

Monster Book

What is this Book for

This book is a set of **tools** for creating opponents and threats in NDE:

- quickly (in 2-5 minutes),
- without calculating stats,
- in a manner consistent with the rules from **Basic Rules** and **MG's Book**.

The most important assumption of NDE: *only players roll dice.* Opponents do not 'attack with a roll' — they attack through **pressure in fiction:** setting obstacles, forcing tests, creating threats and consequences.

0. Glossary (terms in this book)

Defense: the threshold for hitting/bypassing an opponent in battle. The player rolls and compares the result to Defense.,**Difficulty (D):** the threshold for tests against the environment, phenomenon, special move, or an enemy's 'trick'., **Hearts:** how much damage a creature can withstand in this scene., **Minion / Elite / Boss:** three levels of 'importance' of an opponent in the scene., **Advantage / Disadvantage:** changing the player's dice size by 1 degree (**d6** → **d8** → **d12** → **d20** / downward)., **Special Move:** an enemy's active ability that changes the situation (often forces a player attribute check)., **Trait (passive):** a permanent characteristic of an enemy (armor, flight, resistance, threat zone), which usually gives advantage/disadvantage or changes the stakes.

1. How the Opponent Works in NDE (in Brief)

In NDE, the opponent is simple but "alive" due to its behavior.

1. Player acts → player rolls.

- Melee attack: Strength (**S**) vs the target's **Defense**.
- Ranged attack: Dexterity (D) vs the target's **Defense**.
- Powers: **Power** (**P**) vs **Difficulty (D)** or vs Defense (if it's an attack/incapacitation).

2. If the player misses/fails the check, the scene continues: a cost or complication arises.

In combat, a cost might mean:

- losing position,
- losing time,
- entering the range of a dangerous area,
- or **losing a Heart**, if it makes sense (e.g., melee combat, crossfire, blast zone).

3. Opponent "acts" without rolling:

The GM describes what the enemy does, and if it poses a real threat to the heroes, it:

- forces a check (**S/D/P**) against **Difficulty (D)**,
- or imposes a condition ("until you...", "when you enter...", "who is Close..."),
- or changes the players' dice (advantage/disadvantage).

4. Combat is understandable when the enemy has a one-sentence tactic.

Every stat block should include: "what this enemy does in the first round" and "what it does when hit."

2. Statblock — Format and Fields

The minimal statblock has only what is needed in the scene.

Name — **Class**, **Defense**, **Hearts**, **Role**, **Mobility**, **Abilities**, **Moves**, **Tactics**

2.1 Mandatory Fields

- **Class:** Minion | Elite | Boss
- **Defense:** a number that needs to be overcome to hit/bypass the enemy.
- **Hearts:** how many hits it can withstand (in NDE "hit" = 1 Heart by default).
- **Role:** the kind of pressure it exerts in battle (see chapter 4).
- **Mobility:** how it moves (described in zones; grid is optional).
- **Abilities (passive):** 1–2 brief traits.
- **Moves (active):** 1 move (Elite) or 2–3 moves (Boss).
- **Tactics:** 1–3 sentences to help the GM run the enemy consistently.

2.2 Optional Fields (Good to Have if They Fit)

- **Range:** if the enemy is ranged (e.g., "Far", "Very far").
- **Zone:** if the enemy creates a hazardous area (smoke, fire, force field).
- **Weakness:** a clear "lever" for players (water, UV light, signal disruption).
- **Reward / Clue:** what remains after defeat (loot, trail, information).
- **Variants:** 1–2 quick swaps (e.g., "instead of flight has jump"; "instead of fire has acid").

2.3 Example Statblock (Universal)

Guard — **Minion**, **Defense 5**, **Hearts 1**, **Brute**, **Mobility: Near → Close**, **Abilities: Shield**, **Moves: Push**, **Tactics: blocks passage and pushes out of cover**.

