

Old-School Gazette

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Welcome to the tenth Old-School Gazette! In thanks for continued support of the line, number 10 is a free product available for downloading at no cost! This Old-School Gazette gives you 200 items found in a wizard's laboratory, a short article on the use of wandering monsters, and four more tricks and traps to test your player's wits. So enjoy the tenth Old-School Gazette and look forward to many more!

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Some of you may be unaware of OSRIC™. Go and download the product from the above link and then come back. As you can see from the above, OSRIC™ is a freely available, OGL role-playing system that pays homage to the style of role-playing games we grew up playing. The Old-School Gazette is designed to support the OSRIC™ system by releasing compatible material, not only to players and Game Masters, but to other publishers as well.

We plan on featuring monsters, magic items, spells, and anything else you can think of relating to old-school gaming via the OSRIC system in future Old-School Gazettes. Have any ideas? Send an e-mail to josephbrowning@gmail.com and let us know! And yes, it's a paying gig. *smile*

Dungeon Dressing: The Wizard's Laboratory

The wizard's laboratory is a place of wonder! Packed nooks and crooks of odd items and gewgaws, a discovered laboratory is often a conundrum for a GM. "Well you find, you find.... you find some papers and some powders." No longer will GMs face the daunting task of filling a laboratory with interesting discoveries, a simple roll on the tables below will stock the standard wizard's lab with up to 200 objects ranging from the common to the bizarre. This is the first in the dungeon dressing series, so come back for more help in dressing your dungeons!

We suggest that you first determine which table you'd like to use: either the common items or the uncommon items. Generally, common items have little value while uncommon one's have values up to 200gp. There are exceptions and GMs are cautioned to always exercise their good judgment, but enjoy your percentage rolls and discover just what's in that wizard's lab after all. Now, where did I leave my pet box turtle...? I swear she was here just a split second ago...



d100	Common Item Found
1	1-6 arrows with silver heads
2	1-6 candles
3	1-6 silver pins
4	1-10 squares of beeswax (1 sp each)
5	3-inch nails and a small hammer
6	A box turtle and some grass, in a drawer
7	Anatomy sketches, animal or humanoid
8	Animal fur, teeth, or claws
9	Animal skeleton, assembled with metal pins
10	Animal skulls
11	Apron
12	Bag of glass marbles
13	Blank parchments, loose or tied in bundle
14	Black spell books or empty scroll case
15	Book on alchemy
16	Book on plants and herbs
17	Book on spell theory
18	Box of rotten eggs
19	Brazier
20	Broken mirror pieces in a thick leather pouch
21	Bucket with fresh water
22	Bug repellent oil (rosemary and geranium extract)
23	Charcoal sticks in an ivory box
24	Coal and bin
25	Collection of butterflies
26	Colored silk thread
27	Corks, with and without holes in centers
28	Cosmetics for rituals
29	Creature hooves, whole or powered
30	Cutting block and knife
31	Desk or cabinet
32	Dried herbs in a ceramic jar
33	Embalming notes
34	Feather on leather necklace
35	Fresh herbs hung by a string
36	Fresh poison ivy in an oilskin pouch
37	Glass jar of empty cocoons
38	Glass prism hung by a string
39	Glass tubing
40	Glass vials and flasks
41	Gloves of snakeskin
42	Glue
43	Hair and nail clippings in a small jar
44	Hair or clothing dye
45	Half-eaten meal
46	Hollow glass balls hung from a string
47	Holy/unholy water
48	Human skull
49	Humanoid blood
50	Jar of dead flies

