

DMH-9



MARK OF HEROES

MARK OF HEROES™ DM'S

MARK™ APRIL 2006

A ONE-ROUND DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® DM'S
MARK PACKET FOR 8TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison. The Eberron setting created by Keith Baker. Eberron game design by Keith Baker, Bill Slavicsek, and James Wyatt

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WHAT'S A DM'S MARK ADVENTURE?

DM'S MARK adventures are a new part of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS, starting with the EBERRON: MARK OF HEROES campaign. Unlike other RPGA adventures, the DM's Mark adventure is not something you download or buy and run as printed with little to no modification. Instead you get basic guidelines, a special session tracking, and some story objects for an adventure that you write or modify and run.

What Do I Run?

The simple answer to is: whatever you want! The DM's Mark adventures are a chance for you, the DM, to let your creativity shine.

This might mean creating an adventure or a group of adventures totally from scratch, giving your home group an exciting sub-plot within the MARK OF HEROES campaign where they can affect the outcome in ways not possible before in campaign-style play. It might mean that you just have an interesting adventure idea to run at the show. Maybe a small plot sub-plot using NPCs or events detailed in published MARK OF HEROES adventures that have inspired you to build an adventure that will dazzle players and add depth to the campaign as a whole. Even still, it might mean that you have a favorite adventure from a published source that you twiddle with to fit into the EBERRON setting and MARK OF HEROES campaign to create a fun and exciting five-hour session without hours upon hours of work. The choice is yours. The story is yours. Have fun with it!

When Do I Run?

This is the April 2006 DM's Mark adventure, meaning that you can run it between the dates of April 1, 2006 and April 30, 2006. Like any other DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGN adventures, you report the session by way of a special session tracking sheet after the session is completed. Then hand in the session tracking sheet to your Senior GM, and he or she will report it to the RPGA.

This packet retires from play on March 30, 2006. DM's Mark packets show up in the RPGA ordering system with the release of new standard adventures, as they are usually tied to the level of play of those releases. Each DM's Marks adventure is its own unique scenario in the RPGA database, so while you, the DM, can run numerous DM'S MARK adventures each month (and even a number of unique adventures with this packet), players can only play each DM's Mark adventure occurrence once, with whatever DM they choose. You can run DM's Mark adventures at any kind of RPGA event.

For instance, let's say that you've designed a special 7th-level adventure for a group of friends. You can run that adventure at a home game using this packet, and then run a totally different 8th-level adventure for you local convention. Just keep in

mind the friends who played in your home game, can't play in the adventure you run at the convention—they've already played that particular DM's Mark occurrence. In fact, they can't play with any GM using this particular packet as the building guidelines and RPGA database adventure occurrence.

When DM's Mark adventures are released, they can be played and run during that month at Conventions, Game Days, Retail Events, or Home events. They are not released with a staggered schedule.

What Can't I Do With A DM's Mark?

DM's Mark adventures allow you to run your own adventure for a group of 4 to 6 players. It does not give you license to produce and distribute (for sale or for free) your own EBERRON adventures to others. Following the d20 System License (see www.wizards.com/d20) grants you the ability D&D compatible works, but all of the EBERRON setting, and many of the EBERRON specific rules are not covered in that license.

That said, the intent of the DM's Mark is for you to create and present exciting EBERRON adventures to a small group of players, anything more than that is really beyond the scope of the DM's Mark program.

ADVENTURE GUIDELINES

First and foremost, some of the standard rules for RPGA adventures hold true for DM'S MARK adventures as well. DM'S MARK adventures have to be ordered and sanctioned just like other adventures, and thus must be played at RPGA-Sanctioned events.

When you design your adventure, design it for a five-hour time slot—this is especially true if you are running it as part of a public event. They also must be reported. Reporting the adventure not only earns four (4) points for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS, reporting the adventure also allows players to earn experience points and gold pieces for their MARK OF HEROES character.

Level of Play

Each DM'S MARK (and MARK OF HEROES) adventure is optimized for a certain level. The optimized level determines the general levels you should design your adventure at. It also determines the general level of rewards granted for adventure success.

This DM's Mark adventure is optimized for 7th-level play, so you should design your challenges for four 7th-level characters. You'll also want to scale the adventure for up for 8th-level characters. There's a good chance that you'll have six players at the table, and six 7th-level characters face tougher challenges than four or five 7th-level characters.

How Many Encounters?

Some of this depends on your style as a DM, but here are some general guidelines crafted by Andy Collins from his "Craft (Adventure)" column featured on the RPGA website:

"At these levels, characters have many more options. Spellcasters have access to spells that affect many targets simultaneously, forcing the GM to make multiple saves each time such a spell is cast, and warriors attack two or more times per round. Monsters frequently have multiple attacks, reach, or special abilities that require adjudication by the GM (and rolls by the players). Three-dimensional combat becomes common, which can slow down the game as well.

All this leads to longer action times and by extension longer rounds and encounters. A typical player action at these levels can take anywhere from 45 to 90 seconds, assuming the player has adequate familiarity with his character's abilities, particularly in the case of spellcasters. A single round then takes from 6 to 12 minutes, including the GM's actions, and a full encounter about 30 to 60 minutes. Again adding in 10% for the inevitable pre- and post-fight maneuvers, and we get a total of 33 to 66 minutes per encounter. This suggests that anywhere from three to six such encounters can fit into our 200-minute session, with four being a good target. Again, some encounters might count for more or less than a regular encounter, as described above."

You may want to check out all of the "Craft (Adventure)" columns for other good advice on creating adventures for RPGA events. The columns offer a wealth of good advice.

