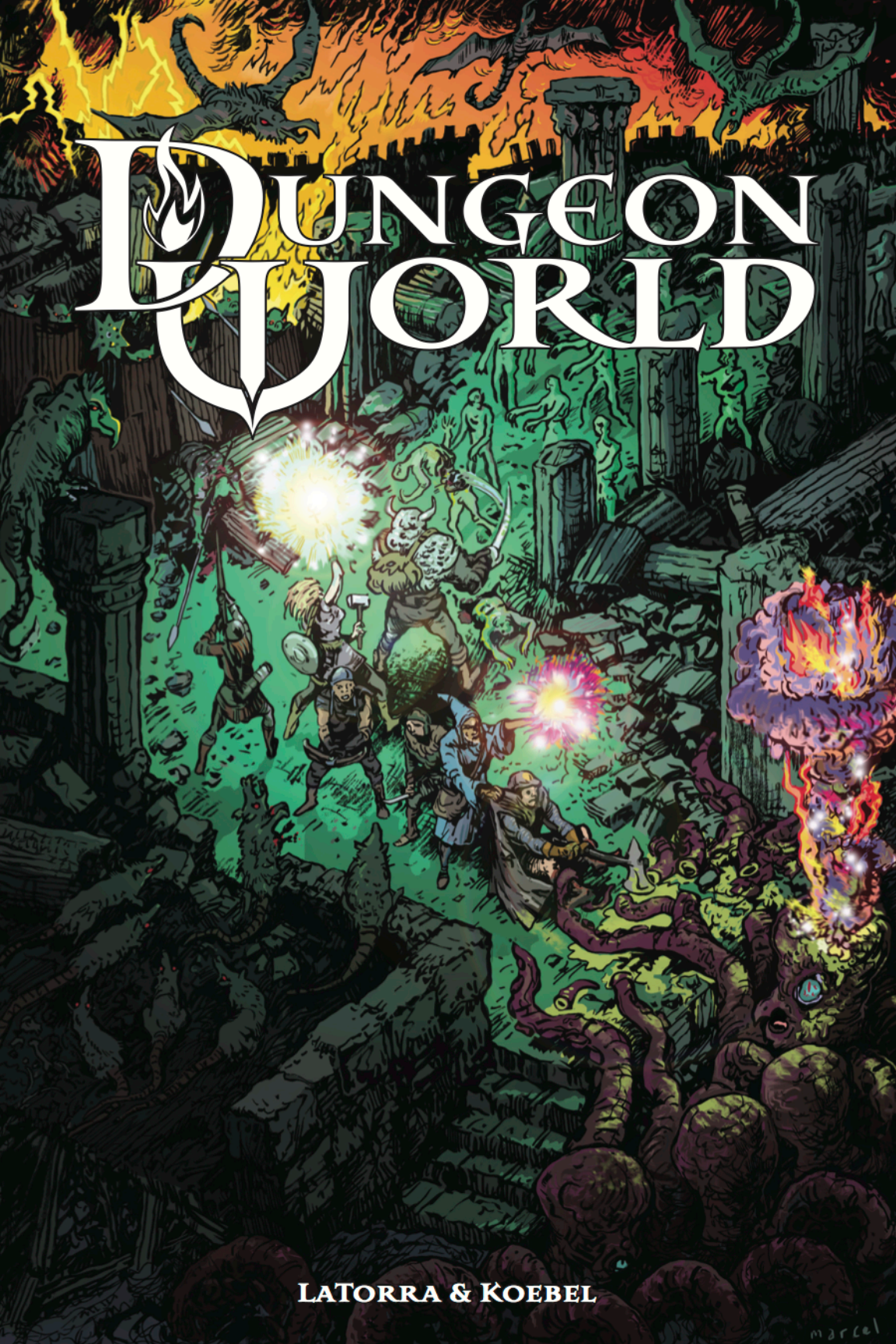


DUNGEON WORLD



LATORRA & KOEBEL

marcel

DUNGEON WORLD



RNDM
GAMES

Dungeon World

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CHAPTER 1

DUNGEON WORLD

Dungeon World is a world of fantastic adventure. A world of magic, gods and demons, of good and evil, law and chaos. Brave heroes venture into the most dangerous corners of the land in search of gold and glory.

Adventurers take many shapes in Dungeon World. The races of elves, men, dwarves, and halflings all have their heroes. Some are near-invincible beasts of battle encased in iron armor. Others are more mysterious, conjuring up and wielding the mighty forces of magic. Treasure and glory are sought by a holy cleric, a tricky thief, a mighty paladin, and more.

It isn't all easy heroics and noble bravery, though. Every time the ranger guides his friends through the ancient woods there are a hundred things waiting to bite his head off. Slavering hordes of goblin troops, maybe. Or is this the Cursed Wood, where dwells the Gray Witch? Or the throngs of hateful dead, looking to drag a meaty corpse back to their lair? Scary, sure, but there's treasure, too. More gold and jewels and magic lost to man have fallen between the cracks in the world than you can imagine. Who better to retrieve it than a band of stalwart heroes?

You and your friends *are* those heroes. You go where others can't or won't. There are monstrous things lurking in the world. Are you ready to face them?

INTRODUCTION



THE BARD

The poems say an adventurer's life is all open roads and the glory of coin and combat. The tales told in every farmhand-filled inn have to have some ring of truth to them, don't they? The songs to inspire peasantry and royals alike—to soothe the savage beast or drive men to a frenzy—have to come from somewhere.

Enter the bard. You, with your smooth tongue and quick wit. You teller-of-tales and singer-of-songs. A mere minstrel can retell a thing, but it takes a true bard to live it. Strap on your boots, noble orator. Sharpen that hidden dagger and take up the call. Someone's got to be there, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the goons and the thugs and the soon-to-be-heroes. Who better than you to write the tale of your own heroism?

Nobody. Get going.



THE CLERIC

The lands of Dungeon World are a gods-forsaken mess. They're lousy with the walking dead, beasts of all sorts, and the vast unnatural spaces between safe and temple-blessed civilizations. It is a godless world out there. That's why it needs you.

Bringing the glory of your god to the heathens isn't just in your nature—it's your calling. It falls to you to proselytize with sword and mace and spell, to cleave deep into the witless heart of the wilds and plant the seed of divinity there. Some say that it's best to keep the gods close to your heart. You know that's rubbish. God lives at the edge of a blade.

Show the world who is lord.

THE DRUID

Cast your eyes around the fire. What has brought you to these people, stinking of the dust and sweat of the city? Perhaps it is a kindness—do you protect them as the mother bear watches over her cubs? Are they your pack, now? Strange brothers and sisters you have. Whatever your inspiration, they would certainly fail without your sharp senses and sharper claws.

You are of the sacred spaces; you are born of soil and wear the marks of her spirits on your skin. You may have had a life before, maybe you were a city dweller like them, but not now. You've given up that static shape. Listen to your allies pray to their carved stone gods and polish their silver shells. They speak of the glory they'll find back in that festering town you left behind.

Their gods are children, their steel is false protection. You walk the old ways, you wear the pelts of the earth itself. You'll take your share of the treasure, but will you ever walk as one of them? Only time will tell.



THE FIGHTER

It's a thankless job—living day to day by your armor and the skill of your arm, diving heedlessly into danger. They won't be playing golden horns for the time you took that knife to the ribs for them in the bar in Bucksberg. No flock of angels will sing of the time you dragged them, still screaming, from the edge of the Pits of Madness, no.

Forget them.

You do this for the guts and the glory, for the scream of battle and the hot, hot blood of it. You are a beast of iron. Your friends may carry blades of forged steel but, fighter, you are steel. While your traveling companions might moan about their wounds around a campfire in the wilderness, you bear your scars with pride.

You are the wall—let every danger smash itself to dust on you. In the end, you'll be the last one standing.





THE PALADIN

Hell awaits. An eternity of torment in fire or ice or whatever best suits the sins of the damned throngs of Dungeon World. All that stands between the pits of that grim torture and salvation is you. Holy man, armored war machine, templar of the Good and the Light, right? The cleric may say his prayers at night to the gods, dwelling in their heavens. The fighter may wield his sharp sword in the name of “good” but you know. Only you.

Eyes, hands, and sweet killing blow of the gods, you are. Yours is the gift of righteousness and virtue—of justice, of Vision, too. A purity of intent that your companions do not have.

So guide these fools, paladin. Take up your holy cause and bring salvation to the wastrel world.

Vae victis, right?



THE RANGER

These city-born folk you travel with. Have they heard the call of the wolf? Felt the winds howl in the bleak deserts of the East? Have they hunted their prey with the bow and the knife like you? Hell no. That’s why they need you.

Guide. Hunter. Creature of the wilds. You are these things and more. Your time in the wilderness may have been solitary until now, but the call of some greater thing—call it fate if you like—has cast your lot with these folk. Brave, they may be. Powerful and strong, too. But only you know the secrets of the spaces between.

Without you, they’d be lost. Blaze a trail through the blood and dark, strider.

THE THIEF

You've heard them, sitting around the campfire. Bragging about this battle or that, or about how their gods are smiling on your merry band. You count your coins and smile to yourself—this is the thrill above all. You alone know the secret of Dungeon World: filthy, filthy lucre.

Sure, they give you lip for all the times you've snuck off alone, but without you, every one of them would have been dissected by a flying guillotine or poisoned straight to death by some ancient needle trap. So let them complain. When you're done with all this delving you'll toast their heroes' graves.

From your castle. Full of gold. You rogue.



THE WIZARD

Dungeon World has rules. Not the laws of men or the rule of some petty tyrant. Bigger, better rules. You drop something—it falls. You can't make something out of nothing. The dead stay dead, right?

Oh, the things we tell ourselves to feel better about the long, dark nights.

You've spent so very long poring over those tomes of yours. Conducting experiments that nearly drove you mad and casting summonings that endangered your very soul. For what? For power. What else is there? Not just the power of King or Country but the power to boil a man's blood in his veins. To call on the thunder of the sky and the churn of the roiling earth. To shrug off the rules the world holds so dear.

Let them cast their sidelong glances. Let them call you "warlock" or "diabolist." Who among them can hurl fireballs from their eyes? Yeah. Didn't think so.



WHY?

“They were adventurers... a few performed useful services, research cartography and the like. Most were nothing but tomb raiders. They were scum who died violent deaths, hanging on to a certain cachet among the impressionable through their undeniable bravery and their occasionally impressive exploits.”

—Perdido Street Station

Why play Dungeon World?

First, to see the characters do **amazing things**. To see them explore the unexplored, slay the undying, and go from the deepest bowels of the world to the highest peaks of the heavens. To see them caught up in momentous events and grand tragedies.

Second, to see them **struggle together**. To gather as a party despite their differences and stand united against their foes, or to argue over treasure, debate battle plans, and join in righteous celebration over a victory hard-won.

Third, because **the world still has so many places to explore**. There are unlooted tombs and dragon hoards dotting the countryside just waiting for quick-fingered and strong-armed adventurers to discover them. That unexplored world has plans of its own. Play to see what they are and how they’ll change the lives of our characters.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is going to teach you how to play Dungeon World. If you're going to be the GM, you're going to need to read the whole thing, though you can skim through the monster stats for now and save the Advanced Delving chapter for later. Try printing the play aids too, they'll help you see what's most important. If you're a player, you might not need to read more than Playing the Game—a lot of the rules in Dungeon World will be contained in the character sheets you use during the game itself. You'll come back to the text a few times throughout your game to refer to certain rules, but it should be a rare occasion.

SETTING UP

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

You can play a single session or string together multiple sessions into a campaign. Plan accordingly if you plan on playing a campaign, maybe setting aside a night of the week to play. Each session will usually be a few hours and you'll be able to start playing right away within the first session.

You'll need to print some materials. Before you start a new game, find or print off at least:

- A few copies of the basic and special moves
- One copy of each class sheet
- One copy each of the cleric and wizard spell sheets
- One copy of the adventure sheet and GM moves
- Miscellanea such as: pens and pencils, scrap paper for maps and notes, maybe some index cards

Everyone at the table will need something to write with and some six-sided dice. Two dice is the minimum but two dice per player is a good idea.

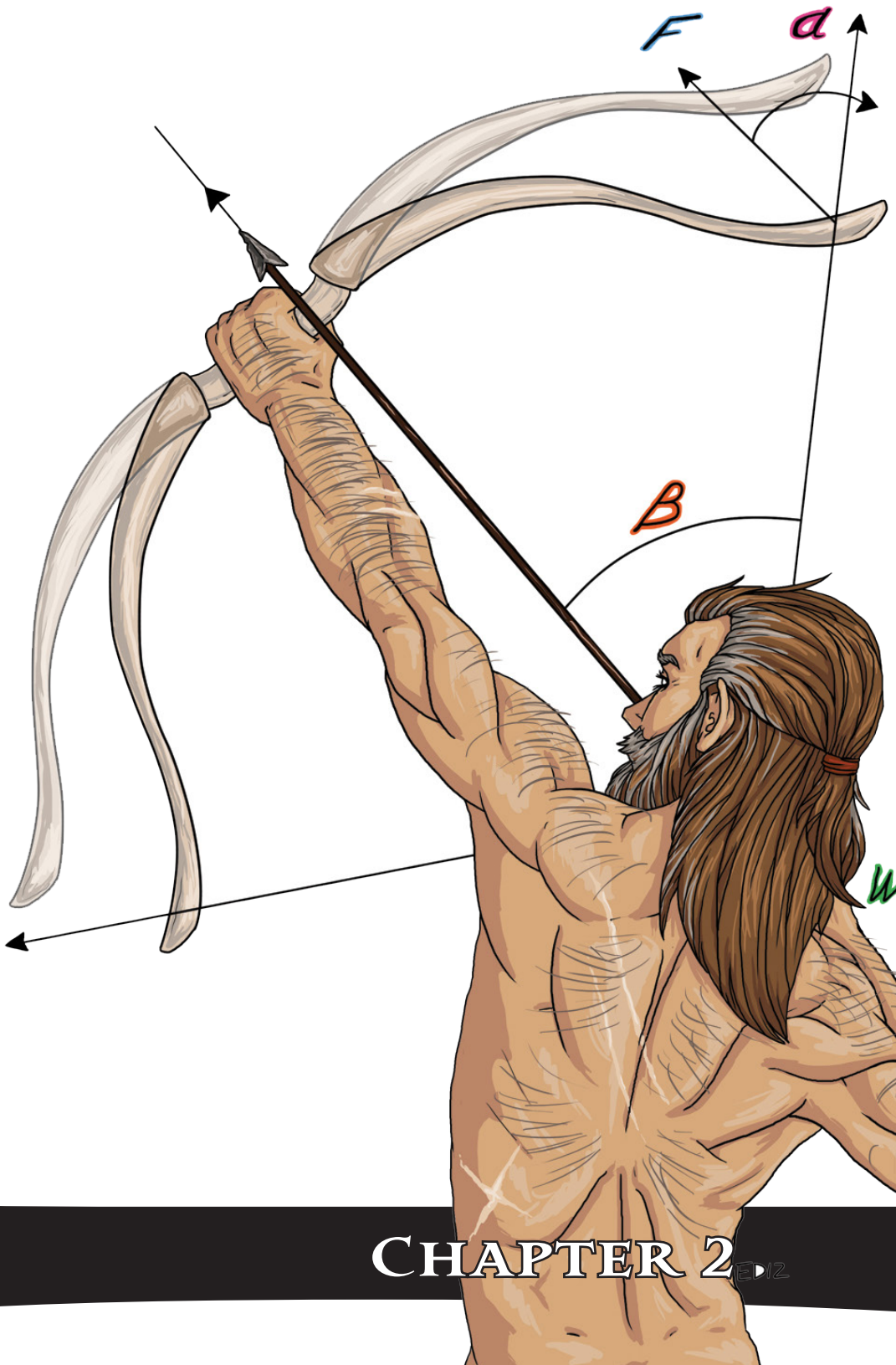
You'll also need some specialized dice: four-sided, eight-sided, ten-sided and twelve-sided. One of each is enough but more is better: you won't have to pass them around so much.

WHAT'S DUNGEON WORLD LIKE TO PLAY?

Playing Dungeon World is all about finding out what happens when your characters encounter dangerous and exciting monsters, strange ruins, and unusual people on their quest for gold and glory. It's a conversation between the players and the GM—the GM tells the players what they see and hear in the world around them and the players say what their characters are thinking, feeling, and doing. Sometimes those descriptions will trigger a move—something that'll cause everyone to stop and say “time to roll the dice to see what happens.” For a moment everyone hangs on the edges of their seats as the dice clatter to a stop. Tension and excitement are always the result, no matter how the dice land.

As you play your characters they'll change from their adventures and gain experience while learning about the world, overcoming monsters, and gathering riches. You'll discover how they feel about each other and where their moral compass points them. When they accrue enough experience they'll gain levels, becoming more powerful and having more options to explore.

You can play Dungeon World with the same group, session to session, over a long series of adventures, watching your characters change and grow together. You can play it as a self-contained game in a single-session, too. Whether a long campaign or a one-shot, Dungeon World's rules are here to guide you and help you create a world of fantasy adventure. Time to get out there and explore it!



CHAPTER 2. 12

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

The rules help shape the conversation of play. While the GM and the players are talking, the rules and the fiction are talking, too. Every rule has an explicit fictional trigger that tells you when it is meant to come into the conversation.

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

This chapter is all about how to play Dungeon World. Here, you'll find information about the rules—how they arise from and contribute to the game. We'll cover both general rules, like making moves, and more specific rules, like those for dealing with damage and hit points.

ABILITY SCORES AND MODIFIERS

Many of the rules discussed in this chapter rely on a player character's abilities and their modifiers. The abilities are Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. They measure a player character's raw ability in each of those areas on a scale from 3 to 18, where 18 is the peak of mortal ability.

Each ability has a modifier associated with it that is used when rolling with that ability. These are written as three-letter abbreviations: STR, CON, DEX, INT, WIS, CHA. Modifiers range from -3 to +3. The modifier is always derived from the current ability score.

For more on abilities and modifiers, see the Character Creation rules on page 48..

PLAYING THE GAME



MAKING MOVES

The most basic unit of rules in Dungeon World is the move. A move looks like this:

When you **attack an enemy in melee**, roll+STR. *On a 10+, you deal your damage to the enemy and avoid their attack. At your option, you may choose to do +1d6 damage but expose yourself to the enemy's attack. *On a 7–9, you deal your damage to the enemy and the enemy makes an attack against you.

Moves are rules that tell you when they trigger and what effect they have. A move depends on a fictional action and always has some fictional effect. “Fictional” means that the action and effect come from the world of the characters we’re describing. In the move above the trigger is “when you attack an enemy in melee.” The effect is what follows: a roll to be made and differing fictional effects based on the outcome of the roll.

When a player describes their character doing something that triggers a move, that move happens and its rules apply. If the move requires a roll, its description will tell you what dice to roll and how to read their results.

A character can’t take the fictional action that triggers a move without that move occurring. For example, if Isaac tells the GM that his character dashes past a crazed axe-wielding orc to the open door, he makes the defy danger move because its trigger is “when you act despite an imminent threat.” Isaac can’t just describe his character running past the orc without making the defy danger move and he can’t make the defy danger move without acting despite an imminent threat or suffering a calamity. The moves and the fiction go hand-in-hand.

Everyone at the table should listen for when moves apply. If it’s ever unclear if a move has been triggered, everyone should work together to clarify what’s happening. Ask questions of everyone involved until everyone sees the situation the same way and then roll the dice, or don’t, as the situation requires.

The GM’s monsters, NPCs, and other assorted beasts also have moves, but they work differently.

The Monsters chapter on page 219 describes monster moves.

MOVES AND DICE

Most moves include the phrase “roll+x” where “x” is one of your character’s ability modifiers (CON for example). Unless the move tells you otherwise, that “roll” always means that you roll two six-sided dice and add their results to the value of the modifier. Some moves will have you add some other value to your roll instead of an ability modifier.

I’m making a move that asks me to roll+STR and my STR modifier is +1. I rolled two six-sided dice, got a one and a four. My total is six.

The results always fall into three basic categories. A total of 10 or higher (written 10+) is the best outcome. A total of 7–9 is still a success but it comes with compromises or cost. A 6 or lower is trouble, but you also get to mark XP.

Each move will tell you what happens on a 10+ and a 7–9. Most moves won’t say what happens on a 6-, that’s up to the GM but you also always mark XP.

Damage rolls work a little differently. They use different dice depending on who or what is dealing damage.

In a move the * marks the beginning of an outcome (like “On a 10+”) to make it easy to reference.

Damage rolls are covered in more detail later in this chapter on page 20.

THE BASIC OUTCOMES

- 10+: You do it with little trouble
- 7–9: You do it, but with complications or trouble
- 6-: The GM says what happens and you mark XP

MOVES AND EQUIPMENT

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

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

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

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

Tags are covered in detail in the Equipment chapter on page 321.

THE EFFECTS OF MOVES

The effects of moves are always about the fictional world the characters inhabit. A 10+ on hack and slash doesn't just mean the mechanical effects, it means you successfully attacked something and did some type of harm to it.

Once you've figured out what the effects of the move are, apply them to the fiction and go back to the conversation. Always return to what's going on in the game.

Some moves have immediate mechanical effects, like dealing damage or giving someone a bonus to their next roll. These effects are always a reflection of the fictional world the characters are in; make sure to use the fiction when describing the effects of the move.

SOME MOVES...

...Use the phrase “deal damage.” Dealing damage means you roll the damage dice for your class; sometimes your weapon will add or subtract damage too. You use your damage dice any time you make an attack that could reasonably hurt your target. Usually that means you’re wielding a weapon, but your fists can be weapons with the right training or an interesting situation

...Say “take +1 forward.” That means to take +1 to your next move roll (not damage). The bonus can be greater than +1, or even a penalty, like -1. There also might be a condition, such as “take +1 forward to hack and slash,” in which case the bonus applies only to the next time you roll hack and slash, not any other move.

...Say “take +1 ongoing.” That means to take +1 to all move rolls (not damage). The bonus can be larger than +1, or it can be a penalty, like -1. There also might be a condition, such as “take +1 ongoing to volley.” An ongoing bonus also says what causes it to end, like “until you dismiss the spell” or “until you atone to your deity.”

...Give you “hold.” Hold is currency that allows you to make some choices later on by spending the hold as the move describes. Hold is always saved up for the move that generated it; you can’t spend your hold from defend on trap expert or vice versa, for example.

...Present a choice. The choice you make, like all move effects, dictates things that happen in the fiction in addition to any more mechanical effects. The choice you make on the 10+ result of hack and slash to deal more damage at the cost of opening yourself up is exactly what’s happening to your character: they have enough advantage that they can stay safe or push their luck.

...Give you a chance to say something about your character and their history. When you spout lore you may get asked how you know the information that the GM reveals. Take that opportunity to contribute to the game and show who your character really is. Just keep in mind the established facts and don’t contradict anything that’s already been described.

...Say “mark XP.” That means you add one to your current XP total.

XP is covered in detail on page 28.

"If it bleeds, we can kill it."
—Dutch, "Predator"

HARM AND HEALING

Cuts, bruises, and mortal wounds are common dangers for adventurers to face in Dungeon World. In the course of play, characters will take damage, heal, and maybe even die. A character's health is measured by their hit points (HP). Damage subtracts from HP. In the right conditions, or with medical or magical help, damage is healed and HP is restored.

HP

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

Your class tells your maximum HP. Your Constitution (the ability, not the modifier) comes into play as well, so more Constitution means more HP. If your Constitution permanently changes during play you adjust your HP to reflect your new Constitution score. Unless your Constitution changes your maximum HP stays the same.

DAMAGE

When a character takes damage they subtract the damage dealt from their current HP. Armor mitigates damage; if a character has armor they subtract its value from the damage dealt. This might mean a blow is turned away completely—that's fine, it's what armor is for! Damage can never take a character below 0 HP.

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

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

Monsters roll damage as listed in their description. Use this damage any time the monster takes direct action to hurt someone, even if they use a method other than their normal attack.

Other sources of damage—like being struck by a chunk of a collapsing tower, or falling into a pit—are left to the GM based on these options:

- It threatens bruises and scrapes at worst: d4 damage
- It's likely to spill some blood, but nothing horrendous: d6 damage
- It might break some bones: d8 damage
- It could kill a common person: d10 damage

Add the *ignores armor* tag if the source of the damage is particularly large or if the damage comes from magic or poison.

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

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

HP loss is often only part of the effect. If the harm is generalized, like falling into a pit, losing the HP is probably all there is to it. When the harm is specific, like an orc pulling your arm from its socket, HP should be part of the effect but not the entirety of it. The bigger issue is dealing with the newly busted arm: how do you swing a sword or cast a spell? Likewise having your head chopped off is not HP damage, it's just you being dead.

DAMAGE FROM MULTIPLE CREATURES

It's a brave monster that goes into battle alone. Most creatures fight with someone at their side, and maybe another at their back, and possibly an archer covering the rear, and so on. This can lead to multiple monsters dealing their damage at once.

If multiple creatures attack at once roll the highest damage among them and add +1 damage for each monster beyond the first.

A goblin orkaster (d10+1 damage ignores armor) and three goblins (d6 damage) all throw their respective weapons—a magical acid orb for the orkaster, spears for the rest—at Lux as she assaults their barricade. I roll the highest damage, d10+1 ignores armor, and add +3 damage for the three other goblins. Adding it all up I tell Lux she takes 9 damage ignoring armor as the acid leaks into the scratches left by the spears.

STUN DAMAGE

Stun damage is non-lethal damage. A PC who takes stun damage is defying danger to do anything at all, the danger being “you’re stunned.” This lasts as long as makes sense in the fiction—you’re stunned until you can get a chance to clear your head or fix whatever stunned you. A GM character that takes stun damage doesn’t count it against their HP but will act accordingly, staggering around for a few seconds, fumbling blindly, etc.

ADDING AND SUBTRACTING DAMAGE

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

The same goes for subtracting damage: you subtract the number from the total rolled. If you subtract a dice (like “-1d6 damage”) you subtract the rolled amount from the original total. Damage never goes negative—0 damage is the minimum.

BEST AND WORST

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

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

HEALING

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

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

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

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

DEATH

Death stalks the edges of every battle. A character who is reduced to 0 HP immediately takes his Last Breath. Death comes for commoner and king alike—no stat is added to the Last Breath roll.

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

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

Depending on the outcome of the Last Breath the character may become stable. A stable character stays at 0 HP but is alive and unconscious. If they receive healing they regain consciousness and may return to battle or seek safety. If a stable character takes damage again they draw their Last Breath once more and return to face Death.

AFTER DEATH

Being an adventurer isn't easy—it's cold nights in the wild and sharp swords and monsters. Sooner or later, you're going to make that long walk to the Black Gates and give up the ghost. That doesn't mean you have to give it the satisfaction of sticking around. Death, in its way, is just another challenge to conquer. Even dead adventurers can rise again.

If your character dies you can ask the GM and the other players to try and resurrect you. The GM will tell them what it will cost to return your poor, dead character to life. If you fulfill the GM's conditions the character is returned to life. The Resurrection spell is a special case of this: the magic of the spell gives you an easier way to get a companion back, but the GM still has a say.

No matter the prospects of resurrection for now you make a new character. Maybe a hireling becomes a full-fledged adventurer worthy of a whole share and a part in the real action. Maybe the characters in the party find a new friend in a steading, willing to join them. Maybe your character had a vengeful family member who now seeks to take up their blades and spells to make right what happened. In any case, make your new character as you normally would at level 1.

If your original character returns to life you can play either character, switching between them as you please (so long as it makes sense).

GM, when you tell the players what needs to be done to bring their comrade back, don't feel like it has to derail the flow of the current game. Weave it in to what you know of the world. This is a great opportunity to change focus or introduce an element you've been waiting to show off. Don't feel, either, that it has to be some great and epic quest. If the character died at the end of a goblin pike, maybe all it takes is an awkward walk home and a few thousand gold pieces donated to a local temple. Think about the ramifications of such a charitable act and how it might affect the world. Remember: Death never forgets a soul stolen from his realm.

DEBILITIES

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

Weak (STR): You can't exert much force. Maybe it's just fatigue and injury, or maybe your strength was drained by magic.

Shaky (DEX): You're unsteady on your feet and you've got a shake in your hands.

Sick (CON): Something just isn't right inside. Maybe you've got a disease or a wasting illness. Maybe you just drank too much ale last night and it's coming back to haunt you.

Stunned (INT): That last knock to the head shook something loose. Brain not work so good.

Confused (WIS): Ears ringing. Vision blurred. You're more than a little out of it.

Scarred (CHA): It may not be permanent, but for now you don't look so good.

Not every attack inflicts a debility—they're most often associated with magic, poison, or stranger things like a vampire sucking your blood. Each debility is tied to an ability and gives you -1 to that ability's modifier. The ability's score is unaffected so you don't have to worry about changing your maximum HP when you're sick.

You can only have each debility once. If you're already Sick and something makes you Sick you just ignore it.

Debilities are harder to heal than HP. Some high level magic can do it, sure, but your best bet is getting somewhere safe and spending a few days in a soft, warm bed. Of course, debilities are both descriptive and prescriptive: if something happens that would remove a debility, that debility is gone.

Debilities don't replace descriptions and using the established fiction. When someone loses an arm that doesn't mean they're Weak, it means they have one less arm. Don't let debilities limit you. A specific disease can have whatever effects you can dream up. Sick is just a convenient shorthand for some anonymous fever picked up from a filthy rat.

MAGIC

Dungeon World is a fantastic place: there's more to it than mud, blood, and ale in the tavern. Fire and wind conjured from the pure elements. Prayers for health, might, and divine retribution. "Magic" is the name given to those abilities not derived from the strength of man and beast but from forces beyond.

Magic means many things. The druid's ability to take the shape of an animal is magic, as are the practiced effects of the wizard and the divine blessings of the cleric. Any ability that goes beyond the physically possible is magical.

SPELLS

Some classes, like the cleric and the wizard have access to spells: specific magical effects that are the benefit of divine servitude or severe study. Each spell has a name, tags, a level, and an effect.

The basic flow of magic is to know, prepare, cast, and forget a spell.

Known spells are those a spellcaster has mastered enough to prepare. The cleric knows all cleric spells of their level or lower, including their rites. The wizard starts knowing their cantrips and three 1st level spells. When the wizard gains a level they learn a new spell. The wizard stores their known spells in their spellbook.

Even if a spellcaster knows a spell, they must have it prepared before they can cast it. With some time and concentration, as described in the Commune and Prepare moves, the spellcaster may choose known spells whose total levels are less than or equal to the caster's level plus 1 to prepare. The wizard always prepares their cantrips; the cleric always prepares their rites. A prepared spell is ready to be cast.

Casting a spell involves calling on a deity, chanting, waving ones hands, invoking mystical forces, and so on. To cast a spell you will usually make the cast a spell move. On a 10+ the spell takes effect, on a 7–9 the caster finds themselves in trouble and must make a choice, but the spell is still cast. Some spells are ongoing—once they're cast they continue to have effect until something ends it.

One option on a 7–9 result is to have the spell revoked or forgotten. A spell that is revoked or forgotten is still known, but no longer prepared, and therefore no longer castable. When the caster next Prepares or Communes they may choose the same spell again.

CHARACTER CHANGE

"You see, life is like that. We change, that's all. You see, the guy I am now is not the guy I was then."

—Steve,
"SLC Punk"

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

Advancement, like everything else in Dungeon World, is both prescriptive and descriptive. Prescriptive means that when a player changes their character sheet the character changes in the fiction. Descriptive means that when the character changes in the fiction the player should change the character sheet to match.

This isn't a benefit or detriment to the players or the GM; it's not an excuse to gain more powers or take them away. It's just a reflection of life in Dungeon World.

Avon, despite being a wizard, has risen to the notice of Lenoral, the deity of arcane knowledge. After being blessed by an avatar of Lenoral and saying his vows in the church, Avon is under the deity's watch. He can fulfill Petitions and gain boons like a cleric.

Gregor offers his signature weapon, an axe whose green steel is tempered in orc blood, as a desperate bargain to save King Authen from eternal damnation. Without his axe he gets none of the benefits of his signature weapon. Should he recover it he'll have access to its benefits again.

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

LEVEL UP

As you play Dungeon World, you'll be doing three things most of all: exploring, fighting dangerous foes, and gathering treasure. For each of these things you'll be rewarded XP at the end of the session. Acting according to your alignment and fulfilling the conditions of your alignment moves will grant you XP at the end of each session as well. If you resolve a bond and create a new one, you'll gain XP, too. Any time you roll a 6- you get XP right away. The GM may have

Some moves may also tell you to "mark XP," which means add one XP to your total.

special conditions that you can fulfill to earn XP or might change the core ones to reflect the world. They'll let you know before you play.

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

The Level Up move is on page 76.

MULTICLASS MOVES

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

REQUIRES AND REPLACES

Some moves that you gain at higher levels depend on other moves. If another move is listed along with the word Requires or Replaces you can only gain the new move if you have the listed move.

A move that requires another move can only be taken if you have the move it requires already. You then have both moves and they both apply.

A move that replaces another move can only be taken if you have the move it replaces already. You lose access to the replaced move and just have the new one. The new move will usually include all the benefits of the replaced one: maybe you replace a move that gives you 1 armor with one that gives you 2 armor instead.

BEYOND 10TH LEVEL

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

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

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

For example, when Gregor becomes a second level fighter, he chooses Multiclass Dabbler. He can choose a move from any other class as if he was one level lower, so he can only choose starting moves. He decides to take the wizard's cast a spell move, so he gains the spellbook and prepare spells moves as well. Since prepare spells refers to his level, he counts his levels only since he gained a wizard move—so he casts spells like a first level wizard. When he gains another level, no matter what move he chooses, he'll prepare spells like a second level wizard.

“The better part of one’s life consists of his friendships.”

—Abraham Lincoln

BONDS

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

Each bond is a simple statement that relates your character to another player character. Your class gives you a few to start with, you’ll replace your starting bonds and gain new ones through play.

RESOLVING BONDS

At the end of each session you may resolve one bond. Resolution of a bond depends on both you and the player of the character you share the bond with: you suggest that the bond has been resolved and, if they agree, it is. When you resolve a bond, you get to mark XP.

A bond is resolved when it no longer describes how you relate to that person. That may be because circumstances have changed—Thelian used to have your back but after he abandoned you to the goblins, you’re not so sure. Or it could be because that’s no longer a question—you guided Wesley before and he owed you, but he paid that debt when he saved your life with a well-timed spell. Any time you look at a bond and think “that’s not a big factor in how we relate anymore” the bond is at a good place to resolve.

If you have a blank bond left over from character creation you can assign a name to it or write a new bond in its place whenever you like. You don’t get an XP for doing so, but you do get more defined bonds to resolve in the future.

WRITING NEW BONDS

You write a new bond whenever you resolve an old one. Your new bond may be with the same character, but it doesn't have to be.

When you write a new bond choose another character. Pick something relevant to the last session—maybe a place you traveled together or a treasure you discovered. Choose a thought or belief your character holds that ties the two together and an action, something you're going to do about it. You'll end up with something like this:

Mouse's quick thinking saved me from the white dragon we faced. I owe her a boon.

Avon proved himself a coward in the dungeons of Xax'takar. He is a dangerous liability to the party and must be watched.

Valeria's kindness to the Gnomes of the Vale has swayed my heart, I will prove to her I am not the callous fiend she thinks I am.

Xotoq won the Bone-and-Whispers Axe through trickery! It will be mine, I swear it.

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

*"I believe in death,
destruction, chaos, filth,
and greed."*

— *Danny Vinyard,
"American History X"*

ALIGNMENT

Alignment is your character's way of thinking and moral compass. For the character, this can be an ethical ideal, religious strictures, or maybe just a gut instinct. It reflects the things your character might aspire to be and can guide you when you're not sure what to do next. Some characters might proudly proclaim their alignment while others might hide it away. A character might not say, "I'm an evil person," but may instead say, "I put myself first." That's all well and good for a character, but the world knows otherwise. Buried deep down inside is the ideal self a person wants to become—it is this mystic core that certain spells and abilities tap into when detecting someone's alignment. Every sentient creature in Dungeon World bears an alignment, be they an elf, a human, or some other, stranger thing.

The alignments are Good, Lawful, Neutral, Chaotic, and Evil. Each one shows an aspiration to be a different type of person.

Lawful creatures aspire to impose order on the world, either for their own benefit or for that of others. Chaotic creatures embrace change and idealize the messy reality of the world, prizing freedom above all else. Good creatures seek to put others before themselves. Evil creatures put themselves first at the expense of others.

A Neutral creature looks out for itself so long as that doesn't jeopardize someone else's well-being. Neutral characters are content to live their lives and pursue their own goals and let others do the same.

Most creatures are Neutral. They take no particular pleasure in harming others, but will do it if it is justified by their situation. Those that put an ideal—be it Law, Chaos, Good, or Evil—above themselves are harder to find.

Even two creatures of the same alignment can come into conflict. Aspiring to help others does not grant infallibility, two Good creatures may fight and die over two different views of how to do right.

CHANGING ALIGNMENT

Alignment can, and will, change. Usually such a change comes about as a gradual move toward a decisive moment. Any time a character's view of the world has fundamentally shifted they can chose a new

alignment. The player must have a reason for the change which they can explain to the other players.

In some cases a player character may switch alignment moves while still keeping the same alignment. This reflects a smaller shift, one of priority instead of a wholesale shift in thinking. They simply choose a new move for the same alignment from below and mention why their character now sees this as important.

LAWFUL

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

*“Serve the public trust.
Protect the innocent.
Uphold the law.”
—RoboCop*

GOOD

- Ignore danger to aid another
- Lead others into righteous battle
- Give up powers or riches for the greater good
- Reveal a dangerous lie
- Show mercy

NEUTRAL

- Make an ally of someone powerful
- Defeat a personally important foe
- Learn a secret about an enemy
- Uncover a hidden truth

CHAOTIC

- Reveal corruption
- Break an unjust law to benefit another
- Defeat a tyrant
- Reveal hypocrisy

*“Introduce a little anarchy.
Upset the established
order, then everything
becomes...chaos.”
—The Joker,
“The Dark Knight”*

EVIL

- Take advantage of someone's trust
- Cause suffering for its own sake
- Destroy something beautiful
- Upset the rightful order
- Harm an innocent

HIRELINGS

Hirelings are those sorry souls that—for money, glory, or stranger needs—venture along with adventurers into the gloom and danger. They are the foolhardy that seek to make their name as adventurers.

Hirelings serve a few purposes. To the characters, they're the help. They lend their strength to the player characters' efforts in return for their pay. To the players, they're a resource. They buy the characters some extra time against even the most frightening of threats. They're also replacement characters, waiting to step up into the hero's role when a player character falls. To the GM, they're a human face for the characters to turn to, even in the depths of the earth or the far reaches of the planes.

Hirelings are not heroes. A hireling may become a hero, as a replacement character, but until that time they're just another GM character. As such their exact HP, armor, and damage aren't particularly important. A hireling is defined by their **Skill** (or Skills) a **Cost** and a **Loyalty** score.

A hireling's skill is a special benefit they provide to the players. Most skills are related to class abilities, allowing a hireling to fill in for a certain class. If you don't have a ranger but you need to track the assassin's route out of Torsea anyway, you need a Tracker. Each skill has a rank, usually from 1 to 10. The higher the rank the more trained the hireling. Generally hirelings only work for adventurers of equal or higher level than their highest skill.

Skills don't limit what a hireling can do, they just provide mechanics for a certain ability. A hireling with the protector skill can still carry your burdens or check for traps, but the outcome isn't guaranteed by a rule. It will fall entirely to the circumstances and the GM. Sending a hireling to do something that is clearly beyond their abilities is asking the GM for trouble.

No hireling works for free. The hireling's cost is what it takes to keep them with the player characters. If the hireling's cost isn't paid regularly (usually once a session) they're liable to quit or turn on their employers.

When hirelings are in play, the players may have to make the Order Hirelings move. The move uses the loyalty of the hireling that triggered the move:

Hirelings do what you tell them to, so long as it isn't obviously dangerous, degrading, or stupid, and their cost is met. **When a hireling find themselves in a dangerous, degrading, or just flat-out crazy situation due to your orders** roll+loyalty. On a 10+ they stand firm and carry out the order. On a 7–9 they do it for now, but come back with serious demands later. Meet them or the hireling quits on the worst terms.

MAKING A HIRELING

Hirelings are easy to make on the fly. When someone enters the players' employ note down their name and what cost they've agreed to as well as any skills they may have.

Start with a number based on where the hireling was found. Hirelings in villages start with 2–5. Town hirelings get 4–6. Keep hirelings are 5–8. City hirelings are 6–10. Distribute the hireling's number between loyalty, a main skill, and zero or more secondary skills. Starting loyalty higher than 2 is unusual, as is starting loyalty below 0. Choose a cost for the hireling and you're done.

A hireling's stats, especially their loyalty, may change during play as a reflection of events. A particular kindness or bonus from the players is worth +1 loyalty forward. Disrespect is -1 loyalty forward. If it's been a while since their cost was last paid they get -1 loyalty ongoing until their cost is met. A hireling's loyalty may be permanently increased when they achieve some great deed with the players. A significant failure or beating may permanently lower the hireling's loyalty.

COSTS

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

SKILLS

When you make a hiring, distribute points among one or more of these skills.

ADEPT

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

Arcane Assistance—When an adept aids in the casting of a spell of lower level than their skill, the spell's effects have greater range, duration, or potency. The exact effects depend on the situation and the spell and are up to the GM. The GM will describe what effects the assist will add before the spell is cast. The most important feature of casting with an adept is that any negative effects of the casting are focused on the adept first.

BURGLAR

Burglars are skilled in a variety of areas, most of them illicit or dangerous. They are good with devices and traps, but not too helpful in the field of battle.

Experimental Trap Disarming—When a burglar leads the way they can detect traps almost in time. If a trap would be sprung while a burglar is leading the way the burglar suffers the full effects but the players get +skill against the trap and add the burglar's skill to their armor against the trap. Most traps leave a burglar in need of immediate healing. If the players Make Camp near the trap, the burglar can disarm it by the time camp is broken.

MINSTREL

When a smiling face is needed to smooth things over or negotiate a deal a minstrel is always happy to lend their services for the proper price.

A Hero's Welcome—When you enter a place of food, drink, or entertainment with a minstrel you will be treated as a friend by everyone present (unless your actions prove otherwise). You also subtract the minstrel's skill from all prices in town.

PRIEST

Priests are the lower ranking clergy of a religion, performing minor offices and regular sacraments. While not granted spells themselves, they are able to call upon their deity for minor aid.

Ministry—When you make camp with a priest if you would normally heal you heal +skill HP.

First Aid—When a priest staunches your wounds heal 2×skill HP. You take -1 forward as their healing is painful and distracting.

PROTECTOR

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

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

Intervene—When a protector helps you defy danger you may opt to take +1 from their aid. If you do you cannot get a 10+ result, a 10+ instead counts as a 7–9.

TRACKER

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

Track—When a tracker is given time to study a trail while Making Camp, when camp is broken they can follow the trail to the next major change in terrain, travel, or weather.

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

WARRIOR

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

Man-at-arms—When you deal damage while a warrior aids you add their skill to the damage done. If your attack results in consequences (like a counter attack) the man-at-arms takes the brunt of it.

THE ADVENTURER'S LIFE

Now you know the basics. It's time you found out what the adventurer's life is really like. They say it's all gold and glory. That's sometimes true, but sometimes it also means digging through otyugh waste for a chance at one more gold coin.

DUNGEONS

As an adventurer you'll spend a lot of time in dungeons. The word "dungeon" conjures up an image of the stony halls under a castle where prisoners are kept, but a dungeon is really any place filled with danger and opportunity. A dragon's cave, an enemy camp, a forgotten sewer, a sky castle, the very foundations of the world.

The most important thing to remember when you're in a dungeon is that it's a living place. Just because you cleared the guards out of the entryway doesn't mean they won't be replaced by fresh recruits. Every monster, soldier, or leader you kill has friends, mates, followers, and spawn somewhere. Don't count on anything in a dungeon.

Since dungeons are living places you'd better prepare for the long haul. Rations are your best friend. Delving into the Hall of Xa'thal isn't a day trip. Once you're inside your exit might be blocked. Even if you could just waltz out the time you spend doing it just gives your enemies time to prepare. Those goblins aren't tough, but when they have time to rally and prepare traps...

Speaking of traps—keep your eyes open for them, too. The thief is your best friend there. They can stop you before you wander into a pit trap or fill the room with acid. Without one you're not in dire trouble, but you're likely to need to take your time and be extra careful. You can investigate an area by discerning realities, but you'll be taking more risks than a skilled thief would.

When you're unlucky enough to trigger a trap you might have a chance to get out of the way, throw up a quick protective spell, or save a friend—most likely by defying danger. Of course not every trap is so crude as to give you time to get out of the way. A well-built trap will have a blade in your side before you even know it's sprung.

That sounds grim, sure, but it's not as bad as all that. You've got steel, skills, and spells. If you stick together and keep your wits you'll make it out alive. Probably.

MONSTERS

The beasts and worse that fill dungeons? We call them monsters.

Not all of them appear monstrous. Sometimes it's just a guy in some armor—no horns, flames, or wings, nothing. But when that guy wants to kill you, well, he's as much a monster as the rest.

Some don't even need arms and armor. A wily warlock or nefarious noble can stab you in the back a dozen times with a word or two. Be wary of anyone who can stroll around a dungeon with nothing but a robe and a staff: there's a reason they don't need a shell of steel.

When it comes to fighting monsters, it's an even bet: your life versus theirs. You should know that going into it. If you can avoid it, never fight with even odds. Unless you have the advantage you're probably better off working to gain that advantage than betting your life on a fight. Find their weaknesses, pad your advantages, and you'll live long enough to enjoy the spoils.

Fights often mean triggering moves like hack and slash, defend, or volley. Defy danger comes up pretty often too, and class moves like cast a spell. The best fight for you is one where you have the drop—since hack and slash is triggered by attacking in melee, and a defenseless enemy isn't really in melee, the move won't trigger—you'll just bury a weapon or spell in their back and deal your damage.

Monsters generally fall into a few types. Humanoids are more or less like you—orcs, goblins, and so on. Beasts are animals, but not so docile as Bessie the cow: think foot-long horns and acid sacs. Constructs are crafted life. Planar monsters come from beyond this world, from places only dreamed of. The undead might be the worst of all: that which is dead is damn hard to kill again.

When you find yourself in a fight with a monster you have a few different tricks up your sleeve that can help you survive. If the monster's something you might know about, you could consult your knowledge and spout lore. It never hurts to take a minute to look around and discern realities, too—there might be something helpful nearby that you missed. Make sure you understand your class moves and how they can help you, too. You never know when a move might come in handy in a new way.

WILDERNESS

There's dungeons, there's civilization, and there's all the stuff in-between: the wilderness. The line between a forest and a dungeon is thinner than you might think—have you ever been lost in the night and surrounded by wolves?

Journeys by road are easy. When you've got a trail to follow and some modicum of protection you're not even making moves—you just consume some rations on the way and make it to your destination. If it's a perilous journey though...

On a perilous journey you'll need a trailblazer, a scout, and a quartermaster. That means you'll probably want at least three people when you're traveling in dangerous areas. Fewer than three and you'll be neglecting something—that's an invitation for trouble.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

You're an adventurer, so people will pay attention to you. Not all of that attention is going to be positive. You'll find that, especially once you're laden down with ancient treasure, all manner of hangers-on will appear from the woodwork.

Sure, you can get leverage on these people and parley them to get what you want, but the way to build a lasting connection is to do right by them. Forcing Duke Alhoro to give you a castle in return for his daughter will get you the land, but the reputation that comes along with your shady dealing won't do you many favors. Coercion isn't mind control, so play it nice if you want to make friends.

Magic, though, that just might be mind control. The morality of it's debatable but you can bend someone to your will if you don't mind tossing their free will in the corner.

It's worth keeping track of who's got your back and who'd sooner stab you in it. The GM will be doing the same, and the worst enemy is the one you don't know. You're not the only ones in Dungeon World with grand designs.

While you live the adventurer's life, with no fixed address to give, other folks are likely to be more settled. Knowing where the blacksmith is that does the best work, or which town's inns will put you up free of charge, is a fine thing indeed.

Keep in mind that not all power is physical. Even if you could take down King Arlon in a fight you'll just be inviting retribution from his kin, allies, and court. Station is its own kind of power apart from magic and might.

THE WORLD

You're an adventurer; you're a big deal. But there are other forces at work too. The world will go on without you. If you don't deal with the goblin infestation in the sewers maybe someone else will. Or maybe the goblins will take over the city. Do you really want to find out?

A world in motion is a world waiting to be changed. Your choices of who to kill (or not), where to go, what bargains to make—it all changes the world you're in. Changing the world requires acting on it—making moves and pursuing treasure and exploration. Change comes in many forms, including XP used to level up and gain new abilities. Those abilities are then used to go back out into the world and stir things up. It's a cycle of change and growth for both you and the world you live in.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

I'm GMing a game with Isaac (playing Omar), Ben (playing Brianne), Amy (playing Nora), and Dan (playing Rath). The group has come upon a tribe of goblins preparing the ritual sacrifice of a rare and valuable albino crocodile (highly regarded as pets among the wealthy of the city).

Three of the goblin warriors—drugged on narcotic vapors—charge the fighter Brianne, shrieking. Two others take cover, prepare their bows and gesture urgently toward Rath, as they make signs to ward off the evil eye. Another group of three slips into the shadows around the outer edge of the chamber, preparing a sneak attack. The high priest and her acolyte carry on with the ritual, rubbing the croc's upturned belly to keep it compliant, and bringing out the sacred knife to slit its throat.

Once I describe the situation I make sure the game's a conversation by giving them a chance to do something: "So, what do you do?"

Isaac jumps into the action first. "There's enough shadows at the edges of the chamber to hide in?" "Yeah," I say, "the goblins aren't much for lighting apparently. The edges of the chamber just kind of disappear into crumbling walls, rubble, and gloom." "Great! I'm going over here, the side where the sneaky ones went. Omar glances over his shoulders, pulls up his hood over his head, and ducks into the shadows. I'm going to pop out of the shadows right here, where the torches illuminate the sacrificial altar."

I look over the map and say "Well, there's certainly a danger of being discovered that I think you're defying. Sounds like DEX to me, since you're moving carefully and silently," so he picks up the dice and rolls. The dice show 1 and 2, plus his DEX of 2 is only 5. "Damn!" he says.

I already have an idea of what to do, but I check it against my list of moves to be sure. Sure enough, my idea to have him get his foot lodged in the rubble in the darkness is a move, "put someone in a spot." "As you make your way through the shadows, you put your foot down on some rubble and it shifts under you, pinning your foot. What's worse, you hear a deep raspy breath as the shifting rubble awakes something in the shadows. Are you giving away your position to cry for help or trying to get out yourself?"

"Um, I'm not sure."

"That's fine, we'll come back to you. What are the rest of you doing?"

Dan steps up. "Those goblins that ducked into the shadows? Can I see them?" "Not at first glance. Are you trying to pick them out?" "No, I'm just wondering if they'll be targets for my sleep spell. I push the winds of magic into a lulling summer breeze that fills the room."

Dan rolls his cast a spell move to cast Sleep. He rolls 6 total on the dice, and he has +2 INT, for a total of 8. He has a choice to make. "You can feel the spell slipping away from you, the winds of magic are already all caught up in the goblin's ritual sacrifice. There are some options on the move, which one are you taking to keep the spell?"

Dan ponders his options. "I may need to put more of these guys to sleep. Brianne, can you cover me if I get in trouble or should I take the -1 forward?"

"Sure, I can cover you," Ben says.

"Okay, I'll take the danger option."

"Great," I say. "The narcotic vapors those goblins are on? It attunes their senses: They can feel the winds of magic just a bit, and now they're all running at you instead of Brianne. How many creatures are you putting to sleep?"

Dan rolls the die. "Looks like only 1, damn."

"Right in the middle of some long goblin invocation the priest just drops to the floor. Her acolyte immediately starts shaking her to wake her up. Neither of them is paying much attention to the albino crocodile, which is no longer content since no one is rubbing its belly. The goblins on the fumes, though, they're coming right at Rath."

Ben jumps in. "I step between Rath and the crazed goblins and make myself a big target, drawing the goblin's attention with a yell."

"Sounds like defend," I say.

"Okay, I rolled a 7, so I hold 1."

"Great. The three goblins on fumes practically bowl Rath over as they slam into him, swinging their daggers wildly."

"No they don't!" Ben says. "I spend my hold to get into the way and direct the attack to me."

"So Brianne steps in at the last moment, pushes Rath out of the way, and the goblins lay into her instead. Looks like 5 damage. Nora, Brianne's got these three psychotic goblins all over her, Rath's just put

the priestess to sleep, the crocodile's stirring, and Omar's nowhere to be found. What are you doing?"

"First I line up a shot on one of the archer goblins, and while I'm doing that I give a little head nod and Canto heads off into the shadows, he's trained to hunt, he's looking for Omar to make sure he's all right."

I look over the ranger's command move, to make sure I know what the effects of Canto's search are, before responding. "Well, on his own Canto will probably find Omar in a while. If you go into the darkness with him you'll take his bonus to your discern realities roll to find Omar. But first it sounds like you're making a called shot?"

"Oh, the goblin archers are surprised by me? I thought I was just volleying," Amy replies.

It's time for me to make a call. "No, they're entirely focused on Rath, they're about to fire on him. I think you've got the element of surprise because they're just too focused."

"Great! Then I'll go ahead and take a shot at the arms of the one closest to me, I want him to drop his bow. Looks like that's +DEX... 10! He drops his bow and takes 4 damage."

I consult the goblin's stats first, then reply "Yup, that'll kill him. And since you hit him dead in the arm, he doesn't get a shot off. The other one, however, releases his shot at Rath, for 2 damage. Rath, Brianne pushes you out of the way and you think you're safe for a split second before an arrow flies into your leg, what are you doing about it? Actually, hold that thought, let's see what Omar's doing."

Isaac's had some time to think things through now. "This deep raspy breath, can I make out where it's coming from? Is it like a human-sized rasp or a monster-sized rasp?"

"Sounds to me like you're trying to listen to your senses and get some information." I'm hoping that this will remind Isaac there's a move for this, instead of just telling him to make the move.

"Oh yeah! So I'm discerning realities, staying as quiet as I can and just trying to pick up any detail on what this thing is. With my Wisdom that's a 7, whew. What should I be on the lookout for?"

I take a second to look over my notes and the map, just to make sure I give him all the information. "Well, not the goblins, actually. They pass by, closer to the light than you, intent on backstabbing your friends and not noticing you. The thing that you do see is the

tip of this huge crocodile snout peak over a mound of rubble, with that rasping sound coming from it. It looks like the albino crocodile has family, and it's big, horse-sized. If you make noise by moving rocks and getting unstuck it'll almost certainly hear you. What are you doing about that?"

Isaac ponders. "So, I can try to get out of here, defying danger most likely from the sounds of it. Or... I tear off a piece of my cloak and soak it in an entire dose of my goldenroot poison. It's an applied poison, but if I can get this huge crocodile to swallow it before it swallows me it'll treat me as a trusted ally, and then I can use it against the goblins."

"Okay!" That sounds like a risky plan to me, but it's just crazy enough to work. Time to cut back to someone else. "Omar's soaking poison into a scrap of cloak, Brienne's got three drugged-up goblins scraping at her, Nora's got an eye out for Omar, there are goblin sneaks in the shadows, one goblin archer by the altar, the crocodile is waking up, and Rath just took an arrow to the knee. Whew. Rath, what are you doing about that arrow?"



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CHAPTER 3

Making Dungeon World characters is quick and easy. You should all create your first characters together at the beginning of your first session. Character creation is, just like play, a kind of conversation—everyone should be there for it.

You may need to make another character during play, if yours gets killed for example. If so, no worries, the character creation process helps you make a new character that fits into the group in just a few minutes. All characters, even replacement characters, start at first level.

Most everything you need to create a character you'll find on the character sheets. These steps will walk you through filling out a character sheet.

1. CHOOSE A CLASS

Look over the character classes and choose one that interests you. To start with everyone chooses a different class; there aren't two wizards. If two people want the same class, talk it over like adults and compromise.

