

The Truncated Dungeon World

# TRUNCHEON WORLD

LaTorra & Koebel





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**The Truncated Dungeon World**

by

Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel.

Edited by Johnstone Metzger.



σύνορκοί τε καὶ ἔνοπλοι  
πρὸς πάντας κινδύνους  
κατὰ σκότιον δεσμωτήριον  
χρυσοῦ ἔνεκα καὶ κλέου

## Truncheon World

Rules and writing by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel.

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## Text

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# BEING THE GM

# SETTING UP

To play Dungeon World, you'll need to gather yourself and 2–5 friends. A group of 4 to 6, including you, is best. **Choose one person to be the Game Master (GM).** Everyone else will be players, taking the role of the characters in the game (we call these the player characters or PCs). As you play, the players say what their characters say, think, and do. The GM describes everything else in the world.

You'll need to print some materials. Before you start a new game, find or 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.
- Stuff for writing notes and drawing maps, such as: pens and pencils, scrap paper, and maybe some index cards.

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, ten-sided and twelve-sided. One of each is enough but more is better: you won't have to pass them around so much.

## Playing the Game

Playing Dungeon World means having a conversation; somebody says something, then you reply, maybe someone else chimes in. We talk about the fiction—the world of the characters and the things that happen around them. As we play, the rules will chime in, too. They have something to say about the world. **There are no turns or rounds in Dungeon World, no rules to say whose turn it is to talk.** Instead players take turns in the natural flow of the conversation, which always has some back-and-forth. The GM says something, the players respond. The players ask questions or make statements, the GM tells them what happens next. Dungeon World is never a monologue; it's always a conversation.

Like any conversation, the time you spend listening is just as important as the time you spend talking. The details established by the other people at the table (the GM and the other players) are important to you: they might change what moves you can make, set up an opportunity for you, or create a challenge you have to face. The conversation works best when we all listen, ask questions, and build on each other's contributions.



# The GM

There are many different fantasy genres, each with their own style or advice for GMing. *Dungeon World* is designed for one of those styles in particular—a world of elves, orcs, dragons and magic where dark dangers mix with light-hearted adventure. The rules in this chapter will help you run a game in that style.

The characters have rules to follow when they roll dice and take actions. The GM has rules to follow, too. You'll be refereeing, adjudicating, and describing the world as you go—*Dungeon World* provides a framework to guide you in doing so.

**This book isn't for the other players, it's for you, the *Dungeon World* GM.** It's not just advice or optional tips and tricks on how best to play. These are your procedures. These are your rules.

## GMing *Dungeon World*: A Framework

Running a game of *Dungeon World* means following a framework created by three things you have as a GM:

- **Agenda.**
- **Principles.**
- **Moves.**

Your agenda is what you set out to do when you sit down at the table. Your principles are the guides that keep you focused on that agenda. Your moves—the GM moves, dungeon moves, monster moves, etc—are the concrete, moment-to-moment things you do to move the game forward. You'll make moves when players miss their rolls, when the rules call for it, and whenever the players look to you to see what happens. Your moves keep the fiction consistent and the game's action moving forward.

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.

# HOW TO GM

When you sit down at the table as a GM you do these things:

- Describe the situation.
- Follow the rules.
- Make moves.
- Exploit your prep.

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 does that entail?

## Describe the World

First and foremost, you **describe the immediate situation around the players at all times**. This is how you start a session, how you get things rolling after a snack break, get back on track after a great joke: tell them what the situation is in concrete terms. The situation around them is rarely “everything’s great, nothing to worry about.” They’re adventurers going on adventures—give them something to react to.

Use detail and senses to draw them in. The situation isn’t just an orc charging you, it’s an orc painted in blood swinging a hammer and yelling bloody murder. You can leverage a lack of information, too. The sound of clattering armour and shuffling feet, for instance.

When you describe the situation, always end with “What do you do?” Dungeon World is about action and adventure! Portray a situation that demands a response.

### SETTING THE SCENE

Remember to describe the environment as evocatively as possible. Use all five senses to convey information to the players.

- **Odour:** The smell of a place, if strong enough, is often the first thing we notice. Is this smell pleasant, or gag-inducing? Does it linger, or give away an enemy’s location? Is the smell’s source visible or hidden?
- **Sight:** Before anything else, think about the light. Is it dark? What are the sources of light—the sun, candles, a lamp, a bonfire? Is there a magical glow? What colour is the light, how does that affect vision?
- **Sound:** A good indicator of movement. What are the acoustics in this place like? Is this location quiet or loud?
- **Touch:** When we pay attention to the way things feel, it is often because something feels very good... or very bad.

# Follow the Rules

From the get-go make sure to **follow the rules**. This means your GM rules, sure, but also keep an eye on the players' moves. It's everyone's responsibility to watch for when a move has been triggered, including you. Stop the players and ask if they mean to trigger the rules when it sounds like that's what they're doing.

## Making Moves

Part of following the rules is **making moves**. Your moves are different than player moves and we'll describe them in detail in a bit. Your moves are specific things you can do to change the flow of the game.

## Exploit Your Prep

In all of these things, **exploit your prep**. At times you'll know something the players don't yet know. You can use that knowledge to help you make moves. Maybe the wizard tries to cast a spell and draws unwanted attention. They don't know that the attention that just fell on them was the ominous gaze of a demon waiting two levels below, but you do.

"Prep" can mean a wide variety of resources. You might have brought a dungeon or other location to the game, already mapped out, or you may have a cast of characters, and know all their motivations. Or perhaps you simply decided something was true and now you are acting on that information. You can also ask the players about their characters' lives and histories, and add those details to your prep.

# AGENDA

Your agenda describes the things you aim to do at all times while GMing a game of Dungeon World:

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

Everything you say and do at the table (and away from the table, too) exists 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, test their ability to solve complex traps, or kill their characters (though monsters might be). You're not here to give them a chance to explore your finely crafted setting and you're most certainly not here to tell everyone a planned-out story.

Your first agenda is to **portray a fantastic world**. Dungeon World is all about guts, guile, and bravery against darkness and doom. It's about characters who have decided to take up a life of adventure in the hopes of some glorious reward. It's your job to participate in that by showing the players a world in which their characters can find that adventure. Without the player characters the world would fall into chaos or destruction—it might still even with them. It's up to you to portray the fantastic elements of that world. Show the players the wonders of the world they're in and encourage them to react to it.

**Filling the characters' lives with adventure** means working with the players to create a world that's engaging and dynamic. Adventurers are always caught up in some kind of world-threatening danger—encourage that kind of action in the game.

Prepared adventures (including fronts and dangers) should **never presume player actions**. A good adventure portrays a setting in motion—someplace significant with creatures big and small pursuing their own goals. As the players come into conflict with that setting and its denizens, action is inevitable. It's your job to honestly portray the repercussions of that action.

This is how you **play to find out what happens**. You're sharing in the fun of finding out how the characters react to and change the world you're portraying. You're all participants in a great adventure that's unfolding. Don't plan too hard—the rules of the game will fight you.

# PRINCIPLES

These are your principles:

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

Your principles are your guides. Often, when it’s time to make a move, you’ll already have an idea of what makes sense. Consider it in light of your principles and go with it, if it fits.

## **ADDRESS THE CHARACTERS, NOT THE PLAYERS**

Addressing the characters, not the players, means that you don’t say: “Tony, is Dunwick doing something about that wight?” Instead, you say: “Dunwick, what are you doing about the wight?” Speaking this way keeps the game focused on the fiction and not on 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 characters, you need to think about what’s happening in terms of those characters—not the players portraying them.

## **ASK QUESTIONS AND USE THE ANSWERS**

Part of playing to find out what happens is explicitly not knowing everything, and being curious. If you don’t know something, or you don’t have an idea, ask the players and use what they say.

Think about time when asking questions: ask about what came before, what is true now and what might happen in the future. Ask the Cleric about the gods, ask the Wizard about magic, then switch it up—maybe the Thief has some ideas about the gods, too?

## Being the GM

### BE A FAN OF THE CHARACTERS

Think of the players' characters as protagonists in a story you might see on TV. Cheer for their victories and lament their defeats. You're not here to push them in any particular direction, merely to participate in the fiction that features them and their actions.

### BEGIN AND END WITH THE FICTION

Everything you and the players do in Dungeon World comes from, and leads to, fictional events. When a player makes a move, they describe their character taking action. Then you apply the rules and get a fictional effect. When you make a move it always comes from the fiction.

### DRAW MAPS, LEAVE BLANKS

Dungeon World exists mostly in the imaginations of the people playing it; maps help everyone stay on the same page. You won't always be drawing them yourself, but any time there's a new location described, make sure it gets added to a map.

When you draw a map don't try to make it complete. Leave room for the unknown. As you play you'll get more ideas and the players will give you inspiration to work with. Let the maps expand and change.

### EMBRACE THE FANTASTIC

Magic, strange vistas, gods, demons, and abominations—the world is full of mystery and magic. Embrace that in your prep and in play. Think about “the fantastic” on various scales. Think about floating cities or islands crafted from the corpse of a god. Think about village wise-men and their spirit familiars, or the statue that the local bandits touch to give them luck. The characters are interesting people, empowered by their gods, their skill at arms, or by mystical training. The world should be just as engaging.

### GIVE EVERY MONSTER LIFE

Monsters are fantastic creatures with their own motivations, whether simple or complex. Give each monster details that bring it to life: smells, sights, sounds—enough to make it real. But don't cry when it gets beat up or overthrown, that's what the players' characters are supposed to do!

### MAKE A MOVE THAT FOLLOWS

When you make a move, what you're actually doing is taking an element of the fiction and bringing it to bear against the characters. Your moves should always follow from the fiction. They help you focus on one aspect of the current situation and do something interesting with it. When it's

your turn to say something, ask yourself: “What’s going on? What move makes sense here?” Then describe what happens in the fiction as an event.

### **NAME EVERY PERSON**

Anyone and everyone that the players speak 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.

### **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 for 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 Omar away 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, since it is.

### **THINK DANGEROUS**

Everything in the world is a target. You’re thinking like an evil overlord: no single life is worth anything and 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 how it can be put in danger, fall apart or crumble. The world changes. Without the characters’ intervention, it changes for the worse.

### **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 its effects when they come into the spotlight.

### **“WHAT DO YOU DO?”**

The most important question to ask 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?”

# MOVES

Whenever everyone looks to you to see what happens, when you have a golden opportunity, or when someone misses a roll, choose one of these:

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

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, for example.

Never speak the name of your move (that's one of your principles). 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 moves are a way of fulfilling your agenda—part of which is to fill the characters' lives with adventure. When a spell goes wild or the floor drops out from under them adventurers react or suffer the consequences of inaction.



# When to Make a Move

You make a move when:

- Everyone looks to you to find out what happens.
- The players give you a golden opportunity.
- They roll a 6 or less (a miss).

Generally when the players are just looking at you to find out what happens next, you make a soft move. Otherwise you make a hard move.

A **soft move** is one without immediate, irrevocable consequences. That usually means it's something not all that bad, like revealing that there's more treasure if they can just find a way past the golem (offer an opportunity with cost). It can also mean that it's something bad, but they have time to avoid it, like having the goblin archers loose their arrows (show signs of an approaching threat) with a chance for them to dodge out of danger.

A soft move ignored becomes a golden opportunity for a hard move. If the players do nothing about the hail of arrows flying towards them it's a golden opportunity to use the deal damage move.

**Hard moves**, on the other hand, have immediate consequences. Dealing damage is almost always a hard move, since it means a loss of HP that won't be recovered without some action from the players.

When you have a chance to make a hard move you can opt for a soft one instead if it better fits the situation. Sometimes things just work out for the best.

## 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.

If your first instinct is that this won't hurt them now, but it'll come back to bite them later, great! That's part of your principles (think offscreen too). Make a note of it and reveal it later, when the time is right.

# 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.

After every move you make, always ask “What do you do?”

## DEAL DAMAGE

When you deal damage, choose one source of damage that’s fictionally threatening a character and apply it. In combat with a lizard man? It stabs you. Triggered a trap? Rocks fall on you.

The amount of damage is decided by the source—see page 91 for guidelines. In some cases, this move might involve trading damage both ways, with the character also dealing damage.

Most damage is based on a die 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.

## GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY THAT FITS A CLASS’ ABILITIES

The thief disables traps, sneaks, and picks locks. The cleric deals with the divine and the dead. Every class has things that they shine at—present an opportunity that plays to what one class shines at.

It doesn’t have to be a class that’s in play right now though. Sometimes a locked door stands between you and treasure and there’s no thief in sight. This is an invitation for invention, bargaining, and creativity. If all you’ve got is a bloody axe, doesn’t every problem look like a skull?

## 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 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 a character needs to make tough choices. Put them, or something they care about, in the path of destruction. The harder the choice, the tougher the spot.

**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. Reveal to the players just how much trouble they're in.

**SEPARATE THEM**

There are few things worse than being in the middle of a raging battle with blood-thirsty owlbears on all sides—one of those things is being in the middle of that battle with no one at your back.

Separating the characters can mean anything from being pushed apart in the heat of battle to being teleported to the far end of the dungeon. Whatever way it occurs, it's bound to cause problems.

**SHOW A DOWNSIDE TO THEIR CLASS, RACE, OR EQUIPMENT**

Just as every class shines, they all have their weaknesses, too. Do orcs have a special thirst for elven blood? Is the cleric's magic disturbing dangerous forces? The torch that lights the way also draws attention from eyes in the dark.

**SHOW SIGNS OF AN APPROACHING THREAT**

This is one of your most versatile moves. "Threat" means anything bad that's on the way. With this move, you just show them that something's going to happen unless they do something about it.

