



8 ADVANCED TOPICS



The brass golem's sword missed Valeros's head by inches. Unable or unwilling to check its swing, the golem didn't even turn as the blade sliced a hand from one of the buxom women by the fire. The quartet screamed, revealing long fangs.

"Hey!" Valeros shouted, his tone deeply offended. "I liked that one!"

Seoni grimaced and rose into the air, fists surrounded by nimbuses of pale light.

"To be fair," she said, "I'm pretty sure they intend to suck out your soul."

"So?" Valeros hefted his shield. "Two can play that game. Maybe three or four."

CUSTOMIZING YOUR GAME

Roleplaying games are, at their cores, simulations, with most rules focusing on how to perform epic feats and participate in the fantastic adventures of legendary heroes. Thus, games like the Pathfinder RPG highlight the most common elements of fantasy stories: battle, magic, monsters, and the like, detailing facets of the simulation that benefit from or require more detail than a GM might comfortably arbitrate on his own. The *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* gives GMs the tools they need to run countless adventures, and serves as a toolbox to help you create nearly any fantasy situation imaginable. Yet no rules set can anticipate every specific situation. Rather than just glossing over situations not discussed in the rules, in many cases, GMs employ specialized subsystems to add new layers of excitement and precision to their adventures. Thus, adjudicating a pursuit through a crowded city might become an exhilarating new game within the game while a fortune-telling session takes on new realism by drawing upon well-known tricks of the trade.

In an attempt to better equip GMs with more exciting options for their campaigns, this chapter presents a variety of new subsystems, as well as advice to make running common fantasy encounters easier. While some sections offer more detailed explanations and uses of existing rules, others present altogether new rules, while still others explain the methods behind creating common story elements. In any case, this chapter strives to aid GMs seeking to craft more exciting and evocative games, but does not claim to be inclusive of all the situations that might arise in an adventure. Rather, GMs should utilize these new rules and details in the same way they might use those in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*, employing them as written when possible or altering them to serve as departure points customized to specific stories, or as the basis for wholly unique subsystems.

WHEN TO DESIGN?

Part of a GM's fun is not just coming up with exciting adventures, but devising new ways to present his adventures. While Chapter 2 discusses many techniques a GM might use to make his campaign more captivating, good organization, tracking tools, handouts, and the like aren't always enough. Sometimes, a GM might find that there's no perfect fit within the existing rules for an encounter, creature, or other element he'd like to include. Yet rather than being deterred and having to reimagine his adventure, it's completely within the GM's purview to get creative with the rules to make what he wants or a campaign needs. Ultimately, while the Pathfinder RPG's rules are designed for ease of use and to promote fairness in a game, they exist to help a GM tell his

story, and should never be a hindrance to play. If revising the rules or reworking them to better suit a situation improves an adventure, the GM is within his rights to make any adjustments he sees fit. At the simplest level, such changes might be purely cosmetic—using the stats of an existing monster while describing some new threat, or describing a magic item differently from its typical interpretation, for example. In other cases, actual rules might be altered as the GM chooses, though the balance and fairness of the game should always remain a consideration. There's nothing wrong with increasing the hit points of a major villain or monster if the PCs risk breezing through a campaign's climax, or increasing the DC of a disease meant to be especially virulent. In such cases, though, the GM should consider if not making a change is actually bad for a game. Sometimes real heroes slay a dragon in a single round or shrug off the world-ravaging plague, and such things make the players feel special and remain memorable long after the adventure ends.

Occasionally, though, an adventure might call for a change that a cosmetic alteration or a random adjustment won't satisfy. In such cases, GMs have the option of creating their own simple subsystems to handle exactly the circumstance they desire. Aside from what a GM determines, there's no other authority that a rule or subsystem must appease for use in a game. While published rules typically have the benefit of professional design and extensive playtesting, there's nothing preventing any GM from designing his own components. This could be basic, like using existing rules to create magic items or monsters; more complex, like using existing spells as guidelines to create new ones; or wholly new, like many of the subsystems in this chapter. While GMs uncomfortable with the details of a game may want to keep things simple or mimic existing rules, those more experienced might attempt to design any element they feel could improve their game.

Designing new elements for one's game doesn't need to be daunting, and taking cues from existing examples serves as a fantastic departure point. A GM might design wandering monster tables for his specific adventure, customize a new kind of staff for a villain, or create a new kind of flaming tornado hazard for a side trek onto the Plane of Fire. In each of these cases, templates or components exist for such elements, requiring just a bit of customizing on the part of the GM, yet feeling completely unique to the players—which is all that matters. On the other side of the spectrum, should the GM have need of complex rules for arguing in court, climbing on titanic beasts, or firing a laser canon, he might be forced to rely on his own ingenuity. In such cases, simple, flexible systems tend to work best, especially when they rely upon established rules. In the case of courtly arguments, one might devise a scale for a king's opinion, and have the actions and urgings of PCs and NPCs affect the scale in one way or



another, creating a more nuanced system for argument than a mere Diplomacy check. GMs should try to test their rules systems before games begin, compare them to existing rules, and then let the players know that they're trying rules the GM has created himself. If things go poorly, the GM can adjust elements on the fly or even abandon the system in favor of more standard rules—and go back to the drawing board after the game. If things go well, though, the GM might solicit feedback and make additional adjustments, tinkering until he's devised a useful new tool.

WHEN TO DISGUISE?

Often the appearance of a rule works just as well as a rule. For a GM faced with a situation for which there seems to be no obvious reference in the game's rules, yet who also lacks the time or interest needed to create a new subsystem, good storytelling, even-handed arbitration, and a bit of deception can typically solve the problem and keep a game moving along. When need for a new rules element unexpectedly comes up mid-game, that's rarely the time to stop and begin designing new rules. While you can easily make a few cosmetic changes to existing rules and stat

blocks if you know of elements that might serve as good stand-ins, sometimes players come up with plans no rules system could account for. Say a PC wishes to run, leap off a cliff, and attack a dragon soaring past, digging in his axe to maintain a hold on the soaring beast. While rules exist for elements of the action, sticking and hanging onto a weapon embedded in another creature is not part of the game system. Yet rather than denying a character the opportunity to attempt a heroic feat, you could easily rely on the results of the rules you do know to arbitrate those you don't. For example, if the same character rolls high on his Acrobatics skill check and significantly exceeds his target's AC with his attack, you could declare that her plan works and she's now being dragged along by the dragon. Alternatively, if the PC botches either roll, she might be in for a long fall. Either way, interpreting existing rules in an unconventional way, or even just calling for an ability check to suggest either a good or poor result, can save you from paging through volumes of rules trying to find a nonexistent perfect fit. And with some shuffling of notes and hidden dice roles, no player should be the wiser to such an improvised ruling.

CHASES

While chases are a signature action scene in countless stories, they present a singular challenge in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, thanks to static movement rates. Since every creature in the game has a set movement rate, it might seem like you'd either automatically (or never) catch up to a fleeing foe! Obviously, this isn't the case, because there's more to catching a foe or avoiding being caught than simple speed.

BUILDING A CHASE

To simulate a chase, you'll need to do a little bit of prep work. Take about 10 small pieces of paper—pieces the size of playing cards or sticky notes work perfectly. These “chase cards” represent the chase's route, like the route a board game takes. Using 10 cards works well for a standard chase, but you can use more cards for a longer chase.

When laying out your chase into a “track” you should decide if there's a preset ending (a “finish line”), be it a contested resource, an escape vehicle, a portal that whisks away the pursued foe to an unknown location before winking out, or some similar goal that the fleeing character is trying to reach before he gets caught by the pursuers. If the chase has a finish line, mark one of the cards as such. If the pursuers haven't caught the fleeing character by the time he reaches this card, the chase ends. If your chase doesn't have a finish line, and it's merely a race of attrition, you should lay your chase cards out in a square, circle, or similar shape so that there's no obvious beginning or ending. You can even lay out chase cards in a grid pattern, allowing the participants to move about a field of obstacles in any direction they wish.

Pick two chase obstacles for each card. Not every card needs obstacles—there's no need to place obstacles on the finish line card, and if you want a faster chase, you can place obstacles on fewer cards—but if a card has obstacles, it should have two choices.

When the chase begins, place miniatures or tokens representing the creatures involved in the chase on the cards as described by the following starting conditions.

Sudden Start: In a chase that assumes that everyone begins at the same starting point, all participants start on the same card.

Head Start: If a participant has a head start on the other creatures involved in the chase, he begins three cards ahead of the rest of the participants.

Long Shot: If one participant is so far ahead that he has practically already won the chase, he begins the chase either three cards from the end of the chase or 10 cards away from the rest of the chase's participants, whichever is the greater distance between the two sides.

CHASE OBSTACLES

You should tailor your chase's obstacles to match the location where the chase takes place. A rooftop chase might include things like crumbling rooftops, narrow gaps to leap across, tightropes to run along, or steep roofs to clamber up. A chase through a crumbling ruin in a swamp might involve crumbling walkways, narrow passageways, grasping vines, leaps over quicksand, or stinking clouds of nauseating miasma. Try to mix up the flavor of the obstacles as well as the types of checks and DCs needed to navigate them.

Assign each obstacle a DC to successfully navigate or overcome. A trivial obstacle is DC 10, a simple obstacle is DC 15, a standard obstacle is DC 20, a difficult obstacle is DC 25, and a very difficult obstacle is DC 30. For high-level chases, feel free to assign correspondingly high-level DCs. When assigning obstacles, it's best to have the DCs of both obstacles on a card be within 5 points of each other, but never identical—this forces participants to make tactical choices.

As a general rule, obstacles should be overcome by physical skill checks, such as Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Ride, or Swim. Perception can be used for obstacles like short cuts, Stealth can be rolled for obstacles requiring someone to move through a square quietly, or Bluff might be required to navigate a square by convincing a city guard you should be allowed to pass. You can even use saving throws to resolve obstacles (a Fortitude save to avoid being sickened by passing through a pool of filth, for example, or a Will save to evade the strange wailing spirits haunting that area). Be creative! It's okay to reuse obstacles, but try to vary them between cards and remember not to get bogged down with repetitive DCs or certain types of checks!

