

WICKED ONES



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INTRO BEING EVIL



*"We prowl in darkness. We raid and pillage.
We worship dark gods. We sow terror and discord.
We build our dungeons. We slay those who trespass.
We are Wicked Ones. And you're in our demesne."*

- Mallus, Demon Zealot of Talazar



WHAT'S THIS GAME ABOUT?

Wicked Ones is a game about a group of evil monsters building a dungeon. You build traps and other defenses to keep the hoard you gather out of the hands of the greedy adventurers coming to steal it away. You play to find out just how long you can survive against the inevitable onslaught of heroism your misdeeds bring. You find out why monsters need to hoard all that gold, who builds all those traps, and how much fun killing adventurers is. **You're the villains of this story. You are Wicked Ones.**

Monsters are deeply flawed creatures, driven by base desires. There are those, however, who are able to keep their baser impulses in check, rally others to their cause, and focus on a grander scheme. These formidable individuals are known among monsterkind as Wicked Ones. You play a group of them that, in understanding there is strength in numbers, have banded together in order to build a dungeon from scratch. You raid civilized lands, gather a hoard, cause mayhem, cast dark rituals, discover long forgotten things deep in the earth, slay heroes, and suffer blowback from your evildoing, all while working towards accomplishing your master plan.

However, you're not just fantasy monsters randomly causing chaos and mayhem. Monsters come and go, but the dungeon outlives them, binds them together, and gives them a purpose. You map it out in detail as it's built, then breathe life into it through play with events like revelry after a victorious raid, calamity striking as a tunnel collapses on your minions, or facing off against adventurers who dare enter your sanctum. **Your dungeon is the main character of this story.**

SANDBOXES, NOT SETTINGS

While it's assumed that your story is taking place in a fantasy world, there is no base setting for the game. With a dungeon, what's most important is its immediate vicinity as it's inextricably tied to the region surrounding it. Players work together to craft a sandbox, a map full of factions and points of interest for your dungeon to get involved with. Make it a pressure cooker where any action you take is bound to have some blowback. There are several sandbox maps later in this book that you can fill with factions, but the game works better if you create your own!

FORGED IN THE DARK

Wicked Ones is a *Forged in the Dark* (FitD) game, based on the system mechanics and unique playstyle developed by John Harper for the game *Blades in the Dark*. In that game, you play dangerous scoundrels who risk everything for fortune. FitD games focus on intense periods of zoomed-in action where events unfold in interesting ways without the need for excessive planning by the players. It has a flexible resolution system that lets you get creative with character actions. It's all about cutting to the action and getting to the good parts. It makes for wonderfully chaotic stories where no matter what you do, things are bound to go wrong - because that's what happens to scoundrels in *Blades* or monsters building a dungeon.

TOUCHSTONES AND TONE

More than anything else, this game was influenced by the PC game *Dungeon Keeper*. If you've played it, or its spiritual successor *War for the Overworld*, you already have the right feel for *Wicked Ones*. Some other video games were a huge inspiration as well, such as *Dwarf Fortress*, *Rimworld*, and *Overlord*. As for tabletop RPGs, of course *Blades in the Dark* gave a ton of ideas for creating a dangerous world that monsters inhabit, but *Saga of the Goblin Horde*, *No Country for Old Kobolds*, and *Goblin Quest* also provided great insight for portraying the perspective of a monster.

It's important for the GM and the players to create the right tone for the game together. It shouldn't be cartoony and the monsters aren't bumbling fools - they're vicious killers with dark hearts filled with malice. There are some laughs to be had, but have no illusion - monsters aren't misunderstood. They're fundamentally evil, by their very nature. Bask in choosing the greater of two evils because being the villain is what *Wicked Ones* is all about!

On the other hand, going too dark all the time isn't going to be fun for the players - so there's a bit of a human aspect to the story. The monsters have motivations, goals, and even things they love, whether it be a pile of trinkets or a growing skull collection. In the end, you're in this together. The dungeon, built from scratch, is your home and it's all you've got. So while your awful nature might wear you down, you still want to protect what's important to you. The game presents a balance of goal-oriented gameplay to compliment this exploration of darker themes. When it comes to evildoings, sometimes less is more - seeing it too often decreases its impact and makes it fall flat, and the game mechanics support this idea in play.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Before you get started, make sure to have gathered up the following:

- **This book:** While the game is based on the *FitD* framework, it does not require *Blades in the Dark* to play. This game is completely standalone.
- **A bit of knowledge:** You're going to need to have a basic understanding of what a tabletop roleplaying game is. This book doesn't cover these core concepts. Wikipedia has an article that serves as a good place to start.
- **Some dice:** Grab a handful of six-sided dice, ideally four or more per person.
- **A gamemaster:** One person needs to be the gamemaster (GM). The GM plays as the world and is responsible for bringing it to life, making it a dangerous place full of ripe opportunities for the monsters to thrive in.
- **Players:** Two to four people who take on the role of the monsters building the dungeon. The players are responsible for weaving awesome stories with their characters' antics and mayhem.
- **Paper and pencils:** Grab character sheets, a GM sheet, a dungeon sheet, and quick reference guides online at banditcamp.io/wickedones. Each player needs a calling sheet of their choice. Pencils work best for drawing the dungeon!

GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

It's a good idea to familiarize yourself with the overall structure of the game and some key terms that'll be used moving forward. Don't worry too much about understanding all of the terms. Try to get a sense of how the game works overall first. When you get confused about how the rules all tie together, you can come back and read this section again to help fill in the gaps.

Wicked Ones is a game driven by character action, which means the GM doesn't usually roll for non-player character (NPC) actions. The players do almost all of the rolling by declaring what their characters do. The world and NPCs then act based on the roll results. In this way, every roll by a player covers both their own character's actions and the actions of the world around them.

You start the game by choosing a **dungeon theme**, which helps players make characters that have similar ambitions. It also gives you a set of **rooms** that you can build within your dungeon. Players then make player characters (PCs) by choosing a **calling** from the list above. Your calling defines what abilities your character has access to.

You draw out your dungeon in detail on the **dungeon sheet**, including its **rooms**, **traps**, **locks**, and the **creatures** that inhabit it. You gather a hoard and protect it from **adventurers**. When the adventurers enter your dungeon, your **minions** confront them on the first level while the PCs wait in the **sanctum** for a titanic final confrontation.

Each character has a set of nine **actions** rated from 0 to 3 dots which are used when you want your character to do something. Before you make a roll, the GM determines the position and effect of the roll. **Position** is a measure of how bad the consequences will be if you fail, while **effect** is a measure of how large of an impact you will have if you succeed. When you want to do something, you declare your intent and what action you'd like to use. The GM gives you the position and effect and you then decide whether to roll or not.

You roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the action rating you chose, then you take the highest result from the roll. If it's a 1, 2, or 3, it's a **failure** and you suffer a **consequence** determined by how bad your position was. A 4 or 5 is a **mixed**, meaning you manage to accomplish your goal but suffer a consequence as well. If you roll a 6, it's a **success** and you accomplish it without any consequences. Two 6s is a **critical** and you get an awesome extra benefit along with your success.

Consequences come in many forms, such as taking **shock**, becoming **bloodied**, the

CALLINGS

BRUTE
CONNIVER
CRAFTER
HUNTER
MARAUDER
SHADOW
SHAMAN
WARLOCK
ZEALOT

DUNGEONS

ENCLAVE
FORGE
HIDEOUT
STRONGHOLD
TEMPLE

situation worsening, a weapon breaking, or enemy reinforcements arriving. Taking another serious wound while bloodied kills you. When you suffer a consequence, you can roll an action to **resist** it, reducing the impact of the consequence or maybe even negating it entirely. When you resist, you take an amount of **stress** depending on the roll. Stress is a resource every character has that allows them to keep their **dark impulse** in check. Characters can also spend stress to empower abilities they have, like casting powerful spells or using monstrous strength.

Your dark impulse rests within your monstrous heart, constantly beckoning you away from the tasks at hand. You can be **compelled** to follow through on a dark impulse, taking an action that plays towards it. Doing so rewards you with a **dark heart**, a bankable die that you can add to a later roll. You can also spend stress to suppress the compel. However, when you take too much stress, you snap and **go feral**, giving in to your dark impulse completely, having to immediately take an action that directly plays into it.

The game progresses through four phases: lurking, calamity, raiding, and blowback. You begin the **lurking phase** with **recovery**, clearing all of your stress and healing all of your wounds. You then pile your loot from the previous raid onto your hoard and partake in revelry, earning gold, dark hearts, and items. You can then take a **downtime action** that you can use to build your dungeon, craft **inventions** and **potions**, recruit **minions**, and so on. The minions you control can also be paid to perform downtime actions. When the **lurking phase** ends, you go through the **calamity phase** where the GM rolls to see if any **calamity** happened within your dungeon such as minions revolting or tunnels collapsing.

During the **raiding phase**, you get ready to head out of your dungeon. You select a **target**, choose a **plan**, and provide a few **details**. The GM then rolls **engagement** and you skip directly to the first steps of the raid plan unfolding. Raids are where the bulk of the action in the game happens, as you hit targets for the gold and materials your dungeon needs. After the raid winds down, you go through the **blowback phase** where the GM rolls to see if your actions caused any **blowback**, such as an ambush waiting for you or targets along a prosperous trade route drying up.

Calamity and blowback sometimes result in **dungeon invasions** as a group of powerful **adventurers** show up at your dungeon, though adventurers might also show up as a result of events within the story. The PCs, like any evil dungeon boss, await them in their sanctum and make their **minions**, **creatures**, **locks**, **traps**, and **tricks** attempt to fend them off. If the adventurers manage to make their way into the **sanctum**, the PCs face off against them in a final battle. After looting the bodies and enjoying some post-defense revelry, you jump right back into the phase cycle and continue raiding and pillaging the overworld.

You can read a more thorough overview of the dungeon rules on page 168.



PLAYER BEST PRACTICES

Wicked Ones and the *Forged in the Dark* system are best enjoyed when players are all on the same page when it comes to how they approach the game. By trying to follow a few simple guidelines below, you'll get the most out of the game. The game's not adversarial and there are no winners - you're all sitting down to tell a cool story about monsters. Here's some advice on how to make that story really entertaining:

- **You're a monster, so act like one!** This should almost go without saying, but your character is a monster. They're evil. They don't have human hang-ups. They look at the world differently than humans do. Try to get into that mindset. Try to figure out what things motivate a monster and what it treasures. Think of their attitude towards their allies. Don't be afraid to throw other characters into harm's way, though remember that monsters can have friends, too.
- **Describe what's going on.** After you roll, take the reins and tell everyone what's happening. Even if a consequence is coming your way, narrate up to the point where the GM cuts in to tell you how everything went horribly wrong. The more you describe your actions, the better the story comes to life for everyone. As a player, you should be narrating every roll you make.
- **Don't be a weasel.** You'll have the urge to manipulate the mechanics for the easiest way to your goal - fight that urge. It's natural to want to roll the most dice or exploit some powerful loophole, but *Wicked Ones* isn't really a game to be won. Try to do what your PC would do in that situation then decide which mechanics resolve it. Be honest about what your PC is feeling or doing in a situation and let the mechanics generate drama and push the game forward.
- **Don't run from danger, embrace it.** The fun in the game happens when the biggest stakes are on the line. Monsters don't always weigh risk vs. reward, and neither should you. If you think something sounds fun to try, don't talk yourself out of it. Throw caution to the wind and grab some dice.
- **When in doubt, listen to your dark impulse.** If you're not sure what your monster would do in some situation, you can always lean heavily on your character's impulse and see where it takes you.
- **It's up to you to tell a cool story.** It's not just on the GM to make the story amazing - it's on all of you. Every person at the table is there to enjoy the same game and you all have the same level of responsibility. It's easy to shuffle this over to the GM, but they have enough on their plate. Come to the session prepared, know the rules, step up and drive action, jump into other players' scenes, and help make suggestions when someone hits a wall creatively.
- **Cheer for your dungeon, not your character.** Your dungeon will outlive any monster character you're playing - it's the center of the story here. Don't worry about losing a character, just promote a minion from a pack to a Wicked One or bring in another fun-to-play monster.

GM BEST PRACTICES

Just as players need to get into the right mindset, so too does the GM. The story and all its details are emergent. The GM doesn't maintain a plotline. The dungeon grows over time as the players pursue their characters' goals. You're all telling the story together. Try to follow these guidelines to help create the right atmosphere at the table and let players know what to expect from you as a GM:

- ▶ **Be the PCs' worst enemy and biggest fan.** When they fail, smack them with consequences without remorse, but when they pull off something awesome, be the first one to cheer their success. Don't fall in love with your world and NPCs - they're dominoes there for the PCs to knock over. Encourage them to do so.
- ▶ **Bring the world to life.** Give NPCs and locations some personality, even if it's just a poignant detail or two. Think about how the monster PCs view them. Call them by distinctive characteristics - the boss with the fat belly, the lady with the whiny voice, the elf with a long nose. Make sure they're more than just human A and B to kill. Make it feel like they exist in the world, have connections, and their loss is going to be felt.
- ▶ **Be the dark desires lurking in their hearts.** Challenge the PCs' dark impulses any chance you get. Keep a list of them in front of you and give a bit of thought in advance to how you can tempt them away from the task at hand. The game is at its best when it all goes awry and their impulses tell you what direction the players want things to go in when it does.
- ▶ **Let the players drive the story.** The world is a sandbox of everyone's creation and the players will be setting their own goals for their dungeon. Don't get in their way - encourage them to create goals and suggest ways they can pursue them. Don't push the story in a predefined direction. Let it develop naturally through player decision and play. Let them find their own way. They know their characters better than you.
- ▶ **Hand the narrative reins to the players.** Prompt the players to describe their intentions before they roll and ask them what it looks like after they roll. Even when rolls don't go well, get them to describe how it goes right up until things go badly or even how they spectacularly fail. Let them describe how it didn't work and set themselves up for the consequences coming their way.
- ▶ **Keep the game moving.** Push players towards decision - don't let the game get wrapped up in endless debating options. Help them come to quick decisions and get back to the action.
- ▶ **Never forget that the world hates monsters.** The world is out to get them, so don't pull your punches. The game's supposed to be brutal. Give them good reason to hide behind their dungeon traps.



HOW EVIL IS TOO EVIL?

You're going to be playing evil monsters doing evil stuff, but there are various shades of evil. For the overall tone of the game, it tends to work best when the monsters are **wickedly evil**, maybe a bit **comically evil**, but definitely not **misunderstood evil**. The best way to think about it is that you're the villain in a B movie. You're the monsters a GM would run in any typical fantasy hack and slash game. When adventurers come kicking down your dungeon door, they're doing what's right. They're the good guys and you've given them good reason to be there. This is a game where you have permission to be the bad guy - so try to jump right into the role!

That said, how evil should you be? That's a question for each table to answer. When playing evil characters, it's all too easy to push things too far. Things can get weird, uncomfortable, or just plain gross. Now if you're into weird, uncomfortable, or just plain gross things, that could be fine - but it's important to make sure that everyone else at the table is, too. So before you get started, it's important to set the right tone and create a table where the game is well within everyone's comfort zones. Luckily, we have some great safety tools developed by the roleplaying community to handle it. Whether you're playing with a new group or even old friends, using one of the following methods can save you a lot of grief down the road.

In addition to implementing one or more of these tools, it can also be especially helpful to regularly check in with the group at the end of a session and ask if everyone felt comfortable with how the session went. Clearly posing the question makes it easier for all to speak up when they might otherwise be quiet and gives the group a chance to reevaluate the safety tools they've put in place.

LINES & VEILS

This fantastic method has been provided to the community by Ron Edwards in the game *Sex and Sorcery*. With Lines and Veils, players set some ground rules during the first session. You discuss things you would rather not have as a part of the game. You set **lines**, which are very clear limits on what can't be brought up in game - it's as if those things don't even exist. They're strictly off limits. You also set **veils**, which allow something to be brought up, but it has to happen off-screen. The scene can fade to black or if it's something you roll for, you just make the roll and it's accepted that it happens. You don't need any details, you don't roleplay through the events, but it having happened can affect the storyline moving forward.

MOVIE RATINGS

Sometimes the easiest way to set some limits is to just assign a rating to the game like it's a movie. Is this game going to be G, PG, PG13, R, or NC-17 rated? This works particularly well along with the X-Card on the next page when you don't really want to go through exactly what is and isn't okay and just judge it more on the fly as the game progresses. Setting a rating can set a nice basis for what's acceptable, then the X-Card on the next page can be used when you hit some uncomfortable territory.

THE X CARD (Source: <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>)

The X Card, a technique created by John Stavropoulos, is a great approach for making everyone at the table comfortable. The GM puts an index card with a big red X on it in the middle of the table, though it can be some other object or even just an agreed upon gesture. The point is to make it clear and easily accessible. If the game veers into uncomfortable territory, players can tap the card and signal to the GM that they'd like to move on. The player doesn't have to explain why they tapped it, but is free to discuss it after the session if they'd like. The GM then moves the scene on or reworks it a bit to avoid that subject matter and everyone at the table knows it's best avoided in the future.

The strong point of the X-Card is how flexible it is - you sometimes don't know what's uncomfortable to you until you're confronted with it. Bringing it up at that time might be a little difficult and players might even feel like they're interrupting other people's fun. The X-Card is an agreement between all players that it's fine to interrupt if you don't like what's going on - that everyone having a good time and being comfortable with the story is the most important thing.

GM: *"Okay, so let's go ahead and set some ground rules. Let's not let the evil get too out of hand. I'm down with an R rating for the game, but let's do Lines and Veils, too. I wanna throw out a few of my own to get started. First, there's no rape, it's strictly off-limits, even in a vague "raping and pillaging" sense. Other sex stuff is fine off-camera like a couple of bugbears hooking up or whatever, but there's no way I'm roleplaying through that."*

John: *"Let's avoid anything involving children, like, no hurting kids. I feel like they can be around if it's important to set a scene, but maybe they just always get away or something."*

Matt: *"I'm not so cool with gory blood stuff. Some is fine, of course, but I don't really want to listen to a long description of it."*

Jenny: *"What about torture? I mean, it's in-genre. Could we maybe do that, but keep it light on the goriness? It's mostly about gathering info and one of the only ways monsters have to get it."*

(This talk continues until everyone feels pretty comfortable.)

GM: *"And just so everyone knows, I'm going to be using the X-Card so I'll just put a card out here in the middle of the table. If we accidentally break some of our ground rules or if we hit on something uncomfortable or weird that we haven't talked about yet, just tap the card and we'll move on. I'll wrap up or go back and rework the scene a bit, no questions asked. We can then talk about it more after the session if you'd like."*



A PLACE TO CALL HOME

During the first session, the PCs' main task is finding a place to set up their dungeon. As this needs to be a prime location, it's likely to have somebody already there. Here we see our PCs about to launch a raid on a cave some merchants are camping in.

PCS: **ULROT** [ORC BRUTE] - **CRAG** [KOBOLD SHAMAN] - **SLEM** [SLISSIK SHADOW]

GM The wind picks up, dousing your campfire in rain. It goes dark and you sit there shivering in the cold. Then suddenly, you hear something off in the distance - the sound of laughter. Then a voice - a human voice. They sound happy, like they're joking with a friend.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE "You guys hear that? Sounds like someone's out of the rain. Ain't gonna be laughing like that if you're out here shivering your ass off."

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN "Yeah, screw this. Let's go chop 'em up. Maybe they have food."

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW "We don't even know how many are over there. Let's hold off until they go to sleep. Then we can sneak in and slit their throats."

ULROT
ORC BRUTE "Pfft, no time for that. I grab my axe and and point off towards the voices. Food, no rain, human blood. Why wait?"

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN "I think I'm with Slem on this one. We have good cover and no idea what we're even facing in there. Better to be sneaky."

GM Sounds like a stealth raid to me. You guys are gonna figure out pretty quickly that this is a small merchant caravan holed up in a cave up ahead, waiting out the storm. What's your point of entry here?

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW Keep it simple and go through the front. They might have a guard, so that'll be the first step. We'll wait until it's good and quiet and hopefully the rain can cover us.

GM You sticking together or splitting up?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE Splitting up. I can't SKULK at all, so I'm just gonna hang back and come charging in as soon as I hear a human voice. I'm the plan B.

GM Great, let's roll engagement and jump into the action. The rain gives you all cover and these guys are a bit drunk, so let's up it to 3d.



The GM rolls 3d engagement and gets a failure!

GM You're going to start in a tight spot. Slem, you and Crag are moving through the forest, rain just pouring down. It's quiet as you approach the cave entrance, though you do catch the light glow of a dying fire. You don't see anyone on watch, but just as you get ready to head inside, you hear someone stumbling through the forest. Turning, you see a wide-eyed drunk mercenary coming back to his post after relieving himself.

Crag
KOBOLD SHAMAN So I'm the closest to him since he came up behind us. I jump straight at him and try to **SMASH** my hands over his mouth so he can't yell.

GM Sounds good. Let's see that roll.



Crag rolls 1d SMASH and gets a mixed!

GM A mixed, okay... you do it, but he pulls a dagger and slashes your arm, giving you **MUSCLES** shock. Tell us what that looks like.

Crag
KOBOLD SHAMAN He's a bit taller than me, so I grab the front of his shirt and sling myself up onto his back and just clamp my other hand over his mouth hard. Unfortunately, he was more keen to get that dagger out than yell.

Slem
SLISSIK SHADOW Looks like I'm up. I see him waving that dagger around wildly with the kobold on his back. I'm just going to step up and slit his throat. It's just a quick slash, so I'm rolling **FINESSE**.

Crag
KOBOLD SHAMAN I'll assist for sure! I pull back on his face, exposing his throat.

GM Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. You have strong effect.



Slem rolls 2d FINESSE and gets a mixed!

GM So I think with the strong effect, this guy is definitely dead. He was their toughest guy as well. But, it's gonna make some noise.

Slem
SLISSIK SHADOW The knife cuts a perfect line across his throat and his eyes go wide. I grin wickedly, then blood comes gushing out. But what was the noise?

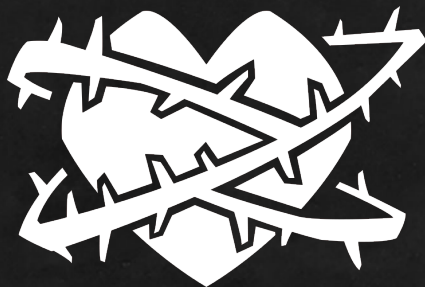
Crag
KOBOLD SHAMAN I got it! Right before you slit his throat, he bites real deep into my hand and I yelp! But I think I'm going to resist that and try to hold it in.

Ulrot
ORC BRUTE Hah, don't bother. So my dark impulse is reckless, right? Yeah, I think I'm getting impatient out here waiting and want a dark heart. Crag's yelp is drowned out by me charging past, yelling 'LET'S DO THIS!'



CHAPTER I

THE BASICS



"That was quick. In and out, just like we planned. Look at 'em, up there, wondering where the hell we went. So how much ya think they're gonna pay for this princess anyway? Huh Spaz? Uh... Spaz? Why you got that murder look in your eyes again?"

- Brok, Orc Brute



GETTING STARTED

You play as monsters working together to build a dungeon and wreak havoc on the region around it. The dungeon is the main character of the story you're telling. It's your home and refuge, a safe place to lay your head after some raiding and the only thing between you and the end of an adventurer's sword. The dungeon grows over time and you fill it with all kinds of crazy stories, like fending off adventurers, busting the heads of your minions, or dragging in prisoners to torture. You play not only your own character, but also the minions and creatures that inhabit your dungeon, as well as all the traps, tricks, locks, and magic rituals you fill it with.

This chapter covers the basic game mechanics and how the characters work, while later chapters cover how the dungeon works in more detail. Newly introduced or important game terms and rules are in **bold** to call attention to them. New terms that are explained later in the book are underlined like this. Some terms such as actions, attributes, calling abilities, and dungeon rooms are displayed in **THIS FONT**.

PHASES & SCENES

Gameplay follows a **cycle of play**. While lurking, you build up your dungeon and deal with any calamity. While raiding, you leave the dungeon and attack targets on the surface, then deal with any blowback it causes. A lot happens within each phase and for the most part, time passes fluidly. You can montage some action or skip around in time with PCs doing things at different times and places.

When things heat up and the action gets interesting, you zoom in to what's called a **scene**. Within scenes, time slows down and events progress in sequential order. You can still skip forward when nothing interesting is happening, but time is mostly driven forward by player action. When the starting situation in a scene isn't exactly clear, you use engagement to clarify it. When the excitement wraps up, you zoom back out into the more fluid flow of time again. This zooming in and out happens naturally through play and doesn't always have to be clearly stated.

"Let's make this a scene," "I wanna see how this plays out," or "What does that look like?" are useful phrases for those times when you or the GM want to cut in and set up a scene. When this occurs, the player starting the scene or the GM sets the scene up, detailing where your characters are and describing what's happening around you. You then zoom in and take on the roles of your characters. When other players go out of their way to join dungeon scenes, they earn xp for doing so.

You use scenes to flesh out the story and establish elements of the fiction. Sometimes a brief description and then using a game mechanic allows you to add some detail to the story without playing out the entire scene, but when you do zoom in, it gives you the chance to make that scene an important part of the story.

"I'm going to recruit some goblins from that village as minions. Of course, I'm going to pay a gold to do it but I want to zoom in here and make it a scene to see what our relationship with these goblins is like. I strut straight into their village. I think a bunch come scurrying out as they notice me, so I pull out some gold and BANTER, 'Who needs a job?'"

FICTION-FIRST GAMING

Throughout this book, you'll find various mechanics for how to judge in-game situations. One thing should be made clear, though - these mechanics exist to be used after the fiction has been established.

When you play a roleplaying game, you first imagine the fictional situations that your characters are in. You declare how they act and then work backwards from that to match up what's happening "on-screen" with a game mechanic that feels right to determine how it plays out.

Rule of Description: You can't access game mechanics before giving at least some level of description. Even a simple one-line explanation suffices.

"I head down to that goblin village I went to a few weeks ago and talk to some of their young warriors, convincing them to join us. I'll pay a gold to recruit them as minions."

You do this because every detail you can add into the fictional world helps make it more interesting. You never know when these details might matter down the road. The core mechanics of *Wicked Ones* support elements of the fiction impacting gameplay. Actions are flexible and easy to apply to various situations, while position and effect give mechanical weight to narrative elements within the fiction. However, when you can't find mechanics that match up with what's happening, the game collapses neatly down into a single **fortune roll**. You can always fall back on this when you're not sure what to do or can't recall a particular rule. Just make a fortune roll, narrate what happens, and move on.

PLAY STRUCTURE

While the game works well as a one-shot or even a short length campaign, an ideal campaign of *Wicked Ones* covers about 16 sessions, which is 4 months of weekly 3-5 hour sessions. You can expect a dungeon invasion about every third or fourth session and your dungeon to increase in tier at the same rate. As your dungeon approaches tier 4, you get closer to realizing your master plan and the region around the dungeon becomes more likely to unite against you.

Throughout these sessions, your PC and minions act as your primary roleplaying tools. You can step into either role whenever you think it would be interesting to do so.

Minions are groups of monsters who live in your dungeon for pay. They are like secondary PCs and the more you make them a part of the story, the larger your dungeon will feel. Each Wicked One has control of enough hoard to recruit a pack of minions, though this doesn't mean the minions are blindly loyal to their master. They have their own impulses and ideas, so put in the effort to make them into their own independent characters.



FLOW OF INFORMATION

The flow of information from the GM to the players about the fictional world is very important. While the GM and the players work together to establish the sandbox and factions within it, the world mostly resides in the mind of the GM. The GM has two responsibilities in this regard:

- **Share information about the setting with the players** so they can make informed decisions to weave a fun and interesting story.
- **Describe what a character perceives, suspects, or intuits** so the players can understand how they can interact with the environment.

Unfortunately, there's too much going on to tell the players everything. It would take forever and be boring. So, when information is lacking, it's up to the players to ask for what they want to know.

Simply ask the GM a question about the world when you want to learn something. Anything known by normal people living in an area should be told to the players. Everything else is **hidden information**.

Most information about the world should be known by everyone at the table, but certain information is hidden from players. This might be weaknesses in a defense or secrets the PCs can exploit. This depends on how well known the information is, though. The GM might tell the players about a huge hole in a castle wall, but detailed information about corrupt guards might be hidden. They could also reveal an open secret about a local priest, such as a gambling addiction, but shouldn't let the players know about a secret lover. Obscuring information in this way increases the challenge, protects NPC motives, and creates dramatic tension. It's the GM's job to find the right balance between what information is freely available and what needs to be gained through the methods on the next page.

You can act on any knowledge you have, even if your character doesn't know it. While monsters have extremely limited knowledge of the overworld, that doesn't mean that players do. Choosing raid targets or finding some trouble to get up to is more fun when everyone is in the know. It's all about making choices that are fun to play through. Monsters have an uncanny knack for showing up at the worst times and places. They prey on weakness in civilization, almost like they have a sense for it. You can use this to justify acting on knowledge that the players have but the characters don't.

"So I remember deciding when we set up the sandbox that this human encampment is on the brink of starvation. I think what I'm gonna do is go hunt down a deer and hang it from a tree like I'm skinning it. That'll lure in a couple of them for sure."

ESTABLISHING FACTS

While the GM is the main author of the world, the players are also contributors. You can try to establish facts within the fiction just by asking the GM a question. You might ask something like “Hey, can there be a big hole on the other side of that wall?” Then the GM needs to make a judgement call:

- **YES:** If it seems likely or they just want to see what you’ll do, they can simply say yes. Players are very likely to interact with details they bring into the game.
- **NO:** If they don’t think it’s plausible or even if they just don’t want whatever it is to exist, they can say no. That’s well within their scope as the GM.
- **MAYBE:** If they want to leave it up to the dice, they can make a fortune roll to determine whether something is true or not.

The GM must say yes when facts are established by calling abilities or dungeon rooms except when it’s highly implausible.

When players ask vague questions about the world, it’s often because they already have something in mind that they’d like to see in the story. This is a good opportunity for the GM to push players to establish facts by responding with a leading question like “What are you hoping to find?” or “What do you think is along that road?” Of course, if they don’t have anything in mind, the GM can describe the world instead.

The players are a nice resource for the GM to tap into to help flesh out the world with details they’re interested in interacting with. When describing the world, the GM can always prompt players to establish facts. When they do so, the likelihood of them bringing those details into the game later drastically increases. This also helps ease the creative burden on the GM. When all’s said and done, though, it’s the GM’s job to tie all this creativity together into a cohesive world.

Grok: “Hey, what’s along this road? Maybe some farms or something?”

GM: “Sure... that seems likely. I think there’s probably several small farms around here. Did you have anything specific in mind?”

Grok: “Yeah, I was thinking that there could maybe be a larger, fancier plantation towards the center here. Raiding farms usually isn’t worth it since farmers are so tough and not really rich, but maybe there’s a place here with quite a bit more loot than what a farm would have.”

GM: “That’s cool. I really like that. Sounds like you’re honing in on a raid target here. Want me to sketch a quick map?”

Grok: “Yeah, if you don’t mind. I’m thinking stealth or maybe an assault for the raid plan, but I wanna see that map first.”



HIDDEN INFORMATION

Scouting the surface is incredibly dangerous for monsters and if caught, you're probably not going to make it back to the dungeon. If you don't have the proper training (a calling ability), your lack of understanding of how civilization works means it's unlikely that you'll learn more than common knowledge. So even when you see something, it's difficult to put it into context and make use of that info.

You spend most of your time lurking behind your dungeon defenses, making it tough to learn about the surface. You have to rely on the following methods to get your hands on hidden information:

- **Torture prisoners** to break them and learn their secrets.
- **Contact factions or vile friends** and convince them to help.
- **Pay gold** to someone you know, such as a vile friend or allied faction.
- **Raid** a target and steal information they don't want known, using safety in numbers to traverse the surface.
- **Use calling abilities or dungeon rooms**, which allow you to establish facts within a limited scope. This guarantees that you have useful information.
- **Flashback** to using information gathering calling abilities and dungeon rooms or paying gold when you need information most. A torture chamber also allows you to flashback to torturing prisoners.

When you successfully use one of the above methods to gain some hidden information, it is revealed with one of the following (GM's choice):

- **Ask Questions:** The player can ask a question or two that the GM answers if the information can be gained from that source.
- **Establish Facts:** The player establishes a fact or two about the world.
- **Reveal Secrets:** The GM reveals a piece or two of useful information.

Zella: "I'm going to use my scout ability here to establish a fact about this trading post. I've been watching this road for months and I know at the beginning of each month, a big shipment of wine comes into the region. We need drinks for our dungeon's tavern."

GM: "You know, that's not all that hidden. We can just establish that that's true. I could reveal a secret about it or maybe you have an idea?"

Zella: "Hmm, I'm not coming up with anything. What do you have?"

GM: "Let's say that a few bottles of this wine are special. They're intended for the abbey for use in their ceremonies. Without it, the power of their god will wane in this region until the next shipment."

STRESS

As a Wicked One, you're unique among monsterkind. You have an extra reserve of tenacity called **stress** that you can tap into to exert your will, fend off disastrous circumstances, or suppress the dark impulses that lurk inside you.



You can spend stress to make use of several different game mechanics, allowing you to do various impressive feats otherwise not possible:

- ▶ You **spend stress** on calling abilities, flashbacks, resistance rolls, teaming up, using some magic items, and suppressing dark impulses.
- ▶ You **clear stress** by rolling a critical on a resistance roll or meeting certain criteria within an ability.

Stress is represented on your character sheet by a 6-segment clock. When something requires you to spend stress, you fill in one segment of the clock. Resistances are the exception, however, with the amount of stress you spend ranging from 1 to 3, depending on the results of the resistance roll. When you clear stress, you erase 1 segment on the clock. When you run out of stress and tick the last segment, you **go feral** and lose yourself to your dark impulse.

Stress is recovered in full during recovery at the beginning of the lurking phase.

"I don't really have much stress left to spend here, so I'm not gonna resist the guard getting away. I'd rather save it for our own getaway. I've got a feeling we'll need a pretty big spell to blow a hole in that wall."

USE YOUR STRESS, DON'T HOARD IT!

Players have a strong tendency to hoard mechanical resources like stress, thinking they might need it later "just in case" and then end the raid without having taken much stress. It's not meant to be hoarded like that. There are plenty of ways for each character to use it and doing so makes the game interesting. Don't talk yourself out of doing something just because it might cost some stress. The worst case scenario is that your character will go feral - which is just more fun!



ROLLING DICE

Anytime there is uncertainty within the story, you roll dice to figure out what happens. All rolls are made using 6-sided dice and you'll need four to six of them. Any time a die roll is mentioned in this book, it's written with the number of dice to be rolled first followed by a "d," so 3d means to roll three 6-sided dice.

Some abilities or situations might modify how many dice you get to roll. A plus or minus sign means to add or subtract from the pool, such as +1d or -1d. When figuring out how many dice are in the pool, first apply negative modifiers with a minimum pool of 0d, then apply positive modifiers.

When you have no dice to roll (0d), you instead roll 2d and take the lower result.

While there are various types of rolls in the game, almost all rolls follow the same basic pattern. There are four roll results: **failure**, **mixed**, **success**, and **critical**. You gather a pool of dice, roll it, and **keep the highest single die result**. This result is used to determine how well the roll went. A critical happens when you roll two or more 6s on one roll. A 0d roll, however, discards the highest result and never results in a critical. The result is judged as follows:



FAILURE



MIXED



SUCCESS



CRITICAL

RESULT	DO YOU ACCOMPLISH THE TASK?	TICKS [❖]
Failure	No, and... Things go as poorly as they could have in that situation. You fail to do it and suffer a consequence.	0
Mixed	Yes, but... You get the results, but they come at a cost. There will be some consequences coming your way. At other times, it may just result in a less effective result.	1
Success	Yes! You get the results that you hoped for!	2
Critical	Yes, and... ! Not only do you get what you want, but you get something else to go along with it!	3+

❖ How many times the roll ticks a progress clock or slashes an adventurer's hearts.

Every action roll covers both the player's action and the action of NPCs as well. For the most part, players are the ones rolling dice. When a player rolls a mixed or a failure, the GM responds with the world acting against the PCs. This is why a mixed result is the most common result in the game. It allows the PCs to work towards their goals, but also the NPCs to act in response to what's happening.

TYPES OF ROLLS

Listed below are the most common types of rolls in the game, split between those rolled by players and those rolled by the GM. These are explained in more detail throughout this book.

PLAYER ROLLS

- ▶ **Action rolls** are made to do something challenging. You choose one of your actions and roll it to find out what happens. The roll has position and effect, which determine how risky it is and the impact it might have.
- ▶ **Resistance rolls** are made to resist consequences. You choose an action and roll it to see how much stress you take and how well you resist the consequence.
- ▶ **Loot rolls** are made to pull gold and items out of the loot you raided for and enjoy revelry, gaining dark hearts. You roll dice equal to the loot you grabbed on your last raid or dungeon defense.

GM ROLLS

- ▶ **Engagement rolls** are made to determine how a raid starts off or how ready the PCs are when we zoom into a scene.
- ▶ **Calamity rolls** are made to determine if anything bad happens within your dungeon while lurking, sometimes triggering dungeon invasions.
- ▶ **Blowback rolls** are made to determine how the world responds to your raids, sometimes triggering dungeon invasions.
- ▶ **Fortune rolls** are made to answer questions about the world when the GM isn't sure or doesn't want to decide on their own.
- ▶ **Defensive Move rolls** are made to see if an adventurer can resist a PC action.

One thing is true for all dice rolls - they never result in "nothing happens." They're designed to move the game forward. When you're at an impasse about what the next step is, you can always turn to the dice to figure it out. An action roll is either going to work or you're going to face consequences. A fortune roll will work out for you or it won't. No matter what you roll, **something happens**.

MAYBE TRY CUSTOMIZING YOUR DICE?

The only dice you need for this game are d6s, like typical white dice with black dots. However, marking some dice with stickers or getting dice with custom sides makes the rolls quicker to parse and have a bigger impact than normal dice. It's a small detail, but highly recommended! For use with virtual tabletops, you can download dice images from banditcamp.io/wickedones.





ACTIONS

Actions are different methods and approaches that you use to get things done. They represent a character's natural ability or training and show what you're good at and what you're terrible at. They define how your character goes about solving problems.

The list of actions covers the most common ways that monsters deal with their problems, though there might be some difficulty applying an action to every situation. To help with this, each action has a *descriptive adverb* tied to it which expands on how it is typically used. When you can't quite find an action that perfectly fits what you want to do, you can fall back on that adverb to figure out which action best applies to it.

ATTRIBUTES AND ACTIONS

Actions are broken up into three categories called attributes, which are a good indication of how the actions within it are typically used. Sometimes, attributes are hit with a consequence called **shock**, weakening that set of actions temporarily.

- ▶ **BRAINS** covers the actions **SCAN**, **TINKER**, and **TRICK**.
- ▶ **MUSCLES** covers the actions **FINESSE**, **SKULK**, and **SMASH**.
- ▶ **GUTS** covers the actions **BANTER**, **INVOKE**, and **THREATEN**.

CHOOSING ACTIONS TO ROLL

Think about what your character is doing, describe it, and work backwards from that to choose an action. Don't think about the action first - it limits your creativity. If you can't quite find one that fits, look to its associated *adverb* in italics next to it to broaden its definition. Matching description with actions is key, as it informs the shape success will take or the consequences that will stem from failure. Are you trying to *powerfully* **SMASH** a stink bomb against a wall, or are you trying to *precisely* **FINESSE** it into the perfect spot? Overlap among actions when trying to accomplish a task is normal - there are many ways to go about most things and some approaches may be more effective than others.

The player chooses the action rolled, which tells the GM and the table how they want to approach the task. While calling out actions to be rolled is a common habit for GMs to fall into, you should fight this urge. Don't assume the player's approach and call out actions like, "Okay, roll **SMASH**." Instead maybe ask, "How do you go about it?" or lean into the adverbs and say "That sounds more like you're trying to do it *powerfully* than *precisely*. What do you think?"

It's the player's job to tell the GM how they want to approach doing something, and it's the GM's job to determine how effective or risky it might be given the situation. This is called **position** and **effect**, detailed later in this chapter.

ACTIONS IN DETAIL

- When you **SCAN**, you *perceptively* read situations or search for information. You might roll this to scope out good targets on a road, read fear in your enemy's heart, or pour over an archaic tome.
- When you **TINKER**, you *cleverly* fiddle with a device, mechanism, or concoction. You might roll this to rig a cart axle to fail, place a trap along a forest path, or jimmy a lock in your way.
- When you **TRICK**, you *slyly* deceive, confuse, or manipulate someone. You might roll this to make someone believe you're harmless, distract some farmers while your buddies loot the barn, or lose some hounds running you down.
- When you **FINESSE**, you *precisely* take aim, maneuver, or use tools. You might roll this to stick an arrow between someone's ribs, jump from tree limb to limb, or trip someone walking by you.
- When you **SKULK**, you *sneakily* move unnoticed or launch a surprise attack. You might roll this to slip out of the shadows and cut a guard's throat, sneak up and pocket some unattended gold pouches, or go unnoticed in a crowd.
- When you **SMASH**, you *powerfully* assault someone or something. You might roll this to bury an axe into someone's skull, bend some prison cell bars, or toss an exploding concoction against a wall.
- When you **BANTER**, you *affably* get people to help you because they like you. You might roll this to get a group of goblins to join your dungeon as minions, convince some satyrs that you're not looking for trouble, or calm a giant spider down.
- When you **INVOKE**, you *magically* interact with dark, mystical forces. You might roll this to cast a fireball into a town square, dispel a ward spell on a door, or make a hippogriff back down with a display of magic.
- When you **THREATEN**, you *forcefully* compel someone to obey or fear you. You might roll this to scare townsfolk into running away, keep your minions in line, or demand some travelers surrender their bags.

BE A MONSTER, THEN CHOOSE AN ACTION THAT FITS

The game is at its best when you're thinking in character and doing what you think a monster would do in that situation. We all have a tendency to want to roll our highest-rated actions, but you're a monster who doesn't think things through and half the fun in the game is dealing with the consequences! So, go ahead and have your tiny kobold roll **THREATEN** to tell that big, bad knight that he'll rip his tongue out!



ACTION ROLLS

When you attempt to do something challenging in a situation with risk and tension, you make an **action roll** to see how it turns out. Action rolls are a risk made in tense situations with something on the line. If there's no risk, there's no reason to roll. You can narrate what happens and move on.

As an action is narrated after the roll, the GM and player collaborate to describe what happens on-screen. Your character's actions are in your hands and it's up to you to describe what success looks like. The GM cuts in with NPC reactions, pulls your narration back when it stretches a little too far, or hands out consequences.

An action roll has two functions. It tells you what the PC is trying to do, but also determines the actions of NPCs and the world as the PC is acting. To fully understand the stakes in play and what might happen, each action roll has four parts that are detailed prior to the roll: **intention**, **action**, **position**, and **effect**.

ACTION ROLLS

You detail your intention and choose an action, the GM details the position and effect, then you roll a number of dice equal to the chosen action's rating to determine how things went.



Failure: You fail to accomplish your goal and suffer a consequence.

Mixed: You manage to do it, but you also suffer a consequence.

Success: You do it well, avoiding any consequences.

Critical: Also, you get increased effect or a secondary bonus!

ACTION ROLL (PROCESS)

Since so much is built into this one roll, you use the following process to fully establish what's at stake before the player decides whether to roll or not. After a few times, everyone in the game gets used to it and it flows naturally in play.

1. **The player details their intention**, or what they want to accomplish.
2. **The player chooses an action**, which describes how they approach it.
3. **The GM okays the roll or modifies position and effect** by considering the intention and action within the context of the story.
4. **The player rolls or chooses another approach.** If the position and effect are not agreeable, players are free to back off and try something different.

The roll's effect determines how well you accomplish the intention and the roll's position determines how bad the consequences are on a mixed or failure. Consequences complicate the situation as NPCs and the world move against you.

Action rolls are assumed to have a chance at achieving what we'd expect as "normal" results for the chosen action, but also carry the risk of something that complicates the situation. This is the default position and effect for rolls and is not explicitly stated. However, when circumstances are outside the norm, the GM can modify the position and effect (detailed later) of a roll. Depending on the situation, you might end up in a dominant or dire position, or with strong or weak effect.

Brak: "I want to break his sword, so I'm going to do a running leap and SMASH down on it."

GM: "I think this is going to be dire. You're on a roof and this guy is a competent swordsman. Let's see that roll."

It's the player's responsibility to narrate their character's success. Since your intention is clear and the stakes and possible effectiveness for the roll are laid out prior to rolling dice, you have a good idea of how far your action can carry. Once the roll is made, you describe what your character does.

It's the GM's responsibility to narrate for NPCs, judge the results, and hand out consequences. They can step in and modify the player's narration when needed, either reining it in when the player goes too far, describing NPC actions during it, or encouraging the player to expand on what they've described.

In this way, players and GMs narrate the results of action rolls together. The GM should try to give the players room to narrate, then cut in with NPC actions or adjusting the scope of the action the PC is describing. Each GM handles this a little differently, but the goal here is to get players to describe as much of their PC's actions as they can on their own. The fiction flows best when players are descriptive.

THE SCOPE OF ROLLS

Action rolls resolve several things happening within the fiction at the same time. It covers the setup of the action, its execution, and the fallout as well as anything else that might be taking place on-screen while that happens. **The world moves every time an action roll is made.** This can change the dynamic of the scene or have unintended side effects separate from what the PC was trying to accomplish.

The scope of what you can accomplish is determined by your intention, the chosen actions, and the difficulty of anything in your way. How far actions extend is up to the GM, but it's like a short sequence of shots in a movie. Leaping across a courtyard, over a wall, and plunging your spear into someone's heart will probably only be one action roll unless each of those things presents a unique challenge with interesting consequences. More complex intentions can be cut up into several actions or represented with a progress clock. The more difficult something is to accomplish, the more likely it is to be broken up in this way.



SMOOTH NARRATION

Most things that take place in the game occur due to action rolls and getting the narration for this right makes the system and fiction flow smoothly. It's nice to think about it as a movie camera controlled by a director (the GM) who gives their actors (the PCs) a lot of leeway in ad-libbing and going off-script.

NARRATING A SUCCESS OR A CRITICAL

On a success, the focus is solely on the PC. The world is moving around you, out of focus, in the background, or off-screen but the camera stays right where you want it. You accomplish what you set out to do without any setbacks. **A success feels clean.** Describe your action, keeping the scope of actions and the position and effect of the roll in mind. It's the GM's job to help guide this narration and make sure it matches up with the roll's position and effect. They might have to pull it back a little if you get overzealous, or tell you when your action carries further than you narrated.

On a critical, you steal the show. You have total control of the camera and your action goes better than you could have hoped for. This might manifest in increased effect or the action on-screen causing a secondary effect. **A critical feels perfect.** The GM is the final judge of the results of the critical, but you have a lot of freedom in describing what you think happens as a result of it, with the GM prompting you to expand on it or coming up with other ideas when you're not sure.

NARRATING A MIXED

On a mixed, the camera is much more dynamic. The focus might start on the PC as you describe your action and, in the end, you do manage to accomplish it. However, things don't go as well as you hoped and it's the GM's job to steal the limelight, pull the camera away from your PC, and hand out consequences. **A mixed feels messy.** Narrating it is a bit like improv - you need to open the door for the GM with your narration. You know consequences are coming, so give the GM hints about what you think might make sense by mentioning some weakness, like how you leave your guard down or forget an important detail. The GM might also begin by telling you what the consequence is going to be, so it matches up with your narration.

NARRATING A FAILURE

On a failure, things go poorly. The focus might start on the PC, with you narrating how your action starts or where it goes wrong, but the GM soon takes control and describes how the world makes you suffer some consequences. **A failure feels tense.** It's the GM's job to ramp up the tension and drama, creating more interesting scenes.

On a mixed, an action is almost always as successful as rolling a success. Likewise, the consequences are just as bad as rolling a failure. The exception to this is that a mixed only ticks a clock or slashes a heart once, not twice.

MOVING THE SPOTLIGHT

Scenes are where the action happens and times passes in them sequentially, with actions or GM narration pushing it forward. Often though, multiple PCs are acting at the same time and the timeline gets a bit messy, requiring you to rewind it a little bit and resolve what happened while another PC was acting. That's completely normal.

Thinking about this like a movie makes it easy to imagine. When a PC jumps into action, the camera stays on them. Time goes by as they perform an action or a sequence of actions. You're not limited to only one action - in fact, you're encouraged to follow through or take the next step if it feels right and creates a cool moment.

If enough time has passed or there's a dramatic cliffhanger or lull in the action, it's probably time to pass the torch and allow other PCs to step into the spotlight. This is each player's responsibility. If you feel like you've "done enough for now" or want to "come back to this after action elsewhere," it's a good sign that someone else deserves a turn. The GM can help here, too, by panning over to a nearby PC or cut away to a PC in another location. Then when the timing is right, they can bring the spotlight back to the first PC.

There is no set turn order. Scenes play out with the spotlight jumping back and forth to the PC who is doing something at that moment. You can act when:

- ▶ **You take the initiative**, grabbing the spotlight and declaring an action.
 - *"Okay, I have something I want to do."*
 - *"Mind if I cut in here with an action?"*
 - *"I'll go next. I think I have an idea."*
- ▶ **Another player passes the spotlight**, giving you the chance to shine.
 - *"We need someone to bust down this door. Drak?"*
 - *"I'm gonna go now, which should open the way for Melik after."*
 - *"Yo Joran, why don't you stick an arrow in that guy real fast?"*
- ▶ **The GM points the camera at you** and asks what you're doing.
 - *"Hey Messa, you haven't acted in a while. What are you doing?"*
 - *"Okay, we cut to Grimmy who's just now getting in place."*
 - *"We then see the tiny goblin hiding behind the orc. Marv?"*
- ▶ **The GM keeps the camera on you** and prompts you to follow through.
 - *"You managed to jump on the griffon's back - now what?"*
 - *"The shed crumbles into a pile of rubble - what's next?"*
 - *"Let's keep the camera on you for a bit, I like where this is going."*

And when there just seems to be a lull and the table gets quiet, the GM has a few other options to get movement happening.

- ▶ **Ask "Who's next?"** Just prompting players to act is often enough.
- ▶ **Compel a PC to act** when their dark impulse overrides their indecision.
- ▶ **Inflict consequences** from a powerful NPC. When players experience indecision, sometimes it's fun to let that manifest as PC indecision as well and a powerful NPC should jump at the opportunity to take advantage of that.

SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT

There's no preset turn order in *Wicked Ones* for an important reason - going in a set order creates unnatural sequences of action which interferes with dramatic pacing. You want to keep the camera on where the action's at until it hits a nice, interesting spot to cut away from it.

However, this freeform system creates a pretty big problem. There are many types of people out there and some aren't as likely to take initiative on their own. It could be that they enjoy listening to what other players are doing, they don't have any good ideas, they can't find a spot to jump in, they're used to systems with set turn orders, or they're a quiet person in general. No matter the reason, just knowing that this can be a problem usually goes a long way towards solving it. Keep your fellow players in mind as you're taking the spotlight. Hold onto it while you have good ideas or want to see a short sequence of events through, but help the GM redirect when nobody else seems to be jumping in.

Mechanical limits like stress, shock, or being bloodied tend to push the spotlight away from more active players. This is intentional. So while those PCs may dominate a scene early declaring action after action, that can only last so long. Eventually, they'll run out of resources and other PCs who are still pretty fresh can step up and carry the scene forward.

As a player, if you're setting up a cool scene, open the door for other players to walk through it. Ask them directly, "When I'm doing this, what's Gorlak doing?" or even call out their name in-character, "Hey Gorlak, get in here and check this out!" Just letting everyone else at the table know that you're interested in having their characters in your scenes makes it easier for them to jump in.

The important thing to keep in mind is that you're all sitting down at the table to tell cool stories together and have a good time doing so. Participation in the story is an important part of that, so work together as a group to make sure that every player gets their fair share of the spotlight.

GM: "You knock him off the wall but lose sight as he falls backwards. You hear a thud and an "oof" as he lands hard on the other side."

Ulrot: "Okay, I want to climb up the wall and then jump on him."

GM: "There's not a lot standing in your way, so I think you can get up the wall without a roll. Once there, you see him lying on the ground. You still planning to jump on him?"

Ulrot: "You bet..." (grabs dice)

GM: "Great, but hold that thought. The focus has kinda been on you for a while here, so let's just say we cut away right as you leap."

GM: (turns to the other players) "You all see him disappear over the wall. Crag, you've been quiet for a while - what are you up to?"



POSITION & EFFECT

Position is a measure of how severe the consequences will be if you fail an action roll and **effect** is the measure of how much impact you will have if you succeed. It's the GM's job to fully establish action rolls within the context of the fiction. They consider all the circumstances surrounding the action and determine whether position and effect need to be modified to better match what's happening on-screen. **Only action rolls have position and effect.**

Most action rolls are made with the PCs on **equal footing** with the challenge at hand as you choose an appropriate action and have the right tools for the job. This is the "default" position and effect and it is assumed, not needing to be stated in play. Your group sets this baseline tone through play and it might vary a bit from table to table, but you can expect a "normal" level of success when you roll well and consequences that complicate the situation when you roll poorly.

When circumstances are working for or against the PCs in some way, the GM can modify the position and effect of a roll. Circumstances that might make the PC do the task better or worse modify effect, while those that make the task riskier or safer modify position. It must be clear that the PCs **have the upper hand** or are **in a tight spot** for position or effect to change. The default has quite a broad range, so make sure that you're only modifying them when the factors have a large impact.



Before each action roll, the GM considers the circumstances surrounding the situation. The easiest way to frame this is trying to figure out if a PC is on equal footing, has the upper hand, or is in a tight spot given the situation. This advantage or disadvantage must be clear, a judgement call made by the GM. A light rain is not likely to affect the action enough, though a thunderstorm certainly would.

When a circumstance is clearly more important than others, it's considered an **overwhelming circumstance** and outweighs other factors. It's the GM's job to look at the broad picture and figure out what really matters in the scene.

Rules modifying position and effect are notated as such: +/-position or +/-effect. If you have such a modifier, it counts as a circumstance towards position or effect, not as an automatic increase or decrease. If you have two or more such modifiers, they combine to count as an overwhelming circumstance.

The GM can assign these positions to better represent the risk of an action:

- **Dominant** position is when you're clearly in control of the situation and don't expect much immediate backlash. Should you fail, you might lose that control or suffer a minor annoyance.
 - *You stand over the knight, their sword and shield kicked to the side.*
 - *They can barely even see you, much less expect to be shot at.*
 - *The water is still and all are asleep as you swim towards the boat.*
- **Dire** position is when you're clearly out of control of the situation. Should you fail, you can expect the worst, a serious complication that drastically changes the dynamic of the scene.
 - *You don't know it yet, but there's a huge dog behind that door.*
 - *There's three of them, one of you, and nowhere to run.*
 - *The chief levels his gaze at you and waits for your reply.*
- **Deadly** position is assigned when death is on the line, like doing something incredibly dangerous such as jumping over lava or risking bodily harm while already **bloodied**. This is used to clearly communicate a dire situation where a mixed or failure will result in death.

The GM can assign these effects to better represent the impact of an action:

- **Strong** effect means you clearly have a lot going in your favor and expect things to go very well. You can achieve much more than you normally would.
 - *You have the perfect plan.*
 - *Your target is weaker than you.*
 - *There's something helping you out.*
- **Weak** effect means you clearly have things working against you and doubt you'll have much impact, probably not fully accomplishing it even on success.
 - *You've chosen the wrong tool for the job.*
 - *Your target is stronger than you.*
 - *You're working on bad information.*
- **Zero** effect is assigned when even if you roll a success, nothing productive will happen such as trying to **SMASH** a dragon by throwing a rock at it or trying to **BANTER** a farmer who just saw you kill his wife. This is used by the GM to communicate clearly that the roll you want to attempt is futile.

WHEN TO USE DEADLY POSITION AND ZERO EFFECT

The purpose of these two extremes is to give the GM a tool to represent, mechanically, that something is incredibly dangerous, illogical, or just impossible instead of just saying “no”. Of course, players can always try to change their terrible position or effect!





ASSESSING CIRCUMSTANCES

These are the most common types of circumstances:

- The **action being used**, whether it's an effective or dangerous way to go about the task or not.

Trying to SMASH a potion against the side of a moving carriage is going to be easier than trying to FINESSE it through a window slit.

- The **scale of each side**, whether one side is substantially larger in size or has greater numbers.

A lone orc will struggle against a mob of townsfolk but a couple of orcs might be able to compete on equal footing against the mob.

- The **quality of the equipment being used**, with higher tier factions generally using higher quality items than lower tiers.

Fighting unarmored townsfolk with pitchforks is one thing, but fighting a well-equipped squad of the baron's soldiers is quite another.

- The **skill of the opponent**, with an extreme gap in skill placing a character into a better or worse position, such as using low action ratings against highly skilled opponents or high action ratings against completely untrained ones.

A kobold with a handaxe and no experience with it is going to struggle against a seasoned guard, but will have no problem killing townsfolk.

- **Defenses and resistances**, with armor and shields being obvious, but also other things like keen ears, an acute mind, or being fearless factoring in.

An anti-magic field is going to severely dampen or negate the effect of magic.

- The **strength of the magic in use**, as more powerful magical effects have an advantage over weaker ones.

Dispelling a minor illusion someone just created is much easier than dispelling one concealing a hidden entrance for hundreds of years.

- **Environmental factors** which could affect one side or the other.

Sneaking through a well lit room full of people isn't going to go as well as creeping down an empty, darkened hallway.

- **More specific situations** like having the exact perfect tool for the job or knowing a secret that comes into play. Having wrong information puts you at a disadvantage, though.

Your troll buddy told you that the orc queen loves to be flattered - a fact that couldn't be further from the truth. She does, however, love war stories and gambling.

At first, the relationship between all of these factors can be a bit much, but with practice, it becomes second nature. When the situation is unclear and you don't have a clear picture of the fiction, you can make use of a quick **engagement roll** to help set the initial details of a scene.



REFLECTING THE FICTION

You pull your axe and face off against a guard. Both of you have appropriate weapons and armor for a fight. Nothing is modifying position or effect yet. However, things might be different if:

+ Dominant position:

*They haven't noticed you yet.
They don't have a weapon.
You have the high ground.*

– Dire position:

*They've tripped you and now stand over you.
They have another guard flanking you.
You're fighting on a precarious ledge.*

+ Strong effect:

*They're not wearing any armor at all.
One of your allies is flanking them.
You're jumping down at them from a ledge above.*

– Weak effect:

*They're carrying a shield.
You were poisoned earlier in the day and haven't recovered.
You realize that you dropped your axe in the courtyard.*

You try to negotiate with a goblin chief to have him bolster a pillaging raid you're planning. The goblin chief is indifferent towards you. You start off on equal footing, but things might be different if:

+ Dominant position:

*Your dungeon is much higher tier than their faction.
You come bearing gifts that appeal to their desires.
You arrange the meeting within your dungeon sanctum.*

– Dire position:

*Their faction is higher tier than your dungeon.
The goblins worship Labisha, the flesh eater, and are starving.
You meet inside the chief's hut inside the goblin village.*

+ Strong effect:

*A vile friend introduces and vouches for you.
The goblins have long warred with your raid target.
Your reputation for holding up your end of bargains precedes you.*

– Weak effect:

*You have taken many of their warriors as minions in the past.
Another faction has warned the goblins of your treachery.
The goblins have no good reason to raid alongside you.*

ENGAGEMENT

Any time the circumstances in a scene are unclear, the GM rolls engagement to set the stage and figure out how things begin. This could be the beginning of a raid, a fight erupting, hiding from a griffon circling overhead, or striking up a conversation with a spider queen. Engagement bridges the gap between the zoomed-out overall narration and a zoomed-in scene. It helps you establish just what exactly was going on when the action starts up when it's not clear, which works much better than the GM arbitrarily making the call.

Engagement tells you how well-prepared you are for what's to come, setting up the initial circumstances towards position and effect. Do you begin in a strong position with a lot of opportunities or is your back against the wall from the get-go?

ENGAGEMENT ROLLS

The GM rolls 1d, 2d, or 3d depending on the likelihood of things starting in the PCs' favor.



Failure: You start in a **tight spot**, with consequences being inflicted.

Mixed: You start on **equal footing**, ready to face the challenge.

Success: You start with the **upper hand**, in control of the situation.

Critical: Also, you get a lucky turn of events!

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES PCS START ON EQUAL FOOTING?

1d Unlikely	2d Toss-Up	3d Likely
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The amount of dice is determined by how likely things are to start off well. The more dice the GM rolls, the better the PCs' chances are. Before the roll, the players can talk through all of the positive and negative factors that might influence it or the GM can make a judgement call using their *gut feeling*.

Positive factors might include knowledge beforehand of an attack, being higher tier, awareness of a weakness, having help from those outside your dungeon, environmental factors that make your job easier, or coming up with the perfect plan against the perfect target.

Negative factors might include outside forces other than your opponent acting against you, bad information, being lower tier, environmental factors that hinder you, or coming up with a plan the opponent is well-defended against.

Engagement rolls are usually a toss-up, with 1d and 3d rolls being made to represent very clear advantages or disadvantages, usually requiring a very strong factor or a couple of lesser ones.

SKIPPING TO THE GOOD STUFF

Beyond setting up the initial details, the engagement roll lets us skip past several less-than-exciting elements of gameplay. It sets up a scene already in action with the build-up or approach to it being covered by the roll. Don't describe how you got somewhere - roll engagement to see what is happening when you get there.

Later in the raiding section, you'll see clear methods for skipping any but the most basics of planning and then filling in the details with flashbacks as you go along. This style of play is intentional, letting you jump straight into action-packed scenes and avoiding a lot of deliberation and sometimes pointless discussion prior to a raid. It's the GM's job to push players towards action by grabbing the dice and rolling engagement.

The PCs are walking down a forest path when they're about to be ambushed by two adventurers. They're higher tier than you, but a vile friend told you they were coming so the GM rolls 2d. On a failure, you don't notice the rogue hiding to your left as a paladin steps into the road. On a mixed, you manage to pull your weapons in time, spotting both. On a success, you hear the paladin coming and can get the drop on her! On a critical, the paladin removes her helmet, revealing the face of a grinning orc - your vile friend! She levels her sword at the hidden rogue.

Your dungeon failed its calamity roll and something has gone awry while you were brewing a potion, suddenly engulfing the dungeon laboratory in flames. Potions are highly dangerous, so the GM rolls 1d to see how this starts. On a failure, you've been engulfed in flames and are bloodied. On a mixed, the fire has enveloped the room and you're standing in the center of it. On a success, you see the potion start to billow smoke, about to blow! Unfortunately, 1d rolls can't result in criticals!

The PCs are doing a quick assault on a river boat, planning to jump on the boat from the trees over the river. The boatmen weren't expecting it and are a lower tier enemy so the GM rolls 3d. On a failure, half of you have missed the boat entirely. On a mixed, you've landed on the deck but the boatmen saw you coming. On a success, you've surprised them! On a critical, you've noticed the boatmen are starting to brawl amongst themselves over something!

CONSEQUENCES

Enemy actions, bad circumstances, or the outcome of a roll can inflict **consequences** on the PCs, the dungeon, or its inhabitants. The GM determines consequences based on the severity of the situation or the position of an action roll. You can also **resist** consequences you don't want by spending stress and rolling an action to either reduce the impact of the consequence or possibly even avoid it completely.

REDUCED EFFECT

WORSE POSITION

SHOCK

BLOODIED / DEATH

COMPLICATIONS

Consequences fall into the categories to the upper-right. Most commonly, they stem from action rolls and their severity is based on that roll's position, as follows:

- **Annoying:** A consequence in **dominant** situations is a minor setback, or losing control of the situation. It's annoying, but only hinders you slightly.
 - *The prisoner pulls a shiv from its hiding spot.*
 - *The guard spots something moving and comes to investigate.*
 - *The merchant ducks into his tent, out of sight.*
- **Frustrating:** A consequence from most action rolls presents some kind of trouble. It complicates the situation and makes your life tougher. It's frustrating and difficult to ignore. This is the default severity.
 - *You stumble back, dropping your bow into the river.*
 - *The dogs catch your scent and have you cornered.*
 - *Your greedy minions run off to find some loot.*
- **Devastating:** A consequence in **dire** situations dominates the scene, drastically changing its dynamic. It's devastating and demands your attention.
 - *The knight plunges his lance deep into your chest.*
 - *Your fireball misses, hitting your allies.*
 - *The bugbear tribe pulls out of the deal.*

A well-chosen consequence is one that really makes you weigh taking stress to resist it versus just accepting it. That's why, by default, consequences are frustrating. They're meant to stand in your way and make the story more interesting.

REDUCED EFFECT

This consequence represents impaired performance. Your action isn't as effective as you anticipated. A mixed result on an action roll can sometimes lead to the action not achieving as much as you expected, essentially giving it -effect after the roll. If it was **strong** before, it's now normal. If it was normal, it's now **weak**.

- *Your weapon doesn't fully penetrate their armor.*
- *You only make it halfway up the cliff.*
- *The goblin king won't lend you his wargs yet, but he's still listening.*



WORSE POSITION

This consequence represents losing control of the situation - the action carries you into a more dangerous position. You lose your dominant position as risk is introduced into the scene, or a risky situation becomes dire with your back against the wall. A dire situation could even possibly devolve into a deadly one.

- *You slip and fall, hanging from a tree branch.*
- *The log you're riding on slams into a rock, throwing you into the river.*
- *Your shield goes flying out of your hands.*

SHOCK

This consequence represents temporary physical or mental conditions. It's quickly shaken off, only hindering you for a short time. Shock covers things like light wounds, but also psychological effects such as being scared, nervous, confused, or frustrated as well as physical ailments like feeling sick, seeing stars, or having dirt thrown in your eyes.



When you take shock, the GM determines which attribute it affects, flowing from the fiction. Shock might even affect a couple of attributes if the consequence is severe enough. The GM might also give the choice to the player, who then chooses what type of shock their PC was most likely to be affected by, given the situation. Once the attribute is determined, the GM or player narrate what happened.

Shock: You take -1d on the next action or resistance roll with any action belonging to the attribute affected by shock. The shock clears after the roll.

- ▶ Shock to **BRAINS** affects a character's smarts, awareness, or insight. These strike at your mind, making it harder to think.
 - *You become confused by a riddle.*
 - *You wake up with a huge hangover.*
 - *You're stunned by a punch to the side of your head.*
- ▶ Shock to **MUSCLES** affects a character's strength, agility, or speed. These strike at your body, making it harder to move well.
 - *You twist an ankle jumping from the ledge.*
 - *You get sick to your stomach after drinking a potion.*
 - *You take a deep cut in a non-vital area.*
- ▶ Shock to **GUTS** affects a character's personality, mettle, or magical ability. These strike at your spirit, making it harder to impose your will.
 - *You get scared by the griffon flying overhead.*
 - *You feel betrayed by your minions running away.*
 - *You grapple with an overflow of arcane energy.*

If you take shock to an already affected attribute, you instead have to pay cost. Any remaining shock clears completely during recovery.

BLOODIED / DEATH

Bloodied represents a significant injury, putting you just one step away from death. Shock is for painful, but minor injuries. Bloodied is for the big stuff.

- *A sneaky rogue sticks a dagger in your ribs.*
- *A warhorse kicks you in the head.*
- *A giant tramples you underfoot as you hide in the bushes.*

Bloodied: You immediately take shock to all attributes and remain bloodied until all shock has been cleared. During this time, if you receive another significant wound, you die.

If you manage to push through and clear shock from each attribute, you recover and are no longer bloodied. Monsters can shake off heavy wounds quickly, not seeming to mind too much if they've had a sword stuck through them or ignoring a wound until it stops bleeding. However, while you're bloodied, you're vulnerable. Taking another equivalent wound kills you immediately - though death can also be resisted.

When an action could result in death, the position of the roll is deadly. This clearly communicates that death or an equally terrible fate is on the line. The choice to go through with the action is a big one and the player needs to understand clearly what might happen should they fail. It also quickly ramps up the tension!

Death Knell: When you die and have dark hearts remaining, you can perform an immediate final action before you kick the bucket. You take +1d on the roll for each dark heart you have. Any ally that sees it gains a dark heart.

There are other ways to bypass being bloodied and go straight to death. Progress clocks, like a clock for drowning, might inflict death when it is full. Death could also be offered as a dark bargain, given the right circumstances.

TO KILL A WICKED ONE

Death is a part of monster life and the dungeon is bigger than any one PC. As the GM, don't hesitate to throw death in your players' faces. They know the stakes going in and the world is cruel and harsh towards monsters. Make sure they feel that. That said, shock and bloodied are sometimes the least interesting consequences, so mix it up, leaning into complications and giving players interesting situations to deal with.



COMPLICATIONS

This consequence represents trouble, mounting danger, or a new threat. The GM might introduce an immediate problem - the target gets away, your axe breaks, it starts raining heavily, or you get lost in the woods. They might also choose to telegraph incoming danger, starting a clock or giving advanced warning of something about to strike. Complications should push PCs towards action, re-evaluating their approach or pivoting to deal with the developing situation.

Sometimes, the GM ticks a **progress clock** or makes a new one and ticks it to represent the complication building over time. When they do so, the amount of ticks generally depends on the severity of the consequence. Annoying consequences might tick it once, frustrating twice, and devastating ones usually finish the clock.

Complications are the most common consequence handed out. They can be almost anything arising from the fiction, such as some of the ideas below:

- **You lose an item**, either temporarily or permanently.
 - *The dogs wrestle the bow out of your hands.*
 - *Your flamespitter runs out of fuel.*
 - *You lose a gold as coins fall out of your pocket.*
- **You lose the opportunity** as your target or chances slip away.
 - *The noble steps into his carriage, closing the door.*
 - *The priest, needed alive for the ritual, gets an arrow in the heart.*
 - *The demon angrily picks up his wares and leaves your dungeon.*
- **Something bad arrives on the scene**, and it's likely hostile towards you.
 - *You hear dogs barking as they close in on your position.*
 - *Several riders join the caravan before you can launch the ambush.*
 - *The bear breaks the lock on its cage.*
- **Magic backfires or your gear malfunctions**, harming you or those nearby.
 - *You miss and knick yourself, quickly feeling the poison take effect.*
 - *The illusion works so well that your allies fall for it, too.*
 - *The summoned spirit doesn't appreciate being disturbed.*
- **The environment changes**, hindering your current goal.
 - *The sun comes up well before you've finished the job.*
 - *A torrential downpour starts, making it difficult to see.*
 - *The ship slowly starts to slip beneath the waves.*
- **An obstacle is in your way**, forcing you to overcome it to proceed.
 - *Guards fast on your heels, the doors slam shut in your face.*
 - *Rocks fall, blocking the path through the mountains.*
 - *An incredibly chatty skeleton won't leave you alone.*
- **You're directly hindered**, preventing you from acting as you'd like.
 - *The cleric smacks you in the back of the head, knocking you out.*
 - *The farmer hogties you.*
 - *The harpy convinces you to protect her.*

DETERMINING CONSEQUENCES

It's the GM's job to hand out consequences and, in doing so, set the tone of the game. Choosing interesting consequences is a bit of an art, relying heavily on developing a good *gut feeling* for consequences that feel appropriate and flow from the story. The severity levels are intentionally vague, giving the GM a lot of flexibility.

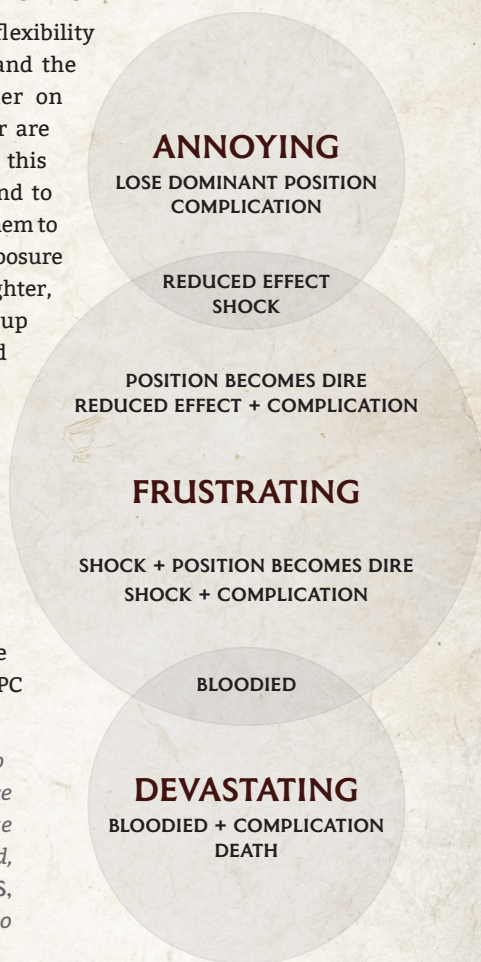
The diagram to the right visualizes this flexibility to adjust consequences based on tone and the fiction. The consequences listed higher on the diagram are "light" and those lower are "harsh." By default, the examples within this book present a gritty world that's unkind to monsters. This works well, incentivizing them to build a dungeon and making them fear exposure on the surface. However, if you want a lighter, more pulp action feel, you can lighten up consequences or split them up and spread them around a bit more.

