#### **Soul Gem Level 9**

You trap the soul of a dying creature within a gem. The trapped creature is aware of its imprisonment but can still be manipulated through spells, Parley, and other effects. All moves against the trapped creature are at +1. You can free the soul at any time but it can never be recaptured once freed.

#### **Shelter Level 9 Evocation**

You create a structure out of pure magical power. It can be as large as a castle or as small as a hut, but is impervious to all non-magical damage. The structure endures until you leave it or you end the spell.

#### **Perfect Summons Level 9 Summoning**

You teleport a creature to your presence. Name a creature or give a short description of a type of creature. If you named a creature, that creature appears before

you. If you described a type of creature, a creature of that type appears before you.

# 16

## Equipment

The musty tombs and forgotten treasure troves of the world are filled with useful items. The Fighters can find a sharp new sword or the Thief might stumble across a deadly poison. Most items are mundane; not magical or intrinsically unique in any way. Any item that is magical or one-of-a-kind is not mundane for the purposes of moves. The Fighter's signature weapon is never mundane.

Weapons don't kill monsters, people do. That's why weapons don't have damage listed. A weapon is useful primarily for its tags which describe what the weapon is useful for. A dagger is not useful because it does more or less damage than some other blade. It's useful because its small and easy to strike with at close distance. A dagger in the hands of a Wizard is not nearly so dangerous as one in the hands of a skilled Fighter.

The stats below are for typical items. There are, of course, variations. A dull long sword might be -1 damage instead while a masterwork dagger could be +1 damage. Consider the following to be stats for a typical weapon of that type—a specific weapon could have different tags to represent its features.

### TAG GLOSSARY

*n Ammo* : It counts as n ammo for appropriate ranged weapons.

*Applied* : It's only useful when carefully applied to a person or something they eat or drink.

*n Armor* : It protects you from harm and absorbs damage. When you take damage, subtract your armor from the total. If you have more than one item with n-armor, only the highest value counts.

*+n Armor* : It protects you and stacks with other armor. Add its value to your total armor.

*Awkward* : It's unwieldy and tough to use.

*+Bonus* : It modifies your effectiveness in some particular situation. It might be "+1 forward to Spout Lore" or "-1 ongoing to Hack and Slash."

*Clumsy* : It's tough to move around with. -1 ongoing while using it.

*n coins* : How much it costs to buy, normally. If the cost includes "-Charisma" a little negotiation subtracts the haggler's Charisma score (not modifier) from the price.

*+n Damage* : It is particularly harmful to your enemies. When you deal damage, you add n to it.

*Dangerous* : It's easy to get in trouble with it. If you interact with it without proper precautions the GM may freely invoke the consequences of your foolish actions.

*Forceful* : It can knock someone back a pace, maybe even off their feet.

*Ignores Armor* : Don't subtract armor from the damage taken.

*Messy* : It does damage in a particularly destructive way, ripping people and things apart.

*n Piercing* : It goes right through armor. When you deal damage with n piercing, you subtract n from the enemy's armor for that attack.

*Precise* : It rewards careful strikes. You use Dex to Hack and Slash with this weapon, not Str.

*Ration* : It's edible, more or less.

*Reload* : After you attack with it, it takes more than a moment to reset for another attack.

*Requires* : It's only useful to certain people. If you don't meet the requirements it works weakly, if at all.

*Slow* : It takes minutes or more to use.

*Thrown* : Throw it at someone to hurt them. If you Volley with this weapon, you can't choose to mark off ammo on a 7-9. Once you throw it, it's lost until you can recover it.

*Touch* : It's used by touching it to the target's skin.

*Two-handed* : It takes two hands to use it effectively.

*Stun* : When you attack with it, it does stun damage instead of normal damage.

*n Uses* : It can only be used n times.

*n Weight* : Count the listed amount against your Load. Something with no listed weight isn't designed to be carried. 100 coins in standard denominations is 1 weight. The same value in gems or fine art may be lighter or heavier.

*Worn* : To use it, you have to be wearing it.

### RANGE TAGS (FROM CLOSEST TO FURTHEST)

*Hand* : It's useful for attacking something within your reach, no further.

*Close* : It's useful for attacking something at arm's reach plus a foot or two.

*Reach* : It's useful for attacking something that's several feet away—maybe as far as ten.

*Near* : It's useful for attacking if you can see the whites of their eyes.

*Far* : It's useful for attacking something in shouting distance.

### WEAPONS

Ragged Bow **Near, 15 coins, 2 Weight**

Fine Bow **Near, Far, 60 coins, 2 Weight**

Hunter's Bow **Near, Far, 100 coins, 1 Weight**

Crossbow **Near, +1 damage, Reload, 35**



coins, 3 Weight

Bundle of Arrows 3 Ammo, 1 coin, 1 Weight

Elven Arrows 4 Ammo, 20 coins, 1 Weight

Club, Shillelagh Close, 1 coins, 2 Weight  
Staff Close, Two-handed, 1 coins, 1 Weight

Dagger, Shiv, Knife Hand, 2 coins, 1 Weight

Throwing Dagger Thrown, Near, 1 coin, 0 Weight

Short Sword, Axe, Warhammer, Mace Close, 8 coins, 1 Weight

Spear Reach, Thrown, Near, 5 coins, 1 Weight

Long Sword, Battle Axe, Flail Close, +1 damage, 15 coins, 2 Weight

Halberd Reach, +1 damage, Two-handed, 9 coins, 2 Weight

Rapier Close, Precise, 25 coins, 1 Weight

Dueling Rapier Close, 1 piercing, Precise, 50 coins, 2 Weight

## ARMOR

Leather, Chainmail 1 Armor, Worn, 10 coins, 1 Weight

Scale Mail 2 Armor, Worn, Clumsy, 50 coins, 3 Weight

Plate 3 Armor, Worn, Clumsy, 350 coins, 4 Weight

Shield +1 Armor, 15 coins, 2 Weight

## DUNGEON GEAR

Adventuring Gear 5 Uses, 20 coins, 1 Weight

Adventuring gear is a collection of useful mundane items such as chalk, poles, spikes, ropes, etc. When you rummage through your adventuring gear for some useful mundane item, you find what you need and mark off a Use.

Bandages 3 Uses, Slow, 5 coins, 0 Weight

When you have a few minutes to bandage someone else's wounds, heal them of 4 damage and expend a use.

Poultices and Herbs 2 Uses, Slow, 10 coins, 1 Weight

When you carefully treat someone's wounds with poultices and herbs, heal them of 7 damage and expend a use.

Healing Potion 50 coins

When you drink an entire healing potion, heal yourself of 10 damage or remove one debility, your choice.

Keg of Dwarven Stout 10 coins, 4 Weight

When you open a keg of dwarven stout

and let everyone drink freely, take +1 to your Carouse roll. If you drink a whole keg yourself, you are very very drunk.

Bag of Books 5 Uses, 10 coins, 2 Weight

When your bag of books contains just the right book for the subject you're Spouting Lore on, consult the book, mark off a use, and take +1 to your roll.

Antitoxin 10 coins

When you drink antitoxin, you're cured of one poison affecting you.

Dungeon Rations Ration, 5 Uses, 3 coins, 1 Weight

Not tasty, but not bad either.

Personal Feast Ration, 1 Use, 10 coins, 1 Weight

Ostentatious to say the least.

Dwarven Hardtack Requires Dwarf, Ration, 7 Uses, 3 coins, 1 Weight

Dwarves say it tastes like home. Everyone else says it tastes like home, on fire, in a hog farm.

Elven Bread Ration, 7 Uses, 10 coins, 1 Weight

Only the greatest of elf-friends are treated to this rare delicacy.

Halfling Pipeleaf 5 Uses, 5 coins, 1 Weight

When you share halfling pipeleaf with someone, expend two uses and take +1 forward to Parley with them.

## POISONS

Oil of Tagit Dangerous, Applied, 15 coins, 0 Weight

The target falls into a light sleep

Bloodweed Dangerous, Touch, 12 coins, 0 Weight

The target deals -1d4 damage ongoing until cured

Goldenroot Dangerous, Applied, 20 coins, 0 Weight

The target treats the next creature they see as a trusted ally, until proved otherwise

Serpent's Tears Dangerous, Touch, 10 coins, 0 Weight

Anyone dealing damage against the target rolls twice and takes the better result.

## SERVICES

A week's stay at a peasant inn 14-Charisma coins

A week's stay at a civilized inn 30-Charisma coins

A week's stay at the fanciest inn in town 43-Charisma coins

A week's unskilled mundane labor 10 coins

A month's pay for enlistment in an army 30 coins

A custom item from a blacksmith Base Item + 50 coins

A night's "companionship" 20-Charisma coins

An evening of song and dance 18-Charisma coins

Escort for a day along a bandit-infested road 20 coins

Escort for a day along a monster-infested road 54 coins

A run-of-the-mill killing 5 coins

An assassination 120 coins

Healing from a Chirurgeon 5 coins

A month's prayers for the departed 1 coins

Repairs to a mundane item 25% of the item's cost

## MEALS

A hearty meal for one 1 coins

A poor meal for a family 1 coins

A feast 15 coins per person

## TRANSPORT

Cart and Donkey 50 coins, Load 20

This donkey is sworn to carry your burdens.

Horse 75 coins, Load 10

Warhorse 400 coins, Load 12

Wagon 150 coins, Load 40

Barge 50 coins, Load 15

River boat 150 coins, Load 20

Merchant Ship 5,000 coins, Load 200

War Ship 20,000 coins, Load 100

Passage on a safe route 1 coins

Passage on a tough route 10 coins

Passage on a dangerous route 100 coins



**LAND AND BUILDINGS**

A hovel 20 coins  
A cottage 500 coins  
A house 2,500 coins  
A mansion 50,000 coins  
A keep 75,000 coins  
A castle 250,000 coins  
A grand castle 1,000,000 coins  
A month's upkeep 1% of the cost

**BRIBES**

A peasant dowery 20-Charisma coins  
"Protection" for a small business 100-Charisma coins  
A government bribe 50-Charisma coins  
A compelling bribe 80-Charisma coins  
An offer you can't refuse 500-Charisma coins

**GIFTS AND FINERY**

A peasant gift 1 coins  
A fine gift 55 coins  
A noble gift 200 coins  
A ring or cameo 75 coins  
Finery 105 coins  
A fine tapestry 350+ coins  
A crown fit for a king 5,000 coins

**HOARDS**

A goblin's stash 2 coins  
A lizardman's trinkets 5 coins  
A priceless sword 80 coins  
An orc warchief's tribute 250 coins  
A dragon's mound of coins and gems 130,000 coins

# 17

## Magic Items

There are stranger things in the world than swords and leather. Magic items are the non-mundane, items that have intrinsic power.

Magic items are for you to make for your game. Players can make magic items through the Wizard's ritual and similar moves. The GM can introduce magic items in the spoils of battle or the bounty of reward. This list provides some ideas, but magic items are ultimately for you to decide.

When making your own magic items keep in mind that magic items are magical. +1 damage is the realm of the mundane, magic items should provide more interesting bonuses.

### Argo-Thaan, Holy Avenger **Close, 2 Weight**

There are many swords in this world, but there is only one Argo-thaan. It is a blade of gold, silver and light, revered as a holy relic by all orders and religions for whom Good rings true. Its touch is a blessing and to many, the sight of it brings tears of joy.

In the hands of a Paladin, it strikes true and strong; his damage die becomes 1d12 and he has access to every Paladin move. As well, Argo-thaan can harm any creature of Evil, regardless of any defenses it may have. No Evil creature may touch it without suffering agony. In the hands of any non-Paladin, it is merely a sword, heavier and more cumbersome than most.

Argo-thaan, while not intelligent, will forever be drawn to a cause of True Good, like iron to a magnet.

### Arrows of Acheron **1 Ammo, 1 Weight**

Crafted in darkness by a blind fletcher, these arrows can find their target in even the deepest darkness. An archer may fire them blind, in the dark, with his eyes bound by heavy cloth and still be assured of a clean shot. If the light of the sun ever touches the arrows, however, they come apart like shadows and dust.

### Axe of the Conqueror-King **Close, 1 Weight**

It is crafted of shining steel, glowing with a golden light and imbued with mythical powers of authority. The bearer of the Axe becomes a beacon of inspiration to all she leads. Any Henchmen in her employ have +1 Loyalty, no matter whether she is a benevolent Princess or wicked Queen.

### Barb of the Black Gate **0 Weight**

A nail or spike, twisted and forever cold, said to have been pried from the Gates of Death himself. When hammered into a corpse, it disappears and ensures that corpse will never be risen again—no magic short of that of Death himself can reignite the flame of life (natural or oth-

erwise) in the body.

### Bag of Holding **0 Weight**

A bag of holding is larger on the inside than the outside, it can contain an infinite number of items, and its weight never increases. When you try to retrieve an item from a bag of holding, roll+Wis. On a 10+, it's right there. On a 7-9, choose one:

- You get the exact item, but it takes a while
- You get a similar item of the GM's choice, but it only takes a moment

No matter how many items it contains, a bag of holding is always 0 weight.

### The Burning Wheel **2 Weight**

An ancient wooden wheel, as might appear on a war-wagon, banded with steel. On a glance, it appears to be nothing special—many spokes are shattered and the thing seems mundane. Under the scrutiny of magic or the eyes of an expert, its true nature is revealed; the Burning Wheel is a gift from the God of Fire and burns with his authority.

When you hold The Burning Wheel and speak a god's name, roll+Con. On a 7+, the god you name takes notice and grants you an audience. An audience with a god is not without a price: on a 10+, you choose one of your stats and reduce it to the next lowest modifier (for example, a 14 is +1, so it would be reduced to 11, a +0). On a 7-9, the GM chooses which stat to reduce.

Once used, the Burning Wheel ignites and burns with brilliant light. It does not confer any protection from those flames, nor does it provide any bonus to swimming.

### Captain Bligh's Cornucopia **1 Weight**

A brass naval horn, curled and ornate, carved with symbols of the gods of Plenty. Sounded, the horn spills forth not sound but food. Enough to feed a meal to everyone who hears its sound.

### The Carcosan Spire **Reach, Thrown, 3 Weight**

None know from whence this spear of twisted white coral comes. Those who bear it too long find their minds full of alien dreams and begin to hear the strange thoughts of the Others. None are impervious. Used against any "natural" target (men, goblins, owlbears and the like) the Spire acts as a mere mortal spear. Its true purpose is to do harm to those things whose strange natures protect them against mundane weapons. Used thus, the Spire can wound foes otherwise invulnerable to harm. The wielder will recognize these twisted foes on sight—the Spire knows its own.

### Cloak of Silent Stars **1 Weight**

A cape of rich black velvet outside and sparkling with tiny points of light within, the Cloak bends fate, time and reality around it to protect the wearer, who may Defy Danger with whatever stat he likes. To do this, the wearer invokes the cloak's magic and his player describes how the cloak helps him "break the rules." He can deflect a fireball with his Cha by convincing it he deserves to live or elude a fall by applying the mighty logic of his Int to prove the fall won't hurt him. The Cloak makes it so. It can be used once for each stat before losing its magic.

**Coin of Remembering 0 Weight**

What appears, at a glance, to be a simple copper coin is, in truth, an enchanted coin. Its bearer can, at any time, redeem it to know immediately one fact that has been forgotten. The coin vanishes thereafter. It does not have to be a thing forgotten by the bearer, but it cannot be "known". Interpretation of this stipulation is left to the Gods. If the coin is unsuccessful, it will still paint an image in the mind's eye of someone or something that does remember what was sought.

**Common Scroll 1 Use, 0 Weight**

A common scroll has a spell inscribed on it. The spell must be castable by you or on your class's spell list for you to be able to cast it. When you cast a spell from a scroll, the spell has effect, simple as that.

**Devilsbane Oil 1 Use, 0 Weight**

A holy oil, created in limited supply by a mute sect of mountain-monks whose order protected humanity from the powers of the Demon Pits in ancient epochs. Only a few jars remain. When applied to any weapon and used to strike a denizen of any outer plane, the oil undoes the magic that binds that creature. In some cases, this will return it to its home. In others, it merely undoes any magic controlling it. The oil stays on the weapon for a few hours before it dries and flakes away.

If applied to the edges of a doorway or drawn in a circle, the oil will repel creatures whose home is any of the outer planes. They cannot pass across it. The oil lasts for one full day before it soaks in or evaporates.

**Earworm Wax 1 Use, 0 Weight**

A yellowish candle. Seems never to burn out and the light it casts is strange and weak. Its wax is always cool, too. Drip the wax into the ear of a target and gain 3 hold. Spend that hold and ask your target a question. They find themselves telling you the whole truth, despite themselves. The consequences, after the fact? Those are up to you to deal with.

**The Echo 0 Weight**

A seemingly empty bottle. Once unstopped, the whispers of another plane re-

sound once and fall silent. In the silence, the bearer learns in his soul the coming of one great danger and how he can avoid it. At any point after the Echo is used, the wielder can ignore the results of any single die roll—hers or another player—and roll again. Once opened, the Echo is released and gone forever.

**The Epoch Lens 1 Weight**

An archmage, old and too frail to leave his tower, crafted this intricate and fragile device of glass and gold to examine the histories and relics he so loved. Looking at an object through the lens reveals visions of who made it and where it came from.

**Farsight Stone 1 Weight**

Swirling clouds fill this smoky orb and those in its presence often hear strange whispers. In ancient times, it was part of a network of such stones, used to communicate and surveil across great distances. When you gaze into the stone, name a location and roll+Wis. On a hit, you see a clear vision of the location and can maintain it as long as you concentrate on the orb. On a 7–9, you draw the attention of some other thing (an angel, a demon, or the holder of another Farsight stone) that uses the stone to surveil you, as well.

**The Fiasco Codex 0 Weight**

A thick tome, said to be penned in the blood of poor fools and robber-barons by some demon prince possessed of dark humor, the Codex details tales and stories of those whose ambition overwhelmed their reason. Reading from this tome teaches one the value of clear-headedness but leaves a sense of dread behind. When you read from the Codex, Roll+Wis. On a 10+, ask two. On a 7–9, just one.

- What is my greatest opportunity, right now?
- Who can I betray to gain an advantage?
- Who is an ally I should not trust?

The Codex gives up its answers only once to each reader and takes 2 to 3 hours to read.

**Flask of Breath 0 Weight**

A simple thing, but useful when you need a breath of fresh air. The flask appears empty but cannot be filled, anything added to it simply spills out. This is because the flask is eternally full of air. If placed underwater, it will bubble forever. If pressed to the mouth, one can breathe normally—smoke is no concern, for example. I'm sure you'll find all sorts of unusual uses for it.

Folly Held Aloft, The Wax Wings, A Huge Mistake 1 Weight

Who hasn't always wanted to soar the pretty blue sky? In an attempt to grant the wishes of land-bound folk, these great magical wings were created. Known by many names and crafted by as many mages, they commonly take the shape of the wings of whatever local birds hold affection. Worn by means of a harness or, in some dire cases, a surgical procedure.

When you take to the air with these magical wings, roll+Dex. On a 10+ your flight is controlled and you may stay aloft as long as you like. On a 7–9, you make it aloft but your flight is short or erratic and unpredictable, your choice. On a 6– you make it aloft, but the coming-down part and everything between is up to the GM.

**Immovable Rod 0 Weight**

A funny metal rod with a button on it. Press the button and the rod just sticks. It freezes in place—in mid air, standing up or lying down. It can't be moved. Pull it, push it, try as hard as you like, the rod stays. Maybe it can be destroyed, maybe it can't. Push the button again and it's free—take it along with you. Might be useful to have such a stubborn thing along.

**Infinite Book 1 Weight**

This book contains an infinite number of pages in a finite space. With no limit to the pages, everything that ever was, is, or will be is contained somewhere in the book. Luckily the index is great.

When you Spout Lore while consulting the book you gain an extra clause. On a 12+ the GM will give a solution to a problem or situation you're in.

**Inspectacles 0 Weight**

Rough-hewn glass in wooden frames. Dinged up and barely held together, they somehow allow the wearer to see much more than their mere eyes might. When you Discern Realities wearing these gifted lenses, you get to bend the rules a little. On a roll of 10+, ask any three questions you like. They don't have to be on the list. As long as sight could give you answers, the GM will tell you what you want to know.

**The Ku'meh Maneuver and Other Stratagem 1 Weight**

A great leathery tome worn shiny by the hands of a hundred great generals, this book is often passed from warrior to warrior, from son to father along the great battle lines that have divided Dungeon World's past. Anyone reading it may, upon finishing for the first time, roll+Int. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7–9 hold 1. You may spend your hold to advise a companion on some matter of strategic or tactical significance. This advice allows you to, at any time, regardless of distance, roll to Aid them on any one roll. On a miss, the

GM can hold 1 and spend it to apply -2 to any roll of yours or the poor sap who listened to your advice.

#### Lamented Memento 0 Weight

Taking the form of a single lock of bright red hair, bound in a black ribbon and immune to the ravages of time, the Lamented Memento bears a grim enchantment. In it are the memories and emotions of a girl who dealt with Death at the Black Gates so many times that, in the end, they fell in love and she left the world to be with him for a time. Her memory protects the wielder. If he finds himself at the Gates, the Memento can be traded for an automatic result of 10+ on the Last Breath move.

#### Lodestone Shield +1 armor, 1 Weight

What mixed-up dummy made this? Shields are meant to repel metal, not draw it in! Emblazoned with a lion rampant, the Lodestone Shield has the power to pull blades and arrows to it. When you Defend against enemies using metal weapons you can spend one hold, per target, to disarm them. Also, sometimes you'll find a handful of loose change stuck to it.

#### Map of the Last Patrol 0 Weight

An ancient order of brave rangers once patrolled the land, protecting villages and warning kings and queens of encroaching danger. They're long gone, now, but their legacy remains. This map, when marked with the blood of a group of people, will always show their location—so long as they remain within the bounds of the map.

#### Ned's Head 1 Weight

An old skull, missing its jaw and very much worse-for-wear. The skull remembers the folly of its former owner—a man with more honor than sense. Once per night, the owner of the skull can ask "Who has it in for me?" and the skull will give up one name in a sad, lonely voice. If the owner of the skull is ever killed, it disappears surreptitiously. No-one knows where it might turn up next.

#### Nightsider's Key 0 Weight

This key unlocks any door, provided the owner of the key does not belong where she intends to go. So long as the intruder does nothing that would alert another to her presence (remaining unheard, unseen and unnoticed) and takes nothing more than her memories out with her, the key's magic will prevent her intrusion from ever being discovered. It's like she was never there at all.

#### Sacred Herbs 0 Weight

The sacred herbs, collected and prepared by an order of lost wizard-monks, can be found in bundles with two or three uses to them. Kept dry, they last in-

definitely. When smoked in a pipe or consumed in an incense burner and the thick, blue smoke inhaled, these herbs will grant strange visions of far away places and distant times. If the imbiber focuses his will on a particular person, place or thing, the herbs will respond: roll+Wis. On a 10+ the vision is clear and useful—some valid information is gained. On a 7–9 the vision is of the focus, but unclear, fraught with metaphor or somehow difficult to understand. On a miss, the GM will ask you "What is it you fear most?" You must answer honestly, of course.

#### The Sartar Duck 0 Weight

An odd, hand-carved wooden duck. Who would make such a funny thing? Whoever bears it finds himself an exceptionally gifted storyteller—no matter the language, he can make himself and his story clear to any audience. They will understand his meaning, if not his words.

#### Tears of Annalise 0 Weight

Cloudy red gemstones the size of a thumbnail, the Tears of Annalise are always found in pairs. When swallowed, they bind the swallows together—when either feels strong emotions (particularly sadness, loss, fear or desire) the other feels it, as well. The effects last until one spills the blood of the other.

#### Teleportation Room Slow

James Ninefingers, eccentric genius mage, created these room-sized magical apparati. A stone room etched with runes and scribbles, glowing with a faint blue light. When you enter and say aloud the name of a location, roll+Int. On a 10+, you arrive exactly where you'd intended. On a 7–9, the GM chooses a safe location nearby. On a miss, you end up someplace. Maybe it's nearby? It's definitely not safe. Strange things sometimes happen to those who bend time and space with these devices.

#### Timunn's Armor 1 Armor, 1 Weight

A stealthy suit of armor, it appears as many things to many people and blends in with appropriate apparel. The wearer always seems the height of fashion to any who gaze upon him.

#### Titus' Truthful Tallow 0 Weight

A candle of ivory-and-copper colored tallow with a wick of spun silver. When lit, none upon whom its light falls is able to tell a lie. They may keep silent or dissemble but when asked a question directly, they can speak naught but truth.

#### Tricksy Rope 1 Weight

A rope that listens. Does tricks, too, like a smart and more obedient snake might. Tell it "coil" or "slack" or "come here, rope" and it will.

#### The Sterling Hand 0 Weight

Crafted by dwarven whitesmiths, this mirrored-metal hand is deeply scored with runes of power and rejuvenation. Meant to replace wounded or destroyed limbs from mining accidents, the Sterling Hand bonds to the wound, old or new, and is strong and stout. It can be used as a weapon (near range) and is made of pure enough silver to harm creatures affected by such.

#### Vellius's Gauntlets 1 Weight

Crafted in the name of Vellius the Clumsy, Vellius the Butter-Fingered, Vellius the Clod, these gloves of simple cloth prevent the wearer from dropping any object she does not intend to. She cannot be disarmed nor fall from any rope or ladder, for example. This item can get very messy if you have something strong pulling at your legs while you grip onto something solid.

#### Violation Glaive Reach, 2 Weight

A legendary blade, said to have been thrust backwards in time from some grim future, the violation glaive is crafted of strange green iron. The blade strikes at the mind of those it wounds, as well as the body. When you Hack & Slash on a 10+ you have an additional option: you can deal your normal damage, let them counter attack you, and instill the emotion of your choice (maybe fear, reverence, or trust)

#### Vorpall Sword Close, 3 Piercing, 2 Weight

Snicker-snack and all that. Sharp as anything, this simple-seeming sword means to separate one thing from another—the limb from the body or folk from their lives. When you deal damage with the Vorpall Sword, your enemy must choose something (an item, an advantage, a limb) and lose it, permanently.



# 18

## The GM

This section is about the art and rules of being the Game Master or GM. There are many styles of GMing epic fantasy games with things like dragons and dungeons and brave adventurers but Dungeon World is designed for one of those styles in particular. These rules will help you run a game in that style.

Just because the rules are mechanical doesn't mean they're removed from the fiction of what's actually happening in the game or that you're playing to win. You'll be refereeing, adjudicating, and narrating your part the game much like you would any other game. You'll just have a framework that helps you determine what to say, at what time.

The GM's rules are rules, just like the rules for moves and character creation and all the rest. Just like every other rule in the game, they are designed to help you play a game of exploration and epic fantasy. You will of course be making your own rules, in the form of custom moves, but the GM's rules are as important to playing Dungeon World as the rules for rolling dice. Play with the rules as written before making any changes, and think carefully about any changes you do make.

### THE BASICS

Dungeon World is built on a framework: the GM's **agenda**, **principles**, and **moves**. The GM's agenda is what they set out to do when they sit down at the table. The principles are the guides that keep the GM focused on their agenda. The GM's moves are the concrete, moment-to-moment things the GM does to drive the game forward. The GM's moves aren't like player moves, they aren't triggered by the fiction. Instead they are actions that drive the game onward.

The GM's agenda, principles, and moves are rules just like damage or stats or HP. You should take the same care in altering them or ignoring them that you would with any other rule. Changing a principle may have just as much of an effect on your game as changing the Fighter's damage dice or giving the Cleric access to Wizard spells.

### ALWAYS SAY

When running Dungeon World as the GM you say these things:

- What the rules demand
- What the adventure demands
- What honesty demands
- What the principles demand

The players have it easy—they just say what their characters say, think and do. You have it a bit harder. You have to say everything else. So what do you say?

Say **what the rules tell you to**. If a move has triggered, yours or the players', then say what the rules tell you to say. Embellish and expand but use the rules to give you a start. The rules will always give you material to work with.

Say **what the adventure demands**. You'll know some things before you sit down at the table. You might know where the goblins are hiding or when the reinforcements are going to arrive. If the players haven't done anything to change those things, stick with them.

Always **be honest**. If the rules tell you to give out information, like the Spout Lore and Discern Realities moves, do it. Don't lie or give half truths; be open and honest—generous, even. The player characters have risked something to get that information just by rolling so make it worth their while. If you don't know the answer make one up or turn the question back to the players. Once you tell the players it's set in stone, no going back on it.

This applies in general to the players' actions, too. If they have worked to achieve something, you should give it to them fully. You're not here to fight back against the players; you're not opposed to them at all. You are playing the game with them.

At all times, **use your principles and agenda** as a filter or inspiration. If something falls flat it's usually because you ignored one of your principles or acted on a different agenda. If you're unsure of what you're about to say just take a moment and look at your agenda and principles to make sure you're abiding by them.

### AGENDA

The GM's agenda is what they sit down at the table to do:

- Make the world fantastic
- Fill the characters' lives with adventure
- Play to find out what happens

Everything you say, create, and do at the table and away from the table is to accomplish these three goals and no others. Things that aren't on this list aren't your goals. You're not trying to beat the players or test their ability to solve complex traps. You're not here to give the players a chance to explore your finely crafted setting. You're most certainly not here to tell everyone a planned story.

That one deserves repeating: **you are not here to tell everyone a planned story**. Don't ever plan a storyline. You do not know what will happen to the players' characters any more than they do. Your job is to portray a fantastic world, not provide a canned plot.

To that end, Dungeon World adventures **never** presume player actions. A Dungeon World adventure describes a location in motion, someplace important with creatures pursuing their own goals. As the players come into conflict with that location, it will snowball into action. You'll honestly portray the repercussions of their actions.

When you play this way you get to share in the fun of finding out what happens to the characters and the world around them. You're not a frustrated novelist trying to organize your unruly characters. You're a participant in a great story that's unfolding. So really—don't plan the story. The rules of the game will fight you.

**Fill the character's life with adventure** means helping the players create a world that's exciting and full of epic foes to battle, strange places to explore, and glorious treasure to discover. Adventurers are always caught up in some plot or world-threatening danger or another—encourage and foster that kind of action in the game.

The players have an agenda too, but it's probably something they'll do by default: portray their characters.

## PRINCIPLES

- Draw maps, leave blanks
- Address the characters, not the players
- Embrace the fantastic
- Make a move that follows
- Never speak the name of your move
- Give every monster life
- Name every person
- Ask questions and use the answers
- Be a fan of the characters
- Think Dangerous
- Begin and end with the fiction
- Think offscreen, too

Your principles are your guides. Often, when it's time to make a move, you'll already have an idea. Quickly run it past your principles and make sure it fits, then go with it.

### DRAW MAPS, LEAVE BLANKS

Dungeon World is mostly in our imaginations, but we can actually see it when we draw a map. So, make use of maps. You won't always be drawing them yourself, but any time there's a new location draw it on a map (or make a new map for it).

When you draw a map, it doesn't have to be complete. Leave blanks, places that are unknown to you. As you play you'll get more ideas or the players will give you inspiration to work with.

### ADDRESS THE CHARACTERS, NOT THE PLAYERS

Addressing the characters, not the play-

ers, means that you don't say "Whit, is Dunwick doing something about that wight?" Instead you say "Dunwick, what are you doing about the wight?" Talking this way keeps the game rooted in the fiction and not at the table. It's important to the flow of the game, too. If you talk to the players you may leave out details that are important to what moves the characters make. Since moves are always based on the actions of the character you need to think about what's happening in terms of characters—not players.

### EMBRACE THE FANTASTIC

The fantastic is the core of fantasy: magic, strange vistas, gods, demons, and abominations. The player characters already have these kind of abilities, so you should reflect them in the world.

### MAKE A MOVE THAT FOLLOWS

When you make a move what you're actually doing is taking some element of the fiction and bringing it to bear against the characters. Your move should always follow from the fiction, and you never speak its name. Instead describe the fictional actions that take place which follow from the situation established.

### NEVER SPEAK THE NAME OF YOUR MOVE

There is no quicker way to ruin the consistency of Dungeon World than to tell the players what move you're making. Your moves are prompts to you, not things you say directly.

You never show the players that you're picking a move from a list. You know the reason the slavers dragged off Omar was because you made the "Put someone in a spot" move, but you show it to the players as a straightforward outcome of their actions.

### GIVE EVERY MONSTER LIFE

Monsters are nameless hordes of creatures that stand between the players and what they want. Give each monster details that bring it to life: smells, sights, sounds. Your monsters are arrows, fired en masse at the players. Give each enough detail to make it real, but don't cry when it gets slain by intrepid adventurers.

### NAME EVERY PERSON

Every person gets a name. You'll have a name list to work from on your adventure sheet, so don't worry too much about it. Anyone that the players interact with has a name. They probably have a personality and some goals or opinions too, but you can figure that out as you go. Start with a name. The rest can flow from there.

How do you know if someone gets a name? If you start dealing with them as an individual (not just "a member of the Knob Street gang" or "a goblin ambusher") it's time for a name.

### ASK QUESTIONS AND USE THE ANSWERS

You don't have to know everything. If you don't know, or you don't have an idea, just ask the players and use what they say.

The easiest question to use is "What do you do?" Whenever you make a move, end with "What do you do?" You don't even have to ask the person you made the move against. Take that chance to shift the focus elsewhere: "Rath's spell is torn apart with a flick of the mage's wand. Finnegan, that spell was aiding you. What are you doing now that it's gone?"

### BE A FAN OF THE CHARACTERS

Treat the players' characters like characters you watch on TV. You want to see how things turn out for them. You're not here to make them lose, or to make them win, and definitely not to guide them to your story. You're here to portray the interesting world around them and see how interacting with that world changes everything.

### THINK DANGEROUS

Thinking Dangerous means that everything in the world is a target. You're thinking like an evil overlord: no single life is worth anything, there is nothing sacrosanct. Everything can be put in danger, everything can be destroyed. Nothing you create is ever protected. Whenever your eye falls on something you've created, think dangerous. Think how it can be put in danger, fall apart, crumble.

### BEGIN AND END WITH THE FICTION

Everything you and the players do in Dungeon World comes from and leads to fictional events. When the players make a move, they always take a fictional action to trigger it, apply the rules, and get a fictional effect. When you make a move it always comes from the fiction.

You can apply this to everything you say. Start with the fiction ("The ogre's axe comes sailing down into your shoulder..."), apply the rules ("...you take 12 damage..."), go back to the fiction ("...as your collar bone cracks beneath your armor. What do you do?").

**THINK OFFSCREEN TOO**

Just because you're a fan of the characters doesn't mean everything happens right in front of them. Sometimes your best move is in the next room, or another part of the dungeon, or even back in town. Make your move elsewhere and show the effects later.

**MOVES**

- Use a monster, danger, or location move
- Reveal an unwelcome truth
- Show signs of doom
- Deal damage
- Use up their resources
- Turn their move back on them
- Separate them
- Give an opportunity that fits a class' abilities
- Show a downside to their class, race, or equipment
- Offer an opportunity, with or without cost
- Put someone in a spot
- Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask

Whenever everyone looks to you to see what happens choose one of these. Each move is something that occurs in the fiction of the game—they aren't code words or special terms. "Use up their resources" literally means to expend the resources of the characters.

Of course you don't say that to the players. You never speak the name of your move (it's one of your principles). You make it a real thing that happens to them: "As you dodge the hulking ogre's club, you slip and land hard. Your sword goes sliding away into the darkness. You think you saw where it went but the ogre is lumbering your way. What do you do?"

No matter what move you make always follow up with "What do you do?" Your move is a way of fulfilling your agenda—part of which is to fill the character's lives with adventure. When a spell goes wild or the floor drops out from under them adventurers react.

**WHEN TO MAKE A MOVE**

You make a move when everyone looks to you to find out what happens. When it's your turn to say something in the conversation you make a move. In particular, you make a soft move: a move that sets up a future move.

Making a soft move just means that you put events in motion, then let the players react. If they don't do anything about it you follow through with the full consequences, making another (harder) move. Showing signs of doom is your most versatile soft move since the doom you por-

tend is a move waiting to happen.

Of course your moves apply when the players undertake something that's not a player move. In that case the players will say something, like "I lay my case before the king, pleading for aid," and look to you to find out what happens. Since they haven't made a move (there's no leverage to make a Parley) you just respond with a soft move of your own as setup by the fiction.

You also make a move when the players give you a golden opportunity. A golden opportunity is any time they ignore a threat or when they fail a roll (6-).

When they give you a golden opportunity, you can make your move just as hard as you like. A hard move is one that is irrevocable and immediate. The players immediately feel the consequences of the move and have to deal with them. Dealing damage is a hard move, since the damage is immediately applied.

Soft moves are useful to setup future harder moves. When the doom you show signs of is an onslaught of goblin arrows, if the players don't do something to get out of the way, you can follow through with damage as a hard move. Ignoring the oncoming arrows is a golden opportunity.

**CHOOSING A MOVE**

To choose a move, start by looking at the obvious consequences of the action that triggered it. If you already have an idea, think on it for a second to make sure it fits your agenda and principles and then do it. **Let your moves snowball**. Build on the success or failure of the characters moves and on your own previous moves.

You can choose to save up your moves instead. Use this option sparingly, only when you're sure the consequences of their action occurred off screen and that you'll be able to come up with those consequences later. The saved move should always be used in the same physical area, such as a dungeon complex or sprawling swamp. Your players will come to expect you to make hard moves on the tail of their failed rolls—this will throw them off. Their actions will instead come back to bite them later. Be careful with it.

**MAKING YOUR MOVE**

When making a move, keep your principles in mind. In particular, "never speak the name of your move" and "address the characters, not the players." Your moves are not mechanical actions happening around the table. They are concrete events happening to the characters in the fictional world you are describing.

Note that "Deal damage" is a move, but other moves may include damage as well.

When an ogre flings you against a wall you take damage as surely as if he had smashed you with his fists. If a monster deals damage incidentally as part of another move, like charging past Titanius slamming her to the ground, the damage dealt is equal to half the monster's normal damage.

If a move causes damage not related to a monster, like a collapsing tunnel or fall into a pit, use the damage rules on page X (Blood and Guts chapter).

After every move you make, always ask "What do you do?" The players' characters are the stars, remember.

**USE A MONSTER, DANGER, OR LOCATION MOVE**

Each monster in an adventure has moves associated with it, as do many locations. A monster or location move is just a description of what that location or monster does, maybe "hurl someone away" or "bridge the planes." If a move (like Hack and Slash) says that a monster gets to make an attack, make a move with that monster.

