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SMALL BONES ON THE FRONTIER *GAME MASTER'S GUIDE*



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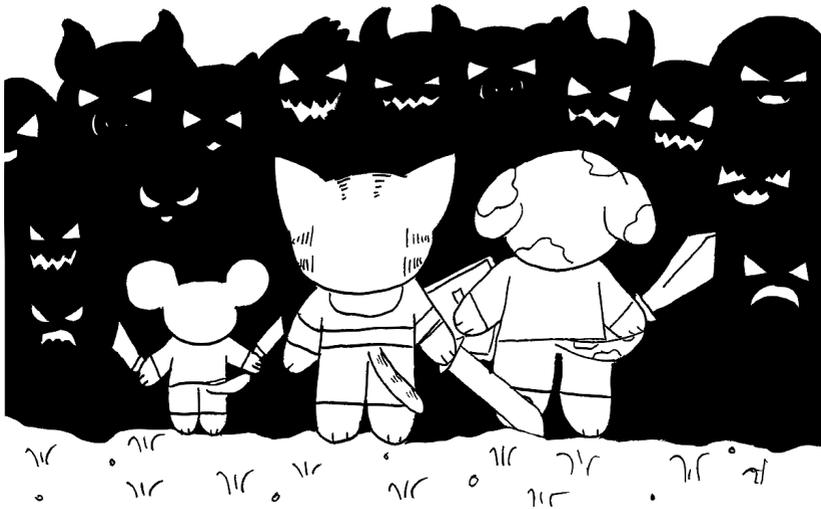
SMALL BONES ON THE FRONTIER

GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

A Brutal Medieval Fantasy Furry Role-Playing Game

Die Horribly, Die Adorably

Powered by the SAMS Engine by Kimberly-Jane Doe/morso



PART ONE: RUNNING THE GAME

THE GM'S ROLE

You are the Game Master. You describe the world, embody every creature the players meet, adjudicate rules, and narrate the consequences of the players' choices.

Your duties:

- Describe the world vividly and honestly
- Play NPCs and monsters with personality
- Enforce consequences (death, dismemberment, loss)
- Reward clever thinking
- Keep the game flowing
- Keep the game engaging
- Balance horror with hope

You are not:

- The players' enemy
- Required to save characters from their choices
- Responsible for the players' fun alone (they must contribute, too)

This is a **brutal** game. Characters will die. They will lose limbs. They will suffer. This creates drama and makes survival meaningful. Do not pull punches.

This is also an **adorable** game. Cute mice bandaging wounded foxes, rabbits sharing rations with their hungry friends, hounds protecting the weak. The contrast between cute aesthetics and horrible consequences is the backbone of this game.

No matter what you do, stick to the **core loop**:

1. Plan expeditions from the settlement
2. Traverse the wilderness
3. Explore a Dungeon
4. Return to grow settlement and level up characters

If in doubt, *chase them up a tree and keep throwing rocks at them*. Have rations perish in bad weather. Make them choose between gold and equipment. Throw a cursed but powerful sword into the mix. Force them to hide from a hungry monster when they're low on resources and desperate to sleep. Make role-play emerge from the mechanics and make fun come from overcoming great hardship.

SESSION STRUCTURE

Before the Session

1. Review previous session's notes
2. Prepare 3-5 encounters (combat, social, exploration)
3. Have random tables ready
4. Know the settlement's current state
5. Prepare NPC names and personalities

Session Opening

1. Recap previous session (ask players to contribute. I like to give a free +10 to any one roll to the player who can recap the best)
2. Establish settlement status (score, events, resources)
3. Ask: "What does your character do today?"
4. Let players drive the action

During the Session

Use the "Yes, and..." principle:

- Player: "Can I swing from the chandelier?"
- GM: "Yes, and if you succeed your Acrobatics check at -10, you'll land on the orc's back."

Telegraph danger:

- "The tunnel ahead reeks of decay. Your instincts scream danger."
- "The mushrooms glow an unnatural green. Touching them seems unwise."
- "Three scratches mark the door. Something LARGE made these."

Don't be coy about lethality:

- "This trap will absolutely kill you if you fail."
- "That creature outclasses you completely. Run or die."
- "You're bleeding out. Someone needs to help."

Most of all – don't railroad. All you need for a memorable session is the settlement, the dungeon and the wilderness between. You don't write the story. The story emerges as the players balance their resources and try to overcome encounters. When the archer is running low on arrows and the mage is out of MP, or when the party is running low on food, stories will happen by themselves as the players try to improvise around these difficulties and plan around them.

As the GM, you are *the referee*. You're not writing a book. The story of the game is what happens within the session, when the players have a goal in mind and you give them obstacles to overcome in order to earn it.

Session Ending

1. Resolve immediate danger (don't end the session mid-combat unless you want a cliffhanger)
 2. Award any treasure/experience
 3. Update settlement score
 4. Ask: "What does your character do between sessions?"
 5. Note unresolved plot threads
-

PACING & TONE

The Three Pillars

Exploration: Travelling through the wilderness, mapping ruins, discovering secrets

Social: Negotiating with NPCs, political intrigue, settlement management

Combat: Deadly encounters, tactical decisions, survival

Vary the pace. Follow tense dungeon delving with quiet settlement downtime. *Balance horror with hope.*

Tone Guidelines

Describe injuries vividly:

- "The axe bites deep. You feel the blade scrape bone. Blood soaks your fur."
- "Your leg bends the wrong way. The pain is blinding."
- "The poison burns through your veins like liquid fire."

Name NPCs, even minor ones:

- Don't say "a mouse dies." Say "Little Pip, the baker's son, doesn't make it."
- Give settlers names and families so their deaths matter
- Give recurring NPCs Advantages and Disadvantages to act as character quirks.

Show the cost of low Settlement Score:

- "The baker hangs himself tonight. The settlement is starving."
- "Three families pack up and leave. They've lost hope."
- "Children cry themselves to sleep. There isn't enough food, even as their parents skip meals to feed them."

Reward cleverness:

- Player sets a clever trap? Automatic success, or a bonus
- Player negotiates brilliantly? Skip the roll, it works

- Player thinks outside the box? Give it to them, as long as it's within the bounds of their character's ability.

Balance cute with brutal:

- "The bunny carefully bandages the fox's wounds... then the mawbeast tracks them using the scent of their blood."
- "You share your last ration with the orphaned mouse child. She smiles. Though you can see her sunken cheeks, still."

When to Roll Dice

Don't roll when:

- Success is guaranteed (routine tasks)
- Failure is impossible (jumping 10cm)
- Failure isn't interesting (picking a lock with unlimited time)
- Success is impossible (if they want to jump to the moon, just say no)

Do roll when:

- Success is uncertain
 - Failure creates complications
 - Time pressure exists
 - Stakes are high
-

REWARDING CREATIVITY

Players will surprise you. Embrace it.

Reward clever tactics:

- "You use an explosive to collapse the tunnel on the orcs? Brilliant. They're buried. No roll needed."
- "You poison the water supply? Roll Alchemy. Success means half the bandits are too sick to fight."

Reward preparation:

- Players bring rope? They can climb safely
- Players hire a tracker? They don't get lost
- Players scout ahead? No ambushes

Reward role-playing:

- Player gives moving speech? Bonus to Charisma roll
- Player intimidates with character voice? NPC cowers without roll
- Player negotiates brilliantly? Automatic success

But maintain consequences:

- Clever plan with obvious flaw? The flaw happens
- Players ignore warnings? Suffer consequences
- Players rush in? Ambushed
- Players are underprepared? Then they starve or run out of ammo.

PART TWO: THE FRONTIER

THE THREE LANDS

The Old Kingdoms (Across the Sea)

The land the colonists fled. A patchwork of warring realms, each ruled by squabbling nobles, which consists of most of the Realm of Tailvorn. Life was hard: endless taxes, religious persecution, conscription and famine. The frontier promises escape from feudalist beurocracy.

King Aldric the Younger rules from his throne across the sea. He granted the colonists royal charter in exchange for:

- **10% of all wealth**
- **Military conscripts**
- **Loyalty to the crown**

The King is not your friend. He sees the frontier as property. His tax collectors arrive by ship every three months, expecting their cut. Failure to pay results in harsh punishment.

The Coastal Settlements

Port Refuge (Population 400): The largest settlement, a bustling port town with markets, inns and temples. This is where colony ships first arrived. Run by Governor

Blackwhisker (a corrupt, greedy rat). Has a Temple of Elin and a hidden Coven.

Trader's Rest (Population 250): Merchant hub full of warehouses, trade guilds, and home to the black market. Run by Mayor Silktail (a cunning, fair ruling fox). Neutral ground where all species trade. Tends to have the best prices on goods.

Fort Graypaw (Population 300): A military outpost with barracks, training grounds and many smithies. Run by Commander Ironjaw (a strict, honourable hound). Protects the coast from raiders and monsters.

All three settlements are **six months old** at game start, still struggling to survive. They trade with each other and send expeditions into the Shadowlands. Some return wealthy. Most don't return at all.

The player settlement is the **fourth** settlement, the newest and most vulnerable. The coastal towns view you as competitors.

THE SHADOWLANDS

The cursed badlands at the frontier's heart. A region of ash-black sands, crumbling ruins, and ancient evil. A source of great wealth... and certain death.

Geography:

- **Dark Wood:** Ancient forest with trees that bleed sap. Dire wolves, giant spiders, bandits.
- **The Barrow Downs:** Rolling hills dotted with burial mounds. Undead, cursed items, treasure.
- **Blackwater Swamp:** Fetid marshland. Disease, poisonous plants, monstrous creatures.
- **The Shattered Peaks:** Jagged mountains. Dragons, harpies, abandoned mines.
- **The Dead City:** Massive ruined metropolis at the Shadowlands' heart. The Dead Empire's capital. A Megadungeon full of unimaginable wealth... and certain death.

The Shadowlands are haunted by the Dead Empire's final act: a magical cataclysm that killed almost everything and mutated the rest. The land itself is wounded. Magic springs from the ground. Creatures grow in grotesque, unnatural forms. The dead here do not rest.

Expeditions into the Shadowlands are assumed to be **one-way trips** until you return. Most parties bring two weeks of

supplies, delve as deep as they dare, then race back before starvation or monsters claim them.

The deeper you go, the greater the rewards and the greater the danger.

As GM, you should add your own ruins, towers, secret settlements and magic-cursed areas for players to explore. Keep them hidden from your players, and allow them to find new locations on their way to their destination.

THE DEAD EMPIRE

History (1,000 Years Ago)

The new frontier was once ruled by an advanced civilisation of sorcerer-kings. They built cities that touched the clouds, towers that pierced the earth, tombs filled with treasures and traps.

They wielded magic openly. Every citizen was a mage in some respect. Their empire stretched across the continent, subjugating lesser peoples and bending reality to their will.

Then they vanished.

No one knows what killed them, but there are theories abound:

- A magical war that spiralled out of control
- An arcane plague that spread throughout the empire

- A deal with demons that went wrong
- Divine punishment for their hubris from Elin Herself

Whatever the cause, the empire fell in a short amount of time. Their cities collapsed. Their people died. Their magic turned on them and left chaos in its wake.

What Remains

Ruins: Everywhere. Crumbling towers, buried temples, labyrinthine tombs. Filled with treasure, traps, and monsters.

Artefacts: Magical items of incredible power. Swords that never dull, armour that repairs itself, rings that grant flight. Also: cursed items, living weapons, reality-warping relics.

Knowledge: Spellbooks, scrolls, ancient texts. The Dead Empire's magic surpasses anything modern mages have achieved. Every spell is a discovery from their libraries.

Monsters: The cataclysm mutated creatures. Giant rats. Undead sorcerer-kings. Demons bound in flesh. Constructs that still guard empty halls.

The Dead City: The empire's capital, at the Shadowlands' heart. A sprawling metropolis of twisted, non-euclidian architecture which warps and changes with each visit. The greatest dungeon, and the ultimate prize. No one has reached its centre and returned.

TIMELINE & HISTORY

1,000 Years Ago: The Dead Empire falls. The Shadowlands are left behind in its place.

500 Years Ago: Brave explorers first enter the Shadowlands. Most die. Some return with treasures, sparking interest.

100 Years Ago: The Old Kingdoms hear rumours of a haunted land rich with magic and gold. Many expeditions are sent. Most fail.

10 Years Ago: The Old Kingdoms, desperate from famine and war, begin recruiting colonists to settle the frontier. They promise land, wealth, and freedom.

6 Months Ago: The first colony ships arrive. 200 colonists establish Port Refuge, Trader's Rest, and Fort Graypaw. They struggle to survive, but establish themselves nonetheless

Present Day: Your party arrives. The King grants the party royal charter to establish a fourth settlement. You have one year to prove yourselves viable, or your charter is revoked and you're expelled.

The Clock Is Ticking.

PART THREE: SETTLEMENT MECHANICS



The party has been granted royal charter to establish a settlement on the frontier's edge. Success means prosperity and independence. Failure means starvation, desertion, and the King's wrath.

Not only are the players adventurers going on expeditions, they're also the governors responsible for the settlement and its people. They share a humble manor house in the centre of the settlement, and oversee all administrative tasks.

This system abstracts the minutiae of settlement management into simple, meaningful choices. You invest wealth, your settlement grows, and you decide what it becomes.

SETTLEMENT LEVELS

Settlements progress through five distinct levels. Each level represents the settlement's overall prosperity, population, and viability.

THE FIVE LEVELS

LEVEL 1: STRUGGLING

- **Population:** 50 settlers
- **Status:** Barely surviving, food scarce, morale low
- **Prices:** Standard (+0%)
- **Services:** Basic shelter and trade only
- **Atmosphere:** Settlers look gaunt. Buildings are crude. Desperation hangs in the air.

LEVEL 2: SURVIVING (Reached at 500 Marks invested)

- **Population:** 100 settlers
- **Status:** Stable but not thriving
- **Prices:** Standard (+0%)
- **Services:** Basic healing, simple training available

- **Atmosphere:** People work hard. The settlement feels functional but fragile.

LEVEL 3: ESTABLISHED (Reached at 1,500 total Marks invested)

- **Population:** 200 settlers
- **Status:** Growing steadily, attracting immigrants
- **Prices:** Good (-10%)
- **Services:** Advanced training, quality equipment available
- **Atmosphere:** Laughter in the streets. Children play. Hope has returned.

LEVEL 4: THRIVING (Reached at 3,000 total Marks invested)

- **Population:** 350 settlers
- **Status:** Prosperous and well-defended
- **Prices:** Great (-20%)
- **Services:** Expert trainers, rare items, specialist services
- **Atmosphere:** Bustling market. New buildings rise weekly. Success story.

LEVEL 5: PROSPEROUS (Reached at 5,000 total Marks invested)

- **Population:** 500+ settlers
- **Status:** Regional powerhouse
- **Prices:** Best (-25%)

- **Services:** Everything available
 - **Atmosphere:** Rival settlements look on with envy. The King takes notice.
-

THE TREASURY

The Treasury represents the collective wealth invested in your settlement's growth. Every Mark contributed goes toward infrastructure, supplies, wages, and expansion.

HOW IT WORKS

After returning from expeditions, players can contribute any amount of their personal wealth to the treasury. This represents:

- Purchasing building materials
- Hiring labourers and craftsmen
- Buying seeds, livestock, and supplies
- Funding expansion projects

The GM tracks the total Marks contributed. When the fund reaches a threshold, the settlement levels up automatically.

Thresholds:

- 500 Marks → Level 2 (Surviving)
- 1,500 Marks → Level 3 (Established)
- 3,000 Marks → Level 4 (Thriving)
- 5,000 Marks → Level 5 (Prosperous)

LEVELLING UP YOUR SETTLEMENT

When the treasury reaches a threshold, the settlement levels up. This represents weeks or months of construction and growth happening in the background whilst the party adventures or during downtime.

WHAT HAPPENS

When the settlement levels up, the GM narrates the transformation:

"Over the next month, new families arrive by wagon train. The sound of hammers and saws fills the air. Crude shelters are replaced with proper cottages. The settlement swells with life. You've reached Level 3: Established!"

Immediate Benefits:

- Population increases
- Prices improve (if applicable)
- New services become available
- Morale rises

Player Choice: The party must now decide what the settlement prioritises. Choose **ONE** development focus:

PLAYER CHOICE: DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

When your settlement levels up, the party chooses one area to develop. This represents where resources and effort are concentrated.

THE FIVE FOCUSES

1. MILITARY (Defence & Security)

- **What's Built:** Barracks, training grounds, armoury, watch towers
- **Benefit:** Settlement can defend itself from raids (+10 to resist attacks)
- **Effect:** Guards patrol the streets. Walls are reinforced. Settlers feel safe.
- **Unlocks:** Hiring guards at -25% cost

2. TRADE (Commerce & Wealth)

- **What's Built:** Expanded marketplace, warehouses, merchant stalls, inn
- **Benefit:** Prices improve by an additional -10%
- **Effect:** Travelling merchants visit regularly. Trade routes established.
- **Unlocks:** Access to rare goods and equipment

3. RELIGION (Faith & Magic)

- **What's Built:** Temple of Elin OR Coven (player choice)

- **Benefit:** Magic training available, healing services, blessings
- **Effect:** Priests tend to the sick. Bells ring at dawn. OR Dark mages whisper in shadows.
- **Unlocks:**
 - **Temple:** Light Mages can train/learn spells here (cost halved)
 - **Coven:** Dark Mages can train/learn spells here (cost halved)

4. TRAINING (Skills & Advancement)

- **What's Built:** Training Hall (see below)
- **Benefit:** All training costs reduced by 50%
- **Effect:** Veterans teach in the hall. Practice dummies line the yard.
- **Unlocks:** Solo training (no mentor required)

5. INFRASTRUCTURE (General Improvement)

- **What's Built:** Hospital, smithy, workshops, better housing, roads
- **Benefit:** Settlement levels require 15% less wealth (efficient systems accelerate growth)
- **Effect:** Quality of life improves. Buildings are well maintained. Services expand.
- **Unlocks:** Better equipment availability, faster development, general improvements. +10 to all

Alchemy and Crafting checks for the purposes of creating items in the settlement walls.