Frustrating consequences are the most common, as they stem from a default roll with no modifier to position. As you can see, frustrating overlaps with both annoying and devastating meaning the consequences there can be assigned for either severity. It really depends on the nature of the consequence as something that's frustrating for one PC might be merely annoying for another.

When a huge Brute takes shock to BRAINS, it's barely an annoyance as they have no dots in any of those actions anyway. On the other hand, when a Crafter takes shock to BRAINS, it's frustrating since they rely so heavily on those actions.

When possible, match consequences to the player's narration. You decide the consequences after the roll because they may change depending on how the player narrates their action. This helps the consequences flow better from the fiction. You might also announce the consequences first, so the player can match their narration to what is going to occur to them.

The flexibility in assigning consequences also allows you to adjust to the tone of your campaign or scene. These are rough guidelines and not all possible combinations are listed on the diagram. The flexibility also builds in room for surprise, allowing for harsher or lighter consequences than might be expected.



BEST PRACTICES

Handing out well-chosen consequences relies on a good *gut feeling*. It's not mechanical, so don't try to calculate exactly what should go wrong in a given situation. Take a broad view of what's happening when you give position, then try to internalize the principles below and the diagram to the left so you can trust your gut to hand out consequences that feel right in the situation.

1 **Consequences introduce change and challenge to the scene.** They keep the action moving, ramp up the drama, and make the world feel real and dangerous. When a PC fails, their circumstances change. Consequences should deter them from their goals or light a fire under them to move faster.

2 **Consequences don't negate a successful roll.** On a mixed, a PC still accomplishes what they wanted to do. If a PC is sneaking through a corn field, the complication can't be that they got spotted. It could, however, be that they made a bit of noise and now there's a dog awake and wandering around.

3 **Consequences don't need to be tied directly to what triggered them.** They usually flow naturally from whatever caused them, but they can also represent things happening off-screen, foreshadowing, outside interference, or bad luck. This makes for a great fallback when nothing comes to mind.

4 **Consequences might affect PCs other than the one that triggered them.** A PC's actions can harm their allies or open up opportunities for enemies to move against them. A Hunter missing as they shoot into melee might stick their friend with an arrow or a Brute might ruin a Conniver's negotiation.

5 **Consequences can be split up into a few lighter ones.** Multiple things can happen at the same time as the world moves. Generally, these should be split up into less severe consequences than the original. Several PCs might also be affected by the same consequence.

6 **Consequences are open to discussion.** When in doubt, the GM can ask the players what consequences they think would work well. As players, if a consequence doesn't feel right, pause the game and talk it out with the table. The GM makes the final call, but everyone's voice should be heard.

INFLECTED CONSEQUENCES

The world is a dangerous place and it's often more powerful or better prepared than the PCs. To represent this, the GM has the power to inflict consequences any time they deem it appropriate, as long as they flow from the story and fit the tone of the game. Inflicted consequences are a powerful tool that are meant to put the PCs immediately on the defensive. They're best used in high impact situations and sometimes force the PCs to resist before they can take action. They can represent things like:

Powerful enemies or magic items inflicting their will, putting the PCs into a defensive position.

- *A barbarian king charges and hacks your shield in half.*
- *A magic ring detects your presence and holds you in place.*
- *A nymph's beauty is overwhelming, preventing you from attacking.*

Environmental hazards that are out of the PCs' control, setting the stage for a chaotic situation.

- *The boat lurches occasionally, sweeping everyone off their feet.*
- *A heavy fog sweeps in making it nearly impossible to see.*
- *Dawn breaks and people begin leaving their homes for work.*

Clever NPCs lying to or manipulating you, keeping you from what you want.

- *The prisoner bites their own tongue off.*
- *The necromancer orders you dragged out of their sight.*
- *The witch swears the potion has no side effects.*

These are just a few examples. Inflicted consequences are best used to allow the world to act when it's clear that something should happen without needing to wait for the PCs to act. **Adventurers**, powerful NPCs that are the bane of a monster's existence, each have 3 moves they can spend to inflict consequences or resist PC actions. Their very nature makes them dangerous wildcards, so keep this in mind when one appears.

INFLECTED CONSEQUENCES MAKE THE WORLD UNPREDICTABLE

The choice of when to inflict consequences can be difficult for GMs. There's a balance to not being too punishing and it requires a lot of trust from the players. The power to hand out consequences is about creating interesting challenges and making the world feel real. Follow the fiction and do what makes sense. Find a balance between position, effect, clocks, telegraphed danger, surprises, engagement rolls, and inflicted consequences. These are the GM's tools and making the world feel alive, dangerous, and responsive to the PCs is their main responsibility.



PAYING COST

There are times when you have a large amount of control over what you're willing to give up if things go poorly. Perhaps you end up bloodied, lose some gold, anger a faction, or owe someone a favor. If the GM is unclear how the world responds, they can allow you to pay cost instead of determining the consequence themselves.

Pay Cost: The GM allows you to choose the consequence most favorable for your PC in that situation. This consequence can't be resisted by you.

The GM has final say over whether you have paid an appropriate amount.

- *The concoction you're crafting blows up. You could decide your PC ends up bloodied here, or maybe your minions were holding it and are splattered all over the wall instead.*
- *You got fleeced by a kobold merchant. You could decide it cost you your terrifying battleaxe, or maybe you owe him a huge favor.*
- *You're hanging off the edge of a cliff and might need to drop something. You could decide you drop your wand, or maybe you dangle precariously by one hand and take shock to MUSCLES instead.*

This is a tool best used for those indecisive moments when it's not really clear what the consequence is. It flows well with consequences that arise from a mixed result. It's also used to determine consequences that arise from crafting.

When the GM asks around the table for ideas for consequences when they draw a blank, this is asking the players what they think makes the most sense within the story or would make for an interesting consequence. When you pay cost, it's a little different. You're allowed to choose what's best for your PC.

GM: "The greater demon claws its way out of the pit and gazes at the summoning circle. Its eyes come to rest on a certain part and you look down to see the circle has a flaw. The demon is not contained. It looks at you and growls, 'Tell me, mortal, what price will you pay for your life?'"

Zanzou: "Oh shit..."

GM: "Yeah, this thing is summoned and still going to wreck the town as you hoped, but you're going to need to pay devastating cost here for your mixed. It's gotta be something valuable."

Zanzou: "I take the bloodseeker amulet from around my neck and hold it up. 'Will this cover it?'"

GM: "It snatches it from your hand with a wicked grin."

RESISTANCE ROLLS

When something bad happens to you or those nearby, you can spend stress to either **partially** or **fully resist** the consequence. Describe what you do to resist it and choose an action that matches that description, following these three rules, which the GM has final say on:

- **It makes sense** as a viable way to reduce the impact or avoid the consequence.
- **It wouldn't have weak effect** as an action roll in the same situation.
- **It's not the same action** that triggered the consequence, but only when the PC resisting it is the one that performed the action.

When you resist, it automatically works, at least to some extent. You roll to see how well you resist it and how costly it is. This gives players a lot of control over the story. You can resist any consequence that you have a viable way of resisting, whether it was caused by your own rolls, those of your allies or minions, or inflicted.

RESISTANCE ROLLS

Choose an action and roll its rating to resist a consequence. You either reduce the impact of the consequence or avoid it entirely, but take stress to do so.



Failure: You spend 3 stress to *partially* resist the consequence.

Mixed: You spend 2 stress to *partially* resist the consequence.

Success: You spend 1 stress to *fully* resist the consequence.

Critical: You clear 1 stress and *fully* resist the consequence.

SMOOTH NARRATION

After you roll, the GM judges how the resistance affects what's happening on-screen. If you fully resist a consequence, something is still happening, but the negative effects are completely negated. With a partial resist, the GM must decide how the consequence was reduced. The GM then informs you of the end result and it's up to you to describe how the scene played out. These follow the same basic narrative flow as action rolls: a critical feels perfect, a success feels clean, a mixed feels messy, and a failure feels tense.

Sometimes narrating resistances requires some mental gymnastics and even a bit of time travel. The consequence has already been stated - it's what could happen if you do nothing and quickly becomes fact if nobody steps in to resist it. What you're doing when resisting is rewinding the story just a bit and describing what actually happened. However, your action still failed or whatever caused the consequence still happened. **Resistance rolls are not action rolls. They don't further your goals - they keep them from slipping away.** It doesn't erase failure and, at most, puts you back to the same basic situation you were in before the consequence.

When you partially resist a consequence, it still happens but it's not as bad for you as it could have been. On a mixed, you struggle against the consequences. On a failure, you just barely manage to avoid the worst of it. A mixed and a failure have the same result on the impact of the consequence - the only difference is the amount of stress you take and how it looks within the story.

When you fully resist a consequence, it either still happens but there's no negative impact on you or you prevent it from even happening. This gives flexibility to make sure that the chosen action and way of resisting matches up with the fiction that's happening on-screen. On a success, you do it with some exertion but appear in control. On a critical, you make it look easy. Both a success and a critical avoid the consequence - the difference is how it looks when you do so.

Here are examples of how different actions might be used to resist.

- You **SCAN** your minions and pick up on them lying about the gold they stole, managing to get half of it back. On a success, you see through their lies and recover it all.
- You **TINKER** a chair against a door, just barely keeping the door shut but the burly innkeeper still manages to get his arm through and his hand around your neck. On a success, he's locked out.
- You **TRICK** a farmer that notices you sneaking through their field by making some animal noises. They seem confused, but keep an eye on the field. On a success, they buy it fully and go back inside.
- You **FINESSE** yourself from falling off a rooftop, grabbing the edge and dangling there. On a success, you never fell at all.
- You **SKULK** away from a griffon diving at you from above, which snatches your bow instead of you in its talons. On a success, it momentarily loses sight of you completely and swoops back up.
- You **SMASH** your shield up in time to keep the lance from plunging into your chest, getting knocked onto the ground and stunned. On a success, the lance rolls off your shield harmlessly
- You **BANTER** the troll to let you pass through its caves instead of eating you, which they agree to for a gold. On a success, they put you down and send you on your way.
- You **THREATEN** a merchant who was running away, scaring them enough to make them stumble and fall just within eyesight. On a success, they instead freeze in fear.
- You **INVOKE** force mastery to keep your staff from falling in the river, deflecting it onto the bank. On a success, it returns to your hand.

PARTIAL RESISTS

When you roll a mixed or a failure, you partially resist the consequence. The GM decides what this means after the resistance roll, so you don't know for sure what will happen when you resist.

Partially resisting drops the severity of the consequence by one. What happened still happens, but you're less affected by it. The GM thinks of another consequence, *flowing from the fiction*, to represent a lesser version the previous one. This tends to be easier with complications as they flow from the story and can usually be toned down but can get a little bit muddy when it comes to game mechanics. In these cases, you can switch the consequence to a less severe, related complication. You can also use some of the ideas below, keeping in mind that they're just suggestions:

- **Reduced effect** might be reduced to -effect on similar actions in the future.
- **Losing position** might be reduced to dropping some non-essential gear.
- **Shock** might be reduced to a different shock that the PC isn't as hindered by.
- **Bloodied** might be reduced to still being bloodied, but only one or two attributes take shock. It could also be reduced to just shock to all attributes, but not bloodied.
- **Losing gold** might be reduced to the PC losing an item.
- **Breaking an item** might be reduced to just dropping it.

When in doubt, you can have the player pay cost at a lighter severity than the original consequence. If nothing makes sense, you can allow them to fully resist it instead, but there's probably always some offscreen clock you can start or tick.

RESISTING DEATH

Resisting death has slightly different, harsher rules.

- **On a mixed**, the consequence is reduced in severity but still incredibly serious. Maybe you get knocked out of the scene, a clock starts as you start bleeding to death, or you lose a limb. The consequences are still devastating and the GM should make clear what the consequences will be before you roll to resist.
- **On a failure**, you still die. If you have dark hearts, perform your death knell!

THE FLOW OF CONSEQUENCES & RESISTANCES

When the GM hands out a consequence, they should expect it to stand - just state it and move on. It's the player's responsibility to call out if they want to resist something. Reminding players a bit in the first session or two will help them build the habit, but after that it sets a way nicer pace to just expect the players to do it on their own. Players, jump in quick if you intend to resist!



DEFENSES

A **defense** represents a character's ability to dependably avoid a specific type of consequence. They're gained through the gear you wear or calling abilities, showing how your equipment and skill allow you to prepare for bad situations.

- *You miss with your attack but catch the counterattack on your shield.*
- *Experience lying helps you cover one up quickly when found out.*
- *You stumble in the shadows, but your cloak keeps you well-hidden.*

Defense: You completely avoid the consequence as if you had rolled a success on a resistance roll. This does not cost stress.

When you use a defense, mark it off on your sheet. You can't use it again until it refreshes during the next recovery. Defenses count as a success on a resist roll for any abilities that require one. When you use a defense, describe what happens and how it applies to the situation. Defenses are quite specific, so it's usually clear when they apply but the GM can step in and judge any gray zones.

Every PC has one defense derived from their gear. Other defenses can be gained through calling abilities, magic items, potions, or concoctions. They offer protection against a specific type of consequence determined when you gain the defense. You might have a defense against things like minion mistakes, detection, magic, being caught lying, wounds, enemy movement, or containment.

GM: "One of the farmers looks up from what he's doing and spots you."

Drek: "Nah, I use my defense against detection here, pulling my cloak tighter around me."

GM: "Okay, he stops for a second thinking he saw something, then shrugs realizing it was his imagination and gets back to work."

NOT EVERY CONSEQUENCE CAN BE RESISTED

The nature of some consequences prevent you from resisting them, such as blowback, calamity, cost, and dark bargains. Others, though, can't be resisted due to weak effect. You can't stop a rainstorm from coming or the sun from rising. You could maybe try rushing to get the job done before it does, but actually stopping it isn't possible. GMs should keep this in mind and make sure to enforce it in play to establish the world as a dangerous place.



DARK IMPULSES

Your **dark impulse** is the deepest, darkest, most terrible part of yourself - it's what makes you a monster. It constantly beckons to you, leading you astray and ruining the best laid plans. It pushes you and your allies into danger - but satisfying it fills your dark heart with wicked glee, empowering you.

Each PC has a dark impulse chosen from the list to the right at character creation. When you choose your impulse, you write in a bit of detail about how it tends to manifest for your PC, making it easier for you and the GM to weave it into the story. You can also work with the GM to come up with your own impulses if you have a specific concept in mind.

BIGMOUTH

CRUEL

DERANGED

FICKLE

OBSESSED

PARANOID

RECKLESS

VENGEFUL

- ▶ **Bigmouth:** You can't hold your tongue, whether that means being obnoxiously rude, a horrendous braggart, a nonstop liar, or you can't help but let the truth slip out. You delight in people hearing you speak, no matter whether it hurts you, them, or your allies.
 - *You tell the wyrm it had better watch how it speaks to you.*
 - *You blurt out where you're hiding the princess.*
 - *You brag that you're sure you could jump over the chasm.*
- ▶ **Cruel:** You enjoy the pain and misery of others, going out of your way to make sure they experience it. Simply killing isn't enough - that tends to be an end to the cruelty. But the face of someone watching those they care about die? That's perfect. The pain of others helps you justify your own wretched existence.
 - *You cut off the farmer's fingers and feed them to his pigs.*
 - *You let the eyeless prince live, knowing they'll never become king.*
 - *You twist the knife just to hear your victim scream.*
- ▶ **Deranged:** You find joy in the most bizarre, disturbing things. You either don't care or don't realize how your derangement effects those around you. You're almost completely unpredictable, with a tendency to try unusual things just to see what happens. You might hear voices that push you towards these actions or maybe it's just extreme curiosity.
 - *You find a potion without a label and take a swig.*
 - *You kick your minions down the hole to see what's down there.*
 - *You grab a dog by its tail and toss it at the farmers.*
- ▶ **Fickle:** You're easily distracted and can't manage to stay on task. Once something grabs your attention, you can't help but check it out. You might change your mind halfway through a plan or even before taking the first step. Your attitudes towards others are just as tentative as your actions.
 - *You should be watching the road as you go check out a bee hive.*
 - *Bored of listening, you let the wolf devour the prisoner.*
 - *You decide you'd rather not pay the goblins you hired.*



- **Obsessed:** You're prone to fixation. Once you have an idea in your mind, you can't let it go. You might have some object or concept which has had your attention for quite some time, or this might manifest as a predilection towards obsession. Either way, once it's on your mind, you can't ignore it.
 - *You're overwhelmed with the desire to procure shiny things.*
 - *You're determined to feast with Lavisha in the afterlife.*
 - *You will do anything to make sure the valley elves suffer.*
- **Paranoid:** You always feel like your life, belongings, or goals are under threat. You never feel safe and find the slightest reason to fear for the worst. You believe that something or someone is out to get you. Your paranoia might be a general attitude, or towards something specific. You might have an irrational fear of something seemingly mundane or an incredibly aversive fear of something somewhat dangerous.
 - *You refuse to cross the river, terrified of water sprites.*
 - *You're sure the vampire will double-cross you.*
 - *You always think your minions are holding back some loot.*
- **Reckless:** The last thing you think about is the consequences. You're impatient, rash, and short-sighted. You take the quickest possible route to your goals, no matter what's in the way. You care little for not only your own safety, but that of those around you as well.
 - *You jump straight into the pike wall, swinging your scythe wildly.*
 - *You grow tired of listening and snatch the potion from the witch.*
 - *You never miss an opportunity to test out your contraptions.*
- **Vengeful:** You never forget someone who has wronged you and don't let any slight go unpunished. Whether the injury was real or just perceived matters little - you know they're responsible and they will pay. The severity of your vengefulness might range from petty to extreme.
 - *You flip the fisherman's boat because they almost hit you.*
 - *You send the goblins who badmouthed you right into a trap.*
 - *You run off into the forest to kill the horse that trampled you.*

DARK HEARTS

Dark hearts are bankable dice earned when you play into your dark impulse, spend loot on revelry, or from some calling abilities. You can have a maximum of two dark hearts at a time, losing any extra you earn.



You can spend a dark heart and take +1d to an action or resistance roll. You can only spend one dark heart per roll.



COMPELLING IMPULSES

Your dark impulse is always beckoning you towards action. To represent this, whenever there is an interesting opportunity for it to take hold of your PC, the GM can **compel** you to act on it. They suggest a course of action which plays into your dark impulse and you have to make a choice:

- **Follow through on the impulse** and gain a dark heart afterwards.
- **Suppress the impulse** by taking stress, describing how you suppressed it.

These compels always put your goals at risk in some way, either by pulling you away from them or acting in mechanically inefficient ways.

It might be wise to be patient waiting for the chief to arrive, but a reckless Brute would instead pound on the table and demand they hurry.

While it's not required, getting a dark heart usually requires an action roll to put things at risk or a sacrifice of some sort, like sending minions to their deaths or giving up some loot you're carrying. That risk may actually come from inaction, though, with the GM compelling you to not follow through on a declared action because of your impulse. The key is that you earn a dark heart when you step away from what you're supposed to be doing and really get back to the basics of being a monster, the things that fill your dark heart with glee.

If you feel like the compel doesn't really reflect the way that the impulse manifests for your character, you can work with the GM and other players at the table to come up with an equally disruptive and interesting compulsion.

As a player, you can compel your own PC into disruptive action, pushing you away from your goals at inopportune moments that increase drama and tension. If you do so, you can earn a dark heart just as if the GM had introduced the compel. While it often makes sense to weave your impulses into your roleplaying, you only earn dark hearts when it puts the current goals of that scene or your dungeon at risk. The GM has the final say in where this line is and what does and doesn't result in a dark heart.

You can suggest compels to the GM for other PCs as well. If you enjoy this a lot, the **DARK MIND** Shadow ability even awards a dark heart for doing so!

- **The GM offers a compel** and puts your PC's back against the wall.
"You could go help your ally, but you're cruel, right? I think you'd rather spend time twisting the knife on this guy you just downed instead?"
- **A player compels their own PC** bringing their impulse into the story.
"I'm way too impatient for this. Can I have a dark heart here if I push past the guard and enter the chief's hut?"
- **Other players offer up ideas** that the GM then compels.
"Aren't you reckless? Why not just try jumping over the chasm?"

Your choice of revelry can also be compelled just as an impulse can. Each monster has a way they like to live it up after each raid. Thoughts of these good times linger and when the opportunity presents itself, even when there are more important matters on the line, you sometimes can't help but enjoy yourself. These types of compels work well when coupled with the opportunity for **good loot**, such as a monster that loves drinking being compelled to secure a cart full of ale barrels.

Dromin, a bugbear Hunter, is trying to sneak past a hunting party's camp. He notices a sleeping guard next to a tree and decides to just move past him. The GM knows that Dromin's dark impulse is vengeful.

GM: (grinning) "Hey Dromin, you see that sleeping guard there and notice the dagger at his side. It really reminds you a lot of the dagger that was stuck in your buddy Gornack's back. Must be a common issue for soldiers in this area. Your fur immediately stands on end. You sure you want to let this guy keep sleeping? That's a compel."

Dromin: "Yeah, that guy's gonna get that dagger buried into his chest. I'm going to **SKULK** over there and take care of him," Dromin says, grabbing dice and marking down a dark heart.

Skitch: "Hey, I'm deranged right? Can I get a dark heart if I just empty this bag of rats I'm carrying right into the middle of this square?"

GM: "I don't know, that seems like it'd probably just help you guys sneak out of here better. Remember, it has to put your current goals at risk."

Skitch: "Okay, sure. What if I douse them in lamp oil first and light it?"

GM: "There you go. Rats can easily be explained away, but flaming rats? They'll know something is up for sure."

WHY NOT JUST BE EVIL AND CRAZY ALL THE TIME?

This is a game where you play evil monsters, right? So why not roleplay your dark impulse all the time? It's a delicate balancing act. When truly monstrous things get their own spotlighted screen time, it makes them feel more awesome. If you throw around nonstop evil and reckless actions, it makes everyone numb to them and the game grinds to a halt - the story doesn't move forward, nothing gets done. It's just not very fun. Less is more. And because you're getting a mechanical reward for playing into them, the other players at the table probably mind less that you're throwing your plans away in pursuit of your impulses.



GOING FERAL

You have stress to stave off your impulse, but when it runs out, you become a slave to it. After you tick off the last segment of your stress clock, you ignore any overflow. **Your dark impulse demands your immediate attention and you must act on it.**

GOING FERAL (PROCESS)

When you go feral, the entire table can give input on what form that takes. It's sure to be something bad that sends the plan off the rails, so it's good to hear from everyone before you jump in.

1. **Play stops and a discussion begins.** "Okay, what's the most *impulsive* thing I can do right now?" Replace *impulsive* with your dark impulse. This is a brainstorming session where everyone throws out one idea.
2. **Make a decision.** Take in all the ideas and choose one or go with your own. The player always makes the final call on the action they take.
3. **Act immediately.** You take the spotlight and act on your impulse. You can use abilities without spending stress on this action.
4. **Take a dark heart.** It feels good to give in, even when you fail.

You remain in a feral state until your next recovery, though you're not forced to play into your dark impulse anymore. Without stress, you lose access to your abilities and resistance rolls. Furthermore, if you're compelled, you must accept it. GMs should use this powerful compel only when an opportune moment presents itself, though.

When you follow through on a compel after going feral, whether it's from the GM or yourself, you can use any abilities on that action without spending stress.

Mungus, a reckless kobold Marauder, just ticked their last stress as they resisted being spotted while sneaking out of the temple. The table starts throwing around ideas about what would be pretty reckless here.

Strak: *I guess the easiest thing to imagine is just attacking, right?*

Scratch: *Yeah, but starting a fight doesn't really make a lot of sense since they resisted being spotted. I think since we want to avoid a fight, what if instead of sneaking, you just bolt for that stained glass window and jump straight out it?*

Mungus: *Yeah, I don't really want to see a fight here. The window option sounds like way more fun anyway. Okay, I'm going to just SMASH my way straight out that window. I wanna get out fast.*

GM: *Sounds pretty feral to me! Oh yeah, jumping through the glass and out of a third story window is definitely dire, but you know, jumping out a window sounds like the fastest way to get out. Let's say strong effect.*



DARK BARGAINS

You're a selfish monster without morals who would gladly sacrifice bystanders, your friends, your goals, or even your own body for short-term gains. To reflect this, anytime you roll, you can ask the GM for a dark bargain.

Dark Bargain: The GM details a consequence - something bad happens to you, those around you, your dungeon, or your current raid. If you agree to accept the consequence, you can take +1d on the roll.


The consequence of the dark bargain will happen no matter what, regardless of the results of the roll. The bargain can't be contingent on the roll and can't be resisted by anyone. The nature and severity of this bargain is up to the GM. A good bargain is one that you have to really think about whether it's worth it before accepting. It works best when the bargain is related to what's currently happening on-screen, but they don't necessarily have to be. They flow well when they're framed as monster PCs not caring about collateral damage, but they're also a useful tool for GMs and players to create more drama within the game.

As usual, the GM can ask the table or players can offer up interesting bargains. The GM makes the final call on what the bargain is. Usually the GM just offers one up and the player can take it or modify it a bit. You can also throw around ideas, but don't let coming up with an idea stop the game for too long. Here are some forms a dark bargain might take:

- Someone, probably not you, takes shock or gets bloodied.
- Someone, probably you, loses a body part.
- A minion pack is wiped out.
- You or a friend loses or breaks something important.
- Something lucky happens for your enemies.
- Someone betrays you, like a minion pack or a vile friend.
- You piss off a friendly or indifferent faction.
- A troublesome clock gets started or ticked to full.
- You take -1d on your next blowback or calamity roll.

Players can ask for dark bargains on any roll. They can also offer up an idea they have for a dark bargain to see if the GM is okay with it. Bargains players come up with have a tendency to be a bit too in the player's favor, so the GM might modify it to make it a harder choice.

Dark bargains aren't always easy to come up with, but don't force it! If nothing comes to mind after a few seconds of thought, make it something really abstract like -1d to blowback or ticking a clock. And of course, the GM can always say that there's not a dark bargain on the table.



Mogdor: I drop my axe, blood gushing from the wound across my ribs. I think this is my last shot. I'm going to SMASH what's left of the cart over the edge of the cliff. Can I get a dark bargain?

GM: How about your axe goes over the side as well?

Mogdor: Ahhh, but I just got the terrifying edge added to it. I love that axe. Can it be my horn instead?

GM: Nah, I think the stakes are so high here that it has to be a pretty big price. It's kind of life or death.

Mogdor: Yeah, true. Dammit, fine... I'll take it. I can always try to get my axe back later. I think Drak fell down there earlier anyway.

GM: Great! Yeah, as you drop your axe, it goes sliding away. You have a second where you could jump to grab it, but you know you've gotta focus on the cart. It slips over the cliff edge.

Karrack: I want to INVOKE here and bring this gnarled, ancient tree to life with wildheart magic. I kind of imagine it's just old, angry, and stubborn, so I want to send it into that village to cause some chaos.

GM: Yeah, that's a tier 3 spell for sure.

Karrack: So -2d for tier 3 and -1d because I have shock to GUTS. Yeah, 0d isn't going to get this done. I'll dump a dark heart into it so I can roll 1d. Still pretty unlikely. Hey, I have an idea for a dark bargain. Can I take +1d if the tree is hostile towards us as well? And maybe if I fail, it still comes alive anyway but is only hostile towards us?

GM: Sounds fun. Yeah, let's go with that.

GM: Yeah, this is deadly. Failure here means you'll fall into the lava.

Drak: Then I'd better not fail. Can I get a dark bargain?

GM: The first thing that comes to mind is the ledge crumbling so your allies lose effect if they try the same jump.

Drak: Nah, I don't want to split us up like that. Can't take that one.

GM: Anyone else have an idea?

Slenn: What if you drop your holy symbol into the lava instead?

Drak: Hah, no way that's happening. Okay, changed my mind. I'm gonna take the first one and throw you guys under the bus here.

EXAMPLE DARK BARGAINS

- 11 A piece of your gear or supply is lost or broken, like your shield breaking or dropping your whip.
- 12 An ally loses something important to them, such as their magic focus or a vile friend.
- 13 You make a ridiculous amount of noise, like jumping and landing on a metal roof.
- 14 You see something that makes you question reality, like the ghost of a dead PC.
- 15 One of your enemies gets away, likely to move against you later.
- 16 Your imps unearth something within the dungeon. Make a 1d discovery roll.
- 21 The ground gives way under you or you lose your footing, putting you in a terrible spot.
- 22 Your body changes temporarily or permanently, like losing a finger or growing a tail.
- 23 You miscommunicate with your allies, like sending them in the wrong direction.
- 24 The real threat isn't what you think it is, like a goblin tribe also raiding your target.
- 25 An adventurer or two enters the scene, like a drunk barbarian and bard stumbling out of a tavern.
- 26 The ground you're standing on becomes unstable, collapsing and bringing everyone with it.
- 31 One of your wounds begins festering. You won't heal your bloodied condition during recovery.
- 32 A group arrives to help your target, like a patrol on the roads galloping in to help.
- 33 Whatever you're about to try won't work again, like a null-magic field being activated just after it.
- 34 Your action will affect one of your allies as well, like blasting them with a fireball.
- 35 A natural disaster is about to occur, like a lightning storm or earthquake. Start a 4-segment clock.
- 36 You make a fool of yourself, losing status with allies, your minions, or even the enemy.
- 41 Your vile friend gets really angry at you, cutting you off until you make amends.
- 42 You get separated from your allies, like getting led into the woods by a bunch of pixies.
- 43 You're completely exhausted, taking shock to all three attributes after your roll.
- 44 You become the center of attention and whoever is watching will expect an immediate follow-up action.
- 45 You're exposed to danger from the environment, like a fire or rocks falling.
- 46 Your biggest secret is revealed, like dropping a document showing the steps to your master plan.
- 51 You're forced to choose between two terrible options, like saving only your minions or your warg.
- 52 An ally springs an unseen trap, like stepping on a rope and getting hauled up into a tree.
- 53 An NPC near you takes a hit, like the priest you were hauling back to torture getting killed.
- 54 Nature helps your enemies, like a wolf pack coming to the aid of a farmer you're chasing.
- 55 The situation changes as magic is put into play, like drawing a god's attention.
- 56 You must choose between two things you want to keep, like the loot or the prisoner.
- 61 A clock is filled, like hunting dogs running you down in the fields or a boat sinking.
- 62 You're blinded, deafened, or otherwise impaired, like your thunder spell also deafening you.
- 63 An unknown entity witnesses the situation, like the orc chief watching you raid their hunting grounds.
- 64 An old enemy shows up, like an adventurer that you thought you'd killed before.
- 65 Targets in this area dry up, like the baron calling for a cease in road traffic.
- 66 An adventuring party is about to show up. Start a 4-segment clock.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)



ADJUSTING ROLLS

Below are a few more tricks up your wicked sleeves, giving you ways to manipulate your rolls at a cost. **Each roll can only benefit from one of the following methods.**

GO HARD

Even in risky conditions, it's assumed that PCs want to minimize the damage to themselves. This leaves some room for extra effort. Going hard at a task means that you're giving up on the idea of self-preservation.

Go Hard: You gain +effect on an action roll but take -position. *How do you disregard your own safety and give it your all?*

Trading position for effect is already possible with the correct narration, but going hard makes this a simple process. You announce to the table and the GM that you're very clearly putting yourself at risk to achieve a better result. If you go hard on a dire roll, the roll becomes deadly. If you can't explain how disregarding your own well-being can help you achieve greater effect, you can't go hard.

- *Axe held high, you step right into the lancer's path.*
- *You grab far more arcane energy than you can likely handle.*
- *You toss your axe and offer a hand in friendship to the angry fiend.*

ASSIST

You assist another PC or minion pack by lending a hand, creating an opening, causing a diversion, or commanding them. This puts yourself in harm's way, though.

Assist: You give someone +effect on an action roll, but you also suffer any consequences from that roll. *What do you do to give them an advantage?*

Assisting creates momentary, fleeting advantages that disappear once that action is resolved. You can assist an ally by knocking a paladin's shield aside, but it would take an action roll to knock it out of their hands. There's no need for a roll, though you can only assist someone if your approach wouldn't have weak effect as an action roll. Each roll can only benefit from one assist.

- *You distract the guards as the Brute barrels through them.*
- *You lean out to grab the hand of the Zealot jumping over the gap.*
- *You stand behind the Conniver looking menacing as they negotiate.*

When you assist an ally, you describe how you help, then work together after the roll to narrate what happens, keeping in mind the PC rolling is in the spotlight.

TEAM UP

Wicked Ones can put aside the petty squabbling that lesser monsters get caught up in and cooperate on tasks, though you risk stress and greater consequences in the process. You can team up with your fellow monsters when you need to join forces to maximize your chances at accomplishing one singular goal, make up for clumsy or unskilled allies, or use cooperation to have greater effect.

Team Up: Each PC who's involved makes an action roll using the same action. The team counts the single best result as the overall team effort. This also gives the action scale, possibly affecting position and effect. However, any PC that rolls a mixed or a failure takes stress.


You might team up to...

- **...cover for weaker allies**, letting stronger members pick up the slack.
 - *You and the Hunter help the Brute and the Zealot sneak in.*
 - *The Marauder extends a hand, helping you over the wall.*
 - *You and the Conniver talk circles around the giant.*
- **...act as a single team to gain scale** to compete with a challenging obstacle.
 - *You and the Brute pick up the templar and toss him off the ledge.*
 - *Everyone grabs a hammer and starts busting down the wall.*
 - *You snarl at the crowd while the Marauder glares menacingly.*
- **...make sure you get the job done** when you might not have a second shot.
 - *You and the Warlock grab the line and pull the drowning Shaman up.*
 - *Bloodied and surrounded, you and the Shadow make a final attack.*
 - *The Zealot begins chanting and everyone joins in to finish the ritual.*

NARRATING SMOOTHLY

When you team up, everyone involved takes a role in narrating the results. First, you describe your action and intention as part of the team's roll, remembering that you're all trying to accomplish one singular goal together using the same action. The GM sets position and effect for the overall roll, accounting for scale, then everyone makes their roll.

Once you know the results, work backwards. If it was a success, maybe those who rolled failures can explain what went wrong and those with successes can narrate how they covered for their allies. If it was a mixed, maybe nobody really accounted for the failures, but you still managed to pull it off. Then once the actions of the PCs are clear, the GM steps in and starts handing out any consequences suffered.



Kanzun: "I pull out my axes and square up against this guy."

Tix: "I'm going to assist, pulling out my dagger and distracting him."

GM: "Okay, looks like it's strong effect as he gives you an opening."

Kanzun rolls 2d Finesse and gets a mixed.

GM: "You're gonna kill this guy, but he strikes first. He jumps forward, slicing Tix across the chest then swings wildly and hits you, Kanzun. That's **MUSCLES** shock. Now tell me what it looks like as you kill him."

GM: "Things aren't looking great. They have a line of archers, all aiming at you. There's six or seven of them."

Remmy: "I'm going to charge them."

GM: (laughing) "Yeah, that's dire for sure and weak effect."

Remmy: "Looks like I'm going to have to go hard."

GM: "You know that means dire becomes deadly, right?"

Remmy: "Yeah, but it's not a problem if I roll a success. I'm throwing a dark heart into this roll and I'm gonna need to hear a dark bargain."

Yorg: "I want to use force mastery to pelt this giant with rocks to scare it away. I don't think we can kill this thing, but maybe we don't have to."

GM: "Yeah, they're just so huge and the rocks aren't going to hurt them enough as a tier 1 spell. I think you're going to have weak effect here."

Slisgar: "What if we team up and blend our magic together? I'll use wildheart to make the trees thrash the giant with their branches, too."

GM: "Okay, having scale puts you on equal footing. Let's see some rolls. It's still going to be dire, though. It's a giant."

Yorg rolls 3d INVOKE and gets a mixed. Slisgar rolls 2d INVOKE and gets a success! The overall result for the roll is a success and there are no consequences, though Yorg takes stress for the mixed.

Yorg: "Okay, so I think I'm pelting it with these rocks and just when I think it's working and the giant is going to run, I realize that it's about to run in MY direction! Looks like I'm getting trampled."

Slisgar: "As the giant takes a step forward, a big tree branch whips it right across the face. It staggers back a bit, looks at us both, then turns tail and runs off."

FLASHBACKS

Just as engagement rolls let us cut ahead to the action already in progress, flashbacks let us cut back to when something important happened. Making detailed plans that might never come to fruition isn't all that fun, so flashbacks allow you to have done something in the past that your character would have thought to do.

You can flashback to any scene that a PC of your calling would have likely thought to do. Each calling has some examples of the types of scenes they can flashback to. So while the player might not have thought to have looked into some arcane secrets, their kobold Warlock definitely would have.

Flashback: Spend stress to flashback to a scene between the last recovery and the present. You can flashback to perform an extra downtime action, but you must also pay cost as you overwork yourself.

When you call for a flashback, first describe the basics of what you want to accomplish. The GM judges whether it was possible and likely for a PC with your calling to think to do it. A flashback then works just like a normal scene. You make action rolls, suffer consequences, and spend stress as usual. Keep in mind that flashbacks can't undo or remove things that have already happened.

The scope of a flashback is limited to a single scene and a couple of action rolls. Sometimes, a roll isn't even required within a flashback. You can flashback to spending gold, which includes paying minions to perform downtime actions. It's fully possible that a flashback results in failure, accomplishing nothing. The flashback just allows you to make those rolls, then have them affect your current situation.

- *The Shadow* **SCANNED** a dead guard for the key to open the gate. They now make their way out of the compound easily.
- *The Brute* **TRICKED** the captured soldier into telling him where his friends are patrolling. They now spring an ambush.
- *The Marauder* **THREATENED** some local goblins to be in place, waiting for his signal to pop out and launch a surprise attack. They watch now as the goblins hit the mercenary band from behind.
- *The Conniver* **BANTERED** with the bugbear warband over drinks and dice and **TRICKED** their leader into attacking the town first. They watch now as the bugbears die softening up the town's defenses.

PROGRESS CLOCKS

Sometimes, tasks are larger than one action - interconnected parts of an entire plan, events unfolding over time, or a challenge quite difficult to overcome. When these situations need tracked, the GM can draw a clock and tick it as progress happens.

Progress Clock: A circle with 4, 6, or 8 segments used by the GM to track progress over time, whether that be for a task the PCs are working on, trouble heading their way, or situations developing out of their control.

Generally, the more complex the situation, the more segments in the progress clock. A complicated obstacle is a 4-segment clock, a more complex obstacle is a 6-segment clock, and a daunting obstacle is an 8-segment clock. For clocks that represent danger or impending events, the shorter the clock, the more pressing the situation is. When the clock is full, something happens: an obstacle is overcome, a situation comes to fruition, consequences are inflicted, or a goal is reached. **This can't be resisted.** The clock ticking can be resisted, but once the clock is full, whatever it represented happens and now must be dealt with. Here are some examples:

FENCES & DOGS



RUN DOWN PREY



TROOPS RETURN



ANGER THE TROLL



MOB OF TOWNSFOLK



HARPY ASSISTANCE



It's the GM's job to tick a clock so it reflects what's happening in the story. Clocks can also be unticked as PCs make efforts towards stopping some situation from coming to fruition. The chart below provides some guidelines on how to do so.

HOW MANY TICKS DOES THE CLOCK GET?

1 tick	2 ticks	3 or more ticks
Mixed result on a roll ✧	Success result on a roll ✧	Critical result on a roll ✧
Minor Story Progress	Steady Story Progress	Major Story Progress
Annoying Consequence	Frustrating Consequence	Devastating Consequence

✧ Strong effect gives +1 tick and weak gives -1 tick (except on a failure).

When you make a clock, make it about the objective, danger, or situation. Don't make it about how to handle those things. A clock called "fences & dogs" represents what stands between the PCs and getting into the farm. Don't call it something like "climb fences & sneak past dogs." Let players figure out how they approach it.

Remember that the clocks themselves aren't the goal, they're just a representation of how much progress has been made. Players shouldn't be thinking, "How can we finish this clock?" Use them to help establish a shared sense of progression.

TYPES OF CLOCKS

Clocks are meant to be flexible and ticking them well as the GM comes with practice. Ticks on a clock are based on the type of clock and what it represents. They're a representation of the fictional situation developing and sometimes the rolls and fiction don't quite match up. Don't be afraid to give an extra tick, hold one back, or end a clock early. Clocks tend to work best when all can see them, even if they're not labelled yet, though the choice of whether to show a clock or not is up to the GM. There are three basic types of clocks:

- ▶ **Objective clocks** are used to represent complex goals the PCs want to achieve, like casting a ritual, slipping through town, taking down a griffon, or negotiating peace with a tribe of orcs. You tick the clock when PCs take steps towards completing the goal, usually by making action rolls. These clocks might even be unticked when the PCs suffer consequences or the fiction changes in some way.
 - *You carefully sneak past the sleeping dogs in the barn.*
 - *You break the prisoner's spirit, forcing them to help you.*
 - *You manage to corner the escaped noble in a small glen.*
- ▶ **Danger clocks** are used to represent impending threats, like guards being alerted, some local humans being pushed far enough to hire adventurers, or angering a dragon. You tick the clock when PCs suffer consequences or allow time to pass without dealing with the danger. The clock might even be unticked when the PCs actively work towards dealing with it.
 - *The guards have you cornered at last.*
 - *The dogs chase you for hours, finally running you down.*
 - *The riders on the horizon arrive in time to help their friends.*
- ▶ **Situation clocks** are used to represent the world moving around the PCs, like a war between two factions, a huge storm passing through, or a town building a new wall. You generally tick the clock with the passing of time or when events that affect it occur.
 - *The stormclouds grow until they let loose in a torrential downpour.*
 - *The baron's troops finally quell the rebellion.*
 - *The town finishes building their walls.*



CLOCK INTERACTIONS

Clocks can interact with each other in a few ways that make working with them in play quite interesting.

- ▶ **Racing clocks** are used to represent competing goals, like building a battering ram before reinforcements arrive, racing bandits to a juicy merchant caravan you both just heard about, or escaping from the guard while they're trying to corner you. The GM draws two clocks, and when one is full, that clock's goal is realized first.
 - *You just barely manage to gather the loot before you drown.*
 - *The deep gnomes win the giant spider's favor before you can.*
 - *You get out of town before the guard dogs close in on you.*
- ▶ **Layered clocks** are used to represent multi-step, complex situations, like sneaking through town and into a well-guarded fortress, taking down a mighty knight's defenses until they're vulnerable, or setting up a complex ritual. The GM draws one clock, then when that one is full, it unlocks a second clock. The clocks can be of different types as well, such as an objective clock unlocking a danger clock that pushes you to escape before help arrives!
 - *You head over the walls, through the courtyard, and into the prison.*
 - *You mow through several waves of halfling peasants.*
 - *You move floor by floor through the wizard's tower.*

USING CLOCKS WELL

When you create an obstacle clock, be sure to make it about the obstacle, not the method. The clock for getting inside a walled town might be "Guards on the Walls," not "Sneak Past the Guards."

When you make a danger clock, make it about the consequence of it being filled. A clock about being detected might be "Guards Respond" instead of "Detected." When you fill the clock, the consequence can immediately happen, or the GM can pocket it and bring it in when it's more relevant or impactful. The consequences from a clock being ticked are almost always *devastating*, generally manifesting as complications.

Complex enemy threats can be broken into several "layers," each with its own progress clock. For example, a fortified castle might have clocks for "Outer Walls," "Guard Patrols," and "Inner Halls" representing movement through each part of that castle.

Clocks like these, representing obstacles, are great for theater of the mind style play, where you don't make use of maps. They help paint the picture of how far you've come and how much further you have to go. However, if your group makes heavy use of maps, it's sometimes better to go lighter on clocks to represent these obstacles within the fiction and rely more on the physical map in front of you.

FORTUNE ROLLS

There are times where the GM needs to make a judgement call about the world and either isn't sure what the answer might be or doesn't want to make that call on their own. In these cases, they can make a fortune roll to see how things turn out. The amount of dice rolled is determined by the likelihood of events turning out well for the one you're rolling for. Fortune rolls also fill in the gaps when there isn't a specific rule or some information within the story is unclear.

FORTUNE ROLLS

Roll 1d, 2d, or 3d depending on the likelihood of something good happening, with the results determining how good it is.



- Failure:** Things go about as poorly as they could.
- Mixed:** It's pretty good, but not perfect, with a tinge of disappointment.
- Success:** It's an ideal situation as you get what you were hoping for.
- Critical:** Also, you get more than you were hoping for!

When the GM makes a fortune roll, they choose the party that they're rolling for - the PCs as a whole, a certain PC, a faction, and NPC, and so on. The results are from that party's perspective. You can also make opposed fortune rolls and compare to see how two sides fared. The amount of dice rolled can be determined by a relevant trait, such as a PC's action rating or a faction's tier. Without a reference for it, it can be determined solely based on the GM's *gut feeling* of how likely it is to go well:

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES THINGS GO WELL?		
1d Unlikely	2d Toss-Up	3d Likely

Slyte: Hey, does this farm have some hay laying around? I want to start a big fire.

GM: Yeah, that's pretty likely. I want to just say yes, but let's roll 3d to see how good the situation is for you.

- On a failure, there's a pile of hay, but there's some dogs playing in it.
- On a mixed, there's a pile of hay, but there's a dog sleeping on it.
- On a success, there's a big pile of hay nearby.
- On a critical, there's a big pile of hay nearby and a lantern next to it!

GEAR & SUPPLY

These are the tools of your trade - weapons, traps, lanterns, wands, rope, torture implements, voodoo masks, bone necklaces, bracers, shields - you name it. While you're always assumed to be wearing at least enough to cover yourself, your gear and supply are all the extra or cool stuff you have that help define your character.

Gear covers the items that you always have on you and make regular use of. They help define your character's look and provide you with a defense based on their utility. You can carry 4 items as gear.

Supply covers the things that you own or have access to but might not always be carrying on you. They're things stowed on your belt, across your back, or in a bag. Instead of completely gearing up and declaring exactly what you're carrying before raiding, supply allows you to flexibly pull items out of your inventory when you need them. You get 2 supply boxes and when you pull something out of supply, you mark one of the boxes. When you're out of boxes, it means you aren't carrying any other items. The supply boxes reset on your next recovery.

Any item in your supply must be able to be carried in one hand or fit nicely in a backpack. Items such as concoctions, potions, or anything else that is limited-use must always be placed in supply.

There are three categories of items: *mundane*, *valuable*, and *powerful*.

- A *mundane item* is just a simple version of something. It could be some rope, an axe, or a set of war drums. It might look awesome, but it functions in the same way as any other item of its type.
- A *valuable item* is something a little rare and you'd be a bit surprised to find. It might be a tier 1 item, such as a magic item, contraption, or a few doses of a concoction or potion. It could also be an item with an *edge*, a map with valuable information on it, or a rare musical instrument.
- A *powerful item* is a normal item with multiple edges or a tier 2 or 3 potion, concoction, contraption, or magic item. It could also be a one of a kind item that is highly sought after, a certain NPC's prized possession, or a document with very secret information.

When you buy, steal, make, or acquire an item, you add it to your gear or supply. Items are sometimes considered as a circumstance towards effect. The right tool makes a job easier or even possible to attempt at all.

If several items serve the same purpose, you can combine them into just one gear or supply, such as writing down "armor" to represent a helmet and shield or "tool pouch" to cover a variety of minor tools. The bigger the impact a single item has, the more likely it should be listed on its own.

GEAR DEFENSE

Monsters tend to love their possessions, clearly favoring evil style over substance, but that doesn't mean that things chosen mostly for appearance are useless. **You have a single defense based on the items you've chosen.** It can be derived from a single item or multiple items working together, though gear only ever gives one defense total. Below are some example problems that might arise and gear that could give you a defense against those problems:

Minion Mistakes: *You might carry a whip, a club, or a whistle.*

Detection: *You might wear a dark cloak, soft boots, or a mask.*

Magic: *You might wear a spirit mask, a mantle, or bracers.*

Caught Lying: *You might wear impressive clothes, jewelry, or a mask.*

Wounds: *You might have heavy armor, a shield, or a defensive weapon.*

Enemy Movement: *You might have a spear, bolas, or a net.*

Containment: *You might have a small knife, oil, or spiked armor.*

You work with the GM to decide what defense your gear provides you. The above are just examples and the defense could be anything you can connect with your gear. When selecting a defense, make sure that it's not too narrow or too broad. It should probably come up about once a session, but not always.

GM: *"The prisoner breaks free and runs down the hallway. They're probably gonna make it out of your dungeon."*

Thig: *"Nope, I'm going to use my defense against enemy movement. I quickly cut off their path with my spear and say, 'Where do you think you're going?'"*

GM: *"The rogue jumps out of hiding, sliding a dagger directly into your ribs. You're bloodied."*

Vatch: *"I don't think so. I use my defense against wounds. The rogue thinks they got me, but the dagger just digs into my chainmail. Surprised, I turn and laugh as I get ready to bash their head in."*

GM: *"Shards of ice fly from the mage's hands, pelting you. You take shock to MUSCLES and are knocked to the floor."*

Daz: *"I see the ice shards coming at me and quickly bring my bracers up in front of my face. I'm using my defense against magic here. The runes start glowing and absorb the spell. They're now ice cold against my skin."*

WEAPONS

Like other items, weapons count as a circumstance. It's important to remember that almost all weapons are deadly - a dagger can kill just as easily as greatsword. **Weapons never give +effect to attacks, they just mitigate negative circumstances.**

The most common weapons strike a good balance - a sword can be held in one hand and easily stowed away or carried while moving, but is also deadly enough to deal significant damage to most enemies. A dagger might struggle against armored opponents, but can be hidden and doesn't hinder movement. A huge warhammer crushes through enemy armor, but could make swimming a challenge.

How ammunition is handled is up to each group, but what usually works best is to assume you always have enough until you don't. This makes for a great consequence as the GM tells the players, "You just realize that was your last arrow."

STEADY SUPPLY

A **steady supply** represents constant access to a consumable resource, such as a potion or concoction. Some abilities and dungeon rooms give steady supplies, but they might also be gained through in-game play or a discovery.

- *You discover a huge cavern full of hallucinogenic mushrooms.*
- *You break the spirit of a captured alchemist, enslaving them and gaining a steady supply of one or two tier 1 concoctions.*
- *Your dungeon is infested with lizards, giving you a steady supply of lizard meat.*

SHARED SUPPLY

A **shared supply** is when the dungeon has gained a resource of something and all members can access it as supply. These supplies are often represented by a clock, usually 4-segments, that you tick each time it's used.

- *You make a deal with some dwarves to allow them passage for ale (4-clock supply of ale).*
- *You rob a royal caravan of fantastic silks (4-clock supply of fancy silk).*
- *You find a crate full of jewelry buried underground (4-clock supply of jewelry).*

WHAT MAKES FOR GOOD GEAR

You're telling awesome monster stories. Make sure to choose gear and supply that help make these stories more awesome and monstrous. Don't get too caught up in mechanical choices - take stuff that sounds fun and cool, stuff that a monster would be carrying, and remember that most monsters go for style over substance.



GOLD

When you're leading a dungeon, all the treasure you gather goes to the hoard. **Gold** is a measure of how much of that hoard each PC controls individually. You can spend each chunk of the hoard (1 gold) to accomplish things without going through the effort yourself. Gold can be spent at any point during downtime or within scenes, even using your calling flashbacks to spend it in the past.



Gold is gained during revelry as you sift through the loot from your last raid. Most of the loot goes into the hoard and keeps the denizens of your dungeon in line. Gold is what's left after that. Each PC can control a max of 3 gold's worth of the hoard before the denizens of the dungeon and other PCs get suspicious of your intentions.

It's called gold for simplicity, but it represents whatever your dungeon hoards. It could be a bag of gems, a pile of stolen fabrics, old tomes, a box full of weapons, a barrel of bones, or a bunch of goats. In the end, gold represents the ability to get others to do things for you. Small, mostly meaningless amounts of wealth aren't tracked. Players can use these small amounts in narration without spending gold.

YOU CAN SPEND 1 GOLD TO...

- **Get a vile friend or faction to help you**, but only if it's something they'd be willing to do. Higher tier factions and bigger favors might cost additional gold.
 - *You pay the goblin tribe to cause a diversion.*
 - *You pay your hobgoblin buddy to provide a small boat for you.*
- **Pay cost**, though devastating cost is higher.
 - *You have to buy more reagents after brewing.*
 - *You throw gold on the ground to distract the guards.*
- **Pay your minions to perform a downtime action.**
 - *Your orc raiders spend a week mining tunnels and expect their pay.*
 - *Your goblin smiths make you a new set of spiked armor.*
- **Pay your minions to come on a raid with you.**
 - *You flip your scouts a gold and tell them to grab their gear.*
 - *You give your grunts a jug of ale and say they're coming tomorrow.*
- **Recruit a minion pack or attract a creature**, but only if you have an open minion slot or creature lair.
 - *You pay some local goblins to come work for you.*
 - *You lure a basilisk into the lair with goats.*
- **Upgrade a minion pack.**
 - *You give your raiders armor.*
 - *You pull some books from the hoard and force your cultists to study the Light Tongue.*





POWER STRUGGLES

Being monsters, it's natural for the PCs to come into conflict with each other - shenanigans, arguments, and fights are commonplace. To allow for this without making such interaction feel mechanically punitive, unfun, and something that players avoid, PCs can engage in **power struggles**. This happens when two or more PCs are at odds with each other and you need to figure out who gets their way.

POWER STRUGGLE (PROCESS)

1. **Start the struggle.** Roleplay through the initial parts of the conflict, describing how your PC tries to get their way.
2. **Choose an action and roll it.** When you need to know who won to move forward, roll an action that fits your description as a fortune roll.
3. **Compare results.** If there is a clear winner, move on. If it's a tie, return to step 1 and narrate further, choosing a different action.
4. **The winner narrates their win.** Describe how you got your way.
5. **The loser narrates their reaction.** Keeping in mind that you lost, you get the final word on what your character does in response.

- *You want to assault the homestead, but the Shadow suggests stealth.*
- *You want a reliquary, but the Zealot thinks a scriptorium is needed.*
- *You want to torture the dwarf, but the Brute thinks she should do it.*

Power struggles never have mechanical impact. PCs never take shock, become bloodied, lose gold, and so on. No matter what happens, whether that means losing a bet or getting stabbed, **nothing on your character sheet changes**. Power struggles allow you to have fun with fights and solve impasses where players or their PCs don't agree on choices happening within the story.

Power struggles can get a bit messy when multiple PCs are in play, but it's up to the GM to lean into fortune rolls to adjudicate this. Maybe some of the PCs are working together or maybe there's a few rounds of arguing and fighting. The "narrate, make a fortune roll, narrate the results" structure will lead you towards some conclusion.

WHY WE FIGHT

Running a dungeon requires many decisions to be made by the players. Discussing these out a bit can be fun, but most of the time you're going to want to land on a decision quickly. This could be deciding what creature to attract, what the next raid target and plan is, what room to build, or what to do with all those elven prisoners. Amongst the Wicked Ones, these indecisions have a way of getting sorted out quickly. Anytime the PCs hit this kind of deadlock, the GM can call for a power struggle to get things moving again.

An argument breaks out about how to raid a ferry crossing. The PCs are in deadlock, standing around a table yelling at each other. A Brute and a Shadow start up a power struggle.

GM: "Looks like a power struggle. Who's in?"

Dukthur: "Yeah, I'm going to SMASH things angrily until you all start listening to me."

Slegra: "I'm definitely going to SKULK into the shadows here and wait for an opening. I'll just let him get all worked up first."

Dukthur: "I slam my fist down hard on the table and demand a full scale attack on the ferry crossing, eyeballing each of you."

GM: "Let's see some rolls."

Dukthur rolls 3d SMASH and gets a mixed. Slegra rolls 3d SKULK and gets a success!

Slegra: "Awesome. Okay, I slip up behind Dukthur and put my dagger to his neck and say, 'I think a lighter touch might be in order.'"

GM: "Hah, that's great. Dukthur, you get the last word here."

Dukthur: (laughing) "Dammit... Okay, knowing I've been outdone, I turn my head a bit, then glance at the slissik and snort, 'Okay, snake - but if this doesn't work, it's on you.'"

A soldier is pinned up against the wall with an arrow. The Conniver and Hunter come at each other to resolve what happens to their prey.

Shriek: "I want to put an arrow in his eye."

Nozrik: "Woah, wait - we need this one alive."

Shriek: "Nah, I'm vengeful and he took a swipe at me earlier. I think I want to compel myself to taking this shot and wasting the prisoner."

Nozrik: "Can't let you do it. Let's power struggle. I just stand right in front of you and stare you down."

Shriek: "I've an idea. I want to TRICK you into thinking that works."

Nozrik rolls 2d THREATEN and gets a failure. Shriek rolls 1d TRICK, and gets a mixed!

Shriek: "I smirk as you stand in front of me and pretend like I'm going to lower my bow. Then just as you move, I quickly raise it again to fire."

GM: "Yeah, that's just too fast for you. Nozrik, how do you respond?"

Nozrik: "After the shot, I stare Shriek down. 'Okay, I'll remember that.'"

TIERS & ENEMIES

Factions, targets, dungeons, adventurers, and many other elements within the game are ranked by tier, grouping them into categories of similar items which allows you to determine their relative power, effectiveness, or challenge levels. Each tier has a relative strength of double its previous tier. **Tiers can be considered as circumstances towards position and effect.** Tiers range from tier 0 to tier 4.

DUNGEON & FACTION TIERS

Dungeon tier represents the size of your dungeon's hoard and how powerful your dungeon, the Wicked Ones, and the minions have grown. It's used to compare the denizens of your dungeons to adventurers and determine whether they can stand against them on equal footing or not.

Faction tiers represent how powerful organized groups in the region are, such as a town, a tribe, or a garrison of soldiers. You use faction tiers to set how difficult raiding a target controlled by that faction will be. Factions higher in tier than your dungeon affect your engagement rolls for any raids against them. The tier also determines what kind of blowback you might face from raiding that faction.

Faction tier and dungeon tier don't compare directly with each other. Your dungeon is much smaller than factions are. The sheer scope of factions on the overworld is why you need the dungeon to protect yourself in the first place.

FACING ENEMIES

As you raid the overworld, you will come across a variety of enemies. How these enemies are modelled within scenes is up to the GM. **Enemies are just like any other obstacle - something in your way that you take action to overcome.** You might be able to overcome a single enemy with an action roll or two. That enemy's relative skill and equipment level can impact position and effect. Enemies from higher tier factions have a tendency to be more skilled, though this isn't always the case. Very skilled enemies may even inflict consequences against you.

The GM might also model larger groups of enemies as a single unit, giving them an advantage of scale versus you, negatively impacting position and effect. Clocks can be used to represent this scale as well or be used to model stronger defenses. You can read more about dangerous foes in the Gamemaster chapter.

You SKULK up behind the guard and try to stick your blade in his back. On a success, you take him down quietly. On a mixed, you might take him down, but his screams alert the other guards, or maybe you stick him in the back but he hobbles away, sword drawn.

ADVENTURERS

Adventurers are tenacious, greedy, powerful, and relentless. They're unlike other enemies. Adventures have a **passive**, **hearts**, and **moves**, which guarantee that when they appear in a scene, they have an impact. They're the bane of every monster's existence.

Adventurers are rated by how dangerous they are, ranging from tier 0 to tier 4. When facing adventurers higher in tier than your dungeon, their tier can count as a negative circumstance towards position and effect.

Their **passive** is something that is always true about them, giving them an advantage, and helping define their niche within an adventuring party.

- *The barbarian ignores death for a short time.*
- *The buccaneer is impossible to pin down.*
- *The slinger's keen senses mean he's never surprised.*

Adventurers have hearts equal to their tier + 1, representing their tenacity.

When you perform actions to knock an adventurer out of a scene, whether it means making them run away or outright killing them, you **slash** away at these hearts. Each slash is equivalent to one clock tick. It takes two slashes to knock out one heart and when all the adventurer's hearts are gone, they're taken down. They might be dead, captured, tricked, convinced, running away, or whatever else makes sense within the fiction.



Adventurers can each make **three moves**. Moves are determined on the fly by the GM, though each **example adventurer** in the GM section has some suggested moves. They flow from the fiction, being things that type of adventurer is likely to be able to do.

Offensive moves inflict consequences or change a scene's dynamic.

- *The buccaneer kicks dirt into your eyes, blinding you.*
- *The barbarian cleaves your shield in half.*
- *The artillery launches a barrage of rocks, preventing you from acting.*

Defensive moves attempt to resist something you've done to them, though a critical result can never be resisted.

- *The buccaneer swings from the curtains to avoid your arrows.*
- *The barbarian roars in defiance and helps his allies stand firm.*
- *The slinger slips between your legs as you try to tackle them.*



ADVANCEMENT

You begin play as a dangerous monster, able to go toe to toe with a seasoned caravan mercenary, match wits with a local priest, or duel a journeyman magician. But as you practice your evil arts, you expand your power and gain access to more abilities, turning into something much more terrible and powerful.

You gain xp for roleplaying as a monster, being an active co-author of the game as a player at the table, and matching the game's mechanics to the fiction even when the odds aren't on your side. Each xp trigger is a carrot meant to pull you along towards a more satisfying and interesting gaming experience. They're not really about your character's accomplishments, but more about encouraging you to be a better roleplayer and tell cooler, more monster stories. XP is tallied up at the end of each session no matter where in the cycle of play the session ended.

WICKED XP

At the bottom of your character sheet is your wicked xp track and its triggers. This track has 9 boxes and when you fill in the 9th box, you can select another calling ability.



You go around the table and recount how the session went. Each PC goes down the list of triggers, remembering how they hit that trigger in play. This makes for a great session review at the end of each session. Other players can help them out if they remember outstanding moments.

The player decides whether they get xp for hitting the trigger or not. A good rule of thumb is that you shouldn't have to struggle to find how you hit the trigger. It shouldn't feel like a reach. Give each one a few seconds and if nothing comes to mind for you or the others at the table, move on to next trigger. Don't be a weasel here. The xp triggers work best and feel most satisfying when everyone is honest about them. You shouldn't expect to hit all the triggers every session.

Mark 1 wicked xp for each trigger met within the session. Detail how it happened.

- **You made progress on your master plan.** *How did this session help you towards accomplishing the next step in your master plan?*
- **You jumped into someone else's dungeon scene.** *How did you help fill the time between raids and invasions with interesting cuts of monster life?*
- **You acted like a monster.** *How did your actions reflect the fact that you're a monster, not a human?*
- **You used your gear or supply in creative ways.** *How did your most prized possessions come into play?*



XP TRIGGERS EXPLAINED

You made progress on your master plan. This trigger lets you set a goal as a group and be rewarded for working towards it. You meet this trigger together, so if it's hit, all players get xp from it even if they didn't really help out with the goal much.

"Well, the next step in our plan is 'Terrify the townsfolk' and I'd think that hanging their priest along the roadside would be pretty terrifying."

You jumped into someone else's dungeon scene. This trigger helps encourage roleplaying, knowing that when you set up a neat scene, others are rewarded for joining in. Think of it like improv - one player sets up a scene, opening the door for other players to join in and keep it going. You get xp for walking through that door.

"When Kilgore was roasting that guard on a spit, I stepped in and tried insulting the poor guy with the few Light Tongue words I know."

You acted like a monster. This trigger rewards thinking in monstrous ways, getting rid of human hang-ups, and seeing the world through a monster's eyes. You hit it by doing things that humans wouldn't really even think of doing.

"Well, like Brack just said, I did cook and eat a guard." Everyone nods approvingly. That's an easy one.

You used your gear or supply in creative ways. This trigger rewards thinking outside of the box and using the things you're carrying in ways they're not typically meant to be used. Monsters can be surprisingly clever.

"After we got inside the barn, I jammed my spear in the door handles to keep the farmhands from opening it."

If something you did hits two triggers, you must choose one of them to take xp for. You can still hit the other trigger by doing something else. Also, once you take xp for a specific act, you can't keep hitting the same trigger in future sessions by repeating the act. Variety is the spice of monster life!

RECKLESS XP

Monsters learn best when their backs are against the wall. As you scrape by, barely living through a situation or giving in to your dark impulse, you learn how to better apply your actions. When you go feral or become bloodied and go out of your way to roleplay through those situations, you can mark 1 reckless xp. You gain this xp by playing up how injured you are or going the extra mile to make your feral moments fun. You can only gain a max of 1 reckless xp per session, though. When the 3-xp track is full, you clear it and place another action dot, remembering that three dots is the maximum for any action.



PRACTICE XP

After you make an action or resistance roll with an action that has no dots in it, you gain 1 practice xp for the action that you rolled. When you gain the first practice xp, place a diagonal line in the action's first box. When you gain the second, place another diagonal line making an "X" in the box. When you gain the third, fill in the box and your action rating increases to 1d. You gain practice xp even if you have bonus dice on the roll, such as from a dark heart, dark bargain, or a calling ability.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BANTER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	INVOKE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	THREATEN

NEW CHARACTERS

When you lose or get tired of playing a character, the nature of a dungeon makes it easy to bring in a new one. Dungeons are always open to new monsters moving in and a Wicked One would quickly prove to be useful. Power recognizes power quickly.

For each tier of your dungeon, you can either gain a calling ability or place an action dot. Your minions and dungeon duties carry over to the new PC.

When bringing in a new character, setting up an off-screen montage works well. Figure out a reason for your new character to be in the dungeon. Maybe you're a minion moving up in the ranks, a vile friend that steps in to fill the roll, or a wandering monster looking for a home. Don't overthink it - monsters are remarkably accepting of outsiders as long as they can prove their worth.

Make it easy for new PCs to work themselves in. Figuring out a plausible reason for a new PC to show up can be tough, so other players should make efforts to open the door, such as setting up a scene that the new PC can join up with quickly. It's up to everyone to open up the story for a new character to join in.

An early power struggle often establishes a new character as a competent and interesting presence, so find something fun to argue about and make it happen.

When a character dies, you can create a new one quickly and work them in during the current session somewhere or have them join up during the next recovery. In the meantime, watching everyone else play is no fun, so you have a few options:

- ▶ You can play as your minions.
- ▶ You can play as another PC's minions, with their permission.
- ▶ You can play as a monster wandering by, with actions equivalent to a minion pack. Just make it up on the fly!
- ▶ You can play as your new PC if you can work them into the story, filling in the important details as you go and revising it between sessions.

GM: "Alright, let's call the session there. It's xp time... Kirrz, you're first."

Kirrz: "Progress on the master plan? Well, the next step is weakening the abbey so we can pillage it and we hit one of their caravans."

Wretch: "Yeah, for sure. Plus we took a couple of prisoners."

Kirrz: "Jumped into someone else's scene? I showed up with another goat when Wretch was attracting a new basilisk into the lair so I'll mark that one. Acted like a monster? I can't really think of anything."

Harf: "What about when you kicked that imp at the adventurer?"

Kirrz: (laughing) "Yeah, punting a lackey is pretty monstrous. I'll take it. I didn't really use my gear creatively. For reckless xp, I got bloodied."

GM: "Yeah, but did you play it up? You've gotta bring it into the story. Maybe mark it this time, but make sure to narrate more next time?"

Harf: "Okay, I'll go next. Marking my master plan xp. Did I jump into anyone else's scene? I can't really remember anything."

GM: "If nothing comes to mind pretty quick, probably best to skip it."

Harf: "Yeah, true. Okay, I acted like a monster when I bit off one of the caravan guards' fingers. It was a deranged compel, but still."

GM: "That counts! All the more reason to accept compels."

Harf: "And I used gear creatively when I shackled those two sleeping guards' legs together with my manacles. Or is that the intended use?"

GM: "Kind of, but it seems pretty creative to me. Not what you'd expect them to be used for. I say go ahead and take it."

Harf: "For reckless xp, I went feral and bit that guy's finger off but I already marked that. I did keep constantly cackling while feral though."

GM: "I think that's good enough. You kept it going, played it up."

Wretch: "Okay, mine's pretty easy. Marking my master plan xp. I jumped into Harf's revelry scene, rolling his drunken body back to his room. And I acted like a monster when I cut that guard's head off."

GM: "I'm not so sure about that one. I mean, humans cut heads off in battle. It's not really going out of your way to be 'monstery' there."

Wretch: "Hmm, I guess so. Okay, not marking it... I'll be sure to get more monastery next time. I did use my tooth necklace pretty creatively when I took it off and used it to draw that map in the dirt."

Kirrz: "You also threw your helmet at that guy on the cart."

Wretch: "Ahhh, yeah that was good. And for reckless xp, I got bloodied and described my entrails hanging out."

GM: "Yeah, plus the blood splattering on that monk's face."



A LIBRARY NEEDS BOOKS

Having established their dungeon, the PCs head out to raid a caravan from the abbey. It's transporting a trove of books which the dungeon needs for its newly built library. The PCs set up an ambush and get a mixed on their engagement roll. It's even footing.

GM The cart comes rumbling down the road. At the helm is a teamster and, beside him, a guard with a crossbow. In the back of the cart, you all see what you came for - crates full of books. Just as you start knocking down the tree to block the road, the sound of another cart catches your attention. It's a gilded carriage, obviously with someone pretty important inside, and an armed guard driving it. You didn't expect to see anyone else! Just then, the tree cracks and breaks, smashing down onto the road in front of the cart with a loud BOOM.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE While the horses are kinda rearing up from being scared by the tree, I'm gonna run in there and chop them free from the cart. I'll SMASH it with my axe.

GM Sounds good, let's see the roll.



Ulrot rolls 3d SMASH and gets a mixed!

GM You're gonna get the horses free of the cart, but one's gonna turn towards you and pummel you with its front hooves. You take shock to BRAINS.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE Nah, I'm gonna resist that. I can't use SMASH since I just rolled that, right? I guess I'll go with FINESSE and dodge out of the way.



Ulrot rolls 1d FINESSE and gets a mixed!

GM Alright, partially resisted. You take 2 stress for the mixed, and let's say that instead of shock, you end up with that guard having you in their sights. Tell us what that all looks like.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE Okay, so I bust out of the bushes and run full speed into the road. I take a huge leap and bring the axe crashing down onto the wood connecting the horses to the cart. It just shatters into splinters, sending the horses into a panic. That's when they lash out at me, but I guess I'm able to duck and weave just enough to avoid getting brained.

GM The horses take off into the woods. That guard's on the verge of sticking a crossbow bolt in you. You can also hear the other cart's driver yelling now as it speeds towards you.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW No worries, I got your back here Ulrot. I'm gonna stick that crossbow guy with my dagger. It's a pretty precise throw, so it's FINESSE.

GM It's dire, but Ulrot's probably gonna take the consequence here.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW Better not miss then. Can I get a dark bargain?

GM Sure. What if that gilded carriage guard is a tier 1 adventurer instead?

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW Alright, I'll take it. We're just gonna load up on books and hightail it outta here anyway, right?

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN Woah, woah, woah. Whoever's in that cart is high profile and we're gonna need some good prisoners because I've got some ideas.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW Uhhh, alright. We'll fight it out, but I'm still taking the dark bargain and I'm gonna dump a dark heart into this, too.



Slem rolls 4d FINESSE (2d + 1d + 1d) and gets a critical!

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW Nice! The dagger slices through the air and gets stuck in that guy's eye socket. Blood comes gushing out. How about for the critical, the teamster takes one look at their dying buddy and runs off?

GM Sounds good to me. He starts screaming and jumps off the cart, running past the carriage behind them. The adventurer isn't phased. He hops down from the carriage and brings his bow up to fire in one smooth motion. He's using a move here, sending an arrow flying straight at you, Ulrot, smashing into your chest. You're gonna be bloodied.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN I resist for him! I see what he's about to do and hold my staff up high. I INVOKE wildheart magic and give a shrill whistle. Our view shifts to a raven high up in a tree. It gives a loud CAW and takes flight.



Crag rolls 3d INVOKE and gets a failure!

