

d12 Monthly

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE
TO SOLO ROLEPLAYING

HEX CRAWLING

CREATING WILDERNESS
TERRAIN

SOLO TTRPG
ISSUE

Issue 12
May, 2022

GETTING STARTED

EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW

CREATING THE STORY

Maw Please: Memorable Dungeon Entrances

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d12 Monthly is a helpful resource for fantasy roleplayers.

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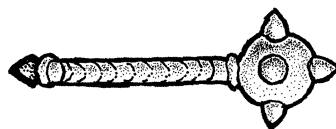
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Unless otherwise mentioned, all articles are written by Russ at YUMDM.



The SoloRPG Issue

I have amazingly fond memories of sitting at my family's kitchen table when I was around 13-14 years old playing D&D solo.

It was AD&D days and I was using the DMG's random dungeon generator to create megadungeons to explore with my eight-character party.

I would spend hours at that table, playing D&D and eating Cheetos. Good times.

Fast forward too many years to count and solo roleplaying is coming back in a BIG way.

Every day I see more solo games on itch and DrivethruRPG. Even large publications are adding in solo rules to their games.

There are many reasons to get into solo gaming - from playtesting adventures or encounters you have developed, to developing new rules, to filling that gaming void when circumstances dictate you cannot find anyone else to play with.

But the biggest reason is, it's fun!

Play out characters you create, using the rules you want, and eat all the snacks yourself! What more could you ask for?

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM
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About Me

I have been roleplaying for over 30 years and DMin'g for most of those. I have played over 50 different roleplaying games, but my first love is fantasy - it's like coming home.

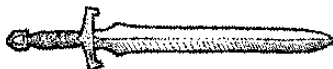
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... for making this zine as good as it is.

Want to join this team and support the zine? I have a Patreon account:

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(New tiers are now available to receive a physical copy each month).



Getting Started

Everything You Need to Know



This article is all about getting you started with running a solo campaign.

Campaigns are a series of on-going sessions that link together (in various ways, but usually with the same characters) to form a story arc or multiple story arcs.

A campaign can be endless or can wrap up at a certain point.

The difference with a solo campaign (versus a regular campaign) is that the end point isn't known ahead of time - it

develops as you roll randomly to determine outcomes and situations.

To get you started, here is a checklist you can work through:

1. Choose your system
2. Create characters (deciding how many you want)
3. Choose your Oracle
4. Choose random generators
5. Choose starting location

Choose Your System

This should be your first consideration.

There are two broad schools of thought on this. One is that a simple system, like OSE, is best as it doesn't bog you down with too many rules.

The other is that a more complex set of rules, like 3rd edition, is good as it provides you with a better framework and some additional rules you may need to lean on.

Neither is correct, it just comes down to preference.

A rules lite system allows you to create characters quickly, while a more complex rule set might allow better character customisation and have additional rules that allow you to adjudicate outcomes.

The one thing I do like about a more complex system is it has more rules you can rely on - rules that allow you to run GMless a lot more easily.

Create Characters

Once you have your system of choice, it's time to create one or more characters.

For campaign play I like to start with a party of characters - around four is a good number.

The reason for this is survivability. The more characters you have, the longer you will last. This also mimics regular group campaigns.

Choose your Oracle

The next thing you should decide on is what oracle you want to use.

I prefer a simple one, but there are a few out there, and like most things when it comes to solo gaming, you can choose what's best for you.

My simple oracle is as follows:

Table: Simple Oracle

D6	Answer is...
1	No, and...
2	No
3	No, but...
4	Yes, but...
5	Yes
6	Yes, and...

You can also add an adjustment before rolling if something is more or less likely.

If you are in a seedy, seaside tavern and encounter an NPC and decide to ask the

oracle if they are a sailor, you could give a +1 (or even +2) to the roll as this is likely.

Other Oracles

Several other oracles exist and you can always design your own as well.

Mythic Game Master Emulator by Word Mill is a popular soloRPG oracle which is one of the more complex versions.

What is an Oracle?

An oracle, also known as a GM Emulator, is a system for determining the answer to questions you may have as a player.

Instead of asking the GM (as that's you as well), you ask the oracle a question framed in a way that the answers make sense. Usually this means in the form of a yes/no question.

For example, if you rolled up a random encounter and want to know if the dwarves you just rolled up are part of the cult the adventurers already encountered, you could ask : "are these dwarves part of the Cult of the Fiery Hand?"

