HACK & SLASH



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HACK & SLASH COMPENDIUM I

Collected Blog Posts

A compiled volume of information for players of Classic Fantasy Role-Playing games, including: Advice for beginning Dungeon Masters, discussions of the Quantum Ogre and player agency, and a collections of backgrounds for 5th Edition Dungeons & Dragons.

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ON A GUIDE FOR NEW DUNGEON MASTERS

What's the difference between most games and role playing games?

The Dungeon Master.

Call them what you want — the idea that one person creates a world while others play in it is both the greatest strength and most critical weakness of role-playing games.

How do you Dungeon Master well?

Here's the most effective beginners guide you'll ever read!

What Am I Doing And How Did I Get Here?

Calm down. Take a deep breath.

You are going to hang out with your friends for a few hours. It's going to be fun.

You don't have to entertain them. You are not responsible for their fun. Your job is to present interesting situations and facilitate the game. Responding to your players, listening to what they have to say, and deducing what they are interested in, while reacting to their crazy plans is fun for you and will insure they have a good time.

But There's All This Stuff Out There I Have To Do And It's Really Intimidating.

You hang out with your friends all the time. Screw all that stuff. That stuff is there for resources when you go looking for it. You don't have to do anything, other than a minimal amount of preparation. Sometimes as little as 15 minutes.

Ok, So What Am I Doing?

You are preparing an environment for your friends to adventure in. Some games come with a strong built in structure (Shadowrun®, Dungeons & Dragons®). Some games come with a player driven structure (Vampire: The Masquerade®).

You come up with an idea or structure for the adventure.

It is perfectly alright for your first game to be explicit about this structure! You can simply say "You have gathered together to explore the mystery of the Dungeon of Dragon Mountain for the reward offered by the town council." Or "you meet with your Johnson and he tells you the mission is to extract a Saeder-Krupp employee for 10,000 credits each." Or "you have all gathered together to meet the Prince of Hot Springs. He says your first task is to clear out a gang of drug dealers operating out of one of his bars."

Remember. The Play is the Thing.

What Next?

Well, you flesh out the structure of the adventure.

How do you do that?

It's up to you!

See, you are the one who is going to be running this adventure. You should prepare it in a way that works for you.[1] You know best how you work. Here are the basics:

All traditional role-playing game design is effectively the same. Your players will be playing characters that will be interacting with you and each other in a scene. These scenes will have some method of connecting with each other.

In each scene you will have one or more of six things.

An antagonist, a reward, something unusual, a plot twist or unexpected challenge, something bad or harmful or nothing. In Dungeons & Dragons® these are usually monsters, treasures, special rooms, tricks, traps and empty rooms.

That's It?!

Essentially yes. You should conceive or design at least 5 of these to last for a four to six hour session. Some games (like in Dungeons & Dragons) it's very easy to conceive of more so that the players can choose which ones they want to encounter. But it isn't terribly difficult in other games either.

Even in free form games these connections between scenes can be explicit. In a dungeon your exits and corridors act as connections between the scenes, but even in a game like Vampire: The Masquerade®, after the prince gives you your mission, you can say "Do you wish to contact the Justicar for supplies, Jeff's sire for guidance, or return to your haven to plan?"

What Else?

For creating your first session, that's it!

In general, your game is improved by having a scene for each of the following five items.

- Introduction
- Puzzle or Role-Playing Opportunity
- Red Herring
- Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict
- Plot Twist

This Seems Too Easy.

Oh yeah? Let me tell you how you're going to screw it up.

You are going to imagine an exciting scene and then be tempted to try to force it to happen. Don't. This is agency destroying.

You are going to imagine a wonderful NPC, and then have him do all sorts of cool, bad-ass things. Don't. Nothing is less fun then sitting listening to how awesome someone else is. Seriously. The worst.

Fudging the game. If you feel the need to fudge (change) a die roll, then you rolled a die for something you shouldn't have. Be very careful! If you are playing with adults, letting bad things happen to them will benefit the game, because then their choices have meaning. It is important that players feel a sense of agency. This includes such traditional errors such as having the bad guy escape/teleport away at the last second.

Attempting to dictate player actions. Don't. You want to know what's worse than a conversation about religion or politics? A discussion about what someone's character should do! Like any conversation not based in verifiable fact, it goes nowhere. Worse, the player takes it as a personal critique. If the players behavior is disruptive, then it should be dealt with directly and assertively; not using the argument 'your character wouldn't do that' to avoid a confrontation.

Opening your big fat mouth about what you had planned or what they missed. Don't. Talking about this stuff makes the game less fun for the players. Let them enjoy the sense of mystery.

Wanting things to happen. Let it go. No, Let. It. Go. Really. Let them miss the treasure or avoid the encounter. It feels like you are wasting work or they are missing fun, but in the end your players have to have the freedom to fail. There are always ways of reusing content.

Making the players jump through hoops. Don't. If it seems like they are about to make a

colossally stupid decision then you have failed to communicate well. Don't punish them because you presented a situation poorly; clear up the misunderstanding.

You may think there's only one solution to your situation. There's not. Design encounters with flexible solutions and allow the opportunity for your players to come up with their own solutions.

But How Do I Make It Good!?

Some general advice.

Consistency. Prepare in a way that's clear to you and take a moment to write down things that you develop in play, like names of non-player characters (or if you're really dedicated, record sessions).

Don't worry about rules. If you're smart enough to be running a game, you probably don't need to be told this, but you might have some compulsion or hang-up on 'doing it correctly'. Don't waste time during the game looking for the correct rule in the book. Make a judgement call and move on. Look it up later.

Listen to player comments, both in game and out of game. Let them know how you will address their actions in the future. Don't defend or debate your previous choices. Simply acknowledge what they are saying.

Involve the players. Remember, the game is about player choices. They are playing a game. If you just have them sit there powerless to affect things that are happening they will not be having fun.

Make sure the players are informed about their options. A choice between two identical dungeon corridors isn't a choice. It's a random selection. Make sure that for any choice, the players are given at least one piece of information about that choice.

WHAT ELSE?

A final word. A lot of advice is about how to handle problem situations. But the fact is, if you are having problems situations often it isn't a problem with the game. It's a personal issue. If you think to yourself "Ah-ha! He didn't say he lit a torch! Take 1d6 damage because you fall in the dark!" you do not need advice on how to DM. You need advice on how to get your needs met in an appropriate way in life.

1. This could be different locations in a sandbox environment, Designing a flow-charted space or sequence of events, (making sure you do so in a format that's useful to you). or using a more advanced technique, such as outlining a spider web of non-player character influences.

ON THE SCENE IN ADVENTURE DESIGN

What are the six elements that compose a scene in the context of a tabletop role-playing game?

A scene is composed of two primary parts, *The Setting*, and *The Action*.

The first component of a scene, *The Setting*, is fairly simple. It's the platonic ideal of a space for the players. It could be a static room, a house, a giant complex, or a spaceship. It is where the players exist during the scene.

What happens in this setting?

Surprisingly few options. What's more surprising is that Gary Gygax already laid out the sum total of everything that could possibly happen relative to play in a tabletop role-playing game in 1981!

Dungeon Masters Guide, 1st Edition, Page 171.
Table V.F. Chamber or Room contents

1-12 Empty	**Empty**: Nothing could happen.
13-14 Monster	**Monster**: The players could meet an antagonist.
15-17 Monster & Treasure	**Treasure**: The players could get a reward.
18 Special	**Special**: Something unusual, neither wholly good or bad could occur.
19 Trick/Trap	**Trick**: The players could experience a plot twist or a challenge of wits.
20 Treasure	**Trap**: Something bad could happen.

That is the sum total of any and every possible thing that could occur. These six elements compose *The Action* of the scene. These two things, *The Setting* and *The Action,* make up the entirety scene. So how does this connect with the structure of our scenes?

Line Structure and Space Structure are all about the way that scenes connect. They are literal structures, because in a very real sense they physically connect the scenes that the players experience. They are useful tools for providing a virtual game-board for the players to explore, but are very static having their actions trigger only when the players arrive. (*The cultists' muscles ache as they hold positions, waiting for the players to bust down the door and save the sacrificial victim*).

So to address the static issue we use Time Structure which allows our environment to change and react in simple ways to the players.

Much like rudimentary Artificial Intelligence programs, the Time Structure is not reactive because it is actually intelligent. It either reacts based on a predetermined plan, or in reaction to the player action. For instance, if the players eliminate a set encounter that they fought as a

wandering monster, and then later either find the set encounter without the monster or get the same wandering monster result which has already been slain, then this doesn't make the Time Structure intelligent, it just means that what the Time Structure is using as reference to is now empty.

Happy Cultist Leader

Not smart. Not dynamic. Just empty. At least using time structure the cultists can execute their sacrifice at midnight regardless of the player action. Happy cultist!

This type of thing feels fairly dynamic to the player, but really it's just changing the states of a few scenes, based on player choice (i.e. how long do they spend doing what).

There is nothing wrong with using just these three structures in unison. This tends to give the game an old school feel. The world is large and dangerous and the players move within it as heroes. Lots of modules, megadungeons, and old-school games take this approach. It leaves the heroes as the only giants to stride across the land.

But what if you really want the players to feel like they are in a world that's alive? How do you make the elements of a scene truly dynamic, instead of just a list of things that you've decided as Dungeon Master? A world that's authentically dynamic and have the players not only combat dungeons and monsters, but other entities and organizations? How do you create emergent game play at the table?

How does one set up a city based game or play a political game without resorting to rolling skill checks or playing the spreadsheet game? How do you handle non-combat encounters without resorting to a mythical iMech? You use Power Structure, or Spiderweb Style.

Power Structure is an accounting of all dynamic, non-player controlled, independent entities; this accounting succinctly describes their goals, values, and relationships with each other.

Dynamic refers to those entities that either have power or take action. We are not concerned about that third generation shopkeeper, or the bureaucrat on Lysen Temple on Zeta IV. Non-player controlled means you're in charge of them, buddy. Independent means that attachés of the player characters do not belong on this list of entities. Henchmen, wards, trainers, wives, ect. are not a part of this accounting. Entities refers to the fact that this structure contains more than non-player characters. This also describes any group that the players may interact with. E.g. The Guild of Smiths, the Rock-Peak Owls, Frank the Necromancer, the Crown, the townspeople who live in the slums, northern-wood elves, the followers of the rat countess etc.

Further reading on styles is located here:

http://hackslashmaster.blogspot.com/search/label/series%20%28structure%20design%29

ON THE DEADLY DIFFERENCE

There are no players who do foolish things. There are only poor Dungeon Masters.

Good Dungeon Masters are good because it's very hard in their game for a player to do a foolish thing.

Players, of course, do stupid things aplenty.

Foolish: *(adj.) resulting from or showing a lack of sense; ill-considered; unwise*
Stupid: *(adj.) lacking intelligence or common sense.*

What we are talking about is how to avoid falling into the Fantasy Gap.

The Fantasy Gap

"A great city sits among the trees, surrounded by clouds. Strange fey creatures move among the high branches wearing what appears to be the forest itself. You feel a powerful sense of awe as the city looms above you."

Ok, so what's the city made of? How is it connected to the trees? How tall are the fey creatures? A "good" player might ask these questions, maybe. But how many more questions could we think of that they didn't ask? Let's try something even more complex:

"A shadowy path leads further into the bandit woods."

What's your action here? What's the first thing you do if you need to go down the path? Prepare for ambushes, right? Or are you checking for traps? How far can you see into these woods? Is there underbrush? Would you say you were checking the treetops?

These things seem trivial to ask, but no matter how many questions you ask there are always more you cannot ask. If you don't ask a question, it's because you've made an assumption. I can guarantee not all of your assumptions will match mine. I know the right answers and you don't.

A "Historically-Effected" Consciousness

Your brain was formed by a variety of genetic factors and then exposed to a certain lifestyle and set of experiences. Those experiences affect the way you view the world and the assumptions you make. They will never completely match another persons.

Any time you are describing something in Dungeons and Dragons, it is imagined in each players mind in a totally different way, a way that matches their developed consciousness. Good, skilled, players ask as few questions as they can to narrow this gap as much as possible.

This process of closing this gap is so difficult, the general historical trend in gaming from industry leaders has been to eliminate as much of it from the gameplay as possible.

Witness the birth of character skill gaming!

Fusing Horizons

So any time you see a player about to do something "Showing a lack of common sense; ill-considered; unwise" it is almost universally because they don't understand the situation well enough to predict the consequences of their actions.

No one is going to not light a torch and walk into a wall in the dungeon. No savvy adventurer is just going to walk right into traps on the way to a bandit camp. No reasonable person is going to attempt a jump they have no chance of making. They are taking those actions because their perception of the situation is a different one than yours!

So what's the solution?

Good Dungeon Masters usually indicate what the consequences of an action might be, no matter what action the player takes. Every single time a player does something that seems foolish to them they take a moment to make sure the player understands the situation accurately.

Often, very often in my personal experience, they proceed to do the stupid thing anyway — but aware of the consequences instead of ignorant about them.

