d12 Monthly

50TH SPECIAL – SOLO CAMPAIGNING

Issue 50
August, 2025

FREE VERSION

SPECIAL 50th ISSUE

SOLO CAMPAIGNING

Features

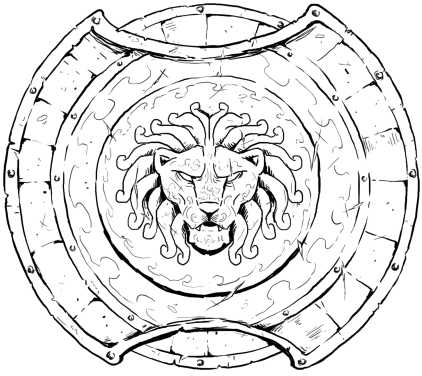
4 **Let There Be Light**
Creating a Solo Campaign

6 **At The Beginning**
The Basics

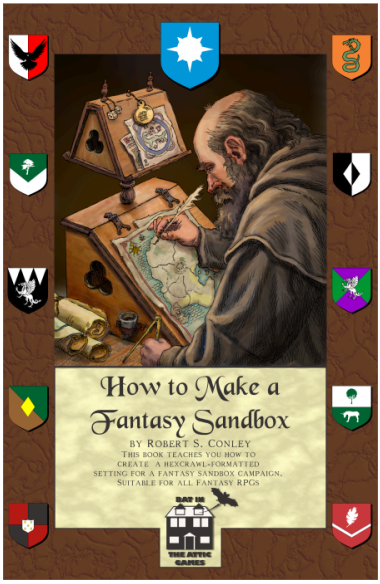
9 **Deep Down**
Creating Your First Dungeon

15 **Talk Talk**
Social Interaction

18 **The Rearview Mirror**
Past Issues That May Help

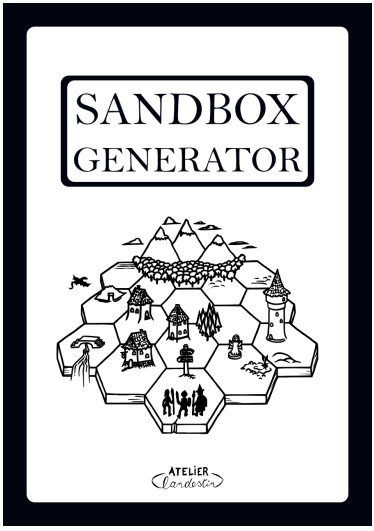


Affiliate



How to Make a Fantasy Sandbox

Buy Now on DTRPG



Learn More over at DTRPG

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

50th Issue

Welcome to the 50th Issue!

If we're being honest, it's actually the 51st issue published, as I started with Issue 0, but 50 has a better ring to it than 49.

Either way, I am heading back to my roleplaying roots in this issue and exploring solo campaigns.

Astute fans will realise I have already released an issue on solo roleplaying, but with this issue I want to focus on how to run a campaign, as opposed to just individual solo sessions.

That is, a long-running series of sessions that takes your characters from 1st to whatever level you want to.

Playing a solo campaign can be very different to playing single sessions, and there are important details you need to keep track of.

I hope you get a lot out of this issue, as solo roleplaying is one of my favourite things to do.

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM
https://yumdm.com/
https://twitter.com/yum_dm

