



# ONE SHOT WORLD



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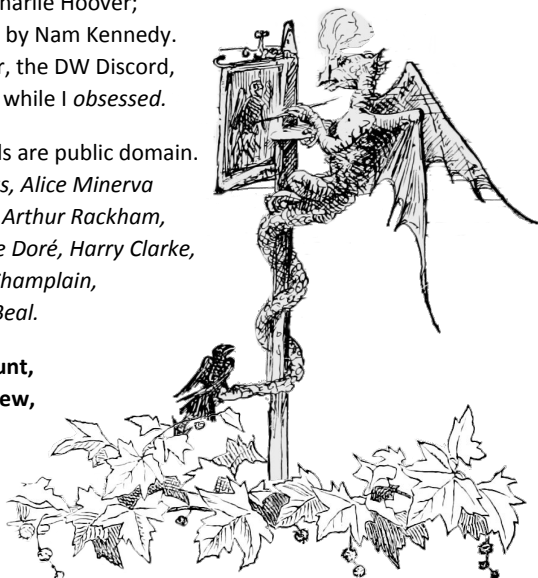
## Attributions

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*One Shot World* is a hack of the excellent *Dungeon World* that removes most of the long-form mechanics and replaces them with simple rules designed to facilitate **one-shots** and **short campaigns**.

## *I'm an experienced GM; why is this worth my time?*

If you run a lot of one or two-shot games, you know that setting up one-shots can be frustratingly slow, especially if the players are unfamiliar with the rules or role-play in general. *One Shot World* shortens the time players spend creating characters, learning rules, and creating the world, so you can get right to the fiction. If you want to run a pick-up game, introduce new players to the hobby, or have a quick off-the-cuff session, *One Shot World* can help.

## *I'm new to this, is this game right for me?*

Yes! *One Shot World* is as easy to pick up and play as *Dungeon World*. It doesn't require any special RPG knowledge or experience; if you can have a conversation with others, you can run this game.

## What's Changed?

Playbooks have been simplified down to just a few **background** and **core moves**, as well as a few optional **advances**. *One Shot World* uses the standard *Dungeon World* **basic moves**, though some have been tweaked to facilitate a shorter game. **Alignment** and **Bonds** are replaced with **questions** that serve a similar



function. **Rations** and **encumbrance** are gone, and **wealth** and **equipment** are simplified. **Racial** moves have been removed in favor of a playbook-specific **backgrounds**, which provide a package of ability score bonuses, moves and starting equipment.

## *How do I handle race, alignment or encumbrance?*

You'll figure this out at the table, as a group. There may be fictional benefits to a particular race or background, but there is no built-in mechanical benefit. For instance, you may decide that Dwarves can see in the dark, or that Elves do not need sleep. At the start of the session, players should answer the questions on their playbooks to determine their character goals, their relationships to the other player characters, NPCs & so on. The GM Moves and the fiction can easily handle load & encumbrance. For the rest, just use your best judgement!

## The Pitch

Because *One Shot World* is a hack of *Dungeon World*, it comes with many of the game's perks: ease-of-play, simple but flexible rules that always support the narrative, and simple, fast-paced combat. Put simply, *Dungeon World* is what you thought Fantasy RPGs were *supposed* to be like when you first heard of them: grand heroics, adventure, and fantastic storytelling!

As such,, *One Shot World* doesn't bog the players down with rules, especially when it doesn't support the narrative. You shouldn't need to worry about exactly how many feet you are from an enemy, or if your class explicitly states that you can or cannot do something. If it makes sense in the fiction, then you should

be able to do it! *One Shot World* makes things very simple: state *what you're trying to do*, pick a move, and roll the dice!

Also, it's important that you pitch the game you're planning to run. First, start with the tone: will it be fun & light, where the Good Guys vanquish the Big Bad? Or will it be dark and gritty, with danger at every turn? Try to relate it to a TV show, novel or video game you like.

Remember that the rules are there to both support a fun game experience as well as an interesting story. If they get in the way, don't be afraid to adjust

them to your liking. Finally, you don't need to do any prepwork; the story should flow from the *conversation* between the GM and the players. Remember, you **play to find out what happens!**



## 2 GM Overview

Everyone at the table will need something to write with and some six-sided dice (two minimum). You'll also need at least one four-sided, eight-sided, and ten-sided dice.

Choose one person to be the Game Master (GM); everyone else will take the role of the characters in the game (player characters, or PCs).

As you play, the players say what their characters say, think, and do. As the GM, you describe and control everything else in the world, from NPCs (non-player characters) to monsters, terrain, the weather, etc.

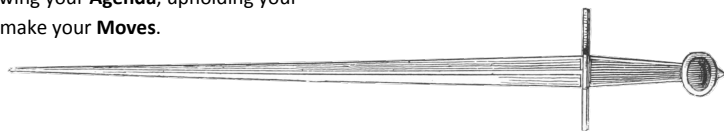
While the players get to describe what their characters think, feel and do, you get to play *everything else*. You can accomplish this by setting the scene, following your **Agenda**, upholding your **Principles**, and make your **Moves**.

### Agenda

**Portray a fantastic world:** It's your job to participate in that by showing the players a world in which their characters can find adventure.

**Fill the characters' lives with adventure:** Work with the players to create a world that's engaging, actionable, and dynamic.

**Play to find out what happens:** The entire table shares in the fun of finding out how the characters react to and change the world you're portraying.



### Principles

#### Never speak the name of your move

Your moves are prompts to you, not things you say directly. Never show the players that you're picking a move from a list.

#### Give every monster life

Monsters are fantastic creatures with their own motivations. Describe them by the details that bring them to life: their smells, sights, and sounds.

