

# d12 Monthly

**RANDOM  
ENCOUNTERS ISSUE**

Issue 27  
September, 2023

**WHAT ARE  
THE ODDS?**

KNOWING WHICH  
DICE TO USE

**START YOUR  
CAMPAIGN RIGHT**

RANDOM TABLES FOR  
STARTING YOUR CAMPAIGN

**DEADLY  
DUNGEONS!**

**Monster of the Month: The Grunk**

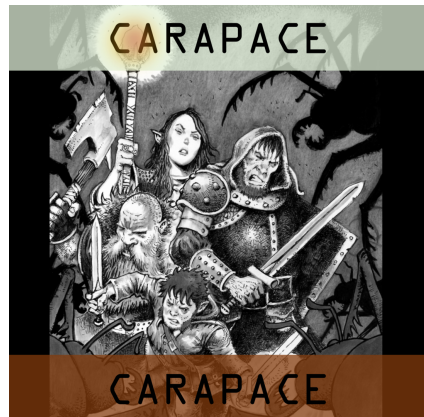
*d12 Monthly* is a helpful resource for fantasy roleplayers.

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

# The Random Encounters Issue

Of all the issues I have published over the last two-and-a-half years, this one has changed the most from inception to completion.

Originally, I was going to have a zine full of random encounter tables (and I still might!), but as I worked on this issue, it became clear that I didn't want to just give you tables that may or may not work in your campaign world, but to give you the tools to be able to build your own.

The geeky equivalent of 'You can teach a man to fish...'

So, go forth, and use the knowledge in this issue to create a better experience at your gaming table.

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM

<https://yumdm.com/>  
[https://twitter.com/yum\\_dm](https://twitter.com/yum_dm)

## About Me

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

**Other TTRPGs I like:** WEG D6 Star Wars, Feng Shui RPG, & Warhammer FRP.

## Thanks to my Patrons

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

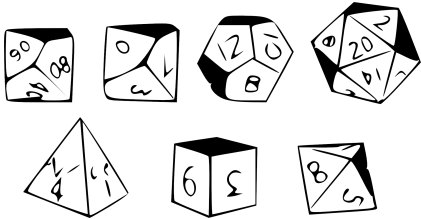
**Want to join this team and support the zine?** I have a Patreon account:

<https://www.patreon.com/yumdm>

*(Tiers are available to receive a physical copy).*

# Keeping It Real

## Why Use Random Encounter Tables?



One tool that has stood the test of time, enhancing both the experience and the storytelling, is the venerable random encounter table.

While some may perceive it as a relic of gaming's past, the advantages of using random encounter tables are far-reaching, as we will discover.

At its core, a random encounter table is a collection of potential scenarios, monsters, events, and interactions that the GM can roll for during a player's journey.

These tables come in a myriad of forms, from simple lists of creatures to complex matrices that consider various factors like location, time of day, and weather.

Incorporating these tables into a campaign presents a multitude of advantages that can elevate gameplay to new heights.

And, as we will discover throughout this issue, creating your own encounter tables is the best way to take advantage of the following benefits.

## Unpredictable Adventure

One of the primary draws of using random encounter tables is the element of surprise they introduce.

While a skilled DM may craft elaborate plots and story arcs, the unexpected is what truly keeps players (and GMs) engaged and invested.

Random encounters inject spontaneity into the story, preventing the world from feeling scripted and allowing for moments that can be both delightful and challenging.

Picture this: a party of adventurers is traversing a dense forest, eager to reach the next town. Suddenly, the DM rolls on the encounter table, revealing a group of mischievous fey creatures who wish to challenge the party to a riddle contest.

This encounter, entirely unplanned, adds a touch of whimsy to the campaign and offers an opportunity for role-playing and character development that might not have occurred otherwise.

## World Immersion

Random encounter tables also play a pivotal role in creating a living, breathing world for players to explore.

By populating various environments with diverse encounters, the game world becomes more than just a backdrop—it becomes an ecosystem teeming with life.

Players can stumble upon a wounded creature in need of aid, discover a hidden



cache of treasures, or encounter a rare and elusive creature that hints at the depth of the world's lore.

Incorporating these tables into different regions of a campaign world adds depth to the setting.

A dense forest may be home to foraging animals, elusive predators, and even ancient guardian spirits.

In contrast, a desolate desert could host nomadic traders, sandstorms, and mysterious oases.

By embracing the unpredictability of random encounters, players are drawn into the world's intricacies, fostering a sense of exploration and wonder.

## Enhanced Creativity

For both players and GMs, random encounters act as creative prompts.

GMs can use these encounters as a springboard to develop unique narratives, challenges, and memorable moments.

They provide an opportunity to flex their storytelling muscles and weave unexpected twists into the overarching plot.

Similarly, players are prompted to think creatively when facing random encounters.

Whether it's devising an unconventional strategy to overcome a particularly challenging foe or negotiating with an eccentric NPC, these moments encourage players to step outside their comfort zones

and embrace the full range of their characters' abilities.

## Player Agency and Investment

Random encounters also foster player agency, allowing them to shape the direction of the story through their decisions.

When presented with a random encounter, players can choose how to approach the situation, whether it's through diplomacy, combat, or creative problem-solving. These choices create a sense of ownership over the campaign's progression, reinforcing the idea that the players' decisions have meaningful consequences.

Furthermore, when players feel that the world around them is responsive and dynamic, their investment in the game deepens.

By utilising random encounter tables, DMs convey that the world is not just a stage for their story, but a living entity that reacts to the players' actions and choices.