GM Oof, three stress and you wind up with shock to GUTS here.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN The raven dives down from above, intent on catching the arrow - but overshoots and instead gets hit by it. I growl at the adventurer, my anger manifesting in shock. "Okay, let's see if that raven had any friends," I say as I start thumping my staff on the ground.



CHAPTER 2

CHARACTERS



*"Why huddle in our caves as the humans across the wall feast
on meat? We have the strength to take what we want.*

*Today, we pillage! And tonight, we feast!
Let's show them the meaning of pain!"*

- Grimmy, Goblin Conniver



BECOMING A WICKED ONE

The world is littered with “normal” monsters - goblin farmers and orc fisherman, weaklings that huddle in their tiny villages far from civilization, hoping humans don’t cast an eye on them. But that’s not you - you crave power and riches. You spit on those fools, hiding in their straw huts. No, you’re a Wicked One and you’re looking to carve out your own place in this world.

Characters work best when they fit in nicely with the overall dungeon style. It’s highly recommended to make characters after some group decisions have been made during a session zero such as what sandbox you’ll be playing in, what your dungeon style is, and what monster races are allowed as PCs.

MONSTER RACES

Dungeons can make for strange bedfellows, pushing even unlikely combinations of evil creatures together. However, the term “monster” is very broad in definition and requires the players and GM to refine it a bit for purposes of selecting races that the PCs can be from. Work together with your group to choose from one of these three themes:

- ▶ **Keep It Simple:** All PCs must be humanoid with two arms and two legs, nothing bigger than a bugbear or smaller than a kobold. *(Recommended for new players)*
- ▶ **We’re All Family:** All PCs must be members of a specific monster race, perfect for a highly themed dungeon.
- ▶ **Anything Goes:** PCs are free to play as anything, from oozes to mushroom people to magically awakened evil squirrels. *Almost* anything goes, with the GM having final say.

The choice of race should have as little mechanical effect as possible. While race can be considered as a circumstance towards position and effect, it’s best to use this only in the most obvious or extreme cases. Allowing players a wide range of choice, such as a hulking kobold or a small, sneaky orc, makes for more interesting characters and satisfied players. If a race has a unique ability, something beyond being a simple bipedal creature that functions similarly to a human, it’s represented in the following two ways.

- ▶ **Primal monsters** are monsters with multiple unique abilities or require gameplay changes that fundamentally alter how they interact with game’s core mechanics. They’re for experienced players and more information can be found in [Chapter 8: Delving Deeper](#).
- ▶ For monsters that have some unique ability that other monsters can’t do but don’t require extensive mechanical changes, you can take **PRIMAL ABILITY** to bring them into play. It’s detailed later in this chapter.

A BLANK SLATE

When setting up the dungeon, it's recommended that all of the PCs be new to the area. This means that any backstory the character has is light on details and mostly irrelevant - we're more concerned with the dungeon and its story moving forward. The monster races covered in this book reflect this. They give a few broad concepts of what members of that race might be like, but players are free to take them in any direction they like. You can define that race's traits through your own play. So make them whatever seems fun!

TYPICAL PC RACES

There's a plethora of fantasy monster races that work just fine as PCs, but the six presented on the next few pages are solid choices for new players and are all present in the art throughout this book. Each of these races has a short description to give a few ideas to latch onto for a character concept, though the exact details of monster attitudes and societies are up to you to decide. **The GM makes the final call on what races are allowed as PCs.**

LANGUAGES

All monster factions speak a common language called the Dark Tongue, while civilized factions speak the Light Tongue. Neutral factions might know one, both, or neither of these. It's rare for a member of a civilized faction to know the Dark Tongue or a monster to know the Light Tongue. PCs can learn the Light Tongue with the *Conniver* calling ability **TONGUES** or give their minions the **FLUENT** upgrade. However, many monsters know a few Light Tongue words, such as those listed below. These are a rough guide as to how much Light Tongue a PC knows.

YOU - ME - US - IT ONE - TWO - THREE - MORE YES - NO - MAYBE - NOW
GO - DO - STOP - KILL EAT - GIVE - GET - GOLD

CHOOSING APPROPRIATE MONSTERS

Wicked Ones isn't just a game about monsters, but a game about monsters building dungeons. When choosing a monster race to play, make sure that it's a monster that would actually have the need to live in a dungeon. Monsters that blend in with civilization, have advanced hiding capabilities, or can just fly their way out of trouble tend to not need to make a dungeon in the first place. Making the dungeon the center of your character concept and giving yourself a strong need for its existence tends to work best.



CHARACTER CREATION

Making a character is quick, usually done in ten to fifteen minutes. You can get the character sheets here: <http://www.banditcamp.io/wickedones>

1. CHOOSE A MONSTER RACE (PG. 90)

Choose a monster race following the theme your group agreed upon. The choice has little mechanical effect, only modifying position and effect in extreme cases, so choose something you think sounds fun to play!

BUGBEAR - DEMON - GOBLIN - KOBOLD - ORC - SLISSIK - YOUR OWN IDEA

2. CHOOSE A CALLING (PG. 94 - 111)

Choose a calling, one of several paths that Wicked Ones follow. Your calling defines how you go about your monstrous work.

BRUTE - CONNIVER - CRAFTER - HUNTER - MARAUDER
SHADOW - SHAMAN - WARLOCK - ZEALOT

Each calling provides you with the following:

- **Core ability:** Lets you spend stress to do something no other calling can do. You get your core ability at character creation.
- **Flashbacks:** Let you flashback and perform actions in the past that a member of your calling would have likely thought to do.
- **Calling abilities:** Let you customize what type of member of your calling you are. You take one at character creation and another each time you max out wicked xp.
- **Flexibility slot:** Lets you take a single calling ability from another calling's list. You can't take a core ability with this.

Some abilities allow you to spend stress to perform **incredible feats**. If a normal monster can do something with an action roll, spending stress allows you to either automatically accomplish it or put you on equal footing. If a normal monster can't perform it at all, spending stress allows you to make an action roll to attempt it.

You spend stress to use your Brute core ability, RAGE, to pick up a huge boulder. However, if you want to throw that boulder at a cart, need to make an action roll.

Core abilities can be used on resistance rolls when you're not able to use an action to resist due to the action having weak effect. Spending stress and using the ability puts you on equal footing, allowing you to roll the action to resist. This never results in an automatic resist.

3. CHOOSE A CALLING ABILITY

You begin play with your calling's core ability and one calling ability from your calling's list. When an ability requires you to choose a benefit, you decide when you take it if it's a passive ability. If it's an ability that costs stress or works on a success, you make the choice each time you use it.

4. CHOOSE YOUR ACTIONS (PG. 28)

Look through the list of actions and choose the ones that best match what your character is good at doing.

- **Put 3 dots in a single action.** This is what you're best at, your bread and butter.
- **Put 2 dots in two other actions.** These are dependable and used often.
- **Put 1 dot in two other actions.** You've had a little practice with these.

5. CHOOSE YOUR DARK IMPULSE (PG. 54)

Look through the list of dark impulses and choose the one that best describes what pulls at your character's attention. **Gain a dark heart** when you make your choice.

BIGMOUTH - CRUEL - DERANGED - FICKLE - OBSESSED
PARANOID - RECKLESS - VENGEFUL

6. CHOOSE YOUR REVELRY (PG. 235)

Look through the list of revelries and choose how your character likes to blow off steam. Your choice of revelry will determine what happens when you overdo it.

CRAVING - DRINKING - GAMBLING - OCCULT - VIOLENCE - WORSHIP

7. CHOOSE YOUR GEAR, SUPPLY, AND GEAR DEFENSE (PG. 70)

Choose 4 items as your gear, the things you always carry on you, and decide your gear defense. Then, choose another 2 items that you begin with in your supply. Each calling has a list of example items to give you some ideas. One of the items you choose can be a valuable item, an item with an edge or a tier 1 contraption, magic item, or three doses of a potion or concoction. You can also take 1 gold instead of this.

8. PICK A VILE FRIEND

Once your dungeon is established, choose a monster in the region you've made friends with during the initial dungeon setup montage. This vile friend gives you an easy way to connect to the world outside of your dungeon. They're more or less friendly towards you and can be paid for help, items, information, and so on.

BUGBEARS are huge, bullish creatures, prone to rage and not exactly known for their intellect. They tend to see themselves as natural leaders and think they should be in charge. They like to follow others into a dangerous fight. They're unlikely to stick their neck out for anyone. A bugbear might say:

"Listen, there's no way I'm dyin' first. Get in there."

"My mind's made up. In we go."

"Who the hell are you to give me orders?"

COMMON NAMES

DUKTHUR - KREMMIK - MALOG - MOGDOR - PORTOC
RADDIT - SKRYV - ULROT - VATCH - ZOKTOC - ZURZOG



DEMONS are minor hellspawn that have somehow found their way into the mortal world. They tend to enjoy chaos, especially lies which they think mortals react to in ridiculous ways. Being immortal, death is only a return to their home. A demon might say:

"I tire of this world of mortals."

"It's just death. It's not like it's my first time."

"Why tell the truth when lyin's more fun?"

COMMON NAMES

CERUS - CHORT - GILGAROTH - KANZUN - JEX
OZRIK - NOZAK - TAKU - TERETH - VELUM - XOG

GOBLINS are short, black-hearted creatures. They're foul tempered and unliked by just about everyone, but tend to really love themselves. They're industrious and single-minded when working on a task. They're usually quick to anger, but refuse to fight on fair terms. A goblin might say:

"Sounds like a fair fight. Let's get the hell out of here."

"What's mine is mine and what's ours is mine."

"Hey, don't look a- I SAID DON'T LOOK AT ME!!"

COMMON NAMES

FLINT - GRIZ - KOSK - REMMY - RIGGZ - SCRATCH
SHRIEK - SKEZZY - SNARK - SNULLY - TIX - ZAZZO



KOBOLDS are small, raucous creatures. They look like a mix between a rodent, a dog, and a lizard. They're hyperactive and aggressive, with short attention spans. They usually prefer working together on something. They rarely have a sense of self preservation. A kobold might say:

"What the hell was I doing again? Oh yeah, stabbin'!"

"Oh, that's shiny! I think I'll be having that."

"Kill 'em all before they get away!"

COMMON NAMES

BITEY - BLEK - DIMM - DRELL - FRUM - GROMP - HARF
MUNGUS - MUTS - RETCH - SKELK - STITCH - SNARL



ORCS are foul mannered, callous creatures. They're stubborn and overly sensitive to slights from others. They tend to approach problems with the first solution that comes to mind. Orcs generally don't even enjoy their own company. An orc might say:

"What are you looking at, maggots?"

"Bleedin' is good for ya. Shake it off."

"Stop whining and get in the catapult."

COMMON NAMES

BRIG - DRADD - FORN - GORR - KIRRRZ - KROS - KRUGZ
ROK - STRAK - THIG - THROM - TORK - YORG - ZIL - ZUG



SLISSIKS are snake-like creatures that tend to react defensively to surprise and feel the need to always keep an eye on those around them. They have terrible memories, which leads to exaggerating details in stories to fill in gaps. A slissik might say:

"Where ya goin'? How long are you gonna be there?"

"Woah, don't sneak up on me like that!"

"There were... 4, 5..., no, wait, 6 of them!"

COMMON NAMES

SLALE - SLANK - SLARK - SLASSY - SLEGRA - SLEZETRA
SLIMMIK - SLINN - SLISGAR - SLIX - SLOAN - SLOON - SLYTE



PRIMAL ABILITY

Some races have their own natural abilities that allow them to do something that other monsters can't. To represent these natural abilities, you can take **PRIMAL ABILITY** when you make a character in place of your calling's core ability or first chosen calling ability. Work together with those at the table to determine the scope of the power. It should be around the power of a normal calling ability.

PRIMAL ABILITY: You have natural abilities that represent the things your race can do that others can't. The total impact of these abilities should be similar to a normal calling ability. If an ability is something you activate, you spend stress to do so. If it's a passive effect, you must spend stress to use it in dire situations.

If the abilities feel too strong, they can be coupled with one or two weaknesses to balance them out. These weaknesses represent unique challenges your race faces. Keep in mind that adventurers always know your weaknesses.

A troll can regenerate their wounds, spending stress to remove the bloodied condition. They also have a keen sense of smell. As these are rather powerful, they have an extreme vulnerability to fire.

A harpy can fly, albeit rather clumsily. They can also spend stress to sing a harpy song, allowing them to TRICK unwitting victims into coming to find them over great distances.

A duergar, a dark dwarf, can spend stress to grow up to three times their size. They can also see in darkness as if it were daylight.

PRIMAL ABILITY is a balancing act. It can easily overshadow other calling abilities, so the GM should maintain a tight purview over it. Keep its capabilities limited. If an ability from **PRIMAL ABILITY** does a bit more than a calling ability or it feels too powerful, adding on weaknesses can help restore that balance. In some cases, you may be able to just reskin an existing ability, such as a Brute's **RAGE** being used to represent the above duergar's ability to grow.

Some abilities are simply too powerful to allow for normal PCs to have. Monsters might also have several abilities which are beyond the scope of taking **PRIMAL ABILITY**. These monsters are better modelled as primal monsters, powerful monsters that have their own unique mechanics and abilities such as Goldmongers (dragons) or Facestealers (doppelgangers).

Some abilities such as flight or natural invisibility can be highly disruptive to campaigns, bypassing several challenges that would otherwise be interesting to deal with. GMs should carefully consider allowing abilities like these into the game. **The GM has final say on what is and isn't allowed.**

Bradley: "I'm gonna make a frogperson with PRIMAL ABILITY. So maybe I can do a big frog jump, have a long tongue, and be a great swimmer."

GM: "What can you do with the tongue?"

Bradley: "I think it can just reach out and grab stuff, maybe like a couple of meters away. Do I need to spend stress for that?"

GM: "It sounds like a passive ability, kind of like an extra limb. So, you only have to spend stress if it's a dire situation. Swimming too - that'll probably let you operate in water without losing effect. But the big jump? Yeah, that'll cost stress. How high can you jump?"

Bradley: "Maybe up on top of a 1 story building or so. It's a frog, so I'm imagining it going pretty high, but nothing crazy."

GM: "You don't have sticky hands or feet, right?"

Bradley: "Yeah, it's not that kind of frog."

GM: "Okay, this isn't all that overpowered. I think you could squeeze all of that in there even though it's kind of a lot, but you're gonna have to take a weakness."

Bradley: "What if I'm afraid of getting eaten, so I'm compelled to avoid dealing with anything like twice my size? Like a dark impulse, but it always goes off."

GM: Yeah, that works. What calling?

Bradley: I'm going to be a Hunter and take PRIMAL ABILITY instead of my core ability so I can take HUNTING PET as my first ability - I need a seagull.



At first glance, an earth elemental might seem like a good candidate for PRIMAL MONSTER. However, the Brute's RAGE ability represents their strength quite well and LIVING WEAPONS gives them pulverizing attacks and grappling roots. Add in a dot or two in INVOKE with the wildheart witchcraft magic path and you can cast minor magic with the fireflies and plants living on them as well.



BRUTE

POWERFUL & INTIMIDATING BRAWLERS

You're called to battle and delight in facing down your enemies, chopping them to pieces in brutal combat. For you, the bloodier, the better. Your confidence with a weapon in hand manifests outside of combat when commanding others, bellowing orders like you expect them to be obeyed and bashing heads on the off chance they aren't. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

RAGE: You can spend stress to perform an incredible feat of strength, like throwing a large boulder, tackling a charging horse, or facing off against a much larger foe on equal footing.

You can **flashback** to things a Brute would have thought to do, such as *torturing a prisoner, threatening violence, or acquiring just the right weapon.*

BRUTE ABILITIES

ASSAULT

You're a force to be reckoned with. On a success in close combat, you can also (choose one): *cleave into a nearby enemy - destroy their shield or armor - send them flying.*

FURY

When you suffer injury or humiliation, you take +1d if you immediately lash out. On a critical, you clear 1 stress.

LIVING WEAPON

Your body is a deadly weapon and has edges (choose two): *concealed - longreach - grappling - ranged - pulverizing - terrifying.* *How did you end up this way?*

MENACE

You put the torment of others over your own safety. You take +1d when you go hard to intimidate or humiliate someone. On a critical, you clear 1 stress.

PACK MULE

You can carry an immense amount. You gain two gear slots, a defense based on them, and a supply slot. *Where do you keep all of that extra stuff?*

RAWHIDE

Your thick hide protects you from harm. You take +1d when resisting physical attacks and spend 1 less stress when you do so. *What makes your hide so tough?*

TASKMASTER

You gain a downtime action which you can only use to recruit minions or sacrifice to have minions perform a downtime action without paying them gold.

EXAMPLE BRUTE ITEMS

battleaxe	spiked armor
horned helmet	jug of liquor
barbed whip	bag of tasty snacks
torture tools	wardrums
fur cloak	sturdy chains
bone earrings	throwing axes





CONNIVER

MANIPULATIVE & CONTROLLING MASTERMINDS

You lurk in the background pulling the strings, laying out intricate plans, and having others do your bidding. For you, revenge is a dish best served cold. Methodical is an understatement - you're in complete control at all times. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

STRINGS: You can spend stress to have an ally remember your voice in their head, allowing them to reroll a failure. If they roll a success, you gain a dark heart. *What criticism or advice did you previously impart on them?*

You can **flashback** to things a Conniver would have thought to do, such as *manipulating others, setting up contingency plans, or acquiring information.*

CONNIVER ABILITIES

INTUITION

Others are an open book to you. You can spend stress to establish a target's emotional state, though it must be a reasonable emotion for them to be feeling. You take +1d when you act on that knowledge.

MASTERFUL LIAR

You excel at lying when you go all in on a falsehood. You take +1d when you go hard to tell a lie. On a success, you gain a dark heart.

MISSED A SPOT

Each downtime, you get two ticks which can be distributed to any project clocks started by your allies. *What errors do you point out in their work?*

OPPORTUNIST

You take +1d on a roll when acting immediately after an ally fails a resistance roll. *How do you leverage their failure to your own advantage?*

TONGUES

You can speak the Light Tongue, albeit with a strong, monstrous accent. *How does a monster like you even learn to speak the language of civilization?*

WEAVING THE WEB

On a success during a flashback or downtime action to interact with contacts, you gain a dark heart. You also gain a downtime action which you can only use to contact a vile friend, faction, or other NPC.

WORDPLAY

On a success when resisting with **BANTER**, **THREATEN**, or **TRICK**, you can also (choose one): *deflect blame* - plant a false idea - have the GM reveal a secret.

EXAMPLE CONNIVER ITEMS

skin of fine wine	hidden dagger
blowgun & darts	decorative mask
wooden flute	flashy rings
iron manacles	soap & perfume
weighted dice	hooded cloak
writing utensils	comb & accessories





CRAFTER

CLEVER & CURIOUS TINKERERS

You spend hours in your workshop mixing together alchemical reagents and constructing dangerous devices with a gleeful disregard for your own safety. You strap up before you leave the dungeon, well-prepared for any situation. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

INGENUITY: You can spend stress to perform an incredible feat of creation, like mixing concoctions *on the fly* to create a powerful combined effect, slapping together a temporary simple contraption, or ignoring volatility in monster science creations.

You can **flashback** to things a Crafter would have thought to do, such as *sabotaging structures, grabbing materials, or brewing a concoction.*

CRAFTER ABILITIES

BREWMASTER

When you make a concoction, you always make 1 extra dose, even on a failure. You gain a downtime action which you can only use to brew concoctions.

CREATIVE FRENZY

On a success while working on a crafting downtime project, the downtime action isn't consumed. You also gain a downtime action which you can only use to craft.

MONSTER SCIENCE

You fully believe in your creations. You take +1d when you go hard with a concoction or contraption, but you can't resist any consequences from the roll. On a critical, you clear 1 stress.

PRIDE

You instill a deep sense of yourself into anything you create. When you or someone else rolls a critical using something you crafted, you gain a dark heart.

PROTOTYPE

Start a single tier 2 or 3 contraption crafting clock. You can use this unfinished contraption as normal. Any time you make a **dire** roll using it, it ticks the crafting clock once. When the clock is full, the contraption is made and you start a new clock.

SCRUTINY

You can spend stress to establish a flaw in a structure or some machinery you can see. You take +1d when you act on that knowledge.

SIGNATURE ELIXIR

You have a steady supply of a single specific tier 2 concoction and you gain 2 supply slots which you can only use for it.

EXAMPLE CRAFTER ITEMS

tool pouch	magnifying glass
crossbow	bag of loose parts
lamp & oil	safety goggles
sledgehammer	flint & tinder
leather apron	canvas bag
shovel	pickaxe





HUNTER

RUTHLESS & TENACIOUS TRACKERS

You're at home running with the beasts of the forest. Relentlessly chasing down prey brings you closer to the animal inside of you. And yet, you're deliberate, never missing a sign, always on the trail. And when you finally corner your target, there's no hesitation to finish it. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

THRILL OF THE HUNT: You can spend stress to establish a small, momentary weakness in your prey. You gain +effect when you exploit this on your next roll to stalk, catch, or bring them down. On a success, you gain a dark heart.

You can **flashback** to things a Hunter would have thought to do, such as *setting a trap*, *scouting out a location*, or *hunting up some food*.

HUNTER ABILITIES

FERAL SENSES

Animal blood runs through your veins, causing your senses to extend twice as far as normal. You take +1d when tracking or surveying an area. You also gain a defense against surprise.

GRIT

You don't go down easy. On a failure when resisting, you can immediately roll an extra 1d that counts towards the roll. If the result is a success, it counts as a critical.

HUNTING PET

You have a hunting pet or pack instead of minions. It has the *companion* upgrade and knows tricks (choose two): *cause confusion* - *fetch* - *herd prey* - *locate prey* - *surprise attack*. Your pet takes +1d when performing known tricks.

SCAVENGER

On a success while surveying or traversing a risky area, you can (choose one): *find a piece of mundane gear* - *tick an edge crafting clock* - *harvest a tier 2 concoction*.

SCOUT

You make a habit of roaming the surface and scouting out targets. While choosing a raid plan, you can establish a weakness you know about in your target's defenses. During the raid, you can also spend stress to establish a second fact.

TRICK SHOTS

You can pull off improbable (but not impossible) shots with a ranged weapon, like ricocheting a projectile off a wall or shooting through one target and hitting another. You ignore any circumstances towards effect from the difficulty, but you must explain how you pulled off the shot.

WILD KNOWLEDGE

You can spend stress to establish a fact about plants, animals, or the weather. You take +1d when you act on that knowledge.

EXAMPLE HUNTER ITEMS

hornbow	skinning knife
animal trap	weighted net
coil of rope	felling hatchet
trail snacks	animal collar
hide armor	fishing gear
full waterskin	animal calls





MARAUDER

CUNNING & FEARLESS WARRIORS

For you, battle is a dance. The thrill of outmaneuvering your enemies sends blood pumping through your veins. Your moves are precise and calculated and your awareness of the field of battle gives you the ability to see the bigger picture in other situations as well. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

BATTELMASTER: You can spend stress to perform an incredible feat of athletics, like *throwing an axe a great distance, maneuvering nearly anywhere on the field of battle, or facing off against a group of foes on equal footing.*

You can **flashback** to things a Marauder would have thought to do, such as *giving orders to minions, surveying a target's strength, or disciplining subordinates.*

MARAUDER ABILITIES

BULWARK

You're the rock on which your allies lean. You take +1d when resisting consequences for an ally. On a success, the ally takes +1d on any follow-up action.

COHORT

Your minions are always elite, with the *mindset (loyal)* and *companion* upgrades. They also have an additional upgrade (choose one): *equipped - mindset (fearless)* - *trained - versatile*.

COMMANDER

You exert your will to bolster your minions. You can spend stress or a dark heart to give a minion pack +1d on a roll. You also gain a defense against minion failure.

CONTROL

You fluidly control a fight. On a success when resisting an attack in close combat, you can also (choose one): *disarm them* - *redirect the attack* - *reposition them nearby*.

JOY OF BATTLE

You love nothing more than your own excellence in battle. On a critical while engaged in combat, you clear 1 stress and gain a dark heart.

MANIAC

You think nothing of risking life and limb. You take +1d when you go hard and put your own body on the line, but you can't resist any consequences from the roll. On a critical, you clear 1 stress.

TACTICIAN

Battle plans are the key to your success. You take +1d on your first action after an engagement roll. You also gain a defense against raid plans going off track.

EXAMPLE MARAUDER ITEMS

round shield	sturdy bracers
twin axes	javelins
bolas	iron caltrops
mapping tools	battle horn
ball-and-chain flail	clutch of torches
curved dagger	leather armor





SHADOW

SNEAKY & ELUSIVE ROGUES

You're at home in the darkness, lurking unseen. You can slip into and out of areas unnoticed. The element of surprise is your greatest weapon and you can often find your way into and out of the trickiest of situations. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

PROWLER: You can spend stress to perform an incredible feat of agility, like *slipping unimpeded through a mob, leaping safely from a high tower, or hiding in plain sight.*

You can **flashback** to things a Shadow would have thought to do, such as *snatching something valuable, lying to create opportunity, or stashing some items.*

SHADOW ABILITIES

DARK MIND

You can compel other PCs to action just as if the GM had compelled them. If they accept, you gain a dark heart. If they decline, you take stress. The GM is still the final judge of what is an appropriate compel.

POISONER

Making or procuring poisons is second nature for you. You have a steady supply of the following tier 1 concoction poisons: *blinding* - *disorienting* - *slowing* - *nauseating*. You also gain two supply slots which you can only use for them.

POUNCE

You recognize the perfect timing to strike. You take +1d when you catch someone by surprise. On a critical, you clear 1 stress.

SLIPPERY

You're tough to pin down. On a success when resisting an enemy attack, you can also (choose one): *disappear from their sight* - *pick their pocket* - *reposition behind them*.

STALKER

Your lurking presence forces foolish action. On a success while moving stealthily, NPCs near you (choose one): *do something stupid due to paranoia* - *reveal a secret*.

STICKY FINGERS

You always manage to come away with something of value. You get 1 extra gold each loot roll and can control up to 4 gold without raising suspicion. Also, once during each raid, you can establish the location of some good loot nearby.

UNSEEN HAND

When you assist an ally, you only take consequences if they roll a failure. If they roll a critical, you clear 1 stress. *Why do they not know you're helping them?*

EXAMPLE SHADOW ITEMS

dark cloak	grappling hook
throwing knives	smoke bomb
shortbow	crowbar & pliers
lockpick	garrote
bag of rocks	shrill whistle
polished mirror	twin daggers





SHAMAN

TERRIFYING & VENGEFUL WITCHES

You understand the dark power of nature and are drawn to the hidden world of spirits. You might revere them and seek their favor, or perhaps enslave them for your own purposes. Either way, the spirits speak and you hear their mad whispers of vengeance. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

WITCHCRAFT: You have mastered a magic path (choose one): *bloodreading* - *soothsaying* - *spiritchalling* - *stormstrike* - *wildheart*. You can spend stress to **INVOKE** tier 2 and tier 3 spells of your path.

You can **flashback** to things a Shaman would have thought to do, such as *interacting with spirits or animals*, *brewing a wild concoction*, or *sowing terror*.

SHAMAN ABILITIES

BEASTFORM

You can spend stress to assume the form of a beast. While in this form, one of your actions swaps ratings with another and you gain either **PRIMAL ABILITY** or a special ability from another calling. You also gain a second dark impulse while in this form. All of these are chosen when you first take this ability.

BONDED SPIRIT

You have a magically bonded spirit or pack instead of minions. It has the companion upgrade and powers (choose two): *become invisible* - *manifest physically* - *possess the weak-minded* - *reveal information about the past*. It can use each once per cycle.

SPIRIT WHISPERS

Your control of chaotic situations pulls information from surrounding spirits. On a success when resisting, you can ask the GM a question or to reveal a secret related to the situation. You also gain a defense against lies, trickery, and stealth.

TERROR

Others can't help but reveal their fears. You can spend stress to establish what someone's worst fear is. You take +1d when you act on that knowledge.

WEAVING

You effortlessly blend witchcraft with the material or mundane. On a success when casting a spell, you take +1d on any follow-up using a different action.

WILD BREWS

You can brew potions of any tier from all witchcraft paths. You also gain a downtime action which you can only use to brew potions.

WRATH

Your desire for payback fuels your witchcraft. When you cast a spell immediately after a resistance roll, you take +1d and it costs no stress to cast.

EXAMPLE SHAMAN ITEMS

spirit mask	spiked club
bone mace	bag of snakes
thorn amulet	smoking pipe
augury bones	gnarled staff
jar of fireflies	tooth necklace
voodoo mask	feathered headdress





WARLOCK

DARING & AMBITIOUS MAGES

You reach out and grab raw, arcane magic by its neck and bend it to your will. You dabble in dangerous arts and know that true power must be wrested away from others. A deep, unquenched thirst for power dwells inside of you. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

SORCERY: You have mastered a magic path (choose one): *enchantment* - *evocation* - *force mastery* - *illusion* - *necromancy* - *pyromancy*. You can spend stress to **INVOKE** tier 2 and tier 3 spells of your path.

You can **flashback** to things a Warlock would have thought to do, such as *acquiring arcane knowledge*, *striking occult deals*, or *creating magic items*.

WARLOCK ABILITIES

ARTIFICER

You gain a downtime action which you can only use to incant rituals to make magic items. These rituals also require one less special requirement than usual.

COUNTERSPELL

On a success when resisting magical effects, you also (choose one): *absorb the spell and clear 1 stress* - *establish a quirk about the caster's power* - *reflect the spell at the caster*.

FAMILIAR

You're magically bonded to a small critter, no bigger than a cat. You can speak telepathically while it's close by. Choose two actions that it excels at, which you roll your own **INVOKE** for. You roll 0d on anything else. It's knocked out of a scene when bloodied and magically returns during recovery. You can spend stress to cast a tier 1 spell through it.

GRAND SORCERY

You can choose a second path for your **SORCERY** core ability and can cast from any sorcery path with only a single magic focus.

OVERLOAD

You open yourself to a torrent of power. You take +1d when you go hard with a spell, but you can't resist any consequences from the roll. On a critical, you clear 1 stress.

REAPER

When you deliver a killing blow with a weapon, you reap the soul of your victim. You can expend this soul later to cast a spell without spending stress, also taking +1d on the roll. You can only hold one reaped soul at a time.

VILE FORM

You can spend stress to assume an amorphous form for a few moments, such as a swarm or a fog. You gain any strengths and weaknesses the form possesses and can roll **INVOKE** to perform actions it would excel at. All of these are chosen when you first take this ability.

EXAMPLE WARLOCK ITEMS

decorated staff	skinbound spellbook
scythe	flowing cape
crystal ball	human skulls
ceremonial dagger	component pouch
tattered robes	summoning utensils
twisted wand	bag of minor gems





ZEALOT

FERVENT & MYSTICAL BELIEVERS

You heed the words of your dark god. You believe in them fiercely, knowing that those who serve will be rewarded. The more believers you can recruit, the higher the chance your god will recognize you. They bestow power onto you, from which your intense conviction comes. You begin play with the following **core ability**:

CHANNELING: You can spend stress to **INVOKE** tier 2 and tier 3 spells of your chosen deity's domains. Each god has two domains which act as magic paths.

You can **flashback** to things a ZEALOT would have thought to do, such as *interrogating nonbelievers*, *making sacrifices*, or *issuing commands to followers*.

ZEALOT ABILITIES

ACOLYTES

Your minions are fanatic devotees of your god. They have the *mindset* (zealous) and *companion* upgrades and will take a downtime action to incant a ritual each downtime without asking for gold.

DEFILER

Draw a 4-segment clock on your sheet. Tick it once each time you defile something sacred or beautiful that is antithetical to your god's domains. When the clock is full, a tier 2 ritual immediately manifests in that location and you start a new clock.

FERVENT AURA

When you would become bloodied or be killed, you can designate a nearby minion to become bloodied or die instead. When a minion pack dies in this way, they can perform a final action and you gain a dark heart.

INQUISITOR

You feel deep satisfaction in breaking the will of others. On a success when torturing prisoners, you gain a dark heart and learn twice as much information as normal. You also gain a downtime action which you can only use for this purpose.

REBUKE

You teach those who challenge you a harsh lesson. On a success when resisting, you take +1d if you immediately act against them. On a critical when resisting, you also (choose one): *strike fear in their heart* - *make them doubt their path*.

SMITE

Designate a weapon as your *unholy weapon*. It's now your magic focus. On a success when attacking someone with it, you can spend stress to immediately affect the target with a tier 1 spell without rolling.

UNHOLY RITUALS

You gain a downtime action which you can only use to incant rituals. On a success when incanting a ritual, you gain a dark heart.

EXAMPLE ZEALOT ITEMS

ceremonial dagger	unholy symbol
vestments	simple sickle
scripture	golden bell
blessed wine	box of incense
quill & parchment	torture tools
anointing oil	wax candles





A WOLF PELT FOR A RITUAL

The PCs broke their new prisoner and learned he was a merchant's son. They then used the library to establish that the family are renown hunters. Now, they're breaking into the family estate to secure a wolf pelt, needed for a ritual of lycanthropy.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

I'm gonna climb up the wall with **FINESSE** to get a better look.

GM Simple enough. Let's see that roll.



Slem rolls 2d FINESSE and gets a success!

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

I make it up easily. Perched up here, I'm going to **SCAN** to see where the dogs the merchant's son told us about are sleeping.

GM It's night and you can't see everything from where you're at. It's going to be weak effect.



Slem rolls 2d SCAN and gets a mixed!

GM You're kinda limited on the info you can gain right now. Let's say that you don't spot the dogs, but you're sure they're not in the outer courtyard. Most likely, they're sleeping in the house.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

I try to scramble up the wall, too. I have 0d in **SMASH** and **FINESSE**, but they're the only actions that make sense. At least I'll get practice xp.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

I'll assist, reaching a hand down to help out. That way we can at least be sure to get you up here on a mixed.

GM Makes sense. That'll be strong effect then. Remember that you're both open to consequences here.



Crag rolls 0d SMASH (2d, keep the lowest) and gets a mixed!

GM Looks like you both go tumbling off the wall. Crag, you'll also end up with **MUSCLES** shock.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

I walk up to the wall, then take several steps backwards, measuring it out. It looks calculated, like I know what I'm doing. Then I take off, running as fast as I can, and put a foot onto the wall and launch myself up it - up it and away from the wall. I yell, "Uh oh!" as I reach out.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

Yeah, I see him about to throw himself away from the wall and, you know, I'm already committed, so I reach out and grab him. The momentum pulls us both off and, I guess I land on top of him.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

I just stand there shaking my head watching all of this. "It's a strike. We get in fast, we get what we need, we get out. What the hell are you two doing?" I run straight at the wall, put my shoulder down, and try to bash through it. My minion pack's gonna be right behind me, too.

GM

Hmm, I don't know. I mean it's a reinforced wall built to not be knocked over. I just don't think it would work. It feels like zero effect.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

Yeah, obviously I'm gonna spend stress and RAGE here.

GM

Well, that's a different story. A second ago, I was a bit torn between whether it was zero or weak effect here, but with RAGE, I think it'll bump you up to normal effect. Make the roll.



Ulrot rolls 3d SMASH and gets a mixed!

GM

Yeah, you break through the wall, but your greedy minions are going to follow you through the hole, then run off to start looting on their own.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

So I SMASH through the wall, sending rocks flying everywhere. As the dust settles, I see my orc raiders poke their heads through the hole, look around, and get the bright idea to go looting. Suddenly, there's a loud CRACK of my whip lashing. I'm using my gear defense against minion mistakes here. I point at the house and they do as they're told.

GM

The noise has woken up everyone in the house. You hear the dogs in there barking. The door opens and the dogs come busting out.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Hold up. I'm gonna spend stress and do a quick flashback to on the way to the estate. I want to have hunted down a boar. I know it's not something a shaman is too likely to do, but I'm a wildheart shaman so I think it makes sense. For the hunting, I just want to TINKER a trap.

GM

Yeah, I could see Crag doing that. Let's see the roll.



Crag rolls 2d TINKER and gets a success!

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Awesome. It was a simple pit trap and I butchered the boar that I caught, knowing the meat would come in handy. So right now, I push Slem off me, then stand up and pull out huge hunks of meat from my bag. "Hey pups, who's hungry?"



CHAPTER 3

DARK ARTS



"Yesss... rise and serve, foul creature. Pull yourself from the depraved fires of hell. Lifetimes of torment you have suffered, but now it's time to revisit that suffering tenfold on those that have wronged us. Come pet, we have dark deeds to do."

- Slerrin, Slissik Warlock



MASTERING THE DARK ARTS

Some Wicked Ones are drawn to the power found within magic and science. They learn to cast spells tinged with darkness or craft insane contraptions. Others spend their time mixing concoctions, noxious alchemicals with bizarre effects, or engaging in complex rituals to taste the most powerful magic. These are the dark arts, whose power only a monster would dare risk trying to harness.

This chapter lays out how magic and science work, providing a framework and examples to show what's possible with them. The Dark Arts are governed by three sets of laws:

THE LAWS OF MONSTER SCIENCE cover the creation of mundane **items**, **edges**, **concoctions**, and **contraptions**. They're rated from tier 1 to tier 3 based on how dangerous and complex they are. You're limited in what you can create by the boundaries of pseudoscience.

- ▶ **Tier 1:** Creations that are simple and safe to make.
- ▶ **Tier 2:** Creations that are complex and risky to make.
- ▶ **Tier 3:** Creations that are convoluted and dangerous to make.

THE LAWS OF SPELL MAGIC cover the casting of **spells** and creation of **potions**. They're rated from tier 1 to tier 3 based on how powerful the effects are compared to what a normal action can accomplish. You're limited in what effects you can conjure by the path of magic you wield.

- ▶ **Tier 1:** Effects replacing a normal action.
- ▶ **Tier 2:** Effects replacing a team effort or a long time solo effort.
- ▶ **Tier 3:** Effects replacing a long time team effort.

THE LAWS OF RITUAL MAGIC cover the incantation of **rituals** and creation of **magic items**. You're limited in what effects you can achieve by their impact on the fiction. At this level of magic, the more impactful it is, the more likely forces are to move against you to stop it.

- ▶ **Tier 1:** Effects with a minor impact on the story.
- ▶ **Tier 2:** Effects with a moderate impact on the story.
- ▶ **Tier 3:** Effects with a major impact on the story.

Magic and science can often achieve similar effects, but the biggest difference is in their limitations. Magic allows you to produce any effect unbounded by the laws of reality, but within a narrowly focused path. Science is limited only by your ability to explain it in a pseudoscientific fashion. Science focuses more on spending time and resources crafting, whereas magic can create effects on the fly within scenes by casting spells.



VOLATILITY

By their very nature, the dark arts are dangerous. This is a risk monsters are willing to take in exchange for power. This manifests in things created with magic or science sometimes becoming *volatile*. Magic items, concoctions, and potions can all be *volatile* unless perfectly crafted. Contraptions are *volatile* by their very nature.

When something has the *volatile* property, it comes with some drawback when using or even just carrying it. The exact nature of the volatility is decided by the GM and the player that crafted it, with the GM having final say. It should be something that still makes the item worth using, but is troublesome or annoying when you do.

- *An essence of ice concoction that makes its container brittle.*
- *A rage potion that makes you unable to tell friends from foes.*
- *A monocle that reveals someone's thoughts, but yours to them as well.*
- *A flamethrower that blazes hot, burning your hands.*

Volatile tends to scale with tier, with the most powerful items having the greatest level of volatility. Minor items might give some small annoyance, but powerful items might be quite dangerous to wield. An item's *volatility* can come from crafting it or when found in loot, at the GM's discretion.

In the following pages, items are listed with a possible *volatile* property after the "but..." in the examples. If the item isn't *volatile*, it doesn't have that effect.

It's also important that the *volatility* is fun in play. Don't make an item *volatile* in such a way that it will never be used. That defeats the entire purpose. *Volatile* is almost like a dark bargain in this way - not quite bad enough to keep you from using the item, but definitely evokes a tinge of regret. If an item proves to be not worth using at all, perhaps revisit and change its *volatility*.

SCIENCE, MAGIC, AND GAME BALANCE

Science and magic are freeform and open to creativity, but maintaining some semblance of balance in terms of power and utility versus other character options is a challenge. Clever players will push this system to its limits, always finding a way to squeeze more out of their magic and science. And you know what? That's great! Let players be rewarded for their creativity. Position and effect reward it in a similar way. The rules within this chapter help set boundaries and operating within these boundaries is where creativity really shines. That said, GMs should be fierce in judging tiers and making sure players create interesting limitations. If a PC's magic or science is overshadowing other characters, it might be time to redefine the boundaries.



LAWS OF MONSTER SCIENCE

The laws of reality are made to be bent and twisted - a task many monsters find quite appealing. They put their brains to work, coming up with clever ways to achieve the most they can within the boundaries of reality.

- **Items and edges** cover any simple, mundane, or non-magical items with useful applications as well as any improvements to those items.
- **Concoctions** are combinations of reagents distilled into powerful elixirs.
- **Contraptions** are insane inventions that allow you to perform something otherwise impossible.

Science usually relies heavily on the TINKER action, though other actions are also applicable. A Hunter might SCAN for herbs that they mix into a poultice or a Crafter might FINESSE the fine details on the timing mechanism of a bomb.

To craft something with science, you must explain the monster science behind what you're crafting or how you're crafting it. The only limitation on what you can create with monster science is what can be reasonably explained in a monster science fashion. As long as you can make the thing you're crafting sound somewhat plausible, you're good to go. The GM is the final judge on this.

Science creations are rated from tier 1 to tier 3 according to how difficult or dangerous to craft they are. The tier is set by the GM.

TIER 1 SCIENCE : SIMPLE, SAFE

These creations sound simple when explained with pseudoscience or are relatively safe to work on. You can make mundane items, minor concoctions, and simple contraptions that accomplish something useful.

TIER 2 SCIENCE : COMPLEX, RISKY; TAKE -1D BREWING CONCOCTIONS

These creations sound complex when explained with pseudoscience or are quite risky to work on. You can add edges to items, make potent concoctions, and complex contraptions. When brewing concoctions of this tier, you take -1d to the roll.

TIER 3 SCIENCE : CONVOLUTED, DANGEROUS; TAKE -2D BREWING CONCOCTIONS

These creations sound convoluted when explained or are quite dangerous to work on. You can create the craziest concoctions and contraptions. When brewing concoctions of this tier, you take -2d to the roll.



CONCOCTIONS

Concoctions are single-use alchemicals thrown together in mad science laboratories, distilling and mixing reagents into powders, poultices, poisons, oils, and bombs. Herbal, plant, or fungal creations are also considered to be alchemical in nature. Concoctions are brewed by spending a **downtime action**. You make two doses with a single downtime action and it is always a tier 1 project, regardless of the tier of the concoction. If you roll a mixed on this downtime action, the concoction becomes *volatile*. A list of example concoctions can be seen on the next page, along with a possible effect and *volatility*. The effects and *volatility* of concoctions are determined by the player and GM when crafting them.

Brewing more potent concoctions carries more risk. You take -1d on the roll when brewing tier 2 concoctions and -2d when brewing tier 3 concoctions.

Concoctions are made using alchemical reagents, purified and distilled elements of the natural world. These tend to be things like minerals, herbs, or fungi. It's assumed that you can collect any ingredients you need when brewing and you can weave the collecting of them into your narration of the downtime action. Some examples are:

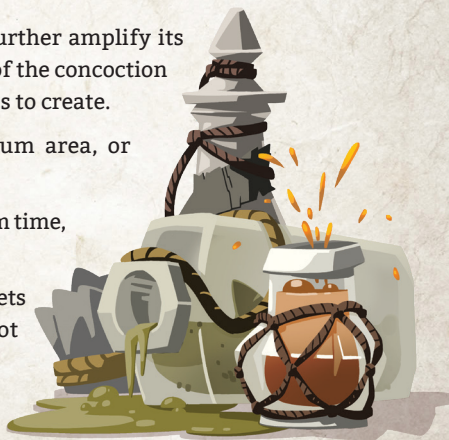
ALCHEMICAL REAGENTS

black powder	mold spores	quicksilver
brimstone	moondew	realgar
cold iron	mugwort extract	saltpeter
ginger extract	myrrh	sea salt
gold flakes	nightshade	silver
magnesium	phosphorus	thistle

ADJUSTING CONCOCTION TIERS

After setting the tier of a concoction, you can further amplify its effects as below. In doing so, it increases the tier of the concoction (max tier 3), making it more difficult or dangerous to create.

- ▶ Expand the **area** from a small to a medium area, or medium to large.
- ▶ Expand the **duration** from a short to a medium time, or medium to long.
- ▶ Expand the **scale** allowing you to affect targets that you might normally be in a tight spot against.





EXAMPLE CONCOCTIONS

TIER

1

- 11 *Glowstick*: Lights up an area like a torch, but the light is a random color.
- 12 *Stink Bomb*: Fills an area with a horrible smell and causes retching, but has a leaky container.
- 13 *Sneezing Powder*: Makes someone who inhales it have a sneezing fit, but is extremely tricky to apply.
- 14 *Itching Dust*: Causes extreme itchiness when contacting skin, but is easily spread by the wind.
- 15 *Firedancer*: Shoots a trail of sparks in a random line then pops, but sometimes flies like a boomerang.
- 16 *Wide-Eye Tablets*: Keeps you wide-awake for a night, but causes hallucinations.
- 21 *Blistermaker*: Causes blisters to erupt on contact with skin, but is extremely foul smelling.
- 22 *Fire Oil*: Catches fire when hit with a spark, but takes a few tries before it lights.
- 23 *Darkwater*: Fills a body of water with dark ink, but your hands get covered in the same ink.
- 24 *Painkiller*: Can ignore the effects of **MUSCLES** shock, but doesn't clear the shock when rolled.
- 25 *Beastlure*: Brings in a specific type of animal if it's in the area, but the scent sticks on you.
- 26 *Shrieker*: Emits a loud shriek when it comes into contact with light, but sometimes randomly shrieks.

TIER

2

- 31 *Stonemelt*: Quickly dissolves large sections of stone, but fills the area with thick smoke.
- 32 *Tarbomb*: Covers anything it hits with sticky tar, but leaves a trail of tar when you throw it.
- 33 *Nervewrecker*: Paralyzes a victim temporarily, but they ignore all pain afterwards.
- 34 *Thunderstone*: Emits a blinding light when thrown against a hard surface, but is always hot to the touch.
- 35 *Zoner*: You don't take shock to **BRAINS**, but you take -2d from shock to other attributes.
- 36 *Metalshards*: Sends shards of metal in all directions, but has a loose trigger.
- 41 *Firebomb*: Bursts on contact and splashes into a ball of flame, but has a very short fuse.
- 42 *Quicksleep*: Instantly puts someone to sleep, but only for a few brief moments.
- 43 *Suregrip*: Allows you to climb on walls like a spider, but normal items stick tenaciously to your hands.
- 44 *Friendmaker*: Makes anyone sprayed in the face friendly to you, but hostile towards those you're with.
- 45 *Dreadfood*: Causes horrific hallucinations, but sometimes enrages the one that imbibed it.
- 46 *Outburst Draught*: Causes someone to act on their current strongest emotion, but is contagious.

TIER

3

- 51 *Bottled Fury*: Stops you from dying until it wears off, but you can't resist death.
- 52 *Lightbender*: Makes someone appear completely invisible, but also nearly blind.
- 53 *Quickfreeze*: Covers the entire area in ice, but the bottle is incredibly fragile.
- 54 *Zombiejuice*: Reanimates a fresh corpse into a killing machine, but it quickly falls apart.
- 55 *Heartstop*: Makes you appear completely dead, but you wake up with shock to **GUTS**.
- 56 *Essence of Night*: Fills a large area with moonless darkness, but the area is freezing cold.
- 61 *Quickrust*: Can instantly rust away any piece of metal, but its container is hard to open.
- 62 *Kaboom*: Creates an explosion large enough to destroy a house, but the explosion is randomly delayed.
- 63 *Anti-Gravity Torch*: Reverses gravity while it burns, but you move very slowly within its zone.
- 64 *Magnetizer*: Causes any metal hit with it to become highly magnetic, but it might randomly activate.
- 65 *Unarcana Stone*: Causes magic within an area to cease working, but also causes monster science to fail.
- 66 *Tremorbead*: Seeps rapidly into the earth, causing it to tremble, but activates when shaken.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)



CONTRAPTIONS

Monster science can push the limits of what's considered possible in a fantasy world: hot air balloons, rocket boots, portable catapults - you name it. These are called contraptions and with them, you can do almost anything you can imagine. Whether it's safe or not, though, is another matter entirely.

On the next page is a list of example contraptions, what they do, and a possible *volatility* that they might have. What the contraption can accomplish and its *volatility* are determined by the player and GM when you start crafting it. Contraptions are made by using the craft downtime action with the tier of the downtime project determined by the tier of the contraption you want to make. When you want to craft something, describe what it is to the GM and they set its tier.

Contraptions are creations that don't already commonly exist, and for good reason. Every contraption is *volatile* in some way. Work with the GM when you finish making a contraption to choose the nature of its *volatility*.

The technology level in a dungeon is “shoddy steampunk.” You can't make anything you want. A monster isn't going to whip up a computer. An airplane is probably impossible, but a dirigible might be doable! Incredibly complex creations are usually the culmination of several different contraptions. A mask that lets you breathe underwater and a small propeller might function as some sort of makeshift submarine. In the end, the GM determines the scope of technology.

ITEMS & EDGES

Crafting a mundane item is a tier 1 downtime project. You can also improve on existing equipment by adding an edge as a tier 2 downtime project. Edges don't give new abilities like contraptions, but instead improve on existing functionality. Below are some examples:

- *Camouflaged*: Take +effect when sneaking in a forest.
- *Hidden*: Can be hidden more easily than a normal version.
- *Light*: Does not take up a gear slot.
- *Terrifying*: Take +effect when using it to scare someone.
- *Trusty*: Extremely difficult to break or remove from your possession.
- *Pulverizing*: Take +effect when destroying stone or armor.
- *Powerful*: Excels at knocking back enemies.

You can create your own edges by working with the GM to decide their effects. Edges sometimes give +effect when using an item, though only within a limited scope. Edges can never make you better at killing things - weapons have already been honed over thousands of years into perfect killing tools.



EXAMPLE CONTRAPTIONS

TIER

1

- 11 *Lighter*: Easily ignites flammable materials, but breaks easily.
- 12 *Gas Mask*: Ignores the effects of gases, but you can barely see while wearing it.
- 13 *Monocle Spyglass*: Sees objects far away as if they were up close, but disorients you.
- 14 *Rapid-Reload Crossbow*: Never requires pausing to reload, but sometimes misfires.
- 15 *Candlehelm*: Lights the way in front of you, but drips wax onto your face.
- 16 *Rope Launcher*: Sends a rope flying a great distance, but requires time to wind it up.
- 21 *Snorkel*: Lets you breathe underwater, but is easily spotted.
- 22 *Spring-loaded hidden dagger*: Puts a dagger instantly into your hand, but can randomly activate.
- 23 *Concoction Launcher*: Shoots a concoction a great distance, but is really cumbersome to carry.
- 24 *Bear Trap*: Latches onto the foot of whoever steps in it, but is really dangerous to pick back up.
- 25 *Corner Mirror*: Lets you see around corners, but is easily broken.
- 26 *High Pitch Whistle*: Can only be heard by dogs and similar beasts, but gives you a headache.

TIER

2

- 31 *Parachute*: Slows your fall, but you still hit the ground pretty hard.
- 32 *Shockstick*: Stuns the one you hit with it, but also stuns you.
- 33 *Portable Trampoline*: Lets you jump higher than you otherwise could, but is hard to put away.
- 34 *Welding Torch*: Welds metal together with a hot flame, but showers you in sparks.
- 35 *Escape Balloon*: Can pull you up into the air, but is almost impossible to control.
- 36 *Spring Boots*: Let you make one giant leap, but take a long time to reload after use.
- 41 *Glider*: Lets you control your descent, but it's absolutely terrifying.
- 42 *Mining Drill*: Bores through stone very quickly, but gives -1d on calamity rolls when used in the dungeon.
- 43 *Sticky Gloves*: Let you climb up a wall, but you can only reliably move up.
- 44 *Two-Wheeler*: Lets you rapidly move over flat terrain, but the brakes don't work.
- 45 *Electromagnet*: Strongly attracts metal, but shocks the hell out of you when you turn it off.
- 46 *Retract-o-Claw*: Clamps onto whatever it's shot at, but retracts very slowly.

TIER

3

- 51 *Rocket Pack*: Allows you to soar through the sky at rapid speeds, but can go off at any time.
- 52 *Night-Vision Goggles*: Lets you see in the dark, but blinds you if you look directly at a light source.
- 53 *Chainsaw*: Can tear through wood and flesh like butter, but merely wielding it is highly dangerous.
- 54 *Rocket Boots*: Let you briefly move incredibly fast, but always launch you out of them at the end.
- 55 *Flamethrower*: Fires jets of white hot fire, but the fuel tank is very vulnerable and fuel is limited.
- 56 *Waterbreather*: Lets you breathe underwater, but your vision is highly limited.
- 61 *Auto-Lockpick*: Allows you to roll the item's tier against any lock, but is very noisy.
- 62 *Backpack Catapult*: Can launch fairly large stones, but takes up an extra gear or supply slot.
- 63 *Clockwork Servant*: Can do one specific task that it's programmed to do, but rusts easily.
- 64 *Laser Eye*: Fires a laser out of one of your eyes, but you have BRAINS shock while it recharges.
- 65 *Robotic Limb*: Replaces a hacked off limb, but seems to have a mind of its own.
- 66 *Boomstick*: Blows something within short range to smithereens, but also hits nearby allies.

♦ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

LAWS OF SPELL MAGIC

Spell magic is a chase after power, pushing you down dark paths in pursuit of something far greater than could ever be achieved on your own. You might be grabbing the power for yourself or surrendering yourself to a more dominant, greater being in hope of gaining just a small portion of their eternal power in return. Monsters can cast spell magic from three different magic **disciplines**, each with its own **magic paths**:

- **Sorcery** draws power from strange, arcane forces. Its paths are *enchantment, evocation, force mastery, illusion, necromancy, and pyromancy*.
- **Witchcraft** draws power from spirits and nature. Its paths are *bloodreading, soothsaying, spiritcalling, stormstrike, and wildheart*.
- **Channeling** draws power from the worship of evil deities. Its paths are determined by the domains of the deity you serve.

As long as you have a **magic focus**, any Wicked One can **INVOKE** magic. However, you can only cast tier 1 spells without the appropriate calling core ability.

Magic Focus: Items like crystal balls, strange powders, crooked wands, spirit masks, or ancient tomes scrawled in blood that you use to wield magic. Each magic focus can only cast spells of a single magic path. They're usually related in some way to their path, though the exact choice of item is up to you.

When you **INVOKE** magic, you cast spells to create magical effects that fall within the scope of the magical path you have chosen. The magical path acts as a limitation on what you can accomplish. When you **INVOKE** a spell, you:

- **Accomplish something with magic that could have been accomplished with another action.** This allows you to use magic in place of other actions.
 - You summon vines and tendrils to tear the lock apart (replacing **FINESSE**, **TINKER**, or **SMASH**).
 - You enchant the goblin and force him to give you the information you desire (replacing **TRICK**, **BANTER**, or **THREATEN**).
 - You meld with the shadows and reappear elsewhere (replacing **SKULK** or **TRICK**).
- **Accomplish something normally impossible without magic.** This allows you to get really creative with the things you do with magic.
 - You turn the guard dog into a pile of snakes.
 - You summon a fire elemental to do your bidding.
 - You rip memories out of the dead body's mind.



SPELL TIERS

A spell is rated according to the results you're looking to achieve by casting it, ranging from tier 0 to tier 3. The higher the spell tier, the more strenuous, difficult, and dangerous to cast it becomes. Tier 2 and tier 3 spells can only be cast by a **SHAMAN**, **WARLOCK**, or **ZEALOT**. They're more dangerous and difficult than normal spells, so tier 2 spells take -1d on the roll and tier 3 take -2d. They also cost stress to cast.

INVOKING SPELLS (PROCESS)

1. **The player describes the spell**, making sure to detail what they hope to accomplish with it.
2. **The GM sets the spell tier**, comparing what the player wants to accomplish to what can be accomplished by a normal action roll.
3. **The player rolls or reconsiders**, either accepting the GM's judgement, looking for a way to modify the spell, or choosing another approach.

Ulna: *I'm going to use pyromancy here to engulf that house in flames.*

GM: *Sounds like tier 2 to me. The house is kinda big. It'd probably take several actions or everyone working together normally.*

Ulna: *Yeah, I don't really have the stress to spend though. Hmm, can I get a smaller fire started now at tier 1 that can grow over time?*

GM: *Yeah, that could be done with a single action roll. Tier 1 it is.*

The GM determines what tier a spell is by comparing the intended result with what can be accomplished with a normal action. At its simplest, the system works as such:

- **Tier 0** spells achieve results much weaker than normal actions.
- **Tier 1** spells achieve results equivalent to normal actions.
- **Tier 2** spells achieve results greater than normal actions.
- **Tier 3** spells achieve results much greater than normal actions.

Tier 1 spells set the baseline from which to judge the other tiers. When the effect is one that can be accomplished with a different action, it's clearly tier 1. When the result isn't normally possible without magic, the GM must make a judgement call and set its tier according to its relative impact. An impossible magical effect that feels about as impactful as a normal action is a tier 1 spell.

The GM must also set the limit of what a tier 3 spell can accomplish. They're meant to be able to produce effects that can dominate a scene, accomplishing things that might take a team of workers some time to finish. Beyond tier 3 spells are **rituals** which cover the most powerful magical effects.

TIER 0 SPELLS : MINOR, MOSTLY COSMETIC EFFECTS

These spells achieve results that anyone could easily accomplish or are completely stylistic in nature. Their main purpose is to blend magic into the narration, allowing you to couple them with other actions or flavor basic actions in a way to make your character feel more magical. They almost never require a roll.

- *You snap your fingers and light a candle.*
- *You call the wind to make your cape blow behind you.*
- *You send a shiver down someone's spine, causing them to turn around.*

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

These spells achieve results that could be accomplished with another action. Their main purpose is allowing you to use INVOKE in place of another action as long as you can creatively justify it within your magic path. They generally require a roll, unless there is no challenge or risk.

- *You ensorcel the horse's mind, making it buck off its rider.*
- *You beseech Shabaz for power and hurl a lightning bolt at the knight in plate mail.*
- *You hear the blood coursing through the veins of the hidden rogue.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : SPEND STRESS TO CAST; TAKE -1D ON THE ROLL

These spells achieve results that could only be accomplished with several actions or a team working together. Their main purpose is to allow you to scale up spells to perform incredible feats, equivalent to other callings' core abilities. They're inherently dangerous and always require a roll. You must spend stress to cast them and you take -1d on the roll.

- *You grow vines, snaking their way across the gap to form a bridge.*
- *You listen as your goddess, Melawa, tells you where the adventurers are hiding in ambush.*
- *You enchant the dryad, causing her to think someone else burned down her forest.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : SPEND STRESS TO CAST; TAKE -2D ON THE ROLL

These spells achieve results that even a team working together would take quite some time to accomplish. Their main purpose is to allow you to take center stage in a scene, but at great risk. They can also be used to accomplish things completely impossible with other actions. They're inherently dangerous and always require a roll. You must spend stress to cast them and you take -2d on the roll.

- *You hit the town wall with a huge amount of force, blowing a hole in it.*
- *You enter the spirit realm and possess the caravan guard.*
- *You conjure an illusion of a huge wyvern flying overhead, which chases away the cavalry pursuing you.*



ADJUSTING SPELL TIERS

A tier 1 spell is usually an instantaneous or short-lived effect that affects a single target within a limited area. You can increase spell tiers by modifying these factors:

- ▶ You expand the **area** from a small area to a medium area, or a medium area to a large area. What constitutes the size of these areas is up to the GM.
- ▶ You expand the **duration** from a short time to a medium time, or a medium time to a long time. Permanent magical effects are only possible with rituals.
- ▶ You expand the **scale** allowing you to go from being in a tight spot to even footing, or from even footing to having the upper hand. This might also change the spell from a single target to a few targets, or a few targets to many targets.

LIMITATIONS

Magic is powerful and flexible, but each magic path has some **limitations**. The first limitation is due to the nature of the magic and something you must deal with. You then choose a second limitation on your own, which serves to balance magic against normal actions. If your magic path is very broad and easy to apply to any situation, the limitation should scale that back some. If your magic path is already narrow, a minor fun limitation is more appropriate. When you choose a magic path, you should jot down a few ideas on your character sheet about what types of limitations you might have and discuss them with the GM.

- *Wildheart requires you to interact with the natural environment.*
- *Pyromancy is only effective against things that are flammable.*
- *Labisha, the Flesh Eater, demands sacrifices to channel her magic.*

SUMMONING

Many magic paths may allow you to summon a pack of minions to do your bidding, usually lasting until the end of the current scene. If you summon a minion pack with a tier 0 or tier 1 spell, you're essentially rolling **INVOKE** to accomplish something but describing it as a short-lived minion being summoned and performing the action for you. You use your **INVOKE** action roll to determine the results. When you cast a tier 2 or 3 spell, you can summon a normal minion that will last for a scene. You determine what actions and impulses they have when you summon them.

- ▶ A tier 2 spell provides you with a **minion pack with no upgrades**.
 - *You make the bones rise as a few skeletons to serve you.*
 - *You summon a couple of minor demons to harass your enemies.*
 - *You call some mangy coyotes to ravage the horses.*
- ▶ A tier 3 spell provides you with a **minion pack with an upgrade or a 3d action**.
 - *You raise a zombie hoard that shambles into the town.*
 - *You pull a greater demon from the depths of hell, forcing it to serve.*
 - *You howl into the night and a wolf pack answers your call.*

OTHER RULES

INVOKE has a few more uses that need clarification. Merely detecting, understanding, and even dispelling magic does not require a magic focus.

Detect Magic: You look for signs of magic. You don't necessarily need to use **INVOKE** to understand when there is magic, though, as you can usually **SCAN** for it as well.

You peer at the runes, suddenly realizing it's a stasis spell.

Dispel Magic: When you dispel a magical effect, you must cast a spell of a tier equal to the strength of the magic in effect. This is determined by the GM.

You sprinkle crushed pixie wings on the chest and the trap's magic fades.

Resistance: You can use **INVOKE** to make a resistance roll. When you do, describe the spell and how it resists the consequence. The GM then sets the tier of the spell, usually tier 1. Remember that to use an action to resist, it can't have weak effect. Spells work the same way. If a tier 1 spell would have weak effect, it might take a tier 2 or even a tier 3 spell. A tier 2 or tier 3 spell used to resist still costs stress and you take a penalty to the roll as usual. This allows you to resist things in a much larger capacity than otherwise possible.

You cast a tier 3 force mastery spell to stop the tower from collapsing.

Conferring Action Ratings: When a spell confers a new action rating on a PC, such as transmuting their body or boosting them with magic, the action rating is equal to the tier of the spell cast.

You use wildheart to take on the aspects of a bear. Your SMASH is 3d.

Conferring Abilities: Spells can mimic calling abilities, even core abilities. This requires a tier 3 spell to do so.

You cast a tier 3 pyromancy spell, turning into a flaming elemental. This gives you the Warlock's VILE FORM ability.

MAGIC REQUIRES GOOD COMMUNICATION

Much like position and effect, the GM is in the best place to consistently judge magical effects within the fiction. GMs should try to be transparent and open to questions about why you've judged the effects in certain ways. This will help inform your players' decisions as they get used to the power level of magic. Players should be forgiving if the GM judges two identical spells as different tiers since judging something so incredibly flexible can be tough. We're all human, right?





GM: "Okay Xog, you're hiding in the cart now and heading into town."

Xog: "I wanna get that charm necklace I saw the merchant ride into town with. I need that to finish my ritual. So as the cart pulls into the town square, I'm going to need a distraction."

GM: "What do you have in mind?"

Xog: "I'm going to use my bloodreading magic here. I want to make this merchant suddenly throw up violently to buy me an opening."

GM: "Yeah, that sounds like a tier 1 spell to me, kind of like a TRICK. You could push it and make the 3 or 4 people standing around the merchant's stall all throw up. That'd be tier 2."

Xog: "Actually, I think I want to go big here instead. Let's make everyone in this square suddenly start retching. Then hopefully I can snatch the charm and make my escape."

GM: "Awesome, that's a tier 3 spell, so you take -2d on your action roll here. If you fail, your spell's probably going to backfire on you in this busy town square."

GM: "You're watching the nomads bring their herd through the valley. A few have their bows out, scanning the treelines and expecting trouble. Rorgar, you said you were leading the way. What do you do?"

Mezz: "Hold up! I just had an idea. I want to flashback to last night and call on Vahoona to fill the nomads' dreams with nightmares of Rorgar here feasting on their flesh."

GM: "Okay, what are you trying to accomplish with that?"

Mezz: "I want 'em to break and scatter as soon as they even see Rorgar."

GM: "Yeah, that's like a large scale THREATEN, plus doing it from afar through their dreams. I think this is going to need a tier 3 spell."

Torin: "Could you throw a rolling fog into those dreams, with Rorgar charging out of it?"

Mezz: "Sure, what are you thinking?"

Torin: "What if we team up here? You INVOKE the dreams in the flashback and I'll INVOKE a rolling fog with stormstrike in the present."

GM: "Oh, that's good! It's a bit weird having the team up rolls happening at two separate times, but it feels right for what you're trying to accomplish. Let's roll with it. The fog is a tier 2 spell, affecting a lot of people with it. You could do something similar with a team of people lighting fires and creating smoke. Alright, let's see some rolls."

POTIONS

Potions are bottled elixirs with potent magical effects. They're usually in liquid form, though it's not unheard of to find these magical essences within a dust or some other form. They're consumed upon use. The tier of a potion is equal to the tier of spell it would take to create the effect normally. Potions are brewed by spending a downtime action. You make two doses with a single downtime action and it is always a tier 1 project, regardless of the tier of the potion. On a mixed, the potion becomes *volatile*. Example potions, with *volatilities* listed after "but..." are on the next page. The effects and *volatility* of potions are determined by the player and GM when crafting them. You must have the proper core ability to brew tier 2 or tier 3 potions.

Brewing more potent potions carries more risk, just like casting spells. You take -1d on the roll when brewing tier 2 potions and -2d when brewing tier 3 potions. You don't spend stress as you would when casting higher tier spells, though.

You must state an ingredient or two when brewing a potion. The stress you would normally spend to cast a spell is replaced within a potion by ingredients. Ingredients tend to be related to the effect of the potion in some way, such as a cat eye for a potion that allows you to see in the dark. It's assumed that you can collect most ingredients you need when brewing and you can weave this collecting of them into your downtime action narration. Here are some example ingredients:

POTION INGREDIENTS

bat wings	fool's gold	rabbit foot
beetle guts	frog spit	rose thorns
bent ring	four-leaf clover	rusty key
broken mirror	owl feather	scorpion tail
crushed pine cone	poison ivy	seashells
curdled goat milk	pumpkin seeds	snake teeth

Especially rare ingredients give you +1d to the roll to brew a potion.

These ingredients are almost always procured within a scene under risky conditions. They might be things like unicorn blood, fairy dust, mermaid scales, prince tears, or a lion's tail. You might...

- Use unicorn blood to make a *potion of healing*.
- Use fairy dust to make a *potion of flying*.
- Use mermaid scales to make a *potion of waterbreath*.
- Use prince tears to make a *potion of disguise*.
- Use a lion's tail to make a *potion of courage*.





EXAMPLE POTIONS

TIER

1

- 11 *Blowfish*: Makes you buoyant in water, but you can only move with the current.
- 12 *Sticky*: Adheres any two things together, but is very difficult to apply.
- 13 *Firefly*: Makes your abdomen blink, but also attracts bugs.
- 14 *Lies*: Makes you unable to tell the truth, but you can't tell when others are lying.
- 15 *Mixed Visions*: Shows you two false and one true vision of the future, but gives you a massive headache.
- 16 *Cowardice*: Forces whoever it hits to run away, but they're emboldened when they return.
- 21 *Illusory Form*: Gives you the appearance of another member of your race, but only from the front.
- 22 *Slipperiness*: Makes an area incredibly slippery, but the bottle itself is also very slippery.
- 23 *Blinding*: Removes the target's sight, but is incredibly difficult to apply without affecting yourself.
- 24 *Giantvoice*: Allows you to project your voice over great distances, but you lose your voice after.
- 25 *Strength*: Makes you as strong as a bear, but you're completely exhausted afterwards.
- 26 *Speed*: Makes you as fast as a horse, but has a very short-term effect.

TIER

2

- 31 *Terror*: Creates a nightmarish illusion where the potion is spilled, but it's your own nightmare.
- 32 *Firebreath*: Lets you breathe flames like a dragon, but torches your gear, too.
- 33 *Spiderlegs*: Gives you legs like a spider allowing you to climb walls, but makes you voraciously hungry.
- 34 *Portable Doorway*: Breaks against a wall to make an instant hole, but disappears very quickly.
- 35 *Speedy*: Doubles your speed, but it's very, very difficult to stop.
- 36 *Blur*: Gives a defense against arrows, but you randomly teleport nearby when you use the defense.
- 41 *Dalgeth's Brew*: Makes everything the drinker hears sound disingenuous, but they're aware afterwards.
- 42 *Squallsight*: Lets you establish a fact about the weather, but angers nearby wildlife.
- 43 *Turnheart*: Causes the drinker to rethink their current goal, but all distrust you while you carry it.
- 44 *Wizardwick*: Pulls magic towards its flames, containing it, but the bundled magic is highly unstable.
- 45 *Mindwall*: Gives you a defense against enchantment, but you're vulnerable after using the defense.
- 46 *Snakejaw*: Lets you swallow anything up to your own size without hindering you, but it tastes terrible.

TIER

3

- 51 *Invisibility*: Makes you completely invisible, but you blink back into sight when you touch something.
- 52 *Tongues*: Lets you speak another language fluently for a while, but you can't understand it.
- 53 *Ratsize*: Shrinks you to the size of a rat, but you smell like prey.
- 54 *Mimic*: Turns you into a carnivorous version of an object, but you only vaguely know how long it lasts.
- 55 *Earbug*: Lets you understand another language for a while, but you can't speak it.
- 56 *Freeshade*: Releases your shadow as a temporary minion, but it doesn't want to rejoin you later.
- 61 *Animal Form*: Turns you into an animal, but you gain an appropriate dark impulse during it.
- 62 *Quickmend*: Removes both bloodied and MUSCLES shock, but gives BRAINS shock.
- 63 *Mooncurse*: Turns someone into a werewolf for one full moon, but wolves are hostile while you carry it.
- 64 *Expertise*: Gives a single action a 3d rating for a short time, but you take -1d to all other actions during it.
- 65 *Intangible*: Lets you float and move through walls, but doesn't wear off until recovery.
- 66 *Ironskin*: Makes your skin as tough as iron, but you move incredibly slowly.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

LAWS OF RITUAL MAGIC

Rituals push magic to its limits, allowing you to bring forth truly horrifying magical effects, transcending what is possible with spell magic. You do not need to have spellcasting ability or even **INVOKE** to incant a ritual, though without some magical ability, you do need a proper explanation for why you know the ritual.

Rituals are incanted with downtime actions, using any action that makes sense within the fiction. You must also meet a number of special requirements equal to the ritual's tier before the ritual can be completed. The GM and player work together to choose interesting requirements. Special requirements are something challenging to accomplish, usually requiring a scene or perhaps even a raid to do so.

A ritual's tier is determined by how large of an impact it will have on the story.

Cursing a farmer is usually easier than cursing a noble, though if that farmer is an important figure in the story, setting the curse on them becomes much more difficult. The GM sets the tier as follows:

TIER 1 RITUALS : MINOR IMPACT; FULFILL 1 REQUIREMENT

These rituals achieve results that have a minor impact on the story. They tend to be useful for PCs, but have minor effect on NPCs.

- *You permanently raise some skeletons to serve you as a minion pack.*
- *You build a teleportation circle between two places you've been.*
- *You make all milk in a town go rancid, causing paranoia.*

TIER 2 RITUALS : MODERATE IMPACT; FULFILL 2 REQUIREMENTS

These rituals achieve results that have a moderate impact on the story. They tend to give PCs a strong advantage or push NPCs into a tough spot.