The overarching dangers of the adventure also have moves associated with them. Use these moves to bring that danger into play, which may mean more monsters.

**REVEAL AN UNWELCOME TRUTH**

An unwelcome truth is a fact the players wish wasn't true: that the room's been trapped, maybe, or that the helpful goblin is actually a spy. You never make up an unwelcome truth when making this move—you just bring one to light. Reveal to the players just how much trouble they're in.

**SHOW SIGNS OF DOOM**

This is one of your most versatile moves. 'Doom' is anything bad that's coming. With this move, you just show them that something's going to happen unless they do something about it. Remember to ask "What do you do?"

**DEAL DAMAGE**

When you deal damage you choose one source of damage that's fictionally threatening a character and apply it. In combat with a lizard man? It stabs you. Running from a collapsing tunnel? Some rocks catch your ankle.

The amount of damage is decided by the source. In some cases, this move might involve trading damage both ways, with the player character also dealing damage.

Most damage is based on a dice roll. When a player takes damage, tell them what to roll, you never need to touch the dice. If the player is too cowardly to find out their own fate, they can ask another player to roll for them.

Dealing damage is a hard move. Use it carefully.

**USE UP THEIR RESOURCES**

Surviving in a dungeon, or anywhere dangerous, often comes down to supplies. With this move, something happens to use up some resource: weapons, armor, healing, ongoing spells. You don't always have to use it up permanently. A sword might just be flung to the other side of the room, not shattered.

**OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY WITH OR WITHOUT COST**

Show them something they want: riches, power, glory. If you want, you can associate some cost with it too, of course.

Remember to lead with the fiction. You don't say "This area isn't dangerous so you can make camp here, if you're willing to take the time." You make it a solid fictional thing and say "Helferth's blessings still hang around the shattered altar. It's clearly been untouched, the goblins don't come here. It's a nice safe spot, but the chanting from the ritual chamber is getting louder. What do you do?"

**PUT SOMEONE IN A SPOT**

A spot is someplace where they have to make tough, ugly choices. Put them in the path of destruction. Put someone or something they care about in a dangerous situation. Whatever you do, just make sure they're someplace where they have to take action and then ask "What do you do?"

**TELL THEM THE REQUIREMENTS OR CONSEQUENCES AND ASK**

This move is particularly good when they've done something that's not a move, or failed a move. They can do it, sure, but they'll have to meet the requirements. Or, they can do it, but there will be consequences. Maybe they can swing across the chasm, fully armored, and leap into battle, but the rope will be stressed beyond usefulness afterwards. Maybe they can swim through the crocodilian-infested moat before be-

ing devoured, but they'll need a distraction. Of course this is made clear to the characters, not just the players: the crocodilians are slaving hungry and starved, or the rope already has dangerous give.

**DUNGEON MOVES**

Dungeon Moves are a special subset that are used to make or alter a dungeon on the fly. Use these if your players are exploring a hostile area that you don't already have planned all the way through.

Map out the area being explored as you make these moves. Most of them will require you to add a new room or element to your map.

- Change the environment
- Point to a looming threat
- Introduce a new faction or type of creature
- Use a threat from an existing faction or type of creature
- Make them backtrack
- Present riches at a price
- Present a challenge to one of the characters

You can make these moves whenever everyone looks to you to say something, when the players present you an opportunity, or when the players miss on a roll. They're particularly well-suited for when the players look at you to find out what a new room or area is like.

**CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT**

The environment is the general feel of the area the players are in: carved tunnels, warped trees, safe trails, or whatever else. This is your opportunity to introduce them to a new environment: the tunnels gradually become naturally carved, the trees are dead, or the trails are lost and the wilderness takes over. Use this move to vary the types of areas and creatures the players will face.

It's an opportunity for you to interject with a change in scenery and play up the themes and dangers that are to come. Snowball this move with itself over time to gradually shift the dungeon to something new and exciting by using one or two elements at a time. First the scent of brimstone fills the tunnels, then hellish sigils mar the walls, then the moans of the damned and before the players know it, they're not in a cavern at all—they're in the pit of a demon lord!

**POINT TO A LOOMING THREAT**

If you know that something lurking and waiting for the players to stumble upon it, this move shows them the signs and clues. This move is the dragon's footprints in the mud or the slimy trail of the gelatinous cube.

This move means that when the players

finally come face-to-face with the threat, they'll have some ideas and fear about what awaits them. Use it to build tension or, in some cases, provide hints that prove to be a surprise. It's not a wicked red dragon like the players expected, it's a wounded silver drake who needs their help.

**INTRODUCE A NEW FACTION OR TYPE OF CREATURE**

A type of creatures is a broad grouping: orcs, goblins, lizardmen, golems, etc.

A faction is a group of creatures united by a similar goal. Once you introduce them you can begin to make moves and cause trouble for the players with those creatures or NPCs.

Introducing means giving some clear sensory evidence or substantiated information. Don't be coy, the players should have some idea what you're showing the presence of. You can, however, be subtle in your approach. No need to have the cultist overlord waving a placard and screaming in the infernal tongue every single time.

You don't have to warn the players about this move. A hard application of this move will snowball directly into a combat scene or ambush.

**USE A THREAT FROM AN EXISTING FACTION OR TYPE OF CREATURE**

Once the characters have some been introduced to the presence a faction or type of creature you can use monsters of that type.

Use the factions and types broadly. Orcs are accompanied with their hunting worgs. A mad cult probably has some undead servants or maybe a few beasts summoned from the deepest pits. This is a move that, often, you'll be making subconsciously—it's just implementing the tools you've set out for yourself in a clear and effective manner.



**MAKE THEM BACKTRACK**

Look back at the spaces you've added to the map. Is there anything useful there as yet undiscovered? Can you add a new obstacle that can only be overcome by going back there? Is there a locked door here and now whose key lies in an earlier room?

When backtracking, take the opportunity to show the effect the players have had on the areas they've left behind. What new threats have sprung up in their wake? What didn't they take care of that's waiting for their return?

Use this move to make the dungeon a living, breathing place. There is no stasis in the wake of the characters' passing. Add reinforcements, cave in walls, cause chaos. Make the dungeon evolve in the wake of the characters' actions.

**PRESENT RICHES AT A PRICE**

What do the players want? What might they give something up for?

Put some desirable item just out of reach. Find something they're short on: time, HP, gear, whatever. Find a way to make what they want available if they give up what they have.

The simplest way to use this move is the promise of gold out of the way of the main objective. Will they stop to pry the ruby eyes from the idol when they know that the virgin sacrifice looms closer and closer? Use this move and you can find out.

**PRESENT A CHALLENGE TO ONE OF THE CHARACTERS**

Challenge a character by looking at what they're good at. Give the Thief a lock to pick, show the Cleric evil gods to battle against. Give the Wizard magical mysteries to investigate. Show the Fighter some skulls he can crack. Give someone a chance to shine.

As an alternative, challenge a character by looking at what they're bad at or what they've left unresolved. If the Bard has a long con running what steps will he take to cover it up when someone figures him out? If the Wizard has been summoning demons then what happens when word gets out?

This move can give a character the spotlight—even if just for a moment. Try to give everyone a chance to be the focus of play using this move from session to session.

# 19

## First Session

The first session of a game of *Dungeon World* begins with character creation. Character creation is also world creation, the details on the character sheets and the questions the GM asks establish what *Dungeon World* is like—who lives in it and what's going on.

This section is for the GM so it's addressed to you—the GM. For the players, the first session is just like every other. They just have to play their characters like real people and explore *Dungeon World*. The GM has to do a little more in the first session. They establish the world and the threats the players will face. Don't worry, it's fun.

### PREP

Before the first session, you'll need to print some stuff. Print off:

- A few copies of the basic moves and special moves (double sided, basic on one side and special on the other). You'll want about one per player.
- One copy of each class sheet, double sided.
- One copy each of the cleric and wizard spell sheets, double sided.
- A few copies of the equipment sheet.
- The GM moves.
- The GM worksheets.

You'll also need to read this whole book, especially the sections on GMing (GM moves) and the basic moves. It's a good idea to be acquainted with the class moves too, so you can be prepared for them. Be especially sure to read the rules for Fronts, but don't create any yet.

Think about fantastic worlds, strange magic, and foul beasts. If you've played other fantasy games like *Dungeons and Dragons* think back to what made your old games so much fun. Remember the games you played and the stories you told. They can all provide inspiration for your *Dungeon World* game. Watch some movies, read some comics; get heroic fantasy into your brain.

What you bring to the first session, ideas-wise, is up to you. At the very least bring your head full of ideas. That's the bare minimum.

If you like you can plan a little more. Maybe think of an evil plot, or who's behind it, or some monsters you'd like to use.

If you've got some spare time on your hands you can even draw some maps (but remember, from your Principles: leave blanks) and imagine specific locations. Flexibility is key when planning: what happens during character creation trumps anything you wrote ahead of time.

The one thing you absolutely can't bring

to the table is a planned storyline or plot. You don't know the heroes or the world before you sit down to play so planning anything concrete is just going to frustrate you. It also conflicts with your Agenda: play to find out what happens.

Don't use the Fronts rules (in the next chapter) for the first session either. Those will come with time but in the first session you need to be able to focus more on getting the game rolling. The big picture doesn't matter so much, yet. Instead focus on getting the players into action, interacting with each other, and using the rules.

### GETTING STARTED

When everyone shows up for the first session briefly introduce anyone who hasn't played before to *Dungeon World*. Cover the mechanical basis of moves. Introduce the character classes, help players pick their classes, and walk them through character creation.

During this entire process, especially character creation, ask questions. Look for interesting facts established by the characters' Bonds, moves, classes, and descriptions and ask about those things. Be curious! When someone mentions the demons that slaughtered their village find out more about them. After all, you don't have anything (except maybe a dungeon) and everything they give you is fuel for future adventures.

Also pay attention to the players' questions. When mechanical questions come up answer them. When questions of setting or fiction come up your best bet is to turn those questions around. When a player says "Who is the King of Torsea" say "I don't know. Who is it? What is he like?" Collaborate with your players. Asking a question means it's something that interests them so work with them to make the answers interesting. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" and ask them the same questions; work together to find a fantastic and interesting answer.

Share the ideas you've brought to the table (either general ones or even a specific dungeon). If you're interested in starting with the players hunting for a lost wizard, tell them that. Until the players agree, it's just your idea. Once they nod their heads, it's part of the game.

Once everyone has their characters created you can take a deep breath. Look back over the questions you've asked and answered so far. You should have some notes that will point you towards what the game might look like. Look at what the players have brought to the table. Look at the ideas that've been stewing away in your head. It's time for the adventure to begin!

## THE FIRST ADVENTURE

The first adventure is really about finding out what future sessions will deal with. Throughout the first adventure keep your eye out for unresolved threats; note dangerous things that are mentioned but not dealt with. These will be fuel for future sessions.

Start the session with a group of player characters (maybe all of them) in a tense situation. Use anything that demands action: outside the entrance to a dungeon, ambushed in a fetid swamp, peeking through the crack in a door at the orc guards, or being sentenced before the King. If the situation stems directly from the characters and your questions, all the better.

Here's where the game starts. The players will start saying and doing things, which means they'll start making moves. For the first session you should watch especially carefully for when moves apply, until the players get the hang of it. Often, in the early sessions, the players will be most comfortable just narrating their actions—this is fine. When a move triggers let them know. Say "It sounds like you're trying to..." and then walk them through the move. Players looking for direction will look to their character sheet. Be quick to ask "so what are you actually doing?" when a player just says "I Hack and Slash him." Ask, too, "how?" or "with what?".

For the first session, you have a few specific goals:

- Establish details, describe
- Use what they give you
- Ask questions
- Leave blanks
- Look for interesting facts
- Help the players understand the moves
- Give each character a chance to shine
- Introduce NPCs

### ESTABLISH DETAILS, DESCRIBE

All the ideas and visions in your head don't really exist in the fiction of the game until you share them, describe them and detail them. The first session is the time to establish the basics of what things look like, who's in charge, what they wear, what the world is like, what the immediate location is like. Describe everything but keep it brief enough to expand on later. Use a detail or two to make a description really stand out as real.

### USE WHAT THEY GIVE YOU

The best part of the first session is you don't have to come with anything concrete. You might have a dungeon sketched out but the players provide the real meat—use it. They'll emerge from the darkness of that first dungeon and

when they do and their eyes adjust to the light, you'll have built up an exciting world to explore with their help. Look at their Bonds, their moves, how they answer your questions and use those to fill in the world around the characters.

### ASK QUESTIONS

You're using what they give you, right? What if you need more? That's when you draw it out by asking questions. Poke and prod about specific things. Ask for reactions "what does Lux think about that?" "is Avon doing something about it?"

If you ever find yourself at a loss, pause for a second and ask a question. Ask one character a question about another. When a character does something, ask how a different character feels or reacts. Questions will power your game and make it feel real and exciting. Use the answers you find to fill in what might happen next.

### LEAVE BLANKS

This is one of your Principles, but it's especially true during the first session. Every blank is another cool thing waiting to happen, leave yourself a stock of them.

### LOOK FOR INTERESTING FACTS

There are some ideas that, when you hear them, just jump out at you. When you hear one of those ideas, just write it down. When a player mentions the Duke of Sorrows being the demon he bargained with, note it. That little fact is the seed for a whole world.

### HELP THE PLAYERS UNDERSTAND THE MOVES

You've already read the game, the players may not have, so it's up to you to help them if they need it. The fact is, they likely won't need it much. All they have to do is describe what their character does, the rules take care of the rest.

The one place they may need some help is remembering the triggers for the moves. Keep an ear out for actions that trigger moves, like attacking in melee or consulting their knowledge. After a few moves the players will likely remember them on their own.

### GIVE EACH CHARACTER A CHANCE TO SHINE

As a fan of the heroes (remember your Agenda?) you want to see them do what they do best. Give them a chance at this, not by tailoring every room to their skills, but by portraying a fantastic world (Agenda again) where there isn't one solution to everything.

### INTRODUCE NPCS

NPCs bring the world to life. If every monster does nothing more than attack and every blacksmith sets out their wares for simple payment the world is dead. Instead give your characters, especially those that the players show an interest in, life (Principles, remember?). Intro-

duce NPCs but don't protect them. The recently-deceased Goblin King is just as useful for future adventures as the one who's still alive.

# 20

## Fronts

Fronts are secret tomes of GM knowledge. With the exception of a few sneaky PC tricks Fronts are your purview and are a place where you'll build the adversaries, organizations, and other misfortune that the characters will come in conflict with. A Front is a collection of linked Dangers—threats to the characters specifically and to the people, places, and things the characters care about. It also includes one or more Impending Dooms, the horrible things that will happen without the players' intervention. "Fronts" comes, of course, from "fighting on two fronts" which is just where you want the characters to be—surrounded by threats, danger and adventure.

Fronts are built outside of active play. They're the solo fun that you get to have between games—rubbing your hands and cackling evilly to yourself as you craft the foes with which to challenge your PCs. You may tweak or adjust the Fronts during play (who knows when inspiration will strike?) but the meat of them comes from preparation between sessions.

Fronts are designed to help you organize your thoughts on PC opposition. They're here to contain your notes, ideas, and plans for these opposing forces. When you're in a bind your Fronts are where you're going to turn and say "oh, so *that's* what I should do". Consider them an organizational tool, as inspiration for present and future mayhem.

When you're building Fronts, think about all the creepy dungeon denizens, the rampaging hordes and ancient cults that you'd like to see in your game. Think in broad strokes at first and then, as you build Dangers into your Fronts, you'll be able to narrow those ideas down. When you write your Campaign Front, think about session—to—session trends. When you write your Adventure Fronts, think about what's important right here and right now. When you're done writing a few Fronts you'll be equipped with all the tools you'll need to challenge your players and ready to run Dungeon World.

### CAMPAIGN AND ADVENTURE FRONTS

At their core, all Fronts contain the same components. They sort and gather your Dangers into easy—to—use clusters. There are, however, two different *kinds* of Fronts available to you. On the session—to—session level there's your Adventure Fronts. These Fronts will see use for 3 or 4 sessions each. They're tied to one problem and will be dealt with or cast aside as the characters wander the dungeon or uncover the plot at hand. Think of them as episodic content: "Today, on Dungeon World . . ."

Tying your Adventure Fronts together is

your Campaign Front. While the Adventure Fronts will contain immediate Dangers—the Orcs in Hargrosh Pass, say—the Campaign Front contains the Dark God Grishkar who drives the Orcs to their pillaging. The Campaign Front is the unifying element that spans your all the sessions of your Dungeon World game. It will have slower—burning Portents but they'll be bigger in scope and have a deeper impact on the world. Most importantly they'll be scarier if they're allowed to resolve.

When a Danger from an Adventure Front goes without resolution you'll have to make a decision. If the Danger is something you like and feel has a place in the larger story of your game don't hesitate to move it to the Campaign Front. You're able to make smaller Dangers that went unresolved into bigger Dangers some day later on. You can move Dangers from the Campaign Fronts to the an Adventure Front if you're ready for the big showdown, too.

### CREATING FRONTS

Here's how a Front comes together:

- Choose Campaign Front or Adventure Front
- Create 2–3 Dangers
- Choose their Impending Doom
- (For an Adventure Front, 1–3 Grim Portents)
- (For the Campaign Front, 3–5 Grim Portents)
- Write 1–3 stakes questions
- List the general cast of the Front

### CREATING DANGERS

Not every single element of your game will warrant a Danger—traps, some roving monsters and other bits of ephemera may just be there to add flavour but aren't important enough to warrant inclusion. That's okay. Fronts are here to keep you appraised of the bigger picture. Dangers are divided into a handful of categories, each with its own name and **impulse**.

Every Danger has a crucial motivation that drives it called its "impulse." The impulse exists to help you understand that Danger. What pushes it to fulfill its Impending Doom? Impulse can help you translation the Danger into action.

When creating Dangers for your Front, think about how each one interacts as a facet of the Front as a whole. Keep in mind the people, places, and things that might be a part of the threat to the world that the Front represents. How does each Danger contribute to the Front?

*Let's say we have an idea for a Front—an ancient portal has been discovered in the icy north. We'll call our Front "The Opening of the White Gate".*

The easiest place to start is with people and monsters. Cultists, ogre chieftains, demonic overlords and the like are all excellent Dangers. These are the creatures that have risen above mere monster status to become serious threats on their own. Groups of monsters, too, can be Dangers—goblin tribes or a rampaging centaur khanate, for example.

*For the Front we're creating, we can pick a few different groups or people who might be interested in the gate. The College of Arcanists, perhaps. There's a golem, too, we've decided, that protects the forgotten portal. The golem is just an obstacle, so we won't make him a Danger.*

Thinking more broadly, less obvious elements of the world can be Dangers. Blasted landscapes, intelligent magical items, ancient spells woven into the fabric of time. These things fulfill the same purposes as a mad necromancer—they're part of the Front, a Danger to the world.

*For our Front, we'll add the Gate itself.*

Lastly, if we think ahead, we can include some overarching Dangers. The sorts of things that are in play outside the realm of the obvious—godly patrons, hidden conspiracies and cursed prophecies waiting to be fulfilled.

*Perhaps the White Gate was carved in the ancient past, hidden by a race of Angels until the Day of Judgement. We'll add the "Argent Seraphim" to our Front.*

Of course, there's so much more I could add to my Front, but there's two reasons not to go overboard: firstly, I want to leave room for discovery. Like a map, blank spaces can always be filled in later. Leaving room for player contribution and future inspiration means I'll have freedom to alter the Front and make it fit the game as the story emerges. Secondly, not every bad thing that could happen deserves Danger—hood. If you're uncertain, think about it this way: Dangers can always get worse.

*A barbarian tribe near the Gate, the frozen tundra itself, a band of rival adventurers; all these things could be dangerous elements of the game but they're not important enough just yet to deserve to be Dangers.*

Creating Dangers is a way to slice up your overall Front concept into smaller, easier to manage pieces. Dangers are a tool for adding detail to the right parts of the Front and for making the Front easier to manage in the long run.

Once you've named and added a Danger to the Front you need to choose a type for that Danger from the list below. Alternately you can use the list of types to inspire Dangers: with your Front in mind, peruse the list and pick one or two that fit.

*For our three Dangers (The College of Arcanists, The White Gate and the Argent Seraphim) we've selected Cabal, Dark Portal and Choir of Angels, respectively.*

## TYPES OF DANGERS

- Ambitious Organizations
- Planar Forces
- Arcane Enemies
- Hordes
- Cursed Places

### AMBITIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- Misguided Good (*impulse: to do "what is right" no matter the cost*)
- Thieves Guild (*impulse: to take by subterfuge*)
- Cult (*impulse: to infest from within*)
- Religious Organization (*impulse: to establish and follow doctrine*)
- Corrupt Government (*impulse: to maintain the status quo*)
- Cabal (*impulse: to absorb those in power, to grow*)

### GM MOVES FOR AMBITIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- Attack someone by stealthy means (kidnapping, etc.)
- Attack someone directly (with a gang or single assailant)
- Absorb or buy out an someone important (an ally, perhaps)
- Influence a body of control (change a law, manipulate doctrine)
- Establish a new rule (within the organization)
- Claim territory or resources
- Negotiate a deal
- Observe a potential foe in great detail

### PLANAR FORCES

- God (*impulse: to gather worshippers*)
- Demon Prince (*impulse: to open the gates of Hell*)
- Elemental Lord (*impulse: to tear down creation to its component parts*)
- Force of Chaos (*impulse: to destroy all semblance of order*)

- Choir of Angels (*impulse: to pass judgement*)
- Construct of Law (*impulse: to eliminate perceived disorder*)

### GM MOVES FOR PLANAR FORCES

- Turn an organization (corrupt or infiltrate with influence)
- Give dreams of prophecy
- Lay a Curse on a foe
- Extract a promise in exchange for a boon
- Attack indirectly, through intermediaries
- Rarely, when the stars are right, attack directly
- Foster rivalries with other, similar powers
- Expose someone to a Truth, wanted or otherwise

### ARCANE ENEMIES

- Lord of the Undead (*impulse: to seek true immortality*)
- Power-mad Wizard (*impulse: to seek magical power*)
- Sentient Artifact (*impulse: to find a worthy wielder*)
- Ancient Curse (*impulse: to ensnare*)
- Chosen One (*impulse: to fulfill or resent their destiny*)
- Dragon (*impulse: to hoard gold and jewels, to protect the clutch*)

### GM MOVES FOR ARCANE ENEMIES

- Learn forbidden knowledge
- Cast a spell over time and space
- Attack a foe with magic, directly or otherwise
- Spy on someone with a scrying spell
- Recruit a follower or toady
- Tempt someone with promises
- Demand a sacrifice

## HORDES

- Wandering Barbarians (*impulse: to grow strong, to drive their enemies before them*)
- Humanoid Vermin (*impulse: to breed – to multiply and consume*)
- Underground Dwellers (*impulse: to defend the complex from outsiders*)
- Plague of the Undead (*impulse: to spread*)

### GM MOVES FOR HORDES

- Assault a bastion of civilization
- Embrace internal chaos
- Change direction suddenly
- Overwhelm a weaker force
- Display a show of dominance
- Abandon an old home, find a new one
- Grow in size by breeding or conquest
- Appoint a champion
- Declare war and act upon that declaration without hesitation or deliberation

## CURSED PLACES

- Abandoned Tower (*impulse: to draw in the weak-willed*)
- Unholy Ground (*impulse: to spawn evil*)
- Elemental Vortex (*impulse: to grow, to tear apart reality*)
- Dark Portal (*impulse: to disgorge demons*)
- Shadowland (*impulse: to corrupt or consume the living*)
- Place of Power (*impulse: to be controlled or tamed*)

### GM MOVES FOR CURSED PLACES

- Vomit forth a lesser monster
- Spread to an adjacent place
- Draw the attention of a curious party
- Grow in intensity or depth
- Leave a lingering effect on an inhabitant or visitor
- Hide something from sight
- Offer power
- Dampen magic or increase its effects
- Confuse or obfuscate truth or direction
- Corrupt a natural law

## DESCRIPTION AND CAST

Write up something short to remind you just what this Danger is about; something to describe it in a nutshell. Don't worry about where it's going or what could happen—Grim Portents and the Impending Doom will handle that for you, you'll get to those in a bit. If there are multiple people involved in the Danger (an orc warlord and his clansmen, a hateful God and his servants) go ahead

and give them a name and a detail or two now. Leave yourself some space as you'll be adding to this section as you play.

## CUSTOM MOVES

Sometimes, a Danger will require some particular move that might not exist yet. Write one or two you think you might need, now. They may be player moves or GM moves, as you see fit. Of course, if you're writing a player move, keep your (the GMs) hands off the dice and keep in mind the basic structure of a move. A 10+ is a complete success; a 7–9 is a partial success. On a miss, maybe the custom move does something specific, or maybe not—maybe you just get to make a move or work towards fulfilling a Grim Portent. The formatting of these moves varies from move to move. See the Advanced Delving chapter for details on how to create your own.

*For the Opening of the White Gate, I just know some fool PC is going to end up in the light that spills from the gate, so I'm writing a move to show what might occur.*

## GRIM PORTENTS

Grim Portents are dark designs for what could happen if a Danger goes unchecked. Imagine yourself a kind of diviner working some scrying spell into the future of your campaign or the adventure that the characters are undertaking. Think about what would happen if the Danger existed in the world but the PCs didn't. If all these awful things you've conjured up had their run of the world. Scary, huh? The Grim Portents are your way to codify the plans and machinations of your Dangers. A Grim Portent can be a single interesting event or a chain of steps. When you're not sure what to do next push your Danger towards resolving a Grim Portent.

More often than not, each Portent relies on its predecessors to resolve. The Orcs tear down the city only after the peace talks fail, for example. A simple Front will progress from bad to worse to much worse in a clear path forward. Sometimes, Grim Portents are unconnected pathways to the Impending Doom. The early manifestations of Danger might not all be related. It's up to you how complex your Front will be. Whenever a Danger comes to pass, check the other Dangers in the Front. In a complex Front, you may need to cross off or alter the Grim Portents. That's fine, you're allowed.

Think of your Grim Portents as possible moves waiting in the wings. When the time is right, unleash them on the world.

*I've chosen a few Grim Portents for my new Front.*

- The College sends an expedition to the Gate
- The Key is discovered
- The First Trumpet sounds
- A Champion is chosen
- The Second Trumpet sounds
- The Herald appears
- The Gate is Opened

Grim Portents are the sword of inevitability that hangs over the characters. The struggles that they fight every day on the field of battle, in the courts of society and in the deepest dungeons of the world. Think about how the Dangers contribute to the Front you're creating, both externally (the effect of the Danger on the world around it) and internally (the politics or struggles of its parts). Keep scale in mind, too. Grim Portents don't all have to be world-shaking. They can simply represent a change in direction for a Danger. Some new way for it to cause trouble in the world.

When a Grim Portent comes to pass, check it off—the Portent is a part of the world, now. The prophecy has come true! A Portent that has come to pass might have ramifications for your other Fronts, too. Have a quick look when your players aren't demanding your attention and feel free to make changes. One small Portent may resound across the whole Campaign in subtle ways.

You can advance a Grim Portent descriptively or prescriptively. Descriptively means that, through play, you've seen the change happen, so you mark it off. Maybe the players sided with the goblin tribes against their lizardmen enemies—now the goblins control the tunnels. Lo and behold, this was the next step in a Grim Portent. Prescriptive is when, due to a failed player move or a golden opportunity, you advance the Grim Portent as your hard move. That step comes to pass, show its effects and keep on asking "what do you do, now?"

## IMPENDING DOOM

At the end of every Danger's path is an Impending Doom. This is the final toll of the bell that signals the Danger's triumphant resolution. When a Grim Portent comes to pass the Impending Doom grows stronger, more apparent and present in the world. These are the Very Bad Things that every Danger, in some way, seeks to bring into effect. Choose one of the types of Impending Doooms and give it a concrete vision in your Front. These may change in play—often they will, as the characters meddle in the affairs of the world. Don't fret, you can change them later.

- Tyranny (of the strong over the weak or the few over the many)
- Pestilence (the spread of sickness and disease, the end of wellness)
- Destruction (apocalypse, ruin and woe)
- Usurpation (the chain of order comes apart, someone rightful is displaced)
- Impoverishment (enslavement, the abandonment of goodness and right)
- Rampant Chaos (laws of reality, of society, or any order is dissolved)

When all of the Grim Portents of a danger come to pass, the Impending Doom sets in. The Danger is then resolved but the setting has changed in some drastic way—even on a small level. This will almost certainly change the Front at large, as well. Making sure that these effects are felt and significant to the NPCs, places, and life of the campaign world is a big part of making them feel real.

## STAKES

Your stakes questions are 1–3 questions about people, places, or groups that you're interested in. People include characters and NPCs, your choice. Remember that your agenda includes "Play to find out what happens?" Well this is a way of reminding yourself what you want to find out.

Stakes are concrete and clear. Don't write stakes about vague feelings or incremental changes. Stakes are about important changes that affect the PCs and the world. A good stakes question is one that, when it's resolved, means that things will never be the same again.

The most important thing about stakes is that you find them interesting. Your stakes should be things that you genuinely want to know, but that you're also willing to not decide. Once you've written it as a stake, it's out of your hands, you don't get to just make it up anymore. Now you have to play to find out.

Playing to find out is one of the biggest rewards of playing Dungeon World.

You've written down something tied to events happening in the world that you want to find out about—now you get to do just that.

Once you have your stakes your front is ready to play.

*My stakes questions include, as tailored to my group:*

- Who will be the Champion?
- How will Lux respond to the Light from Beyond?
- Will the College be able to recruit Avon?

## RESOLVING A FRONT

Often a Front will be resolved in a simple and straightforward manner. A Front representing a single dungeon may have its Dangers killed, turned to good, or overcome by some act of heroism. In this case the Front is dissolved and set aside. Maybe there are elements of the Front—Dangers that go unresolved or leftover members of a Danger that's been cleared—that lives on. Maybe they move to the Campaign Front as brand new Dangers?

The Campaign Front will need a bit more effort to resolve. It'll be working slowly and subtly as the course of the Campaign rolls along. You won't introduce or resolve it all at once, but in pieces. The characters work towards defeating the various minions of the Big Bad that lives in your Campaign Front. In the end, though, you'll know that the Campaign Front is resolved when the Dark God is confronted, the Undead Plague is wiped clear, and the heroes emerge bloodied but victorious. Campaign Fronts take longer to deal with, but in the end they're the most satisfying to resolve.

When a Front is resolved, take some extra time to sit down and look at the aftermath. Did any Grim Portents come to pass? Even if a Danger is stopped, if one or two Grim Portents are fulfilled, the world is changed. Keep this in mind when you write your future Fronts. Is there anyone who could be moved from the now—defeated Front somewhere else? Anyone get promoted or reduced in stature? The resolution of a Front is an important event!

When you resolve an Adventure Front, usually that means the adventure itself has been resolved. This is a great time to take a break and look at The Campaign Front you have. Let it inspire your next Adventure Front. Write up a new Adventure Front or polish off one you've been working on, draw a few maps to go with it and get ready for the next big thing.

## MULTIPLE ADVENTURE FRONTS

As you start your campaign you're likely to have a lightly-detailed Campaign Front and a single, detailed Adventure Front. Characters may choose, part-way through an Adventure, to pursue some other course. You might end up with a handful of partly-resolved Adventure Fronts. Not only is this okay, it's a great way to explore a world that feels alive and organic. Always remember, Fronts continue along apace no matter whether the characters are there to see it or not. Think offscreen, especially where Fronts are concerned.

When running two Adventure Fronts at the same time they can be intertwined or independent. The Anarchists corrupting the city from the inside are a different Front from the orcs massing outside the walls, but they'd both be in play at once. On the other hand one dungeon could have multiple Fronts at play within its walls: the powers and effects of the cursed place itself and the warring humanoid tribes that inhabit it.

A situation warrants multiple Adventure Fronts when there are multiple Impending Doooms, all equally potent but not necessarily related. The Impending Doom of the Anarchists is chaos in the city, the Impending Doom of the orcs is its utter ruination. They are two separate Fronts with their own Dangers. They'll deal with each other, as well, so there's some room for the players choosing sides or attempting to turn the Dangers of one Front against the other.

When dealing with multiple Adventure Fronts the players are likely to prioritize. The cult needs attention now, the orcs can wait, or vice versa. These decisions lead to the slow advancement of the neglected Front, eventually causing more problems for the players and leading to new adventures. This can get complex once you've got three or four Fronts in play. Take care not to get overwhelmed.



# 21

## An Example Front: The Opening of the White Gate

### DANGERS

#### THE COLLEGE OF ARCANISTS (CABAL)

**Impulse:** to absorb those in power, to grow

##### GRIM PORTENTS

- The College sends an expedition to the Gate
- The Key is discovered
- The Gate's Power is harnessed
- The College seizes control

**Impending Doom:** Usurpation

#### THE WHITE GATE (DARK PORTAL)

**Impulse:** to disgorge demons

##### GRIM PORTENTS

- The First Trumpet sounds
- The Second Trumpet sounds
- The Gate is opened

**Impending Doom:** Destruction

#### THE ARGENT SERAPHIM (CHOIR OF ANGELS)

**Impulse:** to pass judgement

##### GRIM PORTENTS

- A Champion is chosen
- An organization of power is formed or co-opted
- The Herald appears
- Judgement is passed

**Impending Doom:** Tyranny

### DESCRIPTION AND CAST

An ancient gate, buried for aeons in the icy north. It opens into a realm of pure light, guarded by the Argent Seraphim. It was crafted only to be opened at Judgment Day, so that the Seraphim could come forth and purge the realm of men. Recently uncovered by the College of Arcanists, who do not yet understand its terrible power.

- Oren Balserus, Arcanist Supreme
- Hali'el, voice of the Seraphim
- Drudge, a manservant

### CUSTOM MOVES

When you stand in the presence of the Light From Beyond, roll+Wis. On a 10+ you are judged worthy, the Argent Seraphim will grant you a vision or boon. On a 7-9 you are under suspicion and see a vision of what dark fate might befall you if you do not correct your ways. On a miss, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting.

### STAKES

- Who will be the Champion?
- How will Lux respond to the holy light?
- Will the College be able to recruit Avon?

# 22

## Blood and Guts

Death and dismemberment are common dangers for adventurers to face in Dungeon World. In the course of play, characters will take damage, heal, and maybe even die. A character's health is measured by their HP (HP being short for hit points). Damage subtracts from HP, which may lead to death. In the right conditions, or with medical or magical help, damage is healed and HP is restored.

### HP

A character's HP is a measure of their stamina, endurance, and health. More HP means the character can fight longer and endure more before facing Death's cold stare. Think of HP in the abstract—a character with high HP can't be hit in the head any more times than one with low HP—they just have greater stores of energy to expend before it comes to blows-to-the-head.

Your class tells you how many HP you get. Your Constitution (the score, not the modifier) always comes into play as well so more Constitution means more HP. If your Constitution permanently changes during play you adjust your HP to reflect your new Constitution score. Unless your Constitution changes your maximum HP stays the same.

### DAMAGE

When a character takes damage they subtract the damage dealt from their current HP. Armor mitigates damage; if a character has armor they subtract their armor's value from the damage dealt. Damage can never take a character below 0 HP.

Damage is decided by the attacker. Each class has a base damage die, which may be modified by the weapon used. No matter the implement, the Fighter will always deal more damage than a Wizard—it's about training and skill. Monsters and other non-player characters have a static damage instead of a dice to roll.

Player characters deal damage according to their class, the weapon used and the move they've made. When a character is armed, they deal their class's damage. If a character is unarmed, they probably can't deal damage, or they might do 1 stun damage.

If a move just says "deal damage" the character rolls their class's damage dice plus any bonuses or penalties from moves or weapons. If a move specifies an amount of damage, use that in place of the class's damage roll.

Monsters' damage is listed in their description. Use this damage any time the monster takes direct action to hurt someone, even if they use a method other than

their normal attack.

Other sources of damage—like being struck by a chunk of a collapsing tower, or falling into a pit—are left to the GM based on these options:

- It threatens bruises and scrapes at worst: d4 damage
- It's likely to spill some blood, but nothing horrendous: d6 damage
- It might break some bones: d8 damage
- It could kill a common person: d10 damage

Add the Ignores Armor tag if the source of the damage is particularly large or if the damage comes from magic or poison.

Temporary or circumstantial armor works the same way: 1 armor for partial cover, 2 armor for major cover.

Remember that damage is both prescriptive and descriptive: if a move says someone takes damage—they have been struck by the weapon or ability causing the damage. If a character is struck by a weapon, they take damage. This means that you can deal damage without making a move. Think of it like an implied move: if you hurt someone and no other move applies, you just deal your damage.

Damage only applies when the injury is general. Falling into a pit trap is general, it could cause any sort of injury, so it's represented by HP loss. When the harm is specific, like an orc pulling your arm from its socket, HP should be part of the effect but not the entirety of it. The bigger issue is dealing with the newly disjointed arm: how do you swing a sword or cast a spell? Likewise having your head chopped off is not HP damage, it's just death.

### DAMAGE FROM MULTIPLE CREATURES

It's a brave monster that goes into battle alone. Most creatures fight with someone at their side, and maybe another at their back, and possibly an archer covering the rear, and so on. This can lead to multiple monsters dealing their damage at once.

If multiple creatures attack at once roll the damage die for each of them and take the highest result. If some of the creatures deal a different amount of damage roll the damage with the highest potential for each creature involved in the attack and take the highest result.

*A goblin orkaster (d10+1 damage ignores armor) and three goblins (d6 damage) all throw their respective weapons—a magical acid orb for the orkaster, spears for the rest—at Lux as she assaults their barricade. I roll the highest damage, d10+1 ignores armor, four times: once for the orkaster, and once for each of the other goblins. I take the highest result, a roll of 8, and tell Lux she takes 9 damage ignoring armor as the acid leaks into the scratches left by the spears.*

## STUN DAMAGE

Stun damage is non-lethal damage. A PC who takes stun damage is Defying Danger to do anything at all, the danger being "you're stunned." A GM character that takes stun damage counts it against their HP as usual, but when they are out of HP they are knocked out, not at the GM's mercy.

## HEALING

There are two sources of healing in Dungeon World: the passage of time and medical aid.

Whenever a character spends some time resting without aggravating their wounds they heal. The amount of healing is described in the move (Make Camp for a night in a makeshift bed, Recover for says in civilization).

Medical aid, both magical and mundane, also provides healing. The amount of damage healed is dependent on the move or item used. Some moves may fully replenish HP while others are just enough to keep someone standing through a fight.