#### Name every person

Anyone that the players speak with has a name. They have a personality and some goals or opinions too, but you can figure that out as you go.

#### Think offscreen too

Just because you're a fan of the characters doesn't mean everything happens right in front of them. Sometimes your best move is in the next room, or another part of the dungeon, or even back in town.

#### Begin and end with the fiction

When the players make a move, they take a fictional action to trigger it, apply the rules, and get a fictional effect. The same applies to your moves.

#### Draw maps, leave blanks

Any time there's a new location described, make sure it gets added to a map; leave room for the unknown!

#### Address the characters, not the players

A good reminder that moves are always based on the actions of the character, not the players portraying them.

#### Embrace the fantastic

The characters are interesting people, empowered by their gods, their skill at arms, or by mystical training. The world should be just as engaging.

#### Ask questions and use the answers

If you don't know something, or you don't have an idea, ask the players and use what they say.

#### Make a move that follows

When you make a move, you are taking an element of the fiction and bringing it to bear against the characters. Moves should make sense within the fiction as well as the rules.

#### Be a fan of the characters

You're not here to push the characters in any particular direction, merely to participate in fiction that features them and their action. Cheer for their victories and lament their defeats.

#### Think dangerous

Whenever your eye falls on something you or the players have created, think how it can be put in danger, fall apart or crumble.

A **move** is something that occurs in the game fiction. They aren't code words or special terms.

## When To Make A Move

**Moves** are what you do in response to the fiction. You make a move:

- When everyone looks to you to find out what happens.
- When the players give you a Golden Opportunity.
- When they roll a 6 or lower.



When the players look at you to find out what happens, you should make a **Soft Move**; otherwise you make a **Hard Move**.

A **Soft Move** is one without immediate, irrevocable consequences. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; for example revealing that there might be another way out, but only if the characters can scale the slippery castle wall (offer an opportunity with cost). It can also mean that it's something bad, but they have time to avoid it, like having the goblin archers loose their arrows (show signs of an approaching threat) with a chance for them to dodge out of danger.

A soft move ignored becomes a **Golden Opportunity** for a hard move. If the players do nothing about the hail of arrows flying towards them, it's a chance for you to use the deal damage move.

**Hard Moves**, on the other hand, have immediate consequences. Dealing damage is almost always a hard move, since it means a loss of HP that won't be recovered without some action from the players.

To choose a move, start by looking at the obvious consequences of the action that triggered it. If your first instinct is that this won't hurt them now, but it'll come back to bite

them later, great! That's part of your principles (think offscreen too).

When making a move, keep your principles in mind. In particular, never speak the name of your move and address the characters, not the players. Your moves are not mechanical actions happening around the table. They are concrete events happening to the characters in the fictional world you are describing.

**Moves are a way of fulfilling your Agenda**, part of which is to fill the characters' lives with adventure.

When a spell misfires or the floor drops out from under them, the adventurers must react, or suffer the consequences of inaction.

No matter what move you make, always follow up by asking, "**What do you do?**"

## Moves

- **Separate them.**
- **Deal Damage.**
- **Show a downside to their class, race, or equipment.**
- **Offer an opportunity, with or without cost.**
- **Put someone in a spot.**
- **Give an opportunity that fits a characters abilities.**
- **Use a monster, danger, or location move.**
- **Reveal an unwelcome truth.**
- **Show signs of an approaching threat.**
- **Tell them the requirements or consequences and ask.**
- **Use up their resources.**
- **Turn their move back on them.**



## 4 The Session

### Character Creation

The GM's role during character creation is to help the players with their playbooks, ask questions, and record their answers. Throughout the game (but especially during character creation) you should pepper the players with questions about their character and the world you're building together. When a player chooses a particular **background** or answers a question aloud, ask them about it!

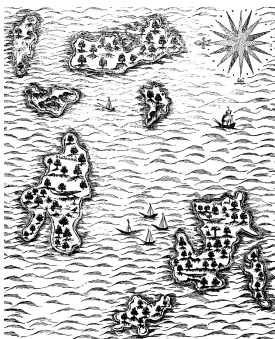
Collaborate with your players. If they ask a question, it's because it interests them; so try to make the answers interesting as well. Or better yet, ask them! Work together to find a fantastic and interesting answer. Equally, when a player says, *"What kinds of people live in this village?"* say, *"I don't know. What do you think? What makes the most sense?"*

Ask each player to write a character goal; something they'd like to see their character accomplish this session. Examples include:

- Discovering the truth behind a local corruption.
- Overcoming a major character flaw.
- Developing a new character trait, flaw or character bond.

### The Map

Now's a good time to start working on a map of the session's starting area. Set out a blank sheet of paper, and ask the player who is the most well-traveled (likely a Ranger or Druid) to draw a rough outline of the region. Then ask the most social character (probably the Bard, Paladin, or Thief) to draw a point of interest they've heard rumors about. Finally, ask the most



knowledgeable character (usually the Wizard or Cleric) to draw roads, rivers, forests, mountain ranges, etc.

If anyone hasn't drawn something on the map yet, they should then add a detail of their choice. The map should still be mostly empty, with places to explore! As each player adds their details to the map, ask them what they know about them! You can also ask the appropriate character (for instance, a Thief might know the name of the capital city's slums), the history behind a ruin, who rules the Emerald Forest, etc. As you talk, you should jot this information down for later use. Always remember to **leave blanks!**

### Worldbuilding

Work with the players to build a unique world; think about the answers they've already given you, and what kind of story you can build with them. But go even further by asking more questions, especially leading ones. Something that hints at a larger truth, something hidden, or a secret agenda. If you've already established that the characters will start out in a the ruins of an abandoned temple, ask them what happened. Why was it abandoned? Perhaps the Cleric would know based on their religious past? Or

maybe the Bard has heard of it in legend? Ideally, you want questions that snowball into more questions, filling out the world as you go. The one thing you absolutely can't bring to the table is a planned storyline or plot.



