WRAITH WRIGHT'S

SOLO PLAYER'S GUIDEBOOK

RULES FOR PLAYING SOLITAIRES

Everything a player needs to navigate the SOLITAIRES system, a type of single-player adventure for the world's greatest roleplaying game

Wraith Wright's
Solo Player's Guidebook

CREDITS

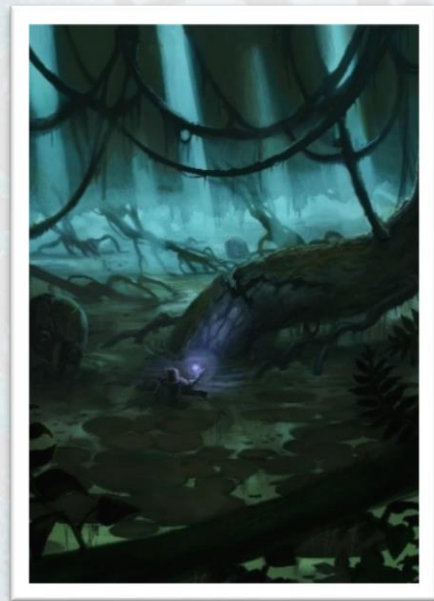*Design and Writing:* Randall Right of Wraith Wright Productions
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This product is dedicated to Paul Bimler, who introduced some of the first commercially-viable single-player adventures to the Dungeon Masters Guild. Paul fosters an online community of fellow enthusiasts, and his products continue to push the envelope, expanding the reach of interactive adventure and showing us what is possible.

On the Cover: Bruno Balixa's *Swamp Area*

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CHAPTER ZERO

INTRODUCTION

"I am, indeed, a king, because I know how to rule myself."

- Pietro Aretino

SINGLE-PLAYER INTERACTIVE ADVENTURES allow you to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS by yourself, to experience the fun and excitement of D&D in a convenient way, or at a convenient time or place. When there is no gaming site available, no table to use, no group to gather, or when no one wants to be the Dungeon Master, adventures in this vein let you clear these hurdles and play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

Unfortunately, the availability of single-player interactive adventures is slim, particularly those that use the 5th Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules. The depth of the single-player adventure experience is very limited at this time; there is little or no continuation for your story. When you play an adventure, you are unlikely to find another adventure to advance that character into.

The SOLITAIRES system, comprised of the *Solo Player's Guidebook* and the *Solo Creator's Guidebook*, seeks to facilitate a broader range of adventure options, helping creators produce compatible adventures and allowing players to string together their own campaigns using adventures crafted by various writers.

PREPARE TO PLAY

THIS CHAPTER PREPARES YOU TO PLAY YOUR own SOLITAIRES campaign. It walks you through the preparations and decisions you should make prior to starting your first adventure. These rules can also be useful for planning any type of single-player interactive adventure.

PREPARE YOUR TOOLS

You will need certain materials before you start a single-player campaign. Be mindful of these supplies before you begin an adventure, lest you need to stop and find them.

ATMOSPHERE

If you are playing a single-player interactive adventure, you are probably playing it by yourself. Unlike a normal game, you are the only one at the table who can impose and maintain the sense of immersion that Dungeon Masters and fellow players would otherwise reinforce through their roleplaying. To help you maintain an atmosphere conducive to play, we recommend these additional tools.

LOCATION

For the best experience, find a comfortable spot to play in. The place should be one where you have easy access to all your materials, and where there are no distractions nearby that might pull you out of the narrative.

Low levels of light or even candlelight can be a nice atmospheric touch. Just make sure you have enough light to read by without straining your eyes.

MUSIC

Background music can enhance the ambiance while you play. Avoid music that has lyrics or distracting beats, since these can draw away your attention at moments when you would prefer to concentrate on the game. Soft music with medieval-period instruments is ideal. You might also want to consider a separate, faster-paced soundtrack for combat scenes.

DICE

It wouldn't be DUNGEONS & DRAGONS without a set of polyhedral dice. All standard die sizes are likely to be called upon during a game. If you lack dice, you can turn to the Internet for dice rolling programs, whether built-in features to websites or downloadable applications you can run on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

RULE BOOKS

SOLITAIRES campaigns use the 5th Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS core rules. The *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* include information necessary for creating characters and playing the game.

The *Monster Manual* is usually not needed; most single-player adventures include relevant monster information in their texts. This is because referencing the *Monster Manual* can give away too much information about the foes you face; when you are both the Dungeon Master and the player, your interaction with the spoilers in that book must be necessarily curtailed in some ways.

Basic Rules

If you don't have these resources, you can instead refer to the free "Basic Rules" from the Wizards of the Coast website:

o http://media.wizards.com/2018/dnd/downloads/DnD_BasicRules_2018.pdf

The Comprehensive Equipment Manual

Some SOLITAIRES use the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual* (*CEM*), a popular book from Wraith Wright Productions. The *CEM* is a completely-separate product; you do not need it in order to play!

If the adventure you are playing uses the *CEM*, the text will occasionally show new equipment items from that book. These will be followed by an alternate item in [square brackets]. For example, if you are not using the *CEM* and you find a "maulaxe [battleaxe]," treat the item as a battleaxe.

Note-Taking Materials

Make sure to have materials on hand to take copious amounts of notes. You can go as basic or as technological as you like, from a pad of paper with plenty of sharp pencils, to electronic documents on your computer. Whatever system you use, your collected notes will be referred to as your "play journal."

Using a Real Journal

For best results, we recommend that you use a real, physical book for your play journal. You can purchase a suitable journal at any major book store or online market. A nice, leather-bound journal with lined pages can enhance your connection to the story and help you keep your notes in one place.