FAQ

Isn't this just coaching the players? Letting them play on easy mode?

Absolutely not!

No, no, you're wrong. You're telling them what's going to happen before they take an action!

I understand. You're the Dungeon Master. It all seems so clear to you behind the screen. How would telling them what's going to happen not be coaching?

Only, I can assume that you are absolutely ignoring two very important facts.

First, *the players don't know what's behind the action*.

There is a tapestry hanging on the wall. What could possibly happen?

Burning it could open a secret door. Moving it could uncover a mirror with heinous effects. It could be treasure. Undead could be hiding behind it. It could be covering a concealed door. It may be there to keep the room warm. Quick! Which of those options is true?

Second, *you don't have to tell them the consequence, just possible consequences*.

If players are doing something 'foolish', then it's an indicator that they don't understand what consequences can result from their choice. So list more than one. Sometimes you can include the actual real consequence in the list, sometimes you can list other options. Either way, the players don't know, you're just creating a situation they can make an informed choice in.

But every time I do this the players will know something is up!

First, that's not a problem. Players knowing where gameplay is at is a feature not a bug.

Second, good Dungeon Masters get in the habit of informing players of possible consequences any time they take actions and checking to make sure it is what they intend to do.

But how will my players learn to be good players if I'm telling them what will happen all the time?

I interpret this question as saying "I want to play a game and hide the rules. If they were good, they would know them already!"

This activity of asking questions, of "Fusing Horizons", of really communicating clearly with another human being is so difficult that there are college courses about it, millions spent on projects to do it effectively, and the plain fact that they moved towards removing it from the game because of how hard it was to do.

So, yes, if your players haven't been playing for at least 5 years, if not a decade, assume that they are very inexperienced. Hell, my brother who'd been playing Dungeons & Dragons® for nearly as long as I have had no idea what yellow mold was. (Spoilers: it's deadly.)

Communicating isn't cheating. The gameplay isn't in obfuscation of consequences. They are already obfuscated by virtue of being a player. It's in making the correct informed choice when you clearly understand the situation and the possible consequences.

So would you tell a new player, "If you hit the skeleton with the sword, it will do less damage. If you use your mace, it will do more damage"?

If I have new players, I absolutely will outline tropes and dangers for them, because they don't know them. When engaging with monsters, I try to be as clear as possible about their character's assessment of the monsters because it is important for the player to understand the risk to make an informed decision. I do not tell them ahead of time special powers or secrets. If I did have a completely new player, I would say something about skeletons being made of bone, with the possibility that certain weapons may be more effective against certain monsters inside the game. Otherwise, that would come out during play; e.g. "your sword seems to bounce off the bones doing little damage".

If the characters approach a gallery with stone statues, do you warn them that some of those statues might come to life if they enter?

Absolutely: "The room ahead is filled with stone statues. From here they look like normal statues. But you never know, they could come to life, be trapped, be an illusion, or possibly be the victims of a medusa or other creature that turns things to stone. But probably not. What are you doing?" I will then assume they will remember that we had that conversation.

If the characters face off with an iron statue, do you warn them that their weapons may stick in it, or they may be splashed with molten material on a successful hit before they engage?

Yes, "It's a statue made of iron. Perhaps it's hot enough to melt your weapons. It might be immune to normal weapons. There could be a gnome inside. Maybe it will spit magma. It might be an illusion. It could even be a golem and totally immune to magic." I make sure they understand the possiblities inherent in what they are facing off against.

If an ally is charmed, then put in a suit of black armor and used as a bodyguard by the bad guy, do you say "The mysterious man in the black armor is your ally, charmed"? If not, they may not like the outcome of running him through.

The answer to that is "yes, I tell them", but not for the reasons listed in this article. I mean, I don't think there's anyone dumb enough in the world to not pick up on that — it's a traditional movie trope. "Oh, one of our party members is missing, and the bad guy has a new bodyguard covered head to toe in black armor." The drama there comes from how they resolve the situation.

If a character meets a pretty girl at a party, do you warn the player that the pretty girl may have the wrong sorts of friends? Or that she might have a disease? How much do you tell the players about this pretty girl?

Yes, if they meet someone at a party, I tell them many, many possibilities. This should have less to do with their actions. In a situation like this, they generally are taking action based on their character's choices and thoughts. I don't think that means the player should be confused as to what is happening.

Does communicating possibilities to the players backfire if it is seeded with misinformation? For example, noting to the players that if they enter a gallery of stone statues, some of them might come to life when, in fact, none of them will?

That is the whole point! As a Dungeon Master you let them know what possible consequences of actions might be so they understand the situation. You don't have to even mention the actual consequence. Or you can. They don't have any idea on their side of the screen what the truth is!

It is a "default stance" when being a Dungeon Master. As a Dungeon Master I am constantly making it clear to them what possible consequences of the situation are so that the choices they are making are informed ones. They still don't know the right choice, but at least they are actually using their skill as a player to make the choices instead of — in a real concrete sense — just guessing in the dark.

What don't the characters know? You aren't telling them anything but possibilities! It is the clearest, most direct way for them to understand the consequences of their actions.

Look at the tapestry example above. What happens when you mess with the tapestry? I have it right here in my notes. At what point do listing those possible consequences remove player skill from the equation? You don't know anything more than you did a minute ago about the tapestry, except for some examples of what's in the realm of possibility, meaning any decision you make will be an informed one, and an actual representation of your skill as a player instead of a crapshoot in the dark.

You're not doing this "as a caution", this is the way you go about fusing horizons to close the fantasy gap.

ON OBJECTIVE DESIGN, PLAYER TYPES

Categorizing people into player types is an exercise in superiority, cliquishness, and judgement. Historically it presents certain types as "good" players and other types as "bad". What's more is that the classifications aren't actually helpful to our ability to run a game.

Let's not be like that.

There are two dimensions to Player Categorization (Archtypes) in objective design.

1.) What do players get to do during the game?
and
2.) What experiences do players seek from those activities?

Game Activities

Engage Gameplay: Most often this means utilizing the combat engine of a game, but it just as frequently refers to skill rolls, space combat, or unique mini-games designed by the Dungeon Master. They are characterized by each player getting to take an individual turn, important stakes of some kind to give meaning to the outcome of the conflict, and utilizing both the skills of the player and the player's avatar, whether that be her character, a ship, or their gambling skill.

Planning and Resource Management: This is a discussion about what to do next or how to do it. It is characterized by asking questions about the situation and the facts, asking questions about what needs to be done, and asking questions about what the players are able to do. This can be planning for a shadowrun, solving a puzzle or riddle, or figuring out how to recover a treasure glimpsed through a translucent portal.

Exploration: This means many things. It is exploring sites like dungeons, but it is also talking with people in the game, or even asking questions about the setting. Exploration is done when you choose where to go, talk to non-player characters, roll on a random table, or even read the rule-book to pick a class. You are gathering information about the world.

Upkeep and Logistics: This is the one most likely to be misunderstood and in error. Did you record your treasure? Update your experience? Calculate your combat bonus? Figure out how much it is going to cost to manage that Castle? What's your encumbrance value?

Do not assume that this category is one to be avoided. Upkeep and Logistics add depth and weight to the choices made during the game—they add reality to the world. There are a great many games that dispose of these outright, but making that choice comes with a sacrifice. Having that last arrow, or needing the gold that badly can force choice and create drama without removing agency at all.

It is also crucial to realize that having these choices does not mean tedium. You can manage weight by stone instead of pound. You can track ammunition via die roll, instead of counting down.

Socializing: Hanging out is great! This is a key part of the experience, playing a game with actual real people. It's not casual to enjoy the company of other people.

Game Experiences

What experiences do those activities provide? What things do the players seek?

Gameplay

Competence: "Power-gamer" is derisive and inaccurate. Some players receive a charge by being good or skillful at the game.
Empowerment: A hero is you. Mastering the game presented allows you to succeed and feel a measure of power.
Tactical Acumen: This is a localized specific form of problem solving. It provides positive reinforcement for system mastery.

Planning

Problem-solving: This isn't always solving puzzles and riddles. Sometimes this is the good idea on the moment's spur. Thinking of the right idea, being creative, or solving the puzzle.
Leadership: Making a final decision or coming up with a plan effectively means you are acting as leader. This is relevant whether or not you are using an actual party leader or a caller.
Impact: The choices made by the players in this stage can have long term effects in the play environment.

Exploration

Role-Assumption: Putting yourself into a situation that isn't real, or putting yourself into the mindset of a person that isn't you is both pleasurable and cathartic. This is the need that is fulfilled by the player who always plays a dwarf or perhaps someone from popular media. They find comfort in their role.
Discovery: The exploration explorer. They are looking for relationships between things. This can be romantic relationships between non-player characters, the dungeon layout, the contents of hexes, or how the gate works to get into the treasure chamber. It is the environment and its relationship to the world and the player that is being explored.
Theatrics: Exploration often involves non-aggressive conflict and interaction with non-player characters. It provides the opportunity to talk to other players and the Dungeon Master in your role.

Logistics

Transposition: These mechanical pieces that dictate the realities of the realm that you are exploring allow disbelief to be suspended. Dealing with the logistics of weather damage or the expense of psionic strength points add to the cohesiveness of the experience for the player.
Achievement: Earning experience through objective goals means that achievement in the game is an actual accomplishment instead of something that is given. Making good decisions about resource expenditure is satisfying when the advantages are gained.

Socializing

Social Needs: In a literal sense, socializing fulfills the third level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Although infrequently used by designers, games can be designed to specifically encourage this need.
Savoir Faire: Doing things to save the day or using cool powers at an appropriate moment. This is the social side reward to several of the needs above. It matters because people see it.
Relaxation: Killing bad guys and taking their loot fulfills your need for fun and enjoyment. This activity often works at odds with providing difficult challenges to players which can cause frustration as well as a feeling of accomplishment.

Notice how "story" isn't in there. The above categorizations can be used to structure a fast-paced TV-episode type of game as well as a traditional dungeon crawl.

I've always been disturbed by it being a label for players. What role-playing game doesn't have a story? Perhaps the Dungeon Master has a grand plot occurring in the world, perhaps every occurrence is only a sequence of random events that upon later reflection tells of your rise to power, perhaps care is taken to structure thematic arcs within the activities above.

The presence or absence of 'story' and the 'storyteller' or 'storygamer' type seems orthogonal to actual concrete objective design (The Vorthos/Melvin axis, Thank you Mark Rosewater). You can have as much or as little of it as you like with great success, so long as you allow the players agency.

But there is no "story" activity when playing a game, unless you count sitting there and listening to the Dungeon Master read. That isn't playing a game.

Negative Space

There is no category for the disruptive player, griefer, overtalker, rules-lawyer or other various common ailments, because those are social ills, and cannot be resolved by rules or design.

Can that be clear enough? No in-game or out-of-game rule can address emotions or substitute for communication. Having a mechanic that forces someone to be quiet does not resolve the issue. If they are not cogent enough to table it when you say "We can deal with it later," or wave it off, then why would a rule make it ok?

The answer is, it doesn't. It simply provides space for one person to make an argument of appeal to authority instead of dealing with other human beings as, well, human beings.

Categories

The other thing of crucial note, is that these aren't labels. They are categories. Each player has differing desires at different times for each type of category. Each player is a combined ranking of the goals. They are the rewards that players get from your game.

The Objective Design is to use each of the concrete activities to address specific needs. This ties right in with the Demon of Design Series. You are choosing what to present. Don't just include things that waste the player's time. You can include things to waste the character's time to accomplish a goal (wandering monster checks increase risk: Logistics->Achievement), but not just to waste time.

Other Research

This is far from the first post on Player types. Wizards of the Coast even performed a quantitative analysis! It's interesting for a couple of reasons. First is that it was likely used to drive the development of 4th edition, which was not a commercial success for Wizards of the Coast. In general it seems that games based of a strong quantitative or theoretical background don't do particularly well in the market.

I am of the opinion that just because some popular things are crap does not mean that a thing cannot be both popular and good. Generally I find that longevity is a good metric of the strength of an idea.

They characterize the "four types of players" into thinkers/power gamers/character actors/and storytellers by placing them on a dual axis graph with a story-combat axis, and a strategic-tactical axis. Though these loosely correlate to the activities of play, I find any poll of players which finds that there is a numerically equal distribution across all types suspect.

The Point

If you play a lot of role-playing games, you'll find that every moment is filled with one of the five activities. Role-playing game design isn't about presenting a dungeon or a bunch of rules or sussing out purposes of play or any of that jazz.

It is simply ordering these five activities in sequences and presenting them in interesting ways. All my design articles talk about that. Adventure Design presents the way you can structure these activities. Set Design explains how you can present them in publication so that they are a useful artifact in play. The Demon of Design talks about how design is purposeful and should focus on the experience of the players and not other goals at their expense. And this Objective Design series talks about what players get out of the game so you know what to design towards.

That's how this is useful. You already know you're going to have each of the five types of activities. When you create your game and design the activities in, you do so to provide opportunities to meet player needs. You say "This is an opportunity to show leadership, tactical acumen, and problem solving" when you put a puzzle fight requiring teamwork in the game.

