

# The Maze Controller's Book

for

# Doorknobs & Derring-do

a ruleset brewed with lots of sunlight in a glass jar  
with bits of sourdough, old pieces of paper, the

D&ND OOP!s AllHouseRules Rulebook  
**House Rules**  
**Edition**

and the

## Goblin Laws of Gaming

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Quests

Reactions and Encounters

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Gods & Their Ways

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*11.8.20 Edition*

gathered by Castle Librarian

# Quests!

It should be easy for players to say "I want to do X," and have a way to learn how. Perhaps the consultation of sages, libraries, or signs can be a generic method for learning specific steps towards their goal. The ultimate quest should be difficult, something that a PC with less than 4 levels should hesitate to attempt.

We already see two procedures emerge. Either there is a rigid and precise procedure for the specific power, or there is an open-ended problem that can be certainly solved with a permanent reward. OSR games love open-ended problems, but setting out a procedure may help players to notice the potential.

So the players determine an ambition (find clues alluding to one by the DM) and consult a source of information. If the source is good, it can provide enough information for the PCs to know what they need to do to acquire the power. If the source is good and specific to the ambition in question, they may also learn dangerous and specific features of the method and power.

Roll 1d4+2 steps on the table below to inspire the specific quest. With fewer steps, make each more exacting or difficult.

## Steps on the Path of Ambition

Roll 1d20

1. Acquire several minor, but scattered magical items
2. Acquire the item that will lead you to the right place
3. Acquire the item that will allow you to perform the correct rite
4. Become worthy of a rite or item
5. Capture several creatures of noted importance
6. Cleanse a sacred space of all corruption
7. Convince the sacred guardian of your cause
8. Defeat the sacred guardian
9. Defeat your sworn rival
10. Earn the approval of your family members (living or dead)
11. Find the person with the unnoticed potential
12. Get to the center of the dangerous and mythical area
13. Lead a people to a new land
14. Learn the truth about your heritage
15. Perform a test of resolve
16. Retrieve a hostage or stolen object by the dead of night
17. Seek out a learned but reclusive master
18. Solve the riddle to learn how to proceed
19. Soothe the spirits that haunt a certain location
20. Wait for the proper celestial event

## Info-Treasure delivery ideas:

Lost Journal (savor that cliché)  
Mural/Painting/Tapestry  
Oracular pool/creature  
Magic Mouth  
Friendly or Neutral NPC/monster  
Hostile but Captive NPC/monster  
Players Map (level of detail dependent on type)  
Letter from messenger

## LEGENDS, LORE, AND INFO-LORE

"Legendary material is probably best placed on note cards. The object is to have enough clues on a subject to be interesting, yet not so many as to create clutter and unnecessary complication. Each card should identify the Legend, indicate the level of information, and state the clue(s). Levels of information...are as follows:

\* 1. Knowing only the topic, only that it exists.

\*2. Dictionary or atlas-level clues.

\*3. Increasingly detailed information, yet not enough to determine the truth or relevance of the Legend.

\*4. These clues allow a player to evaluate and judge the truth or relevance of the Legend.

\*5. Threshold I. Information at this level gives a player a sense of knowledge and accomplishment. Some Legends stop at this level, but a player will not be able to tell if the clues go on to higher levels.

\*6. Clues here merely indicate that more clues follow.

\*7. Beginning of higher level clues.

\*8. Expanded clues: Information here is useful in game activities.

\*9. Relatively complete information; this allows judgments and evaluation of what is likely to remain in the Legend.

\*10. Threshold II. All clues are filled out, completeness."

What I do is this (HC players, again, "ear muffs")...whenever I have the glimmer of an idea in a game or between sessions about a new event, NPC, object, locale, etc. I write it down on an index card. Side one is Bachmann's first layer ("Knowing only the topic, only that it exists"), usually a sentence or two like "with the waxing of the red moon this month, strange flying creatures with leathery wings may be seen with increasing frequency at night."

On the second side I put layer two info ("Dictionary or atlas-level clues") about the hook that a PC may either know or can casually pick up in town if she is interested such as "when the second moon is closing on full it is often noted that these creatures fill the skies. More and more of these critters have been noticed as of late."

I then very deliberately file the card away and stop thinking about it. Note this NOT thinking about it is very important order to head off that too familiar impulse to over-create elements that will never be used that can drive a sandbox campaign GM bat-shit crazy (or turn him into a railroading bastard). It also allows me mental space to create lots and lots of potential little bits to bounce off—between sessions I often write at least 3-5 such cards—leaving me quite a stockpile over the past year of play.