- *You plant fear in the baron's mind, causing him to betray the duke.*
- *You link the fate of two people together, so if one dies, they both die.*
- *You conjure a large wall of ice, blocking the mountain path.*

TIER 3 RITUALS : MAJOR IMPACT; FULFILL 3 REQUIREMENTS

These rituals achieve results that have a major impact on the story. They tend to drastically alter the entire dynamic of the story and NPCs must deal with the fallout.

- *You call forth a mighty storm, earthquake, or other natural disaster.*
- *You summon a nightmarish creature beyond your control to wreak havoc on a local region.*
- *You cause a blight, destroying and cursing farmland for miles around.*

Rituals often bring attention from outside forces seeking to stop it. The GM can make a blowback roll just before it's completed to see if anyone intervenes.

RITUAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Blood Magic:** You must feed the ritual with your own blood, leaving you bloodied. *What does the scar look like?*
- **Fasting:** You're not allowed to eat while preparing this ritual. You take shock to an attribute each time you incant this ritual. *Why must you go through such suffering?*
- **Intimate Materials:** You need an item that the target of the ritual greatly values or cares about deeply. *Why is it so important to them?*
- **Place of Power:** You must perform the ritual at a specific place of power, such as deep within a volcano or a long forgotten battlefield. *How does the place magnify the ritual's power?*
- **Rare Ingredients:** You must collect rare ingredients before you can cast the spell - often from high, inaccessible mountain peaks or at the bottom of deep, dark lakes. *What stands between you and the ingredient?*
- **Ritual Cleansing:** Your body must be thoroughly cleansed with ointment, blood, or other special materials. *What are you being cleansed of?*
- **Sacrifice:** You must sacrifice some type of animal or even a specific person. *What's special about the required sacrifice?*
- **Secret Knowledge:** You require secret, arcane information from a specific source. *What do you have to give up to acquire this knowledge?*
- **Special Focus:** You require a special item or creature that the ritual's power is channeled through. If the item or creature is destroyed, the magic effect is also destroyed. *How is the magic channeled through this focus?*
- **Timing:** You can only perform the ritual at a specific time, such as a certain lunar phase or when the stars align. When your ritual starts, the GM starts an additional 4, 6, or 8 segment clock and ticks it each lurking phase to represent the time approaching. *What is significant about the timing?*
- **Trial:** You must undergo some trial to prove yourself worthy before the ritual can be completed, such as swimming across a dangerous river, burning down a temple, or finding and killing a wyvern without using any weapons. *What makes the task more dangerous than is immediately apparent?*

Grem: "Okay, so it's a tier 3 ritual to turn the river into a river of blood. What kind of special requirements work for this?"

GM: "Blood magic fits perfectly and maybe performing it at a place of power. How about this? Let's say that there's a waterfall upriver, so you'll need to perform it there, shedding your own blood into the river."

Grem: "Those work. Also, sacrifice makes sense. Maybe I have to throw a person off the top of the waterfall, too. How about the town's butcher?"

MAGIC ITEMS

Given their line of work, dungeon monsters are bound to come across magic items, whether they're hanging off the bodies of dead adventurers, hidden away in a wizard's closet, or being secretly transported in a grain caravan. Magic items often give permission to do something that you couldn't otherwise do, rather than enhance your abilities. Like anything else in the fiction, they may count as circumstance bonuses towards position and effect.



Magic items can be crafted with a ritual of a tier equal to the item being enchanted. The tier of the magic item is set in the same way as a ritual, based on its impact within the story. You must also fulfill ritual requirements, though one of these is always a special focus to be enchanted.

As these items have quite a broad range of power, you can balance their power by giving them a drawback. The drawback is decided prior to crafting it. Remember that a tier 1 magic item already becomes *volatile* when you get a mixed on the roll, making it possible to be *volatile* twice.

- ▶ **Activation:** You must activate it in some way, such as by taking stress or paying cost. After activation, it might only be usable once or for a short time.
 - *You turn over the hourglass, giving yourself one hour of protection.*
 - *You take stress to launch a fireball from the wand.*
 - *You put a gold coin in the tiny statue's mouth and it tells you a secret.*
- ▶ **Limited use:** It only has a certain number of uses before it becomes completely unusable or needs to be recharged in some way.
 - *You must throw one of the seeds to grow a tree at that spot.*
 - *The flaming sword has a chance of burning out, needing to be dipped in lava to regain its power.*
 - *Every time you use the eaglewing cape, a few more feathers fall off.*
- ▶ **Volatile:** It's *volatile*, having some negative effect on the user when used.
 - *The cinderstone burns you every time you use it.*
 - *The jumping boots make you queasy every time you use them.*
 - *The lightning wand arcs to an ally after it hits your enemies.*

Martok: "I wanna make a staff that can shoot fireballs."

GM: "Hmm, seems like tier 2. Let's say the special requirements are a staff that's survived being dipped in lava and a tiny captured flame elemental. It kinda needs a drawback to balance it out, though."

Martok: "I don't want it to cost stress, so what if I can only use it once before I need to dip it into lava to recharge the elemental inside it?"

GM: "That's cool, and since you have a lava flow within the dungeon, it effectively becomes recharged at recovery."



EXAMPLE MAGIC ITEMS

TIER

1

- 11 *Bag of Luck*: Lets you reach your hand in and pull out a mundane item, but likes to play tricks on you.
- 12 *Driftcloak*: Lets you slowly descend from a high spot, but you can't control your descent at all.
- 13 *Ember Ring*: Emits embers, igniting anything flammable, but burns you when you use it.
- 14 *Marionette*: Can perform a simple command that you give it, but wanders off afterwards.
- 15 *Waterstep Boots*: Lets you walk across water, but you have to keep moving so you don't sink.
- 16 *Spidersilk Lute*: Draws in spiders in your area when played, but the spiders are hostile to you as well.
- 21 *Bouncy Boots*: Lets you always bounce safely when falling, but you bounce in a random direction.
- 22 *Grasping Shield*: Can reach out and entangle enemies, but is terrified of axes.
- 23 *Vision Helm*: Vastly enhances your sight, but you can't hear very well when wearing it.
- 24 *Snake Lock*: Can be placed on a door to instantly lock it, but bites you when you take it off.
- 25 *Tracking Jewel*: Always makes you aware of its location, but bloodies you if broken.
- 26 *Soul Flask*: Can hold a single soul for transport, but the soul will rattle the flask at the worst moment.

TIER

2

- 31 *Displacement Arrows*: Teleport anyone hit with them to a nearby spot, but the spot is totally random.
- 32 *Immovable Armor*: Makes you nigh-immovable, but you can't run while wearing it.
- 33 *Spiteskull*: Tries to bite and latch onto anything you throw it at, but is always looking for a better owner.
- 34 *Endless Bottle*: Holds an immense amount of liquid, but all of it flows out when opened.
- 35 *Bag of Devouring*: Will completely destroy any non-living material put inside it, but is very hungry.
- 36 *Lookout Cap*: Lets you know if anyone can see you, but is extremely paranoid of getting spotted.
- 41 *Thundering Mace*: Knocks back anyone you hit with it, but is incredibly noisy.
- 42 *Dancebox*: Makes anyone around without a task start dancing, but only plays one song.
- 43 *Eye of Melawa*: Reveals lies and illusions, but makes a blinding flash when it does so.
- 44 *Cursed Coin*: Causes the one that finds it to grow greedier over time, but tries to be spent.
- 45 *Blink Boots*: Lets you teleport a short distance away, but you're disoriented after.
- 46 *Bloodstone*: Heals a wound, but must be bathed in increasingly potent blood after each use.

TIER

3

- 51 *Goldmonger's Tooth*: Turns victims into golden statues, but they might randomly come back to life.
- 52 *Rust Shield*: Instantly rusts any metal weapon it blocks, but slowly falls apart.
- 53 *Werpelt*: Turns you into a werebeast while the full moon is out, but it's a mostly harmless beast.
- 54 *Cursed Mirror*: Sends the thoughts of anyone looking into it to its creator, but slowly drives you insane.
- 55 *Stasis Ring*: Puts you into a visible but incorporeal stasis for a few moments, but you can't see anything.
- 56 *Covensworn Tome*: Allows you to cast a predetermined tier 1, 2, and 3 spell, but costs more each time.
- 61 *Mind Distillery*: Drains memories from people's minds, but makes them go insane in the process.
- 62 *Cloak of Invisibility*: Turns you completely invisible, but no other gear besides the cloak.
- 63 *Cube of Knowledge*: Answers almost any yes or no question you ask, but can't be used again for a cycle.
- 64 *Harvesting Axe*: Gives you a huge burst of power when you hack off a limb, but always demands more.
- 65 *Storm Orb*: Can conjure up a major storm within the region, but you can't decide its path.
- 66 *Withering Staff*: Causes plant life within a large area to wither, but leaves you feeling drained.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

SORCERY

You reach out and seize control of primal, arcane energies, twisting them to serve your own nefarious purposes. Sorcery is the purview of Warlocks, who can learn to cast higher tier spells within this magic discipline. Those who wield sorcery draw their power from a variety of sources. Some tap into the underlying energies that created the world. Others harness the remnants of life energy remaining in corpses. This power might even come from within, such as a forbidden mystical heritage or a heart corrupted by dark experiences.

Over the following pages, the sorcery magic paths are laid out with example spell failures, limitations, magic focuses, and spells. Remember that spell tiers fluctuate depending not on the spell effect itself, but on what you're trying to accomplish with it. All of these are merely examples to help show what might be possible within that path. Magic is a creative endeavor and up to you to define the power you wield.

Sorcery has the following magic paths:



ENCHANTMENT
MANIPULATE WEAK MINDS



EVOCATION
SUMMON HELLISH FIENDS



FORCE MASTERY
MOVE OBJECTS AT WILL



ILLUSION
CONFUSE THE SENSES



NECROMANCY
THE COLD CARESS OF UNLIFE



PYROMANCY
WATCH THE WORLD BURN

MAKE YOUR OWN SPELLS, DON'T JUST USE THE EXAMPLES

All of the spells over the next several pages are merely examples of what you might do within that magic path, to help you get a better sense of what the path covers and how spell tiers work. Magic in *Wicked Ones* is free-form and you should be taking advantage of that to craft useful spells on the fly! When you first make a character, it's a really good practice to brainstorm a couple of spells at each tier and talk it over with the GM to see if you're on the same page about the magic path and spell level. You can also grab some of the example spells and write them in, too!



ENCHANTMENT : MANIPULATE WEAK MINDS

You delve deep into the minds of others, eliciting emotion and controlling thoughts. You can alter memories, implant the seeds of action, or give explicit commands which you expect to be followed. The weaker the mind, the stronger your magic is.

When enchantment spells fail, you might falsely believe it worked, the target may become aware of what you were attempting, or the spell might be reflected back at you.



Limitations: Enchantment only works against living creatures and tends to work better on those with lesser intelligence. You might also have to share a language or only be able to elicit a certain range of thoughts and emotions.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

- INTERROGATE: *Their eyes cloud and they blurt out where the gold is.*
- RECOGNITION: *They think they met you before, grinning as you approach.*
- EMOTION CONTROL: *Anger replaces annoyance as the guard draws his sword and threatens his friend.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- IMPLANT URGE: *The merchant stops the caravan and hops off to take a leak.*
- HYPNOTISM: *They fall into a deep hypnotic state, ready for your suggestion. The first thing they'll do when they get back to the fort is fire the captain.*
- MEMORY LOSS: *With a wave of the hand, the guard forgets you were ever there.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- DOMINATE: *The farmers heft pitchforks and defend you with their lives.*
- IMPLANT MEMORY: *The troll suddenly remembers you saved his life in the river and offers to help you take down the town wall.*
- BETRAY OATH: *The knight plunges the sword into his lord's back.*



EVOCATION : SUMMON HELLISH FIENDS

The hells are full of demons, devils, and fiends waiting to be pulled forth from their fiery domain and put to good use. You open portals and pull through whatever servants you need, binding them to do your bidding.

When evocation spells fail, the fiend you summoned might take vengeance on you for disturbing them, break free and run amok, or hold a vengeance against you.



Limitations: Evocation requires the actual summoning and binding of creatures from hell, which generally don't take too kindly to this. You might also leave lingering portals or need to make small offerings to appease them.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

- **THIEF:** *A tiny whiptail demon appears and picks the lock for you.*
- **ANNOYANCE:** *Quasits appear and grab the bag from the merchant.*
- **WHIP:** *A demonic whip appears in your hand and you lash the sorcerer with it.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **HELLISH WORKCREW:** *A pack of wretches appear and rip down the wall.*
- **WARRIOR:** *A barbed demon climbs out of a pit and tackles the knight.*
- **WINGED SERVANT:** *A winged demon flies high into the sky to look for the caravan.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **HELLHOUNDS:** *A pack of hellhounds run down the fleeing horsemen.*
- **PITS OF HELL:** *Flaming pits erupt along the ground dragging some villagers into them, then lava begins pouring out into the village.*
- **DEVILISH TRANSFORMATION:** *Your form twists into that of a devil, with flaming sword and spiked armor.*



FORCE MASTERY : MOVE OBJECTS AT WILL

There is a force flowing throughout this world, intertwining all objects. You can sense and manipulate this tension to propel non-living matter as you please. Living matter, on the other hand, defies this force and is beyond your ability.

When force mastery spells fail, you might drop whatever you were moving on an ally, break it apart instead of picking it up, or move it way beyond where you intended.



Limitations: Force mastery can only move objects, not things that are alive such as plants and animals. You might also only be able to move one type of material, like stone, or lose one of your senses while casting.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

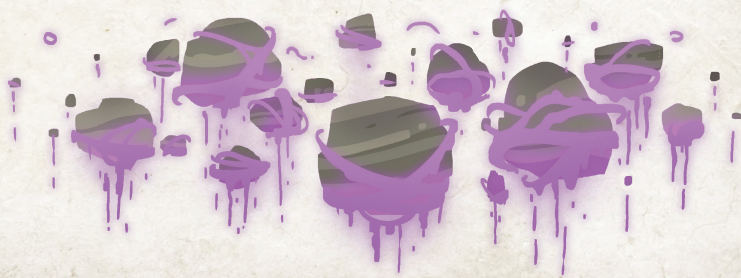
- **SNATCH:** *The sword flies from the soldier's hands and into yours.*
- **SLIDE:** *The bolt slides allowing the door to swing open.*
- **TOSS:** *Rocks pummel the cows, causing a stampede.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **BUILD:** *Stones pulled from the cliff form a stairway to climb up it.*
- **SLAM:** *The house's support beam breaks and the whole structure comes down.*
- **PROTECT:** *Pots and pans form a protective wall in front of you.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **HEAVY LIFTING:** *The small sailing ship lifts out of the water.*
- **FLYING DISC:** *You stand on a small disc, then lift it into the air and fly away.*
- **SYMPHONY:** *Every door and shutter in the town slam open and shut over and over, terrifying the townsfolk and causing pandemonium.*



ILLUSION : CONFUSE THE SENSES

Not all is as it seems, a fact you know better than anyone. The eyes can be tricked quite easily, though the nose and ears may be a little tougher. As one begins to lose trust in their senses, they may even begin to question their own reality.

When illusion spells fail, they might depict the wrong scene, briefly manifest into reality, or confuse you into believing they're working even though they're not.



Limitations: Illusion requires that you've previously seen or experienced what you're conjuring. You might also only be able to affect one sense or be unable to control who is affected by your spells.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

- **MINOR IMAGE:** *The sailor's clothes catch on "fire," so they jump into the harbor.*
- **SIMPLE SCENE:** *The "guard" paces back and forth on the walls, hiding the fact that the real guard is dead.*
- **IMAGINARY FOE:** *A "huge ogre" steps out of the cave and charges your enemies.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **DOUBLE VISION:** *An illusory "you" appears beside you, making it difficult for your enemies to tell which is the real one.*
- **ILLUSORY WALL:** *The pursuers pull up, almost smacking into the "wall".*
- **DISGUISE:** *The "cook" slips into the back room of the tavern and grabs a knife.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **INVISIBILITY:** *The travelers look around in confusion as "nothing" leads their horses away.*
- **HORROR:** *An "enormous dragon" flies over the town, panicking everyone.*
- **COMPLEX SCENE:** *A "caravan" is under attack from a group of "goblins," which seem to have the upper hand, causing the patrol to ride straight into your trap.*



NECROMANCY : THE COLD CARESS OF UNLIFE

Flesh and bone have memory of life and, even once the spark is gone, that memory can be forced to serve your will. You can fill these vessels with necrotic energy to bring forth unlife or turn that necrotic energy against living flesh, sapping its strength.

When necromancy spells fail, the ghosts of those you're raising might hinder you, a skeleton may break free of your command, or the memories of your victims could haunt you.



Limitations: Necromancy requires flesh or bone and tends to work far better on the already dead. You might also need to lay your hands on the target or place your own soul within a vessel.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

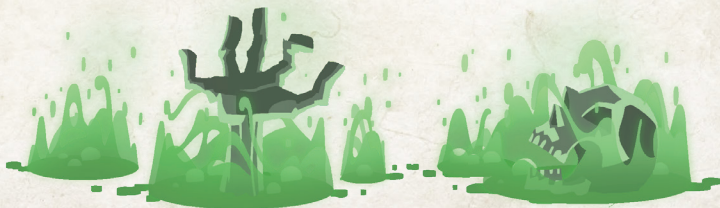
- **HELPING HAND:** *The dead man's arm detaches and drags his weapon to you.*
- **WITHER:** *A burst of necrotic energy saps the barbarian's vigor.*
- **CORPSE EXPLOSION:** *The corpse rumbles, then explodes in a dangerous shower of flesh and bones.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **RAISE SKELETONS:** *The bones form up into a skeleton minion pack, walking towards you and awaiting orders.*
- **SKELETON SURPRISE:** *The skeleton rips itself free of its mortal husk.*
- **WITNESS DEATH:** *You see a horse kicking them in the head, then bandits riding off, leaving them bleeding to death in the road.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **WHISPERS:** *The long-buried duke tells you where his illegitimate son lives.*
- **ZOMBIE HORDE:** *A large horde of zombies burst forth from their graves.*
- **LIFE SIPHON:** *The lancer's life energy is ripped from her, healing your wounds.*



PYROMANCY : WATCH THE WORLD BURN

Fire is the ultimate destructive force. It's wild, fickle, and blazing hot. But within that chaos, there is a beauty that captivates your attention. It's a cleansing force that those who wield can unleash upon the world.

When pyromancy spells fail, you might light up your allies instead, catch something unintended on fire, or burn up a piece of your own gear.



Limitations: Pyromancy requires what you're targeting to be burnable and struggles against anything resistant to fire. You might also be unable to cast in rain or need to directly shoot flames from a body part like your mouth.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

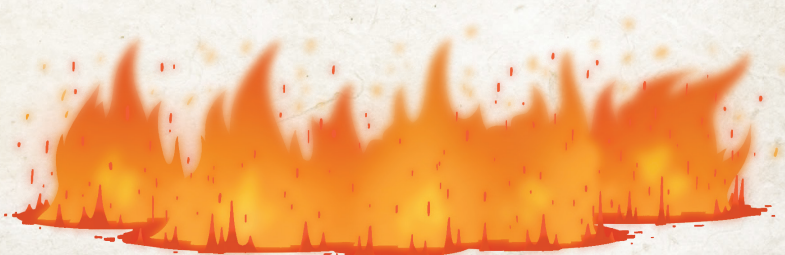
- **CINDERS:** *The torch explodes into a cloud of cinders, distracting the guard.*
- **FLAMEBLADE:** *Flames ripple along the edge of the blade, giving it potency.*
- **SCORCH:** *A blast of flame leaps from your hand and singes the griffon.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **HEATSHIELD:** *A shield of flames envelopes and protects you from projectiles.*
- **FLAMEWALL:** *The encroaching lion is blocked by a large wall of flames.*
- **FLAMING PATH:** *Flames spring up along the ground behind you as you run, making it difficult for your pursuers to keep up.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **FIREBALL:** *An enormous fireball arcs across the sky and into the ship.*
- **FLAMESTEP:** *You step into the fire and step out of a fire elsewhere.*
- **CAUTERIZE:** *The heat painfully seals the wound closed.*





WITCHCRAFT

You call upon or compel natural and ancestral spirits to assist you with your evildoings. Witchcraft is the purview of Shamans, who can learn to cast higher level spells within this magic discipline. Wielders of witchcraft draw their power from nature or the spirit world. You might have been raised by wolves and taught their secrets, possessed by a spirit who now is your companion, or been hit by lightning, which released your ability to command it.

Over the following pages, the witchcraft magic paths are laid out with example spells, failures, limitations, and magical focuses. Remember that spell tiers fluctuate depending not on the spell effect itself, but on what you're trying to accomplish with it. All of these are merely examples to help show what might be possible within that path. Magic is a creative endeavor and up to you to define the power you wield.

Witchcraft has the following magic paths:



BLOODREADING
THE PULSE OF LIFE



SOOTHSAYING
THE TIMELESS EYE



STORMSTRIKE
THE STORM'S FURY



SPIRITCALLING
THE WORLD BEYOND



WILDHEART
THE BRUTALITY OF NATURE



BLOODREADING : THE PULSE OF LIFE

Bodies are nothing more than the blood coursing through their veins, and you know blood well. You can sense it, read it, control it, and use it to push people past their limits, seal wounds closed, or force its body to do terrible things.

When bloodreading spells fail, you might invigorate your target, send them into a blood-boiling rage, or harm yourself instead.



Limitations: Bloodreading requires a living target. You might also need to make them bleed first or touch their flesh with your own before you can cast spells on them.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

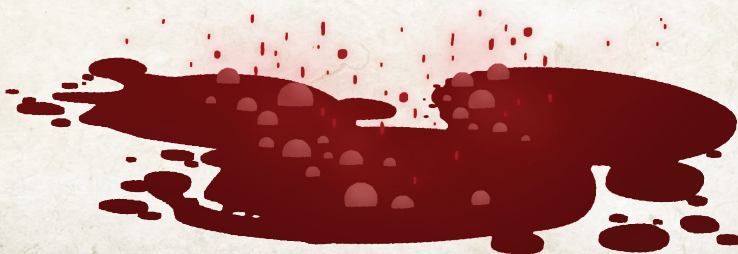
- **TEARS OF BLOOD:** *The victim sheds tears of blood, horrifying themselves and those around them.*
- **HEARTBEATS:** *You listen intently and hear the hiding priest's heartbeat from the choir balcony above you.*
- **SPASM:** *The sailor inexplicably throws the crate into the water.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **ADRENALINE:** *The Brute ignores any shock despite being peppered with arrows.*
- **BLOCK SENSES:** *Suddenly unable to see, the fleeing merchant rides into a tree.*
- **PUPPET MASTER:** *The goblin loses control of her body and swings at her friend.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **INFECT:** *Another rider starts coughing up flecks of blood - the fourth today.*
- **CLOSE WOUNDS:** *The Zealot loses the bloodied condition and MUSCLES shock.*
- **BLOODBOND:** *Any wounds taken by the Marauder are taken by you instead.*



SOOTHSAYING : THE TIMELESS EYE

You can cast your sight far and wide, moving your senses forwards and backwards through time. You play with alternative versions of the future and delve into events in the past, looking to unlock valuable secrets.

When soothsaying spells fail, you might get bad information, curse yourself by toying with future timelines, or make the one who you were viewing aware of your presence.



Limitations: Soothsaying only sees a possible version of the future and a likely version of the past, being prone to error and misinterpretation. You might also only be able to see through a certain element or require a related item.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

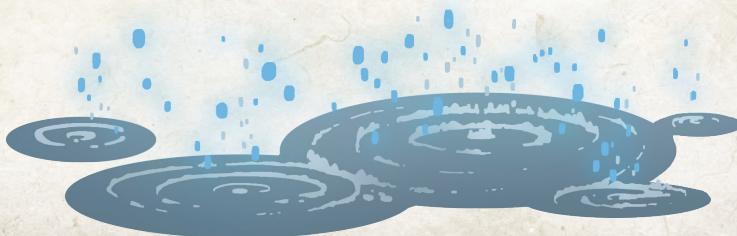
- **CAST SENSES:** *Your sight floats through a small crack in the wall and into the other side, showing you the butcher ready with a cleaver held high.*
- **RECENT PAST:** *As the chieftess shakes your hand, you flash to her perspective moments ago, inside her hut, and see her ordering her warriors to stand ready.*
- **PREDICT WEATHER:** *The pool ripples, then shows you storm clouds brewing.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **ADVANCED WARNING:** *You know when the next time you'll be hit with an attack is, giving you a temporary defense against wounds.*
- **GLIMPSES:** *Visions of the future flood your mind: melting snow, birds chirping, a carriage, horns sounding, people marching. The duchess is coming in spring.*
- **SIGNS:** *In the fire, you see a rope and suddenly know what to do.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **PROJECT VISION:** *You spot the far-away caravan moving through the pass.*
- **TRACES:** *Time rewinds around you, rushing through major events in the area.*
- **SHARED SIGHT:** *You view the world through the guard's eyes as they go on patrol.*



SPIRITCALLING : THE WORLD BEYOND

The spirits of the dead linger, waiting to take care of unfinished business. They have their own motivations, but when you talk, they listen. They're a good source of information, but only know what they've seen.

When spiritcalling spells fail, you might attract unwanted attention from dangerous spirits, scare friendly spirits away, or slip into the spirit realm yourself.



Limitations: Spiritcalling requires there to be the lingering spirits of the dead, and the more recent the better. You might also only be able to see animal spirits or have to broker deals with them for their help.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

- GHOSTLY DISTRACTION: *Something nags at the orc trying to bully you.*
- TATTLE TALE: *A dead imp spirit points at the lying minion that killed her.*
- AURA: *Spirits follow the merchant, the remnants of bad dealings.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- MANIFEST: *The dead troll spirit slips into the real world, ready to defend you.*
- REVENGE: *The spirits of servants lead you to the noblewoman's jewelry.*
- BOLSTER: *The spirits follow your minions, aiding them in their work.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- CURSE: *No matter what the baron does today, the spirits make sure it fails.*
- POSSESS: *You slip into the spirit realm and possess your victim.*
- SPIRIT TRAVEL: *You leave your mortal husk behind and guide your spirit to investigate the border fort.*



STORMSTRIKE : THE STORM'S FURY

The storm is the ultimate power of nature, wreaking havoc and destruction without reserve. You understand the ebbs and flows of the storm, harnessing it for your own purposes. You control clouds, wind, rain, hail, and lightning.

When stormstrike spells fail, you might cause favorable weather conditions for your enemies, strike your allies, or lose control of the raging storm.



Limitations: Stormstrike requires access to the open sky or flowing winds. You might also have your magic affected by the current weather conditions or need to recharge yourself occasionally by being struck by lightning.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

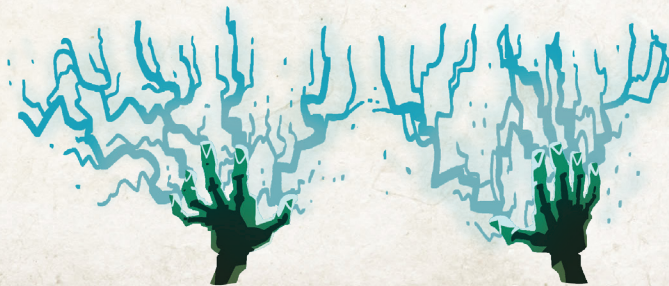
- **WEATHER READING:** *Tomorrow will be an incredibly windy day.*
- **LASH:** *Winds buffet the adventurers coming down the tunnel.*
- **BOLT:** *Lightning crashes across the room, smashing into the warrior's shield.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **HAIL STORM:** *Large chunks of hail pelt the workers, forcing them to take cover.*
- **ARC LIGHTNING:** *A bolt of lightning arcs between several riders in platemail.*
- **OMINOUS SKIES:** *The skies grow dark, making the barbarian tribe waver.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **WINDWALKING:** *You soar with the wind, high above the clouds.*
- **THUNDERSTORM:** *Torrential rain pelts the town, keeping everyone inside.*
- **TORNADO:** *An uncontrollable funnel cloud descends into the fields, throwing livestock and fieldhands into the air.*





WILDHEART : THE BRUTALITY OF NATURE

The power of nature is immense, but you hold sway over it. The dark beasts and creepy crawlers of the world obey your commands. Gnarled roots and thorny vines move when you beckon. Even the cold soil and rushing waters answer your calls.

When wildheart spells fail, you might lose nature's trust for a while, slip into a temporary feral state, or nature might cause unintended trouble.



Limitations: Wildheart requires plants, animals, or aspects of nature to interact with. You might also only be able to cast while on solid ground or limit yourself to one style such as casting plant magic with seeds.

TIER 1 SPELLS : EQUAL TO OTHER ACTIONS IN IMPACT

- **ROOTS:** *Roots grow and tangle the dwarf's legs, tripping them.*
- **FLYING HELPER:** *A falcon descends from above and snatches the talisman.*
- **NATURE GUIDE:** *A wolf leads you to where the traveler is hiding.*

TIER 2 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM'S ACTION OR ONE PERSON OVER TIME

- **RUMBLES:** *The earth trembles from below, sending the horses into a panic.*
- **GNARLED PAL:** *The tree grabs the goblin and launches them across the river.*
- **DANGEROUS WATERS:** *A whirlpool forms making the riverboat rapidly spin.*

TIER 3 SPELLS : EQUAL TO A TEAM OVER TIME OR IMPOSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **TREEFRIENDS:** *The trees uproot themselves and join the fight.*
- **BEE INVASION:** *Bees swarm the town square, stinging all those within it.*
- **NATURE'S MOUNT:** *A giant falcon serves as a mount to you.*



CHANNELING

You call upon a dark god, demigod, or powerful fiend that, in return for your worship, allows you to wield a small fraction of their power. Channeling is the purview of Zealots, who can learn to cast higher level spells within this magic discipline.

You can choose one of the following evil gods to follow or make up your own. Each god has a title followed by two *domains*, which combine to form your magic path. The descriptions of the gods are intentionally vague. They're meant more as creative prompts than lore of the world, giving hooks that you can use to define your character's religion. When you decide to worship a god, take some time and discuss it with the GM but don't worry about detailing everything. You'll flesh it out over time through play. Choose one of the follow dark deities or make up your own:

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY : The Follies of Civilization

- 👑 GORLAG, The Blessed Emperor, God of *Conquest* and *Tyranny*
- 👑 IZIZA, The Sweet Mistress, Goddess of *Seduction* and *Trickery*
- 👑 MELKAHAR, The Rotting Prince, God of *Pestilence* and *Decay*
- ✂️ GIMOSHA, The Flame of Jealousy, Goddess of *Greed* and *Envy*
- 👑 DALGETH, The Grumbling Malcontent, Goddess of *Cunning* and *Treachery*
- 👑 NEZAME, The Joyful Hedonist, God of *Pleasure* and *Satisfaction*
- 👑 MELAWA, The Keeper of Secrets, Goddess of *Knowledge* and *Deceit*

THE WILD : The Essence of Nature

- 👑 SHABAZ, The Unscrupulous Destroyer, God of *Tempests* and *Blights*
- 👑 LABISHA, The Flesh Eater, Goddess of *Slaughter* and *Savagery*
- 👑 TALAZAR, The Relentless Stalker, God of *Vengeance* and *the Hunt*
- 👑 CREVIS, The Quivering Wretch, God of *Cowardice* and *Suffering*
- 👑 VAHOONA, The Howler at Night, Goddess of *Nightmares* and *Twilight*
- 👑 ZAHEEN, The Dancing Madman, God of *Luck* and *Chaos*

Channeling does not have the same limitations as sorcery and witchcraft. Instead, you must strive to please your god, else they will **forsake** you. Minor infractions may be overlooked, but when you have displeased them enough, the punishment is quite severe.

Forsaken: When forsaken, you lose access to tier 2 and tier 3 spells until you have atoned in some way. The GM can also compel you towards actions that would please your god, essentially the opposite of the things that you can be forsaken for. If you suppress the compel, your god immediately forsakes you.



GORLAG, THE BLESSED EMPEROR

God of Conquest and Tyranny. As the head of the imperial family, he rules with an iron fist, ever-intent on expanding his domain and tightening control.

Gorlag may forsake you if you displease him, such as by running like a coward from battle, giving up an opportunity to seize power, or taking orders from your lessers.

TIER
1

- **BOOMING VOICE:** *Across the field of battle, all can hear you give your demands.*
- **BESTOW FEAR:** *The archer on the wall throws their bow and runs for their life.*
- **COMMAND:** *The troll bends their knee, ready to serve.*

TIER
2

- **HAMMER:** *You punch a soldier's shield, sending several of them over the wall.*
- **WARSTEED:** *A mighty black steed gallops from the forest, ready to be ridden.*
- **JUDGEMENT:** *The envoy buckles in pain as the lie escapes their lips.*

TIER
3

- **BATTERING RAM:** *The gate splinters as you slam your mace into it.*
- **RALLY:** *Dead minions stand on their feet again, ready to fight.*
- **ENTHRALL:** *All fighting ceases as they turn to listen to you speak.*





IZIZA, THE SWEET MISTRESS

Goddess of Seduction and Trickery. She is all sweet words and lies. She wormed her way into Gorlag's good graces, got her tentacles around him, and never let go.

Iziza may forsake you if you displease her, such as by missing a chance to exploit someone, being used for others' purpose, or telling the truth with nothing to gain.

TIER
1

- **HARMLESS:** *The lumberjack puts down his axe and comes over to help you.*
- **HYPNOTIC GAZE:** *The young nobleman can't break eye contact with you.*
- **DULL MIND:** *The warrior's mind grows foggy as they listen to you.*

TIER
2

- **PUPPY EYES:** *The ranger levels his bow at the knight about to slay you.*
- **NEW FACE:** *The baroness can't take her eyes off the new servant.*
- **ILLUSORY DESIRE:** *The glimmer of gold catches the rogue's eye.*

TIER
3

- **FAMILIAR FACE:** *The butcher's eyes brighten as he spots his friend.*
- **SLIP BY:** *None notice as you walk through the town square.*
- **OLD MEMORIES:** *The witch suddenly remembers you from her childhood.*





MELKAHAR, THE ROTTING PRINCE

God of Pestilence and Decay. He is the rotten soul of the eternal empire. For aeons, it expanded ever further outwards, leaving the core to rot away.

Melkahar may forsake you if you displease him, such as by bringing order where decay reigns, maintaining long relationships, or missing a chance to defile beauty.

TIER
1

- **WITHER:** *The vines shrivel and fall away, making a path for you.*
- **FESTER:** *The cut burns hot, blood and pus pulsing from it.*
- **RUST:** *The lock and handle rust, turning brittle and breaking as you grasp them.*

TIER
2

- **CORRUPTION:** *The ground around you turns black, twisted, and poisonous.*
- **SICKNESS:** *The innkeeper falls under a mysterious malady and is bedridden.*
- **CORPSE SERVANT:** *The dead farmer lurches at his wife's throat.*

TIER
3

- **SUMMON SWARM:** *A massive swarm of locusts invade the hamlet.*
- **FLESHBOMB:** *The sailor explodes, pelting the dockworkers with blood.*
- **CONTAGION:** *The hunter returns to camp carrying the bug.*





GIMOSHA, THE FLAME OF JEALOUSY

Goddess of Greed and Envy. She draws in and emboldens those who desire more just for the sake of being better than others, feeding on their smug satisfaction.

Gimosha may forsake you if you displease her, such as by being overshadowed, passing up a chance to gain more wealth, or giving up more than you need to.

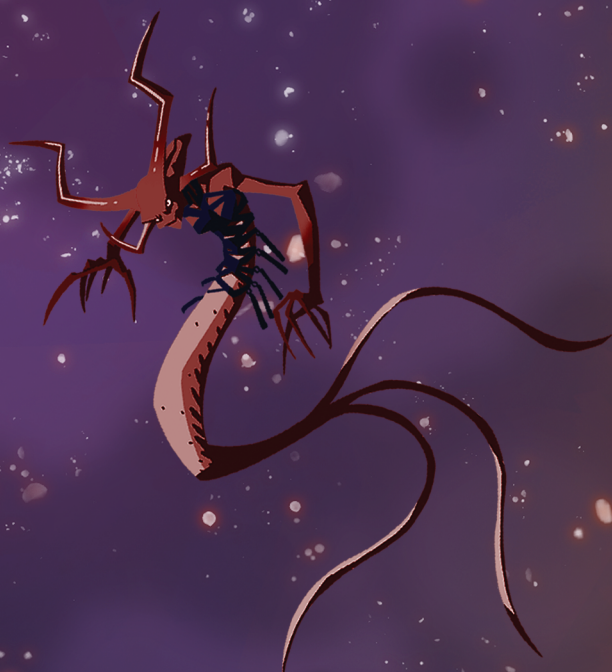
- JEALOUSY: *The guard's lingering jealousy at his friend's promotion resurfaces.*
- FIND LOOT: *The glimmer of silver catches your eye through a window.*
- FOOL'S GOLD: *A small pile of coins will satisfy the troll until you're gone.*
- CHEAT: *Time after time, the cards just happen to go your way.*
- KNOW DESIRE: *The merchant loves nothing more than a fine perfume.*
- ATTRACT: *The jeweled knife flies across the room and into your hand.*
- DUPLICATE: *An exact copy of the king's crown appears in your hands.*
- HYSTERIA: *The townsfolk raid the chapel, stripping it of all its gold.*
- ENVOIOUS HEARTS: *Everyone in the small tribe acts on their biggest envy.*



TIER
1

TIER
2

TIER
3



DALGETH, THE GRUMBLING MALCONTENT

Goddess of Cunning and Treachery. She has her hand in every plot within the imperial family. She sees resentment brewing and bends it to her own advantage.

Dalgeth may forsake you if you displease her, such as by revealing your own plots, being used for another's advantage, or relying on those with power over you.

TIER
1

- **SOW DISCORD:** *The farmers in this community begin grumbling about taxes.*
- **DEFLECT:** *The scout follows your gaze and narrows their eyes at your companion.*
- **MISLEAD:** *The orc chief hears sarcasm in his warrior's voice.*

TIER
2

- **COMEUPPANCE:** *The priest is confronted by an angry mob.*
- **DISCERN:** *You gather that the guard and the merchant are old friends.*
- **FALSE PROMISES:** *The templar forsakes their god and joins you.*

TIER
3

- **TREASONOUS THOUGHTS:** *The prince can't sleep, thinking of the crown.*
- **SPARK BETRAYAL:** *The traveler sneaks off with his friend's coin purse.*
- **FALSE HOPE:** *The horsemen futilely charge the spear wall.*





NEZAME, THE JOYFUL HEDONIST

God of Pleasure and Satisfaction. He is an absolute glutton, and hopes for others to enjoy the same. As long as people are content, the empire persists.

Nezame may forsake you if you displease him, such as by passing up the chance at pleasure, ruining another's good time, or not sharing with others.

- PROMISES: *The mercenary hears exactly what she wants to and rides away.*
- DELIGHTS: *Images of the most delightful things dance in the spider's mind.*
- REGALE: *None of those listening to your story can tear themselves away.*
- SPARK DESIRE: *The troll stops chasing you and checks out the campfire pot.*
- FEAST: *An amazing feast appears, helping the negotiations go smoothly.*
- RELAX: *The riders sheathe their swords and dismount, ready to listen.*
- GRANT WISH: *The fisherman desires a boat, and he shall have it!*
- COMPULSION: *The dryad now wants nothing more than to drink blood.*
- SPLENDOR: *All in sight are completely captivated by your dance.*



TIER
1

TIER
2

TIER
3



MELAWA, THE KEEPER OF SECRETS

Goddess of Knowledge and Deceit. She is the holder of all knowledge, giving to others what she deems appropriate and lying when it benefits her more.

Melawa may forsake you if you displease her, such as by giving away knowledge without a price, letting your lies be discovered, or missing the chance for information.

TIER
1

- MINOR SECRET: *The chief's wife calls him "Cupcake" at home.*
- REVEAL LOCATION: *The monk is below you, hiding in the water.*
- MISTRUTH: *One changed word and the letter they're carrying has new meaning.*

TIER
2

- BEND WORDS: *The priest says one thing, but all attending hear another.*
- SEE THE PAST: *The lumberjack once saved the baron's life.*
- REVEAL OWNER: *The staff belonged to the princess of the wild.*

TIER
3

- SPEAK WITH DEAD: *The dead merchant tells you where his stash is.*
- DEEP SECRET: *The baron plans on waging war against the count.*
- IMPLANT BELIEF: *The merchant thinks his guards will murder him.*





SHABAZ, THE UNSCRUPULOUS DESTROYER

God of Tempests and Blights. He is the bringer of nature's destructive forces, the catalyst for change in the world. He knows no equal and cares little for his victims.

Shabaz may forsake you if you displease him, such as by stemming the forces of nature, aiding growth in the world, or allowing civilization to thrive.

- TIER 1**

 - WILT:** *The flower garden wilts under your gaze, angering the sprites.*
 - LIGHTNING:** *A bolt crashes down from the sky, setting the hay on fire.*
 - HOWLING WINDS:** *The pursuers lose your trail as the heavy winds pick up.*
- TIER 2**

 - OMINOUS FOG:** *As the fog rolls in, the sailors begin to question the captain.*
 - PARCH:** *Wetness is sucked from the air and the goblins grasp their throats.*
 - WAVES:** *Large waves batter the ship, rocking it from side to side.*
- TIER 3**

 - LIGHTNING STORM:** *Rain and lightning pelt the defenders on the walls.*
 - INSECT PLAGUE:** *Locusts descend on the farmlands, wrecking crops.*
 - TORNADO:** *A twister tears through the small hamlet.*





LABISHA, THE FLESH EATER

Goddess of Slaughter and Savagery. She kills for the joy of killing and feasts on the bodies of her enemies. To deny others their chance at life is to truly live.

Labisha may forsake you if you displease her, such as by running from a fight, passing on the chance for a good meal, or partaking in civilized endeavors.

TIER
1

- **PROVOKE COMBAT:** *The traveler stands up and kicks his friend's mug over.*
- **INSTINCTS:** *You smell the rogue's fear and follow the trail.*
- **SCAVENGERS:** *Vultures above circle the mercenaries, unsettling them.*

TIER
2

- **ABSORB:** *You feel empowered as the corpse's energy pumps through your veins.*
- **HORRIFY:** *The villagers flee as they hear the mad cackling.*
- **BLADES:** *Blades erupt from your arms, busting the shackles.*

TIER
3

- **GUT MAW:** *You grow an enormous gut maw that can gobble things up.*
- **PACK:** *A pack of jackals answer your call to hunt together.*
- **CHALLENGE:** *You and the monk are surrounded by a wall of spikes.*





TALAZAR, THE RELENTLESS STALKER

God of Vengeance and the Hunt. He is the apex predator, never giving up once on a trail. His pride prevents him from letting even the smallest slight go unanswered.

Talazar may forsake you if you displease him, such as by giving up on your quarry, being hunted down yourself, or passing on the chance at vengeance.

- **HAUNTING VOICE:** *The scout hears your voice on the wind and gets distracted.*
- **GRASPING VINES:** *Vines grab and hold the running farmer.*
- **WATERWALK:** *You skip across the pond surface after the swimming tribesman.*
- **STALKING EYES:** *Several eyes scour the forest and find the runaway.*
- **TRAP:** *A pitfall trap suddenly appears, cleverly disguised with leaves.*
- **BARBS:** *Every plant grows poisonous barbs in front of your quarry.*
- **LONGSHOT:** *Your spear flies an improbable distance, striking your prey.*
- **RELENTLESS SPEED:** *You run like the wind, far faster than normal.*
- **PASSAGE:** *A hole opens up in the large stone walls and you head in.*



TIER
1

TIER
2

TIER
3



CREVIS, THE QUIVERING WRETCH

God of Cowardice and Suffering. He is intensely focused on self-preservation. Others suffering or fleeing are the only things that distract from his self-loathing.

Crevis may forsake you if you displease him, such as by facing an enemy head on, putting yourself on the line, or getting caught in a terrible situation.

TIER
1

- **RETREAT:** *You slide under the doorway and away from the fight.*
- **DEBILITATING PAIN:** *The traveler clutches their belly, unable to stand.*
- **WAVER:** *The horseman wavers, raising his lance and galloping away.*

TIER
2

- **FOG:** *A fog rolls into the clearing, obscuring everyone's vision.*
- **OBSTACLE:** *A wall collapses between you and your pursuers.*
- **SLOW DEATH:** *The soldier with an arrow in their chest gasps for breath.*

TIER
3

- **DUMMY:** *A copy of you spawns and runs in the opposite direction.*
- **SHARE PAIN:** *The soldier hitting you feels every blow themselves.*
- **SQUIRM:** *You burst into a thousand centipedes, squirming away.*





VAHOONA, THE HOWLER AT NIGHT

Goddess of Nightmares and Twilight. She dwells in darkness, slips into dreams, and feeds off of fear and paranoia. She is the terror lurking deep in everyone's heart.

Vahoona may forsake you if you displease her, such as by failing to bring terror into the world, ending someone's fear too quickly, or fearing something more than her.

- **PARANOIA:** *The dwarf leaves the campfire to check on the echoing sounds.*
- **TERROR:** *The cleric sees the angered face of their god when they look upon you.*
- **LULLABY:** *The sounds of night lull the guard into a restful slumber.*
- **DARKNESS:** *Torches and flames go out, plunging the room into darkness.*
- **HALLUCINATIONS:** *Tentacles swing at the edge of the captain's vision.*
- **HORRIFIC DREAMS:** *The foresters wake up ragged from restless sleep.*
- **DREAMWATCH:** *You peek in on the knight gallivanting with his liege's wife.*
- **COME TRUE:** *The cows stampede, just as the farmer dreamed last night.*
- **DREAMWHISPER:** *A scene of betrayal plays out in the mayor's dreams.*



TIER
1

TIER
2

TIER
3



ZAHEEN, THE DANCING MADMAN

God of Luck and Chaos. He frolics throughout the world, spreading random chaos and complete misfortune. When there is no explanation for something, it was him.

Zaheen may forsake you if you displease him, such as by passing up introducing chaos into order, being too meticulous, or having too many plans come to fruition.

TIER
1

- **HAPPENSTANCE:** *Just as the dogs were about to find you, they spot a cat.*
- **BREAK:** *The bottle shatters, dousing the merchant in dark red wine.*
- **MISFORTUNE:** *The next time that bow is shot, the string will break.*

TIER
2

- **OOPS:** *Caught up in the confusion, the thief stabs their friend.*
- **CRUMBLE:** *The stone pillar cracks, then crumbles under your light touch.*
- **CURSE:** *Everything the smith does today ends in failure.*

TIER
3

- **RIFT:** *The chaotic fabric of the world rends, opening a portal home.*
- **ODD VISIONS:** *Chaotic imagery fills your vision, revealing secrets.*
- **CHAIN REACTION:** *A long series of increasingly bad accidents occur.*





UNDER THE FULL MOON

This is what the PCs have been working towards. The ritual of lycanthropy will curse the merchant's son and unleash the terror of a werewolf on the region. All that's left is to bargain with a dire wolf and perform the ritual under the light of the full moon.

GM Crag, this is kind of your deal. Go ahead and set the scene for us here.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Cool, so we're in a small glade, deep in the northern woods, illuminated by the full moon. We've dragged the prisoner out here and draped the wolf pelt over them. I look at the moon and howl as loud as I can. I want to **BANTER** here, I guess. I'm calling a dire wolf.

GM Let's just make that the engagement roll. Your **BANTER** is 1d, right?



The GM rolls 1d engagement and gets a mixed!

GM Well, you certainly got its attention. You hear a howl in return pierce the night. It's answering your call. You all look at each other, thinking this might go well. Then, you hear another howl, and another, and a few more. They're all around you. It might not be as easy as you thought.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

I motion for the others to just relax and say, "Let 'em come." We wait a few tense moments until the wolves appear at the tree line.

GM You just barely spot a wolf at the glade's edge, waiting. Then you spot another. From behind you, you hear a low, deep growl. You turn to see the dire wolf inching out of the forest towards you. It's noticed the wolf pelt and is moving towards the prisoner, sniffing the air.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

I'm going to **INVOKE** wildheart here and speak directly to the dire wolf.

GM It could be tier 1 if all you're trying to do is convey a basic concept like "friend" or "run." But negotiating with a wolf isn't something you could normally even do, so anything complex is tier 3. I think we can wrap the attempt to convince them into the **INVOKE** roll as well. Also, I'm gonna roll the blowback for this ritual real fast to see if anyone's noticed what you're all up to. I think I'll keep the roll secret for now.



The GM rolls 2d blowback and gets a failure!

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Yeah, this is going to be tier 3. I'll take the -2d on the roll, but I'm putting a dark heart into it. I'll tell you what I say after the roll.

GM Okay, gotcha. It's dire. This is an ancient forest spirit and you're all surrounded. On a failure, I think the wolves attack you for trespassing. On a mixed, the dire wolf accepts your friendship, but eats the human. As an aside, Slem, what's your SCAN?

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW Ummm, it's 3d now. I put my dot from reckless xp into it last session. Hey, can Crag get a dark bargain here? Maybe I'm transfixed on the dire wolf and whatever you need to know my SCAN for is instead a 2d roll?

GM Sounds fair to me. Crag?

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN Yeah, I'll take that. Here's my roll.



Crag rolls 3d INVOKE (3d - 2d + 1d +1d) and gets a success!

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN Yes! Alright, I stand in front of the prisoner, between it and the wolf, and begin uttering in wolf-speech. It's mostly barks and growls. "Great one, we brought a gift, a gesture of friendship. Or if it pleases you, I have a better idea. Help us give it the lycan curse to wreak havoc on the human villagers and in return, we'll guarantee the northern woods remain yours."

GM The dire wolf's on board. You can complete the ritual. But just a sec...



The GM rolls 2d engagement (Slem's SCAN - 1d) and gets a critical!

GM Looks like help is gonna show up a bit too late! The critical means you'll be able to finish the ritual before they arrive. Slem, you look up from the dire wolf to see riders on giant eagles highlighted against the moon.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW I exchange glances with Ulrot, gesture with my head at the adventurers incoming, then put a finger to my mouth, telling him to wait.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN The dire wolf lunges forward, snarling maw directly over the kneeling prisoner. Saliva drips down, covering his head. I howl to the moon and the wolves join me, completing the ritual. The wolf pelt embeds itself into the man's back, a painful process. Then the howling stops and the wolves leave. The prisoner is shaking as I cut the cords holding him. He looks down at his hands, already beginning to turn, then bolts for the trees. I say, "Let him go. This'll all be just a bad dream when he wakes."

ULROT
ORC BRUTE "Good deal. Now that that's all finished up," I pull my axe, "we've got some adventurers to kill." I RAGE and chuck my axe at an eagle.



CHAPTER 4

DUNGEONS



"A crown for me, gold coins for you, and a bit of ale to go around. I told you that templar abbey was the perfect target. But umm... you guys don't think they know we took this, right? Ah well, we can worry about that later. Let's party!"

- Brazz, Goblin Shadow

DUNGEON OVERVIEW

Your dungeon is at the heart of your group. It's your refuge, a place to plan your dastardly deeds, a strong defense against invaders, and a secure location to store your hoard. This section is an overview of how the dungeon works to keep in mind and refer back to while you read through the rules in this chapter.

Your group first chooses a **dungeon theme** together. This gives you a theme around which to base your characters and the campaign. Each theme also comes with a **core feature**, a strong ability related to the theme, and a list of **tier 3 rooms** that you can build within your dungeon to gain strong bonuses, though you have to acquire **materials** for them by raiding. The available **tier 1** and **tier 2 rooms** are the same for each dungeon theme. They give more general bonuses and don't require materials.

You start by finding a location for the dungeon, usually a place that needs its current inhabitants cleared out. After you have a location, you get out the **dungeon sheet**, a grid used for mapping out the dungeon together. You decide on some basic details for your dungeon such as what the floors are made of and what the lighting is like. The GM then draws the outside of the dungeon and any small caves or tunnels already existing in the location. They then roll for a discovery, something you happen across during your initial excavation. The players then draw the dungeon, taking turns picking from a list of dungeon features and drawing them out. Sometime during this process, the GM adds the discovery they rolled earlier to the map. In this way, both the GM and each player have some influence on the dungeon's layout.

You work together to choose a **master plan**, or at least detail the first steps of a plan that develops over time through play. Each plan always starts out the same, though - gathering a hoard. You gain wicked xp when you work towards each step. Over time, the final plan emerges from these steps and gives your group a goal to strive towards.

To grow in power, you increase your **hoard** by raiding the overworld. Your dungeon tier is based on the size of your hoard, ranging from tier 0 to tier 4. The hoard grows when you launch a successful **pillaging raid** against a target higher tier than your dungeon. This is a major looting raid, large enough to increase your dungeon in power. As your hoard grows, it attracts imps, creatures, and minions, as well as paying for their servitude and sustenance.

Imps are tiny, weak beings attracted to your dungeon looking for protection in return for basic services. They have a few descriptive traits that help you describe their presence in scenes, but they're mostly background elements that exist to handwave a lot of the minutiae of running the dungeon. Your imps also make one downtime action roll per lurking phase, chosen and rolled by the GM.

DUNGEONS

ENCLAVE

FORGE

HIDEOUT

STRONGHOLD

TEMPLE

Creatures are unintelligent or independent powerful denizens of your dungeon that fill **lair**s that open up as your dungeon expands. These lairs function as a home for the creatures, drawing them in. Creatures don't directly serve you, though they're usually not hostile towards dungeon denizens and will fight any adventurers that wander by.

Minions are your direct servants, hired or recruited to do your bidding. They have enough intelligence to follow orders. Each player controls one pack of minions which acts as a secondary PC. They're detailed on your character sheet, and have their own actions. You can pay gold to upgrade them, have them perform downtime actions, or join you on raids.

Adventurers or other forces intent on your destruction occasionally wander into your dungeon looking to rid the world of your evil or to just get their greedy hands on your hoard. They might show up as a result of a bad blowback or calamity roll, when a faction clock dealing with your dungeon fills, or when the GM just feels like adventurers should show up. Because of this constant threat of invasion, your dungeon needs some security. You can build **traps** to try and kill them, **tricks** to manipulate their behavior, and **locks** to protect sensitive areas, pushing them towards other paths.

The dungeon is split into two levels. The first level connects directly to the overworld through the dungeon entrance and houses the majority of the dungeon, including all of your minions, creatures, rooms, and defenses. At the end of the first level is a staircase leading down to the second level. As your dungeon grows, you move the staircase to the new "end" of the first level, allowing it to grow over time. The staircase leads to the **sanctum**, where the Wicked Ones spend their time and where the hoard resides. The sanctum sets the stage for the final boss battle at the end of a dungeon invasion.

Discoveries are natural caves, tunnels, old buried structures, or mystical phenomenon that you find while digging underground. They might be helpful, harmful, or completely neutral depending on how the roll goes. You make a new discovery every time your dungeon tier increases. They're drawn by the GM and give some level of control over how the dungeon develops, letting them introduce chaos into your well-laid dungeon plans.

When adventurers enter your dungeon, your minions are scattered throughout the dungeon. You make a **starting location roll** to determine where they are. They might start out in just the right spot or be completely unaware an invasion is happening. As the adventurers move through your dungeon, you narrate how all of the traps, tricks, and locks try to repel the adventurers, how the creatures fair in defending their lairs, and how your minions stand between the adventurers and your sanctum. During this first level of dungeon defense, you take on the roll of your minions running around the dungeon trying to stop the adventurers.

The Wicked Ones, like any good dungeon boss, are unaware of what's going on upstairs. That's why they built all those traps in the first place. If the adventurers manage to make it through the first level, the GM rolls engagement to determine how the final climactic battle starts off as the adventurers descend into the sanctum.

DUNGEON CREATION

You work together as a group to decide all of the details of the dungeon you will live in, then actually draw it out on the dungeon sheet. It grows over time, with the initial setup setting the stage for that growth and serving as a tutorial of sorts to introduce all of the different elements of running the dungeon.

The dungeon creation process below gives the essentials of what needs covered to begin play. To make this process easier, the Starting a Campaign section integrates dungeon creation smoothly into the first few sessions of the campaign.

1. CHOOSE A DUNGEON THEME (PG. 176 - 185)

Choose a dungeon theme, making sure everyone agrees about what type of dungeon you want to build together and what its master plan might be. The dungeon theme also provides you with a list of rooms that you can build and you start off play with its **core feature**, a special benefit that the nature of your dungeon provides you with.

ENCLAVE - FORGE - HIDEOUT - STRONGHOLD - TEMPLE

2. SET THE DUNGEON ATMOSPHERE

Answer the following questions to provide some details about what your dungeon is like and note them down on the dungeon sheet. Set up scenes and use power struggles to help make decisions when there are a few good options out there.

➤ **ENTRANCE:** What does the dungeon's entrance look like from the outside?

It might be something like a natural cave with a stream flowing through it, a small hole in a sewer tunnel, the ruins of an abandoned church, or the trunk of an old, rotten tree.

➤ **STRUCTURE:** What are the floors and walls made of?

They might be something like cold stone that's slightly damp to the touch, mud intertwined with roots, slick and warm black obsidian, or musty bricks stacked haphazardly.

➤ **LIGHTING:** What lights the dungeon and how dark is it?

It might be something like torches in sconces lining the walls, magma flowing through the hallways, a magical illumination that clings to the ceiling, or glowing mushrooms growing in every room.

➤ **ATMOSPHERICS:** What sounds and smells greet those who enter?

It might be something like fetid swamp water, overwhelming incense, rotting flesh, or sulfur and brimstone.

➤ **HOARD:** What makes up the piles of treasure in your hoard?

It might be something like scattered coins and glowing crystals, stacks of weapons and armor, piles of junk and artifacts, or chests brimming with gold.

3. CHOOSE YOUR IMPS (PG. 187)

Soon after you clear out your dungeon location and set its atmosphere, imps begin to show up. The exact nature and personalities of your imps is up to you. Choose two of the traits below or make up your own to describe them:

CLEVER - COWARDLY - CRUEL - MANIC - NOISY - STUPID - SURLY - TROUBLESOME

4. BUILD THE INITIAL DUNGEON

The players take turns drawing out the dungeon on the dungeon sheet, or you can choose one person to draw and have players give them directions. Having a conversation about drawing style prior to beginning is a good idea. Later in this chapter is a drawing guide with example dungeons to help.

DRAWING THE DUNGEON (PROCESS)

1. **The GM draws the outside area**, the entrance leading in from at least one side of the dungeon sheet. This is usually a cliff face or small cave.
2. **The GM rolls a discovery**, but can draw it at any point during this process.
3. **The players take turns drawing**. A new dungeon has one of each of the features below. Players go around the table clockwise choosing and drawing a feature from the list until everything has been drawn. Some features are best discussed as a group before deciding.

TIER 1 ROOM - TIER 2 ROOM - TIER 3 ROOM (MISSING MATERIALS)

TIER 1 CREATURE LAIR - TIER 1 LOCK - TIER 1 TRAP - TIER 1 TRICK - SANCTUM

4. **Draw the stairway** leading down from the first floor to the sanctum. Then draw the stairway leading up to the first floor from the sanctum.
5. **Name your dungeon**. Each player writes down an idea for a dungeon name. When finished, show the names and discuss. If you can't decide on a good one, the GM can initiate a power struggle to make the decision.

MAKING DECISIONS CAN BE DIFFICULT

Some players are more decisive in making decisions than others. That's natural. It's the GM's job to help make everyone at the table comfortable, giving players some room to consider things when it's their turn to decide something, and finally pushing them gently towards landing on a choice. Some players might hesitate, but, it's a good practice to build an expectation that each player participates in the decision making process, but you can also give players an out and just let them pass when they hit a wall.





DUNGEON FEATURES

While there are many types of dungeons out there, dungeons built by the Wicked Ones have a number of aspects in common. They're new dungeons, not built on old ruins, and are unique in many ways. They're built to grow rapidly and mainly serve as a base of operations from which to launch raids and a safe haven from any trouble you stir up when doing so.

Every dungeon has two levels. The first level houses all of your minions, rooms, traps, locks, and so on. This is the buffer layer between you and the surface and its primary purposes is to take the brunt of any adventurer assault on your dungeon. At the end of this layer is a stairway leading down to the second level where your sanctum lies. This is where the Wicked Ones wait to face off against any adventurers who make it through the dungeon's defenses.

As you lay out the dungeon's defenses, the element of surprise is key. If adventurers come up against similar defenses, such as multiple traps in a row, they're going to be on high alert which reduces the effectiveness of that defense type.

Repeated Defenses: Dungeon defenses take -1d on any rolls if a similar defense was the last thing the invaders encountered. Minions, creatures, traps, tricks, and locks are all affected by this.

HOARD & TIER

Your dungeon is rated from tier 0 to tier 4, representing its power relative to other factions and invading adventurers. You start off at tier 0 and the tier is tied directly to the hoard, which is all of the gold, treasure, food, materials, and resources you've dragged into your dungeon from the overworld. The hoard draws in creatures to serve you and as it grows, so too does your dungeon's power.

The dungeon's tier represents training and equipment. The GM compares the dungeon's tier to an adventurer's or other enemy's tier when judging if they're more powerful than the Wicked Ones or the dungeon's denizens. This is a circumstance that counts towards position and effect.

The dungeon's tier represents raiding power. The GM compares the dungeon's tier to a faction's tier to determine if the target you're raiding has an advantage against you. These advantages might be things like better equipment or training, larger numbers, or more powerful magic. As your dungeon grows more powerful, you can raid targets belonging to more powerful factions.

When facing tougher enemies, you might start an encounter with a lower engagement roll or even with consequences already inflicted. You might have difficulty overcoming challenges as your effect is limited or face greater risks as you find yourself in over your head. The opposite is also true, though. When facing weaker enemies, you enjoy a decisive advantage over them.

INCREASING DUNGEON TIER

You grow your hoard by launching a pillaging raid against a target belonging to a faction at least 1 tier higher than your current dungeon tier. If successful, your dungeon's tier increases during the next recovery and the target's faction tier drops by one. The hoard can only grow by taking wealth from a more powerful faction, proving that you have the power to belong in the new tier. When your tier increases, it has the following effects:

- **New Discovery:** Imps dig deep into the earth, leading to a discovery.
- **New Creature Lair:** Add a creature lair equal to your dungeon tier and detail the creature that inhabits it.
- **More Imps:** Imps roll the dungeon tier for their downtime action.
- **Power Growth:** The power of PCs and the dungeon denizens grow, used to compare against raid targets and adventurers.

LOSING THE HOARD

You could lose your hoard in a few ways, though it's pretty rare to lose hoard without the entire dungeon falling. A bad calamity roll might push minions to riot and make off with part of your hoard. Adventurers could bust into your sanctum, take you down, and flee with part of it. An enormous dragon could demand part of your hoard when you try to strike a deal with them. When you lose hoard, you don't lose the benefits of your tier but must reclaim or replace what was taken.

DUNGEON DUTIES

The dungeon is a complex beast and each player has to take an active role in running it. On each character sheet is a place to list your dungeon duties, those parts of the dungeon that you alone are responsible for. When something is added to the dungeon that must be taken care of, narrated, or rolled for in some way, it's added to a player's sheet and they're responsible for bringing it into the game. If one player ends up with too many dungeon duties, you can spread these out to other players, even if they didn't work on that part of the dungeon.

Locks, creatures, traps, and tricks are always added to this list. Dungeon rooms or discoveries might need to be as well. Even certain types of decision making or drawing can be added to the list if your group decides to delegate those tasks instead of working on them together.

DUNGEON DUTIES

TIER	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
1	Trap	Crushing wall - Pressure plate
2	Hydra	Strong - Venomous
3	Trick	Spiderwebs - Lose an item
2	Lock	Wood Door - Bolt

MASTER PLAN

Every dungeon has a master plan, a purpose for existing. You work together to choose a plan that aligns well with your theme, the characters you're playing, and the sandbox you've set up. In this way, you can determine together what you want the game to be about and be rewarded for playing towards those goals.

You earn 1 wicked xp in each session that you work towards the steps in your master plan. This is a group trigger, so either all PCs get it or nobody does.

Your first step is simple - **grow the hoard**. Setting up initial rooms, hiring minions, and eventually pillaging a higher tier target all work towards this first fundamental step. Once that step is completed and you're tier 1, you establish the next step in your plan. You don't need to decide on what the final step is until it becomes clearer later through play. Your PCs might have known the plan all along, but the players can figure it out as you go along. You only need to know what the next step is.

Each step should be broad enough to take 3 to 5 sessions to accomplish, usually needing a couple of raids. If a step becomes meaningless, is too narrow, or you lose focus on it, you can mark it off and write in another one instead.

CORRUPT THE WOODLANDS FOREVER

Step 1: *Grow the hoard.*

Step 2: *Clear the northern woods of foresters and loggers.*

Step 3: *Unite the monster tribes of the forest.*

Step 4: *Wage war on the fae and bring down the dryad queen.*

Final Step: *Perform the ritual of corruption.*

BRING PESTILENCE AND DECAY TO THE REGION

Step 1: *Grow the hoard.*

Step 2: *Loosen the baron's grip on the peasantry.*

Step 3: *Break the power of the clergy.*

Step 4: *Provoke a peasant uprising.*

Final Step: *Introduce the now chaotic region to Melkahar, the god of pestilence and decay.*

DUNGEON THEMES

Every dungeon is built around a central theme, chosen together as a group before the dungeon is built. The theme gives you a **core feature** related to the nature of the dungeon and a set of tier 3 rooms that you can build within it. Each dungeon also has a **flexibility slot** which you can use to build a tier 3 room from another theme.

The theme keeps players all on the same page thematically, allowing you to design characters that fit in well with the theme or fill a unique niche, as well as choosing steps in your master plan that go along with the theme. The choice of dungeon theme is a statement about what kind of things the players want to do in the game. You can choose from the following themes and their tier 3 rooms:

- **Enclave:** Tapping Into the Arcane. Choose this dungeon theme if you want your dungeon to be mystical from top to bottom. Its core function is **TWISTED LANDSCAPE**, corrupting the area surrounding your dungeon. An Enclave has the following tier 3 rooms: **ACADEMY**, **CRUCIBLE**, **GREENERY**, **LIBRARY**, **POTION LAB**, **SCRYING POOL**, and **SPAWNING CHAMBER**.
- **Forge:** The Power of Industry. Choose this dungeon theme if you want a dungeon full of monstrous inventions and steampunk tech. Its core function is **POWER SOURCE**, boosting the productivity and defenses of your dungeon. A Forge has the following tier 3 rooms: **ALCHEMIST LAB**, **GUILD HALL**, **FACTORY**, **MINESHAFT**, **TESTING CHAMBER**, **VEHICLE BAY**, and **WORKSHOP**.
- **Hideout:** Keeping Your Head Low. Choose this dungeon theme if you want to work as a cohesive unit and manipulate the factions of the region. Its core function is **AGENTS OF CHAOS**, allowing you to strongly influence faction clocks. A Hideout has the following tier 3 rooms: **DOJO**, **GAMBLING DEN**, **GEAR LOCKER**, **OBSTACLE COURSE**, **PLANNING ROOM**, **ROOST**, and **TAVERN**.
- **Stronghold:** Through Strength of Arms. Choose this dungeon theme if you want to face challenges with pure military might. Its core function is **WARBAND**, giving you a powerful minion that can raid the region. A Stronghold has the following tier 3 rooms: **BARRACKS**, **BESTIARY**, **FIGHTING PIT**, **FUNERAL PYRE**, **SMITHY**, **WAR DRUMS**, and **WAR ROOM**.
- **Temple:** Serving a Greater Power. Choose this if you want to focus on a certain god and its domains. Its core function is **DIVINE INTERVENTION**, which you can use to cast a tier 3 spell from your god. A temple has the following tier 3 rooms: **ALTAR**, **ANTECHAMBER**, **AUGURY CIRCLE**, **DORMITORY**, **RELIQUARY**, **PENANCE CHAMBER**, **SCRIPTORIUM**.

The room descriptions on the following pages refer to you or the *dungeon*.

- You means the room bonus applies to each PC individually.
- The dungeon means it applies once to the group of PCs as a whole.



ENCLAVE

TAPPING INTO THE ARCANE

An Enclave is infused with magic. Arcane energy lingers in the air, runes are scrawled on the walls, and even the lowliest of minions may have some level of magical aptitude. You start with this **core function**:

TWISTED LANDSCAPE: Arcane energy corrupts the area around the dungeon. Establish its range, increasing with tier, and how it manifests (choose 3): *corrupted wildlife* - *dark whispers* - *illusions* - *inclement weather* - *living plants* - *wisps*. These act as a trap and a trick equal to the dungeon tier against invaders.

ENCLAVE TIER 3 ROOMS

ACADEMY

Young monsters come to study and learn arcane secrets. You can recruit minions from this room. They have **INVOKE** as their primary action and the *adept* upgrade for free. This room also acts as a creature with a tier equal to the dungeon tier.

An academy might need crystal balls, mantles, or wands.

"I walk in to see a mishmash of young monsters slaving away at the spell memorization they've been assigned. I spot a group of lazy goblins hanging out in the back, avoiding their work. They're perfect for the job."

CRUCIBLE

The mystical power of this room enchants items. Each downtime, it can either produce a single tier 1 magic item or tick a magic item creation clock twice. You must still provide the special requirements for tier 2 and 3 magic items.

A crucible might need an essence core, a mystical beast, or magical helpers.

"One of your kobolds runs up to you holding a dwarf skull. Excitedly, she puts it on like a helmet. When she speaks, the skull's mouth moves and it sounds like the dead dwarf's voice!"

GREENERY

This garden of voracious plants will devour living prey. Feed them to harvest (choose one): *a plant-based shared supply - special ingredients for potions, a few doses of a concoction.* The higher the tier, the better the harvest. This room is also a trap equal to your dungeon tier.

A greenery might need rare plants, fertilizer, or artificial sunlight.

"We drag the scout into the room and toss him onto the floor. The plants wake up and turn to look at him, baring their teeth. Later in the day, I return to pick some of the fruit they've grown."

LIBRARY

Books are the key to knowledge of the world. Once per cycle, the dungeon can establish a fact about the history, cultures, or arcana of the world. You can also flashback to use this again while outside the dungeon.

A library might need a trove of books, large bookshelves, or a librarian.

"I leaf through some old dusty tomes, looking up the duke's lineage and find out that his succession was illegitimate. The true heir is still alive."

POTION LAB

Your imps have learned how to make potions. The dungeon chooses a single magic path of which you have a steady supply of all tier 1 potions and a single tier 2 potion.

A potion lab might need brewing equipment, special ingredients, or a giant cauldron.

"The slissiks knock over a shelf full of Spiderlegs potions, dumping them on the adventurers. Let's see how they react to growing spider legs!"

SCRYING POOL

The pool reveals far away scenes. Once per cycle, the dungeon can establish a fact about an NPC's recent activity. You can also flashback to use this again while outside the dungeon. *What question or object do you present to the pool to guide its gaze?*

A scrying pool might need cursed water, mosaic tiles, or a center figurine.

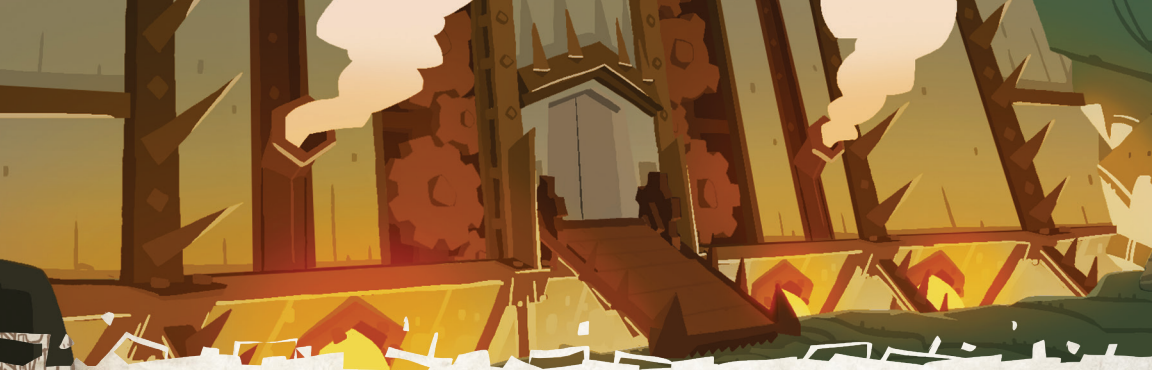
"I toss the insignia into the pool and ask, 'Where's the captain now?' As the ripples settle, it shows me a clear image of the captain riding with a few men. I recognize the area instantly. 'He's on the south road. Let's go.'"

