

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

Every creature has one or more Hit Dice. Characters possess as many Hit Dice as they have levels, whereas a monster's stat block describes how many Hit Dice it has. For example, a 5th-level character has 5 Hit Dice, while a typical troll has 8 Hit Dice.

In the core rules, a character can expend one, some, or all their Hit Dice to heal hit points following a short rest. Players often overlook this rule or rarely use it, thanks to the ready availability of magical healing, which represents a missed opportunity. What if characters could put those neglected Hit Dice to work in some other way?

TPK Games introduced the idea of spending Hit Dice for benefits beyond healing in their Recovery Dice Options book. So, in lieu of standard Hit Dice, a 5th level character would have 5 Recovery Dice to spend. Using the Recovery Dice concept, a character could choose from several thematic options when they spend Recovery Dice. Doing so would allow them to perform special attacks and maneuvers, albeit at the cost of no longer having those dice available for healing later.

Thanks to the Recovery Dice concept, player characters gained a host of new and fun options. But, what about the monsters?

We've decided the time has come to level the battlefield. This book contains hundreds of options for monsters to spend their Recovery Dice, making the world a bit more dangerous and unpredictable for characters. By using this game mechanic, monsters can spend their Recovery Dice to perform special tricks and attacks, inflict additional damage, or accomplish exceptional feats with the traits and powers they already possess. One of the best parts about this is that the GM doesn't need to change any monster's stat block to take advantage of these options.

Each option in this book lists its cost in Recovery Dice. In some cases, after the monster spends its dice, it simply rolls them and applies the total in some way. In many other cases, however, the monster spends the requisite number of dice to gain the benefit described.

ROLE-BASED OPTIONS

Every monster has strengths and weaknesses. Some monsters, like giants, ogres, and trolls, dish out lots of melee damage and soak up damage themselves. Other monsters, such as wraiths and shadows, use their special abilities to attack from unexpected directions or sneak around enemy defenders.

One easy way to help the GM use a monster to the best of its abilities involves combat roles. A creature's combat role quickly describes how a monster fights and how its special abilities can affect the battlefield or its enemies. For example, a Brute tends to have plenty of hit points, high Strength, and the ability to inflict lots of melee damage, while a Medic does what the name implies—heals and buffs its allies.

We've broken down combat roles into nine categories and provided examples of monsters appropriate for each. These roles aren't prescriptive or exclusionary; it's possible for a monster to fill more than one role depending on which of its traits it uses and how. Each role also provides a few appropriate Recovery Dice options. This offers a quick and easy way for the GM to use Recovery Dice without much preparation or bookkeeping. The GM decides what role a given monster plays in an encounter and allows it to spend its Recovery Dice on those options.

COMBAT OPTIONS

The Recovery Dice mechanic allows characters and monsters to trigger cool, fun, and entertaining options. Now, what if we take the concept a step further and weave this mechanic into how combat works? The GM and players can modify the existing combat rules with Recovery Dice in mind to make battles less predictable and more lethal or to give the campaign a grittier, more



old-school feel. The following options allow you to adjust how healing, damage, and criticals interact with Recovery Dice.

MONSTROUS OPTIONS

Now we come to the meat of this book. This chapter provides Recovery Dice options for a vast array of monsters listed in alphabetical order. Each monster entry includes one or more options designed to fit the creature's

theme, design, and abilities as described in the core rules. Thus, trolls don't become immune to acid and fire damage, and a gelatinous cube doesn't suddenly develop psionics by spending their dice.

Although this book provides options for many different monsters, this doesn't mean every monster in every combat needs or should use Recovery Dice. Allowing a monster to spend Recovery Dice makes them more noticeable, unusual, and individualized, which makes this option perfect for boss monsters and unique encounters. For example, if the characters encounter a dozen kobolds

led by a shaman, it works best for the shaman to spend their dice but not the rank-and-file kobolds. The more monsters spending dice in an encounter, the more complex it becomes for the GM to run, and the more time it may take per turn.

When the GM wants to give a monster a few Recovery Dice options, they don't need to make special preparations for the encounter. Once the encounter begins, the GM can open this book, pick one of the chosen monster's options, spend the Recovery Dice and watch the looks of surprised, shocked, and horrified players as they exclaim "that's not in the rules!"

One of the other benefits of giving a monster Recovery Dice is how doing so can spark new ideas and possibilities in and out of combat. For example, check out the option Bringer of Nightmares, for the hag. Although this option can prove valuable in a fight, it also offers the GM some fun plot hooks and ideas outside of combat. The hag doesn't necessarily have to use the knowledge it acquires right away; it could sell the information to the character's enemies or hold it in reserve for future vengeance. Sure, there's a time limit on the hag's ability to frighten their target, but the knowledge itself remains valuable for a long time.

USING RECOVERY DICE

Total Party Kill Games first introduced Recovery Dice Options, a sourcebook of ways for player characters to use their Hit Dice ("Recovery Dice") to do more than simply recover hit points as described in the core rules. This book offered dozens of options for many different classes, races, and campaign themes.

What about monsters? Do they gain Recovery Dice based on their Hit Dice? The core rules make no mention of monsters having the ability to spend Hit Dice to regain hit points. That being said, monsters—like characters—determine their hit points based on their Hit Dice. Whereas characters gain Hit Dice as they gain levels, monsters are based on their challenge rating. Since the system for spending their Hit Dice already exists and every creature has its own Hit Dice; we can easily graft this rule onto monsters.

Okay, perhaps we can give monsters the ability to expend Hit Dice, but should we? When it comes to monsters, let's

be honest: most never survive combat; the lifespan of a monster averages 24 seconds (i.e., four rounds) once they encounter the party. Thus, they have no need for long-term healing. In addition, with the exception of significant villains, most GMs never track monster hit points for those few that escape.

However, with so many new tools and tactics provided to characters in Recovery Dice options, it seems only fair that we return to the concept and level the playing field for monsters, villains, and other bad guys. Book of Monstrous Might returns to the idea and introduces dozens of ways for GMs to spice up their monsters and give adventurers new challenges to worry about. This book provides a range of ways for monsters to use this mechanic in combat. These options extend this game mechanic far beyond the realm of healing. Consider, for example, a dragon expending Hit Dice to recharge its breath weapon, a troll using them to accelerate its regeneration, or a fey creature using them to steal time from its enemies.

As indicated, the concepts and options included herein are just that—optional. We recommend you read through the possibilities before trying them in your campaign. Whichever options you choose, take things slow. Use a sprinkling of them to see how they affect the game. Be mindful that some of these Recovery Dice tools can alter the tone of your campaign by making combats grittier, more dangerous, more challenging, or lengthier. A monster's use of a Recovery Dice option at the right moment can turn the tide of battle. These options make monsters tougher, more potent, and sometimes more complex to run. Thus, do not try to use every single idea included here. Instead, sprinkle them in to flavor your game like the master GM you are!

RECOVERY DICE BASICS

The basic concept behind Recovery Dice remains the same for monsters as it does for characters. A monster can spend one or more Hit Dice, up to its maximum number of Hit Dice, a number based on the creature's challenge rating. When it comes to healing, at the end of a short rest, for each Hit Die spent, the monster rolls the die (which is based on its size) and adds its Constitution modifier to it. The creature regains hit points equal to the total (minimum of 0). The monster can decide to spend an additional Hit Die after each roll.

Whether expending a Hit Die to activate an option requires an action or not is listed in the description.