Before each session I will often pore over the cards to see if the players are in a potential position to trigger any of them (if I remember a trigger may happen during the session). "So they are likely to be camping out in the hills on their way to the Slumbering Ursine Dunes," I think. "So very likely that they would notice the red moon and said flying critters." Pull the card and so on down the line with any more cards that may come into play this session.

If a card is pulled, time to figure out the next couple levels. Level three ("Increasingly detailed information, yet not enough to determine the truth or relevance") "The creatures are the souls of the dead flying up from the Underworld from where unwitting adventurers unlock them from." Which on level four ("clues allow a player to evaluate and judge the truth or relevance") is "False. They are really flying mutant fungoids from the red moon proper."

Does this whole process matter to the players on their way to and fro the dungeon they are looting? No, not unless they care themselves. If they digger deeper I will improvise the next steps or develop them in the week. If not I shrug and toss the card. Plenty more to pull from that stockpile.

Basically any number of "sub-plots" can develop, partially develop, or ignored completely if the party chooses to not follow them.

"The clues for the "Legend of the City of Gold" might look like this:

\* 1—People tell of a City of Gold;

\*2—It is in the east at the head of a great river;

\*3—The inhabitants speak Wosish, are ruled by a King, have little contact with the outside world, and there is a beautiful princess living there;

\*4—An old adventurer had been there, he tells that the inhabitants believed their King was mad, and he mentions that he remembers the King looking like John Doe Swordsman (a member of your party who does not know that he has a Doom);

\*5—There is a rough map in the city archives made by the old adventurer after his journey, there is also a copy of a letter sent with an ambassador who did not return;

\*6—There is no reply to the letter;

\*7—Fifty miles from the City, a player will stumble over an ancient milestone which is overgrown, nearly illegible and seemingly in the middle of nowhere;

\*8—Twenty-five miles from the City, a player will find a hermit who tells of the disarray of the City, disease, decline of the army, the absence of magic, and mentions the death of the King;

\*9—In the City one hears of hopes for a new King, talk of despair, one sees work to be done, the Beautiful Princess has a chance to fall in love with John Doe Swordsman;

\*10—The long lost ambassador is met, and the party learns the signs of the New King (most of them point to you-know-who)."

# Reactions & Encounters

## Random Events

Rolls for random events occur every 20 minutes (2 turns) in populated areas (dungeons, cities, and the like), every 4 hours (1 watch) during travel, or once while camped.

Roll 1d6 for random event:

1. **Encounter.** Roll for distance, surprise, and reaction. The party and the encounter become aware of each other at the same time, if reasonable.
- 2-3. **Omen.** Roll on the encounter table, but receive only an omen—a sign of tracks or what the encounter could have been.
- 4-5. **Nothing.**
6. **Optional Encounter.** Roll on the encounter table, but the party becomes aware of the encounter first.

## Encounters

If an encounter occurs while camped, roll a die to determine when during the camp it takes place. When an encounter occurs, roll for distance. There is a 1:6 chance the encounter is with two groups. If this occurs, roll 1d6:  
**1-2:** The two groups are already engaged with each other.  
**3-4:** The two groups meet at the same time as the party meets them.  
**5-6:** The second group encounters the party 1d6 rounds after the first.

Distance: Roll 1d6, or 1d4 during the night or indoors.

- 1: **Melee** (2'-5') Standard range for grappling and most weapons. Missed range attacks at this distance risk hitting something or someone nearby.
- 2: **Near** (10'-50') Standard distance for ranged attacks. Hand to hand attacks can't be made at this distance.
- 3: **Far** (50'-150')
- 4: **Distant**, 1d6 turns away (150'-300') Arced missile fire. Usually this range can't be made indoors or target individuals.
- 5: **Extreme**, 2d6 turns away
- 6: **Barely Visible**, 1d4 hours away

## Reactions

Sometimes circumstances make it obvious how a creature will react. Otherwise, roll 2d6 on this table for the encounter's reaction to the party/character. If one specific character attempts to speak with the monsters, add or subtract their CHA bonus to modify their reaction.

- 2: Violently Hostile. Attacks immediately.  
 3-5: Unfriendly. Bullies, extorts, or evicts. Attacks if defied.  
 6-8: Indifferent. Blocks, defends, stands ground. Wary.  
 9-11: Friendly. Ignores, keeps distance, may talk.  
 12+: Helpful. Shares resources or information.