### Alternate Session Creation

Pages 12 & 13 of this book detail alternative methods of session creation.

Pages 14 and 15 are designed to help you create evocative openings, as well as questions to help flesh out the player characters and their world.

Page 16 introduces mini "settings" to help you create evocative scenes for the players to encounter. Page 17 offers a different way of building the game map.

The GM can use any of these in tandem with the process described here or in lieu of it!



## Character Creation

**Hand out playbooks**, don't fill any out beforehand.

**Let the players decide** who plays what, and refer to them by that playbook name for now.

**The GM should start asking questions** while the players read over their playbooks

**Remember**, players have questions on their sheets, too; you may ask about them now as well as during the session.

**Going forward**, the GM and the players should only use character names when addressing each other.

## The World

**Build the map.** (see the *Worldbuilding* section on page 4)

## Opening Scene

**Set the opening scene** for the session.

**Be vivid**, use specific details, and give the players something to do right away. (see *ideas* on page 13)

## Going Forward...

Finally, the GM should always ask:

**"What do you do?"**

## Example

*"Cleric, you were once at war, and found yourself on opposite sides of Sora, the Paladin. How did you come to work together today?"*

*"Thief, what brings you to this part of the world? What are you running from?"*

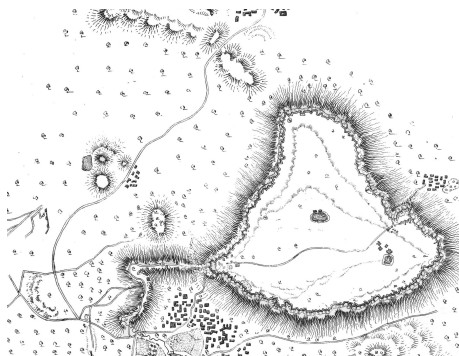
*"Klaust, what secret do you know about the Thief, and does she know that you know?"*

*"Everyone, how common is the supernatural? How about non-Human races? Are there major cities? Forests? Deserts?"*

*"Korbin, you're the only magic user in this group. Does the population of this world (or territory) know much about magic?"*

*"Sora, you're the only Halfling in the party. How do they treat you regarding your small size? What about the rest of the civilized world?"*

*"Anyone, why do you seek the Eye of Quolora? Who is protecting it? What will happen if you are caught trying to take it?"*



*"You're standing on a wet cobblestone street. Nearby, a carriage is overturned. Someone is bleeding to death nearby; who are they? Four bowmen are shooting arrows at you; they obviously want you dead. You have taken shelter behind the carriage, but it has just begun to erupt in flames."*

*"You've been captured by the King's soldiers, and your equipment has been taken out of sight. Where did they take it? Each of you was able to place one small object in a hidden spot on your person. What is it? You've been tied up and placed in a small cell, and the guards seem strangely distracted."*

*"Your party is settling down after a long night of merriment. Suddenly, the innkeeper runs in, screaming, 'There's a monster attacking the town! You're adventurers, aren't you? Help!'"*

*"A member of your party is being forced to fight in the secret pits beneath a local tavern. You stand in the audience above the pit; you can hear the shouts of the crowd chanting the name of the local champion: an enslaved Ogre."*



## 6 Setting The Scene

Try to paint a **vivid**, specific situation and then ask:  
**What do you do?**

**Start the session** with a group of player characters caught up in a tense situation. Use anything that demands action: standing outside the entrance to a **dungeon**, ambushed in a **fetid swamp**, peeking through some bushes at **armed guards**, or being sentenced before a **powerful lord**.

Give the players a chance to **think, ask questions, or take action**; but when the curtain rises, they should be compelled to react (not necessarily with violence). This is also a great opportunity to ask questions and use the answers; let them fill the world out for you.

Eventually, the players will start saying and doing things as their characters, which means they'll start making moves. **When a move triggers let them know**. Say, "It sounds like you're trying to..." and then walk them through the move. When a player says "I hack and slash him" be quick to ask, "so what are you actually doing? With which weapon? Are you going for his head, or simply trying to knock him back?"



### Impressions

When you introduce a new location, describe a **notable impression** and ask one of your players to describe a notable impression too:

#### Sources of light

**A notable feature** that fits the location's theme or history

#### Ambient sounds

**Moisture and smell** of the air

**Natural hazards**

### Places & Things

Answer the following prompts about **places and things** within the dungeon, using what has already been established:

**What guards the entrance**, or otherwise prevents entry?

**What remains** of this place from before?

**How does the terrain** change as you explore?

**What mystery**, puzzle, or foe cannot be defeated with violence?

**How can things go wrong**, or become more complicated?

**What unwelcome truth** or hints of further trouble await?



### Dangers

When you speak of the **dangers** that lurk in the wild, ask questions to establish the following details, but keep one or two answers for yourself as surprises:

**The danger** that threatens the village.

**Who leads them**, and what makes them special or unusual (Use this to write a location move for their lair).  
**A valuable treasure** kept in their lair.

**What they want** (Choose an established person, place, or thing) and why they do.

**An established NPC** who has already become involved, and how.

**What else is involved or at stake** that might cause a distraction, a moral quandary, make it personal, or complicate things.

