

F2023

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Monthly

DOWNTIME ISSUE

Issue 41
November, 2024

FREE VERSION

DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU
AREN'T ADVENTURING

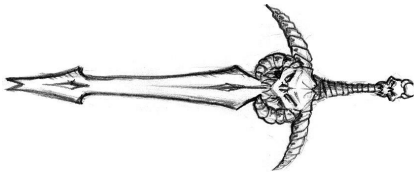
MANAGING DOWNTIME

GET THE MOST OUT OF
DOWNTIME

Make the most of your time

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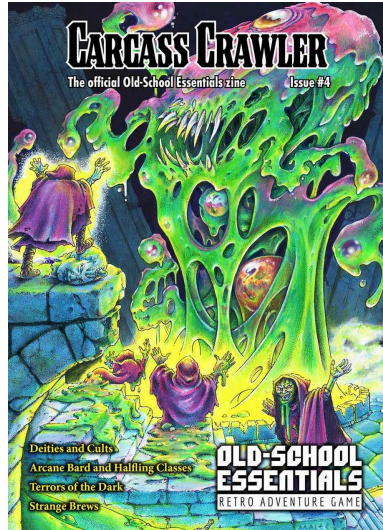
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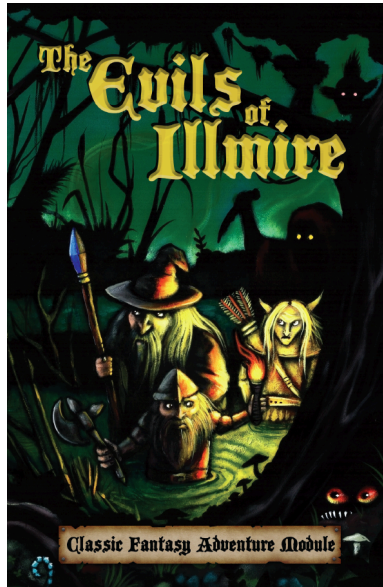
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[A Sandbox Adventure!](#)

Downtime Issue

Downtime has become one of my favourite parts of fantasy roleplaying.

Why?

Because it adds so much to the game, the characters, the campaign, and the world.

It gives players breathers between epic quests and adventures. The GM can also use downtime for great roleplaying opportunities, fulfilling character's goals, and worldbuilding.

In fact, I am looking at rules for managing downtime as the main thing the characters do, adventuring only part-time.

But in the meantime, enjoy these rules and inspiration for developing your own downtime activities, whether you play it out at the table, or between sessions.

Not every player will be into it, but those who are (like me) will be forever grateful for being given an opportunity to delve into some downtime activities.

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM

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

(Tiers are available to receive a physical copy).



One Day At A Time

Daily Life of Adventurers

There are so many undertakings an adventurer can choose to do between adventures.

Downtime works best when you are running a sandbox-type campaign instead of just a series of adventures strung together. Although you can rest between adventures quite easily.

By allowing downtime between adventures or exploration, you can give your players ample roleplaying opportunities as well as allowing them to see the machinations of your world.

What is Downtime?

Downtime is simply that: time spent by the characters that doesn't involve slaying dragons and saving princesses. In other words, time between adventures.

Using downtime can have many advantages, some are listed below.

Gold

Downtime is a chance for the characters to spend some (or all) of their hard-earned wealth.

Characters and their money can be parted in many ways - via business dealings, gambling, shonky deals, carousing, and many more.

Allowing Players to Breathe

A break between adventuring allows the players to bask in their characters successes (or wallow in their failures).

It gives them, and the campaign, a pause to reassess their priorities and ponder on what to do next.

Worldbuilding

Downtime is also a chance for GMs to show off all that worldbuilding they have been doing - giving players more information about it (when connected to what they want to do), and give them a chance to interact with all those NPCs you have made but never got to use.

Roleplaying

If your campaign has too much combat or exploration, and not enough social interaction, then this is the time to balance the scales.

Let the PCs interact with the locals, to ask about a recent rumour, gain insider information, even hear about future adventures.

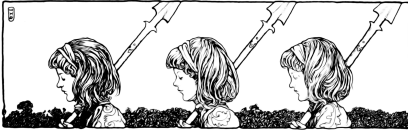
The Best Downtime

Downtime works best when you are running a continuous or sandbox-style campaign where you are keeping track of time.