When we speak of Objective Design, we talk about how well what is published accomplishes its stated goals. If you present a battle where they win no matter what choice they make, then what need is that fulfilling? And what is the cost of fulfilling that need? A successful game or module overloads each of the concrete events within it to fulfill multiple needs, and makes sure to not neglect the majority of them to focus on just one.

There are examples here at TVtropes, and here of other methods of categorizing players. See if you can spot the difference between the ones that are categorized because it is helpful towards the goal of making a product* and those that are categorized to make someone feel better about the way they engage in an activity.

"Well, I'm the good type of player here!"

*Let's also not get too commercial here. They are designed to help making a product because the person wants to make a product that is actually hella-fun to use. They want to maximize the enjoyment of the experience they are preparing. Making money from that is an extremely optional by-product. Reference Old School Renaissance blogs.

Links for reference:
http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/PlayerArchetypes
http://fatbody.blogspot.com/2006/01/35-types-of-role-players.html

ON HOW AN ILLUSION CAN ROB YOUR GAME OF FUN

Sometimes you will see a children's cartoon, where they will take the toy and push the button that shoots the missile or fist or something, and they will be so happy this occurs that they will stop playing and give each other a high five.

YOUR PRECIOUS OGRE ENCOUNTER WILL NOT CAUSE YOUR PLAYERS TO DO THAT. If you force them into an encounter — even if they are unaware of the fact that they are being forced, eventually they will grow to resent you. And it will not be long before they become aware.

First — what in the hell are we talking about? Illusionism is defined as being presented with a choice that doesn't matter. There are three groves that the players can explore in any order. The two opposing examples are one in which the Dungeon Master decides which grove an ogre is in, which grove is empty, and which grove contains treasure before the players encounter it. When they reach the grove, their choice determines which one they find. The second example is where the Dungeon Master creates the encounters and leaves them unassigned. Then, no matter which grove the players enter, they have his ogre encounter.

What's wrong with making the ogre encounter being the first one the PC's select?

Player choice has been thwarted, because the players were presented with a meaningless choice. Does it matter if they know the choice was meaningless or not? If the players have no hint of where the ogre is does it rob them of agency?

It matters for these reasons. If you always preordain 'your precious encounter' then the players never have the experience of choosing correctly and skipping right to the end (which is fun for them).

The flaw of the Quantum Ogre is that, if you have a party who plays smart, the ogre won't be quantum long before you enter the woods. Then you've wasted time by not assigning him to a location already or worse, you become the jerk DM where ESP doesn't work, the ground doesn't hold tracks, and if you try and teleport — suddenly anti-magic fields everywhere.

Palette Shifting

Let's take just one moment and talk about palette shifting. There is some misunderstanding of what is meant by this term.

A palette shift is when the players become aware of an encounter, and when making a choice to avoid that encounter, the DM re-skins (changes the 'color palette') the encounter and has them encounter it anyway. This can be as simple as the bandit encounter (Bandits to the east — we go west! ack, bandits here too!), or as complex as totally different monsters who lead you to exactly the same place. This can be used to either negate the players choice (You're

going to fight my special bandits anyway!) or to negate player freedom (It doesn't matter what you do, you will meet the cultists of Bane!).

Pre-scripting 12 encounter lairs, and randomly generating which is in a hex that was unknown is **not** palette shifting. Having undefined "white space" in a campaign, and dynamically filling it with pre-generated content later is not palette shifting.

Sandbox Triangle

Fast, good, and cheap, pick 2 in the design and management of a sandbox doesn't apply.

It's based on a fallacy, one of wasted effort. There is no 'effort/detail/freedom' sandbox triangle in the OSR, and the postulation of one is a lie! Though it's an easily believable one. That somehow if you put a lot of detail into areas that the players don't visit you will be having time you've spent preparing being wasted.

Being creative does not make you less creative. Let's ignore that there's enough free material on the web to stock 1 millarn over 9000 hexes and dungeons with no more effort than hitting print, random tables, free resources and more, and point out that if you can't get enough detail to give the players freedom because it takes too much effort then you are expanding the wrong kind of effort.

How long is a gaming session? 4-8 hours? How much can be done in that time at the table? What will you need? 1 million areas? 5 areas? It just isn't enough time to go through that many options. Let's assume you don't know where your players will go. How many options do they need? 3? 5? Let's assume 6 (one for each hex face). So what do you need to come up with?

Six general encounters for hexes, a random encounter table, and a table of random stuff if they reject all six of your hooks. Can you not create the basics of that (using web resources, pdf's, blogs, geomorphs, random name generators etc.) in under an hour? All that work you 'wasted' in your last campaign — well it's a new campaign, can't you find a place to stick it in?

Agency Theft

What's really terrible about the destruction of player agency in the above examples is the implicit thought that 'your encounter that's sooo cool' is what makes Dungeons and Dragons fun. It's not. It's getting in that *Dispel Evil* on Strahd that slays him outright. It's getting that critical on that dragon while it's talking shit. It's taking down that frost giant at first level — not your fsking precious encounter. It's when through luck, chance, or skill, something amazing happens; removing you from the reality and giving a rare glimpse into a realm where something truly unique and heroic has happened that the rest of the world will never see.

How can your little pre-planned scripted encounter compare to that?

ON SLAYING THE QUANTUM OGRE



All this rhodmontade over agency has a purpose!

Let's learn how to slay the Quantum Ogre.

How do we give players agency — **how do we let their choices have the effects that relate to the intents of that choice?** The primary rule is 'don't be a dick'. Which is easy to say, but what are our guidelines in play?

Information

This is the key to player agency, since it informs their choice. Without information, they cannot make a choice with intent. This is important in many ways, in many situations. You must study this.

Some examples:

- When dropping hints, drop them three times.
- When the players are discussing things and they have misunderstood something or your intent, correct them.
- When the players tell you what they are doing, also ask them what they want (why they are doing it) and make sure that their choice matches their goal. Pacing is difficult enough to maintain — if the players want to find treasure, let them know before they search an abandoned building for six hours of game time that there's not much treasure there. Tell them where to go to get treasure. (**Yes, but. . .**)
- Let them know the stakes. Tell them if the NPC's are telling the truth or lying to them or not!* (**What's in it for me. . .**)
- If you told them, and 30 seconds have passed, you may tell them again. (**Remember. . .**)
- If the players ask a question, try to answer what they want to know. (**No, but. . .**)
- When dealing with authentic hidden information (how a trick or trap works), give them some sign of all irrevocable effects (**Trick/Trap agency**)
- Don't give the players blind choices. Always give some sort of information with the choice. A choice with no information to distinguish between the options isn't any sort of choice at all.

* This level of explicitness applies to letting them know the stakes — what does each option we may engage in tonight involve? What activities as people will these options allow us to engage in? When your friends are making that decision, you should not allow them to end up doing something for six hours they do not want to do, because of authentic uncertainty in the game world.

Freedom

This is a sword to player agency, since it empowers their choice. Without freedom, they are unable to make a choice with effects relating to their intent. This is critical since without choice, there is no game (i.e. games are collections of interesting choices).

- The outcome of a situation can never be predetermined — you cannot decide ahead of time how the choice a player makes will play out, otherwise the player has no input and is therefore not engaged.
- Allow things to happen that have no bearing on the players or their interests. If everything in the world revolves around the players, how can they be free? More to the point, how can they ever see the effects (or lack thereof) without a living breathing world?
- You cannot dictate the actions of the player characters! Their control over their PC's is sacrosanct territory, with only rare exceptions (magical control, etc.)
- The freedom to ignore your plot hooks adventure thread / situation is critical. Next time you play, look around you — those are actual human beings, not fleshy shells destined to act out what happens next in your fantasy. If they enter your rioting city, and decide to leave, let them get the hell out of there if they wish. . . just remember to let them experience the consequences of their agency.
- The invisible wall is anathema. Say Yes. . . or Say Yes, But. . . If you tell the players they can do anything and then continue to tell them no and no and no, well, they can't really do anything, can they?[1]
- This is ironic, but in order to encourage freedom, you have to limit options. You have to say, here are five tasks, so they can make a meaningful choice between the five — or reject them and forge their own. If you were to tell them "do anything you want" the excessive freedom limits their agency by making their choices meaningless.

[1] I blame America and its obsession with freedom on this dishonesty. The fact is, you can't do anything you want, and not only is it so important for us to believe we can that we constantly tell ourselves and our children that, but it causes massive social dysfunction (a lack of concern about behavior on community) and personal distress when faced with this reality.

ON RESURRECTING THE QUANTUM OGRE AND HAVING HIM OVER FOR TEA

Yes but. . .

Tell the player the consequence of what will happen if he takes the action, before he takes the action. Do not play 'Gotcha!' 'You didn't say!' or 'Guess what I'm thinking!' games with the players.

"If you do that, you will be visible down the corridor. Do you still want to do that?"

"If you do that he will get to attack you, do you still wish to do that?"

"You can explore that entire building if you wish – there is stuff there – but if you're looking for treasure, there probably won't be much in that building"

What's in it for me. . .

If your players cannot make a decision because they lack information, give it to them!

"Maybe we shouldn't go there, he could just be saying he has a magic sword."
"He actually has a magic sword – if you do the quest he will get it and give it to you."

Remember. . .

It's not that they are stupid – it's that they have stressful jobs, kids, families, and lots of responsibilities other then gaming and can't spend as long as you making sure they remember ever last detail. That's your job.

1:*"Are we going west or south."*
2:*"South has bugbears, maybe we should go west."*
DM:*"Well, south also has the temple, which has a lot of treasure in it, and also the cult leader you have been getting clues about lives there – and if you go west, you can't forget that griffons haunt the pass, as well as the inevitable mountain giants and their pet red dragons."*
1:*"Red Dragons?!"*
DM:*"Yes, but due to the curse from the yis-gothka, they-"*
2:*"Who"*
DM:*"The temple guys."*
1:*"Oh, I remember now - let's go get those giants."*
DM:*"Ok, so giants over treasure in the temple and the cult leader, correct?"*

No, but. . .

Listen to your players. If they are asking questions they are telling you what they want to know. Don't ever tell them no — always say the reason why you are telling them no, and provide them a path to accomplish what they want. Be realistic about what is possible and not, and allow them to deviate from what you envision for them.

"*Can I get my horse raised?*"

Restricted agency response: "*No, you don't know how.*"

Pro-agency response: "*Well, you don't know how, but you could pay a sage or ask at the temple and I'm sure they could tell you more if that's something you'd like to do. There are likely to be some drawbacks, and it will probably cost some gold.*"

Trick/Trap agency

There is an appropriate way to run a crushing ceiling. This is the one area of the game where you can have a Gotcha moment — but there are rules if you wish to do it this way.

First, you must make it very, very, clear that they are in an area where something like this can happen. The game makes it easy, because usually this is the entrance or threshold into the underworld. It must be explicit that this can occur. They should be on your guard for this type of thing.

"*This structure has stood for innumerable years, who knows what devious and arcane protections it may possess?*"

"*You see the sign of the devious kobolds, the hammers and gears of their deadly trapwork lay scattered about assuring a risky venture into the depths.*"

The second thing that must occur is that you must make the trap obvious. A good way to do this is to describe one or two unimportant things with one important thing. Often the naturalistic effects of the trap will dictate this conversation.

"*Ahead in the chamber is a cool breeze, dust swirls around on the floor and an earthen smell assaults your nose.*"
"*I examine the dust and chamber.*"
"*The dust appears to be finely ground stone, there are several dark stains within the room. On the walls scrapes and gouges run vertically up and down the walls. Do you wish to enter the room?*"
"*No. what do the stains look like?*"
"*They could be rust. . . or blood.*"
Party says all together "*Collapsing ceiling.*"

Yes

When the players ask for something say yes!

AND THEN GIVE THEM 3 PROBLEMS TO GO WITH IT. There! Now they are having the adventure they want!

Yes, but. . .

When the players ask for something you can't give them, tell them what they need to do — both in and out of game turns.

"I'd like to learn that reduced facing skill that's so cool."

"Well, you'll have to ask a sage how to do that."

Player pays information tax

"You have to go through the valley of the slow centipede, traverse the central forgehammer mountains, and seek out the Loydan monastery where there are monks who teach it. If everyone stays focused, it will take one session of hex travel, and one session of doing a quest for the monks - unless you have a better way to convince them to help to complete."

On misinterpretations of the nature of Agency

"I should keep things secret from my players for realism! Because sometimes people lie! They shouldn't know if the guy has an actual magic sword or not before they do the quest!"

Clearly you're interested in doing something other than playing a game for fun. What's the result here — you being their only source of knowledge have tricked them into doing something just so you can laugh at them taking your word? Because you're trying to teach them people are shitty? Do you think that's why they came to your house to play Dungeons and Dragons?

"They should have listened when I told them about the duke, and then know he was lying to them!"

They are other human beings who are busy and in a room with 2-8 of their peers that they like and haven't seen in a week or longer. It is not conducive to catching every last detail. They are there to play a game, not hang on your every offhand word.