SPAWNING CHAMBER

Minions are grown or summoned here, easily replacing your losses. Once per dungeon defense, a copy of a slain minion pack can burst forth from this spawning chamber. You can also add the *expendable* upgrade to minions for free.

A spawning chamber might need mystical goo, glass containers, or magic seeds.

"My orc grunts rip themselves out of the ooze sacks they were growing in. They follow their instincts, grabbing an axe off the wall and heading down the tunnel towards the adventurers."



FORGE

THE POWER OF INDUSTRY

A Forge is built for production - inventions, factories, steamworks, and alchemy can be found throughout the complex. Problems are approached with ingenuity, eagerness, and a keen disregard for danger. You start with this **core function**:

POWER SOURCE: In a forge, your sanctum is a source of power fueling your dungeon, such as a volcano, a steamworks, or a waterwheel. During downtime, you can take +1d on a single downtime action. During dungeon defense, you can take +1d on a single lock, trap, or trick on your list of dungeon duties.

FORGE TIER 3 ROOMS

ALCHEMIST LAB

Your imps are always hard at work mixing reagents. You have a steady supply of all tier 1 concoctions.

An alchemist lab might need alchemy equipment, chests full of reagents, or recipes.

"KABOOM! An explosion in the lab showers a minion pack with beastlure and broken glowsticks falling off the shelves. From down the hall outside, you hear the sniffing of wargs."

GUILD HALL

You let your minions organize to better their working and living conditions. In truth, you ignore their demands, but the illusion of having some control reduces grumbling. The dungeon takes +1d on calamity rolls.

A guild hall might need benches, a long table, or scribing tools.

"Your minions are sitting in the guild hall having a guild meeting. You see one of the kobold alchemists pounding a gavel, calling the meeting to order. Then suddenly, BAM - the door is kicked in by adventurers."

FACTORY

Your imps relentlessly sweat away in the factory. Each downtime, they can either produce a single tier 1 contraption or tick a contraption clock twice.

A factory might need metal casing for a boiler, piles of coal, or raw iron.

"I wake up heavily hungover, lying on a table. I turn my head to see machinery and tools tossed about, the result of my drunken rampage. The imps are all scowling at me. I guess they can't work this downtime."

MINESHAFT

You dig out a mine, gaining a steady supply of a single non-precious material and make an immediate discovery leading away from the mine. You take +1d on this and all future discovery rolls.

A mineshaft might need mining gear, lots of railway, or several minecarts.

"The brakes on the minecart give out and it goes careening back down into the mineshaft. It slams into the wall at the end of the track, knocking it down and revealing an enormous crystal cavern."

TESTING CHAMBER

You can empower your monster science, for a price. You can pay cost related to your testing to (choose one): *remove an item's volatility - increase a concoction in size, scope, or duration - take +1d on your next use with a specific item.*

A testing chamber might need a huge steel door, a pulley system, or gears.

"I haul my chainsaw into the testing chamber and start mixing together fuels, seeing if I can get a superpowered mix. I manage to do it, but the chainsaw gets away from me at one point and cuts my helmet in half."

VEHICLE BAY

The dungeon has an incredible vehicle, such as a submarine, dirigible, or steamcar. Detail the vehicle and give it edges (choose two): *armored - camouflaged - dependable - fast - nimble.* Give it a flaw (choose one): *clumsy - distinct - noisy - rickety - slow.* The vehicle is fully repaired or rebuilt by imps each recovery.

A vehicle bay might need parts for the vehicle, barrels of fuel, or awesome paint.

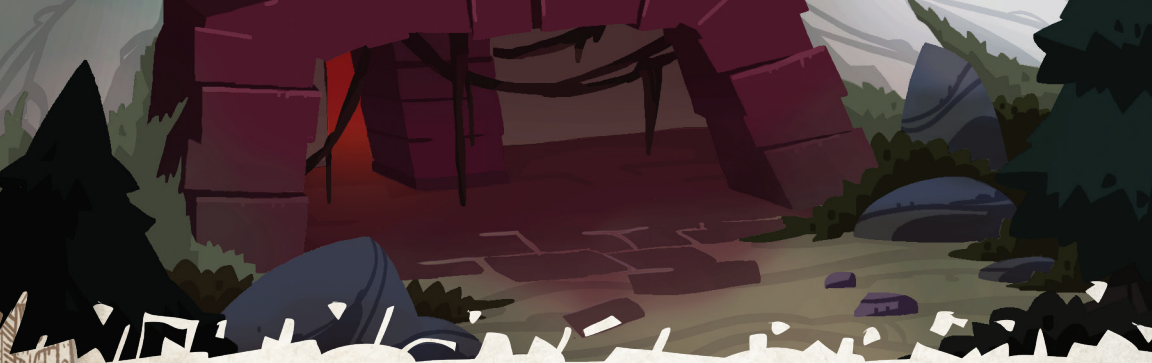
"The bay doors open above us and we float up into the sky, the Wicked Ones on deck and a few minion packs dangling from the ropes below us. I guess someone should've told them how fast this thing is."

WORKSHOP

You have a well-furnished workshop where your imps and minions can toil away. They take +1d when working on crafting or building projects.

A workshop might need crafting tools, leather aprons, or barrels of nails.

"A portal opens and the chaos mage steps out. 'Hmm, wrong room... but this'll do,' he says as he holds open his cloak. Tentacles reach out of it, lifting the goblin workers into the air."



HIDEOUT

KEEPING YOUR HEAD LOW

A Hideout is a place to lay low and keep an eye on the world. Escaping detection is your primary concern. You live and operate under the radar. Teamwork and efficiency are the keys to your success. You start with this **core function**:

AGENTS OF CHAOS: Your dungeon excels at placing blame on others or meddling with faction plans. On a success on blowback, your minions gain morale and you can finish or reset a faction clock. *What happens in the aftermath of your raid to cause this?*

HIDEOUT TIER 3 ROOMS

DOJO

The dojo master trains you relentlessly, forging you into a unified team. When you team up, you only take stress on a failure and 6s from different participants count towards rolling a critical. This room also acts as a creature with a tier equal to the dungeon tier.

A dojo only needs a master to train you, which you must either defeat or impress.

"Complete silence greets the monk and she steps lightly into the room. Her keen eyes catch two imps at the far end scurrying over and sliding the doors open. The master steps out and says, 'Finally, a real fight.'"

GAMBLING DEN

You set up a small gambling establishment, attracting monsters from outside your dungeon. You can recruit minions from this room. They always have TRICK as their 2d action and start with the *strapped* upgrade for free. This room also acts as a creature with a tier equal to the dungeon tier.

A gambling den might need gambling tables, luxurious lighting, or cigars.

"Those two slissiks came in here and fleeced us. I'm pretty sure they're working together. I definitely want them on our side."

GEAR LOCKER

You always get geared up before leaving the dungeon. You gain a supply slot and have a steady supply of the following concoctions and gear: *climbing gear - glowsticks - smoke bombs - tar bombs - throwing weapons - thunderstones - traps.*

A gear locker might need a trove of concoctions, crates of gear, or matching outfits.

"I give the signal to pull out thunderstones, then I kick the door in and get out of the way to let them toss the stones in. Back to the wall as I hear loud bangs, I point at the waiting Brute and give the thumbs up to go."

OBSTACLE COURSE

Minions train hard here, honing their skills. When recruited, you can add an extra 2d action to minions, but only to **FINESSE**, **SCAN**, or **SKULK**. This room also acts as a trick equal to the dungeon tier, detailed when the room is built.

An obstacle course might need rolls of wire, large spikes, or barrels of tar.

"The adventurers swing over the tar pit, crawl under the barbed wire, and run across the balancing board inches above the lava. They don't even realize that each of them dropped a piece of equipment along the way."

PLANNING ROOM

You plot out your raids in great detail. You take +1d on engagement rolls for negotiation, stealth, or trickery plans. On a success, you gain a dark heart.

A planning room might need maps, measuring tools, or refreshments.

"Going too deep into my craving, I run out of my stash of unicorn blood. I spend hours and hours meticulously planning out how to get more. I'm at the drawing board so long that my fingers start bleeding."

ROOST

You have bats, ravens, or other small winged beasts at your service. Each time you plan a raid, the dungeon can establish a fact about the target that your beasts saw from the sky. You can also flashback to use this again while outside the dungeon.

A roost might need cages, winged beasts, or pet food.

"Our ravens return from the woods, reporting back that the count is back from his hunting trip. One of the horses is injured, so they're slowly leading it back to the village."

TAVERN

You have a raucous tavern complete with a bar, shelves of alcohol, a roaring fire, and usually a scuffle. Your minions gain morale during recovery and take +1d when fighting invaders here. Wandering monsters also show up from time to time.

A tavern might need a bartender, lots of alcohol, or a bard.

"As you enter the tavern, you see imps singing tunes and dancing on tables. It's getting pretty crazy in here, but at the bar sits a lone dark dwarf quietly downing flagons of ale."



STRONGHOLD

THROUGH STRENGTH OF ARMS

A Stronghold is the seat of power from which you command your forces. Your project might through sheer military power. You start with this **core function**:

WARBAND: The dungeon has a raiding party, a shared minion pack with *greater scale* than usual and the *companion* and *expendable* upgrades. It can be sent on its own raids. At the beginning of the raiding phase, each player allocates 1d towards a target, chooses a raid plan, then selects a goal (choose one): *gather room materials* - *grab good loot* - *influence a faction* - *kidnap someone* - *setup for a pillaging raid*. You can also choose the same plan and goal to combine rolls to determine effectiveness. Make a fortune roll for each target, rolling the number of dice allocated and narrate accordingly. If you forego these independent raids, the warband can accompany you on a raid instead.

STRONGHOLD TIER 3 ROOMS

BARRACKS

Fresh recruits flock to your dungeon. You can recruit minions from this room. They have **SMASH** as their primary action and the *mindset (loyal)* upgrade for free. This room also acts as a creature with a tier equal to the dungeon tier.

A barracks might need a cache of weapons, armor, or a large amount of rations.

"I SMASH the biggest one in the face. 'Follow me. There's work to do.'"

BESTIARY

You have mounts and a secure area to keep them in. Detail them and give them edges (choose two): *aquatic* - *armored* - *fast* - *flying* - *magical* - *terrifying*. This room also acts as a creature with a tier equal to the dungeon tier.

A bestiary might need the mounts, something to feed them, or riding equipment.

"I yell to mount up and we head off into the night on our giant bats."

FIGHTING PIT

Place any two combatants in the pit, then each PC chooses the one they think will win. Make fortune rolls for each fighter, with the loser dying and both living on a tie. If your chosen fighter wins, you gain a dark heart.

A fighting pit might need exotic weapons, dangerous animals, or a pitmaster.

"The two dwarves face off against one another, the promise of living another day overriding old friendships. The imps and minions howl at them, making wagers and tossing around gold."

FUNERAL PYRE

Your warrior culture honors the dead, burning their bodies as a sendoff to the afterlife. When minions die in combat, any minions that witness it gain morale and will perform a downtime action during the next downtime without asking for gold.

A funeral pyre might need incense, special wood, or the tabards of conquered enemies.

"I toss the bear head onto the pyre. 'When that dwarf ranger fell, you all saw how enraged that bear got. But these two crazy bastards? They stood in the way, and somehow brought her down with 'em! For glory!'"

SMITHY

You have a steady supply of mundane weapons such as axes, bows, and hatchets. Your minions take +1d when crafting items or adding edges.

A smithy might need an anvil, metalworking tools, or a large pile of charcoal.

"I head down to the smithy and throw my battleaxe on the table along with a small pile of gold and say, 'Make it look scary as hell.' My minions fight a bit over the gold, then get to work."

WAR DRUMS

A steady beat emanates throughout your dungeon, keeping everyone focused on the task at hand. Each player can tick a project clock once per downtime, but each tick must go to a different clock. Your imps also take +1d on their downtime action.

War drums might need lots of leather, huge wooden drums, or massive horns.

"The adventurers steel themselves and head in. They hear the low, deep pounding of drums from deep within the tunnel giving them a shiver up their spine."

WAR ROOM

Proper strategy is the key to warfare. You take +1d on engagement rolls for ambush, assault, or strike raid plans. On a success, you gain a dark heart.

A war room might need maps, books on warfare, or intel on your enemies.

"As we gather around the table, I slam my fist down. 'Tonight, we take the fort. A full-on assault. It's been a thorn in our side this whole time. Let's just get it over with. Get the minions ready!'"



TEMPLE

SERVING A GREATER POWER

A Temple is an unholy monument to a dark god, venerating their domains as you lay out your master plan in accordance with their desires. A temple often utilizes rituals to further its goals. You start with this **core function**:

UNHOLY INTERVENTION: Once per cycle, one member of the dungeon can beseech the dungeon's deity to cast a tier 3 spell from their domains. You roll the dungeon tier as an action roll with no dice penalty and the GM determines who is open to any consequences.

TEMPLE TIER 3 ROOMS

ALTAR

You can make a sacrifice at the altar, paying cost to gain a dark blessing (choose one):
take +1d on a single roll with an item this cycle - take +1d on your next resistance roll - your next failure instead becomes a mixed. The sacrifice must be unique each time you ask for a blessing.

An altar might need incense, statues, or icons specific to your god's domains.

*"I kneel before the altar and Vahoona answers my howl with her own.
Shaking with terror, I pay for the blessing with shock to GUTS."*

ANTECHAMBER

Between the stairway and sanctum on the final level is an impressive room glorifying your deeds in the name of your dark god. Adventurers stop to take note of it, giving you a dark heart and +1d on the engagement roll before a sanctum fight.

An antechamber might need skulls, the banners of worthy foes, or an artist.

"The adventurers creep through the antechamber, horrified by the scenes depicted on its frescoed walls. You can hear their gasps, filling your dark hearts with glee as you prepare for battle."

AUGURY CIRCLE

You can flashback to time spent in the circle, reading portents of future events. You can establish a fact in the present about an NPC's next likely action. *What portent did the circle show you and how does it manifest in the present?*

An augury circle might need mosaic tiles, a large mirror, or exotic incenses.

"Chaotic imagery fills my vision, then Zaheen shows me a portent - a sparrow flying through the madness. In the present, the same sparrow smacks straight into the door and dies, warning me of a guard ambush."

DORMITORY

Fresh cultists flock to serve your god. You can recruit minions from this room. They always have your god's favored action, chosen when this room is built, as their primary action and start with the *mindset (zealous)* upgrade for free. This room also acts as a creature with a tier equal to the dungeon tier.

A dormitory might need furniture, accoutrements, or the first batch of pupils.

"It seems like a new clan of scrawny kobolds has felt the pull of Gimoshā. I toss a gold's worth of obsidian daggers on the floor and say, 'Anyone that comes away with a dagger is promoted.'"

RELIQUARY

This room corrupts and amplifies the magic of up to three items of unholy impact placed within it. When an item is placed, it immediately incants a tier 2 ritual causing a persistent effect within your dungeon related to the specific item.

A reliquary does not require special materials beyond the items placed within it.

"I put the holy ring, still on the priest's finger, on the pedestal. The reliquary twists the domains of the fishing village's goddess, filling our underground river with carnivorous fish. It's now an extreme hazard."

PENANCE CHAMBER

Your minions fear punishment more than death and will never betray you. When they fight to the death, they ignore the dice penalty from being bloodied.

A penance chamber might need shackles, whips, or tar.

"Grabbing the dagger off of her dead friend with the only hand she has left, the cultist staggers to her feet and mutters, 'Death in service.'"

SCRIPTORIUM

Your deeds are recorded in unholy scripture, immediately giving you wicked xp equal to your dungeon tier. You also gain a new wicked xp trigger: *Were your actions worthy of your god's notice?* Each PC must prove their own worth to gain this xp.

A scriptorium might need desks, writing equipment, or leather for binding.

"I finally broke that elven druid, getting some nice hints as to the location of the Mother Tree. I'm sure Melawa is pleased."

DENIZENS

Dungeons are full of horrible monstrous life. Some are mere inhabitants that are too mindless or stubborn to obey your orders while others serve you directly and prove their worth many times over. What's important to remember, though, is that each of these denizens exists to keep greedy adventurers away from your hoard.

There are three basic categories of denizens inhabiting your dungeon:

- **Imps** are weak, pathetic creatures that serve your dungeon in exchange for protection. They allow the players to handwave a lot of the drudgery of tasks in the dungeon as the imps are always working in the background. They have two traits which help inform how they behave and what they look like within scenes. You rarely, if ever, roll to see what the imps are doing, though the GM does roll for them once per downtime.
- **Creatures** are beasts or mindless monsters that take up residence in your dungeon and defend their lairs against invasion, but are not under your direct control. They come with two traits to inform how they battle invaders. You roll their tier as a fortune roll when they do something, which is almost always fighting adventurers in their lairs.
- **Minions** are your servants, doing your bidding. Each PC has control of a pack of minions that serves as their secondary PC. You control them during dungeon defense and can bring them along on raids. They come with actions of their own and act like weaker versions of the Wicked Ones.



IMPS

Imps are small, pitiful monsters that flock to your dungeon as soon as you start building it. In exchange for protection, they take care of the drudgery in your dungeon, cleaning, digging, and hauling stuff around. Their existence allows players to handwave a lot of the tedious "management" of the dungeon. Imps can be weaved into scene narration as you see fit.



Each downtime, the GM rolls one downtime action representing the imps effort within the dungeon. They roll the dungeon tier for this.



Exactly what kind of monsters they are is up to you and is chosen at dungeon creation. They usually match the dungeon theme, its overall atmosphere, or the region it's built in. A forge in a volcano might have magma imps while a temple's imps would likely be themed after the god they worship. After you decide what your imps are like, give them two of the following traits or make up your own to help make narrating them in scenes easier:

CLEVER - COWARDLY - CRUEL - MANIC - NOISY - STUPID - SURLY - TROUBLESOME

These traits give you some easy hooks for portraying your imps within scenes. Making the imps a part of the story in the dungeon helps bring it to life and gives you something to play off of. Here are some example imps:

Demonic imps (cowardly - stupid). They're always hurting themselves, looking for food, and running from anything bigger than them. These are the typical imps shown throughout this book.

Clockwork helpers (clever - noisy). They're always clanking around, needing oiled, and finding overly ingenious solutions to simple problems.

An enslaved fairy tribe (manic - troublesome). They're always flittering in your face, pulling on your gear, and tipping over drinks.

Small rock elementals (stupid - surly). They're always bickering with each other, dropping things, and falling apart.

Imps only speak in grunts, squeeks, and gestures, though they can understand the Dark Tongue. They're generally useless, completely refusing to venture outside of your dungeon. They can only have very low impact on any situation, merely adding flavor to scenes like flipping a trap's lever or being thrown at an adventurer. If you ever need to determine an imp's effectiveness, **they roll Od and take -effect.**



CREATURES

Creatures are mindless or unintelligent monsters or beasts that have chosen to lair in your dungeon. They're not under your direct control, though they fight off invaders in defense of their lairs. A crafty Wicked One or minion might be able to trick or goad them into doing something for them, though. They're neutral towards other dungeon denizens for the most part, though a bad calamity roll might bring them into conflict with each other. Monsters moving past or through their lairs generally go unimpeded.

Creatures are rated from tier 1 to tier 4, representing how deadly they are. A creature might be a single monster or it could be a group of smaller monsters. When an invader passes by the entrance to their lair or moves through it, the creature engages them and defends its home.

When adventurers pass near a lair's entrance, they're drawn inside. It doesn't matter if they were just moving by the entrance or were going straight through the lair. When adventurers are in the vicinity of a creature, it will seek to defend its lair. **You roll a creature's tier to determine how a fight goes.** Before making the roll, narrate how the creatures move to engage the adventurers.

CREATURE ROLLS

Roll the creature's tier to determine how it fares against the adventurers threatening its lair. Creatures slash the hearts of adventurers, seeking to kill them.



Failure: The creature is slain or flees the dungeon for good.

Mixed: You damage an adventurer of the GM's choice and the creature is knocked out of the fight.

Success: You damage an adventurer of your choice. Roll again.

Critical: You damage two adventurers of your choice. Roll again.

❖ You can't damage the same adventurer twice in a row unless they're alone.

When you roll for a creature, you narrate what it looks like as the creature struggles with the adventurers, incorporating their traits and their lair into your description. On a critical or success, the creature attacks them without repercussion and prepares to go in for more. On a mixed, they put up a decent fight but are defeated. They're merely dealt with for now, but still alive within your dungeon and ready again after dungeon defense. On a failure, however, the adventurers slay the creature or drive it off permanently.

"Okay, the python is sneaky and powerful so I think it's gonna come at them from above. And... yes! A success! Okay, so it drops right down onto that rogue, digging into her neck and coiling its body around her. As everyone comes running to help, I'll roll again to see what happens."





ATTRACTING CREATURES

Creature lairs attract creatures looking for a home into your dungeon. They're stumbled upon by your imps as your dungeon grows, usually being caves or other natural underground formations which feel appropriate for the type of creature you want. Your hoard or the lair itself provides sustenance for the creature.

When your dungeon tier increases, you add a new creature lair somewhere to your dungeon, choosing its location and drawing it on the map. The new lair only attracts creatures equal to the dungeon tier at which the lair was added, which should be noted on the map when it's drawn.

When you have a vacant lair, one new creature can be attracted to your dungeon each recovery. This always fills the lowest tier lair first. However, the very first time you build a lair, it immediately attracts a new creature. You decide what kind of creature is attracted, but it tends to be a good practice to just replace fallen creatures with the same type to reduce bookkeeping. You can also spend gold or take downtime actions to attempt to fill vacant lairs faster if you want.

When a creature is attracted to your dungeon, one player sets up a short scene detailing it. This scene could be as simple as noticing the empty lair has been filled again or it could be more complex with other PCs joining in as you all watch a new monster make its way through your tunnels. Remember that creatures are independent, often more like beasts than intelligent monsters, though they're not hostile towards you. Taking the time to recognize that the lair has been filled provides a chance to further flesh out your dungeon and give creatures their space within the story.

"I think I'm just wandering down one of these tunnels when I hear something rustling around in that lair. I look in and see a huge basilisk in there settling down for a nap. Looking down the hallway, I see some of our goblin minions dragging a goat to feed it. I kinda think to myself, 'Well, better it eats our goats than our goblins, I guess.'"

Each dungeon begins with a single tier 1 creature lair. They might also be added to your dungeon by discoveries, with the GM deciding the tier, location, and nature of the lair and the first creature inhabitant. The initial lair, the dungeon tier increasing, and discoveries are the only ways creature lairs can be added. If you manage to come into control of a creature besides those gained in the above ways, you can place them within your dungeon but once they're dead, you lose them forever. Additional creature lairs can't be built as your hoard can only support creatures determined by the dungeon tier or specific, self-sufficient lairs that already existed underground that you discovered.

Creatures are generally quite unwilling to venture outside of their lairs. If you do manage to coax a creature out, its effectiveness in whatever you're doing with it is determined by rolling its tier as a fortune roll.

CREATURE CREATION

When a creature is attracted to your dungeon, you decide what kind of monster it is. You choose its type, how many of them there are, and give it two traits that help describe the way it behaves. When a new creature lair is built, one player must write it down in the dungeon duties section of their character sheet. They're responsible for narrating that lair's creature or knowing when a new creature is attracted to the dungeon.

A single creature might represent a swarm of insects, a pack of beasts, or some other group. Their total impact is equal to their tier, so the higher the creature's tier, the larger the group or more powerful the individual creature is.

Creatures are unintelligent - natural or magical beasts, undead, fungi, oozes, and the like. After you have chosen the creature, you give it two traits from the following list or make up your own that better describe it:

CLEVER - CORRUPTED - CORROSIVE - DISEASED - INCORPOREAL - FLAMING
FREEZING - MAGICAL - OOZING - SNEAKY - STRONG - SWARMING - TERRIFYING
TIRELESS - VENOMOUS

Traits give you a hook to pull into the fiction when describing how they face off versus adventurers or cause problems during calamity. Here are some examples:

Basilisk (strong - terrifying)

Lava snake (flaming - strong)

Clockwork warrior (clever - tireless)

Skeletons (corrupted - tireless)

Ghost (freezing - incorporeal)

Sludge monster (corrosive - oozing)

Giant snapping turtle (sneaky - strong)

Swarm of bats (terrifying - swarming)

Giant scorpion (strong - venomous)

Zombie horde (swarming - terrifying)





MINIONS

Minions are packs of minor monsters, usually humanoids, that can follow your orders. Each player has one minion slot which they can fill with minions by paying gold to hire them or coercing them to join with a downtime action, going on a raid, or by some other means. Once they're a part of your dungeon, the hoard covers their sustenance and in return, they guard your dungeon halls. The hoard can only support one pack of minions per player. If you pay them a little extra, they even work on downtime projects or accompany you on a raid.

Minions always come in packs. They're generally nameless monsters that operate in small groups which you treat as a single entity. They take -effect when separated.

Your minion pack acts as a secondary PC. You play as them during dungeon defense, scenes inside your dungeon, and when you bring them on raids.

Minions are like weaker versions of Wicked Ones. You make action rolls to determine how effective they are. Here are some key differences:

- Minions have a primary action (2d) and two secondary actions (1d) chosen when you recruit them. They roll 0d on other actions.
- They don't have stress and can't resist.
- They don't gain xp, though you can upgrade them with gold.
- They can be paid 1 gold to perform a downtime action or go with you on a raid.
- They don't take shock, instead getting knocked out of scenes or bloodied when they would otherwise take shock.
- They take -1d to all rolls while bloodied and clear bloodied only on recovery.
- They can almost always avoid being destroyed by exiting a scene without a roll, running away, getting knocked out, or so on.
- They can gain **morale** which you can spend to take +1d on an action or fortune roll. Morale is gained from **calamity rolls**, but the GM can also award minions with morale when there is an outstanding moment in the story or the PCs take specific action to improve it. Minions can only have one morale at a time.

RECRUITING MINIONS

You can recruit minions by spending 1 gold or performing a downtime action. Either way, you need a plausible way to get minions to come into your dungeon. Look at the factions around you or talk with the GM to see what other monsters might be on the map to find a good source of minions. When re-recruiting minions, it's sometimes easiest to keep all of the details the same and narrate how you replenish their ranks.

- *Your vile friend knows a slaver that sells you a pair of ogres.*
- *You head to a nearby orc tribe and call in a favor the chief owes you.*
- *You raid a kobold village, pressing everyone you can grab into service.*



CREATING MINIONS

When you recruit minions, you need to answer the following questions to flesh out the minion pack:

- How many are in the pack? (2-5)
- What race are they?
- What job are they filling?
- What's their primary action?
- What are their secondary actions?
- What's their dark impulse?
- Do you want to pay for upgrades?

MINION PACK
MORALE ☒ BLOODIED ☒

#
RACE

TYPE

ACTIONS
☐ SCAN
☐ TINKER
☒ TRICK
☒ FINESSE
☒ SKULK
☐ SMASH
☐ BANTER
☐ INVOKE
☐ THREATEN

UPGRADES (1 GOLD EACH)
☐ ADEPT
☐ COMPANION
☒ EQUIPPED *detection* ☐
☐ EXPENDABLE
☐ FLUENT
☐ MINDSET
☐ STRAPPED ☐
☐ TRAINED
☐ VERSATILE

DARK IMPULSE: ADDICTED - AGGRESSIVE - DISLOYAL
☒ GREEDY - IMPATIENT - LAZY - MOODY - SUPERSTITIOUS

Minions come in packs and are always members of the same **race**. Establish the **number of minions** in the pack. It might be as few as two powerful monsters, like a pair of ogres, or it might be as many as five smaller creatures. Then, choose a **job** which gives them a strong core concept and identity plus any basic gear they need for that job. Here are some example jobs:

ACOLYTES - ALCHEMISTS - BUILDERS - CUTTHROATS - ENVOYS - GRUNTS
 MAGES - MINERS - PRIESTS - RAIDERS - SCOUTS - THIEVES - TRAPPERS
 TRICKSTERS - WITCHES - WORKERS

Next, assign one **primary action** (2d) and two **secondary actions** (1d) to the minions. Their job title is likely to influence this, such as builders having SMASH or TINKER or scouts having SCAN or SKULK. If you give them INVOKE, you must also choose a path of magic that they can cast from. They can only cast tier 1 spells of that path.

Then, give your minions a **dark impulse** likely to pull them away from the tasks you've given them. Minion impulses tend to be substantially more disruptive, troublesome, or petty than Wicked Ones impulses. The GM can look to these impulses when deciding the consequences of action rolls or what trouble your minions might cause during a bad calamity in the dungeon. Here are some examples impulses:

ADDICTED - AGGRESSIVE - DISLOYAL - GREEDY - IMPATIENT
 LAZY - MOODY - SUPERSTITIOUS

You can then add **upgrades** from the list on the next page by spending gold. Finally, minions always gain **morale** when recruited.

UPGRADES

Upgrades are additional advantages that your minions have. Each upgrade costs 1 gold and you can add them during the lurking phase. This gold represents resources directed from your hoard to recruit higher quality minions or provide them with additional training, equipment, or motivation that improves their usefulness to the dungeon. If your minions are destroyed, you lose any upgrades they had.

- *Adept*: Your minions can cast a single tier 2 spell once per cycle. They take -1d on this as normal, but don't have to pay stress.
- *Equipped*: Your minions gain a defense of your choice from their gear.
- *Expendable*: Your minions don't need to be re-recruited with gold or a downtime action when destroyed. There are always more around, replenishing on recovery, and keep this upgrade when they come back. They cannot have any other upgrades besides those granted by a room or ability.
- *Fluent*: Your minions can speak the Light Tongue, but with a strong accent.
- *Mindset*: Your minions have a mental edge, which might be considered as a circumstance towards position and effect (choose one): *fearless* - *loyal* - *zealous*. You can also make up your own.
- *Strapped*: Your minions have 1 supply slot which can be used to access anything from your supply.
- *Trained*: Your minions take +1d on a specific type of downtime project (choose one): *brew* - *build* - *contact* - *craft* - *incant* - *recruit* - *torture*.
- *Versatile*: Your minions have another primary (2d) and two more secondary (1d) actions.

Companion is a special upgrade only available to minion packs gained through calling abilities. When you first select the ability, they're automatically recruited. They will always join a raid without asking for gold and you can decide what happens to them when they're taken down. Maybe they were merely knocked out, ran away, or were actually killed. This gives them permission to live when other minions might not. They must still be recruited again as usual, including paying for any upgrades you previously bought for them. The gold or downtime action might represent tending their wounds or going out to find them.

MINIONS ARE CHARACTERS, TOO!

When roleplaying minions, it's important to remember that they have their own motivations. They're not just an extension of your PC, they're a second character. The pack as a whole has a group personality. Try to lean into this concept and their expendable nature when narrating their actions!



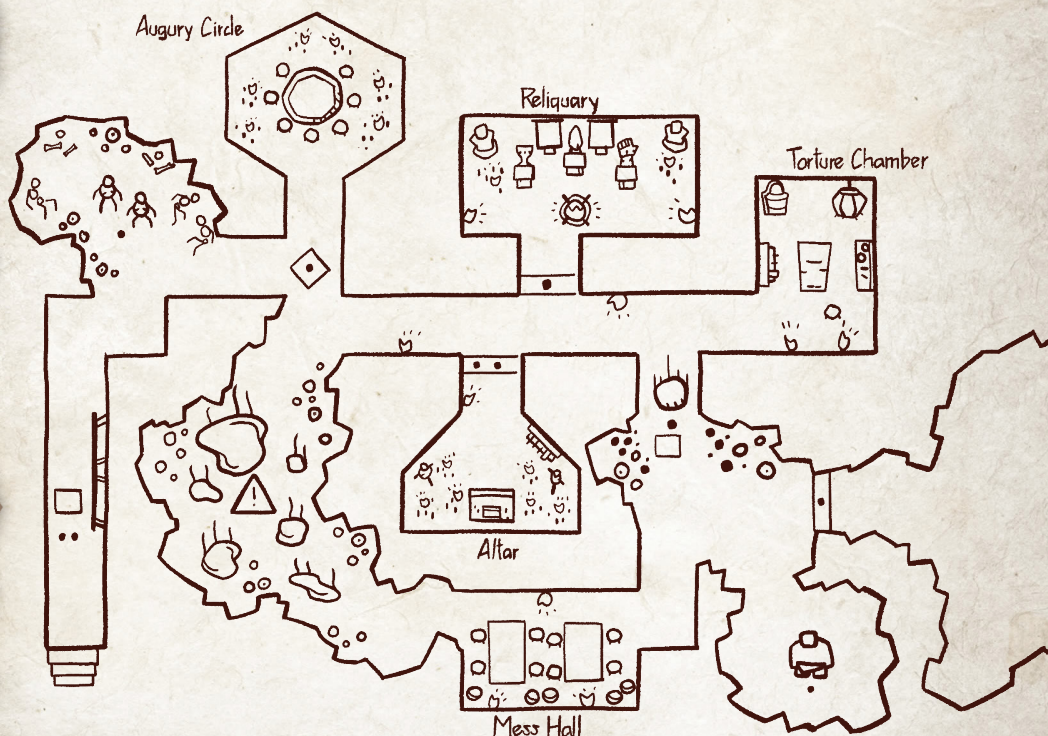
DUNGEON LAYOUT

There's a lot going on inside of dungeons such as rooms, traps, tunnels, tricks, locks, and lairs. You and your minions build all of these during the lurking phase with downtime projects. You start off with a subterranean cavern or some other entrance from the overworld and branch out, adding on bit by bit as your dungeon extends deeper and deeper into the earth.

Everything in your dungeon must be connected by passages large enough for most monsters to make their way through. Anytime you build something, you can connect it to the rest of the dungeon with a short tunnel.

Hidden or smaller passages are fine as auxiliary pathways, but they're certainly not fit for day to day traffic. Any regularly used hidden tunnels are sure to have plenty of tracks that give them away and smaller passages might fit a tiny kobold, but they'll prove a hindrance to any minions that have to carry something.

Building rooms and crafting traps, tricks, and locks are done as downtime projects during the lurking phase. When building, don't sweat the small stuff. There are no exact rules for measurements. Just draw what feels right, looking at the drawing guide to get a sense for what feels best.



ROOMS & STRUCTURES

Rooms and structures are the backbone of your dungeon, providing space to live, a place to house tricks and traps, and each room's function. While any dungeon can build tier 1 and 2 rooms, tier 3 rooms are specific to your dungeon theme.

TIER 1 ROOMS AND STRUCTURES

CRAWLWAY: A tiny passage that smaller creatures can move through fairly quickly, but is too tight for day to day laboring within the dungeon.

LONG TUNNEL: A simple, long passage used to connect areas of the dungeon.

MINOR ROOM: A simple room built only to please your minions and give your dungeon atmosphere, such as a mess hall, latrines, a skull filled corridor, or a garden. When you build one, all minions gain morale and you take +1d on your next calamity roll. Give it two atmospheric traits (choose two): *bright - cold - cluttered - crumbling - dim - echoing - hot - noisy - silent - smelly - spooky*.

SECRET TUNNEL: A hidden passage that will likely go unnoticed unless recently used.

TRAVERSE: A bridge, ladder, rope, swing, pulley lift, or other similar structure that allows safe passage over tough terrain.

WINDOW: A hole in a wall between caverns, rooms, or tunnels.

TIER 2 ROOMS & STRUCTURES

GUARD POST: Assign a single pack of minions to this room. They can always start dungeon defense here regardless of their starting position roll.

MINION LAIR: Assign a single pack of minions to this room. These minions get morale each recovery and take +1d when defending the room against invaders. Give it two atmospheric traits from the minor room list.

PRISON: A room with 4 cells that can contain prisoners, who can't escape without opportunity. If invaders enter the prison, make a fortune roll equal to the dungeon tier to determine whether prisoners can be freed and if they join the invaders.

STAIRWAY: Add another level to your dungeon, with the sanctum remaining at the bottom. This stairway connects them.

TORTURE CHAMBER: You gain +position or +effect (your choice) when torturing.

TIER 3 ROOMS

Each dungeon theme has a set of tier 3 rooms that you can build, but you can also build a single tier 3 room from another dungeon theme's list with your dungeon's flexibility slot. Building a tier 3 room is an 8-segment downtime project, though you also have to gain some relevant materials to finish off the room. Materials are some supplies that are relevant to that specific room. They almost always require going on a raid to acquire them. The exact nature of what materials a room requires is up to the players and the GM, though each tier 3 room lists a few examples after it.

TRAPS

Traps are static, well-hidden defenses that are meant to surprise and maim any unwary adventurer wandering your halls. Each trap consists of a mechanism which details what the trap does and a trigger which details what sets it off. The player in charge of the trap narrates the results of the trap roll. Trap rolls deal damage as if they were ticking a clock, with each tick doing half a heart of damage.



TRAP ROLLS

Roll the trap's tier to determine how effective it is against the invaders that triggered it.



Failure: The trap is disabled or avoided by the adventurers.

Mixed: You damage an adventurer of the GM's choice.

Success: You damage an adventurer of your choice. Roll again.

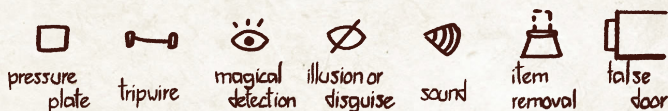
Critical: You damage two adventurers of your choice. Roll again.

❖ You can't damage the same adventurer twice in a row unless they're alone.

The **mechanism** details how the trap is effective against invaders. Choose from the mechanisms below or make up your own:



The **trigger** is how the trap is activated. Depending on the nature of the trigger, some adventurers might not even activate it such as a levitating mage not setting off a pressure plate. Choose from the triggers below or make up your own:



Traps are rated from tier 1 to tier 3, based on how deadly they are and chosen by the player when it's crafted. A tier 1 trap is somewhat easy to avoid, such as a doorknob trapped with a poison needle. Tier 2 traps are deadly, like a giant swinging blade attached to a pressure plate. Tier 3 traps are the deadliest, likely to affect multiple adventurers, like a tripwire that releases an enormous rolling stone ball.



TRICKS

Tricks are subtle ways to get adventurers to do what you want or create advantageous situations for your dungeon. They don't tick adventurer hearts, instead letting you play with the minds of the invaders. Each trick consists of a **method** which details how it fools adventurers, a **trigger** detailing when it activates, and an **intent** which details what happens when it works.



When adventurers encounter a trick, the player in charge of it rolls its tier as a fortune roll and narrates what happens based on the results. The GM can step in to scale the effectiveness up or down to better match the result if needed.

Tricks are rated from tier 1 to tier 3 based on how likely they are to work. The more likely it is to work, the higher its tier is. This is decided by the player when crafting the trick. A trick might be something like the following, with the method and intent listed after each example in parenthesis:

*A string with metal pieces tied across it that jingles when kicked.
(warning string - move past it - alert all minions to presence)*

*A pool of water that fools adventurers into leaving heavy armor behind.
(pool of water - move through it - remove armor)*

*A tied up prisoner that screams for help, drawing adventurers towards them.
(tied up prisoner - prisoner hears noise - recklessly follow the sound)*

*A winding maze that splits up the adventuring party.
(maze - enter it - split up the party)*

*A statue that grabs onto them, allowing imps to snatch a potion.
(statue - look at it - use up an adventurer move)*

*Moving lights from around a corner that make them snuff torches.
(lights - enter the hallway - proceed in darkness)*

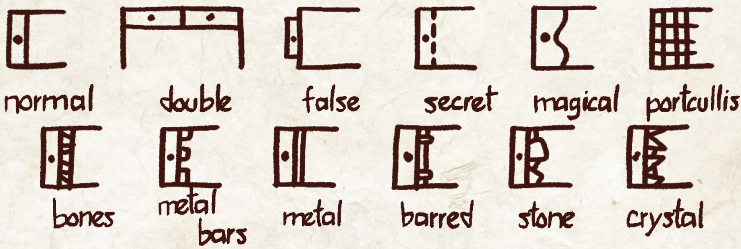
*Glowing moss in a cavern that rubs off on adventurers.
(glowing moss - move through cavern - make adventurers glow)*

*A dazzling waterfall that distracts adventurers as minions sneak up on them.
(dazzling waterfall - stop to look - don't watch own back)*

A trick can never lead an adventurer into a situation they can't escape from. Once some time has passed, they finally overcome it somehow and move on. These types of tricks buy you time or an advantageous situation, but they're temporary. Remember that adventurers are incredibly crafty and even if they're stuck down a pit trap or chained to a wall, given a bit of time, they're likely to find a way out. You can also never trick an adventurer into leaving your dungeon completely.

LOCKS

Locks are used to buy time while defending to set up proper defenses, maneuver around your dungeon, or beat a hasty retreat. They also serve to push adventurers away from sensitive areas. It's best to remember that locks won't keep adventurers out forever - given enough time and determination, adventurers can push their way through any lock in front of them. When a lock pushes the invaders away, they go on another path until there are no paths besides the locked one. They then double back and encounter the lock again. Each time they come against the lock, you make a lock roll, detailed later in the pathing section. Locks might alert nearby minions, give them time to set up ambushes, or keep sensitive areas safe.



Locks are rated from tier 1 to tier 3 depending on how difficult it is to get through it, with players deciding the tier of the lock when building it. Tier 1 locks are the simplest locks with limited reliability, such as a wooden bar holding a door shut. Tier 2 locks are straightforward and effective at keeping people out, such as a chained door with a padlock. Tier 3 locks are complex and formidable, such as a large steel portcullis with a pulley and password system.

When you build a lock, you first choose what kind of **door material** it is made of. You can choose from those below or make up your own:

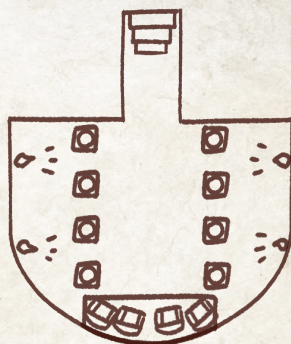
BARS - BONE - CRYSTAL - ICE - IRON - MAGICAL FIELD - ROOTS - STONE - WOOD

Next, you select what the **lock mechanism** is. Make sure to note these down under dungeon duties and the player who builds them should narrate what happens after the lock roll is made. Below are some examples, or you can think of your own:

ARCANE - BAR - BOLT - HEAVY OBJECT - MORTISE LOCK - PADLOCK - PASSWORD
PRESSURE PLATE - PULLEY - PUZZLE - RIM LOCK - TIMED

SANCTUM

The Wicked Ones spend most of their time in the second level of the dungeon, called the sanctum. You don't defend the first level. That's a job below you, meant for your minions, creatures, and defenses. The denizens of your dungeon expect as much. They know that this is their role. For this reason, the Wicked Ones can't leave the sanctum during dungeon defense as doing so would risk upsetting the dungeon hierarchy.



Your sanctum is a large room representing the heart of your dungeon. It houses the lion's share of your hoard and should reflect the style of leadership the PCs bring to the dungeon. It also makes for a convenient place to entertain and impress other evil entities or conduct rituals.

At the end of your dungeon's first floor, there are stairs leading downwards towards your sanctum. As your dungeon grows, you can reposition these stairs to the new "end" of your dungeon. You can do so during downtime and it does not require a downtime action.

THE BOSS FIGHT

The sanctum's main purpose is to be the location of the boss fight, the titanic struggle waiting at the end of the dungeon for the adventurers. As they come down the stairway, you roll engagement to set up the scene. **The Wicked Ones can't leave the sanctum and can't interact with the first floor's dungeon defenses.** Doing so would show immediate weakness to the minions and cause a revolt as your creatures try to wrestle leadership from you and establish the proper dungeon hierarchy. This creates a very clear difference between the first and second level of your dungeon, allowing each to have their own unique scenes within the defense.

PRIVATE LAIRS

The PCs need a place to lay their head, but lairing near the other denizens of the dungeon would make you appear weak. Each PC has their own private lair extending off of the sanctum. This does not need to be drawn on the map. PCs can set scenes within their lairs to flesh them out as important parts of the story or handwave them as just background details.

POWER STRUGGLES AND RAID PLANS

The sanctum makes for a convenient location to set most scenes involving power struggles or raid planning. It's meant to be the power center of your dungeon. The more detail you put into it, the more interesting later boss fights become.



DISCOVERIES

As you dig into the earth, you're bound to run across other things underground such as rivers, lakes, lava flows, remnants of old structures, and horrible creatures best left buried. When your dungeon tier increases, you make a discovery as your imps find something underground while they clear out space for your dungeon. The GM rolls to find out how beneficial it is for you. Discoveries may come at other times that the GM deems appropriate as well, such as after several new additions have been made to the dungeon or as the result of calamity.

When you make a discovery, the GM makes a fortune roll (usually 2d) to see how beneficial or harmful it is for your dungeon, then decides on something appropriate that you found underground. A critical counts as two successes!

The exact nature of what you find is up to the GM, though they can roll on the table on the right to set the basic category, use the more detailed tables on the next few pages, or come up with something on their own. Discoveries are drawn by the GM and introduce randomness into the dungeon. They tend to come towards the "end" of your dungeon, extending it further into the deep. If a discovery needs to be represented mechanically, such as being a creature, a room, or so on, work with the GM to figure it out when it's discovered.

DISCOVERIES

- 1 Earth Formation
- 2 Liquid Formation
- 3 Forgotten Structure
- 4 Resource / Stockpile
- 5 Creature / NPC
- 6 Magic / Science

A **success** should clearly improve the dungeon or make the PCs lives better. They're usually placed in the perfect area to best help out the dungeon.

This might be a long tunnel leading to a friendly dark faction, a tier 3 room from another dungeon theme, a stash of potions, or a hidden exit to the surface.

A **mixed** should be light in impact, perhaps a little good or bad for the PCs depending on how they respond to it. They're usually placed in areas of slight inconvenience.

This might be a neutral creature that only attacks if you approach it, an underground river, some abandoned tunnels, or a shared supply of coal.

A **failure** should clearly hurt your dungeon, causing immediate problems for you or making dungeon defense more difficult. They're almost always placed in positions that make it easier for invaders to bypass defenses or interfere with your layout.

This might be a tunnel full of dwarves mining, a cavern with noxious gas that flows into your dungeon, a cursed trove of magic items, or a giant spider that demands food.



TYPES OF DISCOVERIES

While discoveries underground can be anything the GM thinks would make for interesting gameplay, the following six categories help imagine what's possible.

- **Earth Formations:** Naturally occurring formations of stone and dirt that are typically found in underground cave systems.
These are things like crystal caverns, winding tunnels, deep holes, and new entrances to your dungeon.
- **Liquid Formations:** Naturally or unnaturally occurring liquid flows and pools.
These are things like rivers, lakes, geysers, ooze, tar pits, or lava.
- **Forgotten Structures:** Ancient remnants of dungeons and underground bastions that you dig up and incorporate into your own dungeon.
These are things like dungeon rooms, bridges, winding corridors, or crypts full of the dead.
- **Resource / Stockpile:** Naturally growing plants or fungus, ores, or goods buried and hidden by others.
These are things like mushroom filled tunnels, a fantastic fishing spot, a vein of iron ore, or buried treasure.
- **Creatures / NPCs:** Wild animals, monstrous beings, and new factions that might be either friendly or hostile towards your dungeon.
These are things like burrowing beasts, a hive of giant bugs, lost adventurers, imprisoned beings, or an underground colony.
- **Magic / Science:** Wild arcane phenomenon, persistent magical effects, or discarded technology left buried or intentionally hidden in the deep.
These are things like portals, power cores, automatons, or puzzles.

HAZARDS

A hazard is a discovery, such as those above, that is dangerous to both the dungeon denizens and any invaders. They're marked with the symbol to the right on the map. Hazards might be modelled as a trap, a trick, or simply a fortune roll to see what happens when you or the invaders interact with it in some way.



USE DISCOVERIES TO THWART THE PERFECT DUNGEON

Discoveries are a great tool for the GM to interfere with the plans of their players. No dungeon is complete without its share of weird tunnels and caverns stemming off of it and connecting to other areas of the dungeon. Mix things up by introducing rivers, lava flows, or large chasms blocking expansion in some direction. Even good discoveries could open up an interesting new cavern, but unfortunately provide an easier passage to sensitive areas.



"SUCCESS" DISCOVERIES

- 11 The remnants of an old dungeon's sanctum, with a small hoard. Everyone makes a 3d loot roll.
 - 12 A room that belonged to a desecrated temple to the god of stoneworking. (random tier 3 Temple room)
 - 13 A perfectly spherical room, in the center of which floats a rapidly spinning anti-gravity contraption.
 - 14 A long tunnel leading off the map to a neighboring dungeon, which seems willing to work together.
 - 15 A large bat colony, a creature that also gives you a steady supply of guano. (creature)
 - 16 An enormous cache of old weaponry that gives you a shared supply of weapons, plus one large ballista.
 - 21 The remnants of a centipede rodeo, with several giant centipedes still living here. (creature)
 - 22 A room that belonged to an old gnomish inventor. (random tier 3 Forge room)
 - 23 A long tunnel leading off the map, the entrance to a dark elf conclave. They deal in magic secrets.
 - 24 A pool of pitch black water, home to dark faeries, which heals the bloodied condition once per cycle.
 - 25 A plain room with an entrance and three exits. Each exit teleports you to a different spot in the dungeon.
 - 26 A natural cave perfectly suitable as a minion lair, which also has a steady supply of food. (tier 2 room)
 - 31 A lava river flowing through your dungeon, perfectly protecting a previously vulnerable area.
 - 32 A room that belonged to an old revolutionary base. (random tier 3 Hideout room)
 - 33 An old river port with a few boats. The river connects to several dark underground factions far away.
 - 34 Anyone of good heart that drowns in this pool returns as a ghoul, a tier 2 creature under your control.
 - 35 A slime pit, spewing extra slime imps. Your imps take +1d on their downtime action.
 - 36 A cell containing an ancient, imprisoned vampire who is willing to remain friendly if you let them go.
 - 41 A small mining colony of dwarves lie beyond a thin wall at the end of this tunnel, completely unaware.
 - 42 A room that belonged to an old dwarf fortress. (random tier 3 Stronghold room)
 - 43 A large, incredibly cold ice cavern, with sharp icicles hanging from high above.
 - 44 A series of old crypts, filled with the dead. You can recruit *expendable* zombie minions here for free.
 - 45 A statue of a forgotten god. Any PC who takes up worshipping it gains an extra dark heart slot.
 - 46 A buried trove of potions which gives you three shared supplies, each of a random potion.
 - 51 A one-way portal from the dungeon to a hidden, very valuable location within the sandbox.
 - 52 A perfectly placed tunnel leading to a small pool full of polished skulls. (tier 1 minor room)
 - 53 An old torture chamber with an immortal celestial being strapped into the rack. (tier 2 room)
 - 54 A two-way portal from the dungeon to a hidden neutral location within the sandbox.
 - 55 A magical chamber which prevents any injuries suffered here from persisting when you exit.
 - 56 A room that belonged to a long-dead witch's coven. (random tier 3 Enclave room)
 - 61 The Orb of Storms, a tier 3 magic item, rests on a pedestal in the center.
 - 62 A motherlode of gems sit on an ancient throne, giving each PC two gold.
 - 63 A large treasure chest sits in the center of the room. However, when you approach, the mimic smiles.
 - 64 The lair of an enormous, intelligent snake that seems to want to co-exist.
 - 65 A cave that looks like it was once a workshop but was blown up, and a random tier 3 contraption.
 - 66 A room with a trove of books that allow you to establish three secret facts about the history of the region.
- ❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

"MIXED" DISCOVERIES

- 11 Delicious glowing mushrooms line the walls of this tunnel, giving you a steady supply.
- 12 A lake of bubbling acid fills the air in this cavern with noxious fumes.
- 13 A swift river crashes into large, jagged rocks that form a less-than-reliable bridge.
- 14 A buried cache left by bandits, giving you a shared supply of liquor and tobacco.
- 15 A small creek of pure blood winding its way out of a wall, down a tunnel, and into another wall.
- 16 This cavern is full of sentient fungi which devour magic, causing it to be severely weakened here.
- 21 A meandering underground river full of large, aggressive salamanders.
- 22 A cavern with a very high ceiling that creates enormous echoing effects, shaking your dungeon.
- 23 A lake with a large, moving whirlpool which teleports anyone sucked in to a random spot in the dungeon.
- 24 The ruins of an ancient shipwreck with zombie pirates inside. They can't leave the wreck.
- 25 A cavern filled with crystals that send dazzling lights everywhere.
- 26 An old prison with two of its locks rusted away and the skeletons of giants in the cells.
- 31 A perfectly square room within which hang dozens of glowing magical spheres.
- 32 An old gnome farm, complete with artificial lighting that gives you a steady supply of carrots.
- 33 A round room with magnetic walls, making it incredibly difficult to move around inside it with metal.
- 34 Throughout this long, winding tunnel, you can hear the mad whispers of the one that built it.
- 35 A small system of tunnels that produce incredibly confusing echoes while within them.
- 36 Ancient crypt tunnels with many tombs, some of which that have been broken into and looted.
- 41 A slow-flowing river with a perfect fishing spot that gives you a steady supply of cavefish.
- 42 An old storage room that's mostly underwater. Old crates and barrels float around within it.
- 43 A small cavern with a very high ceiling that has been worn away by the geyser in the center of the room.
- 44 A lava flow which extends from one side of the map to the other, along which travel magmin traders.
- 45 A second entrance to your dungeon opens up in a relatively safe location.
- 46 A hole lies in the center of this large cavern, from which freezing cold air flows in and creates snow.
- 51 A series of tunnels filled with cracked mirrors lining the walls, confusing anyone who enters.
- 52 Bags of opals litter the floor along this twisting tunnel, giving you a shared supply.
- 53 A small cavern that is filled with a natural garden created with the sunlight shining in from above.
- 54 A waterfall of mud cascading down the side of a large cavern, then flowing off to the edge of the map.
- 55 A large waterfall emptying into a lake, creating rainbow patterns in the air when light hits it.
- 56 A simple square room with a magical darkness in it so thick that no light can penetrate it.
- 61 A cavern full of stalactites from which drip a glowing ooze that puddles below them.
- 62 A zigzagging cavern full of holes in the walls from which smoke billows.
- 63 A deep, dark hole that has a small shining light at the bottom of it.
- 64 A maze of tunnels missing its long-dead minotaur.
- 65 A two-way portal to a hidden, but mostly useless location within the region.
- 66 A pit that seeps gases from the deep, ever-burning with a bright blue flame.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

"FAILURE" DISCOVERIES

- 11 Aggressive mold rapidly attacks any food carried through this room.
- 12 A small, circular cavern with a hole in the top that leads straight to the surface.
- 13 Small tunnels with cave pixies in holes scattered along their walls, who will steal from evil beings.
- 14 A wide river with a current too strong to swim across limits your dungeon's expansion.
- 15 The storage room of an ancient gnomish inventor which houses a large, hostile automaton.
- 16 An ancient sanctuary, once belonging to a cathedral, which nobody of evil heart can enter.
- 21 In the center of this room is a large block of rapidly melting ice which imprisons a heroic sorceress.
- 22 A bubbling tar pit that spews awful smells inconveniently situated within your dungeon.
- 23 A large hole in the wall, from which spews huge amounts of smoke that drift through your dungeon.
- 24 A natural tunnel that connects two or three vulnerable areas to each other.
- 25 A river with a massive cave gator in it that randomly snatches anyone that wanders too close.
- 26 A tunnel leading to the entrance to a giant ant colony preparing to invade your dungeon.
- 31 A buried cell with an imprisoned devil inside that demands you surrender control of your dungeon.
- 32 A tunnel with a hole in the center of the end wall which carnivorous worms occasionally emerge from.
- 33 A hallway full of heroic statues which, if disturbed, might come alive and attack you or join an invasion.
- 34 This chamber houses a sentient holy relic which alerts members of the faith nearby of its discovery.
- 35 A barrel of explosive reagents in this old storeroom detonates, destroying tunnels and dungeon walls.
- 36 A lava river that occasionally spits out magma elementals who run through your dungeon starting fires.
- 41 A tunnel leading to an underground rebel base, led by the local lord's illegitimate daughter.
- 42 A magical statue of a forgotten god which bloodies anyone of evil heart when they enter this room.
- 43 A one-way portal leading into your dungeon from a well-protected area outside it.
- 44 A shrine of vigor which replenishes a single adventurer move per cycle. It's very volatile if destroyed.
- 45 A dark dwarf encampment set up as the forward advance of a much larger settlement below.
- 46 A rift with the two sides slowly grinding against each other. Any additional movement causes quakes.
- 51 A brackish lake filled with cvesharks that blocks the expansion of your dungeon.
- 52 A complex web of crawlways that connect to several vulnerable points within your dungeon.
- 53 A gnomish inventory's hidden laboratory and copper mine, filled with working constructs.
- 54 A health shrine which replenishes a single adventurer heart per cycle. It's very volatile if destroyed.
- 55 A windy cavern full of mushrooms whose poisonous spores occasionally waft through your dungeon.
- 56 A large ooze pit that feasts on bodies, becoming highly unstable when left hungry for too long.
- 61 A giant hole with strong winds flowing out of it and through your dungeon.
- 62 A hostile mind-controlling crystal rests on fabulous rugs and pillows.
- 63 A tunnel full of mushrooms that douse you in hallucinogenic spores.
- 64 A second entrance to your dungeon opens up in a terrible location.
- 65 An enormous slime pit that throws slime balls at anyone traveling over it.
- 66 The nest of a huge spider which will feed on your minions if not placated.



DRAWING GUIDE

The dungeon serves as a maze for adventurers to get lost in. Drawing it out will help bring it to life and keep everyone on the same page while setting scenes inside of it. The dungeon is drawn out on the **dungeon sheet**, giving you an easy to use grid to work off of while drawing it.

Drawing the dungeon works best if everyone gets involved and takes turns drawing. You don't have to be an artist. Just drawing out simple squares and circles is enough. Having everyone get involved makes the dungeon feel like it belongs to everyone and makes for a more interesting, chaotic dungeon as you'll have multiple minds at work in the planning. If there's no quick volunteer to draw a new addition, the GM should just point to someone to draw it.

Drawing the dungeon is meant to be fun. It doesn't have to be a masterpiece and shouldn't really be about drawing skill. It just needs to get the point across. However, if a player doesn't enjoy drawing, they can ask another player to draw for them! Getting pushed way outside of your creative comfort zone isn't fun at all.

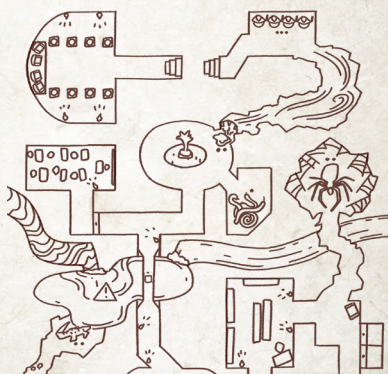
This drawing guide is broken up into two drawing styles: **basic** and **detailed**. The actual drawing guides can be found over the next few pages, but the styles and their merits are discussed below. You're not required to follow either of these guides, of course! They're just there to help give you some ideas.

The **basic drawing style** makes sure that almost anyone can draw the dungeon. It consists of straight lines, simple shapes, and dots which represent all of the important, required mechanics of the dungeon. It provides a visually clean dungeon which is easy to understand at a glance.

This style works very well if you then add details by making notes around each area. If a dungeon room is full of old boxes, making a note of that helps you remember it during play!

The **detailed drawing style** delves into making your dungeon more visually interesting. You can follow the guide to decorate the dungeon, adding objects and clutter to areas that can then later be pulled into scenes taking place in those areas.

Having a visual reminder of what might be around you is a huge help when roleplaying as your PCs or minions. The more detail you can add to the dungeon, the more interesting the stories inside it become.



TIPS TO DRAWING BETTER DUNGEONS

- Tier is the most important piece of information about creatures, traps, tricks, and locks. No matter which style you choose to use, always note down the tier by writing a number of dots equal to the tier near the drawing.
- Dungeon rooms tend to be geometric shapes, looking like someone built them. Most discoveries drawn by the GM and many creature lairs have a natural look to them, such as the walls of a cavern or an old structure that has partially collapsed.
- Most dungeon rooms are between 3x3 and 5x5 squares in size. There's no strict rule on this, but this size tends to make for a balanced dungeon with plenty of space on the paper. The tunnels connecting them are generally 1 to 3 squares in length. Discoveries can be any size that the GM feels is appropriate. **All rooms must be connected to the dungeon by tunnels.**
- The sanctum is larger, usually 5x5 or more squares in size. Don't forget to draw a stairway connecting it to the first level as well. Adding details to your sanctum makes boss fights more interesting.
- Minions are not drawn on the map, since they move around the entire dungeon a lot. Imps are not generally drawn either, though sketching out some of them can be a nice reminder of their existence.
- Creatures should be drawn on the map. When drawing in the basic style, you should fill in the circle with the first letter of the creature to help remember what it is.
- When you draw a trick, it's usually just best to draw a trigger or some symbol representing it. Arrows that indicate intent also help you remember them.
- Keep in mind that your dungeon will grow over time away from the edge of the dungeon sheet that it started on.

BASIC STYLE



Creatures



Traps



Tricks

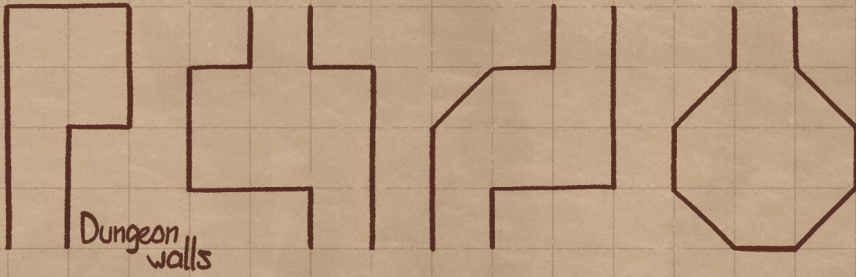


Locks

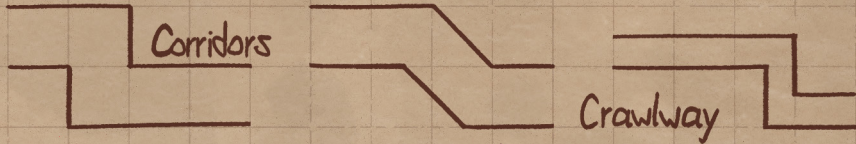
DETAILED STYLE



Basic Dungeons



Dungeon walls



Corridors

Crawlway

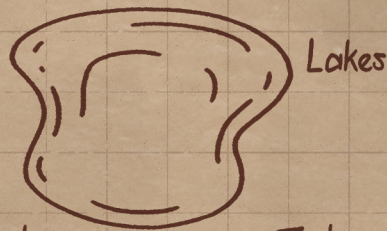


Cave walls

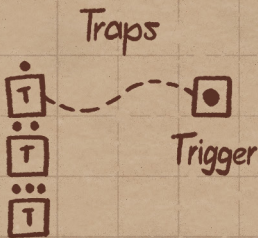
Natural Formations



Rivers



Lakes



Traps

Trigger



Creatures

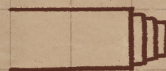


Tricks

Hazards



Locks



Stairs Down



Stairs Up



Torture Chamber

Alchemist Lab



Arrows

Spider



Factory



Batswarm



Noxious Gas Vents



Elementals

River

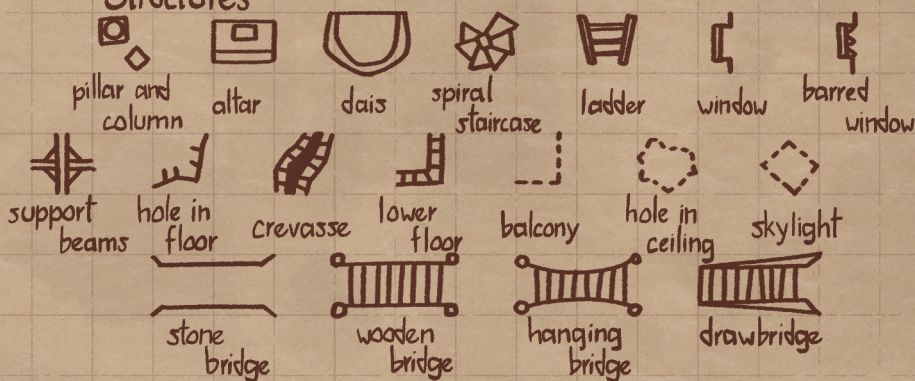


Sanctum

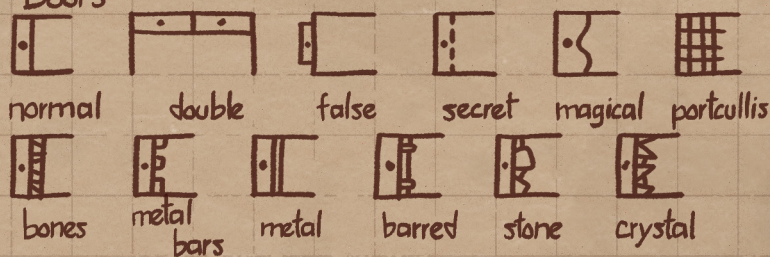
Tier 2 Dungeon
Forge

Detailed Dungeons

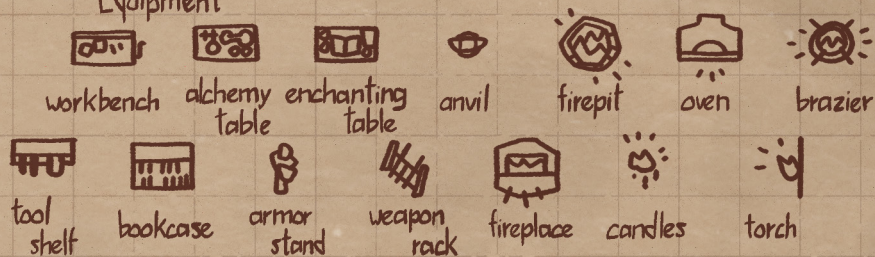
Structures



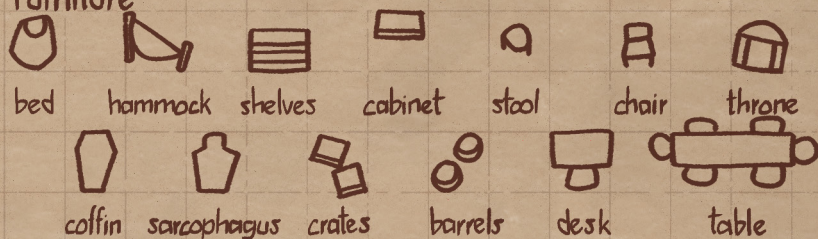
Doors



Equipment



Furniture



Decorations



Nature



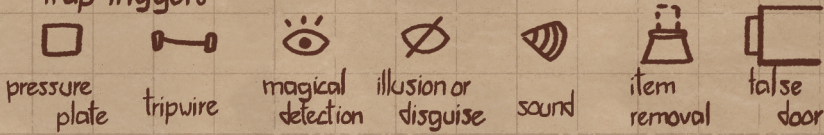
Miscellaneous



Trap Mechanisms



Trap Triggers



Creatures



Light Tongue Speakers



Dark Tongue Speakers



Treasure







DUNGEON DEFENSE

You've raided the overworld for its riches, used the hoard you've amassed to attract minions, built locks and traps to withstand invasion, and now it's time to put it all to the test and keep those pesky adventurers away from your gold.

Invasions usually occur due to bad blowback or calamity rolls as your actions in the overworld bring adventurers down upon you or problems within your dungeon alert them to your presence. Sometimes, events in the story might dictate an invasion is occurring, such as a faction clock filling or you giving away your dungeon's location to known enemies. They're generally undertaken by groups of adventurers coming to deal with the threat you pose to the region and plunder your hoard. At times, the adventurers may instead bring along a few hirelings to fill their ranks or the group invading your halls could be something else entirely, such as a hostile orc tribe, a huge mob of angry townsfolk, a powerful ghost, or a garrison from the local lord.

Dungeons are in hidden, isolated, or wild areas. The exact location of your dungeon is usually unknown to those on the surface. Most adventurers that wander into your halls are just following some rumors of monster activity in the area and head out in hopes of finding it and ridding the world of your evil.

INVASION

When invaders enter your dungeon, they're usually adventurers. Each adventurer has **hearts** that represent their willingness or ability to push forward. Dungeon defenses roll to damage these hearts, wearing away at the resolve or health of the invaders. When a defense works, it slashes these hearts. One slash is equivalent to a clock tick and two slashes takes out a heart. When adventurers have no more hearts, they're killed, knocked out, or run away.

Adventurers are incredibly strong foes and, when grouped, the only way to stop them is to send them through the gauntlet that is your dungeon's defenses. Adventurers might use their moves to disable or resist dungeon defenses. A move might completely negate the dungeon defense, such as a scout spotting a trap or a barbarian bashing down a locked door. At other times, it might merely reduce the effectiveness of the defense, dropping its tier by one or two. These are judgement calls by the GM. Adventurers' passives might also interact with dungeon defenses, such as a rogue reducing all locks in a dungeon by -1d.

Sometimes, adventurers will bring along **hirelings** to pad their numbers. A hireling has 1 heart and either has a passive or can make a single move. The GM may also choose to have other groups invade your dungeon halls and represent them with hearts, moves, and passives similar to adventurers or use clocks to show how difficult they are to overcome.

TYPES OF INVASIONS

There are two types of invasions, minor and major, usually determined by whether a blowback or calamity roll was a mixed or a failure.

A **minor invasion** happens as a result of minor blowback or calamity. It's an invasion that your dungeon is likely to be able to take care of easily. It's one or two adventurers wandering into your halls, maybe with a hireling or two tagging along. It might also be a few monsters that come sniffing around instead. Minor invasions act as good tests for your dungeon defenses and easy sources of loot.

A **major invasion** is an existential threat to your dungeon and happen as a result of major blowback or calamity. A powerful group of adventurers, usually equal in number to the PCs, come into your dungeon looking to rid the world of your foul presence. Major invasions are tracked by the GM and escalate in challenge over time.

Every major invasion is tougher than the last. Your dungeon tier sets the minimum tier of adventurer that will step foot into your dungeon, but there is no maximum tier. Each time there's a major invasion, a tougher group of adventurers comes after you. This is all tracked on the GM sheet.

Most invasions consist of 3 to 5 adventurers, usually the same number as there are PCs. The GM can send more for a harder invasion or swap out adventurers for hirelings to make it a little lighter. Adventurers can also be of different tiers.

When an invasion occurs, the GM selects some adventurers from the Gamemaster chapter to send at you or makes up their own. These adventurers might be connected to previous factions that you've tangled with, but also might just be randomly questing in your area and stumble upon your dungeon.

"The townsfolk gather together enough coin to hire the adventuring party at the tavern, telling them that you've been raiding the town for months. The adventurers search for a few hirelings to act as meat shields, then head off in search of your dungeon."

"A wandering group of adventurers, barely more than brigands really, make camp in the cave entrance to your dungeon. It takes them a while to notice the dungeon's locked door, but when they do, they get the bright idea that they should go in and check it out."

"The duke sends out a call for help, having been unable to handle your raids on his own. The greatest adventurers in the land gather and swear to the duke that they will rid the world of your foul presence, also looking forward to the rich reward he offers."

STARTING LOCATIONS

When an invasion occurs, the Wicked Ones are always located in the sanctum where they await the adventurers for the final boss battle. **Wicked Ones can't leave the sanctum during dungeon defense.** Whether they're even aware of the invasion occurring above them is determined by an engagement roll when the adventurers reach the end of the first level. Such worries are below the leaders of a dungeon and the reason that you hire minions and build defenses in the first place. When an invasion occurs, you need to figure out where the minions start off.

Starting Locations: You make a 1d roll for your minion pack to determine its starting location, narrating what you're doing when the invasion occurs.

"Ah, I rolled a mixed. I think my kobold scouts are going to be in their minion lair, but incredibly hungover. Their dark impulse is addicted after all."

Once you make the roll, it's up to you to decide where your minions start off based on the roll's results. Remember that minions are also affected by the repeated defenses rule, suffering -1d if the invaders face the same defense in a row, so it's a good idea to spread them out throughout the dungeon.