??**Relationships** modify one's reaction (roll 2d6 if unknown):

- 2-5: Stranger, -2  
 6-8: Acquaintance, +0  
 9-12: Friend/Beloved, +2

## DEEPER REACTIONS (untested)

Why are they so? If you already have a satisfactory answer, go with that. If not, it's some kind of attitude towards someone:

1. Admiration/hatred for...
2. Fear/contempt (or pity/fear, whichever makes more sense) for...
3. Familiarity with/alienation from...
4. Opportunities to gain by being nice/mean to...
5. Attraction to/revulsion for...
6. Curiosity about...

Who are they reacting to?

- 1-4. PCs, in order
5. PCs as a group
6. themselves

## Encounter Purpose

| d12/d6 | 1-2 Confrontation | 3-4 Propostion         | 5-6 Subterfuge           |
|--------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1-2    | attacks           | offers favor/object    | observes                 |
| 3      | accuses           | asks/gives advice      | kidnaps                  |
| 4      | bullies           | asks/gives information | lures                    |
| 5      | challenges        | asks/provides help     | lurks around             |
| 6      | curses            | commands               | misleads                 |
| 7      | insults           | offers work/mission    | slanders                 |
| 8      | shoves            | questions              | steals from              |
| 9      | stops             | requests               | trails                   |
| 10     | threatens         | seduces                | tricks                   |
| 11     | mocks             | praises                | recognizes (1:2 falsely) |
| 12     | demands           | pleads                 | trips                    |

## Monster and NPC Stats

| Health              | 1d6       | 2d6     | 3d6       | 4d6         | 6d6             |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|
|                     | Weak      | Typical | Tough     | Hulking     | Colossal        |
| <b>Armor</b>        | 10        | 12      | 13        | 14          | 16              |
|                     | Unarmored | Light   | Medium    | Heavy       | Nigh Impervious |
| <b>Bonus</b>        | +0        | +2      | +3        | +4          | +6              |
| <b>Attack</b>       | Untrained | Trained | Dangerous | Masteful    | Lethal          |
| <b>Strength</b>     | Slow      | Average | Strong    | Powerful    | Monstrous       |
| <b>Dexterity</b>    | Slow      | Average | Nimble    | Swift       | Blurred         |
| <b>Constitution</b> | Frail     | Average | Tough     | Vigorous    | Unbreakable     |
| <b>Intelligence</b> | Stupid    | Average | Bright    | Intelligent | Brilliant       |
| <b>Wisdom</b>       | Foolish   | Average | Keen      | Wise        | Enlightened     |
| <b>Charisma</b>     | Dull      | Average | Appealing | Charismatic | Mesmerizing     |

**Fires** deal damage every round, and have 1:6 chance of being caused unintentionally. When rolling for damage, roll a 1d6. On a 1, the fire shrinks by one step, on a 6, it grows by one step the following round. 1s and 6s cancel each other out. Fires intentionally started may have an initial +1 or +2 bonus.

Stages of fire:

**Alight** (1d6)

**Flaming** (2d6)

**Burning** (3d6)

**Ablaze** (3d6, may ignite nearby flammables)

**Inferno** (4d6, ignites nearby objects)

# Life After Death

When a player's character dies, the player may either create a new character and rejoin the party, or wait to see...

## Who Will Collect Your Soul?

When a character dies, the referee consults with you to see what psychopomps may come to collect the character's soul. Those without any particular distinctions roll a d4, referring the list below. Certain psychopomps may have particular interest in a character's soul based on their actions in life. During this time you use the same character sheet, but now as a disembodied spirit. The ethereal and material worlds overlap, and you can't really interact with the material world. You can only use things that remain with your physical body.

## Time of Death

**1-15** Already by your side, waiting to receive your soul.

**17-18** Double-booked. Two psychopomps come to collect your soul. Expect them to play a game of chess to settle their claim, and expect them to keep a very close eye on you while they do so.

**19-20** Delay. You die seconds earlier than predicted, and as a result, there is no one present at the moment of your death to greet you. If you flee immediately, you'll probably get away.

## Psychopomps

### **1. Dead family member - HD 2**

Qualification: Dead family members

Grampa is overjoyed to see you again, of course. He looks forward to showing you to your mansion in the Immortal Mountains (provided that you pass your judgement, of course). How are your cousins doing? And the twins?

### **2. Weary penitent - HD 3**

Qualification: None

Some poor soul in purgatory sent out to fetch you. Leaden sandals, wings, lantern and appointment book (contains schedule of deaths). The light from the lantern makes all other paths impossible to take.

### **3. Deity.**

Qualification: None/Devotion to an entity/god

Opportunist entities looking for power and entertainment. If the character does not have a god, another psychopomp shows up in 1d4 turns.

