

# *The GameMaster's Apprentice*

## **Adventure Guide: Fantasy**

**Author: Nathan Rockwood**  
**Graphic Designer for Cards: Max Johnson**  
**Artist: Natasha Kline**

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Thanks so much!

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# Table of Contents

<a href="#">INTRODUCTION</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">What is an Adventure Guide?</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">How to use this guide</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Framework Creation Summary</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Choose a Core</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Ask a Big Question (Optional)</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Choose a Doom</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Create Three Other Problems</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Ask 1-3 Little Questions (Optional)</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">The Point: Scene Creation</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Example of a Complete Framework</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Blank Framework Sheet</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">ADVENTURE PREMISES</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Fill in the Blanks</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">The Questgiver</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">The Task</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Reasons</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Fantasy Premise Tag Symbols</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">CHARACTERS</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Professions</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Fantasy Character Tag Symbols</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">ENCOUNTERS</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Premade Combos</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Fantasy Encounter Tag Symbols</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">LOOT!</a>	<a href="#">21</a>

# INTRODUCTION

## What is an Adventure Guide?

An Adventure Guide is a collection of tips for designing and/or running a role playing game, in a given genre, and using The GameMaster's Apprentice deck of cards. These guides should be helpful whether you are using the base, genre-neutral deck or any of the genre-specific decks, and (up to a point) can even be used without the deck of cards, though that defeats the true purpose of the guide: to provide enough inspiration and enough examples that, once you've exhausted the possibilities presented here, you'll have an easy time creating your own story seeds using just the cards.

## How to use this guide

After this introduction, you'll find a section dedicated to advice on constructing an open-ended story framework. That framework can serve as structure you fill in, giving you a more complete adventure, or you can use it to help run a more free-flowing story. While this is 100% useable without the cards, this style of adventure prep is also ideal for games where the cards will be used heavily (either as GM support, or as the GM itself), as it provides options to use the cards to choose from, and suggests characters and dangers the cards might be referencing in their random events or story seeds.

Next, the guide goes over advice on generating quest seeds. This consists primarily of tables that work both by themselves and with the deck, and which are aimed at the conventions of the fantasy genre.

Wrapping it up after that are two sections meant to help tweak the use of the deck to generate fantasy-appropriate characters and random events, and then an example of creating very genre-specific tools for your game--in this case, using the deck to randomly generate loot.

These tools can be used independently or in concert, during prep or during play; I recommend reviewing them all briefly before you start, and then you can decide how you will get the most benefit out of them!

## ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The guidelines here are essentially a set of advice on preparing the framework of an adventure, quickly and efficiently. It might seem overly simplistic, but we're targeting a framework instead of a full adventure because it provides you as a GM with two essential ingredients. First, it ensures you have enough information to always answer the quintessential question, "What happens next?" Second, it gives you the freedom to let the story evolve naturally.

One of the biggest problems with a traditional pre-printed adventure is its limited scope of choices and possible outcomes; that's a large part of what inspired *The GameMaster's Apprentice* in the first place. However, even though I love using random content to enhance my games, I do like to be able to keep things consistent--and planning ahead in broad strokes can make that much easier, and makes the stories that result feel more real and engaging.

These frameworks are partially inspired by my work on *Missions for the Demon Hunters: A Comedy of Terrors Role Playing Game*, which was in turn inspired by many other games, some based on the Fate and Apocalypse World systems. If you think the frameworks here work well for your games, you might want to check out those books for more ideas!

### Framework Creation Summary

So, to make an adventure framework, follow these steps--a more detailed explanation of each will follow this brief checklist:

- Choose a Core
- Ask a Big Question which the game will revolve around (optional)
- Choose a Doom
  - Describe the Doom's Goal
  - Outline the Doom's Plan to achieve this goal, in 2-3 stages
  - Create the Cast for the Doom, describing 1-3 characters or features
- Create 3 other Problems
  - Choose a different Type for each Problem (recommended)
  - Give each a Goal
  - Outline the Plan each has, in 2-3 stages
  - Create a Cast for each Problem, including 1-3 characters or features
- Ask 1-3 Little Questions that provide interesting hooks (optional)

## Choose a Core

A Core is a central principle of the genre; naturally, a given game will be likely to touch on more than one genre convention, but selecting a single Core when planning out a framework is meant to help you focus on choosing other elements that will work well together. The theory here is that stating your target up front will make it easier to achieve. If you find the Cores to be too broad for your tastes, select the most relevant and refine it; reword it or replace it with a more specific version.