**What pushes the characters to act**.

**The location** of their lair (Choose an established place).

As the GM, you may find it helpful to generate interesting, memorable NPCs on the fly. All that’s required are some memorable **Traits**, an **Instinct**, and a means to pursue it. Some NPCs have **Knacks** (a special ability) as well. Here are a few tables you can pull from to quickly build a new character:

Traits

|                |             |              |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Disfigured     | Emaciated   | Clean        |
| Well-dressed   | Skeptic     | Allergic     |
| Kind           | Paranoid    | Asthmatic    |
| Caring         | Easygoing   | Diseased     |
| Scrawny        | Peaceful    | Rude         |
| Naive          | Awkward     | Alienated    |
| Bloodshot Eyes | Spendthrift | Antisocial   |
| Artistic       | Dreamer     | Absentminded |



Instinct to \_\_\_\_\_



|                    |                      |                     |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Spread religion    | Save someone         | Pillage             |
| Make money         | Teach                | Indulge             |
| Seek payback       | Settle down          | Make the best of it |
| Question authority | Preserve law         | Find love           |
| Lord over others   | Discover             | Destroy an artifact |
| Act impulsively    | Keep quiet           | Show off            |
| Be cautious        | Die gloriously       | Entertain           |
| Defy death         | Reunite with a lover | Restore their name  |

Knacks

|                      |                   |                    |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Criminal connections | Special destiny   | Inventive          |
| Skilled warrior      | Balance           | Baking             |
| Hedge wizardry       | Speed             | Writing            |
| Local info           | An eye for detail | Cooking            |
| One-of-a-kind item   | Heroic            | A tie to a monster |
| Hidden knowledge     | A hidden entrance | An innate spell    |
| Magical awareness    | A powerful lover  | A way with knots   |
| Muscle               | Speaks to animals | A catchy tune      |



## 8 Non-Player Character Examples

### Shevaral the Unclean

**Trait:** Weather-beaten, Handsome,  
Nervous speech  
**Instinct:** To battle  
**Knack:** Poison brewing



### Baldric

**Trait:** Bad leg, Shabby Clothes,  
Easygoing  
**Instinct:** Give in to temptation  
**Knack:** Exotic weapon skill

### Freya

**Trait:** Bloodshot Eyes, Well-Dressed,  
Angry  
**Instinct:** To atone for what she's done  
**Knack:** Perfect Memory

### Lim

**Trait:** Tall, Long Hair, Awkward  
**Instinct:** Question authority  
**Knack:** A spell of his own devising

### Willa

**Trait:** Youthful energy, Fast speech,  
Stands too close  
**Instinct:** To spread news far and wide  
**Knack:** Access to a library

### Wesley

**Trait:** Thick mustache, Beady eyes,  
Hums out of tune  
**Instinct:** To gain riches, no matter what  
**Knack:** To betray when it hurts the most

### Genesai

**Trait:** Empty smile, Graceful, Squeezes  
a locket around her neck  
**Instinct:** To defend her family's legacy  
**Knacks:** Charismatic, Reputable

### Seldar the Wise

**Trait:** Bushy eyebrows, Low-pitched  
speech, Wears tattered clothes  
**Instinct:** To find wonder, one last time  
**Knack:** Sense of direction

### Munos

**Trait:** Abnormally large, Passive face,  
Intelligent eyes  
**Instinct:** To locate something lost  
**Knack:** Quicker than you might think

### Prince Illian

**Trait:** Calculating eyes, Flowing hair,  
Explosive temper  
**Instinct:** Reclaim his throne  
**Knack:** Has a backup plan

### Milo

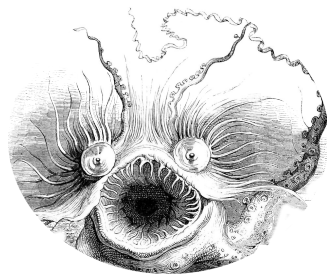
**Trait:** Curly hair, Squints through  
eyeglass, Nervous  
**Instinct:** To meddle where he shouldn't  
**Knack:** Metalworking

### Syla

**Trait:** Short, Crooked teeth,  
Unbearably honest  
**Instinct:** To uncover secrets  
**Knack:** Knows where the monster is

A monster is any living (or undead) thing that stands in the characters' way. They exist to illustrate what a dangerous awful place the world can be, and how it will remain if the heroes don't step in. You shouldn't be rooting for the monsters to win, but they may challenge, and even sometimes defeat, the heroes.

The way you describe the monsters and adversaries the characters face can be a tool to help you fulfill your agenda of portraying a fantastic world. Describing those creatures and people in vivid detail will **bring them to life**.



## Making a Monster

To make a **new monster** on the fly, use one of these templates to start:

- It appears as a **horde** (6 or more): 3 HP, 0 Armor, d6 damage
- It appears as a **small group** (3-5): 6 HP, 1 armor, d8 damage
- It appears by **itself**, or a **leader**: 12 HP, 2 Armor, d10+2 damage

Give each monster an instinct that describes **what it wants**, a move to describe its **favorite tactics**, and another move that shows **why it is dangerous**.

- If the monster has any of these properties, give them the listed tags or apply the listed modifiers to the monster's stats:
- It doesn't have organs or discernible anatomy: **amorphous**, +1 armor, +3 HP
- It's as smart as a human or thereabouts: **intelligent**
- It's kept alive by something **beyond simple biology**: +4 HP
- It's armaments are **vicious** and obvious: +2 damage
- It wields spells and **magic**: magical, write a move about its spells
- **Armor doesn't help** with the damage it deals (due to magic, size, etc.): ignores armor
- It possesses exceptional **strength** or **endurance**: +2 damage, +2 HP, or both

Make your monsters **smart and proactive**, not just punching bags full of HP. A razor boar that does 1d10 in damage doesn't feel like a threat. A razor boar that cuts through armor like paper and can mangle limbs with its tusks as it chases the party through the forest will.