- ▶ A **success** starts you off in a good position. You begin in the exact dungeon room you want to be in with weapons nearby. You might be:
 - *In your lair, setting up an ambush for when they arrive.*
 - *Hiding behind a statue, waiting for an adventurer to trigger a trap.*
 - *Carrying one of your master's concoctions to them as you hear footsteps coming from outside.*
- ▶ A **mixed** starts you off in a less than ideal situation. You might not have weapons or maybe just not begin in a great location. You're likely busy doing some other task. You might be:
 - *Carrying boxes near your dungeon entrance where you spot the adventurers, but you left your weapons in the factory.*
 - *Working on digging out a room, pickaxes in hand, but unaware an invasion is occurring.*
 - *Patrolling the halls, perhaps even hearing something out of the ordinary, but not in a very good location.*
- ▶ A **failure** starts you off in a terrible position. You're far from the action, rather distracted by something you're doing, likely without weapons, or maybe even sleeping. The adventurers have a decisive advantage against you. You might be:
 - *Facing off against each other in the fighting pit as the imps cheer.*
 - *Laying in a hallway, asleep after a huge meal.*
 - *Carefully moving across the small bridge over the magma river.*

MINION AWARENESS

Dungeons are strange places and sounds travel in odd ways. Uneven cave walls cause strange echoes or even absorb sound. Smoother walls send sound funneling down hallways, but it can be next to impossible to discern where the sounds came from. Doors might even block sounds entirely, especially reinforced locked ones. If there are underground streams or lava flows, the constant background noise might swallow up the sounds of conflict.

Minions can't act on player knowledge until they become aware of invaders. They only become aware when invaders enter rooms directly adjacent to them or they are alerted by some other means. Once alerted, they can act.

Monsters tend to be a noisy bunch, filling the dungeons with the sounds of their work, revelry, bickering, and fighting. Sudden, violent clashes between dungeon denizens are commonplace. Digging sounds echo throughout the halls of the dungeon. The sounds of an imp screaming while a creature gobbles them down barely registers to minions. The clanging of metal as doors and traps are created or used is heard regularly. Such sounds hardly stand out to minions as unusual.

On top of this, adventurers usually try to move quietly, knowing the danger of alerting their enemies. Crafty adventurers might even use a move to set up traps, luring nearby minions to their demise or sending them off in the wrong direction.

Once your minions are alerted, you're free to act with them as you wish. You can now act on any information that you as a player have, even if the minions do not know it themselves. Don't get too wrapped up in who knows what - focus on setting up cool scenes and putting adventurer heads on spikes.

WHY CAN'T WICKED ONES LEAVE THE SANCTUM?

The Wicked Ones being restricted to the sanctum reinforces classic fantasy hack and slash dungeon themes surrounding minions and their masters. Dungeon logic dictates that masters wait deep within their dungeons, letting their minions and other defenses do the hard work. The Wicked Ones are far too busy with their own nefarious plots to concern themselves with the first level of the dungeon. And even if they did venture forth and try to save their minions, they would upset the dungeon hierarchy, likely triggering rebellion by showing their weakness. The first floor of the dungeon is the time for all of your defenses to shine! Focus on that and enjoy all of the hard work you've put into the dungeon.



PATHING

The GM controls the movement of the invaders through the dungeon. Generally, they enter through the dungeon's entrance and work their way through the dungeon towards the sanctum. However, invaders may have other motivations, or come in through other means. They could tunnel in through the side or maybe teleport in, though this is the exception rather than the norm.

As the invaders move through the dungeon, the GM narrates their movements. The invaders should feel skilled and their progress invasive. They're formidable foes coming after your hoard and wrecking your home. When there are multiple paths that the invaders can take, pathing is determined by a fortune roll.

Pathing: When there's a fork in the path, ask the players which way they want the adventurers to go and make a 1d fortune roll. On a mixed or success, they go the way the players want them to. On a failure, they go the other way.

When **locks** stand in the way of adventurers, you make a lock roll. This may repel the adventurers, sending them down other paths. Inevitably, adventurers will scour your dungeon, retreading paths and coming up against locked doors until they eventually overcome them. Tricks, traps, and locks can slow them down but only getting rid of all of their hearts can fully repel them. Otherwise, they keep pushing and testing your locks, eventually breaking through even if they have no moves remaining. They inevitably make their way towards your sanctum.

LOCK ROLLS

Roll the lock's tier, which decides whether the adventurers get past the door or sends them down another path.



Failure: They unlock the door and move past it.

Mixed: They go another way unless they have no other option.

Success: An adventurer wastes a move trying to open it, then they go another way unless they have no other option.

Critical: Each adventurer wastes a move trying to open it, then they go another way unless they have no other option.

❖ When there is no other way forward, roll again for the lock.

When the invaders come close to creatures, traps, or tricks, they activate. If they're roughly in the same room as a defense and haven't made specific efforts to avoid them, it activates the defense. Adventurers are also pulled into creature lairs.

When invaders first travel through a tier 3 room, they loot it, boosting their spirits. **Each adventurer recovers a heart slash when they leave the tier 3 room.**



DUNGEON DEFENSE NARRATION

The players are responsible for rolling for and narrating the dungeon's defenses, keeping in mind how the GM has narrated the adventurers moving through the dungeon. In this way, the dungeon feels like it belongs to you, not the GM. It's your home that you've put in the effort to build, so enjoy telling the story of how the defense plays out. Below are some examples of the form that narration might take, with examples for each roll result showing how the narrative bends to match the dice roll.

TRAP: *The adventurers activate a swinging blade / pressure plate trap.*

- **Failure:** *"The knight steps on the plate and the blade comes swinging down. He pivots and catches it on their shield, deflecting it away."*
- **Mixed:** *"The knight tries to catch it on his shield and prevents most of the damage, but the force smacks them in the face with the shield."*
- **Success:** *"The illusionist rushes forward past the knight, wanting to see what's ahead. Suddenly, they hear a "click." and the blade comes down, digging itself into their shoulder."*
- **Critical:** *"The illusionist rushes forward, barely missing the pressure plate. Halfway down the hall, they turn and tell the buccaneer to hurry up! It's the buccaneer that activates the trap, sending the swinging blade into both of them."*

TRICK: *The adventurers hear a tied up prisoner screaming for help.*

- **Failure:** *"The adventurers stop and listen, then give each other a solemn look. They know that man is already dead. They continue on the other path."*
- **Mixed:** *"They catch the sound and run towards it, responding more quickly than the minions planning an ambush. They actually reach the prisoner and untie them. The prisoner becomes a hireling, joining them. But now, the minotaur grunts charge from behind."*
- **Success:** *"They run towards the voice as fast as they can, completely unaware of the minotaur grunts about to ram them from a hallway they're about to pass."*
- **Critical:** *"The party argues, but the amazon thinks she knows that voice! It's her uncle. She takes off running, leaving her friends behind, and walks right into a minotaur axe swinging in from the side tunnel."*

LOCK: *The adventurers come across an ice door / puzzle lock.*

- **Failure:** *"The alchemist holds a torch up to the door, melting it in three specific spots. The ice cracks and falls to the floor in shards."*
- **Mixed:** *"The alchemist keeps trying to move the torch around to different spots, but can't quite figure out the problem. The barbarian grabs their shoulder and tells them to move on."*
- **Success:** *"The alchemist gets frustrated at the lock, throws aside their torch, and pulls out a firebomb. They launch it at the door. There's a big explosion, cloud, smoke, confusion - and then nothing. The door still stands. The party looks for another route."*
- **Critical:** *"As the smoke from the alchemist's bomb clears, the barbarian runs and throws all their strength into it. The door doesn't budge. The cleric convenes with their god, asking for a way through. After several moments of prayer, they walk over and try pulling the handle. It doesn't move. Finally, the chaos mage steps forward and opens their cloak. They hear ominous rumblings and look at each other confidently, thinking it's going to work. Just then, several shimmering butterflies float out of the cloak. The chaos mage shrugs sheepishly and moves down another tunnel."*

CREATURE: *The adventurers come across some terrifying/sneaky gargoyles lining the upper wall of a long, tall room.*

- **Failure:** *"The adventurers notice the statues lining the upper walls as gargoyles immediately. The gargoyles spring to life, but the archer peppers them with arrows."*
- **Mixed:** *"The archer manages to bring down most of them, but the barbarian in front still gets slashed across their face by one as it flies out of the room and runs away."*
- **Success:** *"They move through the room without noticing them. A creepy vibe hangs in the air, but the archer lets out a sigh of relief as they almost reach the other end. Suddenly, black claws grab them and haul them up in the air, flying around above the adventuring party."*
- **Critical:** *"Two gargoyles are flying around with the archer, carrying them by their arms. They divebomb the group and throw the archer straight into the monk. The gargoyles fly back up into the shadowed ceiling and disappear. The adventurers form a back-to-back circle in the center of the room and wait for the second wave."*



SANCTUM BATTLE

When the adventurers reach the stairway down, they prepare to push on and face their final battle versus the Wicked Ones. They know a big fight is coming and they head down the stairway prepared. But are the Wicked Ones ready for them? Engaged in their own nefarious doings, do they even know what has happened in the level above them?

The GM rolls engagement as soon as the adventurers reach the stairway. The engagement roll depends on how quickly the adventurers pushed through the dungeon, with longer meaning a better engagement roll for you.

The engagement roll sets the stage for the battle in the sanctum, determining the initial position the PCs find themselves in. After the roll, rewind a bit and the players narrate what their PCs were doing while the first floor was being cleared. If the engagement roll was a failure, the adventurers probably bust in on you while you're distracted in the middle of a scene. If it was a critical, you knew they were coming all along and the adventurers might walk right into your perfectly laid trap.

LOOT THE BODIES

Once you manage to stave off the invasion, fighting them off in the sanctum if it's necessary, it's time to rifle through the adventurers' possessions, dispose of the bodies, or deal with any prisoners. Depending on how an adventurer lost their last heart, you might be able to take them as a prisoner, though this usually requires a bit of forethought on the part of the players. More often than not, adventurers don't live through the traps, minions, creatures, and sanctum fight. When in doubt, the GM makes the call.

If an invasion occurred as the result of blowback, you add the loot dice from the invasion to your loot from the raiding phase. If it was the result of calamity, you instead make a second loot roll.

You take +1d to the roll for each adventurer that invaded your dungeon. If the invaders were not adventurers, the GM determines the size of the loot roll.

DESTRUCTION

Sometimes you don't make it through. Perhaps the adventurers busted in your front door, smashed through your defenses, left your bodies littered around your sanctum, and made off with your hoard. So how do you move on from this?

Maybe you don't - that could be the end of the game. Dungeons have a way of finding themselves cleaned out. That's what adventurers do after all. Part of the fun of building a dungeon is knowing the end is coming and seeing how long you can live in spite of that.





KILL THE TRESPASSERS

Having braved the twisted landscape surrounding the PCs' Enclave dungeon, a monk, a templar, and an inquisitor descend inside, looking to retrieve the abbey's missing books and put an end to the evil emanating from the forest.

GM Crag, your minions died on the last raid, so we don't need a roll from you. Slem, Ulrot, make a starting location roll for your minions.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE I don't need to roll, either. My orc raiders start out in the guard post.



Slem rolls 1d starting location and gets a success!

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

My goblin thieves were near the entrance and hear the adventurers coming, so they run back down the hallway past the "patrol" trick. They'll wait in ambush and hope it goes off.

GM Sounds good. Okay, these three come creeping into your dungeon. The monk's face is all scratched up from the thorns in the forest. They're hit by the earthy, mossy smell of the floors and walls as the firefly lamps cast dim yellow light through the halls. The templar accidentally steps on a mushroom imp, squishing it, sending the other imps fleeing in panic. Crag, let's see how the trap in this room goes.



Crag rolls 1d trap (magical detection - gas) and gets a success!

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

The dead, hollowed out tree on the far end of the room opens its eyes and spots the monk stumbling away as the mushroom imps run around their feet. With a groan, the tree opens its maw and spews poisonous fungal gases, catching the monk in the cloud. And I roll again...



Crag rolls 1d trap again and gets a mixed!

GM The inquisitor sees the tree moving and jumps to push the monk out of the way, getting caught by the fumes as well. That's 2 slashes for the monk and 1 for the inquisitor. Its poisonous gases spent, the tree just glares at the adventurers as they move on. Do you want them to go down the hallway or through the cave tunnel?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE Definitely down through the cave, towards the gators.



The GM rolls 1d pathfinding and gets a mixed!

GM Cool, they enter the cave tunnel. The fetid water on the floor slowly gets deeper as the tunnel expands into the gators' lair. Ulrot?



Ulrot rolls 1d creature (sneaky - powerful) and gets a failure!

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

The gators make their move, slowly sneaking up behind the inquisitor, but she knows they're coming and turns around quickly, confusing them. The templar steps in from the side and crushes one of their skulls with his mace, which sends the other one running away.

GM Alright, the adventurers make it to the other side of the cave. Sitting on land, they dry off. Slem, this activates the "patrol" trick now. It's a tier 2 trick, but this inquisitor's passive is that she's really good at figuring out tricks. Let's reduce that to a tier 1.



Slem rolls 1d trick ("patrol" - snuff torches) and gets a success!

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

Hah! Only needed 1d. So, the adventurers spot some light moving towards them from around the corner. The monk tosses his torch into the water to keep from being seen. The adventurers can't see it, but the "patrol" is just some mushroom imps carrying a big jar of fireflies.

GM As the imps disappear down another hallway, the templar signals to move into the dark hallway. Where are your goblin thieves at?

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

They're hiding behind some rocks just outside the cave. They toss the mushroom imps a thumbs up, then wait as the adventurers pass. They **SKULK** and hit them from behind. I'm gonna spend their morale here, too. Can I target that monk? He's hurting the most.

GM Yeah, I don't see why not... the goblins don't really know he's hurting, but you can always act on knowledge the player has. These goblins are perfectly set up for the first strike - dominant position.



Slem rolls 3d SKULK (2d + 1d) and gets a critical!

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

The monk was the last one into the hallway. He only has a heart and a half left and can't use a move to resist this because it's a crit, so he's dead! One of the goblins climbs up and wraps some rope around his throat while the other two pin cushion him with daggers. For the bonus from the crit, can the other two adventurers not even notice he's gone?



CHAPTER 5

CYCLE OF PLAY



*"Keep your head down. The Wicked Ones are always watching
and if you wanna stay here, you stay in their good graces.*

Work hard, toil away, and do what they command.

But when they're not looking, it's us who're really in charge. "

- Imp

CYCLE OVERVIEW

Gameplay focuses around a steady cycle of play that simulates life in a dungeon, progressing through four linear phases - lurking, calamity, raiding, and blowback. While these phases are set, there is also room to step outside of them and set up interesting scenes that come up during play without it needing to be related to that phase. The phases are there to help simulate dungeon life, but don't feel beholden to them if there's some scene you want to roleplay through!



Lurking: You keep your head low, staying inside your dungeon while the heat dies down. You count up loot from a recent raid, lose yourself in revelry, and spend some downtime working on improving the dungeon by building traps, incanting rituals, torturing prisoners, and other nefarious activities typical of dungeon life.



Calamity: Your time spent in the dungeon is not without risk. Tunnels might collapse, minions may kill each other, or you might draw the attention of an adventuring party resulting in a dungeon invasion. At the end of each lurking phase, the GM rolls calamity to see how smoothly things went while within the dungeon.



Raiding: You head out of the dungeon to attack a target with the intention of furthering your master plan, gathering materials needed for loot, or pillaging to increase the size of your hoard. When raiding, you skip straight to the action by choosing a goal, a target, a plan, and some details. The GM then rolls engagement and tosses you into the action with the first step already in progress.



Blowback: The surface is dangerous and your actions there are sure to bring the ire of its inhabitants. You might face an ambush, juicy hunting grounds may dry up, factions can move against you, and adventurers may be dispatched to end your existence. At the end of each raiding phase, the GM rolls blowback to see how smoothly things went while on the surface.

TYPICAL SESSIONS

Tabletop roleplaying game sessions can last anywhere from 2 to 8 hours. *Wicked Ones* functions pretty well with 3-4 hours of gametime, which usually gets you through three or four phases. Since calamity and blowback depend on how the roll goes, it's impossible to know how long they might take.

Don't feel like you have to cram all of the phases into a single session. While it's pretty satisfying to open up a session with lurking, do some downtime actions, deal with a small calamity, go on a raid, then wrap it up by defending your dungeon, that's a lot of stuff to pack into a session. The game usually runs better and everyone has more fun when you have some room to breathe. Take your time and set up cool scenes just for the fun of roleplaying through them.



LURKING

From the relative safety of the dungeon, behind your traps and creatures, you bide your time and build up your defenses while looking for the next opportunity to strike. The lurking phase covers the everyday life within your dungeon. You go through **recovery** where you heal, count the **loot** you hauled in, enjoy some revelry, and work on **downtime projects** to improve the dungeon.

The **rule of description**, mentioned earlier in the book, is worth restating here. The lurking phase is a montage of things happening while you spend time within your dungeon. Time passes quickly and if things get interesting, zoom in on them and play out a scene. Remember that nothing happens in the game without description.

Recovery: At the beginning of the lurking phase, you clear all stress, shock, and the bloodied condition. Any abilities, defenses, room, or gear that are usable once per cycle reset at this time. Your dungeon also automatically attracts a creature if you have an empty lair, filling lower tier lairs first.

COUNTING LOOT

As you return to your dungeon from raiding, you haul back any **loot** you gathered (pg. 256) and heft it onto the hoard. Each player then makes a **loot roll** to find out what you do with it. This is a time to count your gold, find cool stuff in the loot, and enjoy some revelry which fills your dark heart with glee.

LOOT ROLLS

You roll a number of dice equal to the amount of loot you hauled in from your last raid. Each die rolled gives you something based on its result.



Failure: You enjoy some revelry, gaining a dark heart. If you already have two dark hearts, you instead overdo it!

Mixed: You gain 1 gold or spend it on revelry instead.

Success: You pull a *mundane* or *valuable item* from the loot. The player chooses what it is.

❖ You can combine two successes into a critical to pull a *powerful item* from the loot instead. The GM chooses what it is.

When you engage in revelry, describe how you go about spending the loot on enjoying yourself. Monsters don't have much impulse control, so it's pretty easy to get too caught up in the good times. When that happens, you **overdo it** and cause some damage to yourself or the dungeon, suffering a *frustrating* or *devastating* consequence based on your choice of revelry (on the next page).

FINDING ITEMS


When you get an item, you pull something useful from the loot that could have been found on the last raid. It has to make sense within that context.

- A *valuable item* is something a little rare and you'd be a bit surprised to find. It might be a few doses of a tier 1 potion or concoction or a tier 1 contraption or magic item. It could also be an item with an edge, a map with valuable information on it, or a rare musical instrument.
- A *powerful item* is a normal item with multiple edges or a tier 2 or 3 potion, concoction, contraption, or magic item. It could also be a one of a kind item that is highly sought after, a certain NPC's prized possession, or a document with very secret information.

REVELRY

You choose a type of revelry at character creation, your PC's favorite way to let off some steam. The available types of revelry are listed below, though you can also make up your own if none of these fit. Example consequences of overdoing it are listed after each. **The GM can also compel you to act on your revelry.**

- **CRAVING:** You have strong desires that must be quelled - food, flesh, luxuries.
 - *You can't leave your lover's arms, losing your downtime action.*
 - *You develop an addiction, gaining a second dark impulse.*
 - *You dip into the hoard's gold, taking -1d on your next calamity roll.*
- **DRINKING:** You can't turn down a good brew.
 - *You stumble and break a trap, reducing its tier by 1.*
 - *You take shock to BRAINS as you wake up with a hangover.*
 - *You have a falling out with a vile friend.*
- **GAMBLING:** You love throwing the bones and making wagers.
 - *You lose a piece of useful equipment in a game of chance.*
 - *You find yourself in debt to a dangerous entity.*
 - *Someone you cheated shows up during a raid to get revenge.*
- **OCCULT:** You can't help involving yourself with strange, supernatural forces.
 - *Your bizarre experiments result in your eyes changing color.*
 - *You're cursed, imposing -1d on your next dire roll.*
 - *A powerful magician becomes aware of your presence.*
- **VIOLENCE:** You have a deep love for brawling, torture, and hurting others.
 - *You go nuts on a creature or pack of minions, killing them.*
 - *You wreck one of the dungeon rooms making it unusable this cycle.*
 - *You meet your match and wind up with shock to MUSCLES.*
- **WORSHIP:** You find comfort in worshipping your dark god.
 - *You can't refuse your dark god's next compel.*
 - *An enemy of the faith sets out to find and destroy you.*
 - *Your god tires of your adoration, giving you shock to GUTS.*



The PCs head back to the dungeon, fresh off raiding a caravan from the abbey. They managed to hit a target at their tier, secure a piece of good loot, and kill an adventurer, so they make a 3d loot roll.

Prine rolls two dark hearts and a gold. However, he already has 1 dark heart, so he takes a second, then overdoes it.

Prine: "Okay, so my revelry is drinking. It looks like I'm gonna get wasted. I open up a cask of ale we looted and set out a bunch of mugs. It looks like I'm getting drinks for everyone, but after I finish pouring, I grab several in each hand and head back to my table alone."

GM: "Let's say you destroy a tier 1 locked door. What's that look like?"

Prine: "Obviously, I don't remember any of this, but you know that crystal door near the workshop? Yeah, later when I'm stumbling back towards my room, I take a running leap through that thing."

Skoggy rolls three gold. He already has two gold, so he instead spends 1 on his revelry.

Skoggy: "I'm just gonna spend that gold I don't have space for gambling with some minions. I lose a lot, but my minions are probably pretty stoked about it. They did a good job on the raid, so they deserve it."

GM: "You know, they can go ahead and take morale there. They're in really great spirits anyway and winning some extra gold sits well."

Skoggy: "Oh, seriously? That's awesome. Okay, cool."

Mace rolls two valuable items and a gold.

Mace: "You know, I think I'm gonna combine these 6s and take the powerful item. Maybe they were transporting some holy magic item?"

GM: "Alright, let's say you find a red shawl adorned with the holy symbol of the Wayfinder, god of travel. Once per cycle, you can use it to create a sanctuary extending a short distance around yourself, preventing any evil creature from entering it."

Mace: "Yeah, but I'm an evil creature, right?"

GM: "That's the loophole, I suppose. It prevents things from entering after it's used. You can also use it once to teleport directly into the abbey, but it consumes the shawl. I guess the monks forgot about this."

Smarm rolls a valuable item, a gold, and a dark heart.

Smarm: "I'm going to have dinner, then head back to my room early. My revelry is occult, so let's say that the item I found was actually a holy book. Can I establish a fact about their religion with it?"

GM: "That works really well, sure."

Smarm: "Cool, I'll save that for a bit then. For my revelry, I just spend a long time pouring over this thing in the sanctum."



DOWNTIME

After the revelry calms down, you have some time to spend building up your dungeon, preparing for your next raid, or working on something devilish of your own devising. These are called **downtime projects**. You can do things like build traps, craft potions, work on rituals, or break a prisoner's spirit. You can take downtime actions to work on any of the downtime projects on the right. Downtime actions work as such:

- BREW
- BUILD
- CONTACT
- CRAFT
- INCANT
- RECRUIT
- TORTURE

- ▶ **Each PC takes one downtime action** during the lurking phase to show how they spent their time in the dungeon.
- ▶ **You can pay minions 1 gold** to undertake a downtime action on their own.
- ▶ You can gain additional downtime actions by taking certain calling abilities.
- ▶ You can also flashback to performing downtime actions that are immediately relevant to a scene, paying cost to represent the strenuous effort.

When you perform a downtime action, you make an action roll that represents your effort and then briefly narrate the results of the roll. **Downtime actions have dominant position**, unless there is an overwhelming circumstance towards position. You generally have enough time to safely work on a project.

Risk It: Any downtime action that has a dominant position can be rerolled with normal position instead, recklessly pushing on to try to accomplish something and risking worse consequences. You must take the second result.

PROJECT TIERS

Projects are rated from tier 1 to tier 3 according to how much effort they take to finish. This generally corresponds to the tier of what you're trying to make or is set by the GM according to the table below when it's unclear. Some projects are accomplishable with a single roll while others require you to fill a clock.

HOW MUCH TIME IS REQUIRED?		
Tier 1 [*] 1 Roll	Tier 2 4-Segment Clock	Tier 3 8-Segment Clock
Accomplished relatively quickly by one PC.	Accomplished quickly by a group of PCs.	Takes a while, even for a group of PCs.

- ❖ If you roll a mixed on a tier 1 project, you must also pay cost to complete it. If you roll a critical, you get something extra out of your effort!

MIXED ROLLS ON TIER 1 PROJECTS

When you roll a mixed on a tier 1 project, it means that you had to give up something extra to accomplish what you're working on. This could mean you're wounded, lose some gold, anger a faction, or anything else that makes sense given the context of the downtime project. You pay cost, so the choice of what you're willing to give up is yours to make. A mixed roll on a tier 2 or tier 3 project does not require you to pay cost, merely ticking the clock less than a success. If the action roll didn't have dominant position, you take a consequence chosen by the GM as normal.

MINION DOWNTIME ACTIONS

You can pay your minions 1 gold to undertake a downtime action. Minions are paid for by the hoard, but their job description only includes living in and defending the dungeon. To get them to do anything else, you'll need to give them some incentive. They can work on any downtime project from the list. The *trained* upgrade gives them +1d on a specific type of downtime project.

IMP DOWNTIME ACTIONS

Your imps take one downtime action of their own, rolling the dungeon tier. The imps are always hard at work in the background and this action represents what they've been up to. The GM decides what this action is and makes the roll. Imps can work on projects PCs are working on, or something on their own.

This downtime action gives the GM some ability to introduce a bit more randomness into the dungeon or help out PCs who are having a rough time, failing a bunch of rolls. Imps might do things like dig tunnels between rooms that weren't connected to make things easier for them to move around, start digging out a tier 3 room if the dungeon hasn't grown in a while, or work on something they overheard the Wicked Ones talking about (or their interpretation of what that meant). The GM can also lean into their traits when deciding what to work on.

USING GOLD INSTEAD OF DOWNTIME ACTIONS

Gold can be used (pg. 73) to accomplish many of the things you can do with downtime projects without putting forth any effort. Balancing how you use your gold and how you spend your downtime actions is essential for a quickly growing dungeon.

GAME PACE AND TURN ORDER

During downtime, so many options sometimes leads to too much time spent pondering. To help with this, a turn order works nicely during downtime. The GM can choose the player that seems the most ready, then move around the table. Having your downtime actions ready beforehand also helps!



DOWNTIME PROJECTS

Brew a concoction or potion, making two doses. This is always a tier 1 project, regardless of the tier of the concoction or potion. You take -1d on the roll if it's tier 2 and -2d if it's tier 3. On a mixed, it becomes *volatile* instead of requiring you to pay cost.

"I INVOKE bloodcalling magic to make a Potion of Retching, mixing frog guts and snake eyes into the elixir." On a mixed, you might decide that the potion sometimes seeps through its glass container.

Commonly used actions: **INVOKE - SCAN - TINKER**

Concoctions pg. 120 / Potions pg. 130

Build a lock, room, trap, or trick. The project tier equals the tier of what you're building.

*"I FINESSE the tripwire perfectly into place." On a mixed, you might decide that it takes you several tries to get it right and one of them activated the trap, giving you shock to **MUSCLES**.*

Commonly used actions: **FINESSE - SCAN - SMASH - TINKER - TRICK**

Locks pg. 201 / Rooms & Structures pg. 197 / Traps pg. 198 / Tricks pg. 200

Contact a vile friend, faction, or other NPC to gain information, ask for help, or make demands. The project tier depends on how much you ask for.

"I BANTER with Arrak and see if he'll come with us on the next raid." On a mixed, you might decide he requires a big share of the loot. If Arrak makes it through alive, you take -1d on your own loot roll.

Commonly used actions: **BANTER - THREATEN - TRICK**

Factions pg. 276

Craft an item, edge, or contraption. The project tier of a contraption equals its tier. A mundane item is a tier 1 project and adding an edge to an item is tier 2. Contraptions are always *volatile*.

"I TINKER in my workshop making a new shield to replace the one I broke." On a mixed, you might decide you owe your vile friend a favor after he came and dropped off some supplies.

Commonly used actions: **FINESSE - SCAN - TINKER**

Gear pg. 70 / Contraptions pg. 122

Incant a ritual, preparing it to be performed or finishing it off and performing it. You can achieve powerful magical effects or make magic items. Rituals have special requirements that must be fulfilled before they can be performed.

"I spend hours FINESSING the fine script needed to cast this ritual." On a mixed, you might decide that it took far longer than expected and you take shock to BRAINS from being tired.

Commonly used actions: **FINESSE - INVOKE - SCAN**

Rituals pg. 132

Recruit a pack of minions or attract a creature without having to spend gold. This is always a tier 1 project. You can only do this if you have an open minion slot or creature lair.

"I go down to the goblin village and SMASH some heads, dragging several of them back with me." On a mixed, you might decide that your new goblin minions start off without morale.

Commonly used actions: **BANTER - THREATEN - SMASH - TRICK**

Minions pg. 189 / Creatures pg. 188

Torture a prisoner to either force them to reveal a single secret or break their spirit and make them do something for you. Getting information is always a tier 1 project and each prisoner knows a number of secrets equal to their tier. Getting them to do your bidding is a project equal to the prisoner's tier. Torturing is risky business, often killing a prisoner or pushing them to do something extreme. This is an overwhelming circumstance towards position.

"I want to TRICK the templar into revealing her order's secrets." On a mixed, the templar tells you some of what she knows, but jabs a piece of metal into her own throat while you're out of the room.

Commonly used actions: **BANTER - SKULK - THREATEN - TRICK**

Flow of Information pg. 22


You can track your project clocks on the character sheet. Just draw a 4 or 8-segment clock as needed. When it's finished, add it to your dungeon duties or wherever appropriate and erase it.

Players may want to do something during downtime that doesn't fit into one of the above downtime projects. In these cases, the GM decides if it's possible and sets the tier of the downtime project according to how long it might take.



Tier 2 trap

Illusion - Pitfall



The PCs are a pirate crew, launching raids on island and shipping lanes from their hideout dungeon. They're getting ready for some downtime.

GM: "Alright, what are you all up to during downtime? Let's start with Blort and work our way around clockwise."

Blort: "I need to recruit another minion pack, so I'm going to send my bird Gully off with a message. I want to BANTER some scouts from that tribe on the last island into coming and joining us."

Blort rolls 2d BANTER and gets a mixed!

Blort: "They're pumped to join up, but maybe losing some of their best scouts angers the tribe, so they're now hostile towards us."

GM: "Yeah, that makes things in that area interesting, too. Remmy?"

Remmy: "I want to build a ballista for our ship, with a big crank winch on it that we can shoot at other ships and pull us together."

GM: "Yeah, that's pretty complex and doesn't sound all that safe to work on, plus a bit out there scientifically. Let's call it a tier 2 contraption."

Remmy rolls 2d TINKER and gets a success! He ticks the new 4-segment contraption clock twice.

Remmy: "I finish up the winch mechanism and spend a bunch of time out on the beach testing it by hauling in big rocks."

Gilgaroth: "I'm going to try to finish this tidal wave ritual."

Gilgaroth rolls 3d INVOKE and gets a critical! He ticks the 8-segment clock three times, finishing it.

Gilgaroth: "Awesome, this thing's ready to go! And all the special requirements are filled, too. Should we discuss what happens?"

GM: "Let's have you describe the final prep and what the ritual looks like just before the raiding phase. Since this is going to let you guys skip the setup for your pillaging raid, it's probably better to just resolve all of that at the same time. Velum?"

Velum: "I'm going to make a trap in the dungeon. I'm gonna put a rolling barrels trap with a tripwire trigger in this hallway."

GM: "That's pretty simple. Sounds like tier 1."

Velum rolls 1d TINKER and gets a failure.

Velum: "I'm gonna risk it and re-roll. I can't quite get the barrels into the ropes holding them up, so I'm just gonna try doing it as fast as possible, tie it off, then walk away assuming it worked."

Velum rolls 1d TINKER and gets a mixed.

GM: "Okay, you manage to do it but the consequence is that this'll count against your calamity roll. It's just way too haphazardly up there."



CALAMITY

Dungeons are messy conglomerations of minions pressed into service, creatures lairing in their confines, and a maze of tunnels throughout. They're filled with traps and tricks in a haphazard fashion. Things are bound to go wrong eventually. After each lurking phase, the GM rolls to see if your dungeon managed to avoid any **calamity** during the phase. The number of dice rolled is determined by the amount of grumbling coming from the denizens of your dungeon.

CALAMITY ROLLS

The GM rolls 1d, 2d, or 3d depending on how much the denizens of your dungeon are grumbling.



Failure: You suffer a major calamity!

Mixed: You suffer a minor calamity.

Success: Your minions gain morale and join the next raid for free.

Critical: Also, your imps dig into a "success" discovery!

HOW MUCH GRUMBLING IS THERE IN YOUR DUNGEON?

1d	2d	3d
Relentless whining and complaining	Normal levels of malcontent	Too happy or scared to complain.

The key to minimizing grumbling in your dungeon is to follow **dungeon logic**. A dungeon that makes sense to minions makes them feel content. The more you think like a monster, the less calamity will befall your dungeon.

When you suffer a calamity, it often pulls you into a scene with the GM grabbing some dice and rolling engagement. This might be a fire raging inside your dungeon or a minion revolt. At other times, it might result in something that's over as soon as it happens, like a tunnel collapsing or minions getting killed by a trap. Calamity can also result in a dungeon invasion. The GM might instead choose to pocket the calamity and bring it into a later scene, such as your minions suddenly betraying you during a raid or one of your contraptions breaking when used.

Calamity can't be resisted but you can start a scene to deal with any fallout from it. Whatever happens just happens, but if you're resourceful, you can attempt to minimize collateral damage. A fire might start raging and destroy a room, threatening to spread to others but you can organize an effort to fight the fire to keep it from spreading. The initial calamity happens regardless, but the GM can threaten to let things spin out of control to push the PCs towards action to create challenging scenes within the dungeon.

DUNGEON LOGIC

Dungeons might not make a lot of sense to humans, but they make perfect sense to their denizens. This is called **dungeon logic** and basically reinforces how a fantasy dungeon operates like a fantasy dungeon. Normal levels of malcontent is the norm for your denizens, always finding something to complain about. There are 5 factors below which figure into dungeon logic. Generally, answering "no" to the questions pushes the roll towards 1d while answering yes pushes it towards 3d. The GM needs to build a *gut feeling* for this dungeon logic. The below questions and guidelines can help:

- **Atmosphere:** Does the layout feel like a dungeon and do the minions enjoy living there?
- **Growth:** Has the dungeon been steadily growing, increasing in tier and adding rooms and discoveries?
- **Hierarchy:** Are weaker creatures likely to face adventurers before stronger ones?
- **Loot and Revelry:** Has there been a steady flow of loot into the dungeon and has the dungeon survived your revelry intact?
- **Worthy Masters:** Have you formulated a solid master plan and garnered a reputation of evil?

Atmosphere determines how content your denizens are on a day to day basis. They want your dungeon to make sense, feel like a dungeon, and have at least some rooms that they can enjoy. They desire a place that feels evil and dungeony. Make the dungeon look awesome and evil and your minions are going to be happy. Minor rooms have a positive effect on this, built mostly to make minions happy. Likewise, placing traps and locks in places that don't make sense, like several in a row or one at each end of a hallway, frustrates or unnecessarily endangers them. If you have a hallway with 5 locked doors in it, it's going to drive your denizens nuts.

"Nowhere to get a drink, nowhere to have a good fight, and we just tossed out those perfectly good adventurer skulls! Those would have looked scary as hell on spikes!"

Growth is always on the minds of a dungeon's denizens. They yearn for power as much as their masters do because belonging to a strong dungeon means greater raids and more revelry. Adding to the hoard shuts minions up fast, as does building more rooms. When the dungeon stops growing, the denizens begin to worry. One cycle without growth might be fine, but longer periods of time without growth will have the denizens wondering what's going on.

"I saw that those orc scouts have been sleeping in the hallway. Getting pretty cramped here. The bosses downstairs seem to be busy with whatever they're cooking up, but don't seem to give a lick about us. And when was the last time we got to do any pillaging anyway?"

Hierarchy is of the utmost importance within a dungeon. There's a reason the first few areas of a dungeon are filled with weaklings. Powerful monsters, such as upgraded minions, think it's beneath them to face the enemy first. They want those weaker than them to soften up opponents. In the case of creatures, placing powerful creatures near your weaker monsters is likely to lead to the weaker ones getting munched on. It's about fairness and pecking order. If you don't respect this, you're going to lose loyalty fast.

"This is bullshit. We get stuck guarding here, right by the entrance. You know who's gonna get a sword in their gut first? You and me, that's who. Probably won't even see it coming. Nah, some of those kobold miners should be here and us back there in the workshop."

Loot and revelry are an effective way of keeping your monsters in line. Making sure you go out of your way to increase loot rolls helps keep grumbling down. They join in on the good times and love it when their masters throw around gold freely. It's a double-edged sword, however, because when you overdo it with your revelry, it has a tendency to go poorly for your minions. And if you skip a raid or fail to bring back good loot, you're likely to hear some complaints.

"Did you see what the Warlock did to Grubby? Poor guy had half his face melted off with acid. That's just not right, using us in their experiments like that. They brought us in to dig tunnels, not be part of weird experiments!"

Worthy masters demand loyalty from their minions, whether it be out of respect or fear. You have to present a strong front and any chinks in that armor quickly become apparent to those below you. Give them a reason to serve you by following through on your master plan and building a strong reputation as evil overlords among those on the surface. Engaging in activities that they see as below their masters, such as attacking weaker factions or backing down from a confrontation, will surely weaken their loyalty towards you.

"And then they just backed down, ran away like a bunch of... wait, ssshhh. Okay, I thought they were coming. Anyway, like a bunch of cowards. Sure, me and the boys were ready to crack some guard skulls, but they just left us there as they saved their own hides while we got peppered with arrows. I'm just sayin', maybe it's time for new management."

CALAMITY ENSURES YOU BUILD A FANTASY DUNGEON

Wicked Ones is a game about dungeon building and dungeons might not always be completely logical to us humans. Basically, trying to "game the system" is likely to lead to calamity. The best practice here is to simply build a dungeon that feels like a dungeon.



TYPES OF CALAMITY

The severity of the calamity is determined by the calamity roll. The GM can come up with something fitting on their own, use the tables below to determine the category of the calamity, or roll on the detailed tables on the next page.

Minor calamity results in mishaps within your dungeon, small things that are a bother but don't present an enormous challenge. They can generally be recovered from with a downtime action or two.

Major calamity results in big events that have a major impact on the dungeon. They're a serious setback that requires your immediate attention and puts a lot of pressure on the dungeon.

RANDOM CALAMITY

- 1 Dungeon Invasion (weak)
- 2 Dungeon Invasion
- 3 Denizen Trouble
- 4 Denizen Trouble
- 5 Structural Problem
- 6 Outside Interference



Below are just some of the categories of calamity that might befall your dungeon, though the GM is free to come up with their own that might not fit into these. Just keep in mind that **minor calamity should sting and major calamity should hurt**. The GM shouldn't pull their punches here. Make calamity an ever-present worry.

- ▶ **Dungeon Invasion:** Your activities within the dungeon bring the attention of adventurers, other dark factions, or local wildlife. Minor calamity invasions are always much weaker or unprepared for your dungeon and can serve as a good test of your defenses. When it's major calamity, they come in prepared to take you down.
 - *An adventurer and a few hirelings follow your minions home.*
 - *Adventurers spot smoke rising from your dungeon.*
 - *A massive bear wanders into your dungeon looking for a home.*
- ▶ **Denizen Trouble:** The denizens in your dungeon start infighting, betray you, or make stupid mistakes. This could even lead to rebellion with major calamity.
 - *A basilisk devours a pack of minions.*
 - *Imps steal or just lose a random item from a random PC.*
 - *Your minions head into the sanctum, weapons ready.*
- ▶ **Structural Problem:** Your dungeon's rooms, walls, traps, and so on fail or fall apart in some way.
 - *A cave-in fills a tunnel with rubble, making it impassable.*
 - *You lose all progress on a tier 3 room clock as it collapses.*
 - *A lava flow bursts through a wall, destroying a tier 3 trap.*
- ▶ **Outside Interference:** Forces from outside of your dungeon move against you. This could be another faction discovered underground, something burrowing into your dungeon, or heavy rains flooding your halls.
 - *A dire mole burrows into the dungeon, making a second entrance.*
 - *A hostile underground faction appears near the dungeon.*
 - *Rain floods your halls, drowning some creatures and minions.*

MINOR CALAMITY (INVASIONS ARE USUALLY BEST DECIDED BY THE GM, NOT ROLLED)

- 11 Townsfolk with pitchforks show up to dispatch you. They're woefully unprepared.
- 12 A single adventurer leading a few hirelings explore your dungeon.
- 13 A room or two gets flooded in waist deep water. You lose the bonus from these rooms for a cycle.
- 14 An aggressive wolf wanders into your dungeon looking for a place to sleep.
- 15 The imps break one of the most important items in the dungeon as they transport it.
- 16 An incredibly foul smell wafts through your dungeon, decreasing productivity until you find the source.
- 21 One of your dungeon rooms becomes *volatile*, requiring you to pay cost to use it.
- 22 The entrance has become overgrown with poison ivy, a fact you won't realize until you raid.
- 23 A dark faction arrives at the dungeon demanding an immediate audience.
- 24 The noise of beetles mating keeps you from sleeping. Everyone takes shock to **BRAINS**.
- 25 Voracious plants sprout from the ceiling of a well-traveled hallway, looking for a meal.
- 26 A small fire sets back a downtime project clock by 2 ticks.
- 31 Your imps randomly dig a tunnel between two sensitive areas, connecting them.
- 32 Brawling minions wreck a dungeon room, requiring repairs before it can be used (a tier 1 project).
- 33 A creature devours a lot of imps and you lose the imp downtime action the next lurking phase.
- 34 Imps constantly getting caught in a trap leads to it breaking. The trap loses a tier.
- 35 A dark faction that had been friendly or neutral towards you becomes hostile.
- 36 An imp writes the solution to one of your tricks on the wall so they don't forget. The trick loses a tier.
- 41 A small earthquake breaks a potion or concoction in a PC's supply, immediately affecting them.
- 42 A minion pack decides that it's had enough and deserts the dungeon.
- 43 A minion pack loses one of its upgrades from something like an accident or gambling.
- 44 A minion pack left the dungeon and raided a small farm. Roll minor blowback instead.
- 45 A PC falls into a liquid or is hanging deep in a hole off a ledge. Start a 4-segment clock: Die.
- 46 Two minion packs start feuding. If nothing is done soon, they'll kill each other.
- 51 Holes open up in the ground along one of your tunnels, turning it into a hazard.
- 52 A bridge or other simple structure collapses, bloodying a minion pack.
- 53 An ambush awaits you as you head out of your dungeon entrance on your next raid.
- 54 One of your locks completely breaks, but you won't realize it until during the next invasion.
- 55 One of your creatures roams the halls until it finds a creature or minion and devours them.
- 56 A wall collapses burying one of the Wicked Ones under it. Start a 4-segment clock: Suffocate.
- 61 A lone dwarf thief tunnels directly into your sanctum while you're all sleeping.
- 62 One of the imps shows you that a couple of minion packs are planning a hoard heist.
- 63 A minion pack betrays a PC, ambushing them in an incredibly vulnerable position.
- 64 A dark faction demands the return of some minions that belonged to them.
- 65 The roof of a tunnel collapses, completely blocking off passage.
- 66 Tremors cause a creature lair to collapse. The lair and creature lose a tier.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

MAJOR CALAMITY (INVASIONS ARE USUALLY BEST DECIDED BY THE GM, NOT ROLLED)

- 11 The spider queen and her hatchlings pour through a new hole in the wall. *Can she be negotiated with?*
- 12 An enormous grizzly bear enters the dungeon looking for a new home.
- 13 A very powerful wizard and his golem protector teleport randomly into the first level of your dungeon.
- 14 Your imps and minions grab weapons and head for the sanctum. It's a revolt!
- 15 Flammable gas seeps into your dungeon, its smell giving it away. Start a 6-segment clock: KABOOM.
- 16 Imps inform you that a couple of minion packs just left the dungeon with 1 tier worth of your hoard.
- 21 Tremors open up a second entrance into your dungeon, bypassing many of your defenses.
- 22 Traitorous minions make away with a large part of your hoard, enough to drop you a tier.
- 23 A hungry creature lashes out at a PC, leaving them bloodied. Now they move to finish their meal.
- 24 Grub worms push through your dungeon walls as they begin their transformation into scarabs!
- 25 Sentient toxic mold seeps into your dungeon, causing severe hallucinations. It must be fed.
- 26 A portal opens up into your sanctum as arcane burglars slip in while you sleep.
- 31 A lich with a skeleton hoard appears at your dungeon entrance.
- 32 All factions roll immediately against their clocks as you lurk in your dungeon far too long.
- 33 The most troublesome faction clock comes to fruition, motivated by your dungeon's presence.
- 34 A ghost possesses a PC, intent on revenge. *Who must the player hunt?*
- 35 Heavy rains temporarily fill your dungeon with a deluge of water. It can't be stopped, only outrun.
- 36 One of your tier 2 rooms is completely destroyed by minions partying. The party is on the move.
- 41 A dark faction comes to you seeking help with a problem much too big for you to handle.
- 42 Your denizens are bored. They demand entertainment or face rebellion.
- 43 An absolutely enormous rat king bursts into your dungeon, barreling through it at full speed.
- 44 A very skilled tier 4 thief with 6 moves, knowledge of your dungeon, and a scroll of teleport sneaks in.
- 45 An enchantress has found a couple of your minion packs outside, dominated them, and is now invading.
- 46 Gnomish engineers come through a wall with their tunnel boring machine, ready to fight.
- 51 A fire breaks out and destroys a tier 1 or 2 room and threatens to rapidly spread throughout the dungeon.
- 52 The biggest creature in the dungeon devours the second largest and is now on the hunt.
- 53 Another group of Wicked Ones launch a pillaging raid on your dungeon along with their minions.
- 54 A large dark faction tribe has surrounded your entrance and demands 1 tier of hoard in tribute.
- 55 A greater demon appears in your sanctum in a burst of fire and demands the reins of control.
- 56 A diviner with knowledge of the inner workings of your dungeon leads a strike team against you.
- 61 One of your tier 3 rooms gets wrecked, requiring you to acquire materials again.
- 62 A couple of minion packs take a PC hostage and have a list of demands.
- 63 Your denizens are starving. Either raid for food or face starvation.
- 64 A hole in a wall opens up and lava begins flowing into your dungeon.
- 65 A shared or steady supply that you have is spoiled, stolen, or runs out.
- 66 A large pack of jackals chase a minion pack back into your dungeon.





RAIDING

No dungeon is self-sufficient - you need resources from outside, whether that be warm bodies standing between you and adventurers, riches to fuel your hoard, or materials to build more rooms. You leave your dungeon to further your nefarious master plan, deal with factions, and loot the riches of the overworld. Raiding consists of figuring out your goal, choosing a target, setting a plan, then launching the raid itself. After a small amount of planning, **raids let you skip directly to the action in progress.**

You work together to terrorize civilized lands, looting your way along as you work towards your objective. You might burn down a farmer's house, kidnap a priest for sacrifice, steal a wizard's magic staff, or hold tense negotiations with hostile tribes. Regardless of the objective, you always make time to fill your pockets with gold along the way.

LAUNCHING A RAID

Dungeon monsters are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to knowledge of the world around them. The overworld is too dangerous to scout so you're going to be striking out blind for the most part. **Scouting targets is only done through a few specific methods:** calling abilities, dungeon rooms, torturing prisoners, and flashbacks.

However, even if the PCs don't know much about the world, the players do and they can use that information to judge what would be a worthwhile or fun raid. As covered in [Flow of Information](#), it's expected for the players to act on knowledge that their PCs might not have and for the GM to freely share all but the most secretive of information. This free flow of information will come in handy as you set up your raid plan.

Raids let you skip directly into a high stakes, high reward scene. Sometimes that scene covers the main part of the raid, hitting the target itself. Other times, the challenge and fun might be in getting there or getting away. You cut away all the boring stuff and jump directly to the mayhem.

To help set up the scene, you have to give the GM the following key pieces of info:

- You need a **goal**. What are you trying to accomplish?
- You need a **target**. Who are you hitting?
- You need a **plan**. How do you want to go about doing it?
- You need some **details**. How does this thing get started?

Once the GM has all the info, they roll engagement and the action starts.

"Raid" is a catch-all term for any group foray onto the surface. It covers attacks and looting, but also things like negotiations or sneaking through secure areas.

THE GOAL & THE TARGET

Your first step is figuring out why you're raiding the surface. What's your goal? What do you want to accomplish? Here are some common reasons to raid:

- Acquire the materials for a tier 3 room.
- Aid a faction that has asked you for help and receive something in return.
- Further the steps of your master plan.
- Get revenge against those who slighted you because they deserve it.
- Meet the special requirements for a ritual to finish it off.
- Pillage a higher tier faction to fill your hoard and increase the dungeon tier.
- Press other monsters into service as minions.
- Pressure a faction into taking action so you don't have to.
- Stop a troublesome clock to avoid its fallout.
- Subjugate a faction to expand your influence in the area.
- Wrangle powerful creatures to let them loose against your foes.

You loot automatically with every raid, so focus on accomplishing other things.

Once you know why you're raiding, you can start searching the sandbox map for targets. When you set up the sandbox, you fill it with factions you want to interact with and each of these factions is likely to have juicy targets. However, if loot is the only thing you want, then go on a **pillaging** raid to increase your dungeon tier!

Frum: "We need materials for our workshop. I guess some tools and supplies like nails and metal scraps for it makes the most sense."

Zil: "What if we tried hitting a supply caravan along this road moving towards the saw mill there? They probably need a lot of tools for their work and the foresters are the same tier as our dungeon."

Cerus: "Okay, where can we get the scroll of rites to finish off the special requirements for the ritual?"

Tix: "Maybe hit the wizard tower? It's pretty likely they have a library."

Portoc: "Um, they're two tiers above us. That's suicide, no way. Maybe this small town here has a temple in it that we can raid?"

GM: "Sure, their archives will have the rites you need."

Cerus: "Okay, cool... let's go with that, then. Plus it'll be more fun defiling a temple and angering one of their gods."

FACTION TIERS AND TARGETS

Factions are much larger than your dungeon and the two aren't directly comparable. You don't target factions, you find targets to hit within those factions that fall under their protection. How much there is to gain but also how tough a target is to raid is determined by how the faction tier or your target compares to your dungeon's.

Higher tier than your dungeon means they have many circumstances towards position and effect working in their favor, such as larger scale, better equipment, greater skill, stronger magic, or specific defenses that are difficult to overcome.

Same tier as your dungeon means they only have circumstances working for them that are strong points of the faction they belong to or the specific nature of the target. It mostly feels like you're on even footing when contending with them.

Lower tier than your dungeon means they usually don't have much working in their favor. You're likely to overwhelm them, even having circumstances favoring you that you normally wouldn't. Hitting lower tier targets can anger your minions.

- **Tier 0 targets** are isolated, without much chance of help coming and mostly lacking in defenses.
 - *A hedge mage and their sprite buddies.*
 - *A farmhouse with a few able-bodied farmers.*
 - *A traveling merchant with a few workers.*
- **Tier 1 targets** can defend themselves and see trouble coming.
 - *A farming community's granary.*
 - *A small band of bandits fresh off their own raid.*
 - *An apothecary in a small hamlet.*
- **Tier 2 targets** are in established locations, with safety in numbers or better training. They know what they protect is valuable.
 - *A dwarven mining camp.*
 - *A shipment to a border watchtower.*
 - *A merchant caravan with mercenary guards heading towards a village.*
- **Tier 3 targets** are expecting trouble. They're located in areas with permanent defenses or have regular, well-trained guards. They respond quickly to attacks.
 - *The library at a warrior monk abbey.*
 - *A dryad, deep in an ancient forest.*
 - *A patrol from a border garrison.*
- **Tier 4 targets** are incredibly tough. They're located in large settlements or have groups of trained warriors at their disposal.
 - *A lord's manner in a walled town.*
 - *A well-armed merchant ship.*
 - *A wizard tower full of golems.*

SETTING THE RAID SCENE

After you know your target and your goal, announce them to the GM. Each raid has three parts: **the approach**, **the goal**, and **the getaway**. On a normal raid, you only be zooming in to one of these scenes, with the players or GM briefly narrating the others. Which scene you focus on generally is determined by the nature of the target itself. There are two scenarios:

Scenario 1: The target itself is well-defended or the goal is challenging to accomplish. Most raids are of this type. In this case, the raid scene is focused on the goal. The engagement roll puts us at the first stages of the plan being put into action with the goal accomplishable within the scene. The approach and the getaway are blended into the background and assumed to be accomplishable easily enough.

You want to hit a few of the outer farms of the nearby town. The action might start with you jumping over a fence, only to realize the farm has dogs sleeping in the field you're in. If things don't go well, hardy farmers will rush out to repel you and protect their families.

You want to ambush and scare off some merchants and their mercenaries on the road. The action might start off with you about to start whooping and hollering. If things don't go well, you will have fight them all.

You want to creep into the secluded temple to secure a chalice needed for your ritual. The action might start with you hiding under a cart heading into the walled compound. If things don't go well, the clerics in their dormitory are sure to wake up and come investigate.

Scenario 2: The target itself is undefended or the goal is easy to accomplish, but the region as a whole is well defended. The raid scene is focused on getting to the target or the return back to the dungeon with the goal in the background.

You finish up accosting travelers on the road, demanding payment. However, a patrol has caught wind of you and you zoom in to the action starting with you hearing riders thundering down the road.

You sneak between border guard posts and then zoom out as you finally reach and easily burn down the minor noble's estate. The ensuing chaos covers your getaway.

You kidnap the princess as she stupidly rides through the royal forest with only one of her servants. You zoom in as the action begins hours later with a search party's hounds cornering you in a gully.

As players discuss possible targets, it's up to the GM to inform them of what type of scene the raid will focus on. While the GM decides which scenario makes the most sense, you should try to contribute ideas about what sounds fun to play through.



THE PLAN & THE DETAILS

Once the target has been set, the GM tells you what type of scene the raid will likely focus on and some details about what it might look like, like some riders running you down on the road or you starting on the outskirts of town.

Once you have this information, you need to work together to come up with a plan. Plans are basic outlines of how you're going to deal with the scene you zoom into in the raid. Following through with your plan reduces the likelihood of **blowback**, while the plan going off the rails increases it. What it means to stick to the plan is expanded upon further in the **blowback** section later in this chapter.

You choose from one of the plans below, then answer two or three questions posed by the GM. Each plan has some example questions with it, but the GM knows the details they need the most and can ask anything. The players can also add in information they want to see in the scene. Once the GM has this info, they've got enough to roll engagement and paint the scene, tossing you into the action.

AMBUSH

Hit them when they least expect it, making sure they don't take any of you down in the process.

Why is their guard down?

Where are you waiting?

What's the signal?

ASSAULT

Bring full force to bear, driving off or killing all those who stand against you.

Where does the assault begin?

Who leads the way?

Do you avoid specific targets?

NEGOTIATION

Talk it out, tell lies, or offer something to get what you want, spilling as little blood as possible.

Where's the meeting spot?

What are you offering?

Are you there in good faith?

STEALTH

Slip in, find what you're after, and slip out quietly, being noticed as little as possible.

Where do you slip in?

What time of day is it?

Do you split up or stick together?

STRIKE

Bust in, get what you want, and run out quickly, without deviating from your goal.

How do you get in?

Who signals to get out?

What guards your prize?

TRICKERY

Confuse, lure, or trick them into doing what you want, without letting on until it's too late.

What do you want them to do?

Why would they do that?

Does it matter if they know after?

BEST PRACTICES

Raiding is a way to cut to the good stuff. It provides a framework for players and the GM to do some rapid worldbuilding on the fly, come up with a few interesting details, help paint the scene, and then skip right to the action. It lets you spend more time roleplaying your characters and less time in player to player discussion.

1 Embrace raiding and skip the boring stuff. Endless “what ifs” are easy to get caught up in, but what you’re at the table to do is tear up some civilized lands. Hone in on a goal, a target, and a plan quickly. Come to the table with ideas in mind. A bit of discussion can be fun, but try not to let it devolve into deadlock.

2 The GM’s job is to nudge players towards quick decisions. Ask pointed questions like “What does your dungeon need?” or “Where do you think you can find that?” When discussion turns towards deadlock, choose two options and push the PCs into a power struggle to reach a quick decision.

3 Worldbuild as a group, on the fly, when it’s most important to the story. The finer details of the sandbox aren’t clear until you have a chance to interact with them. Raid planning is just another chance to add more detail to the world, doing it right when it matters most - just before jumping into a scene.

4 The GM’s job is to encourage players to establish facts about the world. Players are co-authors of the game and while the GM has the final say, when asked questions about the plan, players can just ask the GM if certain details can be true. Their PCs can act on this information, even if they don’t know it.

5 Pick the raid that sounds the funnest, not the easiest or even the smartest. Any raid you come out the other side of is going to do something for your dungeon. When a cool idea gets thrown out there, don’t talk yourself out of going after it just because it seems tough or problematic.

6 The GM’s job is to create challenging raids and represent the factions. Think about the faction’s strong points and represent those within the raid, putting obstacles in the PCs’ path. It’s tough being a monster and there’s always *something* in their way. Make sure to make that *something* fun to kill.

LOOT

While out on a raid, monsters are always on the lookout for loot. Looting is the unstated primary purpose of every raid, meaning no matter what the goal you've set for the raid, you're assumed to also be looting in the background which guarantees you at least something each time. You can then go out of your way to secure more.

Throughout a raid, you build a pool of dice that represents the loot you gather and roll it later back at your dungeon and pull gold or items out of the loot, or maybe spend it on enjoying yourself and earning some dark hearts.

Loot is tracked by the GM throughout a raid. You start at 0d and add dice as follows:

- ▶ Take +1d for a target belonging to a faction at least equal to the dungeon tier.
- ▶ Take +1d for each tier the target faction is above the dungeon tier.
- ▶ Take +1d for each source of good loot you grab.
- ▶ Take +1d for each adventurer you take out.

Good loot requires going out of your way to acquire it. You've already snagged the easy to grab loot just lying around - that's all wrapped up in the base roll. Any extra sources of loot are going to be guarded, hidden, or just plain difficult to haul away. Keep in mind that just because you're looking for something extra doesn't mean it's there - sometimes there's just nothing else around worth taking. Higher tier targets are more likely to have sources of good loot.

- *You ransack a peasant's house, stealing their treasured belongings.*
- *You stuff a huge bag full of chickens and sling it over your back.*
- *You hitch your minions up to a grain cart and have them pull it away.*

Taking out an adventurer might mean killing them, but it could also mean capturing them or making them run away. It's assumed that you have time to loot their body or snag something they dropped. However, outrunning or sneaking away from an adventurer isn't taking them down. This is why monsters are drawn towards adventurers like flies to honey - they know the adventurer is carrying something good.

KEEP BASIC LOOT ABSTRACT AND GOOD LOOT CONCRETE

Of course monsters loot. If there's one thing that every adventurer knows, it's that if you kill a monster, they'll drop some gold. It's just in a monster's nature to be picking up stuff as they raid the overworld. This doesn't make for all that compelling gameplay, though. So what we do is just assume that monsters are looting by default instead of scrambling to grab anything not nailed down. By blending this more mundane looting into the background, it makes space for more interesting scenes where you have to really go out of your way to grab something good and worthwhile. That's some good loot.



EXAMPLE GOOD LOOT

- 11 A chicken coop, but there's a large, pissed off rooster inside.
- 12 A cart full of ale, but how will you pull it home?
- 13 Holy vestments and incense, but several priests stand in your way.
- 14 A beautiful stained glass window, but it seems impossible to dislodge without breaking.
- 15 A wardrobe of extremely fine clothes, but it's magically locked.
- 16 Tapestries hanging from the ceiling, but how can you get up there?
- 21 A massive flag at the top of a flagpole, but it's in plain view of the archers.
- 22 Mage robes and a wand, but the mage's pseudodragon watches over the room.
- 23 Jewelry hanging off the neck of the prince as he walks through the streets, but he's with his guards.
- 24 A coin purse hanging heavily off the belt of a merchant, but the merchant is a retired adventurer.
- 25 Artworks lining the walls, but there's far too many and it's difficult to tell which are valuable.
- 26 A chest full of gems, but it's trapped with a blinding spell.
- 31 Gilded seashells lining the high shelves of the temple to the sea goddess, but they're glued down.
- 32 An unattended bag with a glowing rune on it, but the bag is empty - except for the secret compartment.
- 33 A statue of a conquering, grandiose general, but how do you get it off that pedestal?
- 34 A large crystal, but it's incredibly fragile to both touch and sound.
- 35 Several goats in their pen, but they're mean as hell.
- 36 An ancient atlas, but it's linked to its golem guardian.
- 41 A telescope and other astronomy equipment, but who knows which of these things is valuable?
- 42 A fancy sword hanging on the wall, but the sword is enchanted to come alive and fight.
- 43 A suit of armor on a stand, but it's heavy and welded together.
- 44 Stacks and stacks of cheese wheels, but no way to carry all of them.
- 45 An enormous luxurious carpet, but it has lots of heavy furniture on it.
- 46 A large, golden harp, but it's incredibly heavy.
- 51 The finest silverware you've ever seen, but it's in a very busy kitchen.
- 52 A cart full of produce for market, but one of the wheels is broken.
- 53 A cask of good ale, but it's starting to leak.
- 54 Large amounts of dye, but it's just sitting in a large pile of dust right now.
- 55 A fine quilt, but the grandmother who made it is dangerous with a rolling pin.
- 56 Songbirds in a cage, but they're incredibly noisy and draw attention.
- 61 A garden full of exotic flowers, but some of the plants have poisonous thorns.
- 62 Gargoyle statue, but how do you get it off the wall?
- 63 A fantastic ceremonial headdress, but it's protected by the ghost of its former owner.
- 64 An incredible flowering tree in a pot, but pixies guard over it.
- 65 A large bell, but you have to get it down from its tower.
- 66 A stache of books, but the owner will defend them with their life.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

WRAPPING UP

Each raid lasts as long as it takes, whether it's the approach, the goal, or the getaway, though it's usually quite clear when the action dies down. At other times, it might not be so clear. The easy answer here is that a raid is finished in different fashions, depending on the scenario. If you're making an approach, you zoom out when the path between you and the goal is clear. If the scene focuses on the goal, accomplishing the goal and eliminating immediate threats lets you zoom out. And if it's the getaway, you can probably zoom out when your path home is clear.

Sometimes, raid scenes end incredibly quickly. A great engagement roll followed by a few successes or maybe a critical on well-chosen actions can wrap things up very fast. **GMs, don't cheat your players out of these easy wins!** Raids have a strong tendency to spin out of control with complications arising from failures and dark impulses pulling PCs away from their goals. That's just the nature of raids. So when everything just lines up perfectly, the PCs should be able to savor in an easy victory.

AFTERMATH OF RAIDS

Apart from the benefits to your dungeon and the blowback you might suffer, raids have whatever other effects on the fiction that seem logical. **Blowback isn't the only way for factions to move in response to raids.** Often traveled roads may close down or outposts abandoned, making your raid targets shrink up. Other factions in the region might fortify as news travels, especially from nearby neighbors. The aftermath might be immediate or it might start or tick faction clocks.

The GM should mark down where each raid happens and what session it happens in on the faction sheet to give an idea of the shockwaves that raids can send and help track them throughout the campaign. This makes it easier to see how different factions should respond.

THE POWER OF GRABBING SOME DICE

As talk at the table turns toward the next raid, the GM should pick up some dice and say something like, "Okay, where are you gonna raid?" Show the dice and say, "Let's get a goal, a target, and a plan out there so I can roll engagement and cut to some action." It's the GM's job to push this. You set the pace. Drag details out of your players. Shake those dice and let them know time's wasting. And as soon as you have enough info, declare the engagement roll and throw the dice. Then step back, take a breather, and think things through before you paint the scene.



The PCs want some mining equipment to build a room in the dungeon, so they decide on an ambush against some dwarves as they head back into their mines from a recent trip to the surface.

GM: "Okay, where are you all going to be hiding?"

Lammo: "I think we cover ourselves in soot and hide along the walls."

GM: "Pretty creative, okay. Why do you think their guard is down?"

Max: "They're just heading back into the mines after a midwinter festival, bellies fat and enjoying life."

GM: "Cool, so what's the signal? When does all of this start off?"

Max: "We wait until they pass by completely and hit them from behind. If one of us is spotted, that one acts like they're alone to throw them off."

GM: "Okay, great. That's enough to roll engagement. I'm thinking this is 1d, because, well, the dwarves are expert miners and more likely to notice something strange against the walls."

On a failure, the action might start off with one of the PCs being spotted and grabbed by a dwarf.

On a mixed, the action might start off with one of the dwarves asking, "Did you just hear something?"

On a success, the action might start off with the dwarves moving past you, failing to notice you clinging to the walls. They're easy pickings, completely unaware of your presence.

On a critical, the dwarves come in arguing and jostling each other, which then breaks out into a fight as one dwarf insults another's beard.

Chort: "Let's do a negotiation with the moon elves. We took a couple of them prisoner last time we raided them, so maybe they want them back. We can see what they'll give up. Maybe we can convince them to help us deal with the griffon riders?"

GM: "Where's the meeting spot?"

Chort: "I mean, we're actually coming to trade. No ill intentions. We can go to them, I guess. Let's try to get spotted near the forest edge."

Merv: "Let's take one prisoner, but leave the others behind."

Chort: "Yeah. I'll keep ahold of them with a dagger to their throat."

GM: "I think I have enough to go on. Let's call this a 2d roll on engagement, mostly because they're surprised at the sheer audacity of it."



PILLAGING

Pillaging is a massive endeavor which grows your hoard by bringing large amounts of gold and resources back into your dungeon. When pillaging, loot is the goal and you have to hit a significant target with a multi-part plan. If you manage to pull it off, **it increases your dungeon tier and the faction you hit loses a tier.**

When you pillage, you must hit a target belonging to a faction a tier higher than your dungeon. Aiming high like this and bringing back a huge portion of their wealth is the only way to grow the hoard enough to increase your dungeon tier.

Pillaging a target requires two raids. First, you must go on an initial **setup raid** that creates an advantage or opening that you can leverage to follow through with the **pillaging raid** against a faction's center of power or a major source of wealth. Normally, such an attack would be outside of possibility for a raid as factions are quite larger than a dungeon in scope, but the setup raid creates an opportunity.

Once you decide to go pillaging, you need to search for a faction to hit and get an idea in mind for what your pillaging raid might be. Figure out what faction makes the most sense to attack, what your target will be, and what you'll be looting from them. You don't have to settle on a plan for it at this time.

- *You decide to rampage through the nearby town, whose outer walls and guard patrols currently make it impossible.*
- *You want to loot the archmage's tower and steal his ancient tomes, though his golems and magic have kept you from it so far.*
- *You plan to head deep into the dwarven tunnels, hauling away their gold. The sheer amount of dwarves has deterred you until now.*

SETUP RAID

After you decide your primary target, you search for a smaller target and set a goal that can help create an advantage on the pillaging raid. This target can be from your primary target's faction or even from another faction if it makes sense. Once you have an idea in mind, choose a plan and launch the raid. If you manage to accomplish your goal, make a loot roll with the spoils from the setup raid to celebrate the victory.

- *You start a full-scale attack on a hamlet, but quickly pull away as you trick the faction's defenses into moving towards that point.*
- *You sneak into an outpost and loot their maps, finding a route through the forest and past their defenses.*
- *You negotiate with a goblin chieftess, asking her to send your warriors with you, but you end up having to bust heads until they agree.*





PILLAGING RAID

Immediately after the setup raid and the following loot roll, you dive right into the pillaging raid. There is no time for recovery or returning to the dungeon in between. You have to strike while the iron is hot, else lose the advantage you've created. It's time to choose a plan for your pillaging raid. You can lean into the events of the setup and the current status of your group to choose the plan that works best.

Finishing this raid should require either gathering a substantial amount of good loot or securing one very valuable item. Getting this amount of loot out of the immediate area should be a challenge. Whereas loot tends to be background in normal raids, it's the primary objective in this one - and getting "enough" should prove quite challenging. **You must deal a major blow to the faction, dropping them a tier.**

Setup Raid: **Stealth** ➔ Pillaging Raid: **Strike**

*The riches of the river town have always been out of reach. You know that its wealthy merchant mayor must have a lot of wealth on his estate in the middle of town, so you decide to ransack it. Unfortunately, high walls stand in your way so you lay out a plan. First, you decide to **stealth** into a fishing village upriver, steal some ships, and float downwards towards the river town's port.*

*From there, you launch a **strike** heading to the estate as fast as possible, ransacking it, and slipping over the walls before the guards have time to respond.*

Setup Raid: **Ambush** ➔ Pillaging Raid: **Trickery**

*The baron has maintained a strong presence in the region with their garrison for quite some time, always looming over you. A decisive attack, seizing their stock of arms and armor will be enough to set them back and help equip your raiders. The troops themselves are fierce though, so you can't attack them head on. Instead, you set an **ambush** on a grain caravan heading towards the fort. Once they're subdued, your Warlock enchants them, forcing them to bring the caravans into the garrison as you hide inside the carts.*

*You arrive at sunset and the enchanted crew tell the guards they'll empty the wagons in the morning. Late that night, you set out and begin your **trickery**. A few PCs and minion packs load weapons and armor from the armory into the carts as fast as they can, while another PC goes to open the garrison gates and run interference with the guards. The last PC heads into the stable, killing any horses they don't need. Once the carts are full, you lash some terrified horses to them and barrel recklessly out of the garrison gates.*

Setup Raid: **Negotiation** ➔ Pillaging Raid: **Assault**

*The elves have controlled the southern forest for too long, its treelines protected by woodland creatures. Recently, a group of elven adventurers invaded your halls so you feel like it's time for some revenge. First, you set up a **negotiation** with the goblin tribe. You have kept your distance from them until now, being the unstable Labisha-worshipping cannibals that they are. But there's bloody work ahead and you're sure they'll want in on it.*

*Once you've secured their help, you launch a full-on **assault** into the elven woodlands. The goblins move in from the west while you and your dungeon's minions come at them from the north. As you move through the woods, you set fires sending smoke throughout the trees to create confusion. You dispatch the outer sentries and butcher your way to the home tree. The goblin chief and his warriors meet you there, blood fresh on their lips. The elves flee as you torch the great, ancient tree while your minions start gathering anything of value they can find.*

Setup Raid: **Trickery** ➔ Pillaging Raid: **Negotiation**

*You know the arcane college houses riches such as artifacts and ancient scrolls, but the threat of their powerful magic is a strong deterrent. You start off with some **trickery**, using firebombs to light the building next door on fire. In the ensuing panic, you slip into the back door of the arcane college, spread out in the common room, and wait.*

*As the wizards come back inside, they're greeted by the sight of you standing confidently, waiting for them. They pull out magic tomes and wands intent on dispatching you, but then notice the puny kobold minions with tier 3 bombs strapped to their back. Now the **negotiation** begins. By the end of it, you have them heaping piles of treasure onto a cart and head out of town with a master wizard in tow just in case.*

PILLAGING IS HARD

Pillaging is meant to be a major hurdle and strategic challenge for players. Most raids are about just choosing the funnest or most monstrous thing you can do, but pillaging is all about getting strategic and trying to survive two raids in a row against a higher tier target. So when pillaging, be sure to bring all of your resources to bear. Grab your minions, make up some concoctions and potions, enlist vile friends for help, and buy off factions to assist you because you're going to need their help.



BLOWBACK

Raiding the overworld is bound to draw some attention. Before your dungeon appeared, the region was in relative balance but the added pressure from your attacks starts to throw things into chaos. Your incursions will catch up to you sooner or later and you're going to suffer some blowback. However, the closer you can stick to the raid plans you set out, the more you can minimize this likelihood.

You're definitely not welcome on the surface and while a few monster tribes may be friendly with your dungeon, the vast majority of surface dwellers would love nothing more than to see you dead. After the roaming phase ends, usually just after a raid wraps up, you make a blowback roll determining how the world immediately responds to your actions during this phase. Depending on the roll, you might suffer **minor blowback** or **major blowback**.

BLOWBACK ROLLS

The GM rolls 1d, 2d, or 3d depending on how well you stuck to the raid plan.



Failure: You suffer major blowback!

Mixed: You suffer minor blowback.

Success: Each PC gains a dark heart.

Critical: Also, you can choose a faction to take the blame instead of you.

HOW WELL DID YOU STICK TO THE PLAN?

1d	2d	3d
Went off the rails.	Went a little awry.	Went perfectly.

