GM Mastery Series

Essentials

2PC

By:
Johnn Four

RPG OBJECTS

Race Traits

Class Feat

Portrait / Symbol

Carrying Capacity / Movement

Wealth

PP: GP: SP: CP:

Gems/Jewels

Other:

Henchmen / Animals / Familiars

INCLUDES A COMPLETE MINI-ADVENTURE

d20 system

GM Mastery

NPC Essentials

Writer: Johnn Four
Module Co-Writer: Jared Hunt
Editor: Chris Davis
Additional Editing: Charles Rice, Aki Halme, Bill Collins
Cover Art: V. Shane
Interior Art: V. Shane
Layout: Chris Davis
Maps: James Mathe
Character Sheets: Almaor Myrnnyx

Special Thanks To The Following GMDesign List Members: Aki Halme, Andrew Rowenbranch, Bill Collins, Chris N., Dave Gilham, Jeremy Davis, Fabian Sallmann, Greg Stockton, Jeff Yantha, Lisa Costich, Mark L. Chance, Mark Warren, Carey Martin, Matthew DeForrest, Nicholas Jobidon, Ted O., Simon Moore, Paris Crenshaw, Roger Barr

Ideas and Inspiration:
Melissa P., Brandon L., Zilch (Andrew S), Joachim S., Chris N., KM Mika, Pike S., Lance T., Pit Fiend, GMDM, Deyv, Guillermo F., Dwayne T., Matthew L., Joe P., Hajo, Jared D., Joe D., Sam R., John R., Matt F., Jon G., Stephen G., Jeff W., Gregory V., Ian H., Christian J., Wade, Bret B., CSW, Gary W., Stefan S.

From Johnn:
I'd also like to thank the 13,000 game master subscribers of the Roleplaying Tips Weekly ezine for your tips and suggestions, and for your ongoing support! Thanks also to my Mom and Dad who are pretty cool people.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The GM Mastery Series

Game mastering is a demanding job. If you stop to think about all the tasks a Game Master must perform, it is truly staggering. He must play the role of every NPC, monster, or other "non" player element in the game. The Game Master must prepare adventures and maintain an over-arching campaign. She must balance game play so that it is challenging, entertaining, and most of all, fun. Considering the amount of effort that must be put forth, it is a tribute to the role-playing game community that so many players eagerly don the mantle of Game Master!

Game mastering is a craft, one that takes years to perfect. The GM Mastery series is designed to accelerate this learning curve. It is the goal of this series to give Game Masters a toolkit of tips and techniques to lesson the burden of running games and make the experience richer for players. Our first installment is dedicated to non-player characters, a fundamental element to role-playing. Future editions will cover other essential areas of game mastering.

For more information on the GM Mastery Series, visit http://www.GMMastery.com. There you will find online resources to supplement the series and news about upcoming installments.

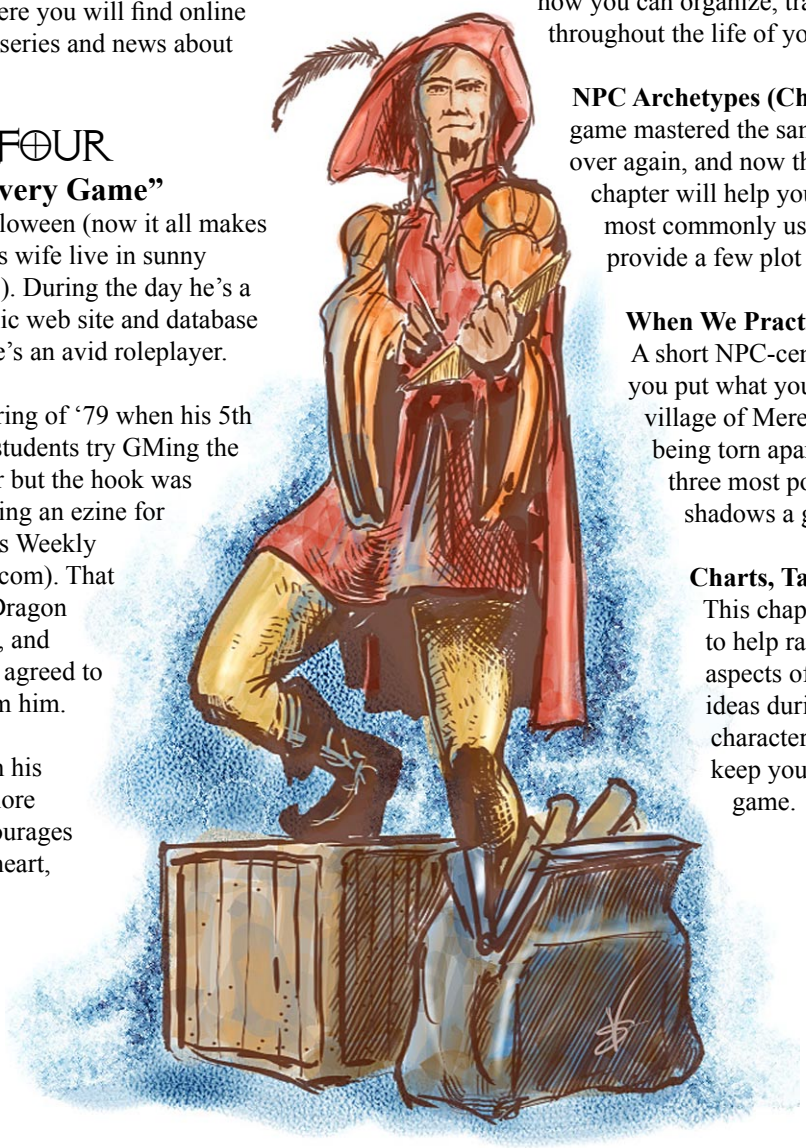
About Johnn Four

"Have More Fun At Every Game"

Johnn Four was born on Halloween (now it all makes sense, doesn't it?) He and his wife live in sunny Vancouver, BC, Canada (eh!). During the day he's a computer geek doing dynamic web site and database programming and at night he's an avid roleplayer.

His first game was in the Spring of '79 when his 5th grade teacher let one of the students try GMing the whole class. It was a disaster but the hook was set. In '99 he started publishing an ezine for GMs called Roleplaying Tips Weekly (http://www.roleplayingtips.com). That ezine drew the attention of Dragon Magazine ™, About.com ™, and Kenzer & Co ™. who've all agreed to suffer regular ramblings from him.

Johnn signs off each week in his ezine off by saying "Have more fun at every game!" He encourages you to take this message to heart, for that's the whole point. Roleplaying is a hobby for many, a passion for some, and a game for all. The final accomplishment of every session should be enjoying a fun and entertaining time shared with friends. He hopes you find this eBook and the GM Mastery series a valuable tool to help you game master more confidently, to wow your players, and to have more fun at every game!



What's In This Book?

NPC Design (Chapter 2): This chapter describes the different types of NPCs, their impact on stories, and how much time you should spend on designing each kind. It also provides advice on the different elements that make up NPCs, such as personality, power bases, and names.

Roleplaying NPCs (Chapter 3): This chapter reveals how to roleplay characters to the best of your ability. It gives specific advice on acting, using your voice, parley tricks and tactics, and much more.

Campaign Management (Chapter 4): This chapter discusses how you can organize, track, and evolve your NPCs throughout the life of your campaign.

NPC Archetypes (Chapter 5): You've probably game mastered the same types of NPCs over and over again, and now they've become a bit stale. This chapter will help you breath new life into 10 of the most commonly used non-player characters plus provide a few plot hooks.

When We Practice To Deceive (Chapter 6): A short NPC-centric adventure designed to let you put what you learn to immediate use. The village of Meremath needs the PCs' help. It's being torn apart by the petty rivalry of its three most powerful citizens, while in the shadows a greater danger looms.

Charts, Tables, & Sheets (Chapter 7): This chapter contains charts and tables to help randomly generate various aspects of NPCs or to inspire you with ideas during creation. It also contains character sheets and worksheets to help keep you organized and on top of your game.

Chapter 2: NPC Design

NPCs are characters GMs play to entertain players, drive stories, and make the world come alive. They are non-player entities, which means they're any interactive element not controlled by players. Yet, they should be given care and attention, just like player-controlled characters. NPCs can be clerics, wizards, fighters, and rogues--they can also be villains, monsters, gods, and magic items. Game masters should enjoy running NPCs because they're an opportunity to be creative, play in the game, and challenge the players.

The success of NPCs depends on making them real and interesting. They should have their own lives and not seem like two-dimensional constructs. This can be a tricky endeavour because GMs often don't have time to fully develop every character in their world. Knowing what characters to create and how to create them is another chief concern. This chapter provides advice on: how to design NPCs that suites your stories, what elements you should create for them, and how much time you should devote to planning each NPC. Charts are also provided at the end to serve as inspiration and fast NPC generation tools.

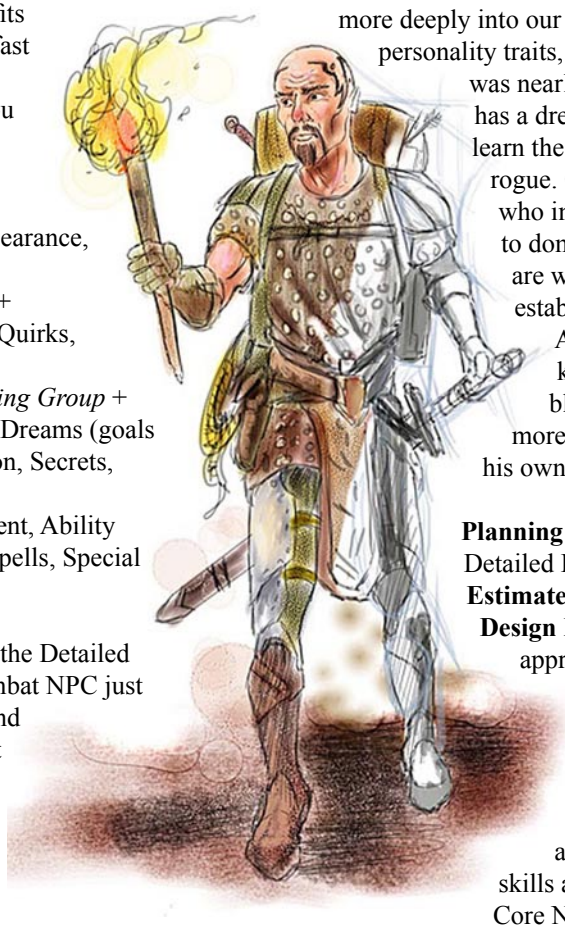
Planning Considerations

What To Plan And How Long It'll Take

The various NPC elements, such as name, ability scores, and personality, can be organized into four groups to reflect GM and story needs. While not every element fits cleanly into a specific group, this is a fast and easy tool to figure out how much planning time you'll need and what you should detail for each character.

The Four Planning Groups:
Core NPC: Name, Race, Gender, Appearance, Profession, Class, and Level.
Core Roleplaying: *Core NPC Group* + Alignment, Social Class, Personality (Quirks, Flaws, Behavior).
Detailed Roleplaying: *Core Roleplaying Group* + History and background, Power Base, Dreams (goals and motives), Relationships, Reputation, Secrets, Daily life, Wealth, Equipment.
Combat: *Core NPC Group* + Equipment, Ability scores, Combat scores, Skills, Feats, Spells, Special abilities.

Note that the Equipment element is in the Detailed Roleplaying and Combat group. A combat NPC just needs magic items, weapons, armor, and any equipment that could be important during combat, while a roleplaying oriented NPC mostly needs personal items (such as a pocket watch and pipe), appearance related equipment (clothing, for example), and anything else that could be important during encounters involving the character. Note that some NPCs will need full equipment listings, so keep this in mind during the planning stage.



NPC Story Roles

Villains

Villains are complex NPCs who probably drive many of the plots and stories. It's important to take the time to understand the villain's character. Each villain should be unique and distinctive. While any NPC can unleash a pack of hireling or monster foes, lay traps to crush the PCs, and conspire to destroy or dominate the world, the memorable villains are the ones who've developed their own unique sense of style. Every villainous action should have the NPC's signature attached to help draw the players into your adventure and make them hate their nemesis. This signature cannot be generated from statistics, quirks, and abilities alone, but is the result of creating, re-creating, and carefully thinking about the villain's NPC elements.

For example, you create a villain who is a fanatic servant of the cat god. His symbol is a snarling lynx and he commands a formidable group of werecats. His signature, at this point, consists of the use of werecats doing his dirty work and the leaving of a slashing claw mark wherever possible. However, assuming the feline deity has other powerful servants, what really makes our villain different from the other servants and cat-villains? Probing more deeply into our NPC, we develop a background, some personality traits, and some d20 statistics. We learn the NPC was nearly killed by guard dogs as a youth. So he has a dreadful fear and hatred of all dogs. We also learn the villain is shy, malicious, and a competent rogue. Our signature now changes to a villain who inflicts pain wherever he can and seeks to dominate the city he grew up in. His agents are werecat rogues--part of a thieves' guild he established--who strike only on dry nights. At the scene of every robbery, murder, or kidnapping, Lynx guild members leave the bloody head of a dog. The signature grows more complex and our villain takes on a life of his own.

Planning Groups: Core NPC, Core Roleplaying, Detailed Roleplaying, Combat.
Estimated Planning Time: Long (2 hours +).
Design Methods: Villain design can be approached in a number of ways depending on the level of involvement in your campaign's early games and your game mastering style.

Character Sheet First. Start by filling out a character sheet for the NPC, including key skills and feats. Next, flesh out the Combat and Core NPC group elements. Move on to the Core Roleplaying group. Extrapolate his personality from his ability

scores, skills, class abilities, and other talents. Finish with the Core Roleplaying elements: power base, social class and wealth. Armed with the present day picture of the NPC, work backwards to his birth. Generate a biography and more in-depth personality profile as you go. With his statistics, personality, and history fully fleshed out, formulate his goals, tactics, and villainous plans of action.

Story First. Beginning with a story seed, start generating a plot line. As you flesh it out, describe the villain in broad terms. Then get to know him better as adventure planning unfolds. Once you've created the perfect villain for the story, grab a character sheet, fill in what you already know, and choose the remaining information to suit the needs of the plot. Fill in any and all information as it comes to you. Use the character sheet and the group element lists as a checklist to ensure no critical details are missed.

Personality First. With a villain roleplaying concept in mind, begin detailing the Core and Detailed Roleplaying group elements. Finish up with the Core NPC group, followed by the Combat group.

Power Base First. What is the NPC's source of power? What resources does he have at his disposal to launch his plan? How does he pose a serious threat to your campaign environment? Use this information to either derive his Combat group elements next or his Core and Detailed Roleplaying elements. This approach is a compromise between the story first approach and the character sheet first approach.

It's highly recommended that you avoid a combat confrontation between villains and the PCs early in the campaign. The best villains feel omnipresent to the PCs, always finding some way to hamper or enrage them, yet remaining enigmas. If this suits your plans and game mastering style, then it's sometimes unnecessary to complete the Combat group until later on. It's highly recommended that you fully flesh out the other three groups though to truly understand your villain before game play and maintain campaign consistency.

Rivals

Rival NPCs bring out the best, or worst, in player characters by being competitors for whatever the PCs might be seeking, whether it's treasure, honor, information, jobs, or friends. Rivals are often enemies and often evil, but that doesn't have to be the case. They are also peers to the PCs, in one or more ways, which means they operate at the same level as the characters. This might translate into similar character levels, social class, equipment, or abilities. If there's a large power disparity between the PCs and NPCs, then the rivals will either turn into bullies or victims, so each side must remain competitive. The closer in terms of power and ability the rivals are to the PCs, the stronger the players' sense of competition and rivalry will be. Examples of rivals are:

- Villain flunkies, servants, and minions
- Competing party of NPC adventurers
- An evil knight who wants the treasure the PCs seek for his own evil purposes
- A small gang of brothers who want revenge against the PCs
- A trio of young, minor nobles who also crave the favor of the PCs' employer

Rival NPCs should be fully fleshed out, unless you have no plans for a confrontation and can guarantee the PCs will not catch their quarry if they decide to hunt them down. Look to draw the rivalry out for as long as possible in the game. Invest the time in developing all four NPC planning groups.

Planning Groups: Core NPC, Core Roleplaying, Detailed Roleplaying, Combat. There are three kinds of rivals to consider planning for: roleplaying, combat, and both.

Roleplaying: These rivals are ideal in low-combat campaigns or as a GM technique of using contrast against a hack'n slash PC group. NPCs who defeat or outsmart the player characters through pulling strings, brown nosing, and bluffing, are sure to earn the enmity of the players. For these NPCs, stick with the Core NPC and two Roleplaying groups.

Combat: Combat rivals are based almost entirely on testosterone. They try to do things like kill the dragon and get his treasure first, or better yet, let the PCs slay the wyrm and then sneak out with the booty during the fight. Arm wrestling, confrontations in the street, races to exotic locales-you name it, the NPCs will be there. Core NPC and Combat elements are critical here. The Roleplaying groups are optional, and probably naturally fleshed out over time after repeated confrontations.

Both: NPCs who have all four planning groups fully detailed most closely resemble the player characters and are therefore often the best rivals. These NPCs try to out-dance the PCs both at the King's Gala and in the dungeon.

Estimated Planning Time: Long (2 hours +).
Design Methods:

Contrast. Look at the PCs' strengths and make these the rivals' weaknesses, and vice versa. If the player characters are roleplayers, make the rivals combat fanatics. If the PCs are hack 'n slashers, make the NPCs roleplayers.

Similarities. It's irritating being challenged and beaten by your evil twins. Make the rival NPCs the same in number, with the same classes, as the PCs. Pick similar, though not identical skills. It's good to mimic the player characters' roleplaying elements as well.

Story Deficit. Do the PCs lack a critical ingredient for your story? If so, consider embodying that ingredient in the PCs' rivals so that the player characters have a chance to succeed if they are cunning enough.

Single NPC. It's thoroughly frustrating to have a single NPC accomplish what a party of several PCs couldn't. For this reason alone, it's fun to create a single character rival.

Major NPCs

Major NPCs have significant roles in the story and come into contact with the PCs enough that it's worth doing a little extra planning for them. Some of these characters might be powerful in terms of character level, wealth, or political clout, but that doesn't have to be the case. It's their close involvement with the player characters during play that gives them the status.

Minions

Minions are the PCs' chief adversaries and lieutenants of the villain. Ideally, your villain should span several stories and wind up in a climactic battle or conflict with the player characters at the end of a campaign. The villain's minions should battle the player characters in a climactic scene in each story. As each minion gets defeated, the players get one step closer to their primary opponent.

Minions are like mini-villains who have lieutenants, power bases, personalities, and evil plans of their own. Depending on your game style, minions should be given the same attention villains receive because they tend to drive many of a campaign's stories.

Roleplaying Companions

Roleplaying companions are considered major NPCs because they often spend a lot of time with the group. They need complete personalities and statistics to interact with. They might not be "major" in the sense of high character level or power bases, but they do have an important role to play in the adventure or in the PC's lives. Examples of roleplaying companions are guides, scouts, employers who insist on accompanying the party, and travelers picked up during play.

Combat Companions

Combat companions ride along for their melee skills to bolster the party's strength, yet their ongoing presence amongst the PCs gives them major status, so they should have a personality attached to their statistics. Examples of combat companions are mercenaries, hirelings, and new friends with some martial goal in mind, such as vengeance.

Guest Stars

Guest stars are famous characters in your world who make a significant appearance in your adventure. When they interact with the PCs they should be brought to life and made memorable--they're guest stars after all--and worth significant development time. They could become companions who stick with the party for a bit or they might play a key role in an important encounter. If the player characters don't get to fight or roleplay with the character, then the NPC should be demoted to Remote NPC status. They don't need a full set of statistics or a detailed personality and background.

Mentors

Mentors are medium to long term NPCs who help guide, teach, or train the player characters. Not every PC group will have mentor relationships with non-player characters, but when it does occur these NPCs should be fully fleshed out so you know whom they are, what they can teach, and how they may be of value to the player characters.

Planning Groups: Core NPC, Core Roleplaying, Detailed Roleplaying, Combat.
Estimated Planning Time: Long (1 hour +).
Design Methods: Same as Villain design.

Minor NPCs

Flunkies

Flunkies are individual NPCs who serve villains and minions. These characters are incredible opportunities for roleplaying as they can be weak or powerful, loyal or rebellious, victims or bullies. Flunkies should be more than NPCs to defeat in battle, as they are prime sources of clues and information. Flunkies should have distinct personalities and made into memorable characters. Examples of flunkies are:

- The villain's personal guards
- The villain's lover
- A shifty supply officer
- A chaotic good bard being blackmailed into service
- The young shoe boy, roguish spy, and possible double-agent

Non-Aligned Foes

Many of the opponents the PCs face won't be associated with any particular villain, minion, or foe. They could be part of a random encounter, a stalling device because the players did something unexpected, or a miscellaneous encounter that you threw in for fun.

Regulars

Characters the PCs regularly interact with should be promoted from Bit Part status and fleshed out so they can be consistent and roleplayed well. It's a good idea to give these NPCs a brief history, a secret or two, and a place within their community. They can be useful plot hooks and help push stories along if needed.

Planning Groups: Core NPC, Core Roleplaying, Detailed Roleplaying (recommended), Combat.
Estimated Planning Time: Fast (5 to 15 minutes).
Design Methods:

Villain's Need: If you've created a villain then you might already have an idea of the servants, sergeants, special roles, jobs, and agents he and his minions require. Make a list of these characters, pull out some full-fledged character sheets, and fill in just the parts you need.

Appearance, Motivation, Quirk, Dream: This is an easy formula for fast NPC creation.

1. *Appearance:* What does the character look like and what first impression does he give to others? Try making her appearance interesting so that she's memorable and distinct from the crowd of other non-player characters in the PCs' lives.
2. *Motivation*: What is the NPC up to in the short term and what does the character think while in contact with the PCs? Does the NPC have a short-term goal that the PCs could possibly impact?
3. *Quirk*: Give the character a prominent personality feature to guide your roleplaying whenever the NPC enters the scene and to get you into character faster.

4. *Dream*: Where would the NPC like to be in the future, in the longest time span relevant to the character? What are his long-term goals and how could the PCs help or interfere with these dreams and plans?

Extras, Walk-Ons, Bit Parts

These characters appear for but a moment in the story to provide atmosphere or have some unplanned, minor role, such as the bartender at a random tavern the PCs wander into. These aren't throwaway NPCs so it's worth giving these characters some core details like race, gender, class, level, and some basic roleplaying traits. Save this information to re-use these NPCs whenever possible, letting them evolve into regular or minor NPCs over time.

Planning Groups: Core NPC, Core Roleplaying (recommended).
Estimated Planning Time: Fast (1 to 5 minutes).
Design Methods: Quickly list out the core NPC and roleplaying details in a notebook, a sheet of paper, or an index card reserved for this type of NPC. Feel free to make these characters two-dimensional and memorable without stealing the show.

Combat Constructs & Cannon Fodder

These NPCs fill dungeons, villainous armies, rioting mobs, and other dangerous situations that place them at the wrong end of the player characters' business. Don't invest much time in these sods, but do try to give them a character hook or quirk to roleplay with. Perhaps the PCs will spare a lucky NPC who makes them laugh or turns out to be useful. The character's status could be upgraded to Bit Part or Minor.

Just because the NPC is doomed doesn't mean he's got to be stupid. Be sure to fully detail his combat statistics. Try to think of any clever strategies and tricks he could wield against a superior foe to save his skin.

Planning Groups: Core NPC, Core Roleplaying (recommended), Combat.
Estimated Planning Time: Fast (5 to 10 minutes).
Design Methods: Establish basic details like race, class, and level, then use the charts in Core Rulebook II starting on page 48 to quickly fill in core combat statistics. Add a name, quirk, basic combat equipment and you're set.

Remote NPCs

Remote NPCs are important characters who never directly interact with the PCs, yet they need fleshing out for storytelling and campaign consistency purposes. Examples of this NPC type would be Kings, historic characters, and deities. What needs detailing for these characters depends on their role in the story. If an encounter with the King involves him in the background addressing his loyal subjects from a castle balcony while the main action for the PCs is taking place in the crowd below, then you'd only need to design the King's appearance, mannerisms, and basic goals (to help you figure out what his speech is about). On the other hand, a book that outlines a famous NPC important to the adventure needs a detailed historical outline with perhaps a few quirks to generate some interesting side notes.

Regard all the statistics, roleplaying details, and information about remote NPCs to be on a need to know basis. Don't over-detail and spend your valuable planning time on other, more important tasks.

Planning Groups: Core NPC, Core Roleplaying, Detailed Roleplaying (varies).
Estimated Planning Time: Fast (5 to 15 minutes).
Design Methods: Look at the encounter, story, or campaign needs for this NPC and detail just that information. If the character's background or life history is needed, use point form notation, bullets lists, or a mind map and only flesh out full details if you're preparing a special player handout or prop.

Creatures

Animals: Animals could come into play as more than just wild foes or random encounters. Some character classes earn animal companions, and certain spells and magic let player characters speak with animals. It's good to consider these creatures as NPCs with their own needs and personalities over and above the standard monster stat block.

Monsters: Thanks to d20's class and template system, it's now possible to turn normal monsters into full-fledged interesting NPCs who can be given the same classes and abilities that PCs enjoy. This opens up many roleplaying opportunities as well as breaking crusty old standards and expectations. A 3rd level troll cleric who worships the goddess of healing, for example can change the players' views on trolls forever.

The key to making a good monster NPC is to treat them just like any other character. Figure out their role in your story, grab a character sheet, and develop their personality, background, relationships, and all the other goodies traditional NPCs receive. Think of the monster as a character. In fact, consider eliminating the word monster from your vocabulary altogether. Even the seemingly mindless monsters Godzilla and King Kong were distinct characters and viewed as such by their fans.

Planning Groups: Monsters should be treated like any other NPC. Their planning will depend on their story purpose. Typical roles are Villains, Minions, Minor NPCs, and Combat Constructs.
Estimated Planning Time: Varies--5 minutes to 2 hours.
Design Methods: Core Rulebook II discusses rules for layering classes and levels on monsters. Also consider the following:

Monster Society: If the NPC comes from a monstrous society, create a basic character first as a distinct individual and then look at the consequences of being different within their culture. How do other society members treat the NPC? How does this treatment affect the NPC and how does the NPC react? Figure out the differences and the consequences and finish fleshing out the NPC.

Story Twist: Start off by reading the monster's statistics, habitat, and description. Ask yourself, how can I change things to surprise my players? The peaceful troll healer is a good example. Next, look at this nascent NPC concept and see where it could best fit into your story. Perhaps replace the captain of the guard

(a Regular NPC in your game) with a one legged, one horned, ex-general minotaur; or turn the kidnapped Princess (a Major NPC in the story) into a medusa child.

Items

Equipment, treasure, items, and objects can also be NPCs. With a little creativity, you can give anything a personality. For example, Stephen King turned a car into a legendary character in his book Christine. Items come in two varieties: magic and non-magic.

Magic Items: With magic, anything is possible. Thus it's easy to create intelligent, interactive items with personality. Items like these should be celebrated and valued in campaigns and not dispensed cheaply. Endeavor to make each item you create unique and distinct using the same processes as you would when creating a flesh and blood NPC, replete with a name, abilities, background, character traits, and a secret or two.

Items & Equipment: Standard items are more difficult to envision as story characters because they don't interact with the PCs like other NPC types do. The benefit of adding in a few item NPCs is increased story interest and entertainment. Once that happens you'll wonder why you didn't include NPC items in your games all along. Consider these examples:

- The three-legged chair at the PCs' favorite bar that catches new customers unaware and gives everyone a laugh. That chair is a treasured part of the establishment and people always touch it on the way out for good luck.
- A priceless violin, the last made by the legendary master bard Phaedrus before his assassination. Its tune is like no other and always holds a note of sadness. The bard PC takes great pain and expense protecting it while adventuring.
- The stupid fire pit shovel that saved a player character's life when she grabbed it out of desperation after being surprised, scored a critical, and felled an ogre in a single, head-crushing blow. It's since been painted and dangles in a custom-made scabbard on the PC's hip. All impromptu weapons are now compared against the revered implement of destruction. "This rake ain't no Bertha Orgecrusher, but it'll do in a pinch!"

When gaming with these items, don't be afraid to go over the top and roleplay them. It's possible to do this without being comedic by giving them a life of their own, key roles in some encounters, and life-like tendencies. For example, when the PCs are searching for the secret cave entrance, the player with the deadly fire pit shovel makes her Search check. You say, "As you're forging through the tall undergrowth Bertha gets snagged in a thick bunch of blackberry stalks. As you try to yank her out she grabs on to the blackberries and pulls away a wall of prickly plants to reveal the cave entrance!"

Planning Groups: Core NPC (where applicable), Core Roleplaying (recommended), Detailed Roleplaying (if item is important), Combat (usually just Hardness, AC, Hit Points).
Estimated Planning Time: Varies (5 minutes to 1 hour)
Design Methods:

Give It A Trait Or Quirk: What are the different parts of the item? A chair, for example, has a seat, a back, legs, supports between the legs, arms, padding, a seat cushion, engravings, and so on. Pick one part and make it special or different. Perhaps the cushion is made from troll skin, or the frame squeaks like a kobold baby when someone sits down.

Make It Rare Or Unique: Interesting and prestigious backgrounds give items value and personality. Perhaps the +2 longsword has been in several famous battles and is mentioned in a poem written by one of the soldiers who wielded it. Items from distant and foreign lands, and things made from unusual materials or with great craftsmanship, also become valuable and interesting.

Make It Important: Make the item important and it will evolve into an NPC over time through regular use in the game. For example, the favored table of all taverns is the shadowy one in the far corner against the wall, facing the door. Give this table a little more personality each time the PCs use it. Add new graffiti, a burn mark that looks like one of the PCs, a chunk cleaved out during a bar fight, a spot of purple blood, and so on.

NPC Elements

The parts that make up an NPC can be separated, defined, and given enough care and attention so that, by the end of the process, a compelling character emerges. There are many NPC elements. The major ones have been detailed below along with a few words of advice. Use this section as a checklist to prevent any important element from being overlooked or considered, or use it to improve any elements you feel regularly fall flat in your characters.

Naming Your NPC

This is an important step and should be carefully considered. You can derive many campaign and adventure benefits just from the names you pick, so they should be regarded as a powerful game master tool. The following are some of the many benefits good NPC names can provide your campaigns:

Mood and Atmosphere

It's wise to choose names that best suit the game mood and campaign atmosphere you'd like to convey. For example, naming every NPC "Bob" instantly turns a serious session into a silly one, and using names of famous or well-known people quickly ruins everyone's sense of disbelief. Serious games should have serious names, epic games should have long, grand names, and so on.

Description

If you choose a descriptive name that suits the NPC, your job in roleplaying him is made much easier. Look for ways to add nouns and adjectives to NPC names that will help you describe such things as:

- Personality
- Character class, prestige class, job
- Power base
- Social class
- Goals

Tension and Fear
Pick a name that, when the PCs hear it, will send chills down their spines. Use whatever hooks you can to create names that will add tension and fear to your sessions:

- Relates to a PC's phobia
- Conveys special powers (such as energy drain--a perennial PC fear)
- Names of rivals and enemies
- Warns of great power or ability

Imagine the PCs receive a written invitation from a powerful paladin lord to attend a banquet. While this would usually bring great joy to the characters because it could mean an exciting new mission or a valuable new contact, this time it strikes fear into their hearts. It has been signed "Lord Vangrim of Shortbow Falls"--Shortbow Falls being the village that was recently destroyed when the PCs unwittingly unleashed an undead hoard!

Clues
NPC names can make great puzzles and clues:

- An alias used as an anagram of the original name
- The name reveals an ancestry related to the PCs' current quest
- It revealing meaning in other campaign languages
- The name is a password or command word
- It links up with a place or thing

Plot Hook
Sometimes, a game master can motivate his players to act in a certain way or take a specific direction to further the adventure through a clever NPC name. Usually the name is something campaign specific that has special meaning to the PCs:

- Regional name where the PCs want to go
- Attribute, special skill, or feat a PC wants
- Ownership of something a PC wants
- A name that conveys an open challenge

When Do You Create An NPC's Name?
There is no best time to generate a name. Game masters all have different styles, rituals, and preferences for the task. Here are a few things to consider about timing:

Before
A good name can be a helpful seed that guides the rest of the NPC design process. It can help encapsulate an NPC's personality, goals, background, and so on, making NPC generation easier for you. Also, if you run out of time for planning, at the very least you've got a good name to work with during the game.

After
Waiting until the NPC is finished means you can pick a name which sums them up well and reflects who they are or where they're from.

During
Creating the name during NPC design is often a result of sudden inspiration. However, should you ever get stuck or suffer writer's block on another NPC element in mid-design, stop and think. What about the NPC's name could help to get the creative juices flowing again?

Name Types and Parts
Names have an unlimited number of options and permutations. Here are a few to consider when naming your NPC:

- Parts
  - First
  - Middle: single or multiple names
  - Last
  - Prefix (i.e. Al', Ms., Dr., Von)
  - Suffix (i.e. III, PhD)
- Attributes (Ironthews, Nimblefingers)
- Skills, career, job (Smith, Carter, Weaver)
- Region of origin (Shadowfalls, Duke of Brezt)
- Ancestors (Caesar)
- Social class (Slaveson, "the Marked")
- Reputation (nicknames, street names)
- Epithets ("the Dragon Slayer")
- Rank (Captain, Lord)

Sources of Names
Offline

- Foreign language dictionaries
- Foreign language books (use any of the words)
- Baby name books
- Atlases

Online

- Ever Changing Book Of Names: http://ebon.uni.cc/
- Google translation services: http://www.google.ca/language_tools?hl=en
- Medieval Names Archive: http://www.panix.com/~mittle/names/
- Eponym: http://www.eponym.org/hq.html
- Babel Fish: http://world.altavista.com/

Naming Tips

- Minor NPCs deserve great names too. In Shakespeare's plays, he gave some of his best to minor characters, making them stand out. In fact, good names for minor NPCs saves you time in other design areas by serving as inspiration or letting you do less work. Take, for example, "Itch Dungflinger, the surly stableboy". No need to create hooks or quirks for that NPC-they're already imbedded in his name.
- Make it personal. Create a name that has some sort of personal meaning or implication to the players. This is particularly effective for PC rivals and enemies. For example, One-Eye Cort, "the land's greatest archer", or Sedrick the Cleric-Killer.
- Long names often designate important NPCs.
- Create naming conventions for your world's peoples and cultures to help decide what to name individual NPCs.
- Say the name out loud. Hard sounds like "b" or "Kr" make NPCs seem stronger, while soft sounds like "sh" or "ah" will give NPCs an intellectual, subtle, or refined feel.
- Repeat names. Name your NPCs after important historical or popular personages, or select a group of names that are common within a society. This can add some extra

believability to your games. Also, if your culture have common name pools, then NPCs with different names will become all that more unusual and special.

RACE

Your NPC's race can do more than modify a couple of ability scores and game rules. It can be a template for fast personality generation, inspire you to create unique and interesting characters, and raise the bar for how your player's roleplay non-human PCs. One NPC design strategy is to pick the race first then filter all the other character elements through that choice. For example, if your NPC were a dwarf, then you'd consider a typical dwarven appearance, history, profession, and so on. This is ideal for making fast NPCs, or for NPCs who should reflect the expected characteristics of their race. Another method is to go through the design process, keeping things race-free, and then choosing the NPC's race last. This is great for creating unique and unusual characters who break the mold, as your choices will often break racial stereotypes.

A middle-ground creation process is locking in the NPC's race near the beginning, choose the standard racial characteristics, and pick one unusual trait that is not typical for that race. This generates a memorable character that is fun to roleplay and is perfect for recurring NPCs or cameo roles. For example:

- A dwarf who is a swim champion
- A young, blind elf
- A 4 1/2 foot tall gnome (which is particularly tall for gnomes)

Consider how their single difference has affected their life, how others of their race treat them, how other races treat them, and whether they regard this difference as a gift or a curse and the consequences of that attitude.

GENDER

How the NPC's gender affects them depends greatly on the campaign world. Gender often has many social implications:

- Acceptable personality traits
- Rights and freedoms
- Standard skill selections and professions
- Expected appearance
- Allowed equipment and wealth

It's a good idea to choose your NPC's gender soon after, or even before their race. This will help you in your characteristics selection--either in creating a traditional NPC or one who breaks social conventions.

POWER BASE

What kind of power does the NPC have and how can they wield it? These questions and their answers are often overlooked in RPG core rulebooks, yet they determine how an NPC can interact in your world and what choices and opportunities they have. They can help form an NPC's personality or help figure out what it drives him to do. A power base also aids you in world creation, campaign planning, story development, and encounter generation. For all these reasons, power bases are one of the most interesting and exciting aspects of NPC design.

When To Design A Power Base

Power base design is not needed for most NPCs. You can often perform this step later on in the campaign for characters that need it. To better prioritize your preparation time for the most important stuff first before next game session, only design a power base when:

- The NPC is a villain.
- He or she is a major ally.
- The NPC forms the nucleus of a campaign or adventure.
- The consequences of an NPC's actions can significantly affect your game world during a campaign or during the world design phase.
- You need to create a logical and realistic sequence of historical events and the NPC is an important factor.
- The PCs will be roleplaying or significantly interacting with the NPC.
- The PCs could possibly interact with the NPC and the campaign is high level.

As a rule of thumb, high-level player characters (9th level+) require more extensive power base planning. This is because the stakes are higher, capabilities greater, and consequences more serious than in low level adventures. If the characters attack, insult, challenge, or request the aid of an NPC, you'll quickly need to know what will happen. At higher levels the possibilities are greater and more complicated, so more pre-game preparation is recommended.

Individual Power And Scalability

When designing power bases, it's important to understand the difference between an NPC's personal power and an NPC's scalable power. Ultimately, a power base represents how competitive an NPC can be in his environment. A 3rd level mage with a fireball wand should be able to rise a rung or two on the ladder of life. Perhaps he carves out for himself a comfortable living by intimidating the local peasants or maybe he uses the wand to become a local hero. Heck, he might just sell the wand and move to the city where he buys himself a job at the library.

However, the mage can't scale his power base outward with his few spells and wand alone. Once his spell slots are used up for the day and the wand's charges are all expended, he's on equal footing with the peasants again. Also, even with his fancy wand, people in the neighboring valley won't care about him because his fireballs can't reach that far. His power is confined to his person and the immediate vicinity, he's quite vulnerable (the wand and his spell books can be lost, destroyed, or stolen--a great adventure idea right there!), and he must always initiate or do things himself in order to get ahead. This means our mage has personal power, not scalable power.