No matter the source of the healing a character's HP can never increase over their maximum.

## DEATH

Death walks the edges of every battle. It waits silently to claim those that fall. A character who is reduced to 0 HP immediately takes his Last Breath. Death comes for commoner and king alike—no stat is added to the Last Breath roll.

What lies beyond the Black Gates of Death is unknown but it is said that many secrets of the mortal plane are laid bare in what lies beyond.

Death's bargains range from the simple to the costly. Death is capricious. One life may be traded for two more dead while for another Death may demand eternal servitude.

Depending on the outcome of the Last Breath the character may become stable. A stable character stays at 0 HP but is alive and unconscious. If they receive healing they regain consciousness and

may return to battle or seek safety. If a stable character takes damage again they face Death and draw their Last Breath once more.

## AFTER DEATH

Being an adventurer isn't easy—it's cold nights in the wild and sharp swords and monsters. Sooner or later, you're going to make that long walk to the Black Gates and give up the ghost. In Dungeon World, Death is always watching and waiting for an adventurer to slip up and visit the other side. That doesn't mean you have to give it the satisfaction of sticking around. Death, in its way, is just another challenge to conquer. Even dead adventurers can rise again.

If your character dies, you can ask the GM and the other players to try and resurrect you. The GM will tell them what it will cost to return your poor, dead character to life. If you're all willing to pay that cost and succeed at the goal set before you then your character can cross back over to the land of the living. The Resurrection spell is a special case of this: the magic of the spell gives you an easier way to get a companion back, but the GM still has a say.

While this quest is underway you can play a new character. Maybe a hireling becomes a full-fledged adventurer worthy of a whole share and a part in the real action. Maybe the characters in the party find a new friend in a steading, willing to join them. Maybe your character had a vengeful family member who now seeks to take up their blades and spells to make right what happened. In any case, make your new character as you normally would at level 1. Add Bonds with the other player characters and join in the quest to resurrect the fallen. When the price has been paid and the quest is done, you can choose which character to play. You can then retire your new character to safety or simply have them vanish into the background. At the start of any given session, choose which character you'll be playing that time around and set the other aside. Make sure this change makes sense in the story you've created—characters can't just appear out of nowhere without a good excuse.

GM, when you tell the players what needs to be done to bring their comrade back, don't feel like it has to derail the flow of the current game. Weave it in to your fronts, steadings and prep. This is a great opportunity to change focus or introduce an element you've been waiting to show off. Don't feel, either, that it has to be some great and epic quest. If the character died at the end of a goblin pike, maybe all it takes is an awkward walk home and a few thousand gold pieces donated to a local temple. Think about the ramifications of such a charita-

ble act and how it might affect the world, give the character back his sweet, sweet life and remember; Death never forgets a soul stolen from his realm.

## DEBILITIES

Losing HP is a general thing, it's getting tired, bruised, cut, and so on. Some wounds are deeper though. These are debilities.

- **Weak (Str):** You can't exert much force. Maybe some important muscles were slashed, or maybe the strength was pulled out of you by magic.
- **Shaky (Dex):** You're a little unsteady on your feet and you've got a shake in your hands.
- **Sick (Con):** Something just isn't right deep inside. It could be a disease or it might be an organ swollen to bursting.
- **Stunned (Int):** You're having trouble . . . remembering. Is that how that sentence ends?
- **Confused (Wis):** Ears ringing. Vision blurred. You're more than a little out of it.
- **Scarred (Cha):** It may not be permanent, but for now you don't look so good. Your voice is probably weak too.

Debilities are inflicted by certain monsters. Not every attack inflicts a debility—they're most often associated with magic, poison, or stranger things like a vampire sucking your blood. Each debility is tied to a stat and gives you -1 to that stat's modifier. The stat's score is unaffected so you don't have to worry about changing your Load when you're Weak.

You can only have each debility once. If you're already Sick and something makes you Sick you just ignore it.

Debilities are harder to heal than HP. Some high level magic can do it, sure, but your best bet is getting somewhere safe and spending a few days in a soft warm bed. Of course debilities are both descriptive and prescriptive: if something happens that would remove a debility, that debility is gone.

Debilities don't replace descriptions and using the established fiction. When someone loses an arm that isn't Weak, that's losing an arm. They can't hold a shield, to begin with. Don't let debilities limit you. A specific disease can have whatever effects you can dream up, Sick is just a convenient shorthand for some anonymous fever picked up from a filthy rat.

## ADVANCEMENT

Dungeon World is ever-changing. The characters change, too. As their adventures progress, player characters gain experience or XP, which lets them level up. This prepares them for greater danger, bigger adventures, and mightier deeds.

Advancement, like everything else in Dungeon World, is both prescriptive and descriptive. Prescriptive means that when a player changes their character sheet the character changes. Descriptive means that when the character changes the player should change the character sheet to reflect that.

This isn't a benefit or detriment to the players or the GM; it's not an excuse to gain more powers or take them away. It's just a reflection of life in Dungeon World.

*Gregor offers his signature weapon, an axe permanently dyed green in orc blood, as a desperate bargain to save the King from eternal damnation. Without his axe he gets none of the benefits of his signature weapon. Should he recover it he'll have access to its benefits again.*

*Avon, despite being a Wizard, has risen to the notice of Lenoral, the deity of arcane knowledge. After being blessed by an avatar of Lenoral, Avon is under the deity's watch. He can fulfill Petitions and gain boons like a Cleric.*

Descriptive changes only happen when the character has clearly gained access to an ability. Befriending a stray dog does not have the same benefits as an animal companion.

## LEVEL UP

When you **have a safe moment and XP equal to (or greater than) your current level + 7**, reset your XP to 0 and choose a new advanced move from your class. If you are the Wizard, you also get to add a new spell to your spellbook.

New moves are chosen based on the character's new level. If a move requires 6th level, it's available as the character advances from 5th to 6th level.

If your new level is 3, 6, or 9, you also get to increase a stat by 2. Increase the base score of the stat of your choice by 2, adjust the modifier to reflect the new score. Changing your Constitution increases your maximum and current HP. Ability scores can't go higher than 18.

## REQUIRES & REPLACES

Some moves depend on other moves. If another move is listed along with the

word **Requires** or **Replaces** you can only gain the new move if you have the move it requires or replaces.

A move that requires another move can only be taken if you have the move it requires already. You then have both moves and they both apply.

A move that replaces another move can only be taken if you have the move it replaces already. You lose access to the replaced move and just have the new one. The new move will usually include all the benefits of the replaced one: maybe you replace a move that gives you 1 armor with one that gives you 2 armor instead.

## BONDS

Bonds are what make you a party of adventurers, not just a random assortment of people. Seeing your bonds evolve and play off each other is one of the best parts of the game.

That said, this isn't high drama. How you feel about Titanius doesn't matter so much when you're both fighting for life and limb against a horde of demons who would happily end the world if they could. Bonds are the icing on the cake: they make your adventures (and your adventures) more interesting.

## RESOLVING BONDS

At the end of each session you may resolve one bond. Resolution of a bond depends on both you and the player of the character you share the bond with: you suggest that the bond has been resolved and, if they agree, it is.

A bond is resolved when it no longer describes how you relate to that person. That may be because circumstances have changed—Thelian used to have your back but after he didn't rush to save you from the ankheg you're not so sure. Or it could be because that's no longer a question—you guided Wesley before and he owed you, but he paid that debt when he saved your life with a well-timed spell. Any time you look at a Bond and think "that's not a big factor in how we relate anymore" the bond is at a good place to resolve.

If a character has blank Bonds left over from character creation they can resolve that Bond without asking anyone and write a new one or they can add a character's name to the Bond instead of writing a new Bond. Ignoring a Bond at character creation does not reduce the total Bonds available to the character.

## WRITING NEW BONDS

You write a new bond whenever you resolve an old one. Your new bond may be with the same character, but it doesn't have to be.

When you write a new bond first choose another character. Then pick something relevant to the last session you've just finished—maybe a place you traveled together or a treasure you discovered. Lastly, choose a thought or belief your character holds that ties the two together and an action, something you're going to do about it. You'll end up with something like this:

- Avon proved himself a coward in the dungeons of Xax'takar, he is a dangerous liability to the party and must be watched.
- Mouse's quick thinking saved me from the white dragon we faced. I owe her a boon.
- Xotoq won the Bone-and-Whispers Axe through trickery! It will be mine, I swear it.
- Valeria's kindness to the Gnomes of the Vale has swayed my heart. I will find a way to prove to her my love.

These new bonds act just like the old ones. They are still resolved and still grant XP when resolved.

If you chose not to use a starting Bond you can replace it with a new Bond at the end of any session. This does not count as resolving a Bond, you don't get XP for it.

## ALIGNMENT

Alignment is your characters' way of thinking and moral compass. For the character, this is reflected as an ethical ideal, religious strictures, or maybe just a gut instinct. It reflects the things your character might aspire to be and can guide you when you're not sure what to do next. Some characters might proudly proclaim their alignment while others might hide it away. A character might not say "I'm an evil person" but may instead say "I put myself first." That's all well and good for a character, but the world knows otherwise. Buried deep down inside is the ideal self a person wants to become—it is this mystic core that certain spells and abilities tap into when detecting someone's alignment. Every sentient creature in Dungeon World bears an alignment, be she an elf, a human, or some other, stranger thing.

The alignments are Good, Lawful, Neutral, Chaotic, and Evil. Each one shows an aspiration to be a different type of person.

Lawful creatures aspire to impose order on the world, either for their own benefit or for that of others. Chaotic creatures embrace change and idealize the messy reality of the world, prizing freedom above all else. Good creatures seek to put others before themselves. Evil creatures put themselves first at the ex-

pense of others.

A Neutral creature looks out for itself so long as that doesn't hurt anyone else much. Neutral characters are content to live their lives and pursue their own goals and let others do the same.

Most creatures are Neutral. They take no particular pleasure in harming others, but will do it if it is justified by their situation. Those that put an ideal, be it Law, Chaos, Good, or Evil, above themselves are rarer.

Even two creatures of the same alignment can come into conflict. Aspiring to help others does not grant infallibility, two Good creatures may fight and die over two different views of how to help others. A great king may wage war on a free city despite his good alignment since he sees (justly, perhaps) that the peoples of the free city will live a better life under his enlightened rule.

### CHANGING ALIGNMENT

Alignment can, and will, change. Usually such a change comes about as a gradual slide to a decisive moment when the pain caused becomes too great or the benefit too others too small.

Any time a player would earn XP from their current alignment they can, instead of taking the XP, change the alignment. The player must have a reason for the change which they can explain to the other players. If they can't explain why their character has had a change of heart they can't change alignment. Don't abuse the privilege.

The first time a player character changes alignment it must be to another alignment listed for their class, though they can choose any of the alignment moves below for a listed alignment. After that they can go to any alignment they like.

In some cases a player character may switch alignment moves while still keeping the same alignment. This reflects a smaller shift, one of priority instead of a wholesale shift in thinking. They simply choose a new move for the same alignment from below and mention why their character now sees this as important.

GM characters can change alignment as well, even if the players have already discerned the character's alignment. Since NPCs do not earn XP the GM can change the NPC's alignment any time it's warranted. The GM is subject to the same justification requirement: if an NPC with a known alignment is no longer that alignment the players may ask the GM for a reason why.

### LAWFUL

- Uphold the letter of the law over the spirit

- Fulfill a promise of import
- Bring someone to justice
- Choose honor over personal gain
- Put power in its rightful hands
- Return treasure to its rightful owner

### GOOD

- Ignore danger to aid another
- Lead others into righteous battle
- Give up powers or riches for the greater good
- Reveal a dangerous lie
- Show mercy

### NEUTRAL

### CHAOTIC

- Reveal corruption
- Break an unjust law to benefit another
- Defeat a tyrant
- Reveal hypocrisy

### EVIL

- Take advantage of someone's trust
- Cause suffering for its own sake
- Destroy something beautiful
- Upset the rightful order
- Harm an innocent

## 23

## Example

I'm GMing a game with Isaac (playing Omar), Ben (playing Brianne), Amy (playing Nora), and Dan (playing Rath). The group has come upon a tribe of goblins preparing the ritual sacrifice of a rare and valuable albino crocodile (highly regarded as pets among the wealthy of the city).

Three of the goblin warriors—drugged on narcotic vapors—charge the fighter Brianne, shrieking. Two others take cover, prepare their bows and gesture urgently toward Rath, as they make signs to ward off the evil eye. Another group of three slips into the shadows around the outer edge of the chamber, preparing a sneak attack. The high priest and her acolyte carry on with the ritual, rubbing the croc's upturned belly to keep it compliant, and bringing out the sacred knife to slit its throat.

Once I describe the situation I make sure the game's a conversation by giving them a chance to do something: "So, what do you do?"

Isaac jumps into the action first. "There's enough shadows at the edges of the chamber to hide in?" "Yeah," I say, "the goblins aren't much for lighting apparently. The edges of the chamber just kind of disappear into crumbling walls, rubble, and gloom." "Great! I'm going over here, the other side from where the sneaky ones went. Omar glances over his shoulders, pulls up his hood over his head, and ducks into the shadows. I'm going to pop out of the shadows right here, where the torches illuminate the sacrificial altar."

I look over the map and say "Well, there's certainly a danger of being discovered that I think you're defying. Sounds like Dex to me, since you're moving carefully and silently," so he picks up the dice and rolls. The dice show 1 and 2, plus his Dex of 2 is only 5. "Damn!" he says.

I already have an idea of what to do, but I check it against my list of moves to be sure. Sure enough, my idea to have him get his foot lodged in the rubble in the darkness is a move, "put someone in a spot." "As you make your way through the shadows, you put your foot down on some rubble and it shifts under you, pinning your foot. What's worse, you hear a deep raspy breath as the shifting rubble awakes something in the shadows. Are you giving away your position to cry for help or trying to get out yourself?"

"Um, I'm not sure."

"That's fine, we'll come back to you. What are the rest of you doing?"

Dan steps up. "Those goblins that ducked into the shadows? Can I see them?" "Not at first glance. Are you trying to pick them out?" "No, I'm just wondering if they'll be targets for my sleep spell. I

push the winds of magic into a lulling summer breeze that fills the room."

Dan rolls his Cast a Spell move to cast Sleep. He rolls 6 total on the dice, and he has +2 Int, for a total of 8. He has a choice to make. "You can feel the spell slipping away from you, the winds of magic are already all caught up in the goblin's ritual sacrifice. There are some options on the move, which one are you taking to keep the spell?"

Dan ponders his options. "I may need to put more of these guys to sleep. Brianne, can you cover me if I get in trouble or should I take the -1 forward?"

"Sure, I can cover you." Ben says.

"Okay, I'll take the danger option."

"Great" I say. "The narcotic vapors those goblins are on? It attunes their senses: They can feel the winds of magic just a bit, and now they're all running at you instead of Brianne. How many creatures are you putting to sleep?"

Dan rolls the dice. "Looks like only 1, damn."

"Right in the middle of some long goblin invocation the priest just drops to the floor. Her acolyte immediately starts shaking her to wake her up. Neither of them is paying much attention to the albino crocodile, which is no longer content since no one is rubbing its belly. The goblins on the fumes, though, they're coming right at Rath."

Ben jumps in. "I step between Rath and the crazed goblins and make myself a big target, drawing the goblin's attention with a yell."

"Sounds like Defend" I say.

"Okay, I rolled a 7, so I hold 1."

"Great. The three goblins on fumes practically bowl Rath over as they slam into him, swinging their daggers wildly."

"No they don't!" Ben says. "I spend my hold to get into the way and direct the attack to me."

"So Brianne steps in at the last moment, pushes Rath out of the way, and the goblins lay into her instead. Looks like 5 damage. Nora, Brianne's got these three psychotic goblins all over her, Rath's just put the priestess to sleep, the crocodile's stirring, and Omar's nowhere to be found. What are you doing?"

"First I line up a shot on one of the archer goblins, and while I'm doing that I give a little head nod and Canto heads off into the shadows, he's trained to hunt, he's looking for Omar to make sure he's alright."

I look over the Ranger's Command move, to make sure I know what the effects of Canto's search are, before responding. "Well, on his own Canto will probably

find Omar in a while. If you go into the darkness with him you'll lose his bonus to your Discern Realities roll to find Omar. But first it sounds like you're making a Called Shot?"

"Oh, the goblin archers are surprised by me? I thought I was just volleying" Amy replies.

It's time for me to make a call. "No, they're entirely focused on Rath, they're about to fire on him. I think you've got the element of surprise because they're just too focused."

"Great! Then I'll go ahead and take a shot at the arms of the one closest to me, I want him to drop his bow. Looks like that's +Dex. . . 10! He drops his bow and takes 4 damage."

I consult the goblin's stats first, then reply "yup, that'll kill him. And since you hit him dead in the arm, he doesn't get a shot off. The other one, however, releases his shot at Rath, for 2 damage. Rath, Brianne pushes you out of the way and you think you're safe for a split second before an arrow flies into your leg, what are you doing about it? Actually, hold that thought, let's see what Omar's doing."

Isaac's had some time to think things through now. "This deep raspy breath, can I make out where it's coming from? Is it like a human-sized rasp or a monster-sized rasp?"

"Sounds to me like you're trying to listen to your senses and get some information." I'm hoping that this will remind Isaac there's a move for this, instead of just telling him to make the move.

"Oh yeah! So I'm Discerning Realities, staying as quiet as I can and just trying to pick up any detail on what this thing is. With my Wisdom that's a 7, whew. What should I be on the lookout for?"

I take a second to look over my notes and the map, just to make sure I give him all the information. "Well, not the goblins, actually. They pass by, closer to the light than you, intent on backstabbing your friends and not noticing you. The thing that you do see is the tip of this huge crocodile snout peak over a mound of rubble, with that rasping sound coming from it. It looks like the albino crocodile has family, and it's big, horse-size. If you make noise by moving rocks and getting unstuck it'll almost certainly hear you. What are you doing about that?"

Isaac ponders. "So, I can try to get out of here, Defying Danger most likely from the sounds of it. Or . . . I tear off a piece of my cloak and soak it in an entire dose of my Goldenroot poison. It's an applied poison, but if I can get this huge crocodile to swallow it before it swallows me it'll treat me as a trusted ally, and then I can use it against the goblins."

"Okay!" That sounds like a risky plan to me, but it's just crazy enough to work. Time to cut back to someone else. "Omar's soaking poison into a scrap of cloak, Brianne's got three drugged-up goblins scraping at her, Nora's got an eye out for Omar, there are goblin sneaks in the shadows, one goblin archer by the altar, the crocodile is waking up, and Rath just took an arrow to the knee. Whew. Rath, what are you doing about that arrow?"



# 24

## The world

Much of the adventuring life is spent in dusty, forgotten tombs or in places of terror and life-threatening danger. It's commonplace to awaken from a short and fitful rest, still deep in the belly of the world and surrounded by foes. When the time comes to emerge from these kinds of places—whether laden with the spoils of battle or beaten and bloody—an adventurer seeks out safety and solace.

These are the comforts of civilization; a warm bath, a meal of mead and bread, company of fellow men and elves and dwarves. Often, thoughts of returning to these places are all that keep an adventurer from succumbing to madness in the depths. All fight for gold and glory but in their hearts, everyone wants a place to call "home".

This chapter covers the wider world. The grand and sweeping scope outside the dungeon. The always-marching movement of the GMs Fronts will shape the world and, in turn, the world reflects the actions the players take to stop or redirect them.

### STEADINGS

We call all the assorted communities, holds, and so on where there's a place to stay and some modicum of safety **Steadings**, as in "homestead." Steadings are places with at least a handful of inhabitants, usually humans, and some stable structures. They can be as big as a capital city or as small as few ramshackle buildings.

### CREATING THE WORLD

Remember how you started the first session? With action either underway or impending? At some point the characters are going to need to retreat from that action, either to heal their wounds or to celebrate and resupply.

When the players leave the site of their first adventure for the safety of civilization it's time to start drawing the Campaign Map. Take a large sheet of paper (plain white if you like or hex-gridded if you want to get fancy), place it where everyone can see, and make a mark for the site of the adventure. Use pencil, this map will change. It can be figurative or literal depending on your drawing skill, just make it obvious. Keep the marking small and somewhere around the center of the paper so you have space to grow.

Now add the nearest Steading, a place the characters can go to rest and gather supplies. Draw a mark for that place on the map and fill in the space between with some terrain features. Try to keep the it within a day or two of the site of their first adventure—a short trip through a rocky pass or some heavy woods is suitable, or a wider distance by road or across open

ground.

When you have time (after the first session or during a snack break or the like) use the rules to create the first Steading. Consider adding marks for other places that have been mentioned so far, either details from character creation or the Steading rules themselves.

### STEADING MOVES

When the players visit a Steading there are some special moves they'll be able to make. These still follow the fictional flow of the game. When the players arrive, ask them "What do you do?" The players' actions will, more often than not, trigger a move from this list. They represent respite, reinvigoration and resupply; opportunities for the players to gather their wits and spend their treasure. Remember that a Steading isn't a break from reality. You're still making hard moves when necessary and thinking about how the players' action (or inaction) leads to your Fronts advancing. The Impending Doom is always there, whether the players are combatting it in the dungeon or ignoring it while getting drunk in the local tavern.

Let each player make one or two moves here, depending on how they answer your "what do you do?" question. Don't let a visit to a Steading become a permanent respite. Remember, Dungeon World is a scary, dangerous place. If the players choose to ignore that, make a hard move. Fill the characters' lives with adventure whether they're out seeking it or not. These moves exist to you can make a visit to town an interesting thing without spending a whole session haggling over the cost of a new baldric.

### CAROUSE

When you **return triumphant and throw a big party**, spend 100 coin and roll + extra 100s of coin spent. On a 10+ choose 3. On a 7–9 choose 1. On a miss, you still choose one, but things get really out of hand.

- You befriend a useful NPC
- You hear rumors of an opportunity
- You gain useful information
- You are not entangled, ensorcelled, or tricked

### SUPPLY

When you **go to buy something with coin on hand**, if it's something readily available in the steading you're in, you can buy it at market price. If it's something special, beyond what's usually available here, or non-mundane, roll+Cha. On a 10+ you find what you're looking for at a fair price. On a 7–9 you'll have to pay more or settle for something

similar.

## RECOVER

When you **do nothing but rest in comfort and safety** after a day of rest you recover all your HP. After three days of rest you remove one debility of your choice. If you're under the care of a healer (magical or otherwise) you heal a debility for every two days of rest instead.

## RECRUIT

When you **put out word that you're looking to hire help**, roll. If you make it known...

- ...that your pay is generous, take +1
- ...what you're setting out to do, take +1
- ...that they'll get a share of whatever you find, take +1

If you have a useful reputation around these parts take an additional +1. On a 10+ you've got your pick of a number of skilled applicants, your choice who you hire and no penalty for not taking them along. On a 7-9 you'll have to settle for what you get or turn applicants away. On a miss someone influential and ill-suited declares they'd like to come along (a foolhardy young duke, a loose cannon mercenary, or a hidden enemy, for example), bring them and damn the consequences or turn them away and risk their ire. If you turn away applicants you take -1 forward to Recruit.

## OUTSTANDING WARRANTS

When you **return to a Steading in which you've caused trouble before**, roll+Cha. On a 10+, word has spread of your deeds and everyone recognizes you. On a 7-9 that, and GM chooses a complication:

- The local constabulary has a warrant out for your arrest
- Someone who holds a grudge makes their move
- Someone important to you has been put in a bad spot as a result of your actions

## BOLSTER

When you **spend your leisure time in study, meditation, or hard practice**, you gain preparation. If you prepare for a week or two, 1 preparation. If you prepare for a month or longer, 3 preparation. When your preparation pays off spend 1 preparation for +1 to any roll. You can only spend one preparation per roll.

## ELEMENTS OF A STEADING

A Steading is any bit of civilization that offers some amount of safety to its inhabitants. Villages, towns, keeps, and cities are the most common Steadings.

Steadings are differentiated based on size. The size indicates roughly how many people the Steading can support. The population tag tells you if the current population is more than or less than this amount.

Villages are the smallest Steadings. They're usually out of the way, off the main roads. If they're lucky they can muster some defense but it's often just rabble with pitchforks and torches. A village stands near some easily exploitable resource: rich soil, plentiful fish, an old forest, or a mine. There might be a store of some sort but more likely it's just people trading to each other. Coin is scarce.

Towns have a few thousand inhabitants. They're the kind of place that springs up around a mill, trading post, or inn and usually have fields, farms, and livestock of some kind. They might have a standing militia of farmers strong enough to wield a blade or shoot a bow. Towns have the basics for sale but certainly no special goods. Usually they'll focus on a local product or two and do some trade with travelers.

A Keep is a Steading built specifically for defense—sometimes of a particularly important location like a river delta or a rich gold mine. Keeps are found at the frontier edges of civilization. Inhabitants are inured to the day-to-day dangers of the road. They're tough folks that number between a hundred and a thousand, depending on the size of the Keep and the place it defends. Keeps won't often have much beyond their own supplies, traded to them from nearby villages, but will almost always have arms and armor and sometimes a rare magical item found in the local wilds.

From bustling trade center to sprawling metropolis the City represents the largest sort of Steading in Dungeon World. These are places where folk of many races and kinds can be found. They often exist at the confluence of a handful of trade routes or are built in a place of spiritual significance. They don't often generate their own materials for trade, relying on villages nearby for food and raw material but will always have crafted goods and some stranger things for sale to those willing to seek them.

Steadings are created as needed. Discovered by players, added as part of the prep for a Front or spawned as the result of the GM asking questions of the players, whatever the reason each Steading is created using the rules below.

Like weapons, Steadings are described by their tags. All Steadings have tags indicating prosperity, population and defenses and many will have tags to illustrate their more unusual properties.

Prosperity indicates what kinds of items are usually available. Population indicates the number of inhabitants relative to the current size of the steading. Defenses indicate the general scope of arms the steading has. Tags in these categories can be adjusted. -category means to change the steading to the next lower tag for that category (so Moderate would become Poor when tagged with -Prosperity). +category means to change the steading to the next higher tag (so Shrinking becomes Steady with +Population). Tags in those categories can also be compared like numbers. Treat the lowest tag in that category as 1 and each successive tag as the next number (so Dirt is 1, Poor is 2, etc.).

Tags will change of the course of play. Creating a Steading provides a snapshot of what that place looks like *right now*. As the players spend time in it and your Fronts progress the world will change and your Steadings with it.

## ADDING STEADINGS

You add your first Steading when you create the Campaign Map; it's the place the players go to to rest and recover. When you first draw it on the map all you need is a name and a location.

When you have the time you'll use the rules below to create the Steading. The first Steading is usually a village, but you can use a town if the first adventure was closely tied to humans (for example, if the players fought a human cult). Create it using the rules below.

Once you've created the first Steading you can add other places referenced in its tags (the Oath, Trade, and Enmity tags in particular) or anywhere else that's been referred to in play. Don't add too much in the first session, leave blanks and places to explore.

As play progresses the characters will discover new locales and places of interest either directly, by stumbling upon them in the wild, or indirectly, by hearing about them in rumors or tales. Add new Steadings, dungeons, and other locations to the map as they're discovered or heard about. Villages are often near a useful resource. Towns are often found at the point where several villages meet to trade. Keeps watch over important locations. Cities rely on the trade and support of smaller steads. Dungeons can be found anywhere and in many forms.

Whenever you add a new Steading use the rules to decide its tags. Consider adding a distinctive feature somewhere

nearby. Maybe a forest, some old standing stones, an abandoned castle, or whatever else catches your fancy or makes sense. A map of only Steadings and ruins with nothing in-between is dull, don't neglect the other features of the world.

## STEADING TAGS

### PROSPERITY

*Dirt* : Nothing for sale, nobody has more than they need (and they're lucky if they have that). Unskilled labor is cheap.

*Poor* : Only the bare necessities for sale. Weapons are scarce unless the stead is heavily defended or militant. Unskilled labor is readily available.

*Moderate* : Most mundane items are available. Some types of skilled laborers.

*Wealthy* : Any mundane item can be found for sale. Most kinds of skilled laborers, too, but demand is high for their time.

*Rich* : Mundane items and more, if you know where to find them. Specialist labor available, but at high prices.

### POPULATION

*Exodus* : The Steading has lost its population and is on the verge of collapse.

*Shrinking* : The population is less than it once was. Buildings stand empty.

*Steady* : The population is in line with the current size of the stead. Some slow growth.

*Growing* : More people than there are buildings.

*Booming* : Resources are stretched thin trying to keep up with the number of people.

### DEFENSES

*None* : Clubs, torches, farming tools.

*Militia* : There are several dozen able-bodied men and women with worn weapons ready to be called, but no standing force.

*Watch* : There are a few watchers posted who look out for trouble and settle small problems, but their main role is to summon the militia.

*Guard* : There are armed defenders at all times with a total pool of less than 100 (or equivalent). There is always at least one armed patrol about the stead.

*Garrison* : There are armed defenders at all times with a total pool of 100–300 (or equivalent). There are multiple armed patrols at all times.

*Battalion* : As many as 1,000 armed defenders (or equivalent). The stead has manned maintained defenses as well.

*Legion* : The Steading is defended by thousands of armed defenders (or equivalent).

alent). The Steading's defenses are intimidating.

### OTHER TAGS

*Safe* : Outside trouble doesn't come here unless the players bring it. Idyllic and often hidden. If the Steading would lose or degrade another beneficial tag get rid of Safe instead.

*Religion* : The listed deity is revered here.

*Exotic* : There are goods and services available here that aren't available anywhere else nearby. List them.

*Resource* : The stead has easy access to the listed resource (e.g. a spice, a type of ore, fish, grapes). That resource is significantly cheaper.

*Need* : The Steading has an acute or ongoing need for the listed resource. That resource sells for considerably more.

*Oath* : The Steading has sworn oaths to the listed Steadings. These oaths are generally of fealty or support, but may be more specific.

*Trade* : The Steading regularly trades with the listed Steadings.

*Market* : Everyone comes here to trade. On any given day the available items may be far beyond their prosperity. +1 to Supply.

*Enmity* : The stead holds a grudge against the listed Steadings.

*History* : Something important once happened here, choose one and detail or make up your own: Battle, Miracle, Myth, Romance, Tragedy.

*Arcane* : Someone in town can cast arcane spells for a price. This tends to draw more arcane casters, +1 to Recruit when you put out word you're looking for an adept.

*Divine* : There is a major religious presence, maybe a cathedral or monastery. They can heal and maybe even raise the dead for a donation or resolution of a quest. Take +1 to recruit priests here.

*Guild* : The listed type of guild has a major presence (and usually a fair amount of influence). If the guild is closely associated with a type of hireling, +1 to recruit that type of hireling.

*Personage* : There's a notable person who makes their home here. Give them a name and a short note on why they're notable.

*Dwarven* : The Steading is significantly or entirely dwarves. Dwarven goods are lower price.

*Elven* : The Steading is significantly or entirely elves. Elven goods are lower price.

*Craft* : The Steading is known for excellence in the listed craft. Items that are a product of that craft are of lower price, higher quality, or both.

*Lawless* : Crime is rampant; authority is weak.

*Blight* : The Steading has a recurring problem, usually a type of monster.

*Power* : The Steading holds sway of some type. Typically Political, Divine, or Arcane.

## STEADING NAMES

Greybark, Nook's Crossing, Tanner's Ford, Goldenfield, Barrowbridge, Rum River, Brindenburg, Shambles, Covener, Enfield, Crystal Falls, Castle Daunting, Nulty's Harbor, Castonshire, Cornwood, Irongate, Mayhill, Pigton, Crosses, Battlemore, Torsea, Curland, Snowcalm, Seawall, Varlosh, Terminus, Avonia, Bucksburg, Settledown, Goblinjaw, Hammerford, Pit, The Grey Fast, Ennet Bend, Harrison's Hold, Fortress Andwynne, Blackstone

## MAKING A VILLAGE

By default a village is Poor, Steady, Militia, Resource (your choice) and has an Oath to another stead of your choice. If the village is part of a kingdom or empire choose one:

- The village is somewhere naturally defended: Safe, -Defenses
- The village abundant resources that sustain it: +Prosperity, Resource (your choice), Enmity (your choice)
- The village is under the protection of another stead: Oath (that stead), +Defenses
- The village is on a major road: Trade (your choice), +Prosperity
- The village is built around a wizard's tower: Personage (the wizard), Blight (arcane creatures)
- The village was built on the site of religious significance: Divine, History (your choice)

Choose one problem:

- The village is in arid or uncultivable land: Need (Food)
- The village is dedicated to a deity: Religious (that deity), Enmity (a settlement of another deity)
- The village has recently fought a battle: -Population, -Prosperity if they fought to the end, -Defenses if they lost.
- The village has a monster problem: Blight (that monster), Need (adventurers)
- The village has absorbed another village: +Population, Lawless
- The village is remote or unwelcoming: -Prosperity, Dwarven or Elven

## MAKING A TOWN

By default a town is Moderate, Steady, Watch, and Trade (two of your choice). If the town is listed as Trade by another steading choose one:

- The town is booming: Booming, Lawless
- The town stands on a crossroads: Market, +Prosperity
- The town is defended by another steading: Oath (that steading), +Defenses
- The town is built around a church: Power (Divine)
- The town is built around a craft: Craft (your choice), Resource (something required for that craft)
- The town is built around a military post: +Defenses

Choose one problem:

- The town has grown too big for an important supply (like grain, wood, or stone): Need (that resource), Trade (a village or town with that resource)
- The town offers defense to others: Oath (your choice), -Defenses
- The town is notorious for an outlaw who is rumored to live there: Personage (the outlaw), Enmity (where the crimes were committed)
- The town has cornered the market on a good or service: Exotic (that good or service), Enmity (a settlement with ambition)
- The town has a disease: -Population
- The town is a popular meeting place: +Population, Lawless

## MAKING A KEEP

By default a keep is Poor, Shrinking, Guard, Need (Supplies), Trade (someplace with supplies), Oath (your choice). If the keep is owed fealty by at least one settlement choose one:

- The keep belongs to a noble family: +Prosperity, Power (Political)
- The keep is run by a skilled commander: Personage (the commander), +Defenses
- The keep stands watch over a trade road: +Prosperity, Guild (trade)
- The keep is used to train special troops: Arcane, -Population
- The keep is surrounded by fertile land: remove Need (Supplies)
- The keep stands on a border: +Defenses, Enmity (steading on the other side of the border)

Choose one problem

- The keep is built on a naturally defensible position: Safe, -Population
- The keep was a conquest from an

other power: Enmity (steadings of that power)

- The keep is a safe haven for brigands: Lawless
- The keep was built to defend from a specific threat: Blight (that threat)
- The keep has seen horrible bloody war: History (Battle), Blight (Restless Spirits)
- The keep is given the worst of the worst: Need (Skilled Recruits)

## MAKING A CITY

By default a city is Moderate, Steady, Guard, Market, and Guild (one of your choice). It also has Oaths with at least two other steadings, usually a town and a keep. If the city has trade with at least one steading and fealty from at least one steading choose one:

- The city has permanent defenses, like walls: +Defenses, Oath (your choice)
- The city is ruled by a single individual: Personage (the ruler), Power (Political)
- The city is diverse: Dwarven or Elven or both
- The city is a trade hub: Trade (every steading nearby), +Prosperity
- The city is ancient, built on top of its own ruins: History (your choice), Divine
- The city is a center of learning: Arcane, Craft (your choice), Power (Arcane)

Choose one problem:

- The city has outgrown its resources: +Population, Need (food)
- The city has designs on nearby territory: Enmity (nearby steadings), +Defenses
- The city is ruled by a theocracy: -Defenses, Power (Divine)
- The city is ruled by the people: -Defenses, +Population
- The city has supernatural defenses: +Defenses, Blight (related supernatural creatures)
- The city lies on a place of power: Arcane, Personage (whoever watches the place of power), Blight (arcane creatures)

## FRONTS ON THE CAMPAIGN MAP

Of course your steadings are not the only thing on the campaign map. In addition to steadings and the areas around them your fronts will appear on the map, albeit indirectly.

Fronts are organizational tools, not something the characters think of, so don't put them on the map directly. The orcs of Olg'gothal may be a front but don't just draw them on the map. In-

stead for each front add some feature to the map that indicates the front's presence. You can label it if you like, but use the name that the characters would use, not the name you gave the front.

For example, the orcs of Olg'gothal could be marked on the map with a burning village they left behind, fires in the distance at night, or a stream of refugees. Lord Xothal, a lich, might be marked by the tower where dead plants take root and grow.

As your fronts change, change the map. If the players cleanse Xothal's tower redraw it. If the orcs are driven off, erase the crowds of refugees.

## UPDATING THE CAMPAIGN MAP

The Campaign Map is updated between sessions or whenever the players spend significant downtime in a safe place. Updates are both prescriptive and descriptive: if an event transpires that, say, gathers a larger fighting force to a village, update the tags to reflect that. Likewise if a change in tags mean that a village has a bigger fighting force you'll likely see more armored men in the street.

Between each session check each of the conditions below. Go down the list and check each condition for all steadings before moving to the next. If a condition applies, apply its effects.

### GROWTH

When **a village or town is Booming and its Prosperity is above Moderate** you may reduce Prosperity and Defenses to move to the next largest type. New towns immediately gain Market and new cities immediately gain Guild (your choice).

### COLLAPSE

When **a steading's Population is Exodus and its Prosperity is Poor or less** it shrinks. A city becomes a town with a Steady Population and +Prosperity. A keep becomes a town with +Defenses and a Steady population. A town becomes a village with Steady population and +Prosperity. A village becomes a ghost town.

**WANT**

When **a steading has a Need that is not fulfilled** (through trade, capture, or otherwise) that steading is in want. It gets either -Prosperity, -Population, or loses a tag based on that resource like Craft or Trade, your choice.

**TRADE**

When **Trade is blocked** because the source of that trade is gone, the route is endangered, or political reasons, the steading has a choice: gain Need (a traded good) or take -Prosperity.

**CAPTURE**

When **control of a resource changes** remove that resource from the tags of the previous owner and add it to the tags of the new owner (if applicable). If the previous owner has a Craft or Trade based on that resource they now have Need (that resource). If the new owner had a Need for that resource, remove it.

**PROFIT**

When **a steading has more Trade than its current Prosperity** it gets +Prosperity.

**SURPLUS**

When **a steading has a Resource that another steading Needs** unless Enmity or other diplomatic reasons prevent it they set up Trade. The steading with the Resource gets +Prosperity and their choice of Oaths, +Population, or +Defenses; the steading with the Need erases that need and adds Trade.