When a monster expends a Hit Die to activate an option, it does not regain hit points with that die unless the option chosen states otherwise. If a creature has no Hit Dice remaining, it cannot use any of these options. In some cases, expending a Hit Die involves rolling that die and adding the result to a game effect, such as an attack roll or ability check. In other cases, there's no need to roll the die—the monster simply receives a benefit in exchange for expending one or more Hit Dice.

Since monsters rarely have the chance to gain a short rest or to heal, the options in this book use Hit Dice to provide other benefits and enhancements. These options are grouped into categories based on monster types (e.g., aberration, fey, undead). Other categories are based on the monster's role in combat, such as a leader or spoiler and include a brief description of what that role means in a fight along with suggestions for what monsters best fit that category.

Most of these options have no other prerequisites and can be assigned to any monster you choose. In some cases, however, a Hit Dice option only works if the monster possesses a certain power or special feature, such as the ability to cast spells, a breath weapon, or a bite attack.

If you want to assign a monster one or more Hit Dice options, you should do so ahead of time instead of once combat begins. Any option you give the monster should make sense for that monster and for the story.

Since these options can make a monster more challenging, and because they can make combat more complicated and time-consuming, you should limit their use to important monsters and encounters. Solo monsters, boss monsters, important NPCs, and major combatants represent the best candidates for having Hit Dice. Minions, minor henchmen, faceless hordes, and weak monsters should rarely use options for their Hit Dice.

NARRATING THE DICE

So what does it mean when a creature “spends” its Hit Dice? What resource do these dice simulate? On the base level, this pool of dice represents a creature's ability to recover from injuries and heal wounds. Beyond this, Hit Dice can signify all manner of innate—but limited—resources: toughness, resiliency, determination,

willpower, passion, innate magical power, or even supernatural power. Thus, a troll's spending of its Hit Dice might reflect its physical recuperative abilities, while a vampire's Hit Dice originate from the necromantic energy fueling its unlife. Thus, what a monster can do with its dice and how such an action appears often depend on the monster and the adventure scenario.

When a monster expends Hit Dice, you should describe to the players what that action looks like or provide a hint as to what the monster is doing. While you don't need to explain precisely what benefit the monster gains by expending Hit Dice, you owe it to your players to give them a bit of foreshadowing. In other words, describe the act of expending these dice into the adventure's narrative.

For example, a red dragon expends a Hit Die to change its breath weapon to dramatically raise the temperature of the cavern instead of unleashing a gout of flame. When this happens, describe the heat ripples, the steam rising from every surface and the steady increase in the air temperature that makes breathing difficult and painful. Likewise, when the infamous orc warlord Grishnak Blood-Eye bellows out a war cry, and her eyes abruptly turn red; the players understand something dangerous has transpired, and their foe has become more dangerous, even if they don't know the game mechanics of the change—they don't know that her Strength has increased, and she's gained temporary hit points. If you describe the use of Hit Dice in an interesting and dramatic way, you may well create new adventure hooks or future story ideas to add to the campaign.

Here are several suggestions and ideas for in-game descriptions of what occurs when a monster spends Hit Dice. Some of these suggestions don't work as smoothly with some options, so let common sense and events in the encounter guide your descriptions.

- The monster utters a powerful battle cry that fills its allies with newfound courage.
- The creature invokes a dark power or calls for aid from its god.
- In spite of the creature's mounting wounds and pain, it summons one final surge of desperate strength.
- A creature gives a stirring speech to its allies, invoking the legend of a great hero or leader.
- The monster asks the spirit of an ancestor to guide its actions and bring it success.

- The monster's eyes glow or radiate some form of energy.
- The creature consumes a flask of some unknown alchemical brew.
- Thanks to exceptional intelligence and precise planning, the monster gains the exact advantage it needs at precisely the right moment.

SAVING THROW DCs

Many Hit Dice options described below involve a target or other creature rolling a saving throw. Because these options were designed to work with a wide variety of different monsters, many of them do not include the specific saving throw DC. Instead, the options describe how to calculate the DC. Often, a save DC depends on the monster's challenge rating; the higher the challenge rating, the higher the save DC.

In addition to including an ability modifier, a save DC may also include the monster's proficiency bonus. As a quick and handy reference, the table below provides this bonus listed by challenge rating.

CHALLENGE	BONUS
0 to 4	+2
5-8	+3
9-12	+4
13-16	+5
17-20	+6
21-24	+7
25-28	+8
29+	+9

If you want to modify the calculation used to determine a saving throw DC, you can increase it by adding the monster's proficiency bonus (if not already included). Conversely, you can reduce the DC by leaving out the proficiency bonus. As a guideline, if an attack or effect is strongly associated with the monster's core abilities or theme, go ahead and include its proficiency bonus. If, however, the attack or effect is more of a sideline or lesser power, go ahead and leave out the bonus.

DESIGN NOTES

Feel free to add your own Hit Dice options for monsters. When doing so, keep in mind a few things about which options can add to the fun and which might detract.

Be cautious about modifying a monster's Armor Class. Even a small increase in a monster's AC can cause a fight to bog down. As a guideline, character attacks should hit about 55 to 60% of the time; any change that dramatically reduces hit chances can lead to player frustration and slow combat to a crawl.

Modest increases to a monster's hit points, whether by adding temporary hit points or healing damage, give a monster one more turn in which to act before it dies and usually don't add too much to the length of a given combat. Be conservative, however, about using options that grant or recover hit points, especially with a monster that regenerates or has damage resistance.

For the most part, use caution with any option that adds the result of a Hit Die roll to another statistic. This is important because a monster's Hit Dice are based on its size. This isn't generally a problem for monsters that are Tiny, Small, Medium, or Large, since these Hit Dice are similar to those for the various character classes (ranging from d4 to d10). When it comes to a Huge or Gargantuan monster, however, a d12 or d20 die roll can add an extremely large number with a good roll and lead to rapid shifts in the flow of combat.

Not all the options provided in this book work for every monster. Try to give the most appropriate Hit Dice options to a monster, i.e., those that fit with the monster's size, appearance, type, tactics, and overall theme. Take, for example, the Thunderous Strike option. This feature presumes a somewhat strong, bulky monster with massive fists. While there's nothing stopping you from giving this option to an orc, you should have some story-based reason for an orc to possess such an unusual ability.

If a monster uses a Recovery Die option that seems odd or out of place, you can bet your players will have questions. It's fine to play against type, but you should have an in-game explanation for doing so. For example, it might not make sense for a wight or other undead creature to heal damage by expending Hit Dice. Instead, you could describe the undead creature picking up a chunk hacked from its body and sticking it back in place, or after



the undead takes a bite out of an adventurer, it “heals” some of its wounds.

Regardless of how many Hit Dice a monster has, resist the temptation to feel you must use all of them in a battle. For a good guideline, limit the use of these options to three times in a battle. If you have a combat where two (or more) monsters have Hit Dice, limit each of them to no more than two uses apiece.

In most cases, there’s no need to alter the challenge rating of a monster or adjust the amount of experience awarded when a character defeats a monster using Hit Dice options. These options can make the creature a bit more dangerous or allow it to survive another round without any need to adjust the encounter difficulty. If, however, you find that the use of Hit Dice turn an otherwise average or easy encounter into a difficult or deadly one, feel free to award extra experience points equaling 10% of the XP value of the monster using this option. Of note, if your players are already using the concepts described in Recovery Dice Options, you probably do not need to adjust the encounter experience or difficulty level.

One final caveat worth mentioning again: do not try to use all the options contained in this book! Some of these options contradict others or do not combine well, while a few different options achieve a similar effect but through different mechanics. Start slow and small, choosing a couple of options to see how they change your game and your adventures before digging too deep into the madness.