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

This move is particularly good when they want something that's not covered by a move, or when they've made a move and missed. They can do it, sure, but they'll have to pay the price. Or, they can do it, but there will be consequences. Maybe they can swim through the shark-infested moat before being devoured, but they'll need a distraction. Of course, this is made clear to the characters, not just the players: the sharks are in a starved frenzy, for example.

**TURN THEIR MOVE BACK ON THEM**

Think about the benefits a move might grant a character and turn them around in a negative way. Alternately, grant the same advantage to someone who has it out for the characters. If Ivy has learned of Duke Horst's men approaching from the east, maybe a scout has spotted her, too.

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

Every 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 player move (like hack and slash) says that a monster gets to make an attack, make an aggressive move with that monster.

Your fronts may also have custom moves associated with them. Use these moves to bring that front's dangers into play, which may mean more monsters.

**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, armour, healing, ongoing spells, whatever. 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.

# DUNGEON MOVES

Dungeon moves are a special subset of GM moves 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 completely.**

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

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 characters enter a new room or hallway and want to know what they find there.

## 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 and strange, 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.

**INTRODUCE A NEW FACTION OR TYPE OF CREATURE**

A type of creature is a broad grouping: orcs, goblins, lizardmen, the undead, 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.

A hard application of this move will snowball directly into a combat scene or ambush.

**MAKE THEM BACKTRACK**

Look back at the spaces you’ve added to the map. Is there anything useful there still undiscovered? Can you add a new obstacle that can only be overcome by going back there? Is there a locked door here whose key lies in an earlier room?

When backtracking, show the effect that time has 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. The dungeon evolves in the wake of the characters’ actions.

**POINT TO A LOOMING THREAT**

If you know that something is 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.

**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 servants of an enemy god to battle against. Give the wizard magical mysteries to investigate. Show the fighter some skulls to 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 complicated lie weighing on his conscience, what steps will he take to cover it up when someone figures him out? If the wizard has been summoning demons, 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.

**PRESENT RICHES AT A PRICE**

What do the players' characters want? What would they sacrifice for it?

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, but out of the way of the main objective. Will they stop to pry the ruby eyes from the idol when they know that the sacrifice looms closer and closer? Use this move and you can find out.

**USE A THREAT FROM AN EXISTING FACTION OR TYPE OF CREATURE**

Once the characters have been introduced to the presence of a faction or type of creature you can use the moves of monsters of that type.

Use the factions and types broadly. Orcs are accompanied by their hunting wargs. A mad cult probably has some undead servants or maybe a few beasts summoned from the abyssal 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.





# THE FIRST SESSION

# GETTING STARTED

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 that you ask establish what Dungeon World is like—who lives in it and what’s going on.

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. You have to do a little more in the first session. You establish the world and the threats the players will face.

## Prep

Before the first session, you’ll need to print some stuff. Print off:

- A few copies of the basic moves.
- One copy of each class sheet, double-sided.
- One copy each of the cleric and wizard spell sheets, double-sided.
- The GM sheet.

You’ll also need to read the whole Dungeon World rule book, especially the GM chapters. 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. Remember the games you played and the stories you told. Watch some movies, read some comics; get heroic fantasy into your brain.

**What you bring to the first session, ideas-wise, is mostly 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 and 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.

**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.

# CHARACTERS

When everyone shows up for the first session, briefly introduce Dungeon World to anyone who hasn't played before. Cover the mechanical basis of moves. Introduce the character classes, help players pick their classes, and walk them through character creation.

Your role during character creation is threefold: 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.

You should also set expectations: the players are to play their characters as people—skilled adventurers delving into dangerous places, but real people. Your role is to play the rest of the world as a dynamic, changing place.

## A Few Questions

Some questions commonly come up during character creation. You should be ready to answer them:

### **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 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, *the* Wizard. They don't have the same abilities, though they may be similar. Later on, there may be another player character with the same class but no GM character will ever really be a wizard (or any other class).

### **IS THE GM TRYING TO KILL US?**

No. The GM's job is to portray the world and the things in it and the world is a very dangerous place. You might die. That doesn't mean the GM is out to get you.

### **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. The special stuff, like magic weapons, isn't for sale. Not for coin, anyway...

## More Questions

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 yet (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.

If you've come to the table with some ideas about stuff you'd like to see in the world, share them with the players. Their characters are their responsibility and the world is yours—you've got a lot of say about what lives in it. If you want the game to be about a hunt for the lost sorcerer-race of aeons past, say so! If the players aren't interested or they're sick to death of sorcerers, they'll let you know and you can work together to find some other way. You don't need pre-approval for everything, but making sure everyone is excited about the broad strokes of the world is a great start.

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 to the ideas that've been stewing away in your head. It's time for the adventure to begin!

# PLAYING THE FIRST SESSION

The first adventure is really about discovering the direction that future sessions will take. 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 sessions to come.

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 King Levus. Ask questions right away—“who is leading the ambush against you?” or “what did you do to make King Levus so mad?” 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. When a player just says “I hack and slash him” be quick to ask, “so what are you actually doing?” Ask “How?” or “With what?”

For the first session, you have a few specific goals:

- Ask questions.
- Establish details, describe things.
- Give each character a chance to shine.
- Help the players understand the moves.
- Introduce NPCs.
- Leave blanks.
- Look for interesting facts.
- Use what they give you.

**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.

**ESTABLISH DETAILS, DESCRIBE THINGS**

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.

**GIVE EACH CHARACTER A CHANCE TO SHINE**

As a fan of the heroes (remember your principles?) 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 (that's your agenda) where there are many solutions to every challenge.

**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.

### **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?) Introduce NPCs but don't protect them. The recently deceased Lord of Goblins is just as useful for inspiring future adventures as the one who's still alive.

### **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.

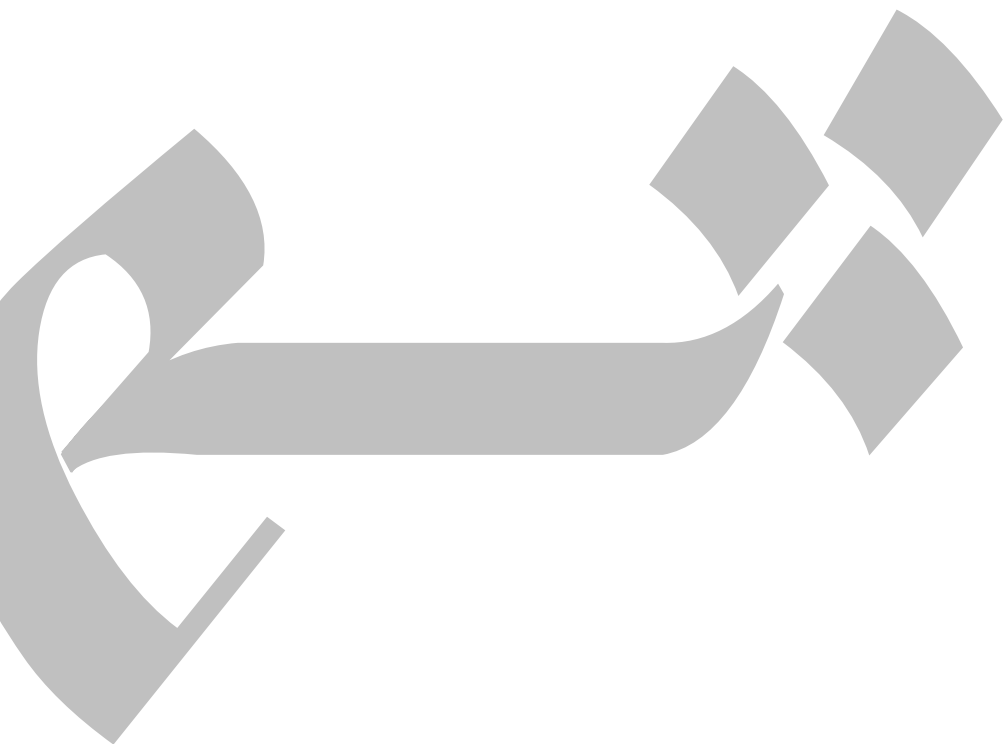
### **USE WHAT THEY GIVE YOU**

The best part of the first session is you don't have to come to the game 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 what you find to fill in the world around the characters.

## **After the First Session**

Once you're done with the first session, take some time to relax. Let ideas ferment. Don't rush into the next session.

Once you've had some time to relax and think over the first session, it's time to prepare for the next session. Preparing for the second session takes a few minutes, maybe an hour if this is your first time. You'll create fronts, maybe make some monsters or custom moves, and generally get an idea of what is going on in the world.





# FRONTS AND DANGERS

# FRONTS

Fronts are secret tomes of GM knowledge. Each is a collection of linked dangers—threats to the characters specifically and to the people, places, and things the characters care about—and the impending dooms those dangers threaten to make a reality, without the characters' 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 your 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 what opposes the players. 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.

## When to Make Fronts

You'll make your campaign front and first adventure fronts after your first session. Your campaign front may not be complete when you first make it—that's great! Just like blanks on a map, unknown parts of your campaign front are opportunities for future creativity.

After that first session you'll also make some adventure fronts. One or two is usually a good number. If you find yourself with more adventure fronts than that, consider leaving some of them in note form for now.

# Types of Fronts

At their core, all fronts contain the same components. They sort and gather your dangers into easy-to-use clusters. There are, however, several different kinds of fronts available to you. On the session-to-session level, there are your **adventure fronts**. These fronts will see use for a few 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 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 world 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 an adventure front if they've come to bear, too.

A third type of front is a **dungeon front**—this the place to put all the dangers that lurk within a single dungeon, but which do not become active until that dungeon is explored by the PCs. A dungeon front contains one or more passive dangers, waiting to be discovered and unleashed. This makes it less important than the other types of fronts—make sure you have those ones done first so you have something to say to the players.

As the PCs move through a dungeon, they encounter different dangers which you then move from the inactive and passive dungeon front into the adventure front, where all the active dangers in play for the current session are grouped—just like you move dangers from an adventure front into your campaign front. Once a danger moves from a dungeon front to the adventure front, start using its grim portents and work toward its impending doom like normal.

# Fronts and the Map

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 part of a front but don't just draw them on the map. Instead, for each front, add some feature to the map that indicates that front's presence. 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. You can label it if you like, but use the name that the characters would use, not the name you gave the front.

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.

## How to Create a Front

Here's how a front comes together:

- Choose the **front type**: adventure, campaign, or dungeon.
- Start writing a short description and creating a **cast** of characters.
- Create a few **dangers**, maybe 2 or 3.
- Choose an **impending doom** for each danger.
- Give each danger a list of **grim portents** that lead to its impending doom: About 3-5 grim portents for campaign front dangers, or 2-3 for the dangers of other front types is a good number.
- Optionally, write one or more **custom moves** associated with this front or its dangers.
- Finish writing out the cast, then write a few **stakes** questions.

As you can see, a front is mostly made from the dangers it contains—these are the things the PCs have to deal with, in concrete terms. The front itself is conceptual and organizational, but dangers exist as actual forces in the fiction.

Because all the dangers in a front are related thematically, individual characters can be part of more than one danger, or move between them. The dangers of one front also tend to target the same aspects of the world—the same people, locations, or items—and in doing so, they also tend to suggest the same questions, which you can turn into stakes. This is why you should detail the cast and stakes at the front level, not just for each danger by itself. Custom moves can apply to the whole front, or just to a single danger, your call.

# Description and Cast

Write up something short to remind you just what this front and its dangers are about, something to describe it in a nutshell. Don't worry about where it's going or what could happen—grim portents and impending dooms will handle that for you; we'll get to those in a bit. If there are multiple people involved in the front (an orc warlord and his clansmen, a hateful god and his servants) go ahead and give them names and a detail or two now. Leave yourself some space as you'll be adding to this section as you play.

## Stakes

Your stakes questions should be a small number of questions (1-3 maybe) about people, places, or groups that you're interested in. People include PCs and NPCs, your choice. Remember that your agenda includes "Play to find out what happens." Stakes are a way of reminding yourself what you want to find out. Because they pose questions about the details of a front and how things will turn out, stakes should also be the last thing you write when preparing a front—detail your cast and get your dangers sorted out, then come back to this step.

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. Write questions like this:

- How will Lux respond to the Holy Light?
- What will the princess think of the PCs, once she is found?
- Will the College of Arcanists be able to recruit Avon?
- Will the dead in the Haunted Forest be put to rest?
- Will the orcs manage to summon a demon?

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 leave to be resolved through play. 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.

# DANGERS

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?

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 can be dangers too—goblin tribes or a rampaging centaur khanate, for example.

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.

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.

There's always more dangers you could add to a front, but limit yourself to 3 at most and leave room for discovery. Like a map, blank spaces can always be filled in later. Leaving room for player contribution and future inspiration means you'll have freedom to alter the front and make it fit the game. Not every bad thing that could happen deserves to be made into a danger. If you're uncertain, think about it this way: dangers can always get worse.

Creating dangers is a way to slice up your overall front concept into smaller, easier to manage pieces. Dangers are tools for adding detail to the right parts of the front and for making the front easier to manage in the long run.

## 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? Impulses can help you translate the danger into action.

# Grim Portents

Grim portents are dark designs for what could happen if a danger goes unchecked. 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. Think of them as possible moves waiting in the wings—when the time is right, unleash them on the world.

More often than not grim portents have a logical order. The orcs tear down the city only after the peace talks fail, for example. A simple danger will progress from bad to worse to much worse in a clear path forward. Sometimes, grim portents are unconnected pathways to the impending doom, and the early manifestations of danger might not all be related. It's up to you to decide how complex your danger will be.