**AID**

When **a steading has Oaths to a steading under attack** that steading may take -Defenses to give the steading under attack +Defenses.

**EMBATTLED**

When **a steading is surrounded by enemy forces** it suffers losses. If it fights back with force it gets -Defenses. If its new Defenses are Watch or less it also gets -Prosperity. If it instead tries to wait out the attack it gets -Population. If its new Population is Shrinking or less it loses a tag of your choice. If the steading's Defenses outclass the attacker's (your call if it's not clear, or make it part of an Adventure Front) the steading is no longer surrounded.

**OPPORTUNITY**

When **a steading has Enmity against a weaker steading** they may attack. Subtract the distance (in rations) between the steadings from the steading with Enmity's Defenses. If the result is greater than the other steading's Defenses +Defense for each step of size difference (village to town, town to keep, keep to city) they definitely attack. Otherwise it's your call: has anything hap-

pened recently to stoke their anger? The forces of the attacker embattle the defender, while they maintain the attack they're -Defenses.

**CLASH**

When **two steadings both attack each other** their forces meet somewhere between them and fight. If they're evenly matched they both get -Defenses and their troops return home. If one has the advantage they take -Defenses while the other takes -2 Defenses.

**OTHER UPDATES**

The conditions above detail the most basic of interactions between steadings, of course the presence of your Fronts and the players mean things can get far more complex. Since tags are descriptive, add them as needed to reflect the players' actions and your fronts' effects on the world.

# 25

## Hirelings

Hirelings are those sorry souls that—for money, glory, or stranger needs—venture along with adventurers into the gloom and danger. They are the foolhardy that seek to make their name on adventures.

Hirelings serve a few purposes. To the characters, they're the help. They lend their strength to the player characters' efforts in return for their pay. To the players, they're a resource. They buy the characters some extra time against even the most frightening of threats. They're also replacement characters, waiting to step up into the hero's role when a player character falls. To the GM, they're a human face for the characters to turn to, even in the depths of the earth or the far reaches of the planes.

Hirelings are not heroes. A hireling may become a hero, as a replacement character, but until that time they're just another GM character, suffering the dangers and perils of the world. As such their exact HP, armor, and damage isn't particularly important. A hireling is defined by their **Skill** (or Skills) a **Cost** and a **Loyalty** score.

A hireling's skill is a special benefit they provide to the players. Most skills are related to class abilities, allowing a hireling to fill in for a certain class. If you don't have a Ranger but you need to track the assassin's route out of Torsea anyway, you need a Tracker. Each skill has a rank, usually from 1 to 10. The higher the rank the more trained the hireling. Generally hirelings only work for adventurers of equal or higher level than their highest skill.

If a hireling becomes a character their skills may suggest a given class, but there isn't a requirement. When the moment comes and the spotlight is on them they may find strength they didn't know they had.

Skills don't limit what a hireling can do, they just provide mechanics for a certain ability. A hireling with the protector skill can still carry your burdens or check for traps, but the outcome isn't guaranteed by a rule. It will fall entirely to the circumstances and the GM. Sending a hireling to do something that is clearly beyond their abilities is asking the GM for trouble.

Of course no hireling works for free. The hireling's cost is what it takes to keep them with the player characters. If the hireling's cost isn't paid regularly (usually once a session) they're liable to quit or turn on their employers.

When hirelings are in play, the players may have to make the Order Hirelings move. The move uses the loyalty of the hireling that triggered the move:

### ORDER HIRELINGS

Hirelings do what you tell them to, so long as it isn't obviously dangerous, degrading, or stupid, and their cost is met. When a hireling finds themselves in a dangerous, degrading, or just flat-out crazy situation due to your orders roll+loyalty. On a 10+ they stand firm and carry out the order. On a 7-9 they do it for now, but come back with serious demands later. Meet them or the hireling quits on the worst terms.

### MAKING A HIRELING

Hirelings are easy to make on the fly. When someone enters the player's employ note down their name and what cost they've agreed to as well as any skills they may have.

Start with a number based on where the hireling was found. Hirelings in villages start with 2-5. Town hirelings get 4-6. Keep hirelings are 5-8. City hirelings are 6-10. Distribute the hireling's number between loyalty, a main skill, and zero or more secondary skills. Starting loyalty higher than 2 is unusual, as is starting loyalty below 0. Choose a cost for the hireling and you're done.

A hireling's stats, especially their loyalty, may change during play as a reflection of events. A particular kindness or bonus from the players is worth +1 loyalty forward. Disrespect is -1 loyalty forward. If it's been a while since their cost was last paid they get -1 loyalty ongoing until their cost is met. A hireling's loyalty may be permanently increased when they achieve some great deed with the players. A significant failure or beating may permanently lower the hireling's loyalty.

### COSTS

- The Thrill of Victory
- Money
- Uncovered Knowledge
- Fame and Glory
- Debauchery
- Good Accomplished

### SKILLS

#### ADEPT

An adept has at least apprenticed to an arcane expert, but is not powerful in their own right. They may have mastered a few simple spells, but they don't have anything like the wizard's spellbook.

**Arcane Assistance** —When an adept aids in the casting of a spell of lower level than their skill, the spell's effects have greater range, duration, or potency. The exact effects depend on the situation and the spell and are up to the GM. The GM will describe what effects the assist will add before the spell is cast. The most impor-

tant feature of casting with an adept is that any negative effects of the casting are focused on the adept first.

#### EXPERT

Experts are skilled in a variety of areas, most of them illicit or dangerous. They are good with devices and traps, but not too helpful in the field of battle.

*Experimental Trap Disarming* —When an expert leads the way they can detect traps almost in time. If a trap would be sprung while an expert is leading the way the expert suffers the full effects but the players get +skill against the trap and add the expert's skill to their armor against the trap. Most traps leave an expert in need of immediate healing. If the players Make Camp near the trap, the expert can disarm it by the time camp is broken.

#### MINSTREL

When a smiling face is needed to smooth things over or negotiate a deal, a minstrel is always happy to lend their services for the proper price.

*A Hero's Welcome* —When you enter a place of food, drink, or entertainment with a minstrel you will be treated as a friend by everyone present (unless your actions prove otherwise). You also subtract the minstrel's skill from all prices in town.

#### PRIEST

Priest are the lower ranking clergy of a religion, performing minor offices and regular sacraments. While not granted spells themselves, they are able to call upon their deity for minor aid.

*Ministry* —When you make camp with a priest if you would normally heal you heal to your maximum HP value.

*First Aid* —When you call on a priest for healing, the priest rushes to your side and heals you of 2×skill HP. You take -1 forward as their healing is painful and distracting.

#### PROTECTOR

A protector stands between their employer and the blades, fangs, teeth, and spells that would harm them.

*Sentry* —When a protector stands between you and an attack you increase your armor against that attack by the defender's skill, then reduce their skill by 1 until they receive healing or have time to mend.

*Intervene* —When a protector helps you Defy Danger you may opt to take +1 from their aid. If you do you cannot get a 10+ result, a 10+ instead counts as a 7–9.

#### TRACKER

Trackers know the secrets of following a trail, but they don't have the experience with strange creatures and exotic locals that make for a great hunter.

*Track* —When a tracker is given time to study a trail while Making Camp, when camp is broken they can follow the trail to the next major change in terrain, travel, or weather.

*Guide* —When a tracker leads the way you automatically succeed on any Perilous Journey of a distance lower than the tracker's skill.

#### WARRIOR

Warriors are not masters of combat, but they are handy with a weapon. They won't be leading anyone into battle anytime soon, but their arm is good.

*Man-at-arms* —When you deal damage while a warrior aids you add their skill to the damage done. If your attack results in consequences (like a counter attack) the man-at-arms takes the brunt of it.



# 26

## Monsters

Great heroes need horrendous antagonists. This section is about how to create and play as those antagonists—from the lowly goblin warrior to the hellish demon.

### USING MONSTERS

A monster is any living (or undead) thing that stands in the players' way.

How you use these monsters follows directly from your Agenda and Principles. Stay true to your principles, use your moves and pursue your agenda—you can't go wrong.

Your first agenda is to "Make the world fantastic". This shines through strongly based on how you think about monsters. Everyone and everything who comes up against the players is a monster but that doesn't mean you have to write their stats out ahead of time. In a fantastic world, every goblin might end up in a fight but you don't have to know their HP before that happens. A monster is so simple to make you can jump right into the fiction, describing whatever you want and back it up with stats as you need them. Make the world fantastic: describe your monsters first and worry about their stats later.

The player characters are the heroes. You shouldn't be rooting for the monsters, *per se*. Monsters exist to illustrate what a dangerous awful place Dungeon World can be—how it will remain if the players don't step in. If you feel like your monsters are being beaten too quickly, don't worry. Let the players revel in their victory and prepare a bigger, badder follow-up monster for next time.

The principle of "Think dangerous" sums up that philosophy—the world is just as dangerous for the monsters as for the characters. An evil overlord doesn't care about his every golem, demon, and harpy. Until proven otherwise, consider every monster an arrow fired at the characters. The monsters are ammunition of the Danger you're representing. Some may be smarter, faster, or more dangerous than others but until a monster warrants a name, a personality, or some other special consideration, it's an arrow. Take aim and shoot. Don't worry if you miss.

A monster stops being an arrow when it is given a chance to shine by the players' actions. When the players are forced to run away from something it gains weight. When a monster somehow survives the players' assault it becomes interesting to the players and to the world at large. The players are the heroes. Your monsters are only important when they become important to the heroes and, thus, important to the world.

One thing that your Agenda and Principles don't say anything about is set-

ting up a fair fight. Heroes are often outnumbered or faced with ridiculous odds—sometimes they have to retreat and make a new plan. Sometimes they suffer loss. When adding a monster to a front, placing them in a dungeon, or making them up on the fly your first responsibility is to the fiction (Make the world fantastic) and to give the characters a real threat (Make the characters heroes), not to make a balanced fight. Dungeon World isn't about balancing encounter levels or counting experience points; it's about telling stories about adventure and death-defying feats!

### ELEMENTS OF A MONSTER

The most important part of a monster is what it does. These are its **moves**. Just like the normal GM moves, they're things that you do when there's a lull in the action or when the players give you a golden opportunity. Just like the normal GM moves they can be hard or soft depending on the circumstances and the move: a move that's irreversible and immediate is hard, a move that's impending or mitigable is soft.

Each monster's *raison d'être* is summed up in its **instinct**. Much like Dangers, monsters have instincts that describe their goals at a high level. Some monsters live for conquest, or treasure, or simply for blood. The monster's instinct is the guide to how to use the monster.

The monster's **description** is where all its other features come from. The description is how you know what the monster really is, the other elements just reflect the description.

**Damage** is a measure of how much pain the monster can inflict at once. Just like player damage it's a dice to roll, maybe with some modifiers. A monster deals its damage to another monster or a player when it uses its standard weapons and tactics to hurt them, or when a move says so.

Just like a weapon, monsters have **tags** that describe how it deals damage, including what range(s) it can do damage at. When trying to attack something out of its range (too close or too far) the monster's out of luck, no damage. Any tag that can go on a weapon (like Messy or Slow) can also go on a monster.

There are also monster tags that apply only to monsters. These tags, listed below, describe the monster's key attributes. Every monster has a tag for its scope: where it falls in the bigger picture of Dungeon World. The scope tag lets the GM know how to portray the monster in a way that its stats back up, for example if an army of gnolls can take a defended village (hint: most likely). Some monsters also have a size tag, which notes

their physical size. Monsters without a size tag are just about human size, give or take.

A monster's **HP** is a measure of how much damage it can take before it dies. Just like players, when a monster takes damage it subtracts that amount from its HP. At 0 HP it's dead, no Last Breath.

Some monsters are lucky enough to enjoy **Armor**. Just like player armor: when a monster with armor takes damage it subtracts its armor from the damage done.

**Special qualities** describe innate aspects of the monster that are important to play. These are a guide to the fiction, and therefore the moves. There is no master list of special qualities, they're just plain-english descriptions of the qualities of a monster that aren't part of an attack. A quality like "Intangible" means just what it says: mundane stuff just passes through it. That means swinging a mundane sword at it isn't Hack and Slash, for a start.

### MONSTERS WITHOUT STATS

Some creatures operate on a scale so far beyond the mortal that concepts like HP, Armor, and Damage just do not hold. These creatures may still cause problems for the players and may even be defeated with clever thinking and enough preparation, they just won't be trading blows.

If a creature is of such a scale far beyond the players, or if it simply doesn't live or die like a mortal creature, don't assign it HP, Damage, or Armor. You can still use the monster creation rules to give it tags. The core of a stat-less monster is its instinct and moves; the GM can still make its moves and act according to its instinct.

### MONSTER TAGS

**Magical** : It is by nature magical through and through.

**Devious** : Its main danger lies beyond the simple clash of battle.

**Gibbous** : Its anatomy and organs are bizarre and unnatural.

**Organized** : It has a group structure that aids it in survival. Defeating one may cause the wrath of others. One may sound an alarm.

**Intelligent** : Its smart enough that some individuals pick up other skills. The GM can adapt the monster by adding tags to reflect specific training, like a mage or warrior.

**Hoarder** : It almost certainly has treasure.

**Stealthy** : It can avoid detection and prefers to attack with the element of surprise.

**Terrifying** : Its presence and appearance evoke fear.

**Cautious** : It prizes survival over aggression.

**Construct** : It was made, not born

**Planar** : Its from beyond this world

### ORGANIZATION TAGS

**Horde** : Where there's one, there's more. A lot more.

**Group** : Usually seen in small numbers, 3-6 or so.

**Solitary** : It lives and fights alone.

### SIZE TAGS

**Tiny** : It's much smaller than a halfling.

**Small** : It's about halfling size.

**Large** : It's much bigger than a human, about as big as a cart.

**Huge** : It's as big as a small house or larger.

### MAKING MONSTERS

Monsters start with your description of them. No matter if you're making the monster before play or just as the players come face-to-face with it, a monster starts with a clear vision of what it is and what it does.

If you're making a monster between sessions start by imagining it. Imagine what it looks like, what it does, why it stands out. Imagine the stories told about it and what effects it has had on the world.

If you're making a monster on the fly during a session start by describing it to the players. Your description starts before the characters even lay eyes on it: describe where it lives, what marks it has made on the environment around it. Your description is the key to the monster.

When you find you need stats for the monster you use this series of questions to establish them. Answer every question based on the facts established and imagined. Don't answer them aloud to anyone else, just note down the answers and the stats listed with each answer.

If two questions would grant the same tag don't worry about it. If you like you can adjust damage or HP by 2 to reflect the tag that would be repeated, but it's not necessary. If a combination of answers would reduce HP or damage below 1 they stay at 1.

When you're finished your monster may have only one move. If this is the case and you plan on using the monster often, give it another 2-3 moves of your choice. These moves often describe secondary modes of attack, other uses for a primary mode of attack, or connections

to a certain place in the world.

#### WHAT IS IT KNOWN TO DO?

Write a monster move describing what it does.

#### WHAT DOES IT WANT THAT CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR OTHERS?

This is its instinct. Write it as an intended action.

#### HOW DOES IT USUALLY HUNT OR FIGHT?

- In large disorganized groups: Horde, d6 damage, 3 HP
- In small groups, about 2-5: Group, d8 damage, 6 HP
- All by its lonesome: Solitary, d10 damage, 12 HP

#### HOW BIG IS IT?

- Smaller than a house cat: Tiny, Hand, -2 damage
- Halfling-esque: Small, Close
- About human size: Close
- As big as a cart: Large, Close, Reach, +4 HP, +1 damage
- Much larger than a cart: Huge, Reach, +8 HP, +3 damage

#### WHAT IS ITS MOST IMPORTANT DEFENSE?

- Cloth or flesh: 0 armor
- Leathers or thick hide: 1 armor
- Mail or scales: 2 armor
- Plate or bone: 3 armor
- Permanent magical protection: 4 armor, Magical

#### WHAT IS IT KNOWN FOR? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

- Unrelenting strength: +2 damage, forceful
- Skill in offense: roll damage twice and take the best
- Skill in defense: +1 armor
- Deft strikes: +1 piercing
- Uncanny endurance: +4 HP
- Deceit and trickery: Stealthy, write a move about dirty tricks
- A useful adaptation like being amphibious or having wings: Add a special quality for the adaptation
- The favor of the gods: Divine, +2 damage or +2 HP or both (your call)
- Spells and magic: Magical, write a move about its spells

**WHAT IS ITS MOST COMMON FORM OF ATTACK?**

Note it along with the creature's damage. Common answers include: a type of weapon, claws, a specific spell. Then answer these questions about it.

- Its armaments are vicious and obvious: +2 damage
- It lets the monster keep others at bay: Reach
- Its armaments are small and weak: -damage dice size
- Its armaments can slice or pierce metal: Messy, +1 Piercing or +3 Piercing if it can just tear metal apart
- Armor doesn't help with the damage it deals (due to magic, size, etc.): Ignores Armor
- It usually attacks at range (with arrows, spells, or other projectiles): Near or Far or both (your call)

**WHICH OF THESE DESCRIBE IT? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)**

- It isn't dangerous because of the wounds it inflicts, but for other reasons: Devious, -damage dice size, write a move about why it's dangerous
- It organizes into larger groups that it can call on for support: Organized, write a move about calling on others for help
- It's as smart as a human or thereabouts: Intelligent
- It actively defends itself with a shield or similar: Cautious, +1 Armor
- It collects trinkets that humans would consider valuable (gold, gems, secrets): Hoarder
- It uses magic: Magical, write a move about its style of magic and the effects it can invoke
- It's from beyond this world: Planar, write a move about using its otherworldly knowledge and power
- It's kept alive by something beyond simple biology: +4 HP
- It was made by someone: Construct, give it a special quality or two about its construction or purpose
- Its appearance is disturbing, terrible, or horrible: Terrifying, write a special quality about why it's so horrendous
- It doesn't have organs or discernible anatomy: Gibbous, +1 Armor, +3 HP

**TREASURE**

Monsters, much like adventurers, collect shiny useful things. When the players search the belongings of a monster (be they on their person or tucked away somewhere) describe them honestly.

If the monster has accumulated some wealth you can roll that randomly. Start

with the monster's damage die, modified if the monster is:

- Hoarder: roll damage die twice, take higher result
- Far from home: +at least one ration (usable by anyone with similar taste)
- Magical: some strange item, possibly magical
- Divine: a sign of a deity (or deities)
- Planar: something not of this earth
- Lord over others: +1d4 to the roll
- Ancient and noteworthy: +1d4 to the roll

Roll the monster's damage die plus any added dice to find the monster's treasure:

1. A few coins, 2d8 or so
2. An item useful to the current situation
3. Several coins, about 4d10
4. A small item (gem, art) of considerable value, worth as much as 2d10×100 coins, 0 weight
5. Some minor magical trinket
6. Useful information (in the form of clues, notes, etc.)
7. A bag of coins, 1d4×100 or thereabouts. 1 weight per 100.
8. A very valuable small item (gem, art) worth 2d6×100, 0 weight
9. A chest of coins and other small valuables. 1 weight but worth 3d6×100 coins
10. A magical item or magical effect
11. Many bags of coins for a total of 2d4×100 or so
12. A sign of office (crown, banner) worth at least 3d4×100 coins
13. A large art item worth 4d4×100 coins, 1 weight
14. A unique item worth at least 5d4×100 coins
15. All the information needed to learn a new spell and roll again
16. A portal or secret path (or directions to one) and roll again
17. Something relating to one of the characters and roll again
18. A hoard: 1d10×1000 coins and 1d10×10 gems worth 2d6×100 each

**MONSTER SETTINGS**

The monsters in this book are presented in **monster settings**. A monster setting is a location (or type of location) and the monsters that inhabit it. It's a way of grouping monsters by where they fit in the world. A monster setting tells you what kind of monsters might inhabit an area while your Fronts tell you what monsters are working together or have ongoing plots.

When creating your own monster settings, they can be more specific. You could create a monster setting for the Great Western Steppes or the Domains of the Horse Lords.

Consult a monster setting to populate a Front or when you want a threat that is only tangentially related to one of your Fronts. For example, if the heroes are battling against the Dungeon Front "The Cult of Khul-ka-ra" by exploring the ancient ruins that the cult has made its home then you might use monsters from the Legions of the Undead as a related threat—not truly part of the front but still a block in the heroes' path.

Monsters within a given setting will tend to be about as powerful. This is a product of their ecology—they're in competition for space and resources, after all. Cavern Dwellers or Denizens of the Murky Swamp are likely to be faced by fresh adventurers as they are the creatures who most often encroach on civilization. The Gnarled Woods, Ravenous Hordes, and Twisted Experiments settings hold more powerful monsters, monsters that can threaten the safety of whole cities. Planar Powers and Creatures of the Lower Depths are the most dangerous enemies the heroes can face—often endangering entire kingdoms. The Legions of the Undead are everywhere and can appear in just about any setting or situation.

The monster stat blocks within these settings describe not only HP, damage, and all the other aspects of the monster, but also the reasons those stats were assigned. These monsters were created with the same process listed above, and the reasons for their stats are just as important as the stats themselves. Looking at the reasoning behind the stats will allow you to present the monsters honestly, answering questions that arise in Dungeon World like "can a warband of gnolls sack an entire village?"

**CAVERN DWELLERS**

At the edges of civilization in the caves and tunnels below the old mountains of the world dwell all sorts of scheming, dangerous monsters. Some are wily and old, like the race of goblins scheming to burn villages and make off with livestock. Others are strange aberrations of nature like the stinking, trash-eating Otyugh. A word of caution, then, to those brave adventurers whose first foray into danger leads them into these dank and shadowy places; bad things live in the dark. Bad things with sharp teeth.

## DENIZENS OF THE SWAMP

All things give way to rot, in the end. Food spoils on the table, men's minds go mad with age and disease. Even the world itself, when left untended and uncared for, can turn to black muck and stinking air. Things dwell in these parts of Dungeon World. Things gone just as a bad as the swirling filth that fills the swamps. In these cesspit lowlands adventurers will find such creatures as the deadly-eyed basilisk or the famed, unkillable troll. You'll need more than a dry pair of boots to survive these putrid fens. A sword would be a good start.

## LEGIONS OF THE UNDEAD

The sermons of mannish and dwarven gods would tell you that Death is the end of all. They say that once the mortal coil is unwound and a person takes their final breath that all is warmth and song and the white wings of angels. Not so. Not for all. For some, after life's embrace loses its strength a darker power can take hold. Black magic rips the dead from the ground and gives them shambling unlife full of hate and hunger. Sorcery and witchcraft lend an ancient spell-smith the power to live forever in the husk of a Lich. There are bleak enchantments at play in shadowy corners all throughout Dungeon World. These creatures are the spawn of that fell magic.

## THE DARK WOODS

It would not be a lie to say that there are trees that stand in the deepest groves of Dungeon World that have stood since before man or elf walked amidst their roots. It would be true, too, to say that these ancient trees have long lost the green leaves of spring. In the strands of the dark woods one finds, if one looks in the right place, sylvan monsters of old and powerful nature. Here live the race of savage Centaurs and the fey soul-stealing creatures of olde. Under the shadow of the ancient trees, wolf-men howl for blood. Hurry along the old forest road and light no fire for food or warmth for it's said that flames offend the woods themselves. You wouldn't want that, would you?

## RAVENOUS HORDES

"I've bested an orc in single combat" they crow. "I've fought a gnoll and lived to tell the tale." Which is no small feat and yet, you know the truth of these boasts. Like vermin, spotting but one of these creatures speaks to a greater doom on the horizon. No orc travels alone. No slaving gnoll moves without his pack. You know that soon, the wardrums will sound and the walls will be besieged by the full fury of the warchief and his

tusked berserkers. These are the monsters that will bring civilization, screaming and weeping, to its knees. Unless you can stop them. Best of luck.

## TWISTED EXPERIMENTS

For some who learn the arcane arts it's not merely enough to be able to live for a thousand years or throw lightning bolts that can fry a man. Some aren't quite satisfied with the power to speak to the dead or draw the angels down from heaven. Hubris calls on those cloaked-and-hooded "scientists" to make a strange and unholy life of their own. No mortal children, these. These are the wages of a mind gone foul with strange magic. In this setting you will find such nightmares as the chimera, dripping poison. Here, too, are the protector golems and mutant apes. All sorts of bad ideas await you in the fallen towers of the mad magicians of Dungeon World.

## THE LOWER DEPTHS

Ruins dot the countryside of Dungeon World. Old bastions of long-forgotten civilization fallen to decay, to monsters or to the whim of a vengeful god. These ruins often cover a much more dangerous truth – catacombs and underground complexes lousy with traps and monsters. Gold, too. Which is why you're here. Why you're locked in mortal combat with a tribe of spiteful dark elves. Battling stone giants in caverns the size of whole countries. Maybe, though, you're the noble souls who've travelled to the world's heart to put an end to the Apocalypse Dragon—the beast who, it is said, will one day swallow the sun and kill us all. We appreciate it, really. We'll all pray for you.

## PLANAR POWERS

Sometimes, monsters do not come from Dungeon World at all. Beyond the mountains at the edge of the world or below the deepest seas the sages and wise old priests say that there are gateways to the lands beyond. They speak of elysian fields; rivers of sweet wine and maidens dancing in fields of gold. They tell tales of the paradise of heavens to be found past the Planar Door. Tales tell, too, of the Thousandfold Hell. Of the swirling Elemental Vortex and the devils that wait for the stars to align so they can enter Dungeon World and wreak their bloody havoc. You must be curious to know if these tales are true? What will you see when the passage to the beyond is opened?

# 27

## Cavern Dwellers

### Ankheg Group, Large

Bite (d8+1 damage) 10 HP 3 Armor

Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Burrowing

A hide like plate armor and great crushing mandibles are problematic. A stomach full of acid that can burn a hole through a stone wall makes them all the worse. They'd be bad enough if they were proper insect-sized but these things have the gall to be as long as any given horse. It's just not natural! Good thing they tend to stick to one place? Easy for you to say—you don't have an Ankheg living under your corn field. Instinct : To undermine

- Undermine the ground
- Burst from the earth
- Spray forth acid, eating away at metal and flesh

### Cave Rat Horde, Small

Gnaw (d6 damage 1 piercing) 7 HP 1 Armor

Close, Messy

Who hasn't seen a rat before? It's like that, but nasty and big and not afraid of you anymore. Maybe this one was a cousin to that one you caught in a trap or the one you killed with a knife in that filthy tavern in Darrow. Maybe he's looking for a little ratty revenge. Instinct : To devour

- Swarm
- Rip apart something (or someone)

### Choker Solitary, Stealthy, Intelligent

Choke (d10 damage) 15 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Flexible

Some say these things descended from the family of a cruel wizard who forced them to live out their lives underground. Say his experiments led him to fear the sun and ages passed while he descended into unlife, dragging his folk along with him. These things resemble men, in a way. Head, four limbs and all that. Only their skin is wet and rubbery and their arms long and fingers grasping. They hate all life that bears the stink of the sun's touch, as one might expect. Jealousy, long instilled, is hard to shake. Instinct : To deny light

- Hold someone, wringing the breath from them
- Fling a held creature

### Cloaker Solitary, Stealthy

Constrict (d10 damage ignores armor) 12 HP 1 Armor

Close

#### Special Qualities: Looks like a cloak

Don't put on that cloak, Gareth. Don't. You don't know where it's been. I tell you, it's no good. See! It moved! I'm not mad, Gareth, it moved! Don't do it! No! GARETH! Instinct : To engulf

- Engulf the unsuspecting

### Dwarven Warrior Horde, Organized

Axe (d6 damage) 7 HP 2 Armor

Close

For ages, men believed all dwarves were men and all were of this ilk—stoic and proud warriors. Axe-wielding and plate-wearing. Stout bearded battle-hungry men who would push them, time and time again, back up out of their mines and tunnels with ferocity. It just goes to show how little men know about the elder races. These folk are merely a vanguard, and they bravely do their duty to protect the riches of the Dwarven realm. Earn their trust and you've an ally for life. Earn their ire and you're not like to regret it very long. Instinct : To defend

- Drive them back
- Call up reinforcements

### Earth Elemental Solitary, Huge

Smash (d10+5 damage) 27 HP 4 Armor

Reach, Forceful

#### Special Qualities: Made of stone

Our shaman says that all the things of the world have a spirit. Stones, trees, a stream. Now that I've seen the earth roil under my feet and fists of stone beat my friends half to death I'm like to believe that crazy old man. The one I saw was huge—big as a house! It came boiling up from a rockslide out of nowhere and had a voice like an avalanche. I pay my respects, now. Rightly so. Instinct : To show the strength of earth

- Turn the ground into a weapon
- Meld into stone

### Goliath Group, Huge, Organized, Intelligent

Mace (d8+7 damage) 14 HP 1 Armor

Reach, Forceful

They dwell beneath the earth because they do not belong above it any longer. An undying race of mighty titans fled the plains and mountains in ages past—driven out by men and their heroes. Left to bide their time in the dark, hate and anger warmed by the pools of lava deep below. It's said that an earthquake is a goliath's birthing cry. Some day they'll take back what's theirs. Instinct : To retake

- Shake the earth
- Retreat, only to come back stronger

### Fire Beetle Horde, Small

Flames (d6 damage ignores armor) 3 HP 3 Armor

Near

#### Special Qualities: Full of flames



*Scarabaeus Pyractomena!* What a delightful creature—see how its carapace glitters in the light of our torches? Not too close now, they're temperamental, you see. The fire in their belly isn't just metaphorical, no. Watch as I goad the beast. Aha! A spout of flame! Unexpected, isn't it? One of these creatures alone, if it comes up from below, can be a hellish nuisance to a farmstead or village. A whole swarm? There's a reason they call it a conflagration of fire beetles. I'll say that much. Instinct : To enflame

- Undermine the ground
- Burst from the earth
- Spray forth acid, eating away at metal and flesh

**Gargoyle Horde, Stealthy, Hoarder**  
Claw (d6 damage) 3 HP 2 Armor

Close

**Special Qualities: Wings**

*It's a sad thing, really. Guardians bred by Magi of the past with no more castles to guard. Their ancestors' sacred task bred into their blood leads them to find a place—ruins, mostly but sometimes a cave or hill or mountain cliff—and guard it as though their masters yet lived below. They're notoriously good at finding valuables buried below the earth, though. Find one of these winged reptiles and you'll find yourself a treasure nearby. Just be careful, they're hard to spot and tend to move in packs. Instinct : To guard*

- Attack with the element of surprise
- Take to the air
- Blend into stonework

**Gelatinous Cube Solitary, Large, Stealthy, Gibbous**

Engulf (d10+1 damage ignores armor) 20 HP 1 Armor

Hand

**Special Qualities: Transparent**

*How many adventurers' last thought was "strange, this tunnel seems cleaner than most?" Too many and all because of this transparent menace. A great acidic blob that expands to fill a small chamber or corridor and then slides, ever so slowly along, eating everything in its path. It cannot eat stone or metal and will often have them floating in its jelly mass. Blech. Instinct : To clean*

- Fill an apparently empty space
- Dissolve

**Goblin Horde, Small, Intelligent, Organized**

Spear (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

*Nobody seems to know where these things came from. Elves say they're the Dwarves' fault—dredged up from a hidden place beneath the earth. Dwarves say they're bad Elvish children, taken away at birth and raised in the dark. The truth of the matter is that goblins have always been here and they'll be here once all the civilized races have fallen and gone away. Goblins never die out. There's just too damn many of them. Instinct : To multiply*

- Charge!
- Call more goblins
- Retreat and return with (many) more

**Goblin Orkaster Solitary, Small, Magical, Intelligent, Organized**

Acid orb (d10+1 damage ignores armor) 12 HP 0 Armor

Near, Far

*Oh lord, who taught them magic? Instinct : To tap power beyond their stature*

- Unleash a poorly understood spell
- Pour forth magical chaos
- Use other goblins for shields

**Otyugh Solitary, Large**

Tentacles (d10+3 damage) 20 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities: Filth Fever**

*The mating call of the otyugh is a horrible, blaring cry that sounds like a cross between an elephant dying and an over-eager vulture. The otyugh spends much of its time partly submerged in filthy water and prefers eating garbage over any other food. As a result, it often grows fat and strong on the offal of orcs, goblins and other cave-dwelling sub-humans. Get too close, however, and you'll have one of its barbed tentacles dragging you into that soggy, razor-toothed maw. If you get away with your life, best get to a doctor, or your victory may be short lived. Instinct : To foul*

- Infect someone with filth fever
- Fling someone or something

**Maggot-Squid Horde, Small**

Chew (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

Close

**Special Qualities: Amphibious, Paralyzing Tentacles**

*The gods that made this thing were playing some sick joke on the civilized folk of the world. The maggot-squid wields a face full of horrible squirming tentacles that, if they touch you, feel like being struck by lightning. They'll paralyze you and chew you up slowly while you're helpless. Best to not let it get to that. Instinct : To eat*

- Paralyze with a touch

**Purple Worm Solitary, Huge**

Bite (d10+5 damage) 20 HP 2 Armor

Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities: Burrowing**

*Iä! Iä! The Purple Worm! Blessed is its holy slime! We walk, unworthy, in its miles of massive tunnels. We are but shadows under its violet and all-consuming glory. Mere acolytes, we who hope someday to return to the great embrace of its tooth-ringed maw. Let it consume us! Let it eat our homes and villages so that we might be taken! Iä! Iä! The Purple Worm! Instinct : To consume*

- Swallow whole
- Tunnel through stone and earth

**Roper Solitary, Large, Stealthy, Intelligent**

Bite (d10+1 damage) 16 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities: Rock-like Flesh**

*Evolutionary happenstance has created a clever underground predator. Disguised as a rocky formation—most often a stalactite or stalagmite—the roper waits for its prey to wander by. When it does, whether it's a rat, a goblin or a foolhardy adventurer, a mass of thin, whipping tentacles erupts from the thing's hide. A hundred lashes in the blink of an eye and the stunned prey is being dragged into the roper's mouth. Surprisingly effective for a thing that looks like a rock. Instinct : To ambush*

- Ensnare the unsuspecting
- Burst from the earth
- Spray forth acid, eating away at metal and flesh

**Rot Grub Horde, Tiny**

Burrow (d6-2 damage) 3 HP 0 Armor

Hand

**Special Qualities: Burrow into flesh**

*They live in your skin. Or your organ meat. Or your eyeballs. They grow there and then, in a bloody and horrific display, burrow their way out. Disgusting. Instinct : To infect*

- Burrow under flesh
- Lay eggs
- Burst forth from an infected creature

**Spiderlord Solitary, Large, Devious, Intelligent**

Mandibles (d8+4 damage) 16 HP 3 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities: Burrowing**

*Even spiders have their gods, whispered to in webs with little praying arms. Instinct : To weave webs (literal and metaphorical)*

- Enmesh in webbing
- Put a plot into motion

**Troglodyte Group, Organized**

Club (d8 damage) 10 HP 1 Armor

Close

*Long-forgotten, our last remaining ancestors dwell in caves in the wild parts of the world. Driven away by our cities and villages, our iron swords and our fire, these ape-men eat their meat raw with sharp-nailed hands and jagged teeth. They strike out at frontier villages wielding clubs and in overwhelming numbers to seize cattle, tools, and poor prisoners to drag into the hills. Known for their viciousness and their stink, they're an old and dying race we'd all sooner forget existed. Instinct : To prey on civilization*

- Raid and retreat
- Use scavenged weapons or magic



# 28

## Swamp Denizens

### Bakunawa Solitary, Large, Intelligent, Messy, Forceful

Bite (d10+3 damage 1 piercing) 16 HP 2 Armor

#### Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Amphibious

Dragon-turtle's sister is a mighty serpent queen. Ten yards of scales and muscle, they say she wakes with a hunger when the sun disappears from the sky. She is drawn in by bright light in the darkness and like any snake, the Bakunawa is sneaky. She will seek first to beguile and mislead and will only strike out with violence when no other option is available. When she does, though, her jaws are strong enough to crack the hull of any swamp-boat and certainly enough to slice through a steel breastplate or two. Instinct: To devour

- Lure prey with lies and illusions
- Lash out at light
- Devour

### Basilisk Solitary, Hoarder

Bite (d10 damage) 12 HP 2 Armor

#### Close

Few have seen a basilisk and lived to tell the tale. Get it? Seen a basilisk? Little bit of basilisk humor there. Sorry, I know you're looking for something helpful, sirs. Serious stuff, I understand. The basilisk, even without its ability to turn your flesh to stone with a gaze, is a dangerous creature. A bit like a frog, bulbous eyes and six leaping-muscle legs. A bit like an alligator, with snapping jaws and sawing teeth. Covered in stoney scales and very hard to kill. Best avoided, if possible. Instinct: To collect stone

- Turn flesh to stone with a gaze
- Retreat into a maze of stone

### Black Pudding Solitary, Gibbous

Corrode (d10 damage ignores armor) 15 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

#### Special Qualities: Amorphous

How do you kill a pile of goo? A great squishy, pile of goo that happens also to want to dissolve you and slurp you up? That is a good question to which I have no answer. Do let us know when you find out. Instinct: To dissolve

- Eat away metal, flesh, or wood
- Ooze into a troubling place: food, armor, stomach

### Coutal Solitary, Intelligent Devious

Light ray (d8 damage ignores armor) 12 HP 2 Armor

#### Close

#### Special Qualities: Wings, Halo

As if in direct affront to the decay and filth of the world, the gods granted us the Coutal. As if to say "there is beauty, even in this grim place" have we been gifted the Coutal. A serpent in flight on jeweled wings, these beautiful creatures glow with a soft light, as the sun does through stained glass. Bright, wise and calm, a Coutal often knows many things and sees many more. You might be able to make a trade with it in exchange for some favor. They seek to cleanse and to purge and to make of this dark world a better one. Shame we have so few. The gods are cruel. Instinct: To cleanse

- Pass judgement on a person or place
- Summon divine forces to cleanse
- Offer information in exchange for service

### crocodilian Group, Large

Bite (d8+3 damage) 10 HP 2 Armor

#### Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Amphibious, Camouflage

It's a really, really big crocodile. Seriously. So big. Instinct: To eat

- Attack an unsuspecting victim
- Escape into the water
- Hold something tight in its jaws

### Doppelganger Solitary, Devious, Intelligent

Dagger (d6 damage) 12 HP 0 Armor

#### Close

#### Special Qualities: Shapeshifting

Their natural form, if you ever see it, is a hideous thing. Like a creature who stopped growing part-way, before it decided it was elf or man or dwarf. Then again, maybe that's how you get to be the way a doppelganger is—without form, without shape to call their own, they seek little more than a place to fit in. If you go out into the world, when you come back home, make sure your friends are who you think they are. They might, instead, be a doppelganger and your friend might be dead at the bottom of a well somewhere. Then again, depending on your friends, that might be an improvement. Instinct: To infiltrate