CHAPTER TWO

RECOVERY DICE OPTIONS

GENERAL OPTIONS

The following Hit Dice Options are open to monsters of any sort. These are somewhat generic in that they make the monster tougher or more dangerous but aren't necessarily dramatic or exciting in and of themselves.

A few of these options are expanded upon or improved under the options provided for specific creature types or for specific monster roles.

Agile Dodge. As a reaction, when the monster suffers a critical hit, it may expend a Hit Die and subtract the amount rolled from the damage inflicted.

Absolute Concentration. As a reaction, the monster expends a Hit Die to gain advantage on a concentration check.

Athletic Surge. As part of a move action, the monster expends a Hit Die to increase its speed by 10 feet. In addition, if the monster moves and takes the Dash action, its speed increases by 15 feet.

Blessings of the North. The monster expends a Hit Die as a bonus action to gain resistance to cold damage until the end of its next turn.

Brute. When the monster expends a Hit Die as a bonus action, it gains advantage on Strength ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Desperate Dodge. As a reaction, the monster expends two Hit Dice to turn a critical hit into a normal hit.

Note: Since players hate losing out on landing a critical hit, use this option sparingly—perhaps no more than once per combat and give some thematic or role-playing reason for the ability.

Diehard. If an attack would knock a monster to 0 hit points, as a reaction, it can expend two Hit Dice to remain at 1 hit point instead. A monster cannot use this option more than once per combat.

Escape Clause. As a reaction, the monster spends one Hit Die. It then rolls 1d4, adding the result to any ability check

aiding its escape, such as from a grapple or on a Stealth check to avoid detection.

Focused Effort. When the monster makes an ability check, it can expend a Hit Die as a free action to gain advantage on the roll.

Hot-Blooded. If the monster spends a Hit Die as a bonus action, it gains resistance to fire damage until the end of its next turn.

Incredible Leap. The monster expends a Hit Die to increase its Strength by +4 for purposes of a Strength (Athletics) check for jumping and for determining how far or high the creature jumps. The bonus lasts until the start of the monster's next turn.

Iron Determination. The monster spends a Hit Die as a reaction to ignore one condition it suffers until the start of its next turn.

Reckless Strike. When making an attack roll, as a bonus action, the monster can spend a Hit Die as a free action to gain advantage. In return, until the end of the monster's next turn, all melee attacks against it gain advantage.

Resurgence. As an action, the monster spends a Hit Die to temporarily ignore a condition. The creature rolls 1d3+1, using the result to determine how many rounds the monster can ignore the condition's effects. This applies to the following conditions: charmed, frightened, paralyzed, or exhaustion. During this time, the monster does not continue to roll saving throws to end the effect. Once the duration ends, the condition resumes.

Rub Some Dirt on It. As a bonus action, the monster expends one or more Hit Dice and gains the amount rolled as temporary hit points. The monster does not add its Constitution modifier to this total. These temporary hit points last for 1 minute.

Swift Healing. The monster can spend one or more Hit Dice as an action and regain hit points equal to one-half the amount rolled. Do not add the creature's Constitution modifier to this total.

Take a Breather. As a reaction, if one of the monster's powers fails to recharge (e.g., a breath weapon that

recharges on a d6 roll of 5 or 6), the monster can spend a Hit Die to reroll this check. The creature can only use this feature once per round.

Twist of Fate. As a reaction, the monster can expend one Hit Die to reroll a saving throw. The monster must accept the result of this reroll.

COMBAT OPTIONS

The Recovery Dice mechanic allows characters and monsters to trigger cool, fun, and entertaining options. Now, what if we take the concept a step further and weave this mechanic into how combat works? The GM and players can modify the existing combat rules with Recovery Dice in mind to make battles less predictable and more lethal or to give the campaign a grittier, more old-school feel. The following options allow you to adjust how healing, damage, and critical hits interact with Recovery Dice.

The following Recovery Dice options and ideas originally appeared in Recovery Dice Options and are reprinted here for your convenience.

Whereas the options described above serve to make monsters tougher, more resilient, and more dangerous, the options described below don't necessarily benefit characters or monsters. They do, however, affect both to some extent. These options increase or reduce the lethality and grittiness of combat in a campaign. Likewise, these options don't change what Hit Dice can do, but they do change how those dice might be spent or which options become the most popular or useful.

BRUTAL CRITICAL

When a creature suffers a critical hit, it also loses one of its Hit Dice. If the creature has no dice remaining, then it suffers an additional weapon die of damage.

This option ramps up the potency of critical hits and, as such, may have the side effect of making players reluctant to expend Hit Dice for uses other than healing.

EMPATHIC HEALING

When a creature casts cure wounds or similar healing magic, it must expend a Hit Die. If the creature has no dice remaining in its pool, it cannot perform the healing, even



if that creature has the spell slots available. This applies to any type of healing, including class features such as the paladin's lay on hands feature.

This option fits best with a grim, gritty setting where healing magic is rare and precious. While this option doesn't necessarily make combat immediately more lethal, it can make each successive battle after the first one more dangerous. This can have the effect of making characters reluctant to engage in more than one battle between long rests.

The Empathic Healing option imposes limits on certain classes, forcing healers to choose between having Hit Dice for their own use and the ability to heal their comrades.

There are several ways to modify this option.

- For healing spells, it costs one Hit Die per spell level; thus, heal would cost the cleric six dice. For the paladin's Lay on Hands feature, the cost is one Hit Die per 5 points of healing granted. This option increases the campaign's lethality by another degree and imposes a significant limit on how much healing any character can perform.
- If the healer has run out of Hit Dice for the day, he can opt to expend his own hit points to power his healing. If he casts a 3rd-level cure wounds spell, he would first have to take 3d8 points of damage to power the healing.

MOMENTARY RESPITE

When you expend Hit Dice, you gain the result of the die roll plus your Constitution modifier in temporary hit points, rather than normal hit points.

This option simulates the idea that creatures don't actually heal from their wounds by spending Hit Dice—it more represents a temporary, limited fix.

SLOW HEALING

You cannot expend Hit Dice for healing after a short rest; you must complete a long rest in order to spend these dice.

For those familiar with the concept of the "15-minute adventuring day," this option may exacerbate this situation—characters may become reluctant to engage in more than one major combat between long rests, while a short rest offers limited value.

WOUND THRESHOLDS

One of fifth editions' optional rules requires a character can only expend a Hit Die if they use an application of a healer's kit as part of the process. Thus, no healer's kit, no healing from Hit Dice. Along similar lines, this option prohibits all healing unless a creature spends Hit Dice.

For example, if a character receives a *cure wounds* spell, they must expend a Hit Die in order to receive the healing. If the character is out of dice for the day, then the cure provides no benefit whatsoever. The same goes for healing potions; if a creature lacks any Hit Dice in his pool, then the potion might as well be plain water.

There are several additional options you can include as part of this concept, some of which soften the overall lethality.

If a creature has no Hit Dice left and receives some form of healing (e.g., *cure wounds*), they receive the healing as temporary hit points rather than normal ones.

- Higher-level or more powerful healing, such as *heal*, does not require expenditure or presence of Hit Dice.
- Divine healing doesn't cost or require Hit Dice if the cleric and their patient worship the same deity.
- Certain kinds of healing don't require Hit Dice, such as the paladin's Lay on Hands feature.
- If a character lacks Hit Dice in their pool and receives healing, they gain half the effect rather than no benefit.