Here are three Cores that cover a significant majority of fantasy stories; you can add to the list or modify what you see here, as need be:

**To save the day:** This Core covers games that cast the players as true heroes. While planning, keep in mind that the focus will be on stopping bad things and helping the needy; the foes will be clearly in the wrong, or could be natural forces or disasters. Moral ambiguity tends to be low in these stories, but that is a trope, not a requirement.

**To explore the wilderness:** This Core can be about exploring in the literal sense, but can also cover learning knowledge, taming the wild, and similar situations; adventure, in the sense of engaging with the unknown. Moral ambiguity can easily be a feature or not; many classic games just gloss over the problems associated with rampaging through the homes of ‘monsters.’

**To gain power:** This Core is central to stories and games featuring a quest for glory, riches, fame, or other forms of power. Some of these stories might seem very similar to those of the exploration Core above, but the difference is in the motivation. Classically, these stories are the most likely to force moral questions, as power is commonly understood to have a corrupting influence.

## Ask a Big Question (Optional)

This isn’t a required step, but something I bring in to my games because I firmly believe that a game can be as much a piece of literature as a novel or a play--and one of the things that defines ‘literature’ for me is the exploration of a grand question.

When it comes to a novel, the answers to these questions are often discussed as ‘themes’ of the text, but those are actually secondary; the important part is the question itself. While the best example I’ve ever seen of a game asking a big question is the classic computer-based RPG from Bioware, *Planescape: Torment*, I’ve also seen the tactic work well in games I and others have GMed.

If you want to give it a shot, after you’ve selected a Core, consider these examples of Big Questions that fit easily into the fantasy genre:

**What is worth dying for?**

**What is true love?**

**What defines a hero?**

**Can evil ever truly be redeemed?**

There is a nearly infinite variety of questions that could be asked here; think through your favorite books, movies, TV shows, and games if you need more inspiration!

Once you have a question, what do you do? Keep it in the back of your mind when planning and making decisions for your NPCs. If the question is *What defines a hero?* then your bad guys might push the player characters to make tough decisions, testing their values and loyalties; on the other hand, if the question is *Can evil ever truly be redeemed?* then you have to make sure the villain has a Goal that sets them up to seek that redemption--even if they are going about it all wrong, prior to the characters' intervention. *What is worth dying for?* is a question that will be difficult to explore unless character death is genuinely likely and could strike from many sides, and *What is true love?* might require a game where all the characters have pre-established dependents and connections (children, parents, spouses, friends, and so on).

But whatever you do, **you must NOT answer the question** yourself! Let the players explore possible answers as the story unfolds. The best games will develop their answers naturally, if at all, and will still leave you thinking at the end.

## Choose a Doom

A Doom is the thing that looms on the horizon. It doesn't have to be the primary focus of the story as it starts, but it squats in the darkness just beyond the firelight and *waits*. This is something that will change the world for the worse unless the characters act.

The biggest challenge in picking an appropriate Doom is realizing that it doesn't have to be physical, concrete foe. Yes, *The Dark Lord* is a useable Doom, but so are *The Plague* and *Fear of the Truth*.

Really, any major threat that could vastly change the world if left unchecked could be a good choice for the framework's Doom. If you're not sure about an idea, think through these questions:

**Can the *characters* (as opposed to the players) potentially see the Doom coming, given warning or reason to be suspicious?**

**Once identified, could the Doom possibly be stopped by the characters?**

**Will the Doom change something significant about the world if it isn't stopped?**

If the answers to all three are *Yes*, then you probably have an acceptable Doom.

While designing your Doom, keep in mind the Core (and possibly Big Question) you already selected. Whatever it is, the Doom should fit in with a game focused on those elements.