- **Special:** can only be taken once.

With Infrastructure, settlement level costs are reduced:

- **Level 2:** 425 Marks (normally 500)
- **Level 3:** 1,275 Marks (normally 1,500)
- **Level 4:** 2,550 Marks (normally 3,000)
- **Level 5:** 4,250 Marks (normally 5,000)

Total savings to reach Level 5: 1,425 Marks

MAKING THE CHOICE

The party discusses and votes. The GM adjudicates ties. Once chosen, the development is built over the following weeks.

Can you choose the same focus multiple times? Yes! If you choose Military at Level 2 and again at Level 3, you build additional defences, hire more guards, and upgrade fortifications. Stack benefits where appropriate (e.g., multiple trade choices = cumulative discounts). The exception is Infrastructure, which can only be taken once.

Can you change your mind? No. Once chosen, the development is permanent. Choose carefully.

THE TRAINING HALL

If players choose the Training focus, the settlement builds a Training Hall. This is a generic facility where any skill can be practiced.

Benefits:

- **Reduced Cost:** Training to new levels costs half as much.
- **No Mentor Required:** Characters can train solo using the hall's facilities
- **All Skills Covered:** Combat, magic (if Temple/Coven also present), crafting, social skills - everything

How It Works: The Training Hall contains practice dummies, archery ranges, sparring rings, meditation chambers, workshops, and libraries. Veterans and settlers offer informal instruction. It's not specialised, but it's functional.

ROYAL TAX

Every three in-game months, the King's tax collector arrives by ship. Fletcher Greytail (rat, cold, efficient) expects payment.

HOW IT WORKS

When the tax collector arrives, **roll 1d6:**

1-3: "The King demands **100 Marks**."

- Flat fee, easy to pay from settlement treasury

4-5: "The King demands **200 Marks**."

- Annoying but manageable

6: "The King demands **a favour** instead."

- Quest hook! The King wants something: escort a noble, retrieve an item, investigate a threat, etc.
- Refusing = treated as non-payment (see below)

PAYMENT

The settlement pays the tax from its **treasury** (communal wealth, not player gold).

If the treasury is empty, players must contribute personal wealth or face consequences.

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-PAYMENT

1st Offence: Warning delivered. -1 Settlement Level (temporary setback - population flees, morale drops). You have one month to pay.

2nd Offence: Bounty hunters arrive seeking the party (50 Marks per character, alive). Settlement remains at -1 Level.

3rd Offence: Charter revoked. Military force sent to evict you. Game over (or major quest to regain standing).

SETTLEMENT EVENTS (OPTIONAL)

Events are **not mandatory**. Use them when you want to add drama, create side quests, or shake up the status quo.

WHEN TO USE EVENTS

- The session feels slow
- Players need a hook
- You want to create urgency
- The settlement has been safe too long

Don't use events every session. They lose impact if overused.

HOW IT WORKS

When you want an event, **roll 1d6**:

1-2: PROBLEM

- Raid threatened (quest: drive them off)
- Disease outbreak (need medicine/magic)
- Food shortage (need supplies)
- Desertion (morale low, need to address grievances)

Consequences if ignored: -1 Settlement Level, casualties, unrest

3-4: OPPORTUNITY

- Merchant caravan arrives (rare items for sale!)

- Talented NPC seeks refuge (new hireling available)
- Nearby resource discovered (quest: claim it)
- Festival! (morale boost, party can participate)

Benefits if pursued: +5-10% toward next level, bonuses, new resources

5-6: GROWTH

- New families arrive (+10-20 settlers)
- Unexpected windfall (someone donates 50 Marks to fund)
- Building completed faster than expected
- Good harvest (automatic benefit)

Immediate positive effect, no player action required

EXAMPLE EVENTS

Bandit Raid (Problem): "Scouts report a bandit warband approaching - 12 strong, heavily armed. They'll attack in two days unless driven off."

- Quest: Ambush them, negotiate, or fortify and defend
- Success: +10 to treasury, no casualties
- Failure: 1d10 settlers killed, -1 Settlement Level

Rare Merchant (Opportunity): "A travelling merchant from the Old Kingdoms has rare goods: masterwork weapons, exotic potions, a map to forgotten ruins."

- Benefit: Access to items normally unavailable
- Limited time: He leaves in 3 days

Birth Boom (Growth): "Spring brings new life. Several families welcome children. Morale soars."

- Benefit: +20 settlers, +5% toward next level
 - Atmosphere: Celebration, hope renewed
-

GOVERNOR'S QUESTS

The King's appointed governors (from Port Refuge, Trader's Rest, or Fort Graypaw) occasionally offers quests. These are official contracts that benefit both the settlement and the Crown.

TYPES OF QUESTS

Extermination: Clear monsters from nearby ruins or wilderness. Payment: 100-200 Marks, +10-15% toward next level.

Retrieval: Recover a specific item from the Shadowlands. Payment: 150-300 Marks, +15-20% toward next level, possible magic item.

Escort: Protect new settlers on the journey. Payment: +2d10 new settlers, +10% toward next level.

Diplomacy: Negotiate with another settlement or faction.
Payment: Trade route established (ongoing benefits), +15% toward next level.

Investigation: Mysterious disappearances, strange occurrences. Payment: 100 Marks, +10% toward next level, uncover plot hook.

WHY ACCEPT?

- Marks toward levelling up
- Governor's favour (useful politically)
- Access to resources or services
- Story hooks and adventure

WHY REFUSE?

You can decline. Governors remember refusals. Too many = they stop offering quests, or offer them to rival parties instead.

VILLAGE INCOME

The settlement generates income from its residents each month. This represents market fees, service levies, and voluntary contributions from people who want their home to survive.

Base rate: 1 Mark per resident per month.

The players set the tax rate at the start of each month.

Effects:

Rate per resident	Income	Effect
0Mks	None	+1d10 new settlers arrive next month (word spreads of a generous charter)
1mk	Standard	No effect
2mks	Double	Morale Check after 1 month: on a failure, 1d10 residents leave
3mks	Triple	Automatic unrest: 2d10 residents leave, -1 Settlement Level equivalent progress

The INFRASTRUCTURE development focus adds a bonus: settlements with roads and better housing produce +0.5mk per resident (round up) at standard rate — residents are more prosperous and pay more.

GM GUIDANCE: RUNNING THE SETTLEMENT

Keep It Simple: Players contribute wealth. The settlement grows. They make one choice per level. That's it. Don't overthink it.

Make It Narrative: When the settlement levels up, describe the changes. New buildings rise. Families arrive. The mood shifts. Make players feel their investment paying off.

Use Events Sparingly: One event every 2-3 sessions is plenty. Let the settlement be stable most of the time. Drama is more impactful when rare.

Tie to Story: The settlement isn't just mechanics - it's the party's home. NPCs live here. Families grow. Threats matter because people they care about are at risk.

Reward Investment: If players pour wealth into the settlement, show them the results. Describe thriving markets, happy settlers, children playing. Make them proud of what they've built.

Consequences Matter: If they ignore threats or refuse to pay taxes, follow through. Settlements fall. Charters are revoked. The frontier is unforgiving.

Example Play:

Session 5: Party returns with 800 Marks from dungeon. They contribute 500 to Treasury (now at 500 total). Settlement levels up to Level 2!

GM: "Over the next month, wagons arrive from Port Refuge. New families - forty souls - seek refuge in your settlement. Carpenters raise proper cottages. The market expands. You've reached Level 2: Surviving! What do you want to focus on?"

Players: "Let's build a Training Hall. We need to get stronger."

GM: "Done. Within weeks, a large timber hall rises on the settlement's edge. Veterans set up practice dummies and sparring rings. All skill training now costs 100 Marks instead of 200."

Session 12: Three months pass in-game. Tax collector arrives.

GM: *[Rolls d6, gets 5]* "Fletcher Greytail steps off the ship, ledger in hand. 'The King demands 200 Marks.' He stares at you expectantly."

Players: "We pay from the treasury."

GM: "He nods, makes a notation, and departs. The King is satisfied... for now."

RAIDS & WARFARE

When settlements grow wealthy, they attract unwanted attention. This section provides mechanics for defending your settlement from raids and the consequences of raiding others. During a raid, the game zooms out to settlement scale.

DEFENDING YOUR SETTLEMENT

When Raids Occur

Raids can happen in several ways:

- Settlement Event roll (d6 = 1: "Raid threatened!")
- Retaliation for raiding other settlements
- Failing to pay Royal Tax (bounty hunters/Crown forces)
- Random encounter when settlement reaches Level 3+ (wealthy targets)

OR Roll once every 3 game months after settlement reaches Level 2:

d20:

1-15: No raid this period

16-18: Scout warning - raiders spotted 1d4 days away

19-20: Ambush - raiders attack with no warning!

Warning Phase

If scouts spot approaching raiders, players have 1d4 days to prepare:

- Hire additional guards (3 Marks per guard per day)
- Set traps (Traps check. Success = +5 Defence)
- Evacuate treasury to hidden location (Wilderness check to find good hiding spot)

- Negotiate surrender (pay a tribute to avoid the fight)
- Send for help from nearby settlement (arrives in 1d6 days - might be too late)
- Rally settlers to fight (Charisma check from one party member, followed by a Spirit check at Spirit 50 which represents the combined Spirit of all the townspeople. The player's margin of success is the amount of settler's rallied.)

Raid Strength

Roll 1d6 to determine raider strength:

1-2: SMALL RAID (20 raiders)

Bandits, Wildkin, deserters

Raid Score: 20

3-4: MEDIUM RAID (40 raiders + leader)

Bandit captain or swinekin chief

Raid Score: 30

5-6: LARGE RAID (60+ raiders + monsters)

Organized warband with ogre or troll

Raid Score: 45

Settlement Defence Score

Add up all applicable bonuses:

- Settlement Level × 10 (so Level 3 = 30)

- Military development: +20 (first one), +10 each additional
- Per 10 hired guards: +5
- Player characters defending: +10
- Successful trap setup: +5
- Fortifications if built: +10

Example: Level 3 settlement (30) + Military (20) + 20 guards (10) + PCs defending (10) = Defence Score 70

Resolution

Both sides roll 2d6 and add their scores. They then compare totals:

Result	Treasury Lost	Settlers Killed	Buildings	Morale
Win by 5+	0%	1d6	None	+5
Win by 1-4	10%	2d6	None	+0
Tie	20%	2d10	None	-5
Lose by 1-4	40%	3d10	1 damaged	-10
Lose by 5+	70%	5d10	1d4 destroyed	-20

If settlement loses by 10+, survivors may abandon settlement entirely (after a failed morale check).

Winning raiders escape with stolen goods. Losing raiders leave corpses (loot 1d10×10 Marks per 10 raiders killed).

Player Involvement If players participate in defence:

- **Full Combat:** GM runs tactical battle using normal combat rules

- **Abstract:** Each PC makes one key action (Melee/Bows/Traps/Leadership/Magic) and contributes their success/failure to final roll
- **Heroic Moments:** Critical successes turn the tide, giving a +10 Defence bonus

RAIDING OTHER SETTLEMENTS

Players may choose to raid other locations for wealth. This is risky and carries consequences.

Potential Targets:

TRADE CARAVAN

Defence: 25 (guards)

Loot: 1d10×100 Marks

Consequence: Crown investigates (+1 Wanted level) Risk:

Survivors report you

RIVAL SETTLEMENT (Level 1-2)

Defence: 30-40

Loot: 25% of their treasury

Consequence: Retaliation certain (Grudge +3)

Risk: Escalation spiral

COASTAL SETTLEMENT (Level 3+)

Defence: 50+

Loot: 50% of their treasury

Consequence: Crown intervention (The King may revoke the player's charter)

Risk: Overwhelming force

Planning the Raid

Step 1: Choose Target & Gather Forces

Minimum 10 combatants (PCs + hirelings, 5 Marks/day each)

Common Targets:

- Bandit Camp: Defence 20, Loot $2d6 \times 50$ Marks
- Trade Caravan: Defence 25, Loot $1d10 \times 100$ Marks
- Rival Settlement: Defence = their Level $\times 10$, Loot 25% of treasury (Grudge +3)

Step 2: Calculate Attack Score

- Number of attackers $\div 10$
- +10 if PCs lead
- +10 if surprise achieved (Wilderness check to approach unseen)

Step 3: Roll Contest

Both sides roll $2d6 + \text{score}$. Use same outcome table as defensive raids.

Step 4: Consequences

Survivors split loot equally.

But:

- Each raid builds Grudge (target will retaliate)
- Raiding innocents destroys reputation
- Crown intervenes if you raid Royal interests

GRUDGE & RETALIATION

Each raid builds Grudge points:

- Raid their settlement: +3 Grudge
- Kill 10+ settlers: +1 Grudge
- Destroy buildings: +2 Grudge

Retaliation Schedule:

- Grudge 3: Target raids you back within 1d4 months
- Grudge 5: Target forms alliance, coordinates attacks
- Grudge 7: Target petitions Crown to revoke your charter

Reducing Grudge:

- Pay reparations (double what you stole): -3 Grudge
- Complete quest for them: -2 Grudge
- 1 game year passes: -1 Grudge

Breaking the Cycle: Negotiate peace, destroy them completely, or flee and start over elsewhere.

SPECIAL RAID TYPES

Undead Horde (if nearby ruins disturbed)

Defence needed: 40 | Effect: 3d10 settlers killed, Frightened status spreads

Solution: Cleric can Turn Undead, seal the ruins permanently

Dragon Tribute Demand

Defence needed: 70 (can't win by fighting) Effect: Dragon takes 50% treasury or 5d10 settlers die

Solution: Pay tribute, complete quest for dragon, or kill or trick it somehow

Crown Tax Enforcement (if you can't pay Royal Tax)

Defence needed: 60 (professional soldiers) Effect: Treasury seized, leaders arrested

Solution: Don't fight the Crown - negotiate, flee, or pay up

MILITARY DEVELOPMENT

Each Military development provides:

- +20 Defence (first), +10 each additional
- -25% guard hiring costs
- Special defensive options unlocked

GM GUIDANCE

Frequency: Roll for raids once every 3-6 game months after Settlement Level 2. Don't overuse - they're dramatic moments, not routine.

Give Warning: Always give players a chance to prepare unless you want maximum drama. Scouts spotting raiders 1-3 days out creates tension and meaningful choices.

Make It Personal: Name NPCs who die. "Mittens the baker's son didn't make it" hits harder than "3 settlers killed."

Reward Preparation: If players invested in Military and hired guards, let them feel powerful. Their ballista should obliterate that ogre!

Failed defence = Story: Settlement sacked? Perfect setup for recovery arc, revenge quest, or refugee storyline.

The Grudge Spiral: Let player raids create consequences. Settlement A raids Settlement B. B retaliates. A counter-retaliates. Now they're locked in war. Force players to negotiate peace or commit to total destruction.

Example: Players raid Millbrook (Grudge +3). Millbrook raids back (Grudge +5). Players burn Millbrook's mill (Grudge +8). Millbrook allies with two other settlements and attacks with 150 raiders. Players barely survive. Now they must pay reparations, destroy Millbrook utterly, or flee. Whatever they choose creates more story.

PART FOUR: WILDERNESS & TRAVEL



HEX CRAWLING (3KM HEXES)

The wilderness is mapped in hexes. Each hex represents **3 kilometres** (about 2 miles) of terrain.

Travel Speed: Characters travel a number of hexes per day equal to the **slowest party member's Movement** (in tiles).

Example: Party has a cat (7 tiles movement), a mouse (9 tiles movement), and a rabbit (10 tiles movement). They travel at the cat's speed: **7 hexes per day** (21 kilometres).

Daily Wilderness Procedure

Each day of wilderness travel:

1. Morning: Choose Direction

- Navigator chooses direction on map
- Party can travel up to their Movement in hexes

2. Morning: Weather Check

- GM rolls on Weather Table
- Apply weather effects

3. Travel: Navigator Checks

- Navigator rolls **Wilderness check**
- **Success:** Progress 1 day's worth of hexes, no issues
- **Failure:** Party becomes lost, make no progress

4. Travel: Forager Checks

- One party member rolls **Wilderness check** to forage
- **Success:** Find 1d4 rations
- **Failure:** Find nothing

5. Evening: Scout Checks

- Scout rolls **Perception check** to spot dangers
- **Success:** Spot any encounters early, gain surprise
- **Failure:** Normal encounters
- **Critical Failure:** Ambushed

6. Evening: Encounter Check

- GM rolls on Encounter Table
- Resolve any encounters

7. Night: Camp

- Set watches (characters need 8 hours rest, 4 hours watch)
 - No watch = automatic ambush if encounter rolled
-

TRAVEL SPEED & SUPPLIES

Movement Rates

On Foot: Movement ÷ 10 = hexes per day

- Cat (6 tiles): 6 hexes/day
- Hound (5 tiles): 5 hexes/day
- Mouse (7 tiles): 7 hexes/day
- Rabbit (10 tiles): 10 hexes/day

Mounted:

- Riding Horse: 10 hexes/day
- Warhorse: 12 hexes/day
- Donkey/Mule: 6-7 hexes/day

Wagons:

- Cart: 5 hexes/day
- Wagon: 8 hexes/day

Forced March: Can travel +50% hexes per day, but:

- Each party member must pass Athletics check (difficulty -10)
- Failure = Exhausted
- Mounts must also pass (treat as Athletics 30)

Rations

Each character needs **1 ration per day**.