From injecting spontaneity into the narrative to fostering world immersion, enhancing creativity, balancing gameplay, and empowering player agency, these tables contribute to a richer and more engaging gaming experience.

So, whether you're a seasoned GM, or a novice player, don't overlook the power of randomness; let the dice roll and embark on an unforgettable journey through the realms of imagination.

# Roll 'Em

## Checking for Random Encounters



Whether you're aiming for a straightforward or intricate encounter system, dice rolling is a dynamic tool that keeps players on their toes, immerses them in the world, and ensures that the next adventure is never quite certain.

There are multiple methods involving various die types and rolling mechanics to keep the element of surprise alive.

### Straight Dice Roll

This is the simplest method.

The GM selects a specific die and a target number. If the roll meets or exceeds the target number, an encounter takes place. For example, rolling a d20 and needing a result of 16 or higher to trigger an encounter.

### Variable Threshold

Instead of a fixed target number, the DM can adjust the threshold based on factors like the party's level, the difficulty of the

terrain, or the presence of specific modifiers.

This approach ensures that encounters are more challenging in dangerous areas and less so in safer regions.

### Multiple Dice

Using multiple dice can make the encounter chances more variable.

For example, rolling 2d10 and considering an encounter triggered if the sum is 15 or higher. This creates a bell curve distribution of probabilities, making the chance of an encounter less likely.

### Roll Under System

In this method, the DM sets a target number and the players must roll under that number on a specific die to trigger an encounter.

For instance, rolling a d10 and needing a result of 3 or lower to have an encounter occur.

### Roll Over System

Similar to the roll under system, the DM sets a target number, but players must roll over that number to trigger an encounter.

For example, rolling a d12 and needing a result of 9 or higher to initiate an encounter.

### Success Count System

Rather than a single roll, the DM could ask all players to roll a specific die, counting the number of successful rolls that meet or

exceed the target number. The more successes, the higher the chance of an encounter.

## Progressive Odds

In this method, the DM starts with a lower target number for an encounter and gradually increases it over time or as the players move through different areas.

This reflects the likelihood of an encounter occurring.

## Die Scaling

As the session progresses, the GM can switch to smaller die types (e.g., D20 to D12 to D10, etc.) to represent the escalating chance of an encounter occurring.

## Critical Success/Failure

If a player rolls a critical success (natural 20) or a critical failure (natural 1), the DM could use these results to trigger special encounters.

Critical success might lead to a beneficial or unexpected encounter, while critical failure could bring about a dangerous situation.

Each of these approaches can be tailored to fit the campaign's tone, the players, and the GM's preferences.

## Combination

You can also combine the chance of an encounter with the encounter table itself.

If the chance for an encounter is 2 in 6, then you could use a D12 and have just 4

spots available for an encounter, as shown in the **Random Chance Encounters** table below.

**Table: Random Chance Encounters**

D12	Creature Type
1-8	No encounter
9	Orc Marauders
10	NPC Party
11	Giant Lizard
12	Remoraz

The advantage of this type of table is its quickness - one roll is all it takes. The disadvantage is that the number of slots available for encounters can be limited. Using larger die types, like a D20 or even a D100, can negate this, however.

## Hidden Vs. Open Rolls

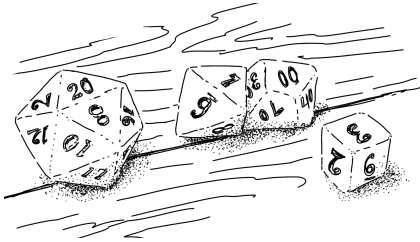
To maintain a sense of suspense, the DM can make the rolls secretly behind the screen. This adds tension as players won't know if an encounter is coming until the GM reveals the result.

Or the GM can simply have the players roll the dice to determine an encounter. This can lessen the guilt or blame heaped on a GM from deadly encounters.



# All Dice Under The Sun

## Various Rolling Methods



There are many ways you can use one or more dice to change the odds of a particular result occurring.

In this article I will outline these and give recommendations on when to use them. This won't be an exhaustive list, but it should get you started thinking on how to use certain tables and dice.

### Single Die

This is the simplest type of table to create.

You choose a die type and list a number of results equal to the die maximum. With this method, each result has the same chance of appearing.

For example, if you choose a D8, then there will be eight results, all with the same chance of appearing.

### Exploding Die

An exploding die method is to create a table with a particular die type in mind, and if the maximum result of the die comes up, you re-roll the die and add the result.

A lot of D6 tables use this.

It can be used in two main ways:

1. You roll the die and add additional rolls if you roll any natural 6s
2. You can use it in a cascade method, where the natural 6 leads you to another table (with usually more potent effects).

For example, say I have a D6 random encounter table for each level of a 6-level dungeon, with the monsters appearing on each table becoming increasingly deadly (higher HD, etc) as you go deeper into the dungeon.

You could set it up so that the '6' on each table actually leads to the next table, indicating that a monster from the next level further down has shown up.

### Adding Modifiers

You can add modifiers to any table, increasing the number of results.

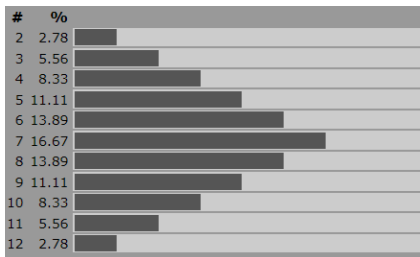
For example, instead of having multiple tables for each level of a dungeon, you could have one single table, but add the level of the dungeon to the result.

This creates just one table with fewer results than multiple tables, but it would be easier to reference.

