



SLY FLOURISH'S
THE LAZY
DM'S COMPANION

**GUIDELINES AND INSPIRATION TO HELP YOU RUN AWESOME
FIFTH EDITION FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAMES**

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the third in the Lazy DM's series, alongside *Return of the Lazy DM* and *The Lazy DM's Workbook*. As with each of those books, you don't need to read the entire series to find value in this book. Each title stands alone, but also works together with the others to help you run great fantasy RPGs.

Return of the Lazy DM offers an eight-step framework for preparing for your game, along with deeper dives into setting up, running, and thinking about your game. *The Lazy DM's Workbook* sits beside you at your table when you're running your game, offering references, random tables, and maps to help you improvise as things take unexpected turns.

The Lazy DM's Companion is designed to work with you while you're preparing your game, offering guidelines and inspiration to make running games easier, and to help you build fantastic adventures and campaigns.

Over the past seven years of running the fifth edition of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game, we've all learned new tips and tricks to make things run better. We've looked at the bumps and sharp corners of this system and have learned how to smooth them out. This book contains more such guidelines, all designed to make it easier to run our games and focus on the parts that bring the most fun to the table.

Although this book was written with fifth edition fantasy in mind, much of what's here can be used with any fantasy RPG. About half the book contains guidelines to help you prepare and run 5e fantasy games, with those guidelines able to be used alone or in conjunction with other parts of the book as you see fit. You're free to use what works for you, to skip what doesn't, and to modify any of the book's suggestions and advice to suit your game—including modifying it for games other than 5e fantasy.

The other half of the book contains "adventure generators"—sets of random tables built around a particular adventure theme, from protecting a village to determining what horrors might be imprisoned in an ancient keep. There's also a core adventure generator with tables to suit many different adventure types. The random tables in the book have been grouped around these adventure types, so you typically won't need to flip around to access all the tables you need to build a particular type of adventure. We spent a lot of effort making sure that the tables hit the right resolution—specific enough to give you clear ideas you can use, but general enough that you don't get overtaken by minutiae.

This book also contains a number of location maps. While the maps in *The Lazy DM's Workbook* focused on specific locations, the maps in this book are more general purpose. Each has been designed to serve as the basis for multiple locations, using a mixture of natural and constructed environments. Each has enough details



to fill things out, but enough details left blank that you can use them in multiple situations.

USING RANDOM TABLES

This book makes heavy use of random tables, in the hope of inspiring all of us as DMs to let our minds travel in directions we never would have considered on our own. These random tables aren't intended to build entire adventures with just a few dice rolls. Rather, they're intended to inspire you to come up with your own adventure ideas as you and the dice work together to create something new and unique.

When you're sitting down to plan an adventure, go through the generators in this book and see if any of them includes a theme that excites you. Then roll on the tables in that generator and see what comes up. The results might make no sense to you initially. But spend some time with them, and see if you can make sense of them as the story forms in your mind. If they *really* don't work, just reroll and try again. Random tables alone aren't enough to build a fun game, but a creative mind fueled by randomness can come up with truly unique and inspiring adventures.

GUIDELINES FOR STORY-FOCUSED GAMES

All the guidelines in this book serve one ultimate purpose—to make it easier for you to run your games while staying focused on the evolving story taking place at your table. This book is built from the philosophy that the stories we share with friends and family matter more than the mechanics of the game. The mechanics serve the story, not the other way around. Likewise, the book is built around the idea that as DMs, we don't write the story ahead of time. Rather, we set the stage for the story that we and the players create at the table together.

Every part of this book is intended to make it easier to share that story. As such, the book abstracts the mechanics as much as possible to keep a focus on high-action fantasy roleplaying. As you would expect from any Lazy DM book, *The Lazy DM's Companion* aims you towards the easy path whenever possible, sometimes simplifying the fine details that other DMs embrace. This process might push too far for you in some areas. That's fine. Just use the guidelines that help you share the story you want to share in the way you want to share it.

TOOLS FOR IMPROVISATION

The following tools can help you improvise during your games. Keep a copy of this section handy, paste notes in your favorite DM's book, or memorize the key mechanics presented here to help you react to unexpected events and unforeseen changes in the game.

DIFFICULTY CHECKS

For any given task or challenge, ask yourself how hard it is to accomplish. Then assign a DC from **10 (easy)** to **20 (very hard)**. If a task is trivial, don't bother asking for a roll. Rather, the characters automatically succeed. Likewise, reserve DCs above 20 for superhuman challenges.

IMPROVISED DAMAGE

Decide on a challenge rating (CR) for the source of the damage, from **CR 1 (low challenge)** to **CR 20 (very high challenge)**. Then roll a number of damage dice of a particular kind, as follows:

- **Single-Target Damage:** CR × 5 (d10)
- **Multiple-Target Damage:** CR × 3 (d6)

This challenge rating can be thought of as roughly equivalent to the average level of a group of characters. However, don't automatically choose a challenge rating based on the level of the characters. Rather, the level of the challenge might be higher or lower than the characters, depending on the situation.

IMPROVISED STATISTICS

Whenever you need to improvise the Armor Class and saving throws for a creature, or the saving throw DCs for effects created by the creature, use the following guidelines based on the creature's challenge rating:

- AC = 10 + 1/2 CR
- DC = 10 + 1/2 CR
- Attack Bonus = 2 + 1/2 CR
- Saving Throw with Proficiency = 2 + 1/2 CR
- Hit Points = 20 × CR

You can use the same process to improvise similar statistics for traps and other objects that deal damage and can be attacked to destroy them. Just estimate the object's CR by comparing it to various creatures that produce the same sorts of effects in combat.

OTHER IMPROV TRICKS

The following tricks can also help make it easier for you to improvise during your game:

- Use the story the players give to you, rather than forcing the characters to stick to a path you set.
- Use static monster damage.
- In combat, go around the table by player instead of rolling for initiative.

- Use advantage and disadvantage to reward unique approaches or clarify poor choices.
- Improve pacing by changing monster hit points on the fly to speed up or prolong a fight. (See "Monster Difficulty Dials" on page 9 for more on this topic.)
- Let the characters stumble upon two weak monsters, then see whether monsters and characters want to fight or simply have a conversation.

DEADLY ENCOUNTER BENCHMARK

Choose monsters that make sense for the location, the situation, and the story. Don't worry about whether an encounter is "balanced"—except to determine if it might be deadly. **An encounter might be deadly if the total of all the monsters' challenge ratings is greater than one quarter of the total of all the characters' levels, or one half of the characters' levels if the characters are 5th level or higher.**

If an encounter might be deadly, warn the players—and make sure the characters have a chance to escape. (See "Lazy Combat Encounters" on page 8 for more information on creating great combat encounters.)