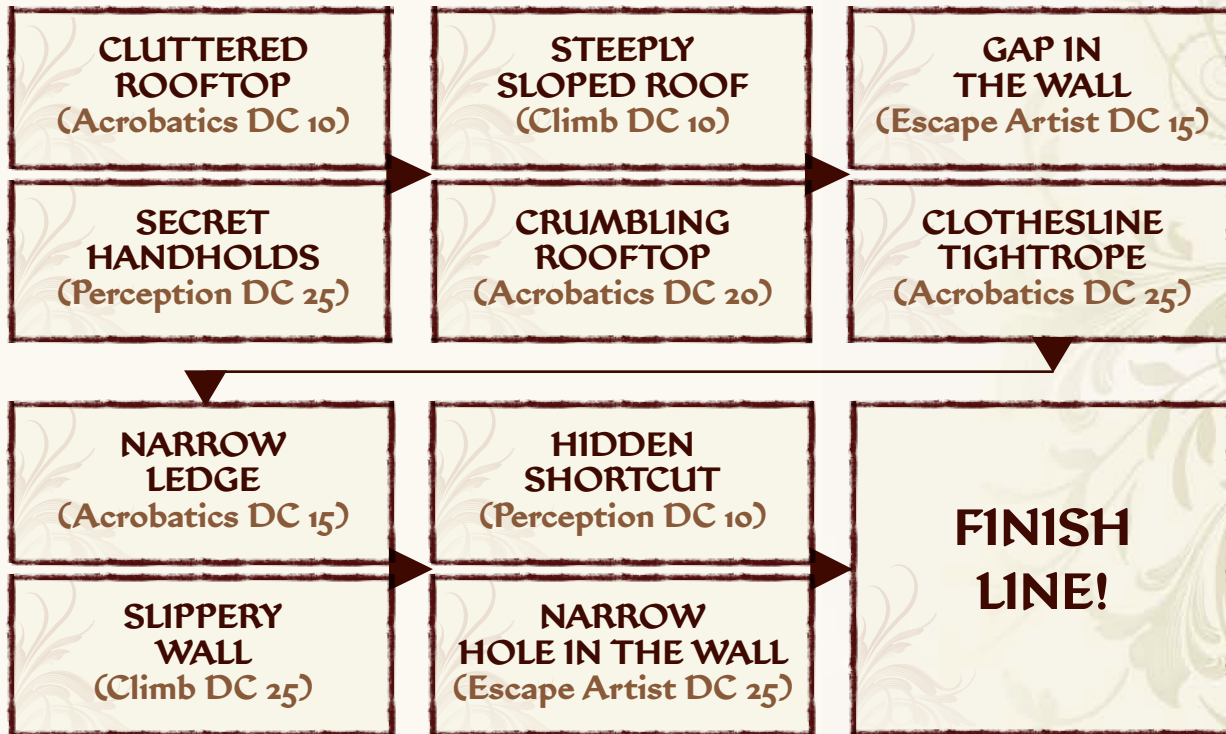
RUNNING A CHASE

The first thing to do when a chase starts is to determine the baseline speed—the movement rate of the majority of the chase's participants. In most cases, this is a land speed of 30 feet, but in some cases you'll start out with different assumptions. This base speed sets the “distance” of each chase card, so in most cases, each card represents 30 feet of space.

In some instances, such as a chase between two sailing ships racing to reach a distant island, or a long overland journey through a desert that separates a bounty hunter from his quarry, you'll want to adjust the timing of a chase. Doing so alters the distance of each card, and also gives the participants multiple options each turn to do things like cast spells. You can still use these chase rules, though—simply decide on how long each round of the chase takes and adjust the distance of each card as appropriate.

At the start of a chase, each participant makes an Initiative check to determine the order in which he

EXAMPLE PROGRESSION



moves. (If a participant triggers the chase with an initial action, such as a prisoner suddenly making a mad dash for freedom, that participant gets to go first in a surprise round if he successfully surprises the other creatures.)

While a character's actual speed doesn't directly affect how often he moves between cards, it does affect how quickly he navigates obstacles. For each 10 feet slower than the chase's baseline speed a character moves, he suffers a cumulative -2 penalty on any check made to navigate obstacles. Likewise, for every 10 feet faster than the baseline speed he moves, he gains a cumulative $+2$ bonus on these checks. Significant mobility advantages over the baseline speed type (such as flight) grant an additional $+10$ bonus on checks made to avoid obstacles, simulating the character's use of enhanced movement to bypass obstacles entirely. Used properly, extremely powerful effects (such as teleportation) allow a character to instantly move forward a number of cards (use each card's distance to determine ranges).

Using the base assumption of 30-foot cards, it takes a move action to move through a single card. When a character exits from a card, he must choose one of that card's two obstacles to face as a standard action before moving to the next card. Success means the character moves to the next card, while failure means the character must face the obstacle again on the next round. Instead of exiting a card, a character

can choose to take another action not directly related to navigating the chase's course, such as casting a spell or drawing a weapon.

A character who wants to attempt to move three cards during his turn can do so by taking a full-round action. That character must overcome both obstacles on the card he is leaving. In this case, if a character fails either obstacle check by 5 or less, he only moves one card forward and his turn ends. If a character fails either obstacle check by more than 5, he cannot move at all that turn. A character unfortunate enough to fail two obstacle checks in a turn becomes mired in his current square (he might have fallen from a ledge, gotten a foot stuck amid roots, or got caught in a crowd, for example). A character who is mired must spend another full-round action becoming unmired and effectively loses his next turn in the chase. In some cases, becoming mired might impart additional penalties (such as falling damage).

A character can also choose to make a ranged attack or cast a spell during his turn in a chase. If the action is a full-round action, he can't move at all. Use the number of cards and their established distances to determine ranges as necessary. The terrain where the chase takes place might provide the target partial or even full cover or concealment, as you wish. A character can only choose to make melee attacks against targets that are on the same card.

DISASTERS

Natural disasters go far beyond any mere environmental hazard, leaving death and devastation in their wake. Supernatural disasters can be even more disruptive, with the potential to forever scar a world. A disaster is much more like an adventure than an encounter, and does not have a specific Challenge Rating. Rather, each portion of the disaster should be treated as a separate encounter designed with a CR appropriate to the PCs.

Presented below are rules for handling the effects of three different types of disasters, both natural and supernatural. Some disasters happen quickly, like earthquakes and tsunamis, while others progress through several stages, like forest fires, volcanoes, and undead uprisings. Adjust the pacing of the adventure to fit the disaster, allowing the events to unfold over mere minutes or over several days as your needs require.

VOLCANOES

When the world's crust ruptures and expels its molten heart, one of the most dramatic natural disasters results: a volcano. Volcanic eruptions offer a wide range of options for the GM, including lava, lava bombs, poisonous gases, and pyroclastic flows. GMs might also consider presaging a dramatic volcanic eruption with existing hazards, like avalanches and minor earthquakes (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 429 and 275).

Lava

Lava flows are usually associated with nonexplosive eruptions, and can be a permanent fixture of active volcanoes. Most lava flows are quite slow, moving at 15 feet per round. Hotter flows move faster, achieving speeds up to 60 feet per round. Lava in a channel such as a lava tube is especially dangerous, moving as fast as 120 feet per round (a CR 6 hazard). Creatures overrun by a lava flow must make a DC 20 Reflex save or be engulfed in the lava. Success indicates that they are in contact with the lava but not immersed (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444).

Lava Bombs (CR 2 or 8)

Blobs of molten rock may be hurled several miles from an erupting volcano, cooling into solid rock before they land. A typical lava bomb strikes a point designated by the GM and explodes in a 30-foot radius. All creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Reflex save or take 4d6 points of damage. Creatures under cover or capable of covering themselves (like with a shield) gain a +2 bonus on this save. Particularly large lava bombs might sometimes occur, dealing 12d6 points of damage. Normal lava bombs have a CR of 2, large lava bombs have a CR of 5.

Poisonous Gas (CR 5)

One of the more insidious threats of a volcano is toxic gas, often escaping notice amid the fire and destruction. A wide variety of poisonous vapors can result from a volcanic eruption, some visible, some unseen. Poisonous gas causes 1d6 points of Constitution damage per round if inhaled (Fortitude DC 15 negates, the DC increases by 1 per previous save), and visible gases also function as heavy smoke (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444). Poisonous gas clouds flow toward low ground, and are typically 50 feet high. Gale-force winds can divert gas clouds, as can high barriers—provided the gas has somewhere else to go.

Pyroclastic Flows (CR 10)

Some volcanic eruptions create a devastating wave of burning ash, hot gases, and volcanic debris called a pyroclastic flow that can travel for miles. Treat a pyroclastic flow as an avalanche (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 429) traveling at 500 feet per round, combined with the effects of poisonous gas listed above. Contact with the searing-hot debris of the flow causes 2d6 points of fire damage per round, while any creature buried in the flow suffers 10d6 points of damage per round. Only reality-warping magic like *miracle* or *wish* can turn aside or impede a pyroclastic flow.

TSUNAMIS

Tsunamis, sometimes referred to as tidal waves, are crushing waves of water caused by underwater earthquakes, volcanic explosions, landslides, or even asteroid impacts. Tsunamis are almost undetectable until they reach shallow water, at which point the mass of water builds up into a great wave.

Depending on the size of the tsunami and the slope of the shore, the wave can travel anywhere from hundreds of yards to more than a mile inland, leaving destruction in its wake. The water then drains back, dragging all manner of debris and creatures far out to sea.

The exact damage caused by a tsunami is subject to the GM's discretion, but a typical tsunami obliterates or displaces all temporary and poorly built structures in its path, destroys about 25% of well-built buildings (and causes significant damage to those that survive), and leaves serious fortifications only lightly damaged. As much as a quarter of the population living in the area (including animals and monsters) perishes in the disaster, either swept out to sea, drowned on shore, or buried under rubble.

A creature can avoid being pulled out to sea with a DC 25 Swim check; otherwise it is pulled 6d6 × 10 feet away from shore. Waters after a tsunami are always treated as rough or stormy, barring magical influence. A creature caught in a collapsing building takes 6d6 points of damage (DC 15 Reflex save for half), or half that amount if the building is particularly small. There is a 50%

chance that the creature is buried (as for a cave-in, see page 415 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*), or the tsunami may tear the building apart, freeing the creature from the rubble.

UNDEAD UPRISING

Whether from an ancient curse or fell necromancy, one of the most terrifying of all supernatural disasters is the undead uprising—the dead emerging from their graves to claim the living. This disaster can strike any area where the dead have been laid to rest, not just towns and cities. More than one blood-soaked battlefield has given rise to a legion of desiccated undead warriors.

Undead uprisings occur in waves, with the timing varying according to the underlying forces at play. The events may happen over the course of only a few days, devastating a city, or be spread out over weeks as the terrified populace cowers behind locked doors and struggles to survive. During the day, life often returns to some semblance of normalcy, as the light of day briefly suppresses the power of the undead.

The Unquiet Dead

On the first nights of an undead uprising, the bodies of the recently dead rise as zombies. Those interred in consecrated ground remain at rest, but bodies left unburied or in mass graves lurch out into the streets, wreaking havoc. At first, only a few corpses are able to free themselves from their coffins and tombs, but each night, more bodies return to walk the land of the living. When dawn breaks, the dead seek safety in their graves or other hidden places. Any caught in the daylight flail about confused, as per the condition (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 566) until they are destroyed or manage to stagger into shelter. At the GM's discretion, non-humanoid corpses may rise as undead on subsequent nights.

Skeletal Awakening

As the uprising progresses, older and older corpses join the shambling ranks of the undead. Skeletons wearing traces of long-rotted funeral garb claw their way out of graveyards and crypts, and act with a malevolence and organization rarely encountered among their ilk.