51	Jar of sulfur
52	Leather bag of dried and cracked clay
53	Leather bag of moist clay
54	Leather pouch of course salt
55	Leather pouch of ground bone
56	Live herbs in a pot
57	Lump of alum in a vial of vinegar
58	Magical beast (hippogriff) fur
59	Magnet
60	Magnifying glass
61	Mortar and pestle
62	Mouse in a small cage
63	Mushrooms, edible
64	Mushrooms, poisonous
65	Notebook of experiments
66	Nutshells
67	Phosphorescent moss
68	Pipe with pouch of tobacco
69	Poison in an amber vial
70	Poisonous plant in a pot
71	Potter's wheel
72	Pouch of elf ears
73	Powdered peas
74	Purified water from a sacred place
75	Quartz stones, powered
76	Quills and inks
77	Read leather pouch of sawdust
78	Scale and weights
79	Seeds, folded in a parchment
80	Shiny rocks in a leather pouch
81	Silk shawl
82	Silver dagger
83	Skin dye
84	Small pouch of snake scales
85	Small pouch of fish scales
86	Soil from a distant land in a silk pouch
87	Spirit gum
88	Sprigs of mistletoe in an ivory jar
89	Springs of wolfsbane
90	Stuffed animal
91	Sturdy gloves
92	Tarot deck
93	Tiny bell on a fine silver wire
94	Tongs
95	Trapped container
96	Traveling alchemy lab case
97	Tree sap spread between to strips of wood
98	Unfinished potion
99	Vial of green fuzz
100	Wand with no charges

d100	Uncommon Items
1	1-6 arrows with phosphorescent liquid tips
2	1-6 coral pieces (10-200 gp worth)
3	1-6 glass lenses (10-200 gp worth)
4	1-6 arrows of quality (1/2 chance to break)
5	1-6 twigs that glow like a candle (50 gp each)
6	1-6 vials of acid (1-4 damage each)
7	1-10 gems (10 gp each)
8	1-10 thin sheets of precious metal (10-200 gp worth)
9	A dragon scale
10	Apron made from red dragon hide
11	Assembled bugbear skeleton
12	Assembled gnom skeleton
13	Assembled human skeleton
14	Assembled kobold skeleton
15	Ball of rubber
16	Blackmail letter to owner of lab
17	Book on astronomy
18	Book of magical runes (incomplete)
19	Book on pentagrams and summoning
20	Box filled with elven trail-bread
21	Box filled with fine oil paints
22	Box filled with teak wood planks
23	Box filled with ultra-fine sand
24	Burial shroud over 200 years old
25	Carnivorous plant, dried and preserved
26	Carnivorous plant, live and potted
27	Carved sticks wrapped in silk (10-200 gp worth)
28	Chain of precious metal (10-200 gp worth)
29	Clay pot filled with grave earth
30	Clay pot filled with holy clarified butter
31	Colored glass vials (10-200 gp worth)
32	Compromising letter from local noble lady
33	Contract for magic item creation
34	Crate full of dried chili peppers
35	Crystal ball, non-magical (10-200 gp worth)
36	Crystal rod (10-200 gp worth)
37	Cursed potion in a black glass vial
38	Cursed scroll
39	Diagram of a ship (cog)
40	Disguise kit full of makeup
41	Drow dagger in a wax sealed wooden box
42	Elemental planer air in vial
43	Elemental planer earth in vial
44	Elemental planer water in vial
45	Expensive bottle of wine (50 gp)
46	Explosive experiment in progress (1d6 damage if disturbed)
47	Famous hero's non-magical shield
48	Fine calf-skin gloves
49	Flask of dragon's blood, labeled with dragon's name only

50	Glass cone
51	Glass jar filled with exotic candied ginger
52	Gold holy symbol of the god of craftsmen (50 gp)
53	Healing kit (full of bandages, wraps, etc.)
54	Incense (10-200 gp worth)
55	Ink, rare (10-200 gp worth)
56	Ink, readable under moonlight only
57	Jar of aboleth slime
58	Jar of giant snake venom
59	Jar of goldwashed rose petals (10 gp)
60	Jar filled with orange marmalade
61	Ki-rin skin
62	Leather pouch with ten basilisk eyelashes
63	Lodestone or magnet
64	Lost piece of art (1,000 gp)
65	Map to a treasure
66	Magical beast (hippogriff) blood
67	Magical beast (griffin) blood
68	Magical beast (unicorn) blood
69	Mithral filings (10-200 gp worth)
70	Notes on creating magic potions
71	Notes on creating magic rings
72	Notes on creating magic wands
73	Notes on spell creation/ or new spell
74	Parchment of finest quality
75	Parchment with words beltat and anthanae written upon
76	Parchment torn from famous lost work on necromancy
77	Perfume in colored glass vial
78	Powdered gem in clear glass vial (10-200 gp worth)
79	Powdered gem in clay pot (10-200 gp worth)
80	Precious gem lens (10-200 gp worth)
81	Raw ore of precious metal (10-200 gp worth)
82	Religious artifact, non-magical
83	Rune stones
84	Rune stones on semi-precious stone (200 gp)
85	Scrap of paper with 102012 written upon it
86	Secret compartment
87	Skin of a human baby
88	Sleeping potion
89	Small vial of spores, harmful
90	Small vial of spores, harmless
91	Small vial of will-o'-wisp essence, labeled
92	Spyglass
93	Strip of leather from a bullete
94	Tarot deck inked with gold
95	Unholy candle
96	Vial of green slime
97	Vial of mercury
98	Vial of smoke
99	Waterclock (1,000 gp)
100	Wire of precious metal (5-50 gp worth)