This time-tracking over days, months, and even years is important as it allows you to track what characters are doing, and how long it will take them.

It's All In A Day's Work

How to Manage Downtime



Downtime can be handled a number of ways:

1. If everyone is keen, you can play out downtime at the table as part of the normal gaming process.
2. Or you can play it out via chat or other means *between* gaming sessions.

There are several ways to make downtime more interesting and tie it to your current campaign, and campaign world.

This is something I recommend you do when running downtime as it keeps it relevant and connected to your game and world.

Make Downtime Meaningful

Downtime should serve as an opportunity for players to interact with the world in unique ways, establish connections, and pursue personal goals.

Rewards for downtime activities could include:

- Gain new skills or proficiencies
- Making helpful connections
- Have a new item or spell (from crafting them)
- Gain lore or other information from research
- Gain friendships, rivals, or misadventures from carousing

Connect Downtime to the World

Use downtime to deepen the players' connection to your setting. This can be achieved via the following:

- PCs can build or invest in local businesses
- They could join factions within the campaign world
- They could establish strongholds - either building them or using structures they rid of monstrous infestations

Introduce Random Events

To keep downtime dynamic, add unpredictability with random tables or encounters. Such entries could contain:

- A rival challenging the PC's efforts
- An NPC from the PC's past showing up with a favor or grudge
- Natural disasters or economic shifts affecting investments
- Intrigue involving local powers or factions

Encourage Player Creativity

Allow players to propose unique downtime activities. Old-school gaming thrives on improvisation and player-driven narratives. Some examples:

- Establishing a secret society or spy network
- Writing books or crafting songs to gain fame
- Training apprentices to leave a legacy

Tie Downtime to XP and Advancement

Reward characters for their downtime efforts with XP, gold, or other tangible benefits.

For example, characters could earn XP for investing in their communities or resolving local problems, or significant downtime achievements might unlock new resources, followers, or titles.

Streamline with Rules or Systems

If you want more structure, use or adapt downtime rules from existing systems.

You could assign a cost in time and gold for specific tasks, with checks for outcomes (e.g., a proficiency check to determine crafting success).

Or, you could create custom tables for results of activities like carousing, investments, or research, with adjustments to the roll based on a character's ability scores.

Downtime as a Springboard

Use downtime to plant seeds for future adventures. Downtime can even be used as hooks for your next adventure.

A few ideas:

- A player's business dealings might uncover a smuggling ring
- Faction work might lead to political intrigue or rivalries (especially rival factions)
- Research might reveal the location of a long-lost artifact or dungeon

Remember, by making downtime engaging and significant, you encourage players to think deeply about their characters' place in the world, fostering immersion and creativity.

Not For Everyone

Not every player will love downtime. Some just want to roll some dice, explore dank dungeons, and kill themselves a dragon.

And that's fine.

But for those who do enjoy immersing themselves into the campaign world and fleshing out their character to be more than just dragon-slayers, then downtime offers you a way to keep those players happy.

And you can always create new sessions for them or handle it between sessions.

We Didn't Start The Fire

Campaign Events



Your campaign world should ideally continue changing regardless of what the characters are doing. And these events are great to introduce during downtime.

Major and Minor events throughout a game year is a great way to showcase this.

Kingdoms may fall or change leaders, peasants may revolt, freak weather events may strike, and many other events may change the course of your world and add interesting hooks for your PCs.

A list of events is listed below for both yearly and monthly events. The former generally have more of an impact and are larger in scope, while the latter are smaller in scope.

Table: Annuals Events

D20	Annual Event
1	Great Storm
2	Plague's Passing

- 3 War
- 4 Bountiful Harvest
- 5 Warlord's Ascent
- 6 Religious Event
- 7 Foreign Power's Demands
- 8 Prophecy
- 9 Important Birth
- 10 Important Death
- 11 Natural Disaster
- 12 Famine
- 13 Marriage
- 14 Political Plot
- 15 Uprising
- 16 Religious Fervour
- 17 Calling of the Clans
- 18 Cabal
- 19 Discovery
- 20 Roll Twice

The Great Storm

A massive storm sweeps across the land, disrupting trade, damaging settlements, and altering river courses or coastlines. Entire regions must rebuild, and adventurers may uncover ruins or secrets unearthed by the storm.