- Mice need only **0.5 ration per day** (small size)

Starvation (missing rations):

- **Day 1:** -5 to all physical checks
- **Day 2:** -10 to all physical checks, gain Exhausted
- **Day 3:** 1d6 damage per day, -15 to all physical checks
- **Day 4+:** 2d6 damage per day, cannot heal, Spirit check or Panicked

Water

Each character needs **1 waterskin per 2 days** (refillable at streams/rivers).

Dehydration (no water):

- **Day 1:** -5 to all checks
- **Day 2:** -15 to all checks, 1d6 damage

- **Day 3+:** 2d10 damage per day, automatic Exhausted, death imminent

WEATHER SYSTEM

Roll 1d20 each morning for daily weather.

Weather Table (d20)

1-12: Clear Normal travel, no effects.

13-15: Light Rain -10 to Perception checks (reduced visibility). Stealth easier (+10). Tracks wash away.

16-17: Heavy Rain -10 to all physical checks (slippery). Exposure risk (cold). -20 to Perception (sound and sight). Rivers may flood.

18: Storm Cannot travel (must take shelter). 1d6 damage per hour exposed. Lightning strikes (1d20: on 1, random character struck for 3d10 damage).

19: Fog Visibility 2 tiles. -20 to Perception checks. Easy to get lost (-20 to Wilderness navigation). Encounters at point-blank range.

20: Extreme Weather (as below)

Extreme Weather Table (d6)

1-2: Blizzard (cold regions) - 2d10 cold damage per hour, cannot travel, frostbite risk

3-4: Heatwave (hot regions) - 2d6 damage per hour, double water needs

5: Tornado - 4d10 damage, scattered 1d6 hexes in random direction, lose all unsecured gear

6: Magical Anomaly - Strange weather (raining blood, floating objects, low gravity), unpredictable effects

TERRAIN TYPES

Different terrain affects travel and encounters.

Terrain Effects

PLAINS (Grasslands, Fields)

- Travel Speed: Normal
- Visibility: Excellent (spot encounters from distance)
- Cover: Minimal
- Encounters: Bandits, wild animals, patrols

FOREST (Woods, Jungle)

- Travel Speed: -25% (dense undergrowth)
- Visibility: Poor (2 hexes)
- Cover: Abundant
- Encounters: Dire wolves, giant spiders, bandits, fey creatures

HILLS (Rolling, Rocky)

- Travel Speed: -25% (climbing)
- Visibility: Good (elevated positions)

- Cover: Moderate
- Encounters: Hill giants, trolls, bandits, ruins

MOUNTAINS (Peaks, Cliffs)

- Travel Speed: -50% (treacherous paths)
- Visibility: Variable
- Cover: Excellent
- Encounters: Dragons, harpies, mountain lions, avalanches
- Danger: Falling (2d10 per 3 metres)

SWAMP (Marsh, Bog)

- Travel Speed: -50% (difficult terrain)
- Visibility: Poor (fog and vegetation)
- Cover: Moderate
- Encounters: Giant rats, disease, poisonous plants, undead
- Danger: Quicksand, disease (+20% infection chance)

DESERT (Wasteland, Badlands)

- Travel Speed: Normal
- Visibility: Excellent
- Cover: Minimal
- Encounters: Serpents, scorpions, bandits, heat exhaustion
- Danger: Dehydration (double water/rations needs)

RUINS (Ancient, Shadowlands)

- Travel Speed: Variable
 - Visibility: Poor (crumbling structures)
 - Cover: Abundant
 - Encounters: Undead, cursed creatures, traps, treasure
 - Danger: Structural collapse, magical anomalies
-

FORAGING & HUNTING

Foraging (Wilderness Check)

One character per day can attempt to forage for food.

Wilderness Check:

- **Success:** Find 1d4 rations
- **Critical Success:** Find 2d4 rations + something valuable (herbs, rare plant, etc.)
- **Failure:** Find nothing

- **Critical Failure:** Eat poisonous plant, Moderate Poison

Terrain Modifiers:

- Forest: +10 (abundant food)
- Plains: +0 (normal)
- Hills: -5 (sparse)
- Mountains: -10 (scarce)
- Swamp: -10 (most food is poisonous)
- Desert: -20 (nearly barren)

Hunting (Wilderness + Combat)

If the party encounters game animals (deer, rabbits, boar):

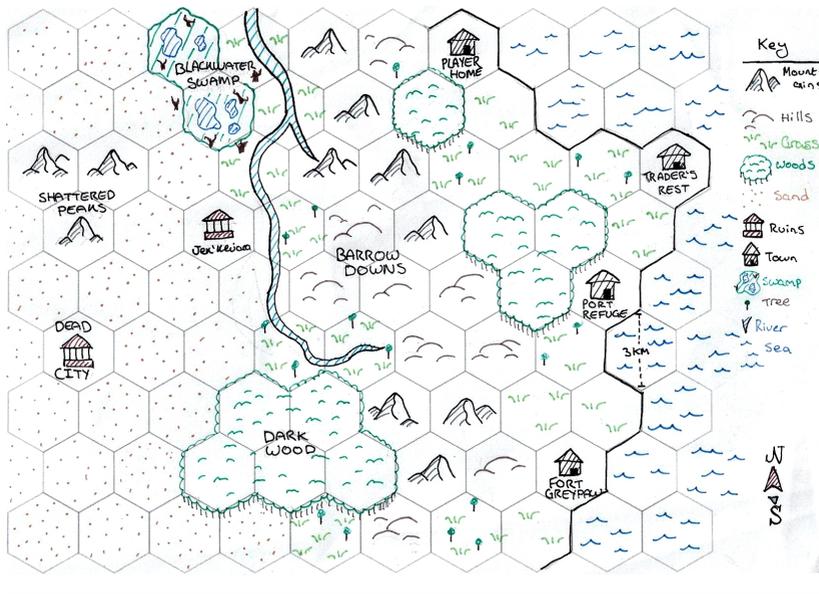
Procedure:

1. Wilderness check to track
2. Stealth check to approach
3. Bows attack to kill
4. Wilderness check to butcher

Success:

- Small game (rabbit): 2 rations
- Medium game (deer): 6 rations
- Large game (boar): 10 rations

Time: Hunting takes 4 hours (half a day of travel lost)



PART FIVE: TRACKING TIME

Time is one of your most powerful tools as a GM. When players know that the Royal Tax is due in twelve days, that winter is six weeks away. Every decision has weight. Every expedition becomes a calculation. Every delay has a cost.

This chapter gives you a simple, consistent calendar to track time across sessions. Write the date on the table. Tell your players what month it is and let them feel the changing of seasons affect gameplay.

THE TAILVORNIAN CALENDAR

The Frontier uses a simple 360-day calendar: 12 months of exactly 30 days each, divided into four seasons of three months. There are no leap years.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

SEASON	MONTH
Spring	1 — Thawmonth
Spring	2 — Seedmonth
Spring	3 — Bloommonth
Summer	4 — Sunmonth
Summer	5 — Haymonth
Summer	6 — Dustmonth
Autumn	7 — Harvestmonth
Autumn	8 — Rootmonth
Autumn	9 — Ashmonth
Winter	10 — Frostmonth
Winter	11 — Deepmonth
Winter	12 — Grimmonth

THE SEASONS

Each season has mechanical implications beyond the calendar. The Shadowlands are dangerous year-round, but the dangers shift. Plan accordingly.

SPRING (Thawmonth, Seedmonth, Bloommonth)

The Frontier comes back to life. Snow melts, rivers run high, and the first green shoots appear. Travel is possible but muddy.

- **Weather:** Roll on the Standard Weather Table. Mild results are common.
- **Food:** Stores from winter are at their lowest. Starvation risk is highest in early Thawmonth.
- **Monsters:** Creatures emerge from winter dens hungry and aggressive. Encounter frequency higher for the first two weeks of Thawmonth (roll twice on random encounter tables, take the worse result).

SUMMER (Sunmonth, Haymonth, Dustmonth)

Long days and warm nights. The easiest season for expeditions. The hardest season for avoiding hubris.

- **Weather:** Hot and dry. Dust storms possible in Dustmonth.
- **Food:** Foraging is easiest. +10 to all Foraging checks.
- **Monsters:** Active and ranging further from their lairs. Standard encounter frequency.
- **Settlement:** Trade caravans are most likely to visit during summer. Roll 1d6 at the start of each summer month — on a 4–6, a merchant caravan arrives.

AUTUMN (Harvestmonth, Rootmonth, Ashmonth)

The world is beautiful and the clock is ticking. Everything the settlement needs for winter must be secured before Frostmonth arrives.

- **Weather:** Unpredictable. From Rootmonth onwards, roll weather twice and take the worse result.
- **Food:** Foraging becomes harder. -10 to all Foraging checks from Rootmonth onwards.
- **Monsters:** Feeding before winter. Encounter frequency +1 throughout Ashmonth.
- **Settlement:** The Royal Tax falls on the 30th of Ashmonth. If stores are low, this hurts.

WINTER (Frostmonth, Deepmonth, Grimmonth)

Survival mode. The Shadowlands don't sleep in winter, they just get meaner. Expeditions are possible, but punishing.

- **Weather:** Always roll on the Extreme Weather Table. Standard travel may be impossible during Deepmonth.
- **Food:** Rations are consumed at 1.5× the normal rate: cold burns calories. Update food stores at the start of each week.
- **Travel:** Movement speed halved in deep snow. Wilderness checks at -10 for navigation.

- **Cold Exposure:** Any character without a bedroll and appropriate clothing must make a Cold Exposure check each night (see Part Six: Lethality).
- **Monsters:** Fewer wandering encounters, but those that remain are desperate and fight to the death. -2 on random encounter frequency rolls, but all encountered creatures gain +10 to Morale.
- **Settlement:** The Royal Tax falls on the 30th of Grimmonth — the cruellest timing possible. Settlers who are hungry do not pay taxes cheerfully. If food stores are empty, morale collapses regardless of treasury levels.

TRACKING TIME IN PLAY

Time is only useful if everyone can see it. Keep a running date visible: a simple calendar at your table, written on a shared document, pinned in your play-by-post channel, or noted at the top of your session notes. When players lose track of the date, they stop planning around it.

HOW TIME PASSES

- **1 day:** Moving up to the slowest party member's movement speed in world map hexes or a full working day in the settlement.
- **1 week:** A significant project: building a structure, training a skill, or recovering from serious injury.

- **Dungeon time:** Track carefully. Each room explored takes roughly 10 minutes of in-game time. A full dungeon delve typically costs 1–3 days including travel.
- **Downtime:** Between sessions, players may declare downtime activities. Each costs at least one week (see training rules in the Player's Guide).

Don't be precious about exact hours. What matters is days and weeks — enough granularity to make the tax deadline feel real and the food stores feel finite, without bogging down play in minute-by-minute accounting.

THE ROYAL TAX CALENDAR

The Royal Tax falls on the 30th of every third month. Mark these dates clearly when you start a campaign.

TAX DATE	SEASON
30th of Seedmonth	Spring
30th of Dustmonth	Summer
30th of Ashmonth	Autumn
30th of Grimmonth	Winter

STARTING DATE

By default, the party arrives at the start of Thawmonth: the 1st of Month 1. This gives them two full months before their first tax payment, one full season to establish themselves, and the looming pressure of winter twelve months away.

If you want a harder start, begin in Seedmonth: their first tax arrives almost immediately. If you want a gentler introduction, begin in Bloommonth and give them a full spring to breathe.

GM GUIDANCE: USING THE CALENDAR

The calendar is not just bookkeeping. It's atmosphere. Use it.

- **Announce seasons:** "The 1st of Ashmonth. The leaves outside your manor window are turning red."
 - **Count down to the tax:** "Fletcher Greytail's ship will dock in eleven days."
 - **Make winter personal:** "It's Deepmonth. Your breath fogs in the manor house. The settlers outside are burning the last of last season's wood."
 - **Connect seasons to dungeons:** A dungeon discovered in summer is a very different proposition in Grimmonth. Snow at the entrance. Frozen mechanisms. Monsters that have moved indoors.
 - **Reward planning:** Players who stockpile food in summer and complete their tax runs before Ashmonth are playing well. Acknowledge it. Then introduce a complication anyway.
-

PART SIX: LETHALITY

DISEASE & INFECTION

When damaged by dirty sources (sewers, rot, disease-carrying creatures), roll for infection.

Infection Check (d6)

Roll 1d6 when wounded by contaminated source:

1-4: No Infection - Wound is clean **5: Minor Infection** - Localized infection **6: Major Infection** - Systemic infection, life-threatening

Minor Infection

Symptoms: Red, swollen wound. Pain. **Damage:** 1d4 damage per day **Effect:** -5 to all physical checks **Treatment:** Medicine check at -10 OR herbal poultice **Duration:** 3 days if treated. Progresses to Major Infection if not treated.

Major Infection

Symptoms: Fever, pus, spreading red lines, delirium **Damage:** 1d8 damage per day **Effect:** -10 to all checks, Exhausted **Treatment:** Medicine check at -20 + rare herbs (10 Marks) + 3 days bed rest **Duration:** 1 week if treated, death in 1d6 days if not treated. Progresses to Gangrene if not treated for 3 days.

Gangrene Table (d20)

If Major Infection untreated for 3 days, roll on Gangrene Table:

1-8: Amputation Required Limb must be removed or character dies in 2 days. Surgery (Medicine check at -25, costs 50 Marks). Character survives but gains Missing Limb disadvantage permanently.

9-15: Septic Shock Character must amputate (as above) AND loses 50% max HP permanently. Scarred disadvantage gained. Immune system destroyed.

16-18: Miraculous Recovery Infection clears on its own (rare miracle). Character loses 25% max HP permanently and gains Crippled disadvantage (limb damaged but not lost).

19-20: Full Recovery Against all odds, character recovers completely. Gains +5 Spirit permanently (hardened by survival). Scars remain but no mechanical penalty.

COMMON DISEASES

Swamp Fever

Source: Swamp water, insect bites
Symptoms: High fever, chills, delirium
Effect: -10 to

all checks, 1d6 damage per day
Duration: 1d6 days

Treatment: Medicine check at -15 + herbal tea
Fatality:

10% (roll 1d10: on 1, character dies)

Red Pox

Source: Infected creatures, poor hygiene **Symptoms:**

Red spots, fever, coughing

Effect: 2d6 damage per day, HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS

Duration: 1d10 days

Treatment: Medicine check at -20 + expensive medicine (25 Marks) + quarantine

Contagion: Anyone within 3 tiles for extended period must make Spirit check or contract disease **Fatality:** 25% (roll 1d4: on 1, character dies)

Bone Ache

Source: Cursed ruins, undead touch **Symptoms:**

Deep joint pain, weakness

Effect: PERMANENT -5 Strength, -1 tile Movement, chronic pain **Treatment:** No

cure. Painkilling herbs reduce symptoms for 1 day (costs 5 Marks) **Fatality:** Non-lethal but crippling

Gut Rot

Source: Spoiled food, contaminated water

Symptoms: Severe diarrhoea, vomiting, cramps

Effect: -15 to all checks, cannot keep food down (no benefit from rations)

Damage: 1d4 per day from dehydration **Duration:** 2 days **Treatment:** Medicine check at -10 + clean water + bed rest **Fatality:** 5% if untreated (dehydration)

The Wasting Plague

Source: Deep ruins, ancient curses **Symptoms:** Rapid

weight loss, grey skin, hollow eyes **Effect:** 3d8 damage per day, black swellings, highly contagious

Effect: -20 to all checks
Duration: 1d6 days (usually fatal before duration ends)
Treatment: Medicine check at -30 + rare alchemical cure (50 Marks) + divine intervention (resurrection

spell may be needed)
Contagion: Anyone who touches victim must pass Spirit check at -10 or contract disease **Fatality:** 50% even with treatment, 90% without

POISON TABLE

Mild Poison

Delivery: Poisoned blade, weak venom, spoiled food
Effect: 1d4 damage per turn for 5 turns **Effect:** -5 to all checks whilst poisoned
Treatment: Medicine check at -10 OR Antidote herbs
Duration: 5 turns (about 10 seconds)

Moderate Poison

Delivery: Viper bite, poisoned trap, alchemical poison **Effect:** 1d8 damage per turn for 10 turns **Effect:**

-10 to all checks + Nauseated **Treatment:** Medicine check at -20 OR Antidote potion (15 Marks)
Duration: 10 turns (about 20 seconds)

Deadly Poison

Delivery: Assassin's blade, deadly serpent, cursed weapon **Effect:** 2d8 damage per turn for 10 turns **Effect:** -15 to all checks + Paralysed (cannot move) **Treatment:** Medicine check at -30 + rare antidote (40 Marks).