"You said you should tell your PC's when the NPC's are lying to them! You are a terrible DM and must have no skills if you can't communicate this information in game! If you can't drop clues so they can figure it out, you are a terrible person and a worse GM!"

Ok, several things.

First, that advice is about clearing up adventure hooks for the party so they can make an informed decision as people about what they want to do tonight in your game. I am not advocating that the players be informed of everything by out of character talking. These are situational pieces of advice to use to restore the players ability to make informed decisions.

Second, what the above is describing is a particular form of douche-baggery. Leaving 'really good clues' around everywhere and expecting players to guess your intent is not 'skillful' play. There is no way for a group of random human beings to know what your baseline expectations are for a situation — how often have we been surprised by how another person deals with something? If you don't give them information and you're not explicit about it, then you are destroying their agency.

"There's nothing fun about blind luck! And if you don't fudge the dice and alter the story that's what it comes down to!"

If you never let anything bad happen to the characters, I understand why it seems that way. The reason it doesn't all come down to blind luck is player skill. The skill comes in creating a situation where the fate of the whole party doesn't rely on a single dice roll. If your players are often in a situation where it all comes down to blind luck it's because anytime something bad has happened, you've protected them from the consequence, so why would they try anything different? As long as you are there to pull their fat from the fire, they will engage in every combat knowing they can't lose. In the long run this is less satisfying then winning a victory against the authentic chance of a loss.

"But I can't let them destroy the epic encounter at the climax of the adventure by a lucky roll!"

Think about it. The example of Beedo's players causing Strahd's death wasn't the result of a lucky roll — it was the result of planning, thought, and skill of the players. Making them fight some long battle is taking away from the very epicness of the situation! Beedo's players will be talking about how they killed Strahd for much longer than any of his other 'boss fights'. Because it was their plan, it was real, it mattered, and it stuck.

The real key to this is, it swings both ways.

"But if they don't have this encounter — they won't experience my precious plot."

So?

"They have to have this encounter or the game just won't work."

Is this because you're not creative enough to work it in around what the players choose to do? Or is it because you don't respect them enough to ask them what they might want to get out of the game? Or is it because you're not bright enough to pick up on what they want to do? If you have a key encounter, and you give it to them, and they refuse it — forcing them to have it doesn't improve the situation.

"There's no right way to run a game. My players have control over the world and we do improv storytelling, and everything is tied into their story!"

I've run games like that before — where players know their plot arc, and have script immunity, and it's about drama and acting. That is not Dungeons & Dragons. It's not structured that way — it's a game, and one with fairly clear expectations and rules. You can certainly change up and add to Dungeons & Dragons — it's designed that way. But this is an article about the game of old-school Dungeons & Dragons, the type where you don't name your fighter till level 3, and it's structured around exploring dungeons and clearing hexes. I'm glad you are having fun, but be clear about your house rules being house rules.

"Newer games give you lots of agency, because there are lots of rules. And you don't just use those rules to make your character, in the game you have lots of different options during combat, meaning your making lots of decisions and choices, and those choices matching your intent! That's player agency also"

Of course. Chess has a ton of player agency, in the realm of tactical and strategic options of a board game. I play lots of boardgames and tactical strategy games and they are lots of fun. Again, not Dungeons & Dragons though (no matter what people call it) and that's what I'm focused on providing agency in.

"If I have a wandering monster table with 1 encounter and a 100% chance of that encounter — how is that different then the quantum ogre?"

Cute. Well, the original article postulated 3 options (groves of trees), and a DM that *no matter what the party did,* found the ogre in the first one, and the mcguffin in the last one the party entered. And there was nothing they could do to change or avoid the outcome. (It's technically a Schrodinger's ogre, but that's overused, no?)

This strawman assumes that all improvisation on the part of the Dungeon Master is negative. Clearly there are appropriate times to do all of the things that I recommend against doing. Older editions even contained rules to bypass the need to do them! A classic example is morale. In Pathfinder, if the party has clearly won the fight, and there are just a few orcs left, having a player kill one instead of leaving it with one hit point is a perfectly acceptable time to fudge the dice, because the outcome doesn't matter. All you are doing is facilitating interesting

choices, instead of uninteresting ones. In earlier editions they would have already fled due to morale failure.

You will spring an encounter on the PC's You will roll sometimes and ignore it. You will dictate player actions. Just always be sure to do so in a way that maintains agency.

"I don't want a bunch of random things happening! I want a story!"

Two things. First, is that all the randomness in a sandbox is supposed to simulate realistic things — don't put ice worms on your volcano encounter table.

Secondly, the idea is that the events and choices of the players are the things that we look back on and tell stories about and these posts that are about what happened aren't about the DM's 'precious' plot, but about the thing that's greater that's shared between a group of people. The sandbox is a living breathing world. No pre-scripted outcomes, no predetermined plots. Whatever you have in mind, can only be improved by the shared creativity and experience of other people.

"The players don't know the difference! I can lie to them all I want! There's no difference between a quantum ogre and a wandering encounter."

Have you ever seen the film where they underestimate the audience? Notice how all the best films don't do that?

"Everything in my game has to have a purpose!"

The unspoken part is — of your design. How about you let the player purpose themselves into your game?

ON THE CORPSE OF THE QUANTUM OGRE

What is a Quantum Ogre?

It is a situation in which the Dungeon Master removes agency* from the players because of his desire for an outcome.

WOAH! Did our eyes glaze over? What that means is that the player tries to do a thing (cast a spell, use a skill, attack a creature, make a choice) and the Dungeon Master does something actively to neutralize that thing!

"Oh, there's an anti-magic field here!" or "Nope, your skill fails." or "You miss." or maybe he adjust the hit points of a creature so that it doesn't die yet, or suddenly decides his big bad evil guy is wearing a ring of free action.

Does this mean you can't have anti-magic fields or opponents that wear rings of free action? Of course not. It's only agency denying if you do those things to stop the players from ruining your encounter. Of course the secret is, they can't ruin the encounter, because in a game free of quantum ogres, the outcome is never pre-decided, so can never be ruined.

"I read your article and don't understand how this doesn't ruin the game! If you tell your players what's in every cave and what they are going to get for every reward how is their any sense of freedom or mystery? Don't they have the freedom to not get that information?"

The Quantum Ogre series isn't advice on how to Dungeon Master.

It is a list of tools to solve specific problems that traditionally are areas where agency can be impacted.

So when you look at the advice for "What's in it for me?" It specifically address the part of the game where the player has to make a choice about what they are going to do in the game that night. You know, the situation where they want to know what's in it for them!

The advice isn't "Tell them the specific consequences of any action they might take in the game ever the whole entire time." The advice is, "When the game starts, and the players are trying to decide what activity they are going to engage in for the evening, they should have a good idea about how to get access to the activity they want to do." If they want to do some talking in character and political maneuvering, you should tell them that instead of visiting the crypt, they should visit the haunted forest where the faerie ball is happening this evening.

Each of the original pieces of advice are not pieces of general advice. They are all designed to solve specific problems.

Yes but. . . is designed to assist with communication errors between players and the Dungeon Master. They can't know what's in your head, so this tool is used when actions are taken to keep everyone on the same page.

Remember. . . is designed to avoid real world frustration. You are sitting in a room with real people who are friends. It is not your job to make those people jump through hoops. Player skill is about making informed choices, not recalling something they may not have even noted in the first place.

No, but. . . is designed to address the problem of the player not understanding the world to the degree that the Dungeon Master does. If you've ever wondered why a player just doesn't do this simple solution to the problem, it's because they aren't aware of it!

Trick/Trap Agency is designed to avoid the gotcha. It doesn't mean you have to dumb anything down. The general idea is that the players must make the choice to engage with the trap and there must be some way for them to become aware of it.

Yes is designed to make the game fun for the players! Who likes to be shut down? It's also a subtle admonition to avoid the word no when running a game. If the answer isn't **Yes, but . . .** or **No, but . . .**, why not **Yes**?

"Isn't a Random table essentially a Quantum Ogre? How can you have the players run into a village with a festival? Is it fair to do so? Can the Dungeon Master ever decide anything?"

Of course you can decide things. Of course you can just invent things you think would be cool during play. The Quantum Ogre isn't about putting an ogre in the woods. It's about invalidating the players decisions. Any time you are deciding something or making a choice that does that, you are at risk of invalidating agency.

"But what about a random encounter table with only one entry? What about these random situations that I've concocted? Aren't there lots of places where player choices are invalidated, like death? Where is the line where agency is impacted?"

Dungeon Mastering is hard.

It's a chaotic, magical, talent that is easy to learn, but maybe only really old dudes with wizard eyebrows master. I like to call when I make mistakes "fucking up". I make mistakes to this day when I run games.

The fact is, is that this isn't about absolutes. It is about knowledge the participants possess, expectations, and intent of the Dungeon Master.

Many of the examples I've been given, can't even be addressed in terms of agency, because they depend on context and expectations. It is a question of intent and degrees, dependent on context. Isn't a dungeon a railroad because it has walls and the players can't visit any room at the start? Isn't a town filled with Quantum Ogres because guards will attack the players if they steal? What about people who might be bothered by a hypothetical situation?

Are you running games? Do your players feel empowered? Are their misunderstandings about game expectations? That happens. Are those misunderstandings deliberate efforts on your part to force an outcome? That's called lying. Are the players able to acquire information about the world? Is that information meaningful?

The Quantum Ogre isn't a thought experiment. It is an example of certain type of gaming problem, with a list of concrete solutions designed to resolve those problems and make role playing more fun for both the players.

*Player Agency (n.): "the feeling of empowerment that comes from being able to take actions in the [virtual] world whose effects relate to the player's intention" -Mateas, 2001

BRAVO

Everyone needs a little help now and then. Sometimes this could be a glare. Sometimes it means just standing around nearby as a show of strength. Sometimes it means you got to break someone's kneecaps. Never can tell.

Skill Proficiency: Strength (Athletics), Charisma (Intimidation)
Proficiency: Gain proficiency with any blunt weapon.
Languages: Pick any one language.
Equipment: Blunt weapon you have proficiency in. Chain (10 feet), common clothes, crowbar. sledge hammer, holy symbol, potion of healing. stylish or dapper hat (wedge shaped, tri-cornered, or pointed front/back, pick one). pet rat or snake.

Specialty: There are many different reasons you might have been an enforcer. Select or roll from the list below. Grant an appropriate contact and ally from the following list.
1.) **Devout:** You discouraged the practice of heathen religions and cults for a religious organization.
2.) **Enforcer:** You enforced order for a legal entity like a government.
3.) **Connected:** You made sure nothing bad happened to such a nice place.
4.) **Internal Investigator:** You provided enforcement for oversight of a particular organization, rooting out corruption and subversive influence.
5.) **Teamster:** You enforced the rights of the lower class against exploitative employers.
6.) **Mercenary:** You acted as a private police force for commercial interests.
7.) **Brigand:** You were an entrepreneur for an independent organization with room for growth.
8.) **Free-agent:** It's nice to hurt people.

Feature: In addition to the contact and ally listed above, you have a mentor who is a specialist in some skill, either physical or mental, who has a positive and reciprocal relationship with you. This could be an old apothecarist or alchemist that heals your wounds (and gave you the healing potion you carry), a blacksmith who provided you with food or shelter, or even an old witch in the wood who turned out not to dislike orphans or runaways.

Suggested Characteristics

Most people don't need to be hurt. But there are a certain class of people to you, heathens, degenerate drug addicts or gamblers, deviants, corrupt exploiters, what have you, that just won't listen to reason. That's why you don't use reason. You're not mean. You're not evil. Those are just the facts. If it weren't for you, little girls and innocent people would suffer. You're setting things right.

d8 Personality

1.) I get visions. Sometimes I see things that aren't there. I'm always cautious about what I say or do because of that.

2.) I am secretly inside just like the people I hurt. That's why I hate them so much.

3.) I know other people aren't real. I don't worry about the ones I don't like.

4.) I like physical confrontation! It's not stressful, it's exciting and I feel so alive. Also, I'm usually much better prepared than those I face. I don't like all the talking and waiting beforehand, it stresses me out.

5.) I SMASH!

6.) Some things aren't right, and it makes me soo ANGRY! (Note: You need 3-5x the physical space to feel comfortable and often internalize things people say as personal attacks)

7.) People don't have to agree with me. I'm pretty laid back. Unless of course, you're in my way.

8.) I try to be the best person I can. I'm known as a good guy. I'm nice to old ladies and superpolite and helpful to everyone I meet.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Purity:** Some things are wrong and they must be dealt with. (Lawful)

2.) **Sadist:** *shrug*, I likes to hurt people. (Evil)

3.) **Masochist:** *lip quiver* I hate hurting people, but it is my terrible burden to do so. (also, evil)

4.) **Moral:** I make the world a better place. (Good)

5.) **Conflict Drive:** I love to fight! (Chaotic)

6.) **Competent:** I like to be prepared. (Unaligned)

d6 Bond

1.) I've named your weapon. It doesn't talk to me exactly, but I know what it wants.