Random Encounters

by Stuart Marshall

To deal effectively with random encounters, it is first necessary to appreciate the reason they exist. Checks for random encounters are always made based on the amount of time that elapses, not the distance traveled. This is for a good reason; a party which dilly-dallies around and zig-zags from place to place without rhyme or reason will experience a much greater number of random encounters than a party which selects an objective in advance and proceeds directly, quickly, but stealthily towards it. It follows that one of the main purposes of random encounters is to keep the game moving.

Now, a good GM will adjust the wandering monster dice according to the PCs' approach. If they choose to move slowly around the location, kicking down doors with a violent crash, yelling and arguing with one another, lumbering from place to place without scouting ahead, then you need to be rolling whole bucketfuls of wandering monster dice. You should also adjust the surprise rolls to make it more likely that the players will be surprised and less likely that monsters will be. However, if the PCs' approach is a swift and stealthy infiltration, with subtle reconnaissance followed by a surgical strike at a carefully chosen target, then you might as well put away your wandering monster dice because you won't need them. The PCs aren't attracting the attention of the curious, warlike, and hungry creatures which lurk nearby, so you don't need to roll. You also need to adjust the surprise rolls to make it less likely that the players will be surprised and more likely that the monsters will be. This is a simple, logical consequence of the players' actions, and it should serve to increase their characters' chances of surviving and ultimately gaining access to great wealth.

It follows that the other major purpose of wandering monsters is to reward skilled play (or, more accurately, to punish poor play). This logic leads us to the basic principles of wandering monster table design, which are:

-The majority of wandering monster encounters must be detrimental to the player characters.

You need to reward players for an approach which minimizes the number of dice you roll — encourage them to move quickly and quietly from place to place. You must not give wandering monsters significant amounts of treasure. They are a punishment mechanism, and encountering them should not normally result in a reward.

Wandering monsters serve to slow down a slow party even more, and you don't want to bog down your game. Ensure that some of the wandering monster encounters can be bypassed by the payment of a bribe or toll—or unintelligent creatures might be distracted with food. As long as party resources are consumed rather than enhanced by dealing with them, the purpose of the random encounters is served.

Some random encounters can be helpful, so long as you ensure that the majority of them are not. You can place potential henchmen, patrols of the watch, or other things on such tables, but ensure that they do not outweigh the odds of a detrimental encounter.

-Use logic. Players should be able to make sense of the encounter in the context of the particular environment in which they are adventuring. Just to focus on that last point: I feel that use of the standardized wandering monster tables is a sign that the GM has not prepared sufficiently. You do need to devise specific tables for your own campaign environment.

For example, hill giants are Common. The wilderness encounter tables reflect that to a certain extent, and they take no account of the likely strength of the party. This is a function of the time at which these tables were written, of course, when it was assumed that extensive overland travel would only be undertaken by highly experienced characters and that the younger types would be spending all their time in a local dungeon. You need to adjust for your own game because if your players are first level, a wandering monster table on which hill giants are Common is simply unreasonable. This is also your chance to personalize your campaign and put your own individual stamp of on your world.

Always back up your tables with rosters, at least for the intelligent beings. There are not, and should not be, an infinite number of wandering orcs in the borderlands. When your party kills two dozen of them, subtract two dozen orcs from the number available. Eventually, if this continues for long enough, there will be a depopulated or substantially depleted orc lair somewhere for the PCs to find, although the orcs will probably decamp to some other location swiftly if their leader feels that the tribe is incapable of defending itself.