Must treat within 3 turns or death. **Duration:** 10 turns (death likely before end)
Fatality: 70% even with treatment

Instant Death Poison

Delivery: Master assassin, ancient trap, demonic weapon **Effect:** Spirit check at -20 or die immediately

(heart stops) **Success:** Take 4d10 damage instead + Paralyzed 1d6 rounds + Poisoned (2d6 damage per turn for 10 turns)

Treatment: If survived Spirit check, requires Medicine check at -30 + resurrection magic **No cure:** If Spirit check failed, only resurrection spell can save victim

TRAP DAMAGE

Dart Trap

Detection: Traps check at -10 to spot **Effect:** 1d8 Piercing damage **Effect:** 50% chance Mild Poison (roll 1d6: 4-6 = poisoned)

Pit Trap (3 Tiles Deep)

Detection: Traps check at -15 to spot **Avoidance:**

Athletics check at -15 to catch edge **Effect:** 3d10 Falling damage **Effect:** 25% chance Bleeding (1d4/turn)

Spiked Pit Trap

Detection: Traps check at -20 to spot **Avoidance:** Athletics check at -20 to catch edge **Effect:** 5d10 Piercing damage **Effect:**

Automatic Bleeding
(1d6/turn) **Effect:** Roll
Wound Location Table (likely
impalement)

Swinging Blade

Detection: Traps check at -
15 to spot **Avoidance:**
Dodge check to avoid
Effect: 4d10 Slashing
damage **Target:** Roll 1d6 for
location (1-2 legs, 3-4 torso,
5 arms, 6 head) **Special:**
Head hit = instant death on
critical hit

Crushing Wall

Detection: Traps check at -
20 to spot **Avoidance:** Sprint
out of room (double
Movement + Athletics
check) **Effect:** 6d10 Crushing
damage **Effect:** Potential
dismemberment if damage
exceeds 40 **Special:** Strength
check at -25 to hold wall

back (buying time for others
to escape)

Bear Trap

Detection: Traps check at -
10 to spot in wilderness
Effect: 3d8 Piercing damage
Effect: Grappled (cannot
move) **Effect:** Bleeding
(1d4/turn) **Escape:** Strength
check at -15 to pry open
Lasting Effect: -50%
movement speed even after
escape (mangled leg)

Poison Gas Trap

Detection: Traps check at -
15 to spot **Avoidance:** Hold
breath (Spirit check each
turn) or flee **Effect:** 2d6
Poison damage per turn in
4-tile radius **Duration:** 2d4
turns (gas dissipates) **Effect:**
Poisoned status

Explosive Rune (Magical Trap)

Detection: Occult check at -20 to spot **Avoidance:** Dodge check to dive for cover **Effect:** 4d8 Fire damage in 2-tile radius **Effect:** On Fire status unless Agility check at -15 **Special:** Alerts entire dungeon (all enemies aware of intruders)

Collapsing Ceiling

Detection: Perception check at -20 (subtle cracks) **Trigger:** Weight-based or tripwire **Effect:** 5d10 Crushing damage to everyone in room **Effect:** Potential burial (Strength check at -20 to dig out, suffocate in 10 rounds if fail) **Lasting Effect:** Room blocked, alternate route needed

EXPOSURE (COLD & HEAT)

Cold Exposure

Mild Cold (0-10°C, 32-50°F)

- No immediate effect
- Requires warm clothes or suffer exposure
- Without protection: Spirit check each hour or suffer Exhausted

Severe Cold (-10-0°C, 14-32°F)

- Spirit check each hour at -15 or take 1d6 damage + Exhausted

- Exposed skin: Frostbite risk (roll on Frostbite Table after 2 failed saves)
- Wet clothing: Automatic failure of first Spirit check

Extreme Cold (-20°C or below, -4°F or below)

- 2d6 cold damage per hour automatically (no save)
- Spirit check each hour at -25 or fall unconscious
- Death within 2 hours without shelter
- Frostbite automatic after 1 hour

Frostbite Table (d6)

1-2: Lost Digits Lose 1d4 fingers or toes. -5 Agility permanently.

3-4: Lost Ear Tips Ears damaged. -5 to hearing-based Perception.

5: Lost Nose Nose destroyed. -10 to smell-based Perception. Scarred.

6: Lost Hand/Foot Entire extremity lost to frostbite. Amputation required. Missing Limb disadvantage.

Heat Exposure

Mild Heat (30-35°C, 86-95°F)

- Double water consumption required
- Thick fur species suffer -5 to physical checks

Severe Heat (35-45°C, 95-113°F)

- Triple water consumption required
- Spirit check each hour at -15 or take 1d6 damage + Exhausted
- Thick fur species automatically fail first check

Extreme Heat (45°C+, 113°F+)

- 2d6 damage per hour automatically
 - Spirit check each hour at -25 or collapse unconscious
 - Thick fur species may catch fire (clothing, not character)
-

STARVATION & THIRST

Covered in Travel section, but expanded here:

Starvation Timeline

Day 1: -5 to all physical checks. Hunger pangs.

Day 2: -10 to all physical checks. Exhausted. Irritable.

Day 3: 1d6 damage per day. -15 to all physical checks. Muscle wasting begins.

Day 4+: 2d6 damage per day. Cannot heal naturally. Spirit check each day or become Panicked (obsessed with finding food, may attack allies or eat dangerous things).

Week 2: Death imminent. 3d6 damage per day.
Hallucinations. Organ failure.

Thirst Timeline (Faster than Starvation)

Day 1 (24 hours): -5 to all checks. Dry mouth, headache.

Day 2 (48 hours): -15 to all checks. 1d6 damage. Dizziness, confusion.

Day 3 (72 hours): 2d10 damage per day. Automatic Exhausted. Delirium. Kidneys failing.

Day 4 (96 hours): Death. Organ failure.

MADNESS & CORRUPTION

Corruption from Ruins

Spending extended time in the deep Shadowlands exposes characters to ancient curses and malevolent magic.

Corruption Checks

When to Roll:

- After 7 consecutive days in the Shadowlands
- Touching cursed artefacts
- Witnessing eldritch horrors
- Killing sentient creatures in cold blood repeatedly
- Using Dark Magic excessively (GM discretion)

Corruption Check: Roll 1d6

1-4: No Effect - Character resists corruption **5: Minor**

Corruption - Character gains unsettling quirk (see Minor Corruption Table) **6: Major Corruption** - Character gains

serious affliction (see Major Corruption Table)

Minor Corruption Table (d10)

1. **Paranoia:** -5 to Charisma, suspect everyone
2. **Nightmares:** Disturbed sleep, -5 to Perception during day
3. **Twitchy:** Nervous tics, -5 to social checks
4. **Bloodlust:** +5 to attack rolls, -10 to resist violence
5. **Apathy:** -5 Spirit, struggle to care about others
6. **Greed:** Must pass Spirit check to share treasure fairly
7. **Cold:** Feel nothing, -10 to resist cold, +5 to resist fear
8. **Whispers:** Hear faint voices, distracted, -5 to Perception
9. **Marked:** Faint dark veins visible on skin, NPCs disturbed (-5 Charisma)
10. **Hunger:** Always hungry, eat twice normal rations or suffer -5 to checks

Minor Corruption can be cured by spending 1 week in Temple of Elin receiving purification rituals (costs 50 Marks).

Major Corruption Table (d10)

1. **Madness:** Gain Fear of Darkness disadvantage. Wake screaming. Hallucinate in dim light.
2. **Cursed Mark:** Dark brands appear on body. Undead are drawn to you. +20% encounter rate with undead.
3. **Withering:** Strength and Spirit permanently reduced by -5 each. Skin grey, hair falls out.
4. **Bloodthirsty:** Must pass Spirit check at -15 to spare defeated enemies. Killing heals 1d6 HP (addiction).
5. **Split Personality:** Second personality emerges. GM controls character for 1d4 hours per day (random times).
6. **Cursed Voice:** Can only speak lies. Truth requires Spirit check at -20. NPCs distrust you.
7. **Shadow Addiction:** Dark Magic use becomes addictive. Using Dark spells heals 1d10 HP. Not using Dark Magic daily causes Withdrawal (-10 to all checks, stacks).
8. **Decaying:** Lose 1 HP per day permanently (max HP shrinks). Smell of rot follows you. Only way to stop: resurrection spell.
9. **Possessed:** Demon takes partial control. Once per session, GM can force character to act against party (attack ally, sabotage plan, etc.).
10. **Transformation:** Slowly becoming monstrous. Fur darkens, eyes glow red, claws lengthen (+1d6

Unarmed damage, but -20 to all social checks with non-corrupted creatures).

Major Corruption is permanent unless cured by powerful magic (Greater Restoration spell, pilgrimage to sacred site, GM-created quest for redemption).

PART SEVEN: DUNGEONS & RUINS

DUNGEON GENERATION

Use this system to create ruins on the fly.

Step 1: Determine Dungeon Size

Small Dungeon: 5-8 rooms, 1-2 hours to clear **Medium Dungeon:** 10-15 rooms, 3-4 hours to clear **Large Dungeon:** 20-30 rooms, full session **Megadungeon:** 50+ rooms, multiple sessions

Step 2: Roll for Rooms

For each room, roll 1d20:

1-8: Empty Room (Safe, may have loot) **9-14: Monster Encounter** (Roll on Monster Table) **15-18: Trap** (Roll on Trap Table) **19: Treasure Room** (Roll on Treasure Table) **20: Special** (Boss, puzzle, NPC, plot point)

Step 3: Describe Rooms

Each room needs:

- **Size:** Small (3×3 tiles), Medium (6×6 tiles), Large (10×10 tiles)
- **Contents:** Furniture, rubble, decorations
- **Exits:** Doors, passages, secret doors
- **Atmosphere:** Smell, sound, lighting, mood

Atmosphere Table (d10):

1. Musty and damp, water drips from ceiling
2. Foul stench of decay, rotting corpses
3. Eerie silence, unnaturally still
4. Distant screams echo through halls
5. Faint magical glow, arcane runes on walls
6. Cobwebs everywhere, giant spider tracks
7. Blood smeared on walls, recent violence
8. Oppressive heat, air shimmers
9. Freezing cold, breath mists
10. Whispers in dead language, unsettling

Step 4: Connect Rooms

Draw a rough map showing:

- Room layouts
- Corridors connecting rooms
- Secret passages (Perception -20 to find)

- Trapped doors
 - Shortcuts/loops
-

TRAP TABLES

Trap Complexity (d6)

1-3: Simple Trap Easy to spot (Traps -5), easy to disarm (Traps -10). Minor damage (1d10).

4-5: Complex Trap Hard to spot (Traps -15), hard to disarm (Traps -20). Moderate damage (3d10).

6: Lethal Trap Very hard to spot (Traps -25), very hard to disarm (Traps -30). Deadly damage (5d10+).

Trap Type (d10)

1. **Dart Trap:** 1d8 Piercing + Poison
 2. **Pit Trap:** 3d10 Falling
 3. **Spiked Pit:** 5d10 Piercing + Bleeding
 4. **Swinging Blade:** 4d10 Slashing + Location
 5. **Crushing Wall:** 6d10 Crushing + Dismemberment
 6. **Poison Gas:** 2d6/turn Poison
 7. **Explosive Rune:** 4d8 Fire + Alert
 8. **Collapsing Ceiling:** 5d10 Crushing + Burial
 9. **Bear Trap:** 3d8 Piercing + Grappled
 10. **GM's Choice:** Custom trap
-

TREASURE TABLES

Treasure Hoard Size (d10)

1-4: Small Hoard 1d6×10 Marks worth of coins/gems

5-8: Medium Hoard 1d10×50 Marks worth of coins/gems
+1d4 mundane items (weapons, armour, tools)

9-10: Large Hoard 1d10×100 Marks worth of coins/gems
+2d4 mundane items +Roll on Magic Item Table

Magic Item Table (d20)

1-8: Minor Magic Item (50-100 Marks value) Potion, scroll, enchanted dagger (+5 to hit), ring of minor effect

9-15: Moderate Magic Item (100-300 Marks value) +10 weapon, +2 DR armour, useful magical tool (lantern that never runs out, rope that ties itself, etc.)

16-19: Major Magic Item (300-500 Marks value) +15 weapon, +4 DR armour, powerful spell scroll, ring of flight, cloak of invisibility

20: Legendary Item (500+ Marks value) Unique artefact with powerful abilities. GM's creation. May be intelligent, may be cursed, may be plot-significant.

MONSTER ECOLOGY

Monsters in ruins aren't random. They have reasons for being there.

Dungeon Factions

Undead: Former inhabitants, still guarding treasures

Bandits: Using ruins as hideout **Cultists:** Worshipping dark powers **Monsters:** Nesting in ruins (spiders, rats, wolves)

Constructs: Still following ancient commands

Faction Interaction:

- Factions may fight each other
- Players can play factions against each other
- Killing one faction may empower another

Example: Ruins have undead on upper levels, giant spiders in lower levels. They avoid each other. If players kill all undead, spiders expand territory upward.

RESTOCKING DUNGEONS

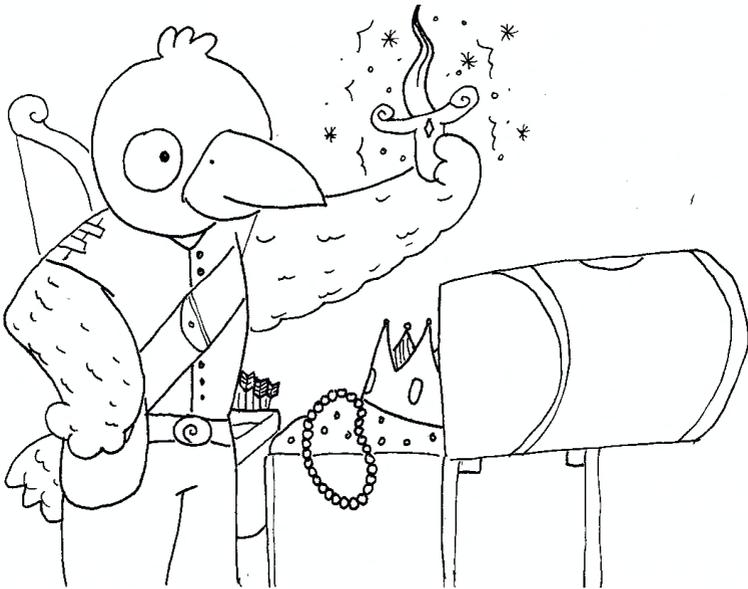
If players clear a dungeon and return later, what's there?

Restocking Check (1 Week Later)

Roll 1d6:

1-3: Empty - Nothing has moved in yet **4-5: Partially Restocked** - 50% of rooms have new occupants (roll new encounters) **6: Fully Restocked** - New faction has moved in (may be stronger than original occupants)

PART EIGHT: MAGIC ITEMS



In the ruins of the Dead Empire, magical artifacts linger like ghosts. Enchanted blades that never dull. Amulets that ward off death. Rings that bend probability. These treasures are rare, valuable, and dangerous.

Magic shaped the ancient world. The sorcerer-priests who ruled a thousand years ago poured their power into weapons, armour, and trinkets. Some items were crafted with care: masterworks of enchantment that still function perfectly. Others were corrupted when the empire fell, twisted by the wild magic that destroyed their creators.

Your players will find magic items in dungeons, treasure hoards, and the hands of dead adventurers. This chapter provides guidelines for identifying, using, pricing, and creating these artifacts.

HOW MAGIC ITEMS WORK

IDENTIFYING MAGIC ITEMS

Most magic items are obviously magical:

- Weapons that glow faintly
- Amulets that hum with power
- Armour that's impossibly light
- Rings that feel warm to the touch

To determine exact properties: Make an **Occult check** (difficulty varies by item complexity). Success reveals the item's function. Failure means trial and error... or worse, triggering a curse.

Simple items (glowing sword, healing potion): Occult check, no modifier

Complex items (multi-function staff, intelligent weapon): Occult -10

Cursed items (seemingly beneficial): Occult -20 to detect the curse

Alternative: Visit a mage, priest, or scholar who can identify items for 10-50 Marks depending on complexity.

USING MAGIC ITEMS

Weapons & Armour: Function immediately once equipped.

Wondrous Items: Some are always active, others require activation (usually a free action).

Charges: Some items have limited uses per day. Charges refresh at dawn.

Consumables: Used once and destroyed (potions, scrolls, holy water).

SELLING MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items can be sold for Marks, but buyers are rare:

- **Level 1-2 Settlements:** No buyers (too poor, or no interest)
- **Level 3 Settlements:** Might buy Common items at half value
- **Level 4-5 Settlements:** Buy any items at full value

- **Travelling Merchants:** Occasional buyers, pay 75% of value

Players must choose: keep the powerful sword, or sell it to fund the settlement's next level?

RARITY & PRICING

Magic items are categorized by rarity, which determines power level and price.

COMMON (50-150 Marks)

Power Level: Minor bonuses (+5), basic utility, simple effects

Frequency: Found occasionally in treasure hoards, sold in wealthy settlements

Examples: +5 weapons, resistance charms, minor utility items

UNCOMMON (200-500 Marks)

Power Level: Moderate bonuses (+10), useful abilities, limited charges

Frequency: Rare finds in dangerous ruins, prized possessions

Examples: +10 weapons, healing potions, cloaks of stealth

RARE (600-1,200 Marks)

Power Level: Strong bonuses (+15), powerful abilities, daily uses

Frequency: Major treasure, boss loot, hidden vaults

Examples: +15 weapons, regeneration rings, powerful staves

LEGENDARY (1,500+ Marks)

Power Level: Exceptional bonuses (+20+), game-changing abilities, unique

Frequency: Once per campaign, final boss treasures, ancient artifacts

Examples: Dragon slayer weapons, lichdom phylacteries, artifact staves

Treasure Distribution Advice: Most hoards contain 1-2 Common items. Uncommon items reward clearing dangerous areas. Rare items are boss loot. Legendary items are campaign climaxes.

EXAMPLE MAGIC ITEMS

WEAPONS

DAUST'S SHORTSWORD

(Uncommon, 350 Marks)

Shortsword, 1d10+2 Sl, +5 to hit

Blade etched with protective runes. Once wielded by a hound warrior who died defending his friends in the Crystal Corruption. The sword remembers his courage.

Special: When protecting an ally (within 2 tiles), gain additional +5 to hit.