If you can't come up with something that feels worthy of the title, take a look at the Problems section below; the suggested categories of Problems could all apply to Dooms, and might inspire you to pick a Doom you wouldn't otherwise have thought of.

Once you have a Doom, it's time to fill out some details about them.

### **Describe the Doom's Goal**

The Goal of a Doom is their endgame; here, you should specify at least one target they have, one thing that will drastically change the world if they can achieve it. Why do this? Because if you know what it wants, you'll always know how it would adapt to deal with a changing situation.

Write a sentence that describes what will happen if the players choose to let the Doom act unchecked. If your Doom is *The Dark Lord*, their Goal might be to *Kill the Emperor and take control of the Empire*. A Doom like *The Plague* might be 'trying' (despite its lack of intelligence) to *Wipe out the Elven population of the continent*, and something like *Fear of the Truth* might drive a society to do terrible things or ignore the realities of the world they live in, destroying knowledge in an effort to *Bring about an Age of Darkness*.

### **Outline the Doom's Plan**

With the Doom's Goal already known, create two or three intermediary steps for it to achieve on the road to that Goal. These things will happen (or be replaced by other things mid-game, since plans do sometimes change) before the Goal is reached, acting as a literal countdown to doomsday, even if the players don't know how much time is left on the clock, and as a source of plotlines.

Write a sentence for each step of the Plan, describing both **what** the Doom is going to accomplish, and **how** it will do so. Before *The Dark Lord* can *Kill the Emperor and take control of the Empire*, he will have to *Recruit priests to raise an army of the undead* and then *Force the Emperor into combat by kidnapping his children*. On the other hand, *The Plague* will have to *Spread to cities via caravans and boats* and *Reach all Elven cities by infecting travelers and adventurers visiting them*, and the *Fear of the Truth* is going to *Instill fear in corrupt leaders* and use them to *Spread lies that cause citizens to ignore the learned and scholars*, before using them to *Eradicate knowledge through the burning of books*.

### **Create the Cast for the Doom**

The Cast is exactly what it sounds like: one to three NPCs who either represent or are involved with the Doom in some way. They could be the Doom itself (*The Dark Lord*), or a henchman, victim, bystander, witness, catalyst, the questgiver for the characters.... anyone involved.

Also, keep in mind that the 'cast' for a Doom might include more than sapient characters; critical locations or events might also serve as sources of knowledge or interaction.

Description is more important than mechanics; write a sentence for each character, naming them and pinning down a few important facts. *The Dark Lord* might have a henchman named *Robert*, who serves him only to protect his family. *The Plague* might be spread by *Rats, cats, and dogs, carrying fleas*, and also be opposed by *Virgil, the Royal Physician*. The *Fear of the Truth* would have *Corrupt Nobility* and *People proud of their ignorance* as proponents, and would encourage a general *Hatred of scholars and the educated* amongst the populace, as a feature, aspect, trait, or what-have-you, that any NPC might have.

## Create Three Other Problems

Since the Doom is the big, long-range issue, Problems are the shorter-term... problems. Most settings worthy of adventure will have more than one thing going on at a time, and these Problems will serve as the driving force behind most of the early game, before the Doom starts ramping up its Plan.

Problems can be many things, just as the Dooms can; the key difference is scale. Problems are still bad, and they still have Goals that they want to achieve via their own Plans, but those Goals won't shatter the world as you know it (or, at least, not all of it). If the Doom is a *Dark Lord* whose Goal is *Take Over the Kingdom*, a Problem might be a *Goblin Army* whose Goal is to *Destroy the Human Village of Nuethal*.

To encourage the creation of three extremely different Problems, I advise that you make each Problem of a different Type. Below are descriptions of Types appropriate to a fantasy game, but you can always add to this list if you want.

**Giant Rats:** Goblins, imps, bandits, zombies, unusually sized rodentia; they generally present little danger individually, but become a more serious issue in large groups or when ignored and left to enact their schemes. Their Goals usually revolve around destruction motivated by their own survival.