## Multiple Dice

Once you add multiple dice you introduce what's called a bell curve.

This means some numbers will come up more often than others. For example, if you roll 2D6, the numbers 6,7 and 8 will have a greater probability of coming up than 2 or 12 do. You can see the odds (and the bell curve it produces) in the graph below.

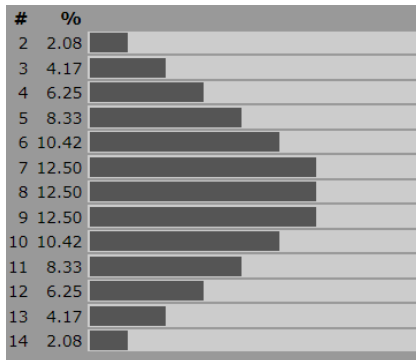


You can use this to your advantage when creating random encounter tables - having a greater chance of some encounters than others.

### Flat Curve

By using two different dice - like a D12 and a D8 - you can create a flat curve, where some results in the middle will all have the same chance of occurring (causing the “flatness”), while the curve still comes into effect on each end, as seen in the next graph.

This gives you a chance to have a greater variety of common encounters on and around the flat curve, and more encounters as a whole.



## Varying Percentage Dice

Of course, you can always use a D100 to give you a percentage chance of an encounter. These tend to be large tables with many results, each having 1 or more percentage chance of occurring.

There are other “percentage” dice combos, however.

A popular one is rolling 2D6, but instead of adding them together, the first D6 is the “tens” and the second, the “units” - this is often called a D66 table.

You could use any die type for this and have a D44 table, or a D88 table, for example.

## Multiple Results on One Table

Using any of the above tables, you could have multiple results on just one table.

For example, you could have a random encounter table that shows encounters for both day-time and night-time, having different results depending on whether it was day or night.



**Table: Day/Night Encounters**

Day	Night	Encounter
-	1	Night Hag
1	-	Fire Lizard
2	2	Wild Dogs
3	3	Orcs
4	-	Giant Eagle
5	4	Trolls
	5	Bats
6		Vultures
-	6	Wraith

Another way you could use these tables is by rolling multiple times for different, but related, information - like coming up with a motivation, appearance, and personality of an NPC.

**Table: MAP for NPCs**

D6	Motivation	Appearance	Personality
1	Revenge	Long beard	Gruff
2	Protecting	Bald	Calm
3	Atonement	Tall	Energetic
4	Curiosity	Overweight	Worried
5	Adventure	Beautiful	Paranoid
6	Fear	Elegant	Aloof

In the table above you would roll 3D6 (all together or one at a time) to find out the motivation, appearance, and personality of the NPC.

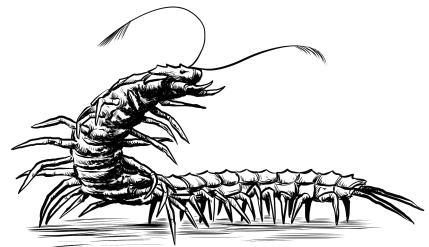
## Multi-Dimensional Tables

These tables create a more complex, but thorough result. One I have used

successfully in my own campaigns is set out as an example below.

These tables use multiple dice (which can be rolled all at once) to give more information immediately without the need to roll again or on another table.

On the **Random Encounters (Hex M1-2 to N1-2)** table you can see one of my campaign world encounter tables, which has several elements we have already discussed, added to a multi-dimensional table, with rolls needed for the horizontal axis as well as the vertical axis.



## How I Use This Table

If the PCs have entered the hexes\* listed, and a random encounter has been indicated, then I roll on the table to see what the encounter is.

\* I call them 'hexes' for ease of communication, but I always use square grids even for outdoor maps as they are much easier to work with than traditional hexes.

I roll 2D6 of one colour for the vertical axis, and a single D6 of another colour for the horizontal.

**Table: Random Encounters (Hex M1-2 to N1-2)**

2D6		Encounter	1 Traces	2 Signs	3 Tracks	4 Noises	5 Monster	6 Lair
Day	Night							
2	-	Pyrolisks	Smouldering corpse	Scattered ash	Claw marks	Clucking	D3 Pyrolisks	Nest - dried grass
3	2-4	Local dungeon denizen	As appropriate	As appropriate	As appropriate	As appropriate	Roll on Dungeon Table	In Dungeon
4	-	Wemic Hunting Party	Hair	Broken arrows	Scat	Purring words	D4+2 Wemics	Camp: Watch set
5	5-6	Orc Raiding Party	Gnawed bones	Camp (D6 hours old)	Flat grass	Whispered grunts on the wind	D4+2 Orcs	Camp: Watch set
-	7	Wild Boar*	Hair	Gored Rabbits	Hoof prints	Snorting	1 Wild Boar	Wild boar den
6	8	Wolves	Hair	Former prey	Crushed vegetation	Howling	D6 Wolves	Den
7	-	Oxen Herd	Skeleton	Hair	Scat	Mulls	4D6 Oxen	n/a
-	9	Azmyth Bats	Guano	Guano	Guano	Squeaks	D6 Bats	n/a
8	-	Random Item	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Roll on item table	n/a
9	10	Cockatrice	Feather	Petrified scrub turkey	Clawing marks	Clucking	Roll on monster entry	Nest - dried grass
10	-	Poisonous Snake	Shed skin	Skull w/ hole in it	Footprints	Moans	1 Snake	n/a
11	11	NPC Party	Marks - travel signs	Leftover meals	Footprints	Laughing & talking	2 NPC characters w/ 4 Hirelings	Camp: Watch set
12	12	Roc	Claw marks	Feathers	Past victim	Squark	1 Roc	n/a

The vertical axis represents the creature encountered, and the horizontal represents what the actual encounter is.