Plague's Passing

A disease spreads through the land, devastating towns and trade. Remedies, cures, and quarantines spark tension, and opportunists exploit the chaos.

The base chance for catching a disease is doubled.

War

Two major rival factions, nations, or city-states declare war, dragging smaller regions into the conflict. Recruitment, espionage, and supply raids dominate the year's activities.

Bountiful Harvest

A rare, exceptionally fertile year leads to an overabundance of crops and game, encouraging festivals but also inviting banditry and greed from neighboring regions.

Warlord's Ascent

A charismatic leader or powerful faction or racial group rises, threatening the balance of power in the region. Lords and factions scramble to form alliances or topple this new threat.

Religious Event

A major religious event shakes the land, sparking religious fervor, exploration of the church, and battles over beliefs - between factions within the church, or with other religions.

Foreign Power's Demands

A distant monarch or empire asserts influence over the region, demanding tribute, military support, or fealty. Local rulers must navigate diplomacy, rebellion, or submission.

Prophecy

An ancient prophecy is uncovered and spreads throughout the land. News of long lost treasures, forgotten kingdom, or impending doom abound, setting adventurers and factions on a race to uncover the truth.

Important Birth

A child is born who has great significance. If born into a noble family, celebrations are in order. This birth could be linked to a prophecy (see above).

Important Death

Someone of great importance has died, whether by natural causes, or by foul play. This causes a time of mourning (if the person was liked by the populous). This could also lead to chaos in the regions as various factions vie for control.

Natural Disaster

An earthquake, flood, landslide, or other natural disaster causes major damage and a great deal of death in the region.

Famine

Famine rips through the land, causing hunger and death. This lasts for D4+1 months. During this time populations drop by 10-30%, food prices increase by 10-100%, and bandits roam the region looking for food.

Marriage

A union between two important individuals is held. This could be between noble families, rival factions, or between Nations. It has a profound effect on the relations between the two groups.

Political Plot

A major and world-altering plot is underway. This could be discovered previously, or it could surprise those in charge. It could topple governments, leaders of major factions, or any other major influence on the region.

This could lead to an uprising (see below).

Uprising

The peasants or similar revolt. This could be to gain independence, lower taxes, due to natural or man-made events, or to overthrow the government. This will occur in a major and influential part of the region.

Religious Fervour

A religion, or a sect therein, creates havoc in the region. This could be new edicts, a crusade against a particular enemy or rival, or a mass excommunication.

This could have great ramifications for characters or major NPCs who are followers of the religion.

Calling of the Clans

Scattered tribes, humanoids, or nomadic groups create an alliance, and build plans for the coming year. This could lead to raids, pillaging, or war as the aligned clans try to dominate the region.

Cabal

A cabal of sorcerers, witches, or mystics gathers in a hidden location to discuss their intentions - whether to protect, corrupt, or disrupt the region. This could lead to curses, an increase in spellcraft, or an

individual, settlement or region being targeted.

Discovery

Important information, document, or artefact has been discovered - either the item itself or its location. Many factions are interested in this item and mobilise to acquire it.

Monthly Events

These occur once per month and have a lower impact than annual events, many of them being local.

Simply roll on the *Monthly Events* table and then roll a D30 to determine the day of the month it occurs (assuming your months have 30 days each).

Table: Monthly Events

D20	Monthly Event
1	An Arrival
2	Missing Local
3	Mystical Occurrence
4	Stranger
5	Local Disaster
6	Celebration
7	Fire
8	Flood
9	Bad Weather
10	A Beast
11	Faction Dispute
12	Discovery

- 13 Blight
- 14 Lost Artefact
- 15 Curse
- 16 Contests
- 17 Haunting
- 18 Excessive Taxes
- 19 Incursion
- 20 VIP Visit

An Arrival

A merchant caravan, pilgrims, or an important noble visit a settlement, bringing rare goods, exotic stories, or potential trouble.

Missing Local

An important resident disappears under mysterious circumstances, sparking rumors of kidnapers, monsters, or personal secrets.

Mystical Occurrence

On the night of the full moon, or other significant event, a supernatural event occurs. This could be when wild animals become aggressive, or an ancient curse reawakens.