ROLE-BASED OPTIONS

The following Hit Dice options are divided into the general roles a monster performs during combat. A solo monster, for example, is a lone creature intended to challenge a party all by itself, while a mastermind remains at the rear of combat and directs its minions and henchmen from a distance. These roles are flexible and intended to cover a number of possibilities based on the encounter and the adventure.

Every monster has strengths and weaknesses. Some monsters, like giants, ogres, and trolls, dish out lots of melee damage and soak up damage themselves. Other monsters, such as wraiths and shadows, use their special



abilities to attack from unexpected directions or sneak around enemy defenders.

One easy way to help the GM use a monster to the best of its abilities involves combat roles. A creature's combat role quickly describes how a monster fights and how its special abilities can affect the battlefield or its enemies. For example, a Brute tends to have plenty of hit points, high Strength, and the ability to inflict lots of melee damage, while a Medic does what the name implies—heals and buffs its allies.

We've broken down combat roles into nine categories and provided examples of monsters appropriate for each. These roles aren't prescriptive or exclusionary; it's possible

for a monster to fill more than one role depending on which of its traits it uses and how. Each role also provides a few appropriate Recovery Dice options. This offers a quick and easy way for the GM to use Recovery Dice without much preparation or bookkeeping. The GM decides what role a given monster plays in an encounter and allows it to spend its Recovery Dice on those options.

BODYGUARD

A bodyguard serves as a shield and protector to another monster, usually, its master or employer. A bodyguard often has a high AC, plentiful hit points, and a good

Perception score to help it identify threats. The bodyguard absorbs attacks intended for its master.

Example: Monsters: Bearded devil, golem (any), shield guardian, werewolf, wight

BLOCKED STRIKE

The creature lifts its shield and blocks an incoming attack.

Prerequisite: The creature must carry a shield or wield a weapon (other than a natural one) in order to use this option.

Benefit: The creature expends a Hit Die as a reaction when an ally within its reach is targeted with a melee or ranged weapon attack, imposing disadvantage against that attack. The monster must have a line of sight to the attacker and the intended target.

BODY SHIELD

The creature lunges in the way and intercepts the hit, protecting its master with its own body.

Benefit: As a reaction, the creature expends a Hit Die to interpose its body and absorb a melee or ranged weapon attack intended for an adjacent ally. If the attack would have successfully hit the intended target, the creature using this option automatically takes the hit, even if its AC is higher. The blocking creature takes all the consequences of the hit. The creature must have a line of sight to the attacker and the intended target in order to use this option.

HEIGHTENED PERCEPTION

The creature remains hypervigilant for incoming threats.

Benefit: As an action, the creature can expend a Hit Die to gain advantage on its Wisdom (Perception) checks for the next minute. Alternatively, the creature can expend a Hit Die to improve its passive Perception by +5 for the next minute.

NOT ON MY WATCH

The bodyguard buys enough time for its charge to avoid a threat.

Benefit: As a free action at any point during a turn, the creature may expend three hit dice to give its reaction to an ally they can see. The bodyguard loses its reaction for that turn. This allows the recipient to use up to two reactions in a single turn. The bodyguard creature can only use this ability once per combat.

ON EDGE

Expect an ambush, and you'll rarely be disappointed.

Benefit: If a creature with this option is surprised at the start of combat, it can spend two Hit Dice to allow them to take an action on the first turn of combat as well as not losing their reaction that turn.

WIZARD KILLER

The creature knows the best tactics for dealing with enemy spellcasters.

Benefit: When an enemy within 5 feet of this creature casts a spell, they can use their reaction and spend a Hit Die to make a melee weapon attack against the spellcaster. If the creature spends two Hit Dice, the target spellcaster suffers disadvantage on the saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration if they were hit.

BRUTE

The brute enjoys tremendous Strength, lots of hit points, and possesses the ability to inflict a great deal of physical damage with its attacks. On the downside, the brute suffers when it comes to speed and agility; hitting the brute is often easy, but eliminating it often takes a long time.

Example: Monsters: Bulette, elemental (any), ettin, giant (any), golem (any), hook horror, minotaur, ogre, purple worm, troll, xorn

BODY SLAM

The creature hurls itself bodily at its target, using its bulk to slam the enemy to the ground.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature can spend a Hit Die as part of a melee weapon attack. If the attack hits, in addition to taking damage, the target must make a Strength saving throw (DC = 8 + the attacker's Strength modifier + the attacker's proficiency bonus) or be knocked prone. If the target is two or more size categories smaller than the attacker, it suffers disadvantage on this saving throw. This option does not affect a target one or more size categories larger than the attacker.

CRUSHING GRIP

Once this creature grabs hold of its victim, it holds them in an unbreakable grip.

Benefit: When the creature has a target grappled, and the target attempts to escape, the monster can spend a Hit Die as a free action. Upon doing so, it then rolls 1d4 and adds the result to the DC of the target's escape attempt.

DISDAINFUL SHOVE

The brute charges forward, shoving aside creatures foolish enough to stand in its path.

Benefit: When the creature takes a move action, it can spend its action and one or more Hit Dice to shove one or more creatures in its path. It must spend one Hit Die for each creature it attempts to shove. Resolve each shove attack as normal. If a shove succeeds, the attacker can knock the target prone or push it away from them. Each target must be no more than one size larger than the attacker and must be within the attacker's reach.

ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

This creature hits especially hard when it hurls rocks.

Prerequisite: The creature must be size Huge or larger to use this option.

Benefit: When the creature targets a character with a thrown rock, it may spend a Hit Die as a free action. If the target is struck, it must succeed at a Strength saving throw (DC = 8 + the monster's proficiency bonus + the monster's Strength modifier) or be hurled straight back 10 feet and knocked prone. If the target cannot be shoved the full 10 feet, it strikes whatever blocks its path and takes bludgeoning damage equal to 1d6 + the monster's Strength bonus.

SUNDER

The creature delivers a hammer-like blow to an object.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature the creature can spend a Hit Die when making a melee weapon attack against an object or structure, adding the results of the die roll to the damage it inflicts.

THUNDEROUS STRIKE

The creature's massive strike leaves the target momentarily deafened.

Benefit: When a creature makes an attack with a melee weapon, as a free action it can expend a Hit Die to attempt to deafen that target. The target must make a Constitution saving throw (DC = 8 + the creature's proficiency bonus + the creature's Strength modifier). If the target fails this save, it becomes deafened for a number of rounds equal to the attacker's Strength modifier.

MASTERMIND

While the mastermind may not have the best hit points or defenses, it poses a threat in its ability to command, direct, and control its henchmen to great tactical effect. It observes the overall battlefield and sends its allies where they can cause the greatest damage or blunt the enemy's advantages. The mastermind prefers to work from the rear, often protected by bodyguards, cover, and other defenses.

Example Monsters: Aboleth, brain gorger, eye tyrant, lich, naga (any)

DEMAND OBEDIENCE

The creature shouts out an order, boosting the morale of one of its allies.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature can attempt to overcome the charmed condition of one of its allies it can see within 60 feet. The creature spends a Hit Die, granting the target an immediate saving throw to end the charmed condition. If the saving throw fails, the condition remains.

FIND WEAKNESS

With a keen eye for weakness, the creature identifies its target's greatest vulnerability.

Benefit: By spending a Hit Die as a bonus action, the mastermind can quickly study one creature it can see within range. In so doing, the mastermind learns one of the following pieces of information about its target:

- If the creature has a vulnerability and to what damage type.
- The creature's weakest saving throw bonus (if two bonuses are tied, the mastermind only learns one of them, determined randomly).
- If the creature is at one-half or fewer hit points.
- What conditions, if any, the creature currently suffers.