**Dungeon:** Prisons, underground caverns, ancient ruins, lost temples, tiny pocket dimensions; these Problems are actually places, which may pose a danger in many ways. They might disgorge monsters into a town, or they could contain something that would be terrible and dangerous if it fell into the wrong hands.

**Dragon:** An evil wizard, an undead warlord, a fire-breathing lizards, a master thief; just because they aren't actually the Doom, that doesn't mean they are going to sit on the sidelines. A big baddie with a Goal that is less serious than "world domination" is still a Problem that needs dealing with; conquering a small village or driving out a legitimate leader is still bad.

**Curse:** A dark spell, a terrible plague, rampant distrust, murmurs of rebellion; sometimes a Problem is diffuse or abstract in the extreme. These may not be capable of intentional planning, but they still have a Goal, usually one that involves spreading their darkness and causing further chaos. These Problems can even have a sapient creature as their source (a mad wizard, etc), though they usually have no more control over it than anyone else after it is released.

### Give each Problem a Goal

Once you've selected three different Problems with three different Types, give each of them a distinct Goal. Just like the Doom's Goal, the Problems' Goals are their grand plans. Write a sentence for each that explains what will happen if the characters choose not to get involved.

If you want to be extra tricky, the Goals of the Problems could be used as steps in the Doom's Plan (possibly meaning you have to go back and edit that), tying them all together into a coherent(-ish) whole.



### **Outline a Plan for each Problem**

Harken back to the Plan you made for the Doom and repeat the process here. What are the steps involved in the Problem reaching its Goal? Think up two to three steps per Problem, and write a sentence for each step.

### **Create a Cast for each Problem**

Next, create one to three important characters or features (locations, major events, strange effects, etc) for each Problem. While it's entirely possible that some characters might be involved in more than one Problem (a bandit leader who also passes on a plague to towns he raids), try come up with at least one unique individual per Problem; remember that these are just inspiration, and you will probably add to these lists during play.

### **Ask 1-3 Little Questions (Optional)**

As you wrap up, you've hopefully created a number of possible starting points. Once you know who the characters are and where they begin the game, it should be fairly easy to decide which Problem presents itself first.

But if you have a real, living setting, there is going to be more going on in the world than the various disasters that strike.

Do any of the characters (player or not) have a particular fate they either seek or avoid? Are there any links between characters that might be worth exploring? What is at stake if the Problems or the Doom manage to achieve their Goals--or even just a step of their Plan? Who stands to suffer?

Ask some specific questions about situations, characters, or events; questions that can't be answered until play progresses. These are entirely optional, but force you to consider who or what stands to be lost or changed, depending on the outcomes of the story. Of course, the questions might be voided or necessarily altered before they are answered, but that's fine--these are just to keep you thinking, and to ensure that you have material to draw on if at any point you can't think of what the next scene should be.

### **The Point: Scene Creation**

Your newly-created framework is a reference sheet for where the story *might* go, without interfering with its natural evolution; it lets you play without either railroading the players down a certain path or letting the game grind to a halt for lack of content.

Introducing one of the Problems? That can be a scene. Advancing the Plan of a Problem or the Doom? Scene. One of the Cast needs to be given some screen time? Another scene. If a Problem achieves their Goal, that's one or more scenes right there, and if the Doom reaches its Goal you've probably got one or more whole *sessions* just dealing with that. And, for things with a smaller scope, the Little Questions can be dealt with, or the Big Question danced around.