RUNNING HORDES

When running hordes, instead of rolling independent attack rolls or saving throws, **assume that one-quarter of those rolls succeed.** Increase or decrease that number depending on the situation (for example, if many creatures in the horde have advantage or disadvantage). Then instead of tracking individual hit points for a horde, tally the damage done to the entire horde when any of its creatures are hit. Every time the tally becomes equal to or higher than the hit points of any individual creature in the horde, remove a creature from the horde and reset the tally. Round monster hit points to the nearest 5 or 10 to make things easier.

NAMES

You can never have enough names on hand while improvising your game. Here are a few you can use whenever an NPC, location, business, or other part of your game needs a name.

First Names: Shum, Agtos, Edbert, Josiane, Olaugh, Rosaline, Pearson, Boyle, Typhon, Satyros, Ronald, Brice, Wilford, Circe, Surbag, Kayla, Latona, Cecily, Shuzug, Moth, Dolly, Minerva, Prutha, Esmour, Tristan, Lake, Stewart, Hehub, Lanos, Ingram, Orvist, Daud, Metope

Last Names/Organization Names: Lionstone, Treeson, Oakhelm, Gentleheart, Whitesong, Starharp, Nightchaser, Shadowstinger, Catclaw, Faeriebound, Leafwing, Goldrock, Dark slicer, Gravewalker, Rainbright, Needleflinger, Goosechaser, Steelclaw, Scalerazor, Glasscutter, Ironhouse, Eboncloud

BUILDING AN RPG GROUP

Finding and maintaining a solid group for roleplaying gaming remains the most difficult task for many DMs. This section offers suggestions for finding players that fit well with your group, and for keeping that group going for years to come.

FINDING PLAYERS

The first step to building an RPG group is finding players. Some of the most common ways to find players for a group include the following:

- Recruit friends and family
- Recruit coworkers
- Ask about putting a notice up at your local game store or library
- Join local organized play groups
- Seek LFG (Looking for Group) forums on Discord, Reddit, Meetup, Next Door, and other forums

SELECTING PLAYERS

Before you invite a player to your gaming group, ensure that they're the right fit for your game and the other players. Start by asking a prospective player questions about their commitment, play style, and reaction to your style of play. Example questions might include the following:

- Do they live nearby, and can they commit to the game's schedule?
- Do they consider themselves a more story-focused or more tactically-focused player?
- Are they okay playing with theater-of-the-mind combat or playing on a battle grid?
- What do they enjoy most about D&D?
- How do they weight their enjoyment of the following: NPC interaction, exploration, world lore, character background, character optimization, and tactical combat?

Asking questions isn't about getting right or wrong answers. Rather, questions can help you identify players who will fit well into your game. They'll also help you determine if there are things a player desires that they're *not* going to find in your game.

Take the time to meet one-on-one with a prospective player and talk to them about what they want from your game and what experiences they've had with other groups. Go with your gut judgment on whether each player you meet will be a good fit for your group.

If they seem like a good fit, invite a player to a single-session game or a short series of games at a different time than your regularly scheduled session, ideally with one or more regular players from your group. See how they fit in during an actual game. If they don't fit, you don't have to invite them to another game. But if they do feel like a good fit, you can invite them to your regular game and see how things go.

FLEXIBLE NUMBERS OF PLAYERS AND ON-CALL PLAYERS

Decide on the minimum and maximum number of players for any given session. A minimum of three and maximum of six is often ideal. While seeking players, you might find some who can't commit to a regularly scheduled game, but who can come from time to time. Put these players on an "on-call" list so that if you have an open chair, you can ask them if they're able to fill it. Putting prospective new players on an on-call list is also a good way to see if they're a good fit for the group before they become a regular player.

CHOOSE A REGULAR SCHEDULE

Rather than attempting to schedule games from session to session, find a set day and time to run your games and stick to it. Run games every week if possible. Otherwise, try every other week at the same day and time. Choose regular, shorter games rather than longer, more infrequent games to help with scheduling.

THE GAME MUST GO ON

Run the game as regularly as you can. Don't cancel games if one or two players can't make it. If you're able to play with as few as three and have a regular group of six, it should take four players cancelling before you have to call off a game. The more consistent the game, the more likely that the players will make it a part of their regular schedule.

If you find that certain players are regularly missing the game, ask if they would prefer to be on your on-call list, and then seek a new player with better availability.

LET ABSENT CHARACTERS FADE INTO THE BACKGROUND

Don't worry about what happens to characters in game when a player misses the session. If there is an easy way for the character to step out of the story, take it. Otherwise, just let the character fade into the background. Your players will understand why you're taking such liberties with the universe, and that in-world consistency isn't as important as making allowances for the realities of our lives.

RPG SAFETY TOOLS

Safety tools help ensure that you and your players are always comfortable with the subject matter of the games you run—especially when that subject matter involves potentially troubling tropes or themes. The safety tools presented in this section can be used individually or together to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the material in the game, even as that material evolves during play. You can choose which safety tools work well for you and your group, and discuss their use early in your game. Usually this means discussing safety tools during your campaign's session zero, or at the beginning of a single-session game.

POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE TOPICS

When you discuss safety tools, describe potentially sensitive topics that might come up in an adventure or campaign. The following table presents a number of topics that are good to talk about, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Blood	Murder
Body horror	Paralysis
Burning	Physical restraint
Cancer	Racism
Cannibalism	Rats
Claustrophobia	Real-world religion
Death by exposure	Ritual sacrifice
Freezing	Self-harm
Gaslighting	Sexism
Genocide	Sexual assault
Gore	Sexual contact
Harm to animals	Slavery
Harm to children	Spiders
Homophobia	Starvation
Incest	Terrorism
Insects	Thirst
Kidnapping	Torture
Mental domination	Transphobia

Decide first what *you* are comfortable with as a DM before bringing a list of topics to your players. Add any topics you're not comfortable with to your own lines and veils (see below).

When describing these topics, ensure that the players are comfortable with them. But also ensure that you identify which topics they are *not* comfortable with, so you can omit that material from your game.

LINES AND VEILS

The concept of lines and veils was originally brought to RPGs by Ron Edwards, allowing you to set parameters for handling sensitive topics in your game. Once you've had a discussion with your players on those topics, talk about whether individual topics should be a **hard line** (material that should never come up) and which can be **veiled** (material that is okay being described vaguely or handled off-screen). For example, after discussion, you and your players might come up with something like the following:

Hard Lines: Sexual assault, violence toward children, abuse toward children or animals, inter-character betrayal, character-driven torture

Veils: Sex and sexual contact, torture, racism, slavery

Discuss hard lines and veils in an open, nonjudgmental conversation with your players, and capture each player's individual lines and veils along with your own.