Whenever a grim portent or impending doom comes to pass, check it off—the prophecy has come true! Check the other dangers in the front—in a complex front, you may need to cross off or alter some of their grim portents, too. That's fine, you're allowed. A grim 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 grim portent may resound across the whole campaign in subtle ways.

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, or some new way for it to cause trouble in the world.

You can advance a grim portent descriptively or prescriptively. Descriptively means that you've seen the change happen during play, so you mark it off. Maybe the players sided with the goblin tribes against their lizardman 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 Dooms

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 or another, seeks to bring into effect. Choose one of the types of impending dooms and give it a concrete form in your front. These often change in play, as the characters meddle in the affairs of the world. Don't fret, you can change them later.

- Destruction (apocalypse, ruin and woe).
- Impoverishment (enslavement, the abandonment of goodness and right).
- Pestilence (the spread of sickness and disease, the end of wellness).
- Rampant Chaos (laws of reality, of society, or any order is dissolved).
- Tyranny (of the strong over the weak or the few over the many).
- Usurpation (the chain of order comes apart, someone rightful is displaced).

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 meaningful way. This will almost certainly change the front at large as well. Making sure that these effects reverberate throughout the world is a big part of making them feel real.

## Custom Moves

Sometimes a danger will suggest a move that isn't covered by any existing ones. You can write custom moves to fill the gaps or to add the right effects for the danger. They can be player moves or GM moves, as you see fit. Of course, if you're writing a player move, keep your hands off the dice and mind the basic structure of a move. A 10+ is a complete success, while 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.



# TYPES OF DANGERS

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 new dangers. With your front in mind, peruse the list and pick one or two that fit:

- Ambitious Organizations.
- Arcane Enemies.
- Cursed Places.
- Hordes.
- Planar Forces.

## Ambitious Organizations

- Cabal (*impulse: to absorb those in power, to grow*).
- Corrupt Government (*impulse: to maintain the status quo*).
- Cult (*impulse: to infest from within*).
- Misguided Good (*impulse: to do what is "right" no matter the cost*).
- Religious Organization (*impulse: to establish and follow doctrine*).
- Thieves Guild (*impulse: to take by subterfuge*).

### 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 someone important (an ally, perhaps).
- Claim territory or resources.
- Establish a new rule (within the organization).
- Influence a powerful institution (change a law, manipulate doctrine).
- Negotiate a deal.
- Observe a potential foe in great detail.

## Arcane Enemies

- 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*).
- 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*).

### GM MOVES FOR ARCANES ENEMIES

- Attack a foe with magic, directly or otherwise.
- Cast a spell over time and space.
- Demand a sacrifice.
- Learn forbidden knowledge.
- Recruit a follower or toady.
- Spy on someone with a scrying spell.
- Tempt someone with promises.

## Cursed Places

- Abandoned Tower (*impulse: to draw in the weak-willed*).
- Dark Portal (*impulse: to disgorge demons*).
- Elemental Vortex (*impulse: to grow, to tear apart reality*).
- Place of Power (*impulse: to be controlled or tamed*).
- Shadowland (*impulse: to corrupt or consume the living*).
- Unholy Ground (*impulse: to spawn evil*).

### GM MOVES FOR CURSED PLACES

- Confuse or obfuscate truth or direction.
- Corrupt a natural law.
- Dampen magic or increase its effects.
- Grow in intensity or depth.
- Hide something from sight.
- Leave a lingering effect on an inhabitant or visitor.
- Lure someone in.
- Offer power.
- Spread to an adjacent place.
- Vomit forth a lesser monster.

# Hordes

- Humanoid Vermin (*impulse: to breed, to multiply and consume*).
- Plague of the Undead (*impulse: to spread*).
- Underground Dwellers (*impulse: to defend the complex from outsiders*).
- Wandering Barbarians (*impulse: to grow strong, to drive their enemies before them*).

## GM MOVES FOR HORDES

- Abandon an old home, find a new one.
- Appoint a champion.
- Assault a bastion of civilization.
- Change direction suddenly.
- Declare war and act upon that declaration without hesitation or deliberation.
- Grow in size by breeding or conquest.
- Embrace internal chaos.
- Overwhelm a weaker force.
- Perform a show of dominance.

# Planar Forces

- Choir of Angels (*impulse: to pass judgement*).
- Construct of Law (*impulse: to eliminate perceived disorder*).
- 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*).
- God (*impulse: to gather worshippers*).

## GM MOVES FOR PLANAR FORCES

- Attack indirectly, through intermediaries.
- Expose someone to a Truth, wanted or otherwise.
- Extract a promise in exchange for a boon.
- Foster rivalries with other, similar powers.
- Give dreams of prophecy.
- Lay a Curse on a foe.
- Rarely, when the stars are right, attack directly.
- Turn an organization (corrupt or infiltrate with influence).

# ADVENTURE FRONT

Cast, Custom Moves, and Stakes.

**Danger**

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

IMPENDING DOOM

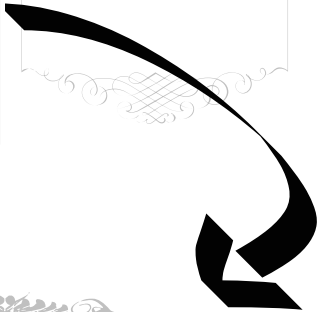
**Danger**

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

IMPENDING DOOM

Dangers from an  
adventure front  
may move to the  
campaign front.



# CAMPAIGN FRONT

Cast, Custom Moves, and Stakes.

Dangers from the  
campaign front  
may become  
active elements  
of an adventure  
front.

**Danger**

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

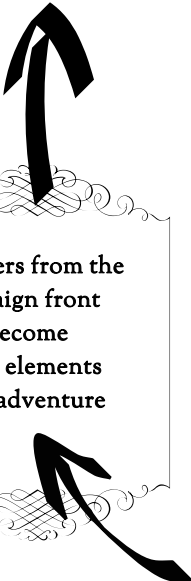
IMPENDING DOOM

**Danger**

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

IMPENDING DOOM



# DUNGEON FRONT

Cast, Custom Moves, and Stakes.

Dangers from a  
dungeon front  
move into an  
adventure front  
when they are  
discovered or  
activated.

## Danger

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

IMPENDING DOOM

## Danger

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

IMPENDING DOOM

# ADVENTURE FRONT

Cast, Custom Moves, and Stakes.

## Danger

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

IMPENDING DOOM

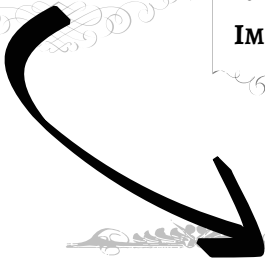
## Danger

GRIM PORTENTS

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

IMPENDING DOOM

Dangers from an  
adventure front  
may become part  
of a dungeon  
front only if they  
become inactive.



# 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 live 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 or the undead plague claims the world and the heroes emerge bloodied but victorious or defeated and despairing. 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 any grim portents are fulfilled, the world is changed, if only in subtle ways. Keep this in mind when you write your future fronts. Is there anyone who could be moved from the now-defeated front to somewhere else? Anyone get promoted or reduced in stature? The resolution of a front is an important event!

When you resolve an adventure front or a dungeon front, that usually means the adventure or dungeon itself has been resolved. This is a great time to take a break and look at your campaign front. Let it inspire your next adventure or dungeon front. Write up a new one, 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 FRONTS

As you start your campaign, you're likely to have a lightly detailed campaign front and one or two detailed adventure fronts. Characters may choose, part-way through an adventure, to pursue some other course. You might end up with a handful of partly-resolved adventure or dungeon fronts. Not only is this okay, it's a great way to explore a world that feels alive and organic. Always remember: adventure fronts (including dangers from dungeon fronts that have been discovered) continue along apace no matter whether the characters are there to see them 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 sources of danger with wildly divergent goals, all equally potent but not necessarily related. The goal of the anarchists is chaos in the city, the goal 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 fronts and dangers, 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 characters 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.





# SESSION REFERENCE

# START OF SESSION

Before you can start role-playing for real, you need to find out who the players’ characters are, and what they are doing when the game starts.

## Character Creation Checklist

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.

### 1. CHOOSE A CLASS

Everyone chooses a different class; there aren’t two wizards. If two people want the same class, talk it over like adults and compromise.

### 2. CHOOSE A RACE

Your race gives you a special move.

### 3. CHOOSE A NAME AND LOOK

Choose from the list or not, just choose appropriately for the particular game you are going to play, and the people you are playing it with.

### 4. CHOOSE STATS AND FIGURE OUT

#### MODIFIERS

Assign these scores to your stats: 16, 15, 13, 12, 9, 8. The modifiers are what you use when a move says +DEX or +CHA. They’re based on the stat score.

Score	Modifier
3 or less	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	0
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18 or more	+3

### 7. SET MAXIMUM HP

Your maximum HP is equal to your class’s base HP+Constitution score. You start with your maximum HP.

### 8. CHOOSE STARTING MOVES

The front side of each character sheet lists the 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.

## 9. CHOOSE ALIGNMENT

Your alignment gives you an action that can earn you additional XP.

## 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 armour and note it on your character sheet.

## 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; when it's your turn, share your look, class and anything else pertinent about your 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.

## 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.

Take some time to discuss the bonds and let the GM ask questions about them as they come up. You'll want to go back and forth and make sure everyone is happy and comfortable with how the bonds have come out. Leave space to discover what each one might mean in play, too: don't pre-determine everything at the start. 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.**

# 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:

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**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:

- A rusted old key in the shape of a lizard.
- A shield that glows with silver light.
- A vial of antivenom.

On a miss, well, good intentions count for something, right?

---

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 kickstart to the adventure.

# BASIC MOVES

Basic moves are the bread and butter of the adventurer's life. They cover situations likely to come up in fights, tense negotiations, and dangerous areas. All player characters have all the basic moves, which are:

- Aid or Interfere.
- Defend.
- Defy Danger.
- Discern Realities.
- Hack and Slash.
- Parley.
- Spout Lore.
- Volley.

## Aid or Interfere

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**When you help or hinder another PC**, roll+the number of bonds you have with them. **On a 10+**, they take +1 or -2 to their roll, your choice. **On a 7-9**, they still get a modifier, but you also expose yourself to danger, retribution, or cost.

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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 with a move 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.

## Defend

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

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

Defending something means standing nearby and focusing on preventing attacks against 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 attacks, of course, 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 a hold 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.

## Defy Danger

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

- ...by enduring, +CON.
- ...by getting out of the way or acting fast, +DEX.
- ...by powering through, +STR.
- ...through mental fortitude, +WIS.
- ...using charm and social grace, +CHA.
- ...with quick thinking, +INT.

**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.

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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, those spikes are a whole different 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 danger from a steep and icy floor with a charming smile just so you can use CHA, since charmingly smiling at the icy 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.

## Discern Realities

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**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. Either way, take +1 forward when acting on the answers:

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

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 closer.

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."



## Hack and Slash

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**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.

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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 counterattack 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 using a typical sword is like swinging a meat cleaver at a tank: it just isn't going to cause any harm, so hack and slash doesn't apply. 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 armour).

Some attacks may have additional effects depending on the triggering action, the circumstances, or the weapons involved. An attack could also knock someone down, restrain them, or leave a big bloody splatter.

## Parley

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**When you have leverage on a GM Character and manipulate them,** roll+CHA. Leverage is something they need or want. **On a 10+**, they do what you ask if you first promise what they ask of you. **On a 7–9**, they will do what you ask, but need some concrete assurance of your promise, right now.

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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. Your leverage can be nasty or nice, 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 Sir Telric 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 lone 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 7+ 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 favour.

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 to prove you can do it, for example. It's worth noting that 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."

## Spout Lore

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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.

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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'dammar 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+ 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 involve the time you take thinking. Maybe you miss that goblin moving around behind you, or the tripwire 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.

## Volley

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**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 as described by the GM.
  - You have to take several shots, reducing your ammo by one.
  - You have to take what you can get: -1d6 damage.
- 

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.

# SPECIAL MOVES

Special moves are moves that come up less often than basic moves, 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.

- Bolster (this page).
- Carouse (page 83).
- Encumbrance (page 62).
- End of Session (page 104).
- Last Breath (page 94).
- Level Up (page 105).
- Make Camp (pages 70 and 96).
- Order Hirelings (page 86).
- Outstanding Warrants (page 83).
- Recover (page 96).
- Recruit (page 84).
- Supply (page 84).
- Take Watch (page 71).
- Undertake a Perilous Journey (page 71).

## Bolster

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**When you spend your leisure time in study, meditation, or hard practice,** you gain preparation.

- If you prepare for a week or two, take 1 preparation.
- If you prepare for a month or longer, take 3 instead.

When your preparation pays off spend 1 preparation for +1 to any roll. You can only spend one preparation per roll.

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# EQUIPMENT

The musty tombs and forgotten treasure troves of the world are filled with useful items. The fighter 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.

The most important role of a character’s equipment is to help describe the moves they make. A character without a weapon of some sort isn’t going to trigger the hack and slash move when fighting a dragon since a bare-knuckle punch really doesn’t do much to inch-thick scales. It doesn’t count for the purposes of triggering the move.

Likewise, sometimes equipment will avoid triggering a move. Climbing a sheer icy cliff is usually defying danger, but with a good set of climbing gear you might be able to avoid the imminent danger or calamity that triggers the move.

Weapons are particularly likely to modify what moves you can trigger. A character with a dagger can easily stab the goblin gnawing on his leg, triggering hack and slash, but the character with a halberd is going to have a much harder time bringing it to bear on such a close foe.