Likewise, a monster that just sits there waiting for the PCs to come and vanquish it isn't dangerous. Like any other NPC, monsters have desires and instincts. Act on them to make them feel more real.

## Elements of a Monster

**Tags** describe how it deals damage, including the range(s) of its attacks.

**Damage** is a measure of how much pain the monster can inflict at once. Just like player damage it's a die to roll, maybe with some modifiers.

**HP** (hit points) are a measure of how much damage it can take before it dies. Just like players, when a monster takes damage it subtracts that amount from its HP. At 0 HP it's dead, no last breath. When a monster with armor takes damage, it subtracts its armor from the damage done.

**Instincts** describe its goals at a fundamental level. Some monsters live for conquest, or treasure, or simply for blood.

**Moves** describe a monster's behavior and abilities. Just like the normal GM Moves, they're things that you do when there's a lull in the action or when the players give you a **Golden Opportunity**.

# Monster Examples

## Bandit

Horde, Intelligent, Organized  
Dirk (d6 damage), 3 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Instinct:** To rob

**Moves:**

- Demand tribute
- Steal something



## Ogre

Group, Large, Intelligent  
Club (d8+5 damage), 10 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Instinct:** To return the world to darker days

**Moves:**

- Destroy something
- Fly into a rage
- Take something by force

## Bandit King

Solitary, Intelligent, Organized  
Trusty knife (d10+2 damage), 12 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Instinct:** To lead

**Moves:**

- Make a demand
- Extort
- Topple power

## Ghoul

Group

Talons (d8 damage, 1 piercing, messy), 10 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Instinct:** To eat

**Moves:**

- Gnaw off a body part
- Gain the memories of their meal

## Iron Golem

Group, Large, Construct  
Metal fists (d8+5 damage), 10 **HP**, 3 Armor

**Instinct:** To serve

**Moves:**

- Follow orders implacably
- Use a special tool or built-in adaptation

## Banshee

Solitary, Magical, Intelligent  
Scream (d10 damage), 16 **HP**, 0 Armor

**Instinct:** To get revenge

**Moves:**

- Steal something
- Drown out all sound with a ceaseless scream
- Unleash a skull-splitting noise
- Disappear into the mists

## Minotaur

Solitary, Large, Close, Reach  
Axe (d10+1 damage), 16 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Special Qualities:** Unerring sense of direction

**Instinct:** To contain

**Moves:**

- Confuse them
- Make them lost

## Basilisk

Solitary, Hoarder, Close  
Bite (d10 damage), 12 **HP**, 2 Armor

**Instinct:** To create new statuary

**Moves:**

- Turn flesh to stone with a gaze
- Retreat into a maze of stone

## Goblin

Horde, Small, Intelligent, Organized  
Spear (d6 damage), 3 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Instinct:** To multiply

**Moves:**

- Charge!
- Call more goblins
- Retreat and return with (many) more

## Skeleton

Horde  
Slam (d6 damage), 7 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Instinct:** To take the semblance of life

**Moves:**

- Act out what it did in life
- Snuff out the warmth of life
- Reconstruct from miscellaneous bones

## Werewolf

Solitary, Intelligent, Close, Messy  
Bite (d10+2 damage, 1 piercing), 12 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Special Qualities:** Weak to silver

**Instinct:** To shed the appearance of civilization

**Moves:**

- Strike from within
- Transform to pass unnoticed as beast or man

## Goblin Orkaster

Solitary, Small, Magical, Intelligent, Organized

Acid orb (d10+1 damage, ignores armor), 12 **HP**, 0 Armor

**Instinct:** To tap power beyond their stature

**Moves:**

- Unleash a poorly understood spell
- Pour forth magical chaos
- Use other goblins for shields

## Cave Rat

Horde, Small

Gnaw (d6 damage 1 piercing), 7 **HP**, 1 Armor

**Instinct:** To devour

**Moves:**

- Rip something (or someone) apart
- Swarm

## Captain Bligh's Cornucopia

A brass naval horn, curled and ornate, carved with symbols of the gods of Plenty. When blown, in addition to sound, the horn spills forth food. Enough to feed a meal to everyone who hears its sound.

## Flask of Breath

A simple thing, but useful when you need a breath of fresh air. The flask appears empty but cannot be filled, anything added to it simply spills out. This is because the flask is eternally full of air. If placed underwater, it will bubble forever. If pressed to the mouth, one can breathe normally—smoke is no concern, for example. I'm sure you'll find all sorts of unusual uses for it.

## Immovable Rod

A funny metal rod with a button on it. Press the button and the rod just sticks. It freezes in place—in midair, standing up or lying down. It can't be moved. Pull it, push it, try as hard as you like, the rod stays. Maybe it can be destroyed, maybe it can't. Push the button again and it's free—take it along with you. Might be useful to have such a stubborn thing along.

## Map of the Last Patrol

An ancient order of brave rangers once patrolled the land, protecting villages and warning kings and queens of encroaching danger. They're long gone, now, but their legacy remains. This map, when marked with the blood of a group of people, will always show their location—so long as they remain within the bounds of the map.



## Lodestone Shield

(+1 armor)

What mixed-up dummy made this? Shields are meant to repel metal, not draw it in! Emblazoned with a lion rampant, the Lodestone Shield has the power to pull blades and arrows to it. When you defend against enemies using metal weapons you can spend one hold, per target, to disarm them. Also, sometimes you'll find a handful of loose change stuck to it.