Later on, if you're making a replacement character, you can choose a class someone else is already playing.

I sit down with Paul and Shannon to play a game run by John. I've got some cool ideas for a wizard, so I mention that would be my first choice. No one else was thinking of playing one, so I take the wizard character sheet.

2. CHOOSE A RACE

Some classes have race options. Choose one. Your race gives you a special move.

I like the idea of being flexible—having more spells available is always good, right? I choose Human, since it'll allow me to pick a cleric spell and cast it like it was a wizard one. That'll leave Shannon's cleric free to keep the healing magic flowing.

Daniel: All right, fine, I'll be a dwarf, but my name is Carlos.

Bill: Carlos the dwarf?

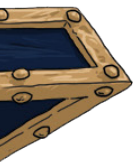
Daniel: Yeah, you got a problem with that, Gorthon?

—Freaks & Geeks

3. CHOOSE A NAME

Choose your character's name from the list.

Avon sounds good.



CHARACTER CREATION

4. CHOOSE LOOK

Your look is your physical appearance. Choose one item from each list.

Haunted eyes sound good since every wizard has seen some things no mortal was meant to. No good wizard has time for hair styling so wild hair it is. My robes are strange, and I mention to everyone that I think maybe they came from Beyond as part of a summoning ritual. No time to eat with all that studying and research: thin body.

5. CHOOSE STATS

Assign these scores to your stats: 16, 15, 13, 12, 9, 8. Start by looking over the basic moves and the starting moves for your class. Pick out the move that interests you the most: something you'll be doing a lot, or something that you excel at. Put a 16 in the stat for that move. Look over the list again and pick out the next most important move to your character, maybe something that supports your first choice. Put your 15 in the stat for that move. Repeat this process for your remaining scores: 13, 12, 9, 8.

Alternatively, if everyone wants a little more randomness then you can roll stats. Roll 3d6 and assign the total to a stat—repeat this until you have all your stats.

If you want something really random you can roll for stats in order (STR, DEX, CON, INT, WIS, CHA). If you choose this method you get to roll before you choose your class.

It looks like I need Intelligence to cast spells, which are my thing, so my 16 goes there. The defy danger option for Dexterity looks like something I might be doing to dive out of the way of a spell, so that gets my 15. A 13 Wisdom will help me notice important details (and maybe keep my sanity, based on the defy danger move). Charisma might be useful in dealing with summoned creatures so I'll put my 12 there. Living is always nice, so I put my 9 in Constitution for some extra HP. Strength gets the 8.

6. FIGURE OUT MODIFIERS

Next you need to figure out the modifiers for your stats. The modifiers are what you use when a move says +DEX or +CHA. If you're using the standard character sheets the modifiers are already listed with each score.

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

7. SET MAXIMUM HP

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

Base 4 plus 9 con gives me a whopping 13 HP.

8. CHOOSE STARTING MOVES

The front side of each character sheet lists the starting moves. Some classes, like the fighter, have choices to make as part of one of their moves. Make these choices now. The wizard will need to choose spells for their spellbook. Both the cleric and the wizard will need to choose which spells they have prepared to start with.

A Summoning spell is an easy choice, so I take Contact Spirits. Magic Missile will allow me to deal more damage than the pitiful d4 for the wizard class, so that's in too. I choose Alarm for my last spell, since I can think of some interesting uses for it.

9. CHOOSE ALIGNMENT

Your alignment is a few words that describe your character's moral outlook. Each class may only start with certain alignments. Choose your alignment—in play, it'll give your character certain actions that can earn you additional XP

The Neutral option for wizards says I earn extra XP when I discover a magical mystery. Avon is all about discovering mystery—I'll go with Neutral.

10. CHOOSE GEAR

Each class has choices to make for starting gear. Keep your Load in mind—it limits how much you can easily carry. Make sure to total up your armor and note it on your character sheet.

I'm worried about my HP, so I take armor over books. A dagger sounds about right for rituals; I choose that over a staff. It's a toss-up between the healing potion and the antitoxin, but healing wins out. I also end up with some rations.

11. INTRODUCE YOUR CHARACTER

Now that you know who your character is, it's time to introduce them to everyone else. Wait until everyone's finished choosing their name. Then go around the table; when it's your turn, share your look, class and anything else pertinent about your character. You can share your alignment now or keep it a secret if you prefer.

This is also the time for the GM to ask questions. The GM's questions should help establish the relationships between characters ("What do you think about that?") and draw the group into the adventure ("Does that mean you've met Grundloch before?"). The GM should listen to everything in the description and ask about anything that stands out. Establish where they're from, who they are, how they came together, or anything else that seems relevant or interesting.

"This is Avon, mighty wizard! He's a human with haunted eyes, wild hair, strange robes, and a thin body. Like I mentioned before his robes are strange because they're literally not of this world: they came to him as part of a summoning ritual."

Having more bonds gives you more interesting facts about you and your companions and lets you help them better. Any bonds you don't fill in now you'll be able to use or replace later.

12. CHOOSE BONDS

Once everyone has described their characters you can choose your bonds. You must fill in one bond but it's in your best interest to fill in more. For each blank fill in the name of one character. You can use the same character for more than one statement.

Take some time to discuss the bonds and let the GM ask questions about them as they come up. You'll want to go back and forth and make sure everyone is happy and comfortable with how the bonds have come out. Leave space to discover what each one might mean in play, too: don't pre-determine everything at the start. Once everyone's filled in their bonds read them out to the group. When a move has you roll+BOND you'll count the number of bonds you have with the character in question and add that to the roll.

With everyone introduced I choose which character to list in each bond, I have Paul's fighter Gregor and Shannon's cleric Brinton to choose from. The bond about prophecy sounds fun, so I choose Gregor for it and end up with "Gregor will play an important role in the events to come. I have foreseen it!" It seems like the wizard who contacts Things From Beyond and the cleric might not see eye to eye, so I add Shannon's character and get "Brinton is woefully misinformed about the world; I will teach them all that I can." I leave my last bond blank; I'll deal with it later. Once everyone is done I read my bonds aloud and we all discuss what this means about why we're together and where we're going.

13. GET READY TO PLAY

Take a little break: grab a drink, stretch your legs and let the GM brainstorm for a little bit about what they've learned about your characters. Once you're all ready, grab your dice and your sheet and get ready to take on the dungeon.

Once you're ready the GM will get things started as described in the First Session chapter.

The First Session chapter is on page 175.





CHAPTER 4

This chapter contains the moves that are available to all characters. These moves fall into two categories: basic and special.

Basic moves are the bread and butter of the adventurer's life. They cover situations likely to come up in fights, tense negotiations, and dangerous areas.

Special moves come up a little more rarely. They cover things like gaining a level, taking a long journey, or returning to town between adventures.

All player characters have all the basic and special moves. Each player character will also have some moves from their class—we'll get to those later.

Each move is presented here starting with its name, then the rules of the move. Some are also accompanied by a quick discussion of how to use the move and some examples of the move being used in play.

BASIC MOVES

HACK AND SLASH

When you attack an enemy in melee, roll+STR. *On a 10+, you deal your damage to the enemy and avoid their attack. At your option, you may choose to do +1d6 damage but expose yourself to the enemy's attack. *On a 7–9, you deal your damage to the enemy and the enemy makes an attack against you.

Hack and slash is for attacking a prepared enemy plain and simple. If the enemy isn't prepared for your attack—if they don't know you're there or they're restrained and helpless—then that's not hack and slash. You just deal your damage or murder them outright, depending on the situation. Nasty stuff.

The enemy's counterattack can be any GM move made directly with that creature. A goblin might just attack you back, or they might jam a poisoned needle into your veins. Life's tough, isn't it?

Note that an "attack" is some action that a player undertakes that has a chance of causing physical harm to someone else. Attacking a dragon with inch-thick metal scales full of magical energy using a typical sword is like swinging a meat cleaver at a tank: it just isn't going to cause any harm, so hack and slash doesn't apply. Note that circumstances can change that: if you're in a position to stab the dragon on its soft underbelly (good luck with getting there) it could hurt, so it's an attack.

If the action that triggers the move could reasonably hurt multiple targets roll once and apply damage to each target (they each get their armor).

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

GM: Jarl, you're up to your not-inconsiderable belly in slavering goblins. They have you surrounded, knives bared. What do you do?

Jarl: I've had enough of this! I wallop the closest goblin with my hammer.

GM: Okay, then. This is definitely combat, you're using hack and slash. Roll+STR.

Jarl: I got an 11. It says here that I have a choice. Fear is for the weak, let those goblins come!

GM: You smash your hammer into the nearest goblin and are rewarded by the satisfying sound of the crunching of his bones. That and a knife wound as the goblin counterattacks. He deals 4 damage to you. What do you do?

GM: Cadeus, from the shadows, you've got the drop on those orc warriors.

Cadeus: I leap out and bring my sword down in a sweeping arc! Like this! Yeeeah!

GM: Well, they weren't expecting that, they're caught totally off guard and you slice into one. Roll damage.

Cadeus: I deal 6 damage.

GM: The orc collapses in a bloody heap! The second orc freezes and then he's grinning at you with that horrible tusked mouth, raising his signal horn from his belt! What do you do?

GM: Bartleby, you've got Finbar the Magnificent, mightiest duelist in the land, completely disarmed and at sword point.

Bartleby: I won't let you betray me again, Finbar! I run him through.

GM: Well, okay, that's a hack and slash, roll+STR.

Bartleby: If you say so... I got a 7.

GM: Okay, you run him through because he can't even defend himself and... umm, wait. You know what, he's not in melee with you at all. He's helpless, forget hack and slash, he's toast. He slumps to the ground, coughing up blood but the sound of the guard alarm rings out. What do you do?

VOLLEY

When you take aim and shoot at an enemy at range, roll+DEX. *On a 10+, you have a clear shot—deal your damage. *On a 7–9, choose one (whichever you choose you deal your damage):

- You have to move to get the shot placing you in danger as described by the GM
 - You have to take what you can get: -1d6 damage
 - You have to take several shots, reducing your ammo by one
-

Volley covers the entire act of drawing, aiming, and firing a ranged weapon or throwing a thrown weapon. The advantage to using a ranged weapon over melee is that the attacker is less likely to be attacked back. Of course they do have to worry about ammunition and getting a clear shot though.

On a 7–9, read “danger” broadly. It can be bad footing or ending in the path of a sword or maybe just giving up your sweet sniper nest to your enemies. Whatever it is, it’s impending and it’s always something that causes the GM to say “What do you do?” Quite often, the danger will be something that will then require you to dedicate yourself to avoiding it or force you to defy danger.

If you’re throwing something that doesn’t have ammo (maybe you’ve got a move that makes your shield throwable) you can’t choose to mark off ammo. Choose from the other two options instead.

Aranwe: So, I'm stuck down here on the floor of the ritualarium and that orc eyegouger is chanting his ritual up on the pedestal? Since Thelian has the rest of the rabble busy, I'll aim my bow and take a shot at the chanting orc.

GM: An excellent choice—sounds like volley to me.

Aranwe: I got an 8, damn. Well, I'm low on arrows and even lower on HP. I better take what I can get. I roll my damage, then subtract the results of a d6, right? I got a 3. Is that enough to distract him, at least?

GM: Sure! The arrow digs into the eyegouger's leg and he roars in pain, interrupting the ritual temporarily. Unfortunately, it looks like interruption might just be worse—a terrible rumbling echoes from the pit under the pedestal and the masonry of the room begins to crumble. What do you do?

Halek: Kobolds and an ogre? Man, what's going on here? Well, if they're coming to get me, I might as well let my arrows say hello. I take a shot at the mob. I rolled an 8.

GM: Well, what'll it be? Danger? Ammo?

Halek: I'll take the danger.

GM: Well, the kobolds swarm you and you manage to hit one as they approach—he falls down but as the rest approach, you realize you've lost track of the ogre. He smashes you with his club and you take 12 damage!

Halek: 12 damage? That's the danger?

GM: You're right, that's not just danger. Okay, so you're not mush yet—the ogre is looming behind you and that club is flying down at your head! What do you do?

DEFY DANGER

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

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

*On a 10+, you do what you set out to, the threat doesn't come to bear. *On a 7–9, you stumble, hesitate, or flinch: the GM will offer you a worse outcome, hard bargain, or ugly choice.

You defy danger when you do something in the face of impending peril. This may seem like a catch-all. It is! Defy danger is for those times when it seems like you clearly should be rolling but no other move applies.

Defy danger also applies when you make another move despite danger not covered by that move. For example, hack and slash assumes that's you're trading blows in battle—you don't need to defy danger because of the monster you're fighting unless there's some specific danger that wouldn't be part of your normal attack. On the other hand, if you're trying to hack and slash while spikes shoot from hidden traps in the walls, those spikes are a whole different danger.

Danger, here, is anything that requires resilience, concentration, or poise. This move will usually be called for by the GM. She'll tell you what the danger is as you make the move. Something like "You'll have to defy danger first. The danger is the steep and icy floor you're running across. If you can keep your footing, you can make it to the door before the necromancer's magic gets you."

Which stat applies depends on what action you take and your action has to trigger the move. That means you can't defy danger from a steep and icy floor with a charming smile just so you can use CHA, since charmingly smiling at the icy floor does nothing to it. On the other hand, making a huge leap over the ice would be STR, placing your feet carefully would be DEX, and so on. Make the move to get the results.

GM: *Emory, as you climb up the side of the ravine you spy a cultist on a ledge nearby who evokes a frost spell and covers the side of the cliff with ice! If you want to keep climbing, you need to defy danger or you'll fall.*

Emory: *No way, I am too tough. I grit my teeth and dig my nails into the wall, climbing one hand at a time. I'm using CON, okay? I got an 8, though...*

GM: *Hmm, well, I think the only way you can gain any traction, tough guy, is if you use your dagger to pull yourself up the last few feet. It's going to be lodged in there until you have some time to pull it loose and there's an angry spellcaster nearby.*

Emory: *I can always get a new dagger when I get home. Time to finish this climb and that cultist.*

GM: *The athach is swinging his burly third arm down at you, knobby fingers gripping a broken branch. What are you doing, Valeria?*

Valeria: *So he wants to fight, huh? Let's do it. I hack and slash him, swinging my sword at his legs.*

GM: *Now hold on there, champ. He's already got you at a disadvantage. You can jump into the fray but you'll take that club head on unless you defy danger first.*

Valeria: *Pfft, he's no match for Valeria the Red! I leap aside like a leaf in the wind, then I start hacking and slashing.*

GM: *Defy danger with your DEX, please and thank you.*

Octavia: *I've had enough of this ogre, I'm going to drop my shield and swing my hammer in both hands. Hack and slash, right?*

GM: *You drop your shield? That's a bad idea—now you have to defy danger because the ogre is going to bash you.*

Octavia: *Are you sure? Isn't that what hack and slash is? Trading blows and stuff?*

GM: *Yes, duh, of course. I need another cup of coffee—hack and slash it is, make your move!*

DEFEND

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

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

Defending something means standing nearby and focusing on preventing attacks against that thing or stopping anyone from getting near it. When you're no longer nearby or you stop devoting your attention to incoming attacks then you lose any hold you might have had.

You can only spend hold when someone makes an attack on you or the thing you're defending. The choices you can make depend on the attacker and the type of attack. In particular, you can't deal damage to an attacker who you can't reach with your weapon.

An attack is any action you can interfere with that has harmful effects. Swords and arrows are attacks, of course, but so are spells, grabs, and charges.

If the attack doesn't deal damage then halving it means the attacker gets some of what they want but not all of it. It's up to you and the GM to work out what that means depending on the circumstances. If you're defending the Gem Eye of Oro-Uht and an orc tries to grab it from its pedestal then half effect might mean that the gem gets knocked to the floor but the orc doesn't get his hands on it, yet. Or maybe the orc gets a hold of it but so do you—now you're both fighting over it, tooth and nail. If you and the GM can't agree on a halved effect you can't choose that option.

Defending yourself is certainly an option. It amounts to giving up on making attacks and just trying to keep yourself safe.

GM: Avon, you begin weaving the spell to push the necromancer's ghost back through the gates but the zombies are bearing down on you.

Lux: Don't worry, squishy Avon, I will save you. While Avon casts his spell, I swear to protect him—I slam my hammer on my shield and yell "If you want to stop him, you'll have to come through me." I'd like to defend Avon.

GM: And with such gusto, too. Roll+CON.

Lux: I get an 11, three hold, right?

Avon: Better get ready to use it, Lux. I got an 8 on my spellcasting roll—I choose to put myself in danger.

GM: Of course you do. The zombies are drawn by the magical disturbance, lurching toward you on the attack. Suddenly, you're swarmed by them, they're everywhere! What do you do?

Avon: Squeak helplessly?

Lux: I'm on it. I spend a point of my hold to redirect the attack to me—I shove Avon aside and let the full fury of my goodness spill out in waves, angering the undead. To be safe, I'm going to whip my hammer in an arc and deal my damage. I might as well use it all up and reduce the damage by half. My god protects us!

GM: So, Hadrian, you've been defending Durga while she heals Willem, but now Willem is better. What do you do?

Durga: I leap forward to drive back the troglodytes!

Hadrian: I want to tangle with this crocodilian.

GM: Okay, Durga, the trogs come at you with their clubs.

Hadrian: No way, I still have hold left over, I want to spend it to redirect that attack to myself.

GM: You two are spread out, now. How are you going to do that if you're 20 yards away? You lost your hold when you attacked the croc, my friend.

Hadrian: Yeah, I guess I'm not "standing in defense" anymore. Forget it, you're on your own, Durga!

SPOUT LORE

When you **consult your accumulated knowledge about something**, roll+INT. *On a 10+, the GM will tell you something interesting and useful about the subject relevant to your situation. *On a 7–9, the GM will only tell you something interesting—it’s on you to make it useful. The GM might ask you “How do you know this?” Tell them the truth, now.

You spout lore any time you want to search your memory for knowledge or facts about something. You take a moment to ponder the things you know about the Orcish Tribes or the Tower of Ul’damm and then reveal that knowledge.

The knowledge you get is like consulting a bestiary, travel guide, or library. You get facts about the subject matter. On a 10+ the GM will show you how those facts can be immediately useful, on a 7–9 they’re just facts.

On a miss the GM’s move will often involve the time you take thinking. Maybe you miss that goblin moving around behind you, or the tripwire across the hallway. It’s also a great chance to reveal an unwelcome truth.

Just in case it isn’t clear: the answers are always true, even if the GM had to make them up on the spot. Always say what honesty demands.

Fenfaril: The floor was illusory? Damn those gnomes. Damn them straight to wherever gnomes go when they're dead.

GM: Heh, yep. You're in a murky pit, and there's a shadowy humanoid shape, mottled and eyeless, moving towards you, mumbling.

Fenfaril: Mumbling shape, huh? What is that thing? Is it going to attack me? I'm sure I've read about them somewhere before, maybe at school?

GM: Could be. Spout lore!

Fenfaril: Bestow your knowledge upon me, brain. I rolled an 8.

GM: Well, of course you know of these things—the name escapes you but you definitely remember a drawing of a creature like this. It was in a hallway, standing guard over something. You know there's a trick to get it to let you pass but you can't quite remember. Why not?

Fenfaril: Obviously I was hungover that day. I was a terrible student. A trick, you say? Hmm...

Vitus: I got a 10 on my spout lore about this gilded skull.

GM: You're pretty sure you recognize the metalwork of Dis, the living city.

Vitus: ...and? I did get a 10!

GM: Right, of course. Well, you recognize a few glyphs specifically. They're efreeti, marks of a fire spell, but they're different, a kind of transmutation magic. I bet if you cast a spell into the skull, it'll turn it into a fire spell.

Vitus: Magic missiles of fire—hurrah!

DISCERN REALITIES

When you closely study a situation or person, roll +wis. *On a 10+, ask the GM 3 questions from the list below. *On a 7–9, ask 1.

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

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

To discern realities you must closely observe your target. That usually means interacting with it or watching someone else do the same. You can't just stick your head in the doorway and discern realities about a room. You're not merely scanning for clues—you have to look under and around things, tap the walls, and check for weird dust patterns on the bookshelves. That sort of thing.

Discerning realities isn't just about noticing a detail, it's about figuring out the bigger picture. The GM always describes what the player characters experience honestly, so during a fight the GM will say that the kobold mage stays at the other end of the hall. Discerning realities could reveal the reason behind that: the kobold's motions reveal that he's actually pulling energy from the room behind him, he can't come any closer.

Just like spout lore, the answers you get are always honest ones. Even if the GM has to figure it out on the spot. Once they answer, it's set in stone. You'll want to discern realities to find the truth behind illusions—magical or otherwise.

Unless a move says otherwise players can only ask questions from the list. If a player asks a question not on the list the GM can tell them to try again or answer a question from the list that seems equivalent.

Of course, some questions might have a negative answer, that's fine. If there really, honestly is nothing useful or valuable here, the GM will answer that question with "Nothing, sorry."

Omar: I don't trust this room—I'm going to poke around a little. I take out my tools and start messing with stuff. I pull candlesticks and tap the walls with my hammer. My usual tricks.

GM: Discern realities?

Omar: Oh yes. I discern all the realities. I got a 12. I want to know "What here is not as it appears to be?"

GM: Well, it's obvious to you that the wall on the north side of the room has a hollow spot. The stones are newer and the mortar is fresher, probably a hidden alcove or passageway.

Omar: I want to ask another one. "Who sealed the room."

GM: That's not on the list, so I'm going pretend you asked "What happened here recently." Looking at the stonework, you notice the wall actually bends out in places. The work is shoddy and awful—looks to you like the work of goblins. The only way it'd get bent out that way, though, is if there was something pushing it from within.

Omar: So either the goblins blocked it from the other side, or there's something in there that tried to get out.

GM: Bingo.

PARLEY

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

Parley covers a lot of ground including old standbys like intimidation and diplomacy. You know you're using parley when you're trying to get someone to do something for you by holding a promise or threat over them. Your leverage can be nasty or nice, the tone doesn't matter.

Merely asking someone politely isn't parleying. That's just talking. You say, "Can I have that magic sword?" and Sir Telric says, "Hell no, this is my blade, my father forged it and my mother enchanted it" and that's that. To parley, you have to have leverage. Leverage is anything that could lure the target of your parley to do something for you. Maybe it's something they want or something they don't want you to do. Like a sack of gold. Or punching them in the face. What counts as leverage depends on the people involved and the request being made. Threaten a lone goblin with death and you have leverage. Threaten a goblin backed up by his gang with death and he might think he's better off in a fight.

On a 7+ they ask you for something related to whatever leverage you have. If your leverage is that you're standing before them sharpening your knife and insinuating about how much you'd like to shank them with it they might ask you to let them go. If your leverage is your position in court above them they might ask for a favor.

Whatever they ask for, on a 10+, you just have to promise it clearly and unambiguously. On a 7–9, that's not enough: you also have to give them some assurance, right now, before they do what you want. If you promise that you'll ensure their safety from the wolves if they do what you want and you roll a 7–9 they won't do their part until you bring a fresh wolf pelt to prove you can do it, for example. It's worth noting that you don't actually have to keep your promise. Whether you'll follow up or not, well, that's up to you. Of course breaking promises leads to problems. People don't take kindly to oath-breakers and aren't likely to deal with them in the future.

In some cases when you state what you want you may include a possible promise for the creature to make, as in “flee and I’ll let you live.” It’s up to the target of the parley if that’s the promise they want or if they have something else in mind. They can say “yes, let me live and I’ll go” (with assurances, if you rolled a 7–9) or “promise me you won’t follow me.”

Leena: “Lord Hywn, I need you to vouch for me or the Queen will never grant me an audience.”

GM: He’s not really convinced—it could be a big hit to his reputation if you embarrass him. “Why should I help you, Leena?”

Leena: Oh, while I talk to him, I absentmindedly play with the signet ring from that assassin we killed. The one he hired to off the prince. I make sure he sees it.

GM: Oh boy, okay. Roll parley.

Leena: An 8.

GM: “Enough being coy!” he looks at you cold and angry. “You and I both know you murdered my hired man. Give me the ring, swear to silence, and I’ll do as you ask.”

Leena: I toss it to him. We can always dig up more dirt on this scumbag later.

Pendrell: This is the place where One Eye plays cards, right? Okay, I walk up to the guard. “Hey there fellows, care to, you know, open the door and let me in?” and I’m being all suave and cool so they’ll do it. Parley is roll+CHA right?

GM: Not so fast, slick. All you’ve done is say what you want. The big smelly one on the right steps in front of you and says, “Sorry sir, private game,” all bored-sounding. It’s like he hates his job and wishes he were someplace else. If you want to parley, you’re going to need some leverage. Maybe a bribe?

AID OR INTERFERE

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

Any time you feel like two players should be rolling against each other, the defender should be interfering with the attacker. This doesn't always mean sabotaging them. It can mean anything from arguing against a parley to just being a shifty person who's hard to discern. It's about getting in the way of another players' success.

Always ask the person aiding or interfering how they are doing it. As long as they can answer that, they trigger the move. Sometimes, as the GM, you'll have to ask if interference is happening. Your players might not always notice they're interfering with each other.

Aid is a little more obvious. If a player can explain how they're helping with a move and it makes sense, let them roll to aid.

No matter how many people aid or interfere with a given roll, the target only gets the +1 or -2 once. Even if a whole party of adventurers aid in attacking an ogre, the one who makes the final attack only gets +1.

GM: Ozruk, you stand alone and bloodied before a pack of angry hellhounds. Behind you cowers the Prince of Lescia, weeping in terror.

Ozruk: I stand firm and lift my shield. Despite certain doom, I will do my duty and defend the princeling.

Aronwe: I emerge from the shadows and draw my sword! "Doom is not so certain, dwarf!" I stand beside him. I want to help him defend. "Though I do not know you well, I have seen you in battle, Ozruk. If we are to die today, we die as brothers!" I don't have any bonds with him but I want to try anyway.

GM: Touching, really. Okay, roll +0 and if you succeed, Ozruk, take +1 to your defend attempt. Here we go!

SPECIAL MOVES

Special moves are moves that come up less often or in more specific situations. They're still the basis of what characters do in Dungeon World—particularly what they do between dungeon crawls and high-flying adventures.

LAST BREATH

"There's something about this that's so black, it's like, how much more black could it be? And the answer is 'none'. None more black."

—Nigel Tufnel, "(This Is) Spinal Tap"

When you're dying you catch a glimpse of what lies beyond the Black Gates of Death's Kingdom (the GM will describe it). Then roll (just roll, +nothing—yeah, Death doesn't care how tough or cool you are). *On a 10+, you've cheated Death—you're in a bad spot but you're still alive. *On a 7–9, Death himself will offer you a bargain. Take it and stabilize or refuse and pass beyond the Black Gates into whatever fate awaits you. *On 6-, your fate is sealed. You're marked as Death's own and you'll cross the threshold soon. The GM will tell you when.

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

There are three outcomes to this move. On a 10+, the Character has cheated Death in some meaningful way. He's escaped with something that, by rights, isn't his anymore. Death is powerless to stop this, but he remembers this slight. On a 7–9, the GM should offer a real choice with significant consequence. Think about the behaviors of the character and the things you've learned about him in play. Death knows and sees all and tailors his bargains accordingly. This is a trade, remember. Offer something that will be a challenge to play out but will lead the game in fun new direction. On a miss, death is inevitable. The most obvious approach is to say "Death takes you across the threshold, into his bleak kingdom." and move on. However, sometimes Death comes slowly. You might say "you have a week to live" or "you can feel the cold hand of Death on you..." and leave it at that, for now. The player may want to give in and accept death at this point—that's okay. Let them create a new character as normal. The key thing to remember is that a brush with death, succeed or fail, is a significant moment that should always lead to change.

GM: Sparrow, as the knife blade disappears into your guts, the world fades away and you stand before the Black Gates of Death. Among the throngs of suffering souls, you spot Lord Hwyn, that sickly cur. It looks like all his ill deals caught up with him at last. He spots you across the bleak gulf and you feel the chill of his hunger in your very soul. Take your Last Breath.

Sparrow: Heavy. I got a 9.

GM: Death appears to you, wisps of black cloth dancing around his shadowy form. A pale hand touches your face. You hear his voice in your mind. "Come to me so soon, pretty Sparrow? You follow a river of souls, sent here by your blade. I do so love you for them. I'll return you to the world, but you must make me a promise. In shadow you dwell, so shadow you shall become. Shun the light of day forever or find a quick trip back to my company. What do you say, little thief?"

Sparrow: (gulp)

ENCUMBRANCE

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

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

A PC's Load stat is determined by their class and STR. Being able to haul more is a clear benefit when trying to carry treasure out of a dungeon or just making sure you can bring along what you need.

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

MAKE CAMP

When you **settle in to rest** consume a ration. If you're somewhere dangerous decide the watch order as well. If you have enough XP you may level up. When you wake from at least a few uninterrupted hours of sleep heal damage equal to half your max HP.

You usually make camp so that you can do other things, like prepare spells or commune with your god. Or, you know, sleep soundly at night. Whenever you stop to catch your breath for more than an hour or so, you've probably made camp.

Staying a night in an inn or house is making camp, too. Regain your hit points as usual, but only mark off a ration if you're eating from the food you carry, not paying for a meal or receiving hospitality.

TAKE WATCH

When you're on watch and something approaches the camp roll+wis.

*On a 10+, you're able to wake the camp and prepare a response, everyone in the camp takes +1 forward. *On a 7-9, you react just a moment too late; your companions in camp are awake but haven't had time to prepare. They have weapons and armor but little else. *On a miss, whatever lurks outside the campfire's light has the drop on you.

UNDERTAKE A PERILOUS JOURNEY

When you **travel through hostile territory**, choose one member of the party to act as *trailblazer*, one to *scout* ahead, and one to be *quartermaster*. Each character with a job to do rolls+wis. *On a 10+:

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

*On a 7-9, each role performs their job as expected: the normal number of rations are consumed, the journey takes about as long as expected, no one gets the drop on you but you don't get the drop on them either.

You can't assign more than one job to a character. If you don't have enough party members, or choose not to assign a job, treat that job as if it had been assigned and the responsible player had rolled a 6.

Distances in Dungeon World are measured in rations. A ration is the amount of supplies used up in a day. Journeys take more rations when they are long or when travel is slow.

A perilous journey is the whole way between two locations. You don't roll for one day's journey and then make camp only to roll for the next day's journey, too. Make one roll for the entire trip.

This move only applies when you know where you're going. Setting off to explore is not a perilous journey. It's wandering around looking for cool things to discover. Use up rations as you camp and the GM will give you details about the world as you discover them.

•

END OF SESSION

When you **reach the end of a session**, choose one of your bonds that you feel is resolved (completely explored, no longer relevant, or otherwise). Ask the player of the character you have the bond with if they agree. If they do, mark XP and write a new bond with whomever you wish.

Once bonds have been updated look at your alignment. If you fulfilled that alignment at least once this session, mark XP. Then answer these three questions as a group:

- Did we learn something new and important about the world?
- Did we overcome a notable monster or enemy?
- Did we loot a memorable treasure?

For each “yes” answer everyone marks XP.

LEVEL UP

“You’ve only begun to discover your power! Join me, and I will complete your training! With our combined strength, we can end this destructive conflict, and bring order to the galaxy.”

—Darth Vader, “Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back”

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

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

CAROUSE

When you return triumphant and throw a big party, spend 100 coins and roll +1 for every extra 100 coins spent. *On a 10+, choose 3. *On a 7–9, choose 1. *On a miss, you still choose one, but things get really out of hand (the GM will say how).

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

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

*"You gotta fight for your right to party."
—The Beastie Boys*

SUPPLY

When you go to buy something with gold on hand, if it's something readily available in the settlement you're in, you can buy it at market price. If it's something special, beyond what's usually available here, or non-mundane, roll+CHA. *On a 10+, you find what you're looking for at a fair price. *On a 7–9, you'll have to pay more or settle for something that's not exactly what you wanted, but close. The GM will tell you what your options are.

RECOVER

When you **do nothing but rest in comfort and safety** after a day of rest you recover all your HP. After three days of rest you remove one debility of your choice. If you're under the care of a healer (magical or otherwise) you heal a debility for every two days of rest instead.

RECRUIT

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

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

*On a 10+, you've got your pick of a number of skilled applicants, your choice who you hire, no penalty for not taking them along. *On a 7–9, you'll have to settle for someone close to what you want or turn them away. *On a miss someone influential and ill-suited declares they'd like to come along (a foolhardy youth, a loose-cannon, or a veiled enemy, for example), bring them and take the consequences or turn them away. If you turn away applicants you take -1 forward to recruit.

OUTSTANDING WARRANTS

When you **return to a civilized place in which you've caused trouble before**, roll+CHA. *On a 10+, word has spread of your deeds and everyone recognizes you. *On a 7–9, as above, and the GM chooses a complication:

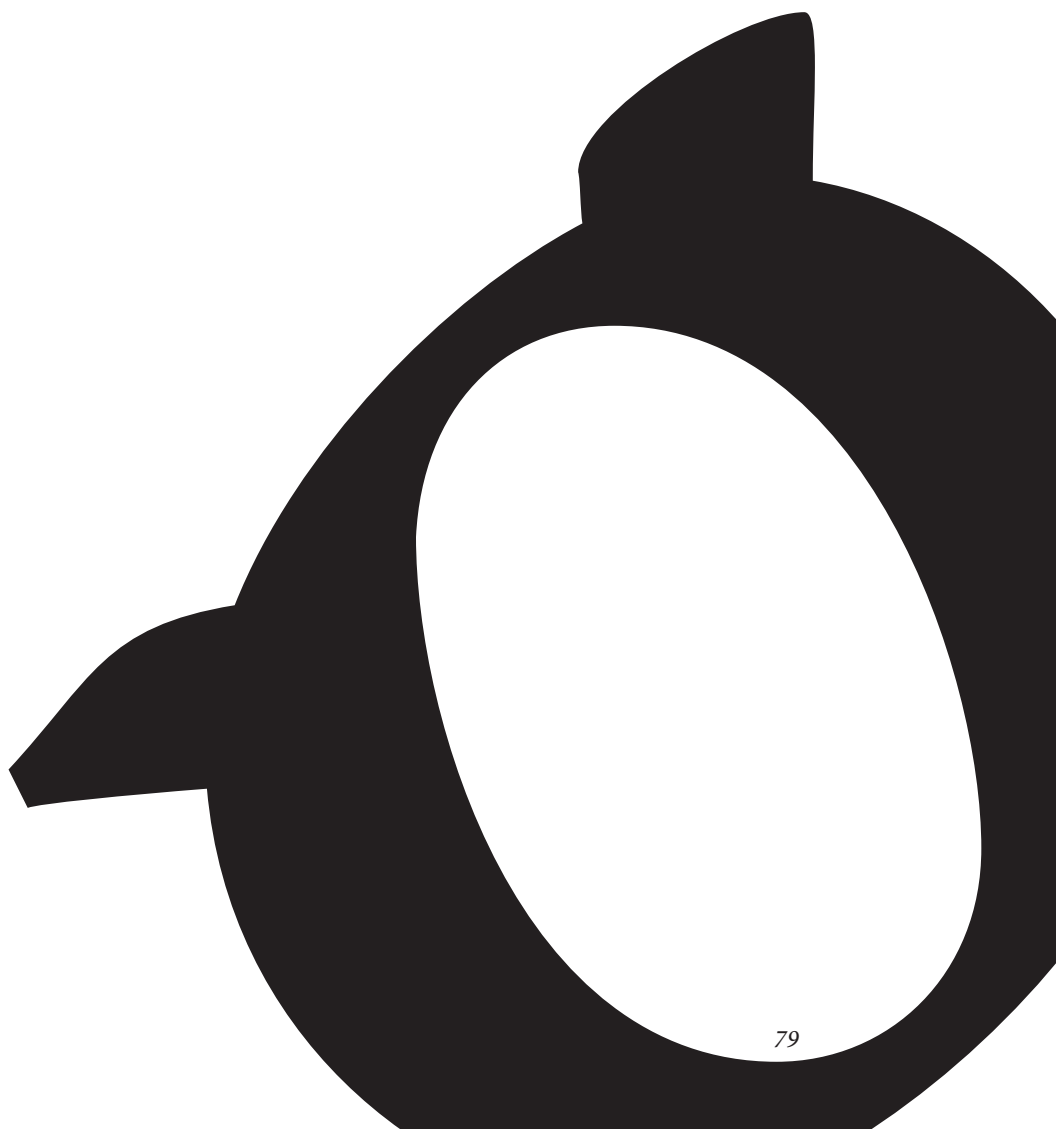
- The local constabulary has a warrant out for your arrest.
 - Someone has put a price on your head.
 - Someone important to you has been put in a bad spot as a result of your actions.
-

This move is only for places where you've caused trouble, not every patch of civilization you enter. Being publicly caught up in someone else's trouble still triggers this move.

Civilization generally means the villages, towns and cities of humans, elves, dwarves, and halflings but it can also apply to any relatively lawful establishment of monstrous species, such as orcs or goblins. If the PCs have stayed in a place as part of the community, it counts as civilization.

BOLSTER

When you **spend your leisure time in study, meditation, or hard practice**, you gain preparation. If you prepare for a week or more, take 1 preparation. If you prepare for a month or longer, take 3 instead. When your preparation pays off spend 1 preparation for +1 to any roll. You can only spend one preparation per roll.





The poems say an adventurer's life is all open roads and the glory of coin and combat. The tales told in every farmhand-filled inn have to have some ring of truth to them, don't they? The songs to inspire peasantry and royals alike—to soothe the savage beast or drive men to a frenzy—have to come from somewhere.

Enter the bard. You, with your smooth tongue and quick wit. You teller-of-tales and singer-of-songs. It takes a mere minstrel to retell a thing but a true bard to live it. Strap on your boots, noble orator. Sharpen that hidden dagger and take up the call. Someone's got to be there, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with the goons and the thugs and the soon-to-be-heroes. Who better than you to write the tale of your own heroism?

Nobody. Get going.

NAMES

Elf: Astrafel, Daelwyn, Feliana, Damarra, Sistranalle, Pendrell, Melliandre, Dagoliir

Human: Baldric, Leena, Dunwick, Willem, Edwyn, Florian, Seraphine, Quorra, Charlotte, Lily, Ramonde, Cassandra

LOOK

Choose one for each:

Knowing Eyes, Fiery Eyes, or Joyous Eyes

Fancy Hair, Wild Hair, or Stylish Cap

Finery, Traveling Clothes, or Poor Clothes

Fit Body, Well-fed Body, or Thin Body

STATS

Your maximum HP is 6+Constitution.

Your base damage is d6.

THE BARD

STARTING MOVES

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

ELF

When you enter an important location (your call) you can ask the GM for one fact from the history of that location.

HUMAN

When you first enter a civilized settlement someone who respects the custom of hospitality to minstrels will take you in as their guest.

You start with these moves:

ARCANE ART

When you **weave a performance into a basic spell**, choose an ally and an effect:

- Heal 1d8 damage
- +1d4 forward to damage
- Their mind is shaken clear of one enchantment
- The next time someone successfully assists the target with aid, they get +2 instead of +1

Then roll+CHA. *On a 10+, the ally gets the selected effect. *On a 7-9, your spell still works, but you draw unwanted attention or your magic reverberates to other targets affecting them as well, GM's choice.

BARDIC LORE

Choose an area of expertise:

- Spells and Magicks
- The Dead and Undead
- Grand Histories of the Known World
- A Bestiary of Creatures Unusual
- The Planar Spheres
- Legends of Heroes Past
- Gods and Their Servants

When you **first encounter an important creature, location, or item (your call) covered by your bardic lore** you can ask the GM any one question about it; the GM will answer truthfully. The GM may then ask you what tale, song, or legend you heard that information in.

CHARMING AND OPEN

When you **speak frankly with someone**, you can ask their player a question from the list below. They must answer it truthfully, then they may ask you a question from the list (which you must answer truthfully).

- Whom do you serve?
- What do you wish I would do?
- How can I get you to _____?
- What are you really feeling right now?
- What do you most desire?

A PORT IN THE STORM

When you **return to a civilized settlement you've visited before**, tell the GM when you were last here. They'll tell you how it's changed since then.

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

GOOD

Perform your art to aid someone else.

NEUTRAL

Avoid a conflict or defuse a tense situation.

CHAOTIC

Spur others to significant and unplanned decisive action.

"By all means," cried the bard, his eyes lighting up. "A Fflam to the rescue! Storm the castle! Carry it by assault! Batter down the gates!"
— *The Book of Three*

GEAR

Your load is 9+STR. You have dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight).

“What can this strange device be?”

When I touch it, it gives forth a sound

It’s got wires that vibrate and give music

What can this thing be that I found?”

— Rush, “2112”

Choose one instrument, all are 0 weight for you:

- Your father’s mandolin, repaired
- A fine lute, a gift from a noble
- The pipes with which you courted your first love
- A stolen horn
- A fiddle, never before played
- A songbook in a forgotten tongue

Choose your clothing:

- Leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Ostentatious clothes (0 weight)

Choose your armament:

- Dueling rapier (close, precise, 2 weight)
- Worn bow (near, 2 weight), bundle of arrows (3 ammo, 1 weight), and short sword (close, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight)
- Bandages (0 weight)
- Halfling pipeleaf (0 weight)
- 3 coins

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

This is not my first adventure with _____.

I sang stories of _____ long before I ever met them in person.

_____ is often the butt of my jokes.

I am writing a ballad about the adventures of _____.

_____ trusted me with a secret.

_____ does not trust me, and for good reason.

ADVANCED MOVES

When you **gain a level from 2-5**, choose from these moves.

HEALING SONG

When you **heal with arcane art**, you heal +1d8 damage.

VICIOUS CACOPHONY

When you **grant bonus damage with arcane art**, you grant an extra +1d4 damage.

IT GOES TO ELEVEN

When you **unleash a crazed performance** (a righteous lute solo or mighty brass blast, maybe) choose a target who can hear you and roll+CHA. *On a 10+ the target attacks their nearest ally in range. *On a 7-9 they attack their nearest ally, but you also draw their attention and ire.

METAL HURLANT

When you **shout with great force or play a shattering note** choose a target and roll+CON. *On a 10+ the target takes 1d10 damage and is deafened for a few minutes. *On a 7-9 you still damage your target, but it's out of control: the GM will choose an additional target nearby.

A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

When you **successfully aid someone** you take +1 forward as well.

ELDRITCH TONES

Your arcane art is strong, allowing you to choose two effects instead of one.

DUELIST'S PARRY

When you **hack and slash**, you take +1 armor forward.

BAMBOOZLE

When you **parley with someone**, on a 7+ you also take +1 forward with them.

MULTICLASS DABBLER

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

MULTICLASS INITIATE

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

HEALING CHORUS

Replaces: Healing Song

When you **heal with arcane art**, you heal +2d8 damage.

VICIOUS BLAST

Replaces: Vicious Cacophony

When you **grant bonus damage with arcane art**, you grant an extra +2d4 damage.

UNFORGETTABLE FACE

When you **meet someone you've met before** (your call) after some time apart you take +1 forward against them.

REPUTATION

When you **first meet someone who's heard songs about you**, roll+CHA. *On a 10+, tell the GM two things they've heard about you. *On a 7-9, tell the GM one thing they've heard, and the GM tells you one thing.

ELDRITCH CHORD

Replaces: Eldritch Tones

When you use arcane art, you choose two effects. You also get to choose one of those effects to double.

AN EAR FOR MAGIC

When you **hear an enemy cast a spell** the GM will tell you the name of the spell and its effects. Take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

DEVIOUS

When you use charming and open you may also ask “How are you vulnerable to me?” Your subject may not ask this question of you.

DUELIST'S BLOCK

Replaces: Duelist's Parry

When you hack and slash, you take +2 armor forward.

CON


Replaces: Bamboozle

When you **parley with someone**, on a 7+ you also take +1 forward with them and get to ask their player one question which they must answer truthfully.

MULTICLASS MASTER

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.





The lands of Dungeon World are a gods-forsaken mess. They're lousy with the walking dead, beasts of all sorts, and the vast unnatural spaces between safe and temple-blessed civilizations. It is a godless world out there. That's why it needs you.

Bringing the glory of your god to the heathens isn't just in your nature—it's your calling. It falls to you to proselytize with sword and mace and spell. To cleave deep into the witless heart of the wilds and plant the seed of divinity there. Some say that it is best to keep god close to your heart. You know that's rubbish. God lives at the edge of a blade.

Show the world who is lord.

NAMES



Dwarf: Durga, Aelfar, Gerda, Rurgosh, Bjorn, Drummond, Helga, Siggrun, Freya

Human: Wesley, Brinton, Jon, Sara, Hawthorn, Elise, Clarke, Lenore, Piotr, Dahlia, Carmine

LOOK



Choose one for each:

Kind Eyes, Sharp Eyes, or Sad Eyes

Tonsure, Strange Hair, or Bald

Flowing Robes, Habit, or Common Garb

Thin Body, Knobby Body, or Flabby Body

STATS

Your maximum HP is 8+Constitution.

Your base damage is d6.

THE CLERIC

STARTING MOVES

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

DWARF

You are one with stone. When you commune you are also granted a special version of Words of the Unspeaking as a rote which only works on stone.

HUMAN

Your faith is diverse. Choose one wizard spell. You can cast and be granted that spell as if it was a cleric spell.

You start with these moves:

DEITY

You serve and worship some deity or power which grants you spells. Give your god a name (maybe Helferth, Sucellus, Zorica or Krugon the Bleak) and choose your deity's domain:

- Healing and Restoration
- Bloody Conquest
- Civilization
- Knowledge and Hidden Things
- The Downtrodden and Forgotten
- What Lies Beneath

*"Valor pleases you, Crom,
so grant me one request,
grant me revenge! And if
you do not listen, then the
hell with you!"*

*—Conan,
"Conan the Barbarian"*

Choose one precept of your religion:

- Your religion preaches the sanctity of suffering, add Petition: Suffering
- Your religion is cultish and insular, add Petition: Gaining Secrets
- Your religion has important sacrificial rites, add Petition: Offering
- Your religion believes in trial by combat, add Petition: Personal Victory

DIVINE GUIDANCE

When you **petition your deity according to the precept of your religion**, you are granted some useful knowledge or boon related to your deity's domain. The GM will tell you what.

TURN UNDEAD

When you **hold your holy symbol aloft and call on your deity for protection**, roll+wis. *On a 7+, so long as you continue to pray and brandish your holy symbol, no undead may come within reach of you. *On a 10+, you also momentarily daze intelligent undead and cause mindless undead to flee. Aggression breaks the effects and they are able to act as normal. Intelligent undead may still find ways to harry you from afar. They're clever like that.

COMMUNE

When you **spend uninterrupted time (an hour or so) in quiet communion with your deity**, you:

- Lose any spells already granted to you.
- Are granted new spells of your choice whose total levels don't exceed your own level+1, and none of which is a higher level than your own level.
- Prepare all of your rites, which never count against your limit.

CAST A SPELL

When you **unleash a spell granted to you by your deity**, roll+wis. *On a 10+, the spell is successfully cast and your deity does not revoke the spell, so you may cast it again. *On a 7–9, the spell is cast, but choose one:

- You draw unwelcome attention or put yourself in a spot. The GM will tell you how.
- Your casting distances you from your deity—take -1 ongoing to cast a spell until the next time you commune.
- After you cast it, the spell is revoked by your deity. You cannot cast the spell again until you commune and have it granted to you.

Note that maintaining spells with ongoing effects will sometimes cause a penalty to your roll to cast a spell.

*"It's not about... making sense. It's about believing in something. And letting that belief be real enough to change your life. It's about faith. You don't fix faith, River, it fixes you."
—Shepherd Book,
"Firefly"*

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

GOOD

Endanger yourself to heal another.

LAWFUL

Endanger yourself following the precepts of your church or god.

EVIL

Harm another to prove the superiority of your church or god.

GEAR

Your load is $10 + \text{STR}$. You carry dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight) and some symbol of the divine, describe it (0 weight). Choose your defenses:

- Chainmail (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Shield (+1 armor, 2 weight)

Choose your armament:

- Warhammer (close, 1 weight)
- Mace (close, 1 weight)
- Staff (close, two-handed, 1 weight) and bandages (0 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight) and dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight)
- Healing potion (0 weight)

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

_____ has insulted my deity; I do not trust them.
_____ is a good and faithful person; I trust them implicitly.

_____ is in constant danger, I will keep them safe.

I am working on converting _____ to my faith.

ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2–5, choose from these moves.

CHOSEN ONE

Choose one spell. You are granted that spell as if it was one level lower.

INVIGORATE

When you **heal someone** they take +2 forward to their damage.

THE SCALES OF LIFE AND DEATH

When **someone takes their last breath in your presence**, they take +1 to the roll.

SERENITY

When you cast a spell you ignore the first -1 penalty from ongoing spells.

FIRST AID

Cure Light Wounds is a rote for you, and therefore doesn't count against your limit of granted spells.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

When you commune you get 1 hold and lose any hold you already had. Spend that hold when you or an ally takes damage to call on your deity, they intervene with an appropriate manifestation (a sudden gust of wind, a lucky slip, a burst of light) and negate the damage.

PENITENT

When you **take damage and embrace the pain**, you may take +1d4 damage (ignoring armor). If you do, take +1 forward to cast a spell.

EMPOWER

When you cast a spell, on a 10+ you have the option of choosing from the 7–9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these effects as well:

- The spell's effects are doubled
- The spell's targets are doubled

ORISON FOR GUIDANCE

When you **sacrifice something of value to your deity and pray for guidance**, your deity tells you what it would have you do. If you do it, mark experience.

DIVINE PROTECTION

When you wear no armor or shield you get 2 armor.

DEVOTED HEALER

When you heal someone else of damage, add your level to the amount of damage healed.

When you gain a level from 6–10, choose from these moves or the level 2–5 moves.

ANOINTED

Requires: Chosen One

Choose one spell in addition to the one you picked for chosen one. You are granted that spell as if it was one level lower.

APOTHEOSIS

The first time you **spend time in prayer as appropriate to your god** after taking this move, choose a feature associated with your deity (rending claws, wings of sapphire feathers, an all-seeing third eye, etc.). When you emerge from prayer, you permanently gain that physical feature.

REAPER

When you **take time after a conflict to dedicate your victory to your deity and deal with the dead**, take +1 forward.

PROVIDENCE

Replaces: Serenity

You ignore the -1 penalty from two spells you maintain.

GREATER FIRST AID

Requires: First Aid

Cure Moderate Wounds is a rote for you, and therefore doesn't count against your limit of granted spells.

DIVINE INVINCIBILITY

Replaces: Divine Intervention

When you commune you gain 2 hold and lose any hold you already had. Spend that hold when you or an ally takes damage to call on your deity, who intervenes with an appropriate manifestation (a sudden gust of wind, a lucky slip, a burst of light) and negates the damage.

MARTYR

Replaces: Penitent

When you **take damage and embrace the pain**, you may take +1d4 damage (ignoring armor). If you do, take +1 forward to cast a spell and add your level to any damage done or healed by the spell.

DIVINE ARMOR

Replaces: Divine Protection

When you wear no armor or shield you get 3 armor.

GREATER EMPOWER

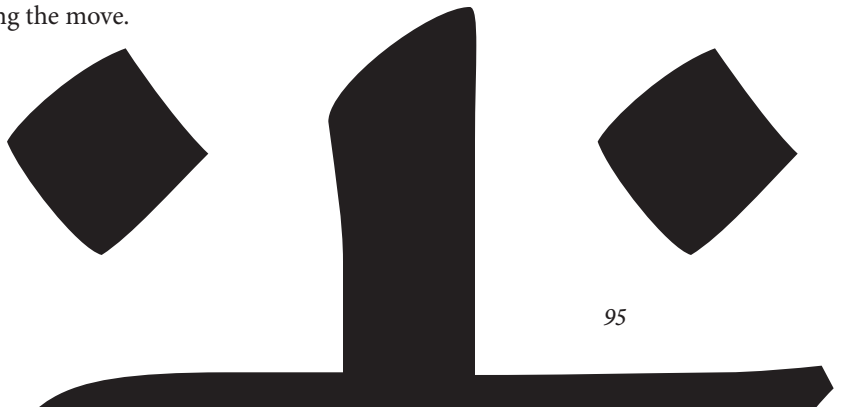
Replaces: Empower

When you cast a spell, on a 10–11 you have the option of choosing from the 7–9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these effects as well. On a 12+ you get to choose one of these effects for free.

- The spell's effects are doubled
- The spell's targets are doubled

MULTICLASS DABBLER

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.



CLERIC SPELLS

ROTES

Every time you commune, you gain access to all of your rites without having to select them or count them toward your allotment of spells.

LIGHT

ROTE

An item you touch glows with divine light, about as bright as a torch. It gives off no heat or sound and requires no fuel but is otherwise like a mundane torch. You have complete control of the color of the flame. The spell lasts as long as it is in your presence.

SANCTIFY

ROTE

Food or water you hold in your hands while you cast this spell is consecrated by your deity. In addition to now being holy or unholy, the affected substance is purified of any mundane spoilage.

GUIDANCE

ROTE

The symbol of your deity appears before you and gestures towards the direction or course of action your deity would have you take then disappears. The message is through gesture only; your communication through this spell is severely limited.

BLESS

LEVEL 1

ONGOING

Your deity smiles upon a combatant of your choice. They take +1 ongoing so long as battle continues and they stand and fight. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

CURE LIGHT WOUNDS

LEVEL 1

At your touch wounds scab and bones cease to ache. Heal an ally you touch of 1d8 damage.

DETECT ALIGNMENT

LEVEL 1

When you cast this spell choose an alignment: Good, Evil, Lawful, or Chaotic. One of your senses is briefly able to detect that alignment. The GM will tell you what here is of that alignment.

CAUSE FEAR

LEVEL 1

ONGOING

Choose a target you can see and a nearby object. The target is afraid of the object so long as you maintain the spell. Their reaction is up to them: flee, panic, beg, fight. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell. You cannot target entities with less than animal intelligence (magical constructs, undead, automatons, and the like).

MAGIC WEAPON

LEVEL 1

ONGOING

The weapon you hold while casting does +1d4 damage until you dismiss this spell. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

SANCTUARY

LEVEL 1

As you cast this spell, you walk the perimeter of an area, consecrating it to your deity. As long as you stay within that area you are alerted whenever someone acts with malice within the sanctuary (including entering with harmful intent). Anyone who receives healing within a sanctuary heals +1d4 HP.

SPEAK WITH DEAD

LEVEL 1

A corpse converses with you briefly. It will answer any three questions you pose to it to the best of the knowledge it had in life and the knowledge it gained in death.

3RD LEVEL

ANIMATE DEAD

LEVEL 3

ONGOING

You invoke a hungry spirit to possess a recently-dead body and serve you. This creates a zombie that follows your orders to the best of its limited abilities. Treat the zombie as a character, but with access to only the basic moves. It has a +1 modifier for all stats and 1 HP. The zombie also gets your choice of 1d4 of these traits:

- It's talented. Give one stat a +2 modifier.
- It's durable. It has +2 HP for each level you have.
- It has a functioning brain and can complete complex tasks.
- It does not appear obviously dead, at least for a day or two.

The zombie lasts until it is destroyed by taking damage in excess of its HP, or until you end the spell. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

CURE MODERATE WOUNDS

LEVEL 3

You staunch bleeding and set bones through magic. Heal an ally you touch of 2d8 damage.

DARKNESS

LEVEL 3

ONGOING

Choose an area you can see: it's filled with supernatural darkness and shadow. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

RESURRECTION

LEVEL 3

Tell the GM you would like to resurrect a corpse whose soul has not yet fully departed this world. Resurrection is always possible, but the GM will give you one or more (possibly all) of these conditions to fulfill:

- It's going to take days/weeks/months
- You must get help from ____
- It will require a lot of money
- You must sacrifice ____ to do it

The GM may, depending on the circumstances, allow you to resurrect the corpse now, with the understanding that the conditions must be met before it's permanent, or require you to meet the conditions before the corpse is resurrected.

HOLD PERSON

LEVEL 3

Choose a person you can see. Until you cast a spell or leave their presence they cannot act except to speak. This effect ends immediately if the target takes damage from any source.

REVELATION

LEVEL 5

Your deity answers your prayers with a moment of perfect understanding. The GM will shed light on the current situation. When acting on the information, you take +1 forward.