SILVER MACE OF ELIN

(Uncommon, 400 Marks)

Mace, 1d10+2 Cr, +5 to hit vs undead, +10 vs undead

Holy symbol engraved on the head. Blessed by temple priests. Glows faintly near

undead.

Special: Light Mages wielding this can turn undead twice per day instead of once.

FLAME BLADE (Uncommon, 450 Marks)

Shortsword, 1d10+3 Sl/Fi, +10 to hit

Blade wreathed in harmless orange flames. Warm to the touch. Forged in the volcanic forges of the Dead Empire.

Special: Provides light as a torch. Can ignite flammable objects with a touch.

FROSTBITE BOW (Rare, 850 Marks)

Longbow, 1d10+4 Pi/Co, +10 to hit

ARMOUR & SHIELDS

DAUST'S SHIELD

(Uncommon, 400 Marks)

Carved from white wood that's always cold. Arrows form from ice when drawn—never runs out of ammunition.

Special: Targets hit must pass Spirit check or become Slowed for 1 round.

WYRMBANE GREATSWORD

(Legendary, 2,000 Marks)

Greatsword, 2d10+5 Sl, +15 to hit, +20 vs dragons

Massive blade etched with draconic runes. Said to have slain three dragons during the empire's height. Blade glows red near dragons or dragonkin.

Special: On critical hit vs dragon, target must pass Spirit check or become Frightened.

Medium Shield, +3 Block, +2 DR

Steel shield with House Graypaw crest. Enchanted to deflect blows. Daust used this to defend his party in their final stand against the Crystal Guardian.

Special: Once per day, automatically block one attack (no roll required).

IRONBARK ARMOUR (Rare, 900 Marks)

Light Armour, +4 DR, no movement penalty

Carved from ancient treant bark. Hard as steel but light as cloth. Leaves and vines

grow from it in spring.

Special: Advantage on checks to resist poison and disease. Regenerate 1 HP per hour when in sunlight.

CLOAK OF SHADOWS

(Uncommon, 400 Marks)

Black fabric that seems to drink light. Hem constantly moves as if in a breeze.

Special: +15 to Stealth in dim light or darkness. Can pull hood up to obscure face completely (observers must beat Investigation vs your Stealth).

STAVES & FOCUS ITEMS

MIRA'S STAFF OF

EVOCATION (Rare, 1,100 Marks)

Quarterstaff, 1d10+4 Cr, +10 Evocation magic

Crystal-tipped staff that hums with power. Once

wielded by the mouse mage Mira before she was crystallized mid-cast in the Cathedral of Corruption. The staff still remembers her final spell.

Charges: 3/day, can cast any

Evocation spell you know without expending MP.

SISTER BRINDLE'S HOLY SYMBOL (Uncommon, 500 Marks)

Holy Symbol of Elin, +5 Enhancement magic

Silver sun medallion on iron chain. Warm to touch. Belonged to a devoted priestess who died trying to save her companions.

Special: Healing spells cast through this symbol restore +5 additional HP. Bearer gains +10 to Spirit checks vs fear.

VASSEK'S CRYSTAL HEART (Rare, 900 Marks)

Spell Focus, unstable magical item

Fist-sized purple crystal that pulses with inner light. Corrupted by the spell that destroyed the Crystal region.

Beautiful but dangerous.

Benefits: +10 to all spell casting. +5 MP.

Drawback: Each time you cast a spell, roll 1d10. On a 1, take 1d10 damage as the crystal surges with wild magic.

Special: Can be used as a spell component worth 200 Marks for any ritual.

WAND OF FIREBALLS (Rare, 800 Marks)

Charred oak wand tipped with ruby. Scorched from use.

Charges: 5/day, cast Fireball (Evocation, 3d10 Fi damage, 5-tile radius) without expending MP or needing Evocation skill.

Drawback: Each use has 10% chance (roll 1d10, on a 1) the wand explodes for 3d10 Fi in 5-tile radius

centred on wielder, then is

destroyed.

RINGS & AMULETS

RING OF THE SURVIVOR

(Rare, 900 Marks)

Simple iron band, warm to the touch. Never tarnishes.

Special: +10 to all Spirit checks. +5 to death saves.

Once per session, automatically stabilize at 0 HP instead of making death saves.

BONE AMULET (Common, 100 Marks)

Carved from finger bone. Hums near undead. Found in the Ossuary.

Special: +5 to Spirit checks vs undead fear effects.

Undead within 10 tiles can be sensed (doesn't reveal exact location, just presence/direction).

RING OF WARMTH

(Common, 80 Marks)

Copper band with fire opal. Always pleasantly warm.

Special: Wearer is comfortable in cold weather down to freezing. Advantage on checks to resist cold damage.

RABBIT'S FOOT CHARM

(Common, 120 Marks)

Preserved rabbit's foot on leather cord. Soft white fur.

Special: Once per session, re-roll one failed check. Must take the second result. Rabbits refuse to wear this item.

RING OF FEATHER FALLING

(Uncommon, 350 Marks)

Silver band with white

feather symbol.

Special: When falling, descend at 1 tile per second (safe landing). Can activate/deactivate at will. Does not prevent damage from being pushed/thrown.

AMULET OF HEALTH (Rare, 1,000 Marks)

Bronze sun disk on gold chain. Warm against skin.
Special: +10 maximum HP. Advantage on checks to resist disease and poison. Recover from wounds in half the normal time.

WONDROUS ITEMS

EVERBURNING TORCH

(Common, 80 Marks)

Metal rod topped with crystal that glows blue-white. Dead Empire artifice.

Special: Provides bright light (10 tiles), dim light (20 tiles). Never goes out. Cannot be extinguished by water or wind. Can be covered to hide light.

ROPE OF CLIMBING

(Uncommon, 300 Marks)

50-foot silk rope, impossibly light and strong.

Special: Can be commanded to tie/untie itself, coil/uncoil, attach to surfaces up to 50 feet away. Holds 200kg. Commands are verbal ("Rope, climb!").

BAG OF HOLDING (Rare, 1,200 Marks)

Appears as ordinary backpack, but interior is extradimensional space.

Special: Holds 100kg of items but only weighs 5kg. Items placed inside can be retrieved instantly by

thinking of them. If torn/destroyed, contents spill into the void (lost forever).

BOOTS OF SPEED

(Uncommon, 400 Marks)

Leather boots with quicksilver stitching. Feel weightless when worn.

Special: +2 tiles movement speed. +5 to Initiative. Once per day, can take Move action as free action.

CLOAK OF THE BAT (Rare, 850 Marks)

Black cloak that billows dramatically. Interior lined

with membrane-thin leather.

Special: Can transform into bat form (1 minute to transform). Bat form: fly 8 tiles/turn, AC $\div 2$, HP $\div 2$, can't attack. Transformation lasts up to 1 hour, can end at will.

GLOVES OF THIEVERY

(Uncommon, 350 Marks)

Black silk gloves, impossibly fine.

Special: +10 to Traps checks (lockpicking, disarming). +10 to Sleight of Hand. Fingers can feel minute details (can "read" objects by touch).

CONSUMABLES

Consumable items are used once and destroyed. Most can be crafted by skilled alchemists (see Player's Guide for crafting rules) or purchased in settlements.

HEALING POTIONS

MINOR HEALING POTION

(Common, 15 Marks)

Red liquid in small vial.

Tastes of copper and honey.

Effect: Drink as action, restore 1d6+2 HP immediately. Can be poured on unconscious character as action.

HEALING POTION

(Uncommon, 35 Marks)
Red liquid in glass vial. Tastes of copper and honey.
Effect: Drink as action, restore 2d8+4 HP immediately. Can be poured

on unconscious character as action.

MAJOR HEALING POTION

(Rare, 80 Marks)
Deep crimson liquid that glows faintly.
Effect: Drink as action, restore 4d8+8 HP immediately. Can be poured on unconscious character as action.

ANTIDOTES & REMEDIES

ANTIDOTE (VIAL)

(Common, 15 Marks)
Clear liquid with bitter almond scent. Basic poison remedy sold in general stores.
Effect: Drink as action, cure Poisoned status (single use).

MINOR ANTIDOTE

(Common, 20 Marks)
Alchemical remedy for weak poisons. Requires Alchemy

skill to craft.

Effect: Drink as action, cure Minor Poison.

ANTIDOTE (Uncommon, 45 Marks)

Alchemical remedy for moderate poisons. Requires Alchemy skill to craft.

Effect: Drink as action, cure Moderate Poison.

STRONG ANTIDOTE (Rare, 90 Marks)

Alchemical remedy for severe poisons. Requires Alchemy skill to craft.

Effect: Drink as action, cure Severe Poison.

FEVER TINCTURE (Common, 15 Marks)

Herbal remedy for infections.

Effect: Drink as action, cure Minor Infection.

HOLY WATER

HOLY WATER (Common, 20 Marks)

Blessed water in glass vial. Warm to touch. Only available from temples or created by Light Mages.

Effect: Thrown weapon (3 tiles range), 2d10 damage vs

undead or demons.

Alternatively, can bless an area (10 tile radius, undead cannot enter for 1 hour).

Source: Temples sell holy water. Light Mages can also create it by casting Consecrate Water.

SPELL SCROLLS

Spell scrolls contain a single spell that can be cast by anyone who can read, regardless of magical ability. The scroll is consumed when used.

CREATING SPELL SCROLLS (Mages Only):

- Time: 1 hour of careful writing
- Cost: Spell's MP cost × 10 Marks in magical inks and parchment

- Check: Occult check at spell's difficulty modifier
- Success: Scroll created
- Failure: Materials wasted, must try again

Example: Creating a Fireball scroll (10 MP spell) costs 100 Marks in materials and 1 hour.

USING SPELL SCROLLS:

- Read as action to cast the spell
- No magic ability required (anyone literate can use)
- Scroll burns/dissolves after use
- Spell uses the scroll creator's skill level (not the reader's)

COMMON SPELL SCROLLS:

SCROLL OF FIREBALL

(Uncommon, 100 Marks)
Parchment with crackling runes. Burns after reading.

Effect: Cast Fireball (3d10 Fi, 5-tile radius, ranged 20 tiles). Does not require magic ability.

SCROLL OF HEALING

TOUCH (Common, 50 Marks)
Parchment with soft golden

script.

Effect: Cast Mending Touch (restore 1d10 HP to touched creature). Does not require magic ability.

SCROLL OF INVISIBILITY

(Uncommon, 100 Marks)
Parchment that seems to shimmer and fade.

Effect: Cast Invisibility on self (invisible for 5 rounds,

+30 Stealth). Does not require magic ability.

SCROLL OF RESURRECTION

(Legendary, 2,500 Marks)

Ancient parchment that smells of incense and dust.

Extremely rare.

Effect: Cast Resurrection on corpse dead less than 24 hours. Target returns with 1 HP, suffers -10 to all checks for 1 week. Light Mages only can create these.

CURSED ITEMS

Some magic items are cursed, either intentionally or by corruption. Cursed items usually appear beneficial until the curse activates.

IDENTIFYING CURSES

- **Occult check (-20)** reveals the curse before using the item
- Otherwise, curse activates on first use (equipping weapon/armor, wearing ring, drinking potion, etc.)
- Once cursed, item cannot be unequipped without visiting a Priest of Elin

EXAMPLE CURSED ITEMS

RING OF MISFORTUNE

(Cursed, 0 Marks—worth

nothing)

Beautiful gold ring with onyx

stone. Feels lucky when first worn.

Curse: -5 to all rolls while worn. Cannot remove ring without removing the curse. Wearer rationalizes keeping it ("It'll turn around soon").

BLOODTHIRSTY BLADE

(Cursed, Uncommon)

Longsword, 1d10+5 Sl, +15 to hit

Crimson blade that whispers in battle. Incredibly powerful.

Curse: Must pass Spirit check (-10) to sheathe the blade without attacking something. Blade hungers for blood. Each day not used in combat, take 1d10 damage as blade feeds on wielder.

BREAKING CURSES

Remove Curse Ritual:

- Requires Light Mage or Temple services.
- Takes 1 hour + materials worth 50-200 Marks

CROWN OF MADNESS

(Cursed, Rare)

Golden circlet set with purple gems. Whispers secrets.

Benefit: +10 Mind, +15 to all mental skills.

Curse: Gradual paranoia.

After 1 week: trust no one.

After 1 month: hear voices.

After 3 months: full

psychotic break.

BOOTS OF BLINDING

SPEED (Cursed, Uncommon)

Silver boots that shimmer.

Benefit: +5 tiles movement speed, +10 to Initiative.

Curse: While moving at full speed, you are Blinded (cannot see).

- Caster makes Spirit check (difficulty varies by curse)
- Success: curse broken, item becomes mundane
- Failure: curse persists, try again with +10 next time

Alternative: Some curses have specific conditions:

- Bloodthirsty Blade: Kill 100 enemies with it
 - Ring of Misfortune: Save someone's life while wearing it
 - Crown of Madness: Confront the source of paranoia
-

CREATING CUSTOM MAGIC ITEMS

As GM, you'll create magic items as treasure. Here's the process:

STEP 1: CHOOSE BASE ITEM

- Weapon (sword, bow, staff, etc.)
- Armour (light/medium/heavy, shield)
- Accessory (ring, amulet, cloak, boots, gloves)
- Wondrous item (unique function)
- Consumable (potion, scroll, single-use)

STEP 2: ASSIGN RARITY

Start with intended power level:

Common: Minor benefit, +5 bonus, simple effect

Uncommon: Moderate benefit, +10 bonus, useful ability

Rare: Strong benefit, +15 bonus, powerful ability

Legendary: Exceptional, +20+ bonus, game-changing

STEP 3: ASSIGN MECHANICS

Pick ONE primary effect:

Combat Bonuses:

- +5/+10/+15/+20 to hit
- +1d10/+2d10 damage
- Extra damage type (Sl/Pi/Cr + Fi/Co/El)
- DR bonus (+2/+3/+4/+5)

Skill Bonuses:

- +5/+10/+15 to specific skill
- +10/+15 to category of checks
- Advantage on specific situations

Special Abilities:

- Daily charges (1-5 uses per day)
- Always-on effect (low-power utility)
- Triggered effect (on crit, on kill, when damaged)

Avoid: Multiple stacking bonuses (keep tracking simple)

STEP 4: ADD FLAVOUR

Magic items should feel unique:

- **Origin:** Who made it? Why?
- **Appearance:** What makes it special?
- **History:** Who wielded it before?
- **Quirk:** Does it glow? Hum? Feel warm?

STEP 5: PRICE IT

Use rarity as baseline:

- Common: 50-150 Marks
- Uncommon: 200-500 Marks
- Rare: 600-1,200 Marks
- Legendary: 1,500+ Marks

Adjust based on power:

- Combat bonuses more expensive than utility
 - Daily charges more expensive than always-on
 - Drawbacks reduce price (or cursed = 0)
-

EXAMPLE CREATION PROCESS

Example 1: Lockpicking Ring

Concept: "I want something to help the rogue with lockpicking."

Step 1 - Base: Ring (accessory)

Step 2 - Rarity: Common (minor bonus)

Step 3 - Mechanics: +10 to Traps/Stealth checks

Step 4 - Flavour: "Thief's Pride: silver ring with tiny lockpick engraved on it. Belonged to the legendary rat burglar Whiskers the Quick."

Step 5 - Price: 120 Marks (common tier)

RESULT:

THIEF'S PRIDE (Common, 120 Marks)

Silver ring with miniature lockpick engraving.

Special: +10 to Traps or Stealth checks involving locks.

Example 2: Fire Resistance Cloak

Concept: "The party is about to fight a dragon. They need fire protection."

Step 1 - Base: Cloak (wondrous item)

Step 2 - Rarity: Uncommon (useful protection)

Step 3 - Mechanics: Resistance to fire damage (half damage from fire)

Step 4 - Flavour: "Salamander Cloak: woven from fire-proof salamander hide. Warm to touch. Smells faintly of smoke."

Step 5 - Price: 450 Marks (uncommon, combat utility)

RESULT:

SALAMANDER CLOAK (Uncommon, 450 Marks)

Red-orange cloak of salamander hide. Never burns.

Special: Resistance to fire damage (take half damage from all fire sources). Comfortable in extreme heat.

Example 3: Shadow Dagger

Concept: "Rogue wants an assassin's weapon."

Step 1 - Base: Dagger (weapon)

Step 2 - Rarity: Rare (powerful combat item)

Step 3 - Mechanics: +15 to hit, +2d10 damage if target unaware

Step 4 - Flavour: "Shadow Fang: black steel dagger that drinks light. Used by Dead Empire assassins. Blade is always cold."

Step 5 - Price: 800 Marks (rare, situational power)

RESULT:

SHADOW FANG (Rare, 800 Marks)

Dagger, 1d10 Sl, +15 to hit

Black steel blade that seems to absorb light.

Special: If target is unaware of you (failed Perception vs your Stealth), deal +2d10 sneak attack damage. Blade makes no sound when drawn.

BALANCE GUIDELINES

DO:

- ✓ Keep bonuses modest (+5 to +15 for most items)
- ✓ Make legendary items truly rare (1 per campaign)
- ✓ Price items according to settlement economy
- ✓ Add interesting flavour and history
- ✓ Use charges for powerful abilities
- ✓ Make items feel earned (boss loot, quest rewards)

DON'T:

- x Give +20 to everything (trivializes combat)
- x Stack multiple unrelated bonuses (tracking nightmare)
- x Make items mandatory (players should function without them)
- x Hand out magic items like candy (dilutes specialness)
- x Create "must-have" items (forces specific builds)
- x Ignore the settlement economy (items = wealth = choices)

POWER BUDGET GUIDELINE

Think of each item as having a "power budget":

Common (1-2 points):

- +5 bonus = 1 point
- Minor utility = 1 point
- Small damage bonus = 1 point

Uncommon (3-4 points):

- +10 bonus = 2 points
- Useful ability (daily charges) = 2 points
- Moderate damage bonus = 2 points

Rare (5-7 points):

- +15 bonus = 3 points
- Powerful ability (daily charges) = 3 points
- Major damage bonus = 3 points
- Resistance to damage type = 2 points

Legendary (8+ points):

- +20 bonus = 4 points
- Game-changing ability = 4 points
- Always-on powerful effect = 4 points

Example: A sword with +10 to hit (2 points) and 1d10 fire damage (2 points) = 4 points total = Uncommon rarity.