The undead remain mindless, but the magical power behind the incursion gives them the efficiency and tactical acumen of a living army. The skeletons seek out weapons and armor to gird themselves for battle. Elite skeletal champions lead the troops, wielding magic items scavenged from abandoned graves. Eventually, ghouls and wights prowl the streets after dark as well, along with other lesser, free-willed undead.

Lost Souls

As the uprising gathers strength, the unquiet souls of bodies long since turned to dust awaken as well. Ghosts, shadows, wraiths, and even spectres arise to prey upon the living. A handful of the ghosts might be free from the malevolent influence of the uprising, and enterprising PCs may be able to glean valuable intelligence from these troubled spirits.

The infusion of negative energy strengthens the undead within the area of the incursion, providing the benefits of a *desecrate* spell. Areas that were once consecrated are now treated as normal ground, and may well provide new sources of corpses for the undead armies, but hallowed ground remains inviolate.

As the undead grow stronger, the growing flood of negative energy brings the Shadow Plane closer, leaving colors muted or gray except during the brightest hours of daylight. Even those undead most vulnerable to light can move about with impunity from late afternoon to mid-morning.

Necropolis

If the flow of negative energy is not reversed, darkness finally claims the area, cloaking it in perpetual shadow. The entire area of the undead uprising functions as if under the effects of an *unhallow* spell (with no additional spell effect tied to it). Hallowed ground remains a rare sanctuary, but only until destroyed by the malevolent forces without.

Heroes who perished in the battle against the uprising return as fearsome undead generals. The few living survivors are enslaved as thralls. The area becomes a city of the dead, or construction begins if no such city existed or survived. Free-willed undead flock to this new sanctuary, and only the greatest of heroes can return this now-blighted area to the world of the living.



DRUGS AND ADDICTION

Hard-drinking heroes, deities of wine and celebration, and the hazy halls of oracles and wise men stand alongside the most memorable tropes of myth and classic fantasy literature. Thus it's no surprise that the adventures of fantasy roleplaying games are filled with similar characters and locales. After all, countless campaigns have been launched around a tavern table and all adventurers know the infamous potency of stout dwarven ale.

For better or worse, all things that one might find in the real world multiply and take on wondrous and lethal qualities in fantasy settings, and the vices of alcohol and chemical abuse are no different. While many games have no place for realistic bouts of drunkenness or the soul-scouring depths of addiction, such elements hold great potential for adventure. Whether one seeks to reenact a feat of fortitude like the drinking contest between Hercules and Dionysus, have an encounter with lotus-eater-like decadents, or recreate the entheogens of religious mysteries, these rules cover the highs and lows.

DRUGS

Drugs are alchemical items that grant effects to those who make use of them. What sets them apart from similar items is that a drug's effects manifest as both a short term (usually beneficial) effect and an amount of ability damage. In addition, those who take drugs also risk addiction, a type of disease of varying severity depending on the type of drug used.

When a character takes a drug, he immediately gains the effects, an amount of ability damage, and must make a Fortitude save to resist becoming addicted to that drug (see Addiction). While the initial effect represents the physical or mind altering effects of the drug, the drain represents both its side effects and the amount of time a dose remains active in a character's body. As ability score damage heals at a rate of 1 point per day, a drug that causes 1 point of ability score damage remains in a character's system for 1 day, though some might cause greater damage and thus remain active for longer. While taking multiple doses of a drug at once rarely has any benefit, taking additional doses as the effects wear off renew those effects but increase the ability damage and potential for addiction.

Drugs can be manufactured using Craft (alchemy). The DC to make a drug is equal to its addiction DC. Rolling a natural 1 on a Craft skill check while making a drug exposes the crafter to the drug.

ADDICTION

Anytime a character takes a drug he must make a saving throw, noted in the drug's description, to resist becoming

addicted. If a character makes the save, he is not addicted and the effects of the drug persist as normal. If he fails the save, he contracts the noted form of addiction (see below). Should a character take multiple doses of the same drug in a short period of time addiction becomes more difficult to resist. The DC of a drug's saving throw increases by +2 every time a character takes a another dose of that drug while still suffering from ability damage caused by a previous dose. Keep track of how high this DC rises, even for characters already addicted to a drug, as it determines the DC necessary to overcome the disease.

Addiction manifests in three different degrees of severity: minor, moderate, and severe. Each drug notes what type of addiction failing a save against it results in. Each addiction causes a persistent penalty to ability scores, lasting for as long as the character has the disease. In the case of moderate and severe addictions, the character also cannot naturally heal ability damage dealt by the drug that caused the addiction.

Each form of addiction encourages sufferers to continue making use of the drug they are addicted to. While a character is benefiting from the effects of the drug he is addicted to, he does not suffer the penalties of his addiction disease. While he still receives the benefits of the drug and takes ability damage as normal, the disease's effects are mitigated. As soon as the drug's benefits expire, the disease's effects return.

MINOR ADDICTION

Type disease, variable; **Save** variable

Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect –2 penalty to Con; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

MODERATE ADDICTION

Type disease, variable; **Save** variable

Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect –2 penalty to Con and Str, target cannot naturally heal ability damage caused by the drug that caused this addiction; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

SEVERE ADDICTION

Type disease, variable; **Save** variable

Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect –2 penalty to Dex, Con, Str, and Wis; target cannot naturally heal ability damage caused by the drug that caused this addiction; **Cure** 3 consecutive saves

Curing Addiction

As addictions are diseases, they can be cured as such, through the use of spells like *remove disease* or by succeeding at Fortitude saves over time. Unlike with other diseases, an addicted character can only make a Fortitude save to overcome his addiction after a day of not taking the drug

he is addicted to. The DC of this Fortitude save is equal to the highest addiction DC his drug use has reached (not necessarily the DC that addicted him if he has continued to make use of the drug while addicted). This DC decreases by –2 for everyday the character does not make use of the drug, to a minimum of the drug's base addiction DC. Depending on the severity of the character's addiction, it might take two or three consecutive successful Fortitude saves to overcome the disease. Should a character take a dose of the drug he's addicted to, he immediately relapses, causing the addiction DC to instantly return to its highest DC and negating any successful past saves.

SAMPLE DRUGS

Numerous types of drugs exist, both in the real world and fantasy worlds. Presented here are several samples with a variety of effects. All drugs have the following features.

Type: This notes how the drug is introduced into the system. These types equate to the types most common to poisons: contact, ingestion, inhalation, injury.

Addiction: This is the severity of the addiction disease the drug causes, followed by the base DC of the save a character must succeed at to resist an addiction and potentially overcome an addiction. This DC can increase through multiple uses of the drug.

Price: The common price of 1 dose of this drug.

Effect: The duration and effect of the drug.

Damage: The amount and type of ability damage caused.

AETHER

Type inhaled; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 16

Price 20 gp

Effect 1 hour; +1 caster level

Effect 1d4 hours; user must make a caster check to cast spells, DC 15 + spell level

Damage 1d2 Con damage

DWARVEN FIRE ALE

Type ingested; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 20

Price 50 gp

Effect 1d4 rounds; *rage* as per the spell

Effect 1 hour; cold resistance 5

Damage 1d2 Con damage

ELVEN ABSINTHE

Type ingested; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 16

Price 500 gp

Effects 1 hour; +1d4 Cha

Damage 1d4 Con damage

FLAYLEAF

Type inhaled or ingested; **Addiction** minor, Fortitude DC 12

Price 10 gp

DRUNKENNESS

Just like drugs, alcohol can be abused and have significant negative effects. In general, a character can consume a number of alcoholic beverages equal to 1 plus double his Constitution modifier. Drinks consumed in excess of this total cause the character to become sickened for 1 hour per drink above this maximum. Particularly exotic or strong forms of alcohol might be treated as normal drugs. Those who regularly abuse alcohol might eventually develop a moderate addiction.

Effects 1 hour; +2 alchemical bonus on saves against mind-affecting effects, fatigue

Damage 1 Wis damage

OPIUM

Type inhaled, ingested, or injury; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 20

Price 25 gp

Effects 1 hour; +1d8 temporary hit points, +2 alchemical bonus on Fortitude saves, fatigue

Damage 1d4 Con and 1d4 Wis damage

PESH

Type ingested or inhaled; **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude DC 20

Price 15 gp

Effects 1 hour; +1d2 alchemical bonus to Strength, –2 penalty on saves against illusions and mind-affecting effects

Effect after 1 hour; 1d2 hours of fatigue

Damage 1d2 Con and 1d2 Wis damage

SCOUR

Type ingested or inhaled; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 24

Price 45 gp

Effects 3 hours; +1d4 alchemical bonus to Dexterity, –1d4 penalty to Wisdom

Damage 1d6 Con damage

SHIVER

Type injury or ingested; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 18

Price 500 gp

Effects variable; 50% chance to sleep for 1d4 hours or gain immunity to fear for 1d4 minutes

Damage 1d2 Con damage

ZERK

Type injury; **Addiction** minor, Fortitude DC 18 **Price** 50 gp

Effects 1 hour; +1 alchemical bonus to initiative. If addicted, the user also gains a +1d4 alchemical bonus to Strength for as long as he is addicted

Damage 1d2 Con damage

FORTUNE-TELLING

Fortune-telling conjures images of hazy tents, mysterious women shrouded in shawls, and portents wafting through the air like incense.

So how do you, in your modern game room that is probably noticeably lacking in crystal balls and mysterious tents, use the illusion of fortune-telling to give your players the same excited trepidation, as well as both hope and fear for their characters' destinies?

No matter how the fortune-telling enters your campaign, you as the Game Master have options. You can choose to roll some dice behind a screen and simply tell your players the result—or you can choose to use the moment to create dramatic tension and the feeling that the players' characters are integral to the fortune-telling. While the second option is likely a lot more fun for all involved, it does require some work on your part.

Basic Fortune-Telling Methods

Many fortune-telling methods exist, and each has its pros and cons in terms of use in a roleplaying game. What follow are some of the more easily integrated fortune-telling methods and their strengths and weaknesses for a Game Master.

Cold Readings: A cold reading is when you decide to plunge into a fortune-telling situation without much—if any—preparation. This might occur because the players suddenly seek out a fortune-teller or because it suddenly seems right in your campaign.

For a cold reading, you can either revert to reading the palms of your players' characters, throwing stones, using cards or dice, or other mystical-feeling methods. The critical thing with a cold reading is not to commit too anything too concrete or detailed in the fortune-teller's answers. You haven't prepared and committing to a possible game changer or other critical game element on the fly can come back to haunt you.

With such readings, attempt to give vague answers or ones filled with symbolism that the players can interpret ("I see a red hawk at your shoulder. Its left foot is crippled, a black ribbon tangled in its claws."). While such prophecies might have little meaning initially, you can work manifestations of such revelations into future adventures—or not, depending on the legitimacy of your fortune-telling NPC.

True Randomness: With this method of fortune-telling you let the sticks, dice, cards, or stones fall as they may. Then it is up to you to interpret the results in a way that is useful and potentially meaningful for your players. This method works best if you write down a few possible results for each player. You can do this by

listing several positive and negative results (say, having the upper numbers on dice tell something positive and the lower numbers mean a negative future). Doing so allows you to create a few vague and optional fates that work with your campaign and your characters' abilities, but still afford the excitement of leaving the results up to chance.