Areas which are close to civilized lands should generally include more helpful encounters and fewer detrimental ones, within the boundaries set out above. The creatures encountered should be lower level, fewer in numbers, and ill equipped compared to their counterparts in the deep wilderness. If you follow this principle, the PCs will be able to find their own level of play. Partway through the campaign, they may have cleared an area around their central village and be able to advance further into the wilderness where challenges are greater, but if they go out too far, too early, then they are going to get stomped. In other words, where they travel is a matter for their skill and judgment.

This principle is mirrored in classic dungeon design, of course. Descending a level increases the difficulty and also the reward, but when they descend is a matter for the players to decide, assuming that staircases are reasonably common. The GM doesn't force the players into more difficult encounters because whether to move to more difficult encounters is a tactical decision

and pretty much every tactical decision involving the players needs to be made by the players, rather than resulting from a GM edict.

A further logical consequence is that you should not generally interfere with the dice just because the players are limping back from the dungeon while injured and out of healing spells! If they are in that situation, then it is their own actions which have

brought the situation about. And equally, on the flip side of the same coin, you should not throw wandering monsters at them repeatedly just because they are having an easy time of it. Fiddling with the dice results is always the GM's prerogative, of course, but altering or skipping wandering monster checks can generally be equated with rewarding poor play. If they're doing well, let them do well—encourage the good play, don't punish it.

Four Tricks and Traps to Test your Players by Matthew Finch!

Sliding Floor Stairways

This trick entails an oddly concealed stairway for the party to find. In a room that contains a stairway down to a lower level, part of the floor is constructed to slide across the top of the stairway, blocking off all access. When the floor slides, it reveals another staircase that also leads down, but to a deeper level or to a different part of the same level as the room's other stairwell. Only one stairwell is accessible at a time, and whichever one is covered will be, of course, hidden from view.

The mechanism for sliding the floor from the top of one stairway to the other is a lever that is not located in the room itself. The lever shouldn't be so far away from the room that the party can't eventually make the connection between the lever and the moving floor. Note that this trick is only likely to be discovered if the party backtracks through the room and notices that the location of the stairway seems to have changed ("Wait a minute, I thought you said the stairway was in the northern half of the room, not the southern half...").

It may be that the sliding floor has a default position and will slide back at some point after it has been moved over the non-default stairway. This would, of course, trap the party on the lower level until they can either find another way up or find a lever on the lower level that re-opens the stair.

Another possibility for this trick is that the sliding floor has become jammed, covering half of each stairway. You might choose to treat this as a challenge of shifting the jammed mechanism or make it a situation in which the characters have to squeeze through a very narrow space to get into either one of the two stairwells.

The Perilous Bartender

A narrow stone altar runs along one wall of a dungeon room. Three stone flagons are arranged in a row atop the altar. When anyone walks close to them, all three

magically fill with a blue liquid. Two of the flagons contain poison (with whatever bonus to the saving throw seems appropriate), but the third contains a potion – perhaps one that delays or neutralizes poison, or perhaps randomly generated.

If you choose to warn the players about the nature of the risk involved here, you might want to have an inscription upon the stone bar reading, *"One of these a potion be; its brothers seek to poison thee."*

The Spinning Room

At the center of this room there is an ordinary spinning wheel, and a door in the far wall. If anyone should step into the room, the floor will spin violently, hurling the character against the wall at a random location (using a d12 to determine a clock position is the easiest way to determine random directions on a circle). The speed of the floor's rotation is so fast that the impact against the wall inflicts 1d4 points of damage. Getting back out of the room will be very difficult, because each round the character's attempts to move will be frustrated by the room's spinning motion.

The Stone Thrower

The stone thrower is a crudely carved statue of a large man holding a stone in one hand, poised to throw it. Directly opposite the statue at a distance of thirty feet, a circle is inscribed upon the floor. If anyone should step into the inscribed circle, the statue will animate just long enough to hurl its stone and return to its original position, a new rock magically appearing in its hand. The stone is thrown as if the statue were a monster with 6HD, and they do 1d10 points of damage if they score a successful hit. The stones are actually of semi-precious materials, and each one is valued as follows (d10): 1-5, 1gp; 6-8, 5 gp; 9, 20gp; 10, 40gp. The thrower will continue to throw its stones for as long as the game master considers it appropriate.

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