THE X CARD

Developed by John Stavropoulos, the X card is a 3 × 5 card placed in front of each player with a large "X" drawn on it. Anytime a player isn't comfortable with the material in a scene, they can hold up or touch the X card, notifying you that they are not comfortable with the current situation. When you see this, you can edit out that portion of the scene. Or, if you're not sure what exactly is being X-carded, you can call for a break to get more information privately.

PAUSE FOR A SECOND

"Pause for a second" is a verbal cue that players and DMs can use to interrupt the current in-world scene, have everyone break character, and discuss the current situation as players. It's specifically designed to work well with both online and in-person games.

This safety tool works in much the same way as an X card. But it can also be used to ensure that all the players are comfortable with shifts in the game's story. To use it, you or any other player can say, "Pause for a second" to interrupt the current state of play and break character. It can be used to edit content ("Pause for a second. I'm not comfortable beating a helpless character for information.") or to check in with the group ("Pause for a second. Are we okay making a deal with a vampire?").

As the DM, think about using "pause for a second" regularly, so as to break the stigma of using it only for the most extreme circumstances—which might cause players to avoid using it at all.

BUILDING SITUATIONS

DMs often build adventures from a string of sequential encounters, matching monsters and environments to be run in succession. Instead, consider building adventures around a larger situation—a location, a number of inhabitants with particular behaviors, and a goal for the characters. That way, instead of simply playing through an outline of scenes, the players create a more dynamic scenario by choosing how their characters approach the location and its inhabitants to accomplish their goal.

Creating a situation for an adventure is as easy as coming up with those three elements—location, inhabitants, and goals—and seeing how they might work together. Consider the following example:

- A corrupt lord worships an archdevil within his keep, built on a rocky hill above the local village. (That's our location, which might be set up using a map.)
- In the keep's cellars, mercenaries, cultists, and sentient ooze begin to poison the river flowing through the town. (Those are our inhabitants and their behaviors.)
- The characters must infiltrate the keep, destroy the machinery poisoning the river, and slay the corrupt lord. (Those are the characters' goals.)

TIPS FOR BUILDING SITUATIONS

When building situations in your game, keep the following tips in mind:

- Think “big picture.” Think about how the inhabitants act and react across the whole location, not just in individual encounters.
- Let the players fail forward. A single bad roll shouldn't bring total disaster and defeat. Rather, let each failed roll lead to interesting complications.
- Improvise upward and downward story beats during the game—moments that can make the players and characters feel like they're accomplishing things, or which can dash their hopes and highlight the challenges they face.
- Give the players enough information to plan a strategy.
- Add both unexpected benefits and complications as the characters enact their plans.
- Think about how the inhabitants of a location act and operate when left on their own. Then, during the game, think about how they react to the characters' actions.

COMPLICATIONS

While the characters are involved in a situation, they might run into a complication like one of the following.

d10	Complication		Complication
1	The villain arrives	6	Something's on fire
2	Drunken brawl	7	Something explodes
3	Rival infiltrators	8	Drunken witness
4	Magic goes awry	9	Situation goal is missing
5	Monster summoned	10	Training drill

EXAMPLE LOCATIONS

Any of the following locations can work for building a situation. Let the location suggest as many options as possible by including multiple entrances and multiple paths the characters can follow within the location.

d20	Location		Location
1	Noble's manor	11	Abandoned lair
2	Lord's castle	12	Underwater city
3	Mercenary camp	13	Floating fortress
4	Thieves' mansion	14	Huge airship
5	Crime boss's lair	15	Fiendish prison
6	Cult warrens	16	Fortified town
7	Unholy temple	17	Underground keep
8	Seedy undercity	18	Large watchtower
9	Pirate ship	19	Twisted village
10	Ruined citadel	20	Wretched museum

EXAMPLE INHABITANTS

When building a situation, populate locations with creatures that make sense for the story. Always think about the big picture when considering things like how creatures move within a location.

d20	Inhabitants		Inhabitants
1	Orc knights	11	Lizardfolk druids
2	Abyssal cultists	12	Corrupt nobles
3	Dwarf assassins	13	Vampire thralls
4	Kobold investigators	14	Vengeful mercenaries
5	Undead thralls	15	Dragonkin fanatics
6	Human bandits	16	Drow monks
7	Gnome pirates	17	Unholy paladins
8	Grimlock cannibals	18	Hags and thralls
9	Mages and servants	19	Gnoll marauders
10	Goblin sorcerers	20	War-scarred devils

EXAMPLE GOALS

Clear goals similar in setup to those on the following table are critical when running adventures featuring open-ended and flexible situations built from locations and inhabitants. Ensure that these goals and their importance are clear to the players.

d20	Goal		Goal
1	Steal an arcane tome	11	Meet a monarch
2	Rescue a prisoner	12	Retrieve an artifact
3	Kill a corrupt noble	13	Swap contracts
4	Evaluate enemy forces	14	Kill four lieutenants
5	Open a back door	15	Poison a supply of ale
6	Plant false evidence	16	Sabotage cannons
7	Destroy an altar	17	Copy a map
8	Steal a crystal ball	18	Steal a weapon
9	Recover secret plans	19	Open a magic portal
10	Save a royal heir	20	Stop a ritual

SPIRAL CAMPAIGNS

Spiral campaign development builds campaign worlds starting in the area immediately surrounding the characters, then spirals out, expanding the world as the characters experience it. This section offers suggestions and inspiration for building a spiral campaign.

CAMPAIGN PITCH

Start off by describing the central theme of your campaign in a single sentence. This campaign pitch becomes the main focus of the campaign, and might be given to the players during your session zero so they can build their characters around it. Use the following campaign pitches as a starting point for a campaign, or as inspiration for pitches of your own.

d20	Pitch
1	Prevent the summoning of the Dragon Queen
2	Prevent the coming of the Black Moon
3	End the dark reign of Elenda the lich queen
4	Break the political power of Vroth the death knight
5	Kill Veresyn the vampire lord and his horde
6	Restore light to the Vale of Nightmares
7	Restore the prison of Orlon the demon prince
8	Shatter the draconic Alliance of Five Claws
9	Save people from the blood feast of a gnoll war band
10	Restore light to the fallen celestial Ixyan
11	Dismantle the Empire of the White Blade
12	Find the seven keys to the gates of Illumenia
13	Prevent the resurrection of the sorcerer king
14	Stop the cult of the Red Ocean
15	Save the heir of the sapphire throne
16	Find and seal the vault of the world serpent
17	Close the gateway to the Outside
18	Destroy the Sword of the Black Sun
19	Slay the ancient dragon Larthyx Flametongue
20	End the dark pact of Karthyn the archdevil

SIX TRUTHS

Once you have your pitch, identify six truths that set your campaign apart from others, then share them with your players. Here are six example truths for a campaign built around the coming of the Black Moon from above.