Choose Random Generators

If the oracle is the heart of the solo engine, random generators are the vascular system.

You will be using random generators for almost every part of your solo campaign, from generating dungeons to NPCs to wilderness to locations and more.

You can start by compiling a bunch of tables from online or in various books and add to them over time (see the *Useful Products* article at the end of this issue for links to various resources).

I keep a simple ring-binder folder with all the charts I use on a regular basis. But something similar to this could be constructed online as well.

Many online generators exist as well.

The most important tables would be a dungeon generator, wilderness generator, quick NPC generator, and a story word generator (you will see why this one is important later).

Choose a Starting Location

Next, choose a starting location - this could be a village or town and a dungeon to explore, or you could create two towns and travel between them if you want a wilderness adventure.

If your campaign will be a city-focused one, you could also start in a large city-state.

One of the easiest ways to start is to create a village or small town for the characters to use as a base together with a dungeon of some type about a day's journey away.

Connect them up with some wilderness and you have all you need to get started.



Getting The Crew Together

Character Generation



As mentioned previously, I tend to start out with 4-6 characters for solo campaign play. There are a couple of reasons for this.

The first is (and this will depend on the ruleset you use) it aids in survivability. If you have a good mix of races/classes and multiple characters, then you will survive a lot longer than having just one character.

The second is it aids in the campaign feel. By this I mean that it allows for more depth to the campaign. Suddenly you have 4-6 characters, each with their own motivations and goals, driving the story.

Sure, the thief and the fighter may want to just plunder for riches, but the wizard may need gold to continue his research and the cleric may want it to repair the local temple or just make a donation to their faith.

Having a group of characters to choose from also means you can take different

characters on various adventures while others partake in some downtime activity.

All of this gives the campaign a depth and creates a good deal of realism to it.

Campaign Time-Keeping

Time management can be a great asset as you keep track of where each of your characters are and what they are doing at any given time.

I see time keeping as a must in solo campaigns, but you may feel it is too much book-keeping and just handwave it all. But I find it adds real depth to the campaign.

I also tend to use downtime activities a lot and so keeping track of how long this takes PCs is important as it will decide if they are available for adventure or not.

For example, if the wizard is busy researching a new spell or creating a scroll, which could take a few days to a week of game time, and the cleric wants to destroy a cabal of cultists before they summon their demon-god, the wizard may simply be too busy to go on that particular mission.

You need to look at each individual character as just that - an individual.

Spells

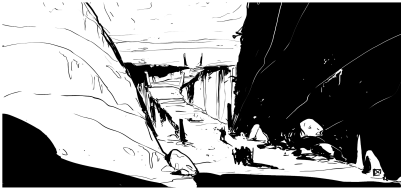
When starting out any wizard characters I also tend to roll for their starting spells randomly. They receive *Read Magic*, but other than that, roll randomly to determine the spells they start with in their spellbook.

Crawling Hexes

Creating Wilderness

Terrain

By Roll to Save



When I play a solo fantasy RPG, one of my favourite elements is exploration.

Nothing beats taking a party of brand new adventurers, being told "The bad guy's lair is 50 miles to the east - go and find him!" and then trekking overland to get there.

I won't go into the rules for travel - as these are already covered in *Issue 7 of d12 Monthly* - but when it comes to hex crawling, I always make tables to determine what sort of terrain I encounter, mainly because I like my maps to make sense.

Going from a settlement to a volcano generally doesn't make much sense (and the sort of people who build a village right next to a volcano deserve everything that they have coming to them...)

Hence, the tables - they're meant to represent the gradual shifting of terrain from one kind to another.

The tables are designed for a temperate climate. You can adjust them for other climates.

Using them is simple. When your party leaves their hex, chuck a D10 to see what the next hex will be. Then, make an additional check to see if there is a river or a road.

You'll notice two things from the tables.

Firstly, roads will only ever start in settlements. This is purely a personal preference - if you like the idea of roads starting elsewhere, knock yourself out!

Secondly, you're more likely to get rivers if there is already a river there. I generally rule that if multiple rivers converge on a hex they usually form a lake. Likewise, the source of a river is usually found in a mountain.

I've included a terrain type that I've simply called "badlands". This can really be whatever you want - blasted scrub, desert, ice - whatever suits the climate. It's essentially that entombed wilderness that sometimes separates settlements.