Thanks to my Patrons

RollStats, Matt Kurowski, Jacob Alexander, ButterflyDefect, J. David Chrisman, Alex, Korg INC, NOLA Bert, GameCat, Kay Bee, Roll to Save, Lee Boden, DM Jangy, Joseph Hurley, William Mayorga, Dave Manley, Darryl McCarthy, Michael Brewer, Jason Lemieux, Eric Scheid, Steven D Warble, Qyubey, Magelord Bjorn, KAM, Peter Lawson, Arthur Braune, Paul Vandyke, Michael Reuter, Gregory Kirkpatrick, Michael Spredemann, Aaron Seigo, Lordfulmine, Christy, allan wakefield, Games With Dave, Jay Alan, AjaxVibe, Father Goose, Christer Enfors, George Fuentes, Alan, Geena, Jean-Claude Tremblay, Simon Williams, Floyd Zoot, John Snow, Matt bayliss, Daniel Harkins, Carl Russell, James F. Kelley, and Ronald Easterday, Jim "Wilmanric" Pacek, Keith Parker, Eric Babe, Robert Vilkaitis, Dennis Bretton, Michael Lee, Chet Cox, Craig Pettie, Bill Jaimez, Michael, Brett Bozeman, David Ross, Aaron Morgan, None of Your business, David Schnoll, Robert Alford, Colton Juhasz, David Risher, Phill Massey, Alien Spaces, Stephen Jolly, Louis DiThomas Keller, MechJack TV, Derek Reny, Andrew, Raith Richwine, Julio Scissors, Joe Johaneman, Jay Sivyer, Hart R, Chris Strahm, John Tenney, Chris de Haan, Van Davis, Grant G., Jamal L. Wilkins, Amos, Brother Who, JT, Andrew Spurgeon, André alias DD, Steven Landell, David, Riley, Eren Azcan, Greg, Tim Cropley, Skinny Brian, Sherry Sheggrud, Andrew Pincher, Jose Perez (Bromos Sunstar), Steenstrupian, Paul Juliano, nikkiro, William Dvorak, Mark Kelly, Stuart Wiltshire, Alex Nicholson, LaughingBubba, Ivel, Frog Kniffin, Paul Delaney, Peter Banks, Aaron Davis, MSN2012, scott johnson, Xapur LeGeek, Matt Blakeley, Dale Poole, Brian Johnson, Rob Carignan, Bugbear Jingo, Ron Northway, Dustin F, A R HuffnPuffn, Raúl, Peter Benning, David White, Hanzo Dakun, David Dierks, Steven Landell, Christopher kramer, Jacques Divol, Paul Graaf, Norwolf, Lucius1202, Michael Penkas, Mark Philip Willis, Jon Jones, MidnightWZRD, Jason, Kyle Houghton, Iain Russell, GM Wolfgang, Walt Ciechanowski, Heath Gordon, Larry Curtis, Tomas Sanchez Tejero, Jez, ScytheLocke, Kyle Crider, Steve Brute (cupofsolo), Paul, Mike Musteric, Tina Haq, Alex van Wessem, Richard May, David Lynn, Anthony Vicente, Ironcaster, Kenny Yeager, Laber Lampe, Frederick Miller, Ben, Michael J Ladd, Lloyd MacPherson, Jason Price, Ten Thousand Worlds, Dagreen Skins, Dungeoneering Dad, Mark Roberts, Lloyd McPherson, Michael J Ladd, Jim Mazzouccolo, Jesus Flores, Victor Gonzalez, Joe Adams, Chris Gunias, Charles Wilson, Terry Taylor, Kai Wolf, Michael Tassano...

... 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).

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Let There Be Light

Creating a Solo Campaign

Where do you start? At the beginning, of course!

The first thing you really need to decide is what sort of campaign you want to run. I prefer sandbox or west marches campaigns, but you can use the following rules and guides in any sort of campaign.

After all, solo gaming is all about what brings *you* the most joy.

When creating a solo campaign, you need three basic things:

1. A homebase
2. A nearby dungeon
3. A list of hooks or rumours

I will look in detail at creating all of these in later articles, but for now it is enough to know that that's all you need to start.

Create a World

Before you create those three items, above, you need to decide what your campaign world is like.

Is it a fairly standard fantasy world? Is it sci-fantasy? Is it techno-fantasy? Will the characters be Plane-hopping? Is it low magic or high magic?

There are a lot of questions that you need to answer before starting this campaign - after all, you are going to be spending a great deal of time inside it.

You don't need to build the whole thing - just have an idea in mind what sort of world and campaign it will be (you can always change it later).

Strong Conflicts

One idea to kick-off a campaign is to create a major conflict within the area your characters are going to be. This could be a physical conflict, like a war, or a more subtle one, like a political conflict, being played out behind the scenes.

Downtime

Remember that adventures don't always happen one directly after the last - think about how you can incorporate downtime into your campaign.

One way to do this is to have severe winters, where travel is restricted due to violent weather or massive snowfalls. Each winter in your campaign world could be a long period of downtime.