CURE CRITICAL WOUNDS

LEVEL 5

Heal an ally you touch of 3d8 damage.

DIVINATION

LEVEL 5

Name a person, place, or thing you want to learn about. Your deity grants you visions of the target, as clear as if you were there.

CONTAGION

LEVEL 5

ONGOING

Choose a creature you can see. Until you end this spell, the target suffers from a disease of your choice. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

WORDS OF THE UNSPEAKING

LEVEL 5

With a touch you speak to the spirits within things. The non-living object you touch answers three questions you pose, as best it can.

TRUE SEEING

LEVEL 5

ONGOING

Your vision is opened to the true nature of everything you lay your eyes on. You pierce illusions and see things that have been hidden. The GM will describe the area before you ignoring any illusions and falsehoods, magical or otherwise. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

TRAP SOUL

LEVEL 5

You trap the soul of a dying creature within a gem. The trapped creature is aware of its imprisonment but can still be manipulated through spells, parley, and other effects. All moves against the trapped creature are at +1. You can free the soul at any time but it can never be recaptured once freed.

7TH LEVEL

WORD OF RECALL

LEVEL 7

Choose a word. The first time after casting this spell that you speak the chosen word, you and any allies touching you when you cast the spell are immediately returned to the exact spot where you cast the spell. You can only maintain a single location; casting Word of Recall again before speaking the word replaces the earlier spell.

HEAL

LEVEL 7

Touch an ally and you may heal their damage a number of points up to your maximum HP.

HARM

LEVEL 7

Touch an enemy and strike them with divine wrath—deal 2d8 damage to them and 1d6 damage to yourself. This damage ignores armor.

SEVER

LEVEL 7

ONGOING

Choose an appendage on the target such as an arm, tentacle, or wing. The appendage is magically severed from their body, causing no damage but considerable pain. Missing an appendage may, for example, keep a winged creature from flying, or a bull from goring you on its horns. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

MARK OF DEATH

LEVEL 7

Choose a creature whose true name you know. This spell creates permanent runes on a target surface that will kill that creature, should they read them.

CONTROL WEATHER

LEVEL 7

Pray for rain—or sun, wind, or snow. Within a day or so, your god will answer. The weather will change according to your will and last a handful of days.

“I’ll give you a winter prediction: It’s gonna be cold, it’s gonna be grey, and it’s gonna last the rest of your life.”
—Phil, “Groundhog Day”

STORM OF VENGEANCE

LEVEL 9

Your deity brings the unnatural weather of your choice to pass. Rain of blood or acid, clouds of souls, wind that can carry away buildings, or any other weather you can imagine: ask and it shall come.

REPAIR

LEVEL 9

Choose one event in the target's past. All effects of that event, including damage, poison, disease, and magical effects, are ended and repaired. HP and diseases are healed, poisons are neutralized, magical effects are ended.

DIVINE PRESENCE

LEVEL 9

ONGOING

Every creature must ask your leave to enter your presence, and you must give permission aloud for them to enter. Any creature without your leave takes an extra 1d10 damage whenever they take damage in your presence. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

CONSUME UNLIFE

LEVEL 9

The mindless undead creature you touch is destroyed and you steal its death energy to heal yourself or the next ally you touch. The amount of damage healed is equal to the HP that the creature had remaining before you destroyed it.

PLAGUE

LEVEL 9

ONGOING

Name a city, town, encampment, or other place where people live. As long as this spell is active that place is beset by a plague appropriate to your deity's domains (locusts, death of the first born, etc.) While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.



CHAPTER 7

Cast your eyes around the fire. What has brought you to these people, stinking of the dust and sweat of the city? Perhaps it is a kindness—do you protect them as the mother bear watches over her cubs? Are they your pack, now? Strange brothers and sisters you have. Whatever your inspiration, they would certainly fail without your sharp senses and sharper claws.

You are of the sacred spaces; you are born of soil and wear the marks of her spirits on your skin. You may have had a life before, maybe you were a city dweller like them, but not now. You've given up that static shape. Listen to your allies pray to their carved stone gods and polish their silver shells. They speak of the glory they'll find back in that festering town you left behind.

Their gods are children, their steel is false protection. You walk the old ways, you wear the pelts of the earth itself. You'll take your share of the treasure, but will you ever walk as one of them? Only time will tell.

NAMES

Elf: Hycorax, Ethanwe, Sinathel, Demanor, Menoliir, Mithralan, Taeros, Aegor

Halfling: Tanner, Dunstan, Rose, Ivy, Robard, Mab, Thistle, Puck, Anne, Serah

Human: Elana, Obelis, Herran, Syla, Andanna, Siobhan, Aziz, Pelin, Sibel, Nils, Wei

LOOK

Choose one for each:

Wise Eyes, Wild Eyes, or Haunting Eyes

Furry Hood, Messy Hair, or Braided Hair

Ceremonial Garb, Practical Leathers, or Weathered Hides

STATS

Your maximum HP is 6+Constitution.

Your base damage is d6.

THE DRUID

STARTING MOVES

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

ELF

The sap of the elder trees flows within you. In addition to any other attunements, the Great Forest is always considered your land.

HUMAN

As your people learned to bind animals to field and farm, so too are you bound to them. You may always take the shape of any domesticated animal, in addition to your normal options.

HALFLING

You sing the healing songs of spring and brook. When you make camp, you and your allies heal +1d6.

You start with these moves:

BORN OF THE SOIL

You learned your magic in a place whose spirits are strong and ancient and they've marked you as one of their own. No matter where you go, they live within you and allow you to take their shape. Choose one of the following. It is the land to which you are attuned—when shapeshifting you may take the shape of any animal who might live in your Land.

- The Great Forests
- The Whispering Plains
- The Vast Desert
- The Stinking Mire
- The River Delta
- The Depths of the Earth
- The Sapphire Islands
- The Open Sea
- The Towering Mountains
- The Frozen North
- The Blasted Wasteland

Chose a tell—a physical attribute that marks you as born of the soil—that reflects the spirit of your land. It may be an animal feature like antlers or leopard’s spots or something more general: hair like leaves or eyes of glittering crystal. Your tell remains no matter what shape you take.

BY NATURE SUSTAINED

You don’t need to eat or drink. If a move tells you to mark off a ration just ignore it.

SPIRIT TONGUE

The grunts, barks, chirps, and calls of the creatures of the wild are as language to you. You can understand any animal native to your land or akin to one whose essence you have studied.

SHAPESHIFTER

When you call upon the spirits to change your shape, roll+wis. *On a 10+ hold 3. *On a 7–9 hold 2. *On a miss hold 1 in addition to whatever the GM says.

You may take on the physical form of any species whose essence you have studied or who lives in your land: you and your possessions meld into a perfect copy of the species’ form. You have any innate abilities and weaknesses of the form: claws, wings, gills, breathing water instead of air. You still use your normal stats but some moves may be harder to trigger—a housecat will find it hard to do battle with an ogre. The GM will also tell you one or more moves associated with your new form. Spend 1 hold to make that move. Once you’re out of hold, you return to your natural form. At any time, you may spend all your hold and revert to your natural form.

STUDIED ESSENCE

When you **spend time in contemplation of an animal spirit**, you may add its species to those you can assume using shapeshifting.

Animal moves just say what the animal naturally does, like “call the pack,” “trample them,” or “escape to the air.” When you spend your hold your natural instinct kicks in and that move happens. If you spend hold to escape to the air, that’s it—you’re away and on the wing.

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

CHAOTIC

Destroy a symbol of civilization.

GOOD

Help something or someone grow.

NEUTRAL

Eliminate an unnatural menace.

GEAR

Your load is 6+STR. You carry some token of your land, describe it.

Choose your defenses:

- Hide armor (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Wooden shield (+1 armor, 1 weight)

Choose your armament:

- Shillelagh (close, 2 weight)
- Staff (close, two-handed, 1 weight)
- Spear (close, thrown, near, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight)
- Poultices and herbs (2 uses, 1 weight)
- Halfling pipeleaf (0 weight)
- 3 antitoxin (0 weight)

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

_____ smells more like prey than a hunter.

The spirits spoke to me of a great danger that follows

_____.

I have showed _____ a secret rite of the Land.

_____ has tasted my blood and I theirs. We are bound by it.

ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2–5, choose from these moves.

HUNTER'S BROTHER

Choose one move from the ranger class list.

RED OF TOOTH AND CLAW

When you **are in an appropriate animal form** (something dangerous) increase your damage to d8.

COMMUNION OF WHISPERS

When you **spend time in a place, making note of its resident spirits and calling on the spirits of the land**, roll+wis. You will be granted a vision of significance to you, your allies, and the spirits around you. *On a 10+ the vision will be clear and helpful to you. *On a 7–9 the vision is unclear, its meaning murky. *On a miss, the vision is upsetting, frightening, or traumatizing. The GM will describe it. Take -1 forward.

BARKSKIN

So long as your feet touch the ground you have +1 armor.

EYES OF THE TIGER

When you mark an animal (with mud, dirt, or blood) you can see through that animal's eyes as if they were your own, no matter what distance separates you. Only one animal at a time may be marked in this way.

SHED

When you **take damage while shapeshifted** you may choose to revert to your natural form to negate the damage.

THING-TALKER

You see the spirits in the sand, the sea and the stone. You may now apply your spirit tongue, shapeshifting and studied essence to inanimate natural objects (plants and rocks) or creatures made thereof, as well as animals. Thing-talker forms can be exact copies or can be mobile vaguely humanoid-shaped entities.

FORMCRAFTER

When you shapeshift choose a stat: you take +1 ongoing to rolls using that stat while shifted. The GM will choose a stat, too: you take -1 ongoing to rolls using that stat while shifted.

ELEMENTAL MASTERY

When you **call on the primal spirits of fire, water, earth or air to perform a task for you** roll+wis. *On a 10+ choose two. *On a 7–9 choose one. *On a miss, some catastrophe occurs as a result of your calling.

- The effect you desire comes to pass
- You avoid paying nature's price
- You retain control

BALANCE

When you **deal damage**, take 1 balance. When you touch someone and channel the spirits of life you may spend balance. For each balance spent, heal 1d4 HP.

When you gain a level from 6–10, choose from these moves or the level 2–5 moves.

EMBRACING NO FORM

When you shapeshift, roll 1d4 and add that total to your hold.

DOPPELGÄNGER'S DANCE

You are able to study the essence of specific individuals to take their exact form, including men, elves, or the like. Suppressing your tell is possible, but if you do, take -1 ongoing until you return to your own form.

BLOOD AND THUNDER

Replaces: Red of Tooth and Claw

When you **are in an appropriate animal form** (something dangerous) increase your damage to d10.

THE DRUID SLEEP

When you take this move, the next opportunity that you have safety and time to spend in an appropriate location, you may attune yourself to a new land. This effect occurs only once and the GM will tell you how long it will take and what cost you must pay. From then on, you are considered to be born of the soil in both lands.

WORLD-TALKER

Requires: Thing-Talker

You see the patterns that make up the fabric of the world. You may now apply your spirit tongue, shapeshifter and studied essence moves to pure elements—fire, water, air and earth.

STALKER'S SISTER

Choose one move from the ranger class list.

FORMSHAPER

Requires: Formcrafter

You may increase your armor by 1 or deal an additional +1d4 damage while in an animal form. Choose which when you shapeshift.

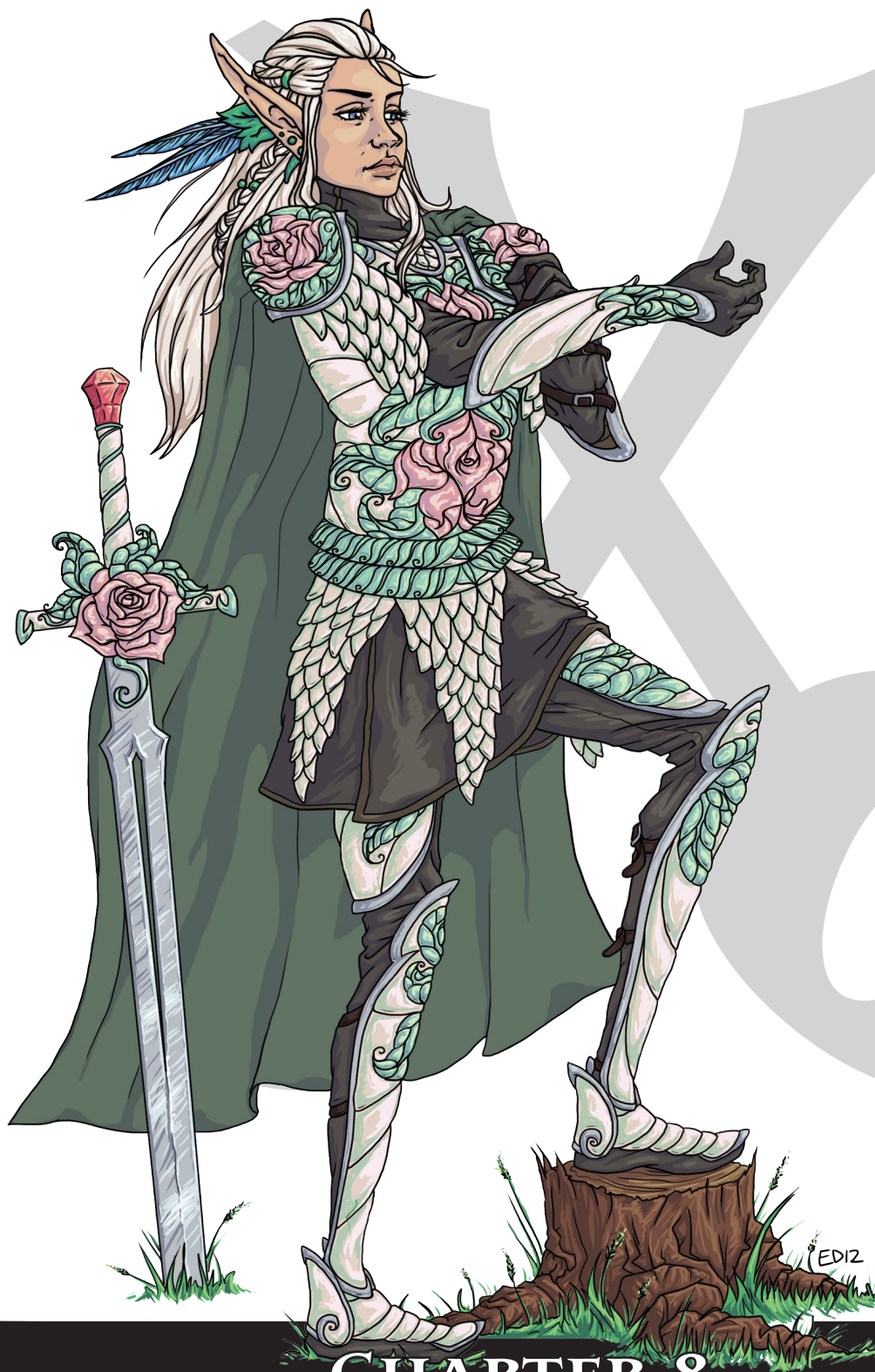
CHIMERA

When you shapeshift, you may create a merged form of up to three different shapes. You may be a bear with the wings of an eagle and the head of a ram, for example. Each feature will grant you a different move to make. Your chimera form follows the same rules as shapeshifter otherwise.

WEATHER WEAVER

When you are under open skies when the sun rises the GM will ask you what the weather will be that day. Tell them whatever you like, it comes to pass.





CHAPTER 8

It's a thankless job—living day to day by your armor and the skill of your arm. To dive heedlessly into danger. They won't be playing golden horns for the time you took that knife to the ribs for them in the bar in Bucksberg. No flock of angels to sing of the time you dragged them, still screaming, from the edge of the Pits of Madness, no.

Forget them.

You do this for the guts and the glory. The scream of battle and the hot, hot blood of it. You are a beast of iron. Your friends may carry blades of forged steel but, fighter, you are steel. While your traveling companions might moan about their wounds over a campfire in the wilderness, you bear your scars with pride.

You are the wall—let every danger smash itself to nothing on you. In the end, you'll be the last one standing.

NAMES

Dwarf: Ozruk, Surtur, Brunhilda, Annika, Janos, Greta, Dim, Rundrig, Jarl, Xotoq

Elf: Elohiir, Sharaseth, Hasrith, Shevaral, Cadeus, Eldar, Kithracet, Thelian

Halfling: Finnegan, Olive, Randolph, Bartleby, Aubrey, Baldwin, Becca

Human: Hawke, Rudiger, Gregor, Brianne, Walton, Castor, Shanna, Ajax, Hob

LOOK

Choose one for each:

Hard Eyes, Dead Eyes, or Eager Eyes

Wild Hair, Shorn Hair, or Battered Helm

Calloused Skin, Tanned Skin, or Scarred Skin

Built Body, Lithe Body, or Ravaged Body

STATS

Your maximum HP is 10+Constitution.

Your base damage is d10.

THE FIGHTER

STARTING MOVES

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

DWARF

When you **share a drink with someone**, you may parley with them using CON instead of CHA.

ELF

Precise weapons allow you to hack and slash using DEX instead of STR.

Choose one weapon—you can always treat weapons of that type as if they had the precise tag.

HALFLING

When you defy danger and **use your small size to your advantage**, take +1.

HUMAN

Once per battle you may reroll a single damage roll (yours or someone else's).

You start with these moves:

BEND BARS, LIFT GATES

When you **use pure strength to destroy an inanimate obstacle**, roll+STR. *On a 10+, choose 3. *On a 7-9 choose 2.

- It doesn't take a very long time
- Nothing of value is damaged
- It doesn't make an inordinate amount of noise
- You can fix the thing again without a lot of effort

ARMORED

You ignore the clumsy tag on armor you wear.

SIGNATURE WEAPON

This is your weapon. There are many like it, but this one is yours. Your weapon is your best friend. It is your life. You master it as you master your life. Your weapon, without you, is useless. Without your weapon, you are useless. You must wield your weapon true.

Choose a base description, all are 2 weight:

- Sword
- Axe
- Hammer
- Spear
- Flail
- Fists

Choose the range that best fits your weapon:

- Hand
- Close
- Reach

Choose two enhancements:

- Hooks and spikes. +1 damage, but +1 weight.
- Sharp. +2 piercing.
- Perfectly weighted. Add precise.
- Serrated edges. +1 damage.
- Glows in the presence of one type of creature, your choice.
- Huge. Add messy and forceful.
- Versatile. Choose an additional range.
- Well-crafted. -1 weight.

Choose a look:

- Ancient
- Unblemished
- Ornate
- Blood-stained
- Sinister

Your signature weapon is special—not just a typical mundane item. Unless you take action that clearly risks it your signature weapon will never permanently leave your possession (though you may have to work to get it back).

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

GOOD

Defend those weaker than you.

NEUTRAL

Defeat a worthy opponent.

EVIL

Kill a defenseless or surrendered enemy.

GEAR

"The private soldiers fight and die to advance the wealth and luxury of the great, they are called the masters of the world without having a sod to call their own."

—Tiberius Gracchus

Your load is 12+STR. You carry your signature weapon and dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight). Choose your defenses:

- Chainmail (1 armor, 1 weight) and adventuring gear (1 weight)
- Scale armor (2 armor, 3 weight)

Choose two:

- 2 Healing potions (0 weight)
- Shield (+1 armor, 2 weight)
- Antitoxin (0 weight), dungeon rations (1 weight), and poultices and herbs (1 weight)
- 22 coins

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

_____ owes me their life, whether they admit it or not.

I have sworn to protect _____.

I worry about the ability of _____ to survive in the dungeon.

_____ is soft, but I will make them hard like me.

ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

MERCILESS

When you deal damage, deal +1d4 damage.

"You were a hero round these parts. That's what they call you when you kill so many people the word murderer falls short."
—Best Served Cold

HEIRLOOM

When you **consult the spirits that reside within your signature weapon**, they will give you an insight relating to the current situation, and might ask you some questions in return, roll+CHA. *On a 10+, the GM will give you good detail. *On a 7-9, the GM will give you an impression.

ARMOR MASTERY

When you **make your armor take the brunt of damage dealt to you**, the damage is negated but you must reduce the armor value of your armor or shield (your choice) by 1. The value is reduced each time you make this choice. If the reduction leaves the item with 0 armor it is destroyed.

IMPROVED WEAPON

Choose one extra enhancement for your signature weapon.

SEEING RED

When you discern realities during combat, you take +1.

INTERROGATOR

When you **parley using threats of impending violence as leverage**, you may use STR instead of CHA.

SCENT OF BLOOD

When you hack and slash an enemy, your next attack against that same foe deals +1d4 damage.

MULTICLASS DABBLER

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

IRON HIDE

You gain +1 armor.

BLACKSMITH

When you have access to a forge you can graft the magical powers of a weapon onto your signature weapon. This process destroys the magical weapon. Your signature weapon gains the magical powers of the destroyed weapon.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

BLOODTHIRSTY

Replaces: Merciless

When you deal damage, deal +1d8 damage.

ARMORED PERFECTION

Replaces: Armor Mastery

When you **choose to let your armor take the brunt of damage dealt to you**, the damage is negated and you take +1 forward against the attacker, but you must reduce the armor value of your armor or shield (your choice) by 1. The value is reduced each time you make this choice. If the reduction leaves the item with 0 armor it is destroyed.

EVIL EYE

Requires: Seeing Red

When you **enter combat**, roll+CHA. *On a 10+, hold 2. *On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold to make eye contact with an NPC present, who freezes or flinches and can't act until you break it off. *On a 6-, your enemies immediately identify you as their biggest threat.

TASTE OF BLOOD

Replaces: Scent of Blood

When you hack and slash an enemy, your next attack against that same foe deals +1d8 damage.

MULTICLASS INITIATE

Required: Multiclass Dabbler

Get one move from another class. Treat your level as one lower for choosing the move.

STEEL HIDE

Replaces: Iron Hide

You gain +2 armor.

THROUGH DEATH'S EYES

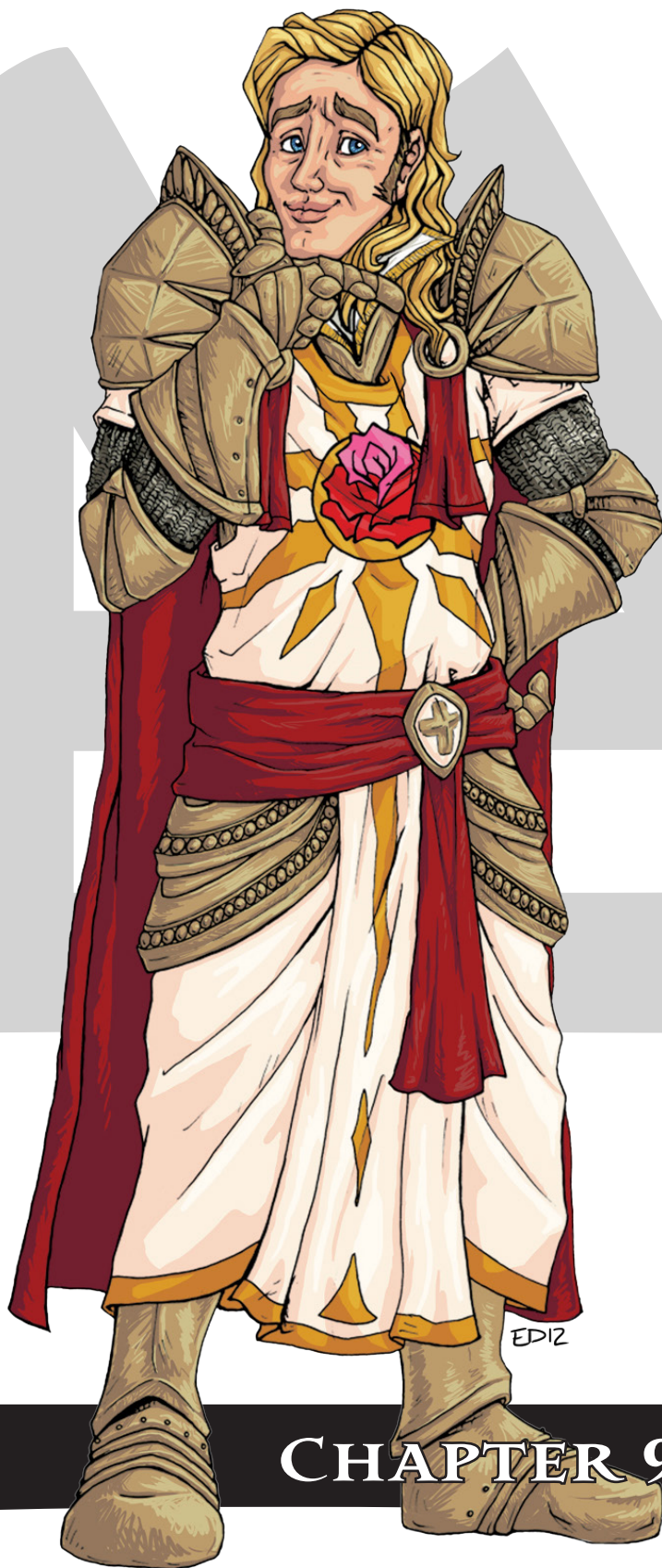
When you **go into battle**, roll+wis. *On a 10+, name someone who will live **and** someone who will die. *On a 7-9, name someone who will live **or** someone who will die. Name NPCs, not player characters. The GM will make your vision come true, if it's even remotely possible. *On a 6- you see your own death and consequently take -1 ongoing throughout the battle.

EYE FOR WEAPONRY

When you look over an enemy's weaponry, ask the GM how much damage they do.

SUPERIOR WARRIOR

When you hack and slash on a 12+ you deal your damage, avoid their attack, and impress, dismay, or frighten your enemy.



CHAPTER 9

Hell awaits. An eternity of torment in fire or ice or whatever best suits the sins of the damned throngs of Dungeon World. All that stands between the pits of that grim torture and salvation is you. Holy man, armored war machine, templar of the Good and the Light, right? The cleric may say his prayers at night to the gods, dwelling in their heavens. The fighter may wield his sharp sword in the name of “good” but you know. Only you.

Eyes, hands, and sweet killing blow of the gods, you are. Yours is the gift of righteousness and virtue. Of justice. Vision, too. A purity of intent that your companions do not have.

So guide these fools, paladin. Take up your holy cause and bring salvation to the wastrel world.

Vae victis, right?

NAMES

Thaddeus, Augustine, Lux, Cassius, Hadrian, Lucia, Octavia, Regulus, Valeria, Sanguinus, Titanius

LOOK

Choose one for each:

Kind Eyes, Fiery Eyes, or Glowing Eyes

Helmet, Styled Hair, or Bald

Worn Holy Symbol or Fancy Holy Symbol

Fit Body, Bulky Body, or Thin Body

STATS

Your maximum HP is 10+Constitution.

Your base damage is d10.

THE PALADIN

STARTING MOVES

You are human, so you get this move.

HUMAN

When you **pray for guidance, even for a moment, and ask, “What here is evil?”** the GM will tell you, honestly.

You start with these moves:

LAY ON HANDS (CHA)

When you **touch someone, skin to skin, and pray for their well-being**, roll+CHA. *On a 10+ you heal 1d8 damage or remove one disease. *On a 7–9, they are healed, but the damage or disease is transferred to you.

ARMORED

You ignore the clumsy tag on armor you wear.

I AM THE LAW

When you **give an NPC an order based on your divine authority**, roll+CHA. *On a 7+, they choose one:

- Do what you say
- Back away cautiously, then flee
- Attack you

*On a 10+, you also take +1 forward against them. *On a miss, they do as they please and you take -1 forward against them.

QUEST

When you **dedicate yourself to a mission through prayer and ritual cleansing**, state what you set out to do:

- Slay _____, a great blight on the land
- Defend _____ from the iniquities that beset them
- Discover the truth of _____

Then choose up to two boons:

- An unwavering sense of direction to _____.
- Invulnerability to _____ (e.g., edged weapons, fire, enchantment, etc.)
- A mark of divine authority
- Senses that pierce lies
- A voice that transcends language
- A freedom from hunger, thirst, and sleep

The GM will then tell you what vow or vows is required of you to maintain your blessing:

- Honor (forbidden: cowardly tactics and tricks)
- Temperance (forbidden: gluttony in food, drink, and pleasure of the flesh)
- Piety (required: observance of daily holy services)
- Valor (forbidden: suffering an evil creature to live)
- Truth (forbidden: lies)
- Hospitality (required: comfort to those in need, no matter who they are)

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

LAWFUL

Deny mercy to a criminal or unbeliever.

GOOD

Endanger yourself to protect someone weaker than you.

*"We're on a mission from God."
—Elwood,
"Blues Brothers"*

GEAR

Your load is 12+STR. You start with dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight), scale armor (2 armor, 3 weight), and some mark of faith, describe it (0 weight). Choose your weapon:

- Halberd (reach, +1 damage, two-handed, 2 weight)
- Long sword (close, +1 damage, 1 weight) and shield (+1 armor, 2 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight)
- Dungeon rations (1 weight) and healing potion (0 weight)

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

_____’s misguided behavior endangers their very soul!

_____ has stood by me in battle and can be trusted completely.

I respect the beliefs of _____ but hope they will someday see the true way.

_____ is a brave soul, I have much to learn from them.

ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2–5, choose from these moves.

DIVINE FAVOR

Dedicate yourself to a deity (name a new one or choose one that’s already been established). You gain the commune and cast a spell cleric moves. When you select this move, treat yourself as a cleric of level 1 for using spells. Every time you gain a level thereafter, increase your effective cleric level by 1.

BLOODY AEGIS

When you take damage you can grit your teeth and accept the blow. If you do you take no damage but instead suffer a debility of your choice. If you already have all six debilities you can’t use this move.

SMITE

While on a quest you deal +1d4 damage.

*"I am an inquisitor. I do not get angry."
—Gregor Eisenhorn
"Xenos"*

EXTERMINATUS

When you **speak aloud your promise to defeat an enemy**, you deal +2d4 damage against that enemy and -4 damage against anyone else. This effect lasts until the enemy is defeated. If you fail to defeat the enemy or give up the fight, you can admit your failure, but the effect continues until you find a way to redeem yourself.

CHARGE!

When you **lead the charge into combat**, those you lead take +1 forward.

STAUNCH DEFENDER

When you defend you always get +1 hold, even on a 6-.

SETUP STRIKE

When you hack and slash, choose an ally. Their next attack against your target does +1d4 damage.

HOLY PROTECTION

You get +1 armor while on a quest.

VOICE OF AUTHORITY

Take +1 to order hirelings.

HOSPITALLER

When you heal an ally, you heal +1d8 damage.

When you gain a level from 6–10, choose from these moves or the level 2–5 moves.

EVIDENCE OF FAITH

Requires: Divine Favor

When you **see divine magic as it happens**, you can ask the GM which deity granted the spell and its effects. Take +1 when acting on the answers.

HOLY SMITE

Replaces: Smite

While on a quest you deal +1d8 damage.

EVER ONWARD

Replaces: Charge!

When you lead the charge into combat, those you lead take +1 forward and +2 armor forward.

IMPERVIOUS DEFENDER

Replaces: Staunch Defender

When you defend you always get +1 hold, even on a 6-. When you get a 12+ to defend instead of getting hold the nearest attacking creature is stymied giving you a clear advantage, the GM will describe it.

TANDEM STRIKE

Replaces: Setup Strike

When you hack and slash, choose an ally. Their next attack against your target does +1d4 damage and they take +1 forward against them.

DIVINE PROTECTION

Replaces: Holy Protection

You get +2 armor while on a quest.

DIVINE AUTHORITY

Replaces: Voice of Authority

Take +1 to order hirelings. When you roll a 12+ the hireling transcends their moment of fear and doubt and carries out your order with particular effectiveness or efficiency.

PERFECT HOSPITALLER

Replaces: Hospitaller

When you heal an ally, you heal +2d8 damage.

INDOMITABLE

When you suffer a debility (even through Bloody Aegis) take +1 forward against whatever caused it.

PERFECT KNIGHT

When you quest you choose three boons instead of two.

*"A lot of idiots you are, selling your own birthright for a saucer of cold porridge! The thrill of theft! Of violence! The urge to live easy! Well, I ask you what is it worth when we have undeniable truth, yes, incontrovertible evidence that Hell exists."
—Prison Chaplain,
"A Clockwork Orange"*



CHAPTER 10

These city-born folk you travel with. Have they heard the call of the wolf? Felt the winds howl in the bleak deserts of the East? Have they hunted their prey with the bow and the knife like you? Hell no. That's why they need you.

Guide. Hunter. Creature of the wilds. You are these things and more. Your time in the wilderness may have been solitary until now, but the call of some greater thing—call it fate if you like—has cast your lot with these folk. Brave, they may be. Powerful and strong, too. You know the secrets of the spaces between, though.

Without you, they'd be lost. Blaze a trail through the blood and dark, strider.

NAMES

Elf: Throndir, Elrosine, Aranwe, Celion, Dambrath, Lanethe

Human: Jonah, Halek, Brandon, Emory, Shrike, Nora, Diana

LOOK

Choose one for each:

Wild Eyes, Sharp Eyes, or Animal Eyes

Hooded Head, Wild Hair, or Bald

Cape, Camouflage, or Traveling Clothes

Lithe Body, Wild Body, or Sharp Body

STATS

Your maximum HP is 8+Constitution.

Your base damage is d8.

THE RANGER



STARTING MOVES

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

ELF

When you undertake a perilous journey through wilderness whatever job you take you succeed as if you rolled a 10+.

HUMAN

When you make camp in a dungeon or city, you don't need to consume a ration.

You start with these moves:

HUNT AND TRACK (WIS)

When you **follow a trail of clues left behind by passing creatures**, roll+WIS. *On a 7+, you follow the creature's trail until there's a significant change in its direction or mode of travel. *On a 10+, you also choose 1:

- Gain a useful bit of information about your quarry, the GM will tell you what
- Determine what caused the trail to end

CALLED SHOT

When you **attack a defenseless or surprised enemy at range**, you can choose to deal your damage or name your target and roll+DEX.

- Head *10+: As 7-9, plus your damage *7-9: They do nothing but stand and drool for a few moments.
- Arms *10+: As 7-9, plus your damage *7-9: They drop anything they're holding.
- Legs *10+: As 7-9, plus your damage *7-9: They're hobbled and slow moving.

ANIMAL COMPANION

You have a supernatural connection with a loyal animal. You can't talk to it per se but it always acts as you wish it to. Name your animal companion and choose a species:

*Wolf, cougar, bear, eagle, dog, hawk, cat, owl, pigeon,
rat, mule*

Choose a base:

- Ferocity +2, Cunning +1, 1 Armor, Instinct +1
- Ferocity +2, Cunning +2, 0 Armor, Instinct +1
- Ferocity +1, Cunning +2, 1 Armor, Instinct +1
- Ferocity +3, Cunning +1, 1 Armor, Instinct +2

Choose as many strengths as its ferocity:

*Fast, burly, huge, calm, adaptable, quick reflexes, tireless,
camouflage, ferocious, intimidating, keen senses, stealthy*

Your animal companion is trained to fight humanoids. Choose as many additional trainings as its cunning:

*Hunt, search, scout, guard, fight monsters, perform,
labor, travel*

Choose as many weaknesses as its instinct:

*Flighty, savage, slow, broken, frightening, forgetful,
stubborn, lame*

COMMAND

When you work with your animal companion on something it's trained in...

- ...and you attack the same target, add its ferocity to your damage
- ...and you track, add its cunning to your roll
- ...and you take damage, add its armor to your armor
- ...and you discern realities, add its cunning to your roll
- ...and you parley, add its cunning to your roll
- ...and someone interferes with you, add its instinct to their roll

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

CHAOTIC

Free someone from literal or figurative bonds.

GOOD

Endanger yourself to combat an unnatural threat.

NEUTRAL

Help an animal or spirit of the wild.

GEAR

Your load is 11+STR. You start with dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight), leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight), and a bundle of arrows (3 ammo, 1 weight). Choose your armament:

- Hunter's bow (near, far, 1 weight) and short sword (close, 1 weight)
- Hunter's bow (near, far, 1 weight) and spear (reach, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight) and dungeon rations (1 weight)
- Adventuring gear (1 weight) and bundle of arrows (3 ammo, 1 weight)

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

I have guided _____ before and they owe me for it.
_____ is a friend of nature, so I will be their friend as well.

_____ has no respect for nature, so I have no respect for them.

_____ does not understand life in the wild, so I will teach them.

ADVANCED MOVES

You may take this move only if it is your first advancement.

HALF-ELVEN

Somewhere in your lineage lies mixed blood and it begins to show its presence. You gain the elf starting move if you took the human one at character creation or vice versa.

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves.

WILD EMPATHY

You can speak with and understand animals.

FAMILIAR PREY

When you spout lore about a monster you use WIS instead of INT.

"Snakes. Why did it have to be snakes?"

—Indiana Jones, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"

VIPER'S STRIKE

When you strike an enemy with two weapons at once, add an extra 1d4 damage for your off-hand strike.

CAMOUFLAGE

When you **keep still in natural surroundings**, enemies never spot you until you make a movement.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND

When you **allow your animal companion to take a blow that was meant for you**, the damage is negated and your animal companion's ferocity becomes 0. If its ferocity is already 0 you can't use this ability. When you have a few hours of rest with your animal companion its ferocity returns to normal.

BLOT OUT THE SUN

When you volley you may spend extra ammo before rolling. For each point of ammo spent you may choose an extra target. Roll once and apply damage to all targets.

WELL-TRAINED

Choose another training for your animal companion.

GOD AMIDST THE WASTES

Dedicate yourself to a deity (name a new one or choose one that's already been established). You gain the commune and cast a spell cleric moves. When you select this move, treat yourself as a cleric of level 1 for using spells. Every time you gain a level thereafter, increase your effective cleric level by 1.

FOLLOW ME

If you are an elf travelling through wilderness you automatically succeed at both roles, as per your racial move.

When you undertake a perilous journey you can take two roles. You make a separate roll for each.

A SAFE PLACE

When you **set the watch for the night**, everyone takes +1 to take watch.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

WILD SPEECH

Replaces: Wild Empathy

You can speak with and understand any non-magical, non-planar creature.

HUNTER'S PREY

Replaces: Familiar Prey

When you spout lore about a monster you use WIS instead of INT. On a 12+, in addition to the normal effects, you get to ask the GM any one question about the subject.

VIPER'S FANGS

Replaces: Viper's Strike

When you strike an enemy with two weapons at once, add an extra 1d8 damage for your off-hand strike.

SMAUG'S BELLY

When you know your target's weakest point your arrows have 2 piercing.

STRIDER

Replaces: Follow Me

When you undertake a perilous journey you can take two roles. Roll twice and use the better result for both roles.

A SAFER PLACE

Replaces: A Safe Place

When you set the watch for the night everyone takes +1 to take watch. After a night in camp when you set the watch everyone takes +1 forward.

OBSERVANT

When you hunt and track, on a hit you may also ask one question about the creature you are tracking from the discern realities list for free.

SPECIAL TRICK

Choose a move from another class. So long as you are working with your animal companion you have access to that move.

UNNATURAL ALLY

Your animal companion is a monster, not an animal. Describe it. Give it +2 ferocity and +1 instinct, plus a new training.



CHAPTER 11

You've heard them, sitting around the campfire. Bragging about this battle or that. About how their gods are smiling on your merry band. You count your coins and smile to yourself—this is the thrill above all. You alone know the secret of Dungeon World—filthy filthy lucre.

Sure, they give you lip for all the times you've snuck off alone but without you, who among them wouldn't have been dissected by a flying guillotine or poisoned straight to death by some ancient needle trap? So, let them complain. When you're done with all this delving you'll toast their hero's graves.

From your castle. Full of gold. You rogue.

NAMES

Halfling: Felix, Rook, Mouse, Sketch, Trixie, Robin, Omar, Brynn, Bug

Human: Sparrow, Shank, Jack, Marlow, Dodge, Rat, Pox, Humble, Farley

LOOK

Choose one for each:

Shifty Eyes or Criminal Eyes

Hooded Head, Messy Hair, or Cropped Hair

Dark Clothes, Fancy Clothes, or Common Clothes

Lithe Body, Knobby Body, or Flabby Body

STATS

Your maximum HP is 6+Constitution.

Your base damage is d8.



THE THIEF

STARTING MOVES

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

HALFLING

When you attack with a ranged weapon, deal +2 damage.

HUMAN

You are a professional. When you spout lore or discern realities about criminal activities, take +1.

You start with these moves:

TRAP EXPERT

When you **spend a moment to survey a dangerous area**, roll+DEX.

*On a 10+, hold 3. *On a 7–9, hold 1. Spend your hold as you walk through the area to ask these questions:

- Is there a trap here and if so, what activates it?
- What does the trap do when activated?
- What else is hidden here?

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

When you **pick locks or pockets or disable traps**, roll+DEX. *On a 10+, you do it, no problem. *On a 7–9, you still do it, but the GM will offer you two options between suspicion, danger, or cost.

BACKSTAB

When you **attack a surprised or defenseless enemy with a melee weapon**, you can choose to deal your damage or roll+DEX. *On a 10+ choose two. *On a 7–9 choose one.

- You don't get into melee with them
- You deal your damage+1d6
- You create an advantage, +1 forward to you or an ally acting on it
- Reduce their armor by 1 until they repair it

*"No matter how subtle the wizard, a knife between the shoulder blades will seriously cramp his style."
—Vlad Taltos, "Jhereg"*

FLEXIBLE MORALS

When someone tries to detect your alignment you can tell them any alignment you like.

POISONER

You've mastered the care and use of a poison. Choose a poison from the list below; that poison is no longer dangerous for you to use. You also start with three uses of the poison you choose. Whenever you have time to gather materials and a safe place to brew you can make three uses of the poison you choose for free. Note that some poisons are applied, meaning you have to carefully apply it to the target or something they eat or drink. Touch poisons just need to touch the target, they can even be used on the blade of a weapon.

- Oil of Tagit (applied): The target falls into a light sleep
- Bloodweed (touch): The target deals -1d4 damage ongoing until cured
- Goldenroot (applied): The target treats the next creature they see as a trusted ally, until proved otherwise
- Serpent's Tears (touch): Anyone dealing damage to the target rolls twice and takes the better result.

*"They were both poisoned.
I spent the last few years
building up an immunity
to iocane powder."
—The Man in Black,
"The Princess Bride"*

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

CHAOTIC

Leap into danger without a plan.

NEUTRAL

Avoid detection or infiltrate a location.

EVIL

Shift danger or blame from yourself to someone else.

GEAR

Your load is 9+STR. You start with dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight), leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight), 3 uses of your chosen poison, and 10 coins. Choose your arms:

- Dagger (hand, 1 weight) and short sword (close, 1 weight)
- Rapier (close, precise, 1 weight)

Choose a ranged weapon:

- 3 throwing daggers (thrown, near, 0 weight)
- Ragged Bow (near, 2 weight) and bundle of arrows (3 ammo, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Adventuring gear (1 weight)
- Healing potion (0 weight)

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

I stole something from _____.

_____ has my back when things go wrong.

_____ knows incriminating details about me.

_____ and I have a con running.

ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2–5, choose from these moves.

CHEAP SHOT

When using a precise or hand weapon, your backstab deals an extra +1d6 damage.

CAUTIOUS

*"I only gamble with my
life, never my money."
—Rick, "The Mummy"*

When you use trap expert you always get +1 hold, even on a 6-.

WEALTH AND TASTE

When you **make a show of flashing around your most valuable possession**, choose someone present. They will do anything they can to obtain your item or one like it.

SHOOT FIRST

You're never caught by surprise. When an enemy would get the drop on you, you get to act first instead.

POISON MASTER

After you've used a poison once it's no longer dangerous for you to use.

ENVENOM

You can apply even complex poisons with a pinprick. When you apply a poison that's not dangerous for you to use to your weapon it's touch instead of applied.

BREWER

When you have time to gather materials and a safe place to brew you can create three doses of any one poison you've used before.

UNDERDOG

When you're outnumbered, you have +1 armor.

"I'd rather be lucky than good."

—Lefty Gomez

CONNECTIONS

When you put out word to the criminal underbelly about something you want or need, roll+CHA. *On a 10+, someone has it, just for you. *On a 7–9, you'll have to settle for something close or it comes with strings attached, your call.

When you gain a level from 6–10, choose from these moves or the level 2–5 moves.

DIRTY FIGHTER

Replaces: Cheap Shot

When using a precise or hand weapon, your backstab deals an extra +1d8 damage and all other attacks deal +1d4 damage.

EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS

Replaces: Cautious

When you use trap expert you always get +1 hold, even on a 6-. On a 12+ you get 3 hold and the next time you come near a trap the GM will immediately tell you what it does, what triggers it, who set it, and how you can use it to your advantage.

ALCHEMIST

Replaces: Brewer

When you have you have time to gather materials and a safe place to brew you can create three doses of any poison you've used before. Alternately you can describe the effects of a poison you'd like to create. The GM will tell you that you can create it, but with one or more caveats:

- It will only work under specific circumstances
- The best you can manage is a weaker version
- It'll take a while to take effect
- It'll have obvious side effects

SERIOUS UNDERDOG

Replaces: Underdog

You have +1 armor. When you're outnumbered, you have +2 armor instead.

EVASION

When you defy danger on a 12+, you transcend the danger. You not only do what you set out to, but the GM will offer you a better outcome, true beauty, or a moment of grace.

STRONG ARM, TRUE AIM

You can throw any melee weapon, using it to volley. A thrown melee weapon is gone; you can never choose to reduce ammo on a 7-9.

ESCAPE ROUTE

When you're in too deep and need a way out, name your escape route and roll+DEX. *On a 10+ you're gone. *On a 7-9 you can stay or go, but if you go it costs you: leave something behind or take something with you, the GM will tell you what.

DISGUISE

When you have time and materials you can create a disguise that will fool anyone into thinking you're another creature of about the same size and shape. Your actions can give you away but your appearance won't.

HEIST

When you take time to make a plan to steal something, name the thing you want to steal and ask the GM these questions. When acting on the answers you and your allies take +1 forward.

- Who will notice it's missing?
- What's its most powerful defense?
- Who will come after it?
- Who else wants it?



CHAPTER 12

ED12

Dungeon World has rules. Not the laws of men or the rule of some petty tyrant. Bigger, better rules. You drop something—it falls. You can't make something out of nothing. The dead stay dead, right?

Oh, the things we tell ourselves to feel better about the long, dark nights.

You've spent so very long poring over those tomes of yours. The experiments that nearly drove you mad and all the botched summonings that endangered your very soul. For what? For power. What else is there? Not just the power of King or Country but the power to boil a man's blood in his veins. To call on the thunder of the sky and the churn of the roiling earth. To shrug off the rules the world holds so dear.

Let them cast their sidelong glances. Let them call you "warlock" or "diabolist." Who among them can hurl fireballs from their eyes?

Yeah. We didn't think so.

NAMES

Elf: Galadiir, Fenfaril, Lilliastre, Phirosalle, Enkirash, Halwyr

Human: Avon, Morgan, Rath, Ysolde, Ovid, Vitus, Aldara, Xeno, Uri

LOOK

Choose one for each:

Haunted Eyes, Sharp Eyes, or Crazy Eyes

Styled Hair, Wild Hair, or Pointed Hat

Worn Robes, Stylish Robes, or Strange Robes

Pudgy Body, Creepy Body, or Thin Body

STATS

Your maximum HP is 4+Constitution.

Your base damage is d4.

THE WIZARD

STARTING MOVES

Choose a race and gain the corresponding move:

ELF

Magic is as natural as breath to you. Detect Magic is a cantrip for you.

HUMAN

Choose one cleric spell. You can cast it as if it was a wizard spell.

You start with these moves:

SPELLBOOK

You have mastered several spells and inscribed them in your spellbook. You start out with three first level spells in your spellbook as well as the cantrips. Whenever you gain a level, you add a new spell of your level or lower to your spellbook. Your spellbook is 1 weight.

PREPARE SPELLS

When you **spend uninterrupted time (an hour or so) in quiet contemplation of your spellbook**, you:

- Lose any spells you already have prepared
- Prepare new spells of your choice from your spellbook whose total levels don't exceed your own level+1.
- Prepare your cantrips which never count against your limit.

CAST A SPELL (INT)

When you **release a spell you've prepared**, roll+INT. *On a 10+, the spell is successfully cast and you do not forget the spell—you may cast it again later. *On a 7-9, the spell is cast, but choose one:

- You draw unwelcome attention or put yourself in a spot. The GM will tell you how.
- The spell disturbs the fabric of reality as it is cast—take -1 ongoing to cast a spell until the next time you Prepare Spells.
- After it is cast, the spell is forgotten. You cannot cast the spell again until you prepare spells.

Note that maintaining spells with ongoing effects will sometimes cause a penalty to your roll to cast a spell.

SPELL DEFENSE

You may end any ongoing spell immediately and use the energy of its dissipation to deflect an oncoming attack. The spell ends and you subtract its level from the damage done to you.

RITUAL

When you **draw on a place of power to create a magical effect**, tell the GM what you're trying to achieve. Ritual effects are always possible, but the GM will give you one to four of the following conditions:

- It's going to take days/weeks/months
- First you must ____
- You'll need help from ____
- It will require a lot of money
- The best you can do is a lesser version, unreliable and limited
- You and your allies will risk danger from ____
- You'll have to disenchant ____ to do it

ALIGNMENT

Choose an alignment:

GOOD

Use magic to directly aid another.

NEUTRAL

Discover something about a magical mystery.

EVIL

Use magic to cause terror and fear.

"Remuneration?

*Since when did a wizard
work for wages? We are
pure academics, Mister
Stibbons! We do not care
for mere money!"*

*—Mustrum Ridcully,
"Unseen Academicals"*

GEAR

Your Load is 7+STR. You start with your spellbook (1 weight) and dungeon rations (5 uses, 1 weight). Choose your defenses:

- Leather armor (1 armor, 1 weight)
- Bag of books (5 uses, 2 weight) and 3 healing potions

Choose your weapon:

- Dagger (hand, 1 weight)
- Staff (close, two-handed, 1 weight)

Choose one:

- Healing potion (0 weight)
- 3 antitoxins (0 weight)

BONDS

Fill in the name of one of your companions in at least one:

_____ will play an important role in the events to come. I have foreseen it!

_____ is keeping an important secret from me.

_____ is woefully misinformed about the world; I will teach them all that I can.

ADVANCED MOVES

When you gain a level from 2-5, choose from these moves. You also add a new spell to your spellbook at each level.

PRODIGY

Choose a spell. You prepare that spell as if it were one level lower.

EMPOWERED MAGIC

When you cast a spell, on a 10+ you have the option of choosing from the 7-9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these as well:

- The spell's effects are maximized
- The spell's targets are doubled

FOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE

When you **spout lore about something no one else has any clue about**, take +1.

KNOW-IT-ALL

When **another player's character comes to you for advice and you tell them what you think is best**, they get +1 forward when following your advice and you mark experience if they do.

EXPANDED SPELLBOOK

Add a new spell from the spell list of any class to your spellbook.

ENCHANTER

When you have time and safety with a magic item you may ask the GM what it does, the GM will answer you truthfully.

LOGICAL

When you **use strict deduction to analyze your surroundings**, you can discern realities with INT instead of WIS.

ARCANE WARD

As long as you have at least one prepared spell of first level or higher, you have +2 armor.

COUNTERSPELL

When you **attempt to counter an arcane spell that will otherwise affect you**, stake one of your prepared spells on the defense and roll+INT. *On a 10+, the spell is countered and has no effect on you. *On a 7-9, the spell is countered and you forget the spell you staked. Your counterspell protects only you; if the countered spell has other targets they get its effects.

QUICK STUDY

When you **see the effects of an arcane spell**, ask the GM the name of the spell and its effects. You take +1 when acting on the answers.

When you gain a level from 6-10, choose from these moves or the level 2-5 moves.

MASTER

Requires: Prodigy

Choose one spell in addition to the one you picked for prodigy. You prepare that spell as if it were one level lower.

GREATER EMPOWERED MAGIC

Replaces: Empowered Magic

When you cast a spell, on a 10-11 you have the option of choosing from the 7-9 list. If you do, you may choose one of these effects as well. On a 12+ you get to choose one of these effects for free:

- The spell's effects are doubled
- The spell's targets are doubled

ENCHANTER'S SOUL

Requires: Enchanter

When you have time and safety with a magic item in a place of power you can empower that item so that the next time you use it its effects are amplified, the GM will tell you exactly how.

HIGHLY LOGICAL

Replaces: Logical

When you **use strict deduction to analyze your surroundings**, you can discern realities with INT instead of WIS. On a 12+ you get to ask the GM any three questions, not limited by the list.

ARCANE ARMOR

Replaces: Arcane Ward

As long as you have at least one prepared spell of first level or higher, you have +4 armor.

PROTECTIVE COUNTER

Requires: Counterspell

When an ally within sight of you is affected by an arcane spell, you can counter it as if it affected you. If the spell affects multiple allies you must counter for each ally separately.

ETHEREAL TETHER

When you have time with a willing or helpless subject you can craft an ethereal tether with them. You perceive what they perceive and can discern realities about someone tethered to you or their surroundings no matter the distance. Someone willingly tethered to you can communicate with you over the tether as if you were in the room with them.

MYSTICAL PUPPET STRINGS

When you **use magic to control a person's actions** they have no memory of what you had them do and bear you no ill will.

SPELL AUGMENTATION

When you **deal damage to a creature** you can shunt a spell's energy into them—end one of your ongoing spells and add the spell's level to the damage dealt.

SELF-POWERED

When you have time, arcane materials, and a safe space, you can create your own place of power. Describe to the GM what kind of power it is and how you're binding it to this place, the GM will tell you one kind of creature that will have an interest in your workings.



WIZARD SPELLS

CANTRIPS

You prepare all of your cantrips every time you prepare spells without having to select them or count them toward your allotment of spells.

LIGHT

CANTRIP

An item you touch glows with arcane light, about as bright as a torch. It gives off no heat or sound and requires no fuel, but it is otherwise like a mundane torch. You have complete control of the color of the flame. The spell lasts as long as it is in your presence.

UNSEEN SERVANT

CANTRIP

ONGOING

You conjure a simple invisible construct that can do nothing but carry items. It has Load 3 and carries anything you hand to it. It cannot pick up items on its own and can only carry those you give to it. Items carried by an unseen servant appear to float in the air a few paces behind you. An unseen servant that takes damage or leaves your presence is immediately dispelled, dropping any items it carried. Otherwise the unseen servant serves you until you end the spell.

PRESTIDIGITATION

CANTRIP

You perform minor tricks of true magic. If you touch an item as part of the casting you can make cosmetic changes to it: clean it, soil it, cool it, warm it, flavor it, or change its color. If you cast the spell without touching an item you can instead create minor illusions no bigger than yourself. Prestidigitation illusions are crude and clearly illusions—they won't fool anyone, but they might entertain them.

"Not tricks, Michael, illusions!"
—George Oscar Bluth Jr,
"Arrested Development"

1ST LEVEL

CONTACT SPIRITS

LEVEL 1

SUMMONING

Name the spirit you wish to contact (or leave it to the GM). You pull that creature through the planes, just close enough to speak to you. It is bound to answer any one question you ask to the best of its ability.

DETECT MAGIC

LEVEL 1

DIVINATION

One of your senses is briefly attuned to magic. The GM will tell you what here is magical.

TELEPATHY

LEVEL 1

DIVINATION ONGOING

You form a telepathic bond with a single person you touch, enabling you to converse with that person through your thoughts. You can only have one telepathic bond at a time.

CHARM PERSON

LEVEL 1

ENCHANTMENT ONGOING

The person (not beast or monster) you touch while casting this spell counts you as a friend until they take damage or you prove otherwise.

INVISIBILITY

LEVEL 1

ILLUSION ONGOING

Touch an ally: nobody can see them. They're invisible! The spell persists until the target attacks or you dismiss the effect. While the spell is ongoing you can't cast a spell.

MAGIC MISSILE

LEVEL 1

EVOCATION

Projectiles of pure magic spring from your fingers. Deal 2d4 damage to one target.

ALARM

LEVEL 1

Walk a wide circle as you cast this spell. Until you prepare spells again your magic will alert you if a creature crosses that circle. Even if you are asleep, the spell will shake you from your slumber.