## Example of a Complete Framework

<b>GMA Framework Sheet</b>	
Core: To explore the wilderness (around a new settlement that needs help)	
<i>Big Question:</i> what makes someone a true hero?	
<b>Doom:</b> Dark god awakens	Plan: 1) Ensnare a few servants who will spread the Dark word; 2) Servants locate lost temple; 3) Perform awakening ritual in temple
Goal: The god's cultists establish his dark kingdom	
	Cast: Alvar, undead high priest; Malwon, brainwashed servant
<b>Problem 1:</b> Bandits (Giant Rats)	Plan: 1) Cut off supply lines to starve them out; 2) Raid the settlement and kill leaders
Goal: Drive out the settlers	
	Cast: Delamina (swordswoman, bandit leader, former priest)
<b>Problem 2:</b> Discontent (curse)	Plan: 1) Rile up townsfolk at the tavern; 2) storm the mayor's house and put him in jail; 3) relax work duties and let guardsmen slack
Goal: Town thrown into chaos by lack of strong leadership	
	Cast: Balastor, rowdy and outspoken; Galvin, strict town mayor
<b>Problem 3:</b> Dragon (Dragon)	Plan: 1) Roast town's armory; 2) demand payment in livestock and treasure; 3) require human sacrifice once/year
Goal: Force town into submission	
	Cast: Xaxilar, evil blue dragon; Fenria, Captain of the Guard
<i>Little Questions:</i> will the townsfolk band together to solve their problems, or will the malcontents have to be exiled/imprisoned/killed? will Malwon, the brainwashed 'priest,' be freed from his compulsion and returned to his family?	

# Blank Framework Sheet

<b>GMA Framework Sheet</b>	
Core:	
<i>Big Question:</i>	
<b>Doom:</b>	Plan:
Goal:	Cast:
<b>Problem 1:</b>	Plan:
Goal:	Cast:
<b>Problem 2:</b>	Plan:
Goal:	Cast:
<b>Problem 3:</b>	Plan:
Goal:	Cast:
<i>Little Questions:</i>	

## ADVENTURE PREMISES

The premise of a story is the back cover of the module, the elevator pitch for the game, or the message you send a friend to try and hook them into making a character. It doesn't tell you everything about the entire story, but it gives you a place to start.

Following these tips, you'll be creating fill-in-the-blank style adventure premises that will hopefully inspire further ideas. Before you begin, you should decide for yourself if your game is going to lean heavily to high, low, dark, or bright fantasy (in any combination); after that, if you wind up with an option that doesn't feel like it fits your concept, choose again!

To use these randomizer lists the way I do, follow these steps.

### Fill in the Blanks

Start with this sentence, treating the underlined portions as blanks to fill in:

**The Questgiver asks you to complete this task because reasons.**

If any parts of that sentence are already decided for you (or by you), fill them in first, and then skip the associated steps below; if you know the Questgiver is going to be the character's boss, there isn't a reason to randomize it. Also, before you start rolling, review these tables and replace the options you don't like with ones that fit your style.

## The Questgiver

Who is sending you on this quest? For a more down-to-earth game, use the Difficulty Selector to randomize; for a game more likely to involve the strange and powerful, just use a d10. (Note! If there are several ideas listed in square brackets ([Secret society/Guild/Mages]), then pick or randomize from that sub-list.)



Roll	Questgiver
1	A tremendously powerful [political/religious/mercantile] leader
2	The high council of [a secret society/mages/a religion/a guild]
3	The [noble/crime lord/supernatural creature] that once did you a favor
4	The village [elders/governor/innkeeper]
5	The [employer/captain/master/leader/owner] you serve
6	A [family member/friend/old flame/merchant/traveler]
7	An apprentice [wizard/adventurer/scholar/priest] in over their head
8	A [shadowy figure/old wanderer/note on your door] at the inn
9	A supernatural creature of [the elements/undead/spirit/primal nature]
10	A major [celestial/demonic/fae/mythical] being

## The Task

Here we have a more interesting table. The first column is aimed at more fantastical, fairy-tale games; the second is targeted to games of epic fantasy; and the last is meant to be appropriate for gritty tales. These tables have no particular weight towards the middle, since they are already broken down into three segments; just use a normal d10 after you've picked your preferred column.