Speaking of settlements, I generally rule that a good few miles need to pass between settlements before finding another one.

However, if you roll one within a couple of hexes of your original settlement, maybe have the settlement become a larger town.

That's all there is to it.

Table: Grasslands

D10	New Terrain
1-4	Grasslands
5-7	Forest
8	Hills
9	Settlement
10	Badlands*

Chance of river 25% or 75% if already existing

Chance of road 75% if already existing

Table: Forests

D10	New Terrain
1-5	Forest
6-7	Grass
8-9	Hills
10	Settlement

Chance of river 25% if already existing

Chance of road 33% if already existing

Table: Hills

D10	New Terrain
1-4	Hills
5	Settlement
6	Grass
7	Forest
8-9	Mountains
10	Badlands*

Chance of river 25% or 75% if already existing

Chance of road 25% if already existing

Table: Mountains

D10	New Terrain
1-5	Mountains
6-9	Hills
10	Settlement

Chance of river 25% or 75% if already existing

Table: Badlands

D10	New Terrain
1-5	Badlands
6-8	Hills
9-10	Grassland

Chance of river 10% if already existing

Chance of road 50% if already existing

Table: Settlement

D10	New Terrain
1-5	Farmland
6-7	Grassland
8-9	Forest
10	Hills

Chance of river 25% or 75% if already existing

Chance of road 50% or 100% if already existing



Maw Please!

Memorable Dungeon Entrances



Once you have an idea for your starting location, it's time to make your dungeon entrance memorable.

This will help cement the type of dungeon it is in your mind, as well as give a little more visualisation.

You can either use the table to the right, find a dungeon entrance generator online or in a book, or just think one up yourself.

For example, in one of my campaigns the entrance to the dungeon is an old tree stump, which leads into an ancient elven tomb.

Another one is an entrance to a large series of caverns and tunnels under a large city-state which is situated 200ft down a crevasse.

Simply roll on the Dungeon Entrance table to find an appropriate dungeon entrance, and then base your dungeon off the result.

Table: Dungeon Entrances

D20	Entrance
1	Cave 6D20 ft up a cliffside
2	An old dragon skull
3	An ancient tree
4	A hole in the ground - 2D6 miles deep
5	A portal into a deep level of a dungeon
6	An ancient Purple Worm tunnel entrance
7	A collapsed building
8	The belly of a huge idol
9	Under the span of a collapsed bridge
10	A portal atop a ruined tower
11	Between two buildings in the slum district of a city
12	An old, abandoned, lighthouse
13	An excavation site
14	An old mine with collapsing tunnels
15	An active volcano
16	A giant wasp nest
17	A newly formed sinkhole
18	The ancient sewer of a ruined city
19	An established temple built on an ancient site
20	Roll again but it's on the ethereal plane

Dungeon Crawl

A Simple Dungeon Creator

Using a simple 2D6 roll you can create an unlimited number of dungeons.

Once you have your starting chamber, roll on the Dungeon Generator table to determine the dungeon layout.

Set Number of Rooms

This is optional, but you can roll a die to decide the number of rooms before you start exploring.

Alternatively, you could roll the die as you go through each room so you won't know which is the last room until after you explore it.

After each room, roll a D8 and if the number rolled is less than the number of rooms you have discovered, then the dungeon is complete (block off any passages with a dead end).

For example, you have discovered (generated) four rooms so far and roll a D8 and it comes up with 5 - still more rooms to go. After the fifth room you roll the D8 again and this time it is a 2. The dungeon is complete and no more rooms are present.

You can use a larger die or multiple dice instead for larger dungeons. Using 2D6 instead of a D8, for example.

Table: Dungeon Generator

2D6	Dungeon Piece	Additional Rolls
2	Trap	Roll on appropriate table (not included)
3	Stairs (Down)	D6: 1-4 down 1 level, 5 down 2 levels, 6 down 3 levels
4	Dead End	1 in 6 chance for secret door
5	Side Passage*	D6: 1-2 on left, 3-4 on right, 5 T-junction, 6 crossroads
6	Door*	D6: 1-2 on left, 3-4 on right, 5-6 straight ahead
7	Straight Passage	Check again in 60ft
8-9	Chamber or Room	Roll a D6 (x10) for width and D6 (x10) for depth. Number of exits (D6): 1 none, 2-3 one exit, 4-5 two exits, 6 three exits
10	Passage Turns*	D6: 1-3 turns left, 4-6 turns right
11	Stairs (Up)	D6: 1-4 up 1 level, 5 up 2 levels, 6 up 3 levels
12	Event	D6: 1-2 random monster encounter, 3-4 NPC encounter, 5-6 other event