3RD LEVEL

"Secrets of the blackest void

known only to the ancients

Freedom from the planetoids

and the gravity that chains us"

—The Sword, "Warp Riders"

DISPEL MAGIC

LEVEL 3

Choose a spell or magic effect in your presence: this spell rips it apart. Lesser spells are ended, powerful magic is just reduced or dampened so long as you are nearby.

VISIONS THROUGH TIME

LEVEL 3

DIVINATION

Cast this spell and gaze into a reflective surface to see into the depths of time. The GM will reveal the details of a grim portent to you—a bleak event that will come to pass without your intervention. They'll tell you something useful about how you can interfere with the grim portent's dark outcomes. Rare is the portent that claims "You'll live happily ever after." Sorry.

FIREBALL

LEVEL 3

EVOCATION

You evoke a mighty ball of flame that envelops your target and everyone nearby, inflicting 2d6 damage which ignores armor.

MIMIC

LEVEL 3

ONGOING

You take the form of someone you touch while casting this spell. Your physical characteristics match theirs exactly but your behavior may not. This change persists until you take damage or choose to return to your own form. While this spell is ongoing you lose access to all your wizard moves.

MIRROR IMAGE

LEVEL 3

ILLUSION

You create an illusory image of yourself. When you are attacked, roll a d6. On a 4, 5, or 6 the attack hits the illusion instead, the image then dissipates and the spell ends.

SLEEP

LEVEL 3

ENCHANTMENT

1d4 enemies you can see of the GM's choice fall asleep. Only creatures capable of sleeping are affected. They awake as normal: loud noises, jolts, pain.

CAGE

LEVEL 5

EVOCATION ONGOING

The target is held in a cage of magical force. Nothing can get in or out of the cage. The cage remains until you cast another spell or dismiss it. While the spell is ongoing, the caged creature can hear your thoughts and you cannot leave sight of the cage.

CONTACT OTHER PLANE

LEVEL 5

DIVINATION

You send a request to another plane. Specify who or what you'd like to contact by location, type of creature, name, or title. You open a two-way communication with that creature. Your communication can be cut off at any time by you or the creature you contacted.

POLYMORPH

LEVEL 5

ENCHANTMENT

Your touch reshapes a creature entirely, they stay in the form you craft until you cast a spell. Describe the new shape you craft, including any stat changes, significant adaptations, or major weaknesses. The GM will then tell you one or more of these:

- The form will be unstable and temporary
- The creature's mind will be altered as well
- The form has an unintended benefit or weakness

SUMMON MONSTER

LEVEL 5

SUMMONING ONGOING

A monster appears and aids you as best it can. Treat it as your character, but with access to only the basic moves. It has +1 modifier for all stats, 1 HP, and uses your damage dice. The monster also gets your choice of 1d6 of these traits:

- It has +2 instead of +1 to one stat
- It's not reckless
- It does 1d8 damage
- Its bond to your plane is strong: +2 HP for each level you have
- It has some useful adaptation

The GM will tell you the type of monster you get based on the traits you select. The creature remains on this plane until it dies or you dismiss it. While the spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

7TH LEVEL

DOMINATE

LEVEL 7 *ENCHANTMENT ONGOING*

Your touch pushes your mind into someone else's. You gain 1d4 hold. Spend one hold to make the target take one of these actions:

- Speak a few words of your choice
- Give you something they hold
- Make a concerted attack on a target of your choice
- Truthfully answer one question

If you run out of hold the spell ends. If the target takes damage you lose 1 hold. While the spell is ongoing you cannot cast a spell.

TRUE SEEING

LEVEL 7 *DIVINATION ONGOING*

You see all things as they truly are. This effect persists until you tell a lie or dismiss the spell. While this spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

SHADOW WALK

LEVEL 7 *ILLUSION*

The shadows you target with this spell become a portal for you and your allies. Name a location, describing it with a number of words up to your level. Stepping through the portal deposits you and any allies present when you cast the spell at the location you described. The portal may only be used once by each ally.

CONTINGENCY

LEVEL 7 *EVOCATION*

Choose a 5th level or lower spell you know. Describe a trigger condition using a number of words equal to your level. The chosen spell is held until you choose to unleash it or the trigger condition is met, whichever happens first. You don't have to roll for the held spell, it just takes effect. You may only have a single contingent spell held at a time; if you cast Contingency while you have a held spell, the new held spell replaces the old one.

CLOUDKILL

LEVEL 7 *SUMMONING ONGOING*

A cloud of fog drifts into this realm from beyond the Black Gates of Death, filling the immediate area. Whenever a creature in the area takes damage it takes an additional, separate 1d6 damage which ignores armor. This spell persists so long as you can see the affected area, or until you dismiss it.

ANTIPATHY

LEVEL 9 ENCHANTMENT ONGOING

Choose a target and describe a type of creature or an alignment. Creatures of the specified type or alignment cannot come within sight of the target. If a creature of the specified type does find itself within sight of the target, it immediately flees. This effect continues until you leave the target's presence or you dismiss the spell. While the spell is ongoing you take -1 to cast a spell.

ALERT

LEVEL 9

DIVINATION

Describe an event. The GM will tell you when that event occurs, no matter where you are or how far away the event is. If you choose, you can view the location of the event as though you were there in person. You can only have one Alert active at a time.

SOUL GEM

LEVEL 9

You trap the soul of a dying creature within a gem. The trapped creature is aware of its imprisonment but can still be manipulated through spells, parley, and other effects. All moves against the trapped creature are at +1. You can free the soul at any time but it can never be recaptured once freed.

SHELTER

LEVEL 9

EVOCATION ONGOING

You create a structure out of pure magical power. It can be as large as a castle or as small as a hut, but is impervious to all non-magical damage. The structure endures until you leave it or you end the spell.

PERFECT SUMMONS

LEVEL 9

SUMMONING

You teleport a creature to your presence. Name a creature or give a short description of a type of creature. If you named a creature, that creature appears before you. If you described a type of creature, a creature of that type appears before you.



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

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

This chapter isn't about advice for the GM or optional tips and tricks on how best to play Dungeon World. It's a chapter with procedures and rules for whoever takes on the role of GM.

GMING DUNGEON WORLD: A FRAMEWORK

Running a game of Dungeon World is built on these: the GM's **agenda**, **principles**, and **moves**. The agenda is what you set out to do when you sit down at the table. The principles are the guides that keep you focused on that agenda. The GM's moves are the concrete, moment-to-moment things you do to move the game forward. You'll make moves when players miss their rolls, when the rules call for it, and whenever the players look to you to see what happens. Your moves keep the fiction consistent and the game's action moving forward.

The GM's agenda, principles, and moves are rules just like damage or stats or HP. You should take the same care in altering them or ignoring them that you would with any other rule.

Changing the rules that make Dungeon World work the way it does, including changing the GM rules, is covered in the Advanced Delving chapter on page 343.

HOW TO GM

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

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

The players have it easy—they just say what their characters say, think, and do. You have it a bit harder. You have to say everything else. What does that entail?

First and foremost, you **describe the immediate situation around the players at all times**. This is how you start a session, how you get things rolling after a snack break, get back on track after a great joke: tell them what the situation is in concrete terms.

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

The situation around them is rarely “everything's great, nothing to worry about.” They're adventurers going on adventures—give them something to react to.

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

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

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

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

AGENDA

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

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

Everything you say and do at the table (and away from the table, too) exists to accomplish these three goals and no others. Things that aren't on this list aren't your goals. You're not trying to beat the players or test their ability to solve complex traps. You're not here to give the players a chance to explore your finely crafted setting. You're not trying to kill the players (though monsters might be). You're most certainly not here to tell everyone a planned-out story.

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

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

Dungeon World adventures **never** presume player actions. A *Dungeon World* adventure portrays a setting in motion—someplace significant with creatures big and small pursuing their own goals. As the players come into conflict with that setting and its denizens, action is inevitable. You'll honestly portray the repercussions of that action.

This is how you **play to find out what happens**. You're sharing in the fun of finding out how the characters react to and change the world you're portraying. You're all participants in a great adventure that's unfolding. So really, don't plan too hard. The rules of the game will fight you. It's fun to see how things unfold, trust us.

PRINCIPLES

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

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

DRAW MAPS, LEAVE BLANKS

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

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

*"Don't use my real name!"
—Kevin, "Frisky Dingo"*

ADDRESS THE CHARACTERS, NOT THE PLAYERS

Addressing the characters, not the players, means that you don't say, "Tony, is Dunwick doing something about that wight?" Instead you say, "Dunwick, what are you doing about the wight?" Speaking this way keeps the game focused on the fiction and not on the table. It's important to the flow of the game, too. If you talk to the players you may leave out details that are important to what moves the characters make. Since moves are always based on the actions of the character you need to think about what's happening in terms of those characters—not the players portraying them.

EMBRACE THE FANTASTIC

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

MAKE A MOVE THAT FOLLOWS

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

NEVER SPEAK THE NAME OF YOUR MOVE

There is no quicker way to ruin the consistency of Dungeon World than to tell the players what move you’re making. Your moves are prompts to you, not things you say directly.

You never show the players that you’re picking a move from a list. You know the reason the slavers dragged off Omar was because you made the “put someone in a spot” move, but you show it to the players as a straightforward outcome of their actions, since it is.

GIVE EVERY MONSTER LIFE

Monsters are fantastic creatures with their own motivations (simple or complex). Give each monster details that bring it to life: smells, sights, sounds. Give each one enough to make it real, but don’t cry when it gets beat up or overthrown. That’s what player characters do!

NAME EVERY PERSON

Anyone that the players speak with has a name. They probably have a personality and some goals or opinions too, but you can figure that out as you go. Start with a name. The rest can flow from there.

Think about time when asking questions: ask about what came before, what is true now and what might happen in the future.

Ask the Cleric about the gods, Ask the Wizard about magic and then switch it up—maybe the Thief has some ideas about the gods, too?

ASK QUESTIONS AND USE THE ANSWERS

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

The easiest question to use is “What do you do?” Whenever you make a move, end with “What do you do?” You don't even have to ask the person you made the move against. Take that chance to shift the focus elsewhere: “Rath's spell is torn apart with a flick of the mage's wand. Finnegan, that spell was aiding you. What are you doing now that it's gone?”

BE A FAN OF THE CHARACTERS

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

THINK DANGEROUS

Everything in the world is a target. You're thinking like an evil overlord: no single life is worth anything and there is nothing sacrosanct. Everything can be put in danger, everything can be destroyed. Nothing you create is ever protected. Whenever your eye falls on something you've created, think how it can be put in danger, fall apart or crumble. The world changes. Without the characters' intervention, it changes for the worse.

BEGIN AND END WITH THE FICTION

Everything you and the players do in Dungeon World comes from and leads to fictional events. When the players make a move, they take a fictional action to trigger it, apply the rules, and get a fictional effect. When you make a move it always comes from the fiction.

THINK OFFSCREEN TOO

Just because you're a fan of the characters doesn't mean everything happens right in front of them. Sometimes your best move is in the next room, or another part of the dungeon, or even back in town. Make your move elsewhere and show its effects when they come into the spotlight.

MOVES

Whenever everyone looks to you to see what happens choose one of these. Each move is something that occurs in the fiction of the game—they aren't code words or special terms. "Use up their resources" literally means to expend the resources of the characters, for example.

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

Never speak the name of your move (that's one of your principles). Make it a real thing that happens to them: "As you dodge the hulking ogre's club, you slip and land hard. Your sword goes sliding away into the darkness. You think you saw where it went but the ogre is lumbering your way. What do you do?"

No matter what move you make, always follow up with "What do you do?" Your moves are a way of fulfilling your agenda—part of which is to fill the characters' lives with adventure. When a spell goes wild or the floor drops out from under them adventurers react or suffer the consequences of inaction.

"The vision made him want to freeze into immobility, but this, too, was action with its consequences."
—Dune

WHEN TO MAKE A MOVE

You make a move:

When a player describes their action and says “did it work?” or “what does he do when I say that?”, these are examples of the players looking to you to see what happens. When it’s your turn to describe the effects the players are having on the world, you can make a move.

- When everyone looks to you to find out what happens
- When the players give you a golden opportunity
- When they roll a 6-

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

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

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

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

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

CHOOSING A MOVE

To choose a move, start by looking at the obvious consequences of the action that triggered it. If you already have an idea, think on it for a second to make sure it fits your agenda and principles and then do it. **Let your moves snowball.** Build on the success or failure of the characters’ moves and on your own previous moves.

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

MAKING YOUR MOVE

When making a move, keep your principles in mind. In particular, never speak the name of your move and address the characters, not the players. Your moves are not mechanical actions happening around the table. They are concrete events happening to the characters in the fictional world you are describing.

Note that “deal damage” is a move, but other moves may include damage as well. When an ogre flings you against a wall you take damage as surely as if he had smashed you with his fists.

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

If a move causes damage not related to a monster, like a collapsing tunnel or fall into a pit, use the damage rules on page 21.

USE A MONSTER, DANGER, OR LOCATION MOVE

Every monster in an adventure has moves associated with it, as do many locations. A monster or location move is just a description of what that location or monster does, maybe “hurl someone away” or “bridge the planes.” If a player move (like hack and slash) says that a monster gets to make an attack, make an aggressive move with that monster.

The overarching dangers of the adventure also have moves associated with them. Use these moves to bring that danger into play, which may mean more monsters.

REVEAL AN UNWELCOME TRUTH

An unwelcome truth is a fact the players wish wasn’t true: that the room’s been trapped, maybe, or that the helpful goblin is actually a spy. Reveal to the players just how much trouble they’re in.

*“The truth will set you free. But not until after it is finished with you.”
—Infinite Jest*

SHOW SIGNS OF AN APPROACHING THREAT

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

*“Omar comin’”
—The Wire*

*"He who overcomes
By force, hath overcome
only half his foe"*
—*Paradise Lost*

DEAL DAMAGE

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

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

Most damage is based on a die roll. When a player takes damage, tell them what to roll. You never need to touch the dice. If the player is too cowardly to find out their own fate, they can ask another player to roll for them.

USE UP THEIR RESOURCES

Surviving in a dungeon, or anywhere dangerous, often comes down to supplies. With this move, something happens to use up some resource: weapons, armor, healing, ongoing spells. You don't always have to use it up permanently. A sword might just be flung to the other side of the room, not shattered.

TURN THEIR MOVE BACK ON THEM

*"Danger always strikes
when everything seems
fine."*
—*Kambei Shimada,*
"Seven Samurai"

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

SEPARATE THEM

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

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

GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY THAT FITS A CLASS' ABILITIES

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

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

SHOW A DOWNSIDE TO THEIR CLASS, RACE, OR EQUIPMENT

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

OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY, WITH OR WITHOUT COST

Show them something they want: riches, power, glory. If you want, you can associate some cost with it too, of course.

Remember to lead with the fiction. You don't say, "This area isn't dangerous so you can make camp here, if you're willing to take the time." You make it a solid fictional thing and say, "Helferth's blessings still hang around the shattered altar. It's a nice safe spot, but the chanting from the ritual chamber is getting louder. What do you do?"

"This is the best deal you're going to get. I won't tell you that you can save yourself, because you can't."

—Anton Chigurh, "No Country For Old Men"

PUT SOMEONE IN A SPOT

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

"Do it to Julia!"

—Winston, "Nineteen Eighty-Four"

TELL THEM THE REQUIREMENTS OR CONSEQUENCES AND ASK

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

DUNGEON MOVES

Dungeon Moves are a special subset that are used to make or alter a dungeon on the fly. Use these if your players are exploring a hostile area that you don't already have planned completely.

Map out the area being explored as you make these moves. Most of them will require you to add a new room or element to your map.

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

You can make these moves whenever everyone looks to you to say something, when the players present you an opportunity, or when the players miss on a roll. They're particularly well-suited for when the characters enter a new room or hallway and want to know what they find there.

CHANGE THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment is the general feel of the area the players are in: carved tunnels, warped trees, safe trails, or whatever else. This is your opportunity to introduce them to a new environment: the tunnels gradually become naturally carved, the trees are dead and strange, or the trails are lost and the wilderness takes over. Use this move to vary the types of areas and creatures the players will face.

POINT TO A LOOMING THREAT

If you know that something is lurking and waiting for the players to stumble upon it, this move shows them the signs and clues. This move is the dragon's footprints in the mud or the slimy trail of the gelatinous cube.

INTRODUCE A NEW FACTION OR TYPE OF CREATURE

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

A faction is a group of creatures united by a similar goal. Once you introduce them you can begin to make moves and cause trouble for the players with those creatures or NPCs.

Introducing means giving some clear sensory evidence or substantiated information. Don't be coy; the players should have some idea what you're showing the presence of. You can, however, be subtle in your approach. No need to have the cultist overlord waving a placard and screaming in the infernal tongue every single time.

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

USE A THREAT FROM AN EXISTING FACTION OR TYPE OF CREATURE

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

Use the factions and types broadly. Orcs are accompanied with their hunting worgs. A mad cult probably has some undead servants or maybe a few beasts summoned from the abyssal pits. This is a move that, often, you'll be making subconsciously—it's just implementing the tools you've set out for yourself in a clear and effective manner.

MAKE THEM BACKTRACK

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

When backtracking, show the effect that time has had on the areas they've left behind. What new threats have sprung up in their wake? What didn't they take care of that's waiting for their return?

Use this move to make the dungeon a living, breathing place. There is no stasis in the wake of the characters' passing. Add reinforcements, cave in walls, cause chaos. The dungeon evolves in the wake of the characters' actions.

"Downward is the only way forward"
—Cobb, *"Inception"*

PRESENT RICHES AT A PRICE

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

Put some desirable item just out of reach. Find something they're short on: time, HP, gear, whatever. Find a way to make what they want available if they give up what they have.

The simplest way to use this move is the promise of gold out of the way of the main objective. Will they stop to pry the ruby eyes from the idol when they know that the sacrifice looms closer and closer? Use this move and you can find out.

PRESENT A CHALLENGE TO ONE OF THE CHARACTERS

Challenge a character by looking at what they're good at. Give the thief a lock to pick, show the cleric servants of an enemy god to battle against. Give the wizard magical mysteries to investigate. Show the fighter some skulls to crack. Give someone a chance to shine.

As an alternative, challenge a character by looking at what they're bad at or what they've left unresolved. If the bard has a complicated lie on his conscience, what steps will he take to cover it up when someone figures him out? If the wizard has been summoning demons, what happens when word gets out?

This move can give a character the spotlight—even if just for a moment. Try to give everyone a chance to be the focus of play using this move from session to session.

DEALING WITH COMMON SITUATIONS

There are some common situations that come up in Dungeon World. Here's how to deal with them.

FIGHTS

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

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

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

TRAPS

Traps may come from your prep, or you can improvise them based on your moves. If nothing has established that the location is safe, traps are always an option.

The players may find traps through clever plans, trap sense, or discerning realities. If a character describes an action that doesn't trigger a move, but the action would still discover a trap, don't hide it from them. Traps aren't allowed to break the rules.

PEOPLE

You can make a quick NPC with two rolls using the rules in Appendix 4 on page 390.

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

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

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





CHAPTER 14

The first session of a game of Dungeon World begins with character creation. Character creation is also world creation, the details on the character sheets and the questions that you ask establish what Dungeon World is like—who lives in it and what’s going on.

This section is for the GM so it’s addressed to you—the GM. For the players, the first session is just like every other. They just have to play their characters like real people and explore Dungeon World. You have to do a little more in the first session. You establish the world and the threats the players will face.

PREP

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

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

You’ll also need to read this whole book, especially the sections on GMing (GM moves) and the basic moves. It’s a good idea to be acquainted with the class moves too, so you can be prepared for them. Be especially sure to read the rules for fronts, but don’t create any yet.

Think about fantastic worlds, strange magic, and foul beasts. Remember the games you played and the stories you told. Watch some movies, read some comics; get heroic fantasy into your brain.

What you bring to the first session, ideas-wise, is up to you. At the very least bring your head full of ideas. That’s the bare minimum.

If you like you can plan a little more. Maybe think of an evil plot and who’s behind it, or some monsters you’d like to use.

If you’ve got some spare time on your hands you can even draw some maps (but remember, from your principles: leave blanks) and imagine specific locations.

The one thing you absolutely can’t bring to the table is a planned storyline or plot. You don’t know the heroes or the world before you sit down to play so planning anything concrete is just going to frustrate you. It also conflicts with your agenda: play to find out what happens.

FIRST SESSION

GETTING STARTED

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

Your role during character creation is threefold: help everyone, ask questions, and take notes. When a player makes a choice—particularly for their bonds—ask them about it. Get more detail. Think about what these details mean.

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

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

Are the characters friends? No, not necessarily, but they do work together as a team for common goals. Their reasons for pursuing those goals may be different, but they manage to work together.

Are there other wizards? Not really. There are other workers of arcane magic, and the common folk may call them wizards, but they're not like you. They don't have the same abilities, though they may be similar. Later on there may be another player character with the same class but no GM character will ever really be a wizard (or any other class).

What's coin? Coin's the currency of the realm. It's good pretty much everywhere. It'll buy you mundane stuff, like steel swords and wooden staves. The special stuff, like magic weapons, isn't for sale. Not for coin, anyway...

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

During this entire process, especially character creation, ask questions. Look for interesting facts established by the characters' bonds, moves, classes, and descriptions and ask about those things. Be curious! When someone mentions the demons that slaughtered their village find out more about them. After all, you don't have anything (except maybe a dungeon) and everything they give you is fuel for future adventures.

Also pay attention to the players' questions. When mechanical questions come up answer them. When questions of setting or fiction come up your best bet is to turn those questions around. When a player says, "Who is the King of Torsea," say, "I don't know. Who is it? What is he like?" Collaborate with your players. Asking a question means it's something that interests them so work with them to make the answers interesting. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know" and ask them the same questions. Work together to find a fantastic and interesting answer.

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

Once everyone has their characters created you can take a deep breath. Look back over the questions you've asked and answered so far. You should have some notes that will point you towards what the game might look like. Look at what the players have brought to the table. Look to the ideas that've been stewing away in your head. It's time for the adventure to begin!

THE FIRST ADVENTURE

The first adventure is really about discovering the direction that future sessions will take. Throughout the first adventure keep your eye out for unresolved threats; note dangerous things that are mentioned but not dealt with. These will be fuel for sessions to come.

Start the session with a group of player characters (maybe all of them) in a tense situation. Use anything that demands action: outside the entrance to a dungeon, ambushed in a fetid swamp, peeking through the crack in a door at the orc guards, or being sentenced before King Levus. Ask questions right away—“who is leading the ambush against you?” or “what did you do to make King Levus so mad?” If the situation stems directly from the characters and your questions, all the better.

Here’s where the game starts. The players will start saying and doing things, which means they’ll start making moves. For the first session you should watch especially carefully for when moves apply, until the players get the hang of it. Often, in the early sessions, the players will be most comfortable just narrating their actions—this is fine. When a move triggers let them know. Say, “It sounds like you’re trying to...” and then walk them through the move. Players looking for direction will look to their character sheet. When a player just says “I hack and slash him” be quick to ask, “so what are you actually doing?” Ask “How?” or “With what?”

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

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

ESTABLISH DETAILS, DESCRIBE

All the ideas and visions in your head don't really exist in the fiction of the game until you share them, describe them, and detail them. The first session is the time to establish the basics of what things look like, who's in charge, what they wear, what the world is like, what the immediate location is like. Describe everything but keep it brief enough to expand on later. Use a detail or two to make a description really stand out as real.

USE WHAT THEY GIVE YOU

The best part of the first session is you don't have to come with anything concrete. You might have a dungeon sketched out but the players provide the real meat—use it. They'll emerge from the darkness of that first dungeon and when they do and their eyes adjust to the light, you'll have built up an exciting world to explore with their help. Look at their bonds, their moves, how they answer your questions and use what you find to fill in the world around the characters.

ASK QUESTIONS

You're using what they give you, right? What if you need more? That's when you draw it out by asking questions. Poke and prod about specific things. Ask for reactions: "What does Lux think about that?" "Is Avon doing something about it?"

If you ever find yourself at a loss, pause for a second and ask a question. Ask one character a question about another. When a character does something, ask how a different character feels or reacts. Questions will power your game and make it feel real and exciting. Use the answers you find to fill in what might happen next.

LEAVE BLANKS

This is one of your principles, but it's especially true during the first session. Every blank is another cool thing waiting to happen; leave yourself a stock of them.

LOOK FOR INTERESTING FACTS

There are some ideas that, when you hear them, just jump out at you. When you hear one of those ideas, just write it down. When a player mentions the Duke of Sorrows being the demon he bargained with, note it. That little fact is the seed for a whole world.

HELP THE PLAYERS UNDERSTAND THE MOVES

You've already read the game, the players may not have, so it's up to you to help them if they need it. The fact is, they likely won't need it much. All they have to do is describe what their character does, the rules take care of the rest.

The one place they may need some help is remembering the triggers for the moves. Keep an ear out for actions that trigger moves, like attacking in melee or consulting their knowledge. After a few moves the players will likely remember them on their own.

GIVE EACH CHARACTER A CHANCE TO SHINE

As a fan of the heroes (remember your agenda?) you want to see them do what they do best. Give them a chance at this, not by tailoring every room to their skills, but by portraying a fantastic world (agenda again) where there are many solutions to every challenge.

INTRODUCE NPCs

NPCs bring the world to life. If every monster does nothing more than attack and every blacksmith sets out their wares for simple payment the world is dead. Instead give your characters, especially those that the players show an interest in, life (principles, remember?) Introduce NPCs but don't protect them. The recently deceased Lord of Goblins is just as useful for future adventures as the one who's still alive.

AFTER THE FIRST SESSION

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

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





CHAPTER 15

Fronts are secret tomes of GM knowledge. Each is a collection of linked dangers—threats to the characters specifically and to the people, places, and things the characters care about. It also includes one or more impending dooms, the horrible things that will happen without the characters’ intervention. “Fronts” comes, of course, from “fighting on two fronts” which is just where you want the characters to be—surrounded by threats, danger and adventure.

Fronts are built outside of active play. They’re the solo fun that you get to have between games—rubbing your hands and cackling evilly to yourself as you craft the foes with which to challenge your PCs. You may tweak or adjust your fronts during play (who knows when inspiration will strike?) but the meat of them comes from preparation between sessions.

Fronts are designed to help you organize your thoughts on what opposes the players. They’re here to contain your notes, ideas, and plans for these opposing forces. When you’re in a bind your fronts are where you’re going to turn and say, “Oh, so *that’s* what I should do.” Consider them an organizational tool, as inspiration for present and future mayhem.

When you’re building fronts, think about all the creepy dungeon denizens, the rampaging hordes and ancient cults that you’d like to see in your game. Think in broad strokes at first and then, as you build dangers into your fronts, you’ll be able to narrow those ideas down. When you write your campaign front, think about session-to-session trends. When you write your adventure fronts, think about what’s important right here and right now. When you’re done writing a few fronts you’ll be equipped with all the tools you’ll need to challenge your players and ready to run Dungeon World.

WHEN TO MAKE FRONTS

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

After that first session you’ll also make some adventure fronts. One or two is usually a good number. If you find yourself with more adventure fronts consider leaving some possible fronts as just notes for now.

FRONTS

CAMPAIGN AND ADVENTURE FRONTS

At their core, all fronts contain the same components. They sort and gather your dangers into easy-to-use clusters. There are, however, two different *kinds* of fronts available to you. On the session-to-session level there are your adventure fronts. These fronts will see use for a few sessions each. They're tied to one problem and will be dealt with or cast aside as the characters wander the dungeon or uncover the plot at hand. Think of them as episodic content: "Today, on Dungeon World..."

Tying your adventure fronts together is your campaign front. While the adventure fronts will contain immediate dangers—the orcs in Hargrosh Pass, say—the campaign front contains the Dark God Grishkar who drives the orcs to their pillaging. The campaign front is the unifying element that spans all the sessions of your Dungeon World game. It will have slower-burning portents but they'll be bigger in scope and have a deeper impact on the world. Most importantly they'll be scarier if they're allowed to resolve.

When a danger from an adventure front goes without resolution you'll have to make a decision. If the danger is something you like and feel has a place in the larger world of your game don't hesitate to move it to the campaign front. You're able to make smaller dangers that went unresolved into bigger dangers some day later on. You can move dangers from the campaign fronts to an adventure front if they've come to bear, too.

CREATING FRONTS

Here's how a front comes together:

- Choose campaign front or adventure front
- Create 2-3 dangers
- Choose an impending doom for each danger
- Add grim portents (1-3 for an adventure front, 3-5 for the campaign front)
- Write 1-3 stakes questions
- List the general cast of the front

CREATING DANGERS

Not every element of your game will warrant a danger—traps, some roving monsters, and other bits of ephemera may just be there to add context but aren't important enough to warrant inclusion. That's okay. Fronts are here to keep you apprised of the bigger picture. Dangers are divided into a handful of categories, each with its own name and **impulse**.

Every danger has a crucial motivation that drives it called its impulse. The impulse exists to help you understand that danger. What pushes it to fulfill its impending doom? Impulses can help you translate the danger into action.

When creating dangers for your front, think about how each one interacts as a facet of the front as a whole. Keep in mind the people, places, and things that might be a part of the threat to the world that the front represents. How does each danger contribute to the front?

Let's say we have an idea for a front—an ancient portal has been discovered in the icy north. We'll call our front "The Opening of the White Gate."

The easiest place to start is with people and monsters. Cultists, ogre chieftains, demonic overlords, and the like are all excellent dangers. These are the creatures that have risen above mere monster status to become serious threats on their own. Groups of monsters can be dangers too—goblin tribes or a rampaging centaur khanate, for example.

For the front we're creating, we can pick a few different groups or people who might be interested in the gate. The College of Arcanists, perhaps. There's a golem, too, we've decided, that protects the forgotten portal. The golem is just an obstacle, so we won't make him a danger.

Thinking more broadly, less obvious elements of the world can be dangers. Blasted landscapes, intelligent magical items, ancient spells woven into the fabric of time. These things fulfill the same purposes as a mad necromancer—they're part of the front, a danger to the world.

For our front, we'll add the gate itself as a danger.

Lastly, if we think ahead, we can include some overarching dangers. The sorts of things that are in play outside the realm of the obvious—godly patrons, hidden conspiracies and cursed prophecies waiting to be fulfilled.

Perhaps the White Gate was carved in the ancient past, hidden by a race of angels until the Day of Judgement. We'll add the Argent Seraphim to our front as a new danger.

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

A barbarian tribe near the gate, the frozen tundra itself, a band of rival adventurers; all these things could be dangerous elements of the game but they're not important enough just yet to deserve to be dangers.

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

Once you've named and added a danger to the front you need to choose a type for that danger from the list below. Alternately, you can use the list of types to inspire dangers: with your front in mind, peruse the list and pick one or two that fit.

For our three dangers (The College of Arcanists, The White Gate and the Argent Seraphim) we've selected Cabal, Dark Portal and Choir of Angels, respectively.

TYPES OF DANGERS

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

AMBITIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

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

GM MOVES FOR AMBITIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

- Attack someone by stealthy means (kidnapping, etc.)
- Attack someone directly (with a gang or single assailant)
- Absorb or buy out someone important (an ally, perhaps)
- Influence a powerful institution (change a law, manipulate doctrine)
- Establish a new rule (within the organization)
- Claim territory or resources
- Negotiate a deal
- Observe a potential foe in great detail

PLANAR FORCES

*“Well tides are a-turnin’
once more*

*Six dark-winged devils
line up at my door*

*Each one is more evil than
that which came before”*

*—Titus Andronicus,
“Four Score and Seven”*

- God (*impulse: to gather worshippers*)
- Demon Prince (*impulse: to open the gates of Hell*)
- Elemental Lord (*impulse: to tear down creation to its component parts*)
- Force of Chaos (*impulse: to destroy all semblance of order*)
- Choir of Angels (*impulse: to pass judgement*)
- Construct of Law (*impulse: to eliminate perceived disorder*)

GM MOVES FOR PLANAR FORCES

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

ARCANE ENEMIES

- Lord of the Undead (*impulse: to seek true immortality*)
- Power-mad Wizard (*impulse: to seek magical power*)
- Sentient Artifact (*impulse: to find a worthy wielder*)
- Ancient Curse (*impulse: to ensnare*)
- Chosen One (*impulse: to fulfill or resent their destiny*)
- Dragon (*impulse: to hoard gold and jewels, to protect the clutch*)

“Sub-creatures! Gozer the Gozerian, Gozer the Destructor, Volguus Zildohar, the Traveller has come! Choose and perish!”

—Gozer, “Ghostbusters”

GM MOVES FOR ARCANE ENEMIES

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

HORDES

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

GM MOVES FOR HORDES

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

CURSED PLACES

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

GM MOVES FOR CURSED PLACES

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

DESCRIPTION AND CAST

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

CUSTOM MOVES

Sometimes a danger will suggest a move that isn't covered by any existing ones. You can write custom moves to fill the gaps or to add the right effects for the danger. They can be player moves or GM moves, as you see fit. Of course, if you're writing a player move, keep your hands off the dice and mind the basic structure of a move. A 10+ is a complete success, while a 7–9 is a partial success. On a miss, maybe the custom move does something specific, or maybe not—maybe you just get to make a move or work towards fulfilling a grim portent. The formatting of these moves varies from move to move.

The Advanced Delving chapter on page 343 has more on making your own moves.

For the Opening of the White Gate, I just know some fool PC is going to end up in the light that spills from the gate, so I'm writing a move to show what might occur.

*When you **stand in the presence of the Light From Beyond**, roll+wis: *On a 10+ you are judged worthy, the Argent Seraphim will grant you a vision or boon. *On a 7-9 you are under suspicion and see a vision of what dark fate might befall you if you do not correct your ways. *On a miss, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting.*

"The unknown future rolls towards us."
—Sarah Connor,
"Terminator 2: Judgement Day"

GRIM PORTENTS

Grim portents are dark designs for what could happen if a danger goes unchecked. Think about what would happen if the danger existed in the world but the PCs didn't—if all these awful things you've conjured up had their run of the world. Scary, huh? The grim portents are your way to codify the plans and machinations of your dangers. A grim portent can be a single interesting event or a chain of steps. When you're not sure what to do next, push your danger towards resolving a grim portent.

More often than not grim portents have a logical order. The orcs tear down the city only after the peace talks fail, for example. A simple front will progress from bad to worse to much worse in a clear path forward. Sometimes, grim portents are unconnected pathways to the impending doom. The early manifestations of danger might not all be related. It's up to you to decide how complex your front will be. Whenever a danger comes to pass, check the other dangers in the front. In a complex front, you may need to cross off or alter the grim portents. That's fine, you're allowed. Keep scale in mind, too. Grim portents don't all have to be world-shaking. They can simply represent a change in direction for a danger. Some new way for it to cause trouble in the world.

Think of your grim portents as possible moves waiting in the wings. When the time is right, unleash them on the world.

I've chosen a few grim portents for my new front.

- *The College sends an expedition to the Gate*
- *The Key is discovered*
- *The First Trumpet sounds*
- *A Champion is chosen*
- *The Second Trumpet sounds*
- *The Herald appears*
- *The Gate is Opened*

When a grim portent comes to pass, check it off—the prophecy has come true! A grim portent that has come to pass might have ramifications for your other fronts, too. Have a quick look when your players aren't demanding your attention and feel free to make changes. One small grim portent may resound across the whole campaign in subtle ways.

You can advance a grim portent descriptively or prescriptively. Descriptively means that you've seen the change happen during play, so you mark it off. Maybe the players sided with the goblin tribes against their lizardman enemies—now the goblins control the tunnels. Lo and behold, this was the next step in a grim portent. Prescriptive is when, due to a failed player move or a golden opportunity, you advance the grim portent as your hard move. That step comes to pass, show its effects and keep on asking, "What do you do, now?"

IMPENDING DOOM

At the end of every danger's path is an impending doom. This is the final toll of the bell that signals the danger's triumphant resolution. When a grim portent comes to pass the impending doom grows stronger, more apparent and present in the world. These are the very bad things that every danger, in some way, seeks to bring into effect. Choose one of the types of impending dooms and give it a concrete form in your front. These often change in play, as the characters meddle in the affairs of the world. Don't fret, you can change them later.

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

When all of the grim portents of a danger come to pass, the impending doom sets in. The danger is then resolved but the setting has changed in some meaningful way. This will almost certainly change the front at large as well. Making sure that these effects reverberate throughout the world is a big part of making them feel real.

CAMPAIGN FRONT

CAST, STAKES, CUSTOM MOVES

DANGER

TYPE

GRIM PORTENTS

IMPENDING DOOM

DANGER

TYPE

GRIM PORTENTS

IMPENDING DOOM

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

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

ADVENTURE FRONT

CAST, STAKES, CUSTOM MOVES

DANGER

TYPE

GRIM PORTENTS

IMPENDING DOOM

DANGER

TYPE

GRIM PORTENTS

IMPENDING DOOM

ADVENTURE FRONT

CAST, STAKES, CUSTOM MOVES

DANGER

TYPE

GRIM PORTENTS

IMPENDING DOOM

DANGER

TYPE

GRIM PORTENTS

IMPENDING DOOM

STAKES

Your stakes questions are 1-3 questions about people, places, or groups that you're interested in. People include PCs and NPCs, your choice. Remember that your agenda includes "Play to find out what happens?" Stakes are a way of reminding yourself what you want to find out.

Stakes are concrete and clear. Don't write stakes about vague feelings or incremental changes. Stakes are about important changes that affect the PCs and the world. A good stakes question is one that, when it's resolved, means that things will never be the same again.

The most important thing about stakes is that you find them interesting. Your stakes should be things that you genuinely want to know, but that you're also willing to leave to be resolved through play. Once you've written it as a stake, it's out of your hands, you don't get to just make it up anymore. Now you have to play to find out.

Playing to find out is one of the biggest rewards of playing Dungeon World. You've written down something tied to events happening in the world that you want to find out about—now you get to do just that.

Once you have your stakes your front is ready to play.

My stakes questions include, as tailored to my group:

- *Who will be the champion?*
- *How will Lux respond to the Light From Beyond?*
- *Will the College be able to recruit Avon?*

RESOLVING A FRONT

Often a front will be resolved in a simple and straightforward manner. A front representing a single dungeon may have its dangers killed, turned to good, or overcome by some act of heroism. In this case the front is dissolved and set aside. Maybe there are elements of the front—dangers that go unresolved or leftover members of a danger that's been cleared—that live on. Maybe they move to the campaign front as brand new dangers?

The campaign front will need a bit more effort to resolve. It'll be working slowly and subtly as the course of the campaign rolls along. You won't introduce or resolve it all at once, but in pieces. The characters work towards defeating the various minions of the big bad that lives in your campaign front. In the end, though, you'll know that the campaign front is resolved when the Dark God is confronted or the undead plague claims the world and the heroes emerge bloodied but victorious or defeated and despairing. Campaign fronts take longer to deal with but in the end they're the most satisfying to resolve.

When a front is resolved take some extra time to sit down and look at the aftermath. Did any grim portents come to pass? Even if a danger is stopped, if any grim portents are fulfilled, the world is changed, if only in subtle ways. Keep this in mind when you write your future fronts. Is there anyone who could be moved from the now-defeated front to somewhere else? Anyone get promoted or reduced in stature? The resolution of a front is an important event!

When you resolve an adventure front usually that means the adventure itself has been resolved. This is a great time to take a break and look at your campaign front. Let it inspire your next adventure front. Write up a new adventure front or polish off one you've been working on, draw a few maps to go with it and get ready for the next big thing.

MULTIPLE ADVENTURE FRONTS

As you start your campaign you're likely to have a lightly detailed campaign front and one or two detailed adventure fronts. Characters may choose, part-way through an adventure, to pursue some other course. You might end up with a handful of partly-resolved adventure fronts. Not only is this okay, it's a great way to explore a world that feels alive and organic. Always remember, fronts continue along apace no matter whether the characters are there to see them or not. Think offscreen, especially where fronts are concerned.

When running two adventure fronts at the same time they can be intertwined or independent. The anarchists corrupting the city from the inside are a different front from the orcs massing outside the walls, but they'd both be in play at once. On the other hand one dungeon could have multiple fronts at play within its walls: the powers and effects of the cursed place itself and the warring humanoid tribes that inhabit it.

A situation warrants multiple adventure fronts when there are multiple impending dooms, all equally potent but not necessarily related. The impending doom of the anarchists is chaos in the city, the impending doom of the orcs is its utter ruination. They are two separate fronts with their own dangers. They'll deal with each other, as well, so there's some room for the players choosing sides or attempting to turn the dangers of one front against the other.

When dealing with multiple adventure fronts the players are likely to prioritize. The cult needs attention now, the orcs can wait, or vice versa. These decisions lead to the slow advancement of the neglected front, eventually causing more problems for the characters and leading to new adventures. This can get complex once you've got three or four fronts in play. Take care not to get overwhelmed.



AN EXAMPLE FRONT: THE OPENING OF THE WHITE GATE

DANGERS

THE COLLEGE OF ARCANISTS (CABAL)

Impulse: to absorb those in power, to grow

GRIM PORTENTS

- The College sends an expedition to the Gate
- The Key is discovered
- The Gate's Power is harnessed
- The College seizes control

Impending Doom: Usurpation

THE WHITE GATE (DARK PORTAL)

Impulse: to disgorge demons

GRIM PORTENTS

- The First Trumpet sounds
- The Second Trumpet sounds
- The Gate is opened

Impending Doom: Destruction

THE ARGENT SERAPHIM (CHOIR OF ANGELS)

Impulse: to pass judgement

GRIM PORTENTS

- A Champion is chosen
- An organization of power is formed or co-opted
- The Herald appears
- Judgement is passed

Impending Doom: Tyranny

DESCRIPTION AND CAST

An ancient gate, buried for aeons in the icy north. It opens into a realm of pure light, guarded by the Argent Seraphim. It was crafted only to be opened at Judgement Day, so that the Seraphim could come forth and purge the realm of men. It was recently uncovered by the College of Arcanists, who do not yet understand its terrible power.

- Oren Balserus, Arcanist Supreme
- Hali'el, voice of the Seraphim
- Drudge, a manservant

CUSTOM MOVES

When you **stand in the presence of the Light From Beyond**, roll+wis. *On a 10+ you are judged worthy, the Argent Seraphim will grant you a vision or boon. *On a 7-9 you are under suspicion and see a vision of what dark fate might befall you if you do not correct your ways. *On a miss, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting.

STAKES

- Who will be the Champion?
- How will Lux respond to the holy light?
- Will the College be able to recruit Avon?



CHAPTER 16

Much of the adventuring life is spent in dusty, forgotten tombs or in places of terror and life-threatening danger. It's commonplace to awaken from a short and fitful rest still deep in the belly of the world and surrounded by foes. When the time comes to emerge from these places—whether laden with the spoils of battle or beaten and bloody—an adventurer seeks out safety and solace.

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

This chapter covers the wider world—the grand and sweeping scope outside the dungeon. The always marching movement of the GM's fronts will shape the world and, in turn, the world reflects the actions the players take to stop or redirect them.

STEADINGS

We call all the assorted communities, holds, and so on where there's a place to stay and some modicum of civilization **steadings**, as in "homestead." Steadings are places with at least a handful of inhabitants, usually humans, and some stable structures. They can be as big as a capital city or as small as few ramshackle buildings.

CREATING THE WORLD

Remember how you started the first session? With action either underway or impending? At some point the characters are going to need to retreat from that action, either to heal their wounds or to celebrate and resupply.

When the players leave the site of their first adventure for the safety of civilization it's time to start drawing the campaign map. Take a large sheet of paper (plain white if you like or hex-gridded if you want to get fancy), place it where everyone can see, and make a mark for the site of the adventure. Use pencil: this map will change. It can be to-scale and detailed or broad and abstract, depending on your preference, just make it obvious. Keep the mark small and somewhere around the center of the paper so you have space to grow.

"If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe."

—Carl Sagan,
"Cosmos"

THE WORLD

Now add the nearest steading, a place the characters can go to rest and gather supplies. Draw a mark for that place on the map and fill in the space between with some terrain features. Try to keep it within a day or two of the site of their first adventure—a short trip through a rocky pass or some heavy woods is suitable, or a wider distance by road or across open ground.

When you have time (after the first session or during a snack break, for example) use the rules to create the first steading. Consider adding marks for other places that have been mentioned so far, either details from character creation or the steading rules themselves.

WHILE YOU'RE IN TOWN...

When the players visit a steading there are some special moves they'll be able to make. These still follow the fictional flow of the game. When the players arrive, ask them "What do you do?" The players' actions will, more often than not, trigger a move from this list. They cover respite, reinvigoration, and resupply—opportunities for the players to gather their wits and spend their treasure. Remember that a steading isn't a break from reality. You're still making hard moves when necessary and thinking about how the players' actions (or inaction) advances your fronts. The impending doom is always there, whether the players are fighting it in the dungeon or ignoring it while getting drunk in the local tavern.

Don't let a visit to a steading become a permanent respite. Remember, *Dungeon World* is a scary, dangerous place. If the players choose to ignore that, they're giving you a golden opportunity to make a hard move. Fill the characters' lives with adventure whether they're out seeking it or not. These moves exist so you can make a visit to town an interesting event without spending a whole session haggling over the cost of a new baldric.

ELEMENTS OF A STEADING

A steading is any bit of civilization that offers some amount of safety to its inhabitants. Villages, towns, keeps, and cities are the most common steadings. Steadings are described by their tags. All steadings have tags indicating prosperity, population, and defenses. Many will have tags to illustrate their more unusual properties.

Steadings are differentiated based on size. The size indicates roughly how many people the steading can support. The population tag tells you if the current population is more than or less than this amount.

Villages are the smallest steadings. They're usually out of the way, off the main roads. If they're lucky they can muster some defense but it's often just rabble with pitchforks and torches. A village stands near some easily exploitable resource: rich soil, plentiful fish, an old forest, or a mine. There might be a store of some sort but more likely its people trade among themselves. Coin is scarce.

Towns have a hundred or so inhabitants. They're the kind of place that springs up around a mill, trading post, or inn and usually have fields, farms, and livestock of some kind. They might have a standing militia of farmers strong enough to wield a blade or shoot a bow. Towns have the basics for sale but certainly no special goods. Usually they'll focus on a local product or two and do some trade with travelers.

A keep is a steading built specifically for defense—sometimes of a particularly important location like a river delta or a rich gold mine. Keeps are found at the frontier edges of civilization. Inhabitants are inured to the day-to-day dangers of the road. They're tough folks that number between a hundred and a thousand, depending on the size of the keep and the place it defends. Keeps won't often have much beyond their own supplies, traded to them from nearby villages, but will almost always have arms and armor and sometimes a rare magical item found in the local wilds.

From bustling trade center to sprawling metropolis, the city represents the largest sort of steading in Dungeon World. These are places where folk of many races and kinds can be found. They often exist at the confluence of a handful of trade routes or are built in a place of spiritual significance. They don't often generate their own raw materials for trade, relying on supplies from villages nearby for

food and resources, but will always have crafted goods and some stranger things for sale to those willing to seek them.

Prosperity indicates what kinds of items are usually available. Population indicates the number of inhabitants relative to the current size of the steading. Defenses indicate the general scope of arms the steading has. Tags in these categories can be adjusted. -Category means to change the steading to the next lower tag for that category (so Moderate would become Poor with -Prosperity). +Category means to change the steading to the next higher tag (so Shrinking becomes Steady with +Population). Tags in those categories can also be compared like numbers. Treat the lowest tag in that category as 1 and each successive tag as the next number (so Dirt is 1, Poor is 2, etc.).

Tags will change over the course of play. Creating a steading provides a snapshot of what that place looks like *right now*. As the players spend time in it and your fronts progress the world will change and your steadings with it.

ADDING STEADINGS

You add your first steading when you create the campaign map—it's the place the players go to rest and recover. When you first draw it on the map all you need is a name and a location.

When you have the time you'll use the rules below to create the steading. The first steading is usually a village, but you can use a town if the first adventure was closely tied to humans (for example, if the players fought a human cult). Create it using the rules below.

Once you've created the first steading you can add other places referenced in its tags (the oath, trade, and enmity tags in particular) or anywhere else that's been referred to in play. Don't add too much in the first session, leave blanks and places to explore.

As play progresses the characters will discover new locales and places of interest either directly, by stumbling upon them in the wild, or indirectly, by hearing about them in rumors or tales. Add new steadings, dungeons, and other locations to the map as they're discovered or heard about. Villages are often near a useful resource. Towns are often found at the point where several villages meet to trade. Keeps watch over important locations. Cities rely on the trade

and support of smaller steads. Dungeons can be found anywhere and in many forms.

Whenever you add a new steading use the rules to decide its tags. Consider adding a distinctive feature somewhere nearby. Maybe a forest, some old standing stones, an abandoned castle, or whatever else catches your fancy or makes sense. A map of only steadings and ruins with nothing in between is dull; don't neglect the other features of the world.

STEADING TAGS

PROSPERITY

Dirt: Nothing for sale, nobody has more than they need (and they're lucky if they have that). Unskilled labor is cheap.

Poor: Only the bare necessities for sale. Weapons are scarce unless the steading is heavily defended or militant. Unskilled labor is readily available.

Moderate: Most mundane items are available. Some types of skilled laborers.

Wealthy: Any mundane item can be found for sale. Most kinds of skilled laborers are available, but demand is high for their time.

Rich: Mundane items and more, if you know where to find them. Specialist labor available, but at high prices.

POPULATION

Exodus: The steading has lost its population and is on the verge of collapse.

Shrinking: The population is less than it once was. Buildings stand empty.

Steady: The population is in line with the current size of the steading. Some slow growth.

Growing: More people than there are buildings.

Booming: Resources are stretched thin trying to keep up with the number of people.

DEFENSES

None: Clubs, torches, farming tools.

Militia: There are able-bodied men and women with worn weapons ready to be called, but no standing force.

Watch: There are a few watchers posted who look out for trouble and settle small problems, but their main role is to summon the militia.

Guard: There are armed defenders at all times with a total pool of less than 100 (or equivalent). There is always at least one armed patrol about the steading.

Garrison: There are armed defenders at all times with a total pool of 100–300 (or equivalent). There are multiple armed patrols at all times.

Battalion: As many as 1,000 armed defenders (or equivalent). The steading has manned maintained defenses as well.

Legion: The steading is defended by thousands of armed soldiers (or equivalent). The steading's defenses are intimidating.

OTHER TAGS

Safe: Outside trouble doesn't come here until the players bring it. Idyllic and often hidden, if the steading would lose or degrade another beneficial tag get rid of safe instead.

Religion: The listed deity is revered here.

Exotic: There are goods and services available here that aren't available anywhere else nearby. List them.

Resource: The steading has easy access to the listed resource (e.g., a spice, a type of ore, fish, grapes). That resource is significantly cheaper.

Need: The steading has an acute or ongoing need for the listed resource. That resource sells for considerably more.

Oath: The steading has sworn oaths to the listed steadings. These oaths are generally of fealty or support, but may be more specific.

Trade: The steading regularly trades with the listed steadings.

Market: Everyone comes here to trade. On any given day the available items may be far beyond their prosperity. +1 to supply.

Enmity: The steading holds a grudge against the listed steadings.

History: Something important once happened here, choose one and detail or make up your own: battle, miracle, myth, romance, tragedy.

Arcane: Someone in town can cast arcane spells for a price. This tends to draw more arcane casters, +1 to recruit when you put out word you're looking for an adept.

Divine: There is a major religious presence, maybe a cathedral or monastery. They can heal and maybe even raise the dead for a donation or resolution of a quest. Take +1 to recruit priests here.

Guild: The listed type of guild has a major presence (and usually a fair amount of influence). If the guild is closely associated with a type of hireling, +1 to recruit that type of hireling.

Personage: There's a notable person who makes their home here. Give them a name and a short note on why they're notable.

Dwarven: The stead is significantly or entirely dwarves. Dwarven goods are more common and less expensive than they typically are.

Elven: The stead is significantly or entirely elves. Elven goods are more common and less expensive than they typically are.

Craft: The stead is known for excellence in the listed craft. Items of their chosen craft are more readily available here or of higher quality than found elsewhere.

Lawless: Crime is rampant; authority is weak.

Blight: The stead has a recurring problem, usually a type of monster.

Power: The stead holds sway of some type. Typically political, divine, or arcane.

STEADING NAMES

Graybark, Nook's Crossing, Tanner's Ford, Goldenfield, Barrowbridge, Rum River, Brindenburg, Shambles, Covaner, Enfield, Crystal Falls, Castle Daunting, Nulty's Harbor, Castonshire, Cornwood, Irongate, Mayhill, Pigton, Crosses, Battlemoore, Torsea, Curland, Snowcalm, Seawall, Varlosh, Terminus, Avonia, Bucksburg, Settledown, Goblinjaw, Hammerford, Pit, The Gray Fast, Ennet Bend, Harrison's Hold, Fortress Andwynne, Blackstone

MAKING A VILLAGE

By default a village is Poor, Steady, Militia, Resource (your choice) and has an Oath to another stading of your choice. If the village is part of a kingdom or empire choose one:

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

Choose one problem:

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

MAKING A TOWN

By default a town is Moderate, Steady, Watch, and Trade (two of your choice). If the town is listed as Trade by another steading choose one:

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

Choose one problem:

- The town has grown too big for an important supply (like grain, wood, or stone): Need (that resource), Trade (a village or town with that resource)
- The town offers defense to others: Oath (your choice), -Defenses
- The town is notorious for an outlaw who is rumored to live there: Personage (the outlaw), Enmity (where the crimes were committed)
- The town has cornered the market on a good or service: Exotic (that good or service), Enmity (a settlement with ambition)
- The town has a disease: -Population
- The town is a popular meeting place: +Population, Lawless

MAKING A KEEP

By default a keep is Poor, Shrinking, Guard, Need (Supplies), Trade (someplace with supplies), Oath (your choice). If the keep is owed fealty by at least one settlement choose one:

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

Choose one problem

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

MAKING A CITY

By default a city is Moderate, Steady, Guard, Market, and Guild (one of your choice). It also has Oaths with at least two other steadings, usually a town and a keep. If the city has trade with at least one stading and fealty from at least one stading choose one:

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

Choose one problem:

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

FRONTS ON THE CAMPAIGN MAP

Your steadings are not the only thing on the campaign map. In addition to steadings and the areas around them your fronts will appear on the map, albeit indirectly.

Fronts are organizational tools, not something the characters think of, so don't put them on the map directly. The orcs of Olg'gothal may be a front but don't just draw them on the map. Instead for each front add some feature to the map that indicates the front's presence. You can label it if you like, but use the name that the characters would use, not the name you gave the front.

For example, the orcs of Olg'gothal could be marked on the map with a burning village they left behind, fires in the distance at night, or a stream of refugees. Lord Xothal, a lich, might be marked by the tower where dead plants take root and grow.

As your fronts change, change the map. If the players cleanse Xothal's tower redraw it. If the orcs are driven off erase the crowds of refugees.

UPDATING THE CAMPAIGN MAP

The campaign map is updated between sessions or whenever the players spend significant downtime in a safe place. Updates are both prescriptive and descriptive: if an event transpires that, say, gathers a larger fighting force to a village, update the tags to reflect that. Likewise if a change in tags mean that a village has a bigger fighting force you'll likely see more armored men in the street.

Between each session check each of the conditions below. Go down the list and check each condition for all steadings before moving to the next. If a condition applies, apply its effects.

GROWTH

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

COLLAPSE

When a **steading's population is in exodus and its prosperity is poor or less** it shrinks. A city becomes a town with a steady population and +prosperity. A keep becomes a town with +defenses and a steady population. A town becomes a village with steady population and +prosperity. A village becomes a ghost town.

WANT

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

TRADE

When **trade is blocked** because the source of that trade is gone, the route is endangered, or political reasons, the steading has a choice: gain need (a traded good) or take -prosperity.

CAPTURE

When **control of a resource changes** remove that resource from the tags of the previous owner and add it to the tags of the new owner (if applicable). If the previous owner has a craft or trade based on that resource they now have need (that resource). If the new owner had a need for that resource, remove it.

PROFIT

When a **steading has more trade than its current prosperity** it gets +prosperity.