The target creature can attempt to hide its weaknesses by succeeding at a Charisma (Deception) check with the DC equal to 8 + the mastermind's proficiency bonus + the mastermind's Wisdom modifier. If this check succeeds, the mastermind learns no information. If this check succeeds by 10 or more, the mastermind learns inaccurate information (determined by the GM).

HOLD THE LINE

The creature gives a rousing speech to its allies, encouraging them to hold to their positions.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature issues orders to a number of allies it can see, up to the value of its proficiency bonus, spending a Hit Die for each. For the 1 minute, each affected ally gains advantage on any ability check or saving throw made to resist or avoid being forcibly moved, such as by a shove attack or while grappled.

ON THE DOUBLE

The creature calls out a command, ordering one of its minions into place.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature can spend one Hit Die to shout a movement command to one of its allies it can see. If the recipient creature then spends its reaction, it can immediately move up to its speed.

SAVING INSIGHT

The creature gives one of its minions a crucial insight at the moment it is most needed.

Benefit: As a reaction, the creature can spend a Hit Die to give an ally that it can see within 60 feet the benefit of the mastermind's Intelligence or Charisma saving throw bonus. The recipient uses the mastermind's Intelligence or Charisma saving throw bonus instead of their own.

YOU SHOULD FEAR ME MORE

The mastermind reminds its minion what fear truly means.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature can expend a Hit Die on an ally it can see that suffer from the frightened condition. For 1 minute or until the frightened condition ends, the target becomes frightened of the mastermind rather than the creature that originally frightened it. The creature can affect a number of targets up to its proficiency bonus, but it must spend one Hit Die for each creature it chooses to affect.

MEDIC

What the medic lacks in toughness or ability to deal damage it more than makes up for in its ability to heal its allies, remove their conditions, and enhance their abilities. The medic often uses magic to boost its comrades, such as by increasing their AC, granting temporary hit points, healing wounds, or giving them resistance to different types of damage.

Example Monsters: Any creature with spellcasting ability

A SHOT OF COURAGE

The medic gives one of its allies a swig of strong spirits or other elixirs, invigorating their resolve.

Benefit: As an action, the medic can spend one, two, or three Hit Dice and touch an adjacent living creature. For each Hit Die expended, roll 1d6. The recipient gains the amount rolled in temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last up to 1 minute.

BATTLEFIELD MEDICINE

The creature uses its amazing skills in healing to aid its wounded comrades.

Prerequisite: Using this option requires the creature to have a healer's kit in its possession.

Benefit: When the creature spends an action and succeeds at a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check to treat an adjacent wounded ally, it can spend one or more Hit Dice. For each die it expends, it heals its patient for 1d8 + its proficiency bonus in hit points. The medic cannot move during the turn spent treating a patient. Each Hit Die spent counts as one use of the healer's kit.

EMPATHIC TRANSFER

The creature takes on the condition suffered by its patient.

Benefit: As an action, the medic can spend three Hit Dice to remove a condition from a creature adjacent to it. This removes one of the following conditions: blinded, deafened, one level of exhaustion, or poisoned. As a result, the condition no longer affects the patient but instead afflicts the medic. The medic's condition immunities, if any, still apply. Everything else remains the same, such as the duration of the condition and the DC of the saving throw needed to end the effect.

FIGHT THROUGH THE PAIN

Through its ministrations, the medic convinces an ally to stay in the fight and to ignore their pain.

Benefit: As a reaction, when an ally drops to 0 hit points, the medic can spend two Hit Dice on restoring them to 1 hit point and keep them conscious. The medic must be adjacent to the creature to use this feature.

SHIELD THE WOUNDED

The medic does their best to protect their patient from further harm.

Prerequisite: The medic must have a melee weapon in hand or adjacent to them to use this option.

Benefit: While administering any form of healing or treatment (mundane or magic) to an adjacent creature, as a reaction, the medic can spend one Hit Die to make a melee weapon attack against an enemy that moves within five feet of their patient. The medic must have a weapon within reach, either their own or their patient's, in order to make this attack.

SUPERIOR HEALING

The medic uses every skill and technique necessary to enhance the healing they provide.

Benefit: As a bonus action, when the medic administers a *potion of healing* or casts a *cure wounds* spell on another creature, they can spend a Hit Die to enhance the healing. The recipient of the healing gains additional hit points equal to the medic's proficiency bonus or its Intelligence ability bonus, whichever is higher.

SKIRMISHER

The skirmisher uses speed, stealth, and agility to weave in and out of combat. Its attacks may not inflict a lot of damage, but they whittle the enemy down and force them to clump together for mutual protection. The skirmisher avoids staying in one space too long and coordinates their attacks with other allies for maximum effect.

Example Monsters: Chuul, drider, gargoyle, ghoul, grick, harpy, invisible stalker, quickling, shadow, specter, wererat, wraith

BAIT AND SWITCH

Using diversionary tactics and misdirection, the skirmisher tricks one enemy into attacking another.

Benefit: As a reaction, the skirmisher can spend two Hit Dice while moving past two or more adjacent enemies. If a creature makes an opportunity attack against the skirmisher, the attack instead targets one of their allies adjacent to the skirmisher. If this attack hits, resolve damage normally.

FAST SHIFT

The creature shifts and weaves its way through combatants, dodging attacks at will.

Benefit: When the creature performs a movement that provokes an opportunity attack, as a reaction, they can spend a Hit Die to give disadvantage to that attack. The creature can use this option multiple times in the same move, spending one Hit Die against each opportunity attack if it so chooses.

FEINT

The skirmisher uses blinding speed to make a surprise attack where it's least expected.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the skirmisher expend a Hit Die as a free action. On the next melee weapon attack it makes before the end of its turn, it ignores the target's Dexterity bonus to AC (if any).

IMPROVED SNEAK ATTACK

The monster's sneak attacks are especially effective.

Prerequisite: The creature must have the Sneak Attack feature to use this option.

Benefit: When the skirmisher makes a sneak attack, they can expend a Hit Die. If the attack hits, they do a bonus 1d6 weapon damage in addition to their normal sneak attack damage. If the attack misses, the Hit Die is expended without benefit.

PERFECT BALANCE

The creature possesses remarkable poise, balance, and coordination, even under extreme conditions.

Benefit: Each time the creature attempts a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, it can expend a Hit Die as a free action to gain advantage on the roll.

TWO-FOR-ONE

The monster strikes at two targets with one attack.

Prerequisite: This option only works with a melee or ranged weapon attack.

Benefit: By expending one Hit Die as a bonus action, the creature may make an attack with a melee or ranged weapon that strikes two adjacent targets. The attack must hit the AC of both targets. If successful, split the damage evenly between both targets.

SOLO

The solo monster stands alone without the need for minions or cannon fodder. It wields sufficient strength, power, and resiliency to stand toe-to-toe against an entire party of adventurers. In spite of being outnumbered, the solo monster can inflict tremendous amounts of damage,



often to several targets at once, and it can absorb hit after hit without going down. A dragon or greater fiend typifies the solo monster concept.

Example Monsters: Balor, chimera, dracolich, dragon (any), eye tyrant, hydra, kraken, pit fiend, solar

DEFENSIVE INSIGHT

The creature's experience, cunning, and tactical acumen give it the edge at the start of the battle.

Benefit: As a reaction, the creature can expend one Hit Die to gain advantage on its next saving throw. The creature can use this option no more than twice in the same combat.