- Sages and cultists describe the coming of the Black Moon—an elder evil that will swallow the world.
- Monsters have been sighted along what were once the safest roads. The populations of whole villages are disappearing without a trace.
- A floating obsidian citadel has appeared above the Cragteeth Mountains to the north.
- Folk once had to deal with the coming of the Black Moon, but their secrets for surviving it were lost.
- The evil King Trex uses the chaos created by the coming of the Black Moon to wage war across the land.
- Prophecy speaks of the return of the Knights of the White Sun, who will restore light to the land.

STARTING LOCATION

Spiral campaigns begin in a central location, often a small settlement from which the characters set out to explore neighboring lands. Though a small village always works well as a starting location, there are many alternatives.

d10	Location		Location
1	Adventurers' guild	6	Refugee camp
2	Mining outpost	7	Fortress under siege
3	Recent shipwreck	8	Great library
4	Frontier outpost	9	Planar hub city
5	Holy temple	10	Crumbling fortress

CAMPAIGN FRONTS

Campaign fronts are the external motivators in a campaign. Like a battlefield (from which they're named), a front is a point of conflict that advances and retreats as the campaign develops. Fronts are often villains, but might also be external forces such as natural disasters or grim fate. Campaigns might have up to three fronts at any given time, including any of the following.

d20	Front		Front
1	Thieves' guild	11	Mages' guild
2	Dark necromancer	12	Outlander horde
3	Armageddon cult	13	Meteor storm
4	Mercenary army	14	Planar invaders
5	Forgotten machine	15	Powerful archmage
6	Evil construct	16	Ancient lich
7	Demon prince	17	Blood-raging cannibals
8	Archdevil	18	Unseelie fey lord
9	Corrupt noble lord	19	Draconic terror
10	Rival adventurers	20	Undead prince

LOCAL ADVENTURE LOCATIONS

As the campaign spirals outward, the characters will become aware of local adventuring locations. Drop three such adventure locations into the areas close by the starting location. And if you need help filling out an adventure location, just look to the other sections of this book!

d20	Location		Location
1	Ancient crypt	11	Abandoned dungeon
2	Forgotten sewers	12	Ruined watchtower
3	Haunted keep	13	Huge hollow statue
4	Festering well	14	Sunken catacombs
5	Rat-infested cellar	15	Obsidian ziggurat
6	Unholy temple	16	Haunted forest
7	Dangerous caves	17	Otherworldly rift
8	Underground city	18	Submerged grotto
9	War-torn citadel	19	Dead hollow tree
10	Fey glade	20	Sundered shipwreck

LAZY COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

This section helps you build and improvise dynamic combat encounters based on the fiction of the game. It's intended as an alternative take on the encounter-building guidelines in *The Lazy DM's Workbook*.

START WITH THE STORY

Good combat encounters begin with the story. Instead of building combat encounters as fixed components of the game, let combat encounters evolve naturally from the story taking place at the table.

Begin by asking the following question: **What monsters make sense given the current location and situation?** Then let that question guide you in the creation of a list of monsters and NPCs that might show up at a given location, and in what quantity.

Instead of predefining scenes as combat, roleplaying, or exploration, let the characters' approach determine what happens. Maybe they fight the guards at the gatehouse. Maybe they sneak past. Maybe they try to play the part of hired mercenaries. But let whatever happens come from the choices of the players.

AVERAGE CHARACTER HIT POINTS

Gauging the level of challenge in an encounter often comes down to comparing the amount of damage a monster can inflict to the hit points of the characters. Hit points vary widely between classes, but you can use the following formula to estimate an average character's hit points at a given level: $(\text{Level} \times 7) + 3$.

By giving you a rough estimation of how tough characters of a given level are, this formula can help you gauge how dangerous a specific monster will be, as well as judging the potential deadliness of traps, hazards, and other effects that deal damage.

POTENTIAL DEADLINESS

Assuming that your chosen monsters aren't dealing damage that easily overwhelms the characters' hit points, you can usually not worry about an encounter's difficulty—unless the encounter is potentially deadly. You can gauge an encounter's potential deadliness with the following benchmark:

An encounter might be deadly if the total of all the monsters' challenge ratings is greater than one quarter of the total of all the characters' levels, or one half of their levels if the characters are 5th level or higher.

To use this benchmark for characters of 1st through 4th level, add up the challenge ratings of all monsters in the encounter. Add up the total levels of all the characters, then divide that number by 4. Then compare the results. If the characters are above 5th level, you use the same process but divide the total character levels by 2 instead of 4. In either case, if the challenge rating sum is the higher number, the encounter might be deadly.

Each time the characters gain a new level, calculate this deadly benchmark score and jot it down in your preparation notes so you have it on hand. If you find that the characters in your game often have an easy time with potentially deadly encounters, treat the characters as though they are one or more levels higher. This will raise the benchmark at which an encounter might become deadly, making the calculation more accurate.

This benchmark assumes multiple monsters, and doesn't work well for gauging combat against a single monster. For legendary monsters—those with legendary actions and possibly lair actions—an encounter is generally deadly if the monster's challenge rating is 5 or more higher than the characters' average level.

CHARACTER CAPABILITIES VARY

No chart, table, or equation works perfectly to judge encounter balance at any given level, because no such system can take into account the wide range of options that can affect combat. Any individual character's effective power in a fight can go well beyond what's expected for their given level, especially at higher levels. And other factors that can affect a character's power might include any of the following:

- Player experience
- Class synergy between different characters in the party
- Magic items
- Environmental and situational circumstances
- Feats and multiclassing
- The total number of actions on either side
- How well rested the characters are

So use the benchmarks for determining whether an encounter might be deadly as a starting point. Then trust that you'll be better able to gauge what your characters can handle in combat the more you see them in action during the game.

SCALING FOR HIGHER LEVELS

As characters reach 11th level and higher, the deadly encounter benchmark becomes less useful for accurately representing a deadly encounter. Depending on the capabilities of those higher-level characters, monsters might pose even less of a threat than their challenge rating denotes. As such, you can further adjust the deadly encounter benchmark to account for this power with the following optional guideline:

At 11th level and higher, an encounter might be deadly if the total of all the monsters' challenge ratings is greater than three quarters of the total of all the characters' levels, or if it is equal to the total of their levels if the characters are 17th level or higher.

This sets up encounters of a much greater challenge than the baseline benchmark, but it might work more accurately for higher-powered characters.