It also matters if the encounter happened during the day or at night.

As an example, say I roll 9 on the 2D6, and a 4 on the single D6 for a day-time encounter.

I can see that the encounter is with some cockatrice (oh, boy!) and that the encounter begins with the PCs hearing some clucking noises not far away.

If I had rolled a 6 for the horizontal axis, the PCs would have stumbled upon the nest of the cockatrices!

A night-time encounter would have been with some Azmyth Bats, and they would have heard some squeaks in the night.

Instead of just encountering a monster, the horizontal axis represents what the PCs actually encounter, whether that's traces, signs, or tracks of the creature (great for building anticipation and signalling how dangerous the area could be); or noises for closer encounters; or the creature itself or its lair.

## Multiple Tables

An easy way to have a wide selection of encounters is to use multiple tables. This requires more rolling, but you could roll all the dice at once as long as you have different coloured dice.

For a great example of this method, see the encounter tables used in the Encounter Tables in the Old School Essentials Referee's Tomb. An example is also presented below.

**Table: Encounter Type**

D6	Creature Type
1	Critter
2	Dragon
3	NPC
4	Terror
5	Tough
6	Undead

Rolling on the Encounter Type table directs you to the next table to roll on (you would have one table for each of the six results above).

**Table: Critters**

D6	Creature Type
1	Giant Centipedes
2	Dire Rats
3	Giant Fire Beetle
4	Giant Spiders
5	Giant Scorpions
6	Giant Ants

## Different Dice Types on Same Table

You can create one table that uses various die types (D4, D6, D8, etc) by having results reflect the die type you are using.

For example, you could have an encounter table for a Kobold Lair with increasingly difficult encounters and use lower die types at the beginning of the exploration, and increase the die type after set time intervals. See the **Kobold Lair Encounters** table.

### A Great Resource

**Goblin's Henchman** has a great resource that shows the odds of various dice rolling in greater depth. I highly recommend it.

Get more details: <https://bit.ly/47S8Ff7>

**Table: Kobold Lair Encounters**

D6	Creature Type	Number Appearing
1	Kobold Scout	1
2	Kobold Guards	D4
3	Kobold Warriors	D6
4	Kobold Riders with Giant Lizard Mounts	D4
5	Giant Dire Lizard	1
6	Undead Kobold Zombies	2D6
7	Kobold Priest with Underlings	1 + 2D4
8	Kobold King with Royal Guards	1 + 2D4

You could use a D4 at the beginning, a D6 once the PCs have been exploring for a few hours, and then to a D8 after a full day of exploration.

### Combining Several Table Types

You can always create an encounter table that uses up several of the above types of tables, combining them together to make a more robust table.



## Locations to Start Your Adventure

Use this table to create starting points for your adventures, whether that is a solo session or with a group.

This is an example of a single die table - all results have an equal chance of happening.

**Table: Encounter Start Locations**

D20	Locations
1	An ancient dead hollowed out tree stump
2	A bustling market in a busy city
3	A mysterious and ancient forest
4	A hidden cave deep in the mountains
5	A remote and abandoned castle
6	A bustling harbour in a coastal town
7	An isolated village with a dark secret
8	A majestic library in a grand city
9	A treacherous swamp with unknown dangers
10	An otherworldly pocket dimension/demi-plane
11	A peaceful farmstead in the countryside
12	A hidden temple deep in the jungle



# Random Monster Encounters



This is an example of the Exploding Die method mentioned in the article *All Dice Under The Sun* in this issue.

You can see it being used both ways in this same table: the natural '6' leading to the next level's table, and then the exploding die when the number appearing is rolled.

**Table: Dungeon Random Encounters, Lvl 1**

D6	Locations	No. Appearing*
1	Goblins	D6
2	Pierces	D4
3	Dire Rats	D4
4	Kobolds	D6
5	Giant Fire Beetles	D4
6	Roll on Lvl 2 table	-

\* If the maximum result rolled on the die, re-roll and add any additional results.

**Table: Dungeon Random Encounters, Lvl 2**

D6	Locations	No. Appearing*
1	Giant Ants	D6
2	Giant Spider	1
3	Choker	1
4	Shriekers	D4
5	Lizardfolk	D4
6	Roll on Lvl 3 table	-

**Table: Dungeon Random Encounters, Lvl 3**

D6	Locations	No. Appearing*
1	Gnolls	D6+1
2	Vargouille	1
3	Shadow	1
4	Skeletons	D6
5	Dire Bats	D4
6	Roll on Lvl 4 table	-

**Table: Dungeon Random Encounters, Lvl 4**

D6	Locations	No. Appearing*
1	Ankhegs	D4
2	Carriion Crawling	1
3	Orcs	D6
4	Ghost	1
5	Dire Weasels	D4
6	Blink Dogs	D4+1



## Wilderness Zones



Just like a dungeon has multiple levels, with increasing deadliness as you descend, so too can a wilderness location have various zones.

Zones represent increasingly dangerous areas. And range from 0 to 4.

Most cities, towns or other settlements will have their own encounter tables, but once you leave the settlement, moving further away from it, the more dangerous it can be. This is indicated by the increasing zone number.

As an example, the fields around the settlement can be zone 0, the road connecting one settlement to another might be zone 1, the immediate wilderness

around the road could be zone 2, the rest of the wilderness could be zone 3, except for the rocky hillocks north of the settlement, which are zone 4.