SURPLUS

When **a steading has a resource that another steading needs** unless enmity or other diplomatic reasons prevent it they set up trade. The steading with the resource gets +prosperity and their choice of oaths, +population, or +defenses; the steading with the need erases that need and adds trade.

AID

When **a steading has oaths to a steading under attack** that steading may take -defenses to give the steading under attack +defenses.

EMBATTLED

When **a steading is surrounded by enemy forces** it suffers losses. If it fights back with force it gets -defenses. If its new defenses are watch or less it also gets -prosperity. If it instead tries to wait out the attack it gets -population. If its new population is shrinking or less it loses a tag of your choice. If the steading's defenses outclass the attacker's (your call if it's not clear, or make it part of an adventure front) the steading is no longer surrounded.

OPPORTUNITY

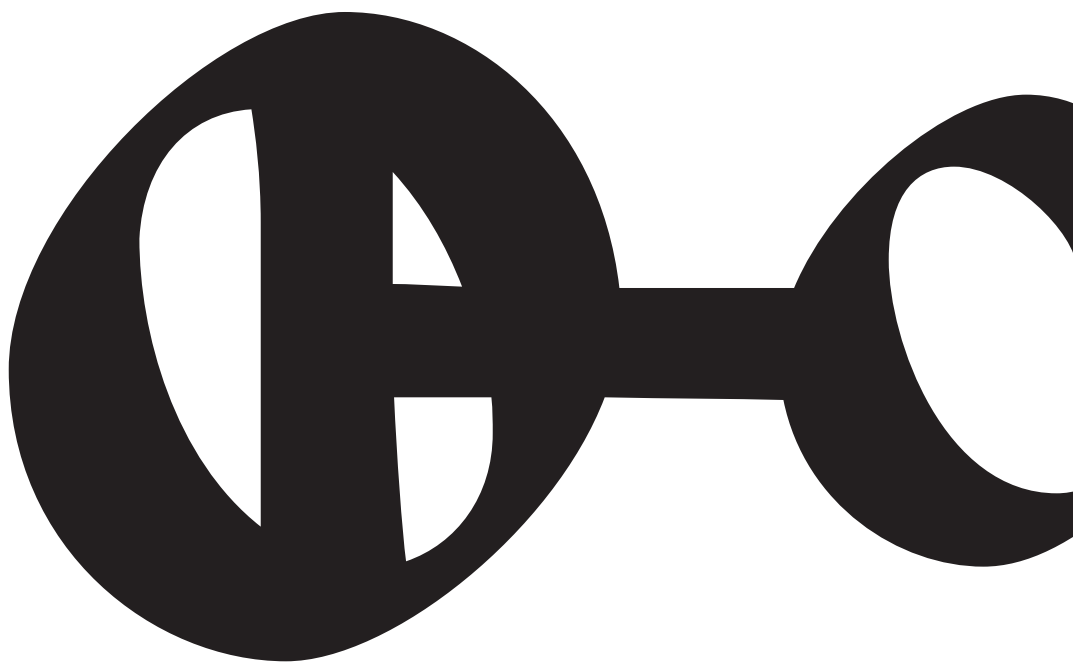
When **a steading has enmity against a weaker steading** they may attack. Subtract the distance (in rations) between the steadings from the steading with enmity's defenses. If the result is greater than the other steading's defenses +defense for each step of size difference (village to town, town to keep, keep to city) they definitely attack. Otherwise it's your call: has anything happened recently to stoke their anger? The forces of the attacker embattle the defender, while they maintain the attack they're -defenses.

CLASH

When **two steadings both attack each other** their forces meet somewhere between them and fight. If they're evenly matched they both get -defenses and their troops return home. If one has the advantage they take -defenses while the other takes -2 defenses.

OTHER UPDATES

The conditions above detail the most basic of interactions between steadings, of course the presence of your fronts and the players mean things can get far more complex. Since tags are descriptive, add them as needed to reflect the players' actions and your fronts' effects on the world.





CHAPTER 17

Great heroes need horrendous antagonists. This section is about how to create and play as those antagonists—from the lowly goblin warrior to the hellish demon.

“We can’t all be heroes. Then who would the heroes fight? It’s a matter of numbers really. Just work out the sums.”

—The Magician King

USING MONSTERS

A monster is any living (or undead) thing that stands in the characters’ way.

How you use these monsters follows directly from your agenda and principles. Stay true to your principles, use your moves and pursue your agenda—you can’t go wrong.

Your first agenda is to *portray a fantastic world*. The way you describe the monsters and adversaries the characters face can be a tool to help you fulfill that agenda. Describing those creatures and people in vivid detail will bring them to life. You’ll eventually need some stats for those monsters, too—the rules in this chapter are here to help you create those stats quickly and easily.

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

The principle of *think dangerous* sums up that philosophy—think of every monster like an arrow fired at the characters. The monsters are ammunition of the danger you’re presenting. Some may be smarter, faster, or more dangerous than others but until a monster warrants a name, a personality, or some other special consideration, it’s an arrow. Take aim and shoot. Don’t worry if you miss.

A monster stops being mere ammunition when something in the world puts the spotlight on it. This might be a spout lore roll that leads your description in an interesting direction or the result of your asking questions and building on the players’ answers. Maybe the characters were overwhelmed in battle and had to run away, giving them a new-found fear and respect for the beast they fought. When these things happen, feel free to give the monster a name and consider creating a danger to represent it.

MONSTERS

One thing that your agenda and principles don't say anything about is setting up a fair fight. Heroes are often outnumbered or faced with ridiculous odds—sometimes they have to retreat and make a new plan. Sometimes they suffer loss. When adding a monster to a front, placing them in a dungeon, or making them up on the fly your first responsibility is to the fiction (*portray a fantastic world*) and to give the characters a real threat (*make the characters heroes*), not to make a balanced fight. Dungeon World isn't about balancing encounter levels or counting experience points; it's about adventure and death-defying feats!

ELEMENTS OF A MONSTER

"Sasquatch, Godzilla, King Kong, Loch Ness

Goblin, Ghoul, Zombie with no conscience

Question: what do all these things have in common?"

—Kanye West, "Monster"

Every monster has **moves** that describe its behavior and abilities. Just like the normal GM moves, they're things that you do when there's a lull in the action or when the players give you a golden opportunity. As with other GM moves they can be hard or soft depending on the circumstances and the move: a move that's irreversible and immediate is hard, a move that's impending or easy to counter is soft.

Each monster has an **instinct** that describe its goals at a high level. Some monsters live for conquest, or treasure, or simply for blood. The monster's instinct is the guide to how to use it in the fiction.

The monster's **description** is where all its other features come from. The description is how you know what the monster really is, the other elements just reflect the description.

Damage is a measure of how much pain the monster can inflict at once. Just like player damage it's a die to roll, maybe with some modifiers. A monster deals its damage to another monster or a player whenever it causes them physical harm.

Each monster has **tags** that describe how it deals damage, including the range(s) of its attacks. When trying to attack something out of its range (too close or too far) the monster's out of luck, no damage. Any tag that can go on a weapon (like messy or slow) can also go on a monster.

There are special tags that apply only to monsters. These tags, listed below, describe the key attributes of the monster—qualities that describe how big they are and how, if at all, they organize themselves.

A monster's **HP** is a measure of how much damage it can take before it dies. Just like players, when a monster takes damage it subtracts that amount from its HP. At 0 HP it's dead, no last breath.

Some monsters are lucky enough to enjoy **armor**. It's just like player armor: when a monster with armor takes damage it subtracts its armor from the damage done.

Special qualities describe innate aspects of the monster that are important to play. These are a guide to the fiction, and therefore the moves. A quality like intangible means just what it says: mundane stuff just passes through it. That means swinging a mundane sword at it isn't hack and slash, for a start.

MONSTERS WITHOUT STATS

Some creatures operate on a scale so far beyond the mortal that concepts like HP, armor, and damage just do not hold. Some creatures just aren't dangerous in a fight. These creatures may still cause problems for the players and may even be defeated with clever thinking and enough preparation.

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

MONSTER TAGS

Magical: It is by nature magical through and through.

Devious: Its main danger lies beyond the simple clash of battle.

Amorphous: Its anatomy and organs are bizarre and unnatural.

Organized: It has a group structure that aids it in survival. Defeating one may cause the wrath of others. One may sound an alarm.

Intelligent: It's smart enough that some individuals pick up other skills. The GM can adapt the monster by adding tags to reflect specific training, like a mage or warrior.

Hoarder: It almost certainly has treasure.

Stealthy: It can avoid detection and prefers to attack with the element of surprise.

Terrifying: Its presence and appearance evoke fear.

Cautious: It prizes survival over aggression.

Construct: It was made, not born

Planar: It's from beyond this world

ORGANIZATION TAGS

Horde: Where there's one, there's more. A lot more.

Group: Usually seen in small numbers, 3–6 or so.

Solitary: It lives and fights alone.

SIZE TAGS

Tiny: It's much smaller than a halfling.

Small: It's about halfling size.

Large: It's much bigger than a human, about as big as a cart.

Huge: It's as big as a small house or larger.

MAKING MONSTERS

Monsters start with your description of them. Whether you're making the monster before play or just as the players come face-to-face with it, every monster starts with a clear vision of what it is and what it does.

If you're making a monster between sessions start by imagining it. Imagine what it looks like, what it does, why it stands out. Imagine the stories told about it and what effects it has had on the world.

If you're making a monster on the fly during a session start by describing it to the players. Your description starts before the characters even lay eyes on it: describe where it lives, what marks it has made on the environment around it. Your description is the key to the monster.

When you find you need stats for the monster you use this series of questions to establish them. Answer every question based on the facts established and imagined. Don't answer them aloud to anyone else, just note down the answers and the stats listed with each answer.

If two questions would grant the same tag don't worry about it. If you like you can adjust damage or HP by 2 to reflect the tag that would be repeated, but it's not necessary. If a combination of answers would reduce HP or damage below 1 they stay at 1.

When you're finished your monster may have only one move. If this is the case and you plan on using the monster often, give it another 1–2 moves of your choice. These moves often describe secondary modes of attack, other uses for a primary mode of attack, or connections to a certain place in the world.

My monster is a spirit of judgement, so its first move is “Judge the living.”

WHAT IS IT KNOWN TO DO?

Write a monster move describing what it does.

That’s easy! Instinct: to pass judgement.

WHAT DOES IT WANT THAT CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR OTHERS?

This is its instinct. Write it as an intended action.

This spirit of judgement rose from the soul of a wronged dead, so there aren’t many of them. That makes it solitary, d10 damage, 12 HP.

HOW DOES IT USUALLY HUNT OR FIGHT?

- In large groups: horde, d6 damage, 3 HP
- In small groups, about 2–5: group, d8 damage, 6 HP
- All by its lonesome: solitary, d10 damage, 12 HP

It was probably a human in life, so human-sized. that gives it the Close tag,

HOW BIG IS IT?

- Smaller than a house cat: tiny, hand, -2 damage
- Halfling-esque: small, close
- About human size: close
- As big as a cart: large, close, reach, +4 HP, +1 damage
- Much larger than a cart: huge, reach, +8 HP, +3 damage

It’s not really protected by anything since weapons just pass through it. I’ll give it 0 armor for now, and keep intangibility in mind.

WHAT IS ITS MOST IMPORTANT DEFENSE?

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

Being intangible is a useful adaptation, so I list that as a special quality. The gods are what brought it back to life, so that gives it Divine and brings its damage to d10+2. An HP bonus doesn’t seem right for what the gods are doing here, so I’ll skip that. It does have spells, so it’s Magical and I give it the “Freeze them with a touch” move.

WHAT IS IT KNOWN FOR? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

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

WHAT IS ITS MOST COMMON FORM OF ATTACK?

Note it along with the creature's damage. Common answers include: a type of weapon, claws, a specific spell. Then answer these questions about it:

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

I think its normal form of attack is its touch which just passes through you, leaving you cold inside. Since it just passes through you I give it the Ignores Armor tag.

WHICH OF THESE DESCRIBE IT? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

- It isn't dangerous because of the wounds it inflicts, but for other reasons: devious, reduce its damage die size by one, write a move about why it's dangerous
- It organizes into larger groups that it can call on for support: organized, write a move about calling on others for help
- It's as smart as a human or thereabouts: intelligent
- It actively defends itself with a shield or similar: cautious, +1 armor
- It collects trinkets that humans would consider valuable (gold, gems, secrets): hoarder
- It's from beyond this world: planar, write a move about using its otherworldly knowledge and power
- It's kept alive by something beyond simple biology: +4 HP
- It was made by someone: construct, give it a special quality or two about its construction or purpose
- Its appearance is disturbing, terrible, or horrible: terrifying, write a special quality about why it's so horrendous
- It doesn't have organs or discernible anatomy: amorphous, +1 armor, +3 HP
- It (or its species) is ancient—older than man, elves, and dwarves: increase its damage die size by one
- It abhors violence: roll damage twice and take the worst result

Its about as smart as it was when it was alive, so that makes it Intelligent.

Biology definitely isn't what's keeping it alive, so that gives it 16 HP total.

Oh yeah, dead and ghostly is disturbing. That gives it the Terrifying tag and I'll give it the move "show the true face of death."

TREASURE

Monsters, much like adventurers, collect shiny useful things. When the players search the belongings of a monster (be they on their person or tucked away somewhere) describe them honestly.

If the monster has accumulated some wealth you can roll that randomly. Start with the monster's damage die, modified if the monster is:

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

Roll the monster's damage die plus any added dice to find the monster's treasure:

- 1: A few coins, 2d8 or so
- 2: An item useful to the current situation
- 3: Several coins, about 4d10
- 4: A small item (gem, art) of considerable value, worth as much as 2d10×10 coins, 0 weight
- 5: Some minor magical trinket
- 6: Useful information (in the form of clues, notes, etc.)
- 7: A bag of coins, 1d4×100 or thereabouts. 1 weight per 100.
- 8: A very valuable small item (gem, art) worth 2d6×100, 0 weight
- 9: A chest of coins and other small valuables. 1 weight but worth 3d6×100 coins.
- 10: A magical item or magical effect
- 11: Many bags of coins for a total of 2d4×100 or so
- 12: A sign of office (crown, banner) worth at least 3d4×100 coins
- 13: A large art item worth 4d4×100 coins, 1 weight
- 14: A unique item worth at least 5d4×100 coins
- 15: All the information needed to learn a new spell and roll again
- 16: A portal or secret path (or directions to one) and roll again
- 17: Something relating to one of the characters and roll again
- 18: A hoard: 1d10×1000 coins and 1d10×10 gems worth 2d6×100 each

MONSTER SETTINGS

The monsters in this book are presented in *monster settings*. A monster setting is a type of location and the monsters you might find there. It's a way of grouping monsters by where they fit in the world. A monster setting tells you what kind of monsters might inhabit an area while your fronts tell you what monsters are working together or have ongoing plots.

When creating your own monster settings, they can be more specific. You could create a monster setting for the Great Western Steppes or the Domains of the Horse Lords.

Consult a monster setting to populate a front or when you want a threat that is only tangentially related to one of your fronts. For example, if the heroes are battling against the dungeon front, the cult of Khul-ka-ra, by exploring the ancient ruins that the cult has made its home then you might use monsters from the Legions of the Undead as a related threat—not truly part of the front but still a block in the heroes' path.

The monster stat blocks within the settings describe HP, damage, and all the other aspects of the monster. These monsters were created with the same process listed above, and the reasons for their stats are just as important as the stats themselves. Looking at the reasoning behind the stats will allow you to present the monsters honestly, answering questions that arise in Dungeon World like “can a warband of gnolls sack an entire village?”

CAVERN DWELLERS

At the edges of civilization in the caves and tunnels below the old mountains of the world dwell all sorts of scheming, dangerous monsters. Some are wily and old, like the race of goblins scheming to burn villages and make off with livestock. Others are strange aberrations of nature like the stinking, trash-eating Otyugh. A word of caution, then, to those brave adventurers whose first foray into danger leads them into these dank and shadowy places; bad things live in the dark. Bad things with sharp teeth.

DENIZENS OF THE SWAMP

All things give way to rot in the end. Food spoils on the table, men's minds go mad with age and disease. Even the world itself, when left untended and uncared for, can turn to black muck and stinking air. Things dwell in these parts of Dungeon World. Things gone just as bad as the swirling filth that fills the swamps. In these cesspit lowlands, adventurers will find such creatures as the deadly-eyed basilisk or the famed, unkillable troll. You'll need more than a dry pair of boots to survive these putrid fens. A sword would be a good start.

LEGIONS OF THE UNDEAD

The sermons of mannish and dwarven gods would tell you that Death is the end of all. They say that once the mortal coil is unwound and a person takes their final breath that all is warmth and song and the white wings of angels. Not so. Not for all. For some, after life's embrace loses its strength a darker power can take hold. Black magic rips the dead from the ground and gives them shambling unlife full of hate and hunger. Sorcery and witchcraft lend an ancient spell-smith the power to live forever in the husk of a Lich. There are bleak enchantments at play in shadowy corners all throughout Dungeon World. These creatures are the spawn of that fell magic.

THE DARK WOODS

It would not be a lie to say that there are trees that stand in the deepest groves of Dungeon World that have stood since before man or elf walked amidst their roots. It would be true, too, to say that these ancient trees have long lost the green leaves of spring. In the strands of the dark woods one finds, if one looks in the right place, sylvan monsters old and powerful. Here live the race of savage centaurs and the fey soul-stealing creatures of yore. Under the shadow of the ancient trees, wolf-men howl for blood. Hurry along the old forest road and light no fire for food or warmth for it's said that flames offend the woods themselves. You wouldn't want that, would you?

RAVENOUS HORDES

"I've bested an orc in single combat," they crow. "I've fought a gnoll and lived to tell the tale." Which is no small feat and yet, you know the truth of these boasts. Like vermin, spotting but one of these creatures speaks to a greater doom on the horizon. No orc travels alone. No slaving gnoll moves without his pack. You know that soon, the wardrums will sound and the walls will be besieged by the full fury of the warchief and his tusked berserkers. These are the monsters that will bring civilization, screaming and weeping, to its knees. Unless you can stop them. Best of luck.

TWISTED EXPERIMENTS

For some who learn the arcane arts it's not merely enough to be able to live for a thousand years or throw lightning bolts that can fry a man. Some aren't quite satisfied with the power to speak to the dead or draw the angels down from heaven. Hubris calls on those cloaked-and-hooded "scientists" to make a strange and unholy life of their own. No mortal children, these. These are the brood of a mind gone foul with strange magic. In this setting you will find such nightmares as the chimera, dripping poison. Here, too, are the protector golems and mutant apes. All sorts of bad ideas await you in the fallen towers of the mad magicians of Dungeon World.

THE LOWER DEPTHS

Ruins dot the countryside of Dungeon World. Old bastions of long-forgotten civilization fallen to decay, to monsters, or to the whim of a vengeful god. These ruins often cover a much more dangerous truth—catacombs and underground complexes lousy with traps and monsters. Gold, too. Which is why you're here. Why you're locked in mortal combat with a tribe of spiteful dark elves. Battling stone giants in caverns the size of whole countries. Maybe, though, you're the noble souls who've travelled to the world's heart to put an end to the Apocalypse Dragon—the beast who, it is said, will one day swallow the sun and kill us all. We appreciate it, really. We'll all pray for you.

PLANAR POWERS

Sometimes, monsters do not come from Dungeon World at all. Beyond the mountains at the edge of the world or below the deepest seas, the sages and wise old priests say that there are gateways to the lands beyond. They speak of elysian fields; rivers of sweet wine and maidens dancing in fields of gold. They tell tales of the paradise of heavens to be found past the Planar Door. Tales tell, too, of the Thousandfold Hell. Of the swirling Elemental Vortex and the devils that wait for the stars to align so they can enter Dungeon World and wreak their bloody havoc. You must be curious to know if these tales are true? What will you see when the passage to the beyond is opened?





MONSTER SETTING 1

ANKHEG*Group, Large*

Bite (d8+1 damage)

10 HP 3 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Burrowing

A hide like plate armor and great crushing mandibles are problematic. A stomach full of acid that can burn a hole through a stone wall makes them all the worse. They'd be bad enough if they were proper insect-sized, but these things have the gall to be as long as any given horse. It's just not natural! Good thing they tend to stick to one place? Easy for you to say—you don't have an ankheg living under your corn field. *Instinct:* To undermine

- Undermine the ground
- Burst from the earth
- Spray forth acid, eating away at metal and flesh

CAVE RAT*Horde, Small*

Gnaw (d6 damage 1 piercing)

7 HP 1 Armor

Close, Messy

Who hasn't seen a rat before? It's like that, but nasty and big and not afraid of you anymore. Maybe this one was a cousin to that one you caught in a trap or the one you killed with a knife in that filthy tavern in Darrow. Maybe he's looking for a little ratty revenge.

Instinct: To devour

- Swarm
- Rip something (or someone) apart

CAVERN DWELLERS

CHOKER*Solitary, Stealthy, Intelligent*

Choke (d10 damage)

15 HP 2 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Flexible

Some say these things descended from the family of a cruel wizard who forced them to live out their lives underground. They say his experiments led him to fear the sun and ages passed while he descended into unlife, dragging his folk along with him. These things resemble men, in a way. Head, four limbs and all that. Only their skin is wet and rubbery and their arms long and fingers grasping. They hate all life that bears the stink of the sun's touch, as one might expect. Jealousy, long-instilled, is hard to shake. *Instinct:* To deny light

- Hold someone, wringing the breath from them
- Fling a held creature

CLOAKER*Solitary, Stealthy*

Constrict (d10 damage ignores armor)

12 HP 1 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Looks like a cloak

Don't put on that cloak, Gareth. Don't. You don't know where it's been. I tell you, it's no good. See! It moved! I'm not mad, Gareth, it moved! Don't do it! No! GARETH! *Instinct:* To engulf

- Engulf the unsuspecting

DWARVEN WARRIOR*Horde, Organized*

Axe (d6 damage)

7 HP 2 Armor

Close

For ages, men believed all dwarves were male and all were of this ilk: stoic and proud warriors. Axe-wielding and plate-wearing. Stout bearded battle-hungry dwarves who would push them, time and time again, back up out of their mines and tunnels with ferocity. It just goes to show how little men know about the elder races. These folk are merely a vanguard, and they bravely do their duty to protect the riches of the Dwarven realm. Earn their trust and you've an ally for life. Earn their ire and you're not likely to regret it very long.

Instinct: To defend

- Drive them back
- Call up reinforcements

EARTH ELEMENTAL*Solitary, Huge*

Smash (d10+5 damage)

27 HP 4 Armor

Reach, Forceful

Special Qualities: Made of stone

Our shaman says that all the things of the world have a spirit. Stones, trees, a stream. Now that I've seen the earth roil under my feet and fists of stone beat my friends half to death I'd like to believe that crazy old man. The one I saw was huge—big as a house! It came boiling up from a rockslide out of nowhere and had a voice like an avalanche. I pay my respects, now. Rightly so. *Instinct:* To show the strength of earth

- Turn the ground into a weapon
- Meld into stone

FIRE BEETLE*Horde, Small*

Flames (d6 damage ignores armor)

3 HP

3 Armor

*Near***Special Qualities:** Full of flames

Scarabaeus pyractomena! What a delightful creature—see how its carapace glitters in the light of our torches? Not too close now, they're temperamental, you see. The fire in their belly isn't just metaphorical, no. Watch as I goad the beast. Aha! A spout of flame! Unexpected, isn't it? One of these creatures alone, if it comes up from below, can be a hellish nuisance to a farmstead or village. A whole swarm? There's a reason they call it a conflagration of fire beetles. *Instinct:* To enflame

- Undermine the ground
- Burst from the earth
- Spray forth flames

GARGOYLE*Horde, Stealthy, Hoarder*

Claw (d6 damage)

3 HP

2 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Wings

It's a sad thing, really. Guardians bred by magi of the past with no more castles to guard. Their ancestors' sacred task bred into their blood leads them to find a place—ruins mostly, but sometimes a cave or hill or mountain cliff—and guard it as though their masters yet lived below. They're notoriously good at finding valuables buried below the earth, though. Find one of these winged reptiles and you'll find yourself a treasure nearby. Just be careful, they're hard to spot and tend to move in packs. *Instinct:* To guard

- Attack with the element of surprise
- Take to the air
- Blend into stonework

GELATINOUS CUBE	<i>Solitary, Large, Stealthy, Amorphous</i>
Engulf (d10+1 damage ignores armor)	20 HP 1 Armor

Hand

Special Qualities: Transparent

How many adventurers' last thoughts were "strange, this tunnel seems cleaner than most?" Too many, and all because of this transparent menace. A great acidic blob that expands to fill a small chamber or corridor and then slides, ever so slowly along, eating everything in its path. It cannot eat stone or metal and will often have them floating in its jelly mass. *Blech. Instinct:* To clean

- Fill an apparently empty space
- Dissolve

GOBLIN	<i>Horde, Small, Intelligent, Organized</i>
Spear (d6 damage)	3 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

Nobody seems to know where these things came from. Elves say they're the dwarves' fault—dredged up from a hidden place beneath the earth. Dwarves say they're bad elvish children, taken away at birth and raised in the dark. The truth of the matter is that goblins have always been here and they'll be here once all the civilized races have fallen and gone away. Goblins never die out. There's just too damn many of them. *Instinct:* To multiply

- Charge!
- Call more goblins
- Retreat and return with (many) more

GOBLIN ORKASTER	<i>Solitary, Small, Magical, Intelligent, Organized</i>
Acid orb (d10+1 damage ignores armor)	12 HP 0 Armor

Near, Far

Oh lord, who taught them magic? *Instinct:* To tap power beyond their stature

- Unleash a poorly understood spell
- Pour forth magical chaos
- Use other goblins for shields

GOLIATH*Group, Huge, Organized, Intelligent*

Mace (d8+7 damage)

14 HP

1 Armor

Reach, Forceful

They dwell beneath the earth because they do not belong above it any longer. An undying race of mighty titans fled the plains and mountains in ages past—driven out by men and their heroes. Left to bide their time in the dark, hate and anger warmed by the pools of lava deep below. It's said that an earthquake is a goliath's birthing cry. Someday they'll take back what's theirs. *Instinct:* To retake

- Shake the earth
- Retreat, only to come back stronger

OTYUGH*Solitary, Large*

Tentacles (d10+3 damage)

20 HP

1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

Special Qualities: Filth Fever

The mating call of the otyugh is a horrible, blaring cry that sounds like a cross between an elephant dying and an over-eager vulture. The otyugh spends much of its time partly submerged in filthy water and prefers eating garbage over any other food. As a result, it often grows fat and strong on the offal of orcs, goblins and other cave-dwelling sub-humans. Get too close, however, and you'll have one of its barbed tentacles dragging you into that soggy, razor-toothed maw. If you get away with your life, best get to a doctor, or your victory may be short lived. *Instinct:* To befoul

- Infect someone with filth fever
- Fling someone or something

MAGGOT-SQUID*Horde, Small*

Chew (d6 damage)

3 HP

1 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Amphibious, Paralyzing Tentacles

The gods that made this thing were playing some sick joke on the civilized folk of the world. The maggot-squid wields a face full of horrible squirming tentacles that, if they touch you, feel like being struck by lightning. They'll paralyze you and chew you up slowly while you're helpless. Best to not let it get to that. *Instinct:* To eat

- Paralyze with a touch

PURPLE WORM*Solitary, Huge*

Bite (d10+5 damage)

20 HP

2 Armor

*Reach, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Burrowing

Iä! Iä! The Purple Worm! Blessed is its holy slime! We walk, unworthy, in its miles of massive tunnels. We are but shadows under its violet and all-consuming glory. Mere acolytes, we who hope someday to return to the great embrace of its tooth-ringed maw. Let it consume us! Let it eat our homes and villages so that we might be taken! Iä! Iä! The Purple Worm! *Instinct:* To consume

- Swallow whole
- Tunnel through stone and earth

ROPER*Solitary, Large, Stealthy, Intelligent*

Bite (d10+1 damage)

16 HP 1 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Rock-like Flesh

Evolutionary happenstance has created a clever underground predator. Disguised as a rocky formation—most often a stalactite or stalagmite—the roper waits for its prey to wander by. When it does, whether it's a rat, a goblin or a foolhardy adventurer, a mass of thin, whipping tentacles erupts from the thing's hide. A hundred lashes in the blink of an eye and the stunned prey is being dragged into the roper's mouth. Surprisingly effective for a thing that looks like a rock. *Instinct:* To ambush

- Ensnare the unsuspecting
- Disarm a foe
- Chew on someone

ROT GRUB*Horde, Tiny*

Burrow (d6-2 damage)

3 HP 0 Armor

*Hand***Special Qualities:** Burrow into flesh

They live in your skin. Or your organ meat. Or your eyeballs. They grow there and then, in a bloody and horrific display, burrow their way out. Disgusting. *Instinct:* To infect

- Burrow under flesh
- Lay eggs
- Burst forth from an infected creature

SPIDERLORD	<i>Solitary, Large, Devious, Intelligent</i>
Mandibles (d8+4 damage)	16 HP 3 Armor
<i>Close, Reach</i>	

Special Qualities: Burrowing

Even spiders have their gods, whispered to in webs with little praying arms. *Instinct:* To weave webs (literal and metaphorical)

- Enmesh in webbing
- Put a plot into motion

TROGLODYTE	<i>Group, Organized</i>
Club (d8 damage)	10 HP 1 Armor
<i>Close</i>	

Long-forgotten, our last remaining ancestors dwell in caves in the wild parts of the world. Driven away by our cities and villages, our iron swords and our fire, these ape-men eat their meat raw with sharp-nailed hands and jagged teeth. They strike out at frontier villages wielding clubs and in overwhelming numbers to seize cattle, tools, and poor prisoners to drag into the hills. Known for their viciousness and their stink, they're an old and dying race we'd all sooner forget existed. *Instinct:* To prey on civilization

- Raid and retreat
- Use scavenged weapons or magic



BAKUNAWA*Solitary, Large, Intelligent, Messy, Forceful*

Bite (d10+3 damage, 1 piercing)

16 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Amphibious

Dragon-Turtle's sister is a mighty serpent queen. Ten yards of scales and muscle, they say she wakes with a hunger when the sun disappears from the sky. She is attracted by bright light in the darkness and like any snake, the Bakunawa is sneaky. She will seek first to beguile and mislead and will only strike out with violence when no other option is available. When she does, though, her jaws are strong enough to crack the hull of any swamp-boat and certainly enough to slice through a steel breastplate or two. Give the greedy snake your treasures and she might just leave you alone. *Instinct:* To devour

- Lure prey with lies and illusions
- Lash out at light
- Devour

BASILISK*Solitary, Hoarder*

Bite (d10 damage)

12 HP 2 Armor

Close

"Few have seen a basilisk and lived to tell the tale. Get it? Seen a basilisk? Little bit of basilisk humor there. Sorry, I know you're looking for something helpful, sirs. Serious stuff, I understand. The basilisk, even without its ability to turn your flesh to stone with a gaze, is a dangerous creature. A bit like a frog, bulbous eyes and six muscled legs built for leaping. A bit like an alligator, with snapping jaws and sawing teeth. Covered in stony scales and very hard to kill. Best avoided, if possible." *Instinct:* To create new statuary

- Turn flesh to stone with a gaze
- Retreat into a maze of stone

SWAMP DENIZENS

BLACK PUDDING*Solitary, Amorphous*

Corrosive touch (d10 damage, ignores armor) 15 HP 1 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Amorphous

How do you kill a pile of goo? A great, squishy pile of goo that also happens to want to dissolve you and slurp you up? That is a good question to which I have no answer. Do let us know when you find out. *Instinct:* To dissolve

- Eat away metal, flesh, or wood
- Ooze into a troubling place: food, armor, stomach

COUTAL*Solitary, Intelligent Devious*

Light ray (d8 damage, ignores armor) 12 HP 2 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Wings, Halo

As if in direct defiance of the decay and filth of the world, the gods granted us the coutal. As if to say, “there is beauty, even in this grim place.” A serpent in flight on jeweled wings, these beautiful creatures glow with a soft light, as the sun does through stained glass. Bright, wise, and calm, a coutal often knows many things and sees many more. You might be able to make a trade with it in exchange for some favor. They seek to cleanse and to purge and to make of this dark world a better one. Shame we have so few. The gods are cruel.

Instinct: To cleanse

- Pass judgment on a person or place
- Summon divine forces to cleanse
- Offer information in exchange for service

CROCODILIAN*Group, Large*

Bite (d8+3 damage)

10 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Amphibious, Camouflage

It's a really, really big crocodile. Seriously. So big. *Instinct:* To eat

- Attack an unsuspecting victim
- Escape into the water
- Hold something tight in its jaws

"I hate the wetlands ... they're stupid and wet and there are bugs everywhere and I think I maced a crane."

*—Lindsay,
"Arrested Development"*

DOPPELGÄNGER*Solitary, Devious, Intelligent*

Dagger (d6 damage)

12 HP 0 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Shapeshifting

Their natural form, if you ever see it, is hideous. Like a creature who stopped growing part-way, before it decided it was elf or man or dwarf. Then again, maybe that's how you get to be the way a doppelgänger is—without form, without shape to call their own, maybe all they really seek is a place to fit in. If you go out into the world, when you come back home, make sure your friends are who you think they are. They might, instead, be a doppelgänger and your friend might be dead at the bottom of a well somewhere. Then again, depending on your friends, that might be an improvement.

Instinct: To infiltrate

- Assume the shape of a person whose flesh it's tasted
- Use another's identity to advantage
- Leave someone's reputation shattered

DRAGON TURTLE*Solitary, Huge, Cautious*

Bite (d10+3 damage)

20 HP 4 Armor

*Reach***Special Qualities:** Shell, Amphibious

Bakunawa has a brother. Where she is quick to anger and hungry for gold, he is slow and sturdy. She is a knife and he is a shield. A great turtle that lies in the muck and mire for ages as they pass, mud piled upon his back—sometimes trees and shrubs. Sometimes a whole misguided clan of goblins will build their huts and cook their ratty meals on the shell of the dragon turtle. His snapping jaws may be glacier-slow, but they can rend a castle wall. Careful where you tread.

Instinct: To resist change

- Move forward implacably
- Bring its full bulk to bear
- Destroy structures and buildings

DRAGON WHELP *Solitary, Small, Intelligent, Cautious, Hoarder*

Elemental breath (d10+2 damage)

16 HP 3 Armor

*Close, Near***Special Qualities:** Wings, Elemental Blood

What? Did you think they were all a mile long? Did you think they didn't come smaller than that? Sure, they may be no bigger than a dog and no smarter than an ape, but a dragon whelp can still belch up a hellish ball of fire that'll melt your armor shut and drop you screaming into the mud. Their scales, too, are softer than those of their bigger kin, but can still turn aside an arrow or sword not perfectly aimed. Size is not the only measure of might. *Instinct:* To grow in power

- Start a lair, form a base of power
- Call on family ties
- Demand oaths of servitude

EKEK*Horde*

Talons (d6 damage)

3 HP

1 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Wing-arms

Ugly, wrinkled bird-folk, these. Once, maybe, in some ancient past, they were a race of angelic men from on high, but now they eat rats that they fish from the murk with talon-feet and devour with needle-teeth. They understand the tongues of men and dwarves but speak in little more than gibbering tongues, mimicking the words they hear with mocking laughter. It's a chilling thing to see a beast so close to man or bird but not quite either one. *Instinct:* To lash out

- Attack from the air
- Carry out the bidding of a more powerful creature

FIRE EELS*Horde, Tiny*

Burning touch (d6-2 damage, ignores armor)

3 HP

0 Armor

Hand

Special Qualities: Flammable oil, aquatic

These strange creatures are no bigger or smarter than their mundane kin. They have the same vicious nature. Over their relations they have one advantage—an oily secretion that oozes from their skin. It makes them hard to catch. On top of that, with a twist of their body they can ignite the stuff, leaving pools of burning oil atop the surface of the water and roasting prey and predator alike. I hear the slimy things make good ingredients for fire-resistant gear, but you have to get your hands on one, first. *Instinct:* To ignite

- Catch someone or something on fire (even underwater)
- Consume burning prey

FROGMAN*Horde, Small, Intelligent*

Spear (d6 damage)

7 HP 1 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Amphibious

Croak croak croak. Little warty munchkins. Some wizard or godling's idea of a bad joke, these creatures are. They stand as men, dress in scavenged cloth and hold court in their froggy villages. They speak a rumbling pidgin form of the tongue of man and are constantly at war with their neighbors. They're greedy and stupid but clever enough when they need to defend themselves. Some say, too, their priests have a remarkable skill at healing. Or maybe they're just really, really hard to kill. *Instinct:* To wage war

- Launch an amphibious assault
- Heal at a prodigious rate

HYDRA*Solitary, Large*

Bite (d10+3 damage)

16 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Many heads, Only killed by a blow to the heart

A bit like a dragon, wingless though it may be. Heads, nine in number at birth, spring from a muscled trunk and weave a sinuous pattern in the air. A hydra is to be feared—a scaled terror of the marsh. The older ones, though, they have more heads, for every failed attempt to murder it just makes it stronger. Cut off a head and two more grow in its place. Only a strike, true and strong, to the heart can end a hydra's life. Not time or tide or any other thing but this. *Instinct:* To grow

- Attack many enemies at once
- Regenerate a body part (especially a head)

KOBOLD *Horde, Small, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized*
Spear (d6 damage) 3 HP 1 Armor
Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Dragon connection

Some are wont to lump these little, rat-like dragon-men in with goblins and orcs, bugbears and hobgoblins. They are smarter and wiser than their kin, however. The kobolds are beholden slaves to dragons and were, in ancient times, their lorekeepers and sorcerer-servants. Their clans, with names like Ironscale and Whitewing, form around a dragon master and live to serve and do its bidding. Spotting a kobold means more are near—and if more are near then a mighty dragon cannot be far, either. *Instinct:* To serve dragons

- Lay a trap
- Call on dragons or draconic allies
- Retreat and regroup

LIZARDMAN *Group, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized*
Spear (d8 damage) 6 HP 2 Armor
Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Amphibious

A traveling sorcerer once told me that lizardmen came before we did. That before elves and dwarves and men built even the first of their wattle huts, a race of proud lizard kings strode the land. That they lived in palaces of crystal and worshipped their own scaly gods. Maybe that's true and maybe it ain't—now they dwell in places men long forgot or abandoned, crafting tools from volcano-glass and lashing against the works of the civilized world. Maybe they just want back what they lost. *Instinct:* To destroy civilization

- Ambush the unsuspecting
- Launch an amphibious assault

MEDUSA*Solitary, Devious, Intelligent, Hoarder*

Claws (d6 damage)

12 HP 0 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Look turns you to stone

The medusa are children of a serpent-haired mother, birthing them in ancient times to bear her name across the ages. They dwell near places of civilization—luring folks to their caves with promises of beauty or riches untold. Fine appreciators of art, the medusa curate strange collections of their victims, terror or ecstasy frozen forever in stone. It satisfies their vanity to know they were the last thing seen in so many lives. Arrogant, proud, and spiteful, in their way, they seek what so many do—endless company. *Instinct:* To collect

- Turn a body part to stone with a look
- Draw someone's gaze
- Show hidden terrible beauty

SAHUAGIN*Horde, Intelligent*

Endless teeth (d6+4 damage, 1 piercing)

3 HP 2 Armor

*Close, Forceful, Messy***Special Qualities:** Amphibious

The shape and craft of men wedded to the hunger and the endless teeth of a shark. Voracious and filled only with hate, these creatures will not stop until all life has been consumed. They cannot be reasoned with, they cannot be controlled or sated. They are hunger and bloodlust, driven up from the depths of the sea to ravage coastal towns and swallow island villages. *Instinct:* To spill blood

- Bite off a limb
- Hurl a poisoned spear
- Frenzy at the sight of blood

SAUROPOD*Group, Huge, Cautious*

Trample (d10+5 damage)

18 HP 4 Armor

*Reach***Special Qualities:** Armor plated body

Great lumbering beasts, they live in places long since forgotten by the thinking races of the world. Gentle if unprovoked, but mighty if their ire is raised, they trample smaller creatures with the care we might give to crushing an ant beneath our boots. If you see one, drift by and gaze in awe, but do not wake the giant. *Instinct:* To endure

- Stampede
- Knock something down
- Unleash a deafening bellow

SWAMP SHAMBLER*Solitary, Large, Magical*

Lash (d10+1 damage)

23 HP 1 Armor

*Close, Reach, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Swamp form

Some elementals are conjured up in sacred circles etched in chalk. Most, in fact. There's a sort of science to it. Others, though, aren't so orderly—they don't fall under the carefully controlled assignments of fire, air, water, or earth. Some are a natural confluence of vine and mire and fungus. They do not think the way a man might think. They cannot be understood as one might understand an elf. They simply are. Spirits of the swamp. Shamblers in the mud. *Instinct:* To preserve and create swamps

- Call on the swamp itself for aid
- Meld into the swamp
- Reassemble into a new form

“Like a wolverine to a bear, so be a troll to a giant.”

—Hugi, “Three Hearts and Three Lions”

TROLL

Solitary, Large

Club (d10+3 damage)

20 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

Special Qualities: Regeneration

Tall. Real tall. Eight or nine feet when they’re young or weak. Covered all over in warty, tough skin, too. Big teeth, stringy hair like swamp moss and long, dirty nails. Some are green, some gray, some black. They’re clannish and hateful of each other, not to mention all the rest of us. Near impossible to kill, too, unless you’ve fire or acid to spare—cut a limb off and watch. In a few days, you’ve got two trolls where you once had one. A real serious problem, as you can imagine.

Instinct: To smash

- Undo the effects of an attack (unless caused by a weakness, your call)
- Hurl something or someone

WILL-O-WISP

Solitary, Tiny, Magical

Ray (w[2d8-2] damage)

12 HP 0 Armor

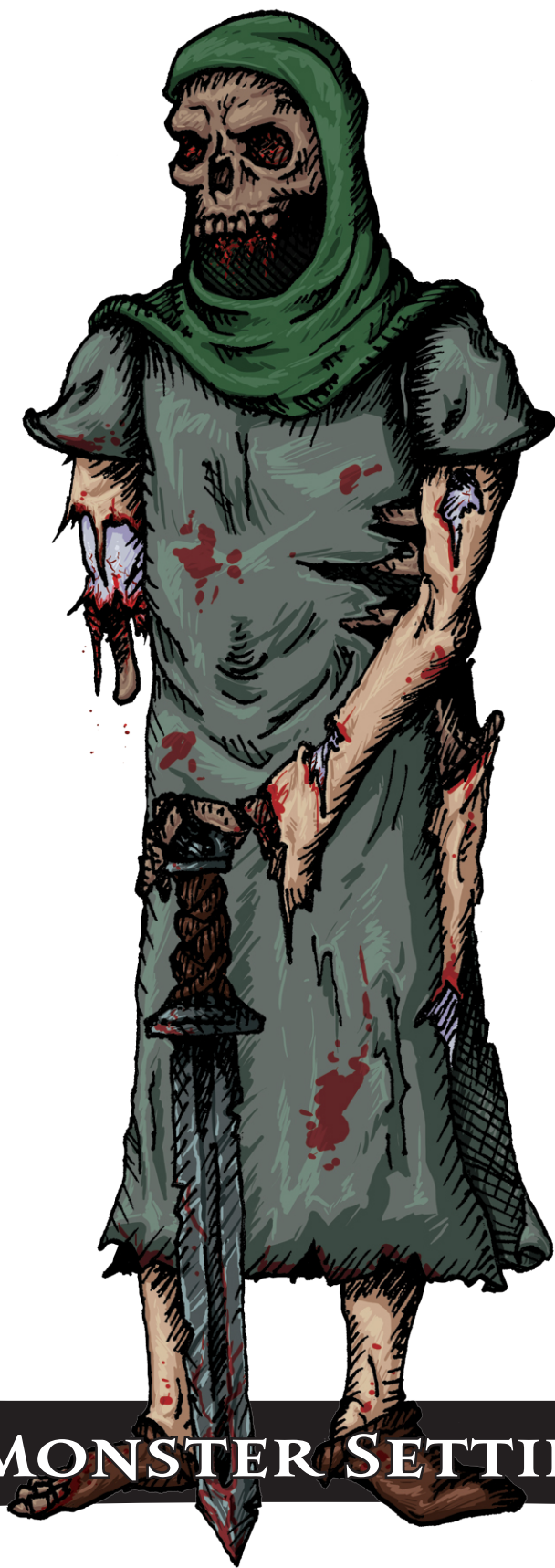
Near

Special Qualities: Body of light

Spot a lantern floating in the darkness, lost traveler in the swamp. Hope—a beacon of shimmering light. You call out to it, but there’s no answer. It begins to fade and so you follow, sloshing through the muck, tiring at the chase, hoping you’re being led to safety. Such a sad tale that always ends in doom. These creatures are a mystery—some say they’re ghosts, others beacons of faerie light. Nobody knows the truth. They are cruel, however. All can agree on that. *Instinct:*

To misguide

- Lead someone astray
- Clear a path to the worst place possible



MONSTER SETTING 3

ABOMINATION*Solitary, Large, Construct, Terrifying*

Slam (d10+3 damage)

20 HP 1 Armor

*Close, Reach, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Many limbs, heads, and so on

Corpses sewn onto corpses make up the bulk of these shambling masses of dark magic. Most undead are crafted to be controlled—made to serve some purpose like building a tower or serving as guardians. Not so the abomination. The last aspect of the ritual used to grant fire to their hellish limbs invokes a hatred so severe that the abomination knows but one task: to tear and rend at the very thing it cannot have—life. Many students of the black arts learn to their mortal dismay the most important fact about these hulks; an abomination knows no master. *Instinct:* To end life

- Tear flesh apart
- Spill forth putrid guts

BANSHEE*Solitary, Magical, Intelligent*

Scream (d10 damage)

16 HP 0 Armor

*Near***Special Qualities:** Insubstantial

Come away from an encounter with one of these vengeful spirits merely deaf and count yourself lucky for the rest of your peaceful, silent days. Often mistaken at first glance for a ghost or wandering spirit, the banshee reveals a far more deadly talent for sonic assault when angered. And her anger comes easy. A victim of betrayal (often by a loved one) the banshee makes known her displeasure with a roar or scream that can putrefy flesh and rend the senses. If you can help her get her vengeance, they say she might grant rewards. Whether the affection of a spurned spirit is a thing you'd want, well, that's another question. *Instinct:* To get revenge

- Drown out all other sound with a ceaseless scream
- Unleash a skull-splitting noise
- Disappear into the mists

UNDEAD LEGIONS

DEVOURER*Solitary, Large, Intelligent, Hoarder*

Smash (d10+3 damage)

16 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

Most folk know that the undead feed on flesh. The warmth, blood and living tissue continue their unholy existence. This is true for most of the mindless dead, animated by black sorcery. Not so the devourer. When a particularly wicked person (often a manipulator of men, an apostate priest or the like) dies in a gruesome way, the dark powers of Dungeon World might bring them back to a kind of life. The devourer, however, does not feed on the flesh of men or elves. The devourer eats souls. It kills with a pleasure only the sentient can enjoy and in the moments of its victims' expiry, draws breath like a drowning man and swallows a soul. What does it mean to have your soul eaten by such a creature? None dare ask for fear of finding out.

Instinct: To feast on souls

- Devour or trap dying soul
- Bargain for a soul's return

DRAGONBONE*Solitary, Huge*

Bite (d10+3 damage, 3 piercing)

20 HP 2 Armor

Reach, Messy

Mystical sorcerers debate: is this creature truly undead or is it a golem made of a particularly rare and blasphemous material? The bones, sinews and scales of a dead dragon make up this bleak automaton. Winged but flightless, dragon-shaped but without the mighty fire of such a noble thing, the dragonbone serves its master with a twisted devotion and is often set to assault the keeps and towers of rival necromancers. It would take a being of some considerable evil to twist the remains of a dragon thus. *Instinct:* To serve

- Attack unrelentingly

DRAUGR*Horde, Organized*

Rusty sword (d6+1 damage)

7 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Icy touch

In the Nordemark, the men and women tell tales in their wooden halls of a place where the noble dead go. A mead hall atop their heavenly mountain where men of valor go to await the final battle for the world. It is a goodly place. It is a place where one hopes to go after death. And the inglorious dead? Those who fall to poison or in an act of cowardice, warriors though they may be? Well, those mead halls aren't open to all and sundry. Some come back, frozen and twisted and empowered by jealous rage and wage their eternal war not on the forces of giants or trolls but on the towns of the men they once knew. *Instinct:* To take from the living

- Freeze flesh
- Call on the unworthy dead

GHOST*Solitary, Devious, Terrifying*

Phantom touch (d6 damage)

16 HP 0 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Insubstantial

Every culture tells the story the same way. You live, you love or you hate, you win or you lose, you die somehow you're not too fond of and here you are, ghostly and full of disappointment and what have you. Some people take it upon themselves, brave and kindly folks, to seek out the dead and help them pass to their rightful rest. You can find them, most times, down at the tavern drinking away the terrors they've seen or babbling to themselves in the madhouse. Death takes a toll on the living, no matter how you come by it. *Instinct:* To haunt

- Reveal the terrifying nature of death
- Haunt a place of importance
- Offer information from the other side, at a price

"People naturally pay their respects to the dead. The person had, after all, just accomplished the personal, profound feat of dying."

—Haruki Murakami, "1Q84"

GHOUL		<i>Group</i>
Talons (d8 damage, 1 piercing)	10 HP	1 Armor
<i>Close, Messy</i>		

Hunger. Hunger hunger hunger. Desperate clinging void-stomach-emptiness hunger. Sharp talons to rend flesh and teeth to tear and crack bones and suck out the soft marrow inside. Vomit up hate and screaming jealous anger and charge on twisted legs—scare the living flesh and sweeten it ever more with the stink of fear. Feast. Peasant or knight, wizard, sage, prince, or priest all make for such delicious meat. *Instinct:* To eat

- Gnaw off a body part
- Gain the memories of their meal

"Now they will know why they are afraid of the dark. Now they will learn why they fear the night."
—Thulsa Doom,
"Conan the Barbarian"

LICH	<i>Solitary, Magical, Intelligent, Cautious, Hoarder, Construct</i>	
Magical Force (d10+3 damage, ignores armor)	16 HP	5 Armor
<i>Near, Far</i>		

"At the end, they give you a scroll and a jeweled medallion to commemorate your achievements. Grand Master of Abjuration, I was called, then. Old man. Weak and wizened and just a bit too senile for them—those jealous halfwits. Barely apprentices, and they called themselves The New Council. It makes me sick, or would, if I still could be. They told me it was an honor and I would be remembered forever. It was like listening to my own eulogy. Fitting, in a way, don't you think? It took me another ten years to learn the rituals and another four to collect the material and you see before you the fruits of my labor. I endure. I live. I will see the death of this age and the dawn of the next. It pains me to have to do this, but, you see, you cannot be permitted to endanger my research. When you meet Death, say hello for me, would you?" *Instinct:* To un-live

- Cast a perfected spell of death or destruction
- Set a ritual or great working into motion
- Reveal a preparation or plan already completed

MOHRG*Group*

Bite (d8 damage)

10 HP 0 Armor

Close

You never get away with murder. Not really. You might evade the law, might escape your own conscience in the end and die, fat and happy in a mansion somewhere. When the gods themselves notice your misdeeds, though, that's where your luck runs out and a mohrg is born. The mohrg is a skeleton—flesh and skin and hair all rotted away. All but their guts—their twisted, knotted guts still spill from their bellies, magically preserved and often wrapped, noose-like, about their necks. They do not think, exactly, but they suffer. They kill and wreak havoc and their souls do not rest. Such is the punishment, both on them for the crime and on all mankind for daring to murder one another. The gods are just and they are harsh. *Instinct*: To wreak havoc

- Rage
- Add to their collection of guts

MUMMY*Solitary, Divine, Hoarder*

Smash (d10+2 damage)

16 HP 1 Armor

Close

There are cultures who revere the dead. They do not bury them in the cold earth and mourn their passing. These people spend weeks preparing the sacred corpse for its eternal rest. Temples, pyramids, and great vaults of stone are built to house them and are populated with slaves, pets and gold. The better to live in luxury beyond the Black Gates, no? Do not be tempted by these vaults—oh, I know that greedy look! Heed my warnings or risk a terrible fate, for the honored dead do not wish to be disturbed. Thievery will only raise their ire—don't say I did not warn you! *Instinct*: To enjoy eternal rest

- Curse them
- Wrap them up
- Rise again

NIGHTWING*Horde, Stealthy*

Rend (d6 damage)

7 HP 1 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Wings

Scholars of the necromantic arts will tell you that the appellation “undead” applies not only to those who have lived, died, and been returned to a sort of partway living state. It is the proper name of any creature whose energy originates beyond the Black Gates. The creature men call the nightwing is one such—empowered by the negative light of Death’s domain. Taking the shape of massive, shadowy, winged creatures (some more bat-like, some like vultures, others like some ancient, leathery things) nightwings travel in predatory flocks, swooping down to strip the flesh from cattle, horses and unlucky peasants out past curfew. Watch the night sky for their red eyes. Listen for their screeching call. And hope to the gods you have something to hide under until they pass. *Instinct:* To hunt

- Attack from the night sky
- Fly away with prey

SHADOW*Horde, Large, Magical, Construct*

Shadow touch (d6+1 damage)

11 HP 4 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Shadow Form

We call to the elements. We call on fire, ever-burning. We summon water, life-giving. We beseech the earth, stable-standing. We cry to the air, forever-changing. These elements we recognize and give our thanks but ask to pass. The elemental we call upon this night knows another name. We call upon the element of Night. Shadow, we name you. Death’s messenger and black assassin, we claim for our own. Accept our sacrifice and do our bidding ’til the morning come. *Instinct:* To darken

- Snuff out light
- Spawn another shadow from the dead

SIGBEN*Horde, Large, Construct*

Tail whip (d6+1 damage)

11 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Vampire spawn

“Aswang-hound and hopping whip-tail! Sent by vampires on their two, twisted legs, these ugly things look like the head of a rat or a crocodile, maybe, furry though and sharp of tooth. They have withered wings, but cannot use them and long, whipping tails, spurred with poison tips. Stupid, vengeful and mischievous they cause all kinds of chaos when let out of the strange clay jars in which they’re born. Only a vampire could love such a wretched thing.”

Instinct: To disturb

- Poison them
- Do a vampire’s bidding

SKELETON*Horde*

Slam (d6 damage)

7 HP 1 Armor

Close

Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones. *Instinct:* To take the semblance of life

- Act out what it did in life
- Snuff out the warmth of life
- Reconstruct from miscellaneous bones

SPECTRE*Solitary, Hoarder*

Withering touch (d10 damage)

12 HP 0 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Insubstantial

For some folk, when they pass, Death himself cannot release their grip on the places they love most. A priest whose devotion to the temple is greater than that of his god. A banking guild official who cannot bear to part with his vault. A drunk and his favorite tavern. All make excellent spectres. They act not out of the usual hunger that drives the undead, but jealousy. Jealousy that anyone else might come to love their home as much as they do and drive them out. These places belong to them and these invisible spirits will kill before they'll let anyone send them to their rest. *Instinct:* To drive life from a place

- Turn their haunt against a creature
- Bring the environment to life

VAMPIRE*Group, Stealthy, Organized, Intelligent*

Supernatural force (d8+5 damage, 1 piercing)

10 HP 2 Armor

Close, Forceful

Special Qualities: Changing form, ancient mind

We fear them, because they call to us. So much like us, or how we hope to be: beautiful, passionate, and powerful. They are drawn to us for what they cannot be: warm, kind, and alive. These tormented souls can only hope, at most, to pass their dreadful curse along. Every time they feed they run the risk of passing along their torture to another and in each one lives the twisted seed of its creator. Vampires beget vampires. Suffering begets suffering. Do not be drawn in by their seduction or you may be given their gift—a crown of shadows and the chains eternal undying grief. *Instinct:* To manipulate

- Charm someone
- Feed on their blood
- Retreat to plan again

WIGHT-WOLF*Horde, Organized, Intelligent*

Pounce (d6+1 damage 1 piercing)

7 HP

1 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Shadow form

Like the nightwing, the wight-wolf is a creature not spawned in our world. Somehow slipping the seals of the Black Gates of Death, these spirits take the shape of massive hounds or shadowy wolves and hunt the living for sport. They travel in packs, led by a mighty alpha, but bear a kind of intelligence unknown to true canines. Their wild hunts draw the attention of intelligent undead—liches, vampires and the like—who will sometimes make pacts with the alpha and serve a grim purpose together. Listen for the baying of the hounds of Death and pray that they do not howl for you. *Instinct:* To hunt

- Encircle prey
- Summon the pack

ZOMBIE*Horde*

Bite (d6 damage)

11 HP

1 Armor

Close

When there's no more room in Hell... *Instinct:* Braaaaaains

- Attack with overwhelming numbers
- Corner them
- Gain strength from the dead, spawn more zombies

"There's something out there. That... that witch in the cellar is only part of it. It lives... out in those woods, in the dark... something... something that's come back from the dead."