If you use something like this, you can reserve some early pages for your most important notes, then fill the remaining pages with chronological note-taking. The first few pages are an ideal space to make a copy of your character sheet, making the journal your only information-tracking workspace. (For additional immersion, you can write your chronological notes from an in-character perspective.)

For this purpose, we particularly recommend the game diaries sold by The Rook & the Raven. (We have no affiliation with that company.) The modularity of their products allows you to insert pages for character sheets, notes, and maps, then rearrange them to suit.

Design Your Campaign

In a SOLITAIRES campaign, you select the adventures you play and the order you play them in, within certain guidelines. Although you can use these rules in a one-off fashion, playing a single adventure at a time, they really shine as a tool to facilitate multi-adventure experiences.

Select Adventures

The first step in designing a campaign is to determine which adventures you will use and in what order. To do that, examine the adventures in your library and consider certain parameters. Your campaign can be as long or as short as you want, depending on

how many adventures you can string together.

The adventures you include in your campaign don't have to be created with the SOLITAIRES system. You can use "imported" adventures as part of your campaign. Although imported adventures usually require alteration to adapt than to a SOLITAIRES campaign, there are some very good single-player adventures worth considering when designing your campaign.

CHARACTER LEVEL

The first restriction to contemplate is an adventure's prescribed level. This is the most common limiter of how you place an adventure in your campaign. Ideally, you can line up one adventure of each character level. This works because almost all single-player adventures purport to reward another character level at their conclusions.

In some cases, you will have multiple adventures of a certain level or have no adventures applicable to some character levels. If you play multiple adventures that call for your character to be of the same level, simply don't add any character levels until you are ready to advance to a higher-level adventure. If you have a gap in your campaign, such that the next adventure requires your character to be of a higher level than it achieved in the previous adventures, simply increase the character's level at that point to suit the upcoming adventure.

Alternately, you can overcome gaps or instances of doubling-up by converting an adventure's level requirement to a level band, as described elsewhere in this book. For example, two adventures written for a 3rd level character are unlikely to be overwhelmed if played at 3rd level and 4th level. It is the odd-numbered levels where new character capabilities appear, typically in the form of spells whose functions might not

have been anticipated by a creator. Adding one more level to your character (so long as it is an even-numbered level) is probably fine.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Most single-player adventures have limited hooks, the story pieces that make your character care about the storyline and motivate its interaction with the events that will take place. If your intended character wouldn't participate in an adventure's storyline, perhaps because it is evil and not motivated to help the downtrodden, don't include that adventure in your campaign.

BEWARE CLIFFHANGERS

Avoid using imported adventures that end in cliffhangers. These conclude with the character trapped in circumstances that will not allow it to pursue a different adventure from that point. Alternately, they might end without resolution, promising that the next adventure resolves the story the current one introduced.

The SOLITAIRES system teaches creators not to force characters directly from one adventure into another, but products written outside the system may have no such qualms. If you import an adventure that ends in a cliffhanger scenario, you will need to either line up the sequel as the next adventure in your campaign or you must come up with your own story changes to facilitate your choice for the next adventure.

ADVENTURE PATHS

The SOLITAIRES system uses a construct called "adventure paths." These are collected episodic adventures that conform to a common storyline. They do not require you to play each adventure, nor to play their associated adventures in a strict sequence.

You can create a campaign by using just an adventure path or by stringing multiple adventure paths together. If you are using

adventure paths, you can also substitute other Solitaires or imported adventures in your campaign, creating a truly-unique mix.

Determine Rules

Since you are acting as your own Dungeon Master, you must be the one to determine which variant rules apply to your campaign and to decide if any playtest materials or third-party products will be allowed.

Optional Rules

The 5th Edition of the Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying Game offers a host of optional and variant rules in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master's Guide.* New players should probably avoid using any optional rules. However, these systems can be instrumental in creating the experience that some players want in their games. For example, a seasoned player may prefer the encumbrance variant and the flanking options, despite these being particularly impactful on characters who adventure alone.

Some single-player adventures might try to advise or dictate which optional rules to apply. Carefully consider this information and the reasons behind it before making your decision. Some adventures might be written with those rules in mind (or excluded), so going against such instructions can dramatically change the adventure.

Additional Rules Sources

Particularly when it comes to character creation, you may wish to use options from playtest materials (*Unearthed Arcana*) or from third-party products. The Dungeon Master's Guild is a source rich with additional options for character classes, races, equipment, and other factors.

While these can be fun to try out, be aware that single-player adventures can't reasonably anticipate the new capabilities such options may allow. For example, don't be disappointed if the adventure doesn't facilitate your custom race's ability to tunnel through stone walls.

Determine Participants

Single-player adventures can be used in ways that defy their definition, by adding another player or a Dungeon Master. These factors will significantly impact the way such adventures play.

If you are designing your campaign to be played alongside another player or to be moderated by a real Dungeon Master, you will need to consult those people ahead of time, determining the campaign parameters alongside them or delegating the process to another person altogether.

If you wish to include a single-player adventure in your multi-player campaign, and it does not have its own conversion mechanics, you will need to decide those factors ahead of time.

Make Your Character

Your character is the most important feature of adventures in this genre. There are several factors to consider when making a character for a single-player interactive adventure in general, and for Solitaires in particular.

Concept

Your character should be suited to play the adventures you have chosen for your campaign, complete with the right alignment, background, and motivations to respond to the hooks those adventures offer. If your character wouldn't play along, scrap the concept and make up one that would, or change out the adventures in your campaign.