You can add as many zones as appropriate, but 5 zones (0-4) is fairly manageable.

Also, larger zones (like grassy plains) could have smaller zones within them, which have higher (or lower) zone number, depending on the terrain and what creatures are located there.

### Designing the Encounter Table

With all this in mind, it's time to design a random encounter table that reflects these various dangers and incorporates the various zones.

This works best with single die tables, and not so well with multiple dice tables as it messes up the chance of encounters.

You can use any single die type for this, but in the example below I have used a D6.

### The Process

The process is simple enough: when you roll the die, you add the zone number to the result.

Encounters in the fields just outside of town (which are probably highly populated and might be patrolled), would just be a straight D6 (as it is in zone 0).

Meanwhile, travelling along the road would add 1 to any roll, giving results from 2-7.

The wilderness around the road would add 2 to the roll, giving results from 3-8. And so on, all the way up to 10 in this example.

The table created would have 10 results of increasingly dangerous encounters.

**Table: Wilderness Random Encounters**

D6	Locations
1	Peasants going about their work
2	Merchants travelling to/from the town
3	A broken down wagon with petty nobles inside
4	A travelling priest of a local deity
5	Wild wolves prowling the outskirts of the town
6	Local patrol
7	Orc Raiders
8	Bandits waiting in ambush
9	Giant Wasps
10	Wyvern hunting for food

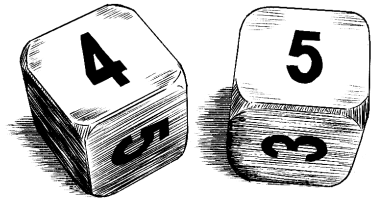
When creating this type of table, make sure that the creatures listed on the table would be encountered in the terrain it represents.

For example, if zone 4 is rocky foothills, then have a creature who would inhabit that area in slot number 10 (as it would only be encountered when the characters are in that zone).



## 2D6 Tables

### A Good Choice for Random Encounters



Some of the easiest tables to use for random encounters, which will give you a built-in changing chance of success is rolling 2D6.

The **Chance of Results** table shows how you should set up your table based on the rarity of the creature in the area the table is being designed for.

The table also shows the percentage chance each result has of showing up when 2D6 are rolled.

You will note that the middle numbers have a much greater chance of being the result than the numbers at either end.

The table contains the following:

- 2 Very rare spots
- 2 Rare spots
- 3 Uncommon spots
- 4 Common spots

If you add up the percentages for these you will have the following:

- **Very rare:** 5.6% chance
- **Rare:** 11.2% chance
- **Uncommon:** 27.7% chance
- **Common:** 55.6%

Interpreting the above numbers (and rounding to the nearest whole number) we see the following:

- **Very rare:** 6% of occurring
- **Rare:** 11% of occurring
- **Uncommon:** 28% of occurring
- **Common:** 56% of occurring

If we total those up, we get 101%, but they are all rounded numbers, and will do for our purposes.

**Table: Chance of Results**

2D6	Encounter	% Chance*
2	Very rare	2.8
3	Rare	5.6
4	Uncommon	8.3
5	Uncommon	11.1
6	Common	13.9
7	Common	16.7
8	Common	13.9
9	Common	11.1
10	Uncommon	8.3
11	Rare	5.6
12	Very rare	2.8

\* Rounded off to one decimal

Interpreting these numbers, it means that **common** encounters will occur just over half the time; **uncommon** ones just under

one-third the time; **rare**, 1 in 10 chance of occurring; and finally, **very rare** about 1 in 20 chance.

These numbers feel right for random encounter chances and this table can be used to create random encounter tables for any area in your campaign world.

## Building the Table

We can now build our first encounter table. Let's choose a hills region in our campaign world.

The Barren Hills are a wind-swept set of hills 15 miles from a main trade road, running north-south.

I know a little about the Barren Hills, so I start by writing out all the creatures that I know live or frequent the hills.

This list consists of:

**Wyvern** - nesting in the hills, uses nearby plains for hunting

**Orcs** - Small groups of raiders

**Goblins** - Small groups on particular missions

Taking this list, I then look at a list of all creatures that live within temperate hills. Depending on what edition you are using, this list could vary quite a bit.

I will use the AD&D Monster Manual II books as it has some comprehensive lists of creatures based on terrain where they are found.

I also think about the activity in the area - is there any mining going on, are there old mines or caverns here that adventurers would explore, and so on.

I can start by using the monster entry to determine the rarity of my listed monsters above, and thus where they should fit on the **Barren Hills Random Encounter** table.

I can then change it if needed based on what I know of the location.

For example, goblins tend not to hang out in these hills and are only there while on mission (changing them from common to uncommon).

**Table: Barren Hills Random Encounters**

2D6	Encounter
2	Wyvern
3	<i>Rare</i>
4	<i>Uncommon</i>
5	Goblins
6	Prospectors (D6 in number)
7	<i>Common</i>
8	Orc Raiders
9	<i>Common</i>
10	<i>Uncommon</i>
11	NPC Adventuring Party
12	<i>Very rare</i>

You can also add in a “Number Appearing” column to the **Barren Hills Random Encounter** table if you wanted to, but I tend to use the number appearing the monster

entry gives me (again, this may vary depending on the edition you are using).

Once I have the things I know in the area on the table, I can look at my creature lists for temperate hills to complete the table.

I make a list of likely creatures, adding more than I need. I then start adding them into the table corresponding to their frequency (common, uncommon, rare, or very rare).

Below is the completed **Barren Hills Random Encounter** table.