## Load and Encumbrance

A PC’s Load stat is determined by their class and STR. Being able to haul 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. If you try and carry too many things at once, there are consequences:

### Encumbrance

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**When you make a move while carrying weight**, you may be encumbered. If your weight carried is:

- Equal to or less than your Load: You suffer no penalty.
  - Load+1 or Load+2: You take -1 ongoing until you lighten your burden.
  - Greater than your Load+2: You have a choice: drop at least 1 weight and roll at -1, or automatically fail.
- 

This move only applies to things a person could walk around with and still act. Carrying a boulder on your back is not encumbrance—you can’t really act or move much with it. It affects what moves you can make appropriately in the fiction.

# Tags

Items and gear of every sort have tags. Tags are terms to describe things—they tell you something about how the equipment affects the character using it, or suggest something about the way it is used. Like everything else in *Dungeon World*, these guide the fiction you're creating in play.

Some tags have a specific effect on the rules (things like damage reduction on armour or a magical bonus to a particular kind of move or stat). Other tags are purely about the fiction (like the close tag, which describes the length of a weapon and how near your enemies need to be for you to attack them). Tags help you describe your character's actions when the items are being used and they give the GM information about how the items you're using might go wrong or cause complications when you fail a roll. If a weapon is awkward, it might mean that you're more likely to drop it when you fail that hack and slash roll.

## General Equipment Tags

These are general tags that can apply to just about any piece of gear. You'll see them on armour, weapons or general adventuring tools. By no means is this an exhaustive list—feel free to create your own.

- **Applied:** It's only useful when carefully applied to a person or to something they eat or drink.
- **Awkward:** It's unwieldy and tough to use.
- **+Bonus:** It modifies your effectiveness in a specified situation. It might be "+1 forward to spout lore" or "-1 ongoing to hack and slash."
- **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.
- **Dangerous:** If you interact with it without proper precautions the GM may freely invoke the consequences of your foolish actions.
- **Ration:** It's edible, more or less.
- **Requires:** It's only useful to certain people. If you don't meet the requirements it works poorly, if at all.
- **Slow:** It takes minutes or more to use.
- **Touch:** It's used by touching it to the target's skin.
- **Two-handed:** It takes two hands to use it effectively.
- **n Uses:** It can only be used a certain number (n) of 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.

# Armour

Armour is heavy, difficult to wear and is damned uncomfortable. Some classes are better trained to ignore these drawbacks, but anyone can strap on a suit of armour and enjoy the benefits it grants.

## Armour Tags

The tags below have some mechanical effect on the player wearing armour:

- **n Armour:** It protects you from harm and absorbs damage. When you take damage, subtract your armour from the total. If you have more than one item with n Armour, only the highest value counts.
- **+n Armour:** Add its value to your total armour (it stacks with others).
- **Clumsy:** It's tough to move around with. -1 ongoing while using it. This penalty is cumulative.

## Armour List

**Leather, Chainmail**

*1 armour, worn, 10 coins, 1 weight*

**Scale Mail**

*2 armour, worn, clumsy, 50 coins, 3 weight*

**Plate**

*3 armour, worn, clumsy, 350 coins, 4 weight*

**Shield**

*+1 armour, 15 coins, 2 weight*

# Dungeon Gear

**Adventuring Gear**

*5 uses, 20 coins, 1 weight*

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.

**Antitoxin**

*10 coins, 0 weight*

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

**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.

**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.

**Dungeon Rations**

*Ration, 5 uses, 3 coins, 1 weight*

Not tasty, but not bad either.



**Dwarven Hardtack***Requires Dwarf, ration, 7 uses, 3 coins, 1 weight*

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

**Elven Bread***Ration, 7 uses, 10 coins, 1 weight*

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

**Halfling Pipeleaf***6 uses, 5 coins, 0 weight*

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

**Healing Potion***50 coins, 0 weight*

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.

**Personal Feast***Ration, 1 use, 10 coins, 1 weight*

Ostentatious to say the least.

**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.

## Poisons

**Bloodweed***Dangerous, touch, 12 coins, 0 weight*

Until cured, whenever the afflicted rolls damage, they roll an additional d4 and subtract that result from their normal damage.

**Goldenroot***Dangerous, applied, 20 coins, 0 weight*

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

**Oil of Tagit***Dangerous, applied, 15 coins, 0 weight*

The target falls into a light sleep.

**Serpent's Tears***Dangerous, touch, 10 coins, 0 weight*

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

# Weapons

Weapons don't kill monsters, people do. That's why weapons in *Dungeon World* don't have a listed damage. 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 it's small and easy to strike with at close distance. A dagger in the hands of the wizard is not nearly so dangerous as one in the hands of a skilled fighter.

## Weapon Tags

Weapons may have tags that are primarily there to help you describe them (like *Rusty* or *Glowing*) but these tags have a specific, mechanical effect.

- **n Ammo:** It counts as ammunition for appropriate ranged weapons. The number indicated does not represent individual arrows or sling stones, but represents what you have left on hand.
- **+n Damage:** It is particularly harmful to your enemies. When you deal damage, you add *n* to it.
- **Forceful:** It can knock someone back a pace, maybe even off their feet.
- **Ignores Armour:** Don't subtract armour from the damage taken.
- **Messy:** It does damage in a particularly destructive way, ripping people and things apart.
- **n Piercing:** It goes right through armour. When you deal damage with *n* piercing, you subtract *n* from the enemy's armour for that attack.
- **Precise:** It rewards careful strikes. You use *DEX* to hack and slash with this weapon, not *STR*.
- **Reload:** After you attack with it, it takes more than a moment to reset for another attack.
- **Stun:** When you attack with it, it does stun damage instead of normal damage.
- **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 gone until you can recover it.

## Range Tags

Weapons have tags to indicate the range at which they are useful. Dungeon World doesn't inflict penalties or grant bonuses for "optimal range" or the like, but if your weapon says Hand and an enemy is ten yards away, you'll have a hard time justifying using that weapon against him.

- **Hand:** It's useful for attacking something that you can get your hands on, but 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.

## Weapon List

The stats below are for typical items. There are, of course, variations. A specific weapon could have different tags to represent its features—a light warhammer might be -1 damage instead, while a club with nails sticking out of it could be +1 damage.

<b>Boomerang</b>	<i>thrown, 10 coins, 1 weight</i>
<b>Club (large) or Shillelagh</b>	<i>close, 1 coin, 2 weight</i>
<b>Club (small) or Metal Pipe</b>	<i>hand, 1 coin, 1 weight</i>
<b>Crossbow</b>	<i>near, +1 damage, reload, 35 coins, 3 weight</i>
<b>Crossbow Bolts</b>	<i>3 ammo, 1 coin, 1 weight</i>
<b>Flail</b>	<i>close, +1 damage, 15 coins, 2 weight</i>
<b>Gavel</b>	<i>hand, 2 coins, 1 weight</i>
<b>Halberd</b>	<i>reach, +1 damage, two-handed, 9 coins, 2 weight</i>
<b>Mace</b>	<i>close, 8 coins, 1 weight</i>
<b>Mallet</b>	<i>hand, 1 coin, 1 weight</i>
<b>Musket</b>	<i>near, reload, 50 coins, 3 weight</i>
<b>Powder and Shot</b>	<i>4 ammo, 2 coins, 1 weight</i>
<b>Rifle</b>	<i>near, far, 100 coins, 3 weight</i>
<b>Staff</b>	<i>close, two-handed, 1 coin, 1 weight</i>
<b>Warhammer</b>	<i>close, 8 coins, 1 weight</i>

Add your own weapons:

# Other Expenses

## Bribes

A peasant dowry	20-Charisma coins
A government bribe	50-Charisma coins
A compelling bribe	80-Charisma coins
“Protection” for a small business	100-Charisma coins
An offer you can’t refuse	500-Charisma coins

## Gifts and Finery

A peasant gift	1 coin
A fine gift	55 coins
A ring or cameo	75 coins
Fine clothes	100+ coins
A noble gift	200 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

## Meals

A hearty meal for one	1 coin
A poor meal for a family	1 coin
A feast	15 coins per person

## Real Estate

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

## 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 labour	10 coins
A month's pay for enlistment in an army	30 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 surgeon	5 coins
A month's prayers for the departed	1 coin
A custom item from a blacksmith	Base Item + 50 coins
Repairs to a mundane item	25% of the item's cost

## Transport

Cart and Donkey, sworn to carry your burdens	50 coins, load 20
Horse	75 coins, load 10
Wagon	150 coins, load 40
Warhorse	400 coins, load 12
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 coin
Passage on a tough route	10 coins
Passage on a dangerous route	100 coins

# EXPLORATION

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 to-scale and detailed or broad and abstract, depending on your preference, just make it obvious. Keep the mark small and somewhere around the centre 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 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, for example) 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.

## Roughing It

If the PCs are exploring dangerous or unfamiliar territory, use the make camp and take watch special moves:

### Make Camp

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**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.

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You usually make camp so that you can do other things, like prepare spells or commune with your god. 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.

Staying a night in an inn or house is making camp, too. 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.

## Take Watch

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**When 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, everyone in the camp takes +1 forward. **On a 7-9**, you react just a moment too late; your companions in camp are awake but haven't had time to prepare. They have weapons and armour but little else. **On a miss**, whatever lurks outside the campfire's light has the drop on you.

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## From Here to There and Back Again

If the PCs are travelling from one known point to another, and are passing through a dangerous area to get there, use the perilous journey special move:

### Undertake a Perilous Journey

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**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*.

Each character with a job to do rolls+WIS. **On a 10+**:

- Quartermaster reduces the number of rations required by one.
- Scout will spot any trouble quick enough to let you get the drop on it.
- Trailblazer reduces the amount of time it takes to reach your destination (the GM will say by how much).

**On a 7-9**, each role 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.

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You can't assign more than one job to a character. If you don't have enough party members, or choose not to assign a job, treat that job as if it had been assigned and the responsible player had rolled a miss.

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.

# Elements of a Steading

We call all the assorted communities, holds, and so on where there's a place to stay and some modicum of civilization steadings, as in "homestead." Steadings are places with at least a handful of inhabitants, usually humans, and some stable structure—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 described by their tags. All steadings have tags indicating prosperity, population, and defences. Many will have tags to illustrate their more unusual properties.

Steadings are differentiated based on size. The size indicates roughly how many people the stading 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 defence 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 its people trade among themselves. Coin is scarce.

Towns have a hundred or so 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 stading built specifically for defence—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 armour and sometimes a rare magical item found in the local wilds.

From bustling trade centre to sprawling metropolis, the city represents the largest sort of stading 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 raw materials for trade, relying on supplies from villages nearby for food and resources, but will always have crafted goods and some stranger things for sale to those willing to seek them.



Prosperity indicates what kinds of items are usually available. Population indicates the number of inhabitants relative to the current size of the steading. Defences 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 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 over 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 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 rumours 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 steadings. 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

## DEFENCES

- **None:** Clubs, torches, farming tools.
- **Militia:** There are 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 steading.
- **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 steading has manned maintained defences as well.
- **Legion:** The steading is defended by thousands of armed soldiers (or equivalent). The steading's defences are intimidating.

## 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 steading. Some slow growth.
- **Growing:** More people than there are buildings.
- **Booming:** Resources are stretched thin trying to keep up with the number of people.

## PROSPERITY

- **Dirt:** Nothing for sale, nobody has more than they need (and they're lucky if they have that). Unskilled labour is cheap.
- **Poor:** Only the bare necessities for sale. Weapons are scarce unless the steading is heavily defended or militant. Unskilled labour is readily available.
- **Moderate:** Most mundane items are available. Some types of skilled labourers.
- **Wealthy:** Any mundane item can be found for sale. Most kinds of skilled labourers are available, but demand is high for their time.
- **Rich:** Mundane items and more, if you know where to find them. Specialist labour available, but at high prices.

## OTHER TAGS

- **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.
- **Blight:** The steading has a recurring problem, usually a type of monster.
- **Craft:** The steading is known for excellence in the listed craft. Items of their chosen craft are more readily available here or of higher quality than found elsewhere.
- **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.
- **Dwarven:** The steading is significantly or entirely dwarves. Dwarven goods are more common and less expensive than they typically are.
- **Elven:** The steading is significantly or entirely elves. Elven goods are more common and less expensive than they typically are.
- **Enmity:** The steading holds a grudge against the listed steadings.
- **Exotic:** There are goods and services available here that aren't available anywhere else nearby. List them.
- **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.
- **History:** Something important once happened here, choose one and detail or make up your own: battle, miracle, myth, romance, tragedy.
- **Lawless:** Crime is rampant; authority is weak.
- **Market:** Everyone comes here to trade. On any given day the available items may be far beyond their prosperity. +1 to supply.
- **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.
- **Personage:** There's a notable person who makes their home here. Give them a name and a short note on why they're notable.
- **Power:** The steading holds sway of some type. Typically political, divine, or arcane.
- **Religion:** The listed deity is revered here.
- **Resource:** The steading has easy access to the listed resource (e.g., a spice, a type of ore, fish, grapes). It is significantly cheaper there.
- **Safe:** Outside trouble doesn't come here until the players bring it. Idyllic and often hidden, if the steading would lose or degrade another beneficial tag get rid of safe instead.
- **Trade:** The steading regularly trades with the listed steadings.

# Making a City

By default a city has moderate prosperity, a steady population, a guard for defence, a market, and a 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 stading and fealty from at least one stading choose an advantage.

## ADVANTAGES:

- **The city has permanent defences, like walls:** +Defences, Oath.
- **The city is a centre of learning:** Arcane, Craft, Power (Arcane).
- **The city is a trade hub:** Trade (every stading nearby), +Prosperity.
- **The city is ancient, built on top of its own ruins:** History, Divine.
- **The city is diverse:** Dwarven or Elven or both.
- **The city is ruled by a single individual:** Personage (the ruler), Power (Political).