Roll	Fairy Tale	Epic	Gritty
1	find and bring back [an artifact/a blessing/a cure]	destroy a dangerous [army/relic/lord]	scout and learn about [an area/a group/a monster]
2	seek the aid of a powerful [being/people/location]	make peace among [the gods/ancient enemies]	help an evil [god/person/monster] to gain their trust
3	heal a sick or wounded [friend/loved one/beast]	prove [a friend/a traveler] innocent of wrongdoing	investigate a [murder/theft]
4	seek out a [person/place] of legend	travel on a mission of [diplomacy/military aid]	travel on a mission of [assassination/espionage]
5	find the answer to a [riddle/a question]	slay a [terrible beast/monster/dark god]	find [food/medicine/safety] for many people
6	forge a magical [weapon/shield/ring]	[gather/locate] a group of allies	identify a traitorous [enemy agent/former friend/person of power]
7	overthrow [a dark lord/an evil kingdom/an occupying force]	carry word of a terrible [foe/disease/disaster] to distant lands	travel through a dangerous [wasteland/hostile environment/wretched hive of scum and villainy]
8	restore hope and good to a [lost/fallen/cursed] individual	find a retired [wizard/adventurer] who knows important secrets	bring [contraband/medicine/supplies] to someone who needs them
9	free a [spirit/ghost/enchanted being/person] from an evil prison	escape a prison or foe in order to [prove your own innocence/save a friend]	claim victory in an [arena/bloodsport/contest]
10	discover the truth of your [ancestry/birth/homeland]	stop the rise of [an ancient evil/a new dark army/a fallen champion]	hunt [bandits/monsters/an enemy] terrorizing villagers

## Reasons

Why must you complete this task? What drives you? Unless some reason has already presented itself (and it might well have, either because you knew it ahead of time or because the task you picked suggests one to you), roll on this table to find out. Like the Questgiver table, this one is weighted to have more 'reasonable' motivations grouped in the middle, so use the Difficulty Selector if that appeals to you.

Roll	Reasons
1	you were promised [a wish/land and title/an item of great power].
2	your [fate/birthright/family/life] hangs in the balance.
3	you are compelled to by a [curse/debt/oath/duty].
4	a [lover/friend/mentor/dependent] of yours could die otherwise.
5	you were promised [treasure/a favor/fame/greater challenges].
6	you must, to prevent [the deaths of innocents/destruction of lands/greater losses].
7	you must, as this is [a personal trial/a singular opportunity/your only hope].
8	you need the [personal healing/self-confidence/adventuring experience] it will bring.
9	you are the only ones who can [complete this task/know about it/survive the challenge].
10	you must, to prevent [war/plague/famine/the end of the world].

## Fantasy Premise Tag Symbols

These can be used in the creation of any fantasy adventure, using the premise system or not; consider this an example of how to create a tag symbol table for your own games.

After filling in the blanks in the premise, draw one card and look at the three tag symbols that result; if at all possible, find a way to apply their meanings to your game. Only redraw if you can't fit two of the three into your concept; if one seems to be an outlier, just ignore that one.

<b>Tower</b>	A mighty fortress; this bastion could be either good or evil, and could be new or old. This is likely a destination or way-station on the quest.	<b>Moon</b>	Recent events leave loyalties confused and uncertain. Who is 'good' and who is 'evil' may be in question, and the party should be suspicious of traitors or betrayal.
<b>Crown</b>	The nobility is involved as more than just quest-givers. A royal person may be joining the party, or may be the subject of the quest (a poisoned king to cure, a princess the party is escorting to the battlefield so she can take command, etc).	<b>Sword</b>	Open conflict begins; if it already had, it escalates or moves into a new arena. This implies a military conflict, but it could be social, religious, or mercantile instead.
<b>Heart</b>	Family, friendship, or romance are at stake; if they were already involved, then the situation becomes more extreme, or the relationship is threatened.	<b>Shield</b>	The characters must protect someone or something vulnerable--either constantly, or it becomes part of their overall goal.
<b>Skull</b>	Fatal consequences are foretold; death may already have struck. Someone could be dying, or have recently been killed, or could be sentenced to death.	<b>Target</b>	A new, secondary goal is introduced; completing it will help with the primary quest, but failing to do so will NOT stop the characters from reaching their objective.
<b>Sun</b>	A recent discovery has revealed something extremely important; this discovery must be acted upon quickly.	<b>Wand</b>	Powerful magic, ability, or authority is granted to the characters, though it is temporary or limited in nature--the boon is probably necessary to complete their quest (which means the quest is that much harder).