- Assume the shape of a person who's flesh it's tasted
- Use another's identity to advantage
- Leave someone's reputation shattered

### Dragon Turtle Solitary, Huge, Cautious

Bite (d10+3 damage) 20 HP 4 Armor

#### Reach

#### Special Qualities: Shell, Amphibious

*Bakunawa has a brother. Where she is quick to anger and hungry for gold, he is slow and sturdy. She is a knife and he is a shield. A great turtle that lies in the muck and mire for ages as they pass, mud piled upon his back—sometimes trees and shrubs. Sometimes a whole misguided clan of goblins will build their huts and cook their ratty meals on the shell of the dragon turtle. His snapping jaws, glacier-slow they may be, can rend a castle wall. Careful where you tread. Instinct : To resist change*

- Move forward implacably
- Bring its full bulk to bear
- Destroy structures and buildings

### **Dragon Whelp Solitary, Small, Intelligent, Cautious, Hoarder**

Elemental breath (d10+2 damage) 16 HP 3 Armor

*Close, Near*

#### **Special Qualities: Wings, Elemental Blood**

*What? Did you think they were all a mile long? Did you think they didn't come smaller than that? Sure, they may be no bigger than a dog and no smarter than an ape, but a Dragon Whelp can still belch up a hellish ball of fire that'll melt your armor shut and drop you screaming into the mud. Their scales, too, are softer than their bigger kin but still turn aside an arrow or sword not perfectly aimed. Size is not the only measure of might. Instinct : To grow in power*

- Start a lair, form a base of power
- Call on family ties
- Demand oaths of servitude

### **Ekek Horde**

Talons (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

*Close*

#### **Special Qualities: Wing-arms**

*Ugly, wrinkled bird-folk, these. Once, maybe, in some ancient past, they were a race of angelic men from on high but now they eat rats they fish from the murk with talon-feet and devour with needle-teeth. They understand the tongues of men and dwarves but speak in little more than gibbering tongues, mimicking the words they hear with mocking laughter. It's a chilling thing to see a beast so close to man or bird but not quite either one. Instinct : To lash out*

- Attack from the air
- Carry out the bidding of a more powerful creature

### **Fire Eels Horde, Tiny**

Burning touch (d6+2 damage ignores armor) 3 HP 0 Armor

*Hand*

#### **Special Qualities: Flammable oil, aquatic**

*These strange creatures are no bigger or smarter than their mundane kin. They have the same vicious nature. Over their relations they have one advantage—an oily secretion that drips from their skin. It makes them hard to catch. On top of that, with a twist of their body they ignite the stuff, leaving pools of burning oil atop the surface of the water and roasting prey and predator alike. I hear the slimy things make good ingredients for fire-resistant gear, but you have to get your hands on one, first. Instinct : To ignite*

- Catch someone or something on fire (even underwater)
- Consume burning prey

### **Frogman Horde, Small, Intelligent**

Spear (d6 damage) 7 HP 1 Armor

*Close*

#### **Special Qualities: Amphibious**

*Croak croak croak. Little warty munchkins. Some wizard or godling's idea of a bad joke, these creatures are. They stand as men, dress in scavenged cloth and hold court in their froggy villages. They speak a rumbling pidgin form of the tongue of man and war constantly with their neighbors. They're greedy and stupid but clever enough when they need to defend themselves. Some say, too, their priests have a remarkable skill at healing. Or maybe they're just really, really hard to kill. Instinct : To war*

- Launch an amphibious assault
- Heal at a prodigious rate

### **Hydra Solitary, Large**

Bite (d10+3 damage) 16 HP 2 Armor

*Close, Reach*

#### **Special Qualities: Many heads, Only killed by a blow to the heart**

*A bit like a dragon, wingless though it may be. Heads, nine in number at birth, spring from a muscled trunk and weave a sinuous pattern in the air. A hydra is to be feared—a scaled terror of the marsh. The older ones, though, they have more heads for every failed attempt to murder it just makes it stronger. Cut off a head and two more grow in its place. Only a strike, true and strong, to the heart can end a Hydra's life. Not time or tide or any other thing but this. Instinct : To grow*

- Attack many enemies at once
- Regenerate a body part (especially a head)

### **Kobold Horde, Small, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized**

Short spear (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

*Close, Reach*

#### **Special Qualities: Dragon connection**

*Some are wont to lump these rat-like little dragon-men in with goblins and orcs, bugbears and hobgoblins. They are smarter and wiser than their kin, however. The Kobolds, beholden slaves to dragons and—in ancient times—their lorekeepers and sorcerer-servants. Their clans, named in fashion like Ironscale and Whitewing, form around a dragon master and live to serve and do its bidding. Spotting a Kobold means more are near—if more are near then a mighty dragon cannot be far, either. Instinct : To serve dragons*

- Lay a trap
- Call on dragons or draconic allies
- Retreat and regroup

### **Lizardman Group, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized**

Spear (d8 damage) 6 HP 2 Armor

*Close*

#### **Special Qualities: Amphibious**

*A traveling sorcerer once told me that Lizardmen came before we did. That before elves and dwarves and men built even the first of their wattle huts a race of proud lizard kings strode the land. That they lived in palaces of crystal and worshipped their own scaly gods. Maybe that's true and maybe it ain't—now they dwell in places men long forgot or abandoned, crafting tools from volcano-glass and lashing against the works of the civilized world. Maybe they just want back what they lost. Instinct : To destroy civilization*

- Ambush the unsuspecting
- Launch an amphibious assault

### **Medusa Solitary, Devious, Intelligent, Hoarder**

Claws (d6 damage) 12 HP 0 Armor

*Close*

#### **Special Qualities: Look turns you to stone**

*The Medusa are children of a serpent-haired mother, birthing them in ancient times to bear her name across the ages. They dwell near places of civilization—luring folks to their caves with promises of beauty untold or riches. Fine appreciators of art, the medusa curate strange collections of their victims, terror or ecstasy frozen forever in stone. It satisfies their vanity to know they were the last thing seen in so many lives. Arrogant, proud, and spiteful, in their way, they seek what so many do—endless company. Instinct : To collect*

- Turn a body part to stone with a look
- Draw someone's gaze
- Show hidden terrible beauty

### **Sahuagin Horde, Intelligent**

Endless teeth (d6+4 damage 1 piercing) 3 HP 2 Armor

*Close, Forceful, Messy*

#### **Special Qualities: Amphibious**

*The shape and craft of men wedded to the hunger and the endless teeth of a shark. Voracious and filled only with hate, these creatures will not stop until all life has been consumed. They cannot be reasoned with, they cannot be controlled or sated. They are hunger and blood-lust, driven up from the depths of the sea to ravage coastal towns and swallow island villages.*  
Instinct: To spill blood

- Turn a body part to stone with a look
- Draw someone's gaze
- Show hidden terrible beauty

### Sauropod Group, Huge, Cautious

Trample (d8+5 damage) 18 HP 4 Armor

Reach

**Special Qualities:** Armor plated body

*Great lumbering beasts, they live in places long since forgotten by the thinking races of the world. Gentle if unprovoked but mighty if their ire is raised, they trample smaller creatures with the care we might give to crushing an ant beneath our boots. If you see one, drift by and gaze in awe, but do not wake the giant.*  
Instinct: To endure

- Stampede
- Panic

### Swamp Shambler Solitary, Large, Magical

Lash (d10+3 damage) 23 HP 5 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities:** Swamp form

*Some elementals are conjured up in sacred circles etched in chalk. Most, in fact. There's a sort of science to it. Others, though, aren't so orderly—they don't fall under the carefully controlled assignments of fire or air or earth. Some are a natural confluence of vine and mire and fungus. They do not think the way a man might think. They cannot be understood as an elf might be. They simply are. Spirits of the swamp. Shamblers in the mud.*  
Instinct: To preserve and create swamps

- Call on the swamp itself for aid
- Meld into the swamp
- Reassemble into a new form

### Troll Solitary, Large

Club (d10+3 damage) 20 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities:** Regeneration

*Tall. Real tall. Eight or nine feet when they're young or weak. Covered all over in warty, tough skin, too. Big teeth, stringy hair like swamp moss and long, dirty nails. Some are green, some grey, some black. They're clannish and hateful of each other, not to mention all the rest of us. Near impossible to kill, too, unless you've fire or acid to spare—cut a limb off and watch. In a few days, you've got two trolls where you once had one. A real serious problem, as you can imagine.*  
Instinct: To smash

- Undo the effects of an attack (unless

caused by a weakness, your call)

- Hurl something or someone

### Will-o-wisp Solitary, Large

Club (d10+3 damage) 20 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities:** Body of light

*Spot a lantern floating in the darkness, lost traveller in the swamp. Hope—a beacon of shimmering light. You call out to it, but there's no answer. It begins to fade and so you follow, sloshing through the muck, tiring at the chase, hoping you're being led to safety. Such a sad tale that always ends in doom. These creatures are a mystery—some say they're ghosts, others beacons of faerie light. Nobody knows the truth. They are cruel, however. All can agree on that.*  
Instinct: To misguide

- Lead someone astray
- Clear a path to the worst place possible

# 29

## Legions of the Undead

### Abomination Solitary, Large, Construct, Terrifying

Slam (d10+3 damage) 20 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities:** Many limbs, heads, and so on

*Corpses sewn unto corpses make up the bulk of these shambling masses of dark magic. Most undead are crafted to be controlled—made to serve some purpose like building a tower or serving as guardians. Not so the abomination. The last aspect of the ritual used to grant fire to their hellish limbs invokes a hatred so severe that the abomination knows but one task: to tear and rend at the very thing it cannot have—life. Many students of the black arts learn to their mortal dismay the most important fact about these hulks. An abomination knows no master. Instinct : To end life*

- Tear flesh apart
- Spill forth putrid guts

### Banshee Solitary, Magical, Intelligent

Scream (d10 damage) 16 HP 0 Armor

Near

**Special Qualities:** Insubstantial

*Come away from an encounter with one of these vengeful spirits merely deaf and count yourself lucky for the rest of your peaceful, silent days. Often mistaken at first glance for a ghost or wandering spirit, the Banshee reveals a far more deadly talent for sonic assault when angered. And angered they are. A victim of betrayal (often by a loved one) the Banshee makes known their displeasure with a roar or scream that can putrefy flesh and rend the senses. If you can, help them get their vengeance and they've been known to grant rewards. Whether the affection of a spurned spirit is a thing you'd want, well, that's another question. Instinct : To avenge*

- Drown out all other sound with a ceaseless scream
- Unleash a skull-splitting noise
- Disappear into the mists

### Devourer Solitary, Large, Intelligent, Hoarder

Smash (d10+3 damage) 16 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

*Most folk know that the undead feed on flesh. The warmth, blood and living tissue continue their unholy existence. This is true for most of the mindless dead, animated by black sorcery. Not so the Devourer. When a particularly wicked person (often a manipulator of men, an apostate priest or the like) dies in a gruesome way, the dark powers of Dungeon World might bring them back to a kind of life. The Devourer, however, does not feed on the flesh of men or elves. The Devourer eats souls. It kills with a pleasure only the sentient can enjoy and in the moments of its victims' expiry, draws breath like a drowning man and swallows a soul. What does it mean to have your soul eaten by such a creature? None dare ask for fear of finding out. Instinct : To eat souls*

- Devour or trap dying soul
- Bargain for a soul

### Dragonbone Solitary, Huge

Bite (d10+3 damage 3 piercing) 20 HP 2 Armor

Reach, Messy

*Mystical sorcerers debate: is this creature truly undead or is it a golem made of a particularly rare and blasphemous material? The bones, sinews and scales of a dead dragon make up this bleak automaton. Winged but flightless, dragon-shaped but without the mighty fire of such a noble thing, the Dragonbone serves its master with a twisted devotion and is often set to assault the keeps and towers of rival necromancers. It would take a being of some considerable evil to twist the remains of a dragon thus. Instinct : To serve*

- Attack unrelentingly

### Draugr Horde, Organized

Rusty sword (d6+1 damage) 7 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities:** Icy touch

*In the Nordemark, the men and women tell tales in their wooden halls of a place where the noble dead go. A mead hall atop their heavenly mountain where men of valor go to await the final battle for the world. It is a goodly place. It is a place where one hopes to go when they die. And the inglorious dead? Those who fall to poison or in an act of cowardice, warriors though they may be? Well, those mead halls aren't open to all and sundry. Some come back, frozen and twisted and empowered by jealous rage and wage their eternal war not on the forces of giants or trolls but on the towns of the men they once knew. Instinct : To take from the living*

- Freeze flesh
- Call on the unworthy dead

### Ghost Solitary, Devious, Terrifying

Phantom touch (d6 damage) 16 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities:** Insubstantial

*Every culture tells the story the same way. You live, you love or hate, you win or you lose, you die somehow you're not too fond of and here you are, ghostly and full of disappointment and what have you. Some people take it upon themselves, brave and kindly folks, to seek out the dead and help them pass to their rightful rest. You can find them, most times, down at the tavern drinking away the terrors they've seen or babbling to themselves in the madhouse. Death takes a toll on the living, no matter how you come by it. Instinct : To haunt*

- Reveal the terrifying nature of death
- Offer information from the other side, at a price

### Ghoul Group

Talons (d8 damage 1 piercing) 10 HP 1 Armor



**Close, Messy**

*Hunger. Hunger hunger hunger. Desperate clinging void-stomach-emptiness hunger. Sharp talons to rend flesh and teeth to tear and crack bones and suck out the soft marrow inside. Vomit up hate and screaming jealous anger and charge on twisted legs—scare the living flesh and sweeten it ever more with the stink of fear. Feast. Peasant or knight, wizard, sage, prince, or priest all make for such delicious meat. Instinct : To eat*

- Gnaw off a body part
- Gain the memories of their meal

**Lich Solitary, Magical, Intelligent, Cautious, Hoarder, Construct**

Enervate (d10+3 damage ignores armor) 16 HP 5 Armor

**Near, Far**

*“At the end, they give you a scroll and a jeweled medallion to commemorate your achievements. Grand Master of Abjuration, I was called, then. Old man. Weak and wizened and just a bit too senile for them—hose jealous halfwits. Barely apprentices, and they called themselves The New Council. It makes me sick, or would, if I still could be. They told me it was an honor and I would be remembered forever. It was like listening to my own eulogy. Fitting, in a way, don’t you think? It took me another ten years to learn the rituals and another four to collect the material and you see before you the fruits of my labour. I endure. I live. I will see the death of this age and the dawn of the next. It pains me to have to do this, but, you see, you cannot be permitted to endanger my research. When you meet Death, say hello for me, would you?” Instinct : To un-live*

- Cast a perfected spell of death or destruction
- Set a ritual or great working into motion
- Reveal a preparation or plan already completed

**Mohrg Group**

Bite (d8 damage) 10 HP 0 Armor

**Close**

*You never get away with murder. Not really. You might evade the law, might escape your own conscience in the end and die, fat and happy in a mansion somewhere. When the gods themselves notice your misdeeds, though, that’s where your luck runs out and a Mohrg is born. The Mohrg is a skeleton—flesh and skin and hair all rotted away. All but their guts—their twisted, knotted guts still spill from their bellies, magically preserved and often wrapped, noose-like, about their necks. They do not think, exactly, but they suffer. They kill and wreak havoc and their souls do not rest. Such is the punishment, both on them for the crime and on all mankind for daring to murder one another. The gods are just and they are harsh. Instinct : To wreak havoc*

- Rage
- Add to their collection of guts

**Mummy Solitary, Divine, Hoarder**

Smash (d10+2 damage) 16 HP 1 Armor

**Close**

*There are cultures who revere the dead. They do not bury them in the cold earth and mourn their passing. These people spend weeks preparing the sacred corpse for its eternal rest. Temples, pyramids, and great vaults of stone are built to house them and are populated with slaves, pets and gold. The better to live in luxury beyond the Black Gates, no? Do not be tempted by these vaults—oh, I know that greedy look! Heed my warnings or risk a terrible fate, for the honored dead do not wish to be disturbed. Thievery will only raise their ire—do not say I did not warn you! Instinct : To enjoy eternal rest*

- Curse them
- Wrap them up
- Rise again

**Nightwing Horde, Stealthy**

Rend (d6 damage) 7 HP 1 Armor

**Close****Special Qualities: Wings**

Scholars of the necromantic arts will tell you that the appellation “undead” applies not only to those who have lived, died, and been returned to a sort of partway living state. It is the proper name of any creature whose energy originates beyond the Black Gates. The creature men call the nightwing is one such creature—empowered by the negative light of Death’s domain. Taking the shape of massive, shadowy, winged creatures (some more bat-like, some like vultures, others like some ancient, leathery things) nightwings travel in predatory flocks, swooping down to strip the flesh from cattle, horses and unlucky peasants out past curfew. Watch the night sky for their red eyes and listen for their screeching call and hope to the gods you have something to hide under until they pass. Instinct : To hunt

- Attack from the night sky
- Fly away with prey

**Shadow Horde, Large, Magical, Construct**

Shadow Touch (d6+1 damage) 11 HP 4 Armor

**Close, Reach****Special Qualities: Shadow Form**

*We call to the elements. We call on fire, ever-burning. We summon water, life-giving. We beseech the earth, stable-standing. We cry to the air, forever-changing. These elements we recognize and give our thanks but ask to pass. The elemental we call upon this night knows another name. We call upon the element of Night. Shadow, we name you. Death’s messenger and black assassin, we claim for our own. Accept our sacrifice and do our bidding ‘til the morning come. Instinct : To darken*

- Snuff out light
- Spawn another shadow from the dead

**Sigben Horde, Large, Construct**

Tail whip (d6+1 damage) 11 HP 2 Armor

**Close, Reach****Special Qualities: Vampire spawn**

*Aswang-hound and hopping whip-tail! Sent by vampires on their two, twisted legs, these ugly things look like the head of a rat or a crocodile, maybe, furry though and sharp of tooth. They have withered wings, but cannot use them and long, whipping tails, spurred with poison tips. Stupid, vengeful and mischievous they cause all kinds of chaos when let out of the strange clay jars in which they’re born. Only a vampire could love such a wretched thing. Instinct : To disturb*

- Poison them
- Do a vampire’s bidding

**Skeleton Horde**

Slam (d6 damage) 7 HP 1 Armor

**Close**

*Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. Instinct : To take the semblance of life*

- Act out what it did in life
- Reveal a fact from its life

**Spectre Solitary, Hoarder**

Withering touch (d10 damage) 12 HP 0 Armor

**Close****Special Qualities: Insubstantial**

*For some folk, when they pass, Death himself cannot release their grip on the places they love most. A priest whose devotion to the temple is greater than that of his god. A banking guild official who cannot bear to part with his vault. A drunk and his favourite tavern. All make excellent spectres. They act not out of the usual hunger that drive the undead, but jealousy. Jealousy that anyone else might come to love their home as much as them and drive them out. These places belong to them and these invisible spirits will kill before they’ll let anyone send them to their rest. Instinct : To drive life from a place*

- Turn their haunt against a creature
- Bring the environment to life

**Vampire Group, Stealthy, Organized, Intelligent**

Supernatural force (d8+5 damage 1 piercing) 10 HP 2 Armor

**Close, Forceful****Special Qualities: Changing form, ancient mind**

*We fear them, because they call to us. So much like us, or how we hope to be: beautiful, passionate, and powerful. They are drawn to us for what they cannot be: warm, kind, and alive. These tormented souls can only hope, at most, to pass their dreadful curse along. Every time they feed they run the risk of passing along their torture to another and in each one lives the twisted seed of creator. Vampires beget vampires. Suffering begets suffering. Do not be drawn in by their seduction or you may be given their gift—a crown of shadows and the chains eternal undying grief. Instinct : To manipulate*

- Charm someone
- Feed on their blood
- Retreat to plan again

### **Wight-Wolf Horde, Organized, Intelligent**

Pounce (d6+1 damage 1 piercing) 7 HP 1 Armor

Close

#### **Special Qualities: Shadow form**

*Like the nightwing, the wight-wolf is a creature not spawned in our world. Somehow slipping the seals of the Black Gates of Death, these spirits take the shape of massive hounds or shadowy wolves and hunt the living for sport. They travel in packs, led by a mighty alpha, but bear a kind of intelligence unknown to true canines. Their wild hunts draw the attention of intelligent undead—liches, vampires and the like—who will sometimes make pacts with the alpha and serve a grim purpose together. Listen for the baying of the hounds of Death and pray that they do not howl for you. Instinct : To hunt*

- Encircle prey
- Summon the pack

### **Zombie Horde**

Bite (d6 damage) 11 HP 1 Armor

Close

*When there's no more room in Hell . . . Instinct : Braaaaaains*

- Attack with overwhelming numbers
- Corner them
- Gain strength from the dead, spawn more zombies

# 30

## Gnarled Woods

### Assassin Vine **Solitary, Stealthy, Gibbous**

Thorns (d10 damage 1 piercing) 15 HP 1 Armor

**Close, Reach, Messy**

#### **Special Qualities: Plant**

Among the animals there exists a clear division 'tween hunter and hunted. All it takes is a glance to know—by fangs and glowing eyes or claws or venomous sting—which of the creature of this world are meant to kill and which stand to be killed. Such a split, if you have the eyes to see it, cuts the world of leaves and flowers in twain, as well. Druids in their forest circles know it. Rangers, too, might spot such a plant before it's too late. Lay folk, though, they wander where they oughtn't—paths into the deep woods covered in creeping vines and with a snap, these hungry ropes snap tight, dragging their meaty prey into the underbrush. Mind your feet, traveller. Instinct : To grow

- Shoot forth new growth
- Attack the unwary

### Blink Dog Group, **Small, Magical, Organized**

Bite (d8 damage) 6 HP 4 Armor

**Close**

#### **Special Qualities: Illusion**

Now you see it, now you don't. Hounds once owned by a sorcerer lord and imbued with a kind of illusory cloak, they escaped into the woods around his lair and began to breed with wolves and wild dogs of the forest. You can spot them, if you're lucky, by the glittering silver of their coats and their strange, ululating howls. They have a remarkable talent for being not-quite where they appear to be and use it to take down prey much stronger than themselves. If you find yourself facing a pack of blink dogs you might well close your eyes and fight. You'll have an easier time when not betrayed by your natural sight. By such sorceries are the natural places of the world polluted with unnatural things. Instinct : To hunt

- Give the appearance of being somewhere they're not
- Summon the pack
- Move with amazing speed

### Centaur Horde, **Large, Organized, Intelligent**

Bow (d6+2 damage 1 piercing) 11 HP 1 Armor

**Close, Reach, Near**

#### **Special Qualities: Half-horse, Half-man**

It will be a gathering of clans unseen in this age. Call Stormhoof and Brightspear. Summon Whitemane and Ironflanks. Sound the horn and we shall begin our meeting—we shall speak the words and bind our people together. Too long have the men cut the ancient trees for their ships. The elves are weak and cowardly, friend to these mannish slime. It will be a cleansing fire from the darkest woods. Raise the red banner of war! Today we strike back against these apes and retake what is ours! Instinct : To rage

- Overrun them
- Move with unrelenting speed

### Chaos Ooze **Solitary, Planar, Terrifying, Gibbous**

Warping touch (d10 damage ignores armor) 23 HP 1 Armor

**Close**

#### **Special Qualities: Ooze, Fragments of other planes embedded in it**

The barrier between Dungeon World and the Elemental Planes is not, as you might hope, a wall of stone. It's much more porous. Thin-like, with holes. Places where the civil races do not often tread can sometimes, how to put this, spring a leak. Like a dam come just a little loose. Bits and pieces of the chaos spill out. Sometimes, they'll congeal like an egg on a pan—that's where we get the material for many of the Guild's magical trinkets. Useful, right? Sometimes, though, it squirms and squishes around a bit and stays that way, warping all it touches into some other, strange form. Chaos begets chaos, and it grows. Instinct : To change

- Cause a change in appearance or substance
- Briefly bridge the planes

### Cockatrice Group, **Small, Hoarder**

Peck (d8 damage) 6 HP 1 Armor

**Close**

#### **Special Qualities: Stone touch**

I ain't ever seen such a thing, sir. Rodrick thought it a chicken, maybe. Poor Rodrick. I figured it to be a lizard of a sort, though he was right—it had a beak and grey feathers like a chicken. Right, well, see, we found it in the woods, in a nest at the foot of a tree while we were out with the sow. Looking for mushrooms, sir. I told Rodrick we were—yes, sir, right sir, the bird—see, it was glaring at Rodrick and he tried to scare it off with a stick to steal the eggs but the thing pecked his hand. Quick it was, too. I tried to get him away but he just got slower and slower and . . . yes, as you see him now, sir. All frozen up like when we left the dog out overnight in winter two years back. Poor, stupid Rodrick. Weren't no bird nor lizard, were it, sir? Instinct : To defend the nest

- Start a slow transformation to stone

### Dryad **Solitary, Magical, Intelligent, Devious, Gibbous**



Crushing vines (2d10-w damage) 23 HP 5 Armor

Close

**Special Qualities: Plant**

More beautiful by far than any man or woman born in the civil realms. To gaze upon one is to fall in love. Deep and punishing, too. Thing is, they don't love. Not the fleshy folk who often find them, though. Their love is a primal thing, married to the woods—to a great oak that serves as home and mother and sacred place to them. It's a curse to see one, too, they'll never love you back. No matter what you do. No matter how you pledge yourself to them, they'll always spurn you. If ever their oak comes to harm, you've not only the dryad's wrath to contend with, but in every nearby village there's a score of men with a secret longing in their heart, ready to murder you where you sleep for just a smile from such a creature. Instinct: To love nature passionately

- Entice a mortal
- Merge into a tree
- Turn nature against them

**Eagle Lord Group, Large, Organized, Intelligent**

Claw (2d8+b+1 damage 1 piercing) 10 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities: Mighty wings**

Some the size of horses. Bigger, even—the Kings and Queens of the Eagles. Their cry pierces the mountain sky and woe to those who fall under the shadow of their mighty wings. The ancient wizards forged a pact with them in the primordial days. Men would take the plains and valleys and leave the mountaintops to the Eagle Lords. These sacred pacts should be honored, lest they set their talons into you. Lucky are the elves, for the makers of their bonds yet live and when danger comes to Elvish lands, the Eagle Lords often serve as spies and mounts for the elves. Long-lived and proud, some might be willing to trade their ancient secrets for the right price, too. Instinct: To rule the heights

- Attack from the sky
- Pull someone into the air
- Call on ancient oaths

**Elvish Warrior Horde, Intelligent, Organized**

Sword (2d6-b damage) 3 HP 2 Armor

Close

**Special Qualities: Sharp sense**

*Like all the elves do, war is an art. I saw them fight, once. The Battle of Astrid's Veil. Yes, I am that old, boy, now hush. She was clad in plate that shone like the winter sky. White hair streaming and a pennant of ocean blue tied to her spear. She seemed to glide across between the trees the way an angel might, striking out and bathing her blade in blood that steamed in the cold air. I never felt so small before. I trained with the master-at-arms of Battlemoore, you know. I've held a sword longer than you've been alive, boy, and in that one moment I knew that my skill meant nothing. Thank the gods the elves were with us then. A more beautiful and terrible thing I have not seen since. Instinct: To seek perfection*

- Strike at a weak point
- Set ancient plans in motion
- Use the woods to advantage

**Elvish High Arcanist Solitary, Magical, Intelligent, Organized**

Flame (d10 damage ignores armor) 12 HP 0 Armor

Near, Far

**Special Qualities: Sharp senses**

True elvish magic isn't like the spells of men. Mannish wizardry is all rites and formulas. They cheat to find the arcane secrets that resound all around them. They are deaf to the arcane symphony that sings in the woods. Elvish magic is fine ear to hear it and the voice with which to sing. To harmonize with what is already resounding. Men bind the forces of magic to their will; Elves simply pluck the strings and hum along. The High Arcanists, in a way, have become more and less than any elf. The beat of their blood is the throbbing of all magic in this world. Instinct: To unleash power

- Work the magic that wants to be worked
- Cast forth the elements

**Griffin Group, Large, Organized**

Claw (d8+3 damage) 10 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities: Wings**

On first glance, one might mistake the Griffin for another magical mistake like the Manticore or the Chimera. It looks the part, doesn't it? These creatures have the regal haughtiness of a lion and the arrogant bearing of an eagle but temper it with the unshakeable loyalty of both. To earn the friendship of a Griffin is to have an ally all your living days. Truly a gift, that. If you're ever lucky enough to meet one be respectful and deferential above all else. It may not seem it but they can tell and answer perceived slights with a sharp beak and talons. Instinct: To serve allies

- Carry an ally aloft
- Strike from above

**Ogre Group, Large, Intelligent**

Club (d8+5 damage) 10 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

A tale, then. Somewhere in the not-so-long history of the Mannish race there was a divide. In days when men were merely dwellers-in-the-mud with no magic to call their own, they split in two: one camp left their caves and the dark forests and built the First City to honor the gods. The others, a wild and savage lot, retreated into darkness. They grew, there. In the deep woods a grim loathing for their softer kin gave them strength. They found dark gods of their own, there in the woods and hills. Ages passed and they bred tall and strong and full of hate. We have forged steel and they match it with their savagery. We may have forgotten our common roots, but somewhere, deep down, the Ogres remember. Instinct: To return the world to darker days

- Destroy something
- Topple trees
- Bring down the roof

**Hill Giant Group, Huge, Intelligent, Organized**

Rock (d8+3 damage) 10 HP 1 Armor

Reach, Near, Far, Forceful

Ever seen an ogre before? Bigger than that. Dumber and meaner, too. Hope you like having cows thrown at you. Instinct: To hurl

- Throw something
- Shake the earth

**Razor Boar Solitary**

Bite (d10 damage 3 piercing) 16 HP 1 Armor

Close, Messy

The tusks of the razor boar shred metal plate like so much tissue. Voracious, savage and unstoppable, they tower over their mundane kin. To kill one? A greater trophy of bravery and skill is hard to name, though I hear a razor boar killed the Drunkard King in a single thrust. You think you're a better hunter than he? Instinct: To shred

- Rip them apart
- Rend armor and weapons

**Sprite Horde, Tiny, Stealthy, Magical, Devious, Intelligent**

Dagger (2d4-w damage) 3 HP 0 Armor

Hand

**Special Qualities: Wings, Fey Magic**

I'd classify them elementals, except that "Being Annoying" isn't an element. Instinct: To play tricks

- Play a trick to expose someone's true nature
- Confuse their senses
- Craft an illusion

**Treant Group, Huge, Intelligent, Gibbous**

Wallop (d8+5 damage) 21 HP 4 Armor

Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities: Wooden**

Old and tall and thick of bark walk amidst the tree-lined dark

Strong and slow and forest-born  
the treants anger quick, we warned  
If to the woods with axe ye go  
know the treants be thy foe  
*Instinct* : To protect nature

- Move with implacable strength
- Set down roots
- Spread old magic

### Werewolf **Solitary, Intelligent**

Bite (d10+2 damage 1 piercing) 12 HP 1 Armor

#### Close, Messy

#### **Special Qualities: Weak to silver**

*Beautiful, isn't it? The moon, I mean. She's watching us, you know? Her pretty silver eyes watch us while we sleep. Mad, too—like all the most beautiful ones. If she were a woman, I'd bend my knee and make her my wife on the spot. No, I didn't ask you here to speak about her, though. The chains? For your safety, not mine. I'm cursed, you see. You must have suspected. The sorcerer-kings called it "lycanthropy" in their day—passed on by a bite to make more of our kind. No, I could find no cure. Please, Don't be scared. You have the arrows I gave you? Silver, yes. Ah, you begin to understand. Don't cry, sister. You must do this for me. I cannot bear more blood on my hands. You must end this. For me.* *Instinct* : To shed the appearance of civilization

- Transform to pass unnoticed as beast or man
- Strike from within
- Hunt like man and beast

### Worg **Horde, Organized**

Bite (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

*As horses are to the civil races, so go the worg to the goblins. Mounts, fierce in battle, ridden by only the bravest and most dangerous, are found and bred in the forest primeval to serve the goblins in their wars on men. The only safe worg is a pup, separated from its mother. If you can find one of these, or make orphans of a litter with a sharp sword, you've got what could become a loyal protector or hunting hound in time. Train it well, mind you, for the worg are smart and never quite free of their primal urges.* *Instinct* : To serve

- Carry a rider into battle
- Give its rider an advantage

### Satyr **Group, Devious, Magical, Hoarder**

Charge (2d8-w damage) 10 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

#### **Special Qualities: Enchantment**

*One of only a very few creatures to be found in the old woods that don't right out want to maim, kill, or eat us. They dwell in glades pierced by the sun, and dance on their funny goat-legs to enchanting music played on pipes made of bone and silver. They smile easily and, so long as you please them with jokes and sport, will treat our kind with friendliness. They've a mean streak, though, so if you cross them, make haste elsewhere; very few things hold a grudge like the stubborn Satyr. *Instinct* : To enjoy*

- Pull others into revelry through magic
- Force gifts upon them
- Play jokes with illusions and tricks

# 31

## Ravenous Hordes

### Formian Drone **Horde, Organized, Cautious**

Bite (d6 damage) 7 HP 4 Armor

**Close**

**Special Qualities: Hive connection, Insectoid**

*With good cause, they say that these creatures (like all insects, really) are claimed by the powers of Law. They are order made flesh—a perfectly stratified society in which every larva, hatching and adult knows their place in the great hive. The Formian is some strange intersection of men and ants (though there are winged tribes that look like ants out in the Western Desert, I've heard. And some with great saw-tooth arms like mantids in the forests of the east). Tall, with a hard shell and a harder mind, these particular Formians are the bottom caste. They work the hills and honeycombs with single-minded joy that can be known only by such an alien mind. Instinct : To follow orders*

- Raise the alarm
- Create value for the hive
- Assimilate

### Formian Taskmaster **Group, Organized, Intelligent**

Spiked whip (d8 damage) 6 HP 3 Armor

**Close, Reach**

**Special Qualities: Hive connection, Insectoid**

*It takes two hands to rule an empire: one to wield the scepter and one to crack the whip. These ant-folk are that whip. Lucky for them, with two extra arms, that's a lot of whip to crack. They oversee the vast swarms of worker drones that set to build the mighty caverns and ziggurats that dot the places that formians can be found. One in a hundred, these brutes stand two or three feet taller than their pale, near-mindless kin and have a sharper, crueller wit to match. They'll often ignore the soft races (as we're known) if we don't interfere in a project, but get in the way of The Great Work and expect nothing less than their full attention. You don't want their full attention. Instinct : To command*

- Order drones into battle
- Set great numbers in motion

### Formian Centurion **Horde, Intelligent, Organized**

Barbed spear (2d6-b+2 damage) 7 HP 3 Armor

**Close, Reach**

**Special Qualities: Hive connection, Insectoid, Wings**

*Whether in the form of a legionnaire, part of the Formian standing army, or as a praetorian guard to the queen, every formian hive contain a great number of these most dangerous insectoids. Darker in carapace, often scarred with furrows and the ceremonial markings that set them apart from their drones, the formian centurions are their fighting force and rightly so. Born, bred and living only for the singular purpose to kill the enemies of their kind, they fight with one mind and a hundred swords. Thus far, the powers of Law have seen fit to spare mankind a great war with these creatures, but we've seen them in skirmish—descending sometimes on border towns with their wings flickering in the heat or spilling up from a sandy mound to wipe clean a newly-dug mine. Theirs is an orderly bloodshed, committed with no pleasure but the completion of a goal. Instinct : To fight as ordered*

- Advance as one
- Summon reinforcements
- Give a life for the hive

### Formian Queen **Solitary, Huge, Organized, Intelligent, Hoarder**

Smash (d10+5 damage) 24 HP 3 Armor

**Reach, Forceful**

**Special Qualities: Hive connection, Insectoid**

*At the heart of every hive, no matter its size or kind, lives a queen. As large as any giant, she sits protected by her guard, served by every drone and taskmaster with her own, singular purpose: to spread her kind and grow the hive. To birth the eggs. To nurture. We do not understand the minds of these creatures but it is known they can communicate with their children, somehow, over vast distances and that they begin to teach them the ways of earth and stone and war while still pale and wriggling larva, without a word. To kill one is to set chaos on the hive; without their queen, the rest turn on one another in a mad, blind rage. Instinct : To spread formians*

- Call every formian it spawned
- Release a half-formed larval mutation
- Set designs on a formian goal

### Gnoll Tracker **Group, Organized, Intelligent**

Bow (d8 damage) 6 HP 1 Armor

**Near, Far**

**Special Qualities: Scent**

Once they scent your blood, you can't escape. Not without intervention from the gods, or the duke's rangers at least. The desert scrub is a dangerous place to go exploring on your own and if you fall and break your leg or eat the wrong cactus, well, you'll be lucky if you die of thirst before the gnolls find you. They prefer their prey alive, see—cracking bones and the screams of the dying lend a sort of succulence to a meal. Sickening creatures, no? They'll hunt you, slow and steady, as you die. If you hear laughter in the desert wind, well, best pray. Death comes to take you before they do. Instinct: To prey on weakness

- Doggedly track prey
- Strike at a moment of weakness

### Gnoll Emissary **Solitary, Divine, Intelligent, Organized**

Ceremonial dagger (d10+2 damage) 18 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Scent

Oh, an emissary! How nice. I suspect you didn't know the Gnolls had ambassadors, did you? Yes, even these mangy hyenas have to make nice sometimes. No, no, not with us. Nor the dwarves, neither. No, the Emissary is the one, among his packmates, who trucks directly with their dripping demon lord. Frightening? Too right. Every hound has a master with his hand on the chain. This gnoll hears his master's voice. Hears it and obeys. Instinct: To share divine insight

- Pass on demonic influence
- Drive the pack into a fervor

### Gnoll Alpha **Solitary, Intelligent, Organized**

Sword (d10+6 damage 1 piercing) 12 HP 2 Armor

Close

#### Special Qualities: Scent

Every pack has its top dog. Bigger, maybe—that'd be the simplest way. Often, though, with these lank and filthy mutts, it's not about size or sharp teeth but about cruelty. About a willingness to kill your brothers and eat them while the pack watches. Willingness to desecrate the pack in a way that cows them to you. If they're that awful to each other—to their living kin—think about how they must view us. It's hard to be mere meat in a land of these kinds of predators. Instinct: To drive the pack