* Check again in 30ft

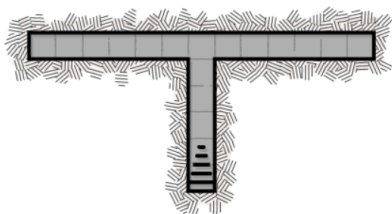
Starting Area

Decide what your starting room or passage is going to be (or simply roll on the table if

not sure) and then roll on the table after each current section has been explored.

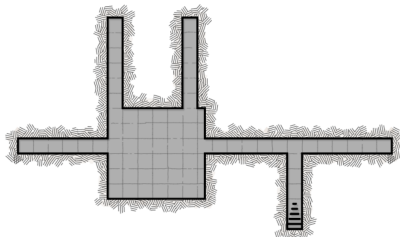
Example

We roll 3 to start - stairs down. The characters head down some stairs and enter (roll: 5) a passage leads from the stairs and has a side passage 30ft down. Rolling another 5, we see that it is a T-junction.



Looking down either passage we can see they stretch on as far as our torch light stretches, so we choose the left passage.

Again, we roll on the table and get a chamber. It's a large one - 60ft by 60ft (I rolled two 6s for chamber size), and has three exits (another 6 was rolled).



We need to determine what's in the chamber. Rolling a D6 I get a 4 and can see some tracks leading into and/or out of the

chamber as I make my way down the passage (see the article *Telegraphing In SoloRPGs* in this issue).

A skill roll from my Ranger indicates it is a creature of some kind (at this stage I don't know what). I decide to continue down the passage cautiously with the Ranger out front.

As I get closer to the chamber I roll to see what is in the chamber, rolling on the table found in the article *Dungeons Deep* in this issue). I get 24: monster + feature.

On the features table in the article *Dungeon Dressing* in this issue, I roll a 50: one content feature. Which I determine is chains (using the content feature table in the same article).

The monster I roll on a random monster encounter table (not included, but see the *Useful Products* article in this issue).

Say, I roll 3 Bugbears. I then start interactions with the encounter, whether that be a reaction roll, initiative, surprise, or whatever else your combat procedures encompass.

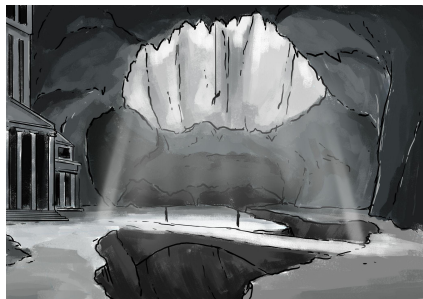
Once I deal with the Bugbears one way or another, I am ready to roll again to see where the other passages take me.

As you can see, you can extend the dungeon for as long as you like simply by using the table above.



Dungeons Deep

Stocking Your Dungeons



There are many ways to create random dungeon encounters, and below I have outlined my preferred method.

Each time you generate a *new* chamber, room, or passage (assuming you are including them as well) roll on this table and then consult the relevant sub-tables you have available.

Monster - Use your favourite dungeon monster encounter charts.

Feature - See the article *Dungeon Dressing* in this issue on how to generate features.

Hidden Treasure - Use your favourite treasure table and determine how it is hidden.

Trap - Use your favourite trap table.

Stairs - Use your favourite stairs table.