MONSTER DIFFICULTY DIALS

Balancing combat encounters is notoriously difficult. Different groups of characters can bring very different capabilities to each battle, even at the same level. However, because monsters as they are typically presented are the average of their type, you can adjust the averages to subtly or dramatically change the difficulty of a given monster or group of monsters. By turning these “difficulty dials” for monsters, you can easily shift the tone of combat even in the middle of a battle.

“HIT POINT” DIAL

Hit points given for monsters are the average of their Hit Dice. This means you can adjust hit points within the minimum and maximum of a monster’s Hit Dice formula based on the individual story for that particular monster, the current pacing of the battle, or both.

For example, an average ogre has 59 hit points from $7d10 + 21$ Hit Dice. This means a weak ogre might have as few as 28 hit points, while a particularly strong ogre might have 91. This lets you easily set up fights in which minion ogres might have fewer hit points while boss ogres have more. (As an even lazier rule of thumb, you can halve or double a monster’s average hit points to give you a weaker or stronger version of that monster.)

You can turn this dial before a battle begins or even during the battle itself. If a battle drags, reduce the hit points of a monster to get it out of the fight earlier. If a battle feels like it will be over too quickly, increase the monster’s hit points to make it hold up longer. Start with average hit points, and then turn the hit point dial one way or the other whenever doing so can make the game more fun.

“NUMBER OF MONSTERS” DIAL

The “number of monsters in a battle” dial alters combat challenge the most dramatically of all the dials—but because it’s so clearly visible to players, this dial is also sometimes difficult to change during a battle.

If circumstances allow for it, some monsters might flee or automatically fall depending on the circumstances of a fight. Undead might break if their necromancer master is killed, and many intelligent creatures will flee a fight they can’t win. Other times, more monsters might enter the fray in a second wave if the first wave isn’t standing up to the characters.

When developing a combat encounter in which you think you might turn this dial, consider beforehand how monsters might leave the battle or how other monsters might join the fight as reinforcements in a realistic way.

“DAMAGE” DIAL

Increasing the amount of damage a monster deals on each attack increases the monster’s threat and can make a dull fight more fun. In the same way, decreasing monster damage can help prevent a fight from becoming overwhelming if the characters are having trouble.

The static damage value noted in a monster’s stat block represents the average of the damage formula for the monster’s attack. If you use average damage, you can adjust the damage based on that formula. For example, an ogre deals $13 (2d8 + 4)$ bludgeoning damage with their greatclub attack, so you can set this damage at anywhere from 6 to 20 and still be within the range of what you might roll.

If you’re a DM who rolls for damage, you can also turn the damage dial up by adding one or more additional damage dice. If you like, you can have an in-game reason for this increase. Perhaps an ogre sets its club on fire to deal an additional $4 (1d8)$ or $7 (2d6)$ fire damage. Or a particularly dangerous vampire with an unholy sword might deal an extra $27 (6d8)$ necrotic damage if you so choose. Adding these kinds of effects to a monster’s attack is an excellent way of increasing a monster’s threat in a way the players can clearly understand—and it has no upper limit.

“NUMBER OF ATTACKS” DIAL

Increasing or decreasing the number of attacks a monster makes has a larger effect on its threat than increasing its damage. You can increase a monster’s number of attacks if it’s badly threatened by the characters, just as you can reduce its attacks if the characters are having an easy time. An angry ogre left alone after its friends have fallen to the heroes might start swinging its club twice per Attack action instead of just once. Single creatures facing an entire party of adventurers often benefit from increasing their number of attacks.

MIX AND MATCH

You can turn any or all of these dials to tune a combat encounter and bring the most excitement to your game. Don’t turn the dials just to make every battle harder, though. Sometimes cutting through great swaths of easy monsters is exactly the sort of situation players love.

Turning several dials together can change combat dramatically, helping to keep things feeling fresh. For example, a group of starving ogres might be weakened (lowering the hit point dial) but also frenzied in combat (turning up the attack dial). By adjusting these dials when designing encounters and during your game, you can keep the pacing of combat exciting and fun.

WILDERNESS EXPLORATION

This section can be used to build out an interesting environment while the characters are exploring a wilderness setting. Rather than having a wilderness feel like an empty landscape, you can focus on memorable landmarks, distinct paths and route markers, and noteworthy encounter possibilities to bring the characters' wilderness journey to life.

WILDERNESS QUESTS

If you don't have a quest already in mind, or if you'd like to set up a side quest during the characters' wilderness exploration, you can use the following table for inspiration.

d10	Quest
1	Restore a defiled grove
2	Find and heal a wounded beast
3	Locate an ancient fey gateway
4	Find a lost city
5	Recover an item stolen by unseelie fey
6	Find a rare spell component
7	Hunt down a defiler
8	Seek the counsel of an ancient being
9	Locate someone lost in the deep wood
10	Plant a magical acorn

WILDERNESS LANDMARKS

To start building out your wilderness location, choose a number of landmarks the characters might discover while they explore, using the following table for inspiration.

d20	Landmark		Landmark
1	Cracked megalith	11	Acidic hot springs
2	Giant mushroom	12	Natural archway
3	Hollow meteorite	13	Standing stones
4	Huge dead tree	14	Gateway to shadow
5	Perfectly still pool	15	Huge cave entrance
6	Ancient fey gate	16	Lost city of gold
7	Lava lake	17	Huge glowing crystal
8	Giant skull	18	Tunneled mud flats
9	Faerie village	19	Primeval graveyard
10	Tree of skulls	20	Floating monolith



WILDERNESS PATHS

For each of your landmarks, determine what paths—literal or virtual—might connect them. Include multiple paths, loopbacks, dead ends, and secret paths to create interesting options for the characters while traveling.

d20	Path		Path
1	Dancing faeries	11	Pointing skeletons
2	Arcane ley line	12	Obsidian markers
3	Bloody game trail	13	Strange smells
4	Glyphed trees	14	Tree carvings
5	Mushroom path	15	Ghostly wolf
6	Running hares	16	Laughing nymphs
7	Lines in the stars	17	Alluring songs
8	Ancient ravine	18	An old string
9	Roaring river	19	Unique plants
10	Friendly critters	20	Ivy-covered statues

MONSTROUS ENCOUNTERS

You can use this table to determine what monstrous encounters the characters might face while exploring. And even if the characters don't face a monster, they might see signs of monsters that traveled through an area earlier.

d20	Monsters		Monsters
1	Goblin scouts	11	Ancient skeletons
2	Unseelie elves	12	Raging redcaps
3	Mutated giants	13	Solitary vampire
4	Wrathful cyclopes	14	Ravenous ghouls
5	Vengeful medusas	15	Hag coven
6	Gazing basilisks	16	Dark knights
7	Dreadful spiders	17	Twisted cultists
8	Territorial dragon	18	Evil druids
9	Betrayed banshees	19	Drow protectors
10	Confused specters	20	Defiling wizards