On the other hand, if the mage uses his wand to impress the leader of a gang of bandits and they throw their lot in with him, the NPC suddenly has scalable power. The bandits can go out and act for the mage, either individually or as a group. The magi can get many things done at the same time without having to perform every task himself. He's not as vulnerable and the skills of the bandits and their leader are at the mage's disposal. This is an example of scalable power--the mage has multiplied his ability to be competitive in his environment and he has a

chance to jump several rungs up life's ladder if he's careful. This distinction is important to make with your NPCs for several reasons:

- Villains generally need scalable power to achieve their plans.
- High-level PCs can often only be defeated or challenged through scalable NPC power versus the great personal power of a single NPC.
- Personal power often has more affect on an NPC's personality than scalable power.
- Most NPCs begin with personal power and then create a scalable power base for themselves. This corresponds nicely to experience levels--low-level NPCs will rely on personal power, while high-level NPCs will focus on creating scalable power.
- Scalable power is difficult to hold without personal power. An NPC with an army, for example, better be a great leader or a smart general.
- For roleplaying focused encounters or stories, NPCs with personal power are always far more interesting to interact with than NPCs who only have scalable power. For example, the PCs finally confront the half-orc mage who leads an army of bandits. The players don't want to meet the army; they want to confront the mage. They want to know who the person is behind the general's mask, what drives him to wage a campaign of terror against the kingdom's peasants, and why the bandits follow him (wait until the PCs learn the NPC is just a low level mage with a big stick!).

Adding A Power Base To An NPC

Power bases are one of the best places to start NPC development. It's a solid concept that forms the character's personality, background, resources, goals, strategy, and so on. It's a great seed to grow your NPC around. Conversely, you can add a base to an NPC at any point during his development (even mid-campaign) and then re-check his other information to ensure it all makes sense.

To give your NPC a power base, simply pick from the list below and integrate it with your NPC's other information, or carefully consider your NPC and pick the power base you feel best suits him, your campaign, or your story's needs.

Once you've determined an NPC's power base, ask what the character does with it, and how does it impact him? For example, think of all the ways wealth can affect a person, and the choices and opportunities it opens up for them. Do they use it for selfish personal satisfaction, help others with it, and launch an evil plan with it? How could being wealthy affect an NPC's personality? Do they stay the same or become arrogant? Does their confidence go up or down?

A power base is one of the most influential elements of an NPC; so don't be afraid to change the NPC around once you've determined his source of power.

Adding Multiple Power Bases

NPCs with multiple power bases are quite possible and even encouraged. For minor NPCs it's probably not worth your time to do this, but for major NPCs the process will pay you great campaign dividends. As a rule of thumb, the more power bases you add, and the more powerful each base you assign is, the more important your NPC is to your game world, campaign, or stories.

Stop and consider how a single power base impacts an NPC and his environment, then think of the juicy complexity multiple bases would create. How great this tool can be for creating realistic, deep, and meaningful non-player characters and campaigns. Multiple bases are encouraged, though be prepared to spend a little more time in the design stage.

A good way to add multiple bases is to layer them on one at a time. For each new base you add, go back to the beginning and weave it into all of your NPC's elements, such as ability scores, personality, background, and so on.

When you're done, it's also a good idea to step back and give your NPC an objective once-over. Is the NPC believable or have you thrown too many ingredients in? Is your NPC a circus freak (possibly a good thing, though) or is he three-dimensional and deliciously complex? Finally, is the NPC playable? Can you roleplay him during the game, or have you created a jumbled soup of messy and contradictory details stemming from poor power base design?

Crafting Stories From Power Bases

An interesting technique is to establish a power base that an NPC would have difficulty supporting and then use this conflict to create stories for the player characters to get involved in. For example:

- A strong NPC starts suffering from a disease which will permanently weakens him. Did he abuse his strength in the past and make enemies who wait in the wings? How will he defend himself now?
- A skilled NPC has a gambling habit and loses his tools in a bet. How will he make a living now? What will he do to get his tools back before he starves?
- A noble NPC is rocked by a scandal, putting his family into disgrace. How does he cope with the guilt? What will he do to redeem himself and his family name?

Scalable power bases naturally impact the game world in significant ways and spawn interesting stories all by themselves. Watch how your NPC wields his power base, and maintains, grows, and defends it. Every choice affects your campaign environment and sows a seed for a new adventure.

For example, an NPC with an army cannot afford to pay his troops. Where does he get additional money? Pillage a nearby town? Send a special force out to slay the dragon in yon hills and capture its treasure hoard? Offer the services of his army to the highest bidder? Each option is an opportunity to tell a great story.

Tragedy And Power Bases

Though you might have assigned a power base to an NPC, this doesn't mean that the character is doing well and improving his lot in life. In fact, he could be in dire straights or have some extreme disadvantage that renders his power base impotent. This

is tragic and creates excellent tension and story possibilities in your games.

For example, a rogue could have magic tools and great skill that makes any barrier a mere formality to him, yet his loose tongue and penchant for ale constantly gets him into trouble and holds his career back.

As a rule of thumb, the greater the potential of an NPC's power base that goes unrealized, the greater the character's tragedy--an excellent GM tool.

Types Of Power Bases

Ability Scores

Many people in real life take pride in being intellectual, spiritual, or fit and healthy. These are personal power bases where the person thinks, acts, and advances according to this perception. For example, an intellectual would focus on studious activities and become more knowledgeable over time through reading, analyzing, and learning. They gain personal confidence because their inner voice tells them they are smart, and a desire to be perceived as smart motivates them to learn even more.

This model, while over-simplified, fits nicely into the d20 system and is a great way to create personal NPC power bases from. It's worth noting that ability scores are often used as secondary power bases by NPCs--that is, they are used in combination with one or more of the other types.

Strength

A strong NPC has many advantages over his neighbors in fantasy worlds, which are generally more physically demanding than modern ones. This type of character will seek to solve their problems through physical means. They might find it difficult to scale their power outwards because they won't think beyond what their strength can accomplish. On the other hand, strong NPCs could use their strength to intimidate others, learn to channel their strength and become great warriors or soldiers, or simply be strong enough to survive conditions others cannot endure.

How does the NPC use his strength to survive, compete, or excel in your game world and campaign?

Dexterity

Characters who are quicker, faster, or nimbler than others are also blessed with good personal power bases. Many paths are open to them, however it can be even harder to scale outwards than strength-focused individuals because high dexterity is subtler in nature and makes less of an impression than great strength does. Conversely, nimble NPCs have the opportunity to take higher risks in life, knowing they can usually escape from most situations.

How does the NPC use his gift of dexterity to survive, compete, or get ahead in life?

Constitution

As a power base, this ability score is most often used to survive with greater personal well-being, or to take chances where weaker and less durable characters will not tread. An NPC who rarely gets sick and who mends quickly is indeed blessed, but not likely to launch a coup against the King based on this gift. Instead, constitution is a great power base for minor NPCs, or employed as a secondary source of confidence: "I am fit, healthy, and full of energy--I can make this business work!"

How does the NPC use his high constitution to survive or become more successful?

Intelligence

Smart, clever, and knowledgeable NPCs have many advantages. Some spell casters, for example, gain more spell slots per day over their rivals. For all NPCs, a high intellect means more skill points, and therefore more capabilities. This is a strong power base that is quite scalable, as smart NPCs have the opportunity to teach others what they know so they can do the work for them, figure out solutions to life's problems, and understand things in order plan and advance their goals.

The NPC has the brains, but how does he use them to improve his lot in life?

Wisdom

Wise people tend to make fewer mistakes, earn more allies, and solve problems intuitively. These are great advantages to have in life, thus wisdom makes an excellent power base. In addition, wise NPC clerics get more daily spells and have greater potential to advance within their organization. Wisdom also represents scalable power because others naturally tend to follow those who seem to know the best course of action to take or who make the best decisions.

How does the NPC use his wisdom to survive, compete, and get ahead in life?

Charisma

Charismatic NPCs are natural leaders, which makes this ability score the most scalable and potentially successful power base of all. On a personal level, NPCs with higher charisma scores often have more friends and have formed more valuable relationships with influential people. At the very least, these NPCs are well liked by most, and that benefits everyone from the lowly peasant farmer to the mighty king. NPCs who can win friends and influence people are a force to be reckoned with at any campaign level.

How does the NPC use his personal magnetism, ability to lead others, and physical attractiveness to survive, compete, or get ahead in life?

Skills

Skills are a common source of power. Usually, a NPC is better off focusing on a specific skill group and carving a niche for themselves than by trying to be a jack-of-all-trades. High skill levels translate into better jobs (master craftsman, for example), or allow NPCs to take higher risks (i.e. launching villainous plans).

Scalability varies with each skill. Diplomacy, for example, opens many doors and allows the NPC to gain friends, contacts, and allies and thus gives the character great scalable power. Pick pockets, on the other hand, requires the NPC to take continual risks. There's little long-term gain from regular use, except in unusual circumstances.

How did the NPC get his skills and how does he use them to improve his situation in life?

Feats
Gaining feats gives an NPC an edge in their environment and therefore make great personal power bases, especially when a character chooses feats that compliment each other. Unlike most other sources of power, feats are dependent on level and experience gains, which makes them more of a secondary power base. Feats give characters important and valuable abilities, but they are most often used in conjunction with other power bases like abilities, skills, and equipment.

Some feats allow an NPC to scale out his power as well. For example, an ambitious wizard might use his item creation feats to create magical gear for his minions and make them more powerful (thus increasing his minions' power bases).

How does the NPC use his feats in daily life? How does having feats benefit him?

Spells
Who wants to mess with a guy who can invade your mind and influence your thoughts (Charm Person spell, for example) or who can summon a deadly column of fire from the safety of a hundred feet away? Is anyone really safe in a world where this could happen? An NPC with the power of spell casting has a strong power base indeed. From a mechanics point of view, spells pack a lot of punch, solve many problems, and give a character great control over his environment. From a roleplaying viewpoint, spells are a mysterious, wondrous, and sometimes frightening ability. A person could use this to their advantage in many ways.

Some spells are quite scalable, such as the Animate Dead spell, and clever NPCs can rise in power quickly if they are clever.

How does the NPC spellslinger use his spells to get by in life, get ahead in life, or even get more life?

Wealth
Wealth is one of the most powerful bases because it can be used in so many different ways. Wealth is a medium of exchange that almost everyone wants, which means it can be put to use to accomplish just about any goal or plan or to solve any problem. Wealth, for the most part, requires no special skills to spend or wield, so it's also available to nearly any NPC you design. Wealth comes in many different forms, so be creative when assigning it to NPCs: Examples of wealth:

- Land
- Art
- Investments
- Owns a business
- Owns valuable goods or equipment

Wealth is always scalable because it can buy the services and loyalty of others, and it can be converted into other scalable forms of power. Often, simply having wealth draws other power bases to the character.

What does the NPC do with their wealth and how well do they manage it?

Followers, Minions, Henchmen
Followers are a key power base for many NPCs because there is only so much time in a day and an NPC can only do so much himself. Henchmen can be a character's eyes and ears in other places, allow him to affect other parts of the world without being there, protect him, and make life easier for him. Followers can be a mixed blessing though, as they can become dependants (they're an expense or responsibility, for example), misunderstand their boss or act independently of his wishes and create problems.

Followers represent a scalable power base. The challenge is in managing them well when their number grows.

Why and how does the NPC attract followers? How does he employ them to his benefit?

Laws, Authority, Consent
This power base gives an NPC the power to arrest, legally injure (or kill), or command others. Depending on your game world and local campaign environment, this is a desirable power base that can be used for good or evil. It's also a complex power base because it is dependent on consent. If others disobey, fight back, or ignore the NPC, then his power is gone, either temporarily or permanently.

This type of power also usually has political or geographic boundaries. Other countries, kingdoms, political groups, religions, and such, might not acknowledge the authority of the NPC. These boundaries are usually called jurisdictions and they cap an NPC's power (whereas many other power bases have no such cap). What is the NPC's jurisdiction and what powers has he been granted:

- Arrest
- Seizure of property
- Freedom to encroach on private property
- Self defense, initiating combat, the license to kill
- Deputization of others
- Ability to judge, assign guilt, and issue penalties
- Ability to make laws, change laws, and break laws

This type of power base is scalable. The NPC might have the power to recruit others to his cause or command others to obey and do his bidding. Also, his authority might be such that a written note, new law, or official decree carries great weight across the land and affects many lives.

How does your NPC use these powers, and does he employ them for personal gain? Has the NPC thought about what he will do if or when his authority has been revoked (i.e. retirement, his lord or boss is removed from power, he is caught abusing his power)?

Social Class
Every society is stratified into layers of privileges and rights. This makes social class a power base for those who are a member of the upper or elite layers. In fact, unless your NPC is on the bottom rung, he will always have some power over those in classes lower than his. It's also true that the lowest members of society have nothing left to lose and can use that as a source of power. The benefits and extent of the character's power base is determined by your world's society. Examples of rights and privileges are:

- Allowed to get a good job with high wages
- Presumption of innocents or rights to a fair trial
- Ability to travel freely
- Entitled to command a certain social class, or treat that class in with impunity
- Inherent relationships, social circles, contacts and connections

Example social classes for determining power bases are:

- Nobility
- Priests
- Mages
- Military
- Working class
- Poor
- Freed slave
- Slave

How does the NPC fit into his society, and how does he use or abuse his rights and privileges?

Reputation and Perception Versus the Truth
How would a peasant react if confronted by a powerful mage known for his short temper and ability to burn a man to death with a twitch of his finger? Would he obey? Most definitely! But what if the peasant knew the mage was weak, hardly more than an apprentice, and his firepower actually comes from that stick dangling from the mage's belt? What would the peasant do then? He might still obey, or he might go for the stick or attack the mage with his hoe.

Perception and reputation are great sources of power for NPCs, and possibly the most fun to game master. The NPC must always work at fostering his reputation and ensuring it spreads to the right people. Encounters with this NPC are usually roleplaying oriented. If the NPC's reputation is deserved, then he just needs to walk-his-talk and word of mouth will spread. Where you can have the most fun is if the NPC is trying to create a reputation that is exaggerated or false. Then he must always convince others of his reputation and never reveal the truth.
In either case, a reputation is scalable because people will learn about it and act accordingly without the NPC having to go to each person and provide a personal demonstration.

In terms of power bases, we're only dealing with reputations that could be of advantage to the NPC. However, it is still possible that the NPC has a reputation, which could be leveraged, but he doesn't want that. For example, an NPC's charisma is so low and his appearance so frightening, that word quickly spreads and all the peasants in the local area fear the character, yet most have never even met or seen him. It's up to the NPC to figure out how to use this to his benefit, but the reputation is still unwanted by him.

What kind of reputation does the NPC have or want? How does he foster it, and how does he use it to his advantage?

Defense
An NPC with exceptional defense can use this as a basis of strength to build his plans from. The form of defense can vary, but the effect is the same: if one's foes cannot hurt you, you have an advantage over them and can act with greater impunity. This isn't a scalable power base, and it's more difficult to build power from, yet it's commonly used:

- High constitution
- Racial immunities
- Great speed
- Impregnable stronghold
- Magic armor and weapons with defensive bonuses
- Defensive feats (i.e. Dodge)
- Remote and secret base
- Capable body guards
- Magical wards, protections, and immunities
- Defensive spells

How does the NPC use his superior defense to get through life and accomplish his goals and dreams?

Equipment and Technology
Having better equipment and technology is a considerable advantage, especially in fantasy or primitive societies.

- Magic items
- Better weapons
- Better armor
- Faster and more reliable communication
- Tools that decrease building time or cost
- Faster and stronger mounts

The downside to equipment is that it can be destroyed or taken away from an NPC, so his power is always tenuous. Technology can always be learned, stolen, or duplicated, so its advantage is fragile as well.

Travel and Communication
A smart NPC can turn a travel or communication advantage into a great power base. Imagine the general who can move his army faster than his opponent, or the plotting mage who can whisper in the king's ear one moment and then teleport to the neighboring kingdom's leader then next. Consider the boy who's the fastest runner and earns the prestigious job as Royal Page, or the merchant who uses balloons to ship goods more safely and faster than his land-based competitors.

The scalability of this power base depends on whether it's just the NPC who has the travel or communication advantage, or whether he can confer this boon to others.
What sort of travel or communication advantage does the NPC have, and how does he use it to improve his circumstances?

Special Ability
The NPC has a special power or ability that he uses to improve his lot in life or impress others with. The value of the power base, and its scalability, depend on the nature of the special ability.

- Racial magical ability
- Racial physical ability
- Psionics
- Permanent magical effect
- Character class ability

What special ability does the NPC have, how does it affect his daily life, and how could he use it as a power base?

Class & Level

An NPC's character class and level determines more than his powers and abilities. Social class, appearance, and personality should also reflect, or affect, their experience and chosen path during design. The majority of characters in your campaign will be Commoners and Experts, with a few Aristocrats sprinkled in. You can find information about these classes in Core Rulebook II.

Appearance

Appearance is one of the most important NPC elements to design. As roleplaying is primarily an oral storytelling game, a good appearance description is something that helps the players identify, understand, and remember who they're dealing with. Often, an interesting appearance, can serve as an inspiring character creation hook. Plus, you can use it as a GM tool to plant clues, steer the PCs, and create campaign depth and realism.

When creating a character's appearance, factor in as many other NPC elements as possible. Social class, quirks, class, level, and name, for example, can all have an impact. It's also a good idea to have a vision or concept in mind to help guide you through appearance design. Conjure up an image in your mind, or consider using any of these sources for inspiration:

1. Comic books
2. Cover art from books, magazines, videos
3. Cartoons
4. Fantasy art books and web sites
5. Historical books and web sites

Psychology affects appearance, and vice versa. For example, being confident affects how an NPC walks, talks, and behaves. There are two appearance perceptions in every roleplaying encounter: how the other party regards the NPC, and how the NPC thinks of himself. If a character believes they are hideously ugly while the PCs see the character's scars as battle wounds to be proud of, an interesting situation occurs simply over a difference of perception.

When establishing an NPC's appearance, take into account such things as:

1. Ability scores. For example, a high strength gives the NPC a powerful physique and a low wisdom gives him a blank stare and goofy smile.
2. Demeanor. How a character behaves will affect the impression the PCs should receive. Is the NPC in a good mood? Drunk? Suspicious? Reflect the NPC's demeanor in his body language and especially in his facial features.
3. Clothes. Think about the cut, style, color scheme, functionality, layers, and the different components of the NPC's garb. Does the NPC conform to a cultural or professional dress code? Feel free to dissect and tweak clothing accessories to suit your character concept. For example, think about sleeves, leggings, collars, shoes, wallets and pouches, and headgear.
4. The climate and weather.
5. Functionality. Does the NPC dress or appear the same at work, home, and celebrations?

As a final touch, look your NPC over and create a "cool factor" for them. Some item, facial expression, apparel style, tattoo, or thing that makes the NPC a little different from the other characters in your story. This is true more for villain, major NPCs, regulars, and characters who will interact with the PCs for more than a minute.

Histroy & Background

NPC background is important for generating a character's psychology, relationships, and power bases. It's also a key to tying them into your campaigns. It helps you understand who the non-player character is by learning where they've come from, and that directly translates into roleplaying and GMing better. Another benefit is world development. By creating extensive histories for your significant NPCs, and brief backgrounds for your less important characters, you'll be expanding your world and creating vibrant characters at the same time.

A great method for background development is to pick three critical events that have happened so far in your character's life. Each event should have had a lasting impact on the NPC, perhaps psychologically or physically. A similar approach, which is better suited for older NPCs, is to generate a life-changing event for every ten years the character has lived. Be sure to spread the incidents out and not make them all exactly a decade apart. Use the following list of categories to help flesh out your NPC's history:

1. Home location(s)
2. Home life
3. Close family members
4. Distant relatives
5. Friends and enemies
6. Education
7. Death
8. Pets
9. Chores, jobs, and responsibilities
10. Random world, campaign, and life events

Social Class & Society

How your NPC fits into their society and culture greatly impacts who they know, what their opportunities are, and how they interact with the player characters. In most fantasy RPG societies, the PCs will need to be at the same social level, if not higher, in order to approach and chat with most non-player characters. Lords and ladies want nothing to do with the working class, and the middle class wants nothing to do with the poor. And who wants anything to do with adventurers?

An NPC has two levels of status, one within their culture where they might be judged by their family bloodlines, wealth, or power, and one within their own social class, where they are judged by the same things but to a finer degree. To the Baron, the NPC is just the son of a butcher, but to the merchant district, the character is the heir to a successful and wealthy businessman.

Social class gives NPCs certain freedoms, rights, and privileges. Use these to formulate other elements, such as personality, wealth, and profession. Or you can work in the reverse order and use any conflicts as character hooks. For example, a poor noble and a titled beggar both make interesting NPCs.

Here are some example freedoms, rights, and privileges to consider, though be sure to defer to your campaign world's cultural settings:

1. Ownership of land and home
2. Ownership of various types of equipment
3. Open belief in and worship of some or all deities
4. Determination of who rules the people
5. Dispute, crime, and conflict resolution
6. Where the NPC can travel
7. Available jobs, professions, and vocations
8. Ability to carry weapons
9. Ability to marry any or certain people
10. Taxes and tax exemptions

Alignment

Alignment is an oft-misunderstood and personal issue at the game table. However, it should be considered a tool for shaping your NPC's personality and other design elements, not a straightjacket. Even if you want nothing to do with the alignment rules, you should decide at the minimum whether the character is good or evil. The first core rulebook has some excellent information about the different alignments and is a highly recommended read for helping to craft your NPC.

Personality

Personality is one of the fundamental NPC building elements. Without personality, every NPC would be the same and roleplaying would get dull fast. While personality and psychology are complex issues in the real world, for GMing purposes we just want to create characters that feel real enough to be entertaining to the whole group. For significant NPCs, such as villains, it's recommended going into a higher degree of detail about their psychology; but for most NPCs, selecting a few quirks and traits is enough to let you roleplay them well and make the character distinct. Personality, for gaming purposes, can be broken down into five categories:

1. Loyalties
2. Goals, Motives, and Dreams
3. Traits
4. Jealousies and Fears
5. Interests

Loyalties

Who or what does the character have a loyalty for, an affiliation with, or a duty towards? This is important to know in case the PCs try to coerce, trick, or get the NPC to do something that would betray his loyalties. It also helps in fleshing out the NPC's daily life and relationships.

It is recommended that you give characters multiple loyalties. Clever players might use conflicting NPC loyalties to their advantage, or you might specifically set-up an encounter or adventure to expose this dilemma. Either way makes a compelling argument for creating the loyalties.

If an NPC were forced to choose between betraying his employer or death, what would he do? What if it were between his family and death? The best way to assist in this kind of decision-making is to rank each loyalty from 1 to 20. Give the choice of living, that is, a loyalty the NPC has for preserving his own life, a base score of 17. Any loyalty over 17 indicates the NPC would rather die than betray this loyalty. Each rank also represents a DC for social situations that the PCs must overcome with their skills in order to sway the character to their side or way of thinking.

Goals, Motives, and Dreams

Knowing what an NPC wants arms you well for roleplaying that NPC in any given encounter. It can also spark NPC design concepts, encounter ideas, story seeds, and campaign plots, depending on the power base and resources of the character. Goals for NPCs are powerful GMing tools because they let you roleplay characters proactively. If an NPC wants something badly enough, he's going to ask for the PCs' help when they arrive on the scene, or he'll seek them out and inquire. It takes NPCs out from under the heavy footprint that player characters tend to make on your campaign area and lets them know that the world is dynamic and doesn't revolve around them.

Motive

What drives your NPC to take action, or to take no action? Complex characters will have several motives, while minor NPCs can get by with just one or two. It's important to tie an NPC's motives in with his history, social class, alignment, and loyalties and to avoid conflicts that would make the NPC unplayable, accidentally insane, or too strange for the player characters to want to deal with.

If there are multiple motivations present, value each one from 1 to 20 to help you decide what to do if motive conflicts arise. Also note that except within pure survival situations, nearly all NPCs will be motivated to continue living, avoid pain, seek pleasure,

secure food and shelter, and earn social respect. Choose motives that go above and beyond and that also fit well with your campaigns and stories.

Traits

Traits represent the general tendencies, personality, and behavior of the NPC and are a valuable tool in determining how the character will interact with the PCs and other non-player characters. They are usually described in one or two words, and can bring flat NPCs instantly to life.

Oddly enough, traits have traits themselves. A trait can be visible, hidden, or repressed. Knowing this will add further depth and complexity to your characters.

Visible traits are obvious to others and can be easily detected. These attributes are publicly praised, teased, or mocked, depending on their type and nature. They are also the type of thing the PCs will hear first about the NPC before meeting them.

Hidden traits are ones that the NPC conceal from others and possibly reflect his true personality. Shy people hide many of their best traits, for example. Hidden qualities, when discovered, are prime targets for rumor and speculation, and create great mysteries and puzzles to unravel.

Suppressed traits are knowingly or unknowingly hidden by the NPC. They represent the dark side of a character's personality. Characters who have strong suppressed traits must develop some kind of coping mechanism, such as solitude, substance abuse, or random evil acts. Non-player characters who don't realize that they have a dark side, and are unconsciously suppressing those traits, are like time bombs waiting to explode.

Jealousies and Fears

Every NPC feels the pangs of jealousy and the chill touch of fear in their life. It's what they do about it that is important to note. If your NPC has such a fear of spiders that the mere sight of one compels him to break out into a sweat and move a safe distance away, then that's worth noting on his character sheet. Fears and jealousies, when strong enough, become flaws and weaknesses for the PCs to discover and help with or exploit.

Interests

Noting any hobbies or special interests the character has will help fully round out his personality. Interests provide great content for small talk and are prime sources for roleplaying opportunities with the PCs. Strong interests in a subject should be translated into a Skill Level. They make that NPC valuable to your stories and the player characters.

Relationships

Who does the non-player character know and what is the nature of their relationships? For minor NPCs, the answer to these questions can be kept within the cast of characters of the current story, and probably even within the section of the adventure they dwell. For major NPCs, knowing about each significant relationship creates extra character depth and complexity, plus provides GMs a fantastic tool to generate side-plots, character exploration encounters. It establishes a feeling that there's more going on in the campaign world than just what the player characters experience.

For each NPC or PC known, note their names and attitude (see Core Rulebook II for NPC attitude information). If the relationship is significant or complex, such as parent to child, a brief history might help you understand the relationship and NPC better.

Note that it's possible for an attitude to differ from the true nature of a relationship. There could be hostility between two parties who actually have deep-rooted feelings of love and tenderness. In these cases, describe the outer and inner attitudes separately, and definitely delve into the history of the relationship to determine the cause of the schism.

Secrets

A nice touch in NPC design is to give the NPC a secret or two, a skeleton in the closet. This provides a great subtext to roleplay with, especially if the secret comes into play, or threatens to do so. The PCs will wonder at a non-player character's slightly strange behavior, vague answers, and attempts at changing the subject. Secrets are also fantastic encounter and plot hooks, and are another type of puzzle to challenge your players with.

A fun, behind-the-screen game is to partially expose a secret to the PCs and roleplay the NPC's cover-up attempts as best you can. A character with a low wisdom, charisma, or intelligence will need to use every skill and ability he's got to compensate. If the player characters successfully uncover the whole truth, they win and possibly earn bonus experience. If the NPC manages to protect his secret then you win and you can give yourself a silent pat on the back.

Daily Life

What does a typical day look like for an NPC? This information can be used to improve roleplaying, It may be a source of clues and weaknesses in the case of rivals and villain characters. Key elements of daily life are:

- Home: Where is it? What is it like?
- Family life: Does the NPC live with family and how are familial relations?
- Defense: How does the NPC protect themselves and their home?
- Meals: Where, when, and what does the character eat? Who do they dine with?
- The working hours: If the NPC has a job, where do they work and what is that like? How long do they work each day? Who do they come into contact with? If they don't work, perform duties, or administer to any responsibilities, what do they do while the rest of society is working?
- After work: Is there any leisure time remaining after the day's work is done? If so, how do they spend it?
- Sleep: What are the NPC's sleeping arrangements? Do they usually wake well rested? Do they dream or have nightmares?
- Rest: How does the NPC prepare for and spend holidays? Are holidays a weekend arrangement, a seasonal festival, or

a regionally celebrated day that excuses them from labor? This area includes many other things already covered by the other NPC design elements, such as relationships, social class, and interests. Be sure to link these up into your day-in-the-life snapshot of the character.

Wealth

Wealth is extremely important in societies that do not have a safety net of unemployment insurance, catastrophe or medical insurance, fair regional government, equal access to water and food, and other modern benefits. For most NPCs, wealth is a security blanket first, and a source of power and advancement second. The upper classes in society are generally born wealthy, so they do not often have a scarcity mentality, but 90% of the citizens are not members of the upper crust.

Wealth comes in many forms, such as land, debts owed, and hard assets like industrial equipment. An important factor to consider is liquidity. Liquidity represents how easy wealth is to trade or spend. Normally liquidity is not an issue, but in times of strife it can make the difference between a continued secure and comfortable existence and joining the ranks of the poor in the street.

Along with liquidity, portability is another desirable feature than makes some items or objects of wealth more valuable than others. If you can't take what makes you rich along with you, then that represents higher risk of devaluation during times of crisis.

For example, two neighboring lords are regarded as highly successful and wealthy by society. One is an importer/exporter, and the other owns thousands of acres of orchards in the country. The source of the first lord's wealth comes from buying low and selling high and keeping the difference. More importantly, his source of wealth comes from his relationships. He knows whom he can purchase items from and who he can sell to. Our second lord generates his income by harvesting succulent fruits year after year and selling them to the highest bidder to merchants and city folk. Whose wealth is more liquid and portable? The first lord's is, for should war, famine, or some other crisis erupt he still has many of his relationships to tap should he relocate. The second lord needs his orchards. He can't take them with him, nor can he do much against catastrophic weather or hungry, invading orcs. Such is the nature of wealth.

Wealth can also have a stigma or honor. For example, a laborer who's saved up his pennies for years and years and had enough good fortune to build up a retirement fund would be regarded differently than a man who got rich quickly after four seasons as the tax collector. Likewise, the wealth of one family could be held in higher esteem than another simply because of ancestry, though the balance sheets might be identical.

If your NPC's wealth is not liquid or portable, or if it has some cultural significance, note that on the character sheet. You might also consider creating a will for the NPC and establishing an heir.

Some NPCs will be in debt. They'll owe more than they're worth or can pay off at any one time. In this case, establish who the lender(s) are, and the terms of the loan(s). What happens to the debts if the NPC dies or is imprisoned? What happens to their family?

Equipment & Belongings

Note what major items the NPC owns, what items he normally carries around, and how he protects the equipment he can't watch over all the time. Equipment is also an opportunity to demonstrate the NPC's personality, style, or station in life. Exotic items, such as a cape made from parrot feathers, might be worn because the NPC hates talking birds, because they're making a statement about what they can afford, or because they craves public attention. Avoid noting every pot and pan, but when listing items of potential use or significance, try to embellish them so that they add to the overall impression the character makes.

Consider creating groups of belongings, especially for important NPCs, in case these characters are caught in unexpected situations. For example:

- Public travel
- Distant travel
- At work (include personal belongings and work equipment at hand)
- At home eating or relaxing
- Sleeping (what does the NPC wear, and what's within hand's reach?)
- Adventuring
- Special celebrations and occasions

Sources of Inspiration

There's no rule that says you can't borrow great characters from other sources, and sometimes it's even necessary if you're suffering from writer's block or you need to develop a concept in a hurry. When grabbing inspiration from various sources, look for what makes the characters memorable and distinct. What qualities, quirks, traits, and behaviors do they posses that attracted your attention and made the characters entertaining? Seek this kind of information to incorporate into your NPCs.
Sources of Inspiration:

1. Fiction, novels and short stories
2. Movies
3. Television shows
4. Plays, opera, theatre
5. Comic books
6. History, current events, newspapers
7. Family members
8. Friends and acquaintances
9. Art
10. Modules and published RPG materials

It's quite effective keeping a notebook with you and noting great characters, character hooks, and NPC concepts as you discover them. After finishing a book or watching a movie, set aside five minutes afterwards to identify and note down any characters that inspired you. With a growing library of ideas, you'll never be stuck for inspiration again!

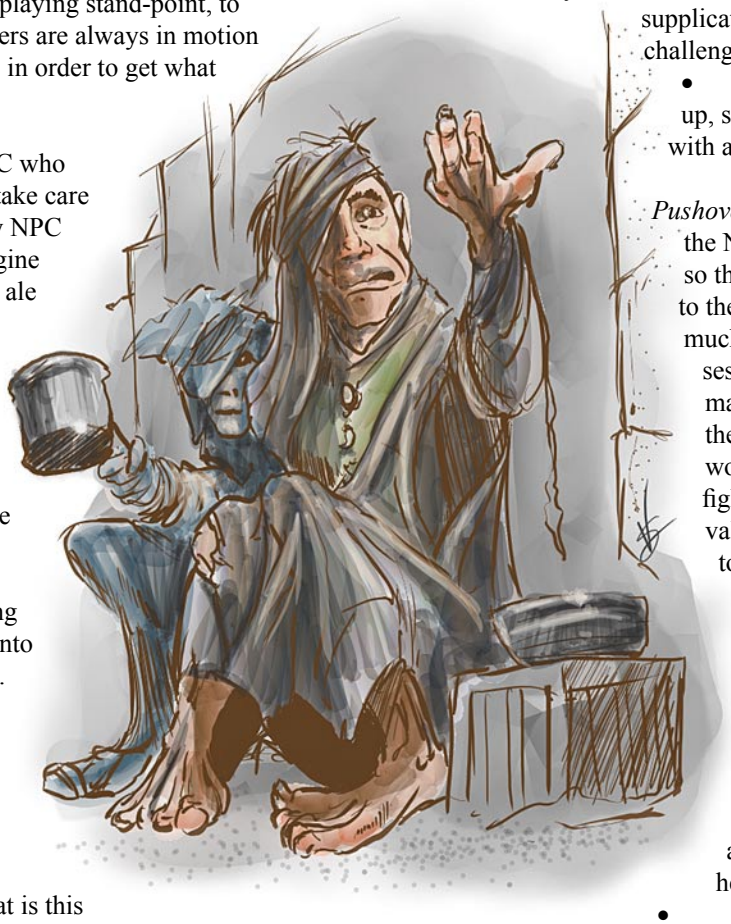
Bring Your NPCs to Life

Transforming the numbers and words from your notes into real, breathing, non-player characters during game sessions can be challenging. NPCs shouldn't feel like cardboard cutouts, yet there's a lot to do and manage behind the screen. You can't focus 100% on just roleplaying the non-player characters. Below are some tips to make bringing your NPCs to life easier and more manageable at the game table. After reading the advice below, just focus on one or two ideas each game. Don't try to do too much at once. Let your roleplaying skills develop over time through practice. Avoid pressuring yourself into thinking every character needs to be perfect and simply enjoy improving your NPCs in small ways each game session instead.

The PCs Have Entered the NPC's Life, Not Vice Versa

It helps to start a scene or encounter involving an NPC with the right attitude. One of the best mind-sets to have is feeling like the player characters have just entered into the NPC's life, not the other way around. It's easy to think of your NPCs as being in freeze-frame mode, ready for activation by the PCs' appearance. It's much more effective from a roleplaying stand-point, to believe that your non-player characters are always in motion and that it's the PCs' task to keep up in order to get what they want.

This translates well for the busy NPC who has customers to tend to or tasks to take care of, but it also helps you GM the lazy NPC who just wants to be left alone. Imagine a character who was happy drinking ale quietly in the corner keeping to his thoughts when the PCs sweep in, sit next to him, and start pressing him with questions. Thinking like this, from the non-player character's point of view, helps you calculate his initial attitude and consequent words and actions. Remember, NPCs have their own things going on, even if it's just doing nothing. The characters have come into their lives, not the other way around.



What is the Purpose of the NPC?

Before you start roleplaying the character, stop and ask yourself, what is this person's purpose? How should this NPC behave right now to best suit the story and game session? Even though the character has their own personality and goals to roleplay, thinking about the larger story issues improves your game mastering and should impact how you roleplay NPCs. Generally, there are two story purposes for roleplaying non-player characters:

1. Challenge Level

The NPC has or knows something the PCs need, or is somehow a barrier to the player characters. When players seek out an NPC, either for reasons of their own or of your devising, ask yourself how challenging this character needs to be at this time. Do you need to stir the players up with a confrontational NPC? Should she be a pushover just to keep the game moving? Maybe you're content to sit back and watch how the scene unfolds? It's possible to maintain character consistency and integrity and still accomplish different story and NPC challenge needs.

Challenging: The NPC must be an effort for the characters, though this doesn't always mean combat (Be prepared in case the PCs draw their swords anyway). If the NPC isn't a fighter, keep his escape route in mind or know how he could try talking his way out of the situation.

- The person withholds information and demands some form of payment. Making the payment more difficult to provide increases the challenge.
- NPC is in a belligerent or stubborn mood. The PCs must roleplay this right or they won't get what they want. The severity of the mood and the amount of PC supplication required sets the challenge level here.
- He has friends to back him up, such as a domineering wife with a take-no-crap attitude.

Pushover: In this situation, you need the NPC to cough up the goods so the player characters can get to the next encounter without too much delay. Perhaps the story or session pace is slow from too many dead-ends or red herrings; the characters are wounded and wouldn't be able to put up a fight; or the NPC actually has no value to the PCs and you want to get the encounter over with quickly. Some examples are:

- A foe is distracted or under stress and slips up.
- NPC is wounded and can't risk a battle herself.
- A friendly character has just received good news and is more than pleased to help the PCs.
- The pushover is boring, offering no story hooks, side-plot potential, or useful information.

Neutral: Often there is no need to intervene and you're able to roleplay the NPC free of meta-game issues, such as story pacing or player interest. In this case, you just need to help the

character pursue what's important to her and react according to her personality, the situation, and the PCs' behavior.

2. Game Mood, Atmosphere, And Tension
Use NPCs to steer the mood of the game when necessary. If the players are starting to act a little silly, for example, it might be time to pull the reigns in and make the next NPC quite serious. Perhaps the player characters have just suffered a great loss and tension is high, so you add a little comedic relief to ease the strain? Maybe you want the game session to be spooky and decide to make the NPCs a little mysterious and slightly strange. For example:

- The normally cordial barkeep puts the PCs into a serious mood after he explains the grave news he's just received about his wife and children.
- The three grim PCs carry their dead brother into the temple for resurrection. Tension is high because the deceased character's player knows her PC will lose a level from the resurrection and it wasn't even her fault that her PC died. You decide to lighten things up a bit by making the head priest a stuttering gnome with a flatulence problem.
- The players are starting to feel nervous now, for this is the tenth person they've spoken with who doesn't answer their questions directly or in a sensible way. Something weird is going on...

The trick here is to take your existing, pre-planned NPCs and layer your GMing purpose on top. This will make your characters a little different each time the PCs meet them and allow you to still roleplay them consistently and true to character.

All Creatures Seek Pleasure And Avoid Pain

Understanding the two basic instincts of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain can help you roleplay a character on-the-fly when you might not otherwise have time to carefully consider his full range of motives. There are multiple levels or thresholds of each for every individual, and your job is to think to the deepest level that will let you make a decision about how the NPC will finally act in the current situation.

By figuring out the greatest possible pleasure or pain for an NPC in a running encounter, you'll know what his immediate motivation will be. That will help you decide what he wants and what he'll do to get it. This is an important GM skill to acquire because the PCs will often put NPCs in situations you might not have accounted for when designing their personalities and motivations. Pleasure/pain levels can change suddenly in an encounter. Being able to adjust quickly helps you roleplay better.