Treasure

At the end of the adventure, all treasure is converted into gold pieces, and split between the PCs. As a basic rule of thumb, for a 7th-level optimized adventure don't stock your adventure with more than 18,000 gp worth of treasure, and some of that treasure should be things that the PCs can find useful in the adventure (for instance *potions of cure moderate wounds* are always useful). This treasure number includes any rewards paid to the PCs, or any other wealth they picked up during the adventure.

Campaign Considerations

The MARK OF HEROES campaign has just reached its second level kick, so the PCs will be facing the mid-level challenges

There are many characters who are Journeymen of the Diggers' Union, which means they are more trusted by the organization, and get better assignments.

The Union was once a semi-autonomous organization entirely devoted to gathering and supplying Morgrave University with adventurers to find and obtain treasure for the university vaults, but with the end of the Last War the organization has emerged as a full-fledged adventurers' guild, with chapter houses throughout the Khorvaire continent

and outposts on far-off Xen'drik and even Aerenal. This gives you vast range when deciding where on Eberron to set your adventure. Diggers' Union members are at home in the wilds of Eldeen Reaches, the unholy landscape of the Mournlands, or the dangerous fighting pits of Droaam. They could be treasure hunting for Morgrave University, on a mission for a dragonmarked house, or even aiding local authorities in the investigation of a crime, when the circumstances become beyond the pale for the local constable's expertise. Eberron is open to you.

The following are some of the current standard adventures in release, or about to see release, with as little spoiler information as possible. You can use these adventures for jumping off points for your own adventure, or just as background.

EMH-9 Mote in the Eye of Chaos

Slated for release in mid April 2006, this 7th-level optimized adventure details the further search for the rhyme and reasons behind the nerra insurgency on Eberron. All clues point to the bastion of a northern Karrn lord who the PCs know was replaced by one of the strange mirror men.

EMH-10 Desolate Endeavor

Release in time for March play, this 7th-level optimized adventure has the PCs traveling to the Demon Waste ruin of Desolate to find and activate a long lost House Oriin portal.

EMH-11 Incident at Graywall

Release at Winter Fantasy, its extended premier, and available for general play in May, this 7th-level optimized adventure has the PCs running for their life in the monster-infested Droaam city of Graywall.

EMH-12 Escape from Grea Tower

Release at Winter Fantasy, its extended premier, and available for general play in May, this 8th-level optimized adventure has the PCs searching for a way out of the besieged Union headquarters.

XMH-3 The Unexpected Gate

Release at WINTER FANTASY and for its extended premier, this 7th-level optimized special adventure has the PCs exploring an ancient dwarven gate on a deserted island in the Bitter Sea.

EMH-13 Deep Woods, Dark Heart

Slated for release in June 2006, this 9th-level optimized adventure pits the PCs against the Children of Winter as they race to stop a sacrifice deep in the Gloaming in the Eldeen Reaches.

ADVENTURE QUESTION

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CAMPAIGNS (of which MARK OF HEROES is part of) tracks character progress digitally. At the adventure's end, you report what the characters did, by answering a number of questions. The answers to those questions are tallied, and determine not only what happens in the campaign, but also the experience points (XP) and gold piece (gp) value increase each character gains.

At the end of this adventure, you'll find the RPGA Session Tracking form, tailored for this adventure. On the section titled "Adventure Questions" fill in the bubble that corresponds to the best answer for the questions below.

Unlike other MARK OF HEROES adventure, the adventure questions for DM's Mark are very general. Since these adventure vary greatly, this general approach is the best way for you, the DM, the ability to reward the PCs properly.

1. Did the PCs reach the adventure objective or objectives?

- All or most objectives.
- Some, but not all the objectives.
- None of the objectives.

2. Did the PCs defeat the adventure encounters?

- All or most of the encounters.
- Some but not all of the encounters.
- None of the encounters.

3. Did the PCs earn and retain the treasure in the adventure?

- All or most of the treasure.
- Some but not all of the treasure.
- None of the treasure.

4. Rate the group's roleplaying.

- Fantastic. Everyone had interesting and engaging characters the interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
- Good. Most everyone had interesting and engaging character that interacted with the adventure in very fun ways.
- Okay. There was some roleplaying.
- None. They treated the adventure only as a set of objectives. There was no roleplaying.

STORY OBJECTS

With each DM's Mark packet, we include a couple of story objects. It is your choice whether or not to use the story objects, as they are tools for you to add depth and some extra reward to your adventure.

Story objects are now digital. You'll notice on both your Session Tracking Sheet, and in the online reporting on the RPGA database, there's a section titled certification or cert. These sections allow you to enter up to two groups of five alphanumeric characters. At the end of each adventure, usually in a sidebar of in the Conclusion section, there is a list of story objects unique to the adventure. This list also features a description of the object, and the five alphanumeric character code you place on the

Session Tracking Sheet and the online reporting to grant a character a particular story object. The story object then is reported with the adventure questions, and appears on the character's online character record after the session is reported.

Here are the story objects you can use for this DM's Mark. Each can be given out to all the PCs (or as many PCs as you desire), but no character can have both DM's Marks.

Object ID: MH1015

Object Name: Unlocked Mind

Object Description: Something has occurred to unlock you mind to hidden potentials...psionics potentials. This story object unlocks the Wild Talent feat from the *Expanded Psionic Handbook*.

Object ID: MH1016

Object Name: Friend of Fey

Object Description: You've gained the trust and respect of an influential group of fey. These fey have marked your character with a supernatural aura that only other fey can see. When encountering other fey there's an 80% chance they act more positively toward you (their initial attitude is one step friendlier toward you), but so fickle are the ways of fey, that if they don't act more positively toward you, they act more negatively (initial attitude is one step more hostile toward you).