Additionally, when designing your character sheet, optimize it for single-player play. This means picking a combination of traits and features that suit a lone adventurer. Prioritize combat survivability since you will

have no allies to protect and revive you when paralyzed or after falling to 0 hit points. A high Armor Class, significant hit points, and reliable saving throw modifiers are very important to those who adventure alone. But just as important is a broad range of effective ability scores and skills. Having so-called "dump stats" can be quite perilous when you have no allied adventurers to pick up the slack. Wisdom- and Intelligence-based skills particularly help you spot and parse clues, while Charisma-based skills can get you past a multitude of challenges.

Ability Scores

Generate ability scores using the point-buy or standard array methods from page 13 of the *Player's Handbook*. Do not use the rolling method unless you are prepared to handle the drawbacks that rolling presents in interactive adventures.

First, you must understand that Solitaires are created contemplating a certain range of ability scores. This range is often deeply-ingrained in the mechanics of the game; higher and lower scores may particularly alter how you interact with ability-based prompts.

Second, rolling ability scores is the primary instance when players are likely to "cheat." Players seem very willing to abandon their first set of ability rolls in favor of rolling again. This lack of commitment to dice results sets a bad precedent. Do yourself the favor of using the point-buy or standard array method instead of tempting yourself into a pattern of die-fudging at the outset.

Level

Start your character at 1st level and advance it according to the guidelines of each adventure you play. As you play through the campaign, your character's level should match the level (or level range) prescribed for each adventure in your campaign, when you begin that adventure.

Adventures written in the Solitaires system use level bands (a range of two levels) to determine which characters are suitable. Level bands are charted on the Wealth Rubric table below.

Starting Equipment

Every character gets the starting equipment indicated in the *Player's Handbook.* There are two official methods to determine this gear; Solitaires assume you will use the class-and-background method rather than rolling on the random wealth table.

At first level, you may not sell off any of your starting equipment or buy additional equipment until you are afforded an opportunity to visit a merchant or a market during an adventure.

However, you can use the optional Item Swaps variant rule at character creation if your campaign uses the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual* if you include that resource. In this case, you will need to decide which exotic lists are available in the setting you are playing in, unless already noted in the adventures or adventure paths you are using. This is part of determining which rules you will use, as described in the previous stage.

Collected Wealth

Solitaires use a wealth-managing mechanism called the Wealth Rubric. The rubric imposes a semblance of compatibility upon campaigns that often combine the adventures of different creators. Where one adventure might give thousands of gold pieces and half a dozen major magic items to a character at 1st level, the next adventure in your campaign might simply wilt under the power such excessive wealth provides. The rubric prevents this from happening by limiting

characters to something close to what the *Dungeon Master's Guide* prescribes.

At the start of each adventure in your campaign, you must therefore discard any equipment or magic items that exceed the allowances on the Wealth Rubric table. This excess wealth is donated to temples, spent to pay debts, remitted to distant family members, or otherwise permanently removed from your character sheet.

Each column of the Wealth Rubric table is explained below.

EQUIPMENT VALUE

This column refers to the total value of your mundane gear and treasure, including your starting gear. It also includes the value of minor magic items like *potions of healing*. Minor magic items are those found on Magic Item Tables A-E. (See chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.)

Major magic items are listed on Magic Item Tables F-I. They are not added into your wealth total unless the market values of their mundane forms exceed 50 gp. In such cases,

the mundane value of the item is included, but the magic value is not.

For example, a suit of magical splint armor counts as a magic item, but its physical form additionally counts against 200 gp of your equipment value restriction because the market value of mundane splint armor (200 gp) exceeds the 50 gp threshold.

MAGIC ITEMS

These columns limit the major magic items of listed rarities that you can start an adventure with at associated levels.

Maintain a list of all magic items that you have removed from your character sheet using this rule. Perhaps you've placed them in a bank or left them with a trusted friend who lives nearby. Between each adventure, you can swap out items in your possession for those held in safekeeping, so long as you enter the next adventure in compliance with the Wealth Rubric.

You cannot swap magic items during an adventure, nor does this option apply to any other sort of wealth or treasure.

WEALTH RUBRIC

Tiers and Level Bands	Equipment Value	——— Magic Items (Minor / Major) ———			
		Uncommon	Rare	Very Rare	Legendary
Tier 1					
Band A (levels 1–2)	350 gp	1	0	0	0
Band B (levels 3–4)	625 gp	1	0	0	0
Tier 2					
Band C (levels 5–6)	2,250 gp	2	1	0	0
Band D (levels 7–8)	5,750 gp	2	1	0	0
Band E (levels 9–10)	10,750 gp	3	2	1	0
Tier 3					
Band F (levels 11–12)	23,750 gp	3	2	1	0
Band G (levels 13–14)	40,500 gp	4	3	2	1
Band H (levels 15–16)	63,000 gp	4	3	2	1
Tier 4					
Band I (levels 17–20)	263,000 gp	5	4	3	2

NAVIGATE ADVENTURES

Tʜɪs ᴄʜᴀᴘᴛᴇʀ ᴀᴘᴘʟɪᴇs ᴏɴʟʏ ᴛᴏ ᴘʀᴏᴅᴜᴄᴛs built with the Sᴏʟɪᴛᴀɪʀᴇs system, a standardized design that correlates to the rules here. This chapter introduces the tools and rules you will encounter in Sᴏʟɪᴛᴀɪʀᴇs products.

Tʀᴀᴠᴇʀsɪɴɢ ᴛʜᴇ Tᴇxᴛ

Sᴏʟɪᴛᴀɪʀᴇs aren't read like normal Dᴜɴɢᴇᴏɴs & Dʀᴀɢᴏɴs adventures, nor are they read like novels. The experience is somewhere in between.