# CHARACTERS

You can already randomize characters with the deck, but to tweak them for a fantasy game, here are two suggestions.

## Professions

Before you draw for any other components of the character, consider giving them a random profession appropriate to the current setting. This table is weighted with more statistically common professions towards the middle, so draw for the Difficulty Selector instead of rolling a d10 if you want the randomization to be more “realistic” (scare-quotes because the percentages are weighted in the direction of real life, but I make no claims to a specific level of historical accuracy, and your game-world may balance jobs differently).

Roll	Professions
1	Royalty
2	Physician or Midwife
3	Merchant or Servant
4	Tradesman (blacksmith, cobbler, carpenter, shipwright, etc)
5	Farmer, farm-worker, or householder
6	Fisherman, hunter, or gatherer
7	Man-at-arms (guard, soldier, bodyguard, enforcer, etc)
8	Criminal or Scholar
9	Wizard or Priest
10	Adventurer



## Fantasy Character Tag Symbols

As with anything else, you can modify characters by drawing one card and applying the Tag Symbols; here is an example table to get you started. When you draw, try to fit at least two of the results into your NPC!

<b>Tower</b>	The NPC is taciturn and generally unwilling to talk to anyone without significant motivation.	<b>Moon</b>	The NPC is hiding a secret, either big or small, that has at least a little bearing on the story. Characters are likely to spot this, but may not be able to divine the secret.
<b>Crown</b>	Regardless of current circumstances, the NPC has a powerful family or powerful bloodline.	<b>Sword</b>	The NPC is a more capable fighter than might otherwise be apparent.
<b>Heart</b>	Either the NPC is a potential romantic interest for a character, or the NPC is linked to the story through romantic or family ties.	<b>Shield</b>	The NPC is highly protective of their friends and loved ones, and is extremely dedicated; they would willingly sacrifice themselves for their duty.
<b>Skull</b>	The NPC is sick--not necessarily with fatal consequences, but that depends on the circumstances.	<b>Target</b>	The NPC has an agenda that they want the character's help to fulfill--though the characters may not be aware of it at first, and it may or may not align with their own goals in the end.
<b>Sun</b>	The NPC is naturally curious or adventurous, and would be easily persuaded to join the party (or be hard to dissuade from trying).	<b>Wand</b>	The NPC possesses magic or a magical ability that is unexpected or unusual for them.

# ENCOUNTERS

Here are two tools to help keep things moving if you need a quick random encounter. They can be used separately or together.

## Premade Combos

One problem with true randomization is that the results have the potential to throw you for a loop or be otherwise frustrating. If you draw for a random event, but get a combination of Noun + Verb you don't think makes any sense (or if you just want to start your game with some pre-made suggestions available), roll on this table!

Because it only provides a Noun and Verb, you can also then draw an Adjective to further modify the encounter, extending the table below from 10 results to 1200.

Roll	Verb, Noun, and Suggestions
1	Fight/Underling: Either the party runs into a minion of a greater evil, or one of their own underlings turns traitor!
2	Lose/Weapon: Someone either loses their weapon now, or discovers that it is already missing.
3	Unearth/Wealth: Whether or not they are looking for it, some form of treasure is discovered. Is it guarded?
4	Interrupt/Beast: Discover an animal or monster in the middle of eating a fresh kill, or hunting, or fighting hunters...
5	Forget/Barrier: Players suddenly confront an obstacle they had forgotten about--either in or out of game (though I caution against trying to make the players believe you had really planned it all along; and perhaps they can now roll to also 'remember' a solution?).
6	Detect/Emotion: A character is behaving oddly, in a manner indicative of some strong emotion; this might indicate romantic tension, a hidden grudge, or other trouble.
7	Restore/Ability: This could indicate a fix for a damaged or reduced ability; otherwise, it might suggest that the party discover an opportunity to help someone else.
8	Befriend/Companion: The players meet someone who could (or must, depending) become a reliable NPC companion, friend, or even an animal pet or familiar.
9	Identify/Wilderness: A path through the wilderness, a way to understand or survive the wild, or the location of something specific within a wilderness, is found!
10	Learn/Mystery: If the players are already unraveling a puzzle, either a clue or a serious complication is discovered; if not, a new mystery is introduced!