False Randomness: Many fortune-telling methods can be made to look random while allowing you to remain in total control of the outcome. This is easiest to do with a prop like a spirit board, but can also be done easily with cards. The advantage to false randomness is that it allows you to give players specific information you want to impart about their futures. By spelling out words on a spirit board or stacking a deck so certain cards are revealed, you can impart meanings specific to the needs of your game. The disadvantage of this technique is that, if you mess up, players know you rigged the results and don't feel as excited or as invested in the results as they might otherwise.

Fortune-Telling Props

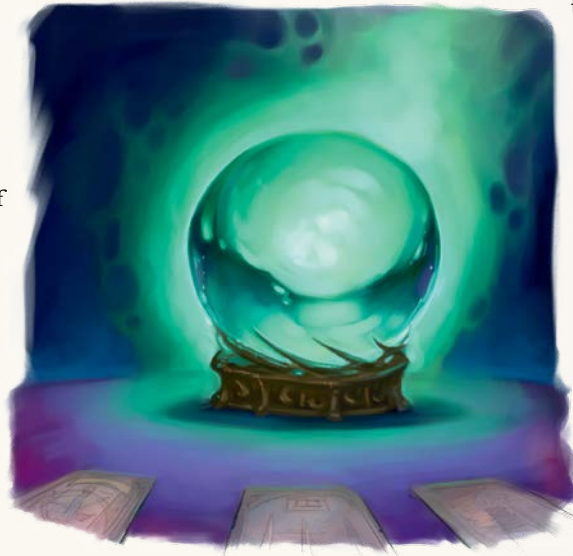
It is usually helpful to use props in the course of a fortune-telling. You can simply use a player's palm as a prop, but players tend to get more excited when they feel that an element of randomness and fate are involved, which rolling dice or drawing cards provide. Of course, you also have to be prepared to deal with that randomness and come up with appropriate responses for the answers, which often require some preparation or research. Certain tools, like tarot cards, imply particular interpretations, and familiarizing yourself with these can help guide your fortune-telling by suggesting results.

There are far more fortune-telling methods in the world than can be addressed here, but the following often prove easiest to integrate into a fantasy roleplaying campaign. If you're interested, the library and Internet have a wealth of information on other fortune-telling methods such as the *I-Ching*, pendulum reading, horary, crystalmanancy, chiromancy, and countless others.

Cards: These can be used either as single cards drawn from a deck or in more complicated fortune-telling spreads. You should have an idea of what each card means in fortune-telling or in your world before doing such a reading, as being able to interpret each card off the top of your head or with only a quick reference of your notes goes a long way to increasing the verisimilitude of the experience. The *Harrow Deck* offers cards designed specifically for use in the Pathfinder RPG, dealing with RPG-related themes, and can be useful in shortening your research time to convert real-world answers to your fantasy world.

Dice, Sticks, or Stones: Dice are something every Game Master has readily available. Many also have shiny stones of different colors and types. The GM reveals fortunes using these props by interpreting either marks on their surfaces or how they fall in relation to one another. While such items typically prove vague enough that only the “fortune-teller” can decipher them, they offer little in the way of thematic suggestions, and thus prove difficult to ad-lib with unless the GM already has an idea of how he wants the prophecy to play out. They do, however, lend an air of action, mysticism, and randomness that simple palm reading or staring into a crystal ball does not.

Crystal Ball, Fire, Foci: When using a crystal ball, fire, or any other prop that offers no visible result, you need to use a more theatrical style. These readings tend to be more scripted (see Fortune-Telling as Theater, below), although you can still add player interaction into such encounters by asking the players questions, such as “What animal comes to mind as you stare into the fire?” You must then be ready to assign a meaning to the animal or whatever other factors you decide have relevance.



Fortune-Telling as Theater

With a bit of preparation, you can give a truly theatrical fortune-telling session using palm reading, a crystal ball, or any other interpretive method where you, as the fortune-teller, are telling the players what you “see” in their future. First off, try to set the mood. Dimming the lights and insisting that everyone stay in character can go far toward eliminating disruptions.

In addition, make sure you have a good message in mind, one using metaphor and/or allegory liberally. Sometimes it helps to actually write a brief script for yourself ahead of time. For example, let’s say the message is that the characters will wind up trapped in a magical labyrinth, and the only way out is to find the labyrinth’s guardian who has a golden key. Instead of saying this straight out in a reading, you might instead phrase it more mysteriously, such as, “I see you lost, trapped in an endless series of choices... Do not allow yourself to spiral out of control or all is lost. Darkness... confusion... grief and terror. All this I see, but there is a glimpse of golden hope, a spider spinning a golden web of safety. Find her or find oblivion.”

The technique here is to not simply spoon feed your players the information they need. You want to give them clues they must unravel as they adventure forward. Also, be sure that whatever scenario your fortune-teller is describing is one you’re pretty sure the players will soon face.

You can, of course, combine this theatrical reading style with one of the more random fortune-telling elements. The combination can be particularly powerful. And always remember that, even in the most directed of readings, you want to integrate the players into the process. This will provide them with the most powerful and enjoyable experience, and will also give them things to look forward to—or dread—in the coming adventure. That kind of emotional engagement and suspense can turn a run-of-the-mill adventure into a truly magical experience.

Mundane and Magical Fortune-Telling

One of the first things PCs are likely to wonder before or after having their fates revealed is whether or not their fortune-teller’s words are true. Some fortune-tellers are complete con artists, devoid of any kind of mystical power, using the same techniques as real-world mystics. If a fortune teller is scamming the PCs, you should roll a Bluff check to determine the effectiveness of her performance. Don’t call for a Sense Motive check from the characters unless they raise the question of their seer’s legitimacy. Part of the effectiveness of fortune-telling is the recipient’s belief in the medium’s miraculous insights. Only once a character doubts these powers does the illusion risk breaking down.

The Pathfinder RPG also presents many magical options for fortune-telling. The spells *augury*, *contact other plane*, and *vision*, along with a host of other divination spells, all prove useful in giving characters insights into the future, where classic magic items like *crystal balls* and *medallions of thoughts* allow seers to demonstrate their uncanny insights. A variety of illusion-based spells and magic items, such as a *wand of major image* or a *deck of illusions*, help bring flair to a fortune-teller’s readings, regardless of actual truthfulness. *Pathfinder Campaign Setting World Guide: The Inner Sea* also presents the harrower prestige class, which employs the aforementioned *Harrow Deck* and allows characters to play a kind of adventuring fortune-teller.

GAMBLING AND GAMES OF CHANCE

Gambling is a staple of fantasy roleplaying, from elaborate games of chance in a glittering high-end casino in the wealthy part of the city to a dangerous high-stakes card game in a tavern's back room. RPG rules aside, the players and the Game Master can play a gambling game between themselves, without the interference of wildly disparate levels and skill modifiers—just get some dice or cards, and play.

However, no one coming to your house for an RPG session is going to be satisfied if you just play croupier all night long. You need to make your players' trip to the Gold Goblin Gaming House rich in fantasy if you're going to have a successful gaming experience, in both senses of the word "gaming."

CREATING THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE

Characters don't walk into gambling halls for the thrill of a slightly worse-than-average chance of breaking even. They come in for the camaraderie, the tasty beverages, and the much smaller-than-average chance of winning very big. Thus, your gambling environments should be fun and rich in character. A high-end casino can have elven dancing maidens on stage, specialty dwarven drinks, and rich patrons sitting at the tables offering wild adventures. A low-end gaming hall can be wall-to-wall with reprobates, staffed with ogre bouncers, and carry the ever-present threat of a table-tipping bar brawl.

When the player characters walk in, describe the action. Have the house wizard cast *detect magic* as they enter, all-knowingly wagging a finger at the PC with the *crystal ball* in her backpack. Show a halfling noble leaping with joy as he hits the jackpot at 3-crown imperial poker. Let them see a goblin tableboy chucked out the window for smuggling players' winnings out between his pointy teeth. Make the characters want to be there.

When they sit down to play, make sure it's something they can win. Long slogs are fine at the nickel slots, but they're no fun in an RPG. Play something with wild swings, chances of devastating losses, and the occasional powerhouse victory.

In the end, offer them an adventure no matter how it turns out. If they lose big, have the club owner give them a chance to win back what they've lost by taking out the kobolds in the nearby sewer. If they win big, have some half-orcs attempt to jack their winnings in the alley. There are many types of gambles in the world.

TYPES OF GAMBLING GAMES

There are thousands of gambling games, but all of them fall into a few basic categories or types. Many games combine elements of these types. Different players like

different kinds of games, so it's a good idea to have a wide array available.

Beat-the-bank: In games like baccarat, the house determines a certain result for itself, and the player must endeavor to beat it. Sometimes a judgment call must be made, such as in blackjack, where both the player and the bank could go above a 21 and fail.

Bluffing: The only true skill on this list, bluffing requires a player to guess what another player has, and judge whether he should try to beat it. Poker is a bluffing game, and thus is not a gambling game in the true sense. Luck is important, but in the long run, skill is much more significant.

Lottery: Each player buys one or more stakes in a large pool. Randomly, one stake is determined the winner, and most of the wagered money goes to the owner(s) of that stake.

Match game: The player wins when certain preset patterns appear, such as on a slot machine. Some may be more valuable than others, so in a game where 3d6 are rolled and the goal is to hit triples, 1-1-1 may be less valuable than 6-6-6.

Pick-a-number: In a game such as roulette or keno, each player picks one or more target numbers, and then a result number is determined. If the result is the same as a player's target number, the player wins; otherwise, the player loses.

Proposition betting: Prop bets are bets on the outcomes of events for which one has imperfect knowledge. Sports bets are the best known of these types of bets. The house sets a line on which it believes half the bettors will pick one side and half will pick the other. The proposition then happens, and the people who picked correctly are paid off.

GAMBLING AND SKILL CHECKS

There is a reason you don't see the word "Gambling" in the Pathfinder RPG skill list, and that's because gambling is not a skill. With the exception of mislabeled skill games such as poker, a gambling game is by its very definition based on seeing what lucks brings you. You cannot bring your own luck, unless you cheat. And since the house always has an edge, you cannot make money gambling against the house.

There is, however, the Profession (gambler) skill. Like all Profession skills, this Wisdom-based skill is about making money over the course of a week, not about winning a particular spin of a roulette wheel. It's about figuring out where to play, when to play, and whom to play with. A character with high ranks in this skill is playing a lot, minimizing his losses, and probably using many other skills.

In a hand of a skill game like poker, you can use a player's Profession (gambler) skill to adjudicate it, in the

same way a character's Profession (fisherman) skill might be used to catch a fish for dinner. However, it need not be the only skill a player could use. Bluff, Intimidate, Sense Motive, and (for cheating) Sleight of Hand can all be used to win a single hand of cards. These rolls, along with some roleplaying, can make a card showdown into an interesting encounter.