For example, the PCs are roughing up a captured pickpocket for information about the thieves' guild. The rogue wants to stop the pain of the interrogation, but he does not want to suffer the stronger pain that would come from the thieves' guild should he spill the beans, so he makes up a story.

Suddenly, the PCs offer the rogue a cut in any loot won in a raid of the thieves' guild coffers in exchange for being a guide. Now what does the pickpocket do? It's potentially a big enough pay-off that he could flee the city afterwards and retire in comfort. Is the potential pleasure of the loot greater than the potential pain of getting caught?

It's also important to note, whenever the pain and pleasure of an option seem about equal, most NPCs will choose to avoid the pain rather than seek the pleasure.

Goals

If you have created some motivations for your NPCs then you can use them as a great tool for bringing characters to life at the game table. Motives determine why NPCs act the way they do and also help you form their specific goals and plans. For example, a young man might be seeking revenge for the murder of his bride-to-be. His plan is to capture the murderer and avenge his fiancé.

If you know an NPC's motives and plans, and they apply directly to the encounter at hand, then you're set. Simply roleplay the NPC so that he tries to get what he wants. What if the goal is completely unrelated to the situation involving the PCs though? For example, the player characters meet the angry young man, know nothing about the murder, and strike up a conversation. What now? The solution is to ask how can the NPC get the most out of this encounter? Right now, right this moment. The young man's goal is to track down and kill the murderers, so perhaps he asks the PCs if they've seen anybody who looks like the killers. Then he might ask them about the weapons they carry. Which ones kill the slowest, which ones can take a man down from a distance, and so on. He might ask if they know anything about tracking and if they might have any tips. The player characters will probably start to get interested in the NPC now, and you can decide whether the character will talk about the tragedy or not. The main point is the NPC has been brought to life, has remained true to his motivations, and has tried to get closer to accomplishing his goals.

Subtext

Subtext is one of the best ways to create believable, complex NPCs in a simple way. It's also a heck of a lot of fun to GM. In life, people do and say things for reasons we don't always know. Subtext is the real meaning and motivation behind their actions. If you can duplicate this in NPCs, you will have developed an amazing roleplaying skill.

For example, in the Goals section above, a young man seeking revenge asks the PCs about their weapons and tracking abilities. The PCs have no idea why he's doing this, so that is guaranteed to get their curiosity. A GM could have roleplayed the NPC by having him say "I'm hunting the murderer of my fiancé. Have you seen the killer and what's the best weapon I could use to ensure a slow, painful death for him?" But then there's no mystery, no complexity of character actions, no subtext.

It would be far more intriguing for the NPC to continue his information gathering and not to reveal his true goal. A scene like this would be easy for you to roleplay because you just need to keep the NPC's motives secret for as long as possible. By doing this you're creating subtext for a realistic, interesting character.

Examples of subtext:

- Lies: what will the NPC lie about and why?
- Private agendas: these are secret goals of the NPC that are usually in conflict with the PCs' objectives or the objectives of various authorities.
- Secrets: What skeletons does the NPC have in his closet that needs to remain in the dark?

Relationships

If you have defined relationships with other NPCs for your character, then these become perfect tools for bringing him to life during games. Here are some things to consider:

- NPCs always like to hear what's happening in the lives of the people they know. The player characters are quite mobile in campaigns and can therefore be great fonts of new information and gossip. If a connection is ever made between the PCs and an NPC your character knows, be sure to bring this up while roleplaying. "Oh, so you know Drebin? What's new with him? How's his health? Last I heard, his daughter got married to some lunatic adventurer-type."
- Do the player characters and the NPC have enemies in common? Even if the NPC is of no use to the PCs, or refuses to ally with them, the fact that they share a common enemy can form a small bond between them. This provides a hook to roleplay with. Shared enemies also give your players the impression of NPC depth and realism.
- Most NPCs only have rumour and hearsay to work with, yet they're more than willing to judge others by this dubious information. In the spots where their information is incomplete, they'll make up stuff, rationalize, guess, exaggerate, or twist known facts to support what they want to believe. (Note this can be done to support other NPCs or to work against them.)

This means you can bring NPCs to life by having them give the player characters conflicting "facts", news, and gossip. Who is right and who is wrong? It will be confusing for the players, but they'll definitely feel your NPCs are realistic and probably have a lot of fun too.

NPC Expectations

What are your NPCs' expectations about how they should be treated by the characters? Having them can help make your characters feel like real people to the PCs. NPC expectations are often based on:

- Social class. For example, nobles expect to be addressed by title or as "my lord".
- Appearance. An NPC with a high charisma might expect either adoration or jealousy, but not indifference.
- Level. Experienced NPCs often expect to be treated with caution, respect, and even fear.
- Race. This depends on your campaign world.

A good technique is establishing a common set of NPC expectations in your campaign when roleplaying, and then adding a twist every once in awhile. Your NPCs will already feel three-dimensional because they have a treatment expectation in the first place. When a non-player character breaks this expectation you add a whole new layer of realism to your campaigns.

Quirks

Quirks are a great tool for bringing an NPC to life, so refresh your memory about any you might have given a character before starting to roleplay him. Quirks are tangible and immediate roleplaying aids. While it might not be realistic to dole them out in great numbers (for example, in some games every person on the street has a loud wheeze, an eye patch, or a strong fear of horses), adding them to characters gives you a strong hook to hang your roleplaying hat on. If your NPC doesn't have any quirks and she's starting to fall a little flat, give her a subtle random quirk and start working it slowly into the game. Before long, she'll be interesting and a lot of fun to game with.

NPC Moods

While most NPCs won't have emotional personalities, they shouldn't be in the same, static, neutral mood every time the PCs interact with them either. Everybody has good days and bad days. Creating NPC moods is a fun way to make characters more interesting. A simple way for managing moods is to roll randomly on Table 3-1.

Roleplay The Weaknesses

An NPC who is invulnerable to attack, wins all contests, is the most handsome, and has the King eating out of his hand is going to be quite difficult to roleplay. He might be a fun rival to tease and goad the PCs with, but that's about it. Instead, every NPC should have at least one weakness. For ideas, read the Power

	2-3 Very Bad Mood (d10)	4-5 Bad Mood (d20)	9-10 Good Mood (d20)	11-12 Great Mood (d10)
1	Depressed	Angry	Adventurous	Animated
2	Disgusted	Annoyed	Carefree	Blissful
3	Fuming	Anxious	Casual	Elated
4	Incensed	Belligerent	Cheerful	Euphoric
5	Miserable	Bitter	Content	Exuberant
6	Pissed	Bored	Delighted	Generous
7	Suicidal	Downhearted	Devilish	Gleeful
8	Upset	Fearful	Flirtatious	Joyous
9	Venomous	Galled	Grateful	Merry
10	Wrathful	Indignant	Happy	Mirthful
11	Stinging	Irritable	Jubilant	Ecstatic
12	Spiteful	Peeved	Lucky	Rapturous
13	Malicious	Pessimistic	Mischievous	Exultant
14	Sadistic	Remote	Optimistic	Exhilarated
15	Hostile	Sad	Playful	Triumphant
16	Vicious	Touchy	Rascally	Blithe
17	Resentful	Uncaring	Romantic	Effervescent
18	Hateful	Unlucky	Sincere	Whimsical
19	Mean	Vexed	Surprised	Thrilled
20	Scornful	Weary	Thankful	Energized

Bases article in chapter 2, and apply the advice there in reverse: choose one or more areas where the NPC is lacking in a minor or major way.

Figure out how the NPC compensates for his weakness:

- Tries to hide it (wears a mask to cover his hideous appearance).
- Weaves lies ("This is an old war wound from my adventuring days").
- Makes it public and uses it as a source of strength ("I proudly bear my scars so all can see I'm willing to make the sacrifices necessary to achieve our aims!")
- Lets stronger abilities overshadow and minimize his weakness (uses spells to hide his grim appearance).
- Ignores it.

You also have the option to make the NPC a tragic character who does not or cannot overcome his weakness no matter how hard he tries. Either way, your character's depth will improve and bringing them to life will become much easier. Weaknesses also make perfect subtexts to roleplay!

How To Make Your NPCs Distinct

If you have more than a few NPCs in your campaign, then it's important to make each character distinct so that the players can tell them apart and remember them. Here are a few tips to help you accomplish this:

- *Names*. Imagine a campaign where every character was named Bob. That would get confusing fast! Use NPC names as hooks and character identifiers that describe the character. For example, Brogund The Cleaver is more memorable and descriptive than Thrichmirgrin.
- *The senses*. What do the PCs see, hear, feel, or smell when interacting with the non-player character? Pick one of the senses and highlight that. For example, perhaps the local innkeeper is an important spy for the thieves' guild. When the PCs meet him, you describe the smell of freshly baked bread that always seems to accompany the NPC. And when the PCs visit the inn, the innkeeper always personally serves them a basket of freshly baked bread to go with their ales. Pretty soon, you'll just need to mention "freshly baked bread" and the players will instantly think of the innkeeper. Now that NPC is distinctive, memorable, and you have a great tool for clues and plot hooks.
- *Contrast*. Use contrast to help NPCs seem different from each other in identifiable ways. Make one guard short and another tall. Have one rival be a cowardly warrior and another a dense mage. Have a father be an emotional wreck and the son a bastion of strength.
- *Key characteristic*. Choose one statistic, ability, piece of equipment, or personality element and focus on roleplaying, embellishing, and drawing attention to that while interacting with the players. This will give them a hook to associate the NPC with and remember him by.

ACTING TIPS & TECHNIQUES

You don't need to be a brilliant Shakespearian actor to roleplay NPCs well; however, learning and employing just a few performance techniques goes a long way towards creating memorable and highly entertaining characters.

I call the items below Acting Tips, but remember you're not on a stage with a passive audience. You're not an actor. You're an interactive role-player. Don't put pressure on yourself to feel you should be delivering amazing performances with thunder and lightning crashing in the background. You're with friends--relax, have fun, and try to make each NPC distinctive in some way.

Body Language

Some basic GMing body language helps NPCs spring to life before the players' eyes. There are two tricks for using body language in RPGs:

1. Focus on and repeatedly use a certain expression, position, pose, or movement to associate that body language with a specific NPC. Once a character becomes linked with body language they become easier to roleplay. Your players will recognize and want to interact with them.
2. Use body language instead of description. In other words, show, don't tell. It's more powerful conveying anger through angry motions than it is to simply say the NPC is mad. A picture is worth a thousand words and so is body language.

Body Language Exercise

You have many body parts to express emotion and deliver specific impressions with. Professional actors are adept at communicating with complex sequences and combinations of body part motions and positions. Your GMing goal is to learn how to use each body part to build a repertoire.

Use a list of body areas as a checklist for experimentation. When you're bored, think about each body area and all the ways it can move and be expressive. If you're able to, use a mirror and twist, turn, move, and pose in any way you can think of, isolating one body part at a time. Take note of the experiments you like. Categorize each in terms of what emotion or effect they convey.

For example, your torso might seem pretty inanimate and boring as far as body language is concerned, but as you think about all the ways you could try moving you might notice:

- Turning from the waist rather than your neck to convey a person with a back injury, a snob, or someone who has so many muscles they can't turn their neck.
- Jutting your stomach out to play a fat NPC or one who likes his ale. Also a good movement for portraying monsters and creatures.
- Sitting straight and rigid like a proud soldier.

The thing is, as you grew up you developed a range of body motions, expressions, and positions that became comfortable. In order to expand your range now, you either have to practice and experiment, or mimic others, but it's worth it! For example, grab pictures from magazines and mimic the actions, poses, and positions. Advertisements are particularly effective for this because they must convey a lot of emotion and capture interest in a small space and in a fraction of a second.

Another tip: associate expression through the extremities with more refined NPCs. That is, use your arms, legs, neck, and torso for barbarians, warriors, physical, and vulgar characters. Use wrists, hands, and fingers for nobles, rogues, feminine, and

refined characters. The face and all its parts are universal and fair game for any type of character you portray though.

Create A Trigger

It's important to portray repeat NPCs with consistency. A good trick for doing this is to create a trigger that allows you to instantly remember who the NPC is and get into character. Three great triggers are:

1) *A key phrase*: "Dr. Livingston I presume?", "Me Tarzan, you Jane", "Go ahead make my day!" Think of a phrase that captures the NPC's personality and character and say it out loud or just under your breath at the game table.
2) *Body movement*: Think of Bruce Lee, the Three Stooges, or Superman's flying pose. Just before you start playing the character assume the position or perform the movement. This can be a powerful memory technique.
3) *Mental mantra*. Create some kind of mental phrase or mantra that instantly brings the NPC to mind. Repeat it several times just before the encounter starts.

Be Aware Of The Scene

Spend a few moments to get a strong mental picture of the scene before you begin to roleplay the NPCs within it. This will give you ideas for props and circumstances to portray non-player characters with greater confidence.

Who are you talking to?
Who does the NPC perceive he is talking to and what does he think of them?

- What do the PCs look like currently?
- What is their demeanor or attitude?
- How do they behave?

Most likely, the player characters are clumped together in a knot, dripping blood, weapons drawn, whispering to each other, and behaving strangely. (It usually only takes a couple of negative NPC reactions to correct this typical player character behavior by the way, as long as you take the time to explain the bad impression the PCs are giving to NPCs.)

Where is the scene?
What is the location and what is its significance, if any? Being aware of where the NPC is and their surroundings helps you figure out how to act. Knowing whether the NPC and PCs are in a public or private place would be valuable. Perhaps, in public, the NPC speaks in hushed tones and appears nervous if the player characters raise their voices. But, in private, the NPC feels free to yell and stomp around. Some locations have their own codes of behavior that will help you guide an NPC's actions:

- Hospital (quiet, certain places and times the public can visit)
- Church (quiet, respectful, reverent, humble)
- School (well-behaved, disciplined, punctual)
- Library (quiet, studious)
- Crowded dance floor (depends on dance style and the event)
- Beauty parlor (chatty, gossipy, casual)
- Campfire (casual, non-judgemental, social)
- Tavern (don't wreck the furniture and hands off the wenches!)
- Holding jail cell (act tough, don't ask questions, don't give ground)
- Sporting event (casual, have fun, cheer for the home team)

What time is it?
The time of day could affect how the NPCs think and react to the PCs and other characters. Is it day or night? Is it breakfast, mid-afternoon, or time to go to bed? Is it time for prayers, time for school, time for work, or time to get home?

What is the mood and atmosphere of the scene?
Is it dark or brightly lit? Are you at a park or in a smokey tavern? Is the encounter supposed to be spooky, humorous, dramatic, disturbing, or fast-paced?

Make Eye Contact With Your Audience

Unlike most plays, movies, and books, where the characters do not interact with the audience, roleplaying games require you to speak directly to the players and vice versa. It is therefore a key acting skill to make eye contact with your players. Here are some suggestions to follow:

- Keep eye contact short most of the time.
- Maintain longer eye contact for intense NPCs or scenes.
- Avoid eye contact on purpose to play a deceptive, shy, or guilty NPC.
- Avoid making your players uncomfortable with overly intense eye contact
- If any of your players are shy, feel free to look generally at their face instead of eye-to-eye.
- Nervous NPCs usually make eye contact repeatedly but for only a microsecond each time.

Once you have eye contact you win attention and focus. If you need the attention of just one player, then have the NPC only make eye contact with him. If you need multiple players involved, make eye contact with each as you roleplay. Eye contact is an invaluable aid that conveys information gets the players involved.

The Fourth Wall

The Fourth Wall is an imaginary line that separates the audience from the actor. Mimes who flatten hands out in mid-air to pretend they're trapped in a box are using the fourth wall. Characters in movies who open a refrigerator and the camera is inside to let you see their face and body is another example. The actor pretends they aren't looking into a camera, and you pretend you're not actually in the refrigerator.

Most of the time there is no fourth wall in RPGs because you interact directly with the player characters, taking on whatever NPCs roles are needed. However, there are times when the characters aren't involved and yet you still want to act out the scene:

- An important conversation between NPCs.
- When the PC spies or scries upon NPCs.
- When a player character has a dream or vision.
- When you do a cut scene to impart a history lesson

Use the fourth wall any time you want to act out a scene that's not interactive with the players. Face the players, do your thing, pretend they're not there, and let them pretend you're not looking at them.

Use The Props

Using props is one of the most important elements to RPG acting. It's the ability to visualize a scene, figure out what objects are in it and the space you're roleplaying within and associate this with the NPC(s). Then convey this information through body language.

For example, suppose the PCs have paid an NPC a visit at his home. The NPC is nervous and has a low DEX. You could simply say "the man is nervous and clumsy." Or you could act out the NPC accidentally bumping into a corner table, knocking over a vase, fumbling with it a couple of times in mid air, and then yelling out CRASH! Which option is the most entertaining?

The corner table and vase are examples of props in the scene above. They are invisible to the players so it's up to you to act out the NPC's interaction with them in such a way that the players will recognize what the props are and figure out what's going on. If you've ever played the game Charades before, then you've done this and are probably already a master at it.

Using the props is an art unto itself and a lot of fun. It also makes NPCs, acting, and roleplaying more entertaining and interactive. Here are a couple of examples:

- Opening an umbrella in a small room filled with valuable trophies.
- Entering a room made for gnomes--it has a four-foot ceiling.
- Opening a cupboard, stoking a wood stove, and making a pot of tea.

The key is to think of what props are present in the scene in the first place. Then you must interact with the make-believe items well enough so that the players know what you are doing. It's not necessary to act out a whole scene this way. Depending our your GMing style, your best option is to use this powerful technique to accent NPC roleplaying to make things more entertaining, rather than entering "mime mode" for a long period of time.

Remember Names

Remembering names is important, especially the PCs' names. Nothing breaks the mood faster than stopping roleplay to ask, "Johnn, what's your character's name again?" Make a list or use a visualization trick of putting a name to a face so that you just need to remember the face and then the name will come to you.

Practice Tricky Names And Phrases

Hesitation, emergency research, and stumbling over tricky names and campaign phrases always detract from your performance. Make a list of potential problem words, names, and phrases, and say them out loud until you can consistently repeat them without awkwardness. Focus on the accents, stresses, vowel sounds, and the sound of the word in general.

When you create your list of tricky items, make two columns. Column one is for the word or phrase. Column two is for the phonetic pronunciation to help you remember how to say the words out loud. Label the sheet and group the words in sections so that you can bring this tool to the game table just in case, and find what you're looking for quickly.

Never Apologize

If you make a mistake or flub while acting, don't stop and apologize unless it creates a critical player misconception. Just keep going. Players are willing to overlook acting mistakes (and even bad acting) and will just want you to move on. Dwelling on an error makes players uncomfortable and suddenly everybody will become sensitive that it's you the person doing some acting, not the NPC coming to life. Apologizing usually just ruins everyone's sense of disbelief, so bull through it.

Make It Interactive

Involve your players with your roleplaying. Avoid turning the scene into a boring monologue. Ask the players questions in your roleplay as the NPC, move around in the scene so that the PCs will need to react or keep up, and use the props (i.e. pretend to pass the PCs their cups of tea or mugs of ale). Once players get involved in a scene they'll be too busy thinking of what they're going to say and do next than to pick your performance apart.

Be Yourself

Being tense provokes a wooden performance. It's important you are relaxed and comfortable enough to let your personality and creativity shine through. You should also recognize that, when it comes to roleplaying, the players are on your side. They want to make-believe. They will gladly superimpose their mental images over what they see you doing as long as you don't come off sounding like a robot with 80's speech synthesis technology.

You are always better off being yourself and adding a few acting elements over time as your skills and comfort level grows. For example, if you can't do accents well, don't worry about it. GM in your normal voice, describe what the NPCs voice really sounds like, and let the players' imaginations do the rest. Feel free to experiment, but never feel the pressure that you need to jump into a role feet first and provide a Hollywood performance. Be yourself and let the players' imaginations help you out.

What Are You Selling?

It's not how well you act but how well you communicate what the NPC wants and how he's trying to get it. Use a combination of description, dialogue, body language, and physical actions to convey how the NPC appears to the players. You're not selling the truth. You're not supposed to reveal the hidden secrets of the character through acting. Instead, you want the players to see things as closely as possible to how their characters perceive them. Hopefully, you'll give the players tip-offs and ideas about what's happening so they can ask the right questions, request the right skill rolls, and make educated assumptions or guesses.

Voice Techniques & Tips

Speech accounts for an overwhelming majority of all the information that is passed back and forth at the game table. (The other top methods are printed materials, dice, and body language). What you say and how you say it dramatically impacts the quality of your NPC roleplaying. The following are tips and techniques on using voice to enhance your non-player characters.

Learn The Best Way To Breathe

Take a deep breath. What rose or expanded more when you inhaled, your chest or stomach? The best way to breathe is through your abdomen. It's also a great way to breathe and speak as you roleplay. Abdominal breathing causes your body to relax. It educes the stress on your lungs that shallow, chest breathing causes. Exhaling and speaking by compressing your belly rather than your chest causes your voice to deepen and become more measured--perfect for NPC voice control!

Try this: lie down and put a book on your stomach. Breathe in deeply over a count of five seconds and exhale over a five second period. Make the book rise and fall, not your chest (Your chest will normally rise and fall a little while you breathe abdominally).

Now, sit up and put your hand on your abdomen and perform the same, deep abdominal breathing, making your hand rise and fall. Next, grab a book and start reading out loud. As you speak, compress your stomach and force the air out that way rather than from your chest. Relax the back of your throat, and use your throat to regulate your voice and airflow rate. You should find your voice deepening somewhat and becoming more even and controlled. The difference is subtle, but becomes greater over time as your abdominal muscles strengthen and you become comfortable speaking this way.

To those people doing the listening, the effect is more subtle to their ears, but they'll be more inclined to pay attention, listen, and become engaged with what your NPC is saying. The alternative is breathing shallowly from your chest. Your voice becomes higher pitched, less commanding, and more easily lost in the regular game table hubbub. While NPCs with higher pitched, thinner voices have their place (another technique to note), you don't want the players sub-consciously dismissing what an NPC is saying when you have the power to speak differently.

This technique is ancient. Many public speakers, musicians, singers, and doctors know about it and use it to their advantage. You should too!

Avoid Upspeak

Avoid ending several successive sentences where your voice rises to make them sound like questions. This makes you, or the NPC, sound tentative and unsure--unless that's the effect you're trying to create.

Avoid Fade-Out

Another common affliction is mumbling and fading out at the end of sentences. Be sure to finish what your NPC is saying at the same voice level as when you started, unless you're going for a special effect.

Pronunciation And Crispness

Many of us, in our everyday life, speak quickly or without too much thought, and consequently, we develop a bit of a slur or lazy pronunciation for our words. This is not usually a problem--until it becomes necessary to communicate important information to a group of listeners in a chaotic environment, your game table, for example.

GM with a crisp voice. Finish a word before you move on to the next one. Verbalize the whole word. Speak a little more slowly. For noble NPCs, this helps convey their better education and upbringing. The same goes for several other types of NPCs who either expects to be listened to or who've been taught the good manners of speaking well.

Speak With Enthusiasm

This comes naturally to most GMs. Speak with enthusiasm, which means raise your voice, throw your body into it, and vary your vocal tones. The important thing is remembering this halfway through a game session when fatigue sets in and you're caught up with multi-tasking. When this happens, learn to recognize it. Take a moment to collect yourself, and put the enthusiastic voice back into your NPCs. The whole game table should become re-energized.

Avoid Hesitation Words & Phrases

Expressions such as "like," "ummmm," and "ahhhh," kill any kind of serious roleplaying mood or important NPC impression you're trying to make. It's a hard habit to break, but the three best ways to beat it are:

- Become conscious of the exact hesitation word or phrase that you use. Consciously avoid saying it. Put the word in big, red letters on a Post-It Note and stick it to your GM screen. If you're unsure of what you say, ask your players, or tape record yourself.
- Speak with purpose. Knowing what you want to say reduces the need to hesitate or stall.
- Know your NPC. If you are crystal clear of your NPC's personality, goals, and mannerisms, you'll be more confident when roleplaying him and less likely to use hesitation words.

It's mostly by habit that you use hesitation phrases. Even when you know exactly what you want to say you'll find ways of slipping them into the conversation. The key is to make yourself aware of what you're saying and to constantly remind yourself not to say those words any more.

Quiet Speaking Forces Players To Listen

Speaking softly makes people lean forward to try and catch what you're saying. It forces them to stop any noise-making activities so that your words aren't being drowned out. This is an effective technique for:

- Horror or spooky encounters and sessions
- Settling down the pace of the game
- Getting the players to focus in better
- Sinister NPCs
- Creating game tension

The tough part is getting the players' attention in the first place so that they figure out something important is being said and they quiet down to listen. The fact that you're talking quietly often makes this impossible. Here are a couple of solutions:

- Step out of character and let the players know the NPC has a quiet voice and they should listen up.
- Make eye contact with each player as you speak and get their attention.
- Begin speaking quietly, forcing the players to catch on and warn each other to be quiet. Refuse requests to stop and start over and keep speaking without getting annoyed or breaking character. However, until you have all the players' attentions, ramble on with relatively unimportant stuff. Once everyone's focused in, get to the real information you want the NPC to convey.
- Begin speaking softly, but raise your voice once in awhile to clue players in that an NPC is speaking. Don't raise your voice in an irritated way, but do it in-character as if the NPC is getting momentarily excited about something.

A once-an-adventure twist: speaking quietly and settling the whole room down is a perfect set-up for a loud BANG! ending that's sure to scare the players. The bang can be from an object (i.e. you slam a book closed) or a yell or shout (the most effective). Do this once and the players will be expecting it, so space this twist out over several sessions to make it unexpected, or to raise the tension of expectation for players with long memories.

Parley Tips, Tactics & Strategies

Keep GM And NPC Information Separate

Your NPCs won't know everything about the PCs, the current adventure, and the campaign world that you do, so it's important to keep this information separate. It's also a great technique for roleplaying and parley because your NPC will want and need to know certain information, though you may already know it. That gives you some good topics to chat about in-character.

Step 1: Figure out what the NPC doesn't know, what he needs know, and what he wants to find out. Some categories that re-occur most often are:

- Who are the PCs, what do they want, what are their abilities, and how powerful are they?
- Do the PCs know anyone the NPC does? Is this a good or bad thing?
- Can I trust the player characters?
- What is going on in the local area that concerns my family, my business, or me?
- What is going on in the world in general that concerns my family, my business, or me?
- What can I learn or find out about the PCs that could be to my benefit or advantage? What are their needs, wants, weaknesses, and secrets?

Plus, there are often situational questions, such as:

- Why are the PCs so heavily armed? Why are they covered in blood/dust/bandages?
- Who has hired or supports the PCs? Why?
- Why are the PCs asking me these questions? What does it all mean?

Step 2: Decide what the need, priority, and sensitivity of these questions are for the NPC. What does the NPC have to know first, and what the NPC is simply curious about. "Need to know" questions are usually top priority and approached with the least sensitivity. Also take into account the character's confidence of the current situation. The NPC would love to know who the PCs' employer is, but does he have the courage to ask? If so, is he courageous enough to be blunt about it, or does he try to be subtle ? Finally, factor in the NPC's rights, social privileges, and personality. For example, a servant NPC, though dying to know all about the player characters, probably wouldn't pry too hard for fear of the PCs telling his master how rude he was.

Know What Your NPC Wants From This Scene

You should know what your NPC wanted before the PCs dropped into the scene, and then figure out how the NPC could use the player characters to advance his goals. The PCs could be viewed as adversaries, tools to be manipulated, good luck, partners, servants, bosses, friends, or potential employees or contractors. Each role should be roleplayed differently:

- *Adversaries*: the NPC will either seek to gain advantage over the PCs through parley or to eliminate the danger they represent.
- *Tools to be manipulated*: the NPC will use trickery in a subtle or indirect way so that they do not catch on and try to turn the tables.
- *Good luck*: the NPC will be happy to see the player characters and will parley in a friendly or positive way.
- *Partners*: the NPC will have his own interests in mind and will always be worried about trust, commitment, and the PCs living up to their end of the bargain. If the NPC is extremely trusting then these thoughts have been buried deep in his mind, but they're still there...
- *Servants*: the NPC will order the PCs around and expect to be obeyed. The character might be kind about it or not, depending on his personality.
- *Bosses*: servant NPCs want to avoid work and punishment. Motivated and ambitious servants might try to exceed the expectations of their role, but for the most part, servant NPCs try to do the minimum. Parley with servants is usually "don't speak until spoken to" or requesting instructions and confirming orders.
- *Friends*: Allies should be trusting, have more intimate knowledge of the PCs, and feel comfortable talking to them about most non-embarrassing things.
- *Potential* employees or contractors: the non-player character will be sizing the PCs up, calculating their abilities, and will possibly be in a negotiation mindset.

Perhaps the NPC doesn't think the player characters will be of any use to him? In that case, the NPC will be tolerant if he's friendly or neutral to the player characters, or intolerant if he doesn't like the PCs. It might seem unrealistic that every NPC has goals. The best approach is to get into the habit of looking for NPC goals first, then ruling them out because it doesn't suit the character or situation. Truth is, NPCs without goals are a lot less interesting and fun to play, and usually everybody wants something.

In tough cases, you might ultimately decide that the NPC's goal is to simply enjoy the player characters' presence. Perhaps the PCs are funny, interesting, famous, or curiosities? Many NPCs might simply want to hang around, get noticed, and parley to have fun.

A Game Within The Game

If you view parley between NPCs and PCs as each side wanting something from the other, then you have the opportunity to play a fun game-within-the-game. Your goal as GM in this game is to make the NPC win without bending the rules or pulling any strings with your god-like in-game powers. The NPC wins by accomplishing his goals, learning what he needs, and/or defying the PCs.

This is just a game of NPC vs. PC (not GM vs. PC, or GM vs. Player). If you play it this way then you're sure to play the NPC to the best of his abilities and the players will enjoy the challenging parley. If the situation is too simple and you've got the game time available, give yourself a handicap to make things interesting. For example, the PCs book a room at the inn and ask a servant to run baths for them. You could just say, "Yes sirs!" and be on with it. But, the PCs have just returned from looting a dungeon and want to roleplay for a change. So, you decide the servant takes a fancy to one of the player characters but is, unfortunately, not very comely. Now things are more interesting! Your goal is to get the PC to take a romantic interest in the NPC despite the non-player character's horrible facial scars. You've got a game-within-a-game started.

What Is The NPC's Leverage?

This something that an NPC can use to get their way. It's usually specific to a person or group (you know someone's secret for example), but not always (you have a big gun). Knowing what your NPC can use as leverage helps your in-game character conversation skills immensely. Examples of leverage are:

- NPC has something the PCs want (information, the ear of the King, a skill).
- A secret.
- NPC is a danger to the PCs' friends or relatives (he might know where they live or be constrained by a good alignment).
- Anything that could be used as blackmail.
- Knowledge of how to ruin the PCs' plans.

An NPC can use this kind of leverage in different ways during parley:

- To manipulate the PCs.
- To get his own way, forcibly if necessary.
- A last-ditch defense.
- A source of self-confidence.

It's often important to decide if making the PCs aware that the NPC has this leverage will hurt the NPC or not. The PCs might get violent or meekly obey. This is part of the fun of parleying, knowing about leverage can add a whole new level to your game.

Questions = Control

He who asks the questions controls the conversation. If you want the NPC to take control of the parley or to put the PCs on the defensive, do it by asking questions. Begin conversations with a question, then follow-up with another, and so on. Once the NPC is satisfied he can dismiss the PCs. They'll be left wondering what just happened. Some players are savvy about this and will try to turn the tables. You can deal with this in two ways:

1. Have the NPC answer the PCs' question and then quickly ask a question of his own before the player characters have a chance to speak.
2. Have the NPC answer the question with a question.

It's an important skill to have your NPCs control conversations and ask questions in a manner which doesn't tip the players off or shut down the discussion by being too aggressive. Sometimes you may have to give a little to keep things going in the NPC's favor.

He Who Speaks First Loses

This is a neat trick to help NPCs get answers from reluctant PCs. When somone wants something and you think the time is right, have the NPC ask the question...and then be silent!

He who speaks first loses. If the NPC speaks first then the pressure is off the PCs to come up with an answer. So the character must stay silent, even if that silence lasts for minutes. If the player characters speak first, then they have to reveal something. If they don't answer the question, they will reveal either that they don't want to answer the question or that they don't know the answer. In either case, that's useful information for the NPC and potential leverage.

It's also possible that the PCs speak first but answer the question with question of their own, or are too clever to reveal anything. If that's the case, then congratulations! You're GMing a world-class parley. Your options now are to regain control by working another question into the conversation, playing the silent game again, or using leverage to try and force the PCs to answer truthfully.

Give PCs Choices, Not Ultimatums

If your NPC gives the PCs an ultimatum, "do it or else", he is making the PCs choose. That's not good because it pushes the player characters into a corner, usually means they either get aggressive or become resistant to further parley efforts. The NPC should instead present options for any choice the PCs make that somehow helps the non-player character's cause.

You can do this by asking open-ended questions--questions that can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

- "What do you think of the Baron?"
- "I can see you're not entirely convinced, what is stopping you from allying with me?"
- "Will you investigate the Baron for me or would you rather see the city sink into civil war, brother against brother, the Baron against the Duke?"

Small-Talk Tips

Sometimes it's too unrealistic or uncomfortable for an NPC to dive into a serious conversation or to get directly to the point. In these cases it's best to start with some idle chit chat. Most minor NPC parleys will be small talk in fact, unless they have a specific goal or agenda. Small talk can be difficult and awkward to GM though, not to mention boring. Here are a few tips to solve this problem:

- Focus on recent events. The latest incidents, scandals, and misfortunes are always a hot topic. This kind of small talk has valuable game use as well because you can sow plot hooks, clues, and story seeds into them to further your sessions along.
- Talk about two highly contentious subjects: politics and religion. This kind of conversation is great because it can start off with small talk and then escalate into a serious and dangerous conversation where the PCs' allegiances are brought into the spotlight and questioned.
- Use F.O.R.M. as an easy-to-remember guide:
  - Family
  - Occupation
  - Relationships
  - Money
- Ask how the player characters' families are doing, how their jobs are going (or what their jobs are), how people that the NPC and PCs know in common are doing, and the current state of the region's economy. Use F.O.R.M. to renew a dying conversation or to start one up.
- The weather. A classic topic that players seem to often enjoy making up many details about. Go figure.

GM SCHIZOPHRENIA:
Conversations Between Multiple NPCs

Why Do It At All?

Sometimes you have important information to provide the player characters and you feel the best way is through roleplaying an NPC-to-NPC conversation. Perhaps a PC is secretly spying on a mage council meeting, or the PCs are told to stand quietly while their superiors discuss strategy and plans. Maybe it's a dream sequence or vision. Or perhaps you are doing a "cut-scene" of pure description to introduce a new story campaign.

Regardless of the need, it can be quite tricky roleplaying a conversation with multiple NPCs. The players need to know which NPC is doing the talking at any given time, you need to roleplay different personalities well without having the benefit of a script. The players as a group need to find the conversation interesting enough to follow and learn what they need to from it. Here are some techniques to help you roleplay several NPCs at once:

Create Distinct NPCs

Can you imagine GMing a conversation between fifty guardsmen? It's far easier to make each NPC a distinct and unique individual with one easily identifiable character or personality trait. As each NPC speaks, your job is to identify that character trait as you talk so that the players can follow who is speaking. Example traits are:

- Thin, wispy voice
- Stutters and swears a lot
- Drunken slurred speech
- Long…drawn…out…speech…
- An NPC whose voice rises because they talk fast and always ends sentences with a question?

Establish A Hierarchy Of Relationships

Another good way to make NPCs identifiable is to create a lord/servant, employee/boss, or commander/solider type of relationship. This hierarchy can come through clearly in your roleplaying (for example, subordinate NPCs will end every sentence with "my Lord" or "Sir") This informs the players who the leaders are.

Show, Don't Tell

Use voice, props, and body language to keep the NPCs separate and distinct. For example, when one NPC speaks always pretend to adjust a pair of glasses sitting on your nose. And when another NPC's turn comes, talk using his hoarse whisper. These cues are more enjoyable to witness than being told who is currently speaking all the time.

Have A Point, Keep It Short

Conversations in movies and books get right to the point. In real life, most people start with small talk or beat around the bush a bit, but bypassing those parts keeps the story moving along and doesn't bore the viewers. Feel free to roleplay a little pointless chit chat with NPCs from time to time, possibly in a deliberate attempt to slow the game pace down or establish a specific mood. Avoid doing this with every character, especially in sessions with many NPCs. What player wants to have the same conversation about the weather over and over again?

Be sure to have a point or purpose for the conversation. Before you begin, decide what you'd like to accomplish. What do you want the players to learn? What do you want the NPC to learn? As you GM and speak back and forth in different NPC roles, always work towards achieving a point. This helps you keep conversations on track, short, and reduces the need for scripting.

Move Your Head And Shoulders To Indicate Who's Talking

If you are stuck holding a conversation between groups of indistinct, vanilla NPCs, picture the position of each NPC in the scene. Turn your head and shoulders as if you were speaking from that NPC's position. This small cue will help the players learn when a different NPC starts to speak and which one is most likely to be talking.

Use Accents
Accents are an excellent way to distinguish NPCs during a conversation. They can be tough for some of us to pull off well though, but if you're capable then use it to your advantage.

Point To A Fig Or Use Pictures
Another way to identify which NPC is talking is to have photos, pictures, or figurines/icons for each non-player character. As you switch roles, point to or hold up the different picture, figurine, or photo.

He Who Runs Away Lives To Fight Another Day

It can be tricky letting your NPCs realistically escape. Maybe the NPC realized too late that he got in over his head by confronting the player characters. The PCs might have just got in a few lucky shots, or perhaps the fleeing non-player character wasn't even interested in fighting in the first place. You don't want to trash another NPC that you worked hard to develop and weave into your story line, and the NPC has survival instincts of his own to obey. The following are some tricks and techniques to help your NPCs run away to fight another day.

Plan An Escape Route Before The Encounter Starts

If the character knows he's about to meet with a group of powerful, deadly, or crazy foes, he should plan an escape route beforehand. If you want the NPC to escape, then you should plan an escape route for your own purposes. If the NPC's Wisdom or Intelligence is too low for him to realistically think of an emergency exit, then you should try and plan for a serendipitous escape. Types Of Escapes:

- *Portal*: the NPC flees through a hidden, secret, or regular door, magical gate, or other routes. Before the encounter begins, have a clear understanding of how the portal works, whether it can be locked, and how difficult it is to open and possibly re-lock. You don't want to hesitate mid-encounter and give the player the impression that you're fudging things just to help the NPC get away.
- *Actions*: Keep in mind whether it will require a partial or standard action to open the door. Every second counts during an escape, and a delay could prove to be deadly.
- *Magic*: the NPC has a spell, ability, or device that will magically move him a short distance away (for example, a Blink spell) or a long distance (such as a Carpet of Flying). Figure out before the encounter if the method requires time to activate (like casting time) or special circumstances (such as an open window or clear interior path for the Carpet of Flying to help).
- *Allies*: the NPC has allies who can delay or distract the PCs while he makes his escape. Examples are: town guards, hirelings, servants, and loyal friends. It's important that the NPC meet and create a plan with his allies beforehand so that everyone knows what to do. A plan like this also usually requires an escape signal of some kind. Note the NPC doesn't necessarily have to let his allies know whether or not he'll be sticking around to help. An evil NPC might create a plan and use his allies to unwittingly distract or block the pursuing PCs.
- *Leverage*: the NPC has some form of leverage that grants him temporary immunity from the player characters. Examples are:
  - Important knowledge that would die with him
  - Hostages
  - The secret note explaining everything to the King that gets sent if he doesn't live
  - Terrifying consequences (the NPC carries a demon trapped inside him that will be unleashed if he dies)
  - PC alignment

Keep The Escape Option Open During Encounters

GMs often build escape plans only to end up shooting themselves in the foot because they let the NPC get cornered. It's critical that your NPC keep his escape options open at all times. There are two things you need to watch for during encounters to prevent cornering by clever PCs:

1. The escape route remains open, free, and clear. Doors must be left open or unlocked, allies must be able to catch the signal and act, the leverage needs to be communicated before it's too late and the PCs start chopping...
2. The PCs' route needs to be slower than the NPC's route. Even if the NPC keeps his back to the open doorway at all times, it will do no good if the PCs are standing toe-to-toe with him. The NPC needs to impede the player characters so he can realistically escape, without tipping the player characters off about his escape plans. A tricky game indeed!