2.) I often feel like I'm a (type of animal) trapped in the body of a human. This is your deepest secret.

3.) I travel with my lover. They are not a socially-appropriate lover. Sometimes people comment on this. Once.

4.) I keep the teeth. Not all of them, just one. Subtly. It's not like I'm wearing them around your neck.

5.) I'm good friends with a man that is hunting me.

6.) That's my hat!

d6 Flaw

1.) I am sexually excited by violence.

2.) I don't have the capacity to feel emotion, my loyalties shift like the wind.

3.) I'm smart enough to see the flaws in what my superiors are saying and this always brings me into conflict with them.

4.) I don't like myself and I always end up lashing out at the people who care for me to drive them away.

5.) I bully people because I don't understand that they are suffering when I harass them. That's how I let them know I like them.

6.) Cancer.

CARNEY

You live and travel with a circus or carnival. Running away to join the carnival is the last refuge of the most desperate. Today, even the desperate consider it a poor option.

Skill Proficiency: Pick any one skill.
Languages: Pick any 2, plus Kizzarny, the language of carney's. It is a special variation on thieve's cant.
Equipment: Common clothes, traveler's clothes, costume clothes, ball bearings, bell, book, candle, flask, hooded lantern, 10 foot pole, sack, iron spikes

Specialty: There are many different jobs that workers can do for a circus or carnival. Each of the following contains a random effect, that should only be allowed if the specialty is randomly determined.
1.) **Strongman:** (+1 Strength)
2.) **Master of Ceremonies:** (+1 Charisma)
3.) **Animal Trainer:** (Proficiency in Handle Animal)
4.) **Jointee/Jointy:** (Runs the games: Proficiency in Dexterity (Slight of Hand))
5.) **Mentalist:** (Choose 1 Wizard Cantrip)
6.) **Monkey Boy/Girl:** (-1 Charisma, especially hirsute)
7.) **Novelty Act:** (giant wrestler, midget, "hillbilly," hairy beast, grotesque or deformed person, or a trained animal – Yes, actually a talking dog/elephant/bear, choose appropriate modifiers with your DM)
8.) **Posing Show:** (Proficiency in performance)

Feature: After years in the carnival you've developed a variety of contacts of dubious morality. In each town or village, you can roll on the following table to gain a contact.
1.) Fence
2.) Apothecarist/Druggist/Pharmacist
3.) Thieves' guild member
4.) Corrupt bureaucrat

Suggested Characteristics

You didn't run away to join the carnival because things were going well. You're willing to take risks and have little to lose.

d8 Personality

1.) Drug users, criminals and immigrants are the only people worth getting to know, they are honest not fake.
2.) Any work I can avoid doing is good work.
3.) It's not that I need the money, I just like taking advantage of people.
4.) I like to make people laugh.
5.) I'm only gathering information because I eventually plan to write a book.
6.) As long as I can stay on the road, I don't have to worry about getting all caught up in anything.
7.) I know not to break Kaefabe, I just don't trust anyone enough to ever break it. Everyone's a con.
8.) Easy come, easy go.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Exploitation:** The only good person is a mark.(Evil)
2.) **Freedom:** The open road is the only road for me.(Chaotic)
3.) **Family:** The carnival is my family. (Lawful)
4.) **Competence:** Never be the mark. (Unaligned):
5.) **Enigmatic:**: There's a special magic to traveling the land and bringing wonder to folk. (Good)
6.) **Experience:** I'm going to finally see the elephant! (Unaligned)

d6 Bond

1.) I have a brother that is looking for me.
2.) I have more than one life-partner, and they don't know about each other, nor the lover I travel with.
3.) I travel with a small coterie of lifetime companions.
4.) I bring news to various small towns and villages.
5.) I perform with my brothers and sisters, all of whom share a certain special trait (dwarfism, etc.)
6.) I love the animals I train, and would do anything for them, including steal them from the circus.

d6 Flaw

1.) If I have an opportunity to take money, even from a friend or companion, I can't pass it up.
2.) I ripped off the people I traveled with, and they are out and after me.
3.) I don't really like being obligated, as soon as someone cares for me, it'll be time to be moving on.
4.) I got out of town in a possum belly (cab underneath a wagon) and the person I slept with to let me ride there has developed an unhealthy emotional attachment to me.
5.) I committed one crime too many and am a wanted man.
6.) Due to an error, one of my fellow workers died, and now anytime anyone depends on me I freeze up.

FARMER



You worked the land for many years, or perhaps even owned a farm of your own. For some reason, that path is closed to you know. Maybe your farm was razed. Maybe days of work under the hot sun no longer appealed to you. In any case, you sold what you could and equipped yourself for a more exciting future.

Skill Proficiency: Intelligence (Nature) and Wisdom (Animal Handling).
Tool Proficiency: Farmer's tools (new tools, proficiency bonus applies to growing/harvesting crops), land vehicles
Equipment: Two chickens, a pig or a goat, common clothes, backpack, bedroll, blanket, pole (10 foot), tinderbox, 10 torches, shovel or rake or hoe

Specialty: There are a variety of types of farming you could have expertise in.
1.) Vineyard Farmer
2.) Ranching
3.) Rice farming
4.) Wheat/Grain Farming
5.) Subsistence Farmer
6.) Dairy Farms
7.) Poultry Farms
8.) Prison Farms

Feature: You have worked the land for years. In any area of civilization you can always find free boarding from a local for you and your companions. It may not always be the best lodging, sometimes it means sleeping on the floor of a barn, but you never worry about being turned out. It also allows you and your companions to perform day labor, feeding and housing you for the day in addition to earning 1d4 silver pieces each.

Suggested Characteristics:

A farmer knows the land. He sees death and life every day and understands that they are part of the natural cycle of things. People who complain about hardship always seem to you, to be the ones that never experienced any. You see that people who put on airs have just the same kinds of problems as the working folk, only with more money.

d8 Personality

1.) I'm harsh and unforgiving like the land.
2.) I know that no man is an island, and you have to work together in order to survive.
3.) The more money you have, the less sense you make.
4.) I take joy in the simple things and the present moment. The future will take care of itself.
5.) Life is endless toil and I hate it. I didn't quit farming to do more boring work.
6.) I know what's inside animals and I know the same things are inside people. This is funny, but other people don't seem to think so.
7.) I've only ever lived on my farm and only the only things I know about the big, wide, world are the things my mee-maw told me. I like to share the things she says.
8.) I always liked drinking more than farming.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Curiosity:** I want to see the whole world. (Chaos)
2.) **Balance:** Life and death are natural cycles and must be respected. (Neutral)
3.) **Stability:** I want to make the world a safer place. (Lawful)
4.) **Conservative:** I think things that are different are dangers. (Lawful)
5.) **Hateful:** I fear unusual and different things, they must be destroyed. (Evil)
6.) **Nonchalant:** I don't really want to be engaged in anyone's drama. (Unaligned)

d6 Bond

1.) I have a family and homestead that I care for.
2.) One of my livestock, isn't just livestock. He's a special friend.
3.) I want to keep my past secret. No one can know I'm just a lowly farmer.
4.) My farm was burned to the ground, and now I seek revenge against the man who did it.
5.) My wife and family were killed by bandits. ("When you've waited 15 years to find a man, it's a shame you can only kill him once")
6.) I once lost my dog. He was a good dog, and maybe he's still out there somewhere.

d6 Flaw

1.) I can't get too worked up over whether things die or live.
2.) I was a bonded servant and escaped. I still owe a man 3 years.
3.) I'm intolerant of anyone not of my race or culture
4.) I'm naive and don't understand what things are going on around me normally, and assume everyone is friendly and means well
5.) I have a serious illness or disease that I keep well hidden
6.) I don't much care for bathing or hygiene and am usually covered in filth.

FERAL

You were abandoned as a child, and raised by wild animals. You were a teenager before being exposed to your own kind. Even today you have trouble existing in the civilized world.

Skill Proficiency: Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), Wisdom (Animal Handling) Wisdom (Perception), Wisdom (Survival).
Tool Proficiency: None may be had — if your class gives you any, you lose them. This goes for martial weapons and heavy armor proficiencies also.
Languages: Can only have 1, and speak that poorly. You have the ability to emphatically communicate with the type of animal that raised you.
Equipment: Common clothes, torn; pouch, rope, animal fetish. bucket. you may not take starting money from your class.

Specialty: Select from the following list or determine which animal you were raised by randomly.
1.) Bears
2.) Sharks
3.) Wolves
4.) Eagles
5.) Panthers
6.) Deer
7.) Meekrat
8.) Giant insects
9.) Apes
10.) Undead
11.) Unicorns
12.) Dragons/Wyrms (The non-speaking kind)
13.) Sharks riding bears



Feature: You can communicate with any animal of the type that raised you. This allows you to find out anything it knows. You also have the ability to call upon these animals for help or assistance, in addition to being able to treat the group of animals that raised you as trusted allies who will help you (though they will not throw their lives away needlessly).

Suggested Characteristics

You grew up in the wild. The wild you understand. You can't speak well. You feel anxious around people. You will never be a part of their world and you will never be able to go back. Where do you fit in?

d4 Personality

1.) I am very angry!
2.) I no like people.
3.) *glare*I am shy and do not trust.
4.) I am very much like family I come from. (Take on personality of animal)

d6 Ideal

1.) **Freedom:** I no want to be studied! (Chaos)
2.) **Conservationist:** I want to protect my family! (Unaligned)
3.) **Violent:** I like to hurt people to feel better. (Evil)
4.) **Safety:** I avoid civilization. (Lawful)
5.) **Naturalist:** I want to be a ambassador between my cultures. (Good)
6.) **Hedonist:** Hungry. Mating. Sleepy. (Unaligned)

d6 Bond

1.) I carry one of the young from my tribe.
2.) I carry the emblem of my animal people. It is their history. (a necklace/fetish/etc.)
3.) I have a mentor that cared for me and taught me everything I know about the civilized world.
4.) A beautiful lady found me and now I love her, even though I know I'm not right for her. . . (Me, Tarzan, you Jane)
5.) I carry something given to me by my human mother.
6.) I am quite famous.

d6 Flaw

1.) I only know 18 words.
2.) I am mute and unable to speak.
3.) My tribe family is being hunted to extinction, and I don't care about anything else.
4.) Someone has my tribe family held hostage and I must do what they say.
5.) I was maimed in some physical or debilitating way in my youth. (Work out the effects with your dungeon master. Examples are a limp that reduces speed by 5 feet, or blindness in one eye giving disadvantage on ranged attacks).
6.) I have odious personal habits that make me forever stand out in civilization and offend those I meet. (Defecating in public/covered in lice and parasites, etc.)

FISHERMAN



The sea is your mother, the sea is your life. You aren't a sailor. You're a fisherman. You have a deep, personal, intimate relationship with the sea

Skill Proficiency: Intelligence (Nature); Wisdom (Survival);
Tool Proficiency: Water vehicle
Languages: Pick any one.
Equipment: Fishing line, fishing pole, net, traveler's clothes, dapper fishing hat, tacklebox, can of worms

Specialty: You can either select or roll for the type of fisherman you are, and the type of fish you catch
1.) Wild Drift Net fishing
2.) Fly-fishing
3.) Whaling
4.) Mermaid hunter
5.) Sea monster/Giant squid hunter
6.) Subsistence fisherman
7.) Noodling
8.) Spear hunting

Feature: Anytime you are near a source of water, you have advantage on survival checks to find food. Also, you can generate 2d10 silver pieces a day in fish to sell. Your knowledge of fishing allows you to blend in and acquire information from fishermen in various different cities and places regardless of any negative biases the population may hold towards you

Suggested Characteristics

Spending more time alone on the sea than with people has changed your nature. You are used to knowing that your survival is in your hands against a force much larger and more powerful then you could ever fathom.

d8 Personality

1.) I don't much like people.
2.) I know that I'm not in control of my life, which really allows me to enjoy dangerous situations.
3.) I like being outdoors, wearing fashionable hats, and being prepared. I'm a bit of an outdoors-man nut!
4.) I know how to provide for myself. I don't need any support from the crown.
5.) People are disturbed by how much I like fish. I like them. . . a lot. *Creepy Grin*
6.) I love the sea, it's the only place I feel content.
7.) I know the sea is ever active, so I seek to learn to sail in high winds.
8.) You can't tame the sea by just sitting and looking at it.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Calm:** I am content when I'm in the elements (Unaligned)
2.) **Risk:** I love the chaos of the sea. (Chaos)
3.) **Greed:** The sea holds many mysteries I wish to unlock. (Evil)
4.) **Competence:** I wish to master the sea, as a measure of my skill. (Lawful)
5.) **Exploration:** To see a new vista is the opportunity of the water. (Good)
6.) **Balance:** The sea is a measure of the balance of nature (Unaligned/Neutral)

d6 Bond

1.) Once, I saw a mermaid, and now I pine for her.
2.) I met a magic talking fish, who said I should seek him out again someday.
3.) I built my boat myself.
4.) My fishing rod was given to me by my father
5.) I learned to fish from my grandfather who is still quite young and spry.
6.) I have a partner I fish with.

d6 Flaw

1.) I don't much concern myself with the short term. The sea destroys all things in time.
2.) I made a bargain for immortality with evil fish people.
3.) I'm addicted to fishing and liable to avoid obligations to go.
4.) I often smell of dirt, worms, and fish.
5.) I have a pet fish. This is not as convenient as it sounds.
6.) I am secretly a cursed water creature, either a fish polymorphed into a human or a mermaid given legs, or some other sea creature cursed to walk the land.