FORCE OF NATURE

The elemental might of this creature overcomes all but the most stalwart defenses.

Prerequisite: The creature must possess an attack or ability that inflicts cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.

Benefit: As a free action, the creature can spend two Hit Dice when it inflicts cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage in order to ignore the resistance one creature may have to that damage type. The creature cannot use this option more than twice in a battle, and it cannot do so on consecutive turns.

FOCUSED FURY

The creature unleashes its rage against one foe in particular.

Benefit: Once per round, as a bonus action, the creature can spend a Hit Die and choose a target creature it can see. The next melee or ranged attack it makes against that creature before the end of its turn inflicts bonus damage equal to double the creature's proficiency bonus.

IMPLACABLE WILL

The creature possesses too strong a force of will to surrender to charms, fear, or compulsions.

Benefit: Each time the creature becomes the target of a spell that would inflict the charmed or frightened condition, if the creature has any Hit Dice remaining, it can spend one as a reaction, adding the number rolled to its saving throw.

IMPROVED RECHARGE

The creature's most potent ability recharges with greater speed than with most of its kind.

Prerequisite: The creature must have a power or other feature that recharges.

Benefit: Before the creature rolls to determine if a specific power recharges that round or not, the creature can spend a Hit Die as a free action to improve the chance of recharging by one. For example, if a power recharges on a roll of 5 or 6 on d6, the power instead recharges on a roll of 4-6 on d6. The creature must use this option before it rolls to check whether the power recharges.

REFLEXIVE SPITE

The creature launches a retaliatory strike against an enemy that caused it injury.

Benefit: The creature can, as a reaction, spend a Hit Die to make a melee weapon attack against a creature that just attacked it.

SPITEFUL DEATH

In the midst of its death throes, the monster lashes out at the nearest opponent.

Prerequisite: The creature cannot use this option until it reaches 0 hit points. A creature can only use this option once per combat. In addition, the creature must have at least one Hit Die left.

Benefit: As a reaction when an attack or effect reduces the creature to 0 hit points, it can attack the nearest creature as if using the attack action. The creature can only use its melee weapon attacks, and these attacks must be against a creature in its melee range. If the creature has the multi-attack ability, it can make multiple attacks against its chosen target. If the monster has no Hit Dice remaining, it cannot use this option. After it unleashes this attack, it automatically dies.

WARPED REALITY

So powerful is the creature that it can manipulate chance and probability around it.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature can expend three Hit Dice to grant disadvantage on the next saving throw a creature it can see must make. As another option, as a

reaction the creature can spend two Hit Dice to cast *bane* against up to three creatures it can see within 30 feet. A creature can only use the Warped Reality option once per combat.

SPOILER

This creature uses its attacks, spells, and other powers to harass, bedevil, and weaken the enemy or to change the local terrain. It often uses poison or area of effect attacks to harm several opponents at once. The spoiler often inflicts different conditions designed to slow or inhibit its enemies and allow its allies to operate more freely on the battlefield. While the spoiler lacks the firepower to take down opponents by itself, it can become enough of an irritant to convince the other side to split its forces at a crucial moment.

Example Monsters: Basilisk, corpse crawler, ghast, hag, intellect devourer, medusa, naga (any), vampire

LUCK THIEF

This mischievous creature feeds on the luck of others.

Benefit: This monster automatically knows if another creature possesses the Lucky feat. As a reaction, the monster can steal one of that creature's luck points. Stolen luck points can be spent to gain advantage on an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw. The monster cannot steal more than three luck points in a given combat. Stolen luck points dissipate after 1 hour.

TOUCH OF CONFUSION

The touch of this creature clouds the mind of its victim.

Benefit: As a bonus action, the creature can spend three Hit Dice to cast the spell *confusion* but only against one target. In order to affect that target, the monster must first hit with a melee spell attack. The spell save DC equals 8 + the creature's proficiency bonus + the highest of its Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma ability bonuses.

If the creature possesses the ability to cast a 4th-level or higher spell, as a bonus action, it can spend a Hit Die and a 4th-level spell slot to cast *confusion* (with the normal range and area of effect, and without the need to make a ranged spell attack).

WRONG TARGET

By using speed and diversion, the fey creature tricks one enemy into attacking another.

Prerequisite: Fey

Benefit: As a reaction, when the fey provokes an opportunity attack, it can spend two Hit Dice to deduct 1d4 from the attacker's roll. If the attack misses the fey, it is instead made against another creature adjacent to the fey, using the original roll. If more than one creature is adjacent to the fey, randomly determine which target receives the opportunity attack.

This ability should be limited in use to two or three times during an encounter. Be cautious about how and when you use these options. They work best to make the fight more exciting, dramatic, and cinematic, but you want to avoid dragging out a combat or reducing it to nothing more than a long, dull slog of attrition. Along similar lines, overuse of these options can leave players feeling the fight has become unfair or lopsided in the monster's favor—most players hate having a character's action nullified or rendered meaningless.

OTHER OPTIONS

The most infamous, notorious, and dangerous monsters are often referred to as legendary. A legendary creature possesses unusual abilities allowing it to act at times other than during its turn. Likewise, a legendary creature often exerts a magical or supernatural influence over its lair, which in turn allows it to take lair actions. This malignant influence may extend to the region beyond its lair, affecting the landscape and even the local weather.

Under most circumstances, a legendary creature need not spend Hit Dice to take legendary actions or lair actions as these recharge at the start of its turn. At times, however, you may allow a legendary creature to expend Hit Dice to activate or recharge legendary actions and lair actions. Allowing this might represent the monster's mythical nature, its ancient age, or some supernatural gift granted to it by a greater power. Imagine, for example, the special powers possessed by a red wyrm favored by the goddess of dragonkind, or the wisdom and experience of the first vampire to ever exist.

Here are several options for using Hit Dice with legendary

actions, lair actions, and regional effects associated with legendary creatures. As a general guide, these should be limited in use to two or three times during an encounter.

Be cautious about how and when you use these options. They work best to make the fight more exciting, dramatic, and cinematic, but you want to avoid dragging out a combat or reducing it to nothing more than a long, dull slog of attrition. Along similar lines, overuse of these options can leave players feeling the fight has become unfair or lopsided in the monster's favor—most players hate having a character's action nullified or rendered meaningless.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

BATTERING STRIKE

With a massive blow, the monster drives its foe to the ground.

Prerequisite: Size Large or larger creature, and at least one damaging melee attack among the creature's legendary actions.

Effect: When the monster hits with a legendary melee attack, it can spend one Hit Die as a bonus action. The target creature must make a Strength saving throw (DC = 8 + monster's Strength modifier + monster's proficiency bonus) or be knocked prone. The target creature must be equal in size or smaller than the monster.

BURST OF SPEED

With an unexpected burst of speed, the monster charges.

Prerequisite: The monster must have a legendary action allowing it to move, such as with a charge or by teleporting.

Effect: By spending one Hit Die as a bonus action, the creature increases the distance it can move by up to 10 feet.

CRITICAL STRIKE

The monster unleashes a devastating attack. It takes full advantage of a weakness, or tricks the character into an opening or simply just lands and extremely precise hit.

Prerequisite: At least one damaging melee or ranged attack among the creature's legendary actions.

Effect: By expending two Hit Dice as a bonus action, all of the monster's legendary action attacks score critical hits on a roll of 19 or 20 during this turn.



DESTRUCTIVE

The monster's mighty attack splinters wood, shatters stone, and rends metal. These effects leave destroyed objects in their wake and creates a general disarray, but by far the worst effect is what happens to their target's body and equipment.