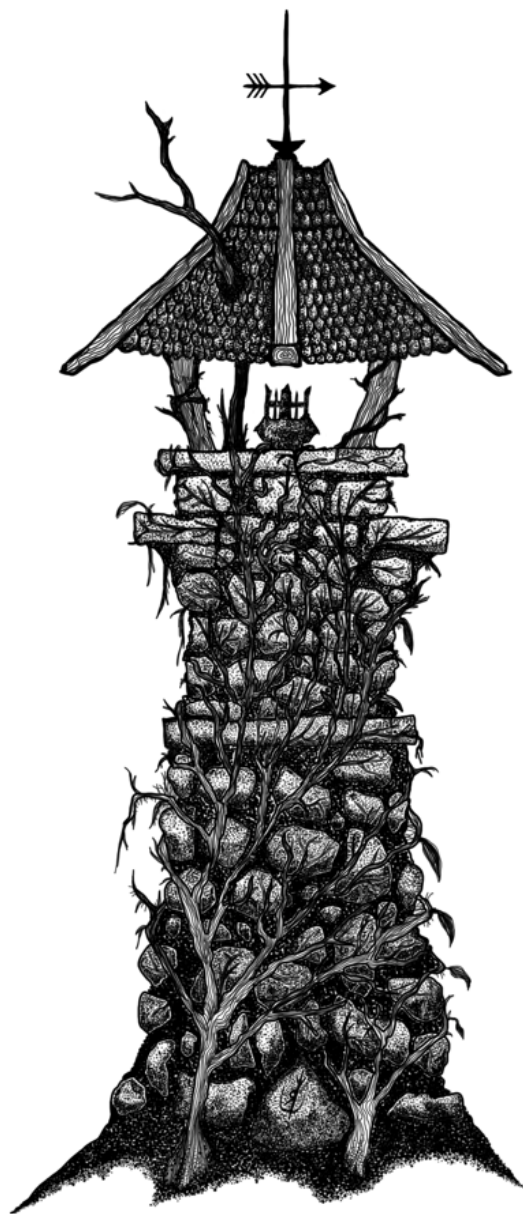
Nothing - The room, passage, or chamber is completely empty save for dust.

Table: Dungeon Contents

D100	Contents
01-18	Monster
19-32	Monster + Feature
33-35	Monster + Hidden Treasure
36-38	Monster + Trap
39-41	Monster + Feature + Hidden Treasure
42-44	Monster + Feature + Trap
45-47	Monster + Hidden Treasure + Trap
48-50	Monster + Feature + Hidden Treasure + Trap
51-70	Features only
71-72	Feature + Hidden Treasure
73-74	Feature + Trap
75-76	Feature + Hidden Treasure + Trap
77-78	Hidden Treasure
79-80	Hidden Treasure + Trap
81-84	Trap
85-90	Stairs
91-00	Nothing

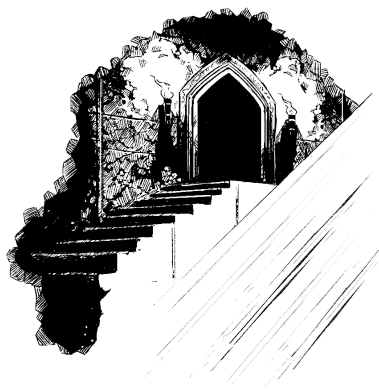
Some references to tables for generating monsters, treasure, traps, stairs, and more are located in the *Useful Products* article in this issue.

Building out a collection of your favourite tables is a big part of your solo roleplaying experience, and there are many resources online and off that you can use.



Dungeon Dressing

Adding Features to your Dungeon



Small details can add a lot of character to your dungeons and create a sense of atmosphere.

Below are a couple of tables you can use to create a more elaborate dungeon quickly and easily. These features can also help you create the story as you go.

The tables are broken up into two types: structural features and content features.

Simply roll on the features table to find how many and what types of features you have discovered.

Then roll on the appropriate tables, either structural features or content features, or both to find that actual features present.

For example, if I rolled 77 above, I would have one structural and two content

features. Roll once on the structural table and twice on the content table I get:

04 on structural: alcove

37 and 64 on content: trash and weapons

Table: Features

D100	Feature Type
01-30	One structural feature
31-60	One content feature
61-75	One structural + one content feature
76-85	One structural + Two content features
86-95	Two structural + Two content features
96-00	Two structural + one content feature

I could easily turn this into the following:

In the room you see an alcove where something long ago used to sit. Instead there is a rusted old sword (I randomly determined what type of weapon it was).

Instead of an empty room, this now becomes a room of interest, and you can use your oracle, word tables, and ability checks to answer some questions.

Is the sword really old? Who made it? Can we know who it belonged to?

And you can tie the answers you received on the above questions into your overarching story, if you wanted to.