- Demand obedience
- Send the pack to hunt

### Orc Bloodwarrior **Horde, Intelligent, Organized**

Jagged blade (d6+2 damage 1 piercing) 3 HP 0 Armor

Close, Messy

The orcish horde is a savage, bloodthirsty, and hateful collection of tribes. There are myths and stories that tell of the origin of their rage—a demon curse, a homeland destroyed, elven magic gone wrong—but the truth has been lost to time. Every able orc, be it man or woman, child or elder, swears fealty to the warchief and their tribe and bears the jagged blade of a bloodwarrior. Men are trained to fight and kill—orcs are born to it. Instinct: To fight

- Fight with abandon
- Revel in destruction

### Orc Berserker **Solitary, Large, Divine, Intelligent, Organized**

Cleaver (d10+5 damage) 20 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Mutations

Stained in the unholy ritual of Anointing By The Night's Blood, some warriors of the horde rise to a kind of twisted knighthood. They trade their sanity for this honor, stepping halfway into a world of swirling madness. This makes Berserkers the greatest of their tribe, though as time passes, the chaos spreads. The rare Berserker that lives more than a few years becomes horrible and twisted, growing horns or an extra arm with which to grasp the iron cleavers they favor in battle. Instinct: To rage

- Fly into a frenzy
- Unleash chaos

### Orc Breaker **Solitary, Large**

Massive hammer (d10+3 damage ignores armor) 16 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

Before you set out across the hordeland, brave sir, hark a moment to the tale of Sir Regnus. Regnus was like you, sir—a Paladin of the Order, all a-shine in his armored plate and with a shield as tall as a man. Proud he was of it, too—Mirrorshield, he called himself. Tale goes that he'd set his eyes on rescuing some lost priest, a kidnap from the abbey on the borders. Regnus came across some orcs in his travels, a dozen or so, and thought, as one might, that they'd be no match. Battle was joined and all was well until one of them orcs emerged from the fray with a hammer bigger than any man ought to be able to wield. Built more like an ogre or a troll, they say it was, and with a single swing, it crushed Regnus to the ground, shield and all. It were no ordinary orc, they say. It were a breaker. They can't make plate of their own, see, so maybe it's jealousy drives these burly things to crush and shatter the way they do. Effective tactic, though. Careful out there. Instinct: To smash

- Destroy armor or protection
- Lay low the mighty

### Orc One-Eye Group, **Divine, Magical, Intelligent, Organized**

Inflict Wounds (d8+2 damage ignores armor) 6 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach, Near, Far

### Special Qualities: One eye

In the name of He Of Riven Sight and by the First Sacrifice of Elf-Flesh do we invoke the Old Powers. By the Second Sacrifice, I make my claim to what is mine—the dark magic of Night. In His image, I walk the path to Gorsha-thak, the Iron Gallows! I call to the runes! I call to the clouded sky! Take this mortal organ, eat of the flesh of our enemy and give me what is mine! Instinct: To hate

- Rend flesh with divine magic
- Take an eye
- Make a sacrifice

### Orc Shaman **Solitary, Intelligent, Organized**

Flame (d10 damage ignores armor) 12 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach, Near, Far

#### Special Qualities: Elemental power

The orcs are as old a race as any. They cast bones in the dirt and called to the gods in the trees and stone as the elves built their first cities. They have waged wars, conquered kingdoms, and fallen into corruption in the aeons it took for men to crawl from their caves and dwarves to first see the light of the sun. Fitting, then, that the old ways still hold. They summon the powers of the world to work, to fight and to protect their people, as they have since the first nights. Instinct: To strengthen orc-kind

- Give protection of earth
- Give power of fire
- Give swiftness of water
- Give clarity of air

### Orc Slaver **Horde, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized**

Whip (d6 damage) 3 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach

Red sails fly in the southern sea. Red sails and ships of bone, old wood and iron. The warfleet of the horde. Orcs down that way have taken to the sea, harassing island towns and stealing away with fishermen and their kin. It's said the custom is spreading north and the orcs learn the value of free work. Taken to it like a sacred task—especially if they can get their hands on elves. Hard to think of a grimmer fate than to live out your life under a lash in an orcish fist. Instinct: To take

- Take a captive
- Pin someone under a net
- Drug them

### Orc Shadowhunter **Solitary, Stealthy, Magical, Intelligent**

Poisoned dagger (d10 damage 1 piercing) 10 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Shadow cloak



Not every attack by orcs is torches and screaming and enslavement. Amongst those who follow He Of Riven Sight, poison and murder-in-the-dark are considered sacred arts. Enter the shadowhunter. Orcs cloaked in Night's magic who slip into camps, towns and temples and end the lives of those within. Do not be so distracted by the howling of the berserkers that you do not notice the knife at your back. Instinct: To kill in darkness

- Poison them
- Melt into the shadows
- Cloak them in darkness

### **Orc Warchief Solitary, Intelligent, Organized**

Iron Sword of Ages (2d10-b+2 damage) 16 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach

#### **Special Qualities: One-Eye blessings, Shaman blessings**

There are chiefs and there are leaders of the tribes among the orcs. There are those who rise to seize power and fall under the machinations of their foes. There is but one Warchief. One orc in all the horde who stands above the rest, bearing the blessings of the One-Eyes and the Shamans both. Who walks with the elements under Night. Who bears the Iron Sword of Ages and carries the ancient grudge against the civil races on his shoulders. The warchief is to be respected, to be obeyed and above all else, to be feared. All glory to the Warchief. Instinct: To lead

- Start a war
- Make a show of power
- Enrage the tribes

### **Triton Spy Solitary, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized**

Trident (2d10-w damage) 12 HP 2 Armor

Close, Near

#### **Special Qualities: Aquatic**

A fishing village caught one in their net, some time ago. Part a man and part some scaly sea creature, it spoke in a broken, spy-learned form of the common tongue before it suffocated in the open air. It told the fishermen of a coming tide, an inescapable swell of the power of some deep-sea god and that the triton empire would rise up and drag the land down into the ocean. The tale spread and now, when fishermen sail the choppy seas, they watch and worry that the dying triton's tales were true. That there are powers deep below that watch and wait. They fear the tide is coming in. Instinct: To spy on the surface world

- Reveal their secrets
- Strike at weakness

### **Triton Tidecaller Group, Divine, Magical, Intelligent**

Wave (d8+2 damage ignores armor) 6 HP 2 Armor

Near, Far

#### **Special Qualities: Aquatic, Mutations**

Part priest, part outcast among their kind, the tidecaller speaks with the voice of the deeps. They can be known by their mutations—transparent skin, perhaps, or rows of teeth like a shark. Glowing eyes or fingertips, angler-lights in the darkness of their underwater kingdom. They speak in strange tongue that can call and command creatures of the sea. They ride wild hippocampi and cast strange spells that rot through the wooden decks of ships or encrust them with barnacles heavy enough to sink. It is the tidecallers who come, now, back to the cities of the Triton, bearing word that the prophecy is coming to pass. The world of men will drown in icy brine. The tidecallers speak and the Lords begin to listen. Instinct: To bring on The Flood

- Cast a spell of water and destruction
- Command beasts of the sea
- Reveal divine commands

### **Triton Sub-Mariner Group, Organized Intelligent**

Harpoon (2d8-b damage) 6 HP 3 Armor

Close, Near, Far

#### **Special Qualities: Aquatic**

The Triton are not a militant race by nature. They shy away from battle except when the sahuagin attack, and only then do they defend themselves and retreat into the depths where their foes can't follow. This trend begins to change. As the tidecallers come to rally their people, some Triton men and women take up arms. They call these generals "sub-mariners" and build for them armor of shells and hardened glass. They swim in formation, wielding pikes and harpoons and attack the crews of ships that wander too far from port. Watch for their pennants of kelp on the horizon and the conch-cry of a call to battle and keep, if you can, your boats near shore. Instinct: To wage war

- Lead Tritons to battle
- Pull them beneath the waves

### **Triton Noble Group, Organized, Intelligent**

Trident (d8 damage) 6 HP 2 Armor

Close, Near, Far

#### **Special Qualities: Aquatic**

The Triton Ruling Houses were chosen, they say, at the dawn of time. Granted lordship over all the races of the sea by some now-forgotten god. These bloodlines continue, passing rulership from father to daughter and mother to son through the ages. Each is allowed to rule their city in whatever way they choose—some alone or with their spouses, others in council of brothers and sisters. In ages past, they were known for their sagacity and bloodlines of even-temper were respected above all else. The tidecallers prophecy is changing that: Nobles are expected to be strong, not wise. The Nobles have begun to respond, and it is feared by some that the ancient blood is changing forever. It may be too late to turn back. Time and tide wait for none. Instinct: To lead

- Stir tritons to war

- Call reinforcements

# 32

## Twisted Experiments

**Bulette Solitary, Huge, Construct**

Bite (d10+5 damage 3 piercing) 20 HP 3 Armor

**Close, Forceful****Special Qualities: Burrowing**

A seasoned caravan guard learns to listen for the calls of a scout or sentry with a keen ear. A few extra seconds after the alarm is raised can mean life or death. Different cries mean different responses, too—a call of “orcs!” means draw your sword and steady for blood but a call of “bandits!” says you might be able to bargain. One alarm from the scouts that always, always means it’s time to pack up, whip your horse and run for the hills? “LAND SHARK!” Instinct : To devour

- Drag prey into rough tunnels
- Burst from the earth
- Swallow whole

**Chimera Solitary, Large, Construct**

Bite (d10+1 damage) 16 HP 1 Armor

**Reach**

Well known and categorized, the chimera is a perfected creature. From the codices of the Mage’s Guild to the famous pages of Cullaina’s Creature Compendium, there’s no confusion about what Chimera means. Two parts lioness, one part serpent, head of a she-goat, and all the vicious magic one can muster. The actual ritual might vary, as might a detail or two—more creative sorcerers switch the flame breath for acid, perhaps. Used as a guardian, an assassin or merely an instrument of chaos unchained, it matters little. The chimera is the worst sort of abomination: an intentional affront to all natural life. Instinct : To do as commanded

- Belch forth flame
- Run them over
- Poison them

**Derro Horde, Devious, Intelligent, Organized**

Pickaxe (2d6-w damage) 3 HP 2 Armor

**Close****Special Qualities: Telepathy**

It’s typical to think that all the malignant arcane monsters made in this world are birthed by wizards, sorcerers, and their ilk. That the colleges and towers of Dungeon World are womb to every bleak experiment. There are mistakes made in the depths of the earth, too. These ones, the Derro, are the mistakes of a long-forgotten dwarven alchemist. The derro don’t forget, though. Twisted and hateful, the Derro can be spotted by their swollen skulls, brain-matter grown too large. They do not speak except in thoughts to one another and plot in the silent dark to extract sweetest revenge—that of the created on the creator. Instinct : To replace dwarves

- Fill a mind with foreign thoughts
- Take control of a beast’s mind

**Digester Solitary, Large, Construct**

Acid (d10+1 damage ignores armor) 16 HP 1 Armor

**Close, Reach****Special Qualities: Digest acid secretion**

It’s okay, magical experimentation is a messy science. For every beautiful pegasus there’s a half-done creature that wasn’t quite right. We understand. The goblin-elephant you thought was such a great idea. The Gelatinous Drake. Just examples. No judgement here. Anyway, we’ve got something for that. We call it the Digester. Yes, just like it sounds. Strange looking, I know, and the smell isn’t the best, but this thing—it’ll eat magic like Svenloff the Stout drinks ale. Next time one of these unfortunate accidents occurs, just point the Digester at it and all your troubles drain away. Just keep an eye on it. Damn thing ate my wand last week. Instinct : To digest

- Eat away at something
- Draw sustenance

**Ethereal Filcher Solitary, Devious, Planar**

Stolen dagger (2d8-w damage) 12 HP 1 Armor

**Close, Reach****Special Qualities: Burrowing**

Things go missing. A sock, a silver spoon, your dead mother’s bones. We blame the maid, or bad luck, or just a moment of stupid forgetfulness and we move on. We never get to see the real cause of these problems. The spidery thing with human hands and eyes as blue as the deep ethereal from whence the creature comes. We never see the nest it makes of astral silver webbing and stolen objects arranged in some madness pattern. We never watch it assemble its collection of halfling finger-bones, stolen from the hands of the sleeping. We’re lucky, that way. Instinct : To steal

- Take something important to it’s planar lair
- Retreat to the Ethereal plane
- Use an item from its lair

**Ettin Solitary, Large, Construct**

Club (d10+3 damage) 16 HP 1 Armor

**Close, Reach, Forceful****Special Qualities: Two heads**

What could possibly be better than an idiotic angry hill giant? One with two heads. Fantastic idea, really. Grade A stuff. Instinct : To smash

- Attack two enemies at once
- Defend its creator

**Girallon Solitary, Huge**

Rend (d10+5 damage) 20 HP 1 Armor

**Reach, Forceful****Special Qualities: Many arms**

The pounding of the jungle drums calls to it. The slab of meat on the sacrificial stone to lure in the Great Ape. Girallon, they call it—a name from the long-forgotten tongue of the kings who bred the beast. Taller than a building, some say. Cloaked in ivory fur with tusks as long as scimitars. Four arms? Six? The rumors are hard to verify. Every year it is the same: some explorer visits the jungle villages seeking the Ape and return, never quite the same, never with a trophy. The pounding of the drums goes on. Instinct : To rule

- Answer the call of sacrifice
- Drive them from the jungle
- Throw someone

**Iron Golem Group, Large, Construct**  
Slam (d8+5 damage) 10 HP 3 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities: Metal**

A staple of the enchanters art. Every golemist and mechano-thaumaturge in the Kingdoms knows this. Iron is a misnomer, though. These guardians are crafted of any metal, really. Steel, copper, or even gold, in some small cases. As much an art as a science, the crafting of a fine golem is as respected in the Kingdoms as a bridge newly built or a castle erected in the mountains. Unceasing watchdogs, stalwart defenders, the iron golem lives to serve, following its orders eternally. Any enchanter worth his salt can craft one, if he can afford the materials. If not. . . Instinct : To serve

- Follow orders implacably
- Use a special tool or adaptation built-in

**Flesh Golem Horde**

Claw (d6+2 damage) 3 HP 0 Armor

Close, Forceful

**Special Qualities: Many body parts**

Stolen bits and pieces in the night. Graveyards stealthily uprooted and maybe tonight an arm. A leg. Another head (the last one came apart too soon). Even the humblest hedge-enchanter can make due with what he can and, with a little creativity, well—it's not only the College that can make life, hmm? We'll show them. Instinct : To live

- Follow orders
- Detach a body part

**Kraken Solitary, Huge**

Slam (d10+5 damage) 20 HP 2 Armor

Reach, Forceful

**Special Qualities: Aquatic**

A cephalo-what? No, boy. Not "a kraken" but "the kraken". I don't know what nonsense they taught you at that school you say you're from, but here, we know to respect the Hungerer. Right, that's what we call it, The Hungerer in the Deep to be more proper. Ain't no god, though we've got those, too. It's a squid! A mighty squid with tentacles thicker 'round than a barrel and eyes the size of the full moon. Smart, too, the Hungerer. Knows just when to strike—when you're all too drunk or too tired or run out of clean water, that's when he gets you. No, I ain't ever seen him. I'm alive, aren't I? Instinct : To rule the ocean

- Drag a person or ship to a watery grave
- Wrap them in tentacles

**Manticore Solitary, Large, Construct**

Sting (d10+1 damage 1 piercing) 16 HP 3 Armor

Close, Reach, Messy

**Special Qualities: Wings**

If the chimera is the first step down a dark path, the manticore is a door that can't be closed once its been opened. A lion, a scorpion, the wings of a drake. All difficult to obtain but not impossible and just animals, anyway. The last component, the hissing hateful face of the beast, is the ingredient that makes a manticore so cruel. Young or old, man or woman, it matters not but that they are human, living and breathing, married to the creature with twisted magic. All sense of who they are is lost, and maybe that's a blessing, but the beast is born from human suffering. No wonder, then, that they're all so eager to kill. Instinct : To kill

- Poison them
- Rip something apart

**Owlbear Solitary, Construct**

Claw (d10 damage) 12 HP 2 Armor

Close

Body of a bear. Feathers of an owl. Beak, claws, and excellent night vision. What's not to love? Instinct : To hunt

- Strike from darkness

**Pegasus Group, Construct**

Stomp (d8 damage) 10 HP 1 Armor

Close

**Special Qualities: Wings**

Don't go thinking that every creature not natural-born is a horrible abomination. Don't imagine for a second that they're all tentacles and screaming and blood or whatever. Take this noble beast, for example. Lovely thing, isn't it? A fine white horse with the wings of a swan. Don't look like it ought to be able to fly, but it does. The elves work miracles, in their own way. They breed true—that's the purity of elf-magic at work. Hatching from little crystal eggs and bonded with their riders for life. There's still some beauty in the world, mark my words. Instinct : To carry aloft

- Carry a rider into the air

- Give their rider an advantage

**Rust Monster Group, Construct**

Corrode (d8 damage ignores armor) 6 HP 3 Armor

Close

**Special Qualities: Corrosive touch**

A very distinctive-looking creature. Something like a reddish cricket, I think. Long crickety legs, anyhow. Blind, too, as I understand it—they feel their way around with those long moth-looking tendrils. Feed that way, too. Sift through piles of metal for the choicest bits. That's what they eat, don't matter the type, neither. Their merest touch turns it all to rusted flakes. Magic lasts longer but under the scrutiny of a rust monster, it's a foregone conclusion. Only the gods know where they came from, but they're a curse if you value your belongings. Instinct : To decay

- Turn metal to rust
- Gain strength from consuming metal

**Xorn Solitary, Large, Construct**

Maw (d10 damage) 12 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities: Burrowing**

Dwarf-made elemental garbage muncher. Shaped like a trash bin with a radius of arms to feed excess rock and stone into its gaping maw. They eat stone and excrete light and heat. Perfect for operating a mine or digging out a quarry. Once one gets lost in the sewers below a city, though, or in the foundation of a castle? You're in deep trouble. They'll eat and eat until you've got nothing left but to collapse the place down on it and move somewhere else. Ask Burrin, Son of Fjornnvald, exile from his clan. I bet he could tell you a story about a Xorn. Instinct : To eat

- Consume stone
- Give off a burst of light and heat



## 33

## Lower Depths

**Aboleth Group, Huge, Intelligent**  
Tentacle (d8+3 damage) 18 HP 0 Armor

Reach

**Special Qualities: Telepathy**

Deep below the surface of the world, in freshwater seas untouched by the sun dwell the aboleth. Fish the size of whales, with strange growths of gelatinous feelers used to probe the lightless shores. They're served by slaves; blind albino victims of any race unfortunate enough to stumble on them, drained of thought and life by the powers of the aboleth's alien mind. In the depths they bid and plot against each other, fishy cultists building and digging upward towards the surface until someday, they'll breach it. For now, they sleep and dream and guide their pallid minions to do their bidding. Instinct: To command

- Invade a mind
- Turn minions on them
- Put a plan in motion

**Apocalypse Dragon Solitary, Huge, Magical, Divine**

Bite (2d10+b+9 damage 4 piercing) 26 HP 5 Armor

Reach, Forceful, Messy

**Special Qualities: Inch-thick metal hide, Supernatural knowledge, Wings**

The end of all things shall be a burning—of tree and earth and of the air itself. It shall come upon the plains and mountains not from beyond this world but from within it. Birthed from the womb of deepest earth shall come the Dragon that Will End the World. In its passing all will become ash and bile and the earth a dying thing will drift through planar space devoid of life. They say to worship it is to invite madness. They say to love it is to know oblivion. The awakening is coming. Instinct: To end the world

- Set a disaster in motion
- Breathe forth the elements
- Act with perfect knowledge

**Chaos Spawn Solitary, Gibbous**

Chaotic touch (d10 damage) 19 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities: Chaos form**

Driven from the city, a cultist finds solace in towns and villages. Discovered there, he flees to the hills and scratches his devotion on the cave walls. Found out, he is chased with knife and torch into the depths, crawling deeper and deeper until, in the deepest places, he loses his way. First, he forgets his name. Then he forgets his shape. His chaos gods, most beloved, bless him with a new one. Instinct: To undermine

- Rewrite reality
- Unleash chaos from containment

**Chuul Group, Large, Cautious**

Claws (d8+1 damage 3 piercing) 10 HP 4 Armor

Close, Reach, Messy

**Special Qualities: Amphibious**

Let us, for a moment, consider the lobster. This one is your worst seafood nightmare come to life. A sort of vicious, half-man half-crawdad cursed with primal intelligence and blessed with a pair of razor-sharp claws. Strange things lurk in the stinking pools in caverns best forgotten and the Chuul is one of them. If you spot one, your best hope is a heavy mace to crack its shell and maybe a little garlic butter. Mmmm. Instinct: To split

- Split something in two with mighty claws
- Retreat into water

**Deep Elf Assassin Group, Intelligent, Organized**

Poisoned blade (d8 damage 1 piercing) 6 HP 1 Armor

Close

It was not so simple a thing as a war over religion or territory. No disagreement of Queens led to the great sundering of the elves. It was sadness. It was the very diminishing of the world by the lesser races and the glory of all the elves had built was cracking and turning to glass. Some, then, chose to separate themselves from the world; wracked with tears they turned their backs on men and dwarves. Others, though, they were overcome with something new. A feeling no elf had felt before. Spite. Hatred filled these elves and twisted them and they turned on their weaker cousins. Some still remain after the great exodus below. Some hide amongst us with spider-poisoned blades, meeting out that strangest of punishments: elven vengeance. Instinct: To spite

- Poison them
- Unleash an ancient spell
- Call reinforcements

**Deep Elf Swordmaster Group, Intelligent, Organized**

Barbed blade (2d8+b+2 damage 1 piercing) 6 HP 2 Armor

Close

The deep elves lost the sweetness and gentle peace of their bright cousins ages ago but did not abandon grace. They move with a swiftness and beauty that would bring a tear to any warrior's eye. In the dark, they've practiced. A cruelty has infested their swordsmanship—a wickedness comes to the fore. Barbed blades and whips replace the shining pennant-spears of surface elven battles. The swordmasters of the deep elf clans do not merely seek to kill, but to punish with every stroke of their blades. Wickedness and pain are their currency. Instinct: To punish

- Inflict pain beyond measure
- Use the dark to advantage

**Deep Elf Priest Solitary, Divine, Intelligent, Organized**

Smite (d10+2 damage) 14 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach

**Special Qualities: Divine connection**

*The spirits of the trees and the lady sunlight are far far from home in the depths where the deep elves dwell. New gods were found, there, waiting for their children to come home. Gods of the spiders, the fungal forests, and things that whisper in the forbidden caves. The deep elves, ever attuned to the world around them, listened with hateful intent to their new gods and found a source of power yet unrealized. Hate calls to hate and grim alliances were made. Even among these spiteful ranks, piety finds a way to express itself. Instinct : To pass on divine vengeance*

- Weave spells of hatred and malice
- Rally the deep elves
- Pass on divine knowledge

### **Dragon Solitary, Huge, Terrifying, Cautious, Hoarder**

Bite (2d10+5 damage 4 piercing) 16 HP 5 Armor

Reach, Messy

#### **Special Qualities: Elemental blood, Wings**

*They are the greatest and most terrible things this world will ever have to offer. Instinct : To rule*

- Bend an element to its will
- Demand tribute
- Act with disdain

### **Gray Render Solitary, Large**

Rend (d10+3 damage) 16 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

*On its own, the render is a force of utter destruction. Huge and leathery, with a maw of unbreakable teeth and claws to match, the render seems to enjoy little more than tearing things apart. Stone, flesh, or steel, it matters little. However, the gray render is so rarely found alone. They bond with other creatures. Some at birth, others as fully-grown creatures, and will follow their bonded master wherever it goes, bringing them offerings of meat and protecting them while they sleep. Finding an un-bonded render means certain riches, if you survive to sell it. Instinct : To serve*

- Tear something apart

### **Magmin Horde, Intelligent, Organized, Hoarder**

Flaming hammer (d6+2 damage) 7 HP 4 Armor

Close, Reach

#### **Special Qualities: Firey blood**

*Dwarf-shaped and industrious, the magmin are among the deepest-dwellers of Dungeon World. Found in cities of brass and obsidian built nearest the molten core of the planet, the magmin live a life devoted to craft—especially that of fire and magical items related to it. Surly and strange, they do not often deign to speak to petitioners who appear at their gates, even those who have somehow found a way to survive the hellish heat. Even so, they respect little more than a finely made item and to learn to forge from a magmin craftsman means unlocking secrets unknown to surface blacksmiths. Like so much else, visiting the magmin is a game of risk and reward. Instinct : To craft*

- Offer a trade or deal
- Strike with fire or magic
- Provide just the right item, at a price

### **Minotaur Solitary, Large**

Axe (d10+1 damage) 16 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

#### **Special Qualities: Unerring sense of direction**

*Head of a man, body of a bull. No, wait, I've got that backwards. It's the bull's head and the man's body. Hooves sometimes? Is that right? I remember the old King said something about a maze? Blast! You know I can't think under this kind of pressure. What was that? Oh gods, I think it's coming. . . Instinct : To contain*

- Confuse them
- Make them lost

### **Naga Solitary, Intelligent, Organized, Hoarder, Magical**

Bite (d10 damage) 12 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

*Ambitious and territorial above nearly all else, the naga are very rarely found without a well-formed and insidious cult of followers. You'll see it in many mountain towns—a snake sigil scrawled on a tavern wall or a local church burned to the ground. People going missing into the mines. Men and women wearing the mark of the serpent. At the core of it all lies a naga; an old race now fallen into obscurity, still preening with the head of a man over its coiled, serpent body. Variations of these creatures exist depending on their bloodline and original purpose, but they are all master manipulators and magical forces to be reckoned with. Instinct : To lead*

- Send a follower to their death
- Use old magic
- Offer a deal or bargain

### **Salamander Horde, Large, Intelligent, Organized, Planar**

Flaming spear (2d6+3 damage) 7 HP 3 Armor

Close, Reach, Near

#### **Special Qualities: Burrowing**

*The excavation uncovered a basalt gate, the reports called it. Black stone carved with molten runes. When they dug it up, the magi declared it inert but further evidence indicates that was an incorrect claim. The entire team went missing. When we arrived, the gate was glowing. Its light filled the whole cavern. We could see from the entrance that the area had become full of these creatures—like red and orange skinned men, tall as an ogre but with a snakes tail where there legs ought to be. They were clothed, too—some had black glass armor. They spoke to each other in a tongue that sounded like grease in a fire. I wanted to leave but the Sergeant wouldn't listen. You've already read what happened next, sir. I know I'm the only one that got back, but what I said is true. The gate is open, now. This is just the beginning! Instinct : To consume in flame*

- Summon elemental fire
- Melt away deception

## 34

## Planar Powers

**Angel Solitary, Terrifying, Divine, Intelligent, Organized**

Flame sword (2d10-b+4 damage ignores armor) 18 HP 4 Armor

**Close, Forceful**

**Special Qualities: Wings**

So was it written that the heavens opened up to Avra'hal and did an angel from the clouds emerge to speak unto her and so did it appear to her as her firstborn daughter—beautiful, of ebon skin and golden eyes—and did Avra'hal cry tears to see it. “Be not afraid” it commanded her “go to the villages I have shown you in your dreams and unto them show the word I have written on your soul.” Avra'hal wept and wept and did agree to do this and did take up her sword and tome and did into the villages go, a great thirst for blood on her lips for the word the angel wrote upon the soul of Avra'hal was “kill”. Instinct : To share divine will

- Deliver visions and prophecy
- Stir mortals to action
- Expose sin and injustice

**Barbed Devil Solitary, Large, Planar, Terrifying**

Spine (d10+3 damage 3 piercing) 16 HP 3 Armor

**Close, Reach, Messy**

**Special Qualities: Spines**

There are a thousand forms of devil, maybe more. Some common and some unique. Each time the Inquisitors discover a new one they write it into the codex and the knowledge is shared among the abbeys in the hope that the atrocities of that particular sort won't find their way into the world again. The barbed devil has long been known to the brothers and sisters of the inquisition. A literal thing, it appears only at a site of great violence or when called by a wayward summoner. Covered in sharp quills, this particular demon revels in the spilling of blood, being specifically fond of impaling victims piecemeal or in whole upon its thorns and letting them die there. Cruel but not particularly effective beyond slaughter. A low inquisitorial priority. Instinct : To bloody

- Impale someone
- Kill randomly

**Chain Devil Solitary, Planar**

Crush (d10 damage ignores armor) 12 HP 3 Armor

**Close, Reach**

Do you think the phrase “drag him to hell” means nothing? It is unfortunately literal, in the case of the chain devil. Appearing differently to each victim, this summoned creature has but a single purpose: to wrap its victim up in binding coils and take it away to a place of torment. Sometimes it will come as a man-shaped mass of rusting iron, hooks and coils of mismatched links. Other times, a roiling tangle of rope or kelp or twisted bloody bedsheets. The results are always the same. Instinct : To capture

- Take a captive

- Return to whence it came
- Torture with glee

**Concept Elemental Solitary, Devious, Planar, Gibbous****Special Qualities: Ideal form**

The planes are not as literal as our world. Clothed in the elemental chaos are places of stranger stuff than air and water. Here, rivers of time crash upon shores of crystal fear. Bleak storms of nightmare roil and churn in a laughter-bright sky. Sometimes, the spirits of these places can be lured into our world, though they are infinitely more unpredictable and strange than mere fire or earth might be. Easier to make mistakes, too—one might try calling up a Wealth Elemental and be surprised to find a Murder Elemental instead. Instinct : To perfect its concept

- Show its concept in its purest form

**Corrupter Solitary, Devious, Planar, Hoarder**

Secret dagger (2d8-w damage) 12 HP 0 Armor

**Close**

Surely, my good man, you must know why I am here. Must know who I am. You said the words. You spilled the blood and followed the instructions almost to the letter. Your pronunciation was a bit off but that's to be expected. I've come to give you what you've always wanted, friend. Glory, love, money? Paltry things when you've the vaults of hell to plumb. Don't look so shocked, you knew what this was. You have but one thing we desire. Promise it to us, and the world shall be yours for the taking. Trust me. Instinct : To bargain

- Offer a deal with horrible consequences
- Plumb the vaults of hell for a bargaining chip
- Make a show of power

**Djinn Group, Large, Magical**

Flame (d8+1 damage ignores armor) 14 HP 4 Armor

**Close, Reach**

**Special Qualities: Made of flame**

Stop rubbing that lamp, you idiot. I do not care what you have read, it will not grant you wishes. I brought you here to show you something real, something true. See this mural? It shows the ancient city. The true city that came before. They called it Majilis and it was made of brass by the spirits. They had golem servants and human lovers and, in that day, it was said you could trade them a year of your life for a favor. We are not here to gather treasure this night, fool, we are here to learn. The djinn still sometimes come to these places, and you must understand their history if you are to know how to behave. They are powerful and wicked and proud and you must know them if you hope to survive a summoning. Now, bring the lamp here and we will light it, it grows dark and these ruins are dangerous at night. Instinct : To burn eternally

- Grant power for a price
- Summon the forces of the City of Brass

### Hell Hound Group, Planar, Organized

Fiery Bite (d8 damage) 10 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

#### Special Qualities: Hide of shadow

When one reneges on a deal, does not the debtor come for payment? Does the owed party not send someone to collect what is due? So too with the Powers Below. They only want what is theirs. A howling pack of shadows, flame and jagged bone, driven by the hunting horn. They will not cease, they cannot be evaded. Instinct : To pursue

- Follow despite all obstacles
- Spew fire
- Summon the forces of hell on their target

### Imp Horde, Planar, Intelligent, Organized

Flame gout (d6 damage ignores armor) 7 HP 1 Armor

#### Close, Near, Far

These tiny observer-demons often act as a first-time binding subject by neonate warlocks. They can be found infesting arcane cabals, drinking potions when no-one watches, and chasing pets and servants with tiny pitchforks. A caricature of true demonhood, these little creatures are, thankfully, not too difficult to bind or extinguish. Instinct : To harass

- Send information back to hell
- Cause mischief

### Inevitable Group, Large, Magical, Cautious, Gibbous, Planar

Hammer (d8+1 damage) 21 HP 5 Armor

#### Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Made of Order

All things come to an end. Entropy bleeds reality slowly out. At the edge of time itself stand the Inevitable. Massive, powerful and seemingly carved from star-stuff themselves, the Inevitable intervene only where magic or calamity have undone the skein of fate. Where the arrogant and powerful boil the substance of destiny away and seek to undermine the very laws of reality, the Inevitable arrive to guide things back to the proper order. Unshakable, seemingly immune to mortal harm and utterly enigmatic, it is said that the Inevitable are all that will remain when time's long thread has run out. Instinct : To preserve order

- End a spell or effect
- Enforce a law of nature or man
- Give a glimpse of destiny

### Larvae Horde, Devious, Planar, Intelligent

Slime (2d4-w damage) 10 HP 0 Armor

#### Close

Those who have seen visions of the Planes Below, and survived with their sanity intact, speak of masses of these writhing wretches. Maggots with the face of men and women, crying out for salvation in a nest of flames. Sometimes, they can be goaded out through a rip in the planar caul and emerge, wriggling and in torment, into our world. Once here, they spread misery and sickness during their mayfly lives before expiring into a slurry of gore. All in all, an inspiration towards good deeds in life. Instinct : To suffer

- Fill them with despair
- Beg for mercy
- Draw evil attention

### Nightmare Horde, Large, Magical, Terrifying, Planar

Trample (d6+1 damage) 7 HP 4 Armor

#### Close, Reach

#### Special Qualities: Flame and shadow

The herd came from a pact made in the days when folk still inhabited the Blasted Steppes. Horselords, they were, who travelled those lands. Born in the saddle, it was said. One of theirs, in a bid to dominate his peers, made a black pact with some fell power and traded away his finest horses. He had some power, sure—but what's a thousand year dynasty when a life is so short? Now the fiends of the pit ride on the finest horses ever seen. Coats of shining oil and manes of tormented flame: these are steeds of hell's cavalry. Instinct : To ride rampant

- Sheath a rider in hellish flame
- Drive them away

### Quasit Horde, Planar

Hellish weaponry (d6 damage) 7 HP 2 Armor

#### Close

#### Special Qualities: Adaptable form

An imp with some ambition. A quasit is a kind of foot soldier in the demon realm. A commoner, armed with fangs or claws or wings or some other thing to give it just a little edge over its hellish peers. Commonly bound by warlocks to carry heavy loads or build bridges or guard their twisted towers, a quasit can take many forms, none of them pleasant. Instinct : To serve

- Attack with abandon
- Inflict pain

### The Tarrasque Solitary, Huge, Planar

#### Special Qualities: Impervious

The Tarrasque. Legendary unstoppable juggernaut—eater of cities and swallower of ships, horses, and knights. A creature unseen in an age but about whom all kinds of stories are told. One thread of truth weaves through these stories. It cannot be killed. No blade can pierce its stony shell nor spell penetrate the shield it somehow bears. Stories say, though, that the will of one pure soul can send it to slumber, though what that means and, by the gods, where such a thing might be found, pray we do not ever need to learn. It slumbers. Somewhere in the periphery of the planar edge, it sleeps for now. Instinct : To consume

- Swallow a person, group, or place whole
- Release a remnant of a long-eaten place from its gullet

### Word Daemon Solitary, Planar, Magical

All of mortal magic is just words. Spells are prayers, rote formula, runes cast, or songs sung. Letters, words, sentences, and syntax strung together in a language that the whole world itself might understand. By way of words we can make our fellows cry or exult, can paint pictures and whisper desire to the gods. No little wonder, then, that in all that power is intent. That every word we utter, if repeated and meaning or emotion given to it, can spark a kind of unintentional summoning. Word daemons are called by accident, appear at random and are often short-lived, but come to attend a particular word. Capricious, unpredictable and dangerous, yes—but possibly useful, depending on the word. Instinct : To further their word

- Cast a spell related to their word
- bring their word into abundance



# 35

## Folk of the Realm

### Acolyte

*Can't all be the High Priest, they said. Can't all wield the White Spire, they said. Scrub the floor, they told me. The Cthonic Overgod don't want a messy floor, do he? They said it'd be enlightenment and magic. Feh. It's bruised knees and dish-pan-hands. If only I'd been a cleric, instead. Instinct: To serve dutifully*

- Follow dogma
- Offer eternal reward for mortal deeds

### Adventurer Horde, Intelligent

Sword (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

#### Special Qualities: Endless enthusiasm

*Scum of the earth, they are. A troupe of armored men and women come sauntering into town, brandishing what, for all intents and purposes, is enough magical and mundane power to level the whole place. Bringing with them bags and bags of loot, still dripping blood from whatever poor sod they had to kill to get it. An economical fiasco waiting to happen, if you ask me. The whole system becomes completely uprooted. Dangerous, unpredictable murder-hobos. Oh, wait, you're an adventurer? I take it all back. Instinct: To adventure or die trying*

- Go on a fool's errand
- Act impulsively
- Share tales of past exploits

### Bandit Horde, Intelligent, Organized

Dirk (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

*Desperation is the watchword of banditry. When times are tough, what else is there to do but scavenge a weapon and take up with a clan of nasty men and women? Highway robbery, poaching, scams and cons and murder most foul but we've all got to eat so who can blame them? Then again, there's evil in the hearts of some and who's to say that desperation isn't a want to sate one's baser lusts? Anyway—it's this or starve, sometimes. Instinct: To rob*

- Steal something
- Demand tribute

### Bandit King Solitary, Intelligent, Organized

Trusty knife (2d10-b damage) 12 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

*Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven. Instinct: To lead*

- Make a demand
- Extort
- Topple power

### Fool

*There's not but one person in all the King's court allowed to speak the truth. The real, straight-and-honest truth about anything. The Fool couches it all in bells and prancing and chalky face-paint, but who else gets to tell the King what's what? You can trust a Fool, they say, especially when he's made you red-faced and you'd just as soon drown him in a cesspit. Instinct: To mock*

- Expose injustice
- Play a trick

### Guardsman Group, Intelligent, Organized

Spear (d8 damage) 6 HP 1 Armor

#### Close, Reach

*Noble protector or merely drunken lout, it often makes no difference to these sorts. Falling just shy of a noble Knight, the proud town guard is an ancient profession none-the-less. These folks of the constabulary often dress in the colors of their lord (when you can see it under the mud) and, depending on the richness of that lord, might even have a decent weapon and some armor that fits. Those are the lucky ones. Even so, someone has to be there keep an eye on the gate when the Black Riders have been spotted in the woods. Too many of us owe our lives to these souls—remember that the next time one is drunkenly insulting your mother, hmm? Instinct: To do as ordered*