## CHOOSE ONE PROBLEM:

- **The city has designs on nearby territory:** +Defences, Enmity (nearby steadings).
- **The city has outgrown its resources:** Need (food), +Population.
- **The city has supernatural defences:** Blight (related supernatural creatures), +Defences.
- **The city is ruled by a theocracy:** -Defences, Power (Divine).
- **The city is ruled by the people:** -Defences, +Population.
- **The city lies on a place of power:** Arcane, Blight (arcane creatures), Personage (whoever watches the place of power).

# Making a Keep

By default a keep has poor prosperity, a shrinking population, a guard for defence, need (supplies), trade (someplace with supplies), and an oath (your choice). If the keep is owed fealty by at least one settlement choose one advantage.

## ADVANTAGES:

- **The keep belongs to a noble family:** Power (Political), +Prosperity.
- **The keep is run by a skilled commander:** +Defences, Personage (the commander).
- **The keep is surrounded by fertile land:** Remove Need (Supplies).
- **The keep is used to train special troops:** Arcane, -Population.
- **The keep stands on a border:** +Defences, Enmity (steading on the other side of the border).
- **The keep stands watch over a trade road:** Guild (trade), +Prosperity.

## CHOOSE ONE PROBLEM:

- **The keep is a safe haven for brigands:** Lawless.
- **The keep is built on a naturally defensible position:** -Population, Safe.
- **The keep is given the worst of the worst:** Need (Skilled Recruits).
- **The keep has seen horrible bloody war:** Blight (Restless Spirits), History (Battle).
- **The keep was a conquest from another power:** Enmity (steadings of that power).
- **The keep was built to defend from a specific threat:** Blight (that threat).

# Making a Town

By default a town has moderate prosperity, a steady population, a watch for defence, and trade (two of your choice). If the town is listed as a trade partner by another steading choose one advantage.

## ADVANTAGES:

- **The town is booming:** Booming, Lawless.
- **The town stands on a crossroads:** Market, +Prosperity.
- **The town is defended by another steading:** +Defences, Oath (that steading).
- **The town is built around a church:** Power (Divine).
- **The town is built around a craft:** Craft, Resource (something required for that craft).
- **The town is built around a military post:** +Defences.

## 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 defence to others:** -Defences, Oath.
- **The town is notorious for an outlaw who is rumoured 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:** Lawless, +Population.

# Making a Village

By default a village has poor prosperity, a steady population, a militia for defence, resource (your choice), and an oath to another steading of your choice. If the village is part of a kingdom or empire choose one advantage.

## ADVANTAGES:

- **The village has abundant resources that sustain it:** Enmity, +Prosperity, Resource.
- **The village is built around a wizard's tower:** Personage (the wizard), Blight (arcane creatures).
- **The village is on a major road:** +Prosperity, Trade.
- **The village is somewhere naturally defended:** -Defences, Safe.
- **The village is under the protection of another steading:** Oath (that steading), +Defences.
- **The village was built on the site of religious significance:** Divine, History (your choice).

## CHOOSE ONE PROBLEM:

- **The village has a monster problem:** Blight (that monster), Need (adventurers).
- **The village has absorbed another village:** Lawless, +Population.
- **The village has recently fought a battle:** -Population, -Prosperity if they fought to the end, -Defences if they lost.
- **The village is dedicated to a deity:** Religious (that deity), Enmity (a settlement dedicated to another deity).
- **The village is in arid or uncultivable land:** Need (Food).
- **The village is remote or unwelcoming:** -Prosperity, possibly Dwarven or Elven.

# Updating the Campaign Map

Update the campaign map between sessions or whenever the players spend significant downtime in a safe place. Updates are both prescriptive and descriptive: if an event 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 armoured 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.

## AID

When a stading has oaths to a stading under attack that stading may take -defences to give the stading under attack +defences.

## 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.

## CLASH

When two steadings both attack each other their forces meet somewhere between them and fight. If they're evenly matched they both get -defences and their troops return home. If one has the advantage they take -defences while the other takes -defences twice.

## COLLAPSE

When a stading's population is in 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 +defences and a steady population. A town becomes a village with a steady population and +prosperity. A village becomes a ghost town.

## EMBATTLED

When a stading is surrounded by enemy forces it suffers losses. If it fights back with force it gets -defences. If its new defences 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 its defences outclass the attacker's (your call if it's not clear, or make it part of an adventure front) the stading is no longer surrounded.



**GROWTH**

When a village or town is booming and its prosperity is above moderate you may reduce prosperity and defences to move to the next largest type. New towns immediately gain a market and new cities immediately gain a guild (your choice).

**OPPORTUNITY**

When a steading feels enmity towards a weaker steading, they may attack. First compare both defences and size, to establish the aggressor's overall advantage (if any). Then reduce this advantage by the distance (in rations) between the two steadings. If the belligerent steading still retains the advantage, they definitely attack. Otherwise, it's your call: has anything happened recently to stoke their anger? While the aggressor maintains their attack, they have -defences.

**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 +defences, oath, or +population; the steading with the need erases that need and adds trade.

**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.

**WANT**

When a steading has a need that is not fulfilled (through trade, capture, or otherwise) that steading is in want. It gets either -population, -prosperity, or loses a tag based on that resource, like craft or trade, your choice.

**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.

# INTERACTION

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 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, the company of fellow men and elves and dwarves and halflings. Often thoughts of returning to these places are all that keep an adventurer from giving up altogether. All fight for gold and glory but who doesn't ache for a place to spend that gold and laugh around a fire, listening to tales of folly and adventure?

## While You're In Town...

When the PCs 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:

- Carouse.
- Outstanding Warrants.
- Recruit.
- Supply.

They cover 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' actions (or inaction) advances your fronts. The impending doom is always there, whether the players are fighting it in the dungeon or ignoring it while getting drunk in the local tavern.

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, they're giving you a golden opportunity to make a hard move. Fill the characters' lives with adventure whether they're out seeking it or not. These moves exist so you can make a visit to town an interesting event without spending a whole session haggling over the cost of a new baldric:

## Carouse

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**When you return triumphant and throw a big party**, spend 100 coins and roll +1 for every extra 100 coins 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 (the GM will say how).

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

You can only carouse when you return triumphant. That's what draws the crowd of revellers to surround adventurers as they celebrate their latest haul. If you don't proclaim your success or your failure, then who would want to party with you anyway?

## Outstanding Warrants

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**When you return to a civilized place 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**, as above, 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.
- 

This move is only for places where you've caused trouble, not every patch 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 in a place as part of the community, it counts as civilization.

## Recruit

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**When you put out word that you're looking to hire help**, roll:

- +1 if you have a useful reputation around these parts.
- +1 if you make it known that they'll get a share of whatever you find.
- +1 if you make it known that your pay is generous.
- +1 if you make it known what you're setting out to do.

**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 to what you want 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.

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If the PCs successfully hire some recruits, you can use the hirelings rules that follow.

## Supply

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**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 not 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 that's not exactly what you wanted, but close. The GM will tell you what your options are.

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# People

Dwarven smiths, elven sages, humans of all shapes and sizes occupy the world around the characters. They're not mindless stooges to be pushed around but they're not what we're playing to find out about either. The NPCs are people: they have goals and the tools to struggle towards those goals. Use them to illustrate what the world is like. Show your players the common people struggling for recognition or the noble classes seeking to uplift their people. Some whole adventures might take place in a peopled environment rather than an isolated dungeon. Some classes, the bard in particular, are adept at manipulating and using people as resources. Don't shy away from these situations. Be a fan of these characters, giving them interesting, nuanced people to interact with.

People, just like dungeons, change over time. The passing of the characters through their lives might inspire or enrage them. The characters' actions will cause the world to change, for good or ill, and the people they meet with will remember these changes. When the characters roll back through a town they were less-than-kind to on their previous visit, show them how the people are different now. Are they more cautious? Have they taken up a new religion? Are they hungry for revenge?

Relationships between characters are represented by the bonds but relationships with NPCs are more tenuous. If the players want to make real, lasting connections with the people of the world, they need to act. Remember, "what do you do?" is as valid a question when faced with the hopes and fears of a potential new ally or enemy as it is when staring down the business end of a longsword.

# 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 as adventurers.

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. As such their exact HP, armour, and damage aren'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.

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.

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

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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 find 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.**

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# Making a Hireling

Hirelings are easy to make on the fly. When someone enters the players' 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

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.

- Debauchery.
- Fame and Glory.
- Good Accomplished.
- Money.
- The Thrill of Victory.
- Uncovered Knowledge.

# Skills

When you make a hireling, distribute points among one or more of these skills:

## ADEPT

An adept has at least apprenticed to an arcane expert, but is not powerful in their own right. They're the grad students of the arcane world.

- **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 important feature of casting with an adept is that any negative effects of the casting are focused on the adept first.

## BURGLAR

Burglars 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 a burglar leads the way they can detect traps almost in time. If a trap would be sprung while a burglar is leading the way the burglar suffers the full effects but the players get +skill against the trap and add the burglar's skill to their armour against the trap. Most traps leave a burglar in need of immediate healing. If the players Make Camp near the trap, the burglar 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

Priests 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.

- **First Aid:** When a priest staunches your wounds heal  $2 \times \text{skill}$  HP. You take -1 forward as their healing is painful and distracting.
- **Ministry:** When you make camp with a priest if you would normally heal you heal +skill HP.

## PROTECTOR

A protector stands between their employer and the blades, fangs, teeth, and spells that would harm them.

- **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.
- **Sentry:** When a protector stands between you and an attack you increase your armour against that attack by the defender's skill, then reduce their skill by 1 until they receive healing or have time to mend.

## TRACKER

Trackers know the secrets of following a trail, but they don't have the experience with strange creatures and exotic locales that make for a great hunter.

- **Guide:** When a tracker leads the way you automatically succeed on any Perilous Journey of a distance (in rations) lower than the tracker's skill.
- **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.

## WARRIOR

Warriors are not masters of combat, but they are handy with a weapon.

- **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.

# VIOLENCE

Sooner or later blades are drawn and blood is shed. When this happens the players are likely to start hacking and slashing, volleying, and defending. Think about more than just the exchange of damage. Monsters might be trying to capture the characters or protect something from them. Understand what the fight is about; what each side wants and how that might affect the tide of battle.

No self-respecting monster just stands still for their beating. Combat is a dynamic thing with creatures moving in and out of range, taking cover, and retreating. Sometimes the battlefield itself shifts. Have your monsters take action that the players will react to. Make sure you're making use of moves beyond deal damage, even in a fight.

Make sure everyone has a chance to act, and that you know where each player is during the chaos of combat. Make a map of a complex battle location so that everyone knows just what's happening and can describe their actions appropriately.

## Harm and Healing

Cuts, bruises, and mortal wounds 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 hit points (HP). Damage subtracts from HP. In the right conditions, or with medical or magical help, damage is healed and HP is restored.

## Hit Points

A character's HP is a measure of their stamina, endurance, and health. More HP means the character can fight longer and endure more trauma before facing Death's cold stare.

Your class tells your maximum HP. Your Constitution (the ability, not the modifier) 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. Armour mitigates damage; if a character has armour they subtract its value from the damage dealt. This might mean a blow is turned away completely—that's fine, it's what armour is for! Damage can never take a character below 0 HP.

Damage is dealt based on the fiction. Moves that deal damage, like hack and slash, are just a special case of this: the move establishes that damage is being dealt in the fiction. Damage can be assigned even when no move is made, if it follows from the fiction.

HP loss is often only part of the effect. If the harm is generalized, like falling into a pit, losing the HP is probably all there is to it. 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 busted arm: how do you swing a sword or cast a spell? Likewise having your head chopped off is not HP damage, it's just you being dead.

## HOW MUCH DAMAGE?

Damage is determined by the attacker. Player characters deal damage according to their class, the weapon used, and the move they've made.

If a move just says “deal damage” the character rolls their class's damage dice plus any bonuses or penalties from moves, weapons, or effects. If a move specifies an amount of damage, use that in place of the class's damage roll.

Monsters roll damage as 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 armour tag if the source of the damage is particularly large or if the damage comes from magic or poison.

### ADDING AND SUBTRACTING DAMAGE

When a move tells you to add damage, you add that damage to the roll on the dice. If it tells you to add some dice (like “+1d4 damage”) you roll that extra dice and add its result to the total.

The same goes for subtracting damage: you subtract the number from the total rolled. If you subtract a dice (like “-1d6 damage”) you subtract the rolled amount from the original total. Damage never goes negative—o damage is the minimum.

### BEST AND WORST

Some monsters and moves have you roll damage multiple times and take the best or worst result. In this case roll as normal but only apply the best (or worst) result.

If a monster rolls its d6 damage twice and takes the best result it's written b[2d6]. The b[] means “best.” Likewise, w[] means worst, so w[3d10] means “roll a d10 for damage three times and use the worst result.”

### COVER

Temporary or circumstantial armour works the same way as armour that you wear: 1 armour for partial cover, 2 armour for major cover.

### 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 highest damage among them and add +1 damage for each monster beyond the first. For example, if a goblin orkaster with an acid orb (d10+1 damage, ignores armour) and three goblins with spears (d6 damage) all throw their weapons at Lux, roll the highest damage—d10+1, ignores armour—and add +3 damage for the three other goblins.

### 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.” This lasts as long as makes sense in the fiction—you're stunned until you can get a chance to clear your head or fix whatever stunned you. A GM character that takes stun damage doesn't count it against their HP but will act accordingly, staggering around for a few seconds, fumbling blindly, etc.