Prerequisite: At least one damaging melee attack among the creature's legendary actions.

Effect: By spending two Hit Dice as a free action after hitting with a legendary action melee attack, the monster inflicts double damage against structures or objects. If the monster uses this effect against a shield held by a creature, the attack automatically destroys a non-magical shield or reduces the AC bonus of a magical shield by 1.

ENHANCED LEGENDARY ACTIONS

LEGENDARY ENDURANCE

When necessary, the creature can call on its last reserves in dealing with its foes.

Prerequisite: The creature must have the ability to take legendary actions to choose this option.

Benefit: The creature gains an extra legendary action when it spends two Hit Dice. Thus, a monster with 3 legendary actions can instead take 4 during a turn. All other rules for legendary actions still apply.



EXTENDED RANGE

The creature extends the range of one of its powers.

Prerequisite: A legendary action with a range, whether an attack or otherwise, which targets one creature.

Effect: By spending two Hit Dice as part of a legendary action with a range, the monster extends the range by 20 feet.

LEGENDARY DEFIANCE

The monster overcomes an effect through sheer strength of will.

Effect: If the creature fails a saving throw, instead of expending one of its uses of Legendary Resistance, it can expend all its legendary actions for the turn plus three Hit Dice to succeed at a failed saving throw.

LEGENDARY AVOIDANCE

Fate, destiny, or luck protects the creature when it needs it the most.

Prerequisite: The creature must possess the Legendary Resistance feature in order to use this option.

Benefit: As a reaction, the creature can expend three Hit Dice to regain the use of one of its Legendary Resistance uses per day. The creature can only use this option once per combat.

LEGENDARY STRIKE

The creature's attack homes in on its target with unerring accuracy.

Prerequisite: At least one damaging melee or ranged attack among the creature's legendary actions.

Effect: If a melee or ranged legendary attack roll misses, the creature can expend three Hit Dice as a free action to reroll the attack. The creature must take the second roll.

OVERWHELMING PRESENCE

The monster's size and magnificence render other creatures too awed to act.

Prerequisite: The monster must have the Frightful Presence ability to use this option.

Effect: The monster uses this power as one of its lair actions and spends three Hit Dice. Each creature of the monster's choice within 120 feet of it and aware of it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 + monster's Charisma modifier + monster's proficiency bonus) or become stunned until the end of their next turn.

If the creature was already affected by the monster's Frightful Presence, they suffer disadvantage on the Wisdom save against Overwhelming Presence. After the affected creature is no longer stunned, they continue to be frightened

of the monster until they succeed on the Wisdom saving throw against Frightening Presence.

PERNICIOUS EFFECT

The monster's power overwhelms even the most resilient defenses.

Prerequisite: A legendary action that allows the target to make a saving throw to reduce or negate the effect.

Effect: As part of a legendary action that allows a target to make a saving throw for reduced or negated effect, the monster can spend four Hit Dice to select one target it can see to suffer disadvantage on this save.

RECHARGE

Summoning deep reserves of power, the creature regains the use of its breath attack.

Prerequisite: The monster must have a breath weapon attack with a recharge roll.

Effect: The monster can spend one of its legendary actions



and three Hit Dice to make another roll for its breath weapon to recharge. This does not, however, allow the creature to use its breath weapon as a legendary action—it must still use the breath weapon as an action on its turn.

RESURGENCE

The greater the threat it faces, the more determined and ferocious the monster becomes.

Effect: The monster can regain one legendary action for the round by spending four Hit Dice. It can only use this option once per round.

SIXTH SENSE

The creature possesses a preternatural ability to detect threats beyond the scope of normal senses.

Prerequisite: As one of its possible legendary actions, the monster must have the Detect ability allowing it to make a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Effect: By spending one Hit Die, the monster can use its Detect ability as a reaction rather than as a legendary action.

SUPERNATURAL AFFLICTION

The monster's attack drains some of the target's resilience and determination.

Prerequisite: At least one damaging melee or ranged attack among the monster's legendary actions.

Effect: When the monster spends three Hit Dice and hits a creature with a legendary action attack, the target's hit point maximum reduces by one-half the damage inflicted by the attack.

TAIL SWEEP

The monster's tail sweeps through its enemies, knocking them aside.

Prerequisite: The monster must have Tail Attack as one of its legendary actions.

Effect: When the monster makes a Tail Attack and spends two Hit Dice, instead of inflicting damage against one target, each creature within 10 feet of the monster must succeed



on a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 8 + monster's Strength modifier + monster's proficiency bonus) or be knocked prone.

THUNDEROUS ROAR

The monster unleashes a bellowing, ear-shattering roar.

Prerequisite: Size Huge or larger monster.

Effect: By spending two legendary actions and two Hit Dice, the monster emits a deafening roar, shriek, or similar sound. All creatures within 120 feet must succeed at a Constitution saving throw (DC = 8 + monster's Strength modifier + monster's proficiency bonus) or become deafened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

UNNATURAL TOUGHNESS

The monster shrugs off an effect.

Effect: By spending a legendary action and three Hit Dice, the creature can remove one condition it suffers.

LAIR ACTIONS

A legendary creature often maintains a magical or supernatural connection to its lair as if the creature and its lair possess a symbiotic relationship. Through this connection, the creature can command its lair to attack or hinder intruders. Lair actions may manifest in the form of natural phenomena such as ceiling collapses, pools of water, or they may manifest as magical phenomenon such as unnatural darkness.

A creature's lair actions reflect some aspect or theme central to that creature. For example, a green dragon holds a strong connection to forests. Its lair actions involve such things as grasping roots and vines and walls of thorny brush. A red dragon, on the other hand, has lair actions involving magma eruptions and blasts of volcanic gas.

Typically, a monster with lair actions can use one of them on initiative count 20 each round. Here are several options for how a legendary creature can combine Hit Dice expenditures with lair actions.

BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES

The monster commands the doors within its lair to slam shut or swing open.

Effect: The monster spends its lair action and two Hit Dice to open or close any or all doors and windows within its lair. The monster can open some doors and close others in any combination. In addition, if the monster wishes, a closed door becomes affected by *arcane lock*.

COMMAND MINION

The creatures serving the monster respond to its commands with urgency.

Effect: As a lair action, the monster can spend three Hit Dice to command all creatures of one type of minion. Those minions can then spend their reaction to move up to their speed. For example, the monster could use this ability to command all kobolds it can see or all ogres it can see.

HEALING POWER

The monster calls upon the ambient magic of its lair to heal its injuries.

Effect: As a lair action, the monster can spend one to three Hit Dice to regain that many hit points. The monster also adds its Constitution bonus to the amount of hit points rolled.

IKNOW YOU

The monster learns important information about an intruder, which is specific to the current encounter.

Effect: The monster can spend two Hit Dice and a lair action to learn the name, race, and alignment of one intruder it can see within its lair. The monster also learns why the intruder has entered the lair. The target creature can attempt a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 + monster's Wisdom modifier + the monster's proficiency bonus). If it succeeds, the monster learns nothing from this attempt to glean information.

ISEE YOU

With only a brief thought, the monster sees invisible creatures and objects.

Effect: When the monster uses its lair action and spends two Hit Dice, it gains the ability to see invisibility for 1 minute. Like the spell, this ability also allows the monster to also see ethereal creatures and objects.



PRETERNATURAL SENSES

The monster's connection to its lair grants it an exceptional sense it doesn't normally possess.