WONDROUS SITES

In addition to the locations and encounters above, give thought to unusual creatures and sites the characters might encounter. Such sites can provide upward beats and positive experiences in your adventure.

d10	Encounter
1	Secluded village
2	Ancient healing fountain
3	Natural restful spring
4	Holy knight on a quest of honor
5	Helpful but mischievous faeries
6	Celestial entity of a hero's god
7	Elder tree of wisdom
8	Lost enclave
9	Glade of empowering flowers
10	Vine-covered statue of blessings

CREATING SECRETS AND CLUES

Secrets and clues, as defined in *Return of the Lazy DM*, are short pieces of information the characters might discover during an adventure. Secrets and clues are initially written without regard to the method by which they might be discovered. Instead, we improvise their discovery as the characters engage with the adventure's locations and NPCs.

The following prompts don't create specific secrets and clues. Rather, the questions they ask are meant to inspire the creation of your own secrets for your campaign. Keep in mind that secrets are meant to serve you. Don't overthink them or worry about making them perfect. There's no wrong way to use secrets and clues as long as they help you run your game.

CHARACTER SECRETS

Use character secrets to tie the characters to the world around them. These sorts of secrets might be revealed by NPCs, old journals or letters, suddenly recalled memories, or prophetic dreams.

d10	Character Secret
1	What family history might be revealed?
2	What ties the character to this location?
3	What ghost or spirit haunts the character?
4	What dreams fill the character's rest?
5	What parasite secretly infests the character?
6	Which family member is involved in the adventure?
7	How is the villain related to the character?
8	What NPC who the character thinks is dead still lives?
9	What ritual was the character blessed with as a child?
10	What previous event ties the character to the story?

HISTORICAL SECRETS

Use historical secrets to give the characters meaningful and useful information as they explore the setting of the campaign. Secrets of this kind should provide characters and players alike with bite-sized pieces of local or world history.

Historical secrets might be found as mosaics in ancient tombs, statues in old ruins, dusty tomes in ancient libraries, markings on strange weapons, or tales shared among elderly villagers.

d10	Historical Secret
1	What dead god has a connection to the area?
2	What armies once battled here?
3	What cruel lord was slain in this place?
4	What ancient civilization once thrived here?
5	What old empire's settlements lie buried here?
6	What alien creature or power is hidden here?
7	What rebellion took place here?
8	What primeval mysteries lay buried here?
9	What was this location's former purpose?
10	What horrific monster once ruled here?



NPC AND VILLAIN SECRETS

Use NPC and villain secrets to reveal information about these NPCs to the characters, especially as a means of introducing villains before they face the characters.

Characters might learn NPC or villain secrets from a villain's herald or sidekick, rumors at a local pub, recovered journals, a minion's last words, captured letters, or town gossip.

d10	NPC or Villain Secret
1	What dark history follows the NPC?
2	What makes the NPC think they're right?
3	What was the NPC's great accomplishment?
4	What foe did the NPC defeat?
5	What makes the NPC politically untouchable?
6	What great power does the NPC possess?
7	What does the villain or NPC desire?
8	What regular routines does the NPC follow?
9	Who does the NPC love above all others?
10	What secret does the NPC want to keep hidden?

PLOT AND STORY SECRETS

Use plot and story secrets to teach characters about the larger events going on in the world, and to move the characters forward in the story of your campaign.

Characters might learn these secrets from quest-giving NPCs, notes found on defeated foes, dreams or portents from the gods, NPCs fleeing a disaster, arcane feedback from an object, or psychic projections.

d10	Plot or Story Secret
1	What villainous event will soon come to pass?
2	What disaster is about to befall the land?
3	What royal figure was just assassinated?
4	What dungeon entrance just became revealed?
5	What monsters recently appeared in the realm?
6	What armies just invaded the realm?
7	What dark sign or portent just appeared?
8	What natural disaster has recently struck the area?
9	What unnatural being has appeared in the world?
10	What unusual creature was seen walking the wilds?

CORE ADVENTURE GENERATOR

The tables in this section can help you generate a core fantasy adventure based on the traditional concept of getting hired by a patron or other NPC to take on a quest in a specific location. Often these adventures take place in small settlements surrounded by ancient ruins and monstrous lairs on the edge of civilization.

Use these tables together to generate and inspire full adventures, or use individual tables to fill in the details of other adventures you create or play. This generator (and specifically, the monsters table and the treasure table) is set up for characters of 1st to 4th level, but can be easily modified for higher-level adventures.

PATRONS AND NPCs

Use these tables to generate a patron or NPC for your adventure, applying an NPC stat block to create villains, hirelings, rivals, or heralds.

d20	Behavior	d20	Ancestry
1	Enthusiastic	1	Human
2	Flighty	2	Elf
3	Shifty	3	Dwarf
4	Optimistic	4	Halfling
5	Paranoid	5	Orc
6	Well spoken	6	Drow
7	Superior	7	Tiefling
8	Haughty	8	Dragonborn
9	Pessimistic	9	Fey
10	Suspicious	10	Goblin
11	Worried	11	Construct
12	Greedy	12	Celestial
13	Brave	13	Ghost
14	Stern	14	Wizard's familiar
15	Sly	15	Talking animal
16	Wise	16	Avian
17	Reserved	17	Lizardfolk
18	Cheery	18	Catfolk
19	Opportunistic	19	Lycanthrope
20	Soft spoken	20	Artifact

QUESTS

Any quests the characters are asked to fulfill might be distilled down to one of the following starting points.

d20	Quest	d20	Quest
1	Find an item	11	Open a gate
2	Kill a villain	12	Activate a monument
3	Rescue an NPC	13	Disable an artifact
4	Uncover a secret	14	Recover an item
5	Clear out monsters	15	Convince an NPC
6	Protect a monument	16	Awaken a monster
7	Protect an NPC	17	Put a monster to sleep
8	Steal an item	18	Bury a secret
9	Return an item	19	Discover a monument
10	Close a gate	20	Dig up an artifact

LOCATIONS, MONUMENTS, AND ITEMS

The location of the quest might also contain specific monuments or items tied to the adventure's goals.