Table: Structural Features

D100	Structural Feature Type
01-05	Alcove
06-08	Chasm
09-11	Collapsed wall
12-13	Falling stones
14-15	Firepit
16-17	Fountain
18-20	Hole
21-25	Mound of rubble
26-30	Ledge
31-32	Pillars
33-35	Pit
36-37	Natural pool
38-40	Shaft
41-44	Well
45-49	Cracks
50-55	Dripping water
56-58	Engravings
59-65	Fungus or Mould
66-68	Mud
69-71	Water puddle
72-73	Runes
74-76	Shattered stones
77-78	Slime
79	Lava pool
80-90	Stairs
91-95	Cave-in
96-00	River

Table: Content Features

D100	Content Feature Type
01-04	Altar
05-07	Barrels
08-10	Bedding
11-12	Cage
13-15	Cauldron
16-19	Dung heap
20-23	Evil symbols
24-28	Idol
29-33	Shrine
34-36	Statue
37-39	Trash
40-42	Ash
43-48	Blood stains
49-52	Bones
53-56	Claw marks
57-60	Cobwebs
61-63	Corpse
64-66	Weapons
67-70	Insects
71-72	Nest
73-76	Skull
77-78	Teeth
79-81	Wood pile
82-86	Chains
87-92	Mushrooms
93-96	Boulder(s)
97-00	Tree roots

Telegraphing In SoloRPGs

Give Yourself Clues

Use a simple D6 to show what indicators the PCs see before encountering the monster.

The blog Retired Adventurer put together two blog posts (see *Useful Products* in this issue) on using a grid to telegraph and expand on random encounters.

The basic premise was to roll an additional die when rolling for a random encounter which would indicate whether you encountered the monster, its lair, or just signs of it (tracks, signs, noises, etc).

I want to use this basic system to telegraph what an encounter may be before the encounter happens. Basically, replacing the GM's hints with some random rolls.

The table shows random encounters with a version of Retired Adventurers' table, using traces, signs, tracks, and noises as possible

Table: Random Encounters (Hex K1)

2D6	Encounter	1 Traces	2 Signs	3 Tracks	4 Noises	5 Monster	6 Lair
2	Wemic Hunting Party	Hair	Broken arrows	Scat	Purring words	D4+2 Wemics	Camp: Watch set
3	Firetails	Feathers	Burnt remains of previous kill	Scat	Squawks	D3 Firetails	n/a
4	Random Site	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Roll on site table	n/a
5	Giant Troll	Flakey skin	Giant broken club	Huge Footprints	Grunting	1 Giant Troll	n/a
6	Orc Raiding Party	Gnawed bones	Camp (D6 hours old)	Flat grass	Whispered grunts on the wind	D4+2 Orcs	Camp: Watch set
7	Griffon	Feathers	Ground disturbed	Flat grass	Squawks	1 Griffon	n/a
8	Wild Scrub Turkeys	Feather	Petrified scrub turkey	Clawing marks	Clucking	2D6 Turkeys	Nest - dried grass
9	Random Item	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Roll on item table	n/a
10	Shadow Gnomes*	Travel markings	Crude map on ground	Footprints	Stalking	D4 Scavenging party	n/a
11	Roll Twice	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
12	Roc	Claw marks	Giant feathers	Past victim	Loud squawk	1 Roc	n/a

* Night-time only. Otherwise treat as Orc Raiding Party

encounters instead of the monster itself (or its lair).

To see what the encounter would be, we roll 2D6 for the type of monster, and then an additional D6 for the actual encounter.

If we roll a 6 on the 2D6 we see that the monsters encountered are orcs. If we get a 4 with the additional D6, the PCs can hear “whispered grunts on the wind” instead of bumping into the orcs themselves.

The orcs are close but cannot be seen just yet. So, the PCs have a chance to hide, set an ambush, run, or any number of other actions before the orcs come into view.

Solo Play

We can use this system by reversing the order of these dice rolls. By rolling the single D6 *first*, and *then* the encounter if your characters decide to continue.

Example

While wandering the wilderness in search of a lost tomb, a random encounter is checked and called for.

Rolling a D6, I get a 2 - signs of the encounter, but I'm not sure signs of what just yet.

I keep this general for now - before knowing what it is - allowing my characters to make a decision: do they continue and encounter the monster or do they decide to retreat or find another way?



You can play off the results too.

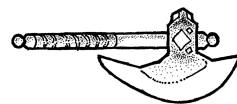
For example, if you roll that you encounter tracks, a character skilled in tracking could make a check to see if they can determine what tracks they are.

If they roll well enough this could give them a heads up to be cautious of a Basilisk they just found tracks for.