Systems

Another thing to think about, and perhaps decide on, is what game system you are

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

going to use. And also, what Oracle you are going to use, as well.

I tend to use either Old School Essentials or 3rd edition, both with a very simple Oracle + Word Table.

The good thing about solo campaigns is that you can test out various systems to see which works best for you. You can also add a bunch of custom rules or rules from other editions or hacks you like.

Adventuring Party

Another decision to be made is how large your party should be. This could be a single character, to a party of 8-18 - it all depends on what you can manage and the style of campaign you want.

Single Character

If you like the idea of having a Witcher-style character who wanders the world and has episodic adventures (with a loose overarching storyline) then one character may do.

Advantage: The advantage of this is that you can focus on this one character and really flesh them out.

Disadvantage: The disadvantage is if the character dies, you may need to start over with a new character.

Modest Party

If you want to delve into dungeons with a party of hardy adventurers, then maybe create a party of 3-6 adventurers.

Advantage: If one character dies, you can keep the campaign going and even replace them with a new character.

Disadvantage: The individual can be lost managing a whole party of characters.

A Large Posse

If you want a whole cadre of characters that you can draw on at any time, depending on the mission at hand, then create a dozen or more characters and choose who will go on any particular adventure.

Advantage: You have plenty of options on which characters to choose from, and if you like making lots of varied characters, then this could suit you.

Disadvantage: This many characters can be quite a lot to manage, and individuals can get lost in the masses.

One way to tackle this is to start with just one or two characters, play with them for a while, and maybe add more as the campaign dictates or you grow more confident with running larger parties.

Flexibility

Most of all, try and go easy on yourself and be flexible when it comes to designing your perfect campaign.

Some systems or rules may not work - get something new. And remember, you only have yourself to please.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

At The Beginning

The Basics

In solo gaming, there are two basic items everyone needs:

1. An Oracle
2. A Word Table

The Oracle

An Oracle is the GM. It gives you answers to all the questions you have. So, it is important you find one you like using.

I love simplicity in rule design, so I usually go with a simple D6 Oracle.

Table: Simple Oracle

D60	Result
1	No, but
2	No
3	No, and
4	Yes, but
5	Yes
6	Yes, and

The important point is to find one that you like using and that can keep the campaign humming along.

Word Tables

These are super useful, especially if you are using a simple D6 Oracle, to help you flesh out any part of your campaign.

They can help spark ideas and help with creating and developing scenes and NPCs within the campaign.

You can use pre-published word tables, create your own, or use the one I have created (see below).

To help your creative juices, you can create a series of word tables - of any length you like - that can be used for specific circumstances.

I tend to use four types of word tables:

- ➔ Verb word table
- ➔ Adjective word table
- ➔ Noun word table
- ➔ Collective word table

The first three are exactly what they say: word tables that are filled with either verbs, adjectives, or nouns, respectively. The last one is a mix of all three.

The trick is to not take these words too literally – you can use their broader meanings or synonyms to discover the idea.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Table: Word Table