GAMES OF CHANCE

In games of pure chance, luck should rule the day. Neither the player nor the house is in control—the dice are, and no ranks in Profession (gambler) will help a character win. But this is as it should be. Players don't want to win at craps because their characters have high Dexterity scores—they want to win because the dice are hot tonight.

Of course, cheating is the only way to change your luck in a game of chance. If someone at the table wants to cheat, Sleight of Hand is the most useful skill, but Disable Device might also be allowed. In addition, magic can be quite useful for cheating. Spells like *mage hand*, *silent image*, and *modify memory* can turn bad results into good results. Getting caught, however, can turn these good results into much, much worse outcomes.

DESIGNING A GAMBLING GAME

A gambling game has five distinct elements: the house, the equipment, the mechanic, the odds, and the payout.

House: The house is the source of the game, and determines the game's style. A "tight" house runs games where the house edge is higher, and where player influence is minimized. A "loose" house wants much more gambling to occur, and is willing to maximize its risks so that players will bet more. The standard deviation of loss or gain is higher if the house is loose. As long as the house has an advantage in all games, the other important number the house must care about is its exposure, which is how much it can lose if everyone suddenly wins at once. A house that can't cover all its bets won't be successful for long.

Equipment: This is what you need to play the game. It's not just dice or cards—you often need markers, coins, and even miniatures. You should also determine how many people are necessary to run the game. Usually it's just one dealer, but a game like craps requires four people to run it: a boxman, two base dealers, and a stickman.

Mechanic: The mechanic is how the game is played. A mechanic should be simple and easy to grasp: place a chip on the board and roll a pair of dice, choose a number and spin a wheel, use some of your hole cards and some of the ones on the table. However, the variation of results can be much less simple; the sheer number of possible places to put your money on a craps table is dazzling.

SAMPLE GAME: TWENTYBONE

Twentybone is a beat-the-bank game played with 20-sided dice, based on the familiar roll for attacks and skill checks.

The house: Twentybone originated in a casino deep in the back alleys of a major city. The casino's owner favors exciting games with lots of randomness, and his oft-inebriated patrons appreciate that too. Bones are rattled all night long, and cheaters who sneak in loaded dice find that some of their bones get rattled as well.

The equipment: To play, you need some d20s. A whole lot of them. A dealer and a "dice girl" run the game.

The mechanic: On each round, players can buy any number of d20s they want. The standard peasant's-wage cost for a d20 is a copper piece, though at some tables a player can spend a silver piece, a gold piece, a platinum piece, or even more for a die. When all dice have been purchased, the players all roll their dice. Then the house rolls a die. Every player die that beats the house die gets paid off with two coins for every one coin it was bought for. For the player, a 1 always loses, and a 20 always wins.

The odds: The player has a 47.75 percent chance of winning. 1's don't beat anything, 2's only beat house 1's, 3's beat house 1's and 2's, and so on. The exception is player 20's, which have a special advantage of beating house 20's.

The payout: The player will win 9.55 coins for every 10 coins he bets. The fact that a player is paid two coins on every win obscures the fact that the player gave over a coin to buy the die. Accounting for this, every successful bet's payout is 1-to-1.

Odds: The odds are the percentage chances that a player will win money. A player's percentage chance of winning should be somewhat less than 50 percent for the house to make money. In any casino, the house will retain some "edge," which is the profit the house will make on a long series of bets. So if a player plays a game where he wins 9 silver pieces for every gold piece he gives the house, the house edge is 10 percent.

Payout: The payout is the rate of return a player gets when he wins, usually double the odds. It's important to understand that for a game of pure chance, all choices must lead to the same payouts over time. Think of the roulette board. A straight-up bet on a single number has a 37-to-1 chance of hitting, and pays 35-to-1. A bet on all of the numbers 1–12 has a 2.167-to-1 chance of hitting, and pays 2-to-1. A bet on red has a 1.111-to-1 chance of hitting, and pays 1-to-1. Doing the math on these bets show that they all have the same rate of return: a player loses 5.3 cents for every dollar bet.

HAUNTS

The distinction between a trap and an undead creature blurs when you introduce a haunt—a hazardous region created by unquiet spirits that react violently to the presence of the living. The exact conditions that cause a haunt to manifest vary from case to case—but haunts always arise from a source of terrific mental or physical anguish endured by living, tormented creatures. A single, source of suffering can create multiple haunts, or multiple sources could consolidate into a single haunt. The relative power of the source has little bearing on the strength of the resulting haunt—it's the magnitude of the suffering or despair that created the haunt that decides its power. Often, undead inhabit regions infested with haunts—it's even possible for a person who dies to rise as a ghost (or other undead) and trigger the creation of numerous haunts. A haunt infuses a specific area, and often multiple haunted areas exist within a single structure. The classic haunted house isn't a single haunt, but usually a dozen or more haunted areas spread throughout the structure.



HAUNT RULES

Although haunts function like traps, they are difficult to detect since they cannot be easily observed until the round in which they manifest. *Detect undead* or *detect alignment* spells of the appropriate type allow an observer a chance to notice a haunt even before it manifests (allowing that character the appropriate check to notice the haunt, but at a –4 penalty).

A haunt can infuse a maximum area with a 5-foot radius per point of CR possessed by the haunt, but the actual area is usually limited by the size of the room in which the haunt is located.

When a haunt is triggered, its effects manifest at initiative rank 10 in a surprise round. All characters in the haunt's proximity can attempt to notice the haunt at the start of this surprise round by making a notice check). All haunts detect life sources and trigger as a result of the approach of or contact with living creatures, but some haunts can be tricked by effects like *hide from undead* or *invisibility*.

On the surprise round in which a haunt manifests, positive energy applied to the haunt (via channeled energy, cure spells, and the like) can damage the haunt's hit points (a haunt never gains a Will save to lessen the damage done by such effects, and attacks that require a successful attack roll to work must strike AC 10 in order to affect the haunt and not merely the physical structure it inhabits). Unless the haunt has an unusual weakness, no other form of attack can reduce its hit points. If the haunt is reduced to 0 hit points by positive energy, it is neutralized—if this occurs before the haunt takes its action at initiative rank 10, its effect does not occur.

A haunt can have virtually any effect identical to an existing spell effect, but often with different—and distinctly more frightening or unnerving—sensory or physical features than that spell effect normally has. (A haunt that has an effect not identical to an existing spell is certainly possible, but this requires designing a new spell effect.) A haunt might cause a room to explode into flames (duplicating *fireball* or *fire storm*), infuse a chamber with fear (duplicating *cause fear*, *scare*, or *fear*), or try to frighten a target to death (duplicating *phantasmal killer* or *slay living*). How the haunt's effects manifest are left to you to determine.

A neutralized haunt is not destroyed, and can manifest again after a period of time—to destroy a haunt, a specific action must be taken in the region to end the effect forever (such as burning a haunted house to the ground or burying the bones of the slaves who died on the site to create the haunt). This specific act is different for every haunt (although a number of nearby haunts often share the same destruction act).

Some haunts are persistent, and their immediate effects continue beyond the surprise round into actual full rounds. Persistent haunts continue to trigger their haunt effects once per round on their initiative rank until destroyed or they no longer have a target.

All primary effects created by a haunt are mind-affecting fear effects, even those that actually produce physical effects. Immunity to fear grants immunity to a haunt's direct effects, but not to secondary effects that arise as a result of the haunt's attack.

ELEMENTS OF A HAUNT

Haunts are presented in the following format.

Haunt Name: The haunt's name is followed by its CR.

XP: This is the amount of XP to award the PCs for surviving the haunt, as determined by its CR.

Alignment and Area: This line gives the haunt's alignment and the dimensions of the area it infuses (up to 5 feet per CR). If a haunt is persistent, this is noted here as well.

Caster Level: This is the haunt's effective caster level for the purposes of dispelling any ongoing effects with *dispel magic*, and for determining the results of spell effects it creates.

Notice: This indicates the skill check and DC required to notice the haunt in the surprise round before it manifests. The sensory input for what a successful check notices—such as a faint ghostly wailing, a smell of burning flesh, or fresh blood oozing from the walls—is listed in parentheses after the DC.

hp: This lists the haunt's effective hit points for the purposes of resolving positive energy damage. A haunt's hit points are equal to twice its CR, except in the case of a persistent haunt, in which case its hit points are equal to its CR × 4.5 (round fractions down).

Weakness: Any weaknesses the haunt might have, such as for haunts that can be tricked by effects like *hide from undead* or can be damaged by effects other than positive energy, are listed here.

Trigger: The conditions that can cause the haunt to manifest are given here. Proximity-triggered haunts occur as soon as a creature enters the haunt's area. A haunt triggered by touch does not activate until a living creature touches a specific object or location in its area, but it can sense (and thus target with its effects) any creature in its area.

Reset: This is the amount of time that must pass before a haunt can attempt to reset. Until it is destroyed, a haunt can reset after this period by succeeding on a DC 10 caster level check—failure indicates the haunt must wait that amount of time again before making another attempt to reset.

Effect: This details the haunt's exact effects, including a description of how the haunt manifests.

Destruction: This describes the act needed to permanently destroy the haunt.

CREATING A HAUNT

To make a haunt like the example below, follow these steps.

Step 1—Determine Base CR: A haunt's base CR is equal to 1 + the level of the spell it duplicates.

Step 2—Determine Actual CR: Select the elements you want the haunt to have and add up the adjustments to its CR to arrive at the haunt's final CR (see Table 8–2: CR Modifiers for Haunts).

TABLE 8–1: CR MODIFIERS OF HAUNTS

Feature	CR Modifier
Type	
Persistent	+2
Notice DC	
15 or lower	–1
16–20	—
21–25	+1
26–29	+2
30 or higher	+3
Reset Time	
1 minute	+2
1 hour	+1
1 day	+0
1 week	–1
Example Weaknesses	
Slow (manifests at Initiative rank 0)	–2
Susceptible to an additional type of damage	–1 per additional type
Tricked by <i>hide from undead</i>	–2
Tricked by <i>invisibility</i>	–1
Tricked by <i>Stealth</i> *	–3
Triggered by touch	–2

* The haunt makes a caster level check instead of a Perception check to notice someone using *Stealth*.

Step 3—Determine Caster Level: A haunt's caster level is equal to its actual CR score.

Step 4—Determine Hit Points: A haunt's hit points are equal to twice its CR (or equal to its CR × 4.5 if the haunt is persistent).

Step 5—Calculate Attacks and Save DCs: A haunt's attack modifier (if one is needed) is equal to its CR. If a haunt's spell effect allows a saving throw to resist or negate the effect, the save DC is equal to 10 + the level of the spell + the ability modifier of the minimum ability score needed to cast that level of spell.

BLEEDING WALLS

CR 5

XP 1,600

CE haunt (5 ft. by 20 ft. hallway)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to hear the sound of soft sobbing)

hp 10; Trigger proximity; Reset 1 day

Effect When this haunt is triggered, thick rivulets of blood course down the walls accompanied by the shrill shriek of a woman's scream. All creatures in the hallway are targeted by a *fear* spell (save DC 16).