**Table: Barren Hills Random Encounters**

2D6	Encounter
2	Wyvern
3	Choke Creeper
4	Giant Centipedes
5	Goblins
6	Prospectors (D6 in number)
7	Herd animals (goats, sheep)
8	Orc Raiders
9	Wolves
10	Giant Snake
11	NPC Adventuring Party
12	Aarakocra

### **Additions You Can Make**

There are two additions you can add to this table to make it a little more realistic and give a little more variety.

## Night/Day

Having two different results based on whether the encounter was during the day or at night-time can add a lot of realism to your encounters and also allow you to add in more variety into the one table, expanding it, as seen in the **Day & Night Barren Hills** table below.

**Table: Day & Night Barren Hills**

Day	Night	Encounter
2	2	Wyvern
3	-	Choke Creeper
4	-	Giant Centipedes
5	3-4	Goblins
6	-	Prospectors (D6 in number)
7	-	Herd animals (goats, sheep)
8	5-6	Orc Raiders
9	7-8	Wolves
-	9	Black Bear
-	10	Ghoul
-	11	Giant Boar
10	-	Giant Snake
11	-	NPC Adventuring Party
12	12	Aarakocra

## Rolling Doubles

If you roll doubles, it can mean that two creatures are encountered simultaneously.

For example, if on the first roll you roll 6 (two 3s), you would get D6 Prospectors, but due to you rolling a double, you roll again and get 8 (a 5 & 3), which is Orc Raiders. Combining these, the party could stumble

upon some prospectors fending off a group of orc raiders.

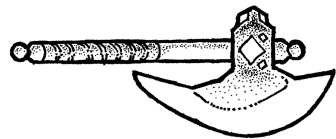
## Adding Another Die Type

As shown in the article *2D6 Tables* in this issue, you can create a table with different odds by replacing one of the D6s with a D8.

This will give you a range from 2-14 and have a plateaued bell curve. This will alter the chances of each encounter type as shown in the **Chance of Results** table.

**Table: Chance of Results**

D8+D6	Encounter	% Chance*
2	Very rare	2.8
3	Rare	4.2
4	Uncommon	6.3
5	Uncommon	8.3
6	Common	10.4
7	Common	12.5
8	Common	12.5
9	Common	12.5
10	Common	10.4
11	Uncommon	8.3
12	Uncommon	6.3
13	Rare	4.1
14	Very rare	2.8





# Drinker Beware!

## Cursed Potions



When a potion is found there is a 5% (or 1-in-20) that it is cursed or spoiled (see Issue ?? of d12 Monthly for information on spoiled potions). Unless otherwise stated, the cursed potion lasts D6 hours.

**Table: Cursed Potions**

D20	Cursed Potion
1	The drinker takes a full round to turn to dust
2	<i>Anything</i> the drinker touches begins to rapidly decay or rot, causing D10 damage per touch
3	The drinker ages 10-40 (D4) years in a round, permanently
4	The drinker is slowed (half movement, 1 attack every second round)
5	The drinker loses the ability to speak for D6 days
6	The drinker reduces in size by 10-60% (D6). This has a 1-in-20 chance of being permanent

- 7 An exact duplicate of the drinker appears, but is of opposite alignment
- 8 The drinker is compelled to charge into combat for the next D6 combats
- 9 Some time in the next 24 hours, the drinker becomes ethereal
- 10 The drinker will attract all physical attacks from any enemies for the next 24 hours
- 11 The drinker instantly teleports up to D6 miles away
- 12 The drinker permanently ceases to understand a random language they knew
- 13 The character starts to levitate at a speed of 10-ft/round & can only stop if a barrier prevents it
- 14 Any healing given to the drinker will inflict that much damage instead
- 15 The drinker become permanently invisible
- 16 For the next 24 hours, any damage inflicted by the drinker will be inflicted on themselves
- 17 The drinker is confused (acts for D6 rounds as though a Confusion spell has been cast)
- 18 The drinker will permanently believe all illusions to be real (auto saving throw fail)
- 19 The drinker has a 20-ft aura around them, causing anyone in range to receive -2 to all rolls
- 20 The drinker must tell the truth for D6 weeks - they cannot lie

# I Search The Body

## Individual Treasure

Most treasure tables focus on treasure that is very PC-centric. That is, the monsters conveniently have the types of treasure the characters' desire. In most cases the creatures encountered will have treasure that is meaningful to *them*.

Below are tables to use for individual creatures the PCs defeat, based on type. Change or add to them, as desired

**Table: Treasure for Humanoids & Giants**

Humanoids	Giants	Treasure
1	1	D6 Shiny stones (1-in-6 chance of being valuable (see Gems))
2	2	D4 Trophy bones or teeth/tusks
3	-	Battle-marked weapons (notches carved into them)
4	3	Wooden tribal totem
5	-	Beast hide armour (AC 7)
6	-	Talisman that symbolises rage
7	4	Goblet made from a skull
8	-	Kit containing war paint
9	5	A necklace adorned with the teeth or claws of defeated foes
10	6	Ornate chains forged to show how many battles the creature has been in
11	7	Jewelled crown,

		bracelet, ring, collar (valued at 10-60GP)
12	8	Horned brass helm
13	9	Rune-carved stones for luck & protection (non-magical)
14	10	Dragonhide banner, cloak, cape (gain +1 to all saving throws Vs. breath weapon)
15	-	Blood-stained map to other treasures or places to explore
16	11	Warriors' journal with entries & maps, written in the crude tongue of creature
17	-	Cursed relic (use random curse on whomever carries it)
18	12	A small shamanic idol
-	13	Tribal tapestry
19	14	A horn made from a mighty beast, capable of producing deafening roars
-	15	A tablet etched with the stories and legends of the giant's people
-	16	A telescope
20	17	Random coins: D6GP, D10SP, D20CP
-	18	Gems: 2D10 x 10 value
-	19	An amulet said to be forged from the essence of a fallen titan
-	20	A fragment from a homeland long lost, preserved by the giant as a symbol of remembrance