D%	Mixed Words	Verbs	Nouns	Adjectives
1	verdict	collect	apartment	maniacal
2	surface	succeed	surgery	vivacious
3	advice	aid	tension	efficient
4	belief	join	alchemy	heavenly
5	future	drown	establishment	chivalrous
6	shiver	interrupt	variation	venomous
7	missile	be	shirt	wealthy
8	privilege	adapt	reception	sorry
9	module	visit	perception	educational
10	dictate	trap	student	abhorrent
11	evoke	stroke	maintenance	gaping
12	virus	relax	watch	gusty
13	cover	lack	patience	enthusiastic
14	bowel	slide	requirement	needless
15	copy	draw	poetry	rightful
16	comment	attain	information	accidental
17	virgin	renew	food	ablaze
18	highway	work	aspect	lopsided
19	passive	stretch	medicine	suspicious
20	coffee	envisage	revenue	funny
21	moon	push	historian	tasteless
22	junior	hunt	employee	wholesale
23	locate	turn	language	gorgeous
24	option	counter	classroom	black-&-white
25	trolley	book	platform	fretful
26	excess	clarify	honey	quarrelsome
27	season	point	message	languid
28	bullet	debate	queen	cumbersome
29	absence	found	meaning	daffy
30	navy	handle	activity	rhetorical
31	cluster	recover	agency	questionable
32	voyage	squeeze	leader	unusual
33	fortune	receive	guidance	erratic
34	licence	move	communication	abiding
35	poison	project	ability	colorful
36	despise	test	policy	domineering
37	horror	defeat	possibility	deeply
38	medal	promote	measurement	ashamed
39	pity	strike	alcohol	spotted
40	descent	travel	conclusion	far-flung
41	contain	win	river	even
42	water	explode	computer	magical
43	cassette	smoke	setting	innate
44	earthwax	regain	weakness	dramatic
45	hallway	separate	salad	muddled
46	writer	age	audience	accurate
47	finger	assert	theory	afraid
48	hostile	revise	perspective	salty
49	discount	figure	difference	acrid
50	inject	scatter	extent	teeny
51	recording	inherit	teaching	hypnotic
52	implicit	invest	teacher	plausible
53	precision	settle	problem	rainy
54	camera	sustain	description	ludicrous

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

55	different	borrow	government	materialistic
56	magnitude	suggest	society	concerned
57	influence	demand	analyst	fluffy
58	mutation	recognize	climate	critical
59	article	influence	writer	instinctive
60	bulletin	attempt	employer	excellent
61	advertise	confront	interaction	damaged
62	introduce	feature	resolution	sophisticated
63	estimate	stimulate	explanation	typical
64	conclusion	extract	charity	teeny-tiny
65	talented	classify	message	accessible
66	allowance	motivate	activity	nervous
67	effective	marry	orange	flagrant
68	magazine	copy	attention	perfect
69	rehearsal	restrict	depression	elderly
70	penetrate	compensate	fortune	victorious
71	proposal	visit	emphasis	nostalgic
72	appetite	convict	finding	chivalrous
73	convention	criticize	awareness	successfully
74	encourage	conform	college	capricious
75	exposure	colour	product	southern
76	accident	tremble	preference	didactic
77	vigorous	centre	stranger	ubiquitous
78	circumstance	forget	song	relevant
79	seasonal	describe	strategy	unhappy
80	neighborhood	convey	death	deeply
81	barrier	access	poem	sturdy
82	indirect	differ	insect	mature

83	location	allocate	president	shaggy
84	perforate	condemn	data	infamous
85	detector	open	personality	judicious
86	practical	appear	replacement	swanky
87	asylum	frighten	bonus	noxious
88	nominate	command	control	anxious
89	investment	exert	drawing	sordid
90	employee	admit	opinion	picayune
91	censorship	appreciate	anxiety	thundering
92	emphasis	obey	method	embarrassed
93	variant	evolve	failure	squalid
94	realize	campaign	expression	unarmed
95	arrangement	accept	internet	subdued
96	incentive	equip	student	greedy
97	dividend	resolve	application	macabre
98	candidate	provoke	chapter	changeable
99	president	resemble	system	unsightly
100	medicine	distribute	knowledge	capable

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Deep Down

Creating Your First Dungeon

Dungeon exploration is a large part of any solo fantasy campaign.

There are many ways to generate a dungeon - via online tools or a bunch of tables in various books. Below you will find what I am currently using as a simple, yet compelling, way to generate a dungeon as you explore it.

There will also be rules for re-stocking already explored sections.

Explore New Areas of Dungeon

If you need a random start to the dungeon, see the article *Maw Please!* In *Issue 12* of ***d12 Monthly***.

Generate map:

1. Roll on the *Mapping* table to generate the next part of the dungeon
2. Roll to see what's in the new area using the *Area Contents* table
3. Play out any encounters
4. PCs will take 1 turn (10 minutes) to map new area
5. PCs can choose to search the area - roll on the *Search Area* table.

Mapping New Areas in Dungeon

Roll on the Mapping table.