ANATOMY OF A TEXT PART

❖ **Part 1-035**

» **Interval** 2

Fortunately, the passageway is now relatively clear. Unfortunately, you are sure the noise of falling rubble was heard in other parts of the mine.
     After the dust settles, you examine the makeshift trap.

*You may **add 1 Interval Point** to extricate the rope and take it with you:*

*- **Hempen rope, 100-foot** (20 lb.)*

The northward passage bends in an arc, eventually pointing southward, back in the direction from which it came.

• *To leave by the western end of the arced passage, go to Part 020.*

• *To leave by the eastern end of the arced passage, go to Part 301.*

This identifier is a hyphenated number found nowhere elsewhere in the book.

An interval mark adds time-tracking points and signals that a short rest or other activity is possible at this point.

Narrative text describes events and features of the scene.

Instructive text tells you how to apply rules. Bold text reminds you to write in your journal or on your character sheet.

An item listing signals that an item can be taken. It is bolded (as something you should write down) and predicated by a dash to set it apart from instructive text.

Options give you two or more choices of how to proceed. Bullet points distinguish them from instructive text.

Prompts direct you to "go to" new text parts and typically include hyperlinks.

Text Parts

A text part is a discrete segment of text that you navigate to from other text parts. It has the following components.

Unique Identifier

This is the three-digit number at the top of a text part, like "Part 021." No two text parts in the same adventure will share an identifying number.

Unique identifiers allow you to find a text part by using a document's "find" function (Control + F in PDF readers). This might become necessary in the case of an appendix page that cannot hyperlink you back to the appropriate text part, or in the unfortunate case of a broken hyperlink. It is particularly useful if you close the document between sessions of play and need to find your place again later.

Narrative Text

Most of the text in a text part is "narrative." It appears in a regular font and formatting. Narrative text describes your surroundings and the events taking place.

Instructive Text

Instructive text is set apart from narrative text by italicization, and is directed at you, the player, rather than describing your character's environment. Instructive text uses natural language to direct you through certain steps for moderating rules or events.

Always resolve instructive text in the order presented, as it is presented. Resolve each segment of instructive text before reading further into the text part.

Options

At the end of each text part, you may be given a set of options. Options are formatted with bullet points to indicate that you have a choice of two or more options.

Prerequisite Notation. Some prompts have prerequisites for their selection. Prerequisites are presented in {braces} ahead of the option.

- {Attitude: Friendly (Driktha)} *Ask Driktha to lend you a mail-carrier's horse for the long trip to Zilspar.*

In this case, if you have cultivated a friendly attitude in the non-player character through prior interactions, you can choose that prompt. Otherwise, you cannot.

Ability Checks. Some prompts give ability checks as prerequisites. If you fail to make a prompt's required ability check (something you can try only once, unless otherwise noted), you cannot select that prompt even if you return to the same text part later.

- {Charisma (Persuasion) 15} *Convince the guard that your personal safe conduct pass also applies to your companions.*

You can roll for each prerequisite check in a set of prompts before deciding which to choose; rolling one does not commit you to choosing that prompt if you are successful. However, some checks come with costs like the advancement of time during time-tracking segments of the adventure.

Adding a Player or Dungeon Master

When adding another player or a Dungeon Master, narrative text is read aloud by one player, or the Dungeon Master reads it aloud or paraphrases it.

Both players discuss any options that come up before choosing a single one of them. This often requires considerable collaboration and agreement; Solitaires are designed primarily for a single character and most choices and story results don't have room for multiple characters to make different choices from one another.

If a prompt calls for a prerequisite roll of any kind, only one character can roll for that

prompt. The players must decide which character attempts each check they encounter and, because of the targeted difficulties of such checks in single-player adventures, the other character cannot assist with the Help action.

When it comes to equipment prerequisites, the players will have to carefully decide which path to follow if specific equipment is required for a character choice. For example, in a cold environment, the text provides two forking options; one is for a character who is wearing cold weather clothes and the other for a character who is not. If only one of the characters has cold weather clothes, which option should the players choose? This is where SOLITAIRES require the hardest self-moderation. You might have to peak at both sections (something normally forbidden!) and apply the results individually.

At various points, you may see text that helps you get through the adventure if you have a second player along. Particularly, combat writeups may list the alternative composition of the enemies if you are including a second player. Where they do not change based on the option of a second character, simply double the number of enemy participants.

MEASURING TIME

At certain points in some adventures you may need to track the passage of time. For this
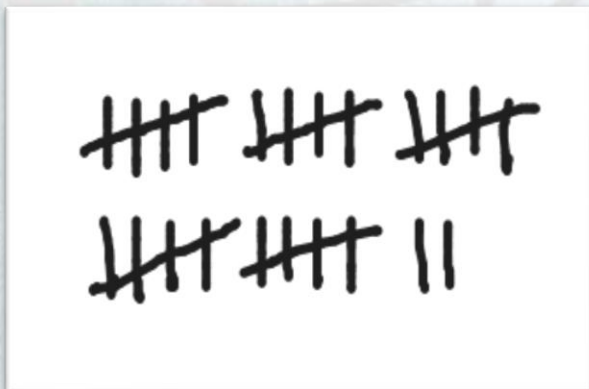
purpose, SOLITAIRES use something called the "Interval" mechanic.

INTERVAL POINTS

Interval Points measure tactical time, typically periods of less than one day. Each point accumulated indicates the passage of about 5 minutes. Your tally of Interval Points increases at set locations in the adventure (interval marks), and it can further increase when you make decisions that use extra time.

Some portions of an adventure will refer to your tally to determine whether the passage of time has changed the environment you encounter. For example, upon reaching the evil overlord's inner sanctum, if you took too long to get there, you will have allowed your foe the time to assemble additional defenders.