MAGIC ITEMS & THE SETTLEMENT

Magic items interact with your settlement system:

ECONOMIC CHOICES

Players constantly face the dilemma: **keep or sell?**

- Keep the +10 sword: one character gets stronger

- Sell it for 300 Marks: entire settlement benefits

This creates interesting group decisions and occasional tension.

PRICING IN SETTLEMENTS

Level 1-2 Settlements: No magic item market

Level 3 Settlements: Buy Common items at 50% value

Level 4 Settlements: Buy Common/Uncommon at 75% value

Level 5 Settlements: Buy any item at full value

Trade Focus Bonus: Settlements with Trade focus attract rare goods merchants who pay full price for all items.

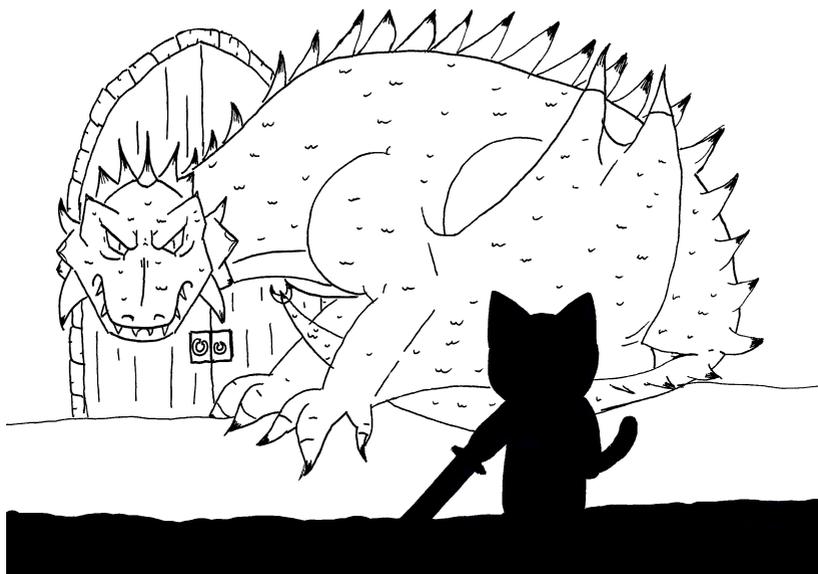
CRAFTING IN SETTLEMENTS

If your settlement has a **Coven** or **Temple** (Religion focus):

- Mages can enchant items (takes weeks + materials)
- Cost: 50% of item's final value in materials + time
- Caster makes Spirit check (difficulty by rarity)
- Success: item created; Failure: materials lost

Infrastructure Bonus: Settlements with Infrastructure gain +10 to crafting checks (+10 to Alchemy/Crafting already applies).

PART NINE: BESTIARY



Monster Statblock Template

NAME: _____

HP: _____

DR: _____

Movement: _____ tiles

STATS:

Strength: _____

Agility: _____

Mind: _____

Spirit: _____

SKILLS:

[List relevant skills]

ATTACKS:

- Attack Name: Skill __%, Damage __, Type __, Range __

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- _____

BEHAVIOUR:

- _____

TREASURE:

- _____

USING THIS BESTIARY

Monster Stats Explained:

- **HP:** Hit Points - how much damage they can take
- **DR:** Damage Reduction from armour/hide
- **Movement:** Tiles they can move per combat turn (usually Agility /10)
- **Stats:** Strength, Agility, Mind, Spirit (same as PCs)
- **Skills:** Key skills listed with percentages (d100 roll-under)
- **Attacks:** Weapon name, skill%, damage, type

- **Damage Types:** Cr (Crushing), Pi (Piercing), Sl (Slashing), Br (Burning), Lightning (Li), Freezing (Fr), Magic (Ma)

Threat Levels:

- **Level 1 (12-25 HP):** Challenge for Level 1-2 parties, use 4-6 creatures
 - **Level 2 (26-45 HP):** Challenge for Level 3-4 parties, use 2-3 creatures
 - **Level 3 (46-70 HP):** Challenge for Level 5-6 parties, use 1-2 creatures
 - **Level 4 (71-100 HP):** Challenge for Level 7-8 parties, use 1 creature
 - **Level 5 (100+ HP):** BOSS encounters for Level 9-10+ parties
-

THREAT LEVEL 1: MINOR THREATS

Creatures with 12-25 HP, suitable for Level 1-2 parties

BANDIT (Human/Various Species)

"Desperate folk turned to brigandry, preying on travellers and weak settlements."

HP: 20

Movement: 5 tiles

DR: 4 (Gambeson)

STATS:

Strength 45 | Agility 50 | Mind 40 | Spirit 40

SKILLS:

Melee 40 | Bows 35 | Stealth 35 | Perception 30

ATTACKS:

- **Shortsword:** Melee 40%, 1d10+4 SI
- **Shortbow:** Bows 35%, 1d10+3 Pi, Range 20 tiles

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Cowardly:** Flee if reduced below 50% HP and no allies nearby (Spirit check to resist fleeing)
- **Ambush Tactics:** +10 to first attack roll if hidden
- **Pack Mentality:** +5 to Spirit checks if their group outnumbered victims 2:1

BEHAVIOUR:

Demand surrender first. Rob but don't kill unless threatened. Use ranged attacks from cover. Flee if losing. Often former settlers who couldn't make it legitimately.

TREASURE: 1d6×10 Marks, basic weapons, stolen goods

VARIANTS:

- **Bandit Leader:** HP 35, Melee 50%, commands 2d4 bandits, has chainmail (DR 6)
- **Crossbow Bandit:** Swaps shortbow for heavy crossbow (2d6+3 Pi, Range 30 tiles)

WILDKIN (Feral Awakened Beasts)

"Those who spent too long in the Shadowlands, their minds twisted by ancient magic."

HP: 18

Movement: 7 tiles

DR: 1 (Thick fur/hide)

STATS:

Strength 50 | Agility 55 | Mind 25 | Spirit 35

SKILLS:

Melee 45 | Stealth 40 | Perception 50 | Wilderness 55

ATTACKS:

- **Claws:** Melee 45%, 1d8+5 SI
- **Bite:** Melee 45%, 1d10+5 Pi

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Feral Rage:** When below 50% HP, +10 to all attacks, cannot flee
- **Pack Hunter:** +5 to hit for each ally within 3 tiles (max +15)
- **Keen Nose:** +20 to Perception (smell), track by scent
- **Corrupted Speech:** Speaks broken Common, unsettling to hear

BEHAVIOUR:

Former civilized folk (wolves, foxes, cats) who've degenerated. Hunt in packs of 2-8. Territorial. May attempt communication but become violent quickly. Tragic figures - they remember fragments of their past lives.

TREASURE: Torn clothing, 1d4×5 Marks, occasionally a locket or keepsake from their former life

SPECIAL NOTE: Some settlements offer bounties to mercy-kill Wildkin and return personal effects to families. 10-20 Marks per proof of identity.

KOBOLD (Draconic Remnant)

"Small scaled servants of the Dead Empire, still guarding ruins they no longer understand."

HP: 12

Movement: 6 tiles

DR: 2 (Scaled hide)

STATS:

Strength 30 | Agility 60 | Mind 45 | Spirit 40

SKILLS:

Melee 40 | Bows 45 | Traps 50 | Stealth 50

ATTACKS:

- **Shortsword:** Melee 40%, 1d6+3 SI
- **Shortbow:** Bows 45%, 1d6+3 Pi, Range 15 tiles
- **Trap Deployment:** Can deploy simple traps as a Ready action (dart trap, snare)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Draconic Heritage:** Immune to Frightened status caused by dragons
- **Trap Sense:** +20 to detect and disarm traps
- **Swarm Tactics:** Gain +5 to hit for each kobold beyond the first attacking same target (max +20)
- **Fire Resistance:** Half damage from Br (Burning) attacks
- **Sunlight Sensitivity:** -10 to all checks in direct sunlight
- **Ancient Tongue:** Speak Ancient Tongue of Dead Empire

BEHAVIOUR:

Intelligent, cowardly alone, deadly in groups. Use traps extensively. Worship dragons as gods. May negotiate if offered shinies or magic items. Obsessed with rebuilding lost empire but lack knowledge how. Appear as 2-3 foot tall bipedal dragons with small wings (can't fly), horns, and scales in various colours.

TREASURE: 2d6×5 Marks, 50% chance of 1d4 gems (10 Marks each), trapped containers, ancient empire trinkets

KNOWLEDGE: Kobolds know the layout of Dead Empire ruins. Captured kobolds might trade maps for freedom.

GIANT RAT (Bestial Vermin)

"Dog-sized rats mutated by Dead Empire magic, aggressive scavengers with disease-ridden bites."

HP: 14

Movement: 7 tiles

DR: 0

STATS:

Strength 35 | Agility 55 | Mind 10 | Spirit 30

SKILLS:

Unarmed 40 | Stealth 50 | Perception 45 (smell/hearing)

ATTACKS:

- **Bite:** Melee 40%, 1d6+3 Pi + Disease risk
- **Claw Scratch:** Melee 40%, 1d4+3 SI

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Disease Carrier:** Any bite that deals damage requires Spirit check or contract Minor Infection (see Disease & Infection section)
- **Pack Tactics:** +5 to hit for each additional rat attacking same target (max +15)
- **Keen Senses:** +15 to Perception in darkness, can track by scent

- **Nimble:** Can squeeze through gaps as small as 6 inches, despite being dog-sized
- **Cowardly Alone:** If alone and reduced below 50% HP, must pass Spirit check or flee
- **Swarm Courage:** Immune to Frightened when 3+ rats present

BEHAVIOUR:

Giant rats are bestial vermin

- NOT anthropomorphic like player character Rats. These are mindless mutated animals the size of large dogs (3-4 feet long plus tail). Found in sewers, ruins, abandoned buildings, and tunnels. Hunt in packs of 2-8. Aggressive when cornered or in groups, cowardly when alone. Attracted to food, garbage, and corpses. Will eat anything including their own wounded.
- Very territorial - mark territory with scent glands creating foul smell. If lair is threatened, all rats within 100 tiles respond to distress squeals. Primarily nocturnal but hunger drives them out during daytime.

TREASURE:

None (scavengers), but nests contain 1d6×5 Marks in coins/shinies, 50% chance of 1 mundane item

TOMB CRAWLERS (Corrupted Insect Swarm)

"A swarm of magic-bloated insects that feed on corpses in ancient crypts."

HP: 15

Movement: 5 tiles (can

DR: 0 (Swarm - see special)

climb walls)

STATS:

Strength 20 | Agility 50 | Mind 5 | Spirit 30

SKILLS:

Melee 40 | Stealth 45

ATTACKS:

- **Swarm Bite:** Melee 40%, 1d6 Pi + Disease risk
- **Engulf:** If swarm moves through a tile with a creature, automatic 1d4 damage (no roll needed)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Swarm Nature:** Sl/Pi weapons deal half damage. Area effects (spells, explosives) deal double. Can squeeze through tiny gaps
- **Diseased:** Any hit requires Spirit check or contract Minor Infection (see GM book)
- **Light Aversion:** Flee from bright light (torches give -10 to their Spirit checks)
- **Scent Blood:** +20 to track wounded creatures

BEHAVIOUR:

Mindless scavengers. Attracted to fresh corpses and wounded creatures. Found in crypts, dungeons, dark places. Will pursue wounded targets relentlessly. Disperse in bright sunlight.

TREASURE: None (scavengers), but often found near valuable corpses

THREAT LEVEL 2: MODERATE THREATS

Creatures with 26-45 HP, suitable for Level 3-4 parties

SWINEKIN RAIDER (Orc-like Pig-Folk)

"Brutal pig-faced raiders from the northern wastes, living for plunder and battle."

HP: 35

Movement: 5 tiles

DR: 5 (Thick hide + leather armour)

STATS:

Strength 60 | Agility 40 | Mind 35 | Spirit 55

SKILLS:

Melee 50 | Block 40 | Intimidation 45

ATTACKS:

- **War Axe:** Melee 50%, 2d6+6 SI
- **Gore:** Melee 50%, 1d10+6 Pi (tusks - desperation attack)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Thick Hide:** +10 to resist poison/disease (Spirit checks)
- **Battle Rage:** Once per fight, when below 30% HP, +15 to all attacks for 3 rounds (must pass Spirit check to avoid entering rage)
- **Powerful Build:** Carry capacity doubled
- **Fearsome:** First encounter each combat, enemies must pass Spirit check at -10 or suffer Frightened status for 2 rounds
- **Poor Climber:** -10 to Athletics when climbing

BEHAVIOUR:

Aggressive, territorial, live for combat and plunder. Appear as 6-7 foot tall bipedal boars with tusks, piggy eyes, and muscular builds. Form war bands of 3-12. Value strength above all. Will eat captives. Take trophies (ears, tails). Respect worthy opponents - might spare those who fight well. Hate weakness.

TREASURE: 2d6×10 Marks, crude weapons, stolen goods, 1d4 trophies from past victims

TACTICS: Charge headlong, overwhelm with strength. Use intimidation. No subtlety.

CORRUPTED SLIME (Magical Ooze)

"Puddles of sentient acid born from spilled alchemical waste in Dead Empire labs."

HP: 25

Movement: 3 tiles (can

DR: Special (see abilities)

climb walls/ceiling)

STATS:

Strength 40 | Agility 20 | Mind 5 | Spirit 50

SKILLS:

Unarmed 35

ATTACKS:

- **Acidic Touch:** Melee 35%, 2d6 Burning + dissolve organic material
- **Engulf:** If slime successfully hits, target must pass Athletics check at -15 or become Grappled and take 2d6 Burning per turn (suffocation in 6 turns if not freed) as they are pulled into the slime's body

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Amorphous:** Can squeeze through gaps as small as 1 inch. Immune to critical hits. Cannot be Grappled or knocked Prone
- **Acid Body:** Immune to Burning damage. Metal weapons/armour take 1d4 damage per hit

- **Weapon Resistance:** Sl/Pi weapons deal minimum damage. Cr/Br/Fr (Freezing) deal normal damage
- **Split:** If dealt 10+ damage in single hit by Sl weapon, splits into two smaller slimes (12 HP each, 1d6 Burning damage)
- **Blind:** Relies on tremorsense (12 tile radius). Unaffected by Blinded status, light/darkness, illusions

BEHAVIOUR:

Mindless. Flows toward vibrations. Drops from ceilings onto prey. Found in Dead Empire labs, sewers, dungeons. Multiple slimes may merge into larger ones (combine HP). Leaves acidic trails that damage boots/feet (1d4 per round of contact).

TREASURE: Partially dissolved victims. 30% chance of 1d4 gems (resistant to acid), 10% chance of magic item (also acid-resistant)

VARIANTS:

- **Ice Slime:** Freezing damage instead of Burning, freezes instead of dissolves, vulnerable to Br
- **Fire Slime:** Br damage instead of Burning, ignites flammable materials, vulnerable to Freezing
- **Glass Slime (Rare):** Transparent, Stealth 70, lethal ambush predator

GHOUL

"Undead scavengers, once-living things twisted by dark magic and hunger."

HP: 28

Movement: 6 tiles

DR: 2

STATS:

Strength 50 | Agility 55 | Mind 25 | Spirit 40

SKILLS:

Melee 50 | Stealth 45 | Perception 40

ATTACKS:

- **Claws:** Melee 50%, 1d8+5 SI + Paralysis (Spirit check at -15 or Paralysed for 1d6 rounds)
- **Bite:** Melee 50%, 2d6+5 Pi + Disease (Spirit check or Major Infection)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Undead:** Immune to Poisoned, disease, Frightened, mind control, Exhausted statuses. Never check Spirit for morale
- **Paralytic Touch:** Claw hits force Spirit check at -15 or victim becomes Paralysed for 1d6 rounds
- **Grave Stench:** All living creatures within 3 tiles suffer -5 to all checks (smell of rot)

- **Pack Tactics:** +10 to hit if ally within 3 tiles
- **Disease Carrier:** Bite causes Major Infection on failed Spirit check

BEHAVIOUR:

Intelligent but feral. Hunt in packs of 2-8. Prefer ambush from above/behind. Lair in crypts and burial sites. Will drag Paralysed victims to lair for later consumption. Territorial. Avoid sunlight (-10 to all checks in direct sun). Can be negotiated with for corpses/meat.

TREASURE: 1d6×10 Marks, bones, partially eaten remains, 20% chance of item from victim

THREAT LEVEL 3: DANGEROUS THREATS

Creatures with 46-70 HP, suitable for Level 5-6 parties

DIRE WOLF

"Massive wolves warped by Shadowlands magic, intelligent and ruthless."