If you roll 5 or 6 then you can play the results normally - the characters encounter the monster or discover its lair (whatever that may be).

Versatile

This system can be used in both wilderness and dungeon environments.



Come Again!?

Restocking Your Dungeon



Dungeons are living, vibrant engines of death.

They don't stand still and while you clear part of a dungeon out, it is still there, waiting for another monster to fill the vacuum.

Each time you return to a cleared dungeon or even a section of a dungeon, you need to check to see if it has been restocked.

To do this quickly and easily, you can use a simple system based on how much time has passed since the last visit (another reason to keep careful track of time in your campaign).

The longer you have been away, the more chance there is that a new monster (or NPC) has moved in.

All you need to do is roll the appropriate die and if a 1 (or 2 or 3) comes up, then a new monster has moved in.

Table: Restocking Dungeons

Time Elapsed	Chance of Restocking
Less than a day	1 in 8
One week or less	1 in 6
More than one week	2 in 6
More than one month	3 in 6

When checking sections of a larger dungeon, you can check each chamber individually.

Example

Our adventurers are coming back to a tomb they cleared out last month and it's been 42 days since they last visited.

Roll a D6 and if a 1, 2, or 3 comes up then roll on an appropriate monster table to see what has moved in.

Wilderness Restocking

You could do the same for wilderness areas as well.

Are you revisiting an ancient druid circle after 3 months? Then there is a 3 in 6 chance that place has been inhabited by something else.



Story Time

Story Word Lists for Your Campaign

Story Word lists are a great way to bring the story into your solo campaign, and is something I find incredibly useful.

The idea is to take two or three words and create a story using them as inspiration. You generate the words using one or more word lists.

I have included one here but you can generate your own as well using websites that randomly generate words. (see the *Useful Links* article in this issue).

You can use this process whenever you feel the need to understand more about a scene or place or object.

For example, if you find a magical weapon you could use this process to create a backstory for it.

I tend to roll three times to generate three words and then combine two or all three into a coherent story which makes sense for the purpose I am using it for.

If your characters run into an NPC in a dungeon, you can use these story words to find out what they are doing there.

I roll on the table and get 8, 11, and 14, which translates to:

Vanish | Pack | Crack

Table: Word List

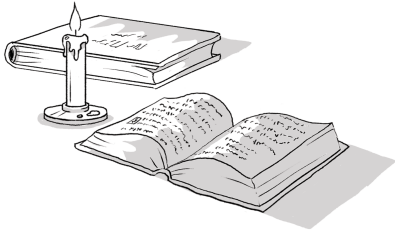
D20	Words
1	Justify
2	Acid
3	Medicine
4	Leader
5	History
6	Safe
7	Pray
8	Vanish
9	Smoke
10	Compose
11	Pack
12	Age
13	Pure
14	Crack
15	Important
16	Heavy
17	Tricky
18	Valuable
19	Habitual
20	Agreeable

From these rolls, I determine that a person from his village vanished one night and he has traced her to this dungeon (he might be from a nearby village - a question to ask your Oracle). He wants to crack the case of what happened to her so he can ask her Father for her hand in marriage.

You can see how the story comes to life with just a few quick rolls.

The Pen is Mightier Than the Sword

Recording Your Sessions



Keeping track of what happens in your solo campaigns is an important part of the whole process.

It allows you to not only keep track of what is happening (referring back to your previous entries) but also gives you the ability to share your campaign with others.

Some solo roleplayers have a blog where they post their solo campaign exploits. This is a great way to share more of your campaign world and the adventures within.

Others are happy to just keep a track of their character's exploits just for themselves.

Both are great options.

Methods

Like in all things solo roleplaying, there are several ways to journal your campaign.

Personally, I just keep dot points in a Google Doc document - this allows me to

know the major beats and story arcs without worrying exactly what happened with every sword swing.

It's just the important parts.

Others I have seen detail every single blow in combat and write out dialogue that happens in-game.

While other solo roleplayers write it up like a story, capturing the feelings and moods of each of the characters involved as well as the action.

However you want to capture it, it is just important that you capture enough to be able to make sense of it when you read it back later.

Review

It is also a great idea to review your notes from previous sessions as you may have forgotten about certain threads or NPCs.