- Uphold the law at all costs
- Make a profit

### Halfling Thief Solitary, Small, Intelligent, Stealthy, Devious

Dagger (2d8-w damage) 12 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

*It would be foolish, now, to draw conclusions about folks just because they happen to be good at one thing or another. Then again, a spade's a spade, isn't it. Or maybe just the goodly, soft-and-sweet type of Halfling have the mind to stay in their grassy-hill homes and aren't the type you find in the slums and taverns of the mannish world. Perhaps they're there to cut your purse for calling them "halfling" in the first place. Not all take so kindly to the title. Or they're playing a game, pretending to be a child in need of alms—and your arrogant eyes can't even see the difference until too late. Well, it matters little. They're gone with your coin before you even realize you deserved it. Instinct: To live a life of stolen luxury*

- Steal
- Put on the appearance of friendship

### Hedge Wizard Magical

Not all those who wield the arcane arts are adventuring Wizards. Nor necromancers in mausoleums or sorcerers of ancient bloodline. Some are just old men and women, smart enough to have discovered a trick or two. It might make them a bit batty to come by that knowledge, but if you've a curse to break or a love to prove, might be that a hedge wizard will help you, if you can find his rotten hut in the swamp and pay the price he asks. Instinct : To learn

- Cast almost the right spell (for a price)
- Make deals beyond their ken

### High Priest

Respected by all who gaze upon them, the high priests and abbesses of Dungeon World are treated with a sort of reverence. Whether they pay homage to Ur-thuu-hak, God of Swords, or whisper quiet prayers to Namiah, precious daughter of peace, they know a thing or two that you and I, we won't ever know. The gods speak to them as a hawker-of-wares might speak to us in the marketplace. For this, for the bearing-of-secrets and the knowing-of-things, we give them a wide berth as they pass in their shining robes. Instinct : To lead

- Set down divine law
- Reveal divine secrets
- Commission divine undertakings

### Hunter Group, Intelligent

Ragged bow (d6 damage) 6 HP 1 Armor

#### Near, Far

The wilds are home to more than just beasts of horn and scale. There are men and women out there, too—those who smell blood on the wind and stalk the plains in the skins of their prey. Whether with a trusty longbow bought on a rare trip into the city or with a knife of bone and sinew-made, these folk have more in common with the things they track and make their meals than with their own kind. Solemn, somber and quiet, they find a sort of peace in the wild. Instinct : To survive

- Bring back news from the wilds
- Slay a beast

### Knight Solitary, Intelligent, Organized, Cautious

Sword (2d10-b damage) 12 HP 4 Armor

#### Close

What youngster doesn't cling to the rail at the mighty joust, blinded by the sun on their glittering armor, wishing they could be the one adorned in steel and riding to please the King and Queen? What peasant youth with naught but a loaf of bread and a lame sow doesn't wish to trade it all in for the lance and the bright pennant? A Knight is many things—a holy warrior, a sworn sword, a villain sometimes, too, but a Knight cannot help but be a symbol to all who see her. A Knight means something. Instinct : To live by a code

- Make a moral stand
- Lead peasants into battle

### Merchant

Ten foot poles. Get your ten foot poles, here. Torches, bright and hot. Mules, too—stubborn but immaculately bred. Need a linen sack, do you? Right over here! Come and get your ten foot poles! Instinct : To profit

- Propose a business venture
- Offer a 'deal'

### Noble

Are they granted their place by the gods, perhaps? Is that why they're able to pass their riches and power down by birth? Some trick or enchantment of the blood, maybe. The peasant bends his knee and scrapes and toils and the noble wears the finery of his place and, they say, we all have our burdens to bear. Seems to me that some of us have burdens of stone and some carry their weight in gold. It's a tough life. Instinct : To rule

- Issue an order
- Offer a reward

### Peasant

Covered in muck, downtrodden at the bottom of the great chain of being, we all stand on the backs of those that grow our food on their farms. Some peasants do better than others, but none will ever see a coin of gold in their day. They'll dream at night of how someday, somehow, they'll fight a dragon and save a princess. Don't act like you weren't one before you lost what little sense you had, adventurer. Instinct : To get by

- Plead for help
- Offer a simple reward and gratitude

### Rebel Horde, Intelligent, Organized

Axe (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

#### Close

In the countryside they'd be called outlaw and driven off or killed. The city, though, is full of places to hide. Damp basements to pore over maps and to plan and plot against a corrupt system. Like rats, they gnaw away at order, either to supplant it anew or just erode the whole thing. The line between change and chaos is a fine one—some rebels walk that thin line and others just want to see it all torched. Disguise, a knife in the dark or a thrown torch at the right moment are all tools of the rebel. The burning brand of anarchy is a common fear amongst the nobles of Dungeon World. These men and women are why. Instinct : To upset order

- Die for a cause
- Inspire others

### Soldier Horde, Intelligent, Organized

Spear (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor

#### Close, Reach

For a commoner with a strong arm, sometimes it's this or be a bandit. It's wear the colors and don ill-fitting armor and march into the unknown with a thousand other scared men and women conscripted to fight the wars of our time. They could be hiding out in the woods instead, living off poached elk and dodging the king's guard. Better to risk one's life in service to a cause. To bravely toss one's lot in with their fellows and hope to come out the other side still in one piece. Besides, the nobles need strong men and women. What is it they say? A handful of soldiers beats a mouthful of arguments. Instinct : To fight

- March into battle
- Fight as one

### Spy

Beloved of Kings but never truly trusted. Mysterious, secretive and alluring, the life of a spy is, if you ask a commoner, full of romance and intrigue. They're a knife in the dark and a pair of watchful eyes. A spy can be your best friend, your lover or that old man you see in the market every day. One never knows. Hells, maybe you're a spy—they say there's magic that can turn folks' minds without them ever knowing it. How can we trust you? Instinct : To infiltrate

- Report the truth
- Double cross

### Tinkerer

It's said that if you see a tinker on the road and you don't offer him a swig of ale or some of your food that he'll leave a curse of bad luck behind. A tinker is a funny thing. These strange folk often travel the roads between towns with their oddment carts and favorite mules. With a ratty dog and always a story to tell. Sometimes the mail, too, if you're lucky and live in a place where Queen's Post won't go. If you're kind, maybe they'll sell you a rose that never wilts or a clock that chimes with the sound of faerie laughter. Or maybe they're just antisocial peddlers. You never know, right? Instinct : To create

- Offer an oddity at a price
- Spin tales of great danger and reward in far-off lands

# 36

## Moves in Detail

### HACK AND SLASH

Hack and Slash is for attacking a prepared enemy plain and simple. If the enemy isn't prepared for your attack—if they don't know you're there or they're restrained and helpless—then that's not Hack and Slash. You just deal your damage or murder them outright, depending on the situation. Nasty stuff.

The enemy's counter-attack can be any GM move made directly with that creature. A goblin might just attack you back, or they might jam a poisoned needle into your veins. Life's tough, isn't it?

Note that an "attack" is some action that a player undertakes that has a chance of causing physical harm to someone else. Attacking a dragon with inch-thick metal scales full of magical energy with a typical sword is like swinging a meat cleaver at a tank: it just isn't going to cause any harm, so it's not an attack. Note that circumstances can change that: if you're in a position to stab the dragon on its soft underbelly (good luck with getting there) it could hurt, so it's an attack.

If the action that triggers the move could reasonably hurt multiple targets roll once and apply damage to each target (they each get their armor).

*Jarl is up to his not-inconsiderable belly in slaving goblins. They have him surrounded, knives bared. "I've had enough of this!" he bellows "I wallop the closest goblin with my hammer." We agree that this is a combat situation and Jarl rolls the dice for Hack and Slash. He rolls an 11, so he has a choice. "Fear is for the weak! I deal extra damage—let the goblins come." "The goblin you strike certainly doesn't like that much" I say, "you smash your hammer into his shoulder and are rewarded with the crunch of goblin bones—and a deep knife wound as the goblin counter-attacks. He deals 4 damage to you."*

*Cadeus has the drop on two orc warriors—he's lurking in the shadows as the orcs walk past. "I leap out and bring my sword down in a sweeping arc, like this!" he says, miming the strike. The orc wasn't ready to fight so I say "The orc is caught entirely off-guard and doesn't even have a chance to raise his patchwork shield. Deal your damage." Cadeus rolls his damage and it's enough to kill the orc. The other warrior is still standing, so I say "The other orc freezes in horror for a split second. Then he's smiling at you with his horrible tusked mouth as he raises a signal horn from his belt. What do you do?"*

*Bartelby has disarmed a duelist and has him at sword point. "I'm not giving this guy another chance to attack! I run him through." Without thinking about it carefully I say "Oh, okay, sounds like Hack and Slash, roll+Str." Bartelby rolls and gets a 7. I try to make a move "You run him through, he's not able to defend himself, but, uh . . . Oh, wait, he's not really in melee with you, is he? He's helpless. Forget Hack and Slash. You run him through and he slumps to the ground coughing up blood."*

### VOLLEY

Volley covers the entire act of drawing, aiming, and firing a ranged weapon or throwing a thrown weapon. The advantage to using a ranged weapon over melee is that the attacker is less likely to be attacked back. Of course they do have to worry about ammunition and getting a clear shot though.

On a 7-9, read "danger" broadly. It can be bad footing or ending in the path of a sword or maybe just giving up your sweet sniper nest to your enemies. Whatever it is it's impending and it's always something that causes the GM to say "What do you do?" Quite often, the danger will be something that will then require you to dedicate yourself to avoiding it or force you to Defy Danger.

If you're throwing something that doesn't have ammo (maybe you've got a move that makes your shield throwable) you can't choose to mark off ammo. Choose from the other two options instead.

*Aranwe is on the floor of the ritualarium as the orc eyegouger chants his ritual from atop the pedestal. "Since Thelian has the other orcs busy, I take the opportunity to site down my bow and take a shot at the orc running the ritual." "Sounds like volley to me." She rolls an 8, plus her Dex makes 9. "Looks like you have a tough choice" I say. "Well, I'm almost out of arrows, and we need to get rid of him before the ritual finishes, so I'm going to take the danger." "Sure, that sounds good. Well, as the ritual progresses the flames around him have gotten higher and you have to move around to take the shot. You hit him dead on, roll your damage, but you had to step inside the ritual circle to do it. Everything outside the circle looks cloudy and unreal, all you can hear is the orc chanting. Thelian, you notice that Aranwe is inside the circle. What do you do?"*



*Halek is firing on the advancing kobold mob. He rolls an 8 and decides to be put in danger. I think for a moment and then say "You have to duck and dodge to get the shot but you finally let it go and nail the lead kobold. You hear something behind you and turn to see that you're right next to the ogre. He smashes you with his club and deals you 12 damage." "All that? Just for getting put in danger? That seems like a lot more than danger." He's right, of course, so I say "Oh, you're right—danger's something that's about to happen. How about, instead, you turn around after firing the shot and the ogre's right in your face! He's about to swing his club right down on you. What do you do?"*

## DEFY DANGER

You Defy Danger when you do something in the face of impending peril. This may seem like a catch-all. It is! Defy Danger is for those times when it seems like you clearly should be rolling but no other move applies.

Defy Danger also applies when you make another move despite danger not covered by that move. For example, Hack and Slash assumes that's you're trading blows in battle—you don't need to Defy Danger because of the monster you're fighting unless there's some specific danger that wouldn't be part of your normal attack. On the other hand, if you're trying to Hack and Slash while spikes shoot from hidden traps in the walls, you're ignoring a clear and present threat and need to Defy Danger.

Danger, here, is anything that requires resilience, concentration, or poise. This move will usually be called for by the GM. She'll tell you what the danger is as you make the move. Something like "You'll have to Defy Danger, first. The danger is the steep and icy floor you're running across. If you can keep your footing, you can make it to the door before the Necromancer's magic gets you."

Which stat applies depends on what action you take and your action has to trigger the move. That means you can't Defy the Danger of the steep and icy floor with a charming smile just so you can use Cha, since charmingly smiling at the ice floor does nothing to it. On the other hand, making a huge leap over the ice would be Str, placing your feet carefully would be Dex, and so on. Make the move to get the results.

*Emory is climbing a steep ravine. Unbeknownst to him, a cultist sorcerer lurks nearby. The sorcerer casts a spell of frost on the cliffside, covering it with ice. "As you reach for the next handhold, a terrible chill overcomes you. If you want to keep climbing, Defy Danger or risk slipping" I say, making sure to explain what the Danger is. "No way" Emory says, "I need to get the top of this ravine! I grit my teeth and hold tight even as my fingers go numb." He rolls Defy Danger, getting an 8 including his Con for enduring. Now it's time for a hard decision. "You make some progress but as your hands go numb you start slipping. The only way you can get any more traction is by jamming your dagger into the ice to pull yourself up the last few feet. If you do that, though, the dagger is going to be jammed in the face of the cliff until you get a chance to stop and pry it out."*

*"The athach's third arm is swinging down on you with its crude club, what are you doing Valeria?" I've just made a move to establish an impending threat: the athach's strike. She says "I Hack and Slash it! I make a wide swing sideways, right into its legs." Sounds good to me, but she's not doing anything about the club coming at her. "Okay, you can do that, but you take the athach's damage from the club coming right down on your skull." "What? But trading blows is part of Hack and Slash, right?" "It is, but before you make your attack there's already a club coming at you, Hack and Slash doesn't cover that. Do you still want to Hack and Slash, or are you doing something about the club?"*

*Octavia is locked in battle with an ogre. She says "I drop my shield and take up my hammer in both hands. I swing it at the ogre. That's Hack and Slash, right?" "Yeah, it will be but first you've gotta Defy Danger. The danger is the ogre's massive club." "Isn't that part of what Hack and Slash already is? I mean if he couldn't be smashing me with his club then I wouldn't be making the move at all because we wouldn't be in melee." "Oh yeah, you're totally right. Hack and Slash it is, make your roll!"*

## DEFEND

Defending something means standing nearby and focusing on preventing attacks on that thing or stopping anyone from getting near it. When you're no longer nearby or you stop devoting your attention to incoming attacks then you lose any Hold you might have had.

You can only spend Hold when someone makes an attack on you or the thing you're Defending. The choices you can make depend on the attacker and the type of attack. In particular, you can't deal damage to an attacker who you can't

reach with your weapon.

An attack is any action you can interfere with that has harmful effects. Swords and arrows are, of course, attacks but so are spells, grabs, and charges.

If the attack doesn't deal damage then halving it means the attacker gets some of what they want but not all of it. It's up to you and the GM to work out what that means depending on the circumstances. If you're defending the Gem Eye of Oro-Uht and an orc tries to grab it from its pedestal then half effect might mean that the gem gets knocked to the floor but the orc doesn't get his hands on it, yet. Or maybe the orc gets ahold of it but so do you—now you're both fighting over it, tooth and nail. If you and the GM can't agree on a halved effect you can't choose that option.

Defending yourself is certainly an option. It amounts to giving up on making attacks and just trying to keep yourself safe.

*Avon is weaving a powerful spell to send the source of the Necromancer's power back to the Plane of Death. The spell takes time and concentration and there's zombies massing on all sides! Lux says "While Avon's casting his spell, it's my duty to keep him alive. I stand between him and the dead and slam my hammer against my shield—"You want him, you go through me!" I'm Defending Avon." That sounds good to me, so I say "roll+Con." She gets an 11 and Holds three. A few moments later Avon finishes his spell but, in rolling for it, has to make a tough choice and puts himself in danger. I say "you unleash the magic of your spell, sure enough. The magical disturbance draws the attention of the zombie horde—they sense your power and it drives their hunger! With a sudden burst of speed, they're right on top of you. What do you do?" Avon looks unsure for a moment, but Lux says "Let them come. I've got his back. I'm spending a point of hold to direct that attack to me. I push Avon back and swing a wide arc with my shield. I'll also spend a point of hold to halve the damage. To be safe, I follow up with my hammer and use one more hold to deal damage to the gang of zombies." "Wow, okay. They get a few feeble claws past your guard but you're mostly unscathed. That does it for your hold. Are you still defending him or are you doing something else?" "I don't think he'll live long without me. I yell at him to run without taking my eyes off the zombies, I'm not letting any of them past me." "Sounds like you're Defending again, roll+Con."*

*Hadrian has been Defending Durga while she heals a badly wounded Willem. Willem's in fighting shape again so Durga has leaped forwards to drive back the troglodytes. Hadrian is still locked in battle with a deadly crocodilian. The troglodytes attack Durga and Hadrian reacts. "Wait! I still have one hold to Defend Durga. I'm doing to redirect that attack to myself." That doesn't sound quite right to me, they're spread out, now. "How are you doing that if she's over at the troglodyte camp and you're battling the crocodilian in the water?" "Oh yeah. I guess when I started doing something other than standing guard I lost that hold. Damn."*

*Vitus has Spouted Lore on a gilded skull she found on a pedestal and gotten a 10. I begin by saying, mysteriously, "You're pretty sure you recognize the telltale signs of metal forged in the City of Dis, the living planar city." I catch myself and remember to be generous with the truth and make it useful. I add "You recognize some of the glyphs from your spellbook, actually: they're part of fire spells, but with other magic symbols smaller inside them. Casting a non-fire spell into the skull turns it into fire magic, based on the glyphs."*

*Finding a strangely empty room guarded by deadly traps, Omar says "I don't trust this shifty room. I'm going to poke around a little. I take out my tools and start messing with stuff—pulling candlesticks, tapping the wall with my stone hammer. My usual tricks." I say to Omar, "Sounds like you're Discerning Realities?" Omar answers in the affirmative and makes his roll. He rolls a 12 and gets to ask questions. "What here is not as it appears to be?" I think for a second, look at my notes and tell him, "As you tap the walls you find that there's an odd, hollow space on the north side. The stones look newer too, this was added recently. It's actually a hidden room."*

## SPOUT LORE

You Spout Lore any time you want to search your memory for knowledge or facts about something. You take a moment to ponder the things you know about the Orcish Tribes or the Tower of Ul'damar and then reveal that knowledge.

The knowledge you get is like consulting a bestiary, travel guide, or library. You get facts about the subject matter. On a 10+ those facts the GM will show you how those facts can be immediately useful, on a 7–9 they're just facts.

On a miss the GM's move will often have to do with the time you take thinking. Maybe you miss that goblin moving around behind you, or the trip wire across the hallway. It's also a great chance to reveal an unwelcome truth.

Just in case it isn't clear: the answers are always true, even if the GM had to make them up on the spot. Always say what honesty demands.

*Fenfaril has had the misfortune of dropping through an illusory floor and now finds himself in a murky pit. A mottled, eyeless creature shambles towards him, mumbling in a strange tongue. "I'm a little freaked out—what is this thing? Is it going to attack me? I probably read about these things in a bestiary back in school." "Great, that's Spout Lore." I say. Fenfaril rolls and gets an 8. "Well of course you read about these. The name escapes you, but you clearly remember a drawing of a creature like this standing in front of a doorway, like a guard, with someone kneeling before it." On a strong hit I would have given some information on what makes the creature let people pass.*

## DISCERN REALITIES

To Discern Realities you must closely observe your target. That usually means interacting with it or watching someone else do the same. You can't just stick your head in the doorway and Discern Realities about a room. You're not merely scanning for clues—you have to look under and around things, tap the walls and check for weird dust patterns on the bookshelves. That sort of thing.

Discerning Realities isn't just about noticing a detail, it's about figuring out the bigger picture. The GM always describes what the player characters experience honestly, so during a fight the GM will say that the kobold mage stays at the other end of the hall. Discerning Realities could reveal the reason behind that: the kobold's motions reveal that he's actually pulling energy from the room behind him, he can't come any close.

Just like Spout Lore the answers you get are always honest ones. Even if the GM has to figure it out on the spot. Once they answer, it's set in stone. You'll want to Discern Realities to find the truth behind illusions—magical or otherwise.

Unless a move says otherwise players can only ask questions from the list. If a player asks a question not on the list the GM can tell them to try again or answer a question from the list that seems equivalent.

Of course, some questions might have a negative answer, that's fine. If there really, honestly is nothing useful or valuable here, the GM will answer that question with "Nothing, sorry."

*Omar still has two more questions. His his next one is "Who sealed the hidden room?" That's not a question from the list but it sounds to me like he's really asking "what happened here recently". I answer that instead. "Looking at the stonework you notice the wall bends out a little. The work's definitely of goblin origin—shoddy and quick. The only way it could get bent out like that is if something pushed out on the stones from within." "So some goblins blocked it from the other side?" Omar says. "Yeah, exactly."*

## PARLEY

Parley covers a lot of ground including old standbys like intimidation and diplomacy. You know you're using Parley when you're trying to get someone to do something for you by holding a promise or threat over them. Nice or not, the tone doesn't matter.

Merely asking someone politely isn't Parleying. That's just talking. You say "Can I have that magic sword?" and the King's knight says "Hell no, this is my blade, my father forged it and my mother enchanted it" and that's that. To Parley, you have to have leverage. Leverage is anything that could lure the target of your Parley to do something for you. Maybe it's something they want or something they don't want you to do. Like a sack of gold. Or punching them in the face. What counts as leverage depends on the people involved and the request being made. Threaten a long goblin with death and you have leverage. Threaten a goblin backed up by his gang with death and he might think he's better off in a fight.

On a hit they ask you for something related to whatever leverage you have. If your leverage is that you're standing before them sharpening your knife and insinuating about how much you'd like to shank them with it they might ask you to let them go. If your leverage is your position in court above them they might ask for a favor.

Whatever they ask for, on a 10+, you just have to promise it clearly and unambiguously. On a 7-9, that's not enough: you also have to give them some assurance, right now, before they do what you want. If you promise that you'll ensure their safety from the wolves if they do what you want and you roll a 7-9 they won't do their part until you bring a fresh wolf pelt, for example. It's worth noting that on a 10+ you don't actually have to keep your promise. Whether you'll follow up or not, well, that's up to you. Of course breaking promises leads to problems. People don't take kindly to oath-breakers and aren't likely to deal with them in the future.

In some cases when you state what you want you may include a possible promise for the creature to make, as in "Flee and I'll let you live." It's up to the target of the Parley if that's the promise they want or if they have something else in mind. They can say "yes, let me live and I'll go" (with assurances, if you rolled a 7-9) or "promise me you won't follow me."

*Leena is trying to convince Lord Hywn to vouch for her so that she is granted an audience with the Queen. She's laid out what she wants pretty well but I say "Lord Hywn obviously isn't convinced. Why should he help you?" She smirks a bit. "Oh. That. While I'm talking to him, I absentmindedly start playing with the signet ring from that assassin we killed. The one he hired to off the prince. I make a big show of it just to make sure he sees who's ring it is." That's perfect; now I know what to ask for. Leena's player hits her roll with an 8. "Once your little show sets in, Hywn just looks at you coldly. After a moment he says 'Enough being coy. You and I both know you murdered my hired man. Give me that ring and swear you'll speak no more about it, then I'll do as you ask.' "Oh sure, I give it to him" she says "We can always dig up more dirt on this scumbag later."*

*Pendrell's trying to get into the gambling den where One-Eye usually plays. He saunters up to the guards and says "Hey fellas, how's it going, care to open the door for me?" Pendrell's player says "I'm being all suave as I do it to; really cool so these guys will let me in. That's Parley! I roll+Cha." Something's not right here so I stop him "Wait a sec. All you've done is tell these guys what you want—you're just talking. The big smelly one on the right of the door steps in front of you, looks you in the eyes and says 'Sorry, private venue' like he's bored with keeping people out and he'd rather be inside himself. If you want to Parley him, you need some leverage. A bribe maybe?"*

Any time you feel like two players should be rolling against each other, the defender should be Interfering with the attacker. This doesn't always mean sabotaging them. It can mean anything from arguing against a Parley to just being a shifty person who's hard to Discern. It's about getting in the way of another players' success.

Always ask the person aiding or interfering how they are doing it. As long as they can answer that, they trigger the move. Sometimes, as the GM, you'll have to ask if interference is happening. Your players might not always notice they're interfering with each other.

Aid is a little more obvious. If a player can explain how they're helping in a roll and it makes sense, let them roll to aid.

No matter how many people aid or interfere with a given roll, the target only gets the +1 or -2 once. Even if a whole party of adventurers aid in attacking an ogre, the one who makes the final attack only gets +1.

*Ozruk stands alone and bloodied before a pack of angry hellhounds. Behind him, the Prince of Lescia weeps in fear. Ozruk says "I stand firm and lift my shield, despite certain doom. I'm defending the Prince." At the last moment, though (just as I'm about to have Ozruk roll Defend) Aronwe appears from the shadows, sword drawn. "Doom is not so certain, Dwarf" he says. "I'm standing beside him, helping Ozruk Defend by covering his sword arm." Aronwe rolls+bonds and, if he succeeds, Ozruk will be able to add a +1 to his Defend result.*

## AID OR INTERFERE

# 37

## Special Moves

Special moves are moves that come up less often or in more specific situations. They're still the basis of what characters do in Dungeon World—particularly what they do between dungeon crawls and high-flying adventures.

### LAST BREATH

The Last Breath is the last moment that stands between life and death. Time stands still as Death comes to claim the living. Even those who stay will catch a glimpse of the other side as they fight for their life. Many are changed by this moment—even those who escape alive.

The deal offered by death is decided by the GM but it should always be a real choice with real consequences. If the GM offers something completely painless, the move is pointless. If the GM offers a ridiculous price, no one will take it. Think of ways that the character might be changed by the event: a new goal in life, a debt that must be paid, an obligation.

*Sparrow stands at Death's black gates. First the Gm describes what she sees beyond them: "In among the suffering souls you clearly see Lord Hywn. It appears his double dealing has caught up with him." Now for the bargain: "The shadowy form of Death itself steps between you and the gates. 'Here so soon? I enjoy seeing the souls you send me. I'll return you to the world so that you may serve me, but there is a cost: you will never be able to move under the sun again, or you will return to my realm immediately.'"*

### ENCUMBRANCE

A PC's Load stat is determined by their class and Str. Being able to carry more is a clear benefit when trying to carry treasure out of a dungeon or just making sure you can bring along what you need.

This move only applies to things a person could walk around and still act with. Carrying a boulder on your back is not encumbrance—you can't really act or move much with it. It effects what moves you can make appropriately in the fiction.

### CAROUSE

Unless the PCs are particularly extravagant or generous Carousing doesn't cost any gold. If the players are paying someone else's tab or living the high life then it'll cost them appropriately.

You can only carouse when you return triumphant. That's what draws the crowd of revelers to surround adventurers as they celebrate their latest haul. If you don't claim your success or your failure is well known then who would want to party with you anyway?

### UNDERTAKE A PERILOUS JOURNEY

Distances in Dungeon World are measured in rations. A ration is the amount of supplies used up in a day. Journeys take more rations when they are long or when travel is slow.

A perilous journey is the whole way between two locations. You don't roll for one day's journey and then make camp only to roll for the next day's journey, too. Make one roll for the entire trip.

This move only applies when you know where you're going. Setting off to explore is not a perilous journey. It's wandering around looking for cool things to discover. Use up rations as you camp and the GM will give you details about the world as you discover them.

### MAKE CAMP

You usually Make Camp so that you can do other things, like Prepare Spells or Dutiful Prayer. Or, you know, sleep soundly at night. Whenever you stop to catch your breath for more than an hour or so, you've probably Made Camp.

When camping in dangerous territory the selections made apply to the entire camp. Every PC camping out needs to roll. Camping with fewer than three characters, or without the Ranger, is dangerous—there will always be at least one option not selected.

What counts as dangerous territory is up to the GM. She should call for the move. When not Making Camp in dangerous territory the camp is in all ways unexceptional with neither benefits or dangers.

Staying a night in an inn or house is Making Camp is a safe location. Regain your hit points as usual, but only mark off a ration if you're eating from the food you carry, not paying for a meal or receiving hospitality.

### OUTSTANDING WARRANTS

This move is only for places where you've caused trouble, not every piece of civilization you enter. Being publicly caught up in someone else's trouble still triggers this move.

Civilization generally means the villages, towns and cities of humans, elves, dwarves, and halflings but it can also apply to any relatively lawful establishment of monstrous species, such as orcs or goblins. If the PCs have stayed there as part of the community it's civilization.

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**Moves  
in Detail**

# 39

## Multiclass Moves

### MULTICLASS DABBLER

### MULTICLASS INITIATE

### MULTICLASS MASTER

For the purposes of these multiclass moves the Cleric's Commune and Cast a Spell count as one move. Likewise for the Wizard's Spellbook, Prepare Spells, and Cast a Spell.

If a multiclass move grants you the ability to cast spells you prepare and cast spells as if you had one level in the casting class. Whenever you level up you increase the level you prepare and cast spells at too.

*When Ajax gains 3rd level he takes Multiclass Dabbler to get Commune and Cast a Spell from the Cleric class. He casts and prepares spells like a first level Cleric: first level spells and rites only, a total of 2 levels of spells prepared.*



# 40

## Bard Moves

### BARDIC LORE

Treat the areas of your lore like books. Is the upwards-flowing waterfall you just came across something important that would be covered in a book called "On Spells and Magicks?" If so, your Bardic Lore applies.

If you care enough to ask a question about it then it's probably important. Don't second-guess yourself: if you care enough to want to know more about it then it has some importance.

### CHARMING AND OPEN

Speaking frankly means you really are being open with them, not just giving the appearance of openness. It's your true sincerity that puts others at ease and lets you get information out of them; if you're trying to maintain a lie at the same time you won't get very far.

### IT GOES TO ELEVEN

Of course the creature you effect must have some way of harming your target of choice. Spurring a wolf into a frenzy to attack the eagle lord circling above doesn't do any good, the wolf doesn't have a way to attack it.

### AN EAR FOR MAGIC

Acting on the answers can mean acting against them or taking advantage of them. Either way you take +1 forward.

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Cleric

## COMMUNE

If you like you can prepare the same spell more than once.

# 42

## Cleric Spells

### GUIDANCE

It's up to the creativity of your deity (and the GM) to communicate as much as possible through the motions and gestures of your deity's symbol. You don't get visions or a voice from heaven, just some visual cue of what your deity would have you do (even if it's not in your best interest).

### MAGIC WEAPON

Casting Magic Weapon on the same weapon again has no effect. No matter how many times you cast it on the same weapon it's still just magic +1d4 damage.

Magic though is nothing to be scoffed at. Having a magic weapon may give you an advantage against some of the stranger beasts of Dungeon World, ghosts and the sort. The exact effects depend on the monster and circumstances, so make the most of it.

### ANIMATE DEAD

Treating the zombie as your character means you make moves with its ability scores based on the fiction, just like always. Unless its brain is functioning on its own the zombie can't do much besides follow the last order it was given, so you'd better stay close. Even if its brain works it's still bound to follow your orders.

# 43

## Fighter Moves

### SIGNATURE WEAPON

The base description you choose is just a description. Choosing a spear doesn't give you Close range, for example. You could choose a spear as the description, then Hand as the range. Your spear is something special, or your technique with it is different, just describe why your weapon has the tags you've chosen.

### HEIRLOOM

The exact nature of the spirits (and therefore what knowledge they can offer to you) is up to you and the GM to decide. Maybe they're dead ancestors, or echoes of people you've slain, or a minor demon. Up to you.

### ARMOR MASTERY

Armor and shields that are reduced to 0 armor are effectively destroyed. You'll pretty much be paying for a new one anyway, so you might as well drop them and haul out some gold instead.



## Paladin Moves

### EVIDENCE OF FAITH

Your +1 forward applies to anything you do based on your knowledge of the spell's effects: defying it, defending against it, using it to your advantage, etc.

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## Ranger Moves

### COMMAND

Your bonuses only applies when your animal is doing something it's trained in. An animal not trained to attack monsters won't be any help when you're attacking a otyugh.



# 46

## Thief Moves

### BACKSTAB

Reducing armor until they repair it means that they lose armor until they do something that compensates for your damage. If you're fighting an armored knight that might mean a fresh suit of armor, but for a thick-hided ogre its until they've had time to heal up (or protect the wound you left).

### POISONER

In order to make more doses of your chosen poison you need to be reasonably able to gather the required materials. If you're locked up at the top of a tower you're not going to be able to get the materials you need of course.

### WEALTH AND TASTE

In order to use this move it's really got to be your most valuable possession. It's the honest value you place on it that draws others, no lies.

### DISGUISE

Your disguise covers your appearance and any basics like accents and limps. It doesn't grant you any special knowledge of the target, so if someone asks you what your favorite color is you'd better think fast. Defying Danger with Cha is a common part of maintaining a Disguise.



## Wizard Moves

### PREPARE SPELLS

You can prepare the same spell twice if you like.

### EMPOWERED MAGIC

Maximizing the effects of a spell is simple for spells that involve a roll: a maximized Magic Missile does 8 damage. In other cases it's down to the circumstances. A maximized Identify might result in far more information than expected. If there's no clear way to maximize it you can't choose that option.

Likewise for doubling the targets. If the spell doesn't have targets you can't choose to double them.

# 48

## Wizard Spells

### DISPEL MAGIC

The exact effects depend on the circumstances. A goblin orkaster's spell might just be ended; a deity's consecration is probably just dimmed. The GM will tell you the likely effects of Dispeling a given effect before you cast.

### FIREBALL

"Nearby" means a few paces at most, depending on the circumstances.

### POLYMORPH

In some cases the GM may choose the last option more than once to list each unexpected benefit or weakness.

### SUMMON MONSTER

The exact type of monster you get is up to the GM, based on your choices. If you want a non-reckless swimming creature you might get a water elemental, a 1d8 damage +2 Str creature might be a barbed devil. Whatever the creature is you still get to play it.

# 49

## Making Moves

At some point you'll likely want to make your own moves. You might want to create moves to reflect some particular threat ("When you go alone into the Unhallowed Halls..."). You might create moves to cover something that's particularly important to you setting ("When you swim in the dark waters..."). You might create moves to expand a class, or create your own class entirely.

This chapter covers how to create moves and more importantly why to create moves.

Moves are the simplest way to modify the game, but you can go beyond that. Maybe you have a cool idea for an entire class, or you want to change how monsters work, or even mess with the entire GMing structure. We'll get to those topics too, but first: moves.

### STARTING POINTS

Where do moves come from?

You can start a move with the trigger. Some actions will just feel like they should be a move. This is the most common starting point for moves. You'll see some action coming up and feel like it's different enough from existing moves that it needs its own rules.

You can start with the effect. This is particularly useful for class moves. You know that casting a spell is something that the Wizard does, so what triggers that effect?

Rarely, you can even start with the mechanics. Sometimes you'll think of something cool, like a tamed demon who's happiness is a constantly varying stat, and go from there. Be wary of any idea that's entirely mechanical. Since moves always start and end with the fiction, a mechanical idea is the least important bit of the move.

A final starting point is someone else's move. Between *Apocalypse World*, *Dungeon World*, *Monsterhearts*, and the dozens of other games using moves there are many great ideas out there. If you plan to use a borrowed move for anything beyond your personal gaming group, it's a good idea to ask the author first. They're usually pretty cool about it.

### TYPES OF MOVES

What role the move is fulfilling determines what kind of move you're creating.

Moves for dealing with the environment or special features you've added to *Dungeon World* are special moves. These moves are usually the GMs' domain, a place to make parts of the world stand out. Since moves are always triggered by the players' most moves like this should

be written or printed somewhere everyone can look them over unless the move covers something that the player characters wouldn't have any idea about.

Moves that reflect some special competency or power, or something the players do, are usually class moves. If the move is clearly tied to a specific class, add it to that class. If the move is tied to some concept that multiple classes might have access to, like a move only accessible to those that have seen beyond Death's Black Gates, you can create a Compendium Class for those moves. A Compendium Class is like a mini-class, it's a collection of moves around a fictional theme. We'll deal with them in more detail later.

If your move is something the players do but isn't associated with any specific theme or class it's probably a basic or special move. If it comes up all the time it's a basic move, if it comes up more rarely it's a special move.

Moves made by the players in response to monsters, such as the effects of a disease or pressing on despite a focused blast of wind from an air elemental, are player moves associated with that monster. Player moves associated with a monster are fairly rare, most of the ways a player will interact with a monster are covered by the basic and class moves.

Moves made by monsters against the players aren't player moves at all. They're monster moves, simple statements of what the monster does. Trying to make every monster move into a player move will seriously hamper your creativity.

### WORLD MOVES

Your *Dungeon World* is full of fantastic things, right? You're likely to find that some of those fantastic things deserve or demand custom moves to reflect exactly what they do. Consider this one from Chris Bennet:

*When you open a sewer hatch roll+Str. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7-9 choose 1.*

- You avoid being covered in feces and rotting animal entrails from the sewers above.
- You avoid having a gelatinous cube land on you.
- You find a secret back entrance to where the merchant's daughter is being held.

This move is strong because it is tied strongly to a particular place at a particular time. This move was written by request for Jason Morningstar's *Dungeon World* game as the players entered some particularly horrible sewers to find

a powerful merchant's daughter. Two of the options here are very directly tied to that precise situation.

Why would you write this move instead of just using Defy Danger? You wouldn't, always. Opening a pressurized sewer hatch is certainly dangerous, you could use Defy Danger. This move does have the advantage of setting up the choices ahead of time. This is actually a very strong technique: if there's a particular situation that is likely to cause Defy Danger, you can write a custom move that describes the tough choice to be made to save the GM some thinking in the moment.

The other strength of moves like this is they call out something as important. By making the trigger "when you open a sewer hatch" instead of "when you act despite an imminent threat" the move calls out that these sewers are always dangerous.

## CLASS MOVES

Each class has enough moves to take it through tenth level but that doesn't mean you can't add more. Adding moves to a class can demonstrate your idea of Dungeon World. Take this one, for example:

*When you claim a room for you deity, mark every entrance and roll +Wis. On a 10+ the room is peacebonded: no one can take action to cause physical harm within it. On a 7-9 the room is peacebonded, but the show of divine power draws attention. You can dismiss the peacebond as you see fit.*

This move presents a slightly different side of Dungeon World, one that can demand peace (something that usually doesn't come easily to PCs). This may not be every Dungeon World game, but it's a great way to show how your Dungeon World looks reflected in the characters.

When adding a move, look carefully at what class it belongs to. Avoid giving a class moves with infringe on another class's areas of expertise. If the Thief can cast spells just as well as the Wizard the Wizard is likely to feel marginalized. This is why the multiclass moves act as one level lower, so that each class's niche is somewhat protected.