Destruction The body of the maid entombed behind the walls must be extracted and given a proper burial.

HAZARDS

The adventuring world is filled with dangers beyond dragons and ravening fiends. Hazards are location-based threats that have much in common with traps, but are usually intrinsic to their area rather than constructed.

Hazards fall into three main categories: environmental, living, and magical. Environmental hazards include subterranean threats like cave-ins and wilderness dangers like forest fires. Living hazards are creatures that are generally too passive to be considered monsters, but are still a threat to unwary adventurers, such as dangerous molds, slimes, and fungi. Magical hazards are the most unpredictable, and can be the legacy of arcane experimentation, strange underground radiations, or ancient enchantments gone awry.

Hazards have challenge ratings like traps or monsters. A typical hazard triggers if a creature ventures near or into it, causing hit point damage, ability damage or drain, or some other harmful effect. Most can be detected by wary and knowledgeable PCs. Every hazard should have a means of escape or a way to eliminate the hazard, if not both.

SAMPLE HAZARDS

Presented here are a variety of unusual hazards.

Accursed Pool (CR 3)

The lingering effects of ancient curses or harmful energy leaching from a submerged cursed magical item can turn a simple pool of water into a dangerous magical hazard. An accursed pool lures passersby into its depths with a *silent image* (DC 16 Will save to disbelieve) of glittering treasure at the bottom of its 10-foot depth. Any creature that reaches the treasure triggers the curse. A creature within the pool must make a DC 16 Will save or be affected by the curse, which warps its perception of the pool. The water seems to thicken into viscous goo, while the pool appears to distort to a depth of 40 feet. Swim checks in the pool suffer a –10 penalty and are at half normal speed as a result of these effects, and spellcasting within the pool requires a concentration check with a DC of 15 + the level of the spell being cast. An accursed pool radiates strong magic, and is destroyed by *dispel magic* or *remove curse* (caster level check DC 15).

Bad Air (CR 1 or 4)

An invisible hazard, pockets of low-oxygen gas present a danger to miners and spelunkers as well as cavern-delving adventurers. Nonflammable gases such as carbon dioxide or nitrogen are CR 1 and require a DC 25 Survival check to notice. Creatures breathing the air must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) each hour or become fatigued. After a creature becomes fatigued,

slow suffocation sets in (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 445). Creatures holding their breath can avoid these effects.

Flammable vapors such as coal gas are much more dangerous (CR 4). The gases displace breathable air in the lungs, causing fatigue as described above. In addition, any open flame or spark causes an explosion for 6d6 points of damage (Reflex save DC 15 for half) to all in the cavern or within 5 feet of an entrance. The fire burns away the oxygen in the air, leaving it unbreathable for 2d4 minutes. After an explosion, flammable gas usually takes several days to build up to dangerous levels again.

Dweomersink (CR 6)

Zones of magical entropy that disrupt spells, dweomersinks are occasionally formed at the sites of great magical duels, by the destruction of powerful artifacts, or by vortices of eldritch energy at the fringes of antimagic zones. They vary in size from small bubbles only a few feet across to large areas the size of a town. A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check detects a tingling in the air that heralds the presence of a nearby dweomersink. An active spell brought into a dweomersink may be dispelled, and any spell cast inside a dweomersink is subject to an immediate counterspell (both as *dispel magic*, caster level 8th). The resulting release of magical energy deals 1d6 points of damage per spell level in a 5-foot burst centered on the bearer of the spell entering the area or the caster of a new spell (Reflex DC 15 half). If multiple overlapping bursts hit the same target, only the most damaging applies. Once a spell effect has survived a dispel attempt, it is not affected again unless it leaves and reenters the dweomersink. More powerful dweomersinks are even more disruptive. Each +1 increase in CR increases the caster level of the dispel check by 2 and the save DC for the damaging burst by 1.

Ear Seekers (CR 5)

Ear seekers are tiny, pale-colored worms that dwell in rotting wood or other organic detritus. They can be noticed with a DC 15 Perception check. Otherwise, a living creature poking about their lair inadvertently transfers one or more ear seekers to its body. The seekers then search out a warm location on the creature, especially favoring the ear canal. Once there, they lay 2d8 eggs before dying. The eggs hatch 4d6 hours later and the larvae devour the surrounding flesh. Upon the death of their host, the new ear seekers crawl out and seek a new host. *Remove disease* kills any ear seekers or unhatched eggs in or on a host. Some ear seekers favor living in intact wood, often hiding in dungeon doors. The small pinholes left by this variety are particularly hard to spot (Perception DC 20).

EAR SEEKERS

Type infestation; **Save** Fortitude DC 15

Onset 4d6 hours; **Frequency** 1/hour

Effect 1d6 Con damage

Magnetized Ore (CR 2)

The strange energies of the subterranean world can charge rocks and veins of ore with powerful magnetic fields, creating a hazard for anyone carrying or wearing ferrous metals. Any steel or iron brought within 20 feet of the ore is drawn toward it. Medium-sized creatures carrying 30 or more pounds of ferrous metal are pulled toward the ore as if by the pull special ability (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 303). The ore has an effective CMB of +7 and CMD 17. Small creatures are pulled if they have 15 pounds of metal, Large if they have at least 60 pounds. For creatures of other sizes, modify the weight required as per the rules for carrying capacity (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 170). Creatures wearing metallic armor suffer a penalty to their CMD to resist the pull (–2 for medium armor, –4 for heavy armor). Affected creatures are pulled up to 20 feet and slammed against the rock for 2d6 points of damage and gain the grappled condition. Creatures not carrying large amounts of metal but holding metal items in their hands are affected by a disarm maneuver as the items are ripped free. Freeing a stuck item requires a successful grapple check against the ore's CMD.

Mnemonic Crystals (CR 3)

Mnemonic crystals are large (2–4 feet tall) clusters of violet quartz crystals that radiate a strong abjuration aura. They can be identified with a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check. Attuned to the unique energies of spellcraft, mnemonic crystals harvest magical energy for growth and defense. The crystals drain prepared spells from spellcasters within 30 feet, who must make DC 22 Will saves each round while in the crystals' area. Failure results in the loss of one prepared spell, chosen randomly. Spontaneous spellcasters such as sorcerers are unaffected.

Damaging or breaking the crystals causes them to release their absorbed spells in a burst of mental energy that does 1d6 points of Wisdom damage to all creatures in a 10-foot radius. Mnemonic crystals are exceedingly fragile (hardness 0, 1 hit point). In areas thick with the crystals, creatures passing through must make DC 10 Acrobatics checks to avoid stepping on or brushing against the crystals and breaking them.

Poison Oak (CR 1 or 3)

Contact with poison oak (CR 1) causes a painful rash, and the resulting itch leaves the hapless victim sickened until the damage is healed. Full body contact or inhaling the smoke from burning poison oak is particularly dangerous, and can be fatal (CR 3). A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals this seemingly innocuous plant for what it is. This hazard can also be used for similar noxious plants such as poison ivy, poison sumac, and stinging nettles, the latter not being hazardous when burned.

INFESTATIONS

Parasites such as ear seekers or rot grubs cause infestations, a type of affliction similar to diseases. Infestations can only be cured through specific means; no matter how many saving throws are made, the infestation continues to afflict the target. While a *remove disease* spell (or similar effect) instantly halts an infestation, immunity to disease offers no protection, as the infestation itself is caused by parasites.

POISON OAK

Type poison, contact; **Save** Fortitude DC 13

Onset 1 hour

Effect 1d4 Dex damage, creature sickened until damage is healed; **Cure** 1 save

POISON OAK (SEVERE EXPOSURE)

Type poison, contact or inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 16

Onset 1 hour; **Frequency** 1/hour

Initial Effect 2d4 Dex damage and 1d4 Con damage, creature sickened until damage is healed; **Secondary Effect** 1 Con damage; **Cure** 1 save

Rot Grubs (CR 4)

Rot grubs are nauseating parasites that feed on flesh and nest in corpses. Generally, a handful of the grubs infest a single corpse at a time, and a DC 15 Perception check is enough to notice and avoid the grubs. Otherwise, 1d6 grubs swiftly burst from the carcass to burrow into the creature, which can attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the grubs (but only if the creature is aware of the grubs' presence). Any amount of damage reduction is enough to provide immunity to infestation.

Once rot grubs have infested a living body, they burrow toward the host's heart, brain, and other key internal organs, eventually causing death. On the first round of infestation, applying flame to the point of entry can kill the grubs and save the host, but this inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage to the victim. Cutting the grubs out also works, but the longer the grubs remain in a host, the more damage this method does. Cutting them out requires a slashing weapon and a DC 20 Heal check, and inflicts 1d6 points of damage per round that the host has been infested. If the Heal check is successful, one grub is removed. *Remove disease* kills any rot grubs in or on a host.

ROT GRUBS

Type infestation; **Save** Fortitude DC 17

Onset immediate; **Frequency** 1/round

Effect 1d2 Con damage per grub

MYSTERIES AND INVESTIGATIONS

A favorite weapon inexplicably stained in blood, a treasure purloined despite the best defenses, a locked room with a mangled corpse within—such elements might seem more at home in tales of crime and suspense than in the sword-swinging quests of most roleplaying games, but just as the literary genres of fantasy and mystery have a long and overlapping tradition, so too do aspects of crime and detective work hold the potential for memorable adventures. In fantasy, mysteries often take on puzzling new angles, as magic, the abilities of monsters, and other wondrous elements vastly enlarge the spectrum of possibilities. Yet fantasy opens up not just new avenues of crime, but also those of detection, and many classic capers might be solved in an instant merely by speaking a simple spell. Thus, the arena of crime, mystery, and investigation changes completely with the introduction of magic, forcing GMs interested in creating enigmatic adventures to think beyond the tropes of classic detective stories and consider the logic of impossible realms in their schemes.

When planning an adventure based around a mystery, a GM needs to consider the plot from two angles, conceiving both the mystery's elements and the investigative techniques of the detectives (typically the PCs).

THE FANTASY MYSTERY

At the root of any fantasy mystery is a puzzle that needs to be solved. In laying such a foundation, a GM can take inspiration from traditional tales of conspiracy and deception. Once he has a basic plot, adding details relevant to a fantasy setting makes the mystery more believable, more difficult to solve, and better tuned to the elements of a magical world.

Create Levels: The best mysteries have more than one mystery going on. If someone is murdered, it might be fairly easy for the PCs to track the killer down. Creating extra layers gives the PCs more to work with and reduces the efficacy of divination spells. One person wants another dead, so he hires a thug to commit the murder. On his way to the victim's house, the murderer runs into a city guard, panics, and kills the guard. The next day he returns to the house and successfully murders the victim. Now the PCs have two murders to investigate, the second of which is the intended murder. And the murderer is not the instigator of the crime.