Crunch Some Numbers

It pays to do your homework before the encounter to determine the abilities of the PCs and the odds of an NPC escape. If there little hope of the NPC ever escaping, then you might want to re-consider the encounter. Perhaps the NPC should send a messenger or delegate instead?

Calculate the party's maximum movement rate. It only takes one PC to catch-up with, tackle, or slow down the NPC long enough for the other player characters to arrive and complete the capture. So, what is the fastest PC's movement rate by:

- Land
- Air
- Water (surface)
- Water (submerged)
- Magic (at various ranges:10', 100', 1 mile, etc.)

What is the NPC's movement rate for those categories? Don't forget about encumbrance. Look at the NPC's move after encumbrance and consider how fast the PCs can shed their encumbrance to move faster. If a PC with the highest speed is slow just because he's carrying several bags of gold, you need to know that.

2) Calculate the party's near-maximum melee damage for one round. Look at the toughest PCs and assume a non-critical hit. How much damage could they do in one round if 75% of them hit for 75% maximum damage? You might want to tweak this formula by factoring in the NPC's AC and the PCs' actual

odds of hitting. You might also want to list each PC separately because you won't know who will be near the NPC during the encounter.

The figure you come up with should be the amount of Hit Points an NPC should have left, at the ideal minimum, before he starts his escape.

3) Calculate the party's near-maximum missile damage for one round. Assume 75% of the PCs hit for 75% of potential maximum damage, no criticals. If the number is large, the NPC might want to consider changing the encounter location to a place where missiles are difficult to use, such as a heavily forested area of a park.

4) Calculate the party's near-maximum spell damage for one round. Assume 75% of the potential maximum damage is done. A high figure means the NPC might want to choose a magic-inhibited location, such as a busy public market, to protect themselves from those nasty fireballs.

You should also determine the saving throw DCs the NPC will face for various spells that could prevent him from escaping, such as Hold Person, Web, etc.

As you're calculating these figures, you should keep in mind that the NPC won't really know them. If he has the time and resources though, the NPC should try to get a feel for this information beforehand through reconnaissance, spying, and information gathering. This is a gives you campaigns an air of realism. The PCs might learn about mysterious people asking about them, what kind of weapons they favour, and so on. They might find clues that they're being followed or spied upon.

Once your NPC has this type of information, then you can roleplay with it; otherwise, you need to assess the importance of not losing the NPC against the potentially negative impact of GM meta-gaming. It's your call.

Tweak The NPC For Chases

If you think it necessary, there's no harm in giving an NPC the skills and abilities to help them survive a flight from the PCs. You can work these skills into the non-player character's background and personality. This is a great excuse to add a little depth to your NPC.

There are three parts to a successful chase sequence and escape. The breakaway, the flight, and the evasion. The breakaway involves the first two rounds of flight where the NPC needs to turn and flee without being taken down from behind or from Attacks of Opportunity. The flight requires the NPC to put some distance between himself and the PCs until the PCs either lose sight of the character or give up the chase. If the PCs refuse to stop pursuit, the NPC can try to hide or take a route the PCs won't spot or try to follow once out of sight.

Key abilities for fleeing NPCS are:

- General:
  - High AC
  - Lots of remaining hit points
  - High speed
  - Cover and concealment
  - High Dexterity score
  - High Reflex score
- Feats:
  - Endurance
  - Lightning Reflexes
  - Mobility
  - Run
  - Shot On The Run
- Skills:
  - Balance
  - Climb
  - Hide
  - Jump
  - Listen
  - Move Silently
  - Search
  - Spot
  - Tumble

Don't Cheat the PCs

Let the NPC be defeated once the player characters have done a great job of outwitting, cornering, capturing, or preventing from escaping. Don't become so caught up in an NPC's escape planning, skill tweaking, and in-game chase sequence that you bend or break all the rules to let him win. That will just create animosity between you and your players. You have an unlimited pool of NPCs at your disposal, so sincerely congratulate the players for a job well done and move on.

Finding Opportunities to Roleplay During Combat

An oft-overlooked aspect of roleplaying NPCs is during a fight. There's no reason why you can't have a great parley as the NPC clashes swords with the player characters. You reap all the usual benefits of regular roleplaying, such as imparting plot hooks, campaign clues, and matches of wits.

In fact, combat parleys are a win/win for a mixed party of role-players and hack 'n slashers where each group gets what they want from the game. Plus, you might find that combat parleys can be as intense and rewarding as casual roleplaying, depending on the circumstances. The following are some tips and tricks to help you roleplay with your NPCs during a melee:

Let The Participants Talk, Then Game

Let all the combatants say what they want at the beginning of each round then start rolling the dice. Roleplaying on turn-by-turn basis becomes too stilted and not as fun. Roleplaying at the end of a round makes the conversation seem like it's lagging

behind the action, much like a time delay in long distance or satellite calls tends to dampen a conversation. Feel free to experiment and find the perfect solution for your group though, as each combination of players and GM has a different dynamic. You can use a timer and chop things off at three or six seconds to mimic round or half-round length, but it's better to look for a natural break in the conversation and then ask everybody to start rolling or performing their actions according to initiative order. If the conversation took 12 seconds, that's a worthwhile break from reality and the players never seem to care. It seems a shame that an insult a player has been working on the whole previous round must be cut-off halfway through because six seconds are up.

Insults And Challenges Always Work To Get Things Started

A good insult or challenge is a great way to start a parley in battle. It even works on mages and rogues! Insults should be as personal to the PC as possible--every character aspect, relationship, or ability that the NPC knows about is fair game.

Challenges should be more than feeble claims of imminent victory. Try to actually setup a contest and bring the combatant's honour or reputation into play. Play up to the player-character's ego, or hurt the PC's pride in order to goad him into accepting a challenge.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Roleplay through an NPC's actions, not just their words. Reflect briefly on your NPC's personality. And then figure how would he act during combat?

- An honorable NPC would give the PCs quarter, let them stand if they fall, and go for clean shots. This kind of opponent sets an example that compels many player characters to rise up to the same level.
- A macho character might hold his action to give a PC the first shot, or he might laugh off any wounds he receives. "Is that the best you can do dwarf? Haha! You better run while you still can!"
- An NPC full of bravado might combine every blow with a challenge or insult, or he might confront the strongest foe in every battle to prove he's the best.
- An angry or evil foe might spit at the PC's feet, taunt him, and try to perform attacks that will embarrass the player character.

To many warriors, style is everything. Some always look for tables to jump on, tricks to pull, clever called shots, to fit the style they pride themselves on.

To many GMs, this kind of behavior seems senseless because it creates tactical weaknesses and renders NPCs less powerful. Why risk a Jump skill check when I can just clobber him with regular swing? Why spend a whole round hurling insults, playing brave, and taking missile damage when I could just storm in swinging?

The potential reward for roleplaying in combat is huge. Fights become legendary because of the participants' antics instead of the total damage done. Players often rise to the occasion and roleplay as well. This encourages pure hack 'n slashers to start speaking up, even in non-combat situations. It draws shy and quiet players out of their shells faster than most other roleplaying techniques as well. Ultimately, it adds a whole new layer of fun to the game.

If you're worried about challenging players, then you're better off using higher level NPCs who might be tactically weaker in combat because of your roleplaying. Once the players learn that not all their opponents hack-to-the-max any more, they'll loosen up too and things should balance out. Ultimately, if the players just choose to smack down their opponents mercilessly and take advantage of your NPCs' roleplaying, then let them. You have an unlimited NPC pool to draw from and you can tweak their abilities so that they continue to be challenging adversaries.

The Parting Shot

Whether an NPC is fleeing or dying, it's important to try to get the last word in. This drives PCs crazy and encourages them to roleplay even more. Hurl an insult just as an NPC gets carried away to safety, make a plausible threat as an NPC kicks his horse's flanks and gallops off in a cloud of dust, or issue a hoarse warning as the NPC's final breath.

Do Not Abuse The Players' Trust

Once you start roleplaying in combat, and choose style and fun over emotionless, always-perfect tactics, avoid betraying player trust by returning to that mode and catching them off-guard. It's fine if an NPC does this as a cruel trick. Otherwise maintain the spirit of the game you've set-up or your players will be less likely to respond in kind in the future.

Look Out Behind You!

Here's a fun challenge. While roleplaying an NPC in-character, try to trick a PC into looking over his shoulder during combat with the classic "look behind you!" It's incredibly difficult to do because the players are aware of this trick from countless movies and books. A rule is that you can't use your powers as GM to unfairly manipulate the PC (such as creating a "co-incidental" strange noise behind the PC) but NPC spells, skills, and other abilities can all be brought into play.

Chapter 4: Campaign Management

Managing NPCs over the lifetime of a campaign brings up several challenges. Campaigns require a larger cast of characters. Tracking numerous NPCs can be frustrating and mismanaging them can slow down gaming sessions while you waded through notes. Natural and believable introductions are also important, as is tying them to your setting so that they feel like they belong. This chapter will explain how to address these concerns, in addition to helping you make your characters seem alive and dynamic as your campaign matures.

Organizing Your NPCs

Keeping track of NPCs is important for smooth and enjoyable game sessions. Game delays and mistakes can ruin the mood, story, and pace. Lost papers, and missing information are classic errors, but they are preventable. By being better organized, GMs will enjoy a sense of confidence when the game flows smoothly, NPCs enter scenes on queue, and all the information you need is at your fingertips.

Method Of Organization

Below are a few ideas for organizing NPC information. Pick what works best for you. Always seek to improve your organization methods to make the paperwork and information aspects of game mastering as painless and efficient as possible.

Create A Cast Of Characters For Quick Reference

This is a great planning tool to use and update while GMing. It's a simple list of NPCs and their roles in your games. It is similar to the casting lists found in movie scripts and plays. A cast of characters sorts out who's who while you're creating plots, planning your next session, or struggling to remember names during play. Depending on the level of detail you prefer, it can be a simple list of names or detailed mini-profiles.

Put Each NPC On An Index Card

This is a fast and simple way to track NPCs. You can file the cards in a box, sort them alphabetically, and pull out the cards that you anticipate needing for the upcoming session. With each fact, encounter, and event concerning an NPC, simply update their card and file it back in the box for future, accurate reference.

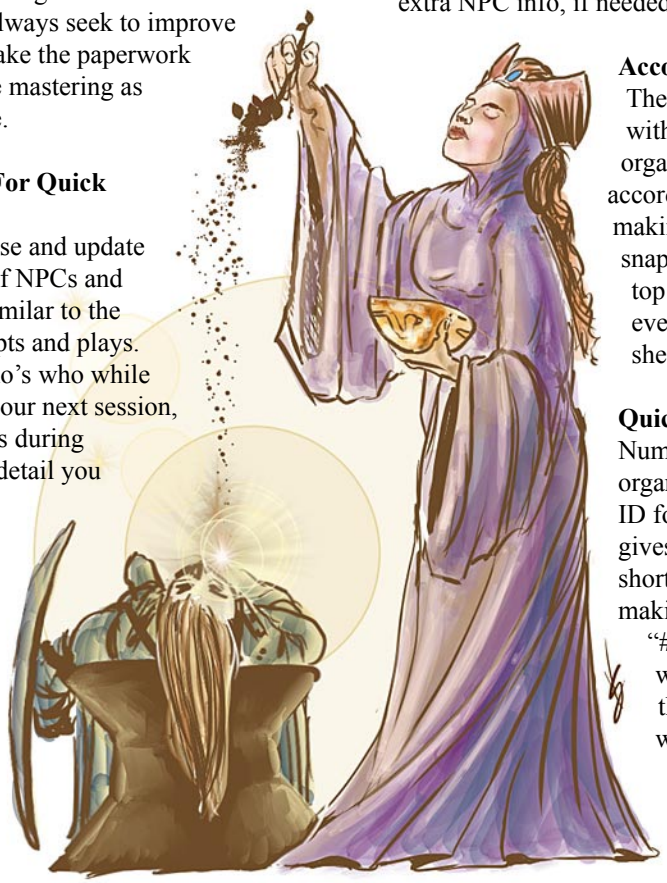
Full Character Sheets.

Character sheets are great to use too. They're wonderful tools because you can start with just a name during the game and develop the NPC as the campaign progresses. With this method, you'll find your NPCs slowly evolving over the life of your campaign on a need-to-know basis, which decreases your preparation time and improves campaign consistency. Character sheets assist in fully developing NPCs before the game because the form indicates what information is needed or missing.

Consider using an NPC-only binder to store your characters in on a permanent basis. Add and remove NPCs as needed. Take it to game sessions in case you suddenly need a random one. You might actually benefit from using two NPC binders, one for active characters and the other for inactive NPCs. The active binder can hold the current NPCS, sorted alphabetically. The inactive binder can hold unused NPCs. Sort the inactive binder by character level because you'll most likely be concerned about their class and level, not their name.

Business Cards

Small cards, like the blank business card sheets for printers that you can get at stationery stores, are perfect for NPC mini-profiles and reference tools. They're easily stored and sorted. Make it a habit to grab a few cards from businesses as you wander through life because the backs are almost always blank and you can add extra NPC info, if needed, between the lines on the printed side.



Accordion Files

These are expandable, paper files with many pockets that are perfect for organizing NPC character sheets. Many accordion files are pre-tabbed alphabetically, making sorting and finding characters a snap. Be sure to put a rubber band around top and bottom when not in use in case it ever falls over-you don't want 300 NPC sheets dumped out all over the ground.

Quick Tip: Number Your NPCs

Number every NPC regardless of how you organize and store them. A unique number ID for each character in your campaign gives you an extremely easy and efficient shorthand method, perfect when planning or making notes during games. For example: "#2 to meet the PCs at the cave in one week's time", "#459 talks to PCs briefly then sneaks out back to wait in ambush with #464-468".

Updating NPCs

Keeping your NPCs current and up-to-date is a matter of self-discipline and organization. It's an important GMing function and vital for campaign consistency. You don't want to players asking "Hey, didn't that guy have a magic *sword* last time, not a *trident*?" The worst is, "He's what!? We killed him four sessions ago, what gives?" A dynamic, organic campaign environment requires you to keep on top of NPC changes that happen as a result of play, and campaign time passing.

Update Character Sheets After Each Session
Whether you use index cards, business cards, or character sheets, it's a good idea to update each one after the game session. In fact, try to leave fifteen minutes for wrap-up at the end of each game. Players get EXPs, pack-up, chat, and clean-up. Use this time to update each NPC. If that's not possible, do the updates as soon as you can after the game so all the little details aren't forgotten.

Use An NPC Log During Sessions
Grab an index card or sheet of paper and make brief notes during the game to help make post-game NPC updates easy. Whenever an update is required, note the NPC name or his ID#, and the new information.

What To Update
In addition to equipment and game stat updates such as damage taken, consider making the following items a part of your regular notes:

1. Date, time, and location of the last interaction with the PCs. Knowing when and where the player characters last met the NPC makes calculating travel possibilities easier (where and how far the NPC could have travelled, for example). These facts will jog your memory when the NPC is met again.
2. The results of the last interaction with the PCs. Note the nature of events (combat, rumor exchange, spell duel), the results (NPC severely wounded, NPC wins respect of fighter PC), and roleplaying aspects (initial attitude, attitude at the end, how NPC regards each PC, promises and threats made).
3. Experience points. NPCs should earn them too. Feel free to write ballpark figures down instead of taking time to meticulously calculate Challenge Ratings out. When an NPC goes up a level, consider how and where any training takes place. Little updates like these make the NPC feel like a real character to you, which is important for future roleplaying.
4. New facts known about the NPC. Did you mention that the NPC had a brother to the player characters? If so, be sure to note that kind of information down, possibly spawning a new character sheet for the brother!
5. Group, campaign, and session # of the most recent PC-NPC interaction. If you share NPCs between groups and campaigns, it's important to keep updates and campaign specific information separate.

INTRODUCING NPCS

Movies and good novels leave nothing to chance when it comes to introducing characters in the plot to the viewer or reader. We are storytellers as well. If there's any benefit or strategy for NPC introductions to improve our games then we should leave no stone unturned.

There are many benefits from doing a little advance planning and keeping an eye out for opportunities. For example, while you're GMing a session you might spot a good time to introduce a character for better effect than your plans called for so you seize the moment. If you've created a Cast of Characters, then you might want to run through it after reading this section and plan out a few important introductions.

Sense of disbelief. If the PCs are always meeting new characters at the exact moment when the NPCs need or want something, stories and encounters become a little stale. Good planning can prevent this by letting you introduce NPCs when they're in "normal" mode.

Preventing deus ex machina. This Latin phrase means, among other things, "an unexpected or improbable character who has been suddenly introduced to resolve a situation". If a high level NPC shows up just as the last PC falls in combat, the players will be raising their eyebrows, though probably cheering. But, if the PCs have never seen or heard of this savior character before, they'll also probably lose all respect for the adventure.

Dramatic effect. It's possible to increase the drama and improve the roleplaying aspect of your game with well-timed NPC introductions.

Surprise. Any time you can surprise your players is a great moment for you behind the screen. Clever NPC introductions can help create these moments for you.

For example, the PCs are hanging around the inn healing up while you impatiently wait for a week of game time to go by so you can launch a surprise assassination attempt. During this waiting period, you spot an opportunity to introduce a new serving wench who takes a fancy to a couple of the PCs. A week later, you watch the looks on your player's faces with delight when that wench, dressed in the garb of a ninja, draws a pair of deadly swords to attack the PCs in the middle of the night.

Ok, we know there are great benefits to be gained from strategic NPC introductions, but how do you pull them off?

Introduce An NPC Before He Becomes Important

This, more than any other technique, adds depth to your campaigns, increases the players' sense of disbelief and wonderment, and covers your behind when it comes time to deploy the NPC. You need to make the players aware of the NPC's existence before they become important. It could be an innocent, chance encounter at the market that you mention off-handedly, an official introduction at a meeting, party, or ceremony, or even in the middle of an encounter where some unrelated action is taking place.

Avoid making a special deal out of it, unless you're going for a specific effect, and keep the game moving onwards. The goal is to get the PCs to forget all about the NPC but then suddenly remember him when the time of import arrives.

The Law Of Awe: Time Delay Introductions

The Law of Awe goes as follows: the more important the NPC and the longer the time between introduction and revelation, the greater the player awe. This is especially true for villains and foes when the revelations expose their true nature or story role to the players. "You mean that gnome we met months ago has been our secret enemy the whole time? Amazing! Now it's time to crush that puny menace."

The amount of awe doubles if you plant a decent clue during the introduction that could have let players figure things out for themselves. The clue lets the players know you really did have it all planned out the whole time and aren't just making things look that way. The early introduction gives you credibility, and the clue gives you even greater credibility.

Time Lapse Introductions

Certain situations can be made more compelling by a series of short introductions over a period of time that reveal a slow change in the NPC. For example, your new story involves a quest to find an anti-dote for an NPC who has been mysteriously and slowly poisoned over time. Rather than introducing the character for the first time when the PCs are summoned to his bedside, you could instead have the NPC appear in the background a few times in a month as the PCs travel around town. Each time they see him they notice his health slowly declining. This should pique the players' curiosities. When the messenger appears with the summons and the PCs finally meet the ailing NPC, the impact and revelation is much greater thanks to a few time lapse introductions.

Introductions Are Important: Roleplay At Your Best

Introductions always form a lasting impression. You want to roleplay the NPC as best you can to form a strong memory in the players' minds. It's better to roleplay 110% during an introduction and taper off for the rest of the game than to do the opposite. If you don't help the players figure out who the NPC is and what makes them unique in their minds, then the character will become hazy. It will take great effort to fix during the rest of the campaign.

Focus On The Differences

During an introduction, you want to give a two dimensional, over-the-top performance to immediately bring the NPC to life. Unless the introduction involves an hour-long roleplaying encounter of some sort, don't try to be subtle. Let that come into play during future encounters over the life of the NPC.

Focus on what makes the NPC different from others and roleplay as many nuances as possible during the introduction. This is what is meant by "over the top". If the NPC has a lisp, a pet carnivorous parrot, and is a great swordsman, bring all of those aspects into play during the introduction without the scene turning into a circus. Perhaps the NPC orders the parrot to fetch him a few links of sausage from a nearby vendor when the PCs meet him. When the parrot returns a minute later, the character whips out his sword and slices the sausages in mid-air so that each PC has a piece. Impressive and memorable! In future encounters, the parrot stays at home and the sword remains in its sheath, but the players will always remember and enjoy whom they're dealing with.

Use Foreshadowing

If possible, for major villains and chief adversaries, use foreshadowing to prime the player characters for the introduction. For example, in your next story the PCs will confront an insane priest of the frog god who plans on turning the whole region into a deadly swamp. Before the PCs meet or even learn of the frog god and his evil priestly minion, start planting wandering frog encounters for the PCs to overcome. Have some beautiful frog ceramics on sale at the local bazaar, and place a couple of frog shaped gems in the next treasure pile. Whether these things are pure co-incidence, fate, or villainous planning, once the PCs meet the frog priest the introduction will have greater impact.

Use Contrast

Contrast is a great GM tool in general. For NPC introductions it can help create surprised players and characters! Use contrast during the introduction, and between the time of introduction and the encounter of importance, assuming those two events are separated. For example:

- The warrior who makes the PCs believe he is powerful but who then goes down on the first blow.
- The assassin that's introduced as a cleric of a god of healing.
- The dandy who's dressed in silk clothes but then reveals amazing skills at turning horrid undead.

Major NPCs benefit greatly from contrast. Introduce future allies as potential villains, and present future villains as victims or allies. Another form of contrast is give versus need. The NPC who will probably help the PCs out in the future could be introduced as a character in need. The character who is a future rival or adversary could be introduced as someone who helps the PCs out.

Introduce For Effect

Introduce important NPCs when significant things are happening in the game or encounter. Unless you're aiming for a time lapse, delay, or subtle introduction, pick the moment of introduction carefully to suit the importance of the non-player character.

For example, the PCs are summoned to meet with the King for the first time. Rather than have the player characters enter a throne room where the King sits patiently waiting, have some civil emergency happening, such as a food riot in the poor quarter. Have the King bellow orders to other powerful NPCs. Then squeak the PCs into a fast two-minute meeting where the King speaks with them and assigns them their quest while doing ten other things at once. Other examples include:

- Just in time introductions. The NPC arrives just as the PCs can't wait any longer and run to catch their ship.
- Heroic introductions. The PCs arrive only to see the NPC take down a giant single handedly.
- Embarrassing introductions. The characters enter the inn and catch the innkeeper off-guard, necking with the cook.
- Glitzy introductions. The NPC casts Faerie Fire on himself and struts into the council meeting.

Give special consideration, villains, major allies, and other important characters. Try introducing characters early on in the story or campaign so that it doesn't seem contrived when they appear or reveal themselves at a critical moment. Look to enhance introductions in any way possible, no matter how minor, to help bring your NPCs to life and make them compelling to the players. And be sure to roleplay with everything you've got during an intro.

When PC & NPC Power Levels Differ

In d20 settings, mortals have tangible, differing levels of power. Unlike the real world, where a book smart student and a strong body builder merely have differing skill sets and characteristics, a first level wizard and a twentieth level fighter are miles apart when it comes to ability and power. I encourage you to provide encounters of greater and weaker power levels than the PCs over the course of your campaigns. It becomes monotonous, in a game sense, if the PCs are always perfectly matched against their opponents. It would be frustrating for players whose characters survive to high levels to be rewarded with legions of ever more powerful foes. And it would be unfair to over-protect weak PCs by only serving up kobolds and goblins.

There is a glorious roleplaying opportunity to be had in a disparity between PC and NPC power levels. Weak PCs must learn to talk, trick, and earn their way out of encounters too difficult to be settled by melee. And powerful PCs, who will quickly grow bored of one-round massacres, must learn that weak NPCs have their benefits and uses too--lessons only learnable through roleplaying. Below are some tips and techniques for encouraging roleplaying and dealing with lopsided encounters.

When NPCs Are Lower Level Than The PCs

This situation is a huge opportunity to get more enjoyment from your role as GM. When the NPCs are out-powered by the player characters, it's up to you to trick, roleplay, and claw your way through encounters to ensure your non-player characters survive. You have an unlimited pool of NPCs at your disposal. You could make them all insanely powerful to crush the PCs, but playing the underdog is more rewarding because you aren't expected to win! If you lose, it's not a problem because the player characters were expected to win. It goes beyond combat to contests of skill, wits, and parley as well. If you win though, the glory is all yours! It only takes the occasional win with an underpowered NPC or NPC group to get immense satisfaction from being the person behind the screen. Here are some ways weaker NPCs can challenge more powerful PCs:

The Bluff

This is your greatest weapon. The PCs should never assume they know exactly who or what they're dealing with, especially with the d20 system where any monster or being can have character class levels. Try bluffing the players into thinking their foes are more powerful than they really are.

One-Off Magic Items

Hand out potions, scrolls, and charged items with only a couple of shots left to give the NPCs a bit of an edge. Avoid mass destruction items, like a wand of fireballs, but consider instead elixers that can be used to deceive or influence the player characters' decisions.

Respect

Help the NPCs earn the player characters respect in some way, usually through roleplaying, aid, or a contest, and the PCs will be more willing to let your NPCs survive the encounter. Perhaps they'll even become friends. Evil NPCs should use this new respect to their advantage, but not in foolish ways that will turn the PCs immediately against them.

Learn The PCs' Weaknesses

Either figure out the player characters' weaknesses, or start adding campaign elements to create those weakness so they can be leveraged by NPCs. Good aligned NPCs might use these weaknesses to secure escape or bend the PCs to their cause, while evil NPCs will be more ruthless.

- Family and friends (avoid over-doing this though, or the PCs will start to avoid making friends)
- Pets, companions, familiars
- Personal honor, reputations, respect from others
- Wealth and possessions

Learn Tactics

The best way to learn successful tactics and strategies is to watch the PCs at work. Assuming you're challenging them when they're low level, their solutions and tactics can then be employed by their foes when they become high level and the NPCs are the weak ones. Sample tactics:

- Divide and conquer
- Ganging-up
- Using skills (such as Tumble) to complement combat tactics

Always Have An Escape Plan

Escaping alive is a minor victory when the situation involves over-powered NPCs, but it's a victory nonetheless. Therefore, plan how your NPCs can escape before the encounter starts, and don't be afraid to have an NPC flee early in a confrontation. These NPCs are perfect for future encounters, generating player enmity and creating plot hooks for use later in the campaign.

Roleplay

Give the NPCs some intelligence and communication skills (plus a language in common with the PCs). Have the character ask the PCs questions. Reveal the NPC's personality, background, and history. If you can make them interactive for the player characters, power level differences often fade into the background. At the very least, you're helping the NPC stall for time and probe for weaknesses while he edges towards the escape route!

When NPCs Are Higher Level Than The PCs

Help The PCs Learn Who They're Dealing With

Your first goal, when the player characters encounter a foe who is much more powerful then they are, is to clearly communicate this fact without scaring them off. If the PCs don't know what they're up against, they will assume you've set up an encounter they can handle and not behave any differently. You must get the point across that the PCs are the weaker party as soon as possible. Ways to do this are:

- Demonstration of power. The NPC uses his power without knowing the PCs are there. (If the PCs know the NPC is aware of them, they'll think he's showing off and issuing a challenge.)
- Reputation. Warn the player characters ahead of time about the powerful beings in your campaign. Make sure an NPC's reputation can be quickly linked to him (i.e. The Black

Knight) so the PCs know whom they're dealing with.
- Peer example. Other non-player characters, whom the PCs respect or fear, tend to act subservient, obedient, or meek around the major NPC. It's up to the player characters to take the hint.

Give The NPC A Weakness
Major NPCs should have a major numerous minor weaknesses. They don't exist in vacuums, so there must be checks and balances to their abilities, otherwise the major powers would just wipe everything out. The food chain principle does apply. Every predator in real life has one or more weaknesses over and above fearing what's higher up in the chain. Large predators have restrictive, specialized environments or reproductive limitations. Even man, supposedly at the top of the chain, is extremely vulnerable in many situations. Therefore, your NPCs, no matter how powerful, will have exploitable weaknesses:
- Limitation of their key power
- Prestige, honor, reputations to protect
- Old age
- Stupid
- Friends, relatives, and people that they care about
- Poisoned, diseased, cursed
- Running a plan that's extremely delicate

Most weaknesses require you to think outside of the statistics. NPCs with high character levels will not have low hit points, attack bonuses, and skill levels. You either have to reduce those in some way (old age or cursed, for example) or look for a roleplaying solution (such as a family to protect, goals, or needs). A roleplaying fix is always the best way to go if you have that option. Hack 'n slash PCs won't get their way because you've kept the NPCs' stats intact. NPCs with this kind of weakness are realistic, fun to GM, and more entertaining. In other words, when giving your NPCs weaknesses, you're not trying to bring them down to the PCs' level, because then they're really not more powerful than the player characters and we're back where we started. Instead, create a weakness that will turn into a roleplaying event, quest, puzzle, or problem for the PCs to figure out. Make a game of it.

Make The PCs Valuable
Whether you're playing a powerful ally, a deity, or a villain, if you can plan before the game on how the PCs can be of value to the NPC, then you have an angle for helping them survive their encounter. Your job is to:
1. Create one or more NPC needs
2. Figure out at least one way for how the PCs can fill one or more of those needs
3. Have the NPC learn the PCs could be of value (could be the PCs' task)
4. Get the PCs to learn they could be of value

Items 1 and 2 can be done through clever planning or on-the-fly, if you have that rare skill. And items 3 and 4 can be achieved through a planned encounter or roleplaying.

NPCs Have Enemies Too
Give the powerful NPC one or more enemies to:
- Distract the NPC away from the PCs ("I'll finish you later!")
- Give the PCs a bit of leverage (play the NPC and his opponent against each other)
- Possibly make the PCs more useful alive as pawns than dead

Avoid Intolerant Personalities
Player characters are often egotistical. They're used to getting their own way, beating opponents, and winning. The players show up to the table, not to play meek characters or to obey make-believe bosses, but to vent or escape real life. Therefore, until the player characters learn how to tread carefully around touchy NPCs who could blast them to smithereens, it's best to create NPCs who are tolerant of brazen, arrogant, or rude PCs. That's not to say you have to let the PCs cross the line. Just don't shoot yourself in the foot by creating powerful NPCs who force combat on the weak PCs because they have intolerant personalities.

Think Long Term
With powerful NPCs, you don't want to spend a lot of time creating them and fleshing them out for just one encounter. So, think long term:
- Initially, act through the their minions, flunkies, servants, and allies.
- Give the NPC a long-term view. The PCs are special beings by their very nature. Though they might not be powerful--yet--they must have some use to the NPC in his long-range game plan.
- Subtly incorporate the NPC's presence throughout your campaign without direct confrontation. Use rumors, gossip, news, background events, distant sightings, and so on. This gives the NPC a strong presence without having to worry about the PC-NPC power imbalance in the short term.

TYING NPCS TO YOUR CAMPAIGN
Non-player characters should reflect the world and feel like they belong there. Avoid NPCs who feel like they've just stepped in from an alien world (unless, of course, they have) or who have no ties to the campaign and are nothing but combat automatons.

The realms of game world design and NPC management tend to blur here, so we'll try to keep focused on the NPC-side of design issues. During this process, if you find yourself creating any new content for your world, be sure to log these changes and additions somewhere for later integration and campaign consistency.

Trendsetters And Trend Followers
NPCs can be divided into two groups. The first group is the trendsetters. They forge their own paths and create the standards that the second group, the trend followers, conforms to with only minor personal variations.

Trend Followers
When someone says that NPCs should reflect the world that they live in--an essential ingredient for tying them into your campaigns--you should try to take this literally. NPCs think, act, dress, desire, express themselves, and behave like others do in their environment. If the citizens of Greenoak are honest, hard

working, and noted for their fine ale and love of fire dancing, then most NPCs from there that the PCs meet should have these qualities. Greenoak characters "reflect" what's normal for that village if they're trend followers.

Therefore, your task is to define the general qualities of the different groupings of beings in your world, or perhaps even just your local campaign area, and use these as templates for NPC creation. The next time the player characters meet a person wearing a strange, green hat. Who seems to be a self-proclaimed expert on ale, your players will know he's from Greenoak without asking. Suddenly the NPC is believable and tied strongly to your campaign from the players' perspectives.

Trendsetters

The people who establish the standards that trend followers conform to may or may not be setting the trends on purpose. Examples of trend-setting NPCs would be:

- Kings and queens
- Inventors
- Nobles
- Charismatic leaders
- Popular folk
- Famous bards
- Independent thinkers
- Lunatics
- Religious leaders

Unless your game world popped into existence yesterday, you should have an established base of societies and cultures, even though you might not have fleshed them out yet. Trendsetters are people who go against the common grains you've created. They break the existing standards, and have the influence to convince others to conform.

Tie trendsetters into your campaign by giving them one or more qualities that are different than the group they're most closely associated with. The 80/20 rule applies here. Where trendsetters should be 80% conformist, and 20% rebel. This type of NPC is tied into your campaign, even more so than trend followers, because they are different. It's strange, but true. For example, the PCs meet an honest, hard-working man who thinks he's an expert about ale, but he's wearing a *red* hat. The PCs think he might be from Greenoak, but wonder why he's not wearing the customary green. The NPC relates strongly to the background because of his difference from regular Greenoak citizens.

The following is a list of ways that NPCs tend to group together as trend followers. Use it to develop cultural standards and campaign ties, and inspire the differences needed to create trendsetters.

- Species
  - Elves, gnomes, humans
- Racial heritage
  - Moon Elves, Rock Gnomes, High Men
- Geographical region
  - Climate (desert nomads)
  - Terrain (highland warriors)
  - Distance (the greater the distance, the greater the foreignness and stereotyping)
- Political affiliation
  - International (countries and kingdoms)
  - National (political movements and parties)
- Cultural affiliation
  - Social movement (E.A.M. - Elves Against Magic)
  - Clubs, orders, groups (Knights of the Grey Dawn)
- Religious affiliation
  - Followers of a particular deity or pantheon
  - Cultists
  - Followers of sects and splinter groups
- Family and ancestry
- Art and artisans
  - Artistic movements (Freeform Illusionists)
  - Mimicking famous bards and entertainers
  - Artistic styles (urban vs. rural religious mosaics)
- Professional affiliation
  - Guilds
  - Unions

Once you've grouped NPCs together, your next task is to figure out what their standards are. What links them together? What identifies them as being members of the group? Here are some categories:

- Beliefs
- Physical attributes and qualities
- Bloodlines and lineage
- Code of honor
- Code of behavior
- Dress codes and styles
- Permitted or common Prestige Classes
- Permitted or common skills
- Special knowledge
- Events, ceremonies, rituals, celebrations
- Secret signals and member identification
- Legal status
- Social rights, privileges, freedoms, and status
- Wealth
- Possessions, armor and weapon preferences, and notable equipment

Once you've created your grouping and the details they have in common, place them in your campaign environment. Bring them into your stories often so that the players will learn about them and start thinking in those terms.

NPC Knowledge

Tying NPCs into your campaigns is sometimes just a matter of giving them some important information that the PCs need or could benefit from. With their knowledge, they don't seem random or trivial. The trick is giving NPCs knowledge that is interesting, believable, or valuable to the PCs. When the player characters roleplay with the NPC, he's got something of value to contribute to the game. He feels like he's part of the campaign. Here are several possibilities of the things NPCs could know:

- Clues
  - Stories
  - Parts of a puzzle
  - Mystery-solving elements
  - Background events
- Hooks

    - Adventure
    - Encounter
    - Campaign
    - Game world
- News
    - Local events and affairs
    - Foreign matters
    - Past events, current events, upcoming events
- Gossip
    - Tattle-tales
    - Rumours
    - Embellishments
- Knowledge
    - History and legends
    - Specialized skills important to the story
    - Monster facts and lore
    - The past, present, or future

What if the PCs never encounter the NPC with the critical piece of knowledge that you've got planned? Are you expected to flesh out every person and being in the area with what they know? There are two quick and easy solutions to these problems, knowledge lists and the knowledge grid.

Knowledge Lists
Create lists of facts about the different and important aspects of your campaign, game world, and plots. If you've developed social groupings, you've got lots of material to draw from. Think up as many relevant and useful facts as possible that the characters do not already know. If you're pressed for time, focus on story and plot clues, rumors, hints, hooks, and facts. If you've got more time, delve into interesting world and campaign information--it often sprouts into future story hooks and side-adventures.

Keep these lists handy at the game table. Use one or more entries for each NPC that the player characters interact with. Check-off each entry as you use it, and write the NPC's ID number beside it (if you give them unique Ids), and the knowledge item number of the NPC's sheet for fast cross-referencing. If you have access to a spreadsheet program, consider putting all your knowledge items in one column and the topic that they most closely belong to in another. Use the topics mentioned above so you can sort your information and print it out. This way you can give each NPC an item from two or more categories. For example, he knows a bit of gossip, has some insight on a current event, and is knowledgeable about an interesting skill.

The Knowledge Grid
This is a more detailed expansion on the Knowledge Lists concept. First, draw a grid or grab a piece of graph paper. Next, create your Knowledge Lists and number each item. Then, in the first column of your grid, write the numbers of each Knowledge List item down the page. Along the top of the page, record your Cast of Characters or list of NPC names. Now you've got a grid of knowledge items along the side and NPCs along the top. Before the game, assign NPCs bits of knowledge until you're satisfied the major points have been covered. In the boxes of the grid, record one letter:

T - True
F - False
e - Slightly Exaggerated
E - Wildly Exaggerated
L - Lies

Each letter represents how the NPC conveys his item of knowledge. True means he knows the truth and gives it to the PCs depending on any conditions you apply (such as a Bluff or Gather Information skill check). False means the NPC has incorrectly learned or remembered this information and therefore misinforms the PCs without knowing it. Slightly Exaggerated means the NPC knows the truth but embellishes it a little to either make himself seem more important or to possibly impress the PCs. Wildly Exaggerated means the NPC turns his knowledge into a fantastic tale that barely resembles the truth. And when an NPC Lies, it means he knows the truth but does not give it, for reasons up to you. As you convey each bit of information, put a dot or check mark in the grid box to show it's been delivered.