HP: 40

Movement: 9 tiles

DR: 2 (Thick Fur)

STATS:

Strength 55 | Agility 60 | Mind 30 | Spirit 45

SKILLS:

Melee 50 | Perception 45 | Stealth 40 | Wilderness 50

ATTACKS:

- **Bite:** Melee 50%, 2d8+5 Pi
- **Pounce:** If moved 5+ tiles before attack, +10 to hit and target must pass Athletics check at -10 or knocked Prone

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Pack Tactics:** +10 to hit if ally within 3 tiles
- **Keen Nose:** +20 to Perception (smell), can track by scent
- **Night Vision:** See perfectly in darkness (no penalties)
- **Howl:** Once per combat, all wolves within 24 tiles gain +5 to hit for 3 rounds. Enemies must pass Spirit check or become Frightened for 2 rounds
- **Hamstring:** On critical hit, target's Movement reduced by half until healed

BEHAVIOUR:

Pack hunters (appear in groups of 1d4+1). Coordinate attacks - alpha leads, others flank. Target weakest first. Flee if alpha is killed and below 50% pack strength (Spirit check). Size of large horses - 4-5 feet at shoulder. Gray/black fur,

glowing amber eyes. More intelligent than normal wolves - some understand Common.

TREASURE: None (but pelt worth 10 Marks per wolf)

TROLL (Corrupted Badger-Kin)

"Massive regenerating monsters, once-badgers,, they have since been twisted by Dead Empire experiments."

HP: 50

Movement: 6 tiles

DR: 4 (Thick hide)

STATS:

Strength 70 | Agility 40 | Mind 20 | Spirit 50

SKILLS:

Melee 55 | Perception 40 (smell)

ATTACKS:

- **Claws (x2):** Melee 55%, 1d10+7 Sl each (can attack twice per turn)
- **Bite:** Melee 55%, 2d8+7 Pi

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Regeneration:** Regain 3 HP per turn (does not function if took Br damage that turn)

- **Relentless:** When reduced to 0 HP, make Spirit check. Success = remain conscious at 1 HP and continue fighting (once per encounter)
- **Fire Vulnerability:** Take double damage from Br
- **Keen Nose:** +20 to track by scent
- **Limb Regrowth:** Lost limbs regrow in 1d4 days
- **Ravenous Hunger:** Must eat 20 rations-worth of food per day or become Enraged (+10 to attack, -5 to defence, attack anything nearby)

BEHAVIOUR:

Solitary territorial hunters. Appear as 8-9 foot tall bipedal badgers - hunched, massive claws, regenerating wounds visibly. Extremely tough to kill - must use Br. Intelligent enough for basic speech but feral. Lair in caves. Will negotiate if offered large quantities of food. Omnivorous but prefer meat.

TREASURE: 1d10×20 Marks (from victims), bones, 1d4 mundane items, 20% chance of magic item

KILLING TROLLS: Br damage prevents regeneration for that turn. To permanently kill: reduce to 0 HP, then burn/dissolve the corpse (takes 1 turn with fire).

OGRE (Corrupted Bear-Kin)

"Brutish giants, once-bears mutated into dim-witted man-eaters."

HP: 45

Movement: 5 tiles

DR: 5 (Natural hide)

STATS:

Strength 75 | Agility 35 | Mind 25 | Spirit 45

SKILLS:

Melee 50 | Block 40 | Intimidation 50

ATTACKS:

- **Great Club:** Melee 50%, 3d8+7 Cr
- **Rock Throw:** Throwing 40%, Range 12 tiles, 2d10+7 Cr
- **Grab:** Melee 50%, 1d6+7 Cr + Grappled (Athletics check at -20 to escape)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Mighty:** Carry capacity tripled. Can wield two-handed weapons one-handed
- **Thick Skull:** +5 to resist mind-affecting magic (Spirit checks)
- **Large Size:** Counts as 4 creatures for space. Attackers get +10 to hit (easy target)

- **Terrifying Roar:** Once per combat, all creatures within 6 tiles must pass Spirit check at -10 or become Frightened for 1d4 rounds
- **Grab and Throw:** Can Grapple creature and throw it 1d4 tiles away (1d10 falling damage)

BEHAVIOUR:

Dim-witted but cruel. Appear as 10-12 foot tall bipedal bears with pot bellies, crude weapons, filthy. Live in caves or ruins. Often serve smarter creatures (dark mages, swinekin chiefs). Hoard shiny objects without understanding value. Eat anything, including people. Can be bribed with food or treasure. Loyal to whoever feeds them best.

TREASURE: 2d6×20 Marks, large sack of bones, 1d6 gems (50 Marks each), random items from victims

TACTICS: Brute force. Throw rocks from distance, charge in with club. Grab small creatures and shake/throw them. Not smart enough for complex tactics.

THREAT LEVEL 4: DEADLY THREATS

Creatures with 71-100 HP, suitable for Level 7-8 parties

MAWBEAST (Unique Shadowlands Predator)

"Three-headed horrors born from dark magic, apex predators of the ruins."

HP: 80

Movement: 7 tiles

DR: 4 (Thick Hide)

STATS:

Strength 75 | Agility 50 | Mind 25 | Spirit 50

SKILLS:

Melee 60 | Perception 55

ATTACKS:

- **Claws (x2):** Melee 60%, 3d8+7 Sl each (can attack twice per turn)
- **Bite (x3):** Melee 60%, 3d8+7 Pi (can attack with all three mouths - must choose claws OR bites each turn)
- **Hug:** If both claws hit same target, automatically Grapples and crushes for 2d10 Cr per turn

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Three Heads:** +30 to Perception. Can make three bite attacks instead of two claw attacks
- **Keen Senses:** +20 to Perception (sight and hearing). Cannot be surprised
- **Fearsome Presence:** Enemies within 10 tiles must pass Spirit check at -10 or become Frightened for 1d4 rounds (first encounter only)
- **Rampage:** If reduced below 50% HP, gains +10 to all attacks. Immune to Frightened status (berserker rage)
- **Relentless Hunter:** Once target is selected, will pursue for days. Track by scent over miles

BEHAVIOUR:

Extremely territorial. Attacks on sight. Focuses on one target until dead, then moves to next. Never flees (no Spirit checks for morale). Roars constantly (alerts everything nearby). Lairs are in Dead Empire ruins. Size of large bear but more muscular. Three heads - each with independent awareness but single mind. Each head has different expression (rage, hunger, hate).

TREASURE: Bones and torn equipment in lair (1d10×50 Marks, 30% chance of magic item)

TACTICS: Charge in, Grapple strongest-looking target, crush while other heads bite at others. No subtlety. Pure aggression.

SHADOW WRAITH (Incorporeal Undead)

"Spirits of those who died in terror during the Dead Empire's fall."

HP: 50

Movement: 6 tiles (flying,
pass through walls)

DR: Special (see below)

STATS:

Strength 40 | Agility 70 | Mind 55 | Spirit 80

SKILLS:

Cursing 65 | Stealth 70 | Intimidation 60

ATTACKS:

- **Life Drain Touch:** Melee 60%, 2d10 Magic (ignores armour) + heals wraith for half damage dealt
- **Shadow Curse:** Cursing 65%, target permanently loses 1d6 from random stat (can stack - victim becomes shadow spawn if all stats reach 0)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Incorporeal:** SI/Pi/Cr weapons deal half damage. Magic weapons deal full damage. Spells affect normally
- **Shadow Step:** Can teleport to any shadow within 10 tiles (free action)

- **Sunlight Vulnerability:** Takes 2d10 Br per turn in direct sunlight, flees immediately (automatic Spirit check failure)
- **Fear Aura:** All creatures within 5 tiles suffer -10 to all checks (dread)
- **Create Spawn:** Any creature killed by wraith rises as lesser shadow in 1d4 days (25 HP shadow)
- **Resistant to Magic:** +10 to Spirit checks when resisting spells

BEHAVIOUR:

Intelligent, sadistic. Toys with victims. Drains stats slowly rather than killing outright. Speaks in whispers - voices of those it killed. Flees if seriously threatened (below 25% HP) to hunt again later. Lairs in darkest parts of ruins. Drawn to areas of suffering and despair.

TREASURE: 1d6 spirit gems (50 Marks each, contain trapped souls), 40% chance of 1d4 magic items from victims

DESTROYING WRAITHS: Sunlight forces them to flee. Reducing to 0 HP disperses them for 1d6 days (they reform unless curse is broken). Permanent destruction requires: Dispel Evil spell (Enhancement magic) or consecrating their death site with rituals.

WIGHT LORD (Armoured Undead Commander)

"Former knights of the Dead Empire, bound to guard their posts eternally."

HP: 65

Movement: 5 tiles

DR: 8 (Enchanted Plate
Armour)

STATS:

Strength 65 | Agility 40 | Mind 50 | Spirit 70

SKILLS:

Melee 60 | Block 55 | Tactics 50

ATTACKS:

- **Enchanted Longsword:** Melee 60%, 2d10+6 SI (magical weapon)
- **Death Touch:** Melee 60%, 1d10 Magic + Level Drain (Spirit check to resist losing 1 experience level temporarily)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Undead:** Immune to Poisoned, disease, Frightened, mind control, Exhausted. Never check Spirit for morale
- **Level Drain:** Any successful hit with Death Touch drains 1 experience level (Spirit check at -10 to

resist). Lost levels return after 1 week rest in settlement

- **Command Undead:** Can command 2d6 lesser undead (skeletons, zombies, ghouls) within 24 tiles
- **Resistant to Magic:** +10 to Spirit checks when resisting spells
- **Regeneration (Minor):** Regain 2 HP per turn
- **Aura of Despair:** Living creatures within 6 tiles suffer -5 to all Spirit checks
- **Ancient Warrior:** Skilled tactician, uses terrain and commands underlings effectively

BEHAVIOUR:

Intelligent, disciplined, honourable. Bound to guard specific locations (tombs, vaults, gateways). Will negotiate if approached respectfully - may allow passage for tribute or proof of worthiness. Fights with skill, not just brute force. Commands skeleton/zombie guards. Remembers oath from life, follows it blindly even if it no longer makes sense.

TREASURE: 2d6×50 Marks, enchanted armour/weapons, keys to vault it guards, ancient military orders/maps

DEALING WITH WIGHTS: Can be negotiated with. May accept duel (single combat for passage). Destroying them releases bound spirits (good act). Some can be convinced their oaths are fulfilled (creative role-play).

THREAT LEVEL 5: BOSS ENCOUNTERS

Creatures with 100+ HP, suitable for Level 9-10+ parties

DRAGON

"Ageless winged terrors from before the Dead Empire, eternal and unkillable."

HP: 120

Movement: 8 tiles ground,

DR: 8 (Scaled hide)

16 tiles flying

STATS:

Strength 90 | Agility 60 | Mind 80 | Spirit 85

MP: 40 (Mind 80 ÷ 2)

SKILLS:

Melee 70 | Perception 65 | Occult 70 | Evocation 60 |
Conjuration 60 | Transmutation 60 | Cursing 60

ATTACKS:

- **Bite:** Melee 70%, 4d10+9 Pi
- **Claws (x2):** Melee 70%, 3d8+9 Sl each
- **Tail Sweep:** All creatures in 12-tile cone behind dragon must Dodge at -20 or take 3d10 Cr and knocked Prone
- **Wing Buffet:** All creatures within 6 tiles must pass Athletics check at -20 or knocked back 2d4 tiles and Prone

BREATH WEAPON:

- **Fire Breath:** 24-tile cone, 8d10 Br (Dodge check for half). Usable once every 1d4+1 turns. Ignites flammable materials. Victims gain On Fire status unless Agility check at -15

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Dragon Fear:** First encounter, all creatures within 24 tiles must pass Spirit check at -20 or become Frightened and flee for 1d6 rounds. Even success causes -10 to all checks for 3 rounds
- **Massive:** Counts as 8 creatures for space. Can move over smaller creatures
- **Magic Resistance:** Immune to cantrip and basic-level spells (0-5 MP). Moderate-level spells (10 MP) work at half effectiveness. Advanced+ spells work normally. Gets +20 to Spirit checks when resisting spell effects
- **Spell Casting:** Can cast Advanced-level spells (15 MP cost). Knows Evocation, Conjunction, Transmutation, and Cursing schools. Has 40 MP pool
- **Eternal:** Cannot die of old age. Heals completely if given 1 month undisturbed. Can only be permanently killed by magical weapons.
- **Ancient Knowledge:** Speaks all languages. Knows secrets of Dead Empire. Can identify any magic item on sight

- **Treasure Sense:** Can smell gold/magic items from miles away. Knows exact value instinctively
- **Brilliant Mind:** Mind 80 - brilliant tactician, manipulator, long-term planner

BEHAVIOUR:

Extremely intelligent, patient, manipulative. Lives for centuries - views mortals as mayflies. Obsessed with hoarding treasure and knowledge. Each dragon has unique personality (cruel, scholarly, vain, cunning, etc). Prefers manipulation to direct combat - uses minions, makes deals, plays factions against each other.

COMBAT TACTICS:

- **Round 1:** Fire breath from above while flying
- **Round 2:** Land on strongest target (crush with weight), tail sweep others
- **Round 3:** Cast spell (Wall of Flames to split party, 15 MP) or breath again if recharged
- **Round 4+:** Savage strongest survivors with bite/claws, fly away if reduced below 50% HP

Lair: Always in ruins/mountains with treasure hoard worth 10,000-50,000 Marks. Lair has 2d6 deadly traps and 3d6 servants (kobolds worship dragons as gods, dark mages serve for power, bound creatures).

TREASURE:

- 5d6×1000 Marks in coins/gems
- 2d6 magic items (swords, armour, rings, potions, scrolls)
- Ancient texts worth 500 Marks each (1d6 of them)
- 25% chance of one Legendary item (incredibly powerful unique artifact)

DEALING WITH DRAGONS:

- **Negotiation:** Dragons love games, riddles, deals. May spare party for entertainment or tribute (1000+ Marks or an interesting magic item)
- **Distraction:** Can be lured away from lair with information about bigger treasure elsewhere
- **Long-term Plot:** Dragons play chess with kingdoms. Might hire party to sabotage rivals

VARIANTS:

- **Young Dragon:** HP 60, MP 30, less experienced, overconfident, easier to trick
- **Ancient Dragon:** HP 180, MP 60, has ruled for millennium, knows Master-level spells (20 MP), DR 10, multiple legendary items in hoard
- **Dracolich (Undead Dragon):** HP 100, MP 50, immune to Br, breathes Magic energy (8d10) instead, commands undead hordes, has a phylactery (like lich)

LICH (Undead Archmage)

"Sorcerer-kings of the Dead Empire who achieved immortality through dark magic."

HP: 80

Movement: 6 tiles ground, 8 tiles flying (via Levitate spell)

DR: 2 (Robes)

STATS:

Strength 40 | Agility 50 | Mind 95 | Spirit 90

MP: 47 (Mind 95 ÷ 2 = 47.5, round down)

SKILLS:

All magic schools 80 | Occult 85 | Investigation 70 | Intimidation 75

ATTACKS:

- **Staff Strike:** Melee 40%, 1d6+4 Cr (rarely used)
- **Death Touch:** Melee 50%, 4d10 Magic (ignores armour) + Spirit check at -20 or Paralysed for 1d6 rounds
- **Spell Casting:** PRIMARY ATTACK METHOD (see below)

SPELL CASTING:

- Can cast Master-level spells (20 MP cost)
- Knows ALL spells from spell list in Player's Guide
- Can cast while moving

- Has 47 MP, recovers $2d10 + (\text{Spirit } 90 \div 4 = 22) = 2d10+22$ MP per short rest

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Undead:** Immune to Poisoned, disease, Frightened, mind control, Exhausted, charm
- **Magic Mastery:** +20 to all spellcasting skill checks. Can burn Mana more efficiently (+2% per MP spent instead of +1%)
- **Phylactery:** Cannot be permanently killed unless phylactery (soul vessel) is destroyed. Reforms at phylactery location in 1d10 days if "killed"
- **Immortal:** Cannot die of age. Has existed for 1000+ years
- **Magic Resistance:** +20 to Spirit checks when resisting spells (very hard to affect with magic)
- **Death Aura:** All living creatures within 10 tiles take 1d6 Magic per turn (no defence possible)
- **Paralysing Gaze:** Once per turn as free action, one creature within 12 tiles must pass Spirit check at -15 or Paralysed for 1 round
- **Command Undead:** Can command unlimited undead within sight
- **Ancient Knowledge:** Remembers Dead Empire's secrets, knows locations of hidden vaults, ancient rituals

BEHAVIOUR:

Brilliant, patient, utterly inhuman. Has schemed for centuries. Views living as insects. Typically guards most valuable parts of Dead Empire ruins (central vaults, throne rooms, ritual chambers). Each lich has unique obsession (revenge on living, perfecting magic, completing ancient work, conquering territory).

COMBAT TACTICS:

- **Pre-combat:** Lair filled with undead servants (2d6 skeletons, 1d6 wights, 1d4 wraiths). Extensive magical traps. Lich knows party is coming (Scrying spells)
- **Round 1:** Cast Conjure Swarm (10 MP) or Meteor Strike (20 MP) to thin numbers
- **Round 2:** Cast Barrier of Will (10 MP) to separate party
- **Round 3:** Cast Telekinesis (15 MP) to disarm/throw warriors or Rust Metal (10 MP) on armoured foes
- **Round 4:** Cast Winter's Breath (15 MP) or Fireball (10 MP) concentrated fire
- **Round 5+:** Use held spells (half MP cost) to spam attacks. If threatened: cast Teleport (15 MP) to escape, return with more undead
- **Death Touch:** Only uses in melee if cornered

PHYLACTERY: Hidden elsewhere (different room, different ruin, buried underground). Destroying lich is temporary

victory. Must find and destroy phylactery (separate quest) for permanent death.

Common phylacteries: Enchanted gemstone (hidden in crown), magic ring (worn by lich - clever players might steal it!), ancient tome (in library), beating heart in jar (disgusting but classic).