—Ash, "Evil Dead II"



MONSTER SETTING 4

ASSASSIN VINE*Solitary, Stealthy, Amorphous*

Thorns (d10 damage, 1 piercing)

15 HP 1 Armor

*Close, Reach, Messy***Special Qualities:** Plant

Among the animals there exists a clear division 'tween hunter and hunted. All it takes is a glance to know—by fangs and glowing eyes or claws or venomous sting—which of the creatures of this world are meant to kill and which stand to be killed. Such a split, if you have the eyes to see it, cuts the world of leaves and flowers in twain, as well. Druids in their forest circles know it. Rangers, too, might spot such a plant before it's too late. Lay folk, though, they wander where they oughtn't—paths into the deep woods covered in creeping vines and with a snap, these hungry ropes snap tight, dragging their meaty prey into the underbrush. Mind your feet, traveller. *Instinct:* To grow

- Shoot forth new growth
- Attack the unwary

BLINK DOG*Group, Small, Magical, Organized*

Bite (d8 damage)

6 HP

4 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Illusion

Now you see it, now you don't. Hounds once owned by a sorcerer lord and imbued with a kind of illusory cloak, they escaped into the woods around his lair and began to breed with wolves and wild dogs of the forest. You can spot them, if you're lucky, by the glittering silver of their coats and their strange, ululating howls. They have a remarkable talent for being not quite where they appear to be and use it to take down prey much stronger than themselves. If you find yourself facing a pack of blink dogs you might as well close your eyes and fight. You'll have an easier time when not betrayed by your natural sight. By such sorceries are the natural places of the world polluted with unnatural things. *Instinct:* To hunt

- Give the appearance of being somewhere they're not
- Summon the pack
- Move with amazing speed

DARK WOODS

CENTAUR*Horde, Large, Organized, Intelligent*

Bow (d6+2 damage, 1 piercing)

11 HP

1 Armor

*Close, Reach, Near***Special Qualities:** Half-horse, Half-man

“It will be a gathering of clans unseen in this age. Call Stormhoof and Brightspear. Summon Whitemane and Ironflanks. Sound the horn and we shall begin our meeting—we shall speak the words and bind our people together. Too long have the men cut the ancient trees for their ships. The elves are weak and cowardly, friend to these mannish slime. It will be a cleansing fire from the darkest woods. Raise the red banner of war! Today we strike back against these apes and retake what is ours!” *Instinct:* To rage

- Overrun them
- Fire a perfect bullseye
- Move with unrelenting speed

CHAOS OOZE*Solitary, Planar, Terrifying, Amorphous*

Warping touch (d10 damage ignores armor)

23 HP

1 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Ooze, Fragments of other planes embedded in it

The barrier between Dungeon World and the elemental planes is not, as you might hope, a wall of stone. It's much more porous. Places where the civil races do not often tread can sometimes, how to put this, spring a leak. Like a dam come just a little loose. Bits and pieces of the chaos spill out. Sometimes, they'll congeal like an egg on a pan—that's where we get the material for many of the Guild's magical trinkets. Useful, right? Sometimes, though, it squirms and squishes around a bit and stays that way, warping all it touches into some other, strange form. Chaos begets chaos, and it grows. *Instinct:* To change

- Cause a change in appearance or substance
- Briefly bridge the planes

COCKATRICE*Group, Small, Hoarder*

Beak (d8 damage)

6 HP

1 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Stone touch

"I ain't ever seen such a thing, sir. Rodrick thought it a chicken, maybe. Poor Rodrick. I figured it to be a lizard of a sort, though he was right—it had a beak and gray feathers like a chicken. Right, well, see, we found it in the woods, in a nest at the foot of a tree while we were out with the sow. Looking for mushrooms, sir. I told Rodrick we were—yes, sir, right sir, the bird—see, it was glaring at Rodrick and he tried to scare it off with a stick to steal the eggs but the thing pecked his hand. Quick it was, too. I tried to get him away but he just got slower and slower and...yes, as you see him now, sir. All frozen up like when we left the dog out overnight in winter two years back. Poor, stupid Rodrick. Weren't no bird nor lizard, were it, sir?" *Instinct:* To defend the nest

- Start a slow transformation to stone

DRYAD*Solitary, Magical, Intelligent, Devious,*

Crushing vines (w[2d8]damage)

12 HP

2 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Plant

More beautiful by far than any man or woman born in the civil realms. To gaze upon one is to fall in love. Deep and punishing, too. Thing is, they don't love—not the fleshy folk who often find them, anyway. Their love is a primal thing, married to the woods—to a great oak that serves as home and mother and sacred place to them. It's a curse to see one, too, they'll never love you back. No matter what you do. No matter how you pledge yourself to them, they'll always spurn you. If ever their oak comes to harm, you've not only the dryad's wrath to contend with, but in every nearby village there's a score of men with a secret longing in their heart, ready to murder you where you sleep for just a smile from such a creature. *Instinct:* To love nature passionately

- Entice a mortal
- Merge into a tree
- Turn nature against them

EAGLE LORD*Group, Large, Organized, Intelligent*

Talons (b[2d8]+1 damage, 1 piercing)

10 HP

1 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Mighty wings

Some the size of horses. Bigger, even—the kings and queens of the eagles. Their cry pierces the mountain sky and woe to those who fall under the shadow of their mighty wings. The ancient wizards forged a pact with them in the primordial days. Men would take the plains and valleys and leave the mountaintops to the eagle lords. These sacred pacts should be honored, lest they set their talons into you. Lucky are the elves, for the makers of their treaties yet live and when danger comes to elvish lands, the eagle lords often serve as spies and mounts for them. Long-lived and proud, some might be willing to trade their ancient secrets for the right price, too. *Instinct:* To rule the heights

- Attack from the sky
- Pull someone into the air
- Call on ancient oaths

ELVISH WARRIOR*Horde, Intelligent, Organized*

Sword (b[2d6] damage)

3 HP

2 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Sharp sense

”As with all things they undertake, the elves approach war as an art. I saw them fight, once. The Battle of Astrid’s Veil. Yes, I am that old, boy, now hush. A warrior-maiden, she was clad in plate that shone like the winter sky. White hair streaming and a pennant of ocean blue tied to her spear. She seemed to glide between the trees the way an angel might, striking out and bathing her blade in blood that steamed in the cold air. I never felt so small before. I trained with the master-at-arms of Battlemoore, you know. I’ve held a sword longer than you’ve been alive, boy, and in that one moment I knew that my skill meant nothing. Thank the gods the elves were with us then. A more beautiful and terrible thing I have never seen.” *Instinct:* To seek perfection

- Strike at a weak point
- Set ancient plans in motion
- Use the woods to advantage

ELVISH HIGH ARCANIST*Solitary, Magical, Intelligent,**Organized*

Arcane fire (d10 damage ignores armor)

12 HP

o Armor

*Near, Far***Special Qualities:** Sharp senses

True elvish magic isn't like the spells of men. Mannish wizardry is all rotes and formulas. They cheat to find the arcane secrets that resound all around them. They are deaf to the arcane symphony that sings in the woods. Elvish magic requires a fine ear to hear that symphony and the voice with which to sing. To harmonize with what is already resounding. Men bind the forces of magic to their will; Elves simply pluck the strings and hum along. The High Arcanists, in a way, have become more and less than any elf. The beat of their blood is the throbbing of all magic in this world. *Instinct:* To unleash power

- Work the magic that nature demands
- Cast forth the elements

GRIFFIN*Group, Large, Organized*

Talons (d8+3 damage)

10 HP

1 Armor

*Close, Reach, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Wings

On first glance, one might mistake the griffin for another magical mistake like the manticores or the chimera. It looks the part, doesn't it? These creatures have the regal haughtiness of a lion and the arrogant bearing of an eagle, but they temper those with the unshakeable loyalty of both. To earn the friendship of a griffin is to have an ally all your living days. Truly a gift, that. If you're ever lucky enough to meet one be respectful and deferential above all else. It may not seem it but they can perceive the subtlest slights and will answer them with a sharp beak and talons. *Instinct:* To serve allies

- Judge someone's worthiness
- Carry an ally aloft
- Strike from above

HILL GIANT	<i>Group, Huge, Intelligent, Organized</i>
Thrown rocks (d8+3 damage)	10 HP 1 Armor
<i>Reach, Near, Far, Forceful</i>	

Ever seen an ogre before? Bigger than that. Dumber and meaner, too. Hope you like having cows thrown at you. *Instinct:* Ruin everything.

- Throw something
- Do something stupid
- Shake the earth

OGRE	<i>Group, Large, Intelligent</i>
Club (d8+5 damage)	10 HP 1 Armor
<i>Close, Reach, Forceful</i>	

A tale, then. Somewhere in the not-so-long history of the mannish race there was a divide. In days when men were merely dwellers-in-the-mud with no magic to call their own, they split in two: one camp left their caves and the dark forests and built the first city to honor the gods. The others, a wild and savage lot, retreated into darkness. They grew, there. In the deep woods a grim loathing for their softer kin gave them strength. They found dark gods of their own, there in the woods and hills. Ages passed and they bred tall and strong and full of hate. We have forged steel and they match it with their savagery. We may have forgotten our common roots, but somewhere, deep down, the ogres remember. *Instinct:* To return the world to darker days

- Destroy something
- Fly into a rage
- Take something by force

RAZOR BOAR	<i>Solitary</i>
Tusks (d10 damage, 3 piercing)	16 HP 1 Armor
<i>Close, Messy</i>	

The tusks of the razor boar shred metal plate like so much tissue. Voracious, savage and unstoppable, they tower over their mundane kin. To kill one? A greater trophy of bravery and skill is hard to name, though I hear a razor boar killed the Drunkard King in a single thrust. You think you're a better hunter than he? *Instinct:* To shred

- Rip them apart
- Rend armor and weapons

SATYR*Group, Devious, Magical, Hoarder*

Charge (w[2d8] damage)

10 HP 1 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Enchantment

One of only a very few creatures to be found in the old woods that don't outright want to maim, kill, or eat us. They dwell in glades pierced by the sun, and dance on their funny goat-legs to enchanting music played on pipes made of bone and silver. They smile easily and, so long as you please them with jokes and sport, will treat our kind with friendliness. They've a mean streak, though, so if you cross them, make haste elsewhere; very few things hold a grudge like the stubborn satyr. *Instinct:* To enjoy

- Pull others into revelry through magic
- Force gifts upon them
- Play jokes with illusions and tricks

SPRITE*Horde, Tiny, Stealthy, Magical, Devious, Intelligent*

Dagger (w[2d4] damage)

3 HP 0 Armor

Hand

Special Qualities: Wings, Fey Magic

I'd classify them elementals, except that "being annoying" isn't an element. *Instinct:* To play tricks

- Play a trick to expose someone's true nature
- Confuse their senses
- Craft an illusion

TREANT	<i>Group, Huge, Intelligent, Amorphous</i>
Walloping branches (d10+5 damage)	21 HP 4 Armor
<i>Reach, Forceful</i>	

Special Qualities: Wooden

Old and tall and thick of bark
walk amidst the tree-lined dark
Strong and slow and forest-born,
treants anger quick, we warn
if to woods with axe ye go
know the treants be thy foe

Instinct: To protect nature

- Move with implacable strength
- Set down roots
- Spread old magic

WEREWOLF	<i>Solitary, Intelligent</i>
Bite (d10+2 damage, 1 piercing)	12 HP 1 Armor
<i>Close, Messy</i>	

Special Qualities: Weak to silver

“Beautiful, isn’t it? The moon, I mean. She’s watching us, you know? Her pretty silver eyes watch us while we sleep. Mad, too—like all the most beautiful ones. If she were a woman, I’d bend my knee and make her my wife on the spot. No, I didn’t ask you here to speak about her, though. The chains? For your safety, not mine. I’m cursed, you see. You must have suspected. The sorcerer-kings called it “lycanthropy” in their day—passed on by a bite to make more of our kind. No, I could find no cure. Please, don’t be scared. You have the arrows I gave you? Silver, yes. Ah, you begin to understand. Don’t cry, sister. You must do this for me. I cannot bear more blood on my hands. You must end this. For me.” *Instinct:* To shed the appearance of civilization

- Transform to pass unnoticed as beast or man
- Strike from within
- Hunt like man and beast

WORG*Horde, Organized*

Bite (d6 damage)

3 HP 1 Armor

Close

As horses are to the civil races, so go the worg to the goblins. Mounts, fierce in battle, ridden by only the bravest and most dangerous, are found and bred in the forest primeval to serve the goblins in their wars on men. The only safe worg is a pup, separated from its mother. If you can find one of these, or make orphans of a litter with a sharp sword, you've got what could become a loyal protector or hunting hound in time. Train it well, mind you, for the worg are smart and never quite free of their primal urges. *Instinct:* To serve

- Carry a rider into battle
- Give its rider an advantage



MONSTER SETTING 5

FORMIAN DRONE*Horde, Organized, Cautious*

Bite (d6 damage)

7 HP

4 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Hive connection, Insectoid

With good cause, they say that these creatures (like all insects, really) are claimed by the powers of Law. They are order made flesh—a perfectly stratified society in which every larva, hatchling and adult knows its place in the great hive. The formian is some strange intersection of men and ants. (Though there are winged tribes that look like wasps out in the Western Desert, I’ve heard. And some with great sawtooth arms like mantids in the forests of the east.) Tall, with a hard shell and a harder mind, these particular formians are the bottom caste. They work the hills and honeycombs with single-minded joy that can be known only by such an alien mind.

Instinct: To follow orders

- Raise the alarm
- Create value for the hive
- Assimilate

FORMIAN TASKMASTER*Group, Organized, Intelligent*

Spiked whip (d8 damage)

6 HP

3 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Hive connection, Insectoid

It takes two hands to rule an empire: one to wield the scepter and one to crack the whip. These ant-folk are that whip. Lucky for them, with two extra arms, that’s a lot of whip to crack. They oversee the vast swarms of worker drones that set to build the mighty caverns and ziggurats that dot the places that formians can be found. One in a hundred, these brutes stand two or three feet taller than their pale, near-mindless kin and have a sharper, crueller wit to match. They’ll often ignore the soft races (as we’re known) if we don’t interfere in a project, but get in the way of The Great Work and expect nothing less than their full attention. You don’t want their full attention.

Instinct: To command

- Order drones into battle
- Set great numbers in motion

RAVENOUS HORDES

FORMIAN CENTURION*Horde, Intelligent, Organized*

Barbed spear (b[2d6]+2 damage)

7 HP

3 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Hive connection, Insectoid, Wings

Whether in the form of a legionnaire, part of the formian standing army, or as a praetorian guard to the queen, every formian hive contains a great number of these most dangerous insectoids. Darker in carapace, often scarred with furrows and the ceremonial markings that set them apart from their drones, the formian centurions are their fighting force and rightly so. Born, bred and living for the singular purpose of killing the enemies of their hive, they fight with one mind and a hundred swords. Thus far, the powers of Law have seen fit to spare mankind a great war with these creatures, but we've seen them in skirmish—descending sometimes on border towns with their wings flickering in the heat or spilling up from a sandy mound to wipe clean a newly-dug mine. Theirs is an orderly bloodshed, committed with no pleasure but the completion of a goal.

Instinct: To fight as ordered

- Advance as one
- Summon reinforcements
- Give a life for the hive

FORMIAN QUEEN*Solitary, Huge, Organized, Intelligent,**Hoarder*

Crushing mandibles (d10+5 damage)

24 HP 3 Armor

*Reach, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Hive connection, Insectoid

At the heart of every hive, no matter its size or kind, lives a queen. As large as any giant, she sits protected by her guard, served by every drone and taskmaster with her own, singular purpose: to spread her kind and grow the hive. To birth the eggs. To nurture. We do not understand the minds of these creatures but it is known they can communicate with their children, somehow, over vast distances and that they begin to teach them the ways of earth and stone and war while still pale and wriggling larvae, without a word. To kill one is to set chaos on the hive; without their queen, the rest turn on one another in a mad, blind rage. *Instinct:* To spread formians

- Call every formian it spawned
- Release a half-formed larval mutation
- Organize and issue orders

GNOLL TRACKER*Group, Organized, Intelligent*

Bow (d8 damage)

6 HP

1 Armor

*Near, Far***Special Qualities:** Scent-tracker

Once they scent your blood, you can't escape. Not without intervention from the gods, or the duke's rangers at least. The desert scrub is a dangerous place to go exploring on your own and if you fall and break your leg or eat the wrong cactus, well, you'll be lucky if you die of thirst before the gnolls find you. They prefer their prey alive, see—cracking bones and the screams of the dying lend a sort of succulence to a meal. Sickening creatures, no? They'll hunt you, slow and steady, as you die. If you hear laughter in the desert wind, well, best pray Death comes to take you before they do. *Instinct:* To prey on weakness

- Doggedly track prey
- Strike at a moment of weakness

GNOLL EMISSARY*Solitary, Divine, Intelligent, Organized*

Ceremonial dagger (d10+2 damage)

18 HP

1 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Scent

Oh, an emissary! How nice. I suspect you didn't know the gnolls had ambassadors, did you? Yes, even these mangy hyenas have to make nice sometimes. No, no, not with us. Nor the dwarves, neither. No, the emissary is the one, among his packmates, who trucks directly with their dripping demon lord. Frightening? Too right. Every hound has a master with his hand on the chain. This gnoll hears his master's voice. Hears it and obeys. *Instinct:* To share divine insight

- Pass on demonic influence
- Drive the pack into a fervor

GNOLL ALPHA*Solitary, Intelligent, Organized*

Sword (b[2d10] damage, 1 piercing)

12

HP

2 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Scent

Every pack has its top dog. Bigger, maybe—that'd be the simplest way. Often, though, with these lank and filthy mutts, it's not about size or sharp teeth but about cruelty. About a willingness to kill your brothers and eat them while the pack watches. Willingness to desecrate the pack in a way that cows them to you. If they're that awful to each other—to their living kin—think about how they must view us. It's hard to be mere meat in a land of carnivores. *Instinct:* To drive the pack

- Demand obedience
- Send the pack to hunt

ORC BLOODWARRIOR*Horde, Intelligent, Organized*

Jagged blade (d6+2 damage, 1 piercing)

3 HP

0 Armor

Close, Messy

The orcish horde is a savage, bloodthirsty, and hateful collection of tribes. There are myths and stories that tell of the origin of their rage—a demon curse, a homeland destroyed, elven magic gone wrong—but the truth has been lost to time. Every able orc, be it man or woman, child or elder, swears fealty to the warchief and their tribe and bears the jagged blade of a bloodwarrior. Men are trained to fight and kill—orcs are born to it. *Instinct:* To fight

- Fight with abandon
- Revel in destruction

ORC BERSERKER *Solitary, Large, Divine, Intelligent, Organized*

Cleaver (d10+5 damage)

20 HP

0 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Mutations

Stained in the unholy ritual of Anointing By The Night's Blood, some warriors of the horde rise to a kind of twisted knighthood. They trade their sanity for this honor, stepping halfway into a world of swirling madness. This makes berserkers the greatest of their tribe, though as time passes, the chaos spreads. The rare berserker that lives more than a few years becomes horrible and twisted, growing horns or an extra arm with which to grasp the iron cleavers they favor in battle. *Instinct:* To rage

- Fly into a frenzy
- Unleash chaos

ORC BREAKER*Solitary, Large*

Hammer (d10+3 damage ignores armor)

16 HP o Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

“Before you set out across the hordeland, brave sir, hark a moment to the tale of Sir Regnus. Regnus was like you, sir—a paladin of the Order, all a-shine in his plated armor and with a shield as tall as a man. Proud he was of it, too—Mirrorshield, he called himself. Tale goes that he’d set his eyes on rescuing some lost priest, a kidnap from the abbey on the borders. Regnus came across some orcs in his travels, a dozen or so, and thought, as one might, that they’d be no match. Battle was joined and all was well until one of them orcs emerged from the fray with a hammer bigger than any man ought to be able to wield. Built more like an ogre or a troll, they say it was, and with a single swing, it crushed Regnus to the ground, shield and all. It were no ordinary orc, they say. It were a breaker. They can’t make plate of their own, see, so maybe it’s jealousy drives these burly things to crush and shatter the way they do. Effective tactic, though. Careful out there.” *Instinct:* To smash

- Destroy armor or protection
- Lay low the mighty

ORC ONE-EYE *Group, Divine, Magical, Intelligent, Organized*

Inflict Wounds (d8+2 damage ignores armor)

6 HP o Armor

Close, Reach, Near, Far

Special Qualities: One eye

In the name of He of Riven Sight and by the First Sacrifice of Elf-Flesh do we invoke the Old Powers. By the Second Sacrifice, I make my claim to what is mine—the dark magic of Night. In His image, I walk the path to Gor-sha-thak, the Iron Gallows! I call to the runes! I call to the clouded sky! Take this mortal organ, eat of the flesh of our enemy and give me what is mine! *Instinct:* To hate

- Rend flesh with divine magic
- Take an eye
- Make a sacrifice and grow in power

ORC SHAMAN*Solitary, Intelligent, Organized*

Elemental blast (d10 damage ignores armor) 12 HP o Armor
Close, Reach, Near, Far

Special Qualities: Elemental power

The orcs are as old a race as any. They cast bones in the dirt and called to the gods in the trees and stone as the elves built their first cities. They have waged wars, conquered kingdoms, and fallen into corruption in the aeons it took for men to crawl from their caves and dwarves to first see the light of the sun. Fitting, then, that the old ways still hold. They summon the powers of the world to work, to fight and to protect their people, as they have since the first nights.

Instinct: To strengthen orc-kind

- Give protection of earth
- Give power of fire
- Give swiftness of water
- Give clarity of air

ORC SLAVER*Horde, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized*

Whip (d6 damage) 3 HP o Armor
Close, Reach

Red sails fly in the southern sea. Red sails and ships of bone, old wood and iron. The warfleet of the horde. Orcs down that way have taken to the sea, harassing island towns and stealing away with fishermen and their kin. It's said the custom is spreading north and the orcs learn the value of free work. Taken to it like a sacred duty—especially if they can get their hands on elves. Hard to think of a grimmer fate than to live out your life on an orcish galley, back bent under the lash. *Instinct:* To take

- Take a captive
- Pin someone under a net
- Drug them

ORC SHADOWHUNTER *Solitary, Stealthy, Magical, Intelligent*

Poisoned dagger (d10 damage, 1 piercing) 10 HP 0 Armor
Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Shadow cloak

Not every attack by orcs is torches and screaming and enslavement. Among those who follow He of Riven Sight, poison and murder-in-the-dark are considered sacred arts. Enter the shadowhunter. Orcs cloaked in Night's magic who slip into camps, towns and temples and end the lives of those within. Do not be so distracted by the howling of the berserkers that you don't notice the knife at your back. *Instinct:* To kill in darkness

- Poison them
- Melt into the shadows
- Cloak them in darkness

ORC WARCHIEF

Solitary, Intelligent, Organized

Iron Sword of Ages (b[2d10]+2 damage) 16 HP 0 Armor
Close, Reach

Special Qualities: One-Eye blessings, Shaman blessings, Divine protection from mortal harm

There are chiefs and there are leaders of the tribes among the orcs. There are those who rise to seize power and fall under the machinations of their foes. There is but one Warchief. One orc in all the horde who stands above the rest, bearing the blessings of the One-Eyes and the Shamans both. But one who walks with the elements under Night. But one who bears the Iron Sword of Ages and carries the ancient grudge against the civil races on his shoulders. The Warchief is to be respected, to be obeyed and above all else, to be feared. All glory to the Warchief. *Instinct:* To lead

- Start a war
- Make a show of power
- Enrage the tribes

"They mostly come out at night..."

*Mostly,"
- Newt, Aliens*

TRITON SPY*Solitary, Stealthy, Intelligent, Organized*

Trident (w[2d10] damage)

12 HP 2 Armor

*Close, Near***Special Qualities:** Aquatic

A fishing village caught one in their net, some time ago. Part a man and part some scaly sea creature, it spoke in a broken, spy-learned form of the common tongue before it suffocated in the open air. It told the fishermen of a coming tide, an inescapable swell of the power of some deep-sea god and that the triton empire would rise up and drag the land down into the ocean. The tale spread and now, when fishermen sail the choppy seas, they watch and worry that the dying triton's tales were true. That there are powers deep below that watch and wait. They fear the tide is coming in. *Instinct:* To spy on the surface world

- Reveal their secrets
- Strike at weakness

TRITON TIDECALLER*Group, Divine, Magical, Intelligent*

Waves (d8+2 damage, ignores armor)

6 HP 2 Armor

*Near, Far***Special Qualities:** Aquatic, Mutations

Part priest, part outcast among their kind, the tidecaller speaks with the voice of the deeps. They can be known by their mutations—transparent skin, perhaps, or rows of teeth like a shark. Glowing eyes or fingertips, angler-lights in the darkness of their underwater kingdom. They speak in a strange tongue that can call and command creatures of the sea. They ride wild hippocampi and cast strange spells that rot through the wooden decks of ships or encrust them with barnacles heavy enough to sink. It is the tidecallers who come, now, back to the cities of the triton, bearing word that the prophecy is coming to pass. The world of men will drown in icy brine. The tidecallers speak and the lords begin to listen. *Instinct:* To bring on The Flood

- Cast a spell of water and destruction
- Command beasts of the sea
- Reveal divine proclamation

TRITON SUB-MARINER*Group, Organized, Intelligent*

Harpoon (b[2d8] damage)

6 HP

3 Armor

*Close, Near, Far***Special Qualities:** Aquatic

The triton are not a militant race by nature. They shy away from battle except when the sahuagin attack, and then they only defend themselves and retreat into the depths where their foes can't follow. This trend begins to change. As the tidecallers come to rally their people, some triton men and women take up arms. They call these generals "sub-mariners" and build for them armor of shells and hardened glass. They swim in formation, wielding pikes and harpoons and attack the crews of ships that wander too far from port. Watch for their pennants of kelp on the horizon and the conch-cry of a call to battle and keep, if you can, your boats near shore.

Instinct: To wage war

- Lead tritons to battle
- Pull them beneath the waves

TRITON NOBLE*Group, Organized, Intelligent*

Trident (d8 damage)

6 HP

2 Armor

*Close, Near, Far***Special Qualities:** Aquatic

The triton ruling houses were chosen, they say, at the dawn of time. Granted lordship over all the races of the sea by some now-forgotten god. These bloodlines continue, passing rulership from father to daughter and mother to son through the ages. Each is allowed to rule their city in whatever way they choose—some alone or with their spouses, others in council of brothers and sisters. In ages past, they were known for their sagacity and bloodlines of even-temper were respected above all else. The tidecallers prophecy is changing that: nobles are expected to be strong, not wise. The nobles have begun to respond, and it is feared by some that the ancient blood is changing forever. It may be too late to turn back. Time and tide wait for none. *Instinct:* To lead

- Stir tritons to war
- Call reinforcements



MONSTER SETTING 6

BULETTE*Solitary, Huge, Construct*

Bite (d10+5 damage, 3 piercing)

20 HP 3 Armor

*Close, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Burrowing

A seasoned caravan guard learns to listen for the calls of a scout or sentry with a keen ear. A few extra seconds after the alarm is raised can mean life or death. Different cries mean different responses, too—a call of “orcs!” means draw your sword and steady for blood but a call of “bandits!” says you might be able to bargain. One alarm from the scouts that always, always means it’s time to pack up, whip your horse and run for the hills? “LAND SHARK!” *Instinct:* To devour

- Drag prey into rough tunnels
- Burst from the earth
- Swallow whole

CHIMERA*Solitary, Large, Construct*

Bite (d10+1 damage)

16 HP 1 Armor

Reach

Well-known and categorized, the chimera is a perfected creature. From the codices of the Mage’s Guild to the famous pages of Cullaina’s Creature Compendium, there’s no confusion about what chimera means. Two parts lioness, one part serpent, head of a she-goat, and all the vicious magic one can muster. The actual ritual might vary, as might a detail or two—more creative sorcerers switch the flame breath for acid, perhaps. Used as a guardian, an assassin or merely an instrument of chaos unchained, it matters little. The chimera is the worst sort of abomination: an intentional affront to all natural life. *Instinct:* To do as commanded

- Belch forth flame
- Run them over
- Poison them

DERRO*Horde, Devious, Intelligent, Organized*

Pickaxe (d6 damage)

3 HP

2 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Telepathy

It's typical to think that all the malignant arcane monsters made in this world are birthed by wizards, sorcerers, and their ilk. That the colleges and towers of Dungeon World are womb to every bleak experiment. There are mistakes made in the depths of the earth, too. These ones, the derro, are the mistakes of a long-forgotten dwarven alchemist. The derro don't forget, though. Twisted and hateful, the derro can be spotted by their swollen skulls, brain-matter grown too large. They do not speak except in thoughts to one another and plot in the silent dark to extract sweetest revenge—that of the created on the creator. *Instinct:* To replace dwarves

- Fill a mind with foreign thoughts
- Take control of a beast's mind

DIGESTER*Solitary, Large, Construct*

Acid (d10+1 damage ignores armor)

16 HP

1 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Digest acid secretion

It's okay, magical experimentation is a messy science. For every beautiful pegasus there's a half-done creature that wasn't quite right. We understand. The goblin-elephant you thought was such a great idea. The Gelatinous Drake. Just examples. No judgement here. Anyway, we've got something for that. We call it the Digester. Yes, just like it sounds. Strange looking, I know, and the smell isn't the best, but this thing—it'll eat magic like Svenloff the Stout drinks ale. Next time one of these unfortunate accidents occurs, just point the Digester at it and all your troubles drain away. Just keep an eye on it. Damn thing ate my wand last week. *Instinct:* To digest

- Eat away at something
- Draw sustenance

ETHEREAL FILCHER*Solitary, Devious, Planar*

Stolen dagger (w[2d8] damage)

12 HP

1 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Burrowing

Things go missing. A sock, a silver spoon, your dead mother's bones. We blame the maid, or bad luck, or just a moment of stupid forgetfulness and we move on. We never get to see the real cause of these problems. The spidery thing with human hands and eyes as blue as the deep Ethereal plane from whence the creature comes. We never see the nest it makes of astral silver webbing and stolen objects arranged in some mad pattern. We never watch it assemble its collection of halfling finger-bones, stolen from the hands of the sleeping. We're lucky, that way. *Instinct:* To steal

- Take something important to its planar lair
- Retreat to the Ethereal plane
- Use an item from its lair

ETTIN*Solitary, Large, Construct*

Club (d10+3 damage)

16 HP

1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

Special Qualities: Two heads

What could possibly be better than an idiotic angry hill giant? One with two heads. Fantastic idea, really. Grade A stuff. *Instinct:* To smash

- Attack two enemies at once
- Defend its creator

GIRALLON*Solitary, Huge*

Rending hands (d10+5 damage)

20 HP 1 Armor

*Reach, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Many arms

The pounding of the jungle drums calls to it. The slab of meat on the sacrificial stone to lure in the great ape. Girallon, they call it—a name from the long-forgotten tongue of the kings who bred the beast. Taller than a building, some say. Cloaked in ivory fur with tusks as long as scimitars. Four arms? Six? The rumors are hard to verify. Every year it is the same: some explorer visits the jungle villages seeking the ape and returns, never quite the same, never with a trophy. The pounding of the drums goes on. *Instinct:* To rule

- Answer the call of sacrifice
- Drive them from the jungle
- Throw someone

IRON GOLEM*Group, Large, Construct*

Metal fists (d8+5 damage)

10 HP 3 Armor

*Close, Reach, Forceful***Special Qualities:** Metal

A staple of the enchanter's art. Every golemist and mechanothaumaturge in the kingdoms knows this. Iron is a misnomer, though. These guardians are crafted of any metal, really: steel, copper, or even gold, in some small cases. As much an art as a science, the crafting of a fine golem is as respected in the Kingdoms as a bridge newly built or a castle erected in the mountains. Unceasing watchdog, stalwart defender, the iron golem lives to serve, following its orders eternally. Any enchanter worth his salt can craft one, if he can afford the materials. If not... *Instinct:* To serve

- Follow orders implacably
- Use a special tool or adaptation, built-in

FLESH GOLEM*Horde*

Miscellaneous Claws and Teeth (d6+2 damage) 3 HP 0 Armor
Close, Forceful

Special Qualities: Many body parts

Stolen bits and pieces in the night. Graveyards stealthily uprooted and maybe tonight an arm, a leg, another head (the last one came apart too soon). Even the humblest hedge-enchanter can make do with what he can and, with a little creativity, well—it's not only the college that can make life, hmm? We'll show them. *Instinct:* To live

- Follow orders
- Detach a body part

KRAKEN*Solitary, Huge*

Giant tentacles (d10+5 damage) 20 HP 2 Armor
Reach, Forceful

Special Qualities: Aquatic

"A cephalo-what? No, boy. Not "a kraken" but "the kraken." I don't know what nonsense they taught you at that school you say you're from, but here, we know to respect the Hungerer. Right, that's what we call it, The Hungerer in the Deep to be more proper. Ain't no god, though we've got those, too. It's a squid! A mighty squid with tentacles thicker 'round than a barrel and eyes the size of the full moon. Smart, too, the Hungerer. Knows just when to strike—when you're all too drunk or too tired or run out of clean water, that's when he gets you. No, I ain't ever seen him. I'm alive, aren't I?" *Instinct:* To rule the ocean

- Drag a person or ship to a watery grave
- Wrap them in tentacles

MANTICORE	<i>Solitary, Large, Construct</i>
Stinger (d10+1 damage, 1 piercing)	16 HP 3 Armor
<i>Close, Reach, Messy</i>	

Special Qualities: Wings

If the chimera is the first step down a dark path, the manticore is a door that can't be closed once it's been opened. A lion, a scorpion, the wings of a drake. All difficult to obtain but not impossible and just animals, anyway. The last component, the hissing hateful face of the beast, is the ingredient that makes a manticore so cruel. Young or old, man or woman, it matters not but that they are human, living and breathing, married to the creature with twisted magic. All sense of who they are is lost, and maybe that's a blessing, but the beast is born from human suffering. No wonder, then, that they're all so eager to kill. *Instinct:* To kill

- Poison them
- Rip something apart

OWLBEAR	<i>Solitary, Construct</i>
Claws (d10 damage)	12 HP 2 Armor
<i>Close</i>	

Body of a bear. Feathers of an owl. Beak, claws, and excellent night vision. What's not to love? *Instinct:* To hunt

- Strike from darkness

PEGASUS*Group, Construct*

Sharp hooves (d8 damage)

10 HP 1 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Wings

Don't go thinking that every creature not natural-born is a horrible abomination. Don't imagine for a second that they're all tentacles and screaming and blood or whatever. Take this noble beast, for example. Lovely thing, isn't it? A fine white horse with the wings of a swan. Don't look like it ought to be able to fly, but it does. The elves work miracles, in their own way. They breed true—that's the purity of elf-magic at work. Hatching from little crystal eggs and bonded with their riders for life. There's still some beauty in the world, mark my words. *Instinct:* To carry aloft

- Carry a rider into the air
- Give their rider an advantage

RUST MONSTER*Group, Construct*

Corrosive touch (d8 damage, ignores armor)

6 HP 3 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Corrosive touch

A very distinctive-looking creature. Something like a reddish cricket, I think. Long crickety legs, anyhow. Blind, too, as I understand it—they feel their way around with those long moth-looking tendrils. Feed that way, too. Sift through piles of metal for the choicest bits. That's what they eat, don't matter the type, neither. Their merest touch turns it all to rusted flakes. Magic lasts longer but under the scrutiny of a rust monster, it's a foregone conclusion. Only the gods know where they came from, but they're a curse if you value your belongings. *Instinct:* To decay

- Turn metal to rust
- Gain strength from consuming metal

XORN*Solitary, Large, Construct*

Maw (d10 damage)

12 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Burrowing

Dwarf-made elemental garbage muncher. Shaped like a trash bin with a radius of arms to feed excess rock and stone into its gaping maw. They eat stone and excrete light and heat. Perfect for operating a mine or digging out a quarry. Once one gets lost in the sewers below a city, though, or in the foundation of a castle? You're in deep trouble. They'll eat and eat until you've got nothing left but to collapse the place down on it and move somewhere else. Ask Burrin, Son of Fjornnvald, exile from his clan. I bet he could tell you a story about a xorn. *Instinct:* To eat

- Consume stone
- Give off a burst of light and heat



MONSTER SETTING 7

ABOLETH*Group, Huge, Intelligent*

Tentacle (d10+3 damage)

18 HP 0 Armor

Reach

Special Qualities: Telepathy

Deep below the surface of the world, in freshwater seas untouched by the sun, dwell the aboleth. Fish the size of whales, with strange growths of gelatinous feelers used to probe the lightless shores. They're served by slaves: blind albino victims of any race unfortunate enough to stumble on them, drained of thought and life by the powers of the aboleth's alien mind. In the depths they plot against each other, fishy cultists building and digging upward towards the surface until someday, they'll breach it. For now, they sleep and dream and guide their pallid minions to do their bidding. *Instinct:* To command

- Invade a mind
- Turn minions on them
- Put a plan in motion

APOCALYPSE DRAGON*Solitary, Huge, Magical, Divine*

Bite (b[2d12]+9 damage, 4 piercing)

26 HP 5 Armor

Reach, Forceful, Messy

Special Qualities: Inch-thick metal hide, Supernatural knowledge, Wings

The end of all things shall be a burning—of tree and earth and of the air itself. It shall come upon the plains and mountains not from beyond this world but from within it. Birthed from the womb of deepest earth shall come the Dragon that Will End the World. In its passing all will become ash and bile and the Dungeon World a dying thing will drift through planar space devoid of life. They say to worship the Apocalypse Dragon is to invite madness. They say to love it is to know oblivion. The awakening is coming. *Instinct:* To end the world

- Set a disaster in motion
- Breathe forth the elements
- Act with perfect foresight

*"Sacred bones crumble enshrined**Entombed in roots and stones**A dead sun burns in the hollow Earth**Nameless rivers of dust"**—Wolves in the Throne Room, "Thuja Magus Imperium"*

LOWER DEPTHS

CHAOS SPAWN*Solitary, Amorphous*

Chaotic touch (d10 damage)

19 HP 1 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Chaos form

Driven from the city, a cultist finds sanctuary in towns and villages. Discovered there, he flees to the hills and scratches his devotion on the cave walls. Found out again, he is chased with knife and torch into the depths, crawling deeper and deeper until, in the deepest places, he loses his way. First, he forgets his name. Then he forgets his shape. His chaos gods, most beloved, bless him with a new one.

Instinct: To undermine the established order

- Rewrite reality
- Unleash chaos from containment

CHUUL*Group, Large, Cautious*

Claws (d8+1 damage, 3 piercing)

10 HP 4 Armor

Close, Reach, Messy

Special Qualities: Amphibious

Your worst seafood nightmare come to life. A vicious sort of half-man half-crawdad, cursed with primal intelligence and blessed with a pair of razor-sharp claws. Strange things lurk in the stinking pools in caverns best forgotten and the chuul is one of them. If you spot one, your best hope is a heavy mace to crack its shell and maybe a little garlic butter. Mmmm. *Instinct:* To split

- Split something in two with mighty claws
- Retreat into water

DEEP ELF ASSASSIN	<i>Group, Intelligent, Organized</i>
Poisoned blade (d8 damage, 1 piercing)	6 HP 1 Armor
<i>Close</i>	

It was not so simple a thing as a war over religion or territory. No disagreement of queens led to the great sundering of the elves. It was sadness. It was the very diminishing of the world by the lesser races. The glory of all the elves had built was cracking and turning to glass. Some, then, chose to separate themselves from the world; wracked with tears they turned their backs on men and dwarves. There were others, though, that were overcome with something new. A feeling no elf had felt before. Spite. Hatred filled these elves and twisted them and they turned on their weaker cousins. Some still remain after the great exodus below. Some hide amongst us with spider-poisoned blades, meting out that strangest of punishments: elven vengeance. *Instinct:* To spite the surface races

- Poison them
- Unleash an ancient spell
- Call reinforcements

DEEP ELF SWORDMASTER	<i>Group, Intelligent, Organized</i>
Barbed blade (b[2d8]+2 damage, 1 piercing)	6 HP 2 Armor
<i>Close</i>	

The deep elves lost the sweetness and gentle peace of their bright cousins ages ago, but they did not abandon grace. They move with a swiftness and beauty that would bring a tear to any warrior's eye. In the dark, they've practiced. A cruelty has infested their swordsmanship—a wickedness comes to the fore. Barbed blades and whips replace the shining pennant-spears of elven battles on the surface. The swordmasters of the deep elf clans do not merely seek to kill, but to punish with every stroke of their blades. Wickedness and pain are their currency. *Instinct:* To punish unbelievers

- Inflict pain beyond measure
- Use the dark to advantage

DEEP ELF PRIEST*Solitary, Divine, Intelligent, Organized*

Smite (d10+2 damage)

14 HP 0 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Divine connection

The spirits of the trees and the lady sunlight are far, far from home in the depths where the deep elves dwell. New gods were found there, waiting for their children to come home. Gods of the spiders, the fungal forests, and things that whisper in the forbidden caves. The deep elves, ever attuned to the world around them, listened with hateful intent to their new gods and found a new source of power. Hate calls to hate and grim alliances were made. Even among these spiteful ranks, piety finds a way to express itself. *Instinct:* To pass on divine vengeance

- Weave spells of hatred and malice
- Rally the deep elves
- Pass on divine knowledge

DRAGON*Solitary, Huge, Terrifying, Cautious, Hoarder*

Bite (b[2d12]+5 damage, 4 piercing)

16 HP 5 Armor

*Reach, Messy***Special Qualities:** Elemental blood, Wings

They are the greatest and most terrible things this world will ever have to offer. *Instinct:* To rule

- Bend an element to its will
- Demand tribute
- Act with disdain

GRAY RENDER*Solitary, Large*

Rending claws (d10+3 damage, 3 piercing)

16 HP

1 Armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

On its own, the render is a force of utter destruction. Huge and leathery, with a maw of unbreakable teeth and claws to match, the render seems to enjoy little more than tearing things apart. Stone, flesh, or steel, it matters little. However, the gray render is so rarely found alone. They bond with other creatures. Some at birth, others as fully-grown creatures, and a gray render will follow their bonded master wherever they go, bringing them offerings of meat and protecting them while they sleep. Finding an un-bonded render means certain riches, if you survive to sell it. *Instinct:* To serve

- Tear something apart

MAGMIN*Horde, Intelligent, Organized, Hoarder*

Flaming hammer (d6+2 damage)

7 HP

4 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Fiery blood

Dwarf-shaped and industrious, the magmin are among the deepest-dwellers of Dungeon World. Found in cities of brass and obsidian built nearest the molten core of the planet, the magmin live a life devoted to craft—especially that of fire and magical items related to it. Surly and strange, they do not often deign to speak to petitioners who appear at their gates, even those who have somehow found a way to survive the hellish heat. Even so, they respect little more than a finely made item and to learn to forge from a magmin craftsman means unlocking secrets unknown to surface blacksmiths. Like so much else, visiting the magmin is a game of risk and reward. *Instinct:* To craft

- Offer a trade or deal
- Strike with fire or magic
- Provide just the right item, at a price

MINOTAUR*Solitary, Large*

Axe (d10+1 damage)

16 HP 1 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Unerring sense of direction

“Head of a man, body of a bull. No, wait, I’ve got that backwards. It’s the bull’s head and the man’s body. Hooves sometimes? Is that right? I remember the old king said something about a maze? Blast! You know I can’t think under this kind of pressure. What was that? Oh gods, I think it’s coming...” *Instinct:* To contain

- Confuse them
- Make them lost

NAGA*Solitary, Intelligent, Organized, Hoarder, Magical*

Bite (d10 damage)

12 HP 2 Armor

Close, Reach

Ambitious and territorial above nearly all else, the naga are very rarely found without a well-formed and insidious cult of followers. You’ll see it in many mountain towns—a snake sigil scrawled on a tavern wall or a local church burned to the ground. People going missing in the mines. Men and women wearing the mark of the serpent. At the core of it all lies a naga: an old race now fallen into obscurity, still preening with the head of a man over its coiled, serpent body. Variations of these creatures exist depending on their bloodline and original purpose, but they are all master manipulators and magical forces to be reckoned with. *Instinct:* To lead

- Send a follower to their death
- Use old magic
- Offer a deal or bargain

SALAMANDER *Horde, Large, Intelligent, Organized, Planar*
Flaming spear (b[2d6]+3 damage) 7 HP 3 Armor
Close, Reach, Near

Special Qualities: Burrowing

“The excavation uncovered what the reports called a basalt gate. Black stone carved with molten runes. When they dug it up, the magi declared it inert but further evidence indicates that was an incorrect claim. The entire team went missing. When we arrived, the gate was glowing. Its light filled the whole cavern. We could see from the entrance that the area had become full of these creatures—like men with red and orange skin, tall as an ogre but with a snake’s tail where their legs ought to be. They were clothed, too—some had black glass armor. They spoke to each other in a tongue that sounded like grease in a fire. I wanted to leave but the sergeant wouldn’t listen. You’ve already read what happened next, sir. I know I’m the only one that got back, but what I said is true. The gate is open, now. This is just the beginning!” *Instinct:* To consume in flame

- Summon elemental fire
- Melt away deception



MONSTER SETTING 8

ANGEL *Solitary, Terrifying, Divine, Intelligent, Organized*
Sword of Flames (b[2d10]+4 damage, ignores armor) 18 HP
4 Armor
Close, Forceful

Special Qualities: Wings

“So was it written that the heavens opened up to Avra’hal and did an angel from the clouds emerge to speak unto her and so did it appear to her as her firstborn daughter—beautiful, of ebon skin and golden eyes—and did Avra’hal weep to see it. ‘Be not afraid,’ it commanded her. ‘Go to the villages I have shown you in your dreams and unto them show the word I have written on your soul.’ Avra’hal wept and wept and did agree to do this and did take up her sword and tome and did into the villages go, a great thirst for blood on her lips for the word the angel wrote upon the soul of Avra’hal was ‘kill.’” *Instinct:* To share divine will

- Deliver visions and prophecy
- Stir mortals to action
- Expose sin and injustice

BARBED DEVIL *Solitary, Large, Planar, Terrifying*
Spines (d10+3 damage, 3 piercing) 16 HP 3 Armor
Close, Reach, Messy

Special Qualities: Spines

There are a thousand forms of devil, maybe more. Some common and some unique. Each time the Inquisitors discover a new one they write it into the Tormentors Codex and the knowledge is shared among the abbeys in the hope that atrocities of that particular sort won’t find their way into the world again. The barbed devil has long been known to the brothers and sisters of the Inquisition. It appears only at a site of great violence or when called by a wayward summoner. Covered in sharp quills, this particular demon revels in the spilling of blood, preferably by impaling victims piecemeal or in whole upon its thorns and letting them die there. Cruel but not particularly effective beyond slaughter. A low inquisitorial priority. *Instinct:* To rend flesh and spill blood

- Impale someone
- Kill indiscriminately

PLANAR POWERS

CHAIN DEVIL*Solitary, Planar*

Crush (d10 damage, ignores armor)

12 HP 3 Armor

Close, Reach

Do you think the phrase “drag him to hell” means nothing? It is unfortunately literal, in the case of the chain devil. Appearing differently to each victim, this summoned creature has but a single purpose: to wrap its victim up in binding coils and take it away to a place of torment. Sometimes it will come as a man-shaped mass of rusting iron, hooks and coils of mismatched links. Other times, a roiling tangle of rope or kelp or twisted bloody bedsheets. The results are always the same. *Instinct:* To capture

- Take a captive
- Return to whence it came
- Torture with glee

CONCEPT ELEMENTAL *Solitary, Devious, Planar, Amorphous***Special Qualities:** Ideal form

The planes are not as literal as our world. Clothed in the elemental chaos are places of stranger stuff than air and water. Here, rivers of time crash upon shores of crystal fear. Bleak storms of nightmare roil and churn in a laughter-bright sky. Sometimes, the spirits of these places can be lured into our world, though they are infinitely more unpredictable and strange than mere fire or earth might be. Easier to make mistakes, too—one might try calling up a wealth elemental and be surprised to find a murder elemental instead. *Instinct:* To perfect its concept

- Demonstrate its concept in its purest form

CORRUPTER*Solitary, Devious, Planar, Hoarder*

Secret dagger (w[2d8] damage)

12 HP 0 Armor

Close

“Surely, my good man, you must know why I am here. Must know who I am. You said the words. You spilled the blood and followed the instructions almost to the letter. Your pronunciation was a bit off but that’s to be expected. I’ve come to give you what you’ve always wanted, friend. Glory, love, money? Paltry things when you’ve the vaults of hell to plumb. Don’t look so shocked, you knew what this was. You have but one thing we desire. Promise it to us, and the world shall be yours for the taking. Trust me.” *Instinct:* To bargain

- Offer a deal with horrible consequences
- Plumb the vaults of hell for a bargaining chip
- Make a show of power

DJINN*Group, Large, Magical*

Flame (d8+1 damage, ignores armor)

14 HP 4 Armor

Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Made of flame

“Stop rubbing that lamp, you idiot. I do not care what you have read, it will not grant you wishes. I brought you here to show you something real, something true. See this mural? It shows the ancient city. The true city that came before. They called it Majilis and it was made of brass by the spirits. They had golem servants and human lovers and, in that day, it was said you could trade them a year of your life for a favor. We are not here to gather treasure this night, fool, we are here to learn. The djinn still sometimes come to these places, and you must understand their history if you are to know how to behave. They are powerful and wicked and proud and you must know them if you hope to survive a summoning. Now, bring the lamp here and we will light it, it grows dark and these ruins are dangerous at night.” *Instinct:* To burn eternally

- Grant power for a price
- Summon the forces of the City of Brass

*“These humans are beginning to bore me.”
—Zod, Superman II*

HELL HOUND*Group, Planar, Organized*

Fiery Bite (d8 damage)

10 HP 1 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Hide of shadow

When one reneges on a deal, does not the debtor come for payment? Does the owed party not send someone to collect what is due? So too with the Powers Below. They only want what is theirs. A howling pack of shadows, flame and jagged bone, driven by the hunting horn. They will not cease, they cannot be evaded. *Instinct:* To pursue

- Follow despite all obstacles
- Spew fire
- Summon the forces of hell on their target

IMP*Horde, Planar, Intelligent, Organized*

Flame gout (d6 damage, ignores armor)

7 HP 1 Armor

Close, Near, Far

These tiny observer-demons often act as a first-time binding subject by neophyte warlocks. They can be found infesting arcane cabals, drinking potions when no one watches, and chasing pets and servants with tiny pitchforks. A caricature of true demonhood, these little creatures are, thankfully, not too difficult to bind or extinguish.

Instinct: To harass

- Send information back to hell
- Cause mischief

INEVITABLE *Group, Large, Magical, Cautious, Amorphous, Planar*

Hammer (d10+1 damage) 21 HP 5 Armor
Close, Reach

Special Qualities: Made of Order

All things come to an end. Reality bleeds from the cut of entropy's knife. At the edge of time itself stand the Inevitable. Massive, powerful and seemingly carved from star-stuff themselves, the inevitable intervene only where magic or calamity have undone the skein of fate. Where the arrogant and powerful boil the substance of destiny away and seek to undermine the very laws of reality, the inevitable arrive to guide things back to the proper order. Unshakable, seemingly immune to mortal harm and utterly enigmatic, it is said that the inevitable are all that will remain when time's long thread has run out. *Instinct:* To preserve order

- End a spell or effect
- Enforce a law of nature or man
- Give a glimpse of destiny

LARVAE *Horde, Devious, Planar, Intelligent*

Slime (w[2d4] damage) 10 HP 0 Armor
Close

Those who have seen visions of the Planes Below, and survived with their sanity intact, speak of masses of these writhing wretches. Maggots with the faces of men and women, crying out for salvation in a nest of flames. Sometimes, they can be goaded out through a rip in the planar caul and emerge, wriggling and in torment, into our world. Once here, they spread misery and sickness during their mayfly lives before expiring into a slurry of gore. All in all, an enticement to do good deeds in life. *Instinct:* To suffer

- Fill them with despair
- Beg for mercy
- Draw evil attention

NIGHTMARE*Horde, Large, Magical, Terrifying, Planar*

Trample (d6+1 damage)

7 HP

4 Armor

*Close, Reach***Special Qualities:** Flame and shadow

The herd came from a pact made in the days when folk still inhabited the Blasted Steppes. Horselords, they were, who travelled those lands. Born in the saddle, it was said. One of theirs, in a bid to dominate his peers, made a black pact with some fell power and traded away his finest horses. He had some power, sure—but what's a thousand year dynasty when a life is so short? Now the fiends of the pit ride on the finest horses ever seen. Coats of shining oil and manes of tormented flame: these are steeds of hell's cavalry. *Instinct:* To ride rampant

- Sheath a rider in hellish flame
- Drive them away

QUASIT*Horde, Planar*

Hellish weaponry (d6 damage)

7 HP

2 Armor

*Close***Special Qualities:** Adaptable form

An imp with some ambition. A quasit is a kind of foot soldier in the demon realm. A commoner, armed with fangs or claws or wings or some other thing to give it just a little edge over its hellish peers. Commonly bound by warlocks to carry heavy loads or build bridges or guard their twisted towers, a quasit can take on many forms, none of them pleasant. *Instinct:* To serve

- Attack with abandon
- Inflict pain

THE TARRASQUE*Solitary, Huge, Planar*

Special Qualities: Impervious

The Tarrasque. Legendary unstoppable juggernaut—eater of cities and swallower of ships, horses, and knights. A creature unseen in an age but about whom all kinds of stories are told. One thread of truth weaves through these stories. It cannot be killed. No blade can pierce its stony shell nor spell penetrate the shield it somehow bears. Stories say, though, that the will of one pure soul can send it to slumber, though what that means and, by the gods, where such a thing might be found, pray we do not ever need to learn. It slumbers. Somewhere in the periphery of the planar edge, it sleeps for now.