Stranger

A peculiar visitor arrives, stirring curiosity and suspicion. They could be a fugitive, noble in disguise, or agent of a larger faction.

Local Disaster

A local dam, building, bridge, or other structure is damaged or destroyed, creating

urgency for repair or evacuation. This could also lead to deaths and travel delays.

Celebration

A local feast day, market day, or other festival is being held. This attracts locals and those from surrounding areas. This could be a regular event or simply a one-off.

Fire

A blaze sweeps through nearby farmland or forest, requiring a quick response and could reveal hidden ruins, secrets, or creatures.

Bad Weather

Horrible and destructive weather engulfs a small region, destroying crops, buildings, and killing some of the residents.

A Beast

A legendary predator appears in the area, terrorizing livestock or travelers. Local hunters seek help to end the menace.

Faction Dispute

Two factions or guilds clash over territory, goods, or contracts, threatening to escalate into violence.

Discovery

Locals report strange happenings during their duties - uncovering a hidden cave, stumbling upon a crime scene, or awakening a slumbering danger.

Blight

Crops in a small area are afflicted with rot or pestilence. The cause could be

mundane, such as sabotage or disease, or magical in origin.

Lost Artefact

A relic or heirloom vanishes from its keeper, and its recovery becomes a matter of pride, superstition, or survival.

Curse

A curse descends on the lands, spoiling crops or waterways, locals go missing, or other strange events occur. Residents grow desperate and angry, leading to calls for investigation or appeasement.

Contests

A series of contests occur. This could be part of a festival or celebration or perhaps a friendly rivalry between settlements or factions. These are held over D4 days.

Haunting

A local place has become haunted. This could be a building, grove, or other place where the veil between life and death is thin, or a certain wicked event took place.

Excessive Taxes

The local or region's government has raised taxes, which is putting pressure on locals. This could be for a number of reasons such as greed, mismanagement, or to raise an army.

Incursion

An incursion in the local lands is underway. This could be from humanoids, bandits, or something more sinister.

VIP Visit

Someone of importance is visiting the local area. This could be a noble, ruler, a famous bard, or a delegation from a neighbouring region.

The Legend of Log

The cartoon below was kindly supplied by [Legends of Log](#). On their website you can find more of these cartoons all about the greatest hero of all: Log!

You can also find comic books, coins, buttons, and much more!



Solo Spotlight

Kickstarting a Solo Campaign



Sometimes it's difficult to start a solo campaign. Listed below are some ideas to kickstart your next solo fantasy adventure.

Choose one or roll a 1D20 to determine randomly.

These can be used for a brand new campaign, or as a new adventure after some downtime.

The Disappearance

Someone close to the character - family, a mentor, or a friend - vanishes without a trace, leaving cryptic clues behind.

The Heirloom's Call

An old family heirloom begins to exhibit strange properties, drawing the character into a mystery tied to their ancestry.

The Stranger's Warning

A dying stranger stumbles into the character's camp or town, delivering an urgent warning about an imminent threat.

The Unpaid Debt

A debt collector comes for a deceased loved one's unpaid dues, revealing the family's ties to a dangerous group or mystery.

The Prophecy Foretold

A seer or oracle declares the character is the key to preventing (or causing) an impending disaster.

The Burning Farmstead

The character's home or a nearby settlement is destroyed in a mysterious attack, leaving them to investigate or seek vengeance.

The Wayward Map

A chance discovery of an ancient map or letter sets the character on a quest to uncover treasure, a lost city, or a forgotten secret.

The Bandit King's Challenge

A notorious bandit lord threatens the area, and the character is drawn into the conflict as a victim, hero, or reluctant ally.

The Beast in the Hills

Local livestock and travelers are being attacked by a monstrous predator, and the character is hired or compelled to track it down.

The Forgotten Pact

An old bargain between the character's family or village and a powerful entity (fey, demon, or otherwise) is suddenly invoked.

The Black Caravan

A mysterious caravan arrives in the area, bringing strange goods, unsettling rumors, and veiled threats.

The Silent Plague

A strange illness begins to spread, and the character is asked to find its source or deliver a crucial remedy.

The Crypt Opens

A long-sealed tomb or crypt is disturbed, unleashing undead or other dangers, and the character is hired or compelled to stop it.

The Exiled Lord

A disgraced noble seeks refuge in the area, bringing intrigue and conflict as pursuers arrive to settle old scores.