Categorizing NPC information this way gives you benefits. First, it lets you plan who knows what for quick reference during the session. Second, if the PCs return because they forgot what the NPC told them, you know exactly what he knows and what he doesn't for excellent consistency. Third, if any important information is missed because the PCs don't meet a certain NPC, you can easily identify this and fix it quickly (just scan the row and look for checkmarks or dots). Fourth, you can add NPCs on-the-fly and assign them information randomly or purposefully. Fifth, the range of information known (truths, lies, exaggerations) creates a rich and immersive campaign environment that ties in your NPCs in an even stronger way. The player characters will be analyzing each NPC to determine whether he's telling the truth or misleading.

CREATING DYNAMIC NPCS

A dynamic NPC is one who changes over the course of your stories and campaigns. Things happen to them, they get older and possibly wiser, and their communities might change around them. With the exception of major characters, you probably don't have the planning time to figure out how each NPC is changing as the campaign carries on. You're easiest option is to decide upon a change for each NPC as they appear in your sessions. Note this change so you can track them as the game years pass to keep your characters consistent.

A change is any event. Either the NPC takes an action or is acted upon. In either case, there are consequences and they have resulted in a change that the PCs should be able to detect. Sometimes the change is obvious (for example, the NPC is showing off his new-born son). Other times it's subtler and must be revealed through roleplaying (for example, the NPC has lost money gambling, is acting ashamed of "something", and hits the PCs up for money).

Use the charts at the end of this chapter to determine what event or events have happened in the NPC's life since they last met the player characters. Once you've determined an event, think briefly about how it would affect them. For example, for one

NPC a heavy gambling loss could turn into an addiction and downward spiral with the loan sharks. For another it could turn into a spiritual transformation and the NPC finds new faith by swearing never to gamble again.

A Note About NPC Deaths

NPCs die from old age, disease, poor health, foolish acts, and for a thousand other reasons. If the random charts conjure up an NPC death, you have two options: ignore the result and roll again, or figure out how you can surprise or shock the PCs with the news. Random NPC deaths are a realistic occurrence and remind the player characters that they are mortal too.

If the NPC had some critical adventure role, transfer the role to another NPC and let the PCs be shocked for a few moments that their trail has suddenly and grimly ended. If the NPC had no crucial role in your game, then their death can be enhanced with a little roleplaying, suspense, or style. For example, the PCs return to town and visit the blacksmith for armor repairs. When they get to his shop they find it closed and the furnace chimney is cold. They soon discover other signs that something is wrong and the suspense builds. Then a neighbor pops his head out and explains that the smith was discovered one day lying dead in his shop, his hands clutched at his chest.

Regional Changes Are Important Too

It's also a good idea to generate on-going changes for your game world, and let them filter down to each NPC in their own particular way. A major war means lost sons for some NPCs and increased business for others. Track the area events that happen, especially the ones the PCs cause. Use those as a checklist to weigh each NPC against when the time comes to interact with them at the game table.

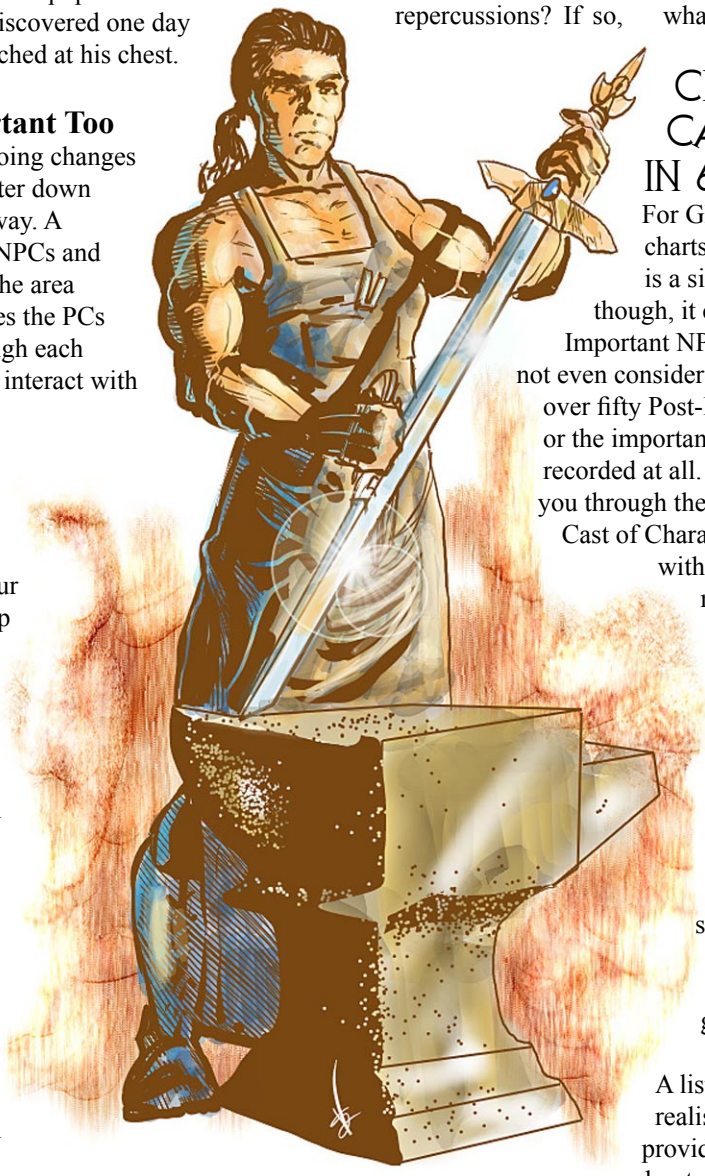
Organizing Updates Using The Charts

If your players meet many NPCs, avoid giving each one an event or your campaign will turn into a strange soap opera. Instead, assign events to a portion of your NPCs (20% works well) and update them each game month, quarter, or year. The remaining 80% can be the news-bearers of the changes for the PCs, in the form of factual accounts, gossip, jealous lies, tall tales that grow with each re-telling, guesses, and false assumptions. The social fabric of the campaign will become bright and strong with this continual renewal of change, information and interaction.

If you have a Cast Of Characters, run through the list periodically and pick some NPCs for events, or roll randomly for each one. With character sheets, index cards, business cards, and other similar organization methods, flip through each NPC and either pick or roll for events.

When an event occurs, record it on the NPC sheet by name, description, or unique event ID from the charts. For most NPCs, there's no need to analyze each event because that would take a long time. You just want to record that an event happened. When the NPC comes into play again, you can quickly scan their log to see what's happened. Analyze each event by considering the following questions:

- What are the immediate effects and consequences of the event for the NPC?
- Who else, besides them, was immediately affected by the event?
- What are the long-term effects and consequences for the NPC?
- What are the long-term effects and consequences for other affected NPCs?
- What are the long-term effects and consequences for the local campaign area?
- Could this event have national or even worldwide repercussions? If so, what are they?



CHARACTER CAST CREATION IN 6 STEPS

For GMs who enjoy making lists and charts, creating a Cast of Characters is a simple task. For many GMs though, it could present quite a challenge. Important NPCs might be forgotten or not even considered, the list might be spread over fifty Post-It Notes and unmaintainable, or the important information doesn't get recorded at all. The following tips will step you through the process of creating your own Cast of Characters in a fast and efficient way without bogging you down with too much planning or detail.

Why Create A Cast?

Creating a cast prevents you from forgetting important NPCs. While you can get away with not remembering to whip up a minor NPC every once in awhile, missing a critical NPC because it slipped your mind or because you lost the napkin will be a disheartening discovery at the game table.

A list fosters story depth and realism in your campaigns, providing you with a heads-up about which NPCs to introduce at what point. Your world is filled with millions of

beings. Knowing about the few who will become important to the players and the story well ahead of time will give you an opportunity to plant those seeds or roleplay those introductions early on.

Step 1: Brainstorm A List Of NPCs

Grab a blank sheet of paper and make a list of all the NPCs you think you'll need for your upcoming campaign. This list will serve as an important tool and the basis for on-going character management that you'll be consulting as long as your campaign runs. Think of the satisfaction of getting to a point in the story where the players stare at you incredulously and ask, "Did you have that planned all along? We met that beggar months ago. Now it all makes sense!" Here are the types of NPCs you should consider for your list:

- PC family members and friends
- Villain(s)
- Servants and minions for your villain(s)
- Allies and potentially helpful NPCs
- Rivals to the PCs
- NPCs who might bear clues or act as hooks
- PC mentors and trainers
- Movers and shakers in your game world
- Important beings in the campaign area
- Legendary and historical NPCs
- NPCs for specific encounters or stories you have in mind

Just start writing a list. Note every name, story role, and campaign function you can think of. Don't stop until you've mined your brain for every possibility. Don't worry if your list gets extremely long-you won't be developing most of these NPCs in the beginning. It's good to know that the list exist so you won't forget about them. You should consider these types of entries:

- *Known NPCs*. Specific ones you might already have plans for or have outlined in a story or encounter. "Bluetooth the good troll healer", "Dyson Towers, enigmatic rogue".
- *Unknown NPCs*. Beings whom you don't have any specific ideas about other than a vague notion. "A band of NPC rivals", "An incompetent villain side-kick".
- *Roles*. Some settings and stories come with standard and expected roles. A city campaign, for example, needs a leader or ruling agency, law enforcers, innkeepers, key thieves guild members, and so on. A dungeon adventure needs a big, bad monster at the end and usually a challenging encounter at the entrance.
- *Wishes*. Ideas or circumstances for which you don't know what NPC is needed yet. "I want a cool NPC to inspire the bard player", "I wish the city had a villain for an underground side-plot".

Brainstorming Tips:

- Do all of your work in one sitting. Once you hit a groove your brain enters idea mode and you want to keep the flow going. It's much harder picking up again after an interruption and you're likely to end up with a shorter list.
- Keep inspiration around for when you get stuck. You might find feeling like you've still got more good ideas in you. Have some inspiration handy, such as toys, comic books, art, and books. Sometimes pacing or having a toy to keep your hands busy or pacing works well for getting un-stuck.
- Don't beat a dead orc. Once the time between ideas grows to a certain point you should stop before the task becomes frustrating. If you don't think up a new idea after two minutes, yo-yoing, or staring at some art, declare victory and move on.
- Be prepared to continue appending to your list. Keep a notebook and pen with you to write down sudden flashes of inspiration. List generation tends to cause this quite frequently, almost as if the back of your brain has refused to give up the task. Write down those ideas and add them to your list when you get home.
- Practice makes you faster. Thinking up good lists is a skill. You'll get better at it just by doing it over and over again. If your initial lists come out short, don't worry; it will get longer if you persist.

Step 2: Prioritize Your NPCs For Development

Now you want to identify those that need development soonest and prioritize them. Game Masters with a high wisdom score know there are some good reasons for this:

- If time planning runs out before the next session, you're more likely to have your most important NPC homework done.
- Some need to be created first so you know what other NPCs you will need. For example, you won't know the type of minions a villain will have until you've developed him first.
- Some NPCs need to be developed before you can finish planning out the adventure. For example, a legendary NPC built a home that has now become a dungeon site for your current campaign. You need to know about the NPC's profession, personality, and abilities before fleshing out his ancient abode.

Take your NPC list and put a priority number beside each one in the left margin. If you have a long list, you're better off sorting NPCs into groups. The best groups to establish are:

- Must develop in great detail first
- Must develop in great detail before next game session
- Just need the basic facts for next game session
- It's OK if I don't get to this NPC before game time

The grouping method makes sorting and prioritizing easier, but it creates a list with bigger chunks of characters to be designed at once, so watch your remaining planning time carefully.

How To Decide NPC Development Order

You'll need to give your NPCs priority for various reasons, such as:

- *Order of appearance*. NPCs most likely to appear in the next session should be given high priority.
- *Order of impact*. NPCs who will have some kind of impact on the campaign in the next session should be given high priority. For example, an NPC who will be mentioned in rumours or street gossip, or a leader who will set certain things in motion that will affect the PCs next game.
- *Order of surprise*. The earlier you can introduce an important NPC the better, especially if there's a future surprise in store for the PCs. For example, a bounty hunter stops and asks the 1st level PCs for directions in session

two, and is then hired to hunt them down in session ten.
- *When undecided, move on*. If you're struggling with how to prioritize two or more NPCs because they both seem to have equal importance, then lump them together and move on.

Step 3: Do A Quick Fly-By And Flesh Out Critical Details

You want to avoid getting caught at the game table needing a name, class, or profession for an NPC low down on your list. To solve this problem, do a quick fly-by over your list and create the core, critical details for each NPC. Armed with this information, you'll be able to roleplay, improvise, or bluff your way through almost any encounter. Additional benefits of this step are forgotten NPCs will get remembered, your stories might get detailed a little more, and you'll get lots of encounter and story hook ideas.

Step 4: Budget Your Time

The number one need of game masters today is more time. Planning a campaign, a story, and each session takes hours. It's frustrating running out of time before plan completion, so budget your time before planning even begins. Major NPCs take one to two hours to create in full detail, and minor NPCs can take five to thirty minutes. Do the math, compare it to how much planning time you've realistically got before next session, and find out if there's going to be a shortfall.

In the case of a time shortage when you know you're not going to get everything done, it's time to cut corners and focus on mission critical tasks. This is the true benefit of budgeting your time: knowing when you're in a fix and taking emergency measures **before** the players come knocking on your door.

Step 5: NPC Development

Now it's time to start with the highest priority NPCs and start making them. Watch the clock. If you've planned out a time budget and an NPC takes an hour extra to create, that's an hour less you can spend on the rest of your list. Re-adjust your plan and move on.

Step 6: Re-Sort, Re-Write, And Maintain Your List

When possible, update your list with new NPCs and any core facts, such as names, classes, and locations. If your first brainstorming list is a mess of numbers and illegible markings, re-write it or print it out again. Take the list with you and use it behind your screen to help you GM faster and better. A casting of characters is a more convenient tool for on-going reference than a binder full of character sheets. Use sheets for detailed interaction, but use the list to remember names quickly and manage the NPCs in your stories.

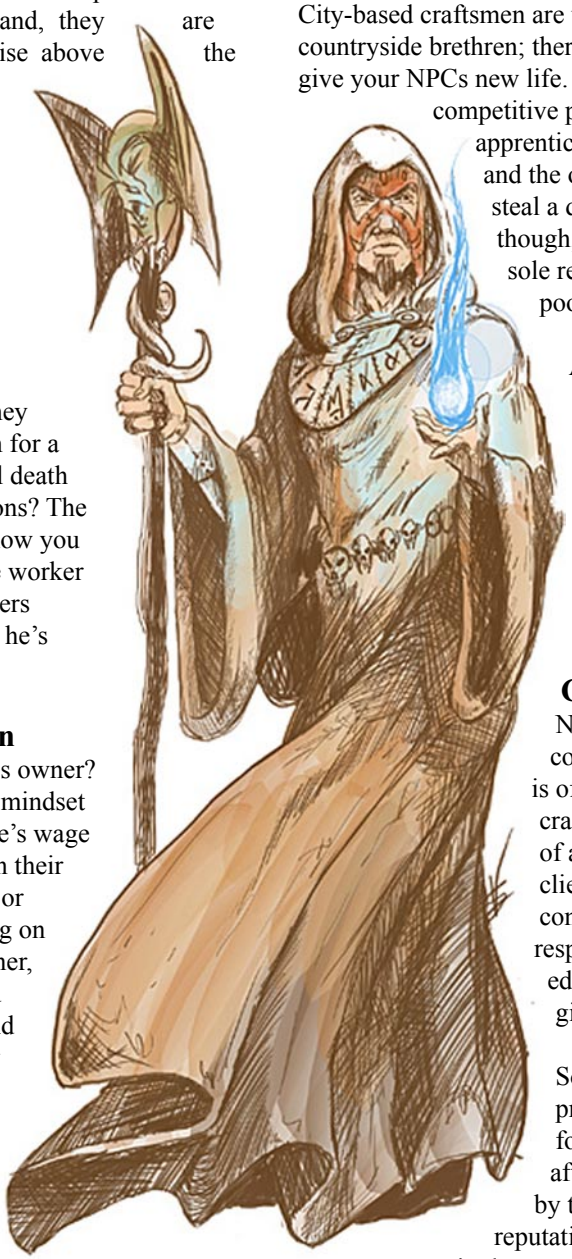
Chapter 5: NPC Archetypes

Certain NPCs appear in every campaign, filling the same story and game roles over and over again. They are part of the fun because players look forward to meeting the haggling horse merchant, the haughty noble lord, or the cunning beggar informant. After a few campaigns though, game masters can fall into a rut and these NPCs become routine, running on old scripts heard before and being played with little enthusiasm. The purpose of this chapter is to breathe new life into these beloved NPCs by presenting different roleplaying ideas and game mastering tips on ten of the classic NPC archetypes.

Craftsman

The craftsman is an interesting character who crosses the boundaries of two worlds. On the one hand, they are a manual laborer. With tools, time, and a lot of sweat, they complete their crafts and projects, hopefully with a sense of pride and an eye for detail. On the other hand, they are knowledgeable professionals who can rise above the common masses and perhaps attain great wealth, fame, or political recognition.
Examples of craftsmen are:

- Blacksmith
- Butcher
- Chandler
- Mason
- Miller



Free Versus Indentured

Is the craftsman free to operate the way they please, are they bonded to an organization for a term, or must they work at their craft until death due to hereditary, legal, or social restrictions? The freedom available to the NPC can guide how you roleplay them. For example, Targ the hide worker might be rude, mean, and nasty to customers because he knows he can't be fired unless he's caught breaking a law.

Employee Versus Business Person

Is the craftsman an employee or a business owner? Each role involves a completely different mindset and personality. For instance, an employee's wage is secure and their thoughts are focused on their craft, the internal politics of the company or organization, and on the other things going on in their life. On the other hand, for an owner, the business often is their life. Clients and client pedigree are important, revenues and expenses critical, productivity and quality of work essential.

Many craftsmen believe they have what it takes to run a business because they know their craft. This is a false assumption because business management requires a different set of skills—skills the NPC might not have. This can create interesting situations where the PCs deal with several characters from the same business who have different goals and personalities.

For example, the paladin PC drops his armor off for repair and is told offhandedly by an employee to check back "in a few days". The bemused knight returns days later only to be given the royal treatment by a fawning owner who tells him his armor will be given top priority and should be done the next day. On the final visit, the owner is away and a different employee proudly displays the buffed and repaired armor that she personally tended to, and goes over the details of every dent removed and buckle shined. The employee, thinking about her next challenging project though, forgets to charge the PC. What will the paladin do?

Urban Versus Rural

City-based craftsmen are under different pressures than their countryside brethren; therefore look to these differences to give your NPCs new life. Cities tend to be crowded, highly competitive places. If a craftsman fails, two dozen apprentices would be eager to take his place, and the other shops in town would love to steal a dissatisfied client away. In rural areas though, a craftsperson is often the region's sole resource for that craft, and if his work is poor then the whole area suffers.

Another point of difference is that urban craftsmen have more opportunities to become masters, rise in rank, and earn greater wealth than rural types. While the sole blacksmith for a village benefits from a monopoly, who can afford to hire her for projects more challenging than shoeing horses and fixing ploughs?

Crafts Have Different Prestige

Not all crafts and professions are considered equal by societies. Prestige is often based on the difficulty of the craft, demand for the work, supply of apprentices, wages, prestige of the clientele, and political power of the controlling guild. Being a miller (a person responsible for converting crops into edible food ingredients) for example, gives that NPC great prestige.

Some crafts can also raise their practitioners to celebrity status. Tailors, for example, can become highly sought after if their styles and designs are worn by the wealthy. Seek to roleplay rivalries, reputations, and status amongst the craftsmen in the campaign area.

Consider Creating A Brand Name

In all crafts, an individual or select few will rise above all others and become famous. Some of these figures might be long since dead and live on only in legend. Others could be alive today. Imagine if the NPC the player characters callously deal with on each trip to town turns out to be the most gifted artisan of her generation? This gives you great room to roleplay with!

For these talented individuals, consider branding their wares. "That's not just any backpack son. Why, that was crafted three valleys over by the most skilled leatherworker in the region. See those stitches? The detailed design on the straps? That's a Briggmann Backpack!"

If you do this, it's a good idea to introduce the reputation and crafted items before the player characters meet the craftsman to make that first encounter more compelling.

Plot Hooks

- A craftsman wants an unscrupulous rival run out of town or taught a lesson.
- An NPC is running low on a rare raw material and needs the PCs to get her more.
- A craftsman's best client has gone missing. Fearing the loss of business this represents, he hires the PCs to find the lost customer.
- The PCs are hired to deliver a delicate item through a dangerous area.
- A rival apprentice has stolen the NPC's tools but nothing can be proven to the authorities.
- A new protection racket is demanding regular payments "or else".
- An NPC hires the PCs as escorts on a trip to a distant city where he seeks to meet a legendary master craftsman.
- A craftsman hires the player characters to bring back a special ore for him to fashion master tools from.
- A craftsman asks the PCs to steal a rival's work for a few hours while the NPC studies it and then return the item undetected.
- A craftsman has just finished creating his best work and refuses to sell it to a minor noble. He needs the PCs to dissuade the noble so he can keep the work for himself.

Merchant

Merchants are middlemen. They buy the fruits of labor from peasants, craftsmen, artists, professionals, and other NPCs, mark the price up, and then find customers. Merchants also deal in services, as brokers for various service providers or sellers of services they provide themselves. Without customers, a merchant cannot recoup their investment or profit from the mark-up; and without suppliers, a merchant has nothing to sell. It is a tricky career.

Merchants Are Real People Too

In many instances, game masters carry over real world perceptions and prejudices of big business, door-to-door salesmen, and unscrupulous marketers. However, in game worlds anything is possible and it's important to separate real world reality from RPG reality. Look for ways to transform merchants from greedy peddlers or silk-tongued tricksters into real people. Give merchants positive traits to balance the negative ones: families, pride in their work, good deals and bad deals. Consider them NPCs first, merchants second.

Recruiting

As PCs often travel to foreign and unusual places, they pose a special opportunity for merchants. Once merchants learn PCs are in the area, they might try to recruit the player characters to seek out new goods and suppliers. They might also ask them about taking fine local goods to sell in far off locales, as they're likely to fetch higher prices there. Either of these situations might be unusual for your group and therefore make merchants more interesting NPCs again.

Consider Barter

Transform a routine purchase into an adventure hook by using barter. Give the merchant a need of some kind, such as a relative in jeopardy, a rare item to find to complete a collection, or a competitor to sabotage. Ask for a trade rather than money. Barter also provides an opportunity for players to show off their skills rather than spend their treasure to receive the goods they need.

Give Merchants High Standards

As an interesting twist, have the merchant refuse to sell services and goods to the PCs. Perhaps the player characters are required to worship the town's deity, have a certain alignment, or follow a special etiquette. The NPC could be self-righteous or humble when denying the PCs, and may or may not give any reasons. This trick wrests control away from the player characters and is a reminder that the world doesn't revolve around them. It might give troublesome PCs a reason to show a little more respect when they interact with merchants. Try to use this as a roleplaying opportunity rather than a punishment though.

The Grey Market

Many areas have a grey market with services and goods that are quasi-legal. Unlike the black market, which has a specific location usually near the point of smuggled entry, grey markets are managed on an individual basis. This poses an interesting way to play an atypical merchant who will be sizing the PCs up to see if they need what's available and determine if they'd turn him in to the local authorities.

Plot Hooks

- A glorious trade opportunity has just emerged but there's no time to assemble a proper caravan. The PCs are hired to personally transport and sell the goods.
- A shipment is late and the merchant needs some fast cash to cover their loan payments.
- A bitter rival has robbed the merchant who then hires the PCs to find the secret warehouse where the stolen goods are being held.
- A merchant wants the PCs to find a faster way for him to travel and deliver goods.
- The NPC wants to corner the market and asks for the player characters' help.
- A merchant asks the PCs to make a special delivery of a

valuable item, and then hires thieves to try and steal it from player characters.
- A merchant needs the PCs to collect from a few clients who are behind on their payments.
- A merchant's best employee has been framed for a crime and the PCs are hired to privately investigate.
- A merchant's wife has disappeared and the player characters are asked to find her.
- A merchant has been targeted by the thieves' guild and he needs to find out why.

SERVANT

Traditionally, servants should not be seen or heard until they're needed. This can make for ho-hum game play however, so feel free to create colourful and unusual servants. A servant's job is generally dull and puts servants near the bottom of the social ladder. There are social hierarchies within servant circles that you can still have fun with though. The stable boys get picked on by the valets who get bullied by the Chief Groom, and so on.

Servant's Actually In Control

This is a great twist that could become a major aspect of your story. The servant is calling the shots because of their knowledge, connections, or anonymity. The master or employer is a mere figurehead who has grown to rely too much upon his retainer or is too meek to prevent a domineering servant from establishing control. You can make this relationship obvious to the PCs or a clever secret for them to gradually figure out.

Use Monstrous Servants

Another option is to replace the expected human servant with a monstrous one, such as a centaur stable boy, a minotaur butler, or a hell hound furnace keeper. This is plausible because servants often live sheltered lives within their lord's domain. The public need not see or even know about these strange minions. Imagine PCs' shock when an impatient minotaur, eager to escort the player characters to his master, takes their cloaks.

Open the Monster Manual and pick a random entry. What servant role would best suit this creature? Alternatively, if you have a specific servant role in mind, look at the Monsters By Type section to see if any particular creature strikes your fancy.

A Little Something On The Side

Add depth to servant NPCs by putting their fingers into a side-business that gives them a little money, power, or freedom. For example, make the cash-strapped handmaiden of the merchant's wife a spy, or turn a foot messenger into an information broker for the thieves' guild. A good way to do this is to consider the servant's situation and motivation:

Situation

What can the servant take advantage of to start a little something on the side?

- Who is their employer?
  - Is the employer important, rich, or powerful?
  - Is the employer important to the story or adventure?
  - Does the employer have valuable relationships with important, rich or powerful people?
  - Is the employer linked to or of value to the villain?
- What are their duties?
  - What (privileged) information does the servant have access to during the normal course of their daily routine?
  - What important, private, or interesting places does the servant have access to?
- What are their skills and knowledge?
  - What skills did the servant acquire before starting their current job?
  - Has the servant received any special training while in the service of their master?
  - Does the servant have any special interests, hobbies, or natural aptitudes they could put to use?

Motivation

Why would a servant risk their necks for a little extra gold or other reward?

- Servant-to-servant politics. The head servant often enjoys the most privileges. An ambitious schemer could try to sabotage the next servant in the pecking order.
- Greed. Bribes and bonuses work well.
- Love or romance. When people become emotional, they become less inhibited, easier to manipulate, and irrational. Whether the servant is a suitor, the object of affection, or a lover, romance can be a powerful lever.
- Blackmail. Servants can be blackmailed too. They have families, secrets, status, and other things to protect.
- Loyalty. Enslaved servants, expatriates, prisoners, guild members, and family members are a few examples of how a servant's highest loyalty might not be to their employer
- Insanity. Temporary or not, servants can be influenced through religious or cultist influences, prophecy, paranoia, hate, or from a number of psychological factors.

How Well Do They Serve?

Make a retainer unusual by taking the quality of their service to an extreme. Everybody respects a capable person, but what about a servant who is too capable? This person does everything extremely well with great efficiency, positive attitude, and impeccable manners. Taken far enough, the NPC could become comical, though definitely memorable. At the other end of the scale, have an incompetent servant who bungles everything no matter how hard they try. This servant could be incapable because of a bad attitude, a lax master, or debilitating character trait.

Plot Hooks

- A servant has learned their employer is being blackmailed and wants to help.
- An NPC wants to buy out the rest of their contract-of-indenture because their master is wicked and cruel.
- A servant has stolen something from their employer and needs the item fenced.
- A servant has learned they are an heir to an estate but their master has hidden the proof needed to make the claim.
- A servant NPC has witnessed a crime, possibly made by their employer or another servant, and needs the PCs to investigate.
- A servant's family member has caught a disease and needs

healing.
- A servant is part of a conspiracy and wants to frame the PCs for an evil deed.
- A lord's servant has disappeared and asks the PCs to investigate.
- A servant wants to find a special gift for their employer's birthday.
- An NPC has a side business and wants the PCs to mind it while the she goes on a trip with her employer.

UPPER NOBILITY

This type of NPC not only includes kings and queens, but entire royal families, the powerful and wealthy, arch wizards, high priests, and any other faction whom your campaign's society regards as upper nobility. These characters are typically roleplayed as arrogant louts or benevolent liberals, and encounters with them are often short.

Make Them Traveling Companions

Just like servants, nobles are real people too with worldly problems, foibles, and character traits. Treat them as NPCs first, nobles second during character design to help create a fully realized person. Then, make them traveling companions of the PCs and set them up as sympathetic characters. This will give the PCs a good opportunity to learn what it's like to be a noble, with all the responsibilities, lack of privacy, and difficult decisions that role entails.

For example, have the player characters journey through the country with the Duke. Create scenes where the Duke must decide who lives and who dies in no-win situations. The noble should ask for the PCs' recommendation in these instances so they feel the weight of the decision as well. The Duke rises before dawn and is the last to turn in for the night, constantly beset with problems, advisors, scouts, and situations. Try to roleplay the Duke so that he earns the PCs' respect, and hopefully, the players will respect future nobles this way as well.

They Expect To Be Obeyed

Nobles are leaders, but leaders are ineffective if they aren't obeyed. In some societies, the nobility are considered to be genetically superior. They really could have superior blood, perhaps because of better access to food, medicine, and healthier living conditions. Law and tradition also weigh in nobles' favor for assuming the role of leader, thus, they expect to be obeyed. Here are a few ways to handle this predisposition.

Assume they will be obeyed. Have the noble simply expect, without arrogance, that their commands will be executed without argument. Quite often it's tempting to make the noble a little snotty, but avoid this and play the character as jovial until disobeyed instead.

They believe they are superior. The noble truly believes that the lower classes are a lesser race, treating them as they would their pets. Others' needs and hardships are not considered, and nobles regard nearly everyone as expendable. The key to roleplaying this is to do so without malice. To the noble, their superiority is a fact. It's true. The noble *knows* his views are correct; therefore there is no insecurity or fear that typically causes malicious behavior.

Establish a chain of command. Nobles are free to order about those far below their station, but the act itself would be degrading to the NPC. Plus, if there's a possibility of rebellious behavior, the noble will not want to risk losing face or being bothered with such a confrontation. Instead, a noble will give the order to his lieutenant who will pass it down to the next level of command. Benevolent nobles understand this is necessary, for some requests are certain to cause hesitation or rebelliousness. If confronted directly with this behavior, the NPC would have no choice but to severely punish the offender to maintain order. If it's just a guard who gives the difficult order however, the punishment for disobedience will most likely be much lighter.

Nobles Have The Most To Lose

Though nobles wield a great deal of power, their position is precarious. Nobles have much to protect compared to a simple peasant. For instance, a typical noble worries about their wealth, station, reputation, land, and relationships. They must curry the favor of powerful nobles, wrestle with leadership issues, maintain the consent of the masses, and abide by tradition and heritage. A coup, critical error, hoard of orcs, display of weakness, or many other threats could topple a noble at any time.

Make Them Weak

As a twist, portray a noble who is weak. Perhaps they have not earned the respect of their peers, servants, or lieutenants. Maybe they are out of favor with the King or business is bad and the coffers are empty. Most of the time, nobles are portrayed as strong and powerful, but a bumbling or inferior character can be a refreshing change.

Make Them New

Another unusual situation to roleplay is a noble that has just recently acquired their power. Perhaps the character is a soldier who's been rewarded and elevated by the King. Maybe the NPC is part of a new establishment that has just seized control. A nascent noble will be looking for allies and seeking to consolidate their power. They might be unused to giving orders, or they could be abusing their new position. A new noble could have the loyalty of the common folk but the disdain of their better-bred peers, or vice versa.

Villains In The Making

Often a villain's power base is derived from their social class. Therefore, it is often interesting to portray a villain in their early and formative years as a noble NPC. Perhaps the PCs are witness to the events that finally push the NPC over to villainy. Maybe the player characters are subject to the darkening personality that will someday become a cold, ruthless, evil menace.

Plot Hooks

- A noble asks PCs to deliver a message to a general far away on a mission.
- A noble needs the PCs to protect his or her children from an evil relative who wants to be heir.

- A younger relative is trying to lay claim (perhaps rightful) to the noble's lands.
- The PCs are asked to protect a young noble while the noble secretly attends their own wedding that has been forbidden.
- A noble's children have been kidnapped for ransom.
- A monster is ravaging a noble's property in the countryside.
- A noble has an ambitious plot to gain the King's favor.
- A noble wishes to leave their responsibilities and become a carefree commoner.
- A noble wants to embarrass and humiliate a rival.
- A PC is asked by a noble to be a second for a duel.

SOLDIER

Soldiers and guards are often played as anonymous members of squads. Sometimes this is a matter of necessity because there's no time to design 25 unique NPCs who make up the Northwest Tower Patrol. This is unfortunate, because having a personality or some sort of distinction could save a soldier's life when faced against amoral, hacking PCs. A little personality also makes encounters with guards more entertaining.

Being A Soldier Is Just A Job

For most soldiers and guards, their job is just a way to earn a living. Leisure time, families, other interests, and conflicts outside of their job are ideal for introducing soldier NPCs to the player characters. Perhaps they meet over beers at the local tavern or at the market while enjoying some entertainment. The PCs may or may not know what the NPC does for a living, but outside of the uniform the NPC should be roleplayed just like any other person. When the non-player character on duty confronts the PCs, it won't be a conflict between the party and a nameless NPC now. This should cause the players to think twice before launching an attack.

Only A Few Soldiers Need Identities

It just takes one recognized face in a crowd of soldiers to get the PCs to stop hacking and start asking questions. If the player characters don't stop, have the NPC call out to the PCs and ask for a parley. The PCs could be faced with a difficult and uncomfortable choice if the NPC remains adamant and stands by his comrades. For this reason, try befriending a small number of soldier and guard NPCs to the player characters as your campaigns progress.

Give Soldiers Name Tags

Give each foe some form of unique identification to add a touch of personality when a large group of soldiers confronts the PCs. This encourages roleplaying in combat and keeps things interesting from what normally is a dice-fest. As each NPC's turn comes up in initiative, look for something to add, note it down quickly, and then work the feature into the combat. Perhaps one NPC has a feather in their helm, another bears a spouse's portrait on their shield, another has a raspy wheeze, and another always strikes low. After sessions, add the features you've created to a master list to help inspire future NPC design.

Use Good Tactics

Make it a goal to learn better tactics from every soldier encounter you GM. In the long run, you'll be able to challenge the players using fewer troops. This translates into less preparation time, more manageable combats, and more entertainment for the group. Watch how the PCs operate, learn how they defeat your NPCs, and make notes for future reference. Put together a "best tactics" list and post it on your screen. Example tactics include:

- Escape and withdrawal
- Positioning on the battlemat
- What targets to hit first (who are deadlier, archers, magic users, or warriors?)
- Weapon choices and cover fire
- Feat and skill selection

In a fantasy world, the military and civilian police forces will have learned how to cope with magic and individuals whose power eclipses any soldier's. They'll know when to retreat, break out the potions, and re-engage. Treat this as a never-ending learning exercise because a well co-ordinated and trained guard unit is more challenging and fun to play against than a chaotic group of individuals who get mowed down in a couple of rounds.

Plot Hooks

- The PCs are hired to find a guard who has gone AWOL.
- The PCs are asked to deliver a soldier's savings to his family who live in the country.
- An NPC has a side venture in a mine going and discovers an evil menace.
- A city guard moonlights as a bodyguard but his client has gone missing.
- A soldier discovered a map on the battlefield and wants help investigating it.
- A guard has accidentally killed someone related to a PC.
- A corrupt sergeant and his troops are shaking down local merchants and must be stopped.
- A gate guard is a wanted criminal who has given up evil, but he's spotted an old enemy who could betray him.
- The NPC is being pressured to let smugglers in and out of the city and he's had enough. He wants the PCs to stop the smugglers without alerting his superiors.
- A guard is being bullied and wants the PCs to teach the bully a lesson.

ARTIST/ENTERTAINER

Depending on your campaign area's views, artists are either much respected or regarded with disdain. Some might see the arts as an essential spiritual aspect of society while others view the pursuit as a waste of time. Bards, as a PC class, are given special treatment both in-game and during design; but what about the painters, jugglers, tumblers, and other entertainers who don't have special rules? Do they become background sideshows in your games, or are they given fair design treatment?

A Surprise Double-Life

Not many artists and entertainers can make a full-time living at their craft. This creates an opportunity for you to surprise the players by turning NPCs they might already know into part-time performers or hobbyists. Perhaps the soldier they bested at

arm-wrestling invites them back to his studio where he reveals a collection of hand-painted portraits.

The reverse is also true. Perhaps a NPC that was first introduced as an artist turns out to have a surprising day job: the burly skald at the PCs' inn turns out to be an archer in the King's army, the masked juggler who tosses flaming swords high up into the air is actually the Duke, and the handmaid of a wealthy merchant crafts the popular sculptures at the market.

Have The Right Attitude

Artists put their necks out when displaying their talents in public. They open themselves up to criticism and possibly worse by the callous masses. To counter this potential pain, many artists adopt a high-handed attitude about themselves, their talents, and their benefits to society. For example, consider the following plaque that can be found in one of the classrooms at the Royal Dance School For Elves:

"Consider carefully your arrival, entrance, and demeanor at all social occasions. Remember, by attending and performing at such an event, you are transforming the affair from a mundane party to something great. Thus, your entry--the point at which the party changes from dull to special--is very important. Ensure your host is properly grateful."

Creative People Are Unusual People

Make this your mantra while you roleplay an entertainer NPC. Many societies expect their artists to be different, citing some link to a greater power, or a side effect of creative genius. Use this expectation to your advantage by making quirky, bizarre NPCs. Fashion might be your first target, then personality, then art form and style. In fantasy worlds, the possibilities are even greater, so have fun, get in touch with your own creative genius, and create unusual artistes.

Create A Competitive Environment

Creating an oversupply of artists or entertainers in your campaign has two potential benefits. First, it will make bard and entertainer PCs work a little harder to earn their audiences. Second, it will create an aura of competition in the area to use as creative encounter backdrops, plot hooks, and NPC hooks. Entertainers will be constantly looking for bigger and better ways to capture attention and win over jaded audiences. Perhaps some entertainers go too far…

Roleplay A Fraud

Out of desperation for attention, fame, or respect, some NPC artists might attempt to copy or steal from their more talented competitors. This creates an unusual roleplaying opportunity, especially if the PCs meet both non-player characters and cannot decide which one is the true creator. It's also potential for an unscrupulous artist to mimic a bard PC and create an interesting conflict. Perhaps the player character is inexplicably booed off the stage under cries of "fraud!" and "cheat!" At the very least, being a fraud gives an NPC a great subtext to roleplay.