Be careful with any move that provides the same benefit as an existing move even if the trigger is different. +damage moves in particular should be avoided for the most part unless carefully crafted with interesting triggers. +armor too can be problematic if given too freely. The classes at present have damage and armor increases that reflect the overall danger of Dungeon World, giving them more can negate potential threats.

## NEW CLASSES

Creating a new class is more than just writing some new moves. Your first consideration should be how the class relates to the existing classes. No character exists in isolation, so you should think carefully about why this class is different.

An excellent first step to creating a new class is to think about what fictional characters you'd like to task an inspiration. Don't slavishly follow what that fictional character can do (after all, they weren't in Dungeon World) but use them as a guide for what's cool about being that person.

The inspirations for the classes in this book are fairly clear, and made clearer by the notes in the margins. Note that not every inspiration is taken entirely: the wizards of Discworld inspired slightly pompous style of the Wizard, but the Wizard is far more competent and casts spells differently than the typical Discworld character. The inspiration is one of style, not an attempt to recreate what a certain character could do in a certain book.

With a clear idea in mind you have a few basic steps that aren't a concern when writing single moves: HP, Bonds, Look, equipment, alignment, races.

A class's HP is usually some base + Constitution. Base HP is almost always 4, 6, 8, or 10. Having more HP than the Fighter and Paladin might make those classes obsolete unless you're careful. Having less HP than the Wizard is probably character suicide. 4 base HP makes for a class that is deliberately fragile, they'll need help from others when the swords come out. 6 base HP is for classes that aren't ready to fight, but can at least take a hit. 8 base HP is enough to take some hits and get into combat a little, while 10 base HP is for skilled warriors and those who have no fear of battle.

Damage is chosen from the dice available: d4, d6, d8, d10. The classes presented here all use a single die with no static bonus, but there's no reason not to experiment with other options: 2d4 or 1d6+2, for example. High HP and damage tend to go together, as you usually need one to make the other worthwhile.

Bonds are where the class's outlook shines through. It's the place where you, the designer, will most clearly interact with the player at character creation. Unless the class is particularly social or antisocial, write four bonds. If the class is very connected to others, add a Bond, if they're cloistered remove one. Avoid bonds that dictate alignment but don't be afraid to say something about what the class is or does. You can use the rules for writing new Bonds as a starting point, but avoid including proper names

in starting Bonds.

Look is largely left to your imagination. This is an excellent spot to think about your fictional inspiration: what did they look like? How could they look different? Including at least one choice about clothes helps establish style without making the player think about buying clothes.

The equipment choices should always include at least one weapon option and one armor option unless the class is clearly non-martial and lacking in fighting skill. Dungeon Rations are also pretty much required, a starting character without food going into a dangerous area borders on stupid.

Alignments are your place to show the starting outlook of the class. Most classes will have Neutral as an option, since only the most dedicated classes are so tied up to an ideal that the self can't come first. A good alignment move is something that happens with some regularity and requires the player to take action they might not otherwise take. An alignment that happens as part of the normal course of play, like "When you gain treasure..." doesn't really show the character's ideals. Adding some requirements, maybe "When you gain treasure through lies and deceit..." adds an element of ideals. Now the alignment says something about the character (they prize pulling a con on the unsuspecting) and requires the player to think about how they play.

## COMPENDIUM CLASSES

A Compendium Class is a class only available to higher level characters who meet specific requirements. They're called Compendium Classes because they first appeared in the Compendiums for Dungeon World Basic. A Compendium Class is the way to go for a concept that can be layered onto multiple other classes.

The basic structure of a Compendium Class is to have a starting move that is available only to characters who have had a certain experience, like this:

*When you enter the bodily presence of a god or their avatar the next time you gain a level you can choose this move instead of a move from your class:*

*Divine Bond*

*When you write a new Bond instead of using the name of another character you can use the name of a deity you've had contact with. Anytime a Bond with a deity applies to the current situation you can mark it off (as if it was resolved) to call on the deity's favor in a clear and decisive way that the GM describes. At the end of the session you then replace the marked off Bond with a new one, with a deity or player character.*

Note that the move is only available after the character has done a specific thing, and even then only at their next level. Compendium Classes are best when they rely on what the character has done, not stat prerequisites or anything that happens without the player's action. A Compendium Class that is available to anyone who just gained 5th level doesn't stand for much, one that only applies if you've been to Death's Black Gates and lived to tell the tale is more interesting.

A Compendium Class also usually has 2–3 moves that can be taken only if the starting move is taken. These are just like normal class moves, just with the requirement that you have to have already taken the starting Compendium Class move.

Compendium Classes are ideal for concepts that don't quite inspire a full class. If you can't think of what the class looks like or how much HP it has, or if the class overlaps with existing classes, it's probably better as a Compendium Class.

## ADVENTURE MOVES

Adventure moves deal directly with the adventure underway. They can move the action along, change the rewards, or let you jump into a bigger adventure.

If you're running a short game, maybe at a convention or game day, you may find that you want to front load the experience a little more. Here's a move that covers "the adventure so far" so that you can get straight into a short game in media res.

*Stalwart Fighter: As if the bandits weren't bad enough! As if all the sword wounds, bruises and batterings at the hands of your enemies were insufficient—now this. Trapped underground with your adventuring companions when all you wanted was to return to the town and spend your well-earned bounty. No such luck, warrior. Sharpen that sword! Certainly, the others will need your protecting before safety is found. Just like last time. Once more into the breach, right? I swear, one of these fellow must owe you a favor or two by now . . .*

*Have a look around and roll+Cha. On a 10+ choose two party members, on a 7–9 just the one, on a miss you're surrounded by ingrates. At a moment of need, you can cash in an owed favor. A PC must change their action to one of your choosing, once. As long as this action doesn't involve them directly taking damage, giving up a magic item they already own or coming to immediate harm, it's fair game. Use it to make them agree with you, or give you that extra ration you want, or giving you their slot in the loot lottery. Leverage is sweet.*

The most important part of this move is not the roll or the effect, but the information and tone. It sets the stage for a quick adventure and gives the player reading it a starting point to work with. The roll and result here are interesting, but don't greatly change the flow of the game. Handing out a set of these, one to each player, along with a playbook, is a great way to run a con game.

You can also adapt the End of Session move to reflect the adventure you're running. When doing this it's key that you show the players the new End of Session move. The goal isn't to keep them in the dark about what earns XP, but to make the XP awards tie directly to this adventure.

*When you end the session, instead of using the normal end of session questions, use these:*

- Did we learn something about the Cult of the Scaled God?
- Did we rescue a captured villager or help defend the village of Secor?
- Did we defeat a major agent of the Cult of the Scaled God?

## MOVE STRUCTURE

Moves always follow a similar structure. The most basic parts of a move are the trigger ("when . . .") and the effect ("then . . ."). Every move follows this basic format.

### TRIGGERS

Triggers are always fictional actions undertaken by the player characters. Note that a trigger never deals with precise units of time. Don't write a move that begins "When you start a round adjacent to a dragon." There's no rounds (and adjacent is maybe not the best phrasing, as it sound removed from the fiction of standing next to a damn fire-breathing dragon). Prepare Spells isn't "When you spend one hour studying your spellbook" for good reason. Time in Dungeon World is a bit fluid, like in a movie where pacing depends on the circumstances. Don't

rely on concrete units either around the table (rounds) or in the fiction (seconds, minutes, days).

Here are some broad types of triggers:

- **When a character takes action** . Examples: Discern Realities, Fascinate [Bard], Command [Ranger].
- **When a character takes action under specific circumstances** . Examples: Hack and Slash, Gladiator [Fighter], Backstab [Thief].
- **When circumstances dictate, no character action** . Examples: Order Hirelings, End of Session, Saving Throw.
- **When a character uses a thing** . Examples: Magic items, Heirloom [Fighter].
- **From now on** . Examples: Serenity [Cleric], Poisoner [Thief].

## EFFECT

Moves effects can be anything you can think of; they are as limitless as your ideas. Don't feel constrained to making rolls, +1 bonuses, and swapping stats. Since all moves flow from the fiction, a fictional effect like "They treat you as a friend" is just as powerful and useful as +1 forward, maybe more so.

Here are some broad types of effects, any given move may use more than one of them:

- **Roll** . Examples: Defy Danger, Cast a Spell [Wizard], Called Shot [Ranger].
- **Substitute stats** . Examples: Precise [weapon tag].
- **Trigger another move** . Examples: Charm Person [Wizard spell], Envenom [Thief].
- **Give a bonus or penalty, forward or ongoing** . Examples: Quarry [Ranger], Beacon of Good [Paladin].
- **Deal or heal damage** . Examples: Volley, Backstab [Thief], Called Shot [Ranger].
- **Choose options** . Examples: Spout Lore, Discern Realities, Ritual [Wizard].
- **Hold & Spend** . Examples: Dominate [Wizard spell], Trap Sense [Thief].
- **Ask & Answer** . Examples: Charming and Open [Bard], Spout Lore.
- **Change circumstances** . Examples: Ascetic Freedom [Cleric], Sins of the Flesh [Paladin].
- **Mark experience** . Examples: Alignment moves.
- **Call for more information** . Examples: Parley, Ritual [Wizard].
- **Add options** . Examples: Survivalist [Ranger], Eye of Riches [Thief].



## CHANGING THE BASICS

Moves can also change the basic structure of the game. Consider this one, to avoid the use of damage dice:

*When you would deal damage, instead of rolling the dice, substitute each die with the listed number. d4 becomes 2, d6 becomes 3, d8 becomes 4, d10 becomes 5, d12 becomes 6.*

Moves like this change one of the basic features of the game. Be very careful with moves that muck with the fundamentals. Any move that contradicts the GM's principles or agenda, or any move that breaks the basic "take the action to gain the effect" rule, should be seriously rethought.

There are some parts of the game that are exceptionally easy to change. The amount of XP to level reflects our view, but you can easily make leveling more or less rare. The way stats are assigned by the class is a way of making the game easier for new players and reflecting the concept of each class but there may be a place for a 17 Constitution Wizard. If you've played enough to know what you're doing with each stat feel free to assign them however you like.

Another basic that's occasionally asked for is a way to make, say, fighting a dragon harder. The best answer here is that fighting a dragon is harder because the dragon is fictionally stronger. Just stabbing a dragon with a normal blade isn't Hack and Slash because a typical blade can't hurt it. If, however, that isn't enough, consider this move from Vincent Baker, originally from Apocalypse World (reworded slightly to match Dungeon World rules):

*When a player makes a move and the GM judges it especially difficult, the player takes -1 to the roll. When a player's character makes a move and the GM judges it clearly beyond them, the player takes -2 to the roll.*

The problem with this move is that the move no longer reflects anything concrete. Instead, the move is a prompt for the GM to make judgement calls with no clear framework. If you find yourself writing this custom move, consider what difficulty you're really trying to capture and make a custom move for that instead. That said, this is a valid custom move, if you feel it's needed.

## DEVELOPMENT OF A MOVE

Let's look at how one move developed over time. Hack and Slash was one of the earliest Dungeon World moves, originally written by Tony Dowler. The first version looked like this (this version has

been reformatted and edited for grammar only):

*When you wade into combat, attacking your enemies, deal damage to the enemy you're attacking, take that enemy's damage, and roll+Str. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9 choose 1.*

- Prevent one ally from taking damage this round
- Kill one enemy of lower level than you or deal max damage to otherwise
- Put an enemy right where you want them (drive them off, prevent them from fleeing, etc.)
- Divide your damage amongst any number of targets you can reach with your weapon

The first problem with this move is that one of the options, preventing damage, is far less useful than the others. Being able to outright kill an enemy is nearly always better than preventing that enemy from doing damage. The first major revision was to drop that option:

*When you wade into combat, attacking your enemies, deal damage to the enemy you're attacking, take that enemy's damage, and roll+Str. On a 10+ choose 2. On a 7-9 choose 1.*

- Kill one enemy of lower level than you or deal max damage to otherwise
- Put an enemy right where you want them (drive them off, prevent them from fleeing, etc.)
- Divide your damage amongst any number of targets you can reach with your weapon

This left only three options which is a great number of options to have when a 10+ lets you pick two. The player making the move always had to not choose one option. All of the options are also clearly useful. But there's still an issue, easily the biggest issue with this move: the fictional action doesn't tightly relate to the outcome.

Consider this situation: Gregor attacks an eagle lord with his mighty axe. He describes his fictional action: "I swing my axe right down on his wing with a big overhead chop." Then he rolls the move, gets a 10, and makes his choices. Max damage is a clear choice and comes right from the fiction. The other options, however, don't make much sense. If he chooses to divide his damage, how does that flow from his one fictional attack? How did that one chop also hit the treant behind him?

Scoping down the fictional effect of the move lead to his version:

*When you attack an enemy who can defend themselves, roll+Str. On a 10+, you deal your damage but your enemy does not get to deal theirs to you. If you choose, you can take your enemy's damage and deal double damage to the enemy. On a 7-9, you take the enemy's damage and deal your damage.*

Here the move now has only the effects that could clearly follow from a single attack. Any action that couldn't reasonably lead to a counter-attack isn't Hack and Slash, so now the trigger matches the effects. Unfortunately double damage was a bit much, so we changed it to this:

*When you attack an enemy in melee, roll+Str. On a 7-9, you deal your damage to the enemy and take their damage. On a 10+ you deal your damage to the enemy. You can choose to also take the enemy's damage to deal +2 damage.*

+2 damage is a clear advantage, but not a game-breaker. The only problem here is that it reduced the effects of an attack to taking damage. Monsters do so much more than just take away your HP; monsters hurl you about the room and destroy the ground you stand on, why can't they do that in response?

*When you attack an enemy in melee, roll+Str. On a 10+ you deal your damage to the enemy. You can choose to let the enemy make an attack to deal +2 damage. On a 7-9, you deal your damage to the enemy and the enemy makes an attack against you.*

This version (the final one) allows a monster to "attack" not just deal damage. That opens up a whole host of interesting monster moves to be used. Now even the 7-9 result has choices to make and unpredictable outcomes.

## AGENDA, PRINCIPLES, AND GM MOVES

Changing the GM's side of the rules is an entirely different beast from writing custom player moves. Writing GM moves is the easy part. Since a GM move is just a statement of something that fictionally happens, feel free to write new ones as you please. Most of the time you'll find they're just specific cases of one of the moves already established, but occasionally you'll come across something new. Just keep in mind the spectrum of hard to soft moves, your principles, and your agenda and you'll be fine. Removing a GM move is also kosher, but you're probably better off keeping the move and just not using it. The players won't know anyway.

Changing the GM's agenda or principles is one of the biggest changes you can make to the game. Changing these areas will likely require changes throughout the rest of the game, plus playtesting to nail it all down.

**Play to find out what happens** is the least changeable part of the GM's agenda. Other options, like "play towards your set plot" or "play to challenge the players' skills" will be resisted pretty strongly by the other rules. The moves give the players abilities that can change the course of an planned adventure quite quickly; if you're not playing to find out what happens you'll have to resist the moves at every step or rewrite many of them.

**Fill the characters' lives with adventure** could be rephrased, but it's hard to really change. "Fill the characters' lives with intrigue" might work, but intrigue just seems like a type of adventure. Removing this agenda entirely will require major reworking since the move structure is based on this. The effects of a miss and the GM's soft moves are all there to create a life of adventure.

**Make the world fantastic** is maybe the easiest to change, but it still requires considerable rewriting of the class moves. A historical world, a grim world, or a utopian world are all possible, but you'll need to carefully rethink many moves. A historical world will require magic, equipment, and several other sections to be nearly entirely rewritten or removed. A grim world can only survive if the players' moves come with darker costs. A utopian world won't need many of the moves as written. Still, this is the easiest part of the agenda to change, since it requires changing the moves, not the basic structures of the game.

The GM's principles are more mutable than the agenda but still can seriously change the game with only minor modifications. **Address the characters, not the players; Make your move, but misdirect; Never speak**

**the name of your move; Begin and end with the fiction; and Be a fan of the characters** are the most important principles. Without these the conversation of play and the use of moves is likely to break down.

**Embrace the fantastic; Give every monster life; Name every person; Think Dangerous; and Give them something to work towards** are key to the spirit of Dungeon World and fantasy exploration. These are changeable, but they amount to changing the setting of the game. If you want to change any of these, you may have to make changes to all of them.

**Leave Blanks; Sometimes, let them decide; and Ask questions and use the answers** are important to running Dungeon World well. They also apply to many other games in the same style. The game will be diminished without them, but the conversation of play will continue. These are also some of the most portable principles, applicable to many other games. They may even work in games with very different play styles.

An additional principle that some people prefer to add is **Test their Bonds**. This principle is entirely compatible with the others and with all the moves, but it changes the focus of the game somewhat. Fronts need to be rethought to work fully with this, and you might need to add moves that speak to it.

## MONSTERS

The easiest place to modify monsters is in the questions used to create them. The simplest changes have to do with adjusting lethality or randomness to your liking. You could easily change just one question to add random damage to the game (if you use random monster damage you might consider having the players roll it so that you don't have to manage dice just for damage).

### HOW DOES IT USUALLY HUNT OR FIGHT?

- As part of large group, five or more: 2d4 damage, 1 HP, Horde
- As part of a small group, around 2–5: 2d6 damage, 8 HP
- All by its lonesome: 2d10 damage, 30 HP, Unique

Note that these changes also adjust lethality slightly, you can play with the numbers to make it more or less random as you please.

A more interesting change is to change the questions being asked to present a different view of monsters. The views built into the questions imply that monsters are more or less like other creatures: they can be of many alignments and won't always be opposed to the player characters. If you want to make Dungeon

World more about indiscriminate killing of monsters that deserve it you might rewrite some of the questions, maybe adding this:

**THE MONSTER IS EVIL THROUGH AND THROUGH. CHOOSE ONE TO REFLECT WHY IT'S EVIL:**

- It's an intrusion of the Old Ones Beyond The Walls: Planar, +5 damage
- It's a product of the Old Wizards of the Red Tower: Construct, +5 HP
- It's from The Time Before Man: Primordial, +5 damage, +5 HP

When creating new monster questions you can either reinterpret existing monsters by answering the questions for them again or only use the new questions for new monsters. If the new questions you add or change are key to your vision of Dungeon World its best to redo all the monsters you use, if the question only applies to a specific kind of monster anyway you can just use it for new monsters.

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**Special  
Thanks**

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## Guild Members

Since you've read this book it's likely at some point you'll be teaching the game to others, either experienced roleplayers or those new to the hobby. Throughout the design process we've had many chances to play with lots of different gamers from different backgrounds and there are a few things we've found work well for teaching the game.

### PITCH IT

Before you play you'll likely be explaining the game to your new players (don't just spring it on them, that's not cool). We call that the pitch: it's explaining why you want to play *Dungeon World* and why you think they'll like it.

First and most importantly: put it in your own words. We can't give you a script because the best way to get people excited about the game is to share your honest excitement. There are, however, some things you might want to touch on.

With first-time roleplayers it's best to focus on what roleplaying means in *Dungeon World*. Tell them what they'll be doing (portraying a character) and what you'll be doing (portraying the world around them). Mention the general conceit (adventurers and adventure). It's usually a good idea to mention the role of the rules too, how they're there to drive the action forward in interesting ways.

With folks who've played RPGs before, especially those who've played other fantasy adventure games, you can focus more on what makes *Dungeon World* different from other similar games. Ease-of-play, the way the rules just step in at the right times, and the fast pace are all things that experienced roleplayers often appreciate.

No matter the audience, don't just pitch *Dungeon World*, pitch the game you're going to run. If this is going to be a trip into the city sewers, tell them that right up front. If there's an evil cult to be stopped that should be part of your description. The interaction between you, the players, and the rules will create all kinds of interesting secrets later on, your pitch should honestly portray the game you intend to run.

### PRESENT THE CLASSES

Once everybody's on board for a game of *Dungeon World* and you've sat down to play start by presenting the character sheets. Give a short description of each, making sure to mention what each does and their place in the world. You can also read out the descriptions for each class, those all include something about both what the class does and how that fits into the big picture.

If anybody has questions about the rules, answer them, but for now focus on de-

scribing what the classes do in plain terms. If someone asks about the fighter it's more useful to tell them that the fighter has a signature weapon that's one of a kind then to go into detail about how the Signature Weapon move works.

### CREATE CHARACTERS

Go through the character creation rules step-by-step. The process of creating a character is also a great introduction to the basic concepts: the players will encounter stats, moves, HP, and damage all in an order that makes sense. Don't bother trying to front-load the rules explanations. There aren't really any wrong choices.

Each player will encounter the rules that are important to their class. The Fighter, for example, will see moves about weapon ranges and piercing and ask about them, explain them as needed. If the Fighter player doesn't ask you what piercing is, don't worry about it. They're happy to choose based on the fiction, which is all the stats and tags reflect anyway.

If your players are particularly worried about making their characters 'right' just give them the option of changing them later. Trying to cover every rule and give them all the context now will just slow the game down. In particular, don't go over the basic moves in detail yet. Leave them out so that the players can read them and ask questions, but don't waste time by explaining each. They'll come up as needed.

As the players introduce their characters and start setting bonds move from answering questions to asking them. Ask about why they chose what they did and what that means for their character. Ask about details established by their bonds. Let their choices establish the world around them. Take special note of anything that you think you might be able to make moves with (like an estranged teacher or a simmering war).

### START PLAY

Start play by concretely describing the world around them. Keep it brief and evocative, use plenty of details, and end with something that demands action. Then ask them what they do.

Ending with something that demands action is important. Don't presume that new players will already know what they want to do. Giving them something to react to right away means you get straight to playing.

Especially for new players make sure that the action they're thrown into is something they have the tools to deal with. A fight is a good choice, as is a tense negotiation (which can easily be-

come a fight). Keep it simple and let the complexity build.

Even in a fight keep to simple monsters: things that bleed, don't have too much armor, and don't have piercing. Give them a chance to get used to their armor and dealing damage before you start using the exceptions to those rules, like piercing and ignoring armor. Of course if the fiction dictates ignoring armor or piercing or a certain monster, use it, but don't lead with those.

For new players make liberal use of your Show Signs of Doom move. New players, or those used to a different type of fantasy adventure, may have different assumptions about what's lethal and when they're in danger, so make sure to show them danger clearly. Once they've started to pick up on what's dangerous you can give them a little less warning.

If you're GMing for the first time focus on a few moves: Show Signs of Doom, Deal Damage, Put Someone in a Spot. Only look at your moves sheet if you're pretty sure none of those three apply. Eventually you'll build up familiarity with the whole range of GM moves and using them will seem like second nature.

## CONTINUING PLAY

After an hour or two of play the players will likely have everything down. As a first time GM you may take a bit longer to pick up all your moves, maybe a session or two. Just roll with it.

If you find yourself struggling in the first session consider it a pilot, like the first episode of a TV show. Feel free to start over or retroactively change things. If a player decides that the Thief just isn't what they thought it was let them switch classes (either remaking the same character or introducing someone new). If your first adventure wasn't working too well scrap it and start something new.

While Dungeon World works great for one-shots the longer cycles of levels and bonds don't really kick in for a bit. If your first one or two sessions go well consider scheduling out enough time for 5–10 more. Knowing that you're planning to play that much longer gives you some space to plan out your fronts and resolve them.

There isn't always time for prep. People aren't entirely committed to a game—you just want to test it out or you've got a four-hour slot at a convention that you want to fill and you've never met the players before in your life. Maybe prep isn't something you care about or you think it's more fun to just take a map and run with it. Even better, maybe you've got a favorite old-school adventure module and you'd love to run through using the Dungeon World

rules. In this appendix, we'll cover how to convert and adapt material from other games into Dungeon World and give you the same flexibility to run your favorite adventures using the rules in this book.

## OVERVIEW

The first step in preparing an adventure for use with Dungeon World is reading through that adventure, and through the Dungeon World rules. For this book, you'll want to be familiar with all the basic rules, as well as familiar with the section on Fronts and on the GM principles. The former will be guiding you in adapting the framework of the adventure and the latter will help keep your mind going in the right direction—so that gameplay stays true to the style and rules set out in this book. You'll want to read through the module next, paying close attention to the four following topics as you go.

- Maps
- Monsters
- Magic Items
- NPCs and Organizations

Flip through the adventure, make some notes as you go, but don't feel you need to memorize the whole thing. Areas that focus particularly on statistics are likely to end up ignored, and you'll want to leave blanks in the adventure for you and the players to discover as you go.

When you've finished, you'll have a broad understanding about what the adventure is about—the power groups at play in it, the special or cool monsters the adventure contains, the threats and dangers that its cast present to the world and the kinds of things the PCs might be interested in. Set aside the adventure for now, and refer to the Fronts section of Dungeon World. This is where the majority of your work is going to take place.

## FRONTS

The core of any standard adventure, scenario or game session in Dungeon World flows outward from the Fronts to the players; the Fronts have their Impending Dooms, the players react, and in the space between, you play the game to find out what happens. The same is true when presenting a converted adventure. Reading through the module, you'll have noticed things—NPCs, places of interest, special monsters and organizations that might have an impact on the world or some agenda to carry out. Depending on the size of the adventure, there may be just one or a few of these. Take a look through the list of Front types and create one for each group.

*I'm going to convert an old adventure I love; I've run it a dozen times in a bunch of different systems and I think it'd be a blast to run my Dungeon World group through. I've given myself a quick read through to remind myself what the adventure is all about. In this case, there's a town being menaced in secret by a wicked cult who worships a squamous reptile god. Sounds like fun! The adventure has a secret dungeon, a corrupt religious order, a bunch of smelly troglodytes and some very helpless adventurers. I've decided that the Fronts in this adventure are The Cultists and The Troglodyte Clan*

*Now, I could make the sorcerous Naga that lives in the caverns her own Front, if I wanted to, or I could add in a Campaign Front for the Reptile God itself, but I think I'll only be running this game a few sessions, so I'm going to stay focused. The two Fronts I have work together in some ways, but are unique and operate independently, so I've separated them.*

Create these Fronts like you would normally, choosing dangers, impending dooms, and grim portents. Ask one or two stakes questions but be sure to leave yourself lots of room—that's where you can really tie in the characters. Normally, you'd be pulling these things straight out of the inspiration of your brain, but in this case, you've got the module to guide you. Think about the Fronts as themes, and the Dangers as elements from the pages of your module. Look at the kinds of things your Fronts are said to be doing in the adventure and how that might go if the PCs were never there to stop it. What's the worst that could happen if the Fronts were able to run rampant? This kind of reading-between-the-lines will give you ammunition for making your hard moves as you play through the adventure. This step is where you'll turn those stat-block NPCs into either full-fledged dangers themselves, or members of the Front's cast.

If there are any traps, curses or general effects in the adventure you'd like to write custom moves for, do it now. A lot of old adventures will have elements that call for a "saving throw" to avoid some noisome effect—these can often simply be a cause for a Defy Danger roll, or can have whole, separate custom moves if necessary. The key here is to capture the intent of the adventure—the spirit of the thing—rather than translate some mechanical element perfectly.

When you're done, you'll have a set of Fronts that cover the major threats and dangers the characters will face.



## MONSTERS

Most published adventures contained one or two unique monsters not seen anywhere else—custom creatures and denizens of the deeps that could threaten players in some way they hadn't encountered before. Take a look through the adventure and make sure you've caught them all. Many monsters will already have statistics noted in Dungeon World and you can, if you're happy with them, just make a note of what page they're on in your Fronts and move on from there. If you want to further customize the monsters, or need to create your own, use the rules to do so. In this step, try to avoid thinking about "balancing" the monsters or concerning yourself too much with how many HP a monster has or whether its armor rating matches what you expect. Think more about how the monster is meant to participate in the adventure. Is it there to scare the pcs? Is it there to bar their way or pose a riddle? What is its purpose in the greater ecology of the dungeon or adventure at large? Translating the spirit of the thing will always give you better, more engaging results. If the monster has a cool power or neat trick you want to write a custom move for, do so! Custom moves are what make Dungeon World feel unique from group to group, so take advantage of them where you can.

*In my adventure, the monsters run the gamut. I've got a scary naga with some mind-controlling powers, an evil priest with divine snake-god magic, a bunch of ruffian cultists, a dragon turtle and a few miscellaneous lizards, crocodiles and snakes. Most of these I can pull from the Monster Settings, but I'll create custom stats for the Naga and the cultist leader, at least. I want them to feel new and different and have some cool ideas for how that might look. I use the monster creation rules to put them together.*

### DIRECT CONVERSION

If you run across a monster that you haven't already created and which you don't know well enough to convert using the monster creation rules you can instead convert them directly.

#### DAMAGE

If the monster's damage is a single dice with a bonus of up to +10 keep it as-is. If the monster's damage uses multiple dice of the same size roll the listed dice and take the highest result. If the monster uses multiple dice of different sizes roll only the largest and take the highest result.

#### HP

If the monster's HP is listed as Hit Dice

take the maximum value of the first HD and add one for each additional hit dice. If the monster's HP is listed as a number with no Hit Dice divide the HP by 4.

#### ARMOR

If the monster's AC is average give it 1 armor. If the monster's AC is low, give it 0 armor. If the monster's AC is high give it 2 armor, 3 armor for beasts that are all about defense. If it's nearly invulnerable, 4 armor. +1 armor if it's defenses are magical.

#### MOVES AND INSTINCT

Look at the special abilities or attacks listed for the monster, these form the basis for its moves.

## MAPS

One of the biggest differences between Dungeon World and many other fantasy RPGs is the concept of maps and mapping. In many games, you'll see a square-by-square map denoting precisely what goes where, often presented to give as much detail as possible and leave little to the imagination save the description of the location in question. Dungeon World often leans the opposite direction—maps marked with empty space and a one or two word description like "blades" or "scary." To adapt an existing adventure for use in Dungeon World, simply keep in mind your Principles and Agenda. Primarily, keep in mind that as the GM, it's your job to "draw maps, leave blanks" and to "ask questions and use the answers."

To that end, it's often best to re-draw the map entirely, if you have time. Don't copy it inch-by-inch but redraw it free-hand, leaving spaces and drawing out new rooms, if you'd like. Don't stick to the map exactly as written, but give yourself some creative license. The idea here is to give yourself room to expand—to allow the players' reaction to the adventure to surprise and inspire you. If you've got the whole map nailed down in advance, there's nowhere to go you don't already know about, is there? Pick a few rooms that don't interest you and wipe out their inhabitants. Draw a new tunnel or two. This will give you some space to play around once you get into the game itself.

If you don't have the time or inclination to re-draw the map, don't worry. Just take the original map, make a few notes about what might go where and leave the rest blank. When the players go into that room marked "4f" don't look it up, just make a guess at what might be there based on your notes and what else has been happening. You'll find a comfortable balance between freely playing out what happens and consulting your prep as you go along.

*The maps that come with my adventure are a good mix of fun and cool and sort of boring stuff. I'll keep most of what the dungeon describes under the city—the lair of the troglodytes and the secret caves where the captive villagers are being kept—but I'm going to throw away a lot of the stuff about the village itself and just leave blank spaces. It'll give me room to use the answers to questions like "who do you already know, here?" and "who lives in the abandoned hut up the road?" I've made some notes about where the map and my Fronts intersect, but mostly I've just given myself room to explore.*

## MAGIC & TREASURE

Two things that are, traditionally, a "big deal" in published modules are treasure and magic items. This is less relevant in Dungeon World (as the reward cycle for characters is more about "doing" than about "having") but it's still fun to drudge through a dungeon or explore lost ruins and come up with cool magic items and piles of gold! Like the map, it's useful to get an idea of the kinds of stuff that might be found in the adventure—anything particularly called out in the text as relevant to the adventure itself (a magic sword that can be used to wound the golem on level 4, or a pendant belonging to the prince captured in room 3) is particularly important. Like monsters, it's better to look at magic items in terms of what purpose they fulfill: what they're "for" rather than the damage or armor bonus they might give. Dungeon World isn't built on balancing treasure against character level, for example, so just look through the adventure for items that seem cool or fun or interesting and create new magic items (with custom moves as necessary) wherever you think it's needed. This is possibly the easiest step of conversion. Again, you can leave yourself exploratory room, here. Make notes to yourself like "the wizard has a magic staff, what does it do?" and find that out in play. Ask the players about it, see what they have to say. Let Spout Lore do some work for you. "You've heard that the wizard here has a strange magical staff. What rumors have you heard of its origins?"

## INTRODUCTORY MOVES

This step is entirely optional, but can be really useful when running through an adventure for a convention group or other group where running through a full “first session” process just isn’t possible. You can take variables of the adventure and create “hooks” for that adventure, writing custom moves to be made after character creation but before play starts. These moves will serve to engage the characters in the fiction and give them something special to prepare them or hook them into what’s about to happen. You can write one for each class, or bundle them together, if you like. Here’s an example:

*Fighter, someone who loves you gave you a gift before you left for a life of adventure. Roll + CHA and tell us how much they love you. On a 10+ pick two heirlooms, on a 7-9 pick one. On a miss, well, good intentions count for something, right?*

- a vial of antivenom
- a shield that glows with silver light
- a rusted old key in the shape of a lizard

These sorts of moves can give the players the sense that their characters are tied to the situation at hand, and open the door for more lines of question-and-answer play that can fill the game world with life. Think about the Fronts, the things they endanger, the riches they might protect and their impact on the world. Let these intro moves flow from that understanding, creating a great kick-start to the adventure.

Sometimes the players will come across someone who becomes important in the moment. When the ritual goes wrong and a poor captive gets the power cosmic what does that villager do with it? Who were they?

When you need a quick NPC all you need is an instinct and some way to pursue it. We call that a Knack, it can be anything from a skill to a title to a debt owed. Combine the two and you have an NPC who has something they want and a way to try to get it, you’re ready to go.

## 100 INSTINCTS

1. To avenge
2. To spread the good word
3. To reunite with a loved one
4. To make money
5. To make amends
6. To explore a mysterious place
7. To uncover a hidden truth
8. To locate a lost thing
9. To kill a hated foe
10. To conquer a far-away land
11. To cure an illness

12. To craft a masterwork
13. To survive just one more day
14. To earn affection
15. To prove a point
16. To be smarter, faster and stronger
17. To heal an old wound
18. To extinguish an evil forever
19. To hide from a shameful fact
20. To evangelise
21. To spread suffering
22. To prove worth
23. To rise in rank
24. To be praised
25. To discover the truth
26. To make good on a bet
27. To get out of an obligation
28. To convince someone to do their dirty work
29. To steal something valuable
30. To overcome a bad habit
31. To commit an atrocity
32. To earn renown
33. To accumulate power
34. To save someone from a monstrosity
35. To teach
36. To settle down
37. To get just one more haul
38. To preserve the law
39. To discover
40. To devour
41. To restore the family name
42. To live a quiet life
43. To help others
44. To atone
45. To prove their worth
46. To gain honor
47. To expand their land
48. To gain a title
49. To retreat from society
50. To escape
51. To party
52. To return home
53. To serve
54. To reclaim what was taken
55. To do what must be done
56. To be a champion
57. To avoid notice
58. To help a family member
59. To perfect a skill
60. To travel
61. To overcome a disadvantage
62. To play the game
63. To establish a dynasty
64. To improve the realm
65. To retire
66. To recover a lost memory
67. To battle
68. To become a terror to criminals
69. To raise dragons
70. To live up to expectations
71. To become someone else
72. To do what can’t be done
73. To be remembered in song
74. To be forgotten
75. To find true love
76. To lose their mind
77. To indulge
78. To make the best of it
79. To find the one
80. To destroy an artifact
81. To show them all

82. To bring about unending summer
83. To fly
84. To find the six-fingered man
85. To wake the ancient sleepers
86. To entertain
87. To follow an order
88. To die gloriously
89. To be careful
90. To show kindness
91. To not screw it all up
92. To uncover the past
93. To go where no man has gone before
94. To do good
95. To become a beast
96. To spill blood
97. To live forever
98. To hunt the most dangerous game
99. To hate
100. To run away

## 100 KNACKS

1. Criminal connections
2. Muscle
3. Skill with a specific weapon
4. Hedge wizardry
5. Comprehensive local knowledge
6. Noble blood
7. A one-of-a-kind item
8. Special destiny
9. Unique perspective
10. Hidden knowledge
11. Magical awareness
12. Abnormal parentage
13. Political leverage
14. A tie to a monster
15. A secret
16. True love
17. An innocent heart
18. A plan for the perfect crime
19. A one-way ticket to paradise
20. A mysterious ore
21. Money, money, money
22. Divine blessing
23. Immunity from the law
24. Prophecy
25. Secret martial arts techniques
26. A ring of power
27. A much-needed bag of taters
28. A heart
29. A fortified position
30. Lawmaking
31. Tongues
32. A discerning eye
33. Endurance
34. A safe place
35. Visions
36. A beautiful mind
37. A clear voice
38. Stunning looks
39. A catchy tune
40. Invention
41. Baking
42. Brewing
43. Smelting
44. Woodworking
45. Writing
46. Immunity to fire
47. Cooking
48. Storytelling

- |                              |                                   |                                          |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 49. Ratcatching              | 67. Balance                       | 85. Mysterious benefactors               |
| 50. Lying                    | 68. Souls                         | 86. Steely nerves                        |
| 51. Utter unremarkableness   | 69. Speed                         | 87. Bluffing                             |
| 52. Mind-bending sexiness    | 70. A sense of right and wrong    | 88. A trained wolf                       |
| 53. Undefinable coolness     | 71. Certainty                     | 89. A long-lost sibling, regained        |
| 54. A way with knots         | 72. An eye for detail             | 90. An arrow with your name on it        |
| 55. Wheels of polished steel | 73. Heroic self-sacrifice         | 91. A true name                          |
| 56. A magic carpet           | 74. Sense of direction            | 92. Luck                                 |
| 57. Endless ideas            | 75. A big idea                    | 93. The attention of supernatural powers |
| 58. Persistence              | 76. A hidden entrance to the city | 94. Kindness                             |
| 59. A stockpile of food      | 77. The love of someone powerful  | 95. Strange tattoos                      |
| 60. A hidden path            | 78. Unquestioning loyalty         | 96. A majestic beard                     |
| 61. Piety                    | 79. Exotic fruit                  | 97. A book in a strange language         |
| 62. Resistance to disease    | 80. Poison                        | 98. Power overwhelming                   |
| 63. A library                | 81. Perfect memory                | 99. Delusions of grandeur                |
| 64. A silver tongue          | 82. The language of birds         | 100 The wind at his back and a spring in |
| 65. Bloodline                | 83. A key to an important door    | his step                                 |
| 66. An innate spell          | 84. Metalworking                  |                                          |

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