- **Shield (passive):** as long as it stands **Close** to cover or a shieldbearer, the attacker has **disadvantage** (dice step down by 1 level).
 - **Push (move):** if the Guard hits in melee (or if the player misses a melee attack against it), the GM may push the hero 1 zone (Close → Near) or 1–2 tiles in grid variant.
 - **Tactics:** engages with the weakest target, guards the corridor, does not flee.
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3. Enemy Classes: Minion, Elite, Boss

In NDE, an opponent's 'difficulty' consists of two things:

- **how hard they are to hit** (Defense),
- **how much they can withstand** (Hearts),
- and **the pressure they exert** (role + moves).

3.1 Minion

- **Defense:** typically **5** (easier: 4, harder: 6).
- **Hearts:** **1** (falls after being hit).
- **Moves:** usually 0–1 (simple, predictable).
- **Purpose:** provides pace, context, and a sense of "fighting with a group."
- **How to run:** appears in numbers of 3–8, dies quickly, but makes noise and occupies space.

A good rule: a minion primarily has position (cover, numerical advantage, high ground), not “complex mechanics.”

3.2 Elite

- **Defense:** usually **6** (easier elite: 5, “tough elite”: 8).
- **Hearts:** **2**.
- **Moves:** 1 distinctive move + 1 passive trait.
- **Purpose:** serves as a “mini-boss” in a scene, forces adaptation.

The elite should do one thing distinctly: “break barriers,” “set up zones,” “jump off walls,” “heal minions.”

3.3 Boss

- **Defense:** usually **8** (legendary: 12).
- **Hearts:** **3** (final: 5).
- **Moves:** 2–3 moves + 1–2 passive traits.
- **Purpose:** It serves as a scene in itself — it influences the terrain and pace.

A boss without tricks is boring. To make a boss “playable,” give it at least one of the following:

- a move that requires a test on multiple heroes,
- a zone (terrain that needs managing),
- or a “phase” mechanic (changes behavior after losing 1 Heart).

3.4 “Legendary” (Optional Level)

If you need a campaign opponent: - **Defense 12, Hearts 5**, 3–4 moves, zones, and phases. This is the “final act boss” — do not use it randomly.

4. Roles of Adversaries (Clear Pressure)

Roles exist so that the GM immediately knows “how to play it.” A role is not a statistic — it’s a **style of threat**.

- **Brute (melee pressure):** comes in Close, pushes, topples, breaks the front.
Question to players: “who stands at the front and what do they risk?”
 - **Skirmisher (mobile):** enters, does its thing, and escapes; punishes isolation.
Question: “who is separated from the team?”
 - **Artillery (ranged):** shoots from cover; forces movement and position changes.
Question: “where is it safe, and where is the firing line?”
 - **Controller (control):** zones, smoke, sticky terrain, traps, pressure on objectives.
Question: “how to avoid the zone instead of struggling within it?”
 - **Support (support):** strengthens, heals, moves, provides shields.
Question: “who to eliminate first to simplify the fight?”
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5. Simplifications/Complications in Monsters — GM Principle

In NDE we **do not complicate numbers**. Instead of: “+2 to hit, -1 to damage, AC bonus” — we implement:

- **simplification:** raise the player’s die by 1 rank,
- **complication:** lower the player’s die by 1 rank,
- **change of stakes:** success is possible, but requires a different approach (e.g., remove the cover first).

5.1 When to Change Defense and When to Change the Die

- **Most often change the player's die** (easier/harder).
- **Change defense rarely**, mainly when:
 - the enemy has 'armor/invisibility/force field' that *actually* makes them harder to hit,
 - or when it is a boss phase mechanic.

5.2 Examples of 'Pure' Disadvantages

- 'The enemy is in partial cover' → the attacker has a **disadvantage**.
 - 'The enemy is stunned/bound' → the attacker has an **advantage**.
 - 'The enemy is quick and jumping on walls' → the attacker has a **disadvantage** until they block them.
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6. Passive Abilities (Traits) — Catalog for Attachment

Below you have traits that you can attach to a stat block. Choose 1–2 (boss: 2–3). Always describe them within the game world.

