



Loot

You keep what you kill

Loot is a game is about waking up in a strange and dangerous place, surviving, and acquiring **loot**. Each **player** takes on the role of a **character**, who attempts to survive, explore, and find loot. The game ends when escape to safety, or there are no survivors. One player also serves as the **guide** to the world.

How to Play

Loot is a **cooperative game**, consisting of a friendly, lighthearted and collaborative conversation between all the players. The guide describes the world and helps the players navigate its perils, faithfully describing what they can see, answering questions, and presenting meaningful choices. The **players** *are their characters* during the game. Players should ask questions and consider their actions carefully, both from the perspective of their characters and themselves.

The guide can also have a character, for cases when its better to have an in-game persona guide the players in first-person.

The **world** is a dangerous, deadly place. Players should remember that the world is their adversary, not the guide. The world is also filled with wonder, and lots of loot. *You keep what you kill.*

Character Creation

As a player, you will take on the role of a character in the world. Write a simple one-line character description. Examples:

1. Gideon Blackthorn: A young swordsman from a remote village, driven by a thirst for adventure and a desire to prove himself.
2. Elara Ravenshadow: A sorceress with untamed powers, seeking to harness her abilities and unravel the mysteries of her lineage.
3. Bran Ironheart: A burly blacksmith's apprentice, yearning to forge his own destiny and become a legendary warrior.
4. Astrid Stormwind: A skilled archer with a troubled past, determined to find redemption and protect those in need.
5. Lyra Moonshadow: A stealthy thief with a heart of gold, on a quest to uncover the truth behind her parents' disappearance.
6. Magnus Stonehaven: A charismatic bard with a silver tongue, seeking fame and fortune through his mesmerizing tales and enchanting melodies.

When the game starts you will wake up wearing rags, with no equipment. The guide will describe your surroundings, and the world will probably try to kill you. Sounds like a good time to look for loot!

AI Prompt: Suggest 6 new named characters, novices with no experience, 20 words each, Robert E Howard.

Loot

The focus of this game is adventuring in dangerous places and acquiring **loot**, such as items of equipment, treasure, and magic items. Sometimes you will find loot that isn't nailed down and can just take it, but other times it will be guarded by hazards such as monsters, traps, or its *current* owner.

Most loot consists of mundane objects, such as a stick, rope, water flask, or a sharp knife. You'd be surprised what you can do with these things if you are clever. You're going to need to be clever to survive.

Learning Items

You need to **learn** an item before you can use it to its full potential. For example, if you find a sword then you need to spend some time practicing with it and feeling the balance of that sword, before you have it all dialed in. The guide will gauge your chances against the world better if you are using loot you have learned.

You can **learn** one item after you spend several hours training with the item. So, you can usually learn one item per day, assuming a normal day out and about, and then rest time back at camp.

- Time is precious, so you may need to carefully weigh your choices of which item to learn.
- While everybody knows how to use simple everyday items like shovels and rope, not everybody can use them to their full potential.
- Each item is considered different unless mass-manufactured, such as general-issue cavalry sabres, matches, a hammer, etc.
- Magic items cannot be used until learned.
- Some rare items have more than one part to learn, such as a sword that can also cast a spell, or two spells.
- Taming/training a pet also works this way
- You cannot learn items when **deprived**.

Fast Learner

You can learn an item much more rapidly if it is similar to an item you already know, or is related to our character description. So, you can learn familiar item along with a normal item. An ex-soldier can rapidly learn a cutlass, an archer will find it easy to learn new bows, and a mage will find it easy to learn more spell scrolls, etc.

Loot Saves Lives

Protective items such as armor can help you to avoid injury. Some items can protect you if you use them actively, for example a sword can parry. Just describe what you are doing in the conversation and the guide will sort it all out. But if the guide mentions a rock falling on your head and seems to have forgotten that you have a helmet (especially if you **learned** that item) then give a gentle reminder.

Caches

While you will always feel excited when you find new loot, after you stop to rest you will realize how heavy a lot of it is. So, you will feel compelled to **cache** some loot each time you make camp or rest. Nobody wants to carry around lots of heavy, bulky items such as crates, so those get dropped first. Same goes with extra weapons and armor, and anything else that doesn't seem essential. Since you might want the loot later, you cache it, that is you store it and mark the spot so you can find it later. You must always cache at least one item when you make camp or rest. You'll develop a long line of caches over time. If you can, it's not a bad idea to cache extra food or water just in case.

You're doing this for own good. It's a good idea to stay fast and nimble, as you might need to run fast. Having caches to run back to will also be very helpful some day.