Each raid plan has a guideline that you have to follow if you want to minimize blowback. Some amount of failure is built into the plan, giving a little leeway in following it. A failure or two, a dark impulse compelled, or a dark bargain aren't usually enough to derail it. But more than just a few or completely abandoning the plan will leave you vulnerable to blowback that you won't see coming.

The exact nature of blowback and where it comes from is up to the GM. It can immediately follow the roll or can be pocketed by the GM and brought out later at a more impactful or convenient time. The blowback often flows directly from recent events, but it can also completely blindside the PCs as their interference in the overworld has pushed factions into moving in ways they're not aware of.

Blowback often results in zooming into a scene in progress like being ambushed as you return to your dungeon. At other times, it might result in something immediate that doesn't require a scene, like each PC losing a gold. **Blowback can't be resisted.**





FOLLOWING THE PLAN

During an **ambush**, you make sure nobody falls. An ambush is about catching your enemy off guard and minimizing your own losses.

3d: *You sprung the ambush on the riders perfectly. They fell into the trench you dug, then you dropped rocks on them from the trees.*

2d: *One of the riders managed to jump the trench and stuck an arrow in the Brute's chest. Your goblin minions also fell out of their tree and died.*

1d: *Even though the trench worked, the riders clawed their way out of it. In the ensuing melee, they cut down the Shadow before dying.*

During an **assault**, you drive off or kill all those who stand against you. An assault is about proving you're mightier and crushing any challenge.

3d: *You climbed over the side of the boat, cutting down the sailors as they scrambled to form a defense. They were quickly broken.*

2d: *The sailors put up a good fight, the captain was tougher to put down than expected, and several jumped overboard and swam to safety.*

1d: *The fight on the deck was brutally fought and hard won, but the sailors fell back to a hold below deck and you left before finishing the job.*

During a **negotiation**, you spill as little blood as possible. A negotiation is about avoiding conflict with charm or relying on threats instead of direct violence.

3d: *You coaxed the dryad into coming out and talking. While negotiations were tense, she agreed to swap a bag of seeds for the prince's golden hair.*

2d: *The dryad seemed willing to talk, but you realized it was a trap when you heard a bear growling behind you. After you brought it down, you threatened the dryad's life and she gave up the bag of seeds.*

1d: *The dryad wouldn't speak to you and your threats angered her. She called the creatures of the woodlands into a bloody fight with you, with both the dryad and the Marauder getting killed.*

During **stealth**, you avoid being noticed. Stealth is about not letting anyone know you're there and getting out without being spotted.

3d: *You scaled halfway up the wizard's tower, snuck past the magical wards, unlocked the door silently, grabbed the tome without alerting the golems, glided off the roof into the harbor, and swam away unnoticed.*

2d: *You almost made it through all of that, but dropped the tome, waking up the golem. Your quick reaction kept the noise to a minimum, though.*

1d: *The wizard's pet pseudodragon spotted you climbing up the side of the tower just as you ducked into the window. This led to you being careless and setting off the magical wards and the pseudodragon waking the golem before you got there.*

During a **strike**, you stick to the path you've set. A strike is about prioritizing your objective and getting out as quickly as possible.

3d: *You rushed deep into the forest, too fast for the elven rangers to catch you. You evaded their traps, made your way to their town in the trees, and kidnapped several elves you need for your ritual.*

2d: *Although you made it past the outer sentries, the Shadow got pulled up into a tree by a trap and had to be cut down. This gave the elves time to try fleeing, so it took you longer than expected to gather the prisoners.*

1d: *The Brute took an arrow to the thigh, so you had to fight your way through the sentries. The running townsfolk made it difficult to gather prisoners and the cruel Shaman ended up getting killed while tormenting the fleeing elves.*

During **trickery**, you don't let on to your intentions until it's too late. Trickery is about making sure you get the target to do what you want and taking advantage of it.

3d: *The farmers rushed to the hayfield to put out the fire raging there as you slipped into the barn and made off with some livestock.*

2d: *A fire in these cold months didn't make sense, making the farmers suspicious. They left a few people to watch the livestock*

1d: *The fire fails to spread quickly, instead serving as a warning sign. The farmers hole up inside the barn, but break and flee when you light it on fire.*

GM: *Alright, you guys manage to slip back into the treeline, bags of grain slung over your back. That was a really messy ambush, though, with everyone ending up with shock or bloodied. That's 1d blowback.*

The GM rolls 1d for blowback and gets a failure.

GM: *"Okay, you're working your way through the woods, heading back to the dungeon. Grell, what's your SCAN?"*

Grell: *"Umm... 2d. Why?"*

The GM rolls 2d for engagement and gets a failure.

GM: *"That's not good. You step on the trap and a rope tightens around your leg, then hauls you up into the tree. You're hanging upside down from a tree limb. From the bushes in front of you, several arrows fly your way. Merlok, you're now bloodied, too."*

Merlok: *"Woah, what the hell's going on? We can't resist, right?"*

GM: *"You all remember those rangers you stole from a couple of sessions ago? This is their payback. Now you're getting ambushed. The blowback is the ambush, which can't be resisted, but the trap and these arrows definitely can be."*

TYPES OF BLOWBACK

The severity of the blowback is determined by the blowback roll. The GM can then use the table below to determine the category of the blowback, roll on the detailed tables on the next page, or come up with something of their own.

Minor blowback results in an inconvenience, but one that you're likely equipped to ignore or handle. It usually tinges the last raid with bitterness, though still overall worthwhile.

Major blowback results in an immediately pressing concern that must be dealt with, risking the success of your latest raid or even your lives. It might also substantially change the sandbox map.

RANDOM BLOWBACK

- 1 Dungeon Invasion (weak)
- 2 Dungeon Invasion
- 3 Dungeon Invasion (strong)
- 4 Travel Trouble
- 5 Factions / Sandbox
- 6 Ambush / Capture

Below are just some of the categories of blowback that might befall your dungeon, though the GM is free to come up with their own that might not fit into these. Just keep in mind that **minor blowback should sting and major blowback should hurt**. The GM shouldn't pull their punches here. Make blowback an ever-present worry.

- ▶ **Dungeon Invasion:** A group of adventurers, soldiers from a local faction, a powerful beast, or some other entity enters your dungeon and makes its way towards your sanctum. Minor blowback invasions are always much weaker or unprepared for your dungeon and can serve as a good test of your defenses. When it's major blowback, they come in prepared to take you down.
 - A group of hunters wander into the dungeon.
 - An adventuring party is hired to bring you down.
 - A massive wyvern chases you home and into your caves.
- ▶ **Factions / Sandbox:** Your raid spurs a faction, either the one you hit or another affected by it in some way, into action. They might finish off a clock, start a new one, or act immediately in their best interests.
 - The two tribes decide to end their conflict and protect their lands.
 - The town stops sending trading caravans along that route.
 - Reinforcements from afar boost the garrison's tier by 1.
- ▶ **Travel Trouble:** The need to stay off well traveled paths makes moving across the overworld quite treacherous.
 - A heavy fog separates you in a forest, then you hear wolves growling.
 - You get stuck in a storm with heavy waves crashing into your ship.
 - You drop some equipment scaling a cliff.
- ▶ **Ambush / Capture:** Someone you have wronged in the past goes out of their way to take you down. They either set up an ambush to take advantage of a vulnerable position you're in or capture a Wicked One or dungeon denizen.
 - The Brute is captured by a local patrol after you get split up.
 - Everyone falls into a pit trap and you hear the sound of snakes.
 - A volley of arrows suddenly pepper you and force you into cover.



GM: "Alright, I think you've been hitting this part of the region a bit too much. They've figured out that they're easy targets, so they sent word off to the far away duke. I'm starting a 4-segment clock here, at the end of which a new tier 3 faction will arrive: Knights of the Flame. When they're in play, they'll be patrolling the roads in the area, kind of a moving faction with short clocks aimed at protecting that area."

Melly: "Can I resist that?"

GM: "Blowback can't be resisted - but the blowback is just the clock starting. You can try to keep it from ticking, though the message has already been sent so this is more of a timer. Maybe there's a raid you could go on or a ritual that you can incant?"

POCKETING BLOWBACK AND CALAMITY

Sometimes blowback or calamity is rolled, but the timing just isn't right for it. Maybe the session is about to draw to a close or you want to keep the focus on other events. Whatever the reason, the GM can always just pocket blowback or calamity, marking it on the GM sheet, and bringing it into play later. This is a valuable wild card that the GM can throw into the middle of later phases to spice them up. This keeps the flow of the story flexible as while the cycle of play is rigid and linear, the fallout from your actions can blend into the story in the way that makes the most sense.

You finish up a tough raid, a mostly pyrrhic victory, when the unbelievably cruel GM decides to use pocketed blowback. The goblin tribe you tricked earlier ambushes you with poisoned darts. You wake up hanging from poles upside down on your way to see their chief.

You roll a failure making a Mooncurse Potion and the GM decides to use pocketed calamity, immediately affecting you with the Mooncurse. The next full moon, you're a hungry werewolf on the prowl in the dungeon.

BLOWBACK AND CALAMITY SPICE UP THE STORY

As the GM, remember that the consequences from blowback and calamity can't be resisted, though any consequences in following scenes can be. You can use this to force interesting scenes like capturing a PC or starting a fire, but be careful to choose things that are interesting to play through. If players think a scene just feels unfun, maybe work together to come up with a better idea.



MINOR BLOWBACK (INVASIONS ARE USUALLY BEST DECIDED BY THE GM, NOT ROLLED)

- 11 You find an altar to a fallen deity. A PC has already touched it and the others are compelled to also do so.
- 12 You see a dead deer with an arrow in it. The wound is fresh and you hear the hunters coming.
- 13 You hear a rumbling, then suddenly you're all caught up in the middle of an animal stampede.
- 14 An adventurer silently stalks you, waiting for the right time to pounce.
- 15 The ground gives way and one or more PCs fall down into a cave.
- 16 You see a human prisoner being chased by several guards through the forest towards the dungeon.
- 21 While climbing up a rough embankment, one or two PCs lose a piece of gear.
- 22 You see the remnants of a battle with several corpses lying around. It's a clever necromancer's trap.
- 23 The roads in this area now have riders with dogs patrolling them.
- 24 An NPC from a dark faction leaves a note demanding gold or they will reveal your dungeon location.
- 25 You get stuck while moving through a marsh and see gators slowly moving towards you.
- 26 A storm delays your return to the dungeon. You take -1d on your next downtime action.
- 31 One of your minions steps on a bear trap on the way home, bloodying or killing them.
- 32 It takes you a very long time to get back home. All faction clocks tick once.
- 33 A faction near the one you hit starts a new 4-segment clock: Improved Defenses.
- 34 You spot a young dragon flying overhead. It circles as it thinks it saw something rustling the bushes.
- 35 A unicorn steps out in front of you and paws the ground. You've stumbled into its glade.
- 36 Halfway home, one of you realizes you've left an important piece of gear back at the raid.
- 41 A mudslide has blocked your path and you realize you have to travel through troll territory.
- 42 A group of farmers chase you down with torches and pitchforks.
- 43 Light faction defenses in the area increase giving -1d on assault and strike raid plan engagement rolls.
- 44 You stumble upon two black bear cubs and notice the momma bear off to the left too late.
- 45 A random PC hits a trap coming back to the dungeon, bloodying or killing them if already bloodied.
- 46 You hear the sound of dogs barking as they catch your trail. Start a 4-segment clock: Cornered.
- 51 Your dungeon was spotted by a tracker, who is now running away. Capture them or face invasion.
- 52 Any further raids against factions in this area will take -1d to the loot roll.
- 53 A griffon rider circles overhead, intent on finding your dungeon's location.
- 54 Each PC has to pay cost as they struggle their way home through a storm.
- 55 You encounter a couple of satyrs inviting you off to party. You're compelled to follow.
- 56 One of you gets smacked with a swinging log trap, knocking you into a river.
- 61 A minion pack that you thought was dead actively disrupts your next raid plan to get revenge.
- 62 One of the PCs has become separated and a mountain lion is stalking them.
- 63 You all wake up entwined in thick vines. Several fae are pulling your loot away.
- 64 You meet a wretched crone offering you a secret way into the keep. It's not a trap, but you can't trust her.
- 65 A famous adventuring crew arrives in the region and leaves warning signs for you.
- 66 A minion pack doesn't make it out of the raid and gets captured.

❖ To get a random result, roll 2d6. Take the results and match them to the table. (Ex. 4 and 6 is 46 or 64)

MAJOR BLOWBACK (INVASIONS ARE USUALLY BEST DECIDED BY THE GM, NOT ROLLED)

- 11 You're cornered in a gully by some riders with dogs. There's no clear way out.
- 12 A dark faction is sick of you in their hunting grounds and decides to attack you during your next raid.
- 13 A very charming bard and a large number of hirelings that he's convinced to join him invade you.
- 14 A priest leads an angry mob into your dungeon, intent on ridding the world of your evil.
- 15 The factions in a certain area of the sandbox stand together, giving you -1d on blowback rolls there.
- 16 A squad of soldiers, about ten to twenty hirelings, show up to clear out your dungeon.
- 21 One of you has been caught by local rangers on the way home and is about to be hanged.
- 22 A paladin steps into your path and draws their sword. Their rogue friend waits in the bushes.
- 23 A small army has set up an encampment around your dungeon entrance, but hasn't noticed it yet.
- 24 There are a large number of scouts around your dungeon. You take -1d on raid engagement rolls.
- 25 One or two of you are taken and imprisoned in a small border garrison. You're the bait.
- 26 A dark faction's emissary arrives with an ultimatum - swear fealty or face invasion.
- 31 Forest pixies and sprites confuse and separate you all, then try leading you to your demise.
- 32 The faction that you just attacked gets motivated and finishes any faction clocks they have.
- 33 Boats along the river defend themselves more heavily, carrying archers that watch the shorelines.
- 34 A friendly faction of yours is attacked, knocking them down a tier. They come pleading for help.
- 35 A friendship with a faction breaks as they feel somehow slighted due to your last raid.
- 36 The faction that you just hit can finish a faction clock as they feel spurred into action.
- 41 Adventurers arrive at your dungeon before you and are in your sanctum as you walk into the entrance.
- 42 You arrive at your dungeon entrance to see a squad of soldiers camped outside it.
- 43 An adventurer that you thought was dead confronts you on the road, more powerful than before.
- 44 You step foot into a dryad's grove and everyone is instantly entangled and poisoned.
- 45 You all fall into a pit trap and wake up tied to spits, ready to be roasted by cannibals.
- 46 The target and its neighbors have increased defenses, giving you -1d to engagement against them.
- 51 A light-aligned dragon roasts the copse of trees you were hiding in, then comes in for a snack.
- 52 Noticing your intent on raiding them, a faction calls in favors and increases their tier by 1.
- 53 An ancient druid and his panther companion don't appreciate you stepping through their glade.
- 54 Your next raid is incredibly easy as guards break and run and nothing is locked. Then it all changes.
- 55 You enter a forest clearing and see a mage duel in progress. They both see you and turn to attack.
- 56 A storm completely batters you, leaving everyone spent. You do not get recovery.
- 61 A diviner foretells your next raid. Its engagement roll will be 0d no matter what.
- 62 A griffon swoops down and snatches one of you, then carries you off to its nest.
- 63 You stop for a break to count up your loot under an enormous tree ent.
- 64 You hear growling in the woods around you as a wolf pack sees a meal.
- 65 You're ambushed on your next raid by archers hiding in carts.
- 66 The ghosts of dead adventurers haunt you on your next raid.





READYING THE ASSAULT

With the werewolf terrorizing the countryside for several full moons and an invasion defeated, the PCs' turn their thoughts to finishing their master plan. On the next full moon, it'll be time to strike at the town and drive them from the region.

GM Alright, downtime - what are you all up to? Ulrot, wanna get us started?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

I need new minions, so I head out to that orc tribe again and spend a gold there. I'm just re-recruiting the same kind of raiders as before. When we get back to the dungeon, I pay them another gold to **SMASH** together the battering ram.



Ulrot rolls 2d SMASH for his minions and gets a mixed!

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

Just barely enough to finish off that clock. They spend way, way too long putting the wheels on it. They put one on, then move to the next while the first wheel falls off, sometimes rolling down the hill. This just kinda repeats for a while.

GM How about your downtime action?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

Ah right. I head into the prison to pay that monk a visit. I want to torture him into telling us what he knows about the werewolf. I guess I'll **SMASH** some fingers until he starts talking.

GM Yeah, just remember that without a torture chamber, you don't have dominant position.



Ulrot rolls 3d SMASH and gets a mixed!

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

Okay, I think this is pretty straightforward and won't go into detail here, but it involves broken bones, not as much information as I'd like, and losing my temper. What does he tell me?

GM I'm using some pocketed minor blowback here. He tells you that they have the dire wolf caged in town. An augurer identified it as the source of the curse and believes it'll lure in the werewolf. Then suddenly, fearing he might say too much, the monk then bites his own tongue off.

CRAIG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Dammit! Well, that gives me an idea, though. I'm going to contact the dire wolf's pack and try to get them to run rampant through the town with us. I want to **INVOKE** wildheart to do this.

GM Getting the pack to do your bidding is a tier 3 spell again.



Crag rolls 1d INVOKE (3d - 2d) and gets a failure!

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Screw that, I'm gonna risk it and roll again without dominant position. I think as I approach them, they're obviously on edge, growling. I put up my hands, non-threatening, and explain what's going on.



Crag rerolls 1d INVOKE and gets a mixed!

GM The wolves leap at you and you're sure you're about to get ripped to shreds, but another wolf backs them off. It scares the hell out of you and you take shock to GUTS, but you're alive and they're listening.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

"Strike the town on the next full moon, but wait until you see fire. That's the signal." I then back slowly away.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

"Well, we're not gonna be needing this tongueless monk anymore." I drag him out of his cell and haul him into the greenery. The plants hungrily snap at him, but I have a certain plant in mind - fire blossoms. I throw the monk in front of them and head off. They scorch him, then start feasting. I come back a bit later to pick some *firebombs*.

GM He's a tier two adventurer, so tier 2 *firebombs* work. You can harvest two, though one of them's *volatile* with a super short fuse.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

Sounds good. I give them to Ulrot. "Here, you'll be needing these."

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

Nah, screw that. I want to power struggle. I toss it back and **THREATEN** you, "No, no, no. I think it's gotta be you riding that battering ram."

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

I try to **TRICK** you, "What are you talking about? You're heavier. It's gonna need the weight to get going fast enough down that hill."

GM Let's see some rolls.



Ulrot rolls 2d THREATEN and gets a failure!



Slem rolls 1d TRICK and gets a mixed!

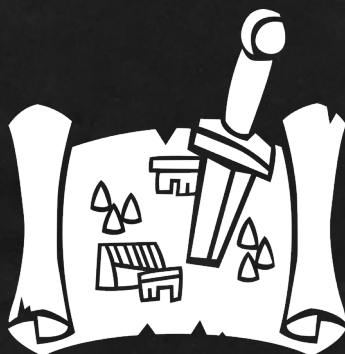
SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

"Don't worry, you're gonna be fine. With that short fuse, remember to count to 2, not 3 before tossing it. That's the key." Now, my downtime...



CHAPTER 6

SANDBOXES



"Blend in?! You're a 400 pound bugbear for fuck's sake. How the hell do you plan on blending in? Just... try using your heads for once instead of throwing yourself at the first idea that crops up in those pea brains of yours."

- Marlog, Demon Marauder



CHOOSING A SANDBOX

A dungeon exists in a rather localized region. Its static nature means it can only affect a limited area. You work together to create a sandbox, a small region full of dominoes for you to knock over. First, you choose a map, whether from this book or another source, then define a series of light, neutral, and dark factions that exist within that sandbox. This gives each player input on the type of factions they want to interact with.

It's important that the region is local. Keeping the travel distance from the dungeon to the edge of the map to about two to four days is ideal. The Wicked Ones can't spend long periods of time away from their dungeon. Giving minions such an opportunity to turn against you is foolhardy and your hoard would surely be raided while you're gone.

Once you have your map, you fill it with factions, the groups that inhabit and control points on the map. This sandbox, filled with factions of varying size, power, and motivation, creates a pressure cooker environment where any interaction is likely to see a faction angered, setting events into motion.

FACTIONS

Factions are the groups that inhabit the sandbox prior to the arrival of your dungeon. Each sandbox has likely hit a balance, with factions pushing and pulling against each other until their relations have hit some kind of equilibrium. Everything on the map is under some faction's sway and if you want your dungeon to grow, you're going to have to take that power from another faction. Factions are split up into the following three basic categories:

- ▶ **Light factions** often consist of races generally seen as "civilized" such as humans, elves, dwarves, and halflings. Light factions speak a common tongue called the Light Tongue.
- ▶ **Dark factions** often consist of races generally seen as "monstrous" such as bugbears, goblins, kobolds, orcs, slissiks, trolls, ogres, troglodytes, cyclopes, hobgoblins, and dark elves. Dark factions speak a common tongue called the Dark Tongue.
- ▶ **Neutral factions** often consist of races that don't generally get placed within the above two groups: gnomes, ratfolk, centaurs, lizardfolk, satyrs, dryads, nymphs, merfolk, sprites, pixies, and giants. Neutral factions might speak their own language or one of the other common tongues.

"Good" and "evil" aren't the best way to represent factions, as a tribe of evil humans could certainly exist, though they speak the Light Tongue and never consider cooperating with more "monstrous" races. "Civilized" is another loaded term that mostly just correlates to having organized kingdoms. **These lines and where factions exist within them are up to each group.** It's important, however, for a hard language and cultural barrier to exist between the light and dark factions. The lack of communication helps explain their animosity towards each other.

Factions are rated from tier 0 to tier 4 depending on their size and the threat they represent to the dungeon. A faction's tier determines how quickly they work towards their goals and how difficult it is for your dungeon to raid targets that belong to them. Their power is relative to each other, with tier 4 factions established first and then all other factions compared to them as they scale downwards in relative power. This hierarchy might look something like this:

- ▶ **Tier 4 factions:** A large orc tribe, a walled town with a few hundred people, and a garrison of the far-away duke's soldiers.
- ▶ **Tier 3 factions:** A reclusive wizard's tower, a gargoyle colony, and a river town.
- ▶ **Tier 2 factions:** Woods filled with various fae, hill trolls, and forest rangers attached to the garrison.
- ▶ **Tier 1 factions:** A traveler's tavern, farmers around the walled town, and a goblin cannibal tribe.
- ▶ **Tier 0 factions:** Displaced kobolds, river sylphs, and a tiny forest shrine.

A single large entity on the map, such as a large town, might have multiple factions within it. For example, you might split it up into a tier 4 noble faction, a tier 2 clergy faction, and a tier 1 farmers faction. Tier 0 factions are not detailed on the map.

FACTION CLOCKS

Each faction has a clock or two that represent goals the faction is working towards. Between each session, no matter how the cycle of play is progressing, the GM should roll the faction's tier as a fortune roll and tick away at their clocks, representing progress towards their goals and simulates the world moving. The GM can also do this narration together at the table from time to time, to get players involved.

When the clocks fill up, the goal is realized and the GM brings this new situation into play. These goals generally focus on interactions with other factions or even the dungeon. When a faction clock brings them up against another faction, opposed fortune rolls to determine how the confrontation goes down work well. The clocks are set and managed by the GM. Events within the game might also tick or even finish them. The segments on the clock are determined by how hard the goal is to accomplish. Check out the pre-made sandboxes for examples of faction goals.

PRE-MADE SANDBOXES

Over the following pages, there are four sandbox maps that you can use with lists of example factions and faction clocks. The examples make for interesting campaigns, though it's recommended that you actually **make your own** factions and clocks together. This helps get players more invested in the world! Some sandboxes may also need a special rule or two to represent what is unique about them, such as Colonial Seas needing ships to play a big part of the campaign, or the importance of moving unseen in the City Sewers sandbox.





QUIET VALLEY

EXAMPLE FACTIONS

1 FANGTOOTH GOBLINS

- Hungry cannibals
- Zealously worship Labisha
- Pit traps in the woods



Eat the wood gnomes



Kidnap the town priest

2

STOUTHEART ABBEY

- Dwarven brewers
- Warrior monks
- Sees trouble brewing



Destroy the cliff path



Reinforcements (+tier)

1

WOOD GNOMES

- Raid for knick knacks
- Incredibly greedy
- Horribly selfish



Trap the woods (+tier)



Summon the wood spirit

2

TOWN CLERGY

- Want to replace the mayor
- Have the townsfolk's backing
- Secretly ruled by a demon



Witch hunt



Work with the garrison

4

WOODTOWN

- Run by a powerful mayor
- Strong loyal guard
- Wants to remain independent



Wipe out the goblins



Request troop withdrawal

3

GARRISON

- Troops of the far-off baron
- Unwanted by Woodtown
- Trying to expand the barony



Frame the mayor



Manufacture crisis

1

FARMFOLK

- Poor and downtrodden
- Pressured by the clergy
- Secretly thinking of revolting



Build harvest god shrine



Refuse to work

4

ELVEN CONCLAVE

- Never seen by other factions
- Sees trouble brewing
- Wants to avoid a war



Approach the crossing



Approach the farmfolk

QUESTIONS: What haunts the eastern woods? What causes the ruined chapel's red glow? Why is the castle in ruins? What danger lurks in the river?



3 RIVERTOWN

- Run by a merchant family
- Old trade hub
- Hurt by the ferry crossing



Pay tribute to ettins



Send tradeboats south

2 MOUNTAIN ETTINS

- Led by a powerful zealot
- Worship Nezame
- Standoffish, but greedy



Flash flood ritual



Demand tribute

2 UNDERTOWN

- Gnome town under the ruins
- Live in deep caves
- Mix of light and dark factions



Ally with the wood gnomes



Ally with the satyr tribes

3 SATYR TRIBES

- Live in the haunted woods
- Serve an ancient ent
- Mostly capricious



Sink the ferry



Sink a river tradeboat

3 SORCERESS'S TOWER

- Wants her castle back
- Tower full of servants
- Building an army



Create flesh golems



Enslave forest spirits

4 BUGBEAR HORDE

- Fled from baron's conquest
- Occupy the castle ruins
- Lurk in the deep forest



Deserters (-tier)



Raid across the river

1 THE CROSSING

- Run by a few ex-adventurers
- Built to facilitate trade
- Angered mayor of Woodtown



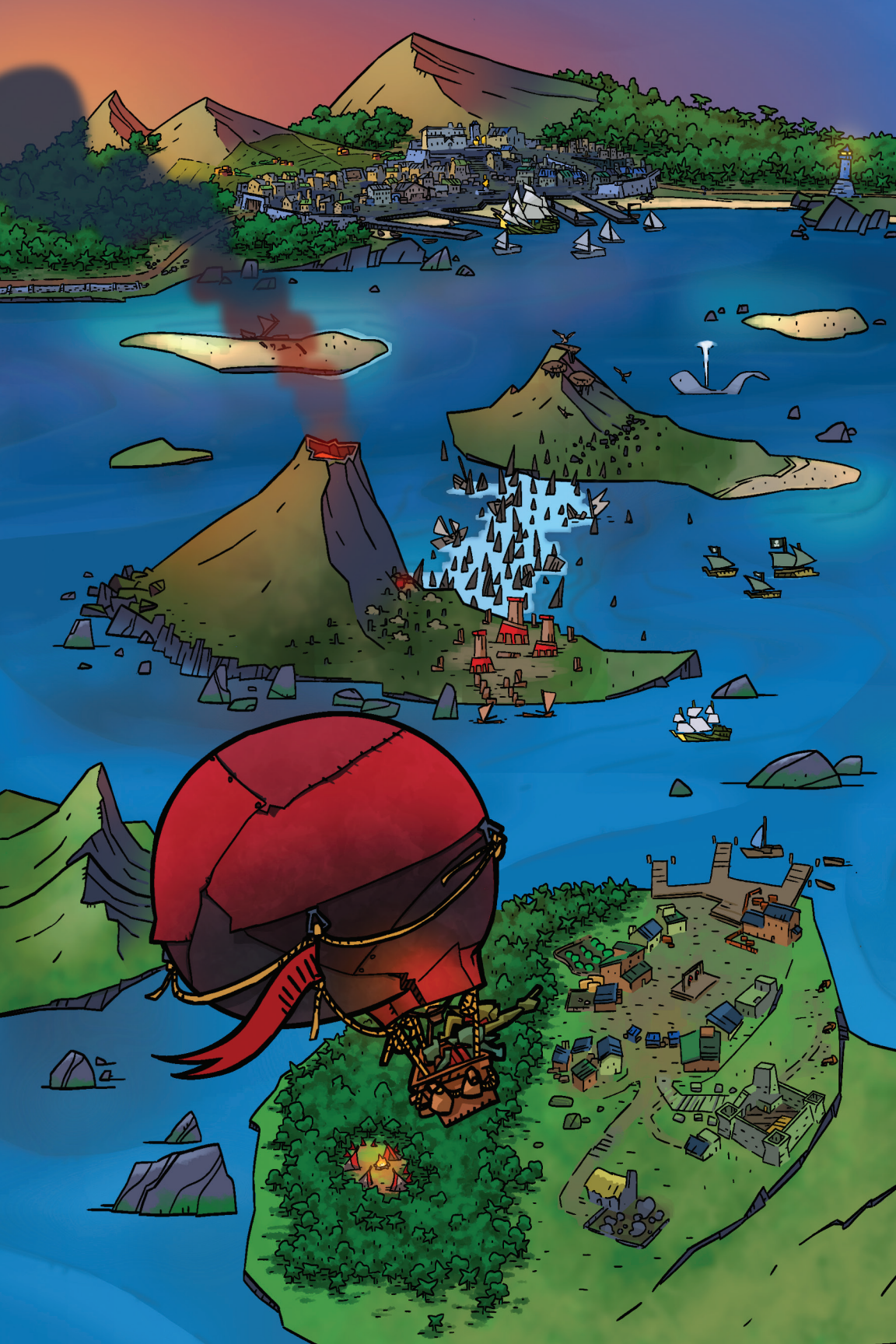
Make a deal with garrison



Quell the river fae

LIKELY DUNGEON LOCATIONS

- Glowing chapel (center)
- Woodlands (top left)
- Ruined castle (center right)
- Estate's basement (bottom left)





3 TREASURE FLEET

- Pressures for more gold
- Protects shipping lanes
- Demand gold from natives



Plunder islanders



Dispatch treasure ship

4 PORT WINDFALL

- Regional power, oldest town
- Governess on her deathbed
- Want to avoid war



Elect new governor



Arrest pirate captain

1 HARPIES

- Worship Iziya
- Sing sweet songs
- Despise trespassers



Cause shipwreck



Raid the firebreathers

3 FIREBREATHERS

- Shabaz-worshipping kobolds
- Burn down settlements
- Empowered by volcano



Raid New Greydon



Eruption (increase tier)

3 PIRATE CREWS

- Several pirate captains
- Loosely working together
- Prey on the treasure fleet



Establish a pirate town



Kidnap important figure

3 NEW GREYDON

- Pious townsfolk
- Loyal to the fort
- Spreading religion



Build defenses (+tier)



Armada arrives

2 GOBLIN ISLANDERS

- Heavily trapped forest
- Ride large apes
- Camouflaged skin



Move to a new island



Kidnap New Greydonian

4 FORT LANDING

- New presence in the region
- Highly expansionist
- Commander is insane



War with Port Windfall



Destroy goblin islanders

QUESTIONS: What is the leviathan that lives in these waters? How long ago did civilized factions arrive? Who originally built the skull mountain?



COLONIAL SEAS

EXAMPLE FACTIONS

1 SEABIRD MANOR

- Original explorer of this area
- Retired pirate captain
- Has a flying machine



Become Windfall governor



Gather support (+tier)

2 PORT BONANZA

- Wild, gambling town
- Mayor is very corrupt
- Disobey Port Windfall



Peace with the pirates



Defect to New Greylon

4 MERFOLK KINGDOM

- Regularly feast on sailors
- See themselves as heroic
- Can speak the Dark Tongue



Lure in a ship



Wrangle the leviathan

1 CONDOR PRINCE

- Magically awakened leader
- Hostile towards outsiders
- Hates colonizers



Expand territory (+tier)



Feast on townsfolk

1 GNOME ISLANDERS

- Sun worshippers
- Practice witchcraft
- Doomsday cult



Appease merfolk



Eternal sunset ritual

2 FOREST FOLK

- Mysterious fae creatures
- Live in the treetops
- Despise trespassers



Destroy the orc islanders



Awaken the wind drake

2 ORC ISLANDERS

- Enemies of the forest folk
- Worship Talazar
- Brutal warriors, but dumb



Fae hunt

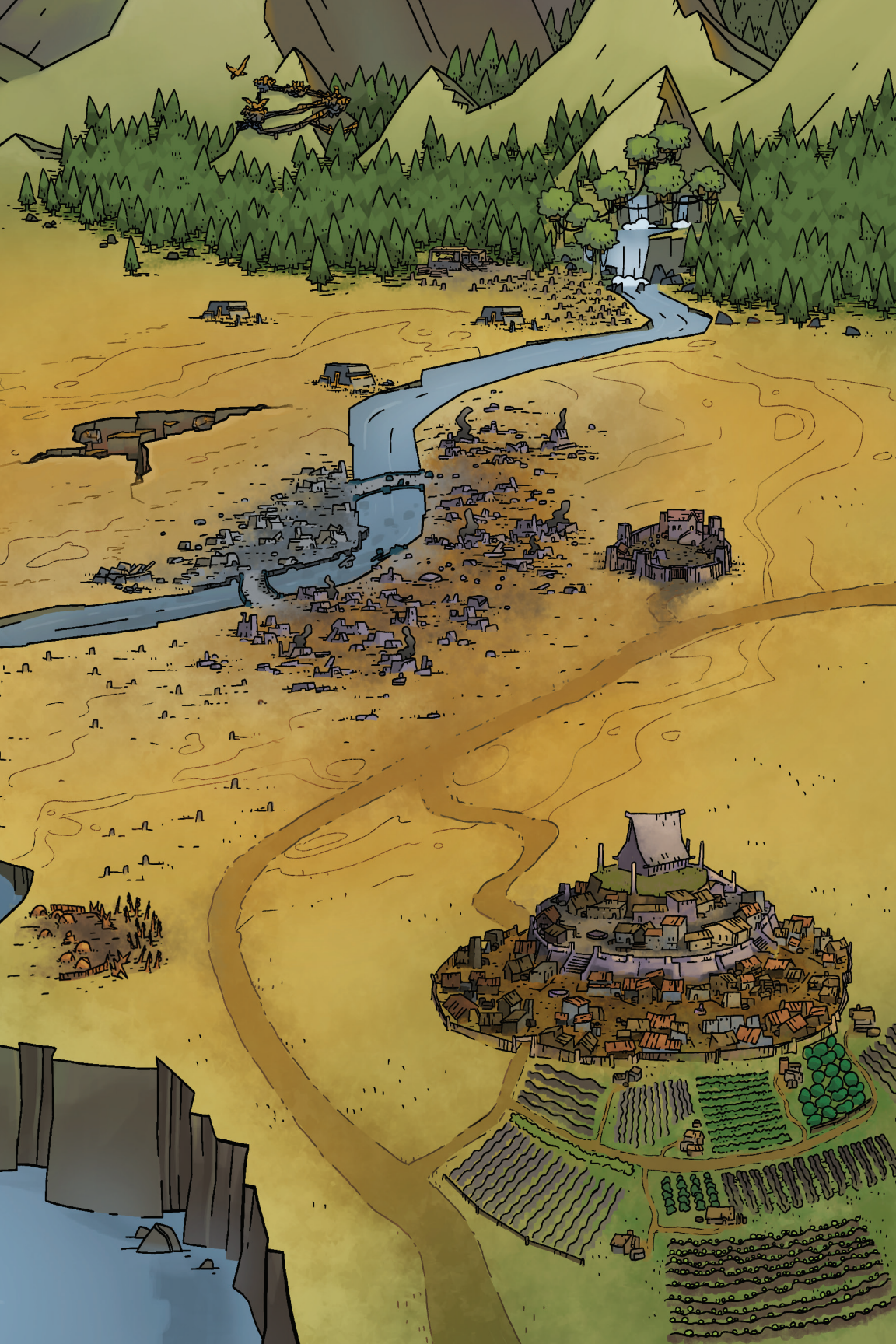


Merfolk hunt

LIKELY DUNGEON LOCATIONS

- Skull mountain (top right)
- Within the volcano (center left)
- Lighthouse basement (top center)
- Foothill forest (bottom right)





4 MOUNTAINHOME

- Large dwarven kingdom
- Need trade to the east
- Massive long-range artillery



Bombardment



Order assault across river

2 TROLL RAIDERS

- New to the area
- Came down from mountains
- Looking for war spoils



Raid the dwarven aviary



More trolls arrive

2 DRYAD WOODS

- Healing waters in center
- Only the pure may enter
- Highly distrusting



Stronger protections



Abandon the region

2 TRADETOWN

- Run by halfling merchants
- Halfling kingdom to the west
- Stay completely neutral



Supply the dwarves



Supply the horse lords

1 GHOST TOWN

- War-torn town
- Haunted by dwarven ghosts
- A necromancer hides here



Terrorize Tradetown



Haunt the trade route

1 CLAN THUNDERFALLS

- About ten giants in the clan
- Twice as tall as a human
- Highly reclusive



Feed the minotaurs



Throw stones at pirates

3 MONSTER PIRATES

- Council of pirate captains
- Trade pirated goods
- Too much hassle to oust



Light the torch of Gimosha



Festival of Gimosha

QUESTIONS: How did the war start? How long has it been running? Why is the town in the center demolished? What lives in the cave in the bottom left?

WARZONE

EXAMPLE FACTIONS

2 DWARVEN AVIARY

- Raise and ride griffons
- Alchemy labs to make bombs
- More concerned about trolls



Kidnap a moon elf



Map the east bank

1 DWARVEN FORESTERS

- Recently started logging
- Heavily trap in the forest
- Strong static defenses



Fuel the war machine



Foresters arrive (+tier)

3 DWARVEN BUNKERS

- Led by a grizzled sergeant
- Extensive defensive tunnels
- Pushing for a fallback



Withdraw from the front



Request fresh troops

4 MOON ELVES

- Strong nature magic
- Speak their own language
- Tired of the war



Ritual of flooding



Stop the logging

3 FORT POINT

- Powerful mercenary captain
- Contract with the Horse Lords
- Incredibly brutal



Kidnap the sergeant



Extend the war

2 WASTELAND VERMIN

- Loosely banded tribes
- Various monster races
- Consider the ruins home



Destroy the bridges



Invite the minotaurs

4 HORSE LORDS

- Human horse riders
- Strong cavalry
- Self-sufficient



Assault the minotaurs



Destroy the bridges

2 MINOTAUR CAMP

- Once hired on as mercenaries
- Now opposing the horse lords
- Currently starving



Send envoy to the dwarves



Raid for food

LIKELY DUNGEON LOCATIONS

- Broken bridge (center)
- Within the rift (center)
- Ruined city (center right)
- Cliff cave (bottom left)





1 PIXIE ISLAND

- Campfire festivals
- Blinking lights in trees
- Fascinated by people



Lure in a fisherman



Move into the city trees

1 BARON POINTYEARS

- Ratfolk tribe in the sewers
- Ride sewer gators
- Incredible hunters



Expand territory (+tier)



Feed the gators

3 ADMIRALTY

- Control the navy and docks
- Recruit from Shanty Town
- Admiral is from Mucktown



Round up shanty towners



Get wind of merfolk

1 SHANTY TOWN

- Loyal Prosperity believers
- Exploited by the temple
- Hardworking, honest folk



Tithe the temple



Praise the Prince Day

2 MENTWICK MANOR

- Ex-adventurer and family
- Very wealthy
- Blackmailing the Prince



Marry into royalty



Blackmail the merfolk

1 BARON BIGTEETH

- Ratfolk tribe in the sewers
- Live on sewerboats
- Powerful warriors



Tear down the statue



Join with the pointyears

2 MUCKTOWN GANGS

- Five constantly warring gangs
- Loose loyalty to the "top" gang
- Want to exterminate ratfolk



New gang takes over



Smuggle goods for nobles

1 NOBLE ESTATES

- A few minor noble families
- Jealous of the Mentwicks
- Loyal Prosperity followers



Hire proper guards (+tier)



Challenge the Mentwicks

QUESTIONS: Why doesn't the city clear out the ratfolk sewer barons? What else stalks the city's sewer system? Who is the statue near the harbor of?

NOTE: An intricate sewer system runs under the entire city. The red circles are manhole covers leading into the sewer. The drainage rivers also lead there.



CITY SEWERS

EXAMPLE FACTIONS

4

PROSPERITY TEMPLE

- Highly corrupt priesthood
- Seek to run the city
- Forsaken by their goddess



Persecute a heretic



Frame the High Wizard

4

THE ROYAL FAMILY

- Led by the Prince
- Belong to a secret cult
- Don't trust the royal guard



Curtail the temple (-tier)



Destroy the Mentwicks

2

CITY GUARD

- Loyal to Prosperity Temple
- Keep the muck out of the city
- Patrols within the walls



Bust Mucktown heads



Uncover blackmail

3

ROYAL GUARD

- Greatly diminished power
- Accompany the Prince
- Easily bribable



Shakedown the college



Shakedown the Mentwicks

1

MERFOLK COVEN

- Thought of only as a myth
- Prince has a merfolk lover
- Want to stop the dirty waters



Convince Prince to help



Ritual of cleansing

1

BARON WHISKERS

- Ratfolk tribe in the sewers
- Practice strange magics
- Universally hated



Capture a merfolk



Raid the College Arcanum

2

COLLEGE ARCANUM

- At odds with the temple
- Strongly against the ratfolk
- Loyal to the Prince



Expose the royal guard



Extreminate Whiskers

2

CULT OF PROSPERITY

- Led by the Prophet
- Preaches of true prosperity
- Directly opposes the temple



Kidnap the high priest



Spread the faith

1

BARON LONGTAIL

- Ratfolk tribe in the sewers
- Contacts with the Prophet
- Swim through the sewers



Convert to Prosperity



Join the Cult

LIKELY DUNGEON LOCATIONS

- Under the prison (top right)
- Bottom of a slum well (bottom left)
- Prosperity Church crypts (top center)
- Arcane College warrens (center)



SANDBOX CREATION

The recommended way to play *Wicked Ones* is to choose a map, then each player helps define the factions that exist within that map. Creating this sandbox together really gets players involved with the setting and also helps let the GM know what kind of monster shenanigans they intend to get up to. As you define the factions, you're really choosing the types of raid targets you want to hit and factions you want to interact with.

Players take turns establishing factions by finding interesting things on the map and detailing what faction occupies that area. The GM can also take a turn in this, or just leave it to the players. When you establish a faction, give a detail or two about them and then the GM can ask a follow-up question or two to further flesh them out. Don't go into too much detail - you're just painting in broad strokes here and can hone in on the factions more through play.

It's highly recommended that PCs not be from the area. You're new arrivals, unaware of all of these factions. The PCs don't have any connections to them, which lets you find out in play how all of this weaves together.

SANDBOX CREATION (PROCESS)

1. **Choose a sandbox map.** Pick one of the four from this book or find one from some fiction that you prefer! Make sure it's a small, regional area.
2. **Choose a dungeon location.** Find a spot on the map to locate your dungeon in. Centralized locations tend to work best!
3. **Detail two or three tier 4 factions.** This is best done as a group, as these are major powers and will have a big impact. Two light factions and one neutral faction works best.
4. **Detail four tier 3 factions.** Two light, one dark, and one neutral is best.
5. **Detail four tier 2 factions.** Two light, one dark, and one neutral is best.
6. **Detail four tier 1 factions.** Two light, one dark, and one neutral is best.
7. **Establish distance.** Choose two points on the map and establish how long it takes to travel from one to the other. A day or two works best.
8. **Answer some questions about the world.** The GM poses a few questions about the map that help give it more detail or clear things up.

The timing of the sandbox creation depends on the group, but the best way is to choose the sandbox map and dungeon location before you do anything else, including picking a dungeon theme or making characters.

The first session usually covers the initial establishment of your dungeon. The beginning of the second session is great timing for detailing the factions as you now have more information about your characters and dungeon so you can make informed choices about what might be fun factions to go up against.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Throughout sandbox creation, the GM's job is to push the players through the creation process and ask probing questions about the factions they detail. You're building little hooks that you can later use to pull the factions into the story. These probing questions are how the GM can get really involved in the process, guiding it towards themes that you want to focus on. If you want to establish the gods as an active element in the story, ask about them! If you want each faction to have small, interesting quirks, try to get those details instead.

Finally, it's the GM's job to ask a few more questions about the sandbox itself.

You can ask about the relationships between factions, the environment or weather in the area, or just try to add some detail to something interesting on the map. While these are helpful during sandbox creation, the GM should also be asking these as the campaign progresses whenever a certain area of the sandbox needs a bit more fleshing out!

Here are some questions a GM might ask:

- *Why do the halflings live by the river? What are their boats like?*
- *Who's the leader of this faction? Is it something like a council or just one powerful individual?*
- *Why have these elves forbidden stepping foot outside of their forest?*
- *What do these hobgoblins sacrifice to their god?*
- *Which faction does this one hate more than any other? How did that faction wrong them?*
- *Why do you think there's nothing living in these mountains?*
- *These two factions have been at war for a while. What do you think the original reason was? What do they fight for now?*
- *This castle seems to be in ruins. What caused that?*
- *Where's this griffon here in the corner taking the goblin?*
- *What caused this rift in the ground? What's inside it now?*
- *Who's the most powerful wielder of ancient magic in this region?*
- *What gods were worshipped hundreds of years ago here? What happened to their followers?*

After the session you create the sandbox in, the GM gives each faction a clock or two. From then on, the GM controls the factions and judges how they respond to the events in the game. If you're not sure what a faction would be doing, that's fine. Put a pin in it until that faction is relevant, then think of what they would have been doing up to that point and make a few rolls on the faction clock to simulate their progress up to that point.



THE WORLD TURNS

Events are in motion, with the werewolf and the dungeon sowing chaos throughout the land. A lot is up in the air and there's some clocks about to get finished, so the GM decides to run through the factions together.

GM So what we've seen so far is the town mostly hysteric over what's happening, with livestock getting slaughtered and people disappearing. That merchant has somehow kept his son's condition secret so far. The mayor's setting a trap with that dire wolf. It's caged in the town center, under guard. Let's start with the farmfolk and see what they're doing.



The GM rolls 1d fortune (farmfolk) and gets a mixed! It fills their "angry mob" clock!

GM The farmers have probably been getting the brunt of the werewolf attacks, so are not so pleased that the mayor hasn't fixed the problem. What do you think this angry mob does?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

Maybe they go straight for the mayor? Demand he steps down?

CRAK
KOBOLD SHAMAN

We're sorta pushing towards the next raid and finishing our master plan here during the next full moon. What if this all happens together?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

Like, the farmers get together, knowing the full moon is coming and more death along with it? Maybe one of their leaders whips them into an angry mob and they're just busting into town, with demands for the mayor to kill the dire wolf, when our next raid happens.

GM Ohhh, I like it. That'll make the town nice and chaotic. Let's see what the town clergy are up to.



The GM rolls 2d fortune (town clergy) and gets a failure! It doesn't tick their "expand the faith" clock.

GM Looks like they're not doing much. What's their inaction mean?

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

Maybe they look at this as some kind of divine punishment and have shut the church's doors to the townsfolk? They see this entire situation as a trial the people must overcome on their own.

GM It also plays pretty well into how the farmfolk built the harvest god shrine earlier. Now let's see what the mayor's doing.



The GM rolls 4d fortune (mayor) and gets a critical! It fills their "hold off the garrison" clock!

GM Okay, that makes things pretty interesting. A few sessions back, we were talking about how the baron's troops in the garrison were offering protection but wanted the town to swear loyalty to the baron. The mayor's back is against the wall with all the unrest. What does he do?

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

The mayor wants the garrison gone. Maybe they leave?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

I don't think the garrison captain would just abandon their post with all the craziness happening. She has orders and it's a perfect situation.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Ohhh, I got it! Maybe the mayor blames them for the situation and the townsfolk drive them off?

GM Ah, that makes sense. Let's make it opposed fortune rolls. If the garrison wins, they'll stay out of the mayor's way but remain in the region. If the mayor wins, the garrison will be abandoned.



The GM rolls 4d fortune (mayor) and gets a success!



The GM rolls 3d fortune (garrison) and gets a success!

GM Huh... ummm, any ideas for the tie? We could narrate and roll again?

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

What if the garrison drops a tier, sending some soldiers away? They still have a presence, but they're not the threat to the mayor they were.

GM That makes a lot of sense. Cool, let's go with that. What's it look like?

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

The garrison commander brings a group of troops right up to the mayor's front gate. The mayor comes out, sword in hand, and whistles. Several archers pop up over the wall, arrows trained on the commander. "Consider this a final warning. We've had enough of your metting. The town's behind me. Now back across the river with you."

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

She didn't expect the mayor to have the backbone for this. "Fine, fools. Die by yourselves. We'll be back to pick up the scraps."

GM Perfect. So I think just dropping the tier doesn't make sense. The garrison relocates across the river instead. Finally, let's do the elves.



The GM rolls 4d fortune (elven conclave) and gets a failure! It doesn't tick their "offer assistance" clock.



CHAPTER 7

GAMEMASTER



"Monstrous scum, raiding and pillaging our lands. Now they'll get what they deserve. Follow close! Let none of them leave these foul tunnels alive. And worry not, for there'll be reward enough for all of us when we get to their hoard."

- Sir Bastion Tell, Knight



THE GM'S JOB

As the gamemaster, you're the one that ties the game together. Within the story, your job is to represent the world and the NPCs that inhabit it. You run a simulation of what happens as the PCs wreak havoc in the sandbox, determine how the world responds to them, and present them with interesting and fun challenges to overcome.

Outside of the story, a lot of the responsibility for keeping gameplay flowing and preparing for the game between sessions will fall on you. Sharing as much of this responsibility as you can with everyone at the table is best - you're all co-authors of the game, after all. However, group activities tend to need someone to act as a leader to keep things moving and more often than not, that will be your job.

The following pages outline several tenets to follow when gamemastering. Consider them as advice or guidelines rather than rules, as each gamemaster will have a different style. Choose the ones that work best for you. Before beginning this section, though, you should review the GM's Best Practices to put yourself in the right frame of mind. You should also internalize how the Flow of Information works in *Wicked Ones*.

REPRESENT THE WORLD HONESTLY

Be the sandbox. You and the players are making a story together and as you add pieces of information to this fiction, it's up to you to run the simulation of how the world responds within your own mind. As you consider how factions respond with blowback, how the dungeon suffers calamity, or what circumstances are important to position and effect, strive to represent the world honestly and build trust from your players that you're making reasonable calls.

Don't set out with an agenda, pushing for certain events to come to pass. Let the players knock over the dominoes in the sandbox and watch as they fall. This is their story, so let them drive it and play to find out how the story unfolds.

Strive to change the dynamic of a situation when handing out consequences, making subsequent rolls more interesting than the last. Use them to push the story forward, rather than getting stuck in a loop with little progress.

Give out consequences that make sense. Make sure that consequences flow from the fiction, feeling realistic given a situation. Nothing is worse from a player perspective than a consequence not making sense given what just happened. When you do need to make some action happen off-screen or with little connection to the current action roll, explain what is going on.

Don't take away easy wins just because the players are rolling well or had a great plan. Reward that! GMs have a tendency to want to introduce an "appropriate" amount of challenge and when PCs breeze through a raid or dungeon defense, it might feel a little hollow from the GM's perspective. As long as you're being honest about the world and the challenges represented within it, these easy wins aren't likely to happen all that often so when they do, let them enjoy it!

KEEP THE DUNGEON IN FOCUS

Make the game about building a dungeon. Help the players feel that the dungeon is the center of the story. Players will have a tendency to focus on their own individual PCs, so asking them questions about why they're in the dungeon, what they think about its progress, what they want to change, and how they feel about the master plan helps reinforce the dungeon as the center of the story. Try to relate their actions back towards the dungeon in some way. The more you take time to discuss these things, the more important the dungeon feels and the easier it becomes to make a master plan that focuses on the dungeon as a whole.

Push for scenes within the dungeon, zooming in and expanding on player action there. Breeze by minor stuff outside of the dungeon, but try not to miss a moment where you can add a bit more detail within it.

Set faction goals that matter for the dungeon. Each faction will have a myriad of things they want to accomplish, but the majority of them likely have no relation to the dungeon itself. Anything that doesn't change the dynamic in meaningful ways can just be backgrounded. If it ever suddenly becomes important, you can always simulate a few faction rolls to see their progress towards something.

Don't fall in love with the sandbox. Even though you're controlling it and representing it honestly, the game is always about the dungeon. Don't outshine what the PCs have going on with their dungeon by amazing events done by the factions. The factions and their goals are backdrops to give the PCs' story depth.

GIVE PLAYERS INTERESTING CHOICES

Keep dark impulses in mind, and use them to throw a wrench into whatever plans the PCs are making. Strike a nice balance between pressuring these impulses and giving the players some room to breathe. Going for once a session per PC is nice, though don't force them either. Sometimes, a PC will give you plenty of opportunities to compel their dark impulses so multiple times per session is fine if it feels right.

Always be on the lookout for temptation. Offer dark bargains when they can't easily afford one, the scene seems static, or a character seems especially vulnerable to temptation. Let those temptations lurk in the back of their minds.

Give players space to make choices, but jump in when they seem at an impasse. Choosing what room to build, what downtime action to perform, what raid to go on, and so on can be quite difficult. Sometimes players just need a bit to think about it. Give them space, but recognize when it's heading towards a dead end. Jump in with suggestions or ask them leading questions. If there are a few options out there, initiating a power struggle can help resolve it and makes for a great scene.

Fall back on player creativity. Gamemastering *Wicked Ones* can be quite taxing creatively. You don't roll for enemies, but position and effect and consequences mean that you're always processing things in your mind and needing to think on your feet. When you hit a wall, ask your players for help!



MAKE THE WORLD DANGEROUS

Make sure dire means dire. Don't pull your punches handing out consequences. The people they're raiding want nothing more than to rid the world of monsters, or at the very least get as far away from them as possible. Be honest about position and fight the urge to tone down consequences, remembering that they can be resisted.

Announce big consequences before the roll. Position and effect do a good job of setting the stakes, but for the biggest consequences, let everyone know exactly how it'll play out before the dice are rolled. The tension will go through the roof and it also takes the burden of "hitting them too hard" off of you as they totally know and have accepted the stakes. If you struggle with pulling your punches too often, announcing your consequences more often can help with it.

Make sure the PCs know that everyone hates monsters. Dungeons exist for this specific reason, to give these monsters a safe place to hide while doing nefarious deeds. Even monstrous factions are unlikely to get along well with other monsters.

Make adventurers smart and terrifying. Think about adventurers as if they were PCs in a hero-based fantasy game. Play them as smart as you'd play your own PC in a game like that. They absolutely want to destroy the monsters, whether their motivation is ridding the world of evil or filling their pockets with treasure.

Telegraph danger before it hits. Give the PCs clues as to what might happen if they fail or try to raid a certain area. Let them know that danger lurks. And when they falter after ignoring the clues or accepting the risks, hit them hard.

Blindside the PCs. If you have pocketed blowback or calamity, that's enough warning for them. Hit them out of nowhere to reinforce how dangerous the world is. Even without it, adventurers have a really pesky habit of showing up at the most inopportune times. They're likely to appear anywhere in any scene without needing much justification at all for it because that's just what adventurers do.

Inflict consequences to create immediate action in a scene that has stalled, or to get a fast paced scene started. This is the GM's greatest power. The world is not only responsive to PC actions. If you feel like an earthquake would make things more interesting, make it happen and see what the PCs do.

Stand in the PCs' way. Be honest about the world, but areas that have something worth raiding are always difficult to raid. Any target that they would consider worth hitting either has defenses protecting its approach, ways to make the loot hard to get, or a strong responsive defense to run down raiders.

Choose blowback and calamity wisely to make the world feel smart, active, and dangerous. Strike a nice balance between choosing when to invade to pressure their dungeon defenses and act as an existential threat, changing the dynamic with factions, or hitting the PCs themselves. And when in doubt, just pocket it and blindside them with it later at the perfect moment.

KEEP INFORMATION FLOWING

Convey lots of detail, giving the players the information they need to make good decisions. Remember that most of the simulation is happening in your mind and while they can likely make assumptions about what's going on, things are not always as clear for players as it is for you. So give them a lot of information and they can then pick up on these details and play into them to help with position and effect.

Give seemingly minor details to make scenes come to life. Let them know an acrid smoke hangs in the air, a lava flow gives off a deep rumbling and crackling, or the sounds of festival and laughter drift across the fields as they launch their raid. Consider what they see, hear, smell, and even taste. Think about the weather and the time of day. Try to make time at the beginning of each scene to add a detail or two because every detail you give to them, they can put to use in their own narration.

Keep the world moving. The world will begin to feel like it only responds to what the PCs are doing if you only describe their actions and their consequences. Remember that other things in the world are happening in the background as well and inform the players about them. These could present new interesting opportunities or signal upcoming danger, even when the PCs were successful. If anything, though, more information helps paint a vivid scene and make the world feel alive and real.

Give NPCs a feature or two that makes them memorable. Reserve names for the most important of characters. When in doubt, describe them as an adjective and a noun - the fat elf, the surly human, the mysterious sylph. Expand a bit to add importance to the character. Features help reinforce the existence of NPCs in the players' minds. The long-nosed troll with a deep voice, the green hag that smells of burnt wood, or the barrel-chested captain that can barely balance on his horse create instantly memorable characters. And when they matter, give them a name.

Be curious about the PCs. Learn about their intentions or what they think is going on. Ask them why they're doing certain things or what they plan on doing next. You're all entertaining each other, but the GM is really the captivated audience for each PC. It's your job to know all about them and what they have going on. This is also a great way of drawing out some of the quieter players.

Give the players narrative control. Ask them what they think a faction might do, or what a good consequence in a given situation might be. This is a nice break for you as the GM, but it also keeps the story flowing in interesting ways that might even surprise you and pull the players into the game further. This kind of open discussion fosters a spirit of co-authorship to the story. Also, don't be afraid to say no, or to change up what they want to have happen a little bit to fit better. Ultimately, the responsibility to keep the sandbox making sense is up to you.

Describe the shifting narrative after every roll. Even when a PC rolls a success and goes into great detail about what they're doing, take a second afterward to describe what other things have shifted in the world during that time. Each action a PC takes has an opportunity cost. The world is still real and should react to what the PCs are doing. This might even create surprising unintended positive or negative side effects which could create new openings or shut off certain doors.



BE A GOOD DIRECTOR OF THE ACTION

Keep the game moving. Players will get stuck on what to do next, spin off into out-of-game conversations, get distracted, or tail off into long in-game conversations about something that nobody's really interested in. Just asking a question is usually enough to pull people back into the game, like "Where's your character during all of this?"

Move the camera between PCs. When some action sparks up around a PC, focus on them and give them lots of room to accomplish something. Sometimes they will chain a few actions together creating their own mini-scene. Let it play out, but when it starts to get too long, put a pin in it and pan the camera over to someone else in the scene or cut away to a PC in another location.

Bring quieter players into focus. No matter what atmosphere you have at the table, some players just aren't comfortable grabbing the spotlight. It's your job to make room for them, creating empty space that's easy to fill or asking them directly what their PC is doing.

Zoom in on what's interesting and zoom out on what's not. Time flows pretty fluidly through the phases and not everything needs a scene. Mechanics can't be accessed without some level of description by players, but it could just be a simple line or two. When something seems interesting to see play out, though, zoom right in on it. Bring the players into the moment, set the stage, and ask them what their PCs are doing.

Ask for details about PC actions. It's the player's job to narrate what their PC is doing so when they don't, ask some questions. "What does that look like?" is always a good go-to in this case, but an even more detailed question like "So is he losing a limb here or something?" can work well.

Don't steal a player's thunder. When their PC does something, make sure not to offer up detailed suggestions about what it looks like. A question like "Do you chop his arm off and it goes flying across the room?" is pretty hard for the player to walk back if they had something else in mind. As soon as you give a detailed suggestion, players begin to imagine it and it starts to feel real. Let the players have their awesome moments.

Make sure the PCs are the stars of the show. There can be badass NPCs, both friends and foes, but they're supporting cast. The entire reason this sandbox exists is to let the monsters shine as they burn it down.

Initiate power struggles. When you see indecision amongst your players, power struggles create great monster scenes. They even work for quite minor things and small disagreements. Arguing about nothing important at all is incredibly monstery.

USE DUNGEON INVASIONS EFFECTIVELY

Time your invasions well. It's ultimately up to the GM to decide when invasions occur. This is intentional, as it gives you a lot of control to balance out the action happening in the game. Multiple invasions in a row might grow a bit tedious, just as having no invasions over an extended period of time is pretty boring.

Consider how long invasions take. Sometimes, an invasion might not match up well with the amount of time left in a session. If calamity or blowback are rolled at the end, it's easy to pick it up in the next game with an invasion. But if major blowback is rolled and you've got about 30 minutes left and were expecting to finish downtime and call the game there, maybe hit them with some different blowback or pocket the blowback and start off the next session with the invasion. Pocketed invasions are especially powerful - place a visual reminder, a token or some such, in front of you to let the players know that it's coming.

Use invasions to provide an existential threat. The goal of most adventuring parties that enter the dungeon is to wipe out its denizens. Punish the PCs for bad dungeon design or overreaching in their raids. Don't be afraid to end the game with a defeated dungeon. That's the entire point of the game! If that threat is off the table, the reason for building the dungeon disappears. Make sure the players know you're coming to kill their PCs.

Mix up the goal of invasions. An adventuring party that enters to rescue a prisoner or steal a specific item can be an interesting change of pace. The PCs are sure to be surprised as some imps enter their sanctum to announce that the prisoners have been freed and the adventurers are getting away. Ask them how they respond and grab some dice, ready to jump into a scene.

Remember that the players play the dungeon. An invasion is the players' chance to see all of the stuff they've been building in motion. Give them plenty of narrative control over how this plays out, even as the dungeon defenses fail. Use invasions to give the dungeon its spotlight through the players' descriptions.

Invade when it makes sense or seems fun. The world is moving in the background, outside of calamity and blowback. An invasion can happen at any time, for any reason. Random adventuring parties wander the world looking for tunnels to dive into in search of treasure. You never need a reason to invade.

Play adventurers honestly. They're experts at dungeoneering. Reward the players when they build clever defenses, but eventually an adventurer will arrive that can bypass these measures. The longer the dungeon exists, the more likely adventurers are to know about the insides of it through rumor or experience.

BE A FAIR ARBITER OF THE RULES

Map the fiction back to the rules. Nobody at the table is likely to know the game as well as you do, so while the responsibility to know the rules rests on everyone, you're in the best position to adjudicate them. When things aren't clear, help players figure out the rule behind what they're trying to accomplish.

Create a fiction-first atmosphere. This goes along with the above, but the fiction comes before the rules. The rules exist just to figure out exactly how something plays out when a PC does something uncertain. Help get your players into this mindset as well, encouraging them to describe what their PCs are doing, not what rules they're using. Guide them towards making decisions that their PC would make, not what's mechanically best in a certain situation.

Trust your gut. So many decisions in the game rest on your *gut feeling*. You can't process everything going on all the time and don't have to. Most of the time, you'll know things like position and effect or the right consequence because it *feels* right. This *gut feeling* takes a while to develop, so don't worry too much if you struggle over the first session or two.

Encourage discussion about rulings. Many decisions rely on that *gut feeling*, so you might miss out on some details. Be open to players questioning your decisions. You always make the final call, but having the players' trust that you're judging things fairly is important for everyone having a good time. Try to keep these conversations brief, though, as it's just stealing time away from what's really fun in the game.

Make up rules on the fly. You're going to find gaps in the rules, weird edge cases, or something the designers never thought of. Don't be afraid to make up a rule or apply other rules more broadly when this happens. When in doubt, everything in the entire game can collapse back down to a fortune roll to see what happens.

Look rules up later. There are going to be times when you've forgotten a rule or can't find it in the book. First, be honest about that. Say you don't remember and, if it's fine with everyone, just make up a quick rule, move on, then look it up later.

Understand the math. It's a good idea to get a general sense of the probabilities of dice rolls so you know how often things are likely to happen. Mixed rolls are very common and criticals are relatively rare without stacking a lot of +1d bonus dice. Knowing this can help you with pacing and developing your *gut feeling*.

POOL SIZE	FAILURE	MIXED	SUCCESS	CRITICAL
0d	75%	22%	3%	0%
1d	50%	33%	17%	0%
2d	25%	44%	28%	3%
3d	13%	45%	35%	7%
4d	6%	42%	39%	13%
5d	3%	37%	40%	20%
6d	2%	32%	40%	26%

STARTING A CAMPAIGN

The first step of getting a *Wicked Ones* campaign set up is pitching the game to some friends. Here's an example of what that might look like:

"Wicked Ones is kind of like Dungeon Keeper meets Blades in the Dark. You play as monsters that build a dungeon together. You raid the overworld for loot to build up your hoard, fend off adventurers invading the dungeon, and try to accomplish a nefarious master plan. It's basically a game about being the bad guys."

You pick a sandbox map of a local region and work together to set up a bunch of factions within it. Then you play to find out what happens to all of it. There's no storyline or anything. It's mostly just introducing the chaos of a dungeon into the middle of some region to see what happens.

Everyone draws the dungeon together on a sheet of paper. It grows over time as you build all kinds of traps, tricks, locks, and rooms inside it and recruit creatures and minions. You also discover other crazy stuff underground as your dungeon grows."

Now that you have some people on board and ready to get together to play, you have some decisions to make. Getting a campaign of *Wicked Ones* up and running requires some setup. The flow lined out in this section should help make that setup go more smoothly. You can follow this guide or just use it as a guideline.

SESSION 0

It's best to get everyone together for a proper session zero where you can talk about expectations for the game and make some major decisions together. Making sure everyone has a say in these decisions will help all players buy into the premise of the game. Before play can start, you need to do the following, probably in this order:

- **Choose a sandbox.** The region the dungeon interacts with has a huge impact on the types of stories that will be told. It's best if the PCs are new to the region, without pre-existing connections to it, so the region can be revealed over time through play. This is also the time to choose where the dungeon will be.
- **Choose a dungeon theme.** The dungeon you build really sets the tone for the entire campaign and can change the way you view the sandbox. It puts everyone on the same page about what kind of story you want to tell.
- **Choose callings.** With the above choices made, players have a much stronger idea about what the game will be about and can make characters that fit in well with those choices.
- **Choose safety tools.** This is a game about being evil and it's likely you'll hit some uncomfortable territory, so taking the time to talk about the themes everyone is okay with exploring can head off problems down the road. This is a nice opportunity to set up the x-card, lines and veils, or movie ratings discussed in the intro chapter.



SESSION 1

Over the first session, you need to **create your dungeon** and **set up factions** in the sandbox. Both of these are best done after the players have a chance to play their characters a bit so they can understand their group's dynamic a little better and make better choices about the game they want to play. Here's a recommended flow for the first session and most of it's on rails, serving as a kind of tutorial. You can tweak this or come up with your own, but this one will get you started nicely!

Start the game off. Gather your group around the table, character sheets filled in and ready to go, then read or paraphrase the following aloud:

"You're all members of a failed dungeon, one that collapsed in upon itself after your master was overthrown by an adventuring party. The dungeon was ransacked and the remnants of the minions and creatures tore each other apart in the aftermath as they struggled for control.

While you never really knew each other before, in the ensuing chaos and escape from the doomed dungeon, you recognized that each of you had the spark of a Wicked One, a monster that can suppress its dark impulses long enough to work towards a master plan together. Seeing first hand how precarious a dungeon run by just one master can be, you decided to band together and set up a dungeon of your own.

But that was weeks ago. Since then, you've been on the run through civilized territory, looking for the right spot for the dungeon. Now, you're huddled around a dying campfire under a tree as rain pours down around you. You're soaked, cold, tired, and pretty angry. You've gone hungry the last several nights. There's one thing you're certain of, though. These lands around you are full of ripe targets. But first, you're going to need refuge."

Have the players describe their characters. Set a small scene, describing the cold and the campfire, then go around and ask each player to describe their PC. Ask some probing questions to get more information out of them.

"What's your name? What do you look like? What trappings and supply do you have? How did you get the dark heart you start with?"

Set the dungeon atmosphere. Get some details about the type of dungeon they want to create, which will start to make it feel more real. Read them the following:

"As you sit there together watching the fire slowly die as the wind splashes it with rain, your thoughts turn towards what your future dungeon will be like.

I'm going to ask you all some questions to set the atmosphere of the dungeon you might all build someday. Let's try to answer them in character. Feel free to disagree. Monsters are sure to have strong opinions about where they want to live. We'll resolve any disputes with a power struggle."

Go through the list of dungeon atmosphere questions. When they're stuck, give them a few examples. Try to keep this quick. Push for answers and, when they disagree, initiate power struggles. This is a good chance for everyone to see the dice in action without any consequences and to establish that **it's okay for PCs to argue** because they're monsters! Be sure to write these down on the dungeon sheet.

- *What will your dungeon's entrance look like from the outside?*
- *What will the floors and walls of your dungeon be like?*
- *What will lighting be like inside your dungeon?*
- *What smell will greet those who step foot into your dungeon?*
- *What will your hoard consist of?*

Set up a raid. So now you have a lot of information about what kind of dungeon they want to build. You know where it's at in the sandbox, it's entrance, and it's overall atmosphere. Take a short break here to set up a raid using these ideas.

The players need to find a home and you're going to give it to them soon. They're about to go on a raid to clear out the beginnings of their new dungeon home. Starting from scratch like this builds a great sense that they've earned their home and gives a strong desire to defend it.

A shallow cave with a short tunnel and an empty cavern works best. Think of some good guys that might be hunkered down in that cave. Are they a group of farmers escaping the rain? Maybe it's a few soldiers on patrol from a local guard post? One of the easiest, though is making it a group of dwarven wanderers that have their sights set on the cave as a new home for themselves. As you make plans, if some details aren't quite clear about what they might want their dungeon to look like, ask the players. Get their feedback.


Once you have an idea in mind, read them the following:

"Suddenly, the wind picks up and your campfire goes out. You shiver as the conversation dies off. Just then, you barely hear a voice in the distance and the hair on your neck stands on end. It's the Light Tongue, the language of the humans, elves, dwarves, and those of their kind. You can't understand it, but you know it when you hear it and it grates on your nerves.

The voice is a ways away, but you hear it again, followed by unmistakable laughter. They sound at ease, comfortable. People out in the cold don't talk like that. You all look at each other and grin, knowing you're about to get out of the rain."

Now speak directly to the players, out of character.

"We're about to jump into a raid and bust some heads. This will be the beginning of your dungeon. Don't worry about knowing all the details, scouting, or things like that - the system is designed to throw you straight into the action and figure out details along the way."



"You need to choose a raid plan. I realize you don't know much about what's over there, but you're a monster and you know you want to get out of the rain. Just roll with it. The plan will tell us basically how you want to approach dealing with them. Take a look at the raid plans on your sheet. Don't overthink it, we'll learn as we go along - which looks good to you?"

Get an answer, using a power struggle if there's a disagreement. Make suggestions if they're unsure, with an assault plan always being a very straightforward choice. Once you have the plan, get some details about it by asking a few questions. Then, grab some dice and roll engagement.

Throw them into the action. This is your chance to reinforce that this game skips the leadup and jumps straight into the action. Set the scene for them and use the details they provided to figure out what the first thing they would do is. They'll probably want to try to take care, scout ahead, make intricate plans - **don't let them!**

So let's say they planned an assault and chose the Brute to lead the way. They got a 3d engagement roll since the rain gives them good cover and ended up rolling a success. Maybe you should start them off with the Brute running straight at the entrance to the cave. That might look like this, as soon as engagement is rolled:

"You guys take off at full speed, running towards the voices, weapons in hand. As the cave comes into view, you spot three dwarves sitting around a campfire just inside. They seem to be in pretty good spirits, drinking ale and chatting. They have some large crossbows laying beside them and mining tools around, but are pretty relaxed. Another dwarf is a bit behind them, skinning a deer. Your stomachs growl at the sight of it.

You start with the upper hand here, so let's say they're not even watching the entrance. Brute, you're running straight towards them, battleaxe ready. What do you do?"

This scene is meant to be simple and straightforward to teach the basic mechanics in *Wicked Ones*. It's not really challenging unless they roll very badly. A dwarf might take a success or a couple of mixed rolls to take care of (kill, chase away, etc.).