d20	Location	d20	Monument	d20	Item
1	Tower	1	Sarcophagus	1	Key
2	Crypts	2	Obelisk	2	Coin
3	Keep	3	Orb	3	Ring
4	Cairn	4	Bone pile	4	Spike
5	Giant statue	5	Skull	5	Stone
6	Caves	6	Megalith	6	Knife
7	Sewers	7	Pillars	7	Earring
8	Temple	8	Throne	8	Doll
9	Mines	9	Statues	9	Goblet
10	Mansion	10	Well	10	Bracelet
11	Academy	11	Orrery	11	Quill
12	Dungeon	12	Effigy	12	Medallion
13	Barrow	13	Arcane circle	13	Brooch
14	Vault	14	Spire	14	Circlet
15	Tomb	15	Altar	15	Glove
16	Warren	16	Pit	16	Bowl
17	Ship	17	Fountain	17	Monocle
18	Sanctum	18	Archway	18	Bottle
19	Cove	19	Cage	19	Die
20	Castle	20	Brazier	20	Lantern

CONDITION, DESCRIPTION, AND ORIGIN

Locations, monuments, or items can be flavored by determining their condition, description, and origin.

d20	Condition	d20	Description	d20	Origin
1	Smoky	1	Ruined	1	Human
2	Acidic	2	Decrepit	2	Elven
3	Bloodied	3	Obsidian	3	Dwarven
4	Burning	4	Haunted	4	Halfling
5	Frozen	5	Unholy	5	Gnomish
6	Poisonous	6	Sunken	6	Tiefling
7	Necrotic	7	Forgotten	7	Dragonborn
8	Thunderous	8	Macabre	8	Orc
9	Ringling	9	Ancient	9	Goblinoid
10	Lightning	10	Festering	10	Undead
11	Radiant	11	Monstrous	11	Celestial
12	Shadowed	12	Golden	12	Fey
13	Oozing	13	Spired	13	Elemental
14	Ethereal	14	Towering	14	Giant
15	Whispering	15	Forsaken	15	Fiendish
16	Windswept	16	Gloomy	16	Unseelie
17	Drowned	17	Horrific	17	Aberrant
18	Diseased	18	Colossal	18	Shadow
19	Crystalline	19	Overgrown	19	Ethereal
20	Silvered	20	Shattered	20	Abyssal

CHAMBERS

Use this table when you need to define the purpose of a chamber in a dungeon, keep, or similar site. Reflavor any chamber to suit the theme of the adventure.

d20	Chamber		Chamber
1	Armory	11	Torture chamber
2	Prison	12	Bedchamber
3	Throne room	13	Gallery
4	Crypt	14	Dining hall
5	Treasury	15	Library
6	Barracks	16	Pantry
7	Monstrous lair	17	Laboratory
8	Storeroom	18	Cesspit
9	Charnel pit	19	Bone yard
10	Museum	20	Scrying chamber

DUNGEON DISCOVERIES

Add useful discoveries such as the following to your adventure, to create upward beats in the characters' story.

d20	Discovery		Discovery
1	Helpful NPC	11	Adventurer's journal
2	Holy fountain	12	Escape tunnel
3	Inspiring statue	13	Useful teleporter
4	Revealing mosaic	14	Enlightening mural
5	Radiant shrine	15	Healing spring
6	Friendly spirit	16	Wounded enemy
7	Hidden campsite	17	Well-stocked armory
8	Edible mushrooms	18	Friendly creature
9	Explorer's pack	19	Useful machinery
10	Spy hole	20	Historical library

DUNGEON MONSTERS

You can add monsters and other foes to your adventure by consulting the following table. Roll a d8 for easy monsters, roll a d12 to expand the range into hard monsters, or roll a d20 to also include dangerous monsters. If you decide to use a monster as a boss monster, give it double hit points and let it take an extra action each turn.

d20	Monster		Monster
1	Human bandits	11	Ghouls
2	Elf cultists	12	Specters
3	Giant rats	13	Human cult fanatics
4	Kobold warriors	14	Gelatinous cubes
5	Stirges	15	Ogres
6	Goblin hunters	16	Wererats
7	Skeletons	17	Basilisks
8	Oozes	18	Green hag
9	Shadows	19	Hell hound
10	Bugbear spies	20	Mummy

TRAPS AND HAZARDS

Add traps as they make sense for the adventure. At 1st through 4th level, traps often have a DC of 13, and deal 7 (2d6) damage for easy traps or 11 (2d10) damage for hard traps.

d20	Trap or Hazard		Trap or Hazard
1	Spiked pit	11	Bear traps
2	Lightning blasts	12	Ghostly haunting
3	Poisoned darts	13	Poisoned gas
4	Swarms of insects	14	Magical instability
5	Explosive runes	15	Barbed spears
6	Psychic pillars	16	Dense fog
7	Flame-jet idols	17	Psychic feedback
8	Force beams	18	Greasy floor
9	Crippling caltrops	19	Thick webs
10	Acidic pools	20	Freezing jets

TREASURE

This table lets you add treasure to the adventure as appropriate. Roll a d10 to determine monetary treasure, or a d20 for monetary and magical treasure.

d20	Treasure		Treasure
1	Coins	11	<i>Potion of healing</i>
2	Bag of gemstones	12	Other potion
3	Platinum jewelry	13	Scroll or <i>spell scroll</i>
4	Rune-scribed gem	14	<i>Bag of holding</i>
5	Golden goblet	15	Wondrous item
6	Ancient tome	16	Wand or rod
7	Treasure map	17	Magic light weapon
8	Ancient relic	18	Magic heavy weapon
9	Fantastic art	19	Magic ranged weapon
10	Jeweled idol	20	Magic armor

SPELLS

Some commonly discovered relics might grant a single-use spell, while less common magic items might allow their wielder to cast a spell daily. Use the list of common spells below or choose specialized spells to create unique magic item rewards.

d20	Discovery		Discovery
1	<i>Magic missile</i>	11	<i>Spiritual weapon</i>
2	<i>Burning hands</i>	12	<i>Lesser restoration</i>
3	<i>Shield</i>	13	<i>Daylight</i>
4	<i>Cure wounds</i>	14	<i>Mass healing word</i>
5	<i>Guiding bolt</i>	15	<i>Revivify</i>
6	<i>Invisibility</i>	16	<i>Lightning bolt</i>
7	<i>Scorching ray</i>	17	<i>Fireball</i>
8	<i>Shatter</i>	18	<i>Dispel magic</i>
9	<i>Aid</i>	19	<i>Haste</i>
10	<i>Misty step</i>	20	<i>Fly</i>

PROTECT THE VILLAGE

This adventure generator builds upon the story model of Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, a movie that's inspired dozens of other movies and hundreds of other stories since it premiered in 1954. The setup of the adventure sees the characters hired by villagers to protect them from marauders. It delivers an excellent situation-based adventure in which the characters are free to choose how, when, and why they protect the village.

WHO ARE THE VILLAGERS?