# Debilities

Losing HP is a general thing, it's getting tired, bruised, cut, and so on. Some wounds are deeper though. These are debilities:

- **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.
- **Shaky (DEX):** You're unsteady on your feet and you've got a shake in your hands.
- **Sick (CON):** Something just isn't right inside. Maybe you've got a disease or a wasting illness. Maybe you just drank too much ale last night and it's coming back to haunt you.
- **Stunned (INT):** That last knock to the head shook something loose. Brain not work so good.
- **Weak (STR):** You can't exert much force. Maybe it's just fatigue and injury, or maybe your strength was drained by magic.

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 an ability and gives you -1 to that ability's modifier. The ability's score is unaffected so you don't have to worry about changing your maximum HP when you're sick.

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 doesn't mean they're Weak, it means they have one less arm. 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.

# Death

Death stalks the edges of every battle. A character who is reduced to zero HP immediately takes their Last Breath. Death comes for commoner and king alike—no stat is added to the Last Breath roll.

No one knows what lies beyond the Black Gates of Death, but it is said that many secrets of the mortal plane are laid bare in the land of Death's dominion. When you die, you might just see them.

Death offers bargains to some, from the simple to the costly. Death is capricious and may ask a favour in the future or exact a toll. She may demand a sacrifice or ask for something strange and seemingly innocent. Death's whim cannot be predicted.

Depending on the outcome of the Last Breath the character may become stable. A stable character stays at zero 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 draw their Last Breath once more and return to face Death.

## Last Breath

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**When you're dying**, you catch a glimpse of what lies beyond the Black Gates of Death's Kingdom (the GM will describe it). Then roll+nothing (Death doesn't care how tough or cool you are). **On a 10+**, you've cheated Death—you're in a bad spot but you're still alive. **On a 7-9**, Death herself 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**, your fate is sealed—you're marked as Death's own and you'll cross the threshold soon. The GM will tell you when.

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The Last Breath is that moment standing between life and death. Time stands still as Death appears to claim the living for her own. Even those who do not pass beyond the Black Gates catch a glimpse of the other side and what might await them—friends and enemies past, rewards or punishment for acts in life or other, stranger vistas. All are changed in some way by this moment—even those who escape.

There are three outcomes to this move. **On a 10+**, the PC has cheated Death in some meaningful way, and escaped with something that, by rights, isn't theirs anymore. Death is powerless to stop this, but she remembers this slight.

**On a 7-9**, the GM should offer a real choice with significant consequence. Think about the behaviours of the character and the things you've learned about them in play. Death knows and sees all and tailors

her bargains accordingly. This is a trade, remember. Offer something that will be a challenge to play out but will lead the game in fun new direction.

**On a miss,** death is inevitable. The most obvious approach is to say “Death takes you across the threshold, into the shadowlands,” and move on. However, sometimes Death comes slowly. You might say “you have a week to live” or “you can feel the cold hand of Death upon you...” and leave it at that, for now. The player may want to give in and accept death at this point—that’s okay. Let them create a new character as normal. The key thing to remember is that a brush with death, succeed or fail, is a significant moment that should always lead to change.

## 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. 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 fulfill the GM’s conditions, the character is returned to life. 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.

No matter the prospects of resurrection for now, you make 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. If your original character returns to life you can play either character, switching between them as you please (so long as it makes sense).

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 what you know of the world. 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 charitable act and how it might affect the world. Remember: Death never forgets a soul stolen from his realm.

# Healing

There are two sources of healing in Dungeon World: medical aid and the passage of time.

Medical aid, both magical and mundane, heals damage according to the move or item used. Some moves may fully replenish HP while others heal just enough to keep someone standing through a fight.

Whenever a character spends some time resting without doing anything to aggravate their wounds they heal. The amount of healing is described in the applicable moves: Make Camp for a night in a dangerous area, Recover for stays in civilization.

## Make Camp

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**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.

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You usually make camp so that you can do other things, like prepare spells or commune with your god. 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.

Staying a night in an inn or house is making camp, too. 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.

## Recover

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**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.

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No matter the source of the healing a character's HP can never increase above their maximum.



# Using Monsters

A monster is any living (or undead) thing that stands in the characters' 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 **portray a fantastic world**. The way you describe the monsters and adversaries the characters face can be a tool to help you fulfill that agenda. Describing those creatures and people in vivid detail will bring them to life. You'll eventually need some stats for those monsters, too—the rules in this chapter are here to help you create those stats quickly and easily.

The player characters are the heroes. Monsters exist to illustrate what a dangerous awful place Dungeon World can be—how it will remain if the heroes don't step in. You shouldn't be rooting for the monsters to win, but they may challenge, and even sometimes defeat, the heroes. If you feel like your monsters are being beaten too quickly, don't worry. Let the players revel in their victory, there's always more monsters.

The principle of **think dangerous** sums up that philosophy—think of every monster like an arrow fired at the characters. The monsters are ammunition of the danger you're presenting. 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 mere ammunition when something in the world puts the spotlight on it. This might be a spout lore roll that leads your description in an interesting direction or the result of your asking questions and building on the players' answers. Maybe the characters were overwhelmed in battle and had to run away, giving them a new-found fear and respect for the beast they fought. When these things happen, feel free to give the monster a name and consider creating a danger to represent it.

One thing that your agenda and principles don't say anything about is setting 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 (portray a fantastic world) 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 adventure and death-defying feats!

# Elements of a Monster

Every monster has moves that describe its behaviour and abilities. 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. As with other 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 easy to counter is soft.

Each monster has an **instinct** that describe its 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 it in the fiction.

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 die to roll, maybe with some modifiers. A monster deals its damage to another monster or a player whenever it causes them physical harm.

Each monster has **tags** that describe how it deals damage, including the range(s) of its attacks. 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 special tags that apply only to monsters. These tags, listed below, describe the key attributes of the monster—qualities that describe how big they are and how, if at all, they organize themselves.

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 **armour**. It's just like player armour: when a monster with armour takes damage it subtracts its armour 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. 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, armour, and damage just do not hold. Some creatures just aren't dangerous in a fight. These creatures may still cause problems for the players and may even be defeated with clever thinking and enough preparation.

If a creature is of such a scale far beyond the players, or if it just doesn't put up a physical fight, don't assign it HP, damage, or armour. You can still use the monster creation rules to give it tags. The core of a stat-less monster is its instinct and moves; you can have it make its moves and act according to its instinct even without numeric stats.

## Monster Tags

- **Amorphous:** Its anatomy and organs are bizarre and unnatural.
- **Cautious:** It prizes survival over aggression.
- **Construct:** It was made, not born.
- **Devious:** Its main danger lies beyond the simple clash of battle.
- **Hoarder:** It almost certainly has treasure.
- **Intelligent:** It's 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.
- **Magical:** It is by nature magical through and through.
- **Organized:** It has a group structure that aids it in survival. Defeating one may cause the wrath of others. One may sound an alarm.
- **Planar:** It's from beyond this world.
- **Stealthy:** It can avoid detection and prefers to attack with the element of surprise.
- **Terrifying:** Its presence and appearance evoke fear.

## 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. Whether you're making the monster before play or just as the players come face-to-face with it, every 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 1 or 2 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 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 DEFENCE?**

- **Cloth or flesh:** 0 armour.
- **Leathers or thick hide:** 1 armour.
- **Mail or scales:** 2 armour.
- **Plate or bone:** 3 armour.
- **Permanent magical protection:** 4 armour, magical.

**WHAT IS IT KNOWN FOR?**

Choose all that apply:

- **A useful adaptation like being amphibious or having wings:** add a special quality for the adaptation.
- **Deceit and trickery:** stealthy, write a move about dirty tricks.
- **Deft strikes:** +1 piercing.
- **Skill in defence:** +1 armour.
- **Skill in offence:** roll damage twice and take the better roll.
- **Spells and magic:** magical, write a move about its spells.
- **The favour of the gods:** divine, +2 damage or +2 HP or both (your call).
- **Uncanny endurance:** +4 HP.
- **Unrelenting strength:** +2 damage, forceful.

**WHAT IS ITS MOST COMMON FORM OF ATTACK?**

Note it along with the creature's damage, then choose all that apply:

- **Armour doesn't help with the damage it deals (due to magic, size, etc.):** ignores Armour.
- **It lets the monster keep others at bay:** reach.
- **It usually attacks at range (with arrows, spells, or other projectiles):** near or far or both (your call).
- **Its armaments are small and weak:** reduce its damage die size by one.
- **Its armaments are vicious and obvious:** +2 damage.
- **Its armaments can slice or pierce metal:** messy, +1 piercing or +3 piercing if it can just tear metal apart.

**WHICH OF THESE DESCRIBE IT?**

Choose all that apply:

- **It abhors violence:** roll damage twice and take the worst result.
- **It actively defends itself with a shield or similar:** cautious, +1 armour.
- **It collects trinkets that humans would consider valuable (gold, gems, secrets):** hoarder.
- **It doesn't have organs or discernible anatomy:** amorphous, +1 armour, +3 HP.
- **It isn't dangerous because of the wounds it inflicts, but for other reasons:** devious, reduce its damage die size by one, write a move about why it's dangerous.
- **It (or its species) is ancient—older than man, elves, and dwarves:** increase its damage die size by one.
- **It organizes into larger groups that it can call on for support:** organized, write a move about calling on others for help.
- **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'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's as smart as a human or thereabouts:** intelligent.

## 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:

- **Ancient and noteworthy:** +1d4 to the roll.
- **Divine:** a sign of a deity (or deities).
- **Far from home:** add at least one ration (usable by anyone with similar taste).
- **Hoarder:** roll damage die twice, take higher result.
- **Lord over others:** +1d4 to the roll.
- **Magical:** some strange item, possibly magical.
- **Planar:** something not of this earth.

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 2d10×10 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.

# END OF SESSION

Dungeon World is ever-changing. The characters change, too. As their adventures progress, player characters gain experience (XP), which lets them level up. This prepares them for greater danger, bigger adventures, and mightier deeds.

## End of Session

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**When you reach the end of a session**, choose one of 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 loot a memorable treasure?
- Did we overcome a notable monster or enemy?

For each “yes” answer everyone marks XP.

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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 in the fiction. Descriptive means that when the character changes in the fiction the player should change the character sheet to match.

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. Descriptive changes only happen when the character has clearly gained access to an ability. It's not up to any one player to decide this—if you think a character qualifies for a new ability, discuss it as a group.



# Level Up

As you play *Dungeon World*, you'll be doing three things most of all: exploring, fighting dangerous foes, and gathering treasure. For each of these things you'll be rewarded XP at the end of the session. Acting according to your alignment and fulfilling the conditions of your alignment moves will grant you XP at the end of each session as well. If you resolve a bond and create a new one, you'll gain XP, too. Any time you roll a 6- you get XP right away. The GM may have special conditions that you can fulfill to earn XP or might change the core ones to reflect the world. They'll let you know before you play.

When your characters have safety and a chance to rest, they'll be able to make the Level Up move to level up and gain new moves.

## Level Up

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**When you have downtime (hours or days) and XP equal to (or greater than) your current level+7**, you can reflect on your experiences and hone your skills.

- Subtract your current level+7 from your XP.
  - Increase your level by 1.
  - Choose a new advanced move from your class.
  - If you are the wizard, you also get to add a new spell to your spellbook.
  - Choose one of your stats and increase it by 1 (this may change your modifier). Changing your Constitution increases your maximum and current HP. Ability scores can't go higher than 18.
- 

## New Moves

Each time you level up, you get a new move. But some moves come with restrictions or requirements.

### MULTICLASS MOVES

The multiclass moves allow you to gain moves from another class. You get to choose any move of your level or lower. For the purpose of multiclassing, any starting class moves that depend on each other count as one move—the wizard's cast a spell, spellbook, and prepare spells for example. If a move from another class refers to your level, count your levels from the level where you first gained a move from that class.

## REQUIRES AND REPLACES

Some moves that you gain at higher levels 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 listed move.

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 armour with one that gives you 2 armour instead.

## BEYOND 10TH LEVEL

Once you've reached 10th level things change a little. When you have enough XP to go to 11th level instead you choose one of these:

- Change entirely to a new class.
- Retire to safety.
- Take on an apprentice.

Changing classes means keeping your ability scores, race, HP, and whatever moves you and the GM agree are core to who your character is. You lose all other class moves, replacing them with the starting moves of your new class. If you retire, you create a new character to play instead and work with the GM to establish your place in the world. If you take on an apprentice, you play a new character (the apprentice) alongside your current character, who stops gaining XP.

# Bonds

Bonds are what make you a party of adventurers, not just a random assortment of people. They're the feelings, thoughts, and shared history that tie you together. You will always have at least one bond, and you'll often have more.

## 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. When you resolve a bond, you get to mark XP.

A bond is resolved when it no longer describes how you relate to that person. That may be because circumstances have changed or it could be because it's no longer a question that needs to be asked. 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 you have a blank bond left over from character creation you can assign a name to it or write a new bond in its place whenever you like. You don't get an XP for doing so, but you do get more defined bonds to resolve in the future.

## 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 choose another character. Pick something relevant to the last session—maybe a place you traveled together or a treasure you discovered. 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.
- Valeria's kindness to the Gnomes of the Vale has swayed my heart, I will prove to her I am not the callous fiend she thinks I am.
- 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.

These new bonds are just like the old ones—use them, resolve them, replace them.

# Changing Alignment

Alignment can, and will, change. Usually such a change comes about as a gradual move toward a decisive moment. Any time a character's view of the world has fundamentally shifted they can choose a new alignment. The player must have a reason for the change which they can explain to the other players.

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.