Magic

If you're really lucky you'll find some magic loot! You might find a magic ring that unlocks locks, or magic boots that can run up walls, a magic belt that makes you stronger, or a gem that protect you from snake venom.

You must **learn** the magic of the item before you can invoke its magic. If the item has more than one magic ability then each needs to be learned separately. If the item has a useful function, such as a sword or a rope, then that is also learned separately.

Whenever you use magic, you run the risk that the guide will tell you the item is **tapped**. This won't happen every time you use the item. You can't use magic from a tapped item until you find a way to **untap** it. You can't untap items when **deprived**. This varies per item, but many items untap when you sleep. Be careful what magic you invite into your dreams...

Survival

Survival is a major part of the game, especially on your first night and early days into the game. You will need to find food, water, shelter, and other essentials of life. The world is going to try to kill you in other ways too.

Deprivation

You are **deprived** if you lack a crucial need (food, water, sleep, etc). You will lack your full energy and cannot **learn** or **untap** items.

You are also more likely to make mistakes. The guide may regretfully have to inform you that your latest plan failed or some other mishap occurred.

So, for your protection you should always eat a meal and drink water whenever you stop to rest, learn an item, sleep, or untap an item. Otherwise the things in the world might see you as easy prey...

Injury

If you become injured then you should try to hole up and rest, and play out your healing process in the conversation. You will not be able to heal if **deprived**, but otherwise you have a lot of time on your hands to **learn** items.

Retirement

At some point you will need to retire your character and start another. Your character might get mangled, die, or be out of commission healing for a long time. You might find all the loot you need to retire happily and escape to safety. Or you just might just want to try a new character.

When you make a new character, you can transfer loot from your old character to your new character. Your new character will need to learn the others normally.

Information for the Guide

As the guide, your role is to serve as the players' guide to the world. You are not the world, you are a cooperative guide to the world. This is an important distinction because the world is strange and dangerous. The world is the adversary, not you.

The **world** will be created during play, starting with the local area where the players are right now. You can optionally prepare some of this ahead of time, or use a prewritten world, but avoid over-preparation.

Starting the Game

Have the players make their characters and then jump right into the game. Briefly describe the **starting situation**, where the characters wake up in rags, with none of their prior belongings. Then step back and see what the players do.

1. Blinking away disorientation, you find yourself surrounded by debris and fellow castaways. The distant sound of crashing waves echoes in your ears.
2. Opening your eyes, you find yourself in a dimly lit dungeon, with only tattered clothing and the stench of decay.
3. The cold cobblestones greet you as you regain consciousness in a shadowy alley, penniless and stripped of all possessions.
4. In the heart of a dense forest, you rise from a bed of leaves, bewildered by your destitution and oblivious to your past.
5. Emerging from a murky swamp, you stand ankle-deep in mud, your tattered garments barely providing warmth against the chill.
6. With the taste of ash lingering in your mouth, you awaken amidst the ruins of a city, its grandeur reduced to rubble.

Tips: Answer any questions they have helpfully, but keep the world mysterious for now. Suggest that the players should focus on their immediate problem.

- Make sure they know this is a dangerous world and will need to use their wits to survive.
- They do not know where they are
- They have little or no memory of what happened to bring them to this precarious situation
- Do not provide any background info or lore for the world
- Suggest that the players should focus on their immediate problem
- Reinforce that the world is going to do things on its own

The Conversation

Most of the game consists of a loose conversation between you and the players. You will describe what they see, they will ask questions, you'll answer, etc. Sometimes you will describe things that happen and the players say how they respond, other times the players will take the initiative and you'll respond with what happens. Just keep it natural and go with the flow.

For the most part, just go with what makes the most sense to you in the moment and what would be the most fun for everyone. If the players describe something sensible then let it happen! If they describe something unwise or infeasible then describe the natural consequences. But above all, keep it fun.

Example: The players are in a town and ask you if there is a shop with a back door left unlocked. They are probably looking to cause some mischief or loot the place, which sounds fun, so just go with it.

The Fog of War

This is an adventure game, so not everything should go smoothly and be predictable, and even perfect plans don't always work. During the conversation you should frequently roll a die, with a 1-in-6 chance of an outcome that will be surprising to *everyone*. This could be the opposite of what "should" have happened, or the surprise might be some cost. Or the character might escape what seemed like certain doom.

Examples: Perhaps the expert fails or the novice succeeds. The characters stumble on a secret door or hear a noise when they weren't listening. Someone finds a scorpion in their bed.

Dice Modifiers

While a basic 1-in-6 is fine starting point, you can adjust your roll to account for various factors that should affect the odds.