Plot Hooks

- An artist asks to draw a PC's portrait but has a sinister plan for the piece when it's done.
- An entertainer needs help discrediting a rival who is pursuing a romantic interest of his.
- Someone has stolen the musician's instrument and the PCs are hired to find it.
- A singer has discovered a secret code in one of his songs.
- An artist needs help finding a rogue who is forging her paintings.
- A poet claims a PC to be his muse and refuses to leave the player character alone.
- An artist has made a demonic pact to become famous but now wants the PCs' help to renege on the deal.
- A sculptor needs the PCs to fetch clay that can only be found in a distant, dangerous river valley.
- A sword juggler recently lost his arm in an accident and asks the PCs to help him find a way to juggle again.

Politico/Minor Noble

It is difficult being a minor noble. They are under constant pressure to appease everyone, even when those interests conflict. Looking up, the major nobility looms overhead with financial demands, political strings, and large armies. Looking down, the mass of commoners cast baleful glares, seeking relief from taxation, militia duty, and the burdens cast upon them by their lord. All around, opponents gather. Other nobles vie for the NPC's position and seek to put him out of favor with his superiors while the NPC is often helplessly stuck in his district taking care of urgent problems. Orcs, monsters, and crazed wizards attack from time to time and this is a no-win situation too. The peasants demand action but don't want to be the ones fighting. The King demands the situation get taken care of immediately before it spreads to other areas, but the royal armies are needed elsewhere. Such is the life of politicos. Examples of politico NPCs are:

- A town mayor
- The Minister Of The Interior
- The Duke's cousin who's been granted a small landholding that includes a village
- A foreign ambassador
- Sub-Attaché Of The Grand Legate

Establish A System Of Favors

One way to survive as a minor lord is to be owed favors from as many people as possible. These debts can be called in (hopefully) when the NPC needs help and the right favor from the right person can save the day. This scenario means the non-player character must earn the favors in the first place: a perfect time to introduce the PCs.

A favor system requires a different mindset when roleplaying this NPC. This type of character is always looking for an angle, a way to endear themselves to others, to become important. If they can't find any leverage then they'll try to fabricate some. For example, to earn the favor of a major landholder in the district, the NPC sends the PCs out to sabotage the landholder's water towers. The landholder comes running to the NPC the next day, crying he's been ruined, his crops will fail and he'll not make this year's tax quotas. The NPC saves the day by sending out expert repair crews and lending him the services of the PC cleric who can magically re-create the lost water. A favor is earned.

Marrying Upwards Is Key
It's critical for many minor nobles to improve their bloodlines by marrying their children into powerful families. This is a long process and requires great planning, but it's possible and a key motivation of many politico NPCs. The trick is winning the approval of the other family. This can be done through payouts (dowries), merging estates, or winning the heart of the other family's child. When the PCs interact with the NPC, these things will always be running through the character's mind. If the player characters are of any potential value to these schemes then the NPC is sure to use them for his ends.

Corrupt By Necessity
A minor noble's career can be derailed at the whim of their lord, at the point of a rebellious sword, or for many other reasons. Many minor nobles succumb under this stress and turn to corrupt means to create a nest egg as fast as possible in case the worst should happen. Bribes, skimming taxes, and secret projects are a few means to this end. Next time you design a politico, figure out where their nest egg is coming from and how that could be used for entertaining roleplaying or adventure hooks.

Plots Hooks
- The NPC hires the PCs to help fix an election for him.
- The PCs are hired to scare off a rival.
- A minor noble needs the PCs for a mission that will earn the NPC the favor of an important lord.
- A small dispute has grown out of proportions in the NPC's jurisdiction and the player characters are asked to help settle it.
- The politico needs the PCs to spy on a neighboring district.
- The PCs are hired to collect a new roof tax. Anyone with a roof must pay the tax.
- The mayor's city is plagued with thieves and the PCs are hired to clean things up.
- A politico hires the PCs to investigate the powerful NPCs in his region and find evidence of corruption.
- A minor noble hires the PCs to deliver a heavy bronze statue of himself as a gift to the daughter of a powerful lord.
- An NPC needs the PCs to close down a market in a nearby district that is stealing business away from his own market.

GUILD LEADER
Guild leaders are masters of their craft and masters of politics. With their position comes many benefits and it's highly sought after by all aspiring guild members. However, the job does not come without its share of headaches. These headaches are great opportunities for adventures, roleplaying, and NPC design hooks. Examples of guild leaders are:
- A trade master
- The head of the Yacht Club
- A bishop
- The leader of the Thieves' Guild

Planners And Managers
First and foremost, guild leaders must be excellent planners. They are responsible for ensuring the guild continues to function and grow. They need to manage budgets, supplies, noble relations, civil relations, guild member relations, buildings, and many other things. This means they no longer have time to practice their craft, which might disappoint or anger many leaders who crave the return of simpler days.

The number one question these NPCs ask is "What are the consequences?" Guilds are often large and complex organizations, so each decision and action is likely to impact something important. It's the guild leader's job to weigh the costs and benefits, and gauge all the consequences before making a final decision. This might catch PCs off-guard when they are probed for these types of answers. The need to get accurate answers might launch several encounters in a natural progression during game play as well.

UMC
UMC is an abbreviation that means Upper Middle Class. This is the standard social class guild leaders occupy in their society, though your game world might differ. Think of UMC also as Upwardly Mobile Commoner. The key words in both of these definitions are *middle* and *commoner*. It means that the guild leader has reached the maximum possible social level for one not of noble birth. This fact rankles NPCs who might be holding greater wealth and power than many nobles. Use this conflict to aid your personality design and roleplaying. Perhaps the Goldsmith's Guild leader refuses to accept reality and strives to become a noble. Meanwhile, the Candlemaker's leader realizes his limitations from "a fluke of birth" and plots against his noble customers. Noble PCs are sure to be treated differently by guild leaders, so consider this briefly before starting an encounter with them.

Organization, Respect, Honor, Discipline
As a change from the usual, make your guild leader a champion of organization, respect, honor, and discipline. He is taking the noble road regardless of his bloodline, and seeks to strengthen his guild and guild members through these cornerstone principles. It's up to you to decide whether the guild thrives or falls because of this program, but it's sure to capture the interest of the PCs.

Recruitment
Guilds need more than journeymen and apprentices. Larger guilds might have their own armed forces, town districts to maintain, errands to run, and investments to make. In short, this means guild leaders are always looking to recruit capable people for whatever jobs and duties are needed. In some areas, guilds might be forced to use the services of other guild members, but in others the PCs might be the perfect people for the job. The nature of the work could be contractual rather than permanent employment, which suits many adventuring group styles. Use this as an opportunity for PCs to show off their non-combat skills and do some roleplaying. Perhaps the guild needs the services of the mage to blast some rocks for a building foundation. The Ropemakers' Guild might have been bequeathed a wild stallion and it's up to a PC to break it.

Earn Prestige
Guild leaders are also responsible for nurturing the prestige of their guild. Organizations in great demand can charge higher

dues and attract more capable applicants. Guilds with fame and prestige will prosper and possibly make inroads in closed circles, such as foreign markets or the nobility. Therefore, leaders constantly seek ways to publicly increase their guilds' notoriety and the PCs could help. For example, if the player characters haul a dragon's carcass into town and declare the threat is over, a savvy leader might try to sign-up the PCs to his guild as honorary members and then claim all the glory in the guild's name.

Create A Secret Service Or Society

Another trick is to create a secret organization within the guild. Cults, elite troops, and secret projects are great fodder for adventures and roleplaying. Guild leaders will use these groups to further their plans for the good of the guild or selfish purposes. These groups also give guilds public and secret faces to maintain and add depth to your campaigns. Next time the PCs confront a guild leader without the proper respect, know that the NPC could have a secret means to retaliate—a great subtext to roleplay.

Plot Hooks

- A guild leader candidate needs something big and grand done in her name to gain notoriety.
- A rival guild is muscling in on the guild leader's territory and he wants the PCs to put a stop to it.
- A PC wants guild membership but must pass a special test for the guild leader first.
- The guild needs more work for its members and the PCs are hired to create a need for it.
- The guild leader is being blackmailed about a dark secret in the NPC's past, and the player characters are hired to deal with the blackmailer.
- The guild leader needs the PCs to uncover information that will let her blackmail a rival guild leader.
- A guild leader needs the PCs to negotiate an end to a trade embargo with a nearby city.
- A rival guild leader has been kidnapped and the PCs are needed to find the NPC before a guild war erupts.
- A guild leader develops a romantic interest in one of the PCs but must be discreet about it to maintain appearances.
- A guild leader is old and dying and needs the PCs to find a way to extend his life by a few more years until a successor is ready.

CLERGY

Servants of religious organizations are sometimes portrayed in a limited number of ways in campaigns, making these NPCs predictable and boring. The clergy is important to most societies, so try not to limit their roles.

Not All Clergy Members Are Clerics

Churches, cults, and other religious organizations have bureaucratic and needs that must be met: finances handled, buildings built and maintained, animals fed, gardens tilled, and so on. Though clerics are capable of handling these tasks, spells are not necessary to perform these functions, so anybody with the proper skills can handle them. It might make financial or political sense for a church to let non-clerics take care of these functions as well. For example:

Monks

Monks (the non-martial kind) might populate the countryside, herding the flocks and growing the crops that will feed the church's followers in the cities. Religious organizations would benefit from a reliable and independent source of food. It would be inexpensive as well because monks will work for food and shelter and ask little in return other than spiritual guidance.

Children Of Nobility And The Wealthy

Nobles with too many children will send them to become clergy accompanied with a reasonable donation to ensure qualification and acceptance. Nobles do this for a number of reasons, including settling threats and disputes regarding who is the heir, ridding them of troublesome offspring, and protecting beloved children from murderous rivals.

Lost And Found

Orphans, victims, and paupers might also be taken under the church's wing. These people might not have the prerequisites needed to achieve cleric status but they are valuable workers and cheap labor nonetheless.

Tour Of Duty

Religious groups who are powerful enough could enforce one-time or regular periods of service from believers and citizens. Volunteers do not drain the treasury and the church can keep closer watch on its members this way.

The next time the PCs deal with a clergy member, feel free to break the stereotype. Know that clergy members can come from a variety of backgrounds, don't need to be clerics, and might be reluctant or resentful of their duties.

Skilled Members Of Society

Clergy folk can be valuable members of society. Access to learned teachers, books, a quiet life, food, and shelter, make it possible for a religious organization to have a skilled workforce at its disposal. This workforce of scribes, accountants, craftsman, and other professionals might serve many functions within society at large, forming a middle or white-collar class. At the next town, the PCs might be taken aback to see the smith, tailor, and gate guard all wearing the garb of clergy members.

Guardians Of Secret Knowledge

Clergy members in remote or defensible locations could be entrusted with secret knowledge. Their duties could involve guarding, maintaining, creating, or passing on this lore. This gives these members an interesting secret to keep and makes them potential sources of adventure hooks. It could also give them surprising skills, knowledge, or special abilities.

Source Of Information & Gossip

The clergy are prime sources of information and gossip. Whether it's learned from the confession booth, their duties, or their trusted positions in society, clergy members could be unexpected fonts of knowledge. Some members are able to keep a secret. Others will grin foolishly until they can't keep it in any longer. And a few members might try to use this valuable information

for personal or organizational gain. Regardless of the case, an NPC with a secret is fun to roleplay.

Plot Hooks

- The clergy member needs help making a great pilgrimage before he dies.
- The PCs are asked to deliver important and perishable scrolls and books to a remote monastery.
- The NPC is up for promotion but must perform a special mission to prove his worth. The PCs are recruited to assist with this task.
- The NPC has discovered a demonic church conspiracy and does not know who to trust or what can be done about it.
- A noble has requested that his son be admitted into the clergy. The PCs are asked to fetch the boy from the noble's country villa and deliver the lord's hefty donation intact.
- An NPC hires the PCs to visit all the churches and monasteries in the area looking for a lost relative.
- During a confession, a clergy member learns a dark secret and later drunkenly confides in the PCs.
- An NPC has been defrocked for committing heresy, yet he tries to convince the PCs he has real knowledge of his deity's will.
- An orphan clergy member hires the PCs to find her parents.
- A clergy member is the bastard of a major noble and asks the PCs to deliver a help request to the lord.

BEGGAR

Beggars are a staple of many campaigns and are fun to game master. They don't always need to be grubby men grabbing the PCs' shirtsleeves and asking for a copper. Consider these possibilities:

Beggars Have Nothing To Lose

If a person is starving, lives on the streets, and struggles for survival every hour, they have nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking risks. Let them take unexpected actions--the more audacious the better. For example, next time the PCs are in town stabling their horses, have a beggar come up and threaten to rub his flea-ridden body all over the player characters' horses unless they give him a gold piece. While the PCs are walking the streets fending off begging children and peasants, have three beggars jump down from the rooftops above aiming to tackle the player characters and hopefully make off with something of value. Have another beggar run into the PCs' inn and threaten to light himself on fire if patrons don't toss some mead and bread his way.

Some Beggars Are New

In most fantasy societies it isn't a long way from being wealthy to being penniless. A fire, change of government, rampant monster, plague, job loss, drought, or other catastrophe could wipe a person out and send them to the streets. It's possible that some beggars will be new. Imagine the players' reactions when a well-dressed merchant approaches them and begs for a silver piece to buy a loaf for his empty stomach!

The Tale Is The Key

Sympathy is the beggar's trade and his appearance and tale of woe are his tools. Have fun with this by taking a moment and coming up with beggar stories so pitiful they're sure to win a coin from the player characters. Smart beggars will see themselves as actors playing a role and will dress and behave for best effect. Each beggar might have several stories, each one best suited for a certain type of victim.

"Excuse me Lord Wizard, may I trouble thee for a moment? I was an aspiring apprentice up until a week ago when my master's spell misfired and he melted before my horror-stricken eyes until he was nothing more than a pool of bubbling goo. I still have nightmares! Now I'm homeless and haven't eaten in days. Could you please spare a copper? It's not for me, oh no, but for my wife who's heavy with child. She lost her job as maid to the wizard when he <sob>…"

Laughter also earns coins. Design a funny act or story, possibly using a character trait or quirk as inspiration. A particularly flatulent beggar with a flint and steel could earn many chuckles and a few coppers after each performance.

Beggars Go Where Few Others Will Travel

Most beggars will not hesitate to dive into the gutter for a crust, explore the sewers for hidden prizes, or visit the town dump on a regular basis. To put a positive spin on this, it means that beggars are ambassadors to the secret worlds of towns and cities. Who knows what mysteries beggars could uncover? Who knows what interesting items grubby hands could dig up? Who knows what secrets desperate eyes could discover? The answers translate directly into adventure hooks and interesting NPCs for your campaigns.

Plot Hooks

- A beggar asks the PCs to help him get his estates back that were stolen by another.
- A homeless woman thrusts her newborn child into a PC's arms and runs away.
- A beggar has found a secret entrance in the sewers and offers to sell the location information to the player characters.
- A beggar overheard two NPCs planning to murder someone important and asks the PCs to stop it.
- A beggar who claims to be a distant relative approaches the PC and then accidentally guesses three things right to make it seem like a possibility.
- A beggar has discovered a large, valuable item buried in the dump and tries to sell it to the PCs.
- The NPC distracts the player characters while his three-legged pet dog tries to steal something from them.
- A beggar accidentally set free a horrible menace while exploring that morning and he asks the PCs to help him "put it back".
- A beggar steals a PC's dagger, stabs himself with it, and runs to the guard claiming the player character attacked him.
- A beggar who closely resembles an important NPC approaches the PCs with a clever plot.

When We Practice to Deceive...

When We Practice to Deceive is a d20 fantasy adventure suitable for characters of levels 3-5. While primarily an investigation and social interaction plot, the combat portions of the adventure will prove very challenging for a 3rd level group but may require strengthening to threaten a 5th level party.

It is recommended that the adventuring party contain a character with the Track feat though the GM can use the bard staying at the village's inn to fill this gap. Social skills will also be very useful, particularly Diplomacy and Gather Information.

Adventure Background

A three-member village council rules the village of Meremath. The council consists of Mayor Richmar, who controls the military; Laelana, the wealthiest merchant; and Father Achevan of Pelor. While there is little love lost among the council (Laelana and Achevan actually hate each other), the three of them understand the importance of the each other's role. For many years, they have maintained a balance of power. Lately, however, that balance has begun to shift.

It has been years since the village has faced a military threat. Many villagers have begun to resent the additional taxes and mandatory militia training imposed by Mayor Richmar. Merchant Laelana has detected this swing in the village's attitude. She is concerned because she supplies equipment for the militia. Laelana has decided to take action. The first step in her plan is to hire a small, local group of bandits to attack the village and allow themselves to be repelled by the militia. Laelana feels this should renew the demand for maintaining a militia and keep her supply business strong. Unfortunately, the bandit chief has decided he can make more money by blackmailing her than by risking his men. Laelana has refused and the chieftain has sent some of his thugs to accost her outside the village.

Adventure Summary

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling a country road and encountering a band of thugs threatening two half-elven women (Laelana and her sister). Assuming they intervene, the PCs easily chase off the thugs. Laelana will ask the PCs to return to the village as her guests.

Unknown to everyone, a bandit spy posted in the village has just reported back to his leader. His report reveals two important details: the village depends on Laelana for trade; and the village is wealthy and complacent. These facts trigger the kidnapping plan.

While in the village, the PCs have meetings with Laelana, Mayor Richmar and Father Achevan. The merchant offers a reward if the characters help defend both her business and the village from these marauders (and thus end the bandit's blackmail).

After the PCs have had time to get caught up in the village's power struggle, Laelana and her younger sister are kidnapped and held for ransom. Richmar asks the PCs to rescue them. While finding and freeing Laelana, the characters discover that the kidnapping is a diversion to cover an all-out attack on the village. After a fast retreat back to the village the PCs must coordinate defenses amongst untrusting groups and then engage the bandit chieftain and his bodyguards in a climactic finale.

Notes For The GM

While there is plenty of opportunity for action, this is an adventure of roleplaying and political intrigue. The story should take one to two sessions to play out. It is a timeline based plot and involves some scripting. For example, the player characters are expected to agree to Laelana's offer of employment, free her from kidnappers, and return to save the village from a bandit assault.

That said, the GM is advised to focus on understanding the three major NPCs, roleplaying their goals and motives, and entangling the PCs in their machinations. The players' main goal should be earning the trust of these major NPCs and getting them to work together to save the village before the bandits attack. Consider the lead-in to each of the encounters described below as suggestions only, and let the roleplaying determine how and when each key event takes place. This type of planning will prevent the adventure from feeling rigid and inflexible to the players.

Adventure Hooks

There are a number of reasons the PCs might wish to visit the backwater village of Meremath. The most likely would involve the fine wines that make up the main export of the village (Laelana's secondary source of income). The PCs might wish to seek the source of these wines. Alternately, a merchant might want to find out more about his supplier, and could commission the PCs to find out a little more about Lelana.

The area surrounding Meremath is heavily forested and is known to contain more than one ancient. The characters may simply be out treasure hunting when they stumble upon Laelana's predicament in the first encounter.

Since the only serviceable road in the area does lead to the village, it is quite possible the PCs were not seeking Meremath at all and random chance has directed them.

The Village of Meremath

Description: When entering Meremath the first thing you notice is the extensive vineyards and orchards sprawling to the north and west of the village. The only serviceable road approaches from the southeast and it leads from the dense, temperate hillside forest into a picturesque village square. The streets are unpaved but well maintained and both the buildings and the people milling about give off an air of contentment and care. The village square (which is actually circular) is framed by the general store, the Lofty Torch Inn, the blacksmith's shop, and the largest and

most dominant building in the village, the glass-fronted church of Pelor. All told, the village has about 70 buildings, most of which are multiple family dwellings.

History: Until 10 years ago Meremath was part of the expansive Duchy of Lythien (villagers will be very hesitant to reveal this information to strangers). At no time in living memory has the village been visited by any member of the ruling family. In fact, the only notice taken of it nowadays is the exceptional wine produced from its vineyards.

Ten years ago marked the overthrow of the Lythien family and the subsequent redistribution of their holdings. Meremath seemed to have been overlooked as the tax collector stopped calling and the duke's soldiers ceased their patrols. The independent-minded villagers met and agreed that they were better off without the duke's taxation and decided to try to make it on their own. An enterprising half-elven merchant (Laelana) was able to find new markets for their wines, a bold young cleric of Pelor (Achevan) united their minds in common worship, and a gifted member of the former duke's military (Richmar) lead the villagers in a series of skirmishes that drove off a local orc tribe. Things settled down and, after a few years of wondering, everyone seemed satisfied that their struggle was concluded. Meremath had achieved independence through hard work and obscurity.

Meremath (village): Conventional; AL LG; 200 gp limit; Assets 8000 gp; Population 800; Mixed (79% human, 9% halfling, 5% elf, 3% dwarf, 2% gnome, 1% half-elf, 1% half-orc).
Authority Figures: (Village Councilors) Mayor Richmar Fellarm, male human Fgt5; Morninglord Achevan of Pelor, male human Clr5; Laelana the Merchant, female half-elf Exp5;
Important Characters: Dugal aka Bren, male halfling Rog3; Morzad Fireheart, half-orc War2/Fgt2 (constable); Narwell, male human Cmn9 ("Lofty Torch Inn" proprietor);
Others: Guardsmen, War3 (x10); Militia, Cmn1/War1 (x80); Exp2 (x4); Hunters, Rng2 (x1), Rng1 (x4);
Notes: The village supports itself primarily by farming, hunting, and trapping. The local vineyards are also known for producing exceptional winemaking grapes and provide the only major export. Due to the influence of the Mayor, an unusually high percentage of locals have been trained for militia duty.

NOTE: Forested areas surrounding Meremath are quite dense and should be treated as undergrowth anywhere other than on roads and trails (movement x ¾, -2 to Move Silently checks, +2 to Hide checks).

ENCOUNTERS

1. Meeting Laelana (EL 2 or 4 for Owlbear)

> On the road ahead of the party appears a scene taken straight from a storybook. Four ruffians have accosted two damsels who seem to be in distress. What more could stouthearted adventurers ask?

The encounter takes place on a country road far from any major cities. The party comes upon two half-elven women being accosted by four bandits. The women are Laelana the Merchant and her sister Raelle. Two of the bandits are half-orcish brutes bearing battle-axes while the other two are human woodsmen with longbows. Upon seeing the PCs, both women cry out for help. The thugs tell the PCs they should mind their own business and that "this wench owes us money", a claim Laelana vehemently denies.

The bandits will fight if provoked or if the PCs refuse to leave the scene. However, the thugs will flee when wounded or if the PCs show signs of competence. Raelle yells for the party to pursue them but will be quickly shushed by her sister. (A Sense Motive check at DC 20 indicates that Laelana is acting more nervous than scared. Laelana does in fact owe the bandits gold).

If the PCs chase after the bandits they will be lead to the lair of an owlbear. The bandits will arouse the beast and let their trailers deal with it. If captured, the bandits default to their training that they should never reveal anything to outsiders (even though it may help them in this case). If magically compelled they know nothing more than that Laelana owes the boss money and were told to rough her up to show they mean business. Both the rangers and the thugs are loyal to their boss out of fear but have little love for one another. Each individual will abandon his companions to save themselves.

After the battle, Laelana will search for her horse, Fairgrove. Visibly distraught, she will beseech the PCs to track her beloved mare. If the characters admit to a lack of wilderness skill, Laelana will urge everyone to return to the nearby village of Meremath where she'll put her trusty stable boy to the task. Otherwise, a Track check DC 10 will lead a PC straight to the horse, and a careful search of the area will discover the animal about thirty yards off grazing amongst the trees.

As reward for helping fend off the bandits, Laelana offers room and board at the Lofty Torch Inn. She is willing to share information about the village in general if asked, but will be vague when answering questions about herself. She attempts to direct the conversation to the characters. Assuming the PCs are civil, she asks if the PCs will work for her in defending the village against the bandits. She claims that this group has been harassing residents for several weeks now (a Spot check DC 15 will reveal Raelle frowns when this is stated).

As her house is on the way into the village, Laelana stops there and calls for her "stableboy" Bren (actually the halfling rogue Dugal in disguise) to accompany the party to the inn while she and her sister recuperate. If her horse is still missing, she'll urge Bren to be quick and then travel back down the road to find her steed. She promises to join the PCs for a beverage as soon as she can.

Raelle remains silent for the majority of the encounter. If pressed she redirects questions to her sister.

Bandit Rangers (x2), male human War1/Rng1 CR 1; Medium Humanoids; HD 1d8+1 plus 1d10+1; Hit points 11; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 armor, +2 Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/19-20 x2, longsword) or +1/+1 melee (1d8+1 longsword/ 1d4 dagger) +5 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA Favored enemy (humans); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; AL NE; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10;
Skills: Climb +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +4, Move Silently +3, Swim +4, Wilderness Lore +4.
Feats: Point Blank Shot, Track, Weapon Focus (Longbow).
Possessions: Dagger, longbow, longsword, quiver w/20 arrows, masterwork studded leather armor, belt pouch containing 10 gp, 12 sp, & 5 cp.
Notes: The bandit rangers are well trained by Galaith and are adept at misleading pursuit. Their equipment shows use but is well maintained.

Bandit Thugs (x2), male half-orc War1 CR ½; Medium Humanoids; HD 1d8+2; Hit points 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CE; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 7;
Skills: Climb +5, Jump +5.
Feats: Power Attack.
Possessions: Battleaxe, studded leather armor.
Notes: These thugs are chosen simply for their size and enthusiasm in hurting people. While they will follow the lead of the rangers, they are easily provoked and are more than stupid enough to attack a superior foe if riled.

Owlbear CR 4; Large Beast; HD 5d10+20; Hit points 49; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural); Atk 2 claws +7 melee, bite +2 melee (claw 1d6+5, bite 1d8+2); Face/ Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./ 5 ft.; SA Improved Grab; SQ Scent; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2; AL CE; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10;
Skills: Listen +8, Spot +7.
Special Abilities: When the owlbear hits with a claw attack it automatically starts a grapple without provoking an attack of opportunity.
Possessions: The owlbear's lair contains the bones and torn clothing of two fallen would-be adventurers amongst which may be found (Search DC 10) a large garnet worth 90 gp, and a potion of *Cure Light Wounds*.

Raelle, female half-elf Brd1 CR ½; Medium Humanoid (5 ft, 1 in. tall); HD 1d8; Hit points 5; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk –1 melee (1d4-1/19-20 x2 dagger) +2 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SQ Low-light vision; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; AL N; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 17;
Skills: Bluff +7, Handle Animal +7, Ride +7, Wilderness Lore +5.
Feats: Skill Focus (Ride)
Possessions: Dagger, masterwork longbow.
Notes: Raelle acts the part of the spoiled brat out of a sense of bitterness towards her parents, her sister's success, and life in general. She is a stunning beauty though few people still think so after getting to know her. Raelle's passion is getting out of the village, a goal she pursues by attempting to seduce visitors she feels might be able to "take her away from it all". As soon as the

GM Notes:

Unless the PCs appear incompetent or evil, Laelana will instantly spot them to be a way out of her predicament. She has a wonderful subtext to roleplay (she knows the bandits, she *does* owe them money, and she's hatching a plot to retain her militia business) so keep that in mind. Raelle knows this information too, but does not hide it as well. Raelle is aware of her high charisma and beauty, and might use that to ease her boredom of life by flirting with the PCs, which she knows will grate on Laelana's nerves.

The situation involving the lost horse is a story clue and important because it becomes relevant during the kidnapping encounter

situation calms down she selects the most attractive male PC and makes him the target of her affections.

Laelana, female half-elf Exp5 CR 4; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. tall); HD 5d6+5; Hit points 23; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20 x2, masterwork dagger) +6 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SQ Low-light vision; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 11;
Skills: Appraise +11, Bluff +8, Craft (Winemaking) +11, Diplomacy +12 (includes synergy bonuses for 5+ ranks in Sense Motive & Bluff), Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +8, Profession (Bookkeeper) +9, Ride +12 (includes synergy bonus for 5+ ranks in Handle Animal), Sense Motive +9
Feats: Martial Weapon Proficiency (Longbow), Point Blank Shot
Possessions: +1 Amulet of natural armor, Figurine of Wondrous Power (Marble Elephant, fist sized, carried in a shoulder bag at all times), masterwork dagger, masterwork longbow
Notes: Laelana earned her place on the council by providing the contacts needed for the village to find new markets for their wine. She is an accomplished vintner herself and the best wines in the village bare her personal seal. Shrewd trading and a somewhat ruthless nature have allowed her to buy controlling interest in virtually every business in the village. She outright owns the general store and the Lofty Torch Inn and both Garin the blacksmith and Conthal the carpenter sold her parts of their businesses over the years. As a merchant, Laelana's power base is her money and ability to supply needed items.

Laelana's passions are horseback riding and archery, activities she participates in as often as possible. Her prized possession is a beautiful chestnut brown stallion named Fairgrove.

Bren the Stableboy, aka Dugal, halfling Rog3 CR 3; Small Humanoid (3 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 3d6+3; Hit points 17; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +1 size, +1 armor); Atk +3 melee (1d4/19-20 x2, dagger) +7 ranged (1d4/19-20 x2, dagger); SQ Low-light vision; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12;
Skills: Appraise +7, Balance +7, Climb +2, Craft +8, Disable device +7, Handle Animal +3, Hide +11, Innuendo +7, Intimidate +9, Intuit direction +4, Jump +2, Listen +3, Move silently +5, Pick pocket +9, Spot +5, Tumble +8; Feats: Run, Skill Focus (Intimidate).

2. The Lofty Torch Inn (EL 0, or 1 for the bouncer, or 6 for Richmar & Morzad)

In the northeastern corner of the village square sits a three-story inn. A beautifully carved shingle proclaims it to be the Lofty Torch Inn.

The Lofty Torch is the only inn and taproom in Meremath. It boasts 20 large rooms and the taproom has a 100 seat capacity. Narwell the proprietor (male human Cmn9; Profession: Innkeeper +15) greets the party as they enter the inn. (Laelana actually owns the inn but very few people know it). Though it gets busy for breakfast and fills every evening, the taproom is barren most of the day.

Bren will vouch for the PCs and be on his way to either search for Fairgrove or tend to other duties. Narwell offers to help with any gear, calls a boy to attend to any mounts, advises them of the house specials (Roasted Owl covered in a honey glaze and Grape Jelly Lamb), and leads them to their rooms. One room is provided for every two people while ensuring that men and women can be separated if desired.

Once the PCs head upstairs or are otherwise distracted, Narwell heads out the front door and walks briskly across the street to the Church of Pelor. Sharp-eyed PCs might spot him through their room's window. They'll see Narwell carrying a covered plate, presumably a hot meal, to the church where he lets himself in.

Developments: Narwell and several regular patrons are loyal to Achevan. Anything the PCs say or do in the taproom will become known to him.

3. Meeting With Richmar

News travels fast in Meremath. While most of the PCs are present in the taproom, Mayor Richmar will make a visit. Two sturdy looking guardsmen accompany him (one of whom is Constable Fireheart). After introducing himself, he looks the party over critically and informs them of the major village ordinances (see boxed text). He acts with the formality and stiffness of a military officer, and he speaks as if giving orders rather than having a conversation. Despite his demeanor, neither Narwell, patrons, nor the inn staff will tolerate any insults directed against Richmar.

Major Village Ordinances
- Hand weapons must be "peace-bonded", tied with string to belts.
- Missile weapons may not be openly carried within village limits.
- Only personal spellcasting is allowed, with the exception of healing magic.
- Guests may not attack or provoke Meremath Citizens.
- Meremath Citizens will be presumed innocent and guests assumed guilty until otherwise proven.
- Open fires, including torches, are prohibited within village limits.

Morzad Fireheart, male half-orc War2/Fgt2 CR 3; HD 2d8+2 plus 2d10+2; Hit points 28; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (breastplate armor); AC 16 (+5 armor, +1 Dex); Atk +9 melee (masterwork warhammer 1d8+4/x3) +9 melee (glaive 1d10+6/x3, 10 ft. reach) +5 ranged (heavy crossbow 1d10/19-20 x2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +2; AL LG; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10;
Skills: Climb +9, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +5, Jump +5, Ride +3.
Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Sunder.
Possessions: Masterwork breastplate, heavy crossbow, glaive, masterwork war hammer, dagger.
Notes: Morzad can be best described as a walking wall of muscle. His outer appearance is strongly orcish but he has impeccable manners and a gruff but kind manner of speaking that quickly assures anyone interested that he has left his orcish blood behind him.
Morzad is devoted to Richmar and takes great pains to ensure people treat the mayor with respect.

Mayor Richmar Fellarm, male human Fgt5 CR 5; Medium Humanoid (6 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 5d10; Hit points 30; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (breastplate armor); AC 19 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield); Atk +9 melee (1d8+5/19-20 x2, +1 longsword), +7 melee (dagger 1d4+2/19-20 x2), +7 ranged (masterwork longbow 1d8/x3); AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12; (Richmar's attributes have been adjusted for his age according to the Aging Effects table in Core Rulebook I)
Skills: Climb +7 (+4 in armor), Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +6, Jump +6 (+3 in armor), Ride +9 (includes synergy bonus for 5+ ranks in Handle Animal), Sense Motive +3.
Feats: Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Focus (Longsword), Weapon Specialization (Longsword)
Possessions: +1 breastplate, +1 longsword, masterwork longbow, dagger, masterwork large steel shield.

Notes: The mayor is a 53 year old former adventurer who has served in the former duke's army in his time. He earned his place as the mayor and the head of both the village guard and the militia by leading a series of skirmishes against a local orc tribe many years ago. He is popular with the people and is still an able warrior but his primary power base is political position and military control.

GM Notes

When running an encounter with Richmar keep in mind that, unlike the other councilors, he does put the interests of the village ahead of his own. He is willing to sacrifice his position and himself in order to preserve what he has worked for. He is aware that the other councilors have their own agendas but he also realizes that they fulfill vital roles in the community. His only major concern is the recent maneuvering by Achevan that seems to be leading towards a reduction in militia training and on-duty guardsmen. As a former soldier, Richmar is a strong believer in maintaining defenses in case of emergency.

The players might feel threatened by Richmar's authority, demeanor, and "village ordinances". Use this to your advantage to create shades of gray where the Mayor is truly a good person but his behavior towards outsiders disguises this fact.

GM Notes

Have fun bargaining with the PCs in this encounter. Start Laelana's offer at one case of wine and work upwards from there. Wine is cheap for her to produce so it's better for her to give that away than gold. Have Laelana use words and phrases, such as poor village, peasants, farmers, lonely wilderness, and isolated, to drive the bargaining downwards. This could create an interesting situation should the PCs discover how wealthy she and the village are after spending some time in the area.

4. The Job Offer

Laelana visits the group on the first evening of their stay and officially makes them an offer to act as her agents in defending her, her property, and the village for one week. She offers up 250 gold pieces and three cases of the village's best wine (valued at 100 gps per case) per character. This is a high payment amount, and though she is a shrewd trader, Laelana has had few dealings with adventurers and wants desperately to ensure they accept her proposal. After they have accepted, she confides that, in her opinion, the only way to deal with these brigands is to track them to their lair and scatter them. For now, the PCs are to remain near the inn in case of trouble.

If the PCs decline her offer, she will try again the next day, offering an additional 250 gold pieces per PC and three more cases of fine wine. Upon a second refusal, she will not ask the PCs again and leave the matter alone, but will gladly accept if the characters ever change their mind.

5. Bard Duel

An interesting person the PCs might encounter at the inn is the elven bard Isenia Crystalbright. She is not your typical outgoing bard and usually displays her talents only in performance. If the party contains a bard or other character with knowledge of music and performance, she will approach that PC and forward a bardic challenge. If the character wins, or loses and is a good sport, Isenia's attitude switches to friendly and she becomes a valuable resource for the PCs (she has access to all information detailed in the **"Building Action**" boxed text).

GM Notes

Isenia can be an important character and great GM tool. She has the Wilderness Lore skill and Tracking feat should the party lack those abilities and need them during the kidnapping encounter. As a GM tool, she can assist the PCs in their investigations with knowledge, advice, and clues if needed.

Isenia Crystalbright CR 3; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 3 in. tall); HD 3d6; Hit points 12; Init +5 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+2 armor, +5 Dex); Atk +3 melee (longsword 1d8+1/19-20 x2), +8 ranged (masterwork longbow 1d8/x3); AL: CG; SV Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 17;
Skills: Appraise +5, Hide +5, Knowledge +6, Knowledge (nature) +3, Listen +3, Move silently +5, Perform +9, Scry +4, Search +3, Speak language +6, Spot +3, Wilderness Lore +3.
Feats: Combat Casting, Track
Bard Spells Per Day: 0 level: 3 (DC 13 where applicable) Detect Magic, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Read Magic, Resistance; 1st-level: 2 (DC 14 where applicable) Feather Fall, Identify, Protection from Evil.
Possessions: leather armor, masterwork longbow, dagger, lyre.

6. Meeting With Father Achevan

On their second day in the village, a messenger (Juroum, a young man wearing the colors of Pelor) approaches the party and requests that they meet with Father Achevan. If the party is reluctant, Narwell will enter the scene and vouch for the Father, praising his wisdom and benevolence.

The church of Pelor is a spectacular building, the largest in the village. The eastern section is made from a single piece of magically shaped glass that reflects and diffuses sunlight into beautifully colored patterns.

Achevan's audience room is located in the back of the church allowing the party to pass through the huge worship hall on their way. After deliberately making them wait for 10-15 minutes, he welcomes them into his office. Achevan opens the conversation by asking pointed questions about the group's activities in the village, including the incident between the bandits and Laelana.

His intent is to let them know he has eyes everywhere and is definitely watching them.

GM Notes

Father Achevan is generally a good man and desires the village to thrive and be safe, but is blinded by his desire for power and control. His ability to sink to anyone's level makes him dangerous. Yet, the PCs might see the Father in a positive light after their authoritarian encounter with Richmar, proving that things are not always as they seem and that encounter timing during adventures can be important.

Regardless of their actions, Achevan recognizes the power inherent in adventurers and wants them under his control. If the group displays noble manners he deals with them accordingly. If they show seedier natures, he is more than willing to sink to that level. Though he is not willing to reveal a source for his suspicion, Achevan is convinced that Laelana is dealing with the bandits. He asks that the party (motivated by money, nobility, or whatever seems appropriate) investigate and uncover her. He offers the use of his cloak and boots of elvenkind (which they may retain upon successful completion of the mission). If asked about the magic items, he says he received them in exchange for a service provided to an elven prince many years ago (true or not at the GM's discretion).

Achevan suggests that the party watch and follow Laelana to see if she has any clandestine meetings.

Developments: Unless they take specific measures to prevent observation, it should be assumed that Achevan's agents are able to monitor everything the players do within the village. If they act against him, he will take steps to have them imprisoned or thrown out of the village. Achevan is not an evil man; he is just a control freak who feels justified in doing nearly anything to maintain peace in "his" village.