The villagers who hire the characters to protect their home can be generated on the following tables. Multiple NPCs bring even more richness and roleplaying opportunities to the scenario.

d10	Villager Ancestry	d10	Villager Occupation
1	Human	1	Farmers
2	Elf	2	Miners
3	Dwarf	3	Scholars
4	Halfling	4	Crafters
5	Gnome	5	Trappers
6	Orc	6	Hunters
7	Tiefling	7	Monks
8	Dragonborn	8	Druids
9	Fey	9	Loggers
10	Goblinoid	10	Fishers

VILLAGE FEATURE

Some specific feature makes the village unique, and might have a connection to why the marauders are intent on attacking.

d10	Village Feature
1	Built atop collapsed mines
2	Built atop ancient catacombs
3	Surrounded by ancient standing stones
4	Was the site of a terrible battle
5	Built above the bones of a dead dragon
6	Built atop a bottomless dungeon
7	Built within a mysterious crater
8	Built underneath a gleaming star
9	Built in the shadow of a huge statue
10	Surrounded by petrified titans



THE VILLAGERS' SECRET

Even as they ask for help, the villagers have a secret they don't want the characters to know.

d10	Secret
1	They know of treasure hidden beneath the village
2	They once burned witches
3	They committed a sacrilege
4	They know the village sits on tainted holy ground
5	They're led by devil worshippers
6	They're peaceful lycanthropes
7	They kidnapped a celestial creature
8	They made a pact with an undead lord
9	They defiled holy ground
10	They stole a holy relic

MARAUDERS

The identity of the marauders attacking the village will help shape the adventure.

d20	Marauders	d20	Marauders
1	Elf bandits	11	Animated armor
2	Goblin bounty hunters	12	Ravenous demons
3	Mindless skeletons	13	Conquering devils
4	Orc renegades	14	Dire wolves
5	Hobgoblin gangsters	15	Bugbear hunters
6	Sahuagin	16	Armored ogres
7	Drow knights	17	Bloodraging ghouls
8	Dwarf cultists	18	Zombie villagers
9	Gnoll warriors	19	Ancient specters
10	Duergar priests	20	Vengeful wraiths

MARAUDERS' LAIR

Before or after they encounter the marauders in the village, the characters might investigate the lair the marauders strike out from.

d20	Lair	d20	Lair
1	Fortified keep	11	Deep grotto
2	Mountain caves	12	Ancient castle
3	Twisted warren	13	Destroyed village
4	Unholy temple	14	Ruined watchtower
5	Forgotten tomb	15	Abandoned mines
6	Occupied manor	16	Docked warship
7	Old catacombs	17	Huge dead tree
8	Shattered tower	18	Floating citadel
9	Extraplanar sanctum	19	Extraplanar world
10	Unhallowed grove	20	Burned-out war camp

THE KEEP

Based on the film of the same name written and directed by Michael Mann, this adventure generator builds on the idea of a powerful entity intent on breaking free from its prison. One faction serves the entity in its imprisoned state, while another faction is set on freeing it—perhaps inadvertently. The characters must deal with both these factions in order to either prevent the entity's release, destroy the entity, or return it to its prison.

THE ENTITY

The entity breaking free from its prison is some manner of powerful or unusual being, including any of the following.

d20	Entity		Entity
1	Ancient vampire	11	Doom construct
2	Powerful lich	12	Powerful child
3	Raging demon	13	Elemental prince
4	Archdevil	14	Otherworldly horror
5	Hunting revenant	15	Deadly shapechanger
6	Hellish hag	16	Cursed mummy
7	Soul-draining ghost	17	Demon lord
8	Sleeping tarrasque	18	Psionic horror
9	Undead dragon	19	Evil wizard
10	Elder evil	20	Rogue angel

THE PRISON

The entity's prison might be found at some manner of fantastic location, a more inconspicuous site, or even within a magical object.

d20	Prison		Prison
1	Ancient keep	11	Astral prison ship
2	Castle cellar	12	Deserted island
3	Featureless obelisk	13	Hollow meteorite
4	Cracked crystal	14	Elven temple
5	Dreamscape	15	Dwarven citadel
6	Pocket dimension	16	Cooled volcano
7	Buried crypt	17	Abandoned church
8	Crashed vessel	18	Wizard's tower
9	Old mine	19	Massive sarcophagus
10	Uncovered tomb	20	Forgotten city



THE BREAKERS

The nature of the group that is purposefully or inadvertently freeing the entity from its prison will help set the tone of the adventure. Consider any of the following options.

d20	Breakers		Breakers
1	Dedicated cultists	11	Greedy mercenaries
2	Ignorant soldiers	12	Power-hungry nobles
3	Cabal of mages	13	Astral hunters
4	Holy paladins	14	Unscrupulous thieves
5	Grim gravediggers	15	Naïve archeologists
6	Devout priests	16	Innocent children
7	Enslaved telepaths	17	Scheming devils
8	Demonic thralls	18	Hag coven
9	Devilish servants	19	Sinful villagers
10	Undead minions	20	Enthralled dreamers

RELICS OF FEAR

A powerful relic the entity fears might be central to the adventure—perhaps one usable as a weapon against the entity if battle is inevitable.

d20	Relic		Relic
1	Holy sword	11	Powerful holy symbol
2	Arcane wand	12	<i>Sun blade</i>
3	<i>Arrow of slaying</i>	13	Binding idol
4	Jeweled medallion	14	Mummer's mask
5	Glyph-scribed stone	15	Bestial claw
6	Tattooed NPC	16	Marked skull
7	<i>Mace of disruption</i>	17	Alchemist's bottle
8	Flaming blade	18	Vial of blood
9	Gnarled staff	19	Binding cage
10	Ancient censer	20	Rune-marked bell

THE SERVITORS

Finally, determine which beings serve the entity and enforce its will.

d20	Servitors		Servitors
1	Dark monks	11	Otherworldly guardians
2	Mindless undead	12	Devout cultists
3	Abyssal beasts	13	Servant elementals
4	Powerful constructs	14	Unholy priests
5	Draconic servants	15	Bound devils
6	Ageless giants	16	Alien aberrations
7	Deadly traps	17	Fallen knights
8	Crystalline entities	18	Unerring constructs
9	Bodiless specters	19	Lycanthrope clan
10	Vampiric thralls	20	Enthralled mummies

COMPANION MAPS

Many of the adventures generated from these pages can benefit from a good map. This section features a number of general-purpose maps intended to be used for a variety of situations—caves, temples, ruins, dungeons,

crypts, and the like. You can shift the orientation, cut off hallways, and change the features of rooms in your descriptions to fit your needs. If this map suits your desires, wonderful! Otherwise, the internet brims with useful maps from amazing artists that can fit just about every location you might build from these pages.