## Fantasy Encounter Tag Symbols

This sample tag symbol table is geared towards modifying events and encounters. These can modify any encounter (random or not) with suggestions appropriate for the genre. Try to find applications for at least two of the results.

<b>Tower</b>	The encounter introduces a new or unexpected obstacle in the path of the player's main quest.	<b>Moon</b>	The encounter provides information that contradicts something previously known or discovered. Whether this revelation can be trusted, or is simply a red herring, is unclear.
<b>Crown</b>	The encounter has the potential to yield a reward much more substantial than initially thought, though the true value (in coin or other currency) may require time to discover.	<b>Sword</b>	The encounter includes a direct confrontation of some kind--physical, social, mental, or otherwise. If it already did, the difficulty of that confrontation (or the difficulty of avoiding it) increase.
<b>Heart</b>	The encounter is personal for one or more characters; something related to their family, their love, or their past is involved or brought to light, even if just because of a passing resemblance.	<b>Shield</b>	The encounter gives the characters a chance to rest and recover, or any immediate danger (physical or not) is partially mitigated by circumstances or a third party.
<b>Skull</b>	Death is a potential consequence of the encounter; if it already was, then part of the challenge may be that someone is mortally wounded, and that must be dealt with.	<b>Target</b>	The encounter is a critical moment for a character, either a PC or an NPC; it may have been arranged or sought out intentionally, in order to further an agenda. Something about it helps them fulfill a goal.
<b>Sun</b>	The encounter seems certain to yield clues or information the characters would value, but it may take digging or puzzle-solving to sort them out.	<b>Wand</b>	The encounter introduces or includes unusual creatures or powers of magical origin; they may be helpful or harmful, but they are not immediately explained either way.

## LOOT!

Loot is a staple of the fantasy genre; it might come from corpses, kings, or cutting purses, but the result is the same: shiny new gear! Here are two sample tag symbol tables; the first is to help you generate the contents of a treasure hoard that has many items (and presumably cash as well), and suggests a different sort of item for each tag symbol you draw. The second table is to provide inspiration for individual magic or otherwise special items, with each tag symbol representing an aspect or ability of the item which combine together.

### Hoard of Loot

<b>Tower</b>	Maps, letters, documents, deeds, and books.	<b>Moon</b>	Thieves' gear, poison, tools and weapons of assassination.
<b>Crown</b>	Jewelry, gems, artwork, and expensive clothing.	<b>Sword</b>	Swords, daggers, clubs, maces, polearms, and other melee weapons.
<b>Heart</b>	Medicine, food, potions, herbs, and first aid supplies.	<b>Shield</b>	Armor, shields, helmets, and other protective clothing.
<b>Skull</b>	Religious icons, holy symbols, tools of worship, and relics.	<b>Target</b>	Bows, crossbows, slings, throwing knives, and other ranged weapons.
<b>Sun</b>	Traveling supplies, climbing tools, light sources, and utility gear.	<b>Wand</b>	Spellbooks, scrolls, spell components, alchemist's tools, and arcane gear.

### Powerful Item

<b>Tower</b>	Utility or craft abilities, enhancing or aiding use of skills.	<b>Moon</b>	Properties of stealth or concealment, or related abilities.
<b>Crown</b>	Interpersonal, persuasive, charming, or commanding properties.	<b>Sword</b>	Offensive properties (melee or ranged, as appropriate).
<b>Heart</b>	Healing, curing, dispelling, or regenerative properties.	<b>Shield</b>	Defensive properties, whether they are physical, mental, magical, etc.
<b>Skull</b>	Cursed; actively causes problems, inflicts penalties, and so on--and is usually hard to get rid of.	<b>Target</b>	Has a ranged or area effect, though that effect need not be an attack.
<b>Sun</b>	Provides illumination or other information advantages, such as ESP or enhanced hearing.	<b>Wand</b>	Summoning, creating, or controlling properties.