## Nightsider's Key

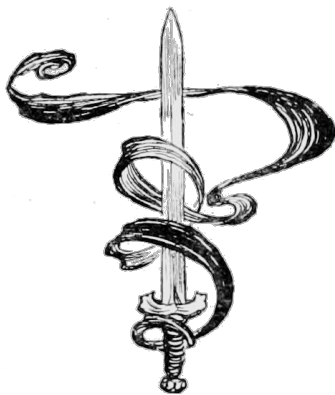
This key unlocks any door for you, provided you don't belong where you intend to go. So long as you do nothing that would alert another to your presence (remaining unheard, unseen and unnoticed) and takes nothing more than your memories out with you, the key's magic will prevent your intrusion from ever being discovered. It's like you were never there at all.

## The Sterling Hand

Crafted by dwarven whitesmiths, this mirrored-metal hand is deeply scored with runes of power and rejuvenation. Meant to replace wounded or destroyed limbs from mining accidents, the Sterling Hand bonds to the wound, old or new, and is strong and stout. It can be used as a weapon (Near range) and is made of pure enough silver to harm creatures affected by such.

## Tricksy Rope

A rope that listens. Does tricks, too, like a smart and more obedient snake might. Tell it "Coil" or "Slack" or "Come here, rope" and it will.



## Instructions

To get started, roll **8d6** and take turns assigning them below. You'll have two dice left at the end: total them.

- On 10+, open your first scene in the heat of battle.
- On 7-9, you're hot on the heels of something you're hunting.
- On 6 or less, you're pinned down, imprisoned or on the run.



### Who's really in control here?

- (1) A cabal of powerful wizards
- (2) A rogue spirit infecting human minds
- (3) Warring gods, using people as pawns
- (4) A populace bent on rebellion
- (5) A maniacal genius, bent on dominion
- (6) Something from beyond or truly monstrous



### What is about to happen?

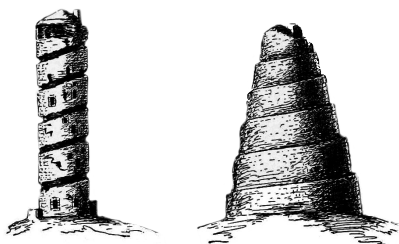
- (1) A treasonous plot nears fruition
- (2) A radical sect threatens the status quo
- (3) A despised or beloved leader lies on their deathbed
- (4) An otherworldly monster comes to take what's theirs
- (5) An invading army camps at the border
- (6) The forces of nature threaten annihilation

### What happened here recently?

- (1) A great and bloody war
- (2) A devastating plague
- (3) Famine brought by drought, flood or blight
- (4) Visitors from another plane
- (5) A prophecy of doom or redemption
- (6) The discovery of powerful new magic or technology

### What here is useful or valuable to me?

- (1) A holy relic in a faraway tomb
- (2) An abandoned hideout, waiting to be seized
- (3) A famous sage, offering blessings for service
- (4) A tournament with a grand prize
- (5) A fugitive with a huge price on their head
- (6) A disorganized mob, desperate for leadership



### What should I be on the lookout for?

- (1) Roving bands of scavengers
- (2) Soldiers enforcing martial law
- (3) Spies everywhere
- (4) A landscape littered with arcane traps
- (5) Carriers of a nasty disease
- (6) Tainted food and water supplies

### What here is not what it appears to be?

- (1) A monster in human skin
- (2) A patrician in disguise
- (3) A monster with a kind heart
- (4) A sham religion
- (5) The return of someone presumed dead
- (6) A curse disguised as a blessing

## We are exploring...

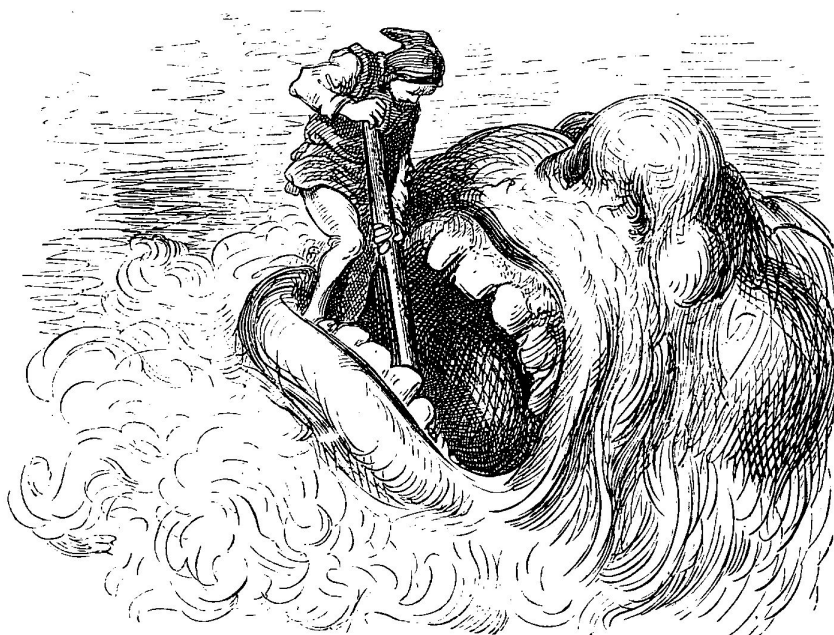
*a remote ruin  
an overgrown necropolis  
the ruins of an ancient city  
a flooded settlement  
an abandoned village  
a twisting canyon  
a lost valley  
a long-forgotten road  
a legendary battle site  
a mysterious cavern*

## that lies...

*on an uncharted island  
along the edge of a great swamp  
high in the mountains  
in a desolate wasteland  
in the freezing tundra  
deep in an ancient forest  
in the windswept badlands  
among the rolling dunes  
in a tropical jungle  
in the middle of hostile territory*