6.1 Protection and Toughness

- **Light Armor:** the first hit in this scene deals 1 Heart less (i.e., 0) or requires "clarification" (the success only deals Heart damage once the armor is bypassed).
The simplest version: "the first hit does not deal Heart damage".
- **Heavy Armor:** as long as you don't bypass the armor (flank, explosion, hook, magic), attacks have **disadvantage**.
Note: provide players with a clear path to bypass it.
- **Tough:** after losing 1 Heart, the enemy doesn't change positions (they can't be easily pushed over/knocked down).
Ideal for colossi and bosses.

6.2 Mobility

- **Quick:** once per round, you can change distance by an additional zone (e.g., Far → Near). In grid: +1–2 squares.
- **Jumper / Climber:** treats vertical obstacles as normal. Provides sensible 'shortcut entries' to the rear.
- **Flying:** ignores terrain obstacles but requires cover 'from above' or forces reaction tests (e.g., to avoid an airstrike).

6.3 Perception and Sneaking

- **Scout:** the first attempt to approach him by surprise has a **disadvantage**.
- **Sentinels:** if someone performs a loud action in the scene, the enemy immediately changes position to a better one (takes cover / calls for support).

6.4 Resistances and Weaknesses (Simple)

- **Resistance [type]:** the first time in a scene that an enemy would receive a specific effect (fire, ice, psychic, electricity), the effect is **weaker** (smaller area / shorter duration / no Heart loss).
- **Weakness [type]:** the player gains an **advantage** against this type of attacks.

Transparency principle: resistances and weaknesses only make sense if players can discover and exploit them.

6.5 "Swarm" and the Pressure of Numbers

- **Swarm:** if at least two such creatures are Near a hero, the hero has a **disadvantage** on movement/escape tests until they change zones.
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7. Active Moves — How to Write and How to Lead

An active move should answer 3 questions:

1. **What does it do in the fiction?** (description)
2. **Who does it concern and when?** (trigger)
3. **How is it resolved mechanically?** (test / effect / cost)

7.1 Simple Move Format

- **Name of the move:** a one-sentence description.
- **Trigger:** when it happens (e.g., "when the hero is Close," "when someone shoots from cover").
- **Test:** which attribute and what Difficulty.
- **Consequence of failure:** what you lose, what changes.
- **Consequence of success:** usually you avoid the consequence or gain an advantage.

7.2 How to Determine the Difficulty of an Enemy Move (Without Tables)

If the move is 'attacking' and involves a single target:

- set **T of the move = Enemy Defense** (this is consistent and easy to remember).

If the move is area-targeted or 'large':

- set T one threshold higher than the scene's standard (usually **T 6** or **T 8**).

7.3 Example Moves (Modules)

Brute (Napór)

- **Description:** the enemy engages in close combat and pushes.
- **Trigger:** when the enemy is Close to the hero.
- **Test:** the hero performs a **S** or **A** test against **T = Enemy's Defense**.
- **Failure:** the hero loses 1 Heart or is pushed 1 zone (GM chooses what makes sense).
- **Success:** you avoid damage and maintain your position.

Artillery (Salwa)

- **Description:** a series of shots/shards in an area.
- **Trigger:** when at least 2 heroes are in the same zone and not in cover.
- **Test:** each target tests **A** against **T 6** (or **T = Enemy's Defense** if the enemy is elite).
- **Failure:** -1 Heart and "you must move" (Close → Distant).
- **Success:** you hide/do not get hit.

Controller (Kotwica)

- **Description:** sticky terrain, force field, web, ice.
- **Trigger:** the enemy has a moment to set up a zone.
- **Test:** when you enter the zone, test **A** or **M** against **T 5–6**.
- **Failure:** you lose movement this turn and are "in a bad position" (disadvantage on attacks).
- **Success:** you pass through or neutralize the zone.