If you want to get a bit more advanced and make the scene more challenging, you can even introduce a hireling or a tier 0 adventurer here. Maybe one of the dwarves is actually a cleric or the one skinning the deer is a ranger? You can introduce some good loot here, too, by maybe having a mule with packs on its back get loose and try running away.

Take this scene slow. Talk through the mechanics. Explain how position and effect work, but also err on the side of keeping it simple. Get everyone used to how the camera pans around without any set turn order. Encourage them to clearly state intention and approach, then narrate their own actions after they roll. When a consequence is handed out, suggest they resist it. New players might forget they can do this. As these basic mechanics settle into their minds, maybe get into more advanced stuff like compelling a dark impulse or starting a clock.

Wrap up the raid. The cycle of play for this session essentially started at the beginning of the raid phase. Once the raid winds down, explain how blowback works. Talk about their raid plan and discuss whether they stuck to the plan or not. Then make a blowback roll and if it's major or minor, pocket it and explain what that means. You don't want to deal with blowback yet. Just keep things moving.

Introduce the Imps. Read your players the following:

"Comfortable in the cave, you look around and realize this is the perfect place for a dungeon. You wake up early the next morning and get to work, starting to rearrange the cave to your liking. Suddenly, you hear some noise coming from the entrance."

Address the players and explain how this works.

"Your dungeon attracts imps, tiny monsters that come to you for protection. In return, they do the busy work around your dungeon. They're used to push simple tasks into the background and populate the dungeon. You can bring them into scenes, use them to set up traps, and so on. Let's decide what your imps are, what they look like, and give them two traits from the list of imp traits on pg. 187. These help determine what kind of presence they have during scenes."

Once you get a sense for what the imps are like, set up a scene. This breathes some life into your dungeon early on and establishes your imps as a presence within it.


"As you all turn to look at the noise, two or three imps peek around the corner. They see you all beginning to set up the cave. They walk over and grab a rock and start hauling it away for you. Their intentions are clear. How do you all respond?"

Draw the Dungeon. At this point, you zoom way out. You go through a montage lasting a few months as your dungeon gets established as play goes best when you jump from having no dungeon to having a small, but fully functional dungeon.

Tell the players that you're going to be drawing out the dungeon now. Explain how the dungeon works best if everyone has a hand in it, but if anyone seems to balk at the idea of drawing, they can ask someone to draw for them. Try to create an open atmosphere that's non-critical of those without a lot of artistic ability. A dungeon doesn't have to be a work of art.

This is a good time to flip back to the dungeon drawing guides, looking over the different drawing styles. The simple style is just lines, letters, and geometric shapes. It can be drawn by anyone. However, you should encourage them to add as much detail as they can as they build their dungeon. The more visual detail there is, the more it will come up within roleplaying scenes.

Turn back to pg. 170 and finish the dungeon creation steps before moving on. You've already finished most of them through this session. As a word of warning, naming the dungeon can be a challenge. Asking each player to offer up one name, then whittling it down to two candidates and power struggling to decide works well!



Start the normal cycle. Now that all of that is established, the normal flow of the game can begin. Go ahead and start a full lurking phase here. Do recovery and then make a loot roll, taking +1d for hitting an equal tier target and an additional +1d if they secured the good loot offered up during the raid. Explain how the loot roll works and have everyone make the roll. It's pretty unlikely people will overdo it on this roll, but make sure they describe their revelry.

You then move into downtime. Review the types of projects they can work on and explain how they each have one downtime action. If there is a failure during these downtime actions, be sure to point out that they can risk it and roll again with -position. You should also explain how gold can be spent to accomplish things in place of a downtime action.

During downtime, try to strongly encourage someone to recruit minions, either with a downtime action or by spending gold. Understanding minion mechanics early is a good idea. They haven't established any factions in the area, but you can always suggest a band of wandering monsters they happened across.

Once the lurking phase is over, explain how calamity works and roll it.

Invade the Dungeon. Now that their dungeon is set up, testing its defenses and showing players how it works will finish off the mechanics tutorial. The dungeon will probably have some blowback or calamity coming at this point. If it has both, use one of them to start either a major or minor invasion and then resolve the other one as something a bit less direct. If it only has one, use it to start an invasion. If it has neither, congratulate them on how well everything went, then launch an invasion anyway. It's the perfect time to explain how the world is an incredibly dangerous place that wants nothing more than to be rid of monsters.

"About two months have passed as you and your imps worked away at getting your dungeon set up. Finally settled in and turning your eye towards the outside world, you Wicked Ones are in your sanctum hatching an evil plan. Unfortunately, invaders approach."

This first invasion should be relatively weak. If the previous raid was a bunch of dwarves, perhaps this could be some of their kin arriving and expecting to see the beginnings of a settlement. If you're launching a major invasion, maybe two tier 0 adventurers and one or two hirelings is a good idea. If it's a minor invasion, maybe it's a tier 0 adventurer and two or three hirelings instead.

If they have minions, the dungeon invasion starts off with their starting location roll. Explain the concept of the sanctum and why the Wicked Ones can't leave it during dungeon defense. Some might balk at this idea, but be firm. Stress the importance of having defenses to stand in-between the PCs and the adventurers as any wounds or stress taken here will carry over into the raiding phase.

Finally, do xp together. Go around the table and run through the list of xp triggers. It's very likely that they've missed a lot of them and not being able to mark it at this time will be a big encouragement to bring those things into play next time.

BETWEEN SESSIONS

Between session 1 and session 2, you should try to answer any questions that your players have. There's a lot to take in during that first session and things are still pretty likely to be a bit unclear. You'll surely need to do some reviewing of the rules yourself as well. That's fine, you can all learn as you go.

There's not a lot of preparation that's needed between sessions of *Wicked Ones*. It might be good to ask the players what they're thinking about doing for their next raid so you can get some ideas in your head going into the next session, though. Scenes can play out on maps with minis or using theater of the mind as your group prefers. If they're played out on a map, try to not get too hung up on the preciseness of what's happening. Just use the maps as a reference and way to build a common image of the scene in everyone's mind. If you do prefer having maps, though, knowing what kind of trouble your players want to cause the next session can help you get some ready.

Encouraging your players to discuss raid plans or at the very least come to the game with some ideas of what they want to do during the upcoming phase is a good idea. When players come to the table prepared, the game gets going sooner and the first hour of play flows way more smoothly.

Also, now that the players know more about the game, they might want to make changes to their characters. Make it clear that they can swap out anything they've chosen before session 2, even as far as choosing an entirely new calling or switching up their dungeon theme. It's hard to make good choices without knowing more about the game. Let them play the type of character they want to play.

Finally, you should try to run the faction simulation on your own between sessions. Occasionally, it's nice to do it as a group and discuss what's happening, but this can eat into valuable gametime if done too often. You can skip this for now, as your players will be setting up factions at the beginning of the next session.

SESSION 2

Establish factions. Now that your players have seen an entire cycle of play, have their dungeon set up, and know how their group dynamic feels, they're ready to finalize the sandbox they're playing in. Get out the faction sheet and head over to the section on establishing factions on pg. 276.

Play to find out. And now you're set. Everything is completely ready to go. Now all there is to do is jump into the regular cycle of play and enjoy finding out what happens to this sandbox your players are going to devastate.

ADVENTURERS

As a GM, adventurers are your bread and butter. They're powerful foes that dynamically change any scene they enter. They're clever and damn good at what they do. Play them as if they were player characters in a fantasy hero roleplaying game. When they enter a scene, it's like the world is going hard at the PCs. They're the never-ending thorns in the side of dungeon monsters. Make your PCs fear them and they will love it all the more when they finally bring one down.

The scope of an adventurer's power is known to all at the table. When adventurers enter play, the game becomes less about telling a cool story and more about a life and death struggle. When you play an adventurer, imagine that they're a heroic PC in another fantasy roleplaying game. Think about how those PCs act, how clever they are, and how they'll always get through any situation.

Each adventurer has five parts that determine their ability: **class**, **tier**, **hearts**, **moves**, and a **passive**. When they show up, you should usually let your players know what they're up against. The game is more fun when everyone is in the know and it frees the GM up a bit to go all out with the adventurers to try to take the PCs down.

CLASS & TIER

Each adventurer has a class, basically acting as a job title such as an assassin, cleric, or scout. It defines their role within an adventuring party and let's both you and the players know what to expect from them in a scene. An adventurer's class determines what kind of things they excel at and what form their passive and moves take. Adventurers also have whatever gear someone of their class might have, which can affect position and effect, such as a knight in plate mail being hard to kill, an alchemist always having a concoction at hand, or a ranger carrying some traps.

Their tier, rated from 0 to 4, compares directly to your dungeon tier to establish how powerful or skilled they are compared to the PCs and their minions. When an adventurer is of higher tier, it's considered an overwhelming circumstance towards position and effect. It also informs how powerful their moves are, which is detailed later in this section.

ADVENTURERS ARE POWERFUL FOES

Remember that adventurers are very dangerous even without their moves. An assassin might spend a move to disappear into the shadows, but they can do the same thing as a consequence for a failed PC roll. Moves just give them permission to do it without having to respond to PC actions. Anything they can do as an offensive move, they can also do as a consequence.





HEARTS

Each adventurer's tenacity, their ability to stick around in a scene, is measured in hearts. When an adventurer has no more hearts remaining, they're knocked out of the scene. When PCs



try to actively take out an adventurer, their actions **slash** these hearts. Each heart takes two slashes to finish off with a slash being equivalent to a clock tick. In short, a mixed does one slash, a success does two, and a critical does three. **Strong** effect deals one extra slash and **weak** effect means one less.

Adventurers have a number of hearts equal to their tier + 1.

Losing all hearts doesn't always mean an adventurer dies! Losing all of their hearts means their spirit is broken. This may mean they're dead, but it might also make sense to have them be captured, run away, betray their friends, or whatever else works in that situation and seems interesting.

Hearts are slashed when PCs take specific action to take out an adventurer. This often means physically harming them, but could also be demoralizing or confusing them. Not every action is going to slash an adventurer's hearts, though. It's up to the GM to determine when a PC's actions present a significant setback that makes them want to abandon their current cause. Not all challenges with adventurers should be tackled by taking out their hearts, though. Generally, hearts represent an adventurer's willingness to stick around. Things like running away from or chasing them down are better modelled with an action roll or two or a clock.

PASSIVES

Every adventurer has one thing that they truly excel at called their passive ability, which is usually based on their class. The GM decides what an adventurer's passive is when they introduce them into a scene. The example adventurers later in this chapter have some passives listed for convenience, but adventurers almost always seem to have just the right skills for the job at hand. For example, if the PCs are trying to get away through a forest, that sounds like a perfectly inopportune time for a ranger to show up! That ranger's passive might be:

- ▶ Can move through forests as quickly as an open field.
- ▶ Can fire a bow much further than normal.
- ▶ Is an expert at tracking and considered higher tier when doing so.
- ▶ Is accompanied by a wolf, their loyal hunting companion.

Passives tend to give some mechanical advantage or permission to do something unique. **Passives can be set on the fly by the GM**, so even when using the pre-made adventurers listed later in this chapter, you can make up your own passives that better suit the situation and are easier to bring into play.

MOVES

Each adventurer can make three moves, allowing them to put the PCs on their back foot or attempt to avoid an aggressive action by the PCs. They can spend a move to make an offensive move or a defensive move. Moves are not predefined and are chosen on the fly by the GM when they need to be used and are based on the adventurer's class. The example adventurers later in this chapter serve to show how moves work, but it's up to you to choose the right tool for the job at that moment.

Offensive moves inflict consequences on the PCs. These tend to be aggressive in nature, such as a direct attack, neutralizing someone by pinning them down or casting a spell on them, or dynamic scene changers.

Their effectiveness is determined by how the adventurer's tier compares to the dungeon tier. Adventurers of the same tier are able to inflict *frustrating* or *devastating* consequences, such as making a PC bloodied. A higher tier adventurer can deliver *devastating* consequences to an entire group, like a powerful wizard fireballing the PCs and leaving everyone bloodied. Adventurers two or more tiers over can even deal out *deadly* consequences. Keep in mind that simply injuring PCs is often the least interesting choice, though, and the one they're most likely to resist or have a defense against.

"The barbarian charges toward you, jumps high into the air and brings his warhammer crashing down on your shield. It splinters into a dozen pieces and you take shock to MUSCLES as it sends a shiver up your arm."

"The ranger sticks an arrow in the tree next to you, forcing you into cover. You know he's trained on your position, pinning you down. You're unable to move while he's covering you. If you try, you'll be dead."

Defensive moves allow adventurers to try to partially or fully negating something happening to them, usually used in response to PC actions or dungeon defenses. They can also have a minor effect on the fiction, such as them moving into hiding or knocking you back. **Defensive moves can't be used against a critical.**

DEFENSIVE MOVE ROLLS

You roll a number of dice equal to the adventurer's tier to attempt to resist an undesired situation.

Failure: They resist nothing.

Mixed: They partially resist it, reducing it in severity.

Success: They fully resist it.

Critical: Also, they immediately make a free offensive move.



"You managed to lose the cleric, but he's going to spend a defensive move here to cast a divination spell. He got a success, negating your roll. From the heavens, a ray of sunlight fully illuminates your position."

TRAITS & MOTIVATIONS

Sometimes, giving an adventurer a bit more depth can make them stand out and react more realistically within scenes. If you're about to send a couple of adventurers to their deaths against a heavily defended dungeon, it might not be worth the effort to flesh them out, but if you think an adventurer stands a chance of lasting a bit longer, giving them a motivation and a few traits from below or making up your own can make them feel more real. Choose one or two of these positive traits:

CLEVER - CONFIDENT - GENEROUS - HELPFUL - HONEST
OPTIMISTIC - PERSISTENT - STEADY

Then, choose one or two of these negative traits:

BRASH - COCKY - DISHONEST - DUMB - GREEDY
IMPATIENT - INDECISIVE - STUBBORN

And finally, figure out why they're out there adventuring. This reason might even be the same for an entire adventuring party. Choose one or two of these motivations:

CHALLENGE - EXPLORATION - JUSTICE - RESPECT - RICHES - THRILLS - VENGEANCE

HIRELINGS

Adventurers sometimes use hirelings to pad their numbers while out on a quest. They pay some skilled locals to accompany them, cover their weaknesses, and, when it really comes down to it, serve as fodder. A hireling is like a mini-adventurer, considered a highly skilled member of their profession. **They have 1 heart and can either make 1 move or have a passive.** Below are some example hirelings:

<i>archer</i>	<i>farmhand</i>	<i>locksmith</i>	<i>sailor</i>
<i>boatman</i>	<i>fisherman</i>	<i>lumberjack</i>	<i>sawbones</i>
<i>burglar</i>	<i>footman</i>	<i>mercenary</i>	<i>scholar</i>
<i>butcher</i>	<i>footpad</i>	<i>messenger</i>	<i>scribe</i>
<i>carpenter</i>	<i>forester</i>	<i>miner</i>	<i>singer</i>
<i>cartographer</i>	<i>guard</i>	<i>pathfinder</i>	<i>spelunker</i>
<i>chronicler</i>	<i>guide</i>	<i>priest</i>	<i>swordsman</i>
<i>cook</i>	<i>inventor</i>	<i>rat catcher</i>	<i>trader</i>
<i>driver</i>	<i>linguist</i>	<i>rider</i>	<i>trapfinder</i>

BEST PRACTICES

Adventurers are meant to present a very real challenge for PCs. They're to be feared and help give PCs a reason to not roam the surface without caution and to build a dungeon to hide behind. It's easy to over or under use them, and it's also easy to make facing them more of a chore than a fun challenge. To get the most out of adventurers, you should stick to the following list of best practices.

1 Timing is important. When they come into scenes is completely up to the GM. You never need a reason for them to show up. That's just what they do. But making sure to balance this against fun gameplay is also important. You don't need one in every session. Trust your *gut feeling* on the timing.

2 Play them smart. They have been dungeon delving and monster hunting for a long time. They know what to expect going in and have survived many encounters with monsters. Make sure that they seem competent. Then again, everyone does something stupid sometimes so have them slip up occasionally.

3 Exploit PC weaknesses. Their experience means they will identify weakness and go straight for it. If you notice a weakness in a dungeon or a raid plan, using an adventurer to point it out is a great way to get your PCs more serious about their dungeon layout, lack of using minions on raids, and so on.

4 Vary their moves. Just doing the same moves in rapid succession is pretty boring. Try to use a few different types of moves, such as a bit of damage, a bit of positioning, and another that changes the dynamic. And don't use all of them at once. Intersperse them naturally throughout a scene.

5 Don't overdo it. One or two adventurers during a raid is a handful. Four in an invasion is about right. Step into using them lightly. Get a good feeling for how they feel in play and how powerful they are, then you can know better when to throw them in the way of your PCs.

6 Run away sometimes. Don't let the PCs kill every adventurer they see. While a lot of them will fight to the death, believing what they're doing is right, others are likely to run and return later with better information and more allies. A strong adventurer that's hard to pin down makes for a great recurring enemy.

THE ACADEMIC

CLEVER - GREEDY : EXPLORATION

PASSIVE: Excels at navigating dungeon paths.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- MONSTER KNOWLEDGE
- X-RAY MONOCLE
- SUMMONING SCROLL

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- TELEPORTATION SCROLL
- OUTTHINK A TRICK
- POSE A RIDDLE



THE ALCHEMIST

CLEVER - IMPATIENT : THRILLS

PASSIVE: Can use any tier 1 or 2 concoction on pg. 121.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- MELT LOCK
- MAKE A DOOR
- RAPID MIXING

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- GOO GRENADE
- SMELLING SALTS
- GREASE BOMB



THE AMAZON

HONEST - STUBBORN : CHALLENGE

PASSIVE: Has a very strong mind and willpower.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- CHARMING SMILE
- KICK DOWN A DOOR
- CLEAVE IN HALF

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- BEAST PROTECTORS
- HERBAL REMEDY
- QUICK CATCH



THE ARISTOCRAT

CONFIDENT - BRASH : RESPECT

PASSIVE: Excels at one-on-one combat.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- CHALLENGE TO A DUEL
- DISARM OPPONENT
- BITING REMARKS

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- THROW RAPIER
- RIPOSTE
- CONDESCENDING LOOK



THE ASSASSIN

PERSISTENT - DISHONEST : RICHES

PASSIVE: Can always start a scene hidden.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- SNATCH ITEM
- SILENT GARROTE
- SLEEPING POISON

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- SLIP INTO SHADOWS
- FEIGN DEATH
- SMOKE BOMB



THE BARBARIAN

CONFIDENT - DUMB : JUSTICE

PASSIVE: Keeps fighting when he should be dead.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- WHIRLWIND SLASH
- MIGHTY ROAR
- TOSS AN ALLY

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- FLEX MUSCLES
- BREAK BONDS
- TOSS AN ENEMY



THE BARD

HELPLESS - GREEDY : RICHES

PASSIVE: Makes all nearby allies perform better.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- DEAFENING STRUM
- MUSICAL COMMANDS
- DANCING TUNE

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- DISTRACTING SONG
- HELPFUL WORDS
- MELODIC LIES



THE BUCCANEER

GENEROUS - COCKY : RICHES

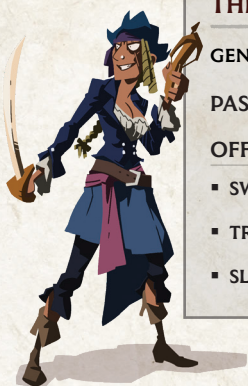
PASSIVE: Is nearly impossible to pin down.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- SWINGING ENTRANCE
- TRIGGER TRAP SHOT
- SLEEPING POISON BOLT

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- FUNNY LINE
- TUCK AND ROLL
- FAKE INJURY



THE CENTURION

STEADY - STUBBORN : RESPECT

PASSIVE: Grows more powerful when injured.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- THROW GLADIUS
- TEAMWORK
- ATHLETIC LEAP

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- WORDS OF RESOLVE
- KNOCKBACK KICK
- GUARD ALLY



THE CHAOS MAGE

OPTIMISTIC - INDECISIVE : EXPLORATION

PASSIVE: Casts random magic when attacked.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- GLITTERING BUTTERFLIES
- EYES OF MADNESS
- UNMASK THYSELF

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- CHAOS RIFT
- TIME SHIFT
- HORRIFIC PROTECTOR



THE CLERIC

GENEROUS - STUBBORN : JUSTICE

PASSIVE: Heals an ally a bit when they take a break.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- PRAYER OF RESTORATION
- PRAYER OF RETRIBUTION
- PRAYER OF DIVINE POWER

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- PRAYER OF GUIDANCE
- PRAYER OF SHIELDING
- PRAYER OF SANCTUARY



THE DEATH KNIGHT

PERSISTENT - COCKY : VENGEANCE

PASSIVE: Heals when death occurs nearby.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- SENSE DEATH
- SPEAK TO DEAD
- REAPING STRIKE

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- SHADOW FORM
- ACCEPT FATE
- FACE OF DEATH



THE DEFENDER

STEADY - INDECISIVE : CHALLENGE

PASSIVE: Extends strong defense to nearby allies.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- SHIELD BASH
- BULL RUSH
- STEP ON TRAP

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- BODYGUARD
- STAND GROUND
- WATCHFUL EYES



THE DRUID

HONEST - IMPATIENT : VENGEANCE

PASSIVE: Can shapeshift into any animal.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- HEALING SHIFT
- WOODLAND FRIENDS
- POISON BERRIES

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- ENTANGLEMENT
- TREESKIN
- THISTLED WHISKERS



THE ELDRITCH WARRIOR

OPTIMISTIC - COCKY : CHALLENGE

PASSIVE: Can summon a powerful magic sword at-will.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- FLOATING DAGGERS
- BLINDING FLASH
- MAGICAL LEAP

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- BLURRED VISAGE
- BLINK STEP
- BLADE SHIELD



THE ILLUSIONIST

HELPFUL - INDECISIVE : THRILLS

PASSIVE: Reacts to attacks and surprise with illusions.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- NIGHTMARISH CREATURE
- SHOW GREATEST DESIRE
- WILD GOOSE CHASE

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- ILLUSORY WALL
- INVISIBILITY
- DANCING DUPLICATES



THE INQUISITOR

PERSISTENT - STUBBORN : JUSTICE

PASSIVE: Excels at seeing through lies and tricks.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- TERRIFYING LASHES
- BARKING COMMAND
- IGNORE A TRICK

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- SCOLDING EYES
- ACCEPT PUNISHMENT
- HISSING DEFIANCE



THE KNIGHT

HONEST - COCKY : RESPECT

PASSIVE: Is nearly impervious to physical damage.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- UNBREAKABLE WALL
- SKEWER
- UNSTOPPABLE MARCH

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- SWAP PLACES
- BULWARK
- CODE OF HONOR



THE LANCER

CONFIDENT - IMPATIENT : CHALLENGE

PASSIVE: Excels at keeping enemies at a distance.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- SPEAR FLURRY
- IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY
- PRECISION THROW

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- LEG SWEEP
- WARNING SLASH
- PIN ENEMY



THE MAGE HUNTER

PERSISTENT - BRASH : VENGEANCE

PASSIVE: Is nearly immune to magic.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- ANTI-MAGIC ZONE
- SMELL MAGIC
- CRUSHING HAMMER

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- SWALLOW MAGIC
- REDIRECT SPELL
- SNATCH MAGIC FOCUS



THE MONK

STEADY - STUBBORN : CHALLENGE

PASSIVE: Can run on walls and across water.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- RELENTLESS FLURRY
- LEAPING STRIKE
- MEDITATION

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- INTENSE FOCUS
- IMPRESSIVE DODGE
- BEAR THE PAIN



THE OCCULT SLAYER

PERSISTENT - DISHONEST : JUSTICE

PASSIVE: Has a sixth sense for danger.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- KNOW WEAKNESS
- HEARTSEEKER
- SENSE EVIL

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- OUTWIT
- WARDS AND CHARMS
- LAST STAND



THE RANGER

CLEVER - IMPATIENT : EXPLORATION

PASSIVE: Has a loyal bear companion.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- BEAR CHARGE
- KNOCKBACK SHOT
- FOLLOW TRACKS

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- PREPARED TRAP
- OUTRUN
- BEAR SHIELD



THE SCOUT

HELPFUL - STUBBORN : EXPLORATION

PASSIVE: Excels at spotting traps and hazards.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- KNOW THE WAY
- SUPPRESSIVE FIRE
- TRICK SHOT

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- WARNING SHOT
- SPOT AN EXIT
- SHOOT TERRAIN



THE SHADOWDANCER

CLEVER - IMPATIENT : THRILLS

PASSIVE: Can teleport between shadows.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- DANCE OF DEATH
- SHADOWSTRIKE
- DEEPER SHADOWS

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- SHADOWFORM
- DANCE AWAY
- SHADOWSTEP



THE SLINGER

OPTIMISTIC - INDECISIVE : JUSTICE

PASSIVE: Excels against anyone bigger than him.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- STUNNING STONE
- HAIL OF STONES
- STAREDOWN

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- RUN THROUGH LEGS
- SUCKER PUNCH
- REPOSITION



THE SPELLBOW

CLEVER - GREEDY : THRILLS

PASSIVE: Imbues each arrow with an elemental effect.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- MASSIVE VOLLEY
- CORROSIVE ARROW
- HOMING ARROW

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- ILLUSION ARROW
- GREASE ARROW
- TELEPORTATION ARROW



THE TEMPLAR

STEADY - STUBBORN : JUSTICE

PASSIVE: Cannot be turned from their path.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- HOLY WORD: SEEK
- HOLY WORD: PAIN
- HOLY WORD: CONFUSE

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- HOLY WORD: STOP
- HOLY WORD: TRUTH
- HOLY WORD: BLIND



THE WEAPONSMITH

HONEST - COCKY : CHALLENGE

PASSIVE: Always has the right weapon for the job.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- CONFIDENT LAUGH
- SNATCH WEAPON
- BREAK WEAPON

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- EXPLOIT FLAW
- BLOCK STRIKE
- DROP WEAPON



THE WILDLING

GENEROUS - DUMB : THRILLS

PASSIVE: Can run through difficult terrain.

OFFENSIVE MOVES

- POUNCE
- STALK
- LICK WOUNDS

DEFENSIVE MOVES

- IGNORE PAIN
- WARNING GROWL
- KEEN SENSES





DANGEROUS FOES

Enemies are modelled like any other challenge in *Wicked Ones*. Strong enemies are a mix of clocks, circumstances towards position and effect, and inflicted consequences. Adventurers are just a codified version of this, allowing everyone in the game to see what's at stake. It's straightforward and simple, since adventurers tend to be very similar to each other. For other foes, it's part of the GM's job to use all of the mechanics in *Wicked Ones* to represent enemies in fun and challenging ways. To start to get a sense on how to best represent enemies and how tough they should be, start with a baseline: a lightly armed and armored human soldier.

A typical human soldier can be taken out by rolling a success. On a mixed, it might take them out, but the PC takes a consequence. You could give them reduced effect, meaning the soldier is wounded but still up and the PC suffers a lighter consequence.

Now that you have a baseline, you can compare other foes against this. Make changes when an enemy is different than a typical soldier:

- ▶ **Attack** is stronger or weaker. Overwhelming circumstance towards position.
 - *The enormous crab claws can snip an orc in half.*
 - *The dryad wields powerful nature magic.*
 - *The giant can destroy a small house with its club.*
- ▶ **Defense** is stronger or weaker. Overwhelming circumstance towards effect.
 - *The treant takes little damage from blades, but fire is another matter!*
 - *The ghost can't be harmed by physical weapons.*
 - *The fire elemental is immune to fire, but vulnerable to water.*
- ▶ **Unique ability.** Inflict consequences.
 - *The griffon divebombs and lifts one of the minions away.*
 - *The unicorn rubs its horn on the knight's leg, fully healing them.*
 - *The sirens lure the weak-willed into the water with their song.*
- ▶ **More tenacious.** Use a clock to represent their agility, constitution, willpower, or a group working together as one unit.
 - *The pixie swarm is incredibly hard to pin down.*
 - *The animated armor has no flesh, requiring you to pulverize it.*
 - *The squad of soldiers acts as one unit.*

In the end, if you feel more comfortable using adventurer mechanics to model other foes, by all means do that! It's easy enough to apply a tier system to enemies and give them hearts, passives, and moves. Go with what you feel the most comfortable with. However, the most powerful enemies eclipse the power of a tier 4 adventurer, so you could do something like expand and give them multiple passives, a defense clock that protects their hearts, or three each of offensive and defensive moves. Play around with the mechanics and get a feel for what works best!





ONE LAST FULL MOON

The full moon is out and the town is in chaos. An angry mob of farmfolk has stormed the mayor's estate, banging on the gates. The dire wolf paces relentlessly in its cage in the town square. The PCs are watching from a hill outside town. The assault begins.

GM Ulrot, what's the plan again? I wanna make sure that I get this engagement roll right.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE The minions push this big tree on wheels - I mean, battering ram - down the hill. I ride it straight towards the mayor's gate. Just before it hits, I toss the *firebombs* over the top at the archers and bail off. Everyone else will be running in behind me.

GM That's just crazy enough to work. The mayor's expecting some trouble, but I think the angry mob is giving you cover. Should be 3d, but let's go with 2d because of that short-fused *firebomb* you're using.



The GM rolls 3d engagement and gets a failure!

GM Yeah, this is gonna be a mess. Your minions start pushing you down the hill and you're just flying. You get the *firebombs* ready and say to yourself, "Okay, on three. One, two, thr-" BOOM. That short-fused one goes off too early and the ram turns into a rolling ball of flame that slams into the gate - which somehow doesn't break! You start off bloodied, with archers up above, and angry farmfolk all around.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE I'll resist that damage with... SMASH? Nah, that doesn't really make sense. Ah, I got it. I'll SCAN to notice the short fuse and jump off earlier. I just took RAWHIDE, too, so that gives me +1d.



Ulrot rolls 2d SCAN (1d + 1d) and gets a success!

ULROT
ORC BRUTE Nice, and no stress either because of RAWHIDE! As I count to "2," I remember Slem's voice in my head. My eyes get real big and in like slow-motion, I yell, "Ohhhhhh shiiiiiiiiit!" dropping the *firebomb* and rolling off the ram.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

From way back behind, I yell, "I tried to tell ya!" Then I duck behind some houses and SKULK to the mayor's estate to slip over the wall.

GM Everyone is pretty distracted, so it's strong effect. A mixed or a success here will get you over that wall unseen.



Slem rolls 3d SKULK and gets a failure!

GM As your's sneaking behind the houses, you hear the wolf pack howling as they enter town. They saw the fire. Then a different howl, a bit more distant, sends chills down your spine. It's the werewolf. Distracted, you don't notice the occult slayer standing in your path until it's too late.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

I use my gear defense against detection from my cloak. He thinks he saw something, but the flourish hides my movements... and then, I strike, again with **SKULK**, from the side.

GM I'm going to give you weak effect here because his passive is "a sixth sense against danger." He feels it coming, his crossbow readied.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

Guess I'll have to go hard then. I don't even try to skirt around him - I just leap from the shadows straight into the path of the crossbow. I get +1d from my **POUNCE** ability, too.

GM Cool, normal effect but it's dire now.



Slem rolls 4d SKULK (3d + 1d) and gets a success!

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

I jump out of the shadows, up and over the crossbow, and come down to wedge the knife into his collar.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

Yeah, he's going to make a defensive move here.



The GM rolls 4d defensive move and gets a success!

GM As you leap, he drops the crossbow and uses your momentum to throw you through a window. He loses sight of you again and the crossbow is on the ground, but he avoids getting hit. Let's cut away there for a bit - Crag, you hear the howling. What are you up to?

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

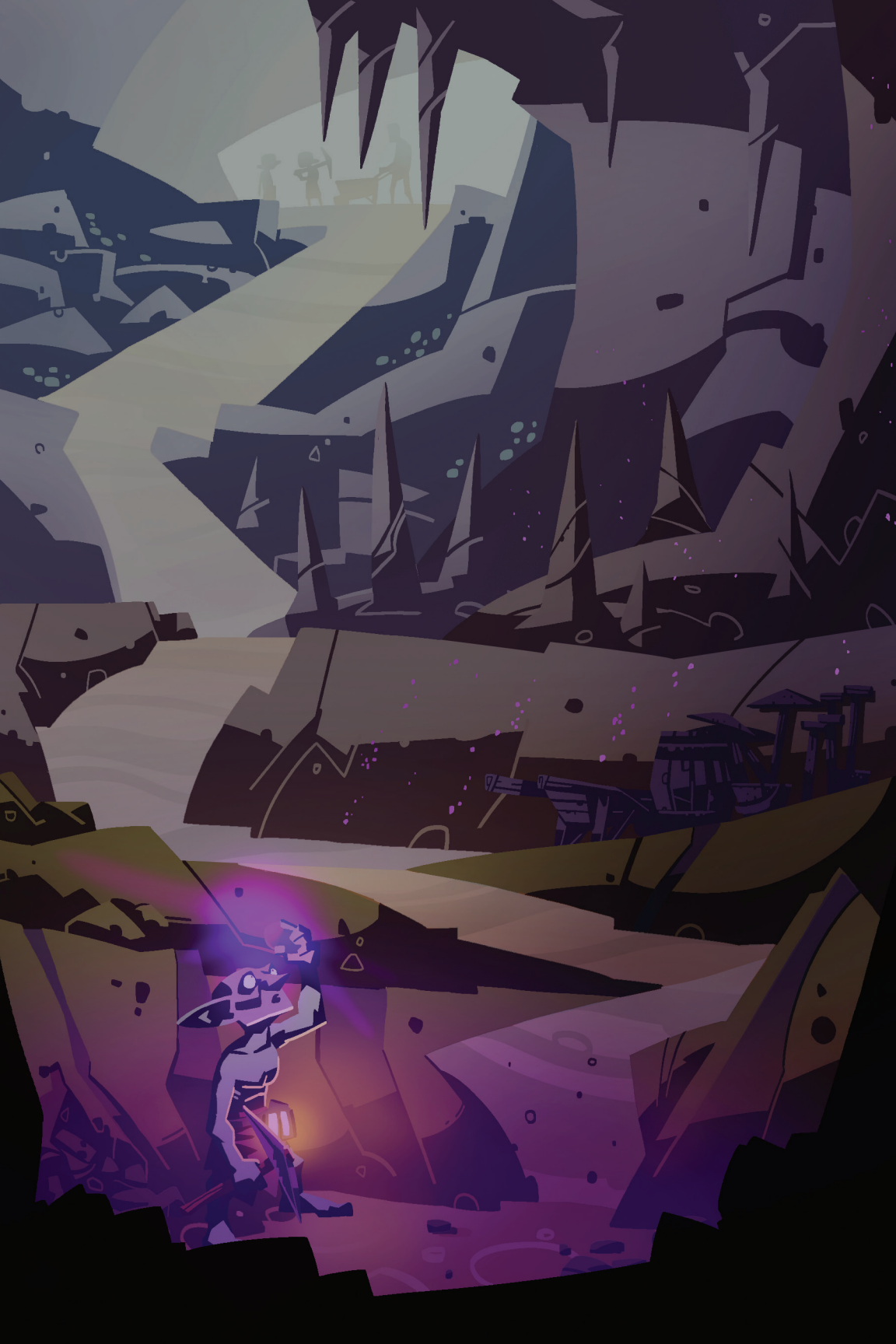
After Slem disappears, I beeline for that cage to let the dire wolf out.

GM As you enter the town square, you see the archers up on the walls about to fill Ulrot with arrows, but then the howling starts.



The GM rolls 1d fortune (wolves) and gets a mixed!

GM The wolves dash into town and straight at the angry mob. The archers let loose arrows, taking down some wolves. All hell is breaking loose!



CHAPTER 8

DELVE DEEPER



"Gotta go deeper, always deeper. The deeper you go, the more you find. Just keep digging and you'll eventually come across-woah, hold up! Holy hell boys! Get down here and check this out! I think we just hit the motherlode!"

- Crem, Goblin Minion



PRIMAL MONSTERS

The monsters you play in *Wicked Ones* tend to be very similar in many ways to humans. They all have two arms, two legs, and one head. They use gear and equipment and don't have many natural abilities. Stepping away from that simple archetype, you can also build monsters using **PRIMAL ABILITY** or reframing some of the calling abilities to match up with what a monster might do, such as modelling a troll's regeneration or a harpy's luring song.

The most complex monsters, however, require larger changes to fully capture. They can't be imagined with a combination of **PRIMAL ABILITY** and a reskinning of other calling abilities. These are primal monsters, and in place of a calling's core ability and starting calling ability, they gain several fundamental mechanical changes and unique abilities.

Every player must agree to allow a primal monster in play. They have a tendency to become the center of the story or even consider themselves to be the dungeon boss. It's important to talk about how a primal monster might see itself before deciding whether to allow it into a campaign or not. A dungeon that's devoted to hatching and raising, then being ruled by a Goldmonger could be fun, but it could also be a chore that some players might not want to participate in. Making sure everyone is on the same page is essential.

Primal monsters are recommended for experienced players. The rule changes can be quite a lot for new players to grasp. Having a solid familiarity with the base rules also helps highlight exactly how the rules changes are meant to feel in play, making it easier to see why a change was made to represent that primal monster. It's might also be a good idea to limit it to one primal monster in any dungeon.

As you can see, primal monsters can be a bit disruptive to the normal flow of campaigns. Below is a brief overview of how the four primal monsters in the book tend to alter campaigns in ways that normal callings don't.

- ▶ **Braineaters** require living meals. Capturing prisoners and saving them for later becomes a priority. They're also very weak when they can't feast.
- ▶ **Doomseekers** tend to stay within the dungeon, sending out their proxy minions in their place. They're also incredibly paranoid, which has a tendency to bring them into conflict with other PCs.
- ▶ **Goldmongers** can't spend gold and don't work on downtime like other PCs. They will strongly urge the dungeon tier to grow rapidly, but it's likely that dungeon defenses will lag behind.
- ▶ **Facestealers** are often working on their own, having small scenes while other players wait. Making sure everyone gets enough screen time can be difficult.

So, before beginning any campaign with a primal monster in it, talk it through with everyone and make sure all players knows the effect it can have on gameplay. If you get everyone on board, the unique mechanics can give a fresh, new dynamic to the game.



BRAINEATER

VORACIOUS PSIONIC MASTERS

The delicious energy hidden within the brains of intelligent creatures calls to you. You crave it, engaging in a neverending search for your next harvest. This endless hunger may even force you to join forces with those you might otherwise consider food.

BRAINEATER TRAITS

PSIONIC DISCIPLINES: You have four psionic disciplines, detailed on the next page, which allow you to manifest psionic powers. Each discipline functions like a magic path. At character creation, you can assign 3, 2, 1, and 1 dots to these disciplines and you roll them as an action when you manifest powers within that discipline. You can spend stress to manifest tier 2 and 3 powers, taking dice penalties like a spell.

PSIONIC MASTERIES: Each discipline has two masteries, advanced techniques brought about by fully mastering the discipline. When you have 3 dots in a discipline, you gain one of its two masteries. The second mastery can later be taken with wicked xp.

PSIONIC DEPENDENCY: Your reliance on psionics has stunted growth elsewhere. You only place 2, 1, 1, and 1 dots in normal actions at character creation.

PSIONIC ADVANCEMENT: You do not have calling abilities like other callings. When your wicked xp is full, you can add a dot in a discipline, take a second mastery in a 3-dot discipline, or use your flexibility slot to take a calling ability.

FEASTING: You no longer clear all stress automatically each recovery. Instead, you feast on brains to handle your stress and hunger. This is possible to do during any scene. This requires a *living victim that is subdued or restrained* and you're very vulnerable while you take the time to feast.

Hunger dominates your thoughts. Failing to feast on the brain of a living, intelligent creature at least once per cycle weakens you. You become bloodied during recovery if you failed to feast during the previous cycle.

Weak brains barely satiate your hunger. This sets your stress clock to 3 ticks regardless of whether you had more or less ticks before.

Delicious brains from a worthy foe or from a victim with particularly interesting memories completely satiate your hunger. You clear all stress.

Your revelry is also **FEASTING**. This covers not only the eating of brains, but also the satisfying of your curiosity as you flitter through the memories in the brains you've consumed. When you overdo it, you might take shock from the flood of memories or hunger for more brains, turning on your dungeon's denizens.





PSIONIC DISCIPLINES & MASTERIES

Psionic disciplines function as magic paths, though they don't require you to have a magic focus. Each discipline has two masteries listed underneath it.

DECEPTION : You **DECEIVE** the minds of others into believing what you want.

- ▶ **MIND BLUR**: You can spend stress to make anyone not aware of your presence simply unable to notice you until you give them cause to. This lasts for several moments. Once noticed, it is much harder to use it against them again.
- ▶ **DEVIOUS INTENT**: On a critical with a deception power, you gain a dark heart. On a failure, you can choose to spend stress to change the result to a mixed instead.

DOMINATION : You **DOMINATE** the minds of others to do your bidding.

- ▶ **THRALL**: You can perform a tier 1 ritual to turn a subdued adventurer into a thrall, occupying your minion slot. It has the *companion* and *mindset (loyal)* upgrades. It also has an extra action with a rating equal to its tier and a calling ability that represents something it can do. If the ability requires it to spend stress, you can spend stress for them.
- ▶ **NULL FIELD**: You can spend stress to create a spherical null-field, within which all magic ceases to function. Anyone who attempts to cast receives a sharp mental rebuke. The sphere itself is crystalline and vulnerable to physical attack or your concentration being broken.

TELEKINESIS : You **CONTROL** objects in the environment around you.

- ▶ **LEVITATION**: You can levitate as easily as you can walk. You can also spend stress to fly through the sky as swiftly as a hawk for a short time.
- ▶ **WARDING**: You have honed your telekinetic abilities to maintain a reflexive guard around you. You can spend stress to fully resist a physical attack as if you had used a defense. *What form does your guard take?*

TELEPATHY : You **READ** the thoughts and memories of others.

- ▶ **AWARENESS**: You're constantly scanning the surface thoughts of those around you. You're never surprised by living creatures and can always act first. You can spend stress to have the GM reveal a secret about an NPC the first time you meet them.
- ▶ **PRESCIENCE**: Delicious brains can't help but reveal their intentions to you. Any adventurer using a defensive move against your psionic powers takes -1d. When you resist adventurer offensive moves, you take +1d.

DOOMSEEKER

PARANOID ABERRATIONS

You're an ancient guardian of a long-lost dungeon, finally freed from the pact that kept you bound to it. A creature of caution, you know you need to surround yourself with "allies" as a buffer against destruction.

DOOMSEEKER TRAITS

EYE RAYS: You have nine eyes, each able to shoot a different magical ray. At character creation, you assign a ray to each eye. These are explained in detail on the next page.

BIZARRE BODY: You can float through the air with supernatural buoyancy. You don't have gear and therefore no gear defense, but you do have supply. Your teeth are also as dangerous as a weapon.

PARANOIA: Your dark impulse is **PARANOID**. This impulse makes it difficult for you to leave the dungeon, strongly preferring to instead send minions on raids. You must spend 2 stress to suppress any compels outside of the dungeon.

GUARDIAN XP: You have guardian xp in place of reckless xp, marking 1 xp for each session in which you were neither bloodied nor went feral. When you hit 3 xp, you can either increase an eye ray's action rating (max of 3d) or add an action dot.

METICULOUS: On a success during a flashback, you gain a dark heart and an ally takes +1d on any follow-up roll.

SUPPORT: After an ally rolls, you can spend a dark heart to give them an additional +1d on the roll. *How did you prepare them for the challenges to come?*

OVERSEER: Your minions can resist consequences using their actions, though you take or clear stress instead of them when they do. Explain how you warned them ahead of time to handle the consequence. You also get an extra downtime action which you can only use to recruit minions.

ULTIMATE FLEXIBILITY: You have 5 flexibility slots to use when you gain an ability from xp. The following abilities are recommended:

- **Conniver:** MISSED A SPOT, WEAVING THE WEB
- **Crafter:** BREWMASTER, SCRUTINY
- **Marauder:** COHORT, COMMANDER
- **Shadow:** DARK MIND, UNSEEN HAND





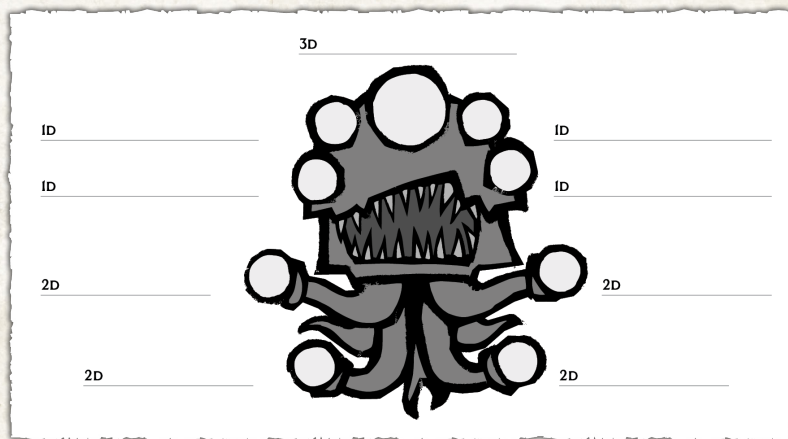
EYE RAYS

Your eyes have magical eye rays that act as a very narrow magical path. You can cast tier 1 spells with them and can also spend stress to cast a tier 2 spell, taking -1d on the roll as normal. However, you can't cast tier 3 spells. You have the following nine eye rays:

- **DEATH RAY:** Harms any living thing it hits, necrotizing flesh and plant matter.
- **TRANSMOGRIFICATION RAY:** Shapes inanimate objects into new forms.
- **PARALYSIS RAY:** Wrecks a target's nerves, temporarily paralyzing them.
- **BEWITCHMENT RAY:** Makes the target act to help you in some way.
- **TIME RAY:** Modifies time, speeding it up or slowing it down, in a limited bubble.
- **NULL-MAGIC RAY:** Creates a small area inside which magic does not function.
- **VISION RAY:** Sees the unseeable, such as through walls or at great distances.
- **TELEKINESIS RAY:** Moves objects and other non-living, solid matter.
- **FEAR RAY:** Strikes fear in their heart, pushing them towards irrational action.

You have nine eyes, each with an action rating. At character creation, you assign each eye a specific eye ray that it casts. When you cast spells, you roll that eye's rating in place of **INVOKE**. Your large, main central eye is 3d, your outer eyestalks are 2d, and the other body eyes are 1d.

Your eye rays can be used to make resistance rolls and are affected by shock to **GUTS**.



FACESTEALER

DEVIOUS IMPERSONATORS

You're a creature of deceit and exploitation, taking on the forms of those you lay eyes on and slipping deep within civilized lands. However, your powers are reviled and you're hunted, so it may be best to find a safe place to rest your head.

FACESTEALER TRAITS

SHAPESHIFTING: You can spend stress to physically change your appearance and voice for a few moments into the form of a humanoid you can currently see. This includes the clothes they're wearing, but not items they're carrying.

FACES: You can spend stress to slide a copy of a completely helpless humanoid's face off of them. They must be alive when you do this. When you do so, draw some of its distinguishing features on your character sheet, then add a few details about the owner. You can shapeshift into the face's owner for as long as you like without spending stress, also gaining the ability to speak their language while shifted. You can only keep three such faces at a time and can replace one when you steal a new face.

VOICES: The faces speak to you, wrestling for control of your mind. You do not have a dark impulse, instead being compelled by the faces. They might force you to hold off on taking an action they strongly oppose, stop to enjoy one of their own impulses, or do something out of character that might blow your cover.

GRAFTING: If you go feral while assuming the forms of one of your faces, that face permanently grafts itself onto you. It can no longer be replaced, taking up one of your three slots. It also costs you two stress to resist a compel from a grafted face.

HUNTED: Your kind is hunted by civilization, which fears and despises you for your ability to pass among them unnoticed. Any time your cover is completely blown and you don't cover your tracks, the GM can pocket minor blowback.

MINDSPEAK: You can communicate telepathically with anyone you can see, though this communication is one-way and they always know who is speaking to them.

GEARLESS: You do not wear gear like a normal monster, finding it inhibits your ability to shift into a new shape. Since you have no gear, you also have no gear defense. However, you still have supply and most Facestealers will carry an inconspicuous bag of things they can use in a pinch. You can choose 6 items to put into your supply at character creation.





FACESTEALER ABILITIES

DRAMATIC REVEAL

You can reveal yourself with impeccable timing, taking advantage of people's shock. You take +1d on any action immediately after you reveal your true form.

EMBODIMENT

You take on physical and personality traits of your faces. Each face has one action that it is especially good at and you act as if your rating is always at least 2d with it. On a critical while with that action while in that face, you gain 1 wicked xp.

GROTESQUE MUTATIONS

When you shift into a form, you can instead shift into a grotesque version of the form, such as *having multiple heads* or *the limbs are backwards*. You take +1d when horrifying someone with your appearance and on a success, you gain a dark heart.

MEDDLING

You excel at manipulating factions from within. You gain a downtime action that you can only use to try to tick faction clocks forwards or backwards. You're assumed to be using forms during this time, though you don't need to pay stress.

PERFECT ENTRANCE

You can spend stress to appear in any scene already shifted into one of your faces as long as you can reasonably explain how that face got there. When you do so, make a separate engagement roll to determine how good your cover is.

SHIFTING TRICKS

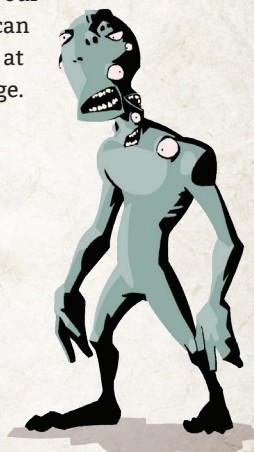
You push your shifting powers to the limit and have learned a few useful tricks. You can spend stress to do one of the following for a few moments (choose one): *climb on walls like a spider* - *grow a weapon from your body* - *turn into a puddle of goo*.

THOUGHT THIEF

You can skim the surface thoughts of those unaware of your true nature. When you enter a scene shapeshifted, you can establish a single fact that one of them has on their minds at that moment. You take +1d when you act on that knowledge.

FACESTEALER ITEMS

garrote	listening cup
writing utensils	tools
pipe & tobacco	rope
dagger	perfume
manacles	blowgun
hourglass	lockpick



GOLDMONGER

GREEDY TYRANTS

You're driven by your lust for gold. It's your obsession as well as fueling your growth. You start as a small whelp, growing alongside your hoard, eventually becoming a terror. But before then, you need some "allies" to help build your hoard.

GOLDMONGER TRAITS

TYPE: There is an element, part of nature, or mystical source of energy that forms the core of your being and manifests in various ways within your abilities. This is your **TYPE**. The effects possible with it are judged similarly to spell magic tiers, though you never take dice penalties on the roll. When a roll is called for using it, you roll **INVOKE**. While your type gives you strength, it also creates a weakness. This is your **ANTI-TYPE**, a similar source of power that directly opposes the core of your being. You have a vile hatred of it as well as a vulnerability towards it. Choose each of these at character creation from the list below or make up your own:

ACID - CRYSTAL - FIRE - EARTH - ENERGY - ICE - ILLUSION - LIGHTNING - METAL
MIND - PLANT - SHADOW - SHIMMERING - SONIC - VENOM - WATER - WIND



PRIMAL BODY: The nature of your form makes it impossible to use items. You do not have gear or supply. However, your claws, teeth, and tail are as deadly as a weapon.

HATCHLING: You start as an egg ready to hatch or a recently hatched whelp. At character creation, you assign 2, 2, 2, 1, and 1 action dots and advance one step in three of the growth paths detailed on the next two pages.

GROWTH: You grow alongside your hoard. When the dungeon tier increases, you add an action dot and advance one step in two separate growth paths. You also grow in size. At tier 0, you're just a tiny whelp and humanoids have scale against you. By tier 1, you can stand on equal footing with them. At tier 3, you now have scale against them. You can also choose not to grow in size when you increase tier.

PLEASED XP: You do not gain wicked or reckless xp. Instead, at the end of each session, you can give 1 xp to the PC that pleased you the most this session. You can still gain practice xp.



SLUMBER

You do not make loot rolls. Instead, you enjoy nothing more than curling up on your hoard for a nice, long nap. Your time spent slumbering also means you have no downtime actions. As others roll loot, you make a **slumber roll**.

SLUMBER ROLLS

You roll a number of dice equal to the amount of loot from your last raid.



Failure: Your slumber is disturbed and you overdo it, wreaking havoc on the dungeon or surrounding countryside in some way.

Mixed: You slumber, albeit restlessly, gaining a dark heart.

Success: You slumber deeply, filling all of your dark hearts as you dream of (choose one): *an interesting faction scene - the location of great treasure - secrets of the past*. Establish a fact you saw.

Critical: Also, you awaken invigorated and can increase a **TYPE** effect's tier by 1 once this cycle!

GROWTH PATHS

Your growth is defined as you advance along six growth paths, each with a chain of three abilities. When you advance a growth path, you always move from the top down and gain the abilities in order. At each opportunity to advance a growth path, you can only move along it one step.

BREATH : *You fire dangerous blasts from your maw.*

- You can unleash your breath as a powerful blast, a tier 1 effect of your **TYPE**.
- You can spend stress to increase the power of your blast to a tier 2 effect.
- When you go hard with a blast, you increase the tier by 1 instead of gaining +effect. On a success when going hard, you gain a dark heart.

FEROCITY : *You rend your enemies to bits with tooth, claw, and tail.*

- Your natural weaponry (choose one): *have an edge - become a tier 1 magic item of your type*. Appropriate edges may be *corrosive*, *powerful*, or *terrifying*.
- You add another edge or the magic item increases to tier 2. On a critical when using your natural weaponry, you gain a dark heart.
- On a success in close combat, you can spend stress to (choose one): *cleave into a nearby enemy - manifest your TYPE (tier 1) - swallow them - swat them away*.

FLIGHT : *You take to the skies to rain death from above.*

- Your wings are powerful enough to fly, though you must spend stress to launch yourself into the air when under threat. You lack fine control over your flight.
- Your wings grow stronger and more dependable and you now have even fine control over your flight. You also gain a defense against missile attacks.
- You can spend stress to perform an incredible feat of flight, like *dive bombing at high speeds or generating huge gusts of wind*. You can also use this to carry a rider or haul large cargo.

HIDE : *Your scales provide you with greater protection.*

- Your scales (choose one): *have an edge - become a tier 1 magic item of your TYPE*. Appropriate edges may be *camouflaged*, *slippery*, or *spiked*. You also gain a defense that comes from your scales.
- On a success when resisting a physical attack, you can (choose one): *break their weapon - manifest your TYPE (tier 1) - strike fear in their heart*.
- You can spend stress to manifest an aura of your TYPE around you that lasts for a few moments. When someone enters the aura, make a fortune roll using INVOKE to see if they're affected by a tier 1 effect of your TYPE.

LAIR : *Your lair is an extension of yourself.*

- Once per dungeon defense, you can manifest your TYPE as a trap, trick, or lock anywhere in the dungeon. You can spend dark hearts on these rolls.
- You can manifest your TYPE a second time as a trap, trick, or lock anywhere in the dungeon. On a success, you gain a dark heart.
- You can now have a maximum of three dark hearts. After you successfully defend your dungeon from invasion, you fill all of your dark hearts.

TYRANNY : *Your presence within the dungeon can't be ignored.*

- Your dungeon's imps take +1d on their downtime action and you control what they work on, not the GM. You also take +1d on power struggles.
- Your reputation brings in minions devoted to serve you. They have the *companion* and *expendable* upgrades. They will also perform one downtime action each downtime without asking for gold.
- You roam the region around your dungeon, reigning terror. State a goal and start a faction clock representing it. Once per downtime, you can awaken from your slumber and take a downtime action to work towards the goal.



EXAMPLE GOLDMONGERS

Goldmongers come in many forms, but they can also take a little bit more planning than normal callings. Here are some example builds to show how flexible the growth paths can be.

MIRTH DRAKE (TIER 0) : TYPE: Shimmering ANTI-TYPE: Shadow

Actions: ●● SCAN - TRICK - INVOKE ● TINKER - FINESSE - BANTER

- FLIGHT: Flitters around constantly, pestering both the PCs and their enemies.
- TYRANNY: Outsmarts other PCs and imps into doing its bidding.
- LAIR: Plants tricks throughout its lair to deter invaders.

FROST WYRM (TIER 1) : TYPE: Ice ANTI-TYPE: Fire

Actions: ●●● INVOKE ●● SCAN - THREATEN ● SMASH - BANTER - THREATEN

- BREATH: Pelts enemies with ice shards and freezes any that survive in place.
- FLIGHT: Comes down on enemies in a rain of ice shard blasts.
- HIDE: Has scales as cold as ice, freezing and shattering weapons that hit it.

SEA SERPENT (TIER 2) : TYPE: Water ANTI-TYPE: Lightning

Actions: ●●● SKULK - SMASH ●● SCAN - TRICK ● THREATEN

- FEROCITY: Slips through water and hits targets from below, swallowing them.
- HIDE: Can breathe underwater due to its magical hide.
- LAIR: Has great control over the watery dungeon it calls home.

FANGED STALKER (TIER 3) : TYPE: Venom ANTI-TYPE: Plant

Actions: ●●● INVOKE - SKULK ●● SCAN - THREATEN ● FINESSE - SMASH

- BREATH: Blasts enemies with venomous gas that confuses their senses.
- FEROCITY: Pounces on victims and paralyzes them with a venomous bite.
- FLIGHT: Hunts on the ground, but flees tough fights through the air.
- HIDE: Uses its *camouflaged* scales to stalk prey, offsetting its large size.
- TYRANNY: Threatens the imps and other PCs into doing what it wants.

SKY SENTINEL (TIER 4) : TYPE: Wind ANTI-TYPE: Earth

Actions: ●●● SCAN - TRICK - FINESSE ●● THREATEN ● SMASH - BANTER

- BREATH: Breathes powerful blasts of air, knocking enemies to the ground.
- FEROCITY: Strikes fast and furiously, claws followed by cutting winds.
- FLIGHT: Soars through the clouds, keeping watch over its demesne.
- HIDE: Has a *feathered* hide and manifests whipping winds in battle.
- TYRANNY: Is an aloof ruler, keeping factions in line and paying tribute.

DUNGEON GENERATOR

You may, at some point, find yourself in need of a dungeon real fast, such as for a one-shot, having your PCs invade a neighboring dungeon, or even for use in some other roleplaying game! This generator helps you make one.

First, choose a dungeon or roll on the random table below, then follow the normal dungeon creation process on pg. 170. Once that's finished, for each tier you want to add to the dungeon, do the steps below in random order. You can roll on the tables over the next few pages or decide for yourself. If you don't like the results, change them or roll again! At the end, adjust things that don't make sense. These random tables use 1d6, 2d6, 1d12, and 1d20, so get some dice ready.

- Roll a discovery, then use the random discovery tables on pg. 207.
- Add two of the following: *tier 1 room* - *tier 2 room* - *tier 3 room*.
- Add a lair and choose a creature at the current tier. Be sure to give it two traits.
- Add two of the following at the current tier: *lock* - *trap* - *trick*.
- Add a minion pack. Be sure to give it an impulse and an upgrade.

DUNGEON THEME

- 1 enclave
- 2 forge
- 3 hideout
- 4 stronghold
- 5 temple
- 6 no core function

IMP TRAITS

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1 clever | 7 irritating |
| 2 cowardly | 8 manic |
| 3 cruel | 9 stupid |
| 4 helpful | 10 surly |
| 5 noisy | 11 tireless |
| 6 weird | 12 lazy |

LIGHTING

- 1 torches on the walls
- 2 magma flows
- 3 magical illumination
- 4 glowing mushrooms
- 5 imps with lanterns
- 6 giant fireflies

FLOORS & WALLS

- 1 cold, damp stone
- 2 mud and roots
- 3 warm obsidian
- 4 musty bricks
- 5 dry dirt and wood
- 6 rock and ice

SMELL

- 1 fetid water
- 2 overwhelming incense
- 3 rotting flesh
- 4 sulfur and brimstone
- 5 grease and smoke
- 6 absolutely nothing

ROOM TRAITS

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| 1 bright | 6 dank | 11 infested | 16 silent |
| 2 cluttered | 7 dim | 12 overgrown | 17 slanted |
| 3 cold | 8 echoing | 13 noisy | 18 smelly |
| 4 confusing | 9 flooded | 14 silent | 19 spooky |
| 5 crumbling | 10 hot | 15 shifting | 20 windy |

**TIER 1 ROOMS**

1	crawlawy	7	sauna (minor)
2	fountain (minor)	8	secret tunnel
3	hall of bones (minor)	9	traverse
4	latrines (minor)	10	well (minor)
5	long tunnel	11	window
6	mess hall (minor)	12	1d discovery. Roll again.

TIER 2 ROOMS

1	guard post
2	minion lair
3	prison
4	torture chamber
5	two tier 1 rooms
6	2d discovery. Roll again.

TIER 3 ROOMS

11	1d discovery	31	funeral pyre	51	roost
12	academy	32	gambling den	52	scriptorium
13	alchemist lab	33	gear locker	53	scrying pool
14	antechamber	34	greenery	54	smithy
15	augury circle	35	guild hall	55	spawning chamber
16	barracks	36	library	56	tavern
21	bestiary	41	mineshaft	61	testing chamber
22	crucible	42	obstacle course	62	vehicle bay
23	dojo	43	penance chamber	63	war drums
24	dormitory	44	planning room	64	war room
25	factory	45	potion lab	65	workshop
26	fighting pit	46	reliquary	66	3d discovery. Roll again.

MINION RACES

1	bugbear
2	demon
3	goblin
4	gnoll
5	hobgoblin
6	kobold
7	orc
8	slissik

MINION IMPULSES

1	addicted
2	aggressive
3	disloyal
4	greedy
5	impatient
6	lazy
7	moody
8	superstitious

MINION UPGRADES

1	adept
2	equipped
3	expendable
4	fluent
5	mindset
6	strapped
7	trained
8	versatile

MINION JOBS

1	acolytes	6	envoys	11	priests	16	trappers
2	alchemists	7	grunts	12	raiders	17	tricksters
3	builders	8	magcs	13	scouts	18	witches
4	cutthroats	9	miners	14	thieves	19	workers
5	sappers	10	haulers	15	bodyguards	20	jesters

TRAP MECHANISMS

1	crushing wall	7	gas
2	darts	8	lightning coil
3	spikes	9	swing blade
4	boulder	10	explosion
5	saw blade	11	pitfall
6	pendulum blade	12	floor blade

LOCK MECHANISM

1	arcane	7	password
2	bar	8	pressure plate
3	bolt	9	pulley
4	heavy object	10	puzzle
5	mortise lock	11	rim lock
6	padlock	12	timed

TRAP TRIGGERS

1	pressure plate	7	sound
2	tripwire	8	item removal
3	magical	9	false door
4	detection	10	sentry
5	illusion	11	wrong choice
6	disguise	12	false lever

DOOR MATERIALS

1	bars	7	ice
2	bone	8	iron
3	clockwork	9	magical field
4	crystal	10	roots
5	gel	11	stone
6	leather	12	wood

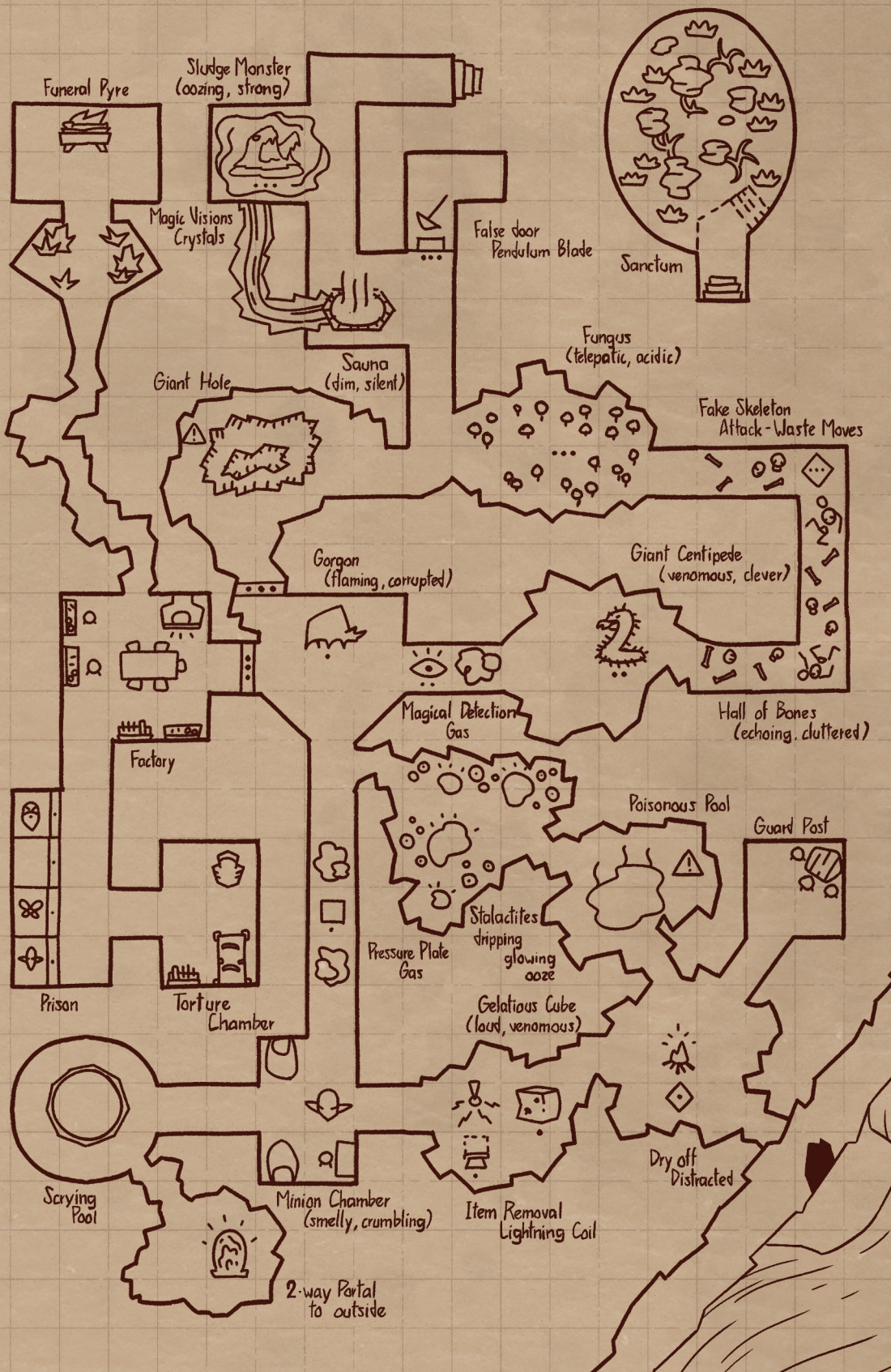
CREATURES (CAN BE A SINGLE CREATURE, A GROUP, OR EVEN A SWARM)

11	giant spider	31	mimic	51	ettercap
12	bat swarm	32	fire elemental	52	ooze
13	giant serpent	33	water elemental	53	fungus
14	skeleton	34	earth elemental	54	minotaur
15	ghost	35	air elemental	55	darkmantle
16	living shadow	36	cave troll	56	grick
21	gelatinous cube	41	ghoul	61	carriion crawler
22	giant scorpion	42	lava snake	62	warg
23	dire rat	43	sludge monster	63	stirge
24	basilisk	44	clockwork warrior	64	quasit
25	zombie	45	rust monster	65	slime
26	gargoyle	46	giant centipede	66	gorgon

CREATURE TRAITS (CHOOSE TWO PER CREATURE)

1	clever	6	flaming	11	strong	16	acidic
2	corrupted	7	freezing	12	swarming	17	jumpy
3	corrosive	8	magical	13	terrifying	18	mechanical
4	diseased	9	oozing	14	tireless	19	loud
5	incorporeal	10	sneaky	15	venomous	20	telepathic

There's no random table for tricks, so you must make your own!





THE IMPERIAL FAMILY



THE WILD



NO DUNGEON IS FOREVER

As the town fell, a lone elven scout watched the carnage. There would be major blowback for the PCs' actions. Realizing their folly in not intervening, the bravest elven heroes have now cut their way through the dungeon and into the sanctum.

GM The lancer, blood running down her face from the falling rock trap, heads down the stairway. She gestures for the eldritch warrior and weaponsmith to follow. In the sanctum, you're all still licking your wounds from the raid on the town and pretty distracted.



The GM rolls 1d engagement and gets a failure!

GM Yeah, you have no idea the adventurers are here. What have you all been doing during the fight on the first level?

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

I'm totally asleep with my head on the table, snoring loudly. My hair and clothes are still singed from that *firebomb*.

CRAG
KOBOLD SHAMAN

I'm in my room sewing up the holes in my side from that pitchfork.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

I'm probably drowning myself in alcohol. I only got 1 stress left, so I'm pretty much on the edge.

GM The lancer enters the sanctum first and sees the orc snoring at the table. Knowing there's more, she gestures for her comrades to fan out and get ready. Slem, you drunkenly stumble into the room, shake your head, and see the lancer with her weapon held high, standing over Ulrot. Behind you on both sides of the door are the other two adventurers.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

"What the hell??" I yell, waking up Ulrot. Then I chuck this bottle of liquor I'm drinking at her. It's **SMASH**. I want to knock her weapon away.

GM Hah, nice! This is *dire* and both you and Ulrot are open to consequences.



Slem rolls 1d SMASH and gets a mixed!

GM Okay, you knock her lance out of her hands, so Ulrot's fine, but you're going to end up bloodied here, Slem.

SLEM
SLISSIK SHADOW

The bottle smacks it out of her hands and I smile smugly, then suddenly feel a sharp pain. Looking down, I see a glowing sword sticking out of my belly. "Of course, there were more behind me." I fall to the floor.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

I jump awake, then roar as I see these trespassers in our sanctum. It's **THREATEN**. I'm trying to make this lancer break and run.

GM Roll it. Also, don't forget that you have shock to **GUTS** from the raid.



Ulrot rolls 1d THREATEN (2d - 1d) and gets a mixed!

GM That's her last heart! The rocks earlier almost took her out. She doesn't have any moves left either. Tell us what happens.

ULROT
ORC BRUTE

She takes a few steps back, looks at her friends, and says, "I'm... I'm so sorry," then runs back up the stairs. I turn to face the other two.

GM When you turn, you see that the weaponsmith is holding your axe, admiring it. He says something in the Light Tongue, which you can't understand, but the gist is, "It's going to be fun killing you with this."

Crag
KOBOLD SHAMAN

I hear all that roaring and come hobbling into the sanctum. The stitches rip out and blood starts leaking. I **INVOKE**, telling the roots to entangle these two. I have a couple of dark hearts, so I might as well use one.

GM Tier 2 to get both of them. This is deadly, and don't forget your shock.



Crag rolls 2d INVOKE (3d - 1d - 1d + 1d) and gets a failure!

Crag
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Ouch. The roots start moving, but the eldritch warrior is faster. The glowing daggers hovering around him turn and fly through the air at me. I guess this is it for ol' Crag - my resistance roll here is going to suck.

Slem
SLISSIK SHADOW

I'll resist for you! I still have a dark heart. From the ground, I use **FINESSE** to leg sweep the eldritch warrior and break his concentration.



Slem rolls 2d FINESSE (2d - 1d + 1d) and gets a failure!

Slem
SLISSIK SHADOW

Ahhh, dammit! Sorry! Aaaand, that stress makes me go feral. My dark impulse is vengeance, so start thinking on what I should do.

Crag
KOBOLD SHAMAN

Nah, it's cool. I have an awesome idea. The daggers strike true and I fall to my knees, blood pouring out of my mouth. I dig my hand into the soil, the roots entwining around my fingers. I look at you two and grin, then just say, "Run." I still have a dark heart. This is my death knell. I'm going to cast a tier 3 spell here and bring the sanctum down.



Crag rolls 2d INVOKE (3d - 2d + 1d) and gets a critical!

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You can get character sheets, game aids, character art commissions in the *Wicked Ones* style, and information on the *Undead Awakening* supplement, the *War for the Overworld* supplement, and future projects at **banditcamp.io**!

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WE PROWL IN DARKNESS.
WE RAID AND PILLAGE.
WE WORSHIP DARK GODS.
WE SOW TERROR AND DISCORD.
WE BUILD OUR DUNGEONS.
WE SLAY THOSE WHO TRESPASS.

WE ARE...

WICKED ONES

DUNGEONS ARE FORGED IN THE DARK.