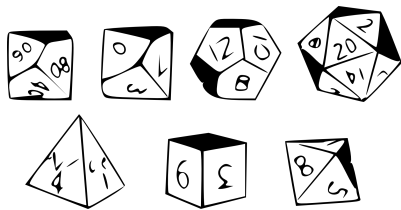
I try to review every few months so that I don't forget anything important. This helps me stay on track and focused.

There are going to be threads left hanging and un-finished, and this is fine, but it can be fulfilling to finish off story-arcs and having recurring NPCs and villains.



Finding The Story

Getting Into Your Campaign



This seems to worry and perplex a lot of people, but it's really nothing to worry about as I find stories come about organically.

In a regular campaign, the GM (or the GM & players together) tend to define what the campaign will be about.

This is not the case in solo campaigns.

Given you are both the GM and player, you need to come up with the campaign arcs.

However, like regular campaigns, I find the narrative - the story - comes up organically as you play.

To give an example, when I started a campaign, all I knew at the start was where the dungeon entrance was (a day's journey from a town and inside an ancient tree stump), and that it was an old elvish tomb.

Once I started playing however, I met some dwarves who attacked my PCs immediately and it was discovered (via story words) that they were part of a cult that was looking for

an item within the tomb to reinstate their rightful leader.

Suddenly, I had a plot hook. A cult is after something within the same dungeon my PCs were exploring.

I could instantly see a race against time and some violent rivalry between the dwarven cultists and my PCs.

This added a new dimension to the dungeon and created a story arc out of practically nothing - just a single encounter.

The story words are of great importance here as they give *reason* to events, and then you can randomly or, sometimes deliberately, meld several events together.

In the example, if I was exploring the dungeon and more dwarves were encountered, I would automatically assume they were also cultists. Or, I could check with my Oracle: "are these dwarves part of the cult?" with perhaps a bonus of +1 to the roll given it is more than likely they are.

But the story words aren't the only way to bring the story to life. You can use your common sense as well. If something "fits" then just go with it.

It's not cheating or fabricating anything, it's all about stitching together various events to weave a story.

Having said this, not all events will be related, but some will. You will need to make that call - or ask the Oracle - at the time.

Useful Products

What follows are some useful links to various products I have found useful for solo campaign play.

Helpful Articles from Previous *d12 Monthly Issues*

Shorthand Your NPCs in **Issue 0**
Location Location Location (Dolgar) in **Issues 0, 1, & 2** for a starting town to use
Corner & End Encounter Tables in **Issues 0, 1, 2, & 3**.
D8 Dungeon Generator in **Issue 1**
Encounter Distance in **Issue 1**
What the Hell are the Monsters Doing? in **Issue 1**
Building a Quick NPC in **Issue 1**
Run Away! in **Issue 3**
Ageing Potions in **Issue 4**
Magical Mishaps Charts in **Issue 4**
Creating Your Pantheon in **Issue 5**
Twisted Table: Starting Your Adventure in **Issue 5**
Library Ratings in **Issue 6**
Create New Undead in **Issue 6**
Update Your Undead in **Issue 6**
Oh, the Places You'll Go in **Issue 7**
Setting Up Camp in **Issue 7**
Building Random Encounters in **Issue 7**
Underdark Places in **Issue 8**
Monster Mash in **Issue 10**
Gift of the Gab in **Issue 10**
Team Up! in **Issue 10**
A Good Follower is Hard to Find in **Issue 11**
I Think Whosit Just Left in **Issue 11**
What's Driving You? in **Issue 11**
What You Lookin' At? in **Issue 11**
Who's Following You? in **Issue 11**

Follow the Leader in **Issue 11**

Useful Links

A Procedure for Wandering Monsters by The Retired Adventurer
<https://retiredadventurer.blogspot.com/2013/05/a-procedure-for-wandering-monsters.html>

The Encounter Grid: Six Years Out by The Retired Adventurer
<https://retiredadventurer.blogspot.com/2019/11/the-encounter-grid-six-years-out.html>

Random Word Generator
<https://randomwordgenerator.com/>

Dungeon Scrawl Online Map Maker
<https://probabletrain.itch.io/dungeon-scrrawl>

Useful Books

AD&D Dungeons Masters Guide

D&D 3.0 Dungeons Masters Guide

D&D 3.5 Dungeon Masters Guide II

D&D 5e Dungeons Masters Guide

D&D 5e Xanathar's Guide to Everything

Filling in the Blanks by Todd Lebeck

The Great Book of Random Tables by Matt Davis



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