### **4. Robed skeleton with scythe - HD 4**

Qualification: None

Collects souls of a very specific category. Likes to play chess. Stops time at their leisure for chatting, games, and collecting souls. Never lets anyone return to life.

### **5. Magical Death**

Qualifications: Incurring magical doom or chaos.

The magical forces in your soul break free from their prison, and you die a magical death (roll chaos).

### **6. Become a ghost**

Qualifications: Unfinished business that you were VERY dedicated to.

You do not reach the afterlife. Instead you become a ghost, bound to return to the location of your body at dawn.

### **7. Demon - HD 1d10**

Qualifications: Doesn't come for those in good standing with their religion.

It'll probably have one or more of the following traits: horns, barbed tail, bat wings, lion's mane. It intends to devour you and carry you off to the Underworld for personal gain.

Souls are useful things: they cannot be destroyed and are infinitely transmutable.

### **8. Spirits 1d12 HD 1**

Qualification: Interaction with the spirit world.

These spirits might resurrect you into a badass bear, or force you to be reincarnated as a snail, depending on your relationship with the spirit world.

### **9. A Saint - HD 8**

Qualifications: Helped a religion or god in a major way.

Serene, beatific, friendly, unshakeable. Still bears the marks of martyrdom and are missing body parts that have gone on to become holy relics.

### **10. Death - HD 12**

Qualifications: Escaped death before.

This is it. The big boss. If you impress them they'll petition Heaven to let you become one of their Reapers. Polite and educated, they know all about you and have a gentle sense of humor. Unlike those who serve them, they're quite reasonable.

### **11. Reapers (special collection team)**

**1d4+2 dead heroes of HD 1d4+4**

Qualification: Killed a psychopomp OR violated the sanctity of death via necromancy or resurrection.

Dead heroes from other adventuring parties that Death keeps on hand to troubleshoot special problems. Armed with scythes (part of the job). When they aren't out kicking the spleens out of rebellious souls, they fight on the eternal battlefield of Valhalla.

### **12. Nobody**

Qualifications: Devout atheism.

Nothing happens.

# Gods and their Ways

|                        | <b>Siebog of the Round Green:</b><br>Fungal God of health, decay, timeliness and community.                                | <b>Eostre of the White Cycle:</b><br>Lunar God of tides, menstruation, secrecy/honesty and moderation.   | <b>Hebe of the Red Struggle:</b><br>Bloody God of punishment, war, learning and redemption.                           |
|------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Miracles</b>        | Restore Wound<br>Decay Material<br>Sense Urgency<br>Share Misery   | Calm water<br>Release<br>Force secrecy<br>Force honesty  | Flay the Wretched<br>Restore HP<br>Learn History<br>Force Redemption  |
| <b>Desired Tribute</b> | Let an animal decay at a temple<br>Burn medicinal herbs at a temple<br>Aid the poor<br>Participate in agricultural seasons | Adorn temples with silver disks<br>Sacrifice white animals<br>Keep a secret<br>Sacrifice menstrual blood | Own up to your mistakes<br>Bring knowledge to temple<br>Participate in public retribution<br>Sacrifice your own blood |
| <b>Abhors</b>          | Skeletal Undead<br>The Diseased<br>Traitors<br>Defilers of Fungi   | Wolf-killers<br>Overfishers<br>False-Promisemakers<br>Lycans   | Cowards<br>Warcriminals/Killers of innocent<br>Repeat Offenders<br>Veteran-slayers                                    |
| <b>Fury</b>            | Stricken with disease<br>Strangers don't like helping you<br>Your wounds won't heal  | Lobster-claw<br>Plagued by terrible weather<br>Strangers don't believe you                               | You have 0 HP<br>Strangers are aggressive to you<br>Stricken with amnesia   |

## List of Miracles:

Calm water: Cause up to [dice] cubic meters of water to calm for [sum]\*10 minutes.

Decay Material: Deal [sum] damage to [dice] objects of lifeless organic material.

Flay the Wretched: Deal [sum] damage spread between up to [dice] chaotic creatures.

Force Honesty: Force up to [dice] creatures to speak honestly for up to [sum] minutes

Force Redemption: Force [dice] creatures to redeem themselves for a wrong they did you or take [sum] damage

Force Secrecy: Force up to [dice] intelligent creatures to keep a secret for up to [sum] hours.

Learn History: Learn [dice] important events that happened to something in the last [sum] years.

Release: Cause up to [dice] entities to release what they are holding.

Restore: HP Restore [sum] HP to [dice] creatures.

Restore Wound: Heal a wound that is of [dice] or less severity if [sum] is critical damage or over.