Table: Mapping

D20	Area
1-3	Straight Passage
4-5	Dead End*
6-7	T-Junction (Right, Left or Centre)
8-9	Crossroads
10	Right Turn in Passage
11	Left Turn in Passage
12-15	Chamber
16-17	Double Chamber**
18	Triple Chamber**
19	Multi-Tiered Chamber^
20	Stairs

* 2-in-6 chance of a secret door.
** These are multiple chambers that are joined by a small passage or other egress.
^ This chamber contains multiple heights (roll 1D4). Roll a D6 x 5-ft to give various heights.

Chambers Size: Roll 2D6 (nat '6' exploding): this equals the number of squares.
Exits from Chambers: 1D4-1
Passage Length: 1D6+2 Squares
Passage Width: Roll on *Passage Width* table, below.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Passage Width

All passages default to 10-ft wide, but roll on the *Passage Width* table to see if it widens or narrows. Roll for each section of passage.

Table: Passage Width

D12	Width
1-7	10-ft
8-9	One size smaller
10	Two-sizes smaller
11	One size larger
12	Two-sizes larger

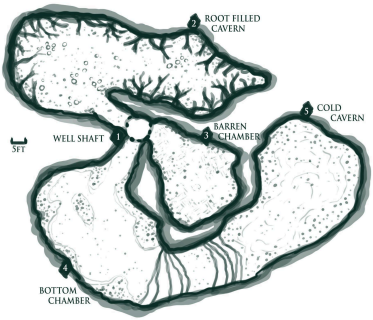
Passage Sizes

Passage basic sizes.

Crack
Crawlspace
5-ft
10-ft
20-ft
30-ft
40-ft with Natural Pillars

Crawlspace: Anyone Medium-sized or larger will need to crawl. Small-sized or lower can move normally.

Crack: Only those of Small-size or lower can navigate these passages, and they need to squeeze through (DEX check).



Area Contents

Roll on the *Area Content* table to see what is in the chamber.

Table: Area Contents

D100	Result
01-18	Monster
19-32	Monster + Feature
33-35	Monster + Bonus Treasure
36-38	Monster + Trap
39-41	Monster + Feature + Bonus Treasure
42-44	Monster + Features + Trap
45-47	Monster + Bonus Treasure + Trap
48-50	Monsters + Features + Bonus Treasure + Trap
51-70	Features only
71-72	Features + Bonus Treasure
73-74	Features + Trap
75-76	Features + Trap + Bonus Treasure

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

77-78	Treasure
79-80	Bonus Treasure + Trap
81-84	Trap
85-90	Stairs
91-00	Nothing/Empty

Table: Number of Area Features

D100	Result
01-30	One structural feature
31-60	One content feature
61-75	One of each
76-85	One structural + two content
86-95	Two of each
96-00	Two structural + one content

Table: Area Structural Features

D100	Feature
01-05	Alcove
06-08	Chasm
09-11	Collapsed wall
12-13	Fallen 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	Pool
38-40	Shaft
41-44	Well
45-49	Cracks
50-55	Dripping water
56-58	Engravings
59-62	Fungus
63-65	Mould
66-68	Mud
69-71	Water puddle
72-73	Runes
74-76	Scattered stones
77-78	Slime
79	Lava pool
80-90	Stairs
91-95	Cave-in (dead end)
96-00	River

Table: Area Content Features

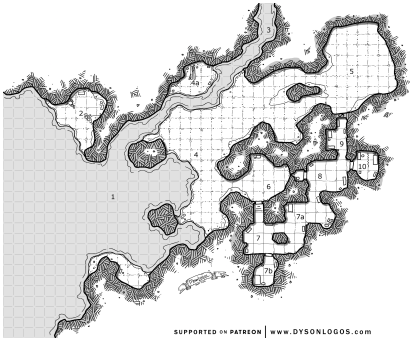
D100	Feature
01-04	Altar
05-07	Barrels
08-10	Bedding
11-12	Cage
13-15	Caldron
16-19	Dung heap
20-23	Symbol
24-28	Idol

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

29-33	Shrine
34-36	Statue
37-39	Trash
40-42	Ash
43-48	Bloodstain
49-52	Bones
53-56	Claw marks
57-60	Cobwebs
61-63	Corpse
64-66	Old weapons
67-70	Insects
71-72	Small nest
73-76	Skull
77-78	Teeth
79-81	Wood
82-88	Spiderwebs
89-92	Mushrooms
93-96	Boulder
97-00	Tree roots

Table: Stairs

D20	Result
1-6	Down one level
7-9	Down two levels
10-11	Up one level
12	Up two levels
13-17	Up/Down to sub-level
18-20	Exit out of Dungeon



Traps

Use the tables from the Old School Essentials rulebooks or other favourite source books.