Support (Wzmocnienie)

- **Description:** the enemy shields an ally/heals/gives an advantage.
- **Trigger:** once per round when an ally is threatened.
- **Effect:** a chosen ally receives a "shield" — attackers have **disadvantage** until the end of the round, or the ally regains 1 Heart (boss/elite).
- **Player Counter:** disable the support or force them to choose (who to save).

8.1 Default: Distance Zones

In descriptive combat, use: **Close / Nearby / Far / Very Far**.

In the stat block, record mobility as:

- "Mobility: changes zone by 1 (standard)"
- or "Mobility: Fast (changes zone by 2)"
- or "Mobility: Flying (ignores obstacles, but requires tests during air raids)".

8.2 Option: Grid (if the table likes tactics)

If you are playing on a map:

- standard movement = **5 squares**,
- Fast = **6–7**,
- Jump = 3 squares "vertically" or over obstacles.

All descriptive abilities work the same — the grid just "provides a measuring tape".

9. Building an Opponent in 2 Minutes (Procedure)

1. Choose a class: Minion / Elite / Boss.
2. Set Defense: 5 / 6 / 8 (legendary: 12).
3. Set Hearts: 1 / 2 / 3 (final: 5).
4. Choose a role: Brute / Skirmisher / Artillery / Controller / Support.
5. Add 1–2 passive traits (boss: 2–3).
6. Add moves: Elite 1, Boss 2–3.
7. Write a strategy in 2 sentences (first round + reaction to threat).
8. (Optional) Add weakness and reward.

Practical test: if you can run the enemy without looking at the table — the statblock is good.

10. Ready Templates (for Reskinning in Any World)

The following entries are intentionally 'colorless.' You change the name and description — the mechanics remain.

10.1 Minions

- **Guard** — Minion, Defense 5, Hearts 1, Brute, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Shield, Moves: Press, Tactics: blocks and pushes.
- **Scout** — Minion, Defense 5, Hearts 1, Skirmisher, Mobility: Fast, Abilities: Scout, Moves: Escape, Tactics: approaches, marks targets, and vanishes.
- **Shooter** — Minion, Defense 5, Hearts 1, Artillery, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Cover, Moves: Barrage, Tactics: keeps Distance and forces to run.
- **Controller** — Minion, Defense 5, Hearts 1, Controller, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Zone, Moves: Anchor, Tactics: splits the team.
- **Support** — Minion, Defense 5, Hearts 1, Support, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Medic, Moves: Reinforcement, Tactics: protects the elite.

Quick moves for minions:

- **Escape:** when hit (but not "out" in fiction, e.g. armor), retreats by 1 zone.
- **Barrage:** if someone is in the open, imposes a disadvantage for their next action ("bullets, shrapnel, fear").
- **Zone:** once per scene places a small hindrance zone (smoke, oil, mud).

10.2 Elites

- **Tough Guy** — Elite, Defense 6, Hearts 2, Brute, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Light Armor, Moves: Push, Tactics: closes in and holds the line.
- **Assassin** — Elite, Defense 6, Hearts 2, Skirmisher, Mobility: Fast + Jumper, Abilities: Scout, Moves: Flanking Slash, Tactics: strikes from behind and retreats.
- **Sniper** — Elite, Defense 6, Hearts 2, Artillery, Mobility: Far, Abilities: Cover, Moves: Precise Shot, Tactics: forces movement and punishes lack of cover.
- **Terrain Manipulator** — Elite, Defense 6, Hearts 2, Controller, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Zone (2x), Moves: Anchor, Tactics: cuts off escape routes.
- **Commander** — Elite, Defense 6, Hearts 2, Support, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Sensors, Moves: Reinforcement, Tactics: strengthens allies and positions them in cover.