THRESHOLDS

Sometimes an adventure will announce results for accumulated Interval Points ahead of time. These are called thresholds. When you are told of a possible threshold, note it in your play journal so you don't lose track of its number or effect.

Static Thresholds. Most thresholds refer to your total accumulated Interval Points.

For example, you are sneaking into a fortress trying to find a kidnapped diplomat. From the outset, you know that the sun will rise after the passage of 36 Interval Points. If you have not found the diplomat by sunrise, she will be evacuated via a secret route and the quest will fail.

Relative Thresholds. Other thresholds occur when you accumulate a number of *additional* Interval Points based on your current tally. These often apply to the duration of spells you cast yourself but could have more-mundane applications.

For example, you light a torch while underground. You currently have 11 Interval Points. Since a torch only lasts for one hour

(the equivalent of 12 Interval Points), it will go out when your tally reaches 23. Make note of this threshold because you will, upon reaching it, need to light another torch. Lighting the next torch creates another 12-point (relative) threshold at which it will expire.

In another example, if you allowed a sentry to escape a combat, you may receive a new threshold for a random encounter with the remainder of the guards. This threshold would occur at a number of Interval Points accumulated following the combat; previously-acquired points wouldn't matter.

INTERVAL MARKS

Interval marks are specially-noted points in the adventure. They appear at the start of certain text parts and look like this:

> **» Interval** 0

When noted with a number greater than 0, they further indicate that time has passed in the transition between the last text part and the current one. For example, in your last text part, you choose to travel a long and winding path. At the start of the next text part, an interval with a number greater than 0 moderates how long the path took to walk.

When you encounter an interval mark, take the following actions, in order, before proceeding further into that text part.

1. Add Interval Points. Add the mark's number to your tally of Interval Points, if the number shown is greater than 0.

2. Check Thresholds. determine whether you have met thresholds you are currently tracking. If you meet multiple thresholds at the same interval mark, resolve the thresholds in the order that they were given to you.

Interval marks are the only times when you check whether you have met thresholds. Even if you accumulate enough points to meet a threshold at other times, ignore the fact until you get to an interval mark. This streamlines the tracking process even though it can sometimes cause you to overshoot the exact threshold number.

3. Perform Interval Activities. Interval marks occur when you are not pressed by immediate danger. This means you can perform elective activities at these places, like resting.

The most common interval activity is the short rest. Short resting requires you to add 12 Interval Points and check for a random encounter (if the area you are in provides a random encounter mechanism).

You can also perform other time-using activities not specifically mentioned in these rules, adding 1 Interval Point for every five minutes these activities require. This lets you exercise class features or other effects that require the use of time.

Finally, some areas describe unique interval activities. For example, while racing through a forest, you might be allowed to add 3 Interval Points at an interval mark to climb to the top of a high tree to get your bearings. The adventure provides that this activity allows you advantage on your next Wisdom (Survival) check for navigation.

4. Check Thresholds Again. If you performed any interval activities, check again for thresholds after all the activities conclude.

OTHER INTERVAL TYPES

The interval mechanic becomes too cumbersome for time periods longer than a day or two. Some SOLITAIRES therefore add new, similar mechanics to track time on a larger scale, particularly for overland travel and exploration. These less-common systems will be described in the adventures that make use of them.

Tracking Progress

Keeping track of game events is an important part of playing without a Dungeon Master. You have to use your play journal to take all those notes that are normally written behind the DM's screen.

Necessary Tracking

You will sometimes be required to track important information in your play journal, as directed by the instructive text you read.

Examples of mandatory tracking include non-player character attitude ratings, point tallies representing the passage of time, and similar notes.

To help you notice when something should be marked in your play journal or should alter your character sheet, Solitaires will signal that by placing that instruction in **bold text.**

Optional Tracking

Your play journal is also a place where you can keep clues and reminders about your adventure. You don't need to write these down but noting them can be helpful.

Combat Log

When you come to a combat, begin by making a note of it in your play journal. Give it a title. List each combatant in the order of initiative. Use that area as a workspace to track your hit points and the hit points of your enemies.

You can get quite in-depth with a combat log if you want, using a new line to write the results of each combat round. The more details you include, the less likely you are to forget your place in the turn or forget to alter hit points totals as you go.

If you later forget whether you have used a feature that refreshes only after a rest, and you've been making detailed notes, you can easily look back to each combat in your play journal to see what you used.

Maps

Some Solitaires provide map fragments representing explored areas, leaving it to the player to figure out the position of these fragments relative to one another. The play journal is an excellent place to draw these fragments in a connected form.

If you have graph paper, you can copy any graphed map fragments using the grids for scale, then fold and tuck those sheets into the pages of your journal.

Physical Clues

Sometimes you may find clues that become helpful later on in your adventure. Some clues may appear within illustrations, but most are simply noted in the text of the adventure and could be easy to overlook. Particularly take note of clues that look like they might be components to a puzzle.

Additionally, some clues may provide you with "second chance" mechanics. For example, if you fail an initial lore roll of Intelligence (Arcana), a second chance mechanic might let you try again later when you can research the clue in a library. In such cases, you will be directed to note a text part that reveals the clue's details if you succeed. Don't lose that that identifying number! It is the only way you will be able to access the information if you succeed later at the second chance mechanic.

Intrigues

Just as you would keep track of physical clues that you find during exploration, it can be useful to take note of intrigues. Non-player characters might let slip their feelings about particular things, betray inconsistencies in their stories, or otherwise reveal forgettable information that may prove useful later.