Monster Encounters

Use tables from Old School Essentials rulebooks or other favourite source books.

Treasure

See *Issues 37-39* (the "Treasure Trilogy") of ***d12 Monthly*** for tables and ideas for creating treasure.

Bonus Treasure

Bonus treasure is treasure that is above and beyond the treasure found on a monster. For a simple calculation, multiply the standard treasure by the dungeon level to arrive at any treasure for that encounter (this included the regular treasure plus the bonus treasure).

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Search Area

If the PCs decide to search the area they are in, then they make a Search check. It takes 3 PCs one turn to search an area. Or use rules from your rulebook of choice.

Table: Search Area

D6	Result
1-4	Nothing
5	Secret Door
6	Hidden Bonus Treasure

Previously Mapped Areas

Moving through previously mapped areas can still be dangerous as passages and chambers can become re-populated if left for too long.

Below is a system for discovering if an area has been re-stocked since the last visit.

Simply roll 1Dx to restock areas previously searched and mapped, where 'x' equals time since last visit. Any time a natural '1' is rolled, the area has been restocked, and you roll on your random monster table of choice. Time since last visit:

- ➔ Less than 1 Week = 1D10
- ➔ Less than 1 Month = 1D8
- ➔ Less than 6 Months = 1D6
- ➔ Less than 1 Year = 1D4
- ➔ More than 1 year = Auto

Additional Rules

Below are a couple of additional rules I use when exploring dungeons.

- ➔ After the encounter is completed, roll 1D6 and if a natural '1' is indicated, then a new monster is attracted to the noise of combat. Roll a new encounter.

- ➔ PCs must rest for 1 turn after each encounter.

Other Issues That Can Help

There are a few issues of ***d12 Monthly*** that can help with dungeon exploration.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Issue 1 is all about Dungeons and contains the following articles:

- ➔ A simple 5-room dungeon generator for those smaller dungeons
- ➔ Simple rules for determining encounter distance
- ➔ A table to determine what a monster is doing when encountered
- ➔ Rules for building new monsters
- ➔ Expansion of rules on the MAP method of NPC creation
- ➔ Details on Dolfar: A small town which would be a perfect homebase for exploring adventurers.

Issue 8 is all about the Underdark and covers:

- ➔ Drow-crafted items
- ➔ Crystal magic
- ➔ Surviving in the deep dark
- ➔ A dark elf campaign
- ➔ A fleshed out Dark Stalker city, complete with map.

Issue 12 is all about solo roleplaying and contains the following helpful articles:

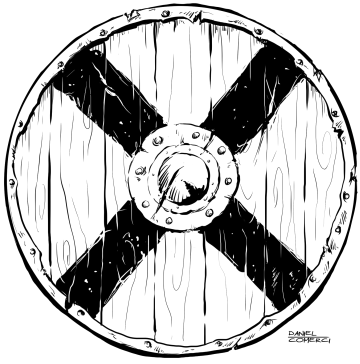
- ➔ Memorable dungeon entrances
- ➔ A simple dungeon generator
- ➔ Rules on stocking your dungeons with monsters and features
- ➔ Rules on re-stocking your dungeon

Issue 25 is focused on sewers and other dark places and has a number of articles that could help you:

- ➔ A sewer random encounter table
- ➔ New sewer-based monsters
- ➔ A list of other dark places found under cities
- ➔ An under-city complete with map

Issue 37 is all about Dungeon Exploration and has numerous articles that may help:

- ➔ An article on dungeon design
- ➔ A table of natural hazards
- ➔ Dungeon ecology
- ➔ Air quality
- ➔ Underground factions



© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Talk Talk

Social Interaction

Running a solo D&D campaign means you're often talking to yourself.