10.3 Bosses

- **Leader** — Boss, Defense 8, Hearts 3, Support, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Sentries + Shield, Moves: Reinforce + Summon + Barrier, Tactics: maintains support and controls pace.
 - **Colossus** — Boss, Defense 8, Hearts 3, Brute, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Tough + Heavy Armor, Moves: Shock + Assault, Tactics: breaks formation and forces tests.
 - **Hunter** — Boss, Defense 8, Hearts 3, Skirmisher, Mobility: Fast + Jumper, Abilities: Scout, Moves: Ambush + Slice + Escape, Tactics: isolates and eliminates.
 - **Zone Architect** — Boss, Defense 8, Hearts 3, Controller, Mobility: standard, Abilities: Zone (2x) + Resistance [type], Moves: Anchor + Volley + Shift, Tactics: divides the team and forces decisions.
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11. Environmental Hazards

Hazard is an 'opponent without a will' or a scene mechanism: turret, fire, avalanche, alarm.

Format: Name — Difficulty (D), When it activates, Effect, How to disable/bypass

11.1 Examples of Hazards (Universal)

Turret / Defense Drone — D 6

- **When it works:** at the end of the round, if someone is in line.
- **Effect:** test C vs D 6; failure: -1 Heart and you must take cover.
- **Deactivation:** test **M** or C vs D 6 at the panel / disruption / **power** cut.

Latch / Mine / Trap — D 5

- **When it works:** when you enter the zone.
- **Effect:** test C vs D 5; failure: -1 Heart or immobilization (lose movement).
- **Deactivation:** tools + test C vs D 4-5.

Gas / Smoke / Contamination — D 5

- **When it works:** at the beginning of the turn, if you are in the zone.
- **Effect:** test F or **M** vs D 5; failure: -1 Heart or a penalty on tests to exit.
- **Deactivation:** ventilation, masks, sealing.

Alarm / Timer — D (depending on scene)

- **When it works:** when a complication occurs or someone makes noise.
 - **Effect:** time pressure appears (next wave, door closing, reinforcements).
 - **Deactivation:** test **M** (hack/ritual) or "physically" F/C test.
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12. Battle Scene Generator (Quick, Clear)

Choose one from each line (or roll a d6):

1. **Objective of the scene:** transition / retrieval / deactivation / escort / theft / defense
 2. **Terrain:** open / bottlenecks / multi-level / lots of cover / edges / fog-smoke
 3. **Opponents:** 6x minion / 4x minion + elite / 2x elite / boss / boss + 2x minion / elite + hazard
 4. **Enemy Advantage:** cover / height / mobility / countdown timer / ambush / long-range support
 5. **Players' Advantage:** surprise / tools / shortcut / neutral ally / terrain provides cover / information (they know who the enemy is)
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13. Balance in Practice (Without Mathematics)

In NDE, balance is achieved through *pace* and *pressure*, not "CR."

13.1 Quick Rules for Setting Scene Difficulty

- **Easy Scene:** 4-6 minions or 1 elite.
- **Standard Scene:** 4 minions + 1 elite, or 2 elites.
- **Hard Scene:** boss + 2-4 minions, or boss + hazard.
- **Finale:** boss (5 Hearts) + elite + time pressure.

13.2 If the fight is too short

- Add a **wave of minions** (2-3 per round for 2 rounds).
- Increase environmental pressure: smoke zone, alarm, lack of cover.
- Change tactics: the enemy stops fighting "fair" (retreats, takes a hostage, blocks the exit).

13.3 If the Battle Drags On

- Give players a 'leverage': an exposed tank, panel, ritual, weakness.
 - Allow **benefits for exceptional success:** breaking cover, disarming, dispersing support.
 - Reduce the Boss's Hearts from 5 to 3 if this is not the final battle.
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14. Reskin: How to Adapt One Enemy for Every Setting

You have the 'Scout' stat block. Now you just change the description:

- **Fantasy:** goblin archer scout (Scout + Volley).
- **Sci-fi:** reconnaissance drone (Scout + Sensors).
- **Cyberpunk:** gang scout on a skateboard (Quick + Escape).
- **Slavic:** a bies tracking by footprints (Weakness: iron; Immunity: fear).

The mechanics remain the same. This allows the community to add hundreds of entries without breaking the consistency of the core.