Consider Multiple Villains: When creating levels, consider having multiple villains playing roles in the crime. This can apply to non-criminal mysteries as well: if the local cleric is plagued with nightmares, it might have as much to do with the evil cult operating beneath the tavern as it does with the strange mushrooms his housekeeper has been putting in the soup. When a combination of factors contribute to a mystery, it's more difficult for the PCs to skip straight to the end.

Secrets upon Secrets: In a mystery, it's easy to consider everyone who isn't guilty as "innocent"—knowing nothing and holding nothing back. But anyone connected to a mystery might know secrets they don't wish to share for various reasons. Witnesses and suspects might hold clues they don't realize are clues: small incidents they can't imagine being connected to the mystery. They also have secrets of their own they wish to protect, which can act as red herrings.

The Truth: When creating an adventure based on a mysterious occurrence, it's vital to sketch out the timeline of events. Once the GM knows exactly what happened, it becomes easier to handle PCs who take unexpected tracks. What incidents led up to the mystery, who is involved, who knows details of the incident, how much time elapsed between events?

RUNNING A MYSTERY

Running a mystery can also prove very different from a more linear, site-based adventure, as investigative adventures typically grant the PCs greater freedom to pursue their theories to multiple ends. When running a mystery adventure, keep the following in mind to make sure the adventure stays interesting and on track.

Clues: Details are the bread crumbs by which a GM leads the PCs through a mystery adventure. Just because a mystery lacks literal dungeon walls to guide a party from encounter to encounter doesn't mean the GM loses any control. Sometimes a clue offers a direct guidepost from one encounter to the next, while other times they require more detail or investigation, changing their suggestions as information builds up. Clues allow GMs to guide the PCs from point to point while providing them with the illusion of choice. The characters can surely go anywhere they please and pursue all the routes of inquiry they like, but the adventure doesn't progress until they reach the next point.

Give the Right Details: In detective stories it's not uncommon for an investigator to crack a case based on his expansive field of knowledge or familiarity with a single detail. Yet even though characters in an adventure might be intimate with the specifics of a world, the players might not be. Few players can be expected to realize and act upon clues requiring in-depth knowledge of the world or continuity details that haven't already been highlighted in a campaign. In such cases, the GM might call for skill checks, giving the PCs opportunities to have revelations or realizations about the clues before them. This grants the players access to their characters' insights to motivate the investigation's progress, proving more satisfying than NPCs having all the big breakthroughs in a plot.

At the same time, it's very possible that a group might miss a clue completely or the adventure lacks a detail the GM didn't realize. It's up to the GM to make sure the PCs' investigations always have a direction. If all the clues lead to

brick walls or leave the party bogged down in argument and inaction, then it's time to introduce a new clue or NPC with a bit of extra insight. Sometimes even just having an NPC subtly remind the PCs of a forgotten facet of the mystery is enough to spark a new revelation, without having the players feel like they're being spoon-fed the plot.

Let the PCs Drive: It's tempting to negate all of the PCs' mystery-busting abilities to preserve a mystery's secrecy. In a mystery, more than other adventures, it's vital for the GM to be reactive. Let the PCs make use of their abilities. Let them find clues and decide where to go next—even if it means bumbling off course or into a red herring. The NPCs involved in the mystery should have their own agendas and take sensible precautions to protect themselves; the GM, however, shouldn't negate PC abilities across the board to make things harder.

Sleuth-Proof: Despite the GM's best efforts, a gaffe early on or an unanticipated line of investigation might lead the PCs to a solution right away, bypassing some or all of the clues and encounters. In minor cases, the PCs should be rewarded for their cleverness and maybe get to skip a few dangers or side encounters. In more significant instances, the GM can be reactive with his plot. Perhaps the PCs arrive at the criminal's house and find him dead, letting the GM create a new master villain and reuse clues and incidents the PCs skipped over the first time. Or perhaps the GM sows the seeds of a new mystery; a cryptic letter, evidence of magical coercion, or an ominous map all might hint at a greater plot. The PCs might think the mystery was straightforward, but the sown clues indicate the adventure is merely a setup for a more complex incident.

Sub-Adventures: A detailed mystery doesn't need to exclude the elements of more traditional adventures. Interspersing an investigation with combats, challenges, and even related dungeons can bolster a group's excitement and keep the mystery feeling like an adventure and not merely a drawn-out roleplaying encounter.

MAGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

When formulating a mystery adventure, a GM needs to account for the realities of a fantasy world—primarily magic. While some crimes and criminals might prove vulnerable to the right spells, true masterminds will know about such magics and expend resources to stymie investigations relying upon them. GMs should also be familiar with the effects of common divination spells, as well as what spells might confound them.

Detect Thoughts: *Detect thoughts* is a useful spell when questioning witnesses. The GM should not place the criminal among the witnesses if the PCs are likely to use *detect thoughts*. However, witnesses will likely have opinions and dark thoughts that may seem suspicious and send the investigators in the wrong direction—making most realize the imprecision of the spell in group settings.

Discern Lies: By uncovering lies, the PCs can focus their investigations on what is being concealed—usually, the truth about the crime. There are other reasons that people lie, though. A suspect or witness might lie for a number of reasons, such as shame over what she was doing, fear of retribution, or to protect someone else. And a suspect can always deny lying and refuse to say anything more.

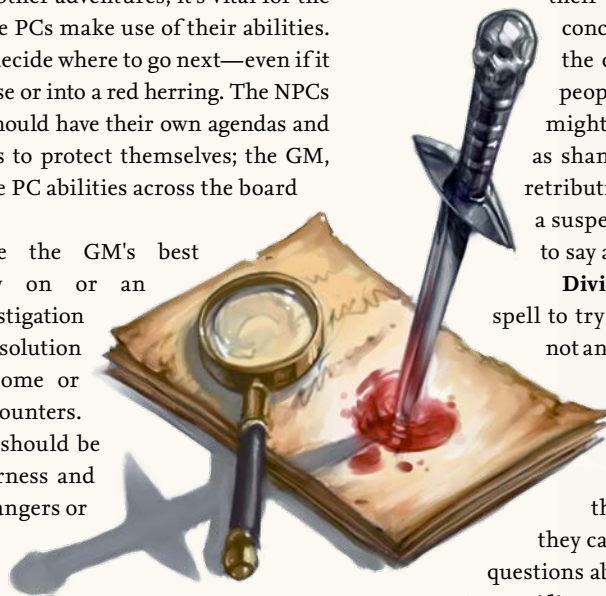
Divination: PCs can use the *divination* spell to try to solve the mystery. The GM need not answer their question plainly, however.

In addition, multiple *divinations* about the same topic reveal the same advice, so unless the PCs follow the advice and learn what they can from that course of action, they cannot learn more by asking different questions about the crime.

Detect Alignment: Just because an NPC has an evil alignment doesn't mean he's a mystery's architect or even a villain. In common society, there are untold numbers of petty evils, but the crimes of a petty cheat probably have nothing to do with a greater plot. Thus, *detect alignment* can't be relied upon as the perfect villain detector. However, one of the surest ways to convince a group of a character's guilt is to have *detect alignment* fail when he's scrutinized. A clever villain with *undetectable alignment* could obscure the alignment of one or several innocents, throwing a hurdle in the way of magic-reliant investigators.

Modify Memory: Witnesses, suspects, and even criminals might not recall pertinent information if their minds have been tampered with. The GM should not use the spell too frequently, however. As with other clue-negating spells, the PCs should learn something from the fact that they learned nothing. At the very least, they might suspect compulsion magic—and thus the involvement of a spellcaster.

Speak with Dead: *Speak with dead* allows the characters to speak with a corpse, but the corpse knows only what it did in life. If the victim was attacked from behind, he may not have seen his murderer. *Speak with dead* also fails if the corpse has been a target of the spell within the past week, or if the corpse doesn't have a mouth. Be sure to give the PCs some clue for their efforts, however.



PUZZLES AND RIDDLES

While ancient ciphers and cunning sphinxes fill the pages of great fantasy tales, crafting a workable and believable puzzle that adds an air of mystery can be a challenge. What makes a great puzzle in a newspaper is rarely right for a puzzle in a dungeon. Puzzles in such publications are usually solved by one person, with no time limit, and modern-day knowledge. None of those things are true in most Pathfinder adventures. In such roleplaying situations you have a team of solvers, often pressed for time, and with only their characters' knowledge. Just as you customize encounters to your PCs' skills, you should customize a puzzle to both your players' skills and their PCs' characteristics. When putting together a puzzle, riddle, or similar knowledge-based challenge for your campaign, consider the four parts of a well-orchestrated puzzle: the setup, the mechanism, the clues, and the answer.

THE SETUP

Giving your puzzle a reason to exist is a crucial step to making sure the players are interested in your game. Any puzzle needs to feel like an important part of an adventure, not a barrier preventing the players from enjoying the experience. There should also be a reason players actually want to solve a puzzle, with at least an implied benefit and penalty if they do or don't.

Characters who select a life of adventure are not necessarily puzzle solvers, but they are good at getting out of dangerous situations. So when you introduce a puzzle, play to the characters' strengths—that is, have it matter to the plot of the adventure, or even threaten their lives. Having a dragon promising to roast the PCs alive if they can't answer its riddles makes finding the proper solution imperative.

Alternatively, not every puzzle needs to have a resolution immediately. A meaningful map or pictograph found in a strange ruin might hint at a campaign-spanning plot even though the PCs have no way of knowing that when they discover it. By feeding the PCs more information, through either their own research or later adventures, the GM gives the PCs the tools they need to make revelations without having a plot spoon-fed to them.

Whether a puzzle demands immediate attention or stretches out over several sessions, keep in mind that the game should not stop while it's being solved. Sometimes impending doom makes solving a puzzle necessary to survive, other times allowing an enigma to baffle players for several sessions makes it a more significant part of the plot. You should also consider the consequences should the PCs fail, and make sure your game can still progress if they do. While coming up with the wrong solution might deny the party some detail, piece of treasure, or option, it should never mean that the adventure comes to a halt.

THE MECHANISM

There are dozens of puzzle types, but not all of them are great for every adventure. When designing a puzzle, consider the story and environment, and decide whether the mechanism fits.

Logic Puzzles: These puzzles are popular, but be careful: when confronted by a logic puzzle, fears of middle-school math class haunt many players' brains, intimidating them away from even looking at the problem. In addition, all the rules of logic in the real world don't necessarily apply to a fantasy world. Having such a puzzle be half solved can help players know what state of mind to consider the problem in, and hint at the right path.

Mazes: Complex labyrinths are difficult to use, especially when employing a map and miniatures makes revealing a maze boring and obvious. At best, mazes should be simple, preferably nothing more than a single intersection or two, with the correct choices offering a safe path and the wrong ones leading to peril. Giving the PCs forewarning of the safe path earlier in an adventure or by means of another riddle rewards them for their cleverness, but only penalizes them with traps and additional challenges.