## seeking the...

*temple of a dead deity.  
crypt of a forgotten hero.  
vault of the last dwarven king.  
prison of a bound demon.  
lair of a legendary beast.  
hideout of a notorious thief.  
cathedral of a fallen god.  
monastery of a mystic order.  
fortress of a tyrannical warlord.  
tower of a mad wizard.*



## We are here to...

*find an ancient artifact  
search for a cure  
rescue someone in distress  
use a sacred site  
bring a villain to justice  
find the chosen one  
recover our souls  
stop the release of an ancient evil  
seek forbidden knowledge  
close an unholy portal*

## and...

*an un-living lord.  
an alien horror.  
a fallen angel.  
an ancient dragon.  
a powerful sorcerer.  
a despotic warrior.  
a zealous priest.  
an infernal fiend.  
a criminal mastermind.  
the one that betrayed us.*

## guarded by...

*undead horrors  
crazed cultists  
twisted abominations  
ruthless assassins  
monstrous hordes  
foul demons  
deadly traps  
powerful constructs  
wild beasts  
skilled warriors*

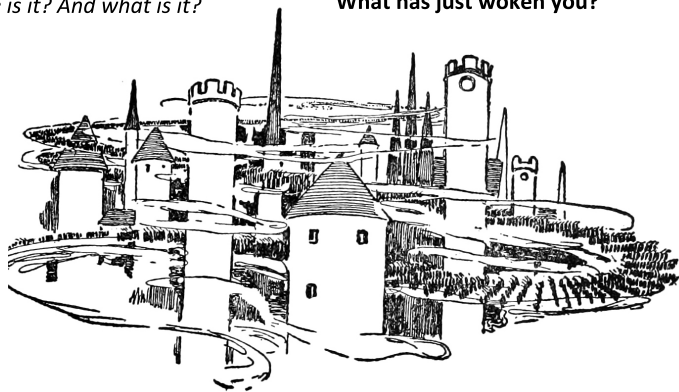
## 14 Inspiration For Opening Scenes

**The battle has just ended; the bodies of a hunting party are dead at your feet. Why did it come to this? Who struck the first blow? Who will be looking for them?**

*You wake up in the lair of a \_\_\_\_\_. You've heard awful rumors about this place. What are they?*

**You are in a \_\_\_\_\_ long after closing. You have tripped an alarm, somewhere, and the sounds of guards can be heard coming down the hall.**

*You left something very important back in town. Where is it? And what is it?*



**As you rush away from a burning field, and into the relative safety of the forest, a group of \_\_\_\_\_ cuts you off. The leader angrily accuses you of destroying the harvest his people rely on. Are you at fault?**

*A member of your party is being forced to fight in the secret pits beneath a local tavern. You stand in the audience above the pit; you can hear the shouts of the crowd chanting the name of the local champion: a \_\_\_\_\_.*

**A young woman lies in the middle of the ceremonial circle, a green-gemmed dagger in her heart. You are relieved to finally see her go. The earth begins to shake, and pillars to collapse. You can see the exit, but the ground is cracking open!**

*You stand at the cave entrance. What are you searching for, and what happens at dawn?*

*You're looking through a keyhole and see the \_\_\_\_\_ you came to kill on the other side. Who is it, and why must they die?*

**You're on a road in the midst of a terrible storm. There is a man kneeling before you in the mud and you have your weapons drawn. Why?**

*You wake up in a prison cell without your equipment, except for one hidden item. What crime do your captors think you committed? Are they right?*

**You're asleep on a riverboat, on your way to an important place. Why are you going? What has just woken you?**

*Careful searching has revealed the location of the bandit fort. At just the perfect moment, you launch your attack! Alas, it was a trap, and now you're cornered!*

**Bowmen are taking shots at you from the rooftops. You've taken shelter behind an overturned carriage, but it's on fire! Someone nearby is bleeding to death: who are they?**

*On a jagged mountain pass, a group of armed cultists wearing lavender-colored robes rush toward you. One of them is holding a weapon high above her head, her face filled with rage. Why is this pass so vital?*

**Why are you breaking into the home of a mighty \_\_\_\_\_? What are you planning to steal? And what were you warned about?**

## Barbarian

*Have you brought anyone from your home with you? What, if anything are they fleeing?*

*Who would you most like to see again?*

*What nearly impossible task could repair your reputation among your people?*

## Bard

*What legend drew you here? What do you hope to see while you are here?*

*Why did you have to flee the last place you settled in?*

*How did you come by your instrument? Who crafted it? What makes it special?*

## Cleric

*What did you do before dedicating your life to your deity?*

*Have you ever failed your deity? What did you do to atone?*

*What prophecy are you trying to fulfill or thwart here? Who is meant to play an important role?*

## Druid

*What happened to make you close to the land?*

*What problems forced you to leave your lands and venture into the unknown?*

*What is the greatest entity actively threatening the natural world?*

## Fighter

*What foe escaped your wrath? How?*

*Who do you spend the most time fighting?*

*Who once wielded your signature weapon?*

## Paladin

*What are you looking to atone for, personally?*

*Recent attacks were led by someone you knew from the war. Who are they? What side were they on?*