Instinct: To consume

- Swallow a person, group, or place whole
- Release a remnant of a long-eaten place from its gullet

WORD DEMON*Solitary, Planar, Magical*

All of mortal magic is just words. Spells are prayers, rote formula, runes cast, or songs sung. Letters, words, sentences, and syntax strung together in a language that the whole world itself might understand. By way of words we can make our fellows cry or exult, can paint pictures and whisper desire to the gods. No little wonder, then, that in all that power is intent. That every word we utter, if repeated and meaning or emotion given to it, can spark a kind of unintentional summoning. Word daemons are called by accident, appear at random and are often short-lived, but come to attend a particular word. Capricious, unpredictable and dangerous, yes—but possibly useful, depending on the word. *Instinct:* To further their word

- Cast a spell related to their word
- Bring their word into abundance



MONSTER SETTING 9

ACOLYTE

“Can’t all be the High Priest, they said. Can’t all wield the White Spire, they said. Scrub the floor, they told me. The Cthonic Overgod don’t want a messy floor, do he? They said it’d be enlightenment and magic. Feh. It’s bruised knees and dishpan hands. If only I’d been a cleric, instead.” *Instinct:* To serve dutifully

- Follow dogma
- Offer eternal reward for mortal deeds

ADVENTURER

Horde, Intelligent

Sword (d6 damage)

3 HP 1 Armor

Close

Special Qualities: Endless enthusiasm

“Scum of the earth, they are. A troupe of armored men and women come sauntering into town, brandishing what, for all intents and purposes, is enough magical and mundane power to level the whole place. Bringing with them bags and bags of loot, still dripping blood from whatever poor sod they had to kill to get it. An economical fiasco waiting to happen, if you ask me. The whole system becomes completely uprooted. Dangerous, unpredictable murder-hobos. Oh, wait, you’re an adventurer? I take it all back.” *Instinct:* To adventure or die trying

- Go on a fool’s errand
- Act impulsively
- Share tales of past exploits

BANDIT*Horde, Intelligent, Organized*

Dirk (d6 damage)

3 HP

1 Armor

Close

Desperation is the watchword of banditry. When times are tough, what else is there to do but scavenge a weapon and take up with a clan of nasty men and women? Highway robbery, poaching, scams and cons and murder most foul but we've all got to eat so who can blame them? Then again, there's evil in the hearts of some and who's to say that desperation isn't a need to sate one's baser lusts? Anyway—it's this or starve, sometimes. *Instinct:* To rob

- Steal something
- Demand tribute

BANDIT KING*Solitary, Intelligent, Organized*

Trusty knife (b[2d10] damage)

12 HP

1 Armor

Close

Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven. *Instinct:* To lead

- Make a demand
- Extort
- Topple power

FOOL

There's not but one person in all the King's court allowed to speak the truth. The real, straight-and-honest truth about anything. The fool couches it all in bells and prancing and chalky face-paint, but who else gets to tell the King what's what? You can trust a fool, they say, especially when he's made you red-faced and you'd just as soon drown him in a cesspit. *Instinct:* To mock

- Expose injustice
- Play a trick

GUARDSMAN*Group, Intelligent, Organized*

Spear (d8 damage)

6 HP

1 Armor

Close, Reach

Noble protector or merely drunken lout, it often makes no difference to these sorts. Falling shy of a noble knight, the proud town guard is an ancient profession nonetheless. These folks of the constabulary often dress in the colors of their lord (when you can see it under the mud) and, depending on the richness of that lord, might even have a decent weapon and some armor that fits. Those are the lucky ones. Even so, someone has to be there to keep an eye on the gate when the Black Riders have been spotted in the woods. Too many of us owe our lives to these souls—remember that the next time one is drunkenly insulting your mother, hmm? *Instinct*: To do as ordered

- Uphold the law
- Make a profit

HALFLING THIEF *Solitary, Small, Intelligent, Stealthy, Devious*

Dagger (w[2d8] damage)

12 HP

1 Armor

Close

It would be foolish, now, to draw conclusions about folks just because they happen to be good at one thing or another. Then again, a spade's a spade, isn't it. Or maybe just the goodly, soft-and-sweet type of Halfling have the mind to stay in their grassy-hill homes and aren't the type you find in the slums and taverns of the mannish world. Perhaps they're there to cut your purse for calling them "halfling" in the first place. Not all take so kindly to the title. Or they're playing a game, pretending to be a child in need of alms—and your arrogant eyes can't even see the difference until too late. Well, it matters little. They're gone with your coin before you even realize you deserved it. *Instinct*: To live a life of stolen luxury

- Steal
- Put on the appearance of friendship

HEDGE WIZARD

Magical

Not all those who wield the arcane arts are adventuring wizards. Nor necromancers in mausoleums or sorcerers of ancient bloodline. Some are just old men and women, smart enough to have discovered a trick or two. It might make them a bit batty to come by that knowledge, but if you've a curse to break or a love to prove, might be that a hedge wizard will help you, if you can find his rotten hut in the swamp and pay the price he asks. *Instinct:* To learn

- Cast almost the right spell (for a price)
- Make deals beyond their ken

HIGH PRIEST

Respected by all who gaze upon them, the high priests and abbesses of Dungeon World are treated with a sort of reverence. Whether they pay homage to Ur-thuu-hak, God of Swords, or whisper quiet prayers to Namiah, precious daughter of peace, they know a thing or two that you and I won't ever know. The gods speak to them as a hawker-of-wares might speak to us in the marketplace. For this, for the bearing-of-secrets and the knowing-of-things, we give them a wide berth as they pass in their shining robes. *Instinct:* To lead

- Set down divine law
- Reveal divine secrets
- Commission divine undertakings

HUNTER

Group, Intelligent

Ragged bow (d6 damage)

6 HP 1 Armor

Near, Far

The wilds are home to more than just beasts of horn and scale. There are men and women out there, too—those who smell blood on the wind and stalk the plains in the skins of their prey. Whether with a trusty longbow bought on a rare trip into the city or with a knife of bone and sinew, these folk have more in common with the things they track and eat than with their own kind. Solemn, somber and quiet, they find a sort of peace in the wild. *Instinct:* To survive

- Bring back news from the wilds
- Slay a beast

KNIGHT*Solitary, Intelligent, Organized, Cautious*

Sword (b[2d10] damage)

12 HP

4 Armor

Close

What youngster doesn't cling to the rail at the mighty joust, blinded by the sun on their glittering armor, wishing they could be the one adorned in steel and riding to please the King and Queen? What peasant youth with naught but a loaf of bread and a lame sow doesn't wish to trade it all in for the lance and the bright pennant? A knight is many things—a holy warrior, a sworn sword, a villain sometimes, too, but a knight cannot help but be a symbol to all who see her. A knight means something. *Instinct:* To live by a code

- Make a moral stand
- Lead soldiers into battle

MERCHANT

"Ten foot poles. Get your ten foot poles, here. Torches, bright and hot. Mules, too—stubborn but immaculately bred. Need a linen sack, do you? Right over here! Come and get your ten foot poles!"

Instinct: To profit

- Propose a business venture
- Offer a "deal"

NOBLE

Are they granted their place by the gods, perhaps? Is that why they're able to pass their riches and power down by birth? Some trick or enchantment of the blood, maybe. The peasant bends his knee and scrapes and toils and the noble wears the finery of his place and, they say, we all have our burdens to bear. Seems to me that some of us have burdens of stone and some carry their weight in gold. It's a tough life. *Instinct:* To rule

- Issue an order
- Offer a reward

“Beware the beast man, for he is the Devil’s pawn. Alone among God’s primates, he kills for sport, for lust, for greed. Yet, he will murder his brother to possess his brother’s land. Let him not breed in great numbers, for he will make a desert of his home and yours. Shun him; drive him back into his jungle lair, for he is the harbinger of death.”
—Planet of the Apes

PEASANT

Covered in muck, downtrodden at the bottom of the great chain of being, we all stand on the backs of those who grow our food on their farms. Some peasants do better than others, but none will ever see a coin of gold in their day. They’ll dream at night of how someday, somehow, they’ll fight a dragon and save a princess. Don’t act like you weren’t one before you lost what little sense you had, adventurer.

Instinct: To get by

- Plead for help
- Offer a simple reward and gratitude

REBEL

Horde, Intelligent, Organized

Axe (d6 damage)

3 HP 1 Armor

Close

In the countryside they’d be called outlaw and driven off or killed. The city, though, is full of places to hide. Damp basements to pore over maps and to plan and plot against a corrupt system. Like rats, they gnaw away at order, either to supplant it anew or just erode the whole thing. The line between change and chaos is a fine one—some rebels walk that thin line and others just want to see it all torched. Disguise, a knife in the dark or a thrown torch at the right moment are all tools of the rebel. The burning brand of anarchy is a common fear amongst the nobles of Dungeon World. These men and women are why. *Instinct:* To upset order

- Die for a cause
- Inspire others

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SOLDIER*Horde, Intelligent, Organized*

Spear (d6 damage)

3 HP

1 Armor

Close, Reach

For a commoner with a strong arm, sometimes it's this or be a bandit. It's wear the colors and don ill-fitting armor and march into the unknown with a thousand other scared men and women conscripted to fight the wars of our time. They could be hiding out in the woods instead, living off poached elk and dodging the king's guard. Better to risk one's life in service to a cause. To bravely toss one's lot in with one's fellows and hope to come out the other side still in one piece. Besides, the nobles need strong men and women. What is it they say? A handful of soldiers beats a mouthful of arguments. *Instinct:* To fight

- March into battle
- Fight as one

SPY

Beloved of kings but never truly trusted. Mysterious, secretive and alluring, the life of a spy is, if you ask a commoner, full of romance and intrigue. They're a knife in the dark and a pair of watchful eyes. A spy can be your best friend, your lover or that old man you see in the market every day. One never knows. Hells, maybe you're a spy—they say there's magic that can turn folks' minds without them ever knowing it. How can we trust you? *Instinct:* To infiltrate

- Report the truth
- Double cross

TINKERER

It's said that if you see a tinker on the road and you don't offer him a swig of ale or some of your food that he'll leave a curse of bad luck behind. A tinker is a funny thing. These strange folk often travel the roads between towns with their oddment carts and favorite mules. With a ratty dog and always a story to tell. Sometimes the mail, too, if you're lucky and live in a place where Queen's Post won't go. If you're kind, maybe they'll sell you a rose that never wilts or a clock that chimes with the sound of faerie laughter. Or maybe they're just antisocial peddlers. You never know, right? *Instinct:* To create

- Offer an oddity at a price
- Spin tales of great danger and reward in far-off lands



CHAPTER 18



The musty tombs and forgotten treasure troves of the world are filled with useful items. The fighter can find a sharp new sword or the thief might stumble across a deadly poison. Most items are mundane—not magical or intrinsically unique in any way. Any item that is magical or one-of-a-kind is not mundane for the purposes of moves. The fighter’s signature weapon is never mundane.

Each piece of equipment will have a number of tags. These will tell you something about how the equipment affects the character using it (like +Armor) or suggest something about the way it is used (like the Range tags). Like everything else in Dungeon World, these guide the fiction you’re creating in play. If a weapon is awkward, it might mean that you’re more likely to drop it when you fail that hack and slash roll.

By no means is this an exhaustive list—feel free to create your own tags.

EQUIPMENT

GENERAL EQUIPMENT TAGS

These are general tags that can apply to just about any piece of gear. You'll see them on armor, weapons or general adventuring tools.

Applied: It's only useful when carefully applied to a person or to something they eat or drink.

Awkward: It's unwieldy and tough to use.

+Bonus: It modifies your effectiveness in a specified situation. It might be "+1 forward to spout lore" or "-1 ongoing to hack and slash."

n coins: How much it costs to buy, normally. If the cost includes "-Charisma" a little negotiation subtracts the haggler's Charisma score (not modifier) from the price.

Dangerous: It's easy to get in trouble with it. If you interact with it without proper precautions the GM may freely invoke the consequences of your foolish actions.

Ration: It's edible, more or less.

Requires: It's only useful to certain people. If you don't meet the requirements it works poorly, if at all.

Slow: It takes minutes or more to use.

Touch: It's used by touching it to the target's skin.

Two-handed: It takes two hands to use it effectively.

n weight: Count the listed amount against your Load. Something with no listed weight isn't designed to be carried. 100 coins in standard denominations is 1 weight. The same value in gems or fine art may be lighter or heavier.

Worn: To use it, you have to be wearing it.

n Uses: It can only be used *n* times.

WEAPONS

Weapons don't kill monsters, people do. That's why weapons in Dungeon World don't have a listed damage. A weapon is useful primarily for its tags which describe what the weapon is useful for. A dagger is not useful because it does more or less damage than some other blade. It's useful because it's small and easy to strike with at close distance. A dagger in the hands of the wizard is not nearly so dangerous as one in the hands of a skilled fighter.

"He equipped himself with a dagger, sword, and spear; in addition to the blade she had taken from the barrow, Eilonwy carried a slim dagger at her waist. Taran collected as many bows and quivers of arrows as he could carry. The group was now lightly but effectively armed."

— *The Book of Three*

WEAPON TAGS

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

n Ammo: It counts as ammunition for appropriate ranged weapons. The number indicated does not represent individual arrows or sling stones, but represents what you have left on hand.

Forceful: It can knock someone back a pace, maybe even off their feet.

+n Damage: It is particularly harmful to your enemies. When you deal damage, you add *n* to it.

Ignores Armor: Don't subtract armor from the damage taken.

Messy: It does damage in a particularly destructive way, ripping people and things apart.

n Piercing: It goes right through armor. When you deal damage with *n* piercing, you subtract *n* from the enemy's armor for that attack.

Precise: It rewards careful strikes. You use DEX to hack and slash with this weapon, not STR.

Reload: After you attack with it, it takes more than a moment to reset for another attack.

Stun: When you attack with it, it does stun damage instead of normal damage.

Thrown: Throw it at someone to hurt them. If you volley with this weapon, you can't choose to mark off ammo on a 7–9; once you throw it, it's gone until you can recover it.

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

Hand: It's useful for attacking something within your reach, no further.

Close: It's useful for attacking something at arm's reach plus a foot or two.

Reach: It's useful for attacking something that's several feet away—maybe as far as ten.

Near: It's useful for attacking if you can see the whites of their eyes.

Far: It's useful for attacking something in shouting distance.

WEAPON LIST

The stats below are for typical items. There are, of course, variations. A dull long sword might be -1 damage instead while a masterwork dagger could be +1 damage. Consider the following to be stats for typical weapons of their type—a specific weapon could have different tags to represent its features.

Ragged Bow	<i>near, 15 coins, 2 weight</i>
Fine Bow	<i>near, far, 60 coins, 2 weight</i>
Hunter's Bow	<i>near, far, 100 coins, 1 weight</i>
Crossbow	<i>near, +1 damage, reload, 35 coins, 3 weight</i>
Bundle of Arrows	<i>3 ammo, 1 coin, 1 weight</i>
Elven Arrows	<i>4 ammo, 20 coins, 1 weight</i>
Club, Shillelagh	<i>close, 1 coin, 2 weight</i>
Staff	<i>close, two-handed, 1 coin, 1 weight</i>
Dagger, Shiv, Knife	<i>hand, 2 coins, 1 weight</i>
Throwing Dagger	<i>thrown, near, 1 coin, 0 weight</i>
Short Sword, Axe, Warhammer, Mace	<i>close, 8 coins, 1 weight</i>
Spear	<i>reach, thrown, near, 5 coins, 1 weight</i>
Long Sword, Battle Axe, Flail	<i>close, +1 damage, 15 coins, 2 weight</i>
Halberd	<i>reach, +1 damage, two-handed, 9 coins, 2 weight</i>
Rapier	<i>close, precise, 25 coins, 1 weight</i>
Dueling Rapier	<i>close, 1 piercing, precise, 50 coins, 2 weight</i>

"It's a trick. Get an axe."
—Ash, "Army of Darkness"

ARMOR

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

ARMOR TAGS

Armor, like weapons, has tags. Some are purely descriptive but the ones below have some mechanical effect on the player wearing them

n Armor: It protects you from harm and absorbs damage. When you take damage, subtract your armor from the total. If you have more than one item with *n Armor*, only the highest value counts.

+n Armor: It protects you and stacks with other armor. Add its value to your total armor.

Clumsy: It's tough to move around with. -1 ongoing while using it. This penalty is cumulative.

ARMOR LIST

Leather, Chainmail	<i>1 armor, worn, 10 coins, 1 weight</i>
Scale Mail	<i>2 armor, worn, clumsy, 50 coins, 3 weight</i>
Plate	<i>3 armor, worn, clumsy, 350 coins, 4 weight</i>
Shield	<i>+1 armor, 15 coins, 2 weight</i>

DUNGEON GEAR

Adventuring Gear

5 uses, 20 coins, 1 weight

Adventuring gear is a collection of useful mundane items such as chalk, poles, spikes, ropes, etc. When you rummage through your adventuring gear for some useful mundane item, you find what you need and mark off a use.

Bandages

3 uses, slow, 5 coins, 0 weight

When you have a few minutes to bandage someone else's wounds, heal them of 4 damage and expend a use.

Poultices and Herbs

2 uses, slow, 10 coins, 1 weight

When you carefully treat someone's wounds with poultices and herbs, heal them of 7 damage and expend a use.

Healing Potion

50 coins, 0 weight

When you drink an entire healing potion, heal yourself of 10 damage or remove one debility, your choice.

Keg of Dwarven Stout

10 coins, 4 weight

When you open a keg of dwarven stout and let everyone drink freely, take +1 to your Carouse roll. If you drink a whole keg yourself, you are very, very drunk.

Bag of Books

5 uses, 10 coins, 2 weight

When your bag of books contains just the right book for the subject you're spouting lore on, consult the book, mark off a use, and take +1 to your roll.

Antitoxin

10 coins, 0 weight

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

Dungeon Rations

Ration, 5 uses, 3 coins, 1 weight

Not tasty, but not bad either.

Personal Feast

Ration, 1 use, 10 coins, 1 weight

Ostentatious to say the least.

Dwarven Hardtack *Requires Dwarf, ration, 7 uses, 3 coins, 1 weight*
Dwarves say it tastes like home. Everyone else says it tastes like home, if home is a hog farm, and on fire.

Elven Bread *Ration, 7 uses, 10 coins, 1 weight*
Only the greatest of elf-friends are treated to this rare delicacy.

Halfling Pipeleaf *6 uses, 5 coins, 0 weight*
When you share halfling pipeleaf with someone, expend two uses and take +1 forward to parley with them.

POISONS

Oil of Tagit *Dangerous, applied, 15 coins, 0 weight*
The target falls into a light sleep.

Bloodweed *Dangerous, touch, 12 coins, 0 weight*
Until cured, whenever the afflicted rolls damage, they roll an additional d4 and subtract that result from their normal damage.

Goldenroot *Dangerous, applied, 20 coins, 0 weight*
The target treats the next creature they see as a trusted ally, until proved otherwise.

Serpent's Tears *Dangerous, touch, 10 coins, 0 weight*
Anyone dealing damage against the target rolls twice and takes the better result.

SERVICES

A week's stay at a peasant inn	14-Charisma coins
A week's stay at a civilized inn	30-Charisma coins
A week's stay at the fanciest inn in town	43-Charisma coins
A week's unskilled mundane labor	10 coins
A month's pay for enlistment in an army	30 coins
A custom item from a blacksmith	Base Item + 50 coins
A night's "companionship"	20-Charisma coins
An evening of song and dance	18-Charisma coins
Escort for a day along a bandit-infested road	20 coins
Escort for a day along a monster-infested road	54 coins
A run-of-the-mill killing	5 coins
An assassination	120 coins
Healing from a surgeon	5 coins
A month's prayers for the departed	1 coin
Repairs to a mundane item	25% of the item's cost

MEALS

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

TRANSPORT

Cart and Donkey, sworn to carry your burdens	50 coins, load 20
Horse	75 coins, load 10
Warhorse	400 coins, load 12
Wagon	150 coins, load 40
Barge	50 coins, load 15
River boat	150 coins, load 20
Merchant ship	5,000 coins, load 200
War ship	20,000 coins, load 100
Passage on a safe route	1 coin
Passage on a tough route	10 coins
Passage on a dangerous route	100 coins

LAND AND BUILDINGS

A hovel	<i>20 coins</i>
A cottage	<i>500 coins</i>
A house	<i>2,500 coins</i>
A mansion	<i>50,000 coins</i>
A keep	<i>75,000 coins</i>
A castle	<i>250,000 coins</i>
A grand castle	<i>1,000,000 coins</i>
A month's upkeep	<i>1% of the cost</i>

BRIBES

A peasant dowry	<i>20-Charisma coins</i>
"Protection" for a small business	<i>100-Charisma coins</i>
A government bribe	<i>50-Charisma coins</i>
A compelling bribe	<i>80-Charisma coins</i>
An offer you can't refuse	<i>500-Charisma coins</i>

GIFTS AND FINERY

A peasant gift	<i>1 coin</i>
A fine gift	<i>55 coins</i>
A noble gift	<i>200 coins</i>
A ring or cameo	<i>75 coins</i>
Finery	<i>105 coins</i>
A fine tapestry	<i>350+ coins</i>
A crown fit for a king	<i>5,000 coins</i>

HOARDS

A goblin's stash	<i>2 coins</i>
A lizardman's trinkets	<i>5 coins</i>
A "priceless" sword	<i>80 coins</i>
An orc warchief's tribute	<i>250 coins</i>
A dragon's mound of coins and gems	<i>130,000 coins</i>

"I am both perplexed and disappointed, for my talismans are not obviously useless."

—Cugel, "Eyes of the Overworld"

MAGIC ITEMS

There are stranger things in the world than swords and leather. Magic items are the non-mundane items that have intrinsic power.

Magic items are for you to make for your game. Players can make magic items through the wizard's ritual and similar moves. The GM can introduce magic items in the spoils of battle or the rewards for jobs and quests. This list provides some ideas, but magic items are ultimately for you to decide.

When making your own magic items keep in mind that these items are *magical*. Simple modifiers, like +1 damage, are the realm of the mundane—magic items should provide more interesting bonuses.

ARGO-THAAN, HOLY AVENGER

Close, 2 weight

There are many swords in this world, but there is only one Argo-thaan. It is a blade of gold, silver and light, revered as a holy relic by all orders and religions for whom Good rings true. Its touch is a blessing and to many, the sight of it brings tears of joy.

In the hands of a paladin, it strikes true and strong. A paladin wielding it increases their damage die to d12 and has access to every paladin move. As well, Argo-thaan can harm any creature of Evil, regardless of any defenses it may have. No Evil creature may touch it without suffering agony. In the hands of any non-paladin, it is merely a sword, heavier and more cumbersome than most—it gains the awkward tag.

Argo-thaan, while not intelligent, will forever be drawn to a cause of true Good, like iron to a magnet.

ARROWS OF ACHERON

1 ammo, 1 weight

Crafted in darkness by a blind fletcher, these arrows can find their target in even the deepest darkness. An archer may fire them blind, in the dark, with his eyes bound by heavy cloth and still be assured of a clean shot. If the light of the sun ever touches the arrows, however, they come apart like shadows and dust.

AXE OF THE CONQUEROR-KING

Close, 1 weight

It is crafted of shining steel, glowing with a golden light and imbued with mythical powers of authority. When you bear the axe, you become a beacon of inspiration to all you lead. Any hirelings in your employ have +1 Loyalty, no matter the quality of your leadership.

BARB OF THE BLACK GATE

0 weight

A nail or spike, twisted and forever cold, said to have been pried from the Gates of Death. When hammered into a corpse, it disappears and ensures that corpse will never be risen again—no magic short of that of Death himself can reignite the flame of life (natural or otherwise) in the body.

BAG OF HOLDING

0 weight

A bag of holding is larger on the inside than the outside, it can contain an infinite number of items, and its weight never increases. When you try to retrieve an item from a bag of holding, roll+wis. *On a 10+, it's right there. *On a 7-9, choose one:

- You get the exact item, but it takes a while
- You get a similar item of the GM's choice, but it only takes a moment

No matter how many items it contains, a bag of holding is always 0 weight.

THE BURNING WHEEL

2 weight

An ancient wooden wheel, as might appear on a war-wagon, banded with steel. On a glance, it appears to be nothing special—many spokes are shattered and the thing seems mundane. Under the scrutiny of magic or the eyes of an expert, its true nature is revealed: the Burning Wheel is a gift from the God of Fire and burns with his authority.

When you hold The Burning Wheel and speak a god's name, roll+CON. *On a 7+, the god you name takes notice and grants you an audience. An audience with a god is not without a price: on a 10+, you choose one of your stats and reduce it to the next lowest modifier (for example, a 14 is +1, so it would be reduced to 12, a +0). *On a 7–9, the GM chooses which stat to reduce.

Once used, the Burning Wheel ignites and burns with brilliant light. It does not confer any protection from those flames, nor does it provide any bonus to swimming.

CAPTAIN BLIGH'S CORNUCOPIA

1 weight

A brass naval horn, curled and ornate, carved with symbols of the gods of Plenty. When blown, in addition to sound, the horn spills forth food. Enough to feed a meal to everyone who hears its sound.

THE CARCOSAN SPIRE

Reach, Thrown, 3 weight

None know from whence this spear of twisted white coral comes. Those who bear it too long find their minds full of alien dreams and begin to hear the strange thoughts of the Others. None are impervious. Used against any “natural” target (men, goblins, owlbears and the like) the Spire acts as a mere mortal spear. Its true purpose is to do harm to those things whose strange natures protect them against mundane weapons. Used thus, the Spire can wound foes otherwise invulnerable to harm. The wielder will recognize these twisted foes on sight—the Spire knows its own.

CLOAK OF SILENT STARS

1 weight

A cape of rich black velvet outside and sparkling with tiny points of light within, this cloak bends fate, time and reality around it to protect the wearer, who may defy danger with whatever stat they like. To do this, the wearer invokes the cloak's magic and their player describes how the cloak helps "break the rules." They can deflect a fireball with CHA by convincing it they deserve to live or elude a fall by applying the mighty logic of their INT to prove the fall won't hurt. The cloak makes it so. It can be used once for each stat before losing its magic.

COIN OF REMEMBERING

0 weight

What appears, at a glance, to be a simple copper coin is, in truth, an enchanted coin. Its bearer can, at any time, redeem it to know immediately one fact that has been forgotten. The coin vanishes thereafter. It does not have to be a thing forgotten by the bearer, but it cannot be "known." Interpretation of this stipulation is left to the gods. If the coin is unsuccessful, it will still paint an image in the mind's eye of someone or something that does remember what was sought.

COMMON SCROLL

1 use, 0 weight

A common scroll has a spell inscribed on it. The spell must be castable by you or on your class's spell list for you to be able to cast it. When you cast a spell from a scroll, the spell takes effect, simple as that.

DEVILSBANE OIL

1 use, 0 weight

A holy oil, created in limited supply by a mute sect of mountain monks whose order protected humanity from the powers of the Demon Pits in ancient epochs. Only a few jars remain. When applied to any weapon and used to strike a denizen of any outer plane, the oil undoes the magic that binds that creature. In some cases, this will return it to its home. In others, it merely undoes any magic controlling it. The oil stays on the weapon for a few hours before it dries and flakes away.

If applied to the edges of a doorway or drawn in a circle, the oil will repel creatures whose home is any of the outer planes. They cannot pass across it. The oil lasts for one full day before it soaks in or evaporates.

EARWORM WAX

1 use, 0 weight

A yellowish candle. Seems never to burn out and the light it casts is strange and weak. Its wax is always cool, too. Drip the wax into the ear of a target and gain 3 hold. Spend that hold and ask your target a question. They find themselves telling you the whole truth, despite themselves. The consequences, after the fact? Those are up to you to deal with.

THE ECHO

0 weight

A seemingly empty bottle. Once unstoppered, the whispers of another plane resound once and fall silent. In the silence, the bearer learns in his soul the coming of one great danger and how he can avoid it. At any point after you use the Echo, you can ignore the results of any single die roll—yours or another player's—and roll again. Once opened, the Echo is released and gone forever.

THE EPOCH LENS

1 weight

An archmage, old and too frail to leave his tower, crafted this intricate and fragile device of glass and gold to examine the histories and relics he so loved. Looking at an object through the lens reveals visions of who made it and where it came from.

FARSIGHT STONE

1 weight

Swirling clouds fill this smoky orb and those in its presence often hear strange whispers. In ancient times, it was part of a network of such stones, used to communicate and surveil across great distances. When you gaze into the stone, name a location and roll+wis. *On a 10+, you see a clear vision of the location and can maintain it as long as you concentrate on the orb. *On a 7–9, you still see the vision, but you draw the attention of some other thing (an angel, a demon, or the holder of another Farsight stone) that uses the stone to surveil you, as well.

THE FIASCO CODEx

0 weight

A thick tome, said to be penned in the blood of poor fools and robber-barons by some demon prince possessed of dark humor, this tome details tales and stories of those whose ambition overwhelmed their reason. Reading from this tome teaches one the value of clear-headedness but leaves a sense of dread behind. When you read from the Fiasco Codex, Roll+WIS. *On a 10+, ask two of the questions below. *On a 7–9, ask one.

- What is my greatest opportunity, right now?
- Who can I betray to gain an advantage?
- Who is an ally I should not trust?

The codex gives up its answers only once to each reader and takes 2 to 3 hours to read.

FLASK OF BREATH

0 weight

A simple thing, but useful when you need a breath of fresh air. The flask appears empty but cannot be filled, anything added to it simply spills out. This is because the flask is eternally full of air. If placed underwater, it will bubble forever. If pressed to the mouth, one can breathe normally—smoke is no concern, for example. I'm sure you'll find all sorts of unusual uses for it.

FOLLY HELD ALOFT, THE WAX WINGS, A HUGE MISTAKE

1 weight

Who hasn't always wanted to soar the pretty blue sky? In an attempt to grant the wishes of land-bound folk, these great magical wings were created. Known by many names and crafted by as many mages, they commonly take the shape of the wings of whatever local birds hold affection. Worn by means of a harness or, in some dire cases, a surgical procedure.

When you take to the air with these magical wings, roll+DEX. *On a 10+, your flight is controlled and you may stay aloft as long as you like. *On a 7–9, you make it aloft but your flight is short or erratic and unpredictable, your choice. *On a 6–, you make it aloft, but the coming-down part and everything between is up to the GM.

IMMOVABLE ROD

0 weight

A funny metal rod with a button on it. Press the button and the rod just sticks. It freezes in place—in midair, standing up or lying down. It can't be moved. Pull it, push it, try as hard as you like, the rod stays. Maybe it can be destroyed, maybe it can't. Push the button again and it's free—take it along with you. Might be useful to have such a stubborn thing along.

INFINITE BOOK

1 weight

This book contains an infinite number of pages in a finite space. With no limit to the pages, everything that ever was, is, or will be is contained somewhere in the book. Luckily the index is great.

When you spout lore while consulting the book you gain an extra clause: On a 12+, the GM will give a solution to a problem or situation you're in.

INSPECTACLES

0 weight

Rough-hewn glass in wooden frames. Dinged up and barely held together, they somehow allow the wearer to see much more than their naked eyes might. When you discern realities wearing these gifted lenses, you get to bend the rules a little. On a roll of 10+, ask any three questions you like. They don't have to be on the list. As long as sight could give you answers, the GM will tell you what you want to know.

THE KU'MEH MANEUVER

1 weight

A great, leathery tome worn shiny by the hands of a hundred great generals, this book is often passed from warrior to warrior, from father to son along the great battle lines that have divided Dungeon World's past. Anyone reading it may, upon finishing for the first time, roll+INT. *On a 10+, hold 3. *On a 7-9, hold 1. You may spend your hold to advise a companion on some matter of strategic or tactical significance. This advice allows you to, at any time, regardless of distance, roll to aid them on any one roll. On a miss, the GM can hold 1 and spend it to apply -2 to any roll of yours or the poor sap who listened to your advice.

LAMENTED MEMENTO

0 weight

Taking the form of a single lock of bright red hair, bound in a black ribbon and immune to the ravages of time, the Lamented Memento bears a grim enchantment. In it are the memories and emotions of a girl who dealt with Death at the Black Gates so many times that, in the end, they fell in love and she left the world to be with him for a time. Her memory protects the wielder. If he finds himself at the Gates, the Memento can be traded for an automatic result of 10+ on the last breath move.

LODESTONE SHIELD

+1 armor, 1 weight

What mixed-up dummy made this? Shields are meant to repel metal, not draw it in! Emblazoned with a lion rampant, the Lodestone Shield has the power to pull blades and arrows to it. When you defend against enemies using metal weapons you can spend one hold, per target, to disarm them. Also, sometimes you'll find a handful of loose change stuck to it.

MAP OF THE LAST PATROL

0 weight

An ancient order of brave rangers once patrolled the land, protecting villages and warning kings and queens of encroaching danger. They're long gone, now, but their legacy remains. This map, when marked with the blood of a group of people, will always show their location—so long as they remain within the bounds of the map.

NED'S HEAD

1 weight

An old skull, missing its jaw and very much worse-for-wear. The skull remembers the folly of its former owner—a man with more honor than sense. Once per night, the owner of the skull can ask “Who has it in for me?” and the skull will give up one name in a sad, lonely voice. If the owner of the skull is ever killed, it disappears surreptitiously. No one knows where it might turn up next.

NIGHTSIDER'S KEY

o weight

This key unlocks any door for you, provided you don't belong where you intend to go. So long as you do nothing that would alert another to your presence (remaining unheard, unseen and unnoticed) and takes nothing more than your memories out with you, the key's magic will prevent your intrusion from ever being discovered. It's like you were never there at all.

SACRED HERBS

o weight

The sacred herbs, collected and prepared by an order of lost wizard-monks, can be found in bundles with two or three uses to them. Kept dry, they last indefinitely. When smoked in a pipe or consumed in an incense burner and the thick, blue smoke inhaled, these herbs will grant you strange visions of faraway places and distant times. If you focus your will on a particular person, place or thing, the herbs will respond: roll+wis. *On a 10+, the vision is clear and useful—yielding some valid information. *On a 7–9, the vision is about the thing desired, but is unclear, fraught with metaphor or somehow difficult to understand. *On a miss, the GM will ask you, “What is it you fear most?” You must answer honestly, of course.

THE SARTAR DUCK

o weight

An odd, hand-carved wooden duck. Who would make such a funny thing? While you bear it, you find yourself an exceptionally gifted storyteller—no matter the language, you can make yourself and your story clear to any audience. They will understand your meaning, if not your words.

TEARS OF ANNALISE

o weight

Cloudy red gemstones the size of a thumbnail, the Tears of Annalise are always found in pairs. When swallowed by two different people, they bind the swallowers together—when either feels strong emotions (particularly sadness, loss, fear or desire) the other feels it, as well. The effects last until one spills the blood of the other.

TELEPORTATION ROOM

Slow

James Ninefingers, eccentric genius mage, created these room-sized magical apparati. A stone chamber etched with runes and scribbings, glowing with a faint blue light. When you enter and say aloud the name of a location, roll+INT. *On a 10+, you arrive exactly where you'd intended. *On a 7–9, the GM chooses a safe location nearby. *On a miss, you end up someplace. Maybe it's nearby? It's definitely not safe. Strange things sometimes happen to those who bend time and space with these devices.

TIMUNN'S ARMOR

1 armor, 1 weight

A stealthy suit of armor, it appears as many things to many people and blends in with appropriate apparel. The wearer always seems the height of fashion to any who gaze upon him.

TITUS' TRUTHFUL TALLOW

0 weight

A candle of ivory- and copper-colored tallow with a wick of spun silver. When lit, none upon whom its light falls is able to tell a lie. They may keep silent or dissemble but when asked a question directly, they can speak naught but truth.

TRICKSY ROPE

1 weight

A rope that listens. Does tricks, too, like a smart and more obedient snake might. Tell it "Coil" or "Slack" or "Come here, rope" and it will.

THE STERLING HAND

0 weight

Crafted by dwarven whitesmiths, this mirrored-metal hand is deeply scored with runes of power and rejuvenation. Meant to replace wounded or destroyed limbs from mining accidents, the Sterling Hand bonds to the wound, old or new, and is strong and stout. It can be used as a weapon (Near range) and is made of pure enough silver to harm creatures affected by such.

VELLIUS'S GAUNTLETS

1 weight

Crafted in the name of Vellius the Clumsy, Vellius the Butter-Fingered, Vellius the Clod, these gloves of simple cloth prevent you from dropping any object you don't intent to. You cannot be disarmed and will not fall from any rope or ladder, for example. This item can get very messy if you have something strong pulling at your legs while you grip onto something solid.

VIOLATION GLAIVE

Reach, 2 weight

A legendary blade, said to have been thrust backwards in time from some grim future, the violation glaive is crafted of strange green iron. The blade strikes at the mind of those it wounds, as well as the body. When you hack and slash on a 10+ you have an additional option: you can deal your normal damage, let them counterattack you, and instill the emotion of your choice (maybe fear, reverence, or trust).

VORPAL SWORD

Close, 3 piercing, 2 weight

Snicker-snack and all that. Sharp as anything, this simple-seeming sword means to separate one thing from another—the limb from the body or folk from their lives. When you deal damage with the Vorpal Sword, your enemy must choose something (an item, an advantage, a limb) and lose it, permanently.



CHAPTER 19

Dungeon World portrays a specific kind of fantasy adventure—one with elves and dwarves, heroes and villains, and characters struggling for riches and glory in a dangerous world. Maybe you’ve got an idea for something different—maybe your Dungeon World is set on a blasted desert planet, peopled by savage cannibals and ruled by haughty psychics. Or maybe you want to play a game where humans are the only race available, but they belong to clans or families as different from each other as a gnome is from a dwarf. All that is possible (and, in fact, encouraged) with a little effort. This chapter will explain how you can turn this Dungeon World into *your* Dungeon World.

MAKING MOVES

The best place to start your journey into hacking Dungeon World is with the moves. Many of the fronts, dangers and other elements of your game will already contain custom moves, so it’s a natural, easy place to start. You might want to create moves to reflect the effects of some particular threat (“When you go alone into the Unhallowed Halls...”). You might create moves to cover something that’s particularly important to your setting (“When you swim in the dark waters...”). As you get more experienced you might create moves to expand a class or create your own class entirely.

GETTING STARTED

Where do moves come from? You can start a move with the trigger. Some actions will just feel like they should be a move. This is the most common starting point for moves. You’ll see some action coming up and feel like it’s different enough from existing moves that it needs its own rules.

You can start with the effect. This is particularly useful for class moves. You know that casting a spell is something that the wizard does, so what triggers that effect?

Rarely, you can even start with the mechanics. Sometimes you’ll think of something cool, like a tamed demon whose happiness is a constantly varying stat, and go from there. Be wary of any idea that’s entirely mechanical. Since moves always start and end with the fiction, a mechanical idea is the least important bit of the move.

ADVANCED DELVING

You can always use a move from another game, too. *Dungeon World* is just one of a handful of games that use moves and you might be inspired by one of those. It's often not too difficult to modify an existing move for use in *Dungeon World*.

TYPES OF MOVES

What role the move is fulfilling determines what kind of move you're creating.

Moves for dealing with the environment or special features you've added to *Dungeon World* are special moves. These moves are usually the GM's domain, a place to make parts of the world stand out. Since moves are always triggered by the players, most moves like this should be written or printed somewhere everyone can look them over unless the move covers something that the player characters wouldn't have any idea about.

Moves that reflect some special competency or power, or something the players do, are usually class moves. If the move is clearly tied to a specific class, add it to that class. If the move is tied to some concept that multiple classes might have access to, like a move only accessible to those that have seen beyond Death's Black Gates, you can create a compendium class for those moves. A compendium class is like a mini-class, it's a collection of moves around a fictional theme. We'll deal with them in more detail later.

If your move is something the players do but isn't associated with any specific theme or class it's probably a basic or special move. If it comes up all the time it's a basic move, if it comes up more rarely it's a special move.

Moves made by the players in response to monsters, such as the effects of a disease or pressing on despite a focused blast of wind from an air elemental, are player moves associated with that monster. Player moves associated with a monster are fairly rare, most of the ways a player will interact with a monster are covered by the basic and class moves.

Moves made by monsters against the players aren't player moves at all. They're monster moves, simple statements of what the monster does. Trying to make every monster move into a player move will seriously hamper your creativity.

WORLD MOVES

Your Dungeon World is full of fantastic things, right? You're likely to find that some of those fantastic things deserve or demand custom moves to reflect exactly what they do. Consider this one from Chris Bennet:

When you **open a sewer hatch**, roll+STR: *On a 10+, choose 2. *On a 7-9 choose 1.

- You avoid being covered in feces and rotting animal entrails from the sewers above.
 - You avoid having a gelatinous cube land on you.
 - You find a secret back entrance to where the merchant's daughter is being held.
-

This move is strong because it is tied strongly to a particular place at a particular time. This move was written by request for Jason Morningstar's Dungeon World game as the players entered some particularly horrible sewers to find a powerful merchant's daughter. Two of the options here are very directly tied to that precise situation.

Why would you write this move instead of just using defy danger? You wouldn't, always. Opening a pressurized sewer hatch is certainly dangerous, you could use defy danger. This move does have the advantage of setting up the choices ahead of time. This is actually a very strong technique: if there's a particular situation that is likely to cause defy danger, you can write a custom move that describes the tough choice to be made to save yourself some thinking in the moment.

The other strength of moves like this is they call out something as important. By making the trigger "when you open a sewer hatch" instead of "when you act despite an imminent threat" the move calls out that these sewers are always dangerous.

CLASS MOVES

Each class has enough moves to take it through tenth level but that doesn't mean you can't add more. Adding moves to a class can demonstrate your idea of Dungeon World. Take this one, for example:

When you **claim a room for your deity**, mark every entrance and roll+wis: *On a 10+, the room is peacebonded: no one can take action to cause physical harm within it. *On a 7–9, the room is peacebonded, but the show of divine power draws attention. You can dismiss the peacebond as you see fit.

This move presents a slightly different side of Dungeon World, one that can demand peace (something that usually doesn't come easily to PCs). This may not be right for every Dungeon World game, but it's a great way to show how your Dungeon World looks, reflected in the characters.

When adding a move, look carefully at what class it belongs to. Avoid giving a class moves that infringe on another class's areas of expertise. If the thief can cast spells just as well as the wizard the wizard is likely to feel marginalized. This is why the multiclass moves act as one level lower, so that each class's niche is somewhat protected.

Be careful with any move that provides the same benefit as an existing move even if the trigger is different. Moves that add to damage, in particular, should be avoided for the most part unless carefully crafted with interesting triggers. The same is true of moves that add to armor. The classes at present have damage and armor increases that reflect the overall danger of Dungeon World. Giving them more can negate potential threats.

NEW CLASSES

Once you've gotten your feet wet creating new moves and customizing the classes in *Dungeon World*, you'll likely notice something. A class is just a collection of themed moves that work together to create a certain set of abilities and qualities that give the class their unique feel. If you're up for it, creating a new class is the next natural step along the way.

Your first consideration should be how the class relates to the existing classes. No character exists in isolation, so you should think carefully about why this class is different.

An excellent first step to creating a new class is to think about what fictional characters you'd like to take inspiration from. Don't slavishly follow what that fictional character can do (after all, they weren't in *Dungeon World*) but use them as a guide for what's so cool about that character.

The inspirations for the classes in this book are fairly clear, and made clearer by the notes in the margins. Note that not every inspiration is taken entirely: the wizards of *Discworld* inspired the slightly pompous style of the wizard, but the wizard is far more competent and casts spells more like a wizard from Vance's *Dying Earth*. The inspiration is one of style, not an attempt to recreate what a certain character could do in a certain book.

With a clear idea in mind you have a few basic steps that aren't a concern when writing single moves: HP, Bonds, Look, equipment, alignment, races.

A class's HP is some base+Constitution. Base HP is almost always 4, 6, 8, or 10. Having more HP than the fighter and paladin will take the spotlight away from those characters unless you're careful. Having less HP than the wizard is probably character suicide. 4 base HP makes for a class that is deliberately fragile, they'll need help from others when the swords come out. 6 base HP is for classes that aren't ready to fight, but can at least take a hit. 8 base HP is enough to take some hits and get into combat a little, while 10 base HP is for skilled warriors and those who have no fear of battle.

Damage is chosen from the dice available: d4, d6, d8, d10. The classes presented here all use a single die with no static bonus, but there's no reason not to experiment with other options: 2d4 or 1d6+2, for example. High HP and damage tend to go together, but your

"I'm a tenth level Vice President!"

—Al Gore, *"Futurama"*

new class could be a pacifistic brick wall or a glass cannon—fragile but dangerous.

Alignments show the starting outlook of the class. Most classes will have Neutral as an option, since only the most dedicated classes are so tied up to an ideal that the self can't come first. A good alignment move is something that happens with some regularity and guides the player to a particular type of action they might not otherwise consider. An alignment that happens as part of the normal course of play, like "When you gain treasure..." doesn't really show the character's ideals. Adding some requirements, maybe "When you gain treasure through lies and deceit..." adds an element of ideals. Now the alignment says something about the character (they prize pulling a con on the unsuspecting) and requires the player to think about how they play. Alignment is a telling fact about the class in the world, too. Everyone knows that paladins are supposed to be paragons of Good and Law, right?

Bonds are where the class' outlook shines through. It's the place where you, the designer, will most clearly interact with the player at character creation. Unless the class is particularly social or antisocial, write four bonds. If the class is very connected to others, add a bond; if they're cloistered, remove one. Avoid bonds that dictate a moral or ethical stance but do think about how your class interacts with their allies—the thief steals things but helps protect the party from traps, the fighter defends his allies and kills monsters that might harm them, the wizard knows secret knowledge and shares or hoards it. You can use the rules for writing new bonds as a starting point, but avoid including proper names in starting bonds.

Look is largely left to your imagination. This is an excellent spot to think about your fictional inspiration. What did they look like? How could they look different? Including at least one choice about clothes helps establish style without making the player think about buying clothes.

The equipment choices should always include at least one weapon option and one armor option unless the class is clearly lacking in fighting skill. Dungeon rations are also pretty much required; a starting character without food going into a dangerous area borders on stupid.

COMPENDIUM CLASSES

A compendium class is a class only available to higher level characters who meet specific requirements. They're called compendium classes because they first appeared in the Compendiums for Dungeon World Basic. A compendium class is the way to go for a concept that can be layered onto multiple other classes.

The basic structure of a compendium class is to have a starting move that is available only to characters who have had a certain experience, like this:

When you enter the bodily presence of a god or their avatar the next time you gain a level you can choose this move instead of a move from your class:

DIVINE BOND

When you write a new bond, instead of using the name of another character you can use the name of a deity you've had contact with. Anytime a bond with a deity applies to the current situation you can mark it off (as if it was resolved) to call on the deity's favor in a clear and decisive way that the GM describes. At the end of the session you then replace the marked off bond with a new one, with a deity or player character.

Note that the move is only available after the character has done a specific thing, and even then only at their next level. Compendium classes are best when they rely on what the character has done, not stat prerequisites or anything that happens without the player's action. A compendium class that is available to anyone who just gained 5th level doesn't stand for much; one that only applies if you've been to Death's Black Gates and lived to tell the tale is more interesting.

A compendium class also usually has 2–3 moves that can be taken only if the starting move is taken. These are just like normal class moves, just with the requirement that you have to have already taken the starting compendium class move.

Compendium classes are ideal for concepts that don't quite inspire a full class. If you can't think of what the class looks like or how much HP it has, or if the class overlaps with existing classes, it's probably better as a compendium class.

ADVENTURE MOVES

Adventure moves deal directly with the adventure underway. They can move the action along, change the rewards, or transition from one adventure to another.

If you're running a short game, maybe at a convention or game day, you may find that you want to front-load the experience a little more. Here's a move that covers "the adventure so far" so that you can get straight into a short game in media res.

Stalwart Fighter: As if the bandits weren't bad enough! As if all the sword wounds, bruises and beatings at the hands of your enemies were insufficient—now this. Trapped underground with your adventuring companions when all you wanted was to return to the town and spend your well-earned bounty. No such luck, warrior. Sharpen that sword! Certainly, the others will need your protecting before safety is found. Just like last time. Once more into the breach, right? I swear, one of these fellows must owe you a favor or two by now...

Have a look around and roll+CHA. *On a 10+, choose two party members. *On a 7–9, choose just one. *On a 6-, you're surrounded by ingrates.

At a moment of need, you can cash in a favor owed you by one of the party members chosen. They must change their action to one of your choosing, once. You may not give them an action that would involve them directly taking damage, giving up a magic item they already own or coming to immediate harm. Use it to make them agree with you, or give you that extra ration you want, or giving you their slot in the loot lottery. Leverage is sweet.

The most important part of this move is not the roll or the effect, but the information and tone. It sets the stage for a quick adventure and gives the player reading it a starting point to work with. The roll and result here are interesting, but don't greatly change the flow of the game. Handing out a set of these, one to each player, along with a playbook, is a great way to run a con game.

You can also adapt the End of Session move to reflect the adventure you're running. When doing this it's key that you show the players the new End of Session move. The goal isn't to keep

them in the dark about what earns XP, but to make the XP awards tie directly to this adventure.

When you end the session, instead of using the normal end of session questions, use these:

- Did we learn something about the Cult of the Scaled God?
 - Did we rescue a captured villager or help defend the village of Secor?
 - Did we defeat a major agent of the Cult of the Scaled God?
-

MOVE STRUCTURE

Moves always follow a similar structure. The most basic parts of a move are the trigger (“when...”) and the effect (“then...”). Every move follows this basic format.

TRIGGERS

Triggers are often fictional actions undertaken by the player characters but they can also be part of character creation or trigger at the beginning or end of a session. Note that a trigger never deals with precise units of time. Don’t write a move that begins “When you start a round adjacent to a dragon.” There’s no rounds (and adjacent is maybe not the best phrasing, as it sounds removed from the fiction of *standing next to a damned fire-breathing dragon*). Prepare Spells isn’t “When you spend one hour studying your spellbook” for good reason. Time in Dungeon World is a bit fluid, like in a movie where pacing depends on the circumstances. Don’t rely on concrete units either around the table (rounds) or in the fiction (seconds, minutes, days).

Here are some broad types of triggers:

- **When a character takes action.** Examples: Discern Realities, Arcane Art (Bard), Command (Ranger).
- **When a character takes action under specific circumstances.** Examples: Hack and Slash, Seeing Red (Fighter), Backstab (Thief).
- **When circumstances dictate, no character action.** Examples: Order Hirelings, End of Session.
- **When a character uses a thing.** Examples: Magic items, Heirloom (Fighter).
- **From now on.** Examples: Serenity (Cleric), Poisoner (Thief).

EFFECT

Moves effects can be anything you can think of; they are as limitless as your ideas. Don't feel constrained to making rolls, +1 bonuses, and swapping stats. Since all moves flow from the fiction, a fictional effect like "They treat you as a friend" is just as powerful and useful as +1 forward—maybe more so.

Here are some broad types of effects, any given move may use more than one of them:

- **Roll.** Examples: Defy Danger, Cast a Spell (Wizard), Called Shot (Ranger).
- **Substitute stats.** Examples: Dwarf (Fighter).
- **Negate damage.** Examples: Man's Best Friend (Ranger).
- **Give a bonus or penalty, forward or ongoing.** Examples: Underdog (Thief), Smite (Paladin).
- **Deal or heal damage.** Examples: Volley, Backstab (Thief), Arcane Art (Bard).
- **Choose options.** Examples: Spout Lore, Discern Realities, Ritual (Wizard).
- **Hold & Spend.** Examples: Dominate (Wizard spell), Trap Expert (Thief).
- **Ask & Answer.** Examples: Charming and Open (Bard), Spout Lore.
- **Change circumstances.** Examples: Reputation (Bard).
- **Mark experience.** Examples: End of Session.
- **Call for more information.** Examples: Parley, Ritual (Wizard).
- **Add options.** Examples: Called Shot (Ranger).

CHANGING THE BASICS

Moves can also change the basic structure of the game. Consider this one, to avoid the use of damage dice:

When you would deal damage, instead of rolling the dice, substitute each dice with the listed number. d4 becomes 2, d6 becomes 3, d8 becomes 4, d10 becomes 5, d12 becomes 6.

Moves like this change one of the basic features of the game. Be very careful with moves that muck with the fundamentals. Moves should never contradict the GM's principles or agenda, or break the basic "take the action to gain the effect" rule.

There are some parts of the game that are exceptionally easy to change. The amount of XP to level reflects our view, but you can easily make leveling more or less rare. As well, the kinds of things players are awarded XP for can be easily changed—if your game isn't about exploring, fighting monsters and finding treasure, change the End of Session move to reflect that difference. Make sure to share it with your players before you start the game.

Another basic that's occasionally asked for is a way to make, say, fighting a dragon harder. The best answer here is that fighting a dragon is harder because the dragon is fictionally stronger. Just stabbing a dragon with a normal blade isn't hack and slash because a typical blade can't hurt it. If, however, that isn't enough, consider this move from Vincent Baker, originally from *Apocalypse World* (reworded slightly to match *Dungeon World* rules):

When a player makes a move and the GM judges it especially difficult, the player takes -1 to the roll. When a player's character makes a move and the GM judges it clearly beyond them, the player takes -2 to the roll.

The problem with this move is that the move no longer reflects anything concrete. Instead, the move is a prompt for the GM to make judgment calls with no clear framework. If you find yourself writing this custom move, consider what difficulty you're really trying to capture and make a custom move for that instead. That said, this is a valid custom move, if you feel it's needed.

DEVELOPMENT OF A MOVE

Let's look at how one move developed over time. Hack and slash was one of the earliest Dungeon World moves, originally written by Tony Dowler. The first version looked like this (this version has been reformatted and edited for grammar only):

When you wade into combat, attacking your enemies, deal damage to the enemy you're attacking, take that enemy's damage, and roll+STR.

*On a 10+, choose 2. *On a 7-9 choose 1.

- Prevent one ally from taking damage this round
 - Kill one enemy of lower level than you or deal max damage to otherwise
 - Put an enemy right where you want them (drive them off, prevent them from fleeing, etc.)
 - Divide your damage amongst any number of targets you can reach with your weapon
-

The first problem with this move is that one of the options, preventing damage, is far less useful than the others. Being able to outright kill an enemy is nearly always better than preventing that enemy from doing damage. The first major revision was to drop that option:

When you wade into combat, attacking your enemies, deal damage to the enemy you're attacking, take that enemy's damage, and roll+STR.

*On a 10+ choose 2. *On a 7-9 choose 1.

- Kill one enemy of lower level than you or deal max damage to otherwise
 - Put an enemy right where you want them (drive them off, prevent them from fleeing, etc.)
 - Divide your damage amongst any number of targets you can reach with your weapon
-

This left only three options which is a great number of options to have when a 10+ lets you pick two. The player making the move always had to not choose one option. All of the options are also clearly useful. But there's still an issue, easily the biggest issue with this move: the fictional action doesn't tightly relate to the outcome.

Consider this situation: Gregor attacks an eagle lord with his mighty axe. He describes his fictional action: "I swing my axe right down on his wing with a big overhead chop." Then he rolls the move,

gets a 10, and makes his choices. Max damage is a clear choice and comes right from the fiction. The other options, however, don't make much sense. If he chooses to divide his damage, how does that flow from his one fictional attack? How did that one chop also hit the treant behind him?

Scoping down the fictional effect of the move lead to this version:

When you attack an enemy who can defend themselves, roll+STR. *On a 10+, you deal your damage but your enemy does not get to deal theirs to you. If you choose, you can take your enemy's damage and deal double damage to the enemy. *On a 7-9, you take the enemy's damage and deal your damage.

Here the move now has only the effects that could clearly follow from a single attack. Any action that couldn't reasonably lead to a counterattack isn't hack and slash, so now the trigger matches the effects. Unfortunately double damage was a bit much, so we changed it to this:

When you attack an enemy in melee, roll+STR. *On a 7-9, you deal your damage to the enemy and take their damage. *On a 10+ you deal your damage to the enemy. You can choose to also take the enemy's damage to deal +2 damage.

+2 damage is a clear advantage, but not a game breaker. The only problem here is that it reduced the effects of an attack to taking damage. Monsters do so much more than just take away your HP; monsters hurl you about the room and destroy the ground you stand on, why can't they do that in response?

When you attack an enemy in melee, roll+STR. *On a 10+, you deal your damage to the enemy and avoid their attack. At your option, you may choose to do +1d6 damage but expose yourself to the enemy's attack. *On a 7-9, you deal your damage to the enemy and the enemy makes an attack against you.

This version (the final one) allows a monster to "attack" not just deal damage. That opens up a whole host of interesting monster moves to be used. +1d6 damage instead of +2 makes the choice more exciting (and slightly more powerful). The rewording adds clarity.

THE GM

Changing the GM's side of the rules is an entirely different beast from writing custom player moves. Writing GM moves is the easy part. Since a GM move is just a statement of something that fictionally happens, feel free to write new ones as you please. Most of the time you'll find they're just specific cases of one of the moves already established, but occasionally you'll come across something new. Just keep in mind the spectrum of hard to soft moves, your principles, and your agenda, and you'll be fine.

Changing the GM's agenda or principles is one of the biggest changes you can make to the game. Changing these areas will likely require changes throughout the rest of the game, plus playtesting to nail it all down.

Play to find out what happens is the least changeable part of the GM's agenda. Other options, like "play towards your set plot" or "play to challenge the players' skills" will be resisted pretty strongly by the other rules. The moves give the players abilities that can change the course of an planned adventure quite quickly; if you're not playing to find out what happens you'll have to resist the moves at every step or rewrite many of them.