But when it comes to NPC interactions, you don't want things to feel pre-scripted, one-sided, or biased. You want those conversations to surprise you and impact the story and your campaign world.

Below are a bunch of guides and rules to help you handle social encounters between your PCs and any NPCs.

The Challenge: Impartial Conversations

When you're both the PC and the NPC, it's easy to fall into bad habits:

- ➔ Giving your character what they want too easily.
- ➔ Making NPCs say what's convenient or obvious.
- ➔ Forgetting to let NPCs have their own goals and limits.

The solution? Randomness + Roleplay.

Use impartial tools to decide how NPCs react, what they want, and how far they'll go. Then roleplay from that framework.

Core Tool: The Reaction Roll

The reaction roll is the old-school way of letting the dice decide how an NPC (or monster) will react.

Table: Standard B/X Reaction Roll

2D6	Reaction
2-3	Hostile, attacks
4-5	Unfriendly, will not cooperate
6-8	Neutral, uncertain
9-10	Friendly, will talk/help
11-12	Helpful, offers aid

Some modifiers can change the number rolled:

- ➔ Charisma Adjustment
- ➔ Bribes
- ➔ Shared Language or Alignment
- ➔ Reputation

Once you've got a result, use it as a tone or stance, not a script.

An "Unfriendly" innkeeper might glare, offer no discount, and lie about rooms being full. A "Helpful" goblin might betray its kin to save its own skin.

NPC Motivations & Personalities

Way back in *Issue 0* (the first issue of ***d12 Monthly***) I introduced a way of quickly giving an NPC character.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

It is called my MAP method, and simply involves giving each NPC a **M**otivation, an **A**ppearance, and a **P**ersonality.

We are going to use those now. Well, at least two of them: motivation and personality.

You can roll for these using random tables, such as those found in *Issue 0* of ***d12 Monthly***, or roll on the table below.

Quick NPC Motive Table

Feel free to expand on this table, as needed.

Table: NPC Motivations

2D6	Reaction
1	Wealth (wants coin or treasure)
2	Power (wants leverage or control)
3	Fear (wants to avoid trouble)
4	Loyalty (to a person or group)
5	Curiosity (interested in PC's goal)
6	Revenge (someone wronged them)

Keep it light. One line is enough to drive an interaction.

Asking Questions & Using Your Oracle

You can't plan every social exchange, and you shouldn't. When you're unsure what an NPC says or does, ask questions and let the dice answer.

Examples

"Does the merchant know about the ruins?"
If yes, you can use word tables or just come up with the reasons why, if it matters.

"Will the noble fund the expedition?"
Roll a reaction check modified by your proposal.

"Is the innkeeper hiding something?"
Use an oracle or roll on a personality table.

Let the results spark your imagination. Don't try to control it.

Making Conversations Meaningful

Some NPC interactions can add more than just flavor. They can also:

- ➔ Provide information - accurate or false
- ➔ Create problems, such as enemies, debts, or secrets
- ➔ Offer opportunities, like alliances or side quests
- ➔ Reflect your character's reputation or past actions

If an NPC was insulted three sessions ago, they should remember. If your character is famed for killing bandits, locals might seek you out, or fear you.

Make sure you track ongoing NPCs, factions, and relationships in a campaign journal or index cards.

Negotiations & Bargaining

Negotiation is a game of trade-offs. When the PC wants something - money, help,

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

forgiveness - NPCs will usually want something in return.

Use offers and demands:

"I'll tell you what I know... if you deliver this letter."

"You can stay the night... but I want double the rate."

"I might forget I saw you... if you owe me a favour."

Then roll another reaction check to see how they respond to counteroffers, threats, or charm.

When to Roleplay Full Dialogue

You don't need to act out every conversation word for word. Instead:

- ➔ Roleplay short, important moments.
- ➔ Summarize routine chats ("I asked around about the ruins").
- ➔ Save drama for dramatic scenes like confessions, bargains, and arguments.

Use NPC voice and tone sparingly but consistently. An orc warlord might be gruff and direct; a noble might be flowery and evasive.

Sample Interaction

The Setup
Your PC enters a smuggler's den to ask about a missing caravan.