**Table: Treasure Based on Creature Type**

Fey	Elementals	Treasure
1	1	Vials with dew collected from rare flowers
2	2	A locket containing a sliver of moonlight
3	-	A flute that releases enchanting melodies carried by the wind
4	3	An acorn believed to hold the dreams of woodland creature
5	4	A gemstone that glows with the ethereal light of distant stars
6	-	A crown adorned with eternal blossoms that never fade
7	-	A goblet that is carved from a rare wood and has a healing effect when water is drunk from it
8	5	A cloak woven from vibrant leaves, offering camouflage in the forest
9	6	A small harp that produces mesmerising tunes when played
10	7	A mirror that reflects the their true inner-self of whoever gazes into it
11	8	An amulet containing a thorn from a magical rose, granting the wearer minor resilience.
12	-	A lantern that emits a soft, glowing light that repels malevolent spirits
13	-	A shawl made from leaves that carries whispered secrets
14	9	A feather from a magical songbird, used to craft

		arrows that strike true
15	-	A veil woven from stars, providing glimpses into the fey realms
16	-	A pouch containing seeds that grow into plants from fey realms
17	10	A dagger made from the finest elven steel
18	11	Smooth, glowing stones collected from the banks of enchanted streams
19	-	A necklace strung with acorns, representing events in the fey's life
20	-	A fan made from the feathers of various birds, used to communicate through a secret language of fluttering
-	12	D6 random gemstones
-	13	Silver or gold coins from a long-dead nation
-	14	A quill made from a feather plucked from a mythical creature
-	15	A satchel filled with dried herbs, petals, and roots, essential for brewing soothing teas
-	16	Colourful ribbons used in dances that celebrate the changing seasons
-	17	A smooth stone found at the heart of a tranquil glade
-	18	A pine cone with a pleasing scent
-	19	A journal filled with dried leaves
-	20	A stick of incense made from the elemental's essence

## An Interview

### Jon from *Tale of the Manticore* Podcast



For those who don't know, Jon creates a podcast called *Tale of the Manticore*, which is a part-actual play and part-audio drama.

I sent him some questions about his podcast, which is currently in its second season.

You can listen to both seasons for free:  
<https://taleofthemanticore.podbean.com/>

**Q. What made you decide to create a podcast in this style (instead of something else TTRPG-related)?**

I went with the hybrid model (half actual play, half audiodrama) after being inspired by *The Iron Realm* podcast. During the pandemic, & before I started the podcast, I still hadn't come back to the hobby (I was a deep-freeze guy) and so I was looking for things that I could use in place of actual games: novels, movies and podcasts. I found *The Iron Realm* by mere chance and it brought back this flood of nostalgia. I just loved it - I can remember feeling sad when

I caught up to the current releases and had to wait for the next episode. When I decided to make my own cast, I used *The Iron Realm* as direct inspiration. I tried to take what I liked best about that show, amplify it, and discard the rest. To me, the best feature was the use of segments with dedicated music - this kept the information perpetually bite-sized, organised, and fresh. Switching to and fro between player and DM was brilliant, I thought, and became the core format for the show I ended up making.

**Q. Why did you choose B/X as your ruleset?**

Pre-return-to-hobby, my play experience had ended with 2e D&D, so I might have gone with that, except the audio medium is not really suited for 'crunch'. I made the decision to use B/X mostly because it's so simple and leans towards rulings over rules. There's other reasons, too. Since I grew up with B/X, it holds a special magical place in my heart and I thought my love for that system (and the nostalgia) might bleed through into my narrative. Finally, I knew it so well, I didn't need to stop and check things very often, which facilitated the flow of writing & playing.

**Q. Who is your favourite character you have created so far?**

This is a very tough one, but I think, if I had to choose, it might be Umura, from Season 1. I'm not entirely sure why I would choose her, either. She arguably went through more than any of the others - she suffered at the hands of her goblin captors in a way I never really talked about in the pod, but

was inspired by the Goblin Slayer manga, if that's meaningful to you. She was an extremely flawed individual, but she got to have a redemption arc that, as a player, I found really satisfying. Also, she's a wizard who could cast 'lightning bolt' and that is just cool as hell.

**Q. How do you go about creating what happens in the story?**

When dice do not determine what happens, as with combat and stuff like that, I use DM fiat. In 99% of cases, there's a logical outcome given what has already taken place, and the more stuff that has happened in the past, the easier it is to know what will occur next. The early episodes are the toughest part to play and write in this regard, because the snowball needs to gather some size before it will roll on its own, if that makes sense. When there are dozens of data points, it's quite simple and I am usually 'chasing' the story, meaning I can barely type fast enough to keep up with events. In the beginning, it is far more arbitrary and off the cuff - and this can create continuity problems or cause me to paint myself into a corner. It's tricky, but I can honestly say: there is no such thing as writer's block with this format.

**Q. What tools do you use, and what's your favourite to use?**

I don't use many, mostly because I wasn't aware of them when the show launched and I'm careful not to complicate the format by adding new things. The most exciting tool I know of is Mythic (I did end up using it once, just for the sake of doing

so, really) & I use Mythic with my live table group all the time.