Fill the characters' lives with adventure could be rephrased, but it's hard to really change. "Fill the characters' lives with intrigue" might work, but intrigue just seems like a type of adventure. Removing this agenda entirely will require major reworking since the move structure is based on this. The effects of a miss and the GM's soft moves are all there to create a life of adventure.

Portraying a fantastic world is maybe the easiest to change but it still requires considerable rewriting of the class moves. A historical world, a grim world, or a utopian world are all possible, but you'll need to carefully rethink many moves. A historical world will require magic, equipment, and several other sections to be nearly entirely rewritten or removed. A grim world can only survive if the players' moves come with darker costs. A utopian world won't need many of the moves as written. Still, this is the easiest part of the agenda to change, since it requires changing the moves, not the basic structures of the game.

The GM's principles are more mutable than the agenda but still can seriously change the game with only minor modifications.

Address the characters, not the players; Make your move, but misdirect; Never speak the name of your move; Begin and end with the fiction; and Be a fan of the characters are the most important principles. Without these the conversation of play and the use of moves is likely to break down.

Embrace the fantastic; Give every monster life; Name every person; Think Dangerous; and Give them something to work towards are key to the spirit of Dungeon World and fantasy exploration. These are changeable, but they amount to changing the setting of the game. If you want to change any of these, you may have to make changes to all of them.

Leave Blanks; Sometimes, let them decide; and Ask questions and use the answers are important to running Dungeon World well. They also apply to many other games in the same style. The game will be diminished without them, but the conversation of play will continue. These are also some of the most portable principles, applicable to many other games. They may even work in games with very different play styles.

An additional principle that some people prefer to add is **Test their bonds**. This principle is entirely compatible with the others and with all the moves, but it changes the focus of the game somewhat. Fronts need to be rethought to work fully with this, and you might need to add moves that speak to it.

MONSTERS

The easiest place to modify monsters is in the questions used to create them. The simplest changes have to do with adjusting lethality or randomness to your liking.

A more interesting change is to change the questions being asked to present a different view of monsters. The views built into the questions imply that monsters are more or less like other creatures: they can be of many alignments and won't always be opposed to the player characters. If you want to make Dungeon World about hunting down evil monsters and destroying them, you might rewrite some of the questions, maybe adding this:

THE MONSTER IS EVIL THROUGH AND THROUGH. CHOOSE ONE TO REFLECT WHY IT'S EVIL:

- It's an intrusion of the Old Ones Beyond the Walls: Planar, +5 damage
- It's a product of the Old Wizards of the Red Tower: Construct, +5 HP
- It's from The Time Before Man: Primordial, +5 damage, +5 HP

When creating new monster questions you can either reinterpret existing monsters by answering the questions for them again or only use the new questions for new monsters. If the new questions you add or change are key to your vision of Dungeon World it's best to redo all the monsters you use; if the question only applies to a specific kind of monster anyway you can just use it for new monsters.

APPENDIX 1

INFLUENCES

If we have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants. Hill giants and stone giants mostly, but some frost giants and even a fire giant one time. That got messy.

By this point it's probably pretty obvious that Vincent Baker's *Apocalypse World*, as well as Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson's *Dungeons and Dragons* are the reason we made this game. The *Dungeons and Dragons Basic Set*, edited by Tom Moldvay, and *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* were our references of choice.

Our version of Alignment is closely related to Keys from *Shadow of Yesterday* by Clinton R. Nixon as seen in John Harper's *Lady Blackbird*.

XP on a miss can be seen in a lot of designs—the version seen in Luke Crane's *Burning Wheel* was an inspiration, but this particular take on it comes by way of John Harper and Paul Riddle's *The Regiment*.

Bonds are a perversion of Hx from *Apocalypse World* with a little bit of the memories from *Freemarket* (by Luke Crane and Jared Sorensen) thrown in for spice.

Dungeon World wouldn't exist without cross-pollination from many other projects powered by the *Apocalypse*. *Sagas of the Icelanders* by Gregor Vuga, *The Regiment* by Paul Riddle and John Harper, *Monsterhearts* by Joe McDaldno, and several unpublished games by Jonathan Walton all were part of our process.

The original idea to mash *Apocalypse World* and *D&D* together belongs to our good friend Tony Dowler. He was gracious enough to let us build on his concept and carry it through to the shape you see today.



THANKS

TOOLS

Dungeon World was created in InDesign. The main fonts used are Adobe Minion Pro, Newcomen, and Archemy.

The original text was written entirely in XML to be imported into the book layout, the character sheet layout, and various other formats. Working in plaintext allowed us to map to all kinds of different layouts as well as versioning the files using Git and Github.

We developed Dungeon World a bit like you develop software, so the Github bug tracker and Dropbox were key tools in making the game a reality.

SPECIAL THANKS

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BACKERS BONDED TO THE BOOK

These brave Kickstarter backers have a bond with Dungeon World, and Dungeon World has a bond with them:

Simon Ward has seen what no other eyes could see. Matthew Sullivan-Barrett shot the morning in the back with his Red Wings on. A recent paradox awakened my nightmares of an anomaly within Jason's soul; I must fix it for the sake of my sanity. A witch put a spell on Ingo. Aaron is the Gouger of the monstrous Filibusterer. Aaron still haunts those Crooked Hills. Abraham wrought the runes of binding. Adam constructed the eldritch machine. Adam is the bearer of the Book of Secrets. Adam Rajski keeps the wisdom of the ages safe. Adam rode the world worm. Adam saved the holy feline. Ahmad and I studied under the same mentor. Alan is the wearer of the trenchcoat of pretension. Alcionne wears the crystal talisman. Alec comprehended the multiple meanings of the Zeugmatic Dialogues. Aleopheus will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger those who would attempt to poison and destroy my brothers. Aleria cannot unsee what she has seen. Alessandro gave me loaded dice! Guard—arrest him! Alexander was once a king; now, naught but an adventurer. Alitar is the embodiment of Strength. Amy incants the story of the world. Andi awoke the dormant evil. Andy always plays a bloody wizard. Andy

reverse engineered the rules of the Universe. Annti stranded me in a house of brigands. Antoine mixed the spell components. Antti is the keeper of the forgotten lore. Arc keeps safe the sacred sigils. Area 42 is a safe haven for adventurers. Argent accessed the Aleph. Arvy found a mysterious tome. As wizards we are bound by birth to protect the realm against all evil. Baern holds the bridge that his friends might survive. Baf is watched by three sages. Balmung is the master of the Crimson Sword. Bard enjoys smelling ancient tomes. Basilios places the celestial crown upon his head. Basteen covered the ancient tome in fish. Bastinan braved the fires of the Hells. Ben boondoggles. Ben spoke one of the ten secret words that started the world. Ben uncorked a bottle of port. Bill kept the dragons well away from the dungeons. Blake has seen the sacred vision that reveals the impending death of your master. Bob defended the realm from the horde onslaught. Bob keeps the secret of the ancient flame wars. Bolthan is the keeper of the white flame. Brad evaded the demon by hiding in the shadows. Brandon unearthed forgotten mysteries. Brandon raised the veil of darkness. Brent harnessed the power of lightning. Brett is the keeper of Secrets. Brett Zeiler is extremely arrogant, but is the best at what he does. Brian controls the chaos of creation. Brian founded a city out of chaos. brian has seen the fnords. Brian helped batter down the door to the armory. Brian is bonded to the bonder of bonds. Brian is searching for his father's lost sword. Brian is the inheritor of forbidden lore. Brian is too trusting. Brian slayed the sleeping sloth. Brindy embraced the night as the stars aligned. Brought knowledge to the masses. C & K are together at the End. Cabuster procured the Papers of Possibility. Cade hurled the flask. Cameron tells the old tales around the campfire. Capellan cares not for your paltry friendship. Carl is the heir of an ominous legacy. Carmin is the bearer of the cloak of shadows. Casey is a disciple of the Red Star. Casidhe hoards any knowledge she discovers. Chamelaeon has discerned the pattern of the stars. Chiang-Chen has an ancestral blade-demon in his palm. Chiv is aeon dead and wields unearthly power. Chris begat many adventuring heroes. Chris consults his library. Chris discovered the first seal. Chris Dulskey summoned an unspeakable thing. Chris is the ruler of Pillow Mountain. Chris killed the crazed cockatrice. Chris knew the lumber consortium was behind the alien landing cover-up. Chris knows secrets even the vizier is unaware of. Chris takes +1 forward in any game run by Adam Koebel. Christian is the bearer of the eternal light. Christian Lindke discovered a magical new world. Chroma owes nothing to Dark Jessop. Clark discovered the lost text (and Amanda corrected it). Clifford keeps the Arcane Knowledge. Clinton will play an important role in the events to come. Clyde is the keeper of the spoken word. Colin is powered by the apocalypse dragon. Connaught strove to preserve the ancient code. Connor is the cookie whisperer. Conrad saved my family from poverty. Corinthi brought low carb snacks. Cork is a master of elemental magic. Cravatosaur is the befouler of the sacred pool. Curt finds all the monsters that burst out of the ground. Damien's blade is not magical though his skill makes it seem that way. Dan binds the sacred tome. Dan knows the monkeys will be his undoing. Daniel discovered the freedom of simplicity. Daniel uncovered the clockwork of the Cosmos. Danohead is a puddingmancer nonpareil. Darkfeather unearths the lost treasure of. Dave has unmasked

the Key Master. Dave Insel the Bringer of Ultimate Awesome. Dave on honey-dew has fed, And drunk the milk of Paradise. Dave struggled through the 7 Hells to earn this book. David has gained the affections of your betrothed They may not realize it, but you know this to be true. David is burdened by the Holy Word. David is cool with whatever we say. David knew the doppelgangers secret. David paid the price with dark magics. David revealed the truth - to everyone but himself. David stole the secret that sealed the stair. Dean vanquished the Great Evil of T'lorin. Deimen has some strange significance to my god Any miracle I beseech in his name comes out reversed. Derek emerged from the ruins carrying an ancient tome of eldritch lore. Derek released the demon within. Derek speaks the Unspeakable Words. Dithmer is the guardian of the forbidden tome. Dom has travelled under far stars of the future. Douglas Justice is King of the Dwarves. Dove the heir the the mountainking, keeper of the ancient hall. Doyce found long-lost secrets in a forgotten library. Drake broke the first seal. Dreamstreamer camped the Final Confrontation and put an arrow in the Barbarian's knee. Drew is bound to no-one. Drew looted his War-Chest for this book. Drewid spoke the arcane spell from from the ancient tome. Drnnuncheon knifed many people between the ribs. Duane has slighted me with his Terrible Idea. Due to a magical accident she is your sister-clone. Dufresne uncovered the means to open a portal to an unholy dimension. Duke Monte hung out with the Goblins. Dungeon World taught Boabdil the power of Awesomancy. Dustin found them in the darkness. Dwarven Chris kept dying over and over. Dylan knows the song to summon the spirit wolf by heart. Dylan plays with some seriously scary lizard men. Dylan summoned forth that which can not be named. Edomaur is the maker of the wood swords of the green magic. Edouard fears Thulsa's rage, it will one day turn on us. Einroy defended the wall. Elkan casts good ol' Magic Missile. Elric wove the web. Eric sacrificed an eye to peer into the future. Erik is running low on hearts. Erik reps Thri-Kreen life. Ernesto made the Barbarian happen. Experience points be damned John will not slay another farmer! Falcros wields the sphere of power. Fax shifted the walls of the dungeon. Fel stole the cursed book. Felan wields a stalagmite as an improvised weapon. Felix has sealed away the cursed axe. Fiddy is the master of many worlds. Finnian stole three pages from the book of rituals. Flavio is the bearer of the hat of grumpyness. For Gavin, the Truth is more holy than the Book. Fox kept the nexus of portal conduits concealed. Francis vainquished the darkness with but a smile. Fred has uncovered the true nature of reality. Fred was lost to reason when he donned the Evil Hat. Gabriel knows the names of all the stars in the sky. Gant and Roland have faced the trials of world, and they have touched Paradise. Garry awakened ancient magics. Gary Hoggatt may be a descendant of Erdrick. George answered the call of the Final Trump. Ghost Bear is haunted by the spirits of those he have defeated. Gilmaldor Half-Eleven is the silent assassin lurking in the shadows. Gina cast the spell of eternal marshmallows. Gip has the strength to act. Glenn explored the lost catacombs. Godfrey is a paragon of goodness and wisdom; when in doubt, I defer to their judgement. Gondry mocked my beliefs. Grandmaster Jarrod asks, "When type of monster is it?". Greenie spoke the Unutterable Name, dooming us all. Greg discovered

the mystifying elixir. Gregor Hutton had foreseen it. Grimwald is trying to unlock the secrets of the scroll of winds. Hamish is the blood-stained sword of the Black Elf nation. Hans holds the key to weaving spells of Uncertainty. Hawk has the largest pile of fail XP. Henry dreamed of places strange. Herman always gets the flaming sword. Hilary is thinking what you are thinking. I am Dan's long lost sibling. Ianovos restored the link to the ancestral eight. Ios heard the call of the Wild Hunt, and never returned. Irene will make the last stand. Irina was taught to make secret potions by the old woman. Isabelle and Emma have shown me the way, now I hope to return the favour. Isen is the defender of the Silverhand. J escaped the hook that hungers. Jack inexplicably can understand the language of Dragons. Jack squandered his only Wish on a good deed. Jake has a jinx on him. James explored all of the wizardly tangents. James held no love but for money, and trusted no-one but his blade. James is the tester of many tablets. Jamie waits in the shadows. Jarod founded the Musty Dragon Inn franchise. Jason drank from the well of common sense. Jason looted the temple of the Ancient Ones. Jason rides the Glyphon. Jay is the wielder of the magical boot of horse theft. JB was buried with the Opal of Xul-Gar. Jeff turned down his right to the crown of the goblin kingdom. Jeffrey struggled not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in outer realms. Jeffy poked a toothpick through the membrane. Jeremiah was taken by horrors of the deep Never to be seen again. Jeremy is always one book away from a complete set. Jeremy slew a red dragon, costing him a limb. Jeremy's mind spent lifetimes wandering the spirit realms, in a deep lotustrance. Jerome stitched the bindings of the ancient tome. Jess opened a Doorway not fit for mortal souls. Jim climbed the Infinite Tower. Jingo uses the stone, one last time. Joe the mythical waffle taunter. Joe's campaign fronts read like the script from a telenovela. Joel shattered the Ancients' ignorance. Joerg is the guardian and wielder of the first sword. Johann warder of the wyrd. John cares deeply for someone, but they are kept apart. John is the keeper of the sacred kennel. John must cleanse his gear daily of evil spirits. John once forged a celestial breastplate. John sundered the Faithless Gate. Johnstone doesn't like anything. Jon doesn't see the point. Jon McCarty and I had a violent falling out. Jonathan brandishes the vorpal great axe. Joseph "UserClone" Le May NEEDS FOOD BADLY! Joseph has awakened what lurks in the deep. Josh Flint stole pages from the leaves of the world tree. Josh is bearer of troubling truth. Josh spoke the unspeakable tale. Josh was there in the Dawn Times. Joshua enscribed the mark of the ereboi huntsman. Joshua is the ally of the animals of the forest. Joshuha forged the perfect weapon. João is the master of the large sack. JP Sauers traversed the outer planes. Julien Pirou is in the secret world behind the GM's screen. Justin hid something beautiful in a terrible, deep dungeon. Justin Wightbred lead the charge against unnecessary escalation. Jürgen Mayer is the shadow that kills you in the night. Kairam is the immortal sage of the swamps. Karuk broke the glittering crown. Kate sees barmaids. Keith drew on the forbidden power that dwells below. Keith is the undiscovered scion of the hidden realm. Keith the Keeper of Arcane Lore. Keith will explore Dungeon World with any who are willing to Adventure! Kem teaches

that the only true weapon is the mind. Ken is the servant of the Secret Spring. Kenny unlock the ancient gate. Kestral still walks Insanity's Edge. Kevin is a disciple of His Weirdness: Al Yankovic. Kevin is entrusted with secret, ancient knowledge. Kevin is the arcane master of the ambulatory eye. Kingston leads old friends into battle with Teuthus, the God who crawls beneath the waves. Kirby drank from the Ewer of Memories. Kreg carried the Swagger Stick everywhere he went. Kristopher despises most people, but keeps it to himself if he thinks you might be useful. Savage invective befalls those that have no use. Kurt tumbled through the demon door. Kyle owes fealty to the Queen of Winter. Kyree rules the ruins with fortune and fate. Larry the unprintable. Laura has special luck. Lazaar is the master of whispers. Leo Lalande opened the astral rift between worlds. Leslie grinds on towards the coming dawn. Lidrick Barrisbren strung his Lute of Lightning. Liri rejected the fulfilling of her deepest wish by the goddess. Logan lost the phylactery. Lucias got tangeled in wizard sleeves. Lucien is the light that binds and demands. Luis crossed oceans of time. Lukas fought at the Gates of Oblivion. Luke cannot use the force. Luke has quenched the fire of creation. LXD lives on! Lythias sought the secrets of the Serpents' Labyrinth. Mabon breathes in the wonder of the night sky. Magic brought down the gate. Makr stole a tear from the Eye of the World. Malabreiga's sinuous body lies wreathed in purple flame. Malo delved down and down again, deep into the world. Manilla has given me enlightenment that I can never repay. Marc has kept the Old Ways secret all his years. Marco is the Keeper of Truth. Margaret delves tomes for knowledge. Marielle never learned how to read and has been faking it this whole time. Mark awoke the gods. Mark bears the brands of the seven holy silences. Mark cooked breakfast at the gates of darkness. Mark has sung the halfling song. Mark immanentized the eschaton. Markku knows where the Arkenstone is located. Markus has seduced the incubus of the seven cauldrons. Marshall married my sister when no one else would. Martin unearthed the antediluvian arcana. Mary knows what we say to Death. Matt delivered the chalice to the village elders. Matt discovered a wonderful forest for His family. Matt followed the echoes of eternity. Matt was bemused by Gnomish poetry. Matthew 'Jarikith' Monagon rolled the Polyhedrons of Chaos. Matthew is the chosen vessel of the Spirit of Wisdom. Matthew shot morning in the back with his Red Wings on. Matthias took up the nearest tome and thumbed it through. Mattie promised to teach me the weaknesses of the human mind. Meg is the keeper of all my stories. Melody keeps the forbidden secrets. Mendez stole the Wudang Manual Again. Micah is the bane of the demon lord, slayer of the spider priest, spiller of the silver blood. Michael dreams of worlds inside everyday objects. Michael knows the ancient rhyme. Michael read the starry wisdom between the words. Michael will sacrifice everything and everyone to achieve his goal. Mike faced the dragon-bears. Milo thinks the section you need to read is around page 56. Mitchifer is the chosen of the God of Death. Mo is the holder of the flame. Murgh Bpurn does it virtually all the time. Nathan is the inheritor of a great and mysterious power. Neal found the darkness within. Nemo detected slanting passages. Nex hides in the shadows. Nicholas consumed the mythical biter brewery's blinding beer. Nicholas', Áúplan B, Äù is kill it with fire, acceptable at any time. Nick is heir

to both warring kingdoms. Nick is the guardian of the forbidden knowledge. Nick is the keeper of the ancient tome. Nikolai is the keeper of the Talisman of the Ranging Pack. NinjaDebugger liberated this book from the Library of the Ages. Noam is still residing at the bottom of that pit trap. Noofy has adventured all over the world to be re-united with his True Love. Nora feeds the trolls. Okerstroker broods in the corner with a watchful eye. Oliver is the master of a thousand spells. Oliver turned out to be good-natured, generous and likeable; in three days no one could stand him. Oliver was menaced by a giant owl. Oscar is the Secret Fire. Oscart knows, To Keep The Peace, Prepare For War. Owen attacked the darkness. Owen is the ringmaster of the workers of dark creation. Pat presided over the sacred smoke ceremony celebrating peace between the tribes-men of plains . Paul and I have shared dreams sent to us from subaquatic temples of cyclopean stone. Pego was there when „ÄPosta!Pizza!Pacco!Ä“ was uttered. Percy unveiled the secret of the Hoss. Peter knows that The Path to Wisdom lies down the Eternal Road. Petrus is nearly proficient with the double-club. Phil is the speaker of dreamtruth. Philip opened the archives and discovered a World of Dungeons. Philippe Debar was blessed once and then thrice. Quinn unlocked the ancient armory. Raf is the source of cosmic grumpiness. Ragnar taught me how to cook on the road. Rainswept's sorrow is here with him. Rausdour hates bats. Ray is master of the dungeon and slave to the dice. Redhan banished an ancient evil. Ren√© deciphered the riddle of the thousand deaths. Rhovanor has a shard of the cup of Eternal Life implanted in his chest. Richard found inner harmony. Richard writes with the sacred ink of the ancients. Richard, Speaker to the Modrons. Rick bears an ominous mark in the superstitions of my people. Rick forgot the most important lesson. Rishi “mistakenly” ate an owlbear pellet. Rob holds the keys to the locks. Rob is lost in a forbidden tome of arcane knowledge. Rob is the chosen protector of the sacred ale. Rob Justice sleeps in the pines. Rob kicked down the door in the name of the King. Rob shot the food. Rob united the Bee Kingdoms. Rob wields the hand, as he journey's forth with the SOG & SAUF. Robert Bruce told you exactly what you wanted to hear. Robert helped me in a time of need. Rocha published Dungeon World in Brazil! Rodrigo is the teller of tales. Roman is the Keeper of the Temple Ruins. Ross was trusted with keeping the ancient tome. Rune is the wielder of the warhammer of grim irritation. Russell is the bearer of the sacred twenty sider. Rusty looked into the Mind of Darkness. Ryan is He Who Stalks Beyond the Walls. Ryan is the Master of the Dungeon. Ryan spoke the word. Ryan Webster is the prince who married his princess. Sage opened his brain to the Worm God first, mmm, dirt. Sally is a friend of the white cat. Sam is the Seeker of Knowledge. Sam wielded the Flame of Creation. Samuel stood with them at the end. Savannah possesses a true strength that cannot be overcome. Sayler is a hoopy frood He deserves a new character class: Spelljammer Buccaneer! Scaathaigh is the eternal Herald of the Starshadow. Scott Belchak bears the thanks of the creators. Scott delved deep into the Book and came out changed. Scott was taken unawares. Sean Dunstan spread word of the wonders of the dungeon to the darkest corners of the world. Sean is heart-bound to Shawna Lee through the Rite of Stone Wood. Sean punched a dungeon right in the face. Sean secretly transcribes the hieroglyphs of the

RJS Empire. Sean unrolled the freshly minted scroll. Sean was here! Shane Knysh is the last royal cartographer of the united southern realms. Shane seeks what the ancients knew, but chose to hide. Shannon opened the book of the forbidden. Shawn was jailed for a crime that I committed. Silj is completely insane! Simba left his mark on the town, leaving it under his protection. Simon carried the torch for no man. Skender discovered the tarnished Glinn circlet. Slay-Tor used the Hardcover to shatter the spines of lesser books. Someone will choose poorly and be killed, unless I intervene. Sophie uses this tome to bend realities. Sovern trusts in the creators. Stacey raised the standard of Friendship high upon the battlefield. StacyRex possesses the Eternal Bag of Happiness. Stefan is the keeper of knowledge. Stella Christina Hall woke up in the middle of each night to learn more from this book. Stephen is the keeper of the book of secrets! Steve has emerged victorious! Steve is sworn in life and death to his son Connor. Steve sang throughout the night. Steve wants to know who you truly love. Steven has opened the secret eye of Angra Mainyu. Stew lead the charge against the horned dragon. Stewart saw into the spaces between the spaces. Stras is the one that keeps carving faces on all the trees in the Godswood. Tara fought the gazebo. Tewhill broke the bugbear's will. The bigger they are, the harder Michele hits. The Book has filled my mind with erudition. The Crimson Dragon falls to my demon blade. The Demonlords await the Convergence. The host speaks for the gophers. The Legions of Gremlins unearthed the deathly tomb. The Lord's Secret mistress is Adrian. The only boundaries that exist are those of the mind. The pale cur sleeps on the book, either growling or snoring. The party shivered at the sinister sound. The prophetess Seldanha remains ever watchful of the vizier's machinations. The Rogue learned his trade from the ancient Assassin's Guild. Thom braved the sideways tower. Thomas deceived the others. Thoradin saved the vale from the mighty orc king. Thorgrim bears the Book of Grudges. Thunder is Newt's brother, he rides the winds of destiny! Tim found his courage in the length of long halls and the depth of blue eyes. Tim unearthed the true history. Tleroth stood and held the breach. Together, Cazantyl and I escaped from a cult. Tom upheld our ancient honors. Tomar can see to the heart of anything. Tony survived the demi-lich. toridas unleashes the power within. Tran knows where the shogoth lies dormant. Travis really should have known better Really. Tresl completed a perilous journey to the smoldering mountains. Tristan invoked the forbidden voice. Tucker is the most worthy of all of Carles' disciples. Tulip knows where the Bees are. Typhur stood fast, despite the cost. Tyson reps Thri-Kreen life. Ulai stands vigilant at the gate. Ungerford's brain aches with the want of knowing. Valtiel is in league with the Fair Folk. Veng has gained mastery of the ancient secrets. Vicki is a wannabe (though hopefully not forever) Renaissance woman :). Vidal is the Paladin of the Great North. Vincent walks under the scrying sun. Vivian stole the Knight's heart. Voodoo marveled at the discovery of the World. Warren wondered what bond words to write. Warzen has a new cat familiar. Wesley expressed disinterest in writing this. Wesley was the guardian of the blind. Whitney awakened the forgotten gods. Will knows the Spectre's secret name. Will was initiated into the conspiracy of the Duke's court. William knows the secret that will undo everything. Willow is the conqueror of

fallen gods. With words a piece of Brian's spirit will live on in this tome. WolfSamurai forever sealed away ancient evils from the world. Wordman wears the silver mask. Xthulu rose from a watery grave. Yet again following Wightbred into strange dungeons. Yrkoon wields the soul-drinking sword. Zachary learned an ancient song, but fears the day when he will be called upon to sing it. Zed journeyed to the frigid north to meet Jex. Zed of Sosaria stepped through the gate eager to explore. Zhang Fei has a history of causing strife among his subordinates I would do best to keep my distance from him. Zirk came to chew bubblegum and play games, and he's all out of bubblegum.

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Thibault Mesmin d'Estienne, Thomas Foss Christensen, Thomas Ryan, Thomas Ulrich, Thorbjørn Steen, ThorDiantral, Thriondel Half-Elven, Tiago Marinho, Tim "Buzz" Isakson, Tim Ballew, Tim Hutchings, Tim Knight, Tim McCracken, Timothy Sanders, TJBailey, Todd Mitchell, Todd Roy, Todd Zircher, Tolly, Tom Cadorette, Tom Flanagan, Tom Idleman, Tom Ladegard, Tom Lumley, Tom McCarthy, Tom Reynolds, Tomasz Pudło, Tomek Filip, Tony, Tony, Tony Dijkstra, Tony Eng, Tony Indurante, Tony Love, Tony Reyes, Topi Makkonen, Torolf, Trachalio, Tracy Barnett/Sand & Steam Productions, Tracy Hurley, Travis Bryant, Travis Scott, Trent Casey, Trent Yacuk, Trevis Martin, Trey Mercer, Trollhawke, Troy "Wrongtown" Hall, Troy Gilbert, Troy M. Costisick, Tuomas, Turk, txelu, Ty Sawyer, Tyler Jones, Tyler Lanser, Uffe Thorsen, Ulysses, Umberto Pignatelli, Unisprink, Vacuumjockey, Vera Vartanian, Vernon Lingley, Veronica Courage Wakefield, Victor Lane, Victor Maslov, Victor Wyatt, Victoria Uney, Viktor Haag, Ville Halonen, Vinicius Lessa, Vites, Vlad Del Cid, Vladimir Dzundza, Vladimir Filipović, W. Scott Jones, Wade "Belzain" Ussery, Walt Robillard, Warrbo, Warren "Mook" Wilson, Warren Merrifield, Wayne "Lumrunner" Humfleet, Wayne Arthurton, Wayne Lauer, Wei-Hua, Hsieh, Wes Price, Weston Clowney, White Paws, Whitt, Wilhelm Fitzpatrick, Will Ijebor, Will Robot, Will Thibault, Will Vesely, William "CallMeWilliam" Nichols, William Ansell, William Carroll, William Fischer, William Gerke, William K Wood, William Koch, Willis Scilacci, Wing Chan, WJO III, Wojciech Gębczyk, Wolfberry, WOoDY, Wothbora, wraith808, Wyatt Camp, Xander Veerhoff, Xavier Aubuchon-Mendoza, Xellos, cleric of coins, xiangh, Yan Prado, Yoki Erdtman, Yragael, Z. Dettwyler, Zach Clay, Zach Gourley, Zach Peters, Zachary Hall, Zachary Sylvain, Zachary Williams, Zack Kline, Zack Woodard, Zane Ewers, zero.executioner, Zippy Schindler, Zontco Gaming Division, ZSP, östen petersson.

APPENDIX 2

Since you've read this book it's likely at some point you'll be teaching the game to others, either experienced roleplayers or those new to the hobby. Throughout the design process we've had many chances to play with lots of different gamers from different backgrounds and there are a few things we've found work well for teaching the game.

PITCH IT

"I believe that life is for the living. I believe in taking risks and biting off more than you can chew and also, people were yelling and I got confused about the rules."

—Kenneth, "30 Rock"

Before you play you'll likely be explaining the game to your new players (don't just spring it on them, that's not cool). We call that the pitch: it's explaining why you want to play Dungeon World and why you think they'll like it.

First and most importantly: put it in your own words. We can't give you a script because the best way to get people excited about the game is to share your honest excitement. There are, however, some things you might want to touch on.

With first-time roleplayers it's best to focus on what roleplaying means in Dungeon World. Tell them what they'll be doing (portraying a character) and what you'll be doing (portraying the world around them). Mention the general conceit (adventurers and adventure). It's usually a good idea to mention the role of the rules too, how they're there to drive the action forward in interesting ways.

With folks who've played RPGs before, especially those who've played other fantasy adventure games, you can focus more on what makes Dungeon World different from other similar games. Ease-of-play, the way the rules just step in at the right times, and the fast pace are all things that experienced roleplayers often appreciate.

No matter the audience, don't just pitch Dungeon World, pitch the game you're going to run. If this is going to be a trip into the city sewers, tell them that right up front. If there's an evil cult to be stopped that should be part of your description. The interaction between you, the players, and the rules will create all kinds of interesting secrets later on; your pitch should honestly portray the game you intend to run.

TEACHING THE GAME

PRESENT THE CLASSES

Once everybody's on board for a game of Dungeon World and you've sat down to play start by presenting the character sheets. Give a short description of each, making sure to mention what each does and their place in the world. You can also read out the descriptions for each class, those all include something about both what the class does and how that fits into the big picture.

If anybody has questions about the rules, answer them, but for now focus on describing what the classes do in plain terms. If someone asks about the fighter it's more useful to tell them that the fighter has a signature weapon that's one of a kind then to go into detail about how the signature weapon move works.

CREATE CHARACTERS

Go through the character creation rules step by step. The process of creating a character is also a great introduction to the basic concepts: the players will encounter stats, moves, HP, and damage all in an order that makes sense. Don't bother trying to frontload the rules explanations. There aren't really any wrong choices.

Each player will encounter the rules that are important to their class. The fighter, for example, will see moves about weapon ranges and piercing and ask about them, explain them as needed. If the fighter player doesn't ask you what piercing is, don't worry about it. They're happy to choose based on the fiction, which is all the stats and tags reflect anyway.

If your players are particularly worried about making their characters "right" just give them the option of changing them later. Trying to cover every rule and give them all the context now will just slow the game down. In particular, don't go over the basic moves in detail yet. Leave them out so that the players can read them and ask questions, but don't waste time by explaining each. They'll come up as needed.

As the players introduce their characters and start setting bonds move from answering questions to asking them. Ask about why they chose what they did and what that means for their character. Ask about details established by their bonds. Let their choices establish the world around them. Take special note of anything that you think

you might be able to make moves with (like an estranged teacher or a simmering war).

START PLAY

Start play by concretely describing the world around them. Keep it brief and evocative, use plenty of details, and end with something that demands action. Then ask them what they do.

Ending with something that demands action is important. Don't presume that new players will already know what they want to do. Giving them something to react to right away means you get straight to playing.

Especially for new players make sure that the action they're thrown into is something they have the tools to deal with. A fight is a good choice, as is a tense negotiation (which can easily become a fight). Keep it simple and let the complexity build.

Even in a fight keep to simple monsters: things that bleed, don't have too much armor, and don't have piercing. Give them a chance to get used to their armor and dealing damage before you start using the exceptions to those rules, like piercing and ignoring armor. Of course if the fiction dictates ignoring armor or piercing or a certain monster, use it, but don't lead with those.

For new players make liberal use of your Show Signs of an Approaching Threat move. New players, or those used to a different type of fantasy adventure, may have different assumptions about what's lethal and when they're in danger, so make sure to show them danger clearly. Once they've started to pick up on what's dangerous you can give them a little less warning.

If you're GMing for the first time focus on a few moves: Show Signs of an Approaching Threat, Deal Damage, Put Someone in a Spot. Only look at your moves sheet if you're pretty sure none of those three apply. Eventually you'll build up familiarity with the whole range of GM moves and using them will seem like second nature.

CONTINUING PLAY

After an hour or two of play the players will likely have everything down. As a first time GM you may take a bit longer to pick up all your moves, maybe a session or two. Just roll with it.

If you find yourself struggling in the first session consider it a pilot, like the first episode of a TV show. Feel free to start over or retroactively change things. If a player decides that the thief just isn't what they thought it was let them switch classes (either remaking the same character or introducing someone new). If your first adventure wasn't working too well scrap it and start something new.

While Dungeon World works great for one-shots the longer cycles of levels and bonds don't really kick in for a bit. If your first one or two sessions go well consider scheduling out enough time for 5–10 more. Knowing that you're planning to play that much longer gives you some space to plan out your fronts and resolve them.

APPENDIX 3

There isn't always time for prep. People aren't entirely committed to a game—you just want to test it out or you've got a four-hour slot at a convention that you want to fill and you've never met the players before in your life. Maybe prep isn't something you care about or you think it's more fun to just take a map and run with it. Even better, maybe you've got a favorite old school adventure module and you'd love to run through using the *Dungeon World* rules. In this appendix, we'll cover how to convert and adapt material from other games into *Dungeon World* and give you the same flexibility to run your favorite adventures using the rules in this book.

OVERVIEW

The first step in preparing an adventure for use with *Dungeon World* is reading through that adventure, and through the *Dungeon World* rules. For this book, you'll want to be familiar with all the basic rules, as well as familiar with the section on fronts and on the GM principles. The former will be guiding you in adapting the framework of the adventure and the latter will help keep your mind going in the right direction—so that gameplay stays true to the style and rules set out in this book. You'll want to read through the module next, paying close attention to the four following topics as you go.

- Maps
- Monsters
- Magic Items
- NPCs and Organizations

Flip through the adventure, make some notes as you go, but don't feel you need to memorize the whole thing. Areas that focus particularly on statistics are likely to end up ignored, and you'll want to leave blanks in the adventure for you and the players to discover as you go.

When you've finished, you'll have a broad understanding about what the adventure is about—the power groups at play in it, the special or cool monsters the adventure contains, the threats and dangers that its cast present to the world and the kinds of things the PCs might be interested in. Set aside the adventure for now, and refer to the fronts section of *Dungeon World*. This is where the majority of your work is going to take place.

ADVENTURE CONVERSION

FRONTS

The core of any standard adventure, scenario or game session in Dungeon World flows outward from the fronts to the players; the fronts have their impending dooms, the players react, and in the space between, you play the game to find out what happens. The same is true when presenting a converted adventure. Reading through the module, you'll have noticed things—NPCs, places of interest, special monsters and organizations that might have an impact on the world or some agenda to carry out. Depending on the size of the adventure, there may be just one or a few of these. Take a look through the list of front types and create one for each group.

I'm going to convert an old adventure I love; I've run it a dozen times in a bunch of different systems and I think it'd be a blast to run my Dungeon World group through. I've given myself a quick read through to remind myself what the adventure is all about. In this case, there's a town being menaced in secret by a wicked cult who worships a squamous reptile god. Sounds like fun! The adventure has a secret dungeon, a corrupt religious order, a bunch of smelly troglodytes and, because the whole town is a mess of suspicion and finger-pointing, some very helpless adventurers. It's a pretty grim start with lots of bad things to choose from. I've decided that all that bad stuff falls under two main fronts: The Cultists and The Troglodyte Clan.

Now, I could make the sorcerous naga that lives in the caverns her own front, if I wanted to, or I could add in a campaign front for the Reptile God itself, but I think I'll only be running this game a few sessions, so I'm going to stay focused. The two fronts I have work together in some ways, but are unique and operate independently, so I've separated them.

Create these Fronts like you would normally, choosing dangers, impending dooms, and grim portents. Ask one or two stakes questions but be sure to leave yourself lots of room—that's where you can really tie in the characters. Normally, you'd be pulling these

things straight out of the inspiration of your brain, but in this case, you've got the module to guide you. Think about the fronts as themes, and the dangers as elements from the pages of your module. Look at the kinds of things your fronts are said to be doing in the adventure and how that might go if the PCs were never there to stop it. What's the worst that could happen if the fronts were able to run rampant? This kind of reading-between-the-lines will give you ammunition for making your hard moves as you play through the adventure. This step is where you'll turn those stat-block NPCs into either full-fledged dangers themselves, or members of the front's cast.

If there are any traps, curses or general effects in the adventure you'd like to write custom moves for, do it now. A lot of old adventures will have elements that call for a "saving throw" to avoid some noisome effect—these can often simply be a cause for a defy danger roll, or can have whole, separate custom moves if necessary. The key here is to capture the intent of the adventure—the spirit of the thing—rather than translate some mechanical element perfectly.

When you're done, you'll have a set of fronts that cover the major threats and dangers the characters will face.

MONSTERS

Most published adventures contained one or two unique monsters not seen anywhere else—custom creatures and denizens of the deeps that could threaten players in some way they hadn't encountered before. Take a look through the adventure and make sure you've caught them all. Many monsters will already have statistics noted in *Dungeon World* and you can, if you're happy with them, just make a note of what page they're on in your fronts and move on from there. If you want to further customize the monsters, or need to create your own, use the rules to do so. In this step, try to avoid thinking about "balancing" the monsters or concerning yourself too much with how many HP a monster has or whether its armor rating matches what you expect. Think more about how the monster is meant to participate in the world. Does it scare off hopeless adventurers? Is it there to bar their way or pose a riddle? What is its purpose in the greater ecology of the dungeon or adventure at large? Translating the spirit of the thing will always give you better, more engaging results. If the monster has a cool power or neat trick you want to write a

custom move for, do so! Custom moves are what make Dungeon World feel unique from group to group, so take advantage of them where you can.

In my adventure, the monsters run the gamut. I've got a scary naga with some mind-controlling powers, an evil priest with divine snake-god magic, a bunch of ruffian cultists, a dragon turtle and a few miscellaneous lizards, crocodiles and snakes. Most of these I can pull from the monster settings, but I'll create custom stats for the naga and the cultist leader, at least. I want them to feel new and different and have some cool ideas for how that might look. I use the monster creation rules to put them together.

DIRECT CONVERSION

If you run across a monster that you haven't already created and which you don't know well enough to convert using the monster creation rules you can instead convert them directly.

DAMAGE

If the monster's damage is a single die with a bonus of up to +10 keep it as-is. If the monster's damage uses multiple dice of the same size roll the listed dice and take the highest result. If the monster uses multiple dice of different sizes roll only the largest and take the highest result.

HP

If the monster's HP is listed as Hit Dice take the maximum value of the first HD and add one for each additional hit dice. If the monster's HP is listed as a number with no Hit Dice divide the HP by 4.

ARMOR

If the monster's AC is average give it 1 armor. If the monster's AC is low, give it 0 armor. If the monster's AC is high give it 2 armor, 3 armor for beasts that are all about defense. If it's nearly invulnerable, 4 armor. +1 armor if its defenses are magical.

MOVES AND INSTINCT

Look at the special abilities or attacks listed for the monster, these form the basis for its moves.

MAPS

One of the biggest differences between Dungeon World and many other fantasy RPGs is the concept of maps and mapping. In many games, you'll see a square-by-square map denoting precisely what goes where, often presented to give as much detail as possible and leave little to the imagination save the description of the location in question. Dungeon World often leans the opposite direction—maps marked with empty space and a one or two word description like “blades” or “scary.” To adapt an existing adventure for use in Dungeon World, simply keep in mind your principles and agenda. Primarily, keep in mind that as the GM, it's your job to “draw maps, leave blanks” and to “ask questions and use the answers.”

To that end, it's often best to re-draw the map entirely, if you have time. Don't copy it inch-by-inch but redraw it freehand, leaving spaces and drawing out new rooms, if you'd like. Don't stick to the map exactly as written, but give yourself some creative license. The idea here is to give yourself room to expand—to allow the players' reaction to the adventure to surprise and inspire you. If you've got the whole map nailed down in advance, there's nowhere to go you don't already know about, is there? Pick a few rooms that don't interest you and wipe out their inhabitants. Draw a new tunnel or two. This will give you some space to play around once you get into the game itself.

If you don't have the time or inclination to re-draw the map, don't worry. Just take the original map, make a few notes about what might go where and leave the rest blank. When the players go into that room marked “4f” don't look it up, just make a guess at what might be there based on your notes and what else has been happening. You'll find a comfortable balance between freely playing out what happens and consulting your prep as you go along.

The maps that come with my adventure are a good mix of fun and cool and sort of boring fluff. I'll keep most of what the dungeon describes under the city—the lair of the troglodytes and the secret caves where the captive

villagers are being kept—but I'm going to throw away a lot of the stuff about the village itself and just leave blank spaces. It'll give me room to use the answers to questions like "Who do you already know, here?" and "Who lives in the abandoned hut up the road?" I've made some notes about where the map and my fronts intersect, but mostly I've just given myself room to explore.

MAGIC & TREASURE

Two things that are, traditionally, a “big deal” in published modules are treasure and magic items. This is less relevant in *Dungeon World* (as the reward cycle for characters is more about “doing” than about “having”) but it’s still fun to drudge through a dungeon or explore lost ruins and come up with cool magic items and piles of gold! Like the map, it’s useful to get an idea of the kinds of stuff that might be found in the adventure—anything particularly called out in the text as relevant to the adventure itself (a magic sword that can be used to wound the golem on level 4, or a pendant belonging to the prince captured in room 3) is particularly important. Like monsters, it’s better to look at magic items in terms of what purpose they fulfill: what they’re “for” rather than the damage or armor bonus they might give. *Dungeon World* isn’t built on balancing treasure against character level, for example, so just look through the adventure for items that seem cool or fun or interesting and create new magic items (with custom moves as necessary) wherever you think it’s needed. This is possibly the easiest step of conversion. Again, you can leave yourself exploratory room, here. Make notes to yourself like “The

wizard has a magic staff, what does it do?” and find that out in play. Ask the players about it, see what they have to say. Let spout lore do some work for you. “You’ve heard that the wizard here has a strange magical staff. What rumors have you heard of its origins?”

INTRODUCTORY MOVES

This step is entirely optional, but can be really useful when running through an adventure for a convention group or other group where running through a full “first session” process just isn’t possible. You can take variables of the adventure and create “hooks” for that adventure, writing custom moves to be made after character creation but before play starts. These moves will serve to engage the characters in the fiction and give them something special to prepare them or hook them into what’s about to happen. You can write one for each class, or bundle them together, if you like. Here’s an example:

Fighter, someone who loves you gave you a gift before you left for a life of adventure. Roll+CHA and tell us how much they love you. On a 10+ pick two heirlooms, on a 7-9 pick one. On a miss, well, good intentions count for something, right?

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

These sorts of moves can give the players the sense that their characters are tied to the situation at hand, and open the door for more lines of question-and-answer play that can fill the game world with life. Think about the Fronts, the things they endanger, the riches they might protect and their impact on the world. Let these intro moves flow from that understanding, creating a great kickstart to the adventure.

APPENDIX 4

Sometimes the players will come across someone who becomes important in the moment. When the ritual goes wrong and a poor captive gets the power cosmic what does that villager do with it? Who were they?

When you need a quick NPC all you need is an instinct and some way to pursue it. We call that a knack, it can be anything from a skill to a title to a debt owed. Combine the two and you have an NPC who has something they want and a way to try to get it—you're ready to go.

100 INSTINCTS

1. To avenge
2. To spread the good word
3. To reunite with a loved one
4. To make money
5. To make amends
6. To explore a mysterious place
7. To uncover a hidden truth
8. To locate a lost thing
9. To kill a hated foe
10. To conquer a faraway land
11. To cure an illness
12. To craft a masterwork
13. To survive just one more day
14. To earn affection
15. To prove a point
16. To be smarter, faster and stronger
17. To heal an old wound
18. To extinguish an evil forever
19. To hide from a shameful fact
20. To evangelize
21. To spread suffering
22. To prove worth
23. To rise in rank
24. To be praised
25. To discover the truth
26. To make good on a bet
27. To get out of an obligation
28. To convince someone to do their dirty work
29. To steal something valuable
30. To overcome a bad habit
31. To commit an atrocity
32. To earn renown
33. To accumulate power
34. To save someone from a monstrosity
35. To teach
36. To settle down
37. To get just one more haul
38. To preserve the law
39. To discover
40. To devour
41. To restore the family name
42. To live a quiet life
43. To help others
44. To atone

INSTANT NPCs

45. To prove their worth
46. To gain honor
47. To expand their land
48. To gain a title
49. To retreat from society
50. To escape
51. To party
52. To return home
53. To serve
54. To reclaim what was taken
55. To do what must be done
56. To be a champion
57. To avoid notice
58. To help a family member
59. To perfect a skill
60. To travel
61. To overcome a disadvantage
62. To play the game
63. To establish a dynasty
64. To improve the realm
65. To retire
66. To recover a lost memory
67. To battle
68. To become a terror to criminals
69. To raise dragons
70. To live up to expectations
71. To become someone else
72. To do what can't be done
73. To be remembered in song
74. To be forgotten
75. To find true love
76. To lose their mind
77. To indulge
78. To make the best of it
79. To find the one
80. To destroy an artifact
81. To show them all
82. To bring about unending summer
83. To fly
84. To find the six-fingered man
85. To wake the ancient sleepers
86. To entertain
87. To follow an order
88. To die gloriously
89. To be careful
90. To show kindness
91. To not screw it all up
92. To uncover the past
93. To go where no man has gone before
94. To do good
95. To become a beast
96. To spill blood
97. To live forever
98. To hunt the most dangerous game
99. To hate
100. To run away

100 KNACKS

1. Criminal connections
2. Muscle
3. Skill with a specific weapon
4. Hedge wizardry
5. Comprehensive local knowledge
6. Noble blood
7. A one-of-a-kind item
8. Special destiny
9. Unique perspective
10. Hidden knowledge
11. Magical awareness
12. Abnormal parentage
13. Political leverage
14. A tie to a monster
15. A secret
16. True love
17. An innocent heart
18. A plan for the perfect crime
19. A one-way ticket to paradise
20. A mysterious ore
21. Money, money, money
22. Divine blessing
23. Immunity from the law
24. Prophecy
25. Secret martial arts techniques
26. A ring of power
27. A much-needed bag of taters
28. A heart
29. A fortified position
30. Lawmaking
31. Tongues
32. A discerning eye
33. Endurance
34. A safe place
35. Visions
36. A beautiful mind
37. A clear voice
38. Stunning looks
39. A catchy tune
40. Invention
41. Baking
42. Brewing
43. Smelting
44. Woodworking
45. Writing
46. Immunity to fire
47. Cooking
48. Storytelling
49. Ratcatching
50. Lying
51. Utter unremarkableness
52. Mind-bending sexiness
53. Undefinable coolness
54. A way with knots
55. Wheels of polished steel
56. A magic carpet
57. Endless ideas
58. Persistence
59. A stockpile of food
60. A hidden path
61. Piety
62. Resistance to disease
63. A library
64. A silver tongue
65. Bloodline
66. An innate spell
67. Balance
68. Souls
69. Speed

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 70. A sense of right and
wrong | 86. Steely nerves |
| 71. Certainty | 87. Bluffing |
| 72. An eye for detail | 88. A trained wolf |
| 73. Heroic self-sacrifice | 89. A long-lost sibling,
regained |
| 74. Sense of direction | 90. An arrow with your
name on it |
| 75. A big idea | 91. A true name |
| 76. A hidden entrance to
the city | 92. Luck |
| 77. The love of someone
powerful | 93. The attention of
supernatural powers |
| 78. Unquestioning loyalty | 94. Kindness |
| 79. Exotic fruit | 95. Strange tattoos |
| 80. Poison | 96. A majestic beard |
| 81. Perfect memory | 97. A book in a strange
language |
| 82. The language of birds | 98. Power overwhelming |
| 83. A key to an important
door | 99. Delusions of grandeur |
| 84. Metalworking | 100. The wind at his back
and a spring in his step |
| 85. Mysterious benefactors | |

NAMES

Finbar, Hywn, One Eye, Alhoro, Arlon, Yev, Slime, Jocat, Ewing, Lim, Poy, Milo, Deryl, Medlyn, Astrafel, Daelwyn, Feliana, Damarra, Sistranalle, Pendrell, Melliandre, Dagoliir, Baldric, Leena, Dunwick, Willem, Edwyn, Florian, Seraphine, Quorra, Charlotte, Lily, Ramonde, Cassandra, Durga, Aelfar, Gerda, Rurgosh, Bjorn, Drummond, Helga, Siggrun, Freya, Wesley, Brinton, Jon, Sara, Hawthorn, Elise, Clarke, Lenore, Piotr, Dahlia, Carmine, Hycorax, Ethanwe, Sinathel, Demanor, Menoliir, Mithralan, Taeros, Aegor, Tanner, Dunstan, Rose, Ivy, Robard, Mab, Thistle, Puck, Anne, Serah, Elana, Obelis, Herran, Sylva, Andanna, Siobhan, Aziz, Pelin, Sibel, Nils, Wei, Ozruk, Surtur, Brunhilda, Annika, Janos, Greta, Dim, Rundrig, Jarl, Xotoq, Elohiir, Sharaseth, Hasrith, Shevaral, Cadeus, Eldar, Kithracet, Thelian, Finnegan, Olive, Randolph, Bartleby, Aubrey, Baldwin, Becca, Hawke, Rudiger, Gregor, Brianne, Walton

TAG REFERENCE

- **n Ammo (equipment):** It can be used as ammunition for certain weapons. The number listed is not an exact count, but a general quantity.
- **Amorphous (monster):** Its anatomy is bizarre and unnatural.
- **Applied (equipment):** It's only useful when carefully applied to a person or something they eat or drink.
- **Arcane (steading):** Someone of notable arcane power lives here.
- **n Armor (equipment):** Subtract *n* from all damage dealt to you. If you have multiple items with *n* armor, you only use the highest *n*.
- **+n Armor (equipment):** Add *n* to your total armor.
- **Awkward (equipment):** It's unwieldy and tough to use.
- **Battalion (steading defenses):** As many as 1,000 armed-and-ready soldiers.
- **Blight (steading):** The steading has a recurring problem, often a monster infestation.
- **Booming (steading population):** Far more people than there is space.
- **Cautious (monster):** It prefers the defensive and will avoid a fight unless it is sure to win.
- **Close (weapon range):** It's useful for attacking someone a foot or two beyond arm's length.
- **Clumsy (equipment):** It's tough to move around in. -1 ongoing while wearing it.
- **n Coins (equipment):** It costs *n* coins to buy, usually.
- **Construct (monster):** It was made, not born.
- **Craft (steading):** The steading is known for mastery of the listed craft.
- **+n Damage (equipment):** When you use it to deal damage, add *n* to the damage you deal.
- **Dangerous (equipment):** If you use it without taking proper precautions expect consequences.
- **Devious (monster):** The real threat of it isn't in a bloody fight.
- **Dirt (steading prosperity):** Nothing for sale. Cheap labor.
- **Divine (steading):** A notable religious organization or person resides here.
- **Dwarven (steading):** The steading is mostly or entirely dwarves.
- **Elven (steading):** The steading is mostly or entirely elves.

- Enmity (steading): The steading has bad blood with the listed steadings.
- Exodus (steading population): On the verge of collapse.
- Exotic (steading): The steading has goods or services that aren't available anywhere else nearby.
- Far (weapon range): It's useful for attacking someone within shouting distance.
- Forceful (equipment): When used as a weapon, it can knock someone backwards or even off their feet.
- Garrison (steading defenses): Multiple patrols of armed guards at all times.
- Group (monster organization): It's usually encountered in groups of 3–6.
- Growing (steading population): The steading is expanding.
- Guard (steading defenses): A standing force protects the steading.
- Guild (steading): The listed guilds hold sway here.
- Hand (weapon range): You can use it to attack someone at arm's length or closer.
- History (steading): The steading has historical significance.
- Hoarder (monster) It collects valuable things. This tag also gives a bonus on random treasure rolls.
- Horde (monster organization): It's usually encountered in groups of more than 7, maybe many more.
- Huge (monster size): It's as big as a small house or larger.
- Ignores Armor (equipment): Armor doesn't apply to damage dealt with this weapon.
- Intelligent (monster): It's about as smart as a person.
- Large (monster size); It's bigger than a human, up to the size of a cart.
- Lawless (steading): Crime is rampant.
- Legion (steading defenses): An entire standing army, essentially.
- Magical (monster): It's beyond the physical in some way. You can't explain it with the laws of nature.
- Market (steading): There's a public market on a regular basis. +1 to supply rolls.
- Messy (equipment): It deals damage in a particularly destructive way, ripping people and things apart.
- Militia (steading defenses): A few people with worn weapons.

- Moderate (steading prosperity): Common items for sale.
- Near (weapon range): It's useful for attacking at range when you can see the whites of their eyes.
- Need (steading): The steading can't survive without the listed resource.
- None (steading defenses): They're lucky if they can get a rabble of farmers with pitchforks.
- Oath (steading): The steading owes fealty or defense to the listed steadings.
- Organized (monster): Groups of this monster will have formal organization—if you kill one, others might seek revenge.
- Personage (steading): The listed important person lives here.
- n Piercing (equipment): Subtract n from the armor of creatures you deal damage to using this weapon.
- Planar (monster): It's not from this world.
- Poor (steading prosperity): Only the bare essentials for sale.
- Power (steading): The steading holds sway in some arena (often arcane, divine, or political).
- Precise (equipment): You can use DEX instead of STR when using this weapon.
- Ration (equipment): It's edible, more or less. When you make camp you have to consume a ration.
- Reach (weapon range): It's useful for attack someone several feet away, maybe as far as 10 feet.
- Religion (steading): The listed religion has a strong hold.
- Reload (equipment): It takes more than a moment to set it up for another attack.
- Requires (equipment): Only people who have the listed requirements can use it.
- Resource (steading): The steading has consistent access to the listed resource.
- Rich (steading prosperity): Any mundane item and stranger stuff for sale.
- Safe (steading): There isn't trouble here unless the players bring it.
- Shrinking (steading population): Fewer people than the steading was designed for.
- Slow (equipment): It takes more than a moment to use it.
- Small (monster size): It's about halfling size.

- Solitary (monster organization): It can live and fight without the help of others. This tag gives a bonus to random treasure rolls.
- Steady (steading population): Population even with the steading's size.
- Stealthy (monster): It can avoid detection and attack with surprise.
- Stun (equipment): It does stun damage instead of normal damage.
- Terrifying (monster): Just being close to it is likely to make people break and flee.
- Thrown (equipment): It's still dangerous when you throw it.
- Tiny (monster size): It's smaller than a halfling.
- Touch (equipment): You use it by touching it to the target's skin.
- Trade (steading): The steading has regular trade with the listed steading.
- Two-handed (equipment): It takes two hands to use it.
- Watch (steading defenses): A few people dedicated to being on the lookout for trouble.
- Wealthy (steading prosperity): Just about any mundane item available.
- n Weight (equipment): The item counts against your load. You can only carry total weight equal to your load without penalty.
- Worn (equipment): It's only useful if you wear it like clothes.
- n Uses (equipment): It can be used n times.

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