Initial Reaction Roll
2d6 = 9 (Friendly). The smugglers offer you food and drink.

Determine Motives
Leader's motive = Wealth. He wants payment.

Negotiation
You offer 50gp. Reaction roll = 6 (Neutral). He shrugs, asks for 100gp.

You Counter
Offer 50gp now, 50gp later. Roll = 10 (Friendly). He agrees.

Outcome
You get the info, but now owe him - and his rival might hear about it.

This interaction is solid as it has risk, reward, and potential ripple effects.

Final Tips

Here are some final tips.

- ➔ Always be willing to be surprised.
- ➔ Let NPCs say "No," lie, or betray - just like in regular games.
- ➔ Keep notes on important people.
- ➔ Use randomness to keep things fair and fresh.
- ➔ Remember: you're not writing a story. You're discovering one.
- ➔ Remember, this is all about you having fun. If you aren't enjoying something, switch it up.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

The Rearview Mirror

Past Issues That May Help

As this issue suggests, I have over 50 issues you can grab ideas from and that can help you with building and running your campaign.

Solo Gaming

For more solo guides, see *Issue 12*, which is dedicated to solo roleplaying.

Wilderness Travel & Encounters

Travelling can be dangerous, especially if it involves the wilderness where very few people tread.

Wild animals, bandits, and monsters invest the wilds and caution must be taken.

I have covered wilderness travel in *Issue 7* of ***d12 Monthly***, and also covered how to create an encounter table in *Issue 27*.

NPC Generation

Generating interesting NPCs can be a challenge sometimes, but I give a really simple way of doing this without slowing down your session: my MAP method from *Issue 0*.

All you do is generate three characteristics for your NPC: Motivation, Appearance and Personality. You can find tables for this in *Issue 1*.

Downtime

To see how to run the all-important downtime, see Issue 41. This covers what downtime actually is, how to manage it, a large list of downtime activities, simple rules on building and managing a business, plus a few other solo articles that will help as well.

Urban Adventures

If you set your campaign in a city, or want to spice up your homebase a little, then take a look at Issues 23-26 as these cover urban environments.

Monsters

There are a number of monster issues as well: *Issue 10* covers monsters, in general; *Issue 6* is all about undead; *Issue 9* covers dragons, *Issue 14* covers Fey; and *Issue 44* deals with weird monsters.

Planes & Deities

If you are into plane-hopping adventures and other "weird" stuff, then check out Issues 29 & 30, which are about The Planes and Deities, respectively. Issue 45 covers weird places, and Issue 5 covers divine magic, which could help with these as well.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

Want Even More?

Looking for more adventure? Back issues are available to download on my website.

I'm also expanding this zine via new articles on the website. This will include web enhancements and other regular features.

Web Enhancements are articles that for whatever reason didn't make it into the zine. Usually 2-3 are posted on the website each month for each issue.
https://yumdm.com/

Acknowledgements

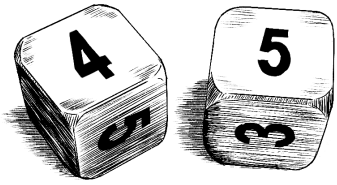
Cover art by Russ.

Art by Dean Spencer, Diego Castro, Fat Goblin Games, Hounworks, and.

Featuring art by Daniel F. Walthall, found at: drivethrurpg.com/product/181517, available under a CC BY 4.0 licence: creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

All art ©, used with permission, all rights reserved. Some artwork provided by Zed Nope, and used with permission.

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



Next Month

We dive back into Old School Essentials with even more rules, tricks, tables, and more!

We will expand the core game and bring in new rules for character generation, kits, and much more in this second OSE issue.

Join my Patreon today to start receiving print copies every month (beats just getting bills in the mail), or just to help out.
https://www.patreon.com/yumdm

SUPPORT ME ON PATREON

You can support me for as little as $2 per month.

© 2025 YUMDM, All rights reserved. Permission granted to copy for personal use.

ISSUE 50 – AUGUST, 2025

SPECIAL 50TH ISSUE - SOLO CAMPAIGNING

DESIGNED FOR USE WITH

OLD-SCHOOL ESSENTIALS

d12 Monthly

YUM DM