Destroying Phylactery: Usually requires specific method - fire for heart, Dispel Magic for ring, desecration ritual for tome. Investigation checks or captured minion interrogation reveals method.

TREASURE:

- 3d6×1000 Marks in ancient currency
- 3d6 magic items (scrolls, potions, enchanted items)
- Spell research notes (new spells! GMs can create custom spells based on these)
- Keys/maps to deeper vaults
- 50% chance of clues to phylactery location

DEALING WITH LICHES:

- **Negotiation:** Possible but difficult. Liches are insane by mortal standards. May make deals if it serves their schemes
- **Distraction:** Can be lured into magical debates (love showing off knowledge). Buys time

- **Temporary Victory:** "Kill" the body, grab treasure, run before it reforms (1d10 days)
 - **Permanent Victory:** Find phylactery → destroy it using specific method → THEN kill lich
-

SPECIAL ENCOUNTERS

LIVING STATUE (Magical Guardian)

"Animated constructs built by Dead Empire to guard their treasures eternally."

HP: 70

Movement: 4 tiles (Heavy)

DR: 10 (Stone body)

STATS:

Strength 80 | Agility 30 | Mind 20 | Spirit 100

SKILLS:

Melee 60 | Block 50

ATTACKS:

- **Stone Fists:** Melee 60%, 3d10+8 Cr
- **Slam:** Melee 60%, 4d10+8 Cr, target knocked Prone (Athletics check at -15 to resist)

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

- **Construct:** Immune to Poisoned, disease, Frightened, mind control, Exhausted, Bleeding, Paralysed, charm, all mental effects
- **Magic Immunity:** +30 to Spirit checks when resisting spells (extremely resistant)
- **Damage Resistance:** Sl/Pi weapons deal minimum damage. Cr weapons and magic deal normal damage
- **Relentless:** Does not tire. Fights until destroyed or intruders leave
- **Guardian Protocol:** Follows specific orders ("guard this door", "kill all who enter"). Cannot deviate or be reasoned with
- **Repair:** If not destroyed, repairs 5 HP per day automatically
- **Immovable:** Cannot be knocked Prone, Grappled, or moved against will.

BEHAVIOUR:

Mindless, follows ancient orders. Typically guards specific doorways, treasure rooms, or artifacts. Will attack anyone without proper authorization (ancient passwords, specific items, certain bloodlines). Ignores distractions and attempts at communication. Can be avoided if players figure out authorization method. Some statues can be temporarily shut down by puzzle solutions or command words (Investigation checks to find clues in area).

TREASURE: None

DESTROYING STATUES:

- Reduce to 0 HP (difficult, as they have DR 10!)
- Find command word to deactivate (Investigation checks in area, ancient texts)
- Bypass entirely (sneak past using Stealth, solve puzzle to open alternate route, forge authorization item)

VARIANTS:

- **Bronze Soldier:** HP 60, DR 8, uses weapons (longsword 3d8+8 Sl, shield +10 Block)
 - **Marble Archer:** HP 50, DR 8, Bows 60, shoots stone arrows (Range 24 tiles, 2d10+5 Pi)
 - **Obsidian Assassin:** HP 40, DR 6, Stealth 60, uses poison blades (4d6 Pi + Deadly Poison)
-

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll d100 when party travels through Shadowlands:

01-30: No encounter

31-40: Environmental (trap, pit, unstable floor, poisonous plants)

41-50: Bandits (1d6+2)

51-55: Wildkin pack (1d4+1)

56-62: Kobold warren (2d6 kobolds + 1d4 traps)

63-66: Corrupted Slime

- 67-70:** Ghoul pack (1d6+1)
- 71-74:** Dire Wolves (1d4+1)
- 75-78:** Swinekin raiders (1d6+1)
- 79-81:** Troll (solitary)
- 82-84:** Ogre (with 1d6 kobold servants)
- 85-87:** Mawbeast
- 88-90:** Shadow Wraith
- 91-93:** Wight Lord (with 2d6 skeleton guards)
- 94-96:** Living Statue
- 97-98:** Dragon (flying overhead, might notice party - Perception check)
- 99-00:** Lich (only in deep ruins, otherwise re-roll)

Adjustments:

- **Shallow Shadowlands (near settlement):** Roll twice, take lower result
- **Deep Shadowlands (far from civilization):** Roll twice, take higher result
- **Night:** +10 to roll (more dangerous encounters)
- **Loud party (no Stealth):** Encounters happen on 01-50 instead of 01-30

ENCOUNTER BUILDING GUIDE

For Level 1-2 Party (4 PCs):

- 4-6 Threat Level 1 creatures (Bandits, Wildkin, Kobolds)
- OR 1 Threat Level 2 creature (Swinekin, Slime, Ghoul pack of 2-3)

For Level 3-4 Party:

- 2-3 Threat Level 2 creatures
- OR 1 Threat Level 3 creature (Dire Wolves, Troll, Ogre)
- OR 6-8 Threat Level 1 creatures

For Level 5-6 Party:

- 1-2 Threat Level 3 creatures
- OR 1 Threat Level 4 creature (Mawbeast, Wraith, Wight Lord)
- OR 4-5 Threat Level 2 creatures

For Level 7-8 Party:

- 1 Threat Level 4 creature
- OR 2-3 Threat Level 3 creatures
- OR 1 Threat Level 5 creature with support (Dragon with kobold servants, Lich with undead guards)

For Level 9-10+ Party:

- 1 Threat Level 5 BOSS creature (Dragon, Lich)
- Support: Add minions equal to half party size
- Environmental advantages: Lair actions, traps, terrain

Making Encounters Harder:

- Add terrain challenges (pit in middle of room, fire hazards)
- Give enemies high ground (+10 to ranged attacks)
- Multiple enemy types (bandits + dire wolves working together)
- Time pressure (room filling with water, ritual completing)
- Reinforcements (more enemies arrive after 3 rounds)

Making Encounters Easier:

- Give players environmental advantages (cover, bottleneck)
 - Provide escape routes (don't force every fight to the death)
 - Telegraph danger clearly ("The troll is MASSIVE and regenerating!")
 - Allow creative solutions (collapse ceiling on ogre, lure dragon into trap)
-

GM NOTES ON TREASURE

Treasure by Threat Level:

- **Level 1:** 1d6×10 Marks, mundane equipment
- **Level 2:** 2d6×10 Marks, 10% chance magic item

- **Level 3:** 1d10×20 Marks, 20% chance magic item
- **Level 4:** 1d10×50 Marks, 30% chance magic item
- **Level 5:** 5d6×100 Marks, 2d6 magic items, legendary items

Adjust based on:

- **Encounter difficulty:** Harder fights = better rewards
- **Player cleverness:** Reward creative solutions with bonus treasure
- **Story needs:** Quest items, plot hooks hidden in treasure
- **Settlement growth:** Party needs gold to level settlement - don't be stingy!

Magic Item Guidelines:

- +1 weapons/armor: 100-200 Marks value
- +2 weapons/armor: 500-1000 Marks value
- Potions: 15-80 Marks depending on power
- Scrolls: 100-500 Marks depending on spell level
- Wondrous items: Varies widely, price by usefulness

Remember: Gold drives the settlement growth loop. Give enough treasure that players feel progress!

BOSS ENCOUNTERS

Boss creatures should:

- Have 2-3× normal HP
- Have multiple attacks per turn
- Have environmental advantages (lair actions, traps, minions)
- Have phases (change tactics at 75%, 50%, 25% HP)
- Present unique challenges (not just "big bag of HP")

Example Boss: Corrupted Sorcerer-King

Phase 1 (100-50% HP): Casts powerful spells, summons skeleton guards
 Phase 2 (50-25% HP): Becomes enraged, physical attacks, ignores pain
 Phase 3 (below 25% HP): Desperation move (suicide explosion if killed, takes everyone with him unless stopped)

PART TEN: GM TOOLS

REACTION ROLLS

When players meet NPCs whose attitude is unclear:

Roll 2d6 and add modifiers:

Modifiers:

- Charisma >60: +1
- Charisma <30: -1
- Same species: +1
- Rival species (cats/mice, etc.): -1

- Party well-armed: +1 (respect) or -1 (threatening, GM's choice)
- Party wounded: -1 (smells blood)

Reaction Table (2d6)

2-3: Hostile - Attacks immediately or flees, calling guards

4-5: Unfriendly - Rude, unhelpful, may refuse service

6-8: Neutral - Polite but distant, standard prices

9-10: Friendly - Helpful, shares information, fair deals

11-12: Enthusiastic - Very helpful, offers discounts, may offer aid

MORALE CHECKS

When NPCs/monsters face overwhelming danger, check if they flee.

When to Check Morale

- Leader killed
- 50% of allies dead
- Outnumbered 3-to-1
- Faced with overwhelming force (dragon, army, magic)
- Witnessing horrific death

Morale Check (Spirit Check)

Success: Stand ground, continue fighting **Failure:** Flee, surrender, or panic

Modifiers:

- Well-trained soldiers: +10
 - Fanatics/Undead: Immune (never flee)
 - Cowards/Hirelings: -10
 - Defending home: +15
 - Fighting for treasure: -10
-

RANDOM QUEST GENERATOR

Roll on these tables to create quick side quests.

Quest Giver (d10)

1. Governor/Authority Figure
2. Wealthy Merchant
3. Desperate Farmer
4. Temple Priest
5. Grieving Parent
6. Mysterious Stranger
7. Rival Adventurer
8. Coven Witch
9. Injured Scout

10.Ghost/Spirit

Quest Type (d10)

1. Rescue Mission
2. Assassination
3. Retrieval
4. Escort
5. Investigation
6. Exploration
7. Hunt Monster
8. Clear Dungeon
9. Diplomacy
- 10.Heist

Complication (d10)

1. Quest giver is lying
2. Target is innocent
3. Rival party also pursuing
4. Time limit (must finish in 1 day)
5. No violence allowed
6. Must remain hidden
7. Traitor in party's ranks
8. Target has hostages
9. Location is trapped/cursed
- 10.Success triggers worse consequence

Reward (d10)

1. 1d6×50 Marks
 2. Magical item
 3. Rare information
 4. +10 Settlement Score
 5. Powerful ally
 6. Access to restricted area
 7. Discount at shop (25% off forever)
 8. Land grant (free building)
 9. Title/Honour (social standing)
 10. Cursed reward (seems good but...)
-

PART ELEVEN: SAMPLE ADVENTURE

THE SCREAMING MILL (Starter Adventure)

Setup

This is a very short sample quest which can be used to get you and your players accustomed to the game before sending them out into the Shadowlands on a real adventure.

The colony's grain mill, which lies just on the outskirts of the settlement, has gone silent for the last 3 days. The Miller and his three mouse children have gone missing. The mill is essential for food production, and if it's non-operational, the settlement's people might starve.

The Truth

Giant rats (bestial – not anthropomorphic) broke into the cellar through ancient smuggling tunnels that the mill was built over the top of. They killed and ate the miller's family. Now they're breeding, and threaten to break into the settlement proper.

Location: The Mill

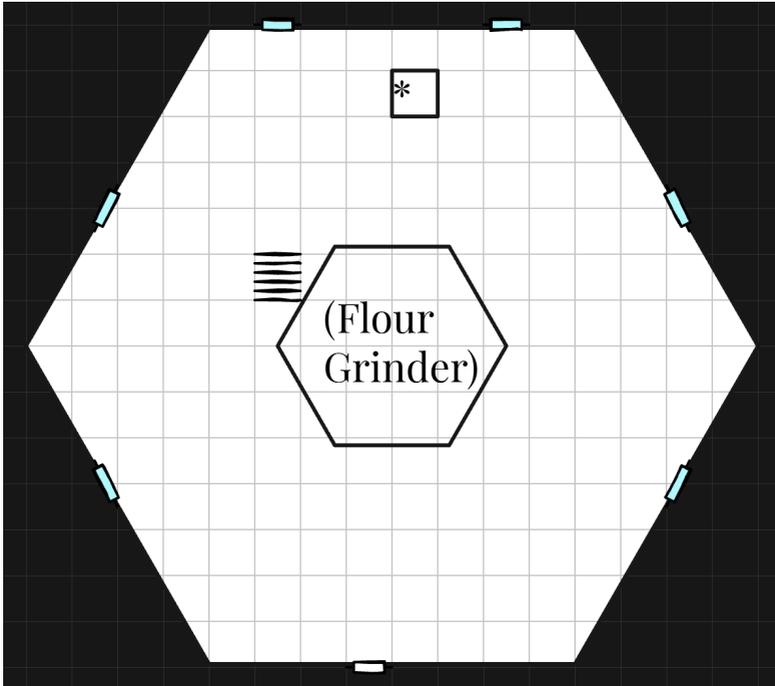
Exterior:

- 3-story stone building, old but solid
- Large water wheel turning slowly (creek-powered)
- Front door ajar, claw marks on frame
- Shuttered windows (can peek inside with a Perception check)
- Squeaking sounds can be heard from within

Ground Floor:

- There's torn grain sacks and flour everywhere
- Blood stains (3 days old, drag marks leading to cellar door)

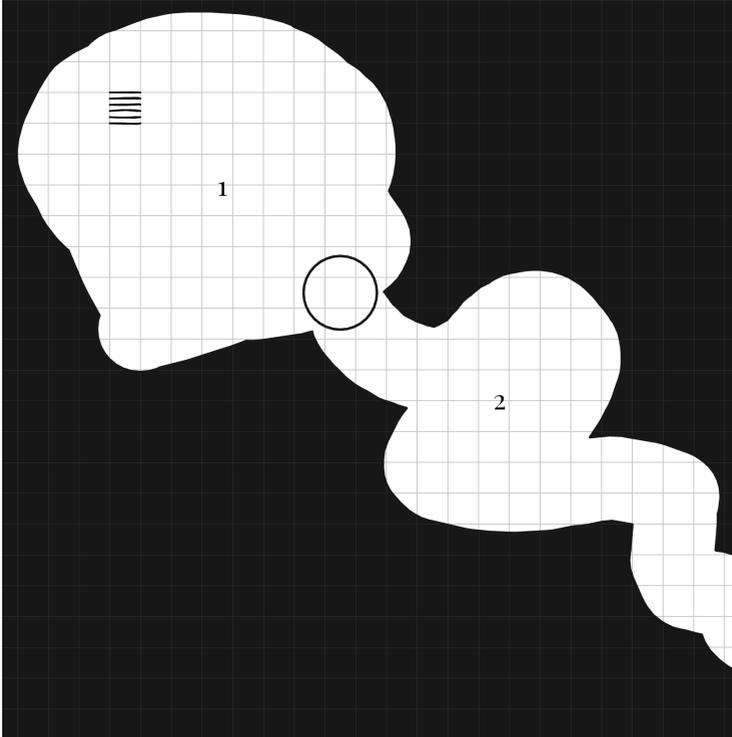
- **2 Giant Rats** scavenging (stats earlier in Bestiary)
- **Hidden Trapdoor:** Lies hidden under some sacks of grain, now chewed through. Investigation to spot, and leads down stone steps



The rough floor plan of the mill's ground floor, with the flour grinder in the centre, with a ladder going to the upper floors (not mapped - just contain beds and living amenities). The square with the asterisk () represents the cellar door. The blue rectangles around the perimeter are windows, and the white square to the south is the door.*

Cellar (via Trapdoor):

- Dark, damp, rotting smell can be sensed immediately upon entry
- This place seems to be hand-carved, and much older than the mill itself
- **3 Giant Rats + Rat Matriarch**



(1) is the main part of the cellar, which contains the boss fight with the Rat Matriarch. The boulder blocking the tunnels is the circle to the Southeast. (2) is the beginning of the cavern, where the Miller's children are hiding, along with the skeletons. The smuggler's tunnels continue Southeast into darkness.

Rat Matriarch: HP 30, DR 2 (thick fur and hide), Bite 2d8+Disease (Spirit check to avoid), Swarm Leader (all rats within 10 tiles gain +10 to their attacks)

- Miller's remains have been feasted on. His guts are hanging out, half-chewed, and his corpse has begun to rot.
- Treasure: 35 Marks in coin purse on the Miller's person, sturdy shield (+5 Block, 6 DR) hanging on wall.

Secret Tunnels:

- Behind loose stone in cellar wall (Investigation -15 or Traps -10 to find)
- These are ancient smuggling tunnels, which lead 1d4 hexes into the wilderness
- The Miller's children are hiding here, starving and terrified! They will be thankful that the players rescued them, but sad about the fate of their father.
- The tunnels contain: 3 skeletons (inanimate, dead smugglers), two rusted swords and a **Spear of Flames** (Rule as a regular spear which does an extra +1d4 Fire damage at the player's discretion, 5 times per day. The fire effect must be declared *before* the player has rolled their melee skill check), as well as 20 Marks worth of ancient coins. Optionally, one of the skeletons may have an old parchment map

showing the location of a dungeon. In my own case, I used this moment as a plot hook for *The Ruins of Jek'kejara*

Complications (d6)

1-2: Rats feeding on corpses (players gain surprise if stealthy) 3-4: Rats alert, have prepared ambush (players walk into trap) 5: Matriarch is birthing (1d6 rat pups present, Matriarch Enraged: +10 to all attacks) 6: Tunnel partially collapses during fight (Dodge check or 2d10 Crushing, the rats use this chaos to escape)

Failure Consequences

If players fail or ignore quest:

- Rats raid settlement in 1 week
- 1d10 settlers killed by escaped rats if nobody is around to stop them, or the settlement has inadequate fortifications/military.

END OF GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

Small Bones on The Frontier Game Master's Guide v1.0

Powered by the SAMS Engine

Created by Kimberly-Jane Doe/morso