*Why is your armor so banged up?*

## Ranger

*Why is this quest so important that you're willing to brave civilization?*

*What resides here, and why does it require protection?*

*What did you lose that now you seek, out here in the wilderness? Who took it?*

## Thief

*What's the biggest score you've ever taken?*

*Why did you return the last thing you stole?*

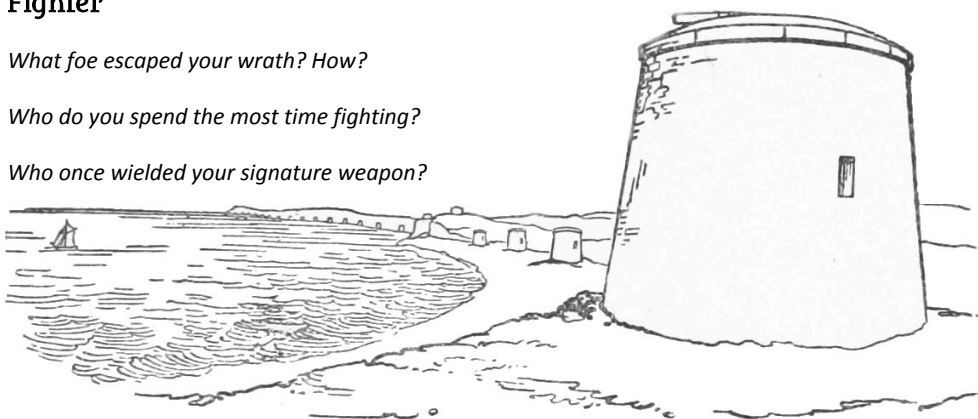
*You recognize someone shady here from your past. Who are they, and how do you know them?*

## Wizard

*How commonplace are the arcane arts?*

*Why do you collect parts of rare creatures?*

*Why do you need protection when you travel?*



# Mini Settings

## The Tsavni Host

- A city of nomads settling down for the night; the smell of fire, meat and manure.
- Children are laughing; adults stare at strangers curiously from multi-colored tents.
- The sounds of men arguing over a game; they stand guard before a chained woman.

## Hrakkan's Pass

- Stone cockroaches the size of horses scattered and half buried along the valley floor.
- A dense and acrid fog that never completely dissipates.
- The sound of shuffling and whispering cuts off whenever you stop to listen.

## Gárgola Apex

- A city situated between two peaks; grand bridges as act entrances on both sides.
- Sits on a massive rotating disc that spins slow enough to accommodate foot traffic.
- Purple-robed guardians are overheard warning that the disc has been erratic lately.

## Borsa River Mine

- Partly submerged stone buildings hint at a large network of structures underwater.
- Flies buzz around statues of strange frog-like creatures erected on dry patches of land.
- Fresh humanoid footprints appear in the mud seemingly at random and then disappear.

## Medina At Beyt Kvora

- A massive city with gothic architecture and spires rising as far as the eye can see.
- Dead rise unless proper rites and rituals are used during burial.
- Graveyard “districts” built around moats separate the living city from the dead.



## The Fallen Maharib

- A hidden bay shelters an enormous, collapsed statue from ancient times.
- Desolated beaches made of dark sand surrounded by bleak, imposing cliffs.
- Only the sounds of tranquil waves washing ashore and distant birds can be heard.

## The Swamp of Paráxenos

- A fetid stench hangs in the far-too humid air.
- Ruins of an ancient civilization lie half-sunken in green, slick mud.
- Howling, recognizable (or familiar) speech can be heard at night.

## Wahah, Jewel of the East

- A desert city of magic, glass, and wonder hidden by faint mirage.
- Men & women fill bustling streets with slippered feet and veiled faces.
- There are whispers that the magic is drawn from something deep below.

## The Sleeping Burj

- A fallen silver tower atop a small hill.
- Round doorways that open when you approach them, revealing right-side up rooms.
- Tables and desks are covered in knobs and lights which unexpectedly react to the touch.

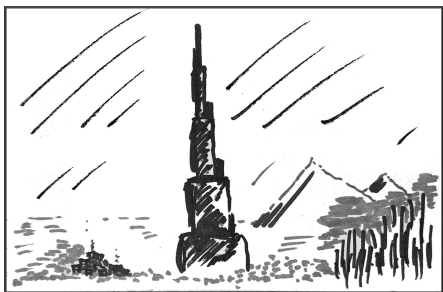
## Littlewit Manor

- An ornate old mansion, colorful, orderly, and beautifully decorated & empty.
- Blood stains the carpets and leads up the staircase to the higher floors.
- An exquisite painting of a many-tentacled abomination hangs prominently in the lobby.

# Alternate Map Creation

First, prepare a stack of index cards and permanent markers. Hand 1 or 2 to each player, then ask each to draw an image. It could be something fantastical (a floating city, a dragon's den), mundane (gorges, mountain peaks, lakes) or simply represent a feature you might see on a fantasy map (ancient ruins, temples, a city on a hill). These are meant to *inspire* you and the players as you build your world map.

Next, choose two or three of the index cards and lay them down in the middle of the table. They shouldn't be touching; leave a little bit of space between. Pick one that you feel is appropriate (an image of a dark forest, the city docks, a mountain cave) and mentally designate it as the starting point of the adventure. Use it to help set the scene!



Work with your players to figure out what these cards represent. They could be the player character's hometown, an overlord's fortress, or an artifact of the landscape.

When you've finished the session, *keep the index cards*. You can use them in future sessions, however you like!



The image's view angle can be top-down, from the side, super zoomed in, or even way zoomed out!

You can then begin the adventure, building out the map as the players move through the world. If they need to cross a treacherous territory on the way to defeat a great evil, place an index card image that best illustrates the danger! It could be a rickety bridge between two mountain peaks, or a dark forest, brimming with creatures of dark intent. Use what the players give you!

Additionally, don't feel limited by what you've got: you can always move the existing index cards apart and insert a **brand new** one between them! You or the players can also draw new locations as the story progresses!



Some players may not feel comfortable drawing. That's OK! After a few sessions, you'll develop a nice pile to draw from!