The Lost Pilgrims

A group of pilgrims disappears en route to a holy site, and the character is sent to investigate their fate.

The Relic's Arrival

A rare artifact arrives in town, attracting the attention of thieves, cultists, or rival factions.

The Whispering Woods

Strange occurrences in a nearby forest draw the character to investigate mysterious lights, eerie sounds, or wandering creatures.

The Feuding Factions

Two local groups (guilds, noble houses, or criminal organizations) escalate their rivalry, drawing the character into their schemes.

The Storm's Wake

After a devastating storm, a wrecked ship, ancient ruin, or magical anomaly is uncovered, setting the stage for an adventure.

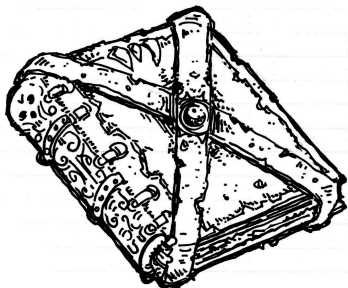
The Distant Summons

The character receives a letter or magical summons from a faraway place, calling them to claim an inheritance, fulfill a promise, or aid an old friend.



Spellcraft

Spells for Downtime



Some spells, especially those of higher level, take longer to cast, or are not meant to be cast in the middle of combat or even an adventure.

Characters could be pressed for time, or just may not think to cast some of these spells at the time.

The spells below are perfect for casting in between adventures, during downtime. These are taken from the AD&D PHB.

Cleric Spells

Level 1

Detect Magic

This can be used on items discovered during an adventure.

Level 2

Detect Charm

You can use this to detect any NPC that you may suspect of being under a charm.

Know Alignment

Make sure you are dealing with the right people.

Speak with Animals

Understand a local area if you are new to it, or simply gain knowledge of who has been here recently.

Animate Dead

This could be used by a necromancer to create undead servants.

Continual Light

Light up your room, a workshop, laboratory, or other area with permanent light.

Cure Blindness & Cure Disease

Both of these spells could be used to help the needy or deal with an outbreak of disease.

Glyph of Warding

Create a magical trap for any thief or unwelcome visitor in your room or other sensitive area.

Remove Curse

Another one to negate the effects of an evil or unwanted curse.

Level 4

Detect Lie

Make sure those you are dealing with are on the level.

Divination

Use this to gain information on a place you want to visit.

Speak with Plants

Similar to *Speak with Animals*, this can give you much needed information.

Tongues

Easily converse with foreigners you have dealings with.

Level 5

Atonement

Use this between adventures to rid someone of any magical deeds they have on them.

Commune

Use this to gain information from your deity or their agents.

Plane Shift

Travel the Planes with ease using this spell.

Quest

Send someone on a quest for you.

Level 6

Aerial Servant

Use this creature to complete tasks for you.

Magic-Users

Level 1

Charm Person

Use this spell to befriend those who may be plotting against you, or just to make transactions go smoothly.

Comprehend Languages

Use this to understand more about scrolls, maps, and other items found while adventuring.

Find Familiar

Find a familiar for yourself between adventures.

Mending

Repair items that were damaged on adventure.

Level 2

ESP

Using this to probe the thoughts of those who you have dealings with.

Forget

Use this on those who you don't want to remember you or a particular encounter.

Magic Mouth

Use this as a warning to those who trespass on your property.

Wizard Lock

Lock up your valuables or access to sensitive areas.

Level 3

Explosive Runes

Protect your things.

Level 4

Dig

Use this to make excavation work a lot easier and quicker.

Level 5

Contact Other Plane

Find out some answers from another Plane.

Level 6

Enchant an Item

Use this spell to create permanent magical items.

Legend Lore

Use this to gain information about a person, place, or thing.

Move Earth

Like *Dig*, this spells can take the hard work out of construction activities.

Level 7

Limited Wish

Use this to alter or create something you want.

Simulacrum

Use this to create a duplicate of someone.

Level 8

Clone

Create an exact double of someone.

Permanency

Use this spell to make another spell permanent.

Symbol

Use this to deter thieves and other interlopers.

Level 9

Wish

As per Limited Wish, above.