Importantly, some non-player characters may give you hints as to how they will react to the options you choose, whether in the current dialog, or later. Taking notes of these

opinions and feelings can help you avoid a misstep in the future.

Self-Moderating

Navigating Solitaires sometimes requires you to make decisions as to how to proceed or interact with the rules, decisions normally handled by a Dungeon Master. As both player and DM, you must commit yourself to the work and the discipline required for both roles if you want to fully enjoy single-player interactive adventures.

Honesty

First and foremost, good self-moderation requires you to be honest with yourself and your results. You will often face a situation where you miss a saving throw by one point, or where your character dies and you don't want to start over with another character. In these moments, your honesty will be tested.

It might seem like no big deal to fudge a die result, but once you allow yourself to do that, you won't be able to stop. It's a slippery slope; once the dice no longer matter, you cease to experience risk. When the risk goes, so too goes the sense of adventure and reward that are hallmarks of Dungeons & Dragons.

Honesty through Note-Taking

When acting as your own Dungeon Master, it is a good idea to note in your play journal each important ruling you make and the reasons behind it. This can help you be consistent and keep you honest by committing your choices to writing.

Along these lines, you should diligently track all your expenditures, from ammunition and rations, to spell slots, to class features that can be used only once between rests. Losing track of these things, forgetting to mark them off, reduces risks and cheapens the rewards of the game.

Moderating the Unexpected

Sometimes your character will have a spell, feat, racial trait, or class feature that can help you overcome a scenario or avoid a fight presented in the adventure. However, not every possibility can be accounted for in the writing process. This is where "self-moderation" is most needed.

For example, when asked to make a Strength (Athletics) check to swim across a river, but your character has an innate swim speed such that checks are not normally required, simply forego the roll and decide that your character was successful. However, if the water includes rough rapids or other features that you think would require a Strength (Athletics) check, even for a character with a swim speed, go ahead and make the roll. Do not be afraid to exercise this discretion when it is called for. If in doubt, ask yourself what any of your previous Dungeon Masters would have ruled if they were running this game.

CHAPTER THREE
FACE CHALLENGES

THIS CHAPTER GIVES NEW RULES FOR SOME of the challenges you will face in the course of play. Most of these rules cover for the fact that there is no Dungeon master to moderate the complex motivations and tactics of the monsters and non-player characters you encounter.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Social interactions occur when you talk to non-player characters. These scenes can present their own challenges and rewards. To fairly adjudicate the range of factors that can influence a non-player character's attitude toward you, SOLITAIRES use an abstract system of points.

ATTITUDES

When you encounter an important non-player character, one that you will interact with significantly in the future, that character will list a starting attitude rank and point rating. Here is an example:

Driktha: Indifferent (+0)

In this example, the non-player character you encountered has an indifferent attitude toward you, a reflection of having no numerical modifier, positive or negative.

Attitude ranks are "friendly," "indifferent," or "hostile," the same ranks described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide.* The point totals are an added mechanism used to keep track of your impact on attitudes throughout the adventure or across multiple adventures. A single act is often insufficient to change an attitude, but an accumulation of them can completely shift an attitude.

As you perform actions that adjust point totals, positively or negatively, attitude ratings change when point totals match the ranges shown on this table.

ATTITUDE RANKS AND POINT RATINGS	
Rating	**Point Range**
Friendly	+6 or higher
Indifferent	+5 to –5
Hostile	–6 or lower

If you encounter non-player characters that introduce new attitude ranks and point ratings, and you have already encountered those characters in other adventures, ignore the listing and substitute the previous ranks and ratings you have earned for them.

It's a good idea to keep an entire page of your play journal dedicated to attitude ratings and point tallies for non-player characters.

COMBAT WRITEUPS

SOLITAIRES each contain an appendix for combat writeups. These are individual descriptions of the combat scenarios you might encounter during the adventure. You will navigate to them through hyperlinks when a combat begins and follow their hyperlinks back into the normal body of text parts after the combat's conclusion.

A combat writeup typically includes the "stat block" for one or more enemies you will face. It will also note the tactical profile of

each combatant, plus any special instructions or tactical variations to apply.

TERRAIN

Each combat writeup includes information about the terrain, the size of the combat area, and other conditions.

A combat area limits the maximum distance ratings creatures can achieve, if such limitations exist. A combat area is often abstract, a limitation on the possible distance between combatants rather than the range between physical boundaries. However, some adventures may supply maps to provide precise information about the space.

If the terrain has features that can grant cover or impose movement penalties, these will be described here as well.

STARTING DISTANCE

At the beginning of a battle, the combat writeup will indicate each creature's starting distance from you. (Distance is addressed in the *theater of the mind* rules, below.)

For simplicity, starting distance is often the same for all enemies or for groups of similar enemies. Sometimes starting distances will vary based on whether you or your foes are surprised.

SURPRISE AND INITIATIVE

Some combats will allow you or your enemies to be surprised. The conditions that determine surprise are described on a case-by-case basis in each writeup.

Each enemy in a SOLITAIRES combat writeup also lists its initiative result, pre-rolled to save you time. If you want to make your own rolls for enemy initiative results, do so according to the rules in the *Player's Handbook*. If you choose this approach, you must use it consistently; decide at the start of the campaign how you will approach pre-rolling for antagonists.

TACTICAL PROFILES

Monsters tactics are purposefully simple and adhere to a generic set of instructions for combat. It would otherwise be difficult for a single player to play both sides of a tactical situation; neither side can get the upper hand when their actions are directed with full knowledge of what the other side can do and what it intends.

SKIRMISHER

This is, by far, the most common tactical profile; the others tend to appear only in very important or complex encounters. From stalwart soldiers to crawling critters, most enemies are very direct with their combat methods.