Father Achevan of Pelor, male human Clr5; CR 5; Medium Humanoid (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 5d8+5; Hit points 27; Init +0 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+4 armor, +3 shield); Atk +5; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 16;
Skills: Concentration +6, Diplomacy +11 (includes synergy bonus for 5+ ranks in Sense Motive), Knowledge (Religion) +6, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +6.
Feats: Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Spell Focus (Enchantment).
Cleric Spells *Strength & Sun Domains (5/4+1*/3+1*/2+1*): 0 -- *Cure Minor Wounds, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Guidance, Light*; 1st – ***Bane**, Cause Fear, Comprehend Languages, Endure Elements (Cold)*, Protection from Evil*; 2nd – *Augury, **Calm Emotions**, **Enthrall**, Heat Metal**; 3rd – *Daylight, Dispel Magic, Magic Vestment**. (Spells in bold are from the Enchantment school and have +2 save DCs for Spell Focus).
Possessions: Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork heavy mace, silver holy symbol, +1 large wooden shield, boots of elvenkind, cloak of elvenkind.

Father Achevan is a healthy-looking man in his mid-forties. He is always dressed in the richest of robes and his every action is calculated to ensure everyone around him is reminded of his holiness. While his manner is prone to irritate, he is quite adept at detecting when he has gone to far and he quickly adapts to his company.

When outside of Meremath, Achevan is merely a low-ranking member of Pelor's faith. Within the village, however, he is the most powerful individual. He controls the minds of the people by reinforcing their faith in his god. The majority of the villagers revere Pelor in the belief that their own happiness is dependent on their faith in him. This makes Achevan's power base decidedly faith oriented, though he is a fairly capable spellcaster as well.

The Elephant Grape Crusher

Laelana owns a Marble Elephant Figurine of Wondrous Power. It's part of the key to her success for she uses it to help her crush fruit for winemaking faster and better than any of her remaining competitors. The Tub, as marked on the map, is filled with fruit from local farmers' orchards. She tosses the figurine in, pronounces the command word ("Olifantus") that causes the animal to appear, and orders the beast to walk in circles until the fruit is thoroughly crushed.

It is advised that the GM introduce this creature before it becomes a factor during the Bandit Camp and Defending The Village encounters. It can be observed at work during the PCs' travels through the village, or villagers can mention it in a familiar way during conversations. If asked, Laelana will cheerfully reveal her secret, though not the command word.

Laelana carries the figurine wherever she goes when not in use. Though bulky, she considers it a critical asset for her business and she is worried that a competitor might steal it.

Meeting the Mayor

While he only seeks out the party when they first arrive in the village, it is quite possible the party will want to seek out Richmar at some point. As indicated on the village map, his house is across the street from the guardhouse and it is at those two locations he spends the bulk of his time.

The guardhouse is a large, two-story wooden building that has obviously been built for utility rather than style. The main room contains a large desk that serves as Richmar's home away from home. The room is quite large to accommodate the many visitors who frequent the guardhouse. From this main room one can access the three prisoner cells and Constable Fireheart's quarters. A locked and barred door leads to a stairway accessing the guardsmen's quarters upstairs. Also located upstairs is a storeroom with extra equipment for the guardsmen (10 suits of scale mail, 10 large wooden shields, 5 longbows, 100 arrows, 5 battle-axes, and 5 heavy maces). At night there is a single guardsman posted in the main room (or two if any of the cells are occupied).

The only time Richmar spends at home is when eating or sleeping. If the players do happen to find him at home he absolutely refuses to talk business while there. If the matter is urgent he can be ready for action in minutes but he insists on

Regarding Laelana

Information	Potential Sources	Gather Info DC
* She owns virtually every business in the village	* Any business owner	* 14
* Achevan and Laelana don't like each other	* Any village resident	* 10
* Her hobbies are horseback riding & archery	* Any village resident	* 12
* Her sister hates the village & wants to move away but Laelana won't let her	* Clergy, Narwell, Isenia, Raelle	* 16
* Dugal works for her	* Narwell, any halfling resident	* 17
* She hired the bandits in an attempt to prove that Richmar's militia is a good idea	* Raelle only	* 25
* Her magical elephant is the secret to the villages' superior wine and to Laelana's success.	* Any village resident	* 10

Regarding Achevan

Information	Potential Sources	Gather Info DC
* He is actually a low ranking member of the church outside of Meremath	* Lesser clergymen, Richmar	* 20
* He has eyes everywhere in the village	* Any resident that doesn't work for him (DM's discretion)	* 15

Regarding Richmar

Information	Potential Sources	Gather Info DC
* He served in Duke Lythien's army & left it to help form the village	* Narwell, Morzad, Achevan	* 15
* He is utterly devoted to the village	* Any resident	* 10

meeting at the guardhouse. Suspicious players may think he is hiding something and attempt to break in. The break in should be relatively easy for a skilled rogue but there are no incriminating or valuable items to steal. Richmar's only valuable possessions are his sword and armor, and he keeps those with him at all times.

Investigations & Building Action

A vital aspect of the adventure is engaging the characters in events in the village. At this point in the story all three members of the village council should have approached the PCs and two will have offered them a job. It should also be suspected by now that the three aren't working together and that Achevan is clearly working against Laelana.

Shrewd players will want to find out more about the situation before proceeding. The most likely method is use of the Gather Information skill through an evening at the Lofty Torch. If the characters are in a hurry, they can also pursue specific sources. As a guideline, any piece of info with a Gather Information DC higher than 15 requires the individual to have a Friendly attitude towards the character and anything with a DC of 20 or higher requires a Helpful attitude. (See the attitude tables in Dungeon Masters Guide.) Use the following charts as a guideline in distributing information.

Romance With Raelle

At the DM's discretion, Raelle might take a romantic interest in one or two of the PCs. This could be used as a way to introduce information as well as create interesting roleplaying opportunities. Raelle will expect all suitors to behave like perfect gentlemen, of course. She is attracted to bravery, strength, manners, and displays of wealth. She is also attracted to PCs who have dark sides and could bring excitement into her dreary life.

A rivalry between two PCs whom Raelle indicates interest in should also encourage intra-party roleplaying as well. Raelle will string both PCs along for fun should this occur.

Village Meeting

A village meeting will be called if word of Laelana's misdeeds comes to light through the actions of the PCs or some other means (such as Achevan's agents or if Richmar captures a bandit). Conversely, if the PCs are attempting to uncover her involvement but the plot is slowing, a regular village meeting could be called during which a stooge in Achevan's employ accuses Laelana.

If any evidence of her guilt is provided (likely by the PCs), Achevan will first call for her expulsion from the village but will allow himself to be talked down to a substantial fine and removal from the village council. A Bardic Lore check DC 20 or Knowledge Religion or Nobility & Royalty DC 18 recalls to mind that it is common for small towns and villages to tithe a portion of all fines to the church.
A large portion of the village owes money to Laelana and that portion vocally advocates the harshest punishment in the hopes of having their debts forgiven.

Richmar attempts to subtly support Laelana as he is one of the few people who knows how much of the village she owns and how destabilizing it would be to lose her. He is quick to agree to a fine as a just punishment, but he carefully avoids the topic of her council membership.

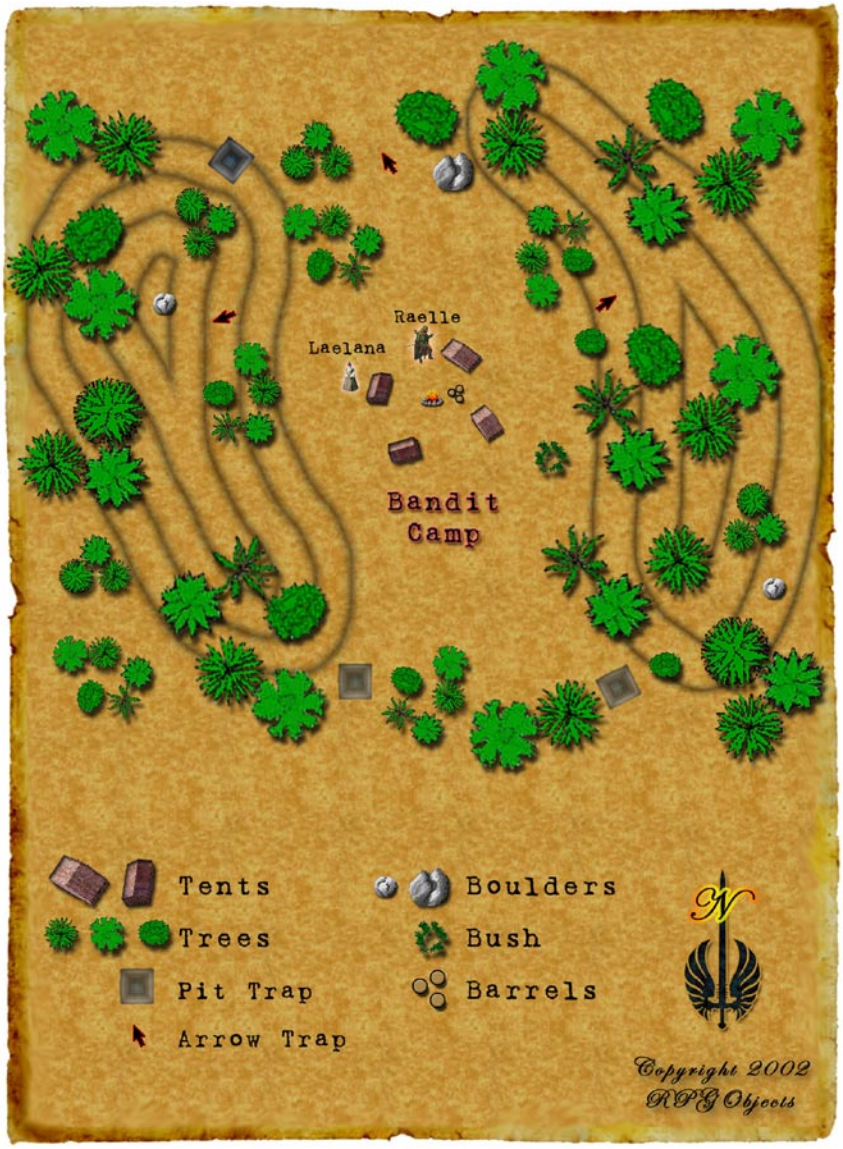
Development: The intent of the village meeting is to raise doubts about Laelana's character, to further hint about Achevan's greedy motives, and to indicate that Richmar cares more for the village than either of the other two council members.

7. Kidnapping

The small group of bandits that Laelana was dealing with is merely a small portion of a larger bandit group lead by an evil ranger named Galaith. After hearing the details about the situation from his spies, he has decided to attack outright. His plan is to draw off as many defenders as possible with

a kidnapping ploy, steal the magic elephant from Laelana, and have his force sweep into the village.

Laelana and her sister are the targets of the kidnapping. From previous spying missions in the village, Galaith knows there are other spies at work (though he does not know who they work for, i.e. Father Achevan and Richmar). Therefore, to ensure his kidnapping ploy works, he orders one of his men to room at the inn. Just before dawn, the bandit rises, ignites the inn and stables, and flees. (This is an ironic twist, considering the inn's name. It should also draw any PCs who might be spying on Laelana away from her residence.) With Dugal's help and intimidation skills, other bandits stationed near Laelana's home will kidnap the merchant and her sister and steal the Figurine of Wondrous Power.



GM's Note

PCs might note that her horse was the love of her life. It is highly unlikely that she would kill it, no matter how desperate. Achevan and Richmar know this and Richmar will point it out to the PCs if they don't bring it up themselves. If the player characters have uncovered evidence of Laelana's guilt, this should prove to be a fun twist to the story.

Based on the assumption about the horse, and his faith in Laelana as a person, Richmar asks that the party track down the bandits and free her. Thanks to Achevan's manipulation of the villagers, Richmar cannot authorize the use of militia or guardsmen, but he can recommend Isenia the bard to help with tracking if required.

This is another interesting roleplaying situation, for if the PCs are still harboring resentment from Richmar's initial warnings of village ordinances, his sudden display of logic, truth, and concern could have the players second-guessing their feelings.

The thugs also leave a message on Laelana's doorstep, tied around the neck of the severed head of Laelana's prize mare, Fairgrove. The message reads simply: "Elves taken. Get 50,000 gold pieces ready quick or they both get it."

Dugal "finds" the note in the morning, runs to the village square and sounds the alert. Richmar and Achevan will arrive on scene moments after the characters. Achevan waits until a large crowd has formed before loudly proclaiming his disgust at such an obvious and desperate ploy by Laelana to draw attention away from her transgressions. Accustomed to agreeing with their spiritual leader, the villagers immediately leap to his conclusion. Richmar attempts to disagree but realizes that it would be a wasted effort.

Galaith, Bandit Leader, male half-dragon (green)/half-human Rng3 CR 5; Medium Dragon (5 ft. 11 in.); HD 3d12+9; Hit points 36; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +9/+9 melee (longsword 1d8+7/dagger 1d4+3) or bite +9 melee/2 claws +4 melee (bite 1d6+6/claw 1d4+3); SA Breath weapon, Favored enemy (humans); SQ Low-light vision, Darkvision 60 ft., Immunities; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2; AL LE; Str 22, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 16;
Skills: Climb +10, Craft (Trapmaking) +7, Handle Animal +7, Hide +5, Jump +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Swim +10, Wilderness Lore +7.
Feats: Track, Weapon Focus (Dagger), Weapon Focus (Longsword).
Special Abilities: Breath weapon – 1/day cone of gas 30 ft., 6d6, save DC 17.
Special Qualities: Immune to paralysis, sleep, & acid.
Possessions: +1 longsword, +1 studded leather, masterwork dagger, potion of cure moderate wounds, Figurine of Wondrous Power (Marble Elephant)—if stolen from Laelana.
Notes: Galaith's half-dragon heritage shows by the greenish tint to his skin, yellowish reptilian eyes, and an overly large mouth full of pointy teeth. He wears thick leather gloves to cover his claws and he uses his natural weapons only in the most desperate situations.
Galaith is quite young for a half-dragon and he is prone to making shortsighted decisions. If the battle seems to go against his forces he is more than willing to abandon them even though it will set back his plans and tip off the locals to his presence.

Cynal, male half-elf Sor4 CR 4; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall) (; HD 4d4+4; Hit points 13; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 Dex, +1 deflection) or 17 with *Mage Armor*; Atk +4 melee (masterwork shortspear 1d8+1/x3) +5 ranged (masterwork shortspear 1d8+1/x3); SA Spells; SQ Low-light vision; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; AL CN; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 7, Cha 17;
Skills: Concentration +6, Spellcraft +4, Tumble +5.
Feats: Combat Casting, Point Blank Shot.
Spells per day: 6/7/4; Spells Known: 0- *Arcane Mark, Daze, Light, Mage Hand, Resistance, Ray of Frost*; 1st – *Mage Armor, Lesser Acid Orb* (from Tome & Blood), *Expeditious Retreat*; 2nd – *Melf's Acid Arrow*.
Possessions: +1 ring of protection, masterwork shortspear.
Cynal is quite insane and enjoys making use of his acid spells to torture his foes as he fights. He likes to use various natural substances to form his long hair into large spikes that point out at strange angles.

Bandit Archers (x8), male human War1 CR ½; Medium Humanoids; HD 1d8+1; Hit points 5; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 armor, +3 Dex); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20 x2, shortsword) +5 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; AL CE; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 9;
Skills: Climb +5, Hide +4, Jump +5.
Feats: Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (Longbow).
Possessions: Longbow, shortsword, leather armor, quiver w/ 20 arrows.

Bandit Thugs (x24), male half-orc War1 CR ½; Medium Humanoids; HD 1d8+2; Hit points 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CE; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 7;
Skills: Climb +2, Jump +2. (armor check penalties included)
Feats: Power Attack.
Possessions: Battleaxe, studded leather armor, large wooden shield.

Elephant CR 8; Huge Animal, HD 11d8+55 (104 hp); Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (-2 size, +7 natural); Atk Slam +16 melee (2d6+10), 2 stamps +11 melee (2d6+5); Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Trample 2d8+15; SQ Scent; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +4; AL N; Str 30, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7;
Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6
Feats: -

The bandits' goal is to pillage as much of the village's wealth as possible and then flee. Targets, in order of attack, will be Laelana's House, the General Store, and the Church of Pelor. The bandits will attack from the southwest. Galaith will use the elephant as a leading shock troop, ordering the creature to crush buildings, scatter militia formations, and clear a path through the village. Archers will fire flaming arrows into buildings to increase the chaos, and then start targeting villagers. Likewise, bandit thugs will use flaming torches to burn buildings, and engage in melee only as required.

Aftermath

If the party brings Laelana back from the camp and unites the village, they are celebrated as heroes. A substantial story experience award should be granted (250 exp per level for each character is suggested) for such a successful resolution. If Laelana dies but the bandit chieftain is killed or some other partial success occurs, the characters will have to be satisfied with any loot they acquired and with standard exp from combat and traps.

If Laelana's collusion with the bandits becomes public, the three councilors will meet in private the next day. After several hours of intense negotiations, they will emerge and declare that Laelana has pleaded guilty to jeopardizing the village for her own benefit, but that she was truly unaware of the significant impact that her plotting with the local bandit gang would have. She is to be fined 10,000 gps, the Figurine of Wondrous Power (if regained from the bandit leader) is to be made village property, and Laelana will be allowed to remain as a council member.

Richmar is happy with this situation. Achevan is secretly pleased about Laelana's reduced power and his shared command of the elephant, but publicly appalled at the lack of justice. Laelana is seething and already plotting a new business "venture" to help pay the stiff fine off quickly.

Marble Elephant (Figurines of Wondrous Power)
This is the largest of the figurines, the statuette being about the size of a human hand. Upon utterance of the command word, a marble elephant grows to the size and specifications of a true elephant. The animal created from the statuette is fully obedient to the figurine's owner, serving as a beast of burden, a mount, or a combatant.
The statuette can be used four times per month for up to 24 hours at a time.
Caster Level: 11th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, animate objects; Market Price: 17,000 gp; Weight: -.

GM's Notes

It's important to encourage the PCs to seek out the bandit leader. When he falls, the rest of the bandits will flee and the assault will end.

Convincing Achevan that the attack is real and that Laelana has not bought the PCs' loyalty could be tricky. A bandit prisoner will help, but Achevan will still be dubious, blinded by an opportunity to gain more power through Laelana's downfall.

Richmar will believe the bandit attack is real, but he is powerless without the militia, which requires Achevan's consent before the villagers will be willing to muster. Richmar will not be in a diplomatic mood, so the PCs must calm him down before he makes the situation with Achevan worse.

Laelana has experienced the bandits' viciousness and truly fears for the village—and her profits. She will have no patience will Achevan and will accuse Richmar of working against her and the village's safety by not mustering the militia.

Getting the village councilors to co-operate should be a major victory for the player characters.

Story Roles vs NPC Elements

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Name	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Race	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+
Gender	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			?
Class & Level	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?			?
Profession	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	?			?
Appearance	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Social Class	+	!	!	+	!		+	+	!	!	+	+	!					!
Alignment	+	!	!	+	!		+	+	!	!	+	+	!	!				!
Personality	+	!	!	+	!			+	!	!	+	+	!	!		+	+	!
Dreams, goals, motives	+	!		!	!			!			!	!				!		!
Power Base	+	!		!	!			!			!	!						!
History and background	+	!		!	!			!			!	!				+	+	!
Relationships	+	!		!	!			!			!	!				+		!
Reputation	+	!		!	!			!			!	!				+	+	!
Secrets	+	!		!	!			!			!	!				+	+	!
Daily life	+	!		!	!			!			!	!						!
Wealth	+	!		!	!			!			!	!						!
Equipment	+	+	+	+	+	+	!	+	+	+	?	?						!
Ability scores	+	+	+	+	+	+	!	+	+	+	?	?		+	+	?		?
Combat Scores	+	+	+	+	+	+	!	+	+	+	?	?		+	+	+	+	?
Skills	+	+	+	+	+	+	!	+	+	+	?	?		+	+	?		?
Feats	+	+	+	+	+	+	!	+	+	+	?	?		+	+	?		?
Spells	+	+	+	+	+	+	!	+	+	+	?	?		+	+	?		?
Special Abilities	+	+	+	+	+	+	!	+	+	+	?	?		+	+	?	?	?

+	Possible
!	Recommended
?	Varies
A	Villains
B	Minions
C	Flunkies
D	Rivals

E	Non-Aligned Foes
F	Combat Constructs
G	Mentors
H	Roleplaying Companions
I	Combat Companions
J	Henchmen & Hirelings

K	Guest Stars
L	Regulars
M	Bit Parts
N	Animals
O	Monsters
P	Magic Items
Q	Items & Equipment

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Modern First Names

	Male	Female
1	Adan	Adeline
2	Allen	Aida
3	Alvaro	Aimee
4	Andre	Alfreda
5	Anthony	Alicia
6	Antoine	Aline
7	Arden	Alisa
8	Armand	Allyson
9	Augustine	Amber
10	Basil	Angelia
11	Benedict	Annette
12	Benjamin	Arline
13	Blaine	Augusta
14	Blair	Aurora
15	Blake	Briana
16	Boris	Bridget
17	Boyd	Camille
18	Brendan	Carissa
19	Bruce	Cassandra
20	Carey	Catalina
21	Cesar	Cathryn
22	Chase	Cecilia
23	Christopher	Celeste
24	Claude	Chelsea
25	Cody	Christa
26	Cole	Claudine
27	Colton	Concetta
28	Cornelius	Cora
29	Cornell	Corrine
30	Cyril	Darcy
31	Damon	Della
32	Darius	Dionne
33	Darwin	Dora
34	Deangelo	Doris
35	Delmar	Elma
36	Deon	Elsa
37	Derrick	Estela
38	Desmond	Etta
39	Devin	Evangelina
40	Dion	Freda
41	Dirk	Geneva
42	Dominic	Georgette
43	Donn	Glenna
44	Dorian	Hannah
45	Doyle	Helena
46	Edison	Herminia
47	Efren	Holly
48	Elden	Jacqueline
49	Eliseo	Janna
50	Ellis	Jeri
51	Elton	Jillian
52	Emery	Josephine
53	Erik	Julianne
54	Ethan	Karyn
55	Ezra	Katheryn
56	Felipe	Keisha
57	Francis	Ladonna
58	Franklin	Latasha
59	Galen	Lauri
60	Garrett	Lea
61	Geoffrey	Lela
62	Grady	Lenora
63	Hayden	Leola
64	Hobert	Leona
65	Howard	Lesa
66	Humberto	Lorraine
67	Isaiah	Marci
68	Issac	Marcia
69	Ivan	Mariana
70	Jaime	Marissa
71	Jamar	Mattie
72	Jamison	Maura
73	Jeremiah	Melva
74	Jerrod	Miriam
75	Jonas	Myra
76	Kendall	Nita
77	Kent	Nola
78	Lauren	Nona
79	Leif	Ola
80	Lenard	Olga
81	Lon	Olivia
82	Marion	Opal
83	Merrill	Ora
84	Myron	Patti
85	Nolan	Penelope
86	Odell	Phoebe
87	Renato	Rae
88	Robert	Renee
89	Rodney	Robyn
90	Rory	Sasha
91	Royce	Savannah
92	Ruben	Shanna
93	Shad	Sharron
94	Silas	Simone
95	Tanner	Socorro
96	Theron	Tabitha
97	Tyron	Tamra
98	Von	Terra
99	Willard	Tia
100	Wyatt	Wilda

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Fantasy First Names

	Male	Female
1	Abudric	Acendra
2	Adilan	Adalind
3	Adirak	Adryn
4	Agreri	Agatha
5	Agrin	Aideen
6	Argi	Alwyn
7	Athelstan	Alyvia
8	Attor	Arabeth
9	Avenal	Ardra
10	Baymas	Arella
11	Bellinus	Astalella
12	Bersi	Belindra
13	Bieven	Brenna
14	Bordat	Bress
15	Brogan	Brielle
16	Cadedri	Brithael
17	Cadmon	Bruswen
18	Cavia	Cadaewen
19	Cendarwen	Cambree
20	Cethien	Caryne
21	Darius	Caylin
22	Deogol	Chanti
23	Eder	Chevonne
24	Edlin	Dagda
25	Edlin	Dagwyn
26	Edric	Dallandra
27	Falmrinth	Derris
28	Faran	Diadra
29	Faran	Dydia
30	Ferragus	Egeria
31	Fredek	Ellette
32	Fyren	Eryke
33	Galan	Fatina
34	Gerazan	Flouerana
35	Gest	Galatea
36	Gildas	Galewen
37	Godric	Gavina
38	Govannon	Helinda
39	Grindan	Iana
40	Hakon	Ibearwen
41	Harek	Icava
42	Hedin	Ishara
43	Hord	Jaden
44	Hrut	Jasara
45	Jeloth	Jayna
46	Karayan	Jonaya
47	Karolek	Kaelyn
48	Kenric	Kahina
49	Ketil	Karran
50	Korian	Kathran
51	Kurush	Kira
52	Lander	Koali
53	Lar	Kona
54	Laraon	Kota
55	Laromald	Ladia
56	Legoreth	Landailyn
57	Leidus	Landrea
58	Letos	Laurana
59	Lotheird	Lodica
60	Maccus	Lypilla
61	Maks	Madora
62	Mendal	Mauriana
63	Merand	Megara
64	Micolai	Megenlind
65	Mirardol	Melia
66	Naviel	Mora
67	Oleg	Muriel
68	Penrith	Nagvar
69	Peri	Narisa
70	Prendar	Nerama
71	Preni	Nerine
72	Pyotr	Nidawi
73	Rabican	Nordrada
74	Ragnar	Odlenda
75	Raoch	Odriana
76	Rhodia	Ogma
77	Rodor	Olinda
78	Roeloth	Onua
79	Rykath	Oriel
80	Santio	Pala
81	Sennet	Pari
82	Shurik	Radella
83	Skapti	Regana
84	Strang	Riberta
85	Tamar	Sadi
86	Tellan	Sarea
87	Thales	Shaundra
88	Thatram	Siveth
89	Thord	Sunita
90	Thormod	Talia
91	Thrand	Terentia
92	Torr	Thana
93	Torsten	Thedela
94	Trymman	Thieda
95	Tucien	Tradith
96	Umassa	Tylwyth
97	Vartan	Umindra
98	Yawen	Vaossi
99	Yazdan	Vesta
100	Yiran	Zawen

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Phonetic Last Names

Instructions: Choose a pattern and roll on the columns accordingly

	Column 1	Column 2
1	A	Adoni
2	Ach	Alegar
3	Ack	Angbel
4	Ad	Askel
5	Ald	Belech
6	An	Bohob
7	Ang	Bothut
8	Ar	Burbano
9	As	Car
10	Ath	Ceroh
11	Aw	Chad
12	B	Cheur
13	Ban	Cloust
14	Bl	Cutor
15	Br	Danddel
16	C	Dard
17	Ch	Darem
18	Cr	Dellir
19	D	Denato
20	Del	Deper
21	Den	Dodmil
22	Dr	Dom
23	E	Dov
24	Em	Draon
25	En	Draswar
26	Er	Dumos
27	Est	Echis
28	G	Elmar
29	Gar	Enid
30	Gha	Enthia
31	H	Essach
32	Hat	Esset
33	Hin	Essis
34	Hon	Gov
35	I	Gul
36	Ild	Henvus
37	Ina	Hinet
38	Ing	Hob
39	Ir	Hordat
40	Is	Ildur
41	It	Inap
42	K	Jodar
43	Kal	Jul
44	Kin	Kimilt
45	L	Kimther
46	Ler	Kutgul
47	Ll	Lek
48	Lor	Lenjet
49	Lye	Lethem
50	M	Llack
51	Mos	Lledyn
52	N	Lorquei
53	Ny	Lussef
54	Nys	Lyurn
55	O	Mesnec
56	Old	Misam
57	Om	Morad
58	On	Nalag
59	Or	Naltasa
60	Orm	Naunt
61	Per	Nel
62	Ph	Nyess
63	Pol	Ongary
64	Qua	Ormet
65	Que	Ormver
66	R	Osash
67	Rad	Osem
68	Rak	Percha
69	Ran	Peron
70	Ray	Qalqef
71	Rh	Qim
72	Ril	Redyn
73	Ris	Rerrus
74	S	Risene
75	Sch	Rodul
76	Sh	Rosay
77	Skel	Rothsenth
78	Sl	Rothver
79	Sn	Rynoch
80	St	Sakim
81	Str	Saon
82	Sul	Sepkos
83	Sw	Tainum
84	T	Tansit
85	Tai	Tanush
86	Tas	Tar
87	Th	Tinusk
88	Thr	Toban
89	Ton	Tohlan
90	Tor	Tonis
91	U	Toris
92	Unt	Torod
93	Usk	Trisay
94	Ust	Turash
95	V	Verald
96	Ver	Veran
97	Ves	Versath
98	Vor	Vordel
99	Y	Vorel
100	Z	Voryt

Pattern Ideas	Example
#1 + (vowel) + #2	Brodraon
#1 ' #2	Aw'Dard
#1 ~ #2	Aw~Dard
#1 - #2	Aw-Dard
#1 ' #2+ (vowel) + #2	Den'Ormetenid
#1 ~ #2 + (vowel) + #2	Den~Ormetenid
#1 - #2 + (vowel) + #2	Den-Ormetenid
#2 ' #1 ' #2	Vorel'Ban'Jodar
#2 ~ #1 ~ #2	Vorel~Ban~Jodar
#2 - #1 - #2	Vorel-Ban-Jodar

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Fun Last Names

Instructions: to generate a last name quickly, roll once in the good or evil prefix column, and once in the suffix column.

	Evil Prefix	Good Prefix	Suffix
1	Acid	Ale	Arm
2	Axe	Apple	Arrow
3	Bald	Ardent	Axe
4	Bane	Ash	Back
5	Bite	Azure	Beard
6	Bitter	Big	Beater
7	Black	Blue	Blade
8	Bleak	Brass	Blaze
9	Blistered	Bright	Blower
10	Blood	Bronze	Boot
11	Blubber	Brown	Bow
12	Bog	Candle	Brand
13	Bone	Clear	Breaker
14	Break	Clever	Breast
15	Broken	Copper	Breath
16	Cackle	Crystal	Brow
17	Canker	Dew	Buckle
18	Cheap	Double	Butt
19	Coal	Dusky	Cap
20	Crackle	Elder	Cheek
21	Cruel	Emerald	Coat
22	Cut	Fair	Cruncher
23	Dangle	Far	Cut
24	Dark	Fast	Cutter
25	Doom	Fierce	Delver
26	Dread	Fine	Diver
27	Ebony	Fire	Ear
28	Fang	Firm	Eater
29	Fat	Frost	Eye
30	Fell	Gentle	Face
31	Fester	Ginger	Fast
32	Fiend	Glow	Feller
33	Fractured	Golden	Field
34	Fretting	Great	Finger
35	Giant	Green	Fist
36	Gibber	Grey	Flower
37	Gloomy	Grim	Foot
38	Gnaw	Half	Forest
39	Goat	Hammer	Frost
40	Gobble	Hew	Gate
41	Grabby	Home	Giver
42	Greedy	Ice	Glow
43	Grizzled	Indigo	Grim
44	Grue	Iron	Gut
45	Heavy	Jet	Hacker
46	Hog	Jewel	Haft
47	Hunch	Judge	Hair
48	Hurl	Just	Hand
49	Lick	Keen	Hat
50	Lie	Lager	Head
51	Lump	Lamp	Heart
52	Maggot	Law	Hearted
53	Maim	Light	Helm
54	Mangle	Long	Herd
55	Mole	Marsh	Knee
56	Mow	Mighty	Knife
57	Murky	Moon	Leaf
58	Narrow	Moss	Leg
59	Nasty	Mud	Less
60	No	Nimble	Lip
61	Old	Oaken	Lips
62	Pale	Ochre	Lock
63	Plague	One	Maker
64	Pudgy	Over	Meadow
65	Puke	Ox	More
66	Rabid	Pearl	Nail
67	Rotten	Pepper	Needle
68	Ruptured	Pug	Nose
69	Rusty	Quick	Pool
70	Savage	Rain	Runner
71	Sear	Red	Sabre
72	Shadow	Rich	Seer
73	Sharp	Sap	Shield
74	Shattered	Short	Shoulder
75	Shrewd	Silken	Slayer
76	Skull	Silver	Smith
77	Smash	Slate	Song
78	Snaggle	Smoke	Speaker
79	Snappy	Snow	Spear
80	Sneer	Stern	Splitter
81	Somber	Stone	Staff
82	Sour	Stout	Stalker
83	Spike	Strong	Stone
84	Spit	Summer	Strider
85	Splintered	Sun	Sunder
86	Spoor	Sweet	Sword
87	Stub	Swift	Talker
88	Surly	Tall	Teller
89	Swamp	Thick	Thumb
90	Thorn	Thin	Tooth
91	Troll	Three	Top
92	Ugly	Tree	Vine
93	Umber	Truth	Walker
94	Vile	Two	Wand
95	Wart	Under	Weather
96	Wild	Wall	Weaver
97	Wither	Wander	Weed
98	Worm	White	Wind
99	Wretched	Wide	Wit
100	Yellow	Wind	Wright

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Background

	Overall Community
1	Chaotic Evil
2	Chaotic Neutral
3	Chaotic Good
4	Neutral Evil
5	Neutral
6	Neutral Good
7	Lawful Evil
8	Lawful Neutral
9	Lawful Good
10	Split, Roll Twice

	Esoteric Community
1	Arctic
2	Clouds
3	Desert
4	Fairy Realm
5	Marsh
6	Mountain Top
7	Other Plane
8	Under Water
9	Underground
10	Volcano

	Community Type
1	Solitary, Remote Location
2	Village
3	Town
4	City
5	Metropolis
6	Castle, Keep
7	Military Base
8	Religious Community
9	Arcane Community
10	Esoteric Community

	Home Location
1	Lived Life In One Location
2	Moved Once
3	Moved Twice
4	Moved Three Times
5	Moved Each Year
6	Nomadic

EDUCATION: (d20)	Adolescence	Childhood	Young Adult	Career
No Schooling	1-8	1-6	1-5	1-3
Home Schooled	9-11	7-10	6-7	4-5
Self-Taught	12-15	11-14	8-10	6-10
On The Job	16-17	15-17	11-15	11-15
Classroom	18	18	16	16
Apprenticeship	19	19	17	17
Tutor	20	20	18	18
Mentor			19	19
College			20	20

Close Family Members
Brothers 0-5 (d6-1)
Sisters 0-5 (d6-1)
Mother (d6 1-4 Alive, 5-6 Deceased)
Father (d6 1-4 Alive, 5-6 Deceased)
Paternal Grandmother (d6 1-2 Alive, 3-6 Deceased)
Paternal Grandfather (d6 1-2 Alive, 3-6 Deceased)
Maternal Grandmother (d6 1-2 Alive, 3-6 Deceased)
Maternal Grandfather (d6 1-2 Alive, 3-6 Deceased)
Paternal Great Grandmother (d6 1 Alive, 2-6 Deceased)
Paternal Great Grandfather (d6 1 Alive, 2-6 Deceased)
Maternal Great Grandmother (d6 1 Alive, 2-6 Deceased)
Maternal Great Grandfather (d6 1 Alive, 2-6 Deceased)
Spouse (d6 1-4 Alive, 5-6 Deceased)
Sons (d6-3)
Daughters (d6-3)

	Family Social Class
1	Upper Class, Major Nobility
2	Upper Class, Minor Nobility
3	Upper Class, Wealthy
4	Upper Class, Diplomat/Politician
5	Celebrity Class
6	Clergy Class
7	Arcane/Esoteric Class
8	Professional Class
9	Academic Class
10	Military Class
11	Merchant Class
12	Artisan/Labour Class
13	Servant Class
14	Artist/Entertainer Class
15	Stranger, Newcomer Class
16	Foreigner Class
17	Fringe Class
18	Refugee Class
19	Slave Class
20	Criminal Class

Distant Family Members
0-3 (d6-3) **Great Uncles** (d6 1 Alive, 2-6 Deceased)
0-3 (d6-3) **Great Aunts** (d6 1 Alive, 2-6 Deceased)
0-5 (d6-1) **Uncles** (d6 1-4 Alive, 5-6 Deceased)
0-5 (d6-1) **Aunts** (d6 1-4 Alive, 5-6 Deceased)
1-20 **First Cousins** (d6 1-3 Alive, 4-6 Deceased) 0 if no Aunts or Uncles
1-50 (d100/2) **Second Cousins** (d6 1-4 Alive, 5-6 Deceased) 0 if no First Cousins
1-100 **Third Cousins** (d6 1-4 Alive, 5-6 Deceased) 0 if no Second Cousins

	Order Of Birth
1	Oldest
2	Youngest
3	Middle
4	Only Child

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Background (continued)

Enemies (d100) [roll again if not applicable]	
1-20	None
21-25	Former Lover
26-30	Former Spouse
31-35	Former Best Friend
36-40	Former Friend
41-45	Family Enemy
46-48	Uncle
49-50	Aunt
51-55	Brother
56-60	Sister
61-65	Cousin
66-68	Father
69-70	Mother
71-78	Business Rival
79-84	Romantic Rival
85-87	Best Friend's Enemy
88-90	Social Rival
91-92	Creature
93-94	Political Rival
95-96	Opposing Alignment/Religion
97-98	Local Authority
99-100	Villain

Friends Roll d20:	Best Friends	Friends	Acquaintances
None	1-10	1-2	1
One	11-15	3-4	2-3
A Few (d6)	16-20	5-10	4-7
Several (d10)		11-15	8-15
Many (d100)		16-20	16-20

	Power Base	Type
	Ability Score	
1	Strength	Individual
2	Dexterity	Individual
3	Constitution	Individual
4	Intelligence	Scalable
5	Wisdom	Scalable
6	Charisma	Scalable
7	Skills	Varies
8	Feats	Varies
9	Spells	Varies
10	Wealth	Scalable
11	Followers	Scalable
12	Laws, Authority, Consent	Scalable
13	Social Class	Varies
14	Reputation	Scalable
15	Defense	Individual
16	Equipment	Varies
17	Travel & Communication	Varies
18	Special Ability	Varies
19	Roll Again Twice	
20	Roll Again Three Times	

	Wealth
1	A Building
2	A Business
3	A Foreign Trade Mission
4	A Road or Bridge (And Collecting Tolls)
5	A School (And Collecting Fees Or Services)
6	Bank Accounts (Earning Interest)
7	Collectibles (Such as books, spells, monster pelts)
8	Collecting Taxes
9	Financially Supporting a Ruler or Politician
10	Gambling
11	Hiring PCs For Quests (Where they return with something of value)
12	Land
13	Lending (And Charging Interest)
14	Livestock and Animals
15	Mining
16	Money
17	Permanent Magic Items
18	Slaves, Indentured Servants, Serfs
19	Stocks, Bonds, and Credit Notes
20	Vehicles and Ships

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Appearance

	Demeanor
1	Aggressive
2	Aloof
3	Cheerful
4	Cocky
5	Easy Going
6	Emotionless
7	Friendly
8	Furtive
9	Haughty
10	Humble
11	Kind
12	Proud
13	Quiet
14	Sad
15	Serious
16	Studious
17	Subdued
18	Tired
19	Uneasy
20	Well-bred

	Eyes
1	Aquamarine
2	Black
3	Blue
4	Cocoa
5	Copper
6	Dark Brown
7	Emerald
8	Forest Green
9	Golden Brown
10	Gray
11	Green
12	Gray Green
13	Hazel
14	Jade
15	Olive Green
16	Sapphire Blue
17	Sky Blue
18	Violet
19	Warm Brown
20	Yellow Green