Adventure Location

Abode of Sagelord Rhystros

Perched atop a weathered hillock deep in the Freelands, the abode of Sagelord Rhystros is a curious mixture of humble practicality and mysterious grandeur.

From a distance, the dwelling appears as a sprawling stone structure, its uneven walls blending almost seamlessly with the rugged terrain.

Ivy creeps across its facade, a patchwork of vibrant green against the dull gray of weathered stones quarried from the nearby hills.

A single ancient oak rises from the courtyard, its gnarled branches spreading like a wizened sentinel over the abode.

The Approach

The road leading to the sage's home is barely more than a trail, winding through rolling hills and scrubby woods.

Faded runestones mark the way, their weathered glyphs warning of traps and curses that await those with ill intent.

The final ascent is marked by an arched stone gateway adorned with sigils glowing faintly in the dusk.

The Interior

The main hall is a library, its walls lined with bookshelves reaching all the way to the high, arched ceiling.

The books exude the comforting scent of old parchment, their leather bindings cracked with age.

A spiral staircase of wrought iron winds upward from the library, leading to the private quarters and the observatory.

This upper chamber is a marvel - a circular room with walls of enchanted glass, offering an unbroken view of the heavens.

Here, Sagelord Rhystros is said to spend most nights charting the movements of celestial bodies.

The Sage's Presence

Rhystros rarely appears in person, though his presence is palpable. Visitors report a sensation of being watched. Servants - silent and efficient - attend to guests, their faces obscured by hooded robes.

When the sage does appear, it is said he moves with an air of quiet gravity, his long white beard and piercing blue eyes lending him an almost otherworldly demeanor.

Secrets and Rumors

Legends swirl around the abode like mist.

Some say the tower houses a portal to another plane, while others whisper of a forbidden artifact hidden in the depths. It is rumored that the abode itself is alive, shifting its rooms and corridors to confound intruders or to protect its master's secrets.

Class Acts

NPCs to Visit

Characters will need to visit a number of NPCs during downtime, and these are listed below.

This list should help you realise who you will need to create before the next downtime session.

Craftspeople & Artisans

Blacksmith – Forge and repair weapons, armor, and tools.

Armorer – Specializes in crafting and fitting armor.

Bowyer/Fletcher – Creates and repairs bows, arrows, and crossbows.

Carpenter – Constructs buildings, furniture, and siege equipment.

Leatherworker – Creates leather armor, pouches, and other goods.

Tailor/Seamstress – Repairs and makes clothing, cloaks, and padded armor.

Jeweler – Appraises, crafts, and repairs jewelry and small decorative items.

Potter – Crafts pottery, tiles, and clay vessels.

Glassblower – Makes delicate glassware and alchemical equipment.

Stonemason – Builds and repairs stone structures and sculptures.

Cobbler – Repairs and crafts boots, shoes, and other footwear.

Merchants & Traders

General Storekeeper – Sells adventuring supplies, tools, and basic gear.

Market Vendor – Sells fresh produce, meats, or imported goods.

Herbalist – Sells medicinal herbs, potions, and ingredients.

Book Dealer – Offers books, maps, and scrolls (both mundane and magical).

Moneylender – Loans money, exchanges currency, and offers financial advice.

Fence – Buys and sells stolen or illegal goods.

Shipwright – Sells or repairs boats and ships.

Animal Trader – Sells horses, pack animals, and exotic creatures.

Healers & Mystics

Apothecary – Prepares potions, salves, and remedies.

Chirurgion – Treats injuries, performs surgeries, and handles long-term care.

Healer – Offers magical or mundane healing services.

Cleric/Priest – Provides spiritual guidance, blessings, and divine magic.

Academics & Scholars

Scribe – Copies documents, writes letters, and translates texts.

Librarian – Oversees a library and offers access to historical or magical knowledge.

Historian – Specializes in local or regional history.

Wizard/Mage – Teaches spells, crafts magical items, or performs rituals.

Alchemist – Sells potions, chemicals, and performs experiments.



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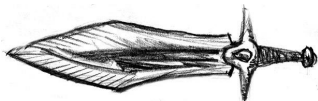
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Next Month

Next month is the Christmas issue! It will focus on holidays and festivals in your campaign world. Lose yourself in the holiday session in real life and in your campaign world.



Spend time creating special holidays, festivals, and other events for your campaign world from the ground up.

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