GLADIATOR



Once you fought against other men and beasts for the entertainment of the people. No longer. Now you fight for a different cause.

Skill Proficiency: Strength (Athletics) OR Dexterity (Acrobatics); Charisma (Performance)
Languages: Pick any two languages.
Equipment: Any weapon, 1d100 coins, traveler's outfit, strips of cloth.

Specialty: Your background before becoming a gladiator varied:
1.) Captured slave
2.) Criminal
3.) Politician seeking warrior pedigree
4.) Ex-soldier
5.) Desperate man
6.) Thrill seeking upper-class patrician

Feature: As a gladiator, you were considered a hero and had many adoring fans. In any settlement of 500 people or more, there are 1d4 people who have heard of your accomplishments and fame per 500 people. In any settlement of 1,000 people or more, one of each of those is a very big fan and will accommodate whatever your wishes are. This can result in free services, housing, or other more esoteric requests depending on the fan.

Suggested Characteristics

No stranger to combat and death, you take such things very seriously. If you achieved any degree of fame, you have a talent for showmanship, but realize that being alive is more important than being impressive.



d8 Personality

1.) By Jupiter's low-hanging c*&k, I love to put a colorful fist full of words that fall from my mouth like s&*t from ass into a knotted ear!

2.) I'm just a simple gladiator trying to make his way against the whim of the gods, the politicians, the miscreants. So often you can't tell one from the other.

3.) There is no greater thing than standing victorious in the arena.

4.) Death comes to us all. Press me again, and you shall find yours.

5.) There is always a choice.

6.) I am beset by misfortune, once again gods spread the cheeks to ram c&*k in f*#&ing ass!

7.) I was sprung from my mother with sword in hand. The ways of battle are second nature, passed down from father to son.

8.) You had me at whores!

d6 Ideal

1.) **Freedom:** Those who seek to place heel on the throat of Liberty will fall to the cry of Freedom. (Chaotic)

2.) **Ceremony:** The dead must be honored and this is why I must fight. (Lawful)

3.) **Wealth:** Show me the money! (Unaligned)

4.) **Victory:** Winning is the only thing that matters. (Evil)

5.) **Equality:** In the arena, none of us are slaves. (Good)

6.) **Vengeance:** Blood demands blood. (Evil)

d6 Bond

1.) I have an endorsement deal with a popular guild, and am bound by contract to certain terms.

2.) I gave my word, blood and honor, to return to my wife. The gods themselves will not keep me from returning.

3.) My gladiators are my brothers and I live for them. Either to increase their rights or to protect their lives.

4.) I still have a close relationship with the Ludis that trained me. With the owners, trainers, and gladiators — I represent them publicly.

5.) I cannot stay long in one place, I am bound to wanderlust, traveling in whatever direction and desire wills my feet.

6.) My trainer is the only person I wish to please.

d6 Flaw

1.) I was once a slave and for some reason, never managed to get that cleared up before I took off.

2.) I killed my patron and led a slave uprising, and now there are a group of people who want me dead for what they see as very good reasons.

3.) I have a wound that never healed correctly, that acts up at inopportune times.

4.) I am extremely popular with members of the opposite sex, and frequently run into problems caused by my sexual mystique.

5.) Freedom is not a stick of wood to be presented as a bone to obedient dog. It is a thing all men deserve. I will not tolerate slavery.

6.) For some reason, the odds never seem to favor me.

GRAVEDIGGER

The dead need burying and you are the pariah to do it.

Skill Proficiency: Intelligence (History), Intelligence (Religion);
Languages: Pick any 1 modern language, any 1 ancient language.
Tool Proficiency: Gravedigger's Tools (Proficiency bonus applies to speed at digging and earth engineering)
Equipment: Spade, shovel, pick, mattock, 10 iron spikes, common clothes, leather bag with 25 gp and a gold ring (30 gp), human skull, pipe

Feature: You're familiar with death, dying, and the dead. You gain advantage on any saves versus any fear effects caused by the undead.



Viktor M. Vasnetsov, December 31, 1870

Alternate Feature: Finding the dead, You are able to procure 1d4 dead bodies a week for a variety of purposes. These can be sold for 1d10 gold each to colleges, necromancers, etc. You also have a 20% chance per body exhumed that you will find jewelry or items worth 3d6 × 1d100 gold.

Suggested Characteristics

You are not liked. Grave diggers are considered unclean, and even in societies where they aren't a lower caste, they aren't trusted. Who knows if one will exhume the body of the loved one to steal their possessions. Being ignored and treated badly may have formed a large part of your personality.

d8 Personality

1.) I like dead things better than living things. My pet skull is a better conversationalist than most people.

2.) There is beauty in death and adventuring has more death than gravedigging.

3.) I'm happy and free, living so near death has made me wish to be alive while I live.

4.) I aspire to be more like the dead while alive than the living. From my flat affect to my morbid smell, I put people off.

5.) I know I'm a vampire, but nobody seems to believe me.

6.) I like to keep my identity hidden, lest people discover my true profession. I always cover my face and body.

7.) I'm pretty sure the dead know I've stole some of their secrets and them or their servants are after me.

8.) Working around the dead so long, it's hard to be bothered by most of the living. I'm always calm in a crisis.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Prudish:** I feel the living are indecent, and not respectful enough of the gods. (Lawful)

2.) **Proselytizing:** I know the truth about life and wish to save as many souls as possible (Good)

3.) **Eccentric:** I don't believe in conforming to expectations, I've always been a little odd. (Chaos)

4.) **Cautious:** I'm not interested in being dead yet. (Unaligned)

5.) **Power-Hungry:** I want to unlock the secrets of death to overcome it and live forever. (Evil)

6.) **Good-Hearted:** I want to make the world a safer place against the ever constant threat of death. (Good)

d6 Bond

1.) I found a relic among the dead, and I believe it has strange powers.

2.) I know a secret of the dead and I must never reveal it.

3.) I'm going to gain respect for grave-diggers everywhere.

4.) I want to learn how to command and control the dead.

5.) My wife died, and I'm going to figure out how to bring her back.

6.) I know the location of an ancient tomb.

d6 Flaw

1.) I was caught stealing from a grave and now am a criminal.

2.) You are hated and a pariah for being a gravedigger.

3.) I tell it like it is, always tell the truth, and never hold my tongue.

4.) I'm mute, my tongue removed in a hate crime.

5.) I have strong, difficult to control urges near a dead body.

6.) I often feel euphoric or depressed and am prone to fits of giggling, crying jags, and manic episodes.

INVENTOR



You always were handy with tools and you liked taking things apart and putting them back together. You made a living as a tinkerer, but always spent your time on thinking of and creating new ideas.

Skill Proficiency: Intelligence (Investigation); Charisma (Persuasion).
Tool Proficiency: Tinker's tools, jeweler's tools.
Equipment: Abacus, backpack, ball bearings (1000), bedroll, block and tackle, bucket, chain, crowbar, traveler's clothes, lamp, iron pot, iron spikes (10)

Feature: You have a tiny animal companion that you have constructed. It is in all ways like a normal animal, except you built it from gears, pipes, steam, and fabric. Choose any challenge level 0 creature. You may command it on your turn as an action. If it is destroyed or damaged, you can rebuild or repair it at a cost of 10 gold pieces per hit point.

Suggested Characteristics

There is always something more to understand about the world and how it works. Inventors love taking things apart and putting them back together again. They have a natural curiosity and exuberance about the world.

d8 Personality

1.) I want to know what that is over there! And how this works! And how that happened!

2.) I know many secrets that I mustn't tell, but I talk about them all the time, I just can't tell them.

3.) I know that if I present myself in the latest fashions and present myself as a modern avant garde personality, people will take my inventions seriously.

4.) There's no point to going out if you're not having fun. Other people never seem to appreciate my jokes as much as I do.

5.) I don't have a screw loose, but I might lose a screw. For my toast. I understand and they don't.

6.) I'll be rich, independently wealthy! Someday. I just need some investors.

7.) There's only one way to test an invention, and that's in the field during live fire. There's nothing more invigorating than that!

8.) I don't say much, ideas I keep to myself can't be taken.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Empowerment:** I want to make the world a better place with my inventions. (Good)

2.) **Order:** There's a right way to do things and a wrong way to do things. (Lawful)

3.) **Change:** I want to change the world with my inventions. (Chaos)

4.) **Stingy:** I don't want to share my secrets with anyone. My inventions are for me. (Unaligned)

5.) **Tyrant:** Once I'm powerful, I'll be able to rule everyone who wronged me. (Evil)

6.) **Liar:** Well, if it helps you get the job done, you'll say what needs saying. (Evil/Unaligned)

d6 Bond

1.) I know of a famous inventor out there that I'll find someday.

2.) I once made an invention I carry, but I don't know how to do it again. I'm afraid if I take it apart I won't be able to figure out how to put it together again (Work with your DM to invent the device).

3.) I know that those people want their money, but they just don't understand the difficulties with getting things done on time.

4.) One of my companions is your sibling or relative who's looking out for me.

5.) I have a small child or baby in my charge.

6.) I've got an idea for the kind of laboratory I'm going to need, and so I'm traveling around looking for all the most important kinds of equipment. I've heard there's a forge of some kind near Phandelver. . .

d6 Flaw

1.) Only the results are important. You can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs.

2.) You just borrowed all that money/that energy source/that device. I'm going to return it when I'm done with it.

3.) I'll betray my closest friends for success and fame.

4.) I'm actually really lazy and don't like doing the work required to be a successful inventor, instead I exploit people at every turn.

5.) I have deviant and illegal tendencies.

6.) Someone stole one of my inventions and has been using it in the commission of crimes. And now they are hunting me for the crimes.

MUSICIAN

You like to play music! Not necessarily sing-a and a dance-a. But you know how to play. You're good, really good. But you're much more than just highly skilled with a musical instrument. Perhaps you are already quite famous. Or maybe your rise to stardom is just beginning.

Skill Proficiency: Wisdom (Insight); Charisma (Performance).
Tool Proficiency: Pick any two instruments.
Languages: Pick any three languages.
Equipment: Three instruments, one masterwork instrument. traveler's clothes, costume clothes. backpack, bedroll, 3 carafes of wine, 10 sheets paper, inkpot and pen, collapsible music stand.

Specialty: What type of instrument do you play? Pick or roll.
1.) Guitar
2.) Harpsicord
3.) Singer
4.) One man band (Harmonica, base drum on back, symbols, horn, etc.)
5.) Celestial Harp
6.) Didgeridoo
7.) Glass Armonica
8.) Dulcimer
9.) Gong
10.) Theremin
11.) Pyrophone Organ (fire organ)
12.) Lute

Feature: You are highly skilled at playing your instrument, doubling your proficiency bonus when you make a performance check where you play your musical instrument.

In addition, anyone who sees you play knows they are in the presence of someone special. You have fans who have heard your work, and you may be quite popular. You have at least one contact who coordinates your fan club, and another contact who acts as your agent. In addition, you can find a small handful of fans in any village or city who have heard of you and are excited to meet you.

Suggested Characteristics

You spend a lot of time practicing your musical instrument and this means you spend a lot of time thinking. You may be slow or very smart, but you understand people and their motivations. You secretly relish an opportunity to play your instrument around people who haven't heard you, because you like the attention. Now that you've accomplished your goal of mastering an instrument, you aren't quite sure what your plans are, which has a large part to do with why you suddenly find yourself on an adventure.

d8 Personality

1.) I am a rock god!!!! WHOOO!!!
2.) I like to call my instrument. . . the panty/bloomer/boxer-brief dropper.
3.) I don't like to talk much, I let my music do my talking for me.
4.) I may be what you call good at my instrument, but I'm a long way from true mastery.
5.) I am very, very. . . high right now.
6.) I'm good at playing, but I need more life experience before I can write songs that really touch people.
7.) It's probably a good idea for us to leave now before they find our trashed room and the mayor figures out where his daughters/sons spent the night.
8.) No, no, I'll teach you. We need someone to play drums.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Humor:** You know what a bassist uses for birth control? His personality! (Unaligned)
2.) **Mastery:** I want to be the best. (Lawful)
3.) **Rebellion:** Music is the way to change hearts and minds. (Chaotic)
4.) **Love:** It speaks to the soul. (Good)
5.) **Manipulation:** Music and its ability to affect people is power. (Evil)
6.) **Fame:** I will be the most famous musician ever! (Unaligned/Evil)

d6 Bond

1.) My instrument is very special.
2.) I'm actually married and I'm just 'on tour'.
3.) I have a small unusual pet that is into my jam.
4.) I travel with two or three of my bandmates.
5.) I just want to perform at the {name of large theater} and then I know I will have made it!
6.) I just want to get back to my roots and away from all the fame and attention.

d6 Flaw

1.) Drugs, man, drugs.
2.) The old lady man, she won't get off my back.
3.) My band members are thieves and won't stop taking stuff.
4.) I'm a star, man. If you don't understand that, you don't understand anything. I can do whatever I want and no one can stop me.
5.) WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY GAVE ME RED CHERRIES!!! I WANTED 1 BLACK CHERRY FOR EVERY 2 RED ONES! They are all FIRED! I'll never play this stinking backwater again! *Smashes guitar* *Storms out*
6.) I'm mute except when I sing.