I created a tool called *Pendulum* that I used for Season 2. It's a world-builder that I made specifically to address the problem I hinted at above. If I can knock out some basic lore concerning the history of a place, it makes life easier during those initial episodes where I'm building data points to keep everything logical and to (mostly) avoid contradicting myself.

I have a few software tools that I absolutely love and highly recommend.

*Dungeonscrawl.com* is free, and great for mapping interiors. *Inkarnate* & *Wonderdraft* are powerful tools for overland maps. There's a couple other helpers I use, like keeping an actual calendar of events, which I refer to constantly. Likewise, I have a master 'level-up' chart that shows when each character will advance to the next level. Without these tools, I'd forget.

**Q. Where would you like to see Tale of the Manticore go? What would be a "success" for you?**

This is the toughest question to answer, because truly, I'm not sure. I know what success 'isn't' though. My goal is not to generate money. I'm interested in reaching as many listeners as possible. And an even more important goal is to make something that really is my best work - something to be proud of. Ultimately, I'm not sure there's a point where I would sigh contentedly and say, "I've arrived." Maybe, like with a real game of D&D, there is no end.

# Random Encounter

## Monster of the Month

Each month I will bring you a new monster for you to pit against your PCs.

### Thud

*Medium Humanoid*

**Climate/Terrain:** Any Underground

**Frequency:** Rare

**Organisation:** Singular, Scoff (D4+2), Repast (2D4+4)

**Activity Cycle:** Any

**Diet:** N/A

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** By size (increase HD)

**Languages:** All

—

**Armour Class:** 15 (Natural armour)

**Hit Dice (HP):** 2 (12)

**Move:** 30 (12)

**Abilities:** S 12 C 14 D 8 I 9 W 10 Ch 8

**Attacks:** 2 x Claws; 1 x Bite

**Damage:** D6+2 (Claw) or D12+1 (Bite)

**Morale:** Medium or Very High (if food is nearby)

Thuds are ever-ravenous, hairy, potato-shaped underground-dwelling humanoids who act only to fill their bellies.

### Habitat

**Underground Dwelling:** Thuds live exclusively underground, creating intricate tunnel systems and chamber networks where they reside.



They prefer habitats with ample space for burrowing and creating storage areas for their food.

**Darkness Adaptation:** Thuds have evolved to thrive in darkness, with sensitive vision (darkvision 120-ft) and echolocation aiding them in navigating their subterranean homes.

### Society

**Food-Centric Culture:** Thuds' society revolves entirely around their insatiable hunger. All their activities are centred on finding, consuming, and storing food.

**Cooperative Tunnelling:** Thuds work together to create and maintain their underground homes, using their tunnelling abilities to expand their habitat.

**Food Hoarding:** Their primary motivation is their own hunger. Given this, Thuds tend not to share food with their communities, often having individual food stores in secret

locations to ensure their own survival during lean times.

**Simple Hierarchical Structure:** Thuds typically have a basic hierarchy with leaders chosen based on their ability to find and provide food.

**Limited Communication:** Their communication is mainly through grunts, gestures, and simple vocalisations, focused on conveying information about food sources.

## Ecology

**Subterranean Diet:** Thuds consume various underground flora and fauna, including fungi, insects, roots, tubers, and other subterranean creatures.

**Ecosystem Impact:** Their burrowing and tunnelling activities can have a significant impact on the underground ecosystem, altering soil composition and potentially creating habitats for other creatures.

**Nocturnal Behaviour:** Thuds are primarily nocturnal due to their sensitivity to light. If they lair close to the surface, they only emerge from their tunnels during the darkest hours to forage for food.

**Predators and Threats:** Thuds have little to fear from other creatures as they are bitter tasting and are more likely to end up eating the hunter.

## Special Abilities

**Insatiable Hunger:** Thuds possess an unending appetite and can eat voraciously without becoming full. If they kill a creature in combat it is 75% likely they will start to eat that opponent immediately.

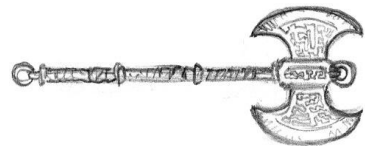
**Tunnelling:** They are skilled at burrowing through the earth using their large mouths and sharp claws, creating intricate networks of tunnels and chambers underground.

**Senses:** Thuds have developed keen eyesight and hearing to help navigate the darkness of their subterranean habitats. They are only surprised on a 1-in-8 (+8 to awareness skills).

**Enhanced Smell:** They possess an acute sense of smell, which helps them locate food sources from miles away.

**Rough Skin:** Their skin is coarse and hairy, giving them natural armour.

**Clawed Limbs:** They have sturdy, clawed hands adapted for digging and fighting. If both claws attacks are successful, the Thud gains an automatic bite attack as it tries to eat its opponent.



## Want More?

Looking for more adventure? Back issues are available to download on [my website](#).

### More Tables!

September will also feature multiple tables using the ideas laid out in this issue, so check throughout the month for additional random tables you can use in your campaign.

**Web Enhancements** are articles that for whatever reason didn't make it into the zine. Usually 2-3 are posted on the website for each issue, published throughout the month for that issue.

<https://yumdm.com/>



Scan the QR code above to be taken to my **website** where you can find even more content including blog posts, downloads, and more!



## Next Month

It's our 3rd annual Halloween issue in ~~Oct~~ Spooktober and this time it's personal! Well, not really, but we do have some spooky articles & ideas for you.



Have you heard of the traveller? Are you sure you want to? Better hide in the carnival... oh, wait. Not the best place to hide!

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Random Encounters



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