Skirmishers will close to melee range as quickly as possible, if possible, and use their most powerful or effective attacks and actions. Skirmishers will try to surround foes or otherwise move to block an escape.

If prevented from closing to melee by terrain, class features, or the like, the creature will resort to ranged attacks and spells. If it has no way to aggress a foe, it will take the Dodge action and try to move out of enemy line of sight, waiting for circumstances to change.

ARTILLERIST

Enemies with this profile initially move to a range appropriate for their ranged attacks or spells. On subsequent turns, they will only move if you got closer or farther away. They are always seeking to maintain their ideal ranges.

Artillerists will use their most powerful or effective attacks and actions as soon as possible. Limited actions like breath weapons will be used as soon as they refresh.

In the case of spells or area-affecting powers, artillerists will not include their allies in harmful area attacks unless otherwise noted in the combat writeup.

SUPPORTER

Enemies with this rare profile have special traits or magic designed to help their allies in battle, bolstering or healing them. When not providing support to its allies, a supporter will behave as a skirmisher or artillerist, whichever is suitable for its capabilities.

A defensive supporter that uses spell slots (or similar resources) will reserve its most powerful spell slot for a healing or protection spell, using it when the opportunity arises. Because this can be hard to adjudicate, supporters are likely to have special instructions in the writeup for how they act during a combat.

COMBAT WRITEUP OPTIONS

A combat writeup provides options to follow for success and for failure. Where applicable, they might also include options for escape or other unusual events. Unlike other options, these are sometimes not dependent on player choices, or might offer a mix of factual outcomes and player choices. Success or failure is not a player decision, but the option to flee might be.

SUCCESS OPTION

You can follow this option's prompt when all of your enemies are slain and any instructive text in that combat writeup has been processed. These usually put you back in the story at the point where your battle began, ready to continue the adventure.

In the rare circumstance that you and your enemies reach 0 hit points in the same turn (perhaps you cast a *fireball* spell that hit everyone in the room), treat this as a success if you survive the resulting death saving throws. If this happens while you are tracking time, add 1d4 x 12 Interval Points for the hours it takes to recover to 1 hit point, unless you roll a 20 on a death saving throw or have some other way to recover more quickly.

FAILURE OPTION

If you are reduced to 0 hit points during a battle, go immediately to the indicated failure prompt. In many cases, the text part will describe your death; the monster devours you, the brigands slit your throat, or you have no chance to stabilize as the farmhouse burns down around you.

However, death is not assumed in every failed combat. Sometimes, enemies wish to capture you so will bind your wounds and tie you up. Certain kinds of enemies, like construct guardians, might simply wander away when you are no longer a threat, leaving you to make death saves in the hopes of stabilizing. Whatever the conditions, the failure option will guide you to the steps you need to take next.

ESCAPE OPTION

If a combat writeup gives an option for fleeing combat, you can try to escape by using an action on your turn.

When you use an action to escape, each enemy immediately gets to attack you, striking you as you turn your back or firing a ranged attack before you can escape to cover.

These attacks happen at the distance ratings that exist when you declare the escape. (See the distance rating rules in the next section.) If you remain above 0 hit points after these attacks are made, follow the escape prompt to the indicated text part. Otherwise, select the failure option.

The type of attack each enemy takes depends on what will be most advantageous to it:

Opportunity Attack. A creature at 5 feet can attempt a normal opportunity attack. You can avoid or mitigate it with your features that affect opportunity attacks. If a creature does not roll an opportunity attack for any reason, perhaps because you are immune to them, it can instead opt for a ranged attack.

Ranged Attack. This is not an opportunity attack and doesn't use a reaction. The range of the attack must be sufficient for the creature's current distance rating. A creature that opts for a ranged attack does so at disadvantage if its distance rating is within 5 feet.

THEATER OF THE MIND

The following rules help you envision the battlefield and calculate location-based combat factors without a Dungeon Master.

DISTANCE

The only measure of locationality in theater of the mind rules is distance; direction is irrelevant in this abstract environment. Each enemy has its own distance rating in feet, indicating how far it is from you. This number applies when determining attack and spell ranges.
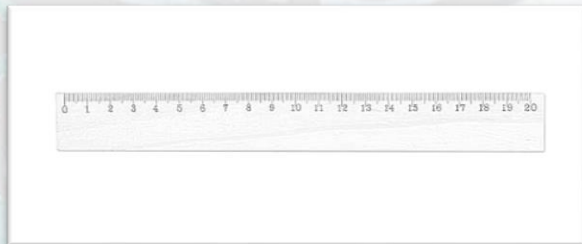
TECHNIQUE: USING A RULER

If you have a physical ruler that measures centimeters, you can place one or more paper clips along it to represent each monster's distance from you. In highly-mobile fights, this can be easier than erasing and re-writing creature distances.

When using this method, each centimeter indicates a multiple of 5 feet. Move the clips as distances change. For fights with multiple foes, paper clips in different colors can help you differentiate your enemies from one another.

Because positions are abstract, enemies with equidistant ranges do not actually occupy the same space as each other. They spread out to surround you and avoid harmful area-effecting spells.

ENEMY MOVEMENT

When a foe approaches you, or when it recedes from you, alter its distance rating accordingly.

An enemy's minimum distance cannot be less than 5 feet, except under special circumstances. Nor can its maximum distance be greater than the largest dimension of the room or space you are in, if such a boundary exists. Check the terrain description of the combat writeup for the size of your combat area.

YOUR MOVEMENT

You can use your movement in combat to go toward all the enemies or away from all the enemies. There is no other direction in which to travel.

When you move away from the enemies, increase all of their distance ratings by the appropriate amount, to the maximum allowed by the combat space.