"Musicians either die young or grow old slowly."

PRISONER



Until recently, you were incarcerated for a crime of which you were or were not guilty of. The truth of the matter has long fled over your internment. Now, however you are free and do not ever plan on becoming imprisoned again.

Skill Proficiency: Charisma (deception) and Charisma (intimidation).
Tool Proficiency: Gaming set and musical instrument.
Languages: Gain 1 additional language.
Equipment: Common clothes, shiv (dagger), small leather pouch, blanket, candle, jagged spoon, twine, small steel mirror.

Specialty: You were once convicted of a crime. Roll on or choose from the following table below to determine your crime
1.) Murder
2.) Treason
3.) Necromancy/gravedigging
4.) Price/match fixing
5.) Defiling a holy temple
6.) Terrorist activity (poisoning wells, etc.)
7.) Trespassing
8.) Practicing medicine without a license.

Feature: You have a bond with a certain person you've shared a cell with. Over the years they came to know all your secrets as you came to know all theirs. They too are no longer imprisoned and have made a new life for themselves. You may be contacted for information about this person, use the knowledge you know about them over them, or rely on their aid and succor. The nature of the relationship is up to you.

Optionally, In addition, due to your maltreatment, you start with 2 fewer hit points than normal, but the DC for your stabilization checks when dying is 8 rather than 10. If prison didn't kill you, it'll take something worse to finally bring you down.

Suggested Characteristics

No one has had it as bad as you. Other people may complain, but you know what true suffering is like. This either makes you empathetic to the plight of others or cold and inured to suffering. You have strong opinions on the rule of law and the effect penalties have on the survivors. You cherish each moment and each day in a way others around you don't, but are occasionally beset by night terrors, where you wake, paralyzed, thinking you are back in prison.

d8 Personality

1.) I'm always aware of my surroundings and all nearby exits; I don't sit with my back to the door and never really trust that I'm safe.
2.) I don't feel alone when I talk, so I try to talk to everyone all the time.
3.) I don't think anyone can ever know what I went through, so I'm hesitant to talk about myself or the past.
4.) I like to play up the fact that I was a prisoner because I like the way people react to it.
5.) It's the small things that matter, taking the time to buy a trinket, or getting just the right hat are the type of freedoms that I value.
6.) I know what happened to me is wrong and I support the right of all citizens versus an oppressive government
7.) I don't have time for nonsense
8.) I only want the finest things after having the worst of things for so long.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Freedom:** My duty is to abolish enslavement and prisons. (Chaotic)
2.) **Justice:** I seek to balance the scales of the falsely accused. (Good)
3.) **Vengeance:** I will get revenge against those who wronged me. (Evil)
4.) **Untethered:** I will not allow anyone to restrict my freedom. (Unaligned)
5.) **Respect:** Who respects you is what's important in life. (Lawful)
6.) **Resilience:** Being independent is the greatest protection. (Any)

d6 Bond

1.) I have a special friend from prison that means more to me than my own life (select one tiny vermin).
2.) I seek to free all those who are in chains, as I feel their pain.
3.) I keep my manacles bound on my wrists so that I never forget my suffering.
4.) I have been tattooed or branded with the symbol of my crime and can never escape my past.
5.) I seek to abolish cruel and unusual punishment and abhor torture.
6.) My freedom is my life. I would rather die than be a prisoner.

d6 Flaw

1.) I moved the treasure my cellmate hid and he is after me to get it back.
2.) I had to hurt someone who attacked me in prison, and have the enmity of a criminal gang.
3.) I have a lingering wound from my time that affects my mobility.
4.) I was in prison for so long, I'm out of touch with any current or recent developments.
5.) Malnutrition in prison has caused my physique to wither and I have lost both teeth and hair.
6.) I become very aggressive with anyone who threatens my status as alpha.

PROSTITUTE



There's more than one way to skin a cat. You provide service for people who can afford to pay it. This may mean sexual favors, but as frequently means conversation, comfort, and company.

Skill Proficiency: Charisma (Deception), Charisma(Persuasion).
Languages: Pick any two languages.
Equipment: Nightclothes, traveler's clothes, fine clothes, leather bag with 200 gp, necklace worth 50 gp. 3 small gems worth 10 gp each.

Feature: You have information about two people of importance. You can leverage this information in order to acquire lodging, information, or even money. You also may have the friendship of a madam, and if you are in the city she lives, you can earn 10d6 gold pieces per day. Otherwise, you can procure 10d6 silver pieces a day.



Suggested Characteristics

You enjoy people and you enjoy your work and you enjoy the money it brings. There's no shame in your profession and often it is highly regulated and regimented by guilds. It requires outgoing and adventurous personalities to be a success, and often these traits lead them to other adventures of a different sort.

d8 Personality

1.) There are so many different kinds of people and I like them and I want to meet them all.
2.) I enjoy being in control and manipulating people. It's important that they like me so they do what I say.
3.) I don't care about what people do or say, but I want all the pretty little gems.
4.) I'm not an airhead, though I don't open my mouth to prove people wrong. I let the discover it after I have what I want.
5.) I never thought this was the life for me, perhaps some brave woman (or man) will rescue me.
6.) People are often hurt and damaged. I try to heal them and leave them stronger than when I meet them.
7.) I'm better than more prim and proper men (and women) and I'm having more fun.
8.) I don't really care what happens, it's an easy way to get money for my habit.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Freedom:** I want to have the independence to enjoy life. (Chaos)
2.) **Lust/Hedonism:** I fill my urges when and where I wish. (Evil)
3.) **Loving:** Everyone needs attention and love. (Good)
4.) **Maudlin:** I seek only to fulfill my own needs. (Neutral)
5.) **Hierodule:** Prostitution is a holy duty. (Lawful)
6.) **Malice:** I love to toy with people, take advantage of them, and cause pain. (Evil)

d6 Bond

1.) I have a young ward who is my world.
2.) If I can only collect enough gold, I'll be able to pay off my debts and be a free man (woman).
3.) I seek a relationship with the most powerful people in the land, desiring to be the power behind the throne.
4.) I have a sick mother who I send all my money to.
5.) I've lost my entire family and am just looking for a place I belong.
6.) My independence is the most important thing in my world.

d6 Flaw

1.) I have an incurable venereal disease.
2.) I'm hopelessly addicted to a drug.
3.) I no longer practice my old profession, and I fear anyone discovering it.
4.) I just can't resist betraying people.
5.) Once I was a slave, and I still possess the mark and the brand. If found out my freedom is forfeit, for I am escaped and sought by my former master.
6.) I can't stand anyone who tries to be nice to me. They only want me to sleep with them.

RATCATCHER

You earned a living on the streets catching rats. You got little respect from anyone and there are few that would consider you their peer. You know a bit about the underworld and a bit about tracking and a lot about ways to both kill and eat rats. You'd be surprised how often that knowledge comes in useful to fancy pants adventurer types.

Skill Proficiency: Wisdom (Animal Handling) and Intelligence (Nature).
Tool Proficiency: Choose one of poisoner's kit or thieves' tools. pick one musical instrument.
Equipment: Common clothes, crowbar, hunting trap, hooded lantern, 2 oil flasks, 1d6 rat corpses in a sack, iron cage, shovel, 50' hempen rope, a small but vicious dog.

Feature: Murine Nature. You've been chasing and catching rats for too long. You can squeeze though spaces as a creature one size smaller than you, and you have advantage on rolls versus animal venom and disease. You also have an intuitive sense about tunnels and caverns. While underground, you can generally tell which direction is north and determine which directions eventually lead to passages up and down.

Suggested Characteristics

You do work no one else is willing to do. Not only that, but you can't even talk about the horrors that come up through the sewers. Unlike most hoity-toity adventurers, there's no chest of gold at the end of your day, just a few coppers the guv'ment can scrape up, plus whatever you can sell your rats for at the market. You do it anyway.

d8 Personality

1.) I like being alone, scouting ahead. That way no one can be mean to me.
2.) I don't talk much, because I enjoy making other people uncomfortable. That's the same reason I don't bathe.
3.) I'm only comfortable in the tunnels and underground. Being in the sunlight makes me nervous.
4.) I really like meeting people and talking with them. I have a broad definition of people that includes animals. Especially rats.
5.) I hate disease and are fastidiously clean. It is extremely important that I eradicate everything that makes people sick!
6.) Underground I can hear the whispers better than I can above ground. Sometimes they tell me very interesting secrets. I'm pretty sure other people might be trying to get the secrets from me.
7.) I like rats. And dogs. And cats, pigs, and goats. It's people I don't like. Animals aren't duplicitous. And they are loyal. Unlike people.
8.) I get to know things other people don't, because I see their trash and garbage. I really like that feeling. Maybe someday I'll know an awful lot about a lot of people!

d6 Ideal

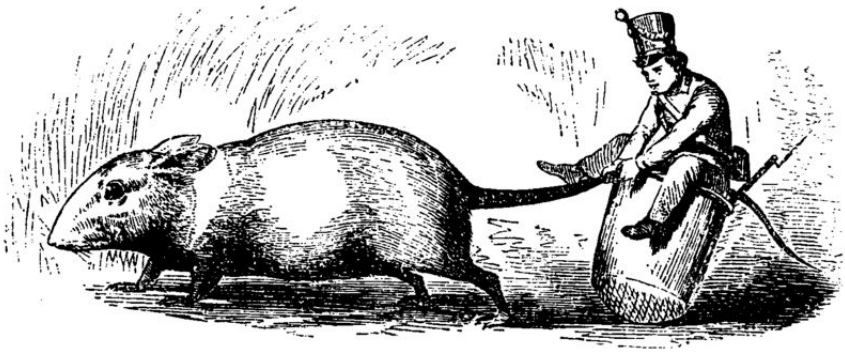
1.) **Duty:** If I don't stop the rats, who will? (Lawful)
2.) **Merciful:** I can catch and release the rats into their own habitat, doing as little harm as possible (Good)
3.) **Nosy:** I can find out all kinds of secrets about people in the sewers (Neutral)
4.) **Explorer:** I find beauty in new and secret places (Chaotic)
5.) **Freedom:** If I take a bad enough job, no one bothers me. (Chaotic)
6.) **Power:** No one complains if I practice making poisons on rats (Evil)

d6 Bond

1.) I saw something once, down in the sewers, and it told me it was coming back for me. Now I hunt for something to stop it before it can get me.
2.) I had a pet rat once. I'm not so much a rat catcher, so much as I'm trying to kill all the other rats so they don't get in the way of finding my friend.
3.) Ratcatching goes well with my drug vices. I'm always looking for another chance to get high.
4.) I've got a missus and six kids at home to support. I've always been too busy working to get any kind of better job.
5.) My dog is my best friend. He loves catching rats more than anything in the world, and that's why I is a rat-catcher.
6.) There are people after me and no one has ever looked twice at a rat-catcher.

d6 Flaw

1.) I'm better than everyone else because I'm willing to do what they aren't.
2.) I hear and see things that sometimes make it difficult to know what's real and what's not.
3.) I love the smell of the sewer hate when I don't smell like it. I like the reaction I get when other people get a load of me!
4.) I don't like people very much and crowds freak me out. When they talk to me I get nervous and just do or say whatever I have to to make them leave me alone.
5.) I've seen people act like rats, I've got more respect for them than I do folks. Easier to kill a man than a rat, besides.
6.) I didn't learn my education so good 'cause my head damage! Mama only dropped me two times (Hold up 6 fingers).



Thomas Vilhelm Pedersen (1820-1859)

SMUGGLER



Sometimes people need things that aren't easy to get. You're the guy to make that happen, and if you make a little money on the side, who's the wiser?

Skill Proficiency: Dexterity (Slight of Hand); Charisma (Deception).
Tool Proficiency: Any vehicle.
Languages: Pick any three languages.
Equipment: Traveler's clothes, weapon, light armor, spyglass, steel mirror, hand crossbow, any one vehicle.

Specialty: You may choose to specialize in smuggling a certain type of good. Roll or select from the following list:
1.) Religious materials.
2.) Drugs.
3.) Medicine (legal drugs).
4.) Endangered or rare animal materials.
5.) Artifacts.
6.) Stolen goods or art
7.) Live animals
8.) People

Feature: You know at least one contact in every city who you can contact when 3 days away by horse. You also choose to have one personal or intimate relationship with someone in each city, though you must roll for their reaction on the following list when you contact them if you choose to do so: 1-4) hostile, 5) unhappy with you, 6) glad to see you.