	Hair Color
1	Ash Blonde
2	Ash Brown
3	Black Brown
4	Cinnamon
5	Copper
6	Dark Ash Brown
7	Dark Golden Blonde
8	Deep Warm Brown
9	Orange
10	Platinum
11	Plum Brown
12	Raven Black
13	Salt & Pepper
14	Smoke
15	Strawberry Blonde
16	Taupe
17	Tawny Blonde
18	Warm Auburn
19	Warm Golden Blonde
20	White Blonde

	Skin Tone
1	Beige
2	Black
3	Café au Lait
4	Chocolate
5	Dark Brown
6	Light Brown
7	Olive
8	Pale Ivory
9	Peach
10	Pink

	Apparent Age
1	Indeterminable
2	Mature Looking
3	Much Older
4	Much Younger
5	Somewhat Older
6	Somewhat Younger

	Clothing Style
1	Athletic
2	Business
3	Fashionable
4	Formal
5	Labor, Clean
6	Labor, Dirty
7	Leather, Fashionable
8	Leather, Tough
9	Loose, Casual
10	Loose, Dressy
11	Nightclothes
12	Over-Accessorized
13	Party
14	Plain
15	Rags
16	Tight, Casual
17	Tight, Dressy
18	Too Big
19	Too Small
20	Unfashionable

	Clothing Accessories
1	Belt
2	Belt Buckle
3	Buttons, Zippers, Chains
4	Cap, Hat
5	Collar
6	Glasses
7	Gloves
8	Hair Clips/Ties
9	Handbag, Wallet, Purse
10	Handkerchief
11	Jewelry
12	Luggage
13	Pipe, Cigar Case
14	Scarf, Tie
15	Shoes, Boots
16	Socks, Stockings, Tights
17	Sunglasses
18	Umbrella, Fan
19	Undergarments
20	Watch, Pocket Watch

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Traits

1	-	3	Absorbed
4	-	6	Accepting
7	-	9	Affectionate
10	-	12	Aggressive
13	-	15	Agitator
16	-	18	Alarmed
19	-	21	Aloof
22	-	24	Altruist
25	-	27	Amiable
28	-	30	Amoral
31	-	33	Anarchist
34	-	36	Angry
37	-	39	Annoyed
40	-	42	Antagonistic
43	-	45	Antisocial
46	-	48	Anxious
49	-	51	Apologetic
52	-	54	Apprehensive
55	-	57	Avaricious
58	-	60	Bad-Tempered
61	-	63	Bashful
64	-	66	Belligerent
67	-	69	Benign
70	-	72	Blissful
73	-	75	Blunt
76	-	78	Blustering
79	-	81	Bold
82	-	84	Bookish
85	-	87	Bored
88	-	90	Brave
91	-	93	Calculating
94	-	96	Calm
97	-	99	Carefree
100	-	102	Careless
103	-	105	Cautious
106	-	108	Chaste
109	-	111	Chatty
112	-	114	Cheap
115	-	117	Cheat
118	-	120	Cheerful
121	-	123	Childlike
124	-	126	Chummy
127	-	129	Clever
130	-	132	Close
133	-	135	Coldhearted
136	-	138	Comfortable
139	-	141	Comforting
142	-	144	Compassionate
145	-	147	Complacent
148	-	150	Concerned
151	-	153	Confident
154	-	156	Confused
157	-	159	Contented
160	-	162	Contrary
163	-	165	Courageous
166	-	168	Courteous
169	-	171	Cowardly
172	-	174	Cranky
175	-	177	Craven
178	-	180	Cross
181	-	183	Cruel
184	-	186	Crushed
187	-	189	Cunning
190	-	192	Curious
193	-	195	Dastardly
196	-	198	Deceitful
199	-	201	Defeated
202	-	204	Dependable
205	-	207	Dependent
208	-	210	Depraved
211	-	213	Depressed
214	-	216	Despairing
217	-	219	Diplomatic
220	-	222	Disappointed
223	-	225	Dismal
226	-	228	Disoriented
229	-	231	Disregarded
232	-	234	Disrespectful
235	-	237	Distant
238	-	240	Distrustful
241	-	243	Dreamer
244	-	246	Dreary
247	-	249	Driven
250	-	252	Drunkard
253	-	255	Dubious
256	-	258	Dullard
259	-	261	Dutiful
262	-	264	Eager
265	-	267	Earnest
268	-	270	Easy-Going
271	-	273	Ecstatic
274	-	276	Egoist
277	-	279	Egotistic
280	-	282	Elated
283	-	285	Embarrassed
286	-	288	Empathetic
289	-	291	Empowered
292	-	294	Energetic
295	-	297	Engrossed
298	-	300	Enraged
301	-	303	Enthusiastic
304	-	306	Envious
307	-	309	Evasive
310	-	312	Excited
313	-	315	Fascinated
316	-	318	Fearful
319	-	321	Fearless
322	-	324	Festive
325	-	327	Fidgety
328	-	330	Fiendish
331	-	333	Filthy
334	-	336	Flippant
337	-	339	Flirtatious
340	-	342	Foolhardy
343	-	345	Forgiving
346	-	348	Formal
349	-	351	Fresh
352	-	354	Friendly
355	-	357	Frightened
358	-	360	Frustrated
361	-	363	Fuming
364	-	366	Funny
367	-	369	Furious
370	-	372	Furtive
373	-	375	Generous
376	-	378	Giving
379	-	381	Glad
382	-	384	Gleeful
385	-	387	Gloomy
388	-	390	Grateful
391	-	393	Grouchy
394	-	396	Grumpy
397	-	399	Guarded
400	-	402	Gullible
403	-	405	Hard-Hearted
406	-	408	Harmless
409	-	411	Hateful
412	-	414	Haughty
415	-	417	Heartbroken
418	-	420	Hedonist
421	-	423	Helpful
424	-	426	Helpless
427	-	429	Hesitant
430	-	432	Honest
433	-	435	Hopeless
436	-	438	Hostile
439	-	441	Humble
442	-	444	Humiliated
445	-	447	Ignoble
448	-	450	Imaginative
451	-	453	Immoral
454	-	456	Imperious
457	-	459	Impotent
460	-	462	Impudent
463	-	465	Impulsive
466	-	468	Indecisive
469	-	471	Independent
472	-	474	Indignant
475	-	477	Inquisitive
478	-	480	Insecure
481	-	483	Insensitive
484	-	486	Inspired
487	-	489	Intellectual
490	-	492	Intense
493	-	495	Intent
496	-	498	Interrupts
499	-	501	Intrigued
502	-	504	Irate
505	-	507	Irreverent
508	-	510	Irritated
511	-	513	Jealous
514	-	516	Jeering
517	-	519	Joyous
520	-	522	Jubilant

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Traits (continued)

523	-	525	Kindly
526	-	528	Laid Back
529	-	531	Lawless
532	-	534	Lazy
535	-	537	Lecherous
538	-	540	Liar
541	-	543	Lighthearted
544	-	546	Loner
547	-	549	Loving
550	-	552	Low
553	-	555	Loyal
556	-	558	Lustful
559	-	561	Masochistic
562	-	564	Maverick
565	-	567	Mean
568	-	570	Melancholy
571	-	573	Messy
574	-	576	Mischievous
577	-	579	Miserable
580	-	582	Miserly
583	-	585	Mocking
586	-	588	Modest
589	-	591	Moody
592	-	594	Mouthy
595	-	597	Naive
598	-	600	Neighborly
601	-	603	Nervous
604	-	606	Neurotic
607	-	609	Nihilist
610	-	612	Nonconformist
613	-	615	Obsessive
616	-	618	Obstructive
619	-	621	Offended
622	-	624	Opinionated
625	-	627	Optimistic
628	-	630	Organized
631	-	633	Overbearing
634	-	636	Paranoid
637	-	639	Passionate
640	-	642	Patient
643	-	645	Peaceful
646	-	648	Peacemaker
649	-	651	Peevish
652	-	654	Peppy
655	-	657	Perceptive
658	-	660	Pervert
661	-	663	Pessimistic
664	-	666	Pious
667	-	669	Plain-Thinking
670	-	672	Playful
673	-	675	Pleased
676	-	678	Polite
679	-	681	Possessive
682	-	684	Powerless
685	-	687	Prankster
688	-	690	Precise
691	-	693	Prejudiced
694	-	696	Preoccupied
697	-	699	Proud
700	-	702	Punctual
703	-	705	Puzzled
706	-	708	Rable-Rouser
709	-	711	Racist
712	-	714	Rambler
715	-	717	Rash
718	-	720	Rebellious
721	-	723	Reclusive
724	-	726	Regretful
727	-	729	Relaxed
730	-	732	Resourceful
733	-	735	Respected
736	-	738	Respectful
739	-	741	Reverent
742	-	744	Rude
745	-	747	Rueful
748	-	750	Sad
751	-	753	Sadistic
754	-	756	Sarcastic
757	-	759	Sassy
760	-	762	Satisfied
763	-	765	Scared
766	-	768	Scatter-Brain
769	-	771	Schemer
772	-	774	Secretive
775	-	777	Secure
778	-	780	Self-Confident
781	-	783	Self-Doubting
784	-	786	Selfless
787	-	789	Sensitive
790	-	792	Serene
793	-	795	Sexist
796	-	798	Shady
799	-	801	Shameful
802	-	804	Sharing
805	-	807	Sharp-Tongued
808	-	810	Shifty
811	-	813	Shocked
814	-	816	Shy
817	-	819	Silky
820	-	822	Skeptical
823	-	825	Slothful
826	-	828	Slovenly
829	-	831	Smelly
832	-	834	Sober
835	-	837	Sociable
838	-	840	Soft-Hearted
841	-	843	Solitary
844	-	846	Somber
847	-	849	Spendthrift
850	-	852	Spiritual
853	-	855	Spiteful
856	-	858	Stout
859	-	861	Straightforward
862	-	864	Strong
865	-	867	Stubborn
868	-	870	Studious
871	-	873	Stupid
874	-	876	Sulky
877	-	879	Suspicious
880	-	882	Tactless
883	-	885	Tardy
886	-	888	Teetotaler
889	-	891	Tender
892	-	894	Terrified
895	-	897	Threatened
898	-	900	Thrifty
901	-	903	Thrilled
904	-	906	Timid
907	-	909	Torn
910	-	912	Trusting
913	-	915	Truthful
916	-	918	Uncertain
919	-	921	Uncomfortable
922	-	924	Understanding
925	-	927	Unforgiving
928	-	930	Uninformed
931	-	933	Unscrupulous
934	-	936	Unsettled
937	-	939	Unsophisticated
940	-	942	Unthinking
943	-	945	Untidy
946	-	948	Upset
949	-	951	Uptight
952	-	954	Vehement
955	-	957	Vengeful
958	-	960	Vindictive
961	-	963	Violent
964	-	966	Virtuous
967	-	969	Vivacious
970	-	972	Warm
973	-	975	Warmhearted
976	-	978	Wavering
979	-	981	Weak
982	-	984	Weird
985	-	987	Well-Mannered
988	-	990	Well-Spoken
991	-	993	Whiny
994	-	996	Wise
997	-	1000	Worried

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Quirks

1	-	5	Absently calls people by different names when speaking with them
6	-	10	Absent minded
11	-	15	Always adds a bit of powder to their beverages (and claims it is a health tonic)
16	-	20	Always agrees with everything
21	-	25	Always conscious of the time
26	-	30	Always correcting others as they speak
31	-	35	Always dresses in one-color outfits
36	-	40	Always has a mild sunburn
41	-	45	Always invites people to events - parties, picnics, meetings, seances, whatever
46	-	50	Always plugs their favorite politician (or guild, royal family-member, etc.)
51	-	55	Always sits with back to a wall; refuses to sit down otherwise
56	-	60	Always snorts when laughing or chuckling
61	-	65	Always tries to win favors from the group
66	-	70	Attracts birds that may land or sit on them when outside
71	-	75	Avoids making eye contact
76	-	80	Believes firmly that the culture is degenerating and always talks about the "old days"
81	-	85	Bets on anything
86	-	90	Blinks constantly
91	-	95	Blows their nose into their hand and then shakes it clean
96	-	100	Boasts about their sexual exploits (real or imagined)
101	-	105	Buck teeth
106	-	110	Burps with gusto
111	-	115	Cannot make decisions--asks others what to do several times before deciding
116	-	120	Carries many bags, parcels, and packages
121	-	125	Changes the subject
126	-	130	Chews fingernails (or toenails...)
131	-	135	Chews lips
136	-	140	Clammy hands
141	-	145	Close talker
146	-	150	Collects bugs
151	-	155	Collects hair
156	-	160	Collects snakes
161	-	165	Color blind
166	-	170	Commits to some specific ritual
			every morning
171	-	175	Compulsive braggart
176	-	180	Confuses information and facts easily
181	-	185	Constantly changes their gaze, making eye contact with everyone around them again and again, in rapid succession
186	-	190	Constantly hums or whistles to self
191	-	195	Constantly refers to themselves in the third person
196	-	200	Constantly toys with a piece of jewelry
201	-	205	Control freak
206	-	210	Cracks knuckles when stressed
211	-	215	Cryptic talker
216	-	220	Curses habitually
221	-	225	Delays and procrastinates in crucial moments
226	-	230	Does not drink alcohol and harangues others about it
231	-	235	Doesn't get most jokes - needs to have them explained
236	-	240	Each eye is of a different color
241	-	245	Eats other people's leftovers (without asking)
246	-	250	Ends every sentence of even marginal humor with a broad wink and a nudge
251	-	255	Espouses the medicinal virtues of garlic (and offers a clove)
256	-	260	Farts with gusto
261	-	265	Fears strangers
266	-	270	Fidgets constantly
271	-	275	Flips hair out of the way arrogantly
276	-	280	Flips lucky coin
281	-	285	Forgets what they are saying
286	-	290	Gets angered by strange things
291	-	295	Gives belly laughs and rocks back and forth in their seat
296	-	300	Gossips about other people, often making details up
301	-	305	Grins constantly
306	-	310	Has a bad cold
311	-	315	Has a breathy voice, like Marilyn Monroe
316	-	320	Has a dark or inappropriate sense of humor
321	-	325	Has a deep, raspy voice
326	-	330	Has a major scar
331	-	335	Has a melodramatic and affected manner
336	-	340	Has a nasal voice

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Quirks (continued)

341	**-**	**345**	Has a nasty rash
346	**-**	**350**	Has a pouch of candied giblets
351	**-**	**355**	Has a very hairy neck
356	**-**	**360**	Has a visible birthmark
361	**-**	**365**	Has a whiny voice
366	**-**	**370**	Has an allergy to a particular type of metal (gold, silver, copper, brass, etc...)
371	**-**	**375**	Has an invisible friend
376	**-**	**380**	Has bad skin
381	**-**	**385**	Has bits of food in his beard
386	**-**	**390**	Has facial tics as if winking
391	**-**	**395**	Has fleas
396	**-**	**400**	Has fresh stains on their clothing
401	**-**	**405**	Has mood swings
406	**-**	**410**	Has no teeth and constantly licks gums while talking
411	**-**	**415**	Has pierced nipples and dresses to show them
416	**-**	**420**	Has strong body odor
421	**-**	**425**	Has to have last word in conversation...Always
426	**-**	**430**	Has trouble hearing
431	**-**	**435**	Has uncanny luck
436	**-**	**440**	Hates going to new restaurants
441	**-**	**445**	Hiccups when nervous or stressed
446	**-**	**450**	Hirsute
451	**-**	**455**	Impresses all with the ability to play music through their nose
456	**-**	**460**	In a hurry, always rushing about
461	**-**	**465**	Injures themselves constantly
466	**-**	**470**	Interrupts people
471	**-**	**475**	Interrupts themselves
476	**-**	**480**	Is a 'know it all'
481	**-**	**485**	Is a picky eater
486	**-**	**490**	Is a serious flirt
491	**-**	**495**	Is a weather vane (has bone joints that ache shortly before it rains or gets foggy)
496	**-**	**500**	Is addicted to gambling
501	**-**	**505**	Is always chilly
506	**-**	**510**	Is always guilty about something
511	**-**	**515**	Is always in a hurry
516	**-**	**520**	Is an albino
521	**-**	**525**	Is an alcoholic
526	**-**	**530**	Is exceptionally rumpled and untucked
531	**-**	**535**	Is extremely clumsy
536	**-**	**540**	Is extroverted to the point of embarrassing their companions
541	**-**	**545**	Is never without their pet mouse (or rodent of choice)

546	**-**	**550**	Is noticeably fastidious
551	**-**	**555**	Is really awkward around the opposite gender
556	**-**	**560**	Is rude to waiters and waitresses
561	**-**	**565**	Is stooped and moves slowly due to a bad back
566	**-**	**570**	Is very curious about everybody
571	**-**	**575**	Is very sleepy
576	**-**	**580**	Keeps a plushy toy or a doll (for personal reasons)
581	**-**	**585**	Keeps looking over their shoulder
586	**-**	**590**	Keeps shifting their weapon from hand to hand
591	**-**	**595**	Likes a particular currency better than others and insists that people change their money first
596	**-**	**600**	Likes to play games
601	**-**	**605**	Logistical thinker (cannot grasp abstract thought)
606	**-**	**610**	Looks boldly at people, with tight lips and narrowed eyes
611	**-**	**615**	Loses things all the time
616	**-**	**620**	Loves to dance
621	**-**	**625**	Loves to sprinkle quotes throughout their conversation
626	**-**	**630**	Makes frequent, bizarre prophecies and predictions
631	**-**	**635**	Makes nonsensical jokes with very obscure punch lines
636	**-**	**640**	Makes puns all the time
641	**-**	**645**	Many tattoos
646	**-**	**650**	Missing finger(s)
651	**-**	**655**	Mumbles
656	**-**	**660**	Narcoleptic
661	**-**	**665**	Near-sighted--squints at who ever is talking to them
666	**-**	**670**	Never combs or trims hair
671	**-**	**675**	Nods frequently but isn't listening
676	**-**	**680**	Obsessed with a specific weapon, item, person, place or monster, often telling long, boring stories about it
681	**-**	**685**	Obsesses over a particular color
686	**-**	**690**	Obsessive about being perfectly clean and neat
691	**-**	**695**	On the seafood diet: if they see food, they eat it
696	**-**	**700**	Paces back and forth
701	**-**	**705**	Pack rat
706	**-**	**710**	Paranoid with extremely wide eyes
711	**-**	**715**	Pulls strands of hair from their mouth
716	**-**	**720**	Remembers everyone as an old

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Quirks (continued)

			school chum
721	**-**	**725**	Rolls their eyes when talking about other people
726	**-**	**730**	Says "excuse me" a lot
731	**-**	**735**	Says a blessing after stepping over every crack in stone or wooden walkway
736	**-**	**740**	Scratches a lot
741	**-**	**745**	Seems very greasy
746	**-**	**750**	Seems very nervous
751	**-**	**755**	Sentences slowly trail off into some unknown train of thought
756	**-**	**760**	Shakes fist in the air often
761	**-**	**765**	Sleepwalker
766	**-**	**770**	Smells really good
771	**-**	**775**	Smokes a foul smelling herb
776	**-**	**780**	Smooths out wrinkles in their clothing during conversations
781	**-**	**785**	Sneezes when in sunlight
786	**-**	**790**	Sniffs incessantly as if having a running nose
791	**-**	**795**	Snores loudly
796	**-**	**800**	Snorts while laughing
801	**-**	**805**	Speaks in a low, deep voice, pausing after every sentence to carefully choose their words
806	**-**	**810**	Speaks slow and deliberately
811	**-**	**815**	Speaks very quickly
816	**-**	**820**	Speaks very slowly
821	**-**	**825**	Speaks very slowly as if they are translating things in their head
826	**-**	**830**	Spits huge wads with gusto
831	**-**	**835**	Spits indiscriminately
836	**-**	**840**	Stares and seldom blinks
841	**-**	**845**	Stinks of garlic
846	**-**	**850**	Strict carnivore
851	**-**	**855**	Suggests fashion improvements
856	**-**	**860**	Sweats profusely
861	**-**	**865**	Takes notes obsessively
866	**-**	**870**	Talks over others and finishes their sentences for them
871	**-**	**875**	Talks rapidly
876	**-**	**880**	Talks slowly
881	**-**	**885**	Talks too loudly
886	**-**	**890**	Talks too quietly
891	**-**	**895**	Talks with their nose up and looks down on people
896	**-**	**900**	Tells people private things as if they were close friends
901	**-**	**905**	Tends to spray spittle while speaking
906	**-**	**910**	Thin blooded and complains of being cold
911	**-**	**915**	Thinks the world is far too loud
916	**-**	**920**	Uses a "signature phrase"
921	**-**	**925**	Uses a dismissive hand wave
926	**-**	**930**	Uses profanity
931	**-**	**935**	Uses the same hand gestures in conversation as they do when casting spells
936	**-**	**940**	Uses the same vocal pause repeatedly (i.E. Ummmm, er, like, and so, uh)
941	**-**	**945**	Vegetarian
946	**-**	**950**	Very hungry all the time
951	**-**	**955**	Very nervous, eyes dart, wrings hands, voice quavers
956	**-**	**960**	Very thirsty all the time
961	**-**	**965**	Very touchy/feely (grabs hands or arms while talking)
966	**-**	**970**	Waves their hand around in the air all the time as though to fan away an unpleasant odor
971	**-**	**975**	Weapon injury caused nerve damage and no drools uncontrollably
976	**-**	**980**	Wears a ring on every finger
981	**-**	**985**	Wears a ring on every toe
986	**-**	**990**	Wears ankle bells that jangle whenever they move
991	**-**	**995**	Whines and complains a lot
996	**-**	**1000**	Wrings their hands

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Secrets

1	Accidentally killed a sibling as a child
2	Acts as if they are physically challenged (blind, one-legged, etc.) but really are not
3	Admires a criminal for his gusto
4	Deserted from the military
5	Enjoys a great reputation for some martial deed in the past, but it is a fabrication and they are actually cowardly
6	Fantasizes about being an adventurer
7	Fought for both sides in a war
8	Has a double life as both the villain and the hero helping the PCs defeat him
9	Has a hatred of other subtypes of his race (i.e. a shield dwarf who hates gold dwarves)
10	Has a position of authority but all their work, plans, and ideas come from an unacknowledged underling
11	Has a treasure map tattooed on their scalp concealed by their hair
12	Has an illegitimate child
13	Has an intelligent magic item that communicates through telepathy
14	Has been slowly poisoning the food and drink of the sick relative they are looking after
15	Has committed a crime and the evidence is buried in the backyard
16	Has killed someone close to PC and has befriended the PC as penance
17	Has no true wealth but makes it appear that they do
18	Hasn't paid taxes in 20 years
19	Is a dealer of an illicit substance or commodity
20	Is a disguised enemy who is sending the PCs on a quest to defeat him, confident of victory
21	Is a fallen paladin
22	Is a famous hero in hiding
23	Is a former evil warlord now living as a simple farmer to avoid destruction
24	Is a gambling addict and is stealing money from their work to cover their debts
25	Is a high level adventurer in disguise
26	Is a lost member of the royal family
27	Is a member of a shady or disreputable sub-culture (i.e. a biker gang)
28	Is a member of the secret police
29	Is a miser, socking away cash in their quarters
30	Is a mole or spy for another nation's government
31	Is a PC's child from a forgotten romantic tryst
32	Is a playwright in disguise who is using the PCs' adventures as the plots for their plays
33	Is a poor noble who supports their lifestyle through crime
34	Is a powerful figure, disguised to listen for rumors from the public
35	Is a racist but realizes that people don't share his views
36	Is a scout looking for potential recruits for the army, police, secret service, etc.
37	Is a terrorist or freedom fighter fighting against the current government
38	Is an actor getting into an upcoming role by living the life of their character
39	Is an agent in disguise for a good organization
40	Is an agent in disguise for an evil organization
41	Is an atheist who pretends to be religious to fit in
42	Is an ex-slave
43	Is an informant for the city watch, thieves' guild, dark cult, or other organization
44	Is an observer from another plane
45	Is an upstanding citizen who also owns a seedy tavern or brothel
46	Is bald and wears a wig
47	Is being magically controlled by another
48	Is blackmailing someone
49	Is deeply in debt to a protection racket and is afraid for their life
50	Is desperate for money and seeks to kill the PCs after being weakened from an adventure
51	Is dying of old age but concealing the fact with illusions
52	Is from a rival adventuring or mercenary group, subtly extracting information from the PCs
53	Is giving the PCs a job he himself was assigned
54	Is guarding an artifact of a lost culture
55	Is harboring a criminal
56	Is illiterate
57	Is in love with a PC
58	Is in love with a PC's parent
59	Is in love with their sibling
60	Is looking for an honest person
61	Is married to two spouses, neither of which know about the other
62	Is masquerading as a different class (i.e. a sorcerer pretending to be a thief)
63	Is of one alignment but masquerades as another
64	Is on the brink of bankruptcy
65	Is plotting against their business rivals
66	Is plotting to kill someone for revenge
67	Is possessed by one of the PC's former opponents
68	Is psychotic or possessed but desperately tries to seem normal
69	Is searching for the magic sword their parent was wearing when killed
70	Is suffering a crisis of faith

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Secrets (continued)

71	Is sympathetic to the heroes' cause even though they work for the villain
72	Is the eyes for a local dragon
73	Is the local homeless drunkard, but the ever-present bottle in the brown paper bag actually holds water
74	Is the one who unleashed the problem that he is now sending the PCs to fix
75	Is the spouse, sibling, or offspring of one of PC's victims
76	Is the world authority on an obscure piece of knowledge
77	Is very young but pretends to be much older
78	Keeps coins in their shoes in case they ever have to run away
79	Knows how to cook gourmet meals but is too lazy to bother
80	Knows the best fishing hole in the area
81	Likes staring fires
82	Likes to torture small animals
83	Moonlights as a tavern singer but is ashamed to admit it
84	Once peed in the King's soup
85	Reads trashy romance novels
86	Recently lost their job but is pretending to go to work to maintain appearances
87	Recently won the lottery and hasn't told anyone
88	Spent many years in jail for a crime they didn't commit
89	Survived an execution and escaped to live a normal life
90	Suspects a PC of being attracted to their spouse
91	Their parents were brother and sister
92	Two NPCs are secretly one
93	Uses their middle name because they hate their given name
94	Wakes up each morning with blood under their nails but no wounds
95	Wants to be a musician
96	Was a member of an adventuring band and treacherously left their companions to die while making off with all the loot
97	Was friend of the PC's parents, and is now keeping a protective eye on the PC from a distance
98	Was once the King's loyal advisor or guard and is holding secret state documents
99	Wears a sword and talks tough, but has no idea how fight
100	Writes trashy romance novels

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Events

1	A feud (family or otherwise) began
2	A feud (family or otherwise) ended
3	Acquaintance died
4	Acquaintance had a life-threatening illness
5	Acquaintance had a major accident
6	Acquaintance had a minor accident
7	Acquaintance had a minor illness
8	Acquaintance was kidnapped
9	Acquired a new class
10	Acquired a new enemy
11	Acquired a new level
12	Acquired a new skill
13	Acquired a sum of money
14	Adopted a child
15	Attended a festival, fair, market, or sporting event
16	Best friend died
17	Best friend had a life-threatening illness
18	Best friend had a major accident
19	Best friend had a minor accident
20	Best friend had a minor illness
21	Best friend was kidnapped
22	Broke off an engagement
23	Broke up a relationship with a friend
24	Changed alignment
25	Changed their job
26	Close family member had a life-threatening illness
27	Close family member had a major accident
28	Close family member had a minor accident
29	Close family member had a minor illness
30	Close relative died
31	Close relative was kidnapped
32	Discovered they owned something valuable
33	Distant family member had a life-threatening illness
34	Distant family member had a major accident
35	Distant family member had a minor accident
36	Distant family member had a minor illness
37	Distant relative died
38	Distant relative was kidnapped
39	Ended an intimate relationship
40	Enemy died
41	Evicted
42	Experienced a haunting or supernatural event
43	Failed to get a raise or promotion
44	Fended off recruitment (military, political party, press gang)
45	Friend died
46	Friend had a life-threatening illness
47	Friend had a major accident
48	Friend had a minor accident
49	Friend had a minor illness
50	Friend was kidnapped
51	Got a divorce
52	Got engaged
53	Got married
54	Got revenge
55	Great performance done or great masterpiece created
56	Had a birthday
57	Had a child
58	Had a miscarriage
59	Had a visitation from their deity
60	Had an anniversary
61	Had to appear in court as a defendant, plaintiff, or witness
62	Had trouble with their boss or coworkers
63	Home burned down
64	Homeless for a period
65	Inherited something trivial
66	Inherited something valuable
67	Is expecting a baby
68	Lived through a change in government, union, guild policy, or law
69	Lived through a crime wave, uprising, revolt, rebellion, or Coup
70	Lived through riots, political unrest, or demonstrations
71	Loaned out money and was never repaid
72	Lost money gambling
73	Lost their job
74	Made a major enemy
75	Made a new acquaintance, friend, or best friend
76	Met a famous person, noble, or ambassador
77	Moved to a better home
78	Nearly killed in a street fight
79	NPC died and was brought back from the dead
80	NPC died and was not brought back from the dead
81	Pet became lost as was found
82	Pet became lost as was not found
83	Pet died
84	Put on (academic, job, criminal) probation
85	Received a message from a distant acquaintance, friend, best friend, or relative
86	Small fire at home, no major damage
87	Spent time as a convict
88	Started a new hobby
89	Stopped a crime (rape, extortion, blackmail, bribery, robbery, etc.)
90	Stopped speaking to a close relative, distant relative, or acquaintance
91	Vegetable garden had an unusual yield
92	Was attacked by a monster or wild animal
93	Was interrogated by the inquisition or local authorities
94	Was recruited (military, political party, press gang)
95	Was robbed of something trivial
96	Was robbed of something valuable
97	Was robbed of something with sentimental value
98	Witnessed a murder
99	Won a prize at the local fair
100	Won money gambling

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Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Height
Weight
Hair
Eyes

STR ____ | ____ DEX ____ | ____
CON ____ | ____ INT ____ | ____
WIS ____ | ____ CHA ____ | ____

REF _____ FORT _____ WILL _____

Power Base
Traits
Quirks
Motives / Goals
Social Class
Secrets
Fears
Interests
Family
Friends
Home
Liege

Appearance

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil + misc

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Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Height
Weight
Hair
Eyes

STR ____ | ____ DEX ____ | ____
CON ____ | ____ INT ____ | ____
WIS ____ | ____ CHA ____ | ____

REF _____ FORT _____ WILL _____

Power Base
Traits
Quirks
Motives / Goals
Social Class
Secrets
Fears
Interests
Family
Friends
Home
Liege

Appearance

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil + misc

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Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Height
Weight
Hair
Eyes

STR ____ | ____ DEX ____ | ____
CON ____ | ____ INT ____ | ____
WIS ____ | ____ CHA ____ | ____

REF _____ FORT _____ WILL _____

Power Base
Traits
Quirks
Motives / Goals
Social Class
Secrets
Fears
Interests
Family
Friends
Home
Liege

Appearance

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil + misc

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Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Height
Weight
Hair
Eyes

STR ____ | ____ DEX ____ | ____
CON ____ | ____ INT ____ | ____
WIS ____ | ____ CHA ____ | ____

REF _____ FORT _____ WILL _____

Power Base
Traits
Quirks
Motives / Goals
Social Class
Secrets
Fears
Interests
Family
Friends
Home
Liege

Appearance

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil + misc

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Skill	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment | Deity
Height
Weight
Hair
Eyes

STR
DEX
CON
INT
WIS
CHA

REF
FORT
WILL

Feats

Appearance

Motives / Goals

Traits / Quirks

Power Base

Interests

Fears

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Secrets

Liege

Friends

Family

Home

Skill	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment | Deity
Height
Weight
Hair
Eyes

STR
DEX
CON
INT
WIS
CHA

REF
FORT
WILL

Feats

Appearance

Motives / Goals

Traits / Quirks

Power Base

Interests

Fears

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Secrets

Liege

Friends

Family

Home

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Essentials

RPG OBJECTS

ROLE PLAYING

NAME

Player	
Deity	
Size	
Age	
Gender	
Height	
Weight	
Hair	
Eyes	
Skin	
Appearance	
Power base	
First Impression	
Social Class	

LEVEL	
TOTAL	

CLASSES

HIT POINTS	
total	current

ESSENTIALS	
Race	
Alignment	
XP	
Spell Resistance	

ATTRIBUTES				
ABILITY	SCORE		MODIFIER	
STR Strength				
DEX Dexterity				
CON Constitution				
INT Intelligence				
WIS Wisdom				
CHA Charisma				

STATISTICS

NAME	TOTAL		BASE		ARMOR		SHIELD		ABILITY		SIZE		MISC		TEMP
AC Armor Class		=	10	+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	
REF Reflex Save		=		+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	
FORT Fortitude Save		=		+		+		+	CON	+		+		+	
WILL Willpower Save		=		+		+		+	WIS	+		+		+	
INIT Initiative		=		+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	

PERSONALITY	
Goals	
Motives	
Jealousies	
Fears	
Interests	
Traits	
Quirks	
Escape Plan	
Favorite Curse	
Favorite Praise	
Tricks & Tactics	

Racical Traits

Class Features

Wealth	
Source	
Revenue	
Cash On-Hand	
Titles & Deeds	
Servants	

LANGUAGES	
Spoken	Read / Write

FEATS

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Essentials

RPG OBJECTS

Creature

NAME: _____ **CAMPAIGN:** _____

Player	
Deity	
Size	
Age	
Gender	
Height	
Weight	
Hair	
Eyes	
Skin	
Appearance	
Power base	
First Impression	

LEVEL

TOTAL	

HIT POINTS

total	current

CLASSES

ESSENTIALS

Species	
Alignment	
XP	
Spell Resistance	

ATTRIBUTES

ABILITY	SCORE		MODIFIER	
STR Strength				
DEX Dexterity				
CON Constitution				
INT Intelligence				
WIS Wisdom				
CHA Charisma				

ARMOR

name	armor bonus	mx dex bonus	check penalty	spell failure	speed
ARMOR					
SHIELD					

STATISTICS

NAME	TOTAL		BASE		ARMOR		SHIELD		ABILITY		SIZE		MISC		TEMP
AC Armor Class		=	10	+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	
REF Reflex Save		=		+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	
FORT Fortitude Save		=		+		+		+	CON	+		+		+	
WILL Willpower Save		=		+		+		+	WIS	+		+		+	
INIT Initiative		=		+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	

MELEE ATTACK BONUS

total		base		STR mod		size		misc
	+		+		+		+	

RANGED ATTACK BONUS

total		base		STR mod		size		misc
	+		+		+		+	

SPECIAL ATTACKS

SPECIAL QUALITIES

LANGUAGES

FEATS

GEAR

TRICKS KNOWN

SKILLS

Cross Class	Skill Name	Key Ability	Skill Mod	Ability Mod	Ranks	Misc Mod

WEAPONS

name	damage	range	ammo		attack bonus		base		ability mod		hand		feat		misc
						=		+		+		+		+	
						=		+		+		+		+	

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NPC

RPG OBJECTS

ITEM

NAME	APPEARANCE	SPECIAL QUALITIES

TYPE	PERSONALITY

SIZE	AC

HARDNESS	HP

BACKGROUND / HISTORY

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AC ____ = 10 + Armor ____ + Shield ____ + Ability ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____ + Temp ____

Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Hit Points

Melee ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____
Ranged: ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Weapons Name	Damage	Range	Ammo	Atk Bns

STR ____
DEX ____
CON ____
INT ____
WIS ____
CHA ____
INIT ____

Feats

Ref ___ Fort ___ Will ___

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AC ____ = 10 + Armor ____ + Shield ____ + Ability ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____ + Temp ____

Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Hit Points

Melee ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____
Ranged: ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Weapons Name	Damage	Range	Ammo	Atk Bns

STR ____
DEX ____
CON ____
INT ____
WIS ____
CHA ____
INIT ____

Feats

Ref ___ Fort ___ Will ___

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AC ____ = 10 + Armor ____ + Shield ____ + Ability ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____ + Temp ____

Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Hit Points

Melee ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____
Ranged: ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Weapons Name	Damage	Range	Ammo	Atk Bns

STR ____
DEX ____
CON ____
INT ____
WIS ____
CHA ____
INIT ____

Feats

Ref ___ Fort ___ Will ___

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AC ____ = 10 + Armor ____ + Shield ____ + Ability ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____ + Temp ____

Class | Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Hit Points

Melee ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____
Ranged: ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Weapons Name	Damage	Range	Ammo	Atk Bns

STR ____
DEX ____
CON ____
INT ____
WIS ____
CHA ____
INIT ____

Feats

Ref ___ Fort ___ Will ___

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AC ____ = 10 + Armor ____ + Shield ____ + Ability ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____ + Temp ____

Melee ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____
Ranged: ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____

Class	Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Hit Points

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Weapons Name	Damage	Range	Ammo	Attack Bonus

STR		
DEX		
CON		
INT		
WIS		
CHA		
INIT		

Feats

REF ____
FORT ____
WILL ____

NOTES

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AC ____ = 10 + Armor ____ + Shield ____ + Ability ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____ + Temp ____

Melee ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____
Ranged: ____ = Base ____ + STR ____ + Size ____ + Misc ____

Class	Level

Race
Gender
Alignment
Hit Points

Skill Name	skill =	rank +	abil +	misc

Weapons Name	Damage	Range	Ammo	Attack Bonus

STR		
DEX		
CON		
INT		
WIS		
CHA		
INIT		

Feats

REF ____
FORT ____
WILL ____

NOTES

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Essentials 3.5

RPG OBJECTS

NAME: _____ CAMPAIGN: _____

ATTRIBUTES

ABILITY	SCORE		MODIFIER	
STR Strength				
DEX Dexterity				
CON Consitution				
INT Intelligence				
WIS Wisdom				
CHA Charisma				

STATISTICS

NAME	TOTAL		BASE		ARMOR		SHIELD		ABILITY		SIZE		MISC		TEMP
AC Armor Class		=	10	+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	
REF Reflex Save		=		+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	
FORT Fortitude		=		+		+		+	CON	+		+		+	
WILL Willpower		=		+		+		+	WIS	+		+		+	
INIT Initiative		=		+		+		+	DEX	+		+		+	

COMBAT

LEVEL			CLASSES	

HP HIT POINTS			WOUNDS current HP	

ARMOR

name	armor bonus	mx dex bonus	check penalty	spell failure	speed
ARMOR					
SHIELD					

MELEE ATTACK BONUS

total		base		STR mod		size		misc
	+		+		+		+	

RANGED ATTACK BONUS

total		base		STR mod		size		misc
	+		+		+		+	

WEAPONS

name	damage	range	ammo		attack bonus		base		ability mod		hand		feat		misc
						=		+		+		+		+	
						=		+		+		+		+	
						=		+		+		+		+	
						=		+		+		+		+	
						=		+		+		+		+	
						=		+		+		+		+	

SPELLS PER LEVEL

#	0		1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9	

TRICKS & TACTICS

ESCAPE PLAN

BATTLE CRY

FAVORED CURSE

SPELLS

Known	Prepped	Scroll	name	casting time	range	duration	save

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