## **CHAOTIC**

- Break an unjust law to benefit another.
- Defeat a tyrant.
- Destroy a symbol of civilization.
- Free someone from literal or figurative bonds.
- Leap into danger without a plan.
- Reveal corruption.
- Reveal hypocrisy.
- Spur others to significant and unplanned decisive action.

## **EVIL**

- Cause suffering for its own sake.
- Destroy something beautiful.
- Harm an innocent.
- Harm another to prove your own superiority.
- Kill a defenceless or surrendered enemy.
- Shift danger or blame from yourself to someone else.
- Take advantage of someone's trust.
- Upset the rightful order.

**GOOD**

- Defend those weaker than you.
- Endanger yourself to combat an unnatural threat.
- Give up powers or riches for the greater good.
- Help something or someone grow.
- Ignore danger to aid another.
- Lead others into righteous battle.
- Reveal a dangerous lie.
- Show mercy.

**LAWFUL**

- Bring someone to justice.
- Choose honour over personal gain.
- Deny mercy to a criminal.
- Fulfill a promise of import.
- Return treasure to its rightful owner.
- Uphold the letter of the law over the spirit.

**NEUTRAL**

- Avoid a conflict or defuse a tense situation.
- Avoid detection or infiltrate a location.
- Defeat a personally important foe.
- Discover something about an important mystery.
- Eliminate an unnatural menace.
- Learn a secret about an enemy.
- Make an ally of someone powerful.
- Uncover a hidden truth.



# USEFUL LISTS

# BARBARIAN

## Alternate Bonds

- \_\_\_\_ does not understand me, or my culture. I will explain myself to them, no matter how long it takes.
- \_\_\_\_ got me involved in a questionable adventure and I'm having second thoughts about it now.
- \_\_\_\_ has seen the lands of my home, more recently than me.
- \_\_\_\_ showed me how to get high.

## Questions to Ask

- Have you brought anyone from your home with you? Who?
- In what way is your home more beautiful than any other land you have been to?
- Of all the other people from your homeland, who would you most like to see again and why?
- What is the most dangerous creature that has stalked the lands of your home? Have you ever defeated one?
- What is the strangest thing about the lands you live in now?
- What precious thing does your homeland lack, that these lands you now roam have in abundance?
- What protects your homeland from invaders (if anything)?
- When did you discover your appetites?
- Why can't ever return to your home?

## Situations to Introduce

- A portly and venal merchant has come before you to offer you that which you have an appetite for, or a sure-fire way to get it. But this merchant has brought hidden assassins who spring upon you, in full view of the public. Precious spirits are spilled, braziers are dislodged, tapestries catch fire. Who's ire have you attracted this time?
- You stand before the enemy army, ready to fight their champion. But then you see your own side begin to retreat—they plan to leave you hear to fight alone! Why does the commander bear a grudge against you? Who can you call upon from your side to support you? What are the enemy troops fighting for?



# BARD

## Alternate Bonds

- I told \_\_\_\_ all about performing inside a rich noble's home and saw the greed in their eyes.
- \_\_\_\_ helped me make some important contacts. I owe them.
- \_\_\_\_ is my lover, or was, or would have been, or... it's complicated.
- \_\_\_\_ knows I have a secret map.
- \_\_\_\_ started a fight while I was performing, and payback's a bitch.
- \_\_\_\_ would be an excellent subject for a ballad, if only they got into more adventures. So I'll just help them out with that.

## Questions to Ask

- What are you running from?
- What's the best thing about performing for others?
- Who trained and taught you the arts you know?
- Why do you travel so much? Would you like to settle down, or no?

## Situations to Introduce

- Charlatans have been travelling from town to town, selling cursed magical items. You've just stumbled across their accounting ledgers, but their guards have just stumbled across you. Have you met them already? What did they think of you before?
- For weeks now, you've been tracking a band of thieves who have stolen a fantastic artifact that falls right inside your area of expertise. And they've just ambushed you. That must mean you're getting close! Where are you when it happens? What other business did you have here, that's not related to these thieves?
- The Crimson Enchantress has ensorcelled a mob to become violent. Who or what is she trying to provide a distraction for? Who wants you to prevent her plans from coming to fruition?
- You're in the middle of a brawl between the town's two most powerful gangs. Rumour has it they want to celebrate different festivals on the same day.

# CLERIC

## Alternate Bonds

- I have intervened with other priests on \_\_\_\_'s behalf before.
- My deity has marked out \_\_\_\_ as someone important. I must help them fulfill their destiny.
- \_\_\_\_ has been through hardships that would break me. They can stand against the darkness I see looming over the world.
- \_\_\_\_ has worked with servants of my deity before.

## Questions to Ask

- Have you ever failed your deity? What did you do to atone?
- How does your family feel about your calling? Is it a prestigious position, or something that is looked down upon?
- What did you do before dedicating your life to your deity, if anything?
- What did you do the last time a rival temple tried to move in on your territory?
- What social restrictions are placed on the faithful here? How do you feel about this—are they voluntary restrictions, or forced upon you?

## Situations to Introduce

- Another follower of your deity has been performing miracles. Whispers that she is the “Chosen One” abound, but you know some of those whisperers would like nothing more than to take advantage of her youth and inexperience. Still, you don't fully trust her. Why?
- Demonic influence manifests itself upon the material plane! What's your relationship to the person acting as conduit? What does your deity have to say about this influence?
- The city's hierophant has asked you to assist in the performance of an important ritual, involving some of the local nobles. Which of your friends and family are in attendance? What's your history with the hierophant's temple? Your deity reveals a nefarious plot, unfolding all around you. Which of your deity's precepts is being violated?
- You're pursuing the kidnappers when they enter the catacombs below the city and a horde of the undead appears to block your passage. Who have they captured and what do they mean to you? What do the rumours you've heard say about these catacombs? What else is buried underneath this city?

# DRUID

## Alternate Bonds

- Me and \_\_\_\_ are tracking the passage of a terrible monster through this land.
- \_\_\_\_ has fought in defence of my lands before and has my respect.
- \_\_\_\_ is familiar with the sickness that infects the land, which must be purged.
- \_\_\_\_ seems suitably impressed by my powers and I just can't help showing off in front of them.

## Questions to Ask

- Were you always like this, or did something change to make you one with the land?
- What kinds of people live on or next to your lands, and what problems do they bring?
- What problem has brought you to leave your lands and venture into unknown territory?
- Which animal is your favourite? Why?
- Why does the wealthiest merchant around here welcome you with open arms, every time you show up?

## Situations to Introduce

- All the animals of the land pass by you, fleeing en masse from the terror that lumbers forward. What do you suspect this mighty monster's ultimate goal is? What source of magic hereabouts could be powerful enough to draw something so dangerous? Of the people you care about, which ones are closer to it than you are, and why aren't they fleeing, like the animals are?
- The city guards have let you inside the walls, but now they're demanding the "gate tax," which you've never heard of before and also seems rather exorbitant. At the same time, they just let someone in strange black robes walk right on by them, and you smell something very, very *wrong* underneath that cloth.

# FIGHTER

## Alternate Bonds

- Me and \_\_\_\_ were both hired by a boss who turned on us.
- \_\_\_\_ proved a worthy ally in the last war, even considering that one mistake they made.
- \_\_\_\_ saw me kill someone important.
- \_\_\_\_ stood up to me and got away with it. That's how it is, I guess.

## Questions to Ask

- Do people ask to become your apprentice or squire ever? What do you say to them?
- Did you join the war willingly, or were you drafted against your will?
- What did you do the last time someone challenged you to a duel?
- What happened to all those coins you used to have?
- What kind of oaths did you swear on the day your old mentor was murdered?
- Which enemy (or enemies) do you spend the most time fighting against? What do they threaten that you want to preserve?
- Who wielded your signature weapon before you? Anyone?

## Situations to Introduce

- Assassins attack you in a crowded marketplace. Why do they want you dead? How did you defeat their leader when last you met them? Do you owe someone, or did you take something that some villain wants for their own?
- The festival was in full swing, and then the iron golem appeared, intent on kidnapping shrine maidens and delivering them to the evil warlock who hides inside a local mountain. What did the warlock hire you to do, and why did you have so many misgivings? What will happen if the shrine maidens cannot finish appeasing the local spirits? Which of them do you suspect is actually in league with the warlock?
- You stand between the caravan and the bandits. They have some kind of monster with them, intent on seizing some "special" cargo. Why didn't you kill the bandit leader when you had the chance? Did you know about the risks before you joined the caravan?

# PALADIN

## Alternate Bonds

- For what they have done, I have sworn to guide and protect \_\_\_\_.
- I have heard of \_\_\_\_'s exploits and am suitably impressed.
- \_\_\_\_ gave me food and shelter when I had nothing.
- \_\_\_\_ obviously doesn't trust me, and this needs to change.

## Questions to Ask

- Are you dedicated to a particular lord, deity, or social institution? Are you on a personal quest, for yourself? Why or why not?
- Is there something particular in your past that drives you to fight the good fight? What are you looking to atone for, personally?
- What do you think about other local authority figures? Are they using their power responsibly, or are they corrupt and venal?
- What was your first job, and why do they want you back?
- Why did your family send you away?

## Situations to Introduce

- The innkeeper's daughter stumbles back to the inn, clutching her neck, covered in blood. She collapses, dying from a vampire's bite. Everyone staying at the inn begins to fight. Why did you keep an eye on those fur traders? What is that monk hiding beneath his robes? Why does the nobleman bear a grudge against you? What will you do about the innkeeper's dying daughter? What will you do about the vampire, still on the loose?
- The séance just turned ugly. Which of your dead relatives do you see, standing in the darkness before you? What don't you want them to say to you? How did the ghost-talker convince you to attend, and what kind of bargain did the two of you agree on? Why is it so important that the baroness doesn't die during this ritual?
- You're caught in a mob of beggars and vagrants, rioting against the king's new laws. The mob is surging towards the palace. Where were you trying to get to, originally? You see a team of thieves in the midst of the mob, using strange magic to disguise their activities.

# RANGER

## Alternate Bonds

- \_\_\_\_ and I took down a great beast once, and paid for it dearly.
- \_\_\_\_ left me in a pinch when they were supposed to come through for me.
- \_\_\_\_ once talked me into guiding some halflings on the run through dangerous territory, and never thanked me properly for it.
- \_\_\_\_ was once my enemy, but we've since reconciled.

## Questions to Ask

- What did you lose that now you seek to regain, out here in the wilderness? Who took it from you (if anyone)?
- What monster lives around here and why do you try to avoid it?
- What's the most important thing about this forest, that needs to be protected, at all cost?
- When the dwarves petition to get their lands back from the king, which side of the argument do you support? What's your relationship with the dwarves like?
- Where did you first meet your animal companion?

## Situations to Introduce

- You can see the orcs, just across the river. They have the ferryman and his family captive, and they're chopping up his boat. The sheriff is itching to get at them. Did he tell you why? What kind of dealings have you had with these orcs before? If they enact their plan, you would benefit in some way—how?
- You've been poking around some ruins next to the city of Tyr for a few days now, and right in front of you there's some traders making a deal with a band of monsters. Where do you know these traders from? Do they know you're there? How far away is the city they're headed for (and is it Tyr)?

# THIEF

## Alternate Bonds

- Me and \_\_\_\_ are the only survivors of a dubious adventure.
- \_\_\_\_ helped me steal something really valuable from someone who is really dangerous.
- \_\_\_\_ knows where I stashed some loot.
- \_\_\_\_ still owes me for some stuff they were supposed to fence for me.

## Questions to Ask

- Are you part of a thieves' guild? Why or why not?
- How were you involved with the notorious criminal who just turned up this morning, dead in a ditch?
- What's the biggest score you've ever taken down?
- Who's your competition?
- Why did you return the last thing you stole?

## Situations to Introduce

- A friend of yours gives you something to stash for safekeeping—something you've been trying to get a hold of for months. What sort of danger is your friend in? What job did you already take on in an effort to raise the money to buy this thing, and how soon do you need to complete the contract?
- The room begins to fill with water and the manticores emerges from a secret doorway in the ceiling. What other traps did you find here, that haven't been triggered yet? What were you hoping to find in this dungeon? What do you regret most about bringing the blacksmith's only son down here with you?
- You find your poison dealer dead at home, apparently by suicide. But there is something suspicious—where have you seen that faint bluish tinge before? Which two books are missing from the house's library, and why would no one else but you notice their absence?
- You're stuck in the city jail. What did they catch you doing? The guards throw a shopkeeper in with you. From the way they talk, a wealthy merchant has bribed them because he doesn't want to pay the shopkeep for goods delivered to his manse. A *very* wealthy merchant...

# WIZARD

## Alternate Bonds

- \_\_\_\_ and I shared a mystical vision, after drinking the blood of the demon world together.
- \_\_\_\_ has supplied me with forbidden tomes.
- \_\_\_\_ once brought me safely through the Haunted Forest.

## Questions to Ask

- A wealthy stranger offered you a fat purse of coins to perform some kind of ritual. Who do you think they were and why did you refuse?
- How do people treat you usually, when they know you are a wizard?
- What did you miss out on by studying magic?
- What magical mystery have you been yearning to solve for years now?
- What strange vision haunts your dreams, night after night?
- Who taught you magic, and what kind of terms are you on these days?
- Why does your mentor want you to collect parts of rare monsters?

## Situations to Introduce

- An arcane tower has suddenly appeared on a nearby hilltop. The local militia broke through it's gate only hours before your arrival and have not emerged since. Now the overseer of the Stevedore's Guild is collecting "taxes" and the children of the town implore you to rescue their fathers from the evil-looking, magical tower. Why did you come to this town in the first place? Who do you know amongst the missing? How much do you owe the stevedores?
- Finally, you arrive at the magical centre of the Great Forest, a place of power if ever there was one. But the elves have arrived here, too—hot on the heels of a monster. What can this monster offer you for your aid? Why does the leader of these elves dislike you so much? Why is the Elf Queen so interested in your arcane research?
- You're in someone else's arcane laboratory. Why aren't you supposed to be here? What would be most useful to you? Were there any defences you had to overcome to get in here? Who's with you and why did you bring them?