Effect: The monster can use its lair action and expend two Hit Dice to gain one of the following special senses for 1 minute: blindsight 60 feet, darkvision 60 feet, tremorsense 30 feet, or truesight 30 feet. For three Hit Dice, the range of its chosen special sense doubles. If the creature already possesses a special sense and it expends two Hit Dice, it doubles the range it has with that sense to a maximum of 120 feet.

SPELLCASTING

The innate magic found throughout the lair aids the monster in casting its spells.

Prerequisite: Spellcasting ability.

Effect: The monster uses its lair action to cast one of its spells, up to 3rd level, without using any components or expending a spell slot. The monster must spend one Hit Die for each level of the spell cast. The monster cannot cast the

same spell two rounds in a row. The monster cannot take other lair actions as long as it is concentrating on a spell cast as a lair action.

TREMORS

A powerful tremor ripples through part of the lair.

Effect: The monster can spend its lair action and one Hit Die to cause the ground to rumble and shake in a 120-foot-radius around itself. Each creature other than the monster on the ground in the area must succeed on a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice; DC = 8 + monster's Wisdom modifier + monster's proficiency bonus) or be knocked prone.

TUMBLING RUBBLE

A section of wall or ceiling in the lair cracks and shatters, showering a pile of debris on intruders.

Effect: As a lair action and by spending two Hit Dice, the monster causes a pile of rubble or other debris to rain down on a 20-foot by 20-foot square it can see within 120 feet. A creature in the area of effect must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 8 + monster's Wisdom modifier + the

monster's proficiency bonus) or suffer 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The area of effect becomes difficult terrain.

UNDISPUTED

While ensconced within its lair, this monster reigns supreme.

Prerequisite: The creature must have a lair and be able to take lair actions in order to use this option.

Benefit: While fighting within its lair, the creature can spend a Hit Die to reuse one of its lair actions, even if it hasn't used a different one first. Alternatively, if it expends two Hit Dice, it instead increases the saving throw DC of a lair action by 2.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

Over time, the presence of a legendary creature can change, warp, or corrupt the land and the environment surrounding the lair. These effects, otherwise known as regional effects, fade or end if the legendary creature dies or abandons its lair.

Unlike legendary actions and lair actions, regional effects normally exist without the monster needing to do anything. Regional effects exist without the need for the monster to spend actions or expend Hit Dice. The new regional effects described below, however, are unusual in that they only take effect if the legendary creature spends the requisite number of Hit Dice each day. Thus, at the start of each day (such as following a long rest), the monster expends the number of Hit Dice required to create the regional effect—which in turn means the monster doesn't have use of those Hit Dice for other purposes. Creating these regional effects doesn't require an action.

Because regional effects connect to a legendary monster's theme or concept, not all the options described below make sense for a given monster. A monster with no interest in beasts, for example, probably wouldn't use the Beast Spy option.

BEAST SPY

A mundane animal becomes a spy for the monster.

Effect: Once per day, the monster can spend one Hit Die to form a telepathic link with one beast friendly to it or charmed by it. This link allows the monster to send simple telepathic commands to the beast. The link also allows the beast to telepathically send basic emotions and simple concepts back to its master. This telepathy has a maximum

range of 1 mile. The beast must have an Intelligence of 3 or less to be affected by this ability. The legendary creature can have multiple beast spies, but it must spend a Hit Die on each to form the telepathic link.

DREAM INTRUSION

The monster can invade the dreams of intruders within its domain.

Effect: The monster can spend three Hit Dice each day to create a programmed dream or nightmare that afflicts all sleeping intruders within 1 mile of the monster's lair. This nightmare functions similar to a dream. The monster treats any intruder in the region as a creature it knows for purposes of this effect. The monster decides the nature of the dream and any message delivered to all dreamers. This effect cannot contact or affect creatures that do not dream, such as elves.

ENCHANTED SLEEP

Intruders entering the region find themselves lulled into a deep, troubled slumber.

Effect: Each day the monster spends three Hit Dice, it places a magical curse upon the region within 1 mile of its lair. Any intruder entering this region must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 + the monster's Charisma modifier + the monster's proficiency bonus) or fall into a deep, troubled sleep. An affected creature falls unconscious for 1d8 hours. Another creature can spend an action to awaken a creature affected by this sleep. Undead and creatures immune to being charmed are not affected by this power. Once a creature has been affected by this power, it becomes immune to the effect for the next 24 hours.

PLANE OF ORIGIN

The monster treats its lair as part of its native dimension.

Effect: By spending two Hit Dice once per day, the monster treats its lair as part of its native plane. This means the monster is considered native to the plane upon which it dwells, such as for purposes of the *banishment* spell. If the monster spends one additional Hit Die, it gains further protection from *banishment*. If it fails its Charisma saving throw against this spell, it only remains trapped on the harmless demiplane for 1d4 rounds (rather than 1 minute), after which it reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied.

SPEAK NOT THE NAME

The monster knows when its name is spoken within its domain.

Effect: A creature's name holds power, and the name of a legendary creature holds tremendous power. If the monster expends two Hit Dice at the start of each day, it automatically knows when a creature within 1 mile of the lair speaks its name. The monster learns the speaker's approximate location.

SPITEFUL RUIN

Throughout the region surrounding the monster's lair, the water and food become tainted.

Effect: Each day, when the monster spends three Hit Dice, all natural water sources, all edible plants, and all creatures within 1 mile of the lair become toxic when intruders consume them. A creature that consumes anything toxic must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC = 8 + the monster's Constitution modifier + the monster's proficiency bonus) or become poisoned for 8 hours. A poisoned creature can attempt this save again at the end of each hour, ending the effect on itself with a success.

WALLS HAVE EYES AND EARS

The monster can spy upon any creature within its demesne.

Effect: As a lair action and by spending two Hit Dice, the monster can cast *clairvoyance* anywhere within its lair with no need for components. The monster must spend its lair action each round to maintain concentration on this effect.

THIEF'S LAMENT

The monster instinctively knows when a creature enters its lair.

Effect: Each day, the creature can place an alarm by spending one Hit Die for each entrance into its lair. This effect lasts until the next day. Like the spell, the monster can choose whether the alarm produces an audible or a silent mental alarm. The entrance cannot be larger than a 20-foot cube. An alarm triggers if a Tiny or larger creature passes through the entrance.

MONSTER ABILITIES BY TYPE

The following options are divided among the different monster types, such as aberration, fiend, or undead. A monster must be of that creature type to choose one of the listed Hit Dice options.

ABERRATION

When an aberration uses a Hit Die, the result should include plenty of alien, creepy, or frightening descriptions. At its best, an aberration exists outside the natural order, and everything about it screams unnatural. They act in unexpected ways and pursue motivations difficult—if not impossible—for most creatures to comprehend.

ALIEN MIND

The structure of the creature's mind enables it to shrug off most psychic attacks.

Benefit: When targeted by an attack that inflicts psychic damage, as a reaction, the aberration can spend one Hit Die to gain advantage on any saving throw allowed against the effect. If the aberration spends two Hit Dice as a reaction, it instead gains resistance to psychic damage until the end of its next turn. Finally, if the aberration spends four Hit Dice as a reaction, it gains immunity to psychic damage until the end of its turn.

ALTER REALITY

The creature bends the laws of this dimension to its own benefit.

Benefit: As an action, when the aberration spends one or more Hit Dice (to a maximum equal to its proficiency bonus), it can alter reality in several possible ways. Decide how many dice the creature expends and consult the table below for the effects. Unless stated differently, this benefit lasts until the end of the creature's next turn.