Physical Puzzles: The best types of puzzles are those you can hand out, giving your players something directly from the adventure to manipulate. If they face a door that must be opened, give them a sketch of a combination lock with letters on it and make them remember the name of the centuries-old lich's lost love. Or just give them a design with seven colored studs that need to be pressed in a hurry—are the buttons random, or does the rainbow shape in the background have some meaning? Physical puzzles can take any form you can imagine, and while they might be labor intensive to create, they can also prove the most memorable.

Riddles: Elusive questions can be the basis for entire adventures. One of the most important parts is to make sure that the answers are comprehensible to the PCs, not just the players. While players know a lot about monsters, treasure, and locations in their universe, not every PC does. Questions with answers that both players and PCs might reasonably know and understand often prove best, as it allows the players to wrack their brains just as their characters would, and not trust in purely real-world knowledge. Thus, if the PCs need to figure out which temple in a massive city contains their foe, a riddle like "I make wolves from men when I arrive, and men from wolves when I depart" could lead to the temple of the moon god.

Wordplay: Assuming your players are comfortable speaking English, you can use puns, anagrams, hidden words, and the like to befuddle them. Often such puzzles come off as being cute or quirky, so make sure that dour wordplay doesn't undermine your adventure and villains—while a sprite might naturally spout rhyming riddles, the same approach instantly robs a vampire of his menace.

THE CLUES

There's a significant distinction between clues and hints. A clue is something that's necessary to solve the puzzle. A hint, on the other hand, is something that helps open up an entirely solvable puzzle. While a clue might be meted out by the GM, often in the form of additional details found along with the puzzle, later in an adventure, or from a loose-tongued henchman, hints should be the domain of the PCs and bridge the gap between characters and players. While optimally players should strive to answer a puzzle using only the knowledge their characters possess, this can be a challenge for even the most experienced players. While formulating puzzles with answers that both the players and PCs can solve fixes this problem to a degree, so does having the players work with their PCs to gain hints. It's wholly possible, even likely, that a character possesses knowledge and insights a player doesn't. Depending on the complexity of a puzzle, calling for a skill check (typically Perception or a Knowledge skill) or even an Intelligence ability check might provide a hint. While such information might hint at the solution, it shouldn't blatantly answer the puzzle. This allows a GM to interject some backstory, forgotten detail, or element of his own reasoning into the solving process without merely giving up the answer. Also bear in mind that many spells can read thoughts, reveal hints, or otherwise affect or circumvent puzzles. Never deny PCs use of their abilities when faced with puzzles. Should those abilities make a puzzle less challenging than anticipated, reward the party for their cleverness, and perhaps consider such factors in future puzzles.

THE ANSWER

Regardless of the type of puzzle, the answer should mean something. Perhaps the answer is the command word to a powerful wand, or the riddle of the three gems results in the players ending up with a magical treasure. An unmemorable answer is easy to spot, such as a number or piece of unrelated trivia. If your answer is unmemorable, the puzzle leading up to it might seem pointless. Make the players need the answer and they'll be excited about getting it.

It helps if the answer is something the players might think of when they're trying to figure out what type of brainbender you've thrown at them. A pirate's riddle might have a nautical theme, for example, or a sphinx's might concern the desert or ancient ruins. Just make sure the solution's possibilities aren't too broad or too narrow. For example, there are lots of animals, but not many seasons, making the latter the source of more achievable answers.

SAMPLE PUZZLES

Noted here are three classic types of fantasy riddles. If you're looking for more riddles, a simple online search for fantasy puzzles and riddles can reveal hundreds more.

Brainteaser Riddles: Here are a few basic question-and-answer riddles.

What question can you ask all day and get a different correct answer every time? *Answer:* "What time is it?"

What falls every day but never breaks? *Answer:* "Night."

What can you put in a wood box that will make it lighter? *Answer:* "Holes."

I Never Lie Puzzle: This is a simple and famous logic puzzle, wherein two guards protect two pathways, one to danger and one to safety. They present the conundrum that one always lies and one always tells the truth. Now have the PCs decide which is which. While a spell like *detect lies* might easily reveal this, so can posing questions with blatantly true answers (like simple equations), or a question like "If I asked you if the door you're guarding leads to safety, would you say yes?" wherein the guard is forced to answer truthfully.

Sequence Riddles: Riddles like this require the solver to find the next in a sequence, though many might require a hint or visual cue.

What are the next 3 letters after "O, T, T, F, F, S, S"?

Answer: E, N, T. The first seven letters stand for: "one," "two," "three," "four," "five," "six," "seven."



SANITY AND MADNESS

Insanity is an affliction inflicted upon those who suffer from extraordinary physical, mental, or spiritual anguishes and trials. Insanity can also be caused by exposure to particularly potent sources of unhinging horror, madness, or alien natures, such that the mind simply cannot withstand them. Insanity is a mind-affecting effect.

GOING INSANE

In-game, a person has a chance of going insane every time he suffers a tremendous shock to one of his mental ability scores—Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. Every time a creature is reduced to a score of 0 in one of these scores, there's a chance he goes insane. (Note: Wisdom damage is particularly likely to cause insanity, since a 0 Wisdom score imparts a –5 penalty on all Will saves.) Either roll on the table on this page or select an insanity appropriate to the cause of what reduced the victim's score to 0. You should make the victim's saving throw in secret—he should not know the result, nor the type of insanity that might afflict him. These effects should play out naturally—some insanities (like phobias) take days or even months to trigger or have effects, while others (such as paranoia) are immediately obvious.

At your option, a creature can run the risk of going insane under extremely unusual situations, even when his mental ability scores are unharmed. A character suffering from long imprisonment might have to make a save against developing agoraphobia or claustrophobia. Someone repeatedly betrayed by allies might have to make a save against developing paranoia. And a poor soul whose mind is possessed by a powerful demon might have to make a save upon being exorcized to keep from becoming psychotic. The causes of such insanities are left to you as the GM to determine.

Insanity can also be inflicted via magic. Consider allowing the spell *insanity* to merely inflict 1 randomly determined insanity per 5 caster levels on its victim rather than causing permanent confusion. *Bestow curse* can also inflict a single insanity on a foe, although in this case the insanity is also a curse.

It's possible to suffer from multiple forms of insanity. If you become afflicted with a form of insanity you are already suffering from, the current DC of that insanity increases by +5.

CURING INSANITY

All insanities have a DC that represents the insanity's strength. An insanity's DC indicates the Will save you need to roll in order to resist contracting the insanity when you are initially exposed to it, but also the DC you need to make to recover. Recovering from an insanity

naturally is a lengthy process—once per week, you make a Will save against the insanity's current DC. If you succeed on this save, the insanity's DC is reduced by a number of points equal to your Charisma bonus (minimum of 1). You continue to suffer the full effects of the insanity until its DC is reduced to 0, at which point you are cured and the insanity vanishes completely.

Lesser restoration has no effect on insanity, but *restoration* reduces the current DC of one insanity currently affecting a target by an amount equal to the caster's level. *Greater restoration*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* immediately cures a target of all insanity.

TYPES OF INSANITY

When a creature goes insane, roll on the following table to determine what form of insanity strikes. Alternatively, you can assign the insanity to match the cause.

d%	Insanity
1–11	Amnesia
12–48	Mania/Phobia
49–68	Multiple Personality Disorder
69–78	Paranoia
79–84	Psychosis
85–100	Schizophrenia

AMNESIA

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 20

Onset immediate

Effect –4 penalty on Will saving throws and all skill checks; loss of memory (see below)

DESCRIPTION

A character suffering from amnesia cannot remember things; his name, his skills, and his past are all equal mysteries. He can build new memories, but any memories that existed before he became an amnesiac are suppressed.

Worse, the amnesiac loses all class abilities, feats, and skill ranks for as long as his amnesia lasts. He retains his base attack bonus, base saving throw bonuses, combat maneuver bonus, combat maneuver defense, total experience points, and hit dice (and hit points), but everything else is gone until the amnesia is cured. If a character gains a class level while suffering from amnesia, he may use any abilities gained by that class level normally. If the class level he gained was of a class he already possess levels in, he gains the abilities of a 1st-level character of that class, even though he is technically of a higher level in that class. If his amnesia is later cured, he regains all the full abilities of this class, including those gained from any levels taken while he was suffering from amnesia.

MANIA/PHOBIA

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 14

Onset 1 day

Effect target is sickened (if manic) or shaken (if phobic) as long as the source of the mania or phobia is obvious; chance of becoming fascinated or frightened (see below)

DESCRIPTION

A mania is an irrational obsession with a (usually inappropriate) particular object or situation, while a phobia is an irrational fear of a (usually commonplace) object or situation. Additionally, if a manic or phobic character is directly confronted by his obsession (requiring a standard action), he must make a Will save against the insanity or become fascinated (if manic) or frightened (if phobic) by the object for 1d6 rounds.

MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 19

Onset 2d6 days

Effect -6 penalty on Will saving throws and Wisdom-based skill checks; multiple personalities (see below)

DESCRIPTION

This is a complicated disorder that manifests as 1 or more distinct and different personalities within the same body and mind. The number of additional personalities the victim manifests equals the DC of the insanity divided by 10 (round down, minimum of 1 additional personality). Should the insanity worsen in some way (such as by the save DC increasing), the number of additional personalities increases as well. Likewise, the number of additional personalities decreases as the sufferer recovers and the insanity's DC decreases. The GM should develop these additional personalities.

Every morning, and each time the afflicted character is rendered unconscious, he must make a Will save against his insanity's DC. Failure indicates that a different personality takes over. A character's memories and skills remain unchanged, but the various personalities have no knowledge of each other and will deny, often violently, that these other personalities exist.

PARANOIA

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 17

Onset 2d6 days

Effect -4 penalty on Will saves and Charisma-based skill checks; cannot receive benefit from or attempt the Aid Another action; cannot willingly accept aid (including healing) from another creature unless he makes a Will save against his insanity's DC

DESCRIPTION

The paranoid character is convinced that the world and all that dwell within it are out to get him. Paranoid characters are typically argumentative or introverted.

PSYCHOSIS

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 20

Onset 3d6 days

Effect character becomes chaotic evil; gains +10 competence bonus on Bluff checks to hide insanity

DESCRIPTION

This complex insanity fills the victim with hate for the world. He may suppress his psychosis for a period of 1 day by

making a Will save against the DC of his insanity, otherwise he cannot help but plot and plan the death and destruction of his friends and enemies alike. For the most part, the impact of psychosis must be roleplayed, although not all players find entertainment in roleplaying a lunatic who's trying to do in his friends. In such cases, the GM should assume control of the character whenever his psychosis is in control.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Type insanity; **Save** Will DC 16

Onset 1d6 days

Effect -4 penalty on all Wisdom and Charisma-based skill checks; cannot take 10 or take 20; chance of becoming confused (see below)

Description A schizophrenic character has lost his grip on reality, and can no longer tell the difference between what is real and what is not. These constant hallucinations cause the schizophrenic to appear erratic, chaotic, and unpredictable to others. Each time a schizophrenic character finds himself in a stressful situation (such as combat) he must make a Will save against his insanity's DC. Failure indicates that the character becomes confused for 1d6 rounds.