# DWARVES

## Names

Aelfar, Annika, Azaghal, Bjorn, Bombur, Brunhilda, Dim, Drummond, Durga, Dwalin, Farin, Freya, Fundin, Gerda, Greta, Helga, Janos, Jarl, Narvi, Ozruk, Rundrig, Rurgosh, Siggrun, Surtur, Telchar, Xotoq, Zirak.

## Questions

- Do all dwarves have beards?
- Do dwarves have books, or some other kind of writing? How do they make them?
- How does one build up a good reputation for themselves amongst the dwarves?
- What dangers do dwarves face, deep down below the earth? How do they deal with them?
- What do dwarves think of halfling pipeleaf?
- What does dwarven romance look like?
- What does family mean to dwarves? What must a dwarf do to be disowned?
- What is your favourite kind of stone? What does this say about you, compared to other dwarves?
- What kind of music do dwarves like?
- What place do oaths have in dwarven society? What happens when someone is branded an oathbreaker?
- When do dwarves wear masks?
- When dwarves leave their homes to live amongst humans, what do most of them do? Is there a guild for dwarves? Do humans expect you to all perform the same kind of work for them?
- Where do dwarves get their wood from?
- Which animals do dwarves keep in their underground homes? Do they have steeds or cattle, that are praised amongst other races for their ability to live and work underground?
- Why do dwarves have such a rivalry with elves?
- Why do dwarves live underground? Are there dangers on the surface, some kind of enemy scouring the earth for dwarves to kill?
- Why haven't dwarves poured forth from their halls to conquer the kingdoms of the other races?

# ELVES

## Names

Aegor, Aranwe, Astrafel, Cadeus, Celion, Cirdan, Daelwyn, Dagoliir, Damarra, Dambrath, Demanor, Edrahil, Eldar, Elohiir, Elrosine, Enkirash, Ethanwe, Feliana, Fenfaril, Galadiir, Gwindor, Halwyr, Hasrith, Hycorax, Idril, Irime, Kithracet, Lanethe, Lillisastre, Luthien, Melliandre, Menoliir, Miriel, Mithralan, Nerdanel, Olwe, Pendrell, Phirosalle, Saeros, Sharaseth, Shevaral, Sinathel, Sistranalle, Taeros, Thelian, Thranduil, Throndir, Voronwe.

## Questions

- Are elves really as stoic as the other races think, or are there times where they express their emotions more readily?
- Are musical instruments just as prized by the elves as song is?
- Can elves really talk to plants? Why do people think they can?
- Do elves change colour with the seasons, just like the trees do?
- Do elves ever eat meat or are they strict vegetarians?
- Do elves only live in forests? Where else do they live?
- How common is magic among the elves?
- How long do elves normally live?
- How well do elves get along with dragons?
- What are elven naming conventions like? Do you have a secret name, or more than one, even?
- What do elves think of fire? Do they believe in a god of fire?
- What happened the last time the elves went to war?
- Who are the natural enemies of the elves? What creatures do they fear the most? Are these the same things the other races fear?
- Why are elves so secretive?
- Why are there so few elves?

# HALFLINGS

## Names

Adelard, Angelica, Aubrey, Baldwin, Bartleby, Becca, Blanco, Brynn, Bug, Doderic, Dunstan, Estella, Falco, Felix, Finnegan, Firiell, Fredegard, Gorbulas, Hanna, Hildigard, Ivy, Lalia, Mab, Marmadas, Mouse, Olive, Omar, Otho, Posco, Puck, Randolph, Robard, Robin, Rook, Rose, Salvia, Sancho, Serah, Sketch, Tanner, Thistle, Tobold, Trixie.

## Questions

- Are there barbarian halflings, living in the wilderness, with no hint of civilized agriculture?
- Do halflings tend to feel small and uncomfortable in the company of other races? Do you?
- Halfling lawyers—you opinion?
- How many songs does a halfling know? Do your people prefer to write their own, or do they borrow whatever songs they like?
- Is there such a thing as halfling literature? If not, why not? If so, what is it like?
- What are halflings like after they find religion?
- What contributions have halflings made to human society?
- What do halflings think of theatre?
- What does red hair on a halfling mean? Are there limericks about red-headed halflings?
- What is the most popular halfling sport? What do you think of it?
- What kind of reputation do halflings have amongst the other races?
- What's the one thing no halfling would be caught dead without, when they go travelling?
- Why are halflings such good gardeners?
- Why do halflings love to gamble so much? Is it all halflings or just some?

# MPCS

## Names

Aeron, Ajax, Alannys, Alekyne, Alester, Alhoru, Anastasia, Andanna, Arlon, Ash, Aytor, Aziz, Azra, Bartleby, Batista, Bonspiel, Brianne, Brovius, Bryce, Bugoso, Cerenna, Clarke, Columbo, Corenna, Daelwyn, Dahlia, Dalamyr, Darlessa, Dayne, Deryl, Desmera, Devan, Diana, Dierdre, Duram, Eddison, Eldon, Elia, Elizabeth, Eltherian, Eluria, Emelio, Emory, Ewing, Feralion, Finbar, Flapgar, Floria, Gabirel, Gambolor, Gamgar, Garlan, Gawen, Gloin, Gregor, Grimantha, Griswald, Halder, Hawthorn, Heramphalmos, Herran, Hob, Hua, Hywn, Igon, Ixirgonthus, Jack, Japera, Jared, Jarmen, Jocat, Kaffshyth, Kaleb, Kevan, Klipsan, Kolina, Krikorian, Larence, Lark, Lenore, Leonella, Lily, Lim, Lothar, Lucan, Lythene, Maric, Marrieth, Martyn, Matthias, Maya, Medlyn, Melmarack, Merrigold, Mildred, Milo, Mina, Morya, Nerissa, Nestor, Norris, Obelis, One Eye, Oramor, Oria, Osmund, Ossian, Ovid, Palla, Pelin, Piotr, Porfyrio, Poy, Preston, Putnam, Radka, Rafi, Ramona, Reardon, Reysen, Rhea, Rickard, Rihana, Ronnet, Rowena, Rudiger, Sabine, Saviero, Sayed, Seraphina, Shella, Shevaun, Shyra, Slime, Studebaker, Sule, Sybelle, Syl, Thena, Trystane, Tsu, Umgax, Ussil, Veranna, Viktor, Vortimer, Walton, Warthog, Wendel, Whalen, Xie, Yasen, Yev, Yodl, Zamzomarr.

## 100 Instincts

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. To accumulate power.                 | 15. To bring about unending summer.             |
| 2. To atone.                            | 16. To commit an atrocity.                      |
| 3. To avenge.                           | 17. To conquer a faraway land.                  |
| 4. To avoid notice.                     | 18. To convince someone to do their dirty work. |
| 5. To battle.                           | 19. To craft a masterwork.                      |
| 6. To be a champion.                    | 20. To cure an illness.                         |
| 7. To be careful.                       | 21. To destroy an artifact.                     |
| 8. To be forgotten.                     | 22. To devour.                                  |
| 9. To be praised.                       | 23. To die gloriously.                          |
| 10. To be remembered in song.           | 24. To discover the truth.                      |
| 11. To be smarter, faster and stronger. | 25. To discover.                                |
| 12. To become a beast.                  | 26. To do good.                                 |
| 13. To become a terror to criminals.    | 27. To do what can't be done.                   |
| 14. To become someone else.             | 28. To do what must be done.                    |

29. To earn affection.
30. To earn renown.
31. To entertain.
32. To escape.
33. To establish a dynasty.
34. To evangelize.
35. To expand their land.
36. To explore a mysterious place.
37. To extinguish an evil forever.
38. To find the one.
39. To find the six-fingered man.
40. To find true love.
41. To fly.
42. To follow an order.
43. To gain a title.
44. To gain honour.
45. To get just one more haul.
46. To get out of an obligation.
47. To go where no man has gone before.
48. To hate.
49. To heal an old wound.
50. To help a family member.
51. To help others.
52. To hide from a shameful fact.
53. To hunt the most dangerous game.
54. To improve the realm.
55. To indulge.
56. To kill a hated foe.
57. To live a quiet life.
58. To live forever.
59. To live up to expectations.
60. To locate a lost thing.
61. To lose their mind.
62. To make amends.
63. To make good on a bet.
64. To make money.
65. To make the best of it.
66. To not screw it all up.
67. To overcome a bad habit.
68. To overcome a disadvantage.
69. To party.
70. To perfect a skill.
71. To play the game.
72. To preserve the law.
73. To prove a point.
74. To prove their worth.
75. To prove worth.
76. To raise dragons.
77. To reclaim what was taken.
78. To recover a lost memory.
79. To restore the family name.
80. To retire.
81. To retreat from society.
82. To return home.
83. To reunite with a loved one.
84. To rise in rank.
85. To run away.
86. To save someone from a monstrosity.
87. To serve.
88. To settle down.
89. To show kindness.
90. To show them all.
91. To spill blood.
92. To spread suffering.
93. To spread the good word.
94. To steal something valuable.
95. To survive just one more day.
96. To teach.
97. To travel.
98. To uncover a hidden truth.
99. To uncover the past.
100. To wake the ancient sleeper.

# 100 Knacks

1. A beautiful mind.
2. A big idea.
3. A book in a strange language.
4. A catchy tune.
5. A clear voice.
6. A discerning eye.
7. A fortified position.
8. A heart.
9. A hidden entrance to the city.
10. A hidden path.
11. A key to an important door.
12. A library.
13. A long-lost sibling, regained.
14. A magic carpet.
15. A majestic beard.
16. A much-needed bag of taters.
17. A mysterious ore.
18. A one-of-a-kind item.
19. A one-way ticket to paradise.
20. A plan for the perfect crime.
21. A ring of power.
22. A safe place.
23. A secret.
24. A sense of right and wrong.
25. A silver tongue.
26. A stockpile of food.
27. A tie to a monster.
28. A trained wolf.
29. A true name.
30. A way with knots.
31. Abnormal parentage.
32. An arrow with your name on it.
33. An eye for detail.
34. An innate spell.
35. An innocent heart.
36. Baking.
37. Balance.
38. Bloodline.
39. Bluffing.
40. Brewing.
41. Certainty.
42. Comprehensive local knowledge.
43. Cooking.
44. Criminal connections.
45. Delusions of grandeur.
46. Divine blessing.
47. Endless ideas.
48. Endurance.
49. Exotic fruit.
50. Hedge wizardry.
51. Heroic self-sacrifice.
52. Hidden knowledge.
53. Immunity from the law.
54. Immunity to fire.
55. Invention.
56. Kindness.
57. Lawmaking.
58. Luck.
59. Lying.
60. Magical awareness.
61. Metalworking.
62. Mind-bending sexiness.
63. Money, money, money.
64. Muscle.
65. Mysterious benefactors.
66. Noble blood.
67. Perfect memory.
68. Persistence.
69. Piety.
70. Poison.
71. Political leverage.
72. Power overwhelming.
73. Prophecy.
74. Ratcatching.

75. Resistance to disease.
76. Secret martial arts techniques.
77. Sense of direction.
78. Skill with a specific weapon.
79. Smelting.
80. Souls.
81. Special destiny.
82. Speed.
83. Steely nerves.
84. Storytelling.
85. Strange tattoos.
86. Stunning looks.
87. The attention of supernatural powers.
88. The language of birds.
89. The love of someone powerful.
90. The wind at his back and a spring in his step.
91. Tongues.
92. True love.
93. Undefinable coolness.
94. Unique perspective.
95. Unquestioning loyalty.
96. Utter unremarkableness.
97. Visions.
98. Wheels of polished steel.
99. Woodworking.
100. Writing.

## Places

Adders Lookout, Barkstone, Barleyvale, Bastion, Blackpool, Blackport, Boar's Head Lake, Boatsman's Strait, Boiling Water, Bone Plains, Brighthelm, Brighthill, Broadford, Broom River, Bullriver Town, Callhampton, Cape Flattery, Cape Sand Island, Castlerock, Church Hill, Copperwood, Cornerbrook, Crossguard, Crystal Lake, Dendale, Doegate, Dove River, Eastland, Endless River, Falconhead, Fort Chesterfield, Fortfield, Freewoman Isles, Glassmoor, Golden Valley, Gull Bay, Harlow, Hayfield, Highcourt, Hilt Island, Holly Hills, Ice Bay, Ire Cove, Ironcastle, Isle of Chalk, Isle of Honey, Isle of Rocks, Ivory Downs, Kettle Valley, Kingston, Land's End, Laurel Gulf, Lenrush, Lightning, Marshbridge, Marshvale, Meadow Lake, Meeting of the Waters, Meridian, Mirrorsands, Miller's Crossing, Mount Malicious, Mudwater, Mullhaven, The Narrows, Newfort, Orchid City, Oxbow Lake, Regret, Resthaven, Richguard Island, Riverton, Rockfort, Roughwater, Royal Mountain, Rustleaf, Saltworks, Skull Mountain, Snowy Hill, Southcross, Steepwood, Storm Sea, Strongoaks, Sunshire, Sunstorm Reach, Thistledown, Threshold, Tumblewater, Valley of Many Streams, Warrior Sea, Watershed, Watertown, Wexridge, White City, Wigtown, Winch Bank, Wolf River, Wooded Hill, Wry Mouth River.

# THE END



## Red Box Vancouver