- **Advantage.** Roll a second time if the first roll is a 1. For example, the expert archer is shooting their bow. Or the character has a better weapon than the foe.
- **Disadvantage.** Roll a second time if the first roll is not a 1. For example, the spindly wizard is trying to use a heavy weapon. Or the character lacks armor.
- **Extremes.** Roll a third time if the Advantage or Disadvantage seems more extreme. For example, Robin Hood is shooting his bow.

If you don't have dice handy then improvise. You could use the seconds hand of a clock. As a last resort, have two people say a number from 1-6 at the same time, a match is a surprise.

Combat

The world is dangerous, and the characters have a very good chance of dying. Their only hope is their wits. Fighting is always a choice, but rarely a wise one.

Combat is just another part of the conversation, and the most likely outcome should happen. A character who swims with reef sharks will probably get eaten. Tangling with pirates will probably end up with someone getting sliced by a cutlass.

You're going to need to decide whether the character or the opposition have the upper hand, and at least early in the game it's usually not going to be in favor of the character. That outcome will happen, barring the 1-in-6 chance of a surprise.

If the danger doesn't feel like certain death (such as pirates rather than a t-rex) then give the character a second chance 1-in-6 chance of suffering a minor wound instead of death. You can even skip the roll if the player mentioned they are leveraging on their armor or other protective items, to reward clever play.

You can extend this out to other kinds of dangers, such as a magic item that protects against poison, etc.

Adventure: The Isle of Loots

This is a sample adventure where the characters find themselves shipwrecked on a mysterious deserted isle.

Blinking away disorientation, you find yourself surrounded by debris and fellow castaways. The distant sound of crashing waves echoes in your ears.

Have the players make their characters and then jump right into the game. Now step back and see what the players do.

While the players are making their characters, plant some **useful loot** nearby for clever players might find to increase their odds of survival.

1. A sturdy wooden staff, perfect for support and self-defense as you navigate the treacherous unknown.
2. A weathered cloak, its thick fabric offering protection against the elements and concealing your ragged appearance.
3. A small flint and steel set, providing the means to start fires, a valuable asset for survival and warmth.
4. A leather-bound water skin, filled with fresh water, quenching your parched throat and sustaining you on your journey.
5. A pouch of dried rations, offering sustenance during lean times, a lifeline in the face of hunger.
6. A length of strong rope, versatile and dependable, aiding in climbing, securing, or fashioning makeshift tools and weapons.

AI Prompt: Suggest 6 useful items to find in the start of a novel where the characters wake up in rags without any of their belongings, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.

You can optionally include some items mentioned or implied by the characters' descriptions. However, any powerful items should not be found here, at most finding a pointer clue.

Elaboration

After a few moments, provide an immediate danger, such as wolf-sized crabs. Let the players tackle the problem as they will.

AI Prompt: Suggest 6 natural (wildlife or environmental) dangers seen, heard, or smelled at the start of an adventure novel where the characters wake up after a shipwreck on an uncharted island, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.

Also provide a warning in the form of someone who had died, possibly to the same danger you described. The corpse should have some loot.

1. A sharp flint and striker, essential for kindling fire and providing warmth and protection in the wilderness.
2. A sturdy waterskin, partially filled, offering a precious source of hydration in this unfamiliar and parched land.
3. A leather pouch containing dried rations, a lifeline to sustain you until you can secure more substantial sustenance.
4. A length of sturdy rope, a versatile tool for securing shelter, crafting traps, or navigating treacherous terrain.
5. A worn but serviceable hunting knife, a versatile weapon for defense, hunting, and survival in this perilous realm.
6. A weathered and well-maintained compass, guiding you through the uncharted wilderness and helping you find your way.

AI Prompt: Suggest 6 useful items to find on a dead person in the start of a novel where the characters wake up in rags

without any of their belongings, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.

AI Prompts

I asked an AI to suggest the examples for this adventure, so we can quickly generate as many as we need, for any genre or writing style. While many of us can write better than an AI, this at least can serve as a source for inspiration when you're looking at a blank page.

Suggest 6 new named characters, novices with no experience, 20 words each, Robert E Howard.

Suggest 6 starting situations for a novel where several characters wake up in rags without any of their belongings, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.

Suggest 6 useful items to find in the start of a novel where the characters wake up in rags without any of their belongings, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.

Suggest 6 natural (wildlife or environmental) dangers seen, heard, or smelled at the start of an adventure novel where the characters wake up in an unknown location, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.

Suggest 6 useful items to find on a dead person in the start of a novel where the characters wake up in rags without any of their belongings, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.

Suggest 6 valuable items to find on a corpse in the start of a novel where the characters wake up in rags without any of their belongings, 20 words each, second person, Robert E Howard.