Suggested Characteristics

There are lots of reasons why goods need smuggling and some of them are very good ones. Perhaps the government is corrupt and destroying indigenous populations. Perhaps the laws are draconian and you believe in freedom.

Maybe it's just that the money is so good.

d8 Personality

1.) I always shoot first.
2.) Trusting people may not be much of a way to live, but it's a good way to not die.
3.) I get off on sneaking things right under peoples noses.
4.) I deserve more than I'm getting, so I make a little money on the side. It doesn't hurt anyone.
5.) I'm a totally normal, low key dude. I just also happen to move hundreds of thousands of gold pieces worth of goods through here every month. It's a living.
6.) Everything else in life is boring. The only excitement I get is from this type of work.
7.) If I'm going to do something, why not do something that impresses the ladies/boys?
8.) I'm driven to do this for the cause!

d6 Ideal

1.) **Freedom:** I like giving the law the middle finger. (Chaos)
2.) **Cultural Relativism:** This belongs in a MUSEUM! (Law)
3.) **Humanitarian:** I smuggle in food and medicine to reduce the suffering of these people. (Good)
4.) **Greed:** All I care about is a profit. I don't want any part in your rebellion. (Evil/Unaligned)
5.) **Selflessness:** I don't care if I get caught. Getting these goods through is what's important. (Good)
6.) **Moral Relativism:** All I did your honor, was take a plant from one place, to a different place, over an invisible line. (Unaligned)

d6 Bond

1.) My vehicle is very special. I won it in a card game.
2.) I am certainly not developing feelings for the person who hired me.
3.) The origin of my name is a secret, and I don't want to tell anyone that I was named after the dog.
4.) Someone taught me everything I know and he isn't quite as spry as he used to be.
5.) I have a friend who's a bit of a buffoon, but he's always there for me.
6.) I'm partners with some unusual muscle.

d6 Flaw

1.) I have warrants out for your arrest in every major area.
2.) I don't own your land vehicle, it belongs to someone else.
3.) I owe a lot of money to a prominent crime family.
4.) There's more than one person that wants revenge against me for killing someone they care about.
5.) People constantly make inappropriate advances against me. It's not my fault and U have nothing to do with it.
6.) I have an odious personal habit. (smoking, dipping, picking nose, etc.)

TORTURER

You enact the political agendas of the courts. People come and take their punishments. Sometimes they are released, sometimes they are killed. Such is your life. You know how to amputate limbs without pain and how to cause tremendous pain without damage. You know what the best ways to kill someone are, with or without pain.

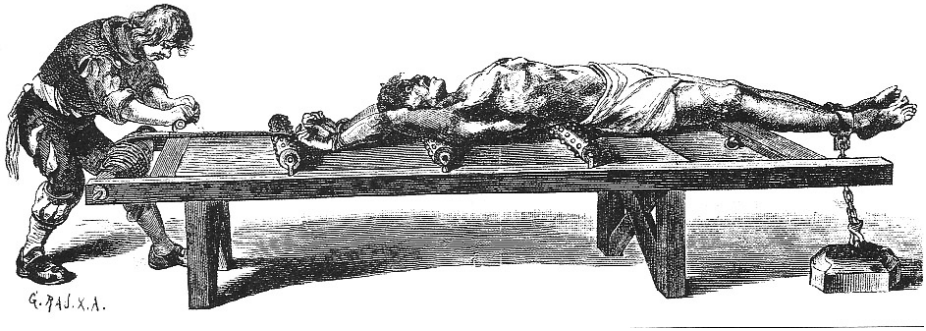
Skill Proficiency: Wisdom (Medicine); Charisma (Intimidation).
Tool Proficiency: Torture's Tools (Proficiency bonus on any rolls to torture subjects), long-sword.
Languages: Pick any one language and one ancient language.
Equipment: Mercurial long-sword (does +1 damage), traveler's clothes, torturer and executioner's garb. crowbar, needles, torture kit, vials of antiseptic and anesthetic, silk rope (50 feet), suede bag with 25 gold. leaf of a plant with razor sharp edges.

Feature: If you have the opportunity to torture someone, you gain advantage on intimidation rolls. You can also hire your services out along the road as a torturer or executioner, earning 1d6 + 2 gold a day, along with the enmity of the population.

Alternate Feature: You have extensive knowledge of local laws and bureaucracies. Any time you are in a city or larger, you can attempt either a Intelligence (Investigation) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to acquire a grant, equipment, lodging, retainers, or other government service. The difficulty of this check is set by the Dungeon Master and is dependent on the request.

Suggested Characteristics

You take life, amputate limbs, and cause pain. The rightness or wrongness of it is always in the minds of men. You've seen and heard every pleading lie and horrific truth. Your job is a job that must be done. If it were not you, it would be someone else. It is the requirement under the law. Without your service, there would be no justice.



d8 Personality

1.) I feel the pain I cause others intently and it brings me to tears. But without practicing my craft I fall into despair.

2.) I know everyone carries sin in their hearts and I use their bodies to free them of it.

3.) I have an eidetic memory, though I get lost inside it sometime.

4.) I am a sadist and derive euphoria from hurting people, though I am smart enough to keep this secret.

5.) I know the knowledge I possess about the body gives me the duty to fulfill. I don't enjoy my job but it is necessary.

6.) I love women and often have difficulty choosing between them, though I always seek their company.

7.) I love people, but I love drugs more.

8.) I've lived most of my life in a tower and understand very little of how things work in the wider world.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Sadism:** I love causing pain and suffering. (Evil)

2.) **Masochism:** I suffer for every person I hurt and I love suffering. (Unaligned)

3.) **Order:** For law to flourish, pain must purify sin. (Lawful)

4.) **Apathy:** Right and wrong are just matters of perspective (Chaos)

5.) **Freedom:** I seek to free myself from the bonds of my guild. (Chaos)

6.) **Duty:** I do what I have to, because I must. (Lawful)

d6 Bond

1.) I bear a holy artifact and may be the messiah of a religion.

2.) I fell in love with one of your charges and were banished from your guild.

3.) I travel with a companion who is your age or younger who may or may not be your mother or grandmother.

4.) My sister is a witch and she wants to kill you.

5.) I am secretly the heir to the throne.

6.) My sword is one of a kind with a unique name.

d6 Flaw

1.) I always like to present things so that they appear favorable for me, even if it involves lying, which I never do.

2.) There is a trail of jilted women left in my wake.

3.) I once angered a magical ogre who seeks you for revenge.

4.) I carry an artifact that you are unaware is anything other than a trinket that many different factions seek.

5.) I know who is worthy and who is not of judgement and it is my job to enforce that judgement.

6.) U carry a mark that identifies you as a torturer even when I don't wear the garb. People react appropriately.

WINTER SOLDIER

You once lived a life that is now gone. Through sorcery, magic, or chance everyone you once knew is dead and you live in a time far into the future.

Skill Proficiency: Dexterity (Acrobatics); Intelligence (History).
Tool Proficiency: Select any two tools.
Languages: Select any one old or ancient language.
Equipment: Costume clothes (any archaic people/uniform), any weapon, any light armor, hunting trap, torches, steel mirror.

Specialty: There are lots of reasons you could be pulled out of time. Roll randomly, or choose one from the following list:

1. You were turned into stone, and recently revivified with a stone to flesh spell.
2. You were imprisoned by a powerful wizard and the enchantment was recently broken.
3. You were adrift, unconscious, in the astral plane for many years and were rescued by a band of astral pirates who were going to sell you until they crashed in a battle with a blue dragon. You escaped alive.
4. Sleeping curse. Wouldn't you know it?
5. Frozen in the ice.
6. Entered a portal and it transported you through time.
7. You're actually a dimensional traveler and are trapped here. This dimension is like yours but different.
8. You were sent through time by a chronomancer. It was for a reason, though when you arrived you had no recollection of what that was.
9. You weren't magically transported. You spent the whole time in prison.
10. You were abducted by aliens.

Feature: A group or person found you, and you recognize the spirit of your time in them. They are your friend and have provided you with support. You may travel with them or work for them. There is one person in particular who you trust, even if the people around them are suspect. There is also a strong possibility you are not the only one to be out of time. Perhaps a companion or an old enemy who knows secrets long forgotten by those people in the modern age.

Suggested Characteristics

You don't understand a lot of unfamiliar things. Perhaps races, language, and customs are all strange. But you are no stranger to human nature. People are always the same. Being from the past doesn't make you stupid. You also carry the burden of everyone you ever knew being gone or drastically changed from when you knew them. It is very likely you may have amnesia of one kind or another.

d8 Personality

1.) I am this way because I volunteered. The reasons I did so are just as true today as they were then.

2.) I hate everything the way it is now. I've lost everything that was important to me.

3.) Everything is so different here, I have no frame of reference for anything. My home culture was radically different.

4.) Everything in my day was golden and I love to tell people about it!

5.) I'm young enough that I'm loving being in the future.

6.) I'm just a normal guy thrust into an extraordinary experience.

7.) Why is this happening to me!?

8.) I have no idea what the future or my life holds, but I will meet it with a level head.

d6 Ideal

1.) **Duty:** My original goal has not changed. (Lawful)

2.) **Honor:** I struggle to do what is right, no matter the time. (Good)

3.) **Loss:** Everything is different, so it doesn't matter what I do! I'm truly free. (Chaos)

4.) **Revenge:** All that matters is making whoever did this to me pay. (Evil)

5.) **Discovery:** I will figure out how the three seashells work! (Unaligned)

6.) **Escape:** I just want to live the rest of my life in peace. (Unaligned)

d6 Bond

1.) I just really want to get my old stuff back.

2.) I hung out with some marginalized group because I blended in. It wouldn't be right if anything happened to them.

3.) I have an enemy that I still seek to destroy.

4.) I was experimented on by aliens. Either they or a robot servant of theirs is my friend.

5.) Something that existed in the past exists now, and it is my focus. Either I must protect it or serve it. Perhaps it is a creature, a god, or just the symbol or earthly representation of such a thing.

6.) I founded an order in the past and discover the current incarnation is opposed to its original purpose.

d6 Flaw

1.) What no one knows is that I traveled through time intentionally, because I was a screw-up where I was from.

2.) The future is so radically different that I am suffering from one or several mental illnesses.

3.) I frequently misunderstand what people say.

4.) Whatever happened to send me through time was a punishment. If anyone knew what I did, they would say I got off easy.

5.) I am overcome by apathy and don't have anything to care for in this new and strange world. (Note: This requires the DM to have some activity or force that drives you towards other characters that you go along with in spite of your apathy.)

6.) A different government is in power then when I left. I was a hero for the vanquished rulers.

Like what you're reading here? Want to make sure any more of the cool stuff I'm doing doesn't get lost in the shuffle, hustle, and bustle of modern life?

HACK & SLASH

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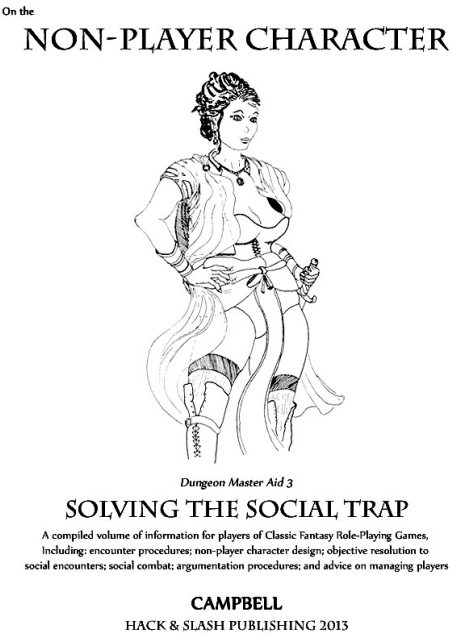
Trouble with Non-Player Characters? Are they dull and lifeless? Are you looking for an objective way to handle character interaction? Don't you wish there was an objective player skill method of handling non-player character encounters and relationships, instead of always having the person who's good at talking do the talking? Want methods to generate immediately gameable content for non-player characters?



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D30 TABLE OF BACKGROUNDS

1.	Acolyte (PHB)
2.	Bravo
3.	Carney
4.	Charlatan (PHB)
5.	Criminal
6.	Entertainer (PHB)
7.	Farmer
8.	Feral
9.	Fisherman
10.	Folk Hero (PHB)
11.	Gladiator
12.	Gravedigger
13.	Guild Artisan (PHB)
14.	Hermit (PHB)
15.	Inventor
16.	Musician
17.	Noble (PHB)
18.	Outlaw (Patreon supporters only)
19.	Outlander (PHB)
20.	Physician (Patreon supporters only)
21.	Prisoner
22.	Prostitute
23.	Ratcatcher
24.	Sage (PHB)
25.	Sailor (PHB)
26.	Soldier (PHB)
27.	Smuggler
28.	Torturer
29.	Urchin (PHB)
30.	Winter Soldier