When you move toward the enemies, decrease all of their distance ratings, to a minimum of 5 feet. Creatures you come within 5 feet of you as you move will maintain a 5-foot distance for the remainder of your movement, surrounding you and scurrying after you as you continue your advance. You cannot bypass them since the direction toward the enemy is always toward all enemies.

OTHER DISTANCE CONSIDERATIONS

These rules address uncommon factors related to distance in *theater of the mind* combat.

OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

Enemies with distance ratings of 5 feet *at the start of your turn* can make opportunity attacks if you move. This is true even if you move toward enemies, not changing the distance ratings of melee-range creatures.

You can also take an opportunity attack as normal if a monster moves out of your melee reach. Enemies will not move to provoke opportunity attacks unless directed to do so by the combat writeup.

FLANKING

If you have chosen to use the optional flanking rule, creatures in multiples of two get advantage on attacks against you if they are within 5 feet of you, starting with the toughest creatures. The weakest creature is ignored in the case of an odd-numbered group of melee attackers.

For example, if three monsters are within 5 feet of you, the toughest two benefit from flanking. The third monster does not until a fourth comes within melee range, at which point all four will get flanking benefits.

FORCED FLEEING

If you cause an enemy to flee for at least one minute (ten rounds), perhaps with the Turn Undead feature or a *suggestion* spell, that enemy is considered to be defeated and will not return to the fight. If forced fleeing has a duration less than one minute, the foe will return to the fight (regaining its prior distance rating) after a number of rounds equal to double the effect's duration.

If a combat writeup provides treasure from an enemy you forced to flee this way, you do not get that treasure.

FLYING

Flying creatures have a second distance rating called height. This extra rating is relevant only to non-flying creatures and is limited to the height of the room or combat space, if any. A creature can use its movement to alter its height or distance, or it can divide its movement between the two.

If you are not flying, a flying creature's effective distance rating is the greater of its normal distance or its height.

If you are flying and your enemies are not, your own height stands in the place of enemies' shorter distance ratings. Although such enemies can reduce their ground distances to 5 feet, they are not in melee range and cannot make opportunity attacks, as they still separated from you by the range of your flying height.

If you and an enemy are both flying, you ignore each other's heights and refer only to the enemy's normal distance rating. If you and *all* enemies have the ability to fly, ignore normal movement and base all distance ratings on flying.

AREAS OF EFFECT

An area spell's coverage is often obvious, particularly for effects that emanate from you in every direction. If every enemy has a distance rating of 5 feet, your *thunderclap* cantrip will affect all of them. Every creature with a distance rating of 15 feet or less is subject to your *spirit guardians* spell.

Similarly, if the dimensions of the combat area make it obvious that no one could escape your *fireball,* yourself included, everybody has to roll a saving throw. Use your judgment to self-moderate these obvious scenarios.

However, because directionality is abstract in this version of *theater of the mind*, not all spells will have obvious coverage. If nine enemies are arrayed at the same distance, this does not mean they are all close to one another; these foes might be encircling you, meaning that some are twice as far from each other as they are from you!

WHEN IN DOUBT

For non-obvious circumstances, the *Dungeon Master's Guide* has a table on page 249 titled Targets in Areas of Effect for use in *theater of the mind* combat.

The table is repeated here.

TARGETS IN AREAS OF EFFECT	
Area	**Base Number of Targets**
Cone	Length ÷ 10 (round up)
Cube or square	Side ÷ 5 (round up)
Cylinder	Radius ÷ 5 (round up)
Line	Length ÷ 30 (round up)
Sphere	Radius ÷ 5 (round up)

CHOICE OF TARGETS

When you use the table to determine the number of targets affected, and you do not have enough coverage to include every enemy on the battlefield, you can choose which enemies to affect and which to exclude. Regardless of coverage, you cannot include creatures with distance ratings exceeding the spell's range.

Under these rules, allies are never harmed by your area spells, nor are any creatures not listed in the combat writeup. For example, your wizard familiar or ranger companion is never at risk of being harmed by your area-affecting spell. Likewise, non-player characters adventuring with you, or any foes they fight in separate-but-simultaneous conflicts, are not affected.

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

To simulate the benefits of adjusting your position in combat, using one of the following options will allow you to include 1 additional foe in your spell's area. You can only select one of the following options per area spell you cast.

Repositioning. Moving prior to spellcasting allows you to get the best line of sight, place self-emanating areas correctly, and get out of your own dangerous spell areas. This option requires the expenditure of 15 feet of your movement, but it does not change enemy distance ratings. If you are within 5 feet of any enemies when you reposition, you provoke an opportunity attack from each.

Danger Close. If the spell does not emanate from you, you can choose to place it such that you are also included in the area affected. (You do not count toward the number of targets affected by the table.) This can be dangerous unless the spell only affects "enemies" or unless you have relevant effects like the Sculpt Spells feature.

Venture into the Unknown, Alone

This three-part rulebook helps you explore single-player interactive adventures, particularly those written in the Solitaires system.

Chapter 1 walks you through the process of designing your own campaigns by stringing together various adventures, even combining adventures made by different creators. It also helps you build a character to play through your combined campaigns and set the stage for an enjoyable experience.

Chapter 2 teaches you the tools specific to Solitaires, including how to navigate the text, track progress, and moderate Dungeon Master decisions.

Chapter 3 provides further details of managing challenges in the Solitaires system, particularly social interactions and combat.

For use with the 5th Edition *Player's Handbook* ®, *Monster Manual* ®, and *Dungeon Master's Guide* ®

Best when used with the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual* and the *Comprehensive Wealth Manual*, sister products from Wraith Wright Productions