

How to use the Bag of Tricks

The Bag of Tricks table generates unusual interactive features for a fantasy adventure game site.

The left-hand side gives three columns, generating (1) a feature, (2) a sub-feature and (3) an action that triggers an effect when tried. On this page, each entry in a row is thematically linked to the others. An exception is the set of cells in blue, which show that the three water features in column 1 are linked to “Liquid” and not the other entries in their row.

The right-hand side has effects of the action when tried. These do not match the rows on the left and should be determined separately.

To determine which of the 36 rows to use, roll two six-sided dice of different colors, designating one as “red” and the other as “black.”

Features and effects may have an additional list of examples, with a number in parentheses—for example, (6)—equalling the number of items in the list. To choose at random, roll a die with that number of sides and count forward in the list.

The rows on the left are arranged roughly by increasing complexity of features. To reflect a natural environment the roll on column 1 may use d2 for the red die, and for a crudely built area, d4.

There are three ways to use the tables.

Simple Trick. Roll the two dice and read off the entire corresponding row on the left. Roll them again and get the effect from the row on the right.

Bizarre Trick. Roll the two dice four times, once for each column, and combine the results.

Natural Trick. Roll a third die of a different color (call it green). If the result is ...

- 1, use the *Simple Trick* procedure.
- 2, use the same roll for columns 1 and 2, then roll separately for column 3 and column 4.
- 3, use the same roll for columns 2 and 3, then roll separately from column 1 and column 4.
- 4-6, use the *Bizarre Trick* procedure.

Always, use your imagination to fill in details so that the tricks make sense.

Examples of tricks

Simple trick: first roll 3, 2; second roll 2, 6

	STAIR	Crack/Slot	Insert a kind of object	
Bad effect elsewhere: floods, blocks exit, frees monster, <u>hides treasure</u> , activates trap, closes way (6)				
Roll = 4	1	2	3	4

One possible result: *A stairway leading to a large golden cup, a slot under the first step; if a would-be trap-fixer inserts a metal object into it, a wall descends, sealing off the cup.*

Natural trick: green die is 2; roll for columns 1-2 is 1, 6; column 3 is 3, 1; column 4, 5, 4

	SPRING/FOUNTAIN	<u>Liquid</u>	Burn a “key” object
	<u>STREAM</u>	Chain	
Useful information about: a magic item or treasure			

One possible result: *If the marriage contract from area 7 is burned and the ashes mixed with the stream’s water, as asked by Rosa’s drowned ghost in area 13, her voice whispers ‘Elias’—the password to the magic dowry chest in area 14.*

The Bag of Tricks II



Tabular method for randomly generating fantastic adventure features: A new, condensed and simplified version

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Roll	1. This thing	2. Has	3. Which if you
	No major feature; roll on "Has a..." column	Hole	Insert any object
	STONE: Stalactites, stalagmites, rock, petrified, flowstone, vein (6)	Bump/Knob	Touch
	PILE: Of refuse, rubble, dung, earth, treasure, powder (6)	Substance	Inhale
	POOL/BASIN	Beast	Feed
	SPRING/FOUNTAIN	Liquid	Drink
	STREAM	Chain	Loosen
	WALL	Brick/Block	Pry
	FLOOR	Tile/Flagstone	Break
	PIT/SHAFT/WELL	Rope/Vine	Climb
	LEDGE/NICHES	Compartment	Open
	CHASM/TRENCH	Bridge	Cross
	PLANTS: Fungi, mold, tree, flowers, shrub, vines (6)	Food/Fruit	Eat
	TOMB	Bones/corpse	Bury
	STAIR	Crack/Slot	Insert a kind of object
	GOODS: Food, drink, equipment, fuel, materials, records (6)	Dirt/Dust/Webs	Clean
	LIGHT SOURCE: Surface shaft, lamp, lantern, torch, fungus, magic (6)	Handle	Pull
	CAGE/JAIL	Grille	Insert a "key" object
	COLUMNS	Carvings	Push
	DOOR	Wheel	Turn
	FIREPLACE	Fire	Burn a "key" object
	FURNITURE: Table, seats, throne, benches, bedding, couch (6)	Seat	Sit on
	WEAVING: Carpet, tapestry, curtain, screen, net, blanket (6)	Cloth/Padding	Wrap
	PLATFORM	Slab/Surface	Lie on
	RELIGIOUS: Altar, shrine, icon, idol, vestments, pulpit (6)	Writing	Complete
	STATUE: Commoner, noble, PC class, mythology, monster, animal (6)	Body part*	Speak to
	DEVICE: Lock, clock, elevator, automaton, vehicle, war (6)	Mechanism	Repair
	TROPHIES: Stuffed, horns, arms, hides, loot, collectibles (6)	Regalia**	Move
	STORAGE: Chest, cabinet, bookcase, wardrobe, desk, closet (6)	Clothing	Wear
	SOUND: Hand instruments, organ, drum, gong, horn, bell (6)	Protrusion	Slide
	ART: Canvas, mural, bas-relief, sculpture, sketch, mosaic (6)	Image	Erase
	FURNITURE 2: Dresser, pedestal, rack, hassock, chaise, desk (6)	Mirror/Glass	Gaze
	WORKSPACE: Kitchen, mine, smithy, embalming, torture, accounts (6)	Tools/Weapons	Put in place
	GALLERY/BALCONY	Lever	Jam
	DECOR: Carved, reliefs, hanging, painted, tiles, etchings (6)	Door/Hatch	Knock
	MAGIC: Illusion, alteration, animation, energy, ward, lab (6)	Magic Effect	Cast spell on
	UNIQUE: Egg, ship, telescope, wheel, pendulum, mask, ladder, teeth, dice, dollhouse, beehive, safe (12) - or, you decide!	Roll twice on this column	Roll twice on this column

4. It does this.	Roll
Major unavoidable damage (average 2 hp/level): fire, shock, blade, crush, acid, poison (6)	
Major avoidable damage (average 4 hp/level): fire, shock, blade, crush, acid, poison -2 save (6)	
Major hostile monster released: undead, demon, predator, elemental, construct, random (6)	
Confinement: chamber sealed off, chute, trapped, entangled, one-way passage, cave-in (6)	
Permanent curse: lose 1d6 points to random ability, combat penalty, attract hostile monsters, permanent physical effect (see) , permanent mental effect (see) , changed form (6)	
Minor unavoidable damage (average 1 hp/level): fire, shock, blade, crush, acid, poison +4 save (6)	
Minor avoidable damage (average 4 hp/level): fire, shock, blade, crush, acid, poison +2 save (6)	
Minor hostile monster released: insects, snake, trickster, bloodsucker, living plant, random (6)	
Physical effect (d6 hours): slow, sleep, paralyze, blind, deaf, mute (6)	
Mental effect (d6 minutes): confusion, insanity, paranoia, berserk rage, compulsion, feeblemind (6)	
Temporary curse - see , above	
Bad effect elsewhere: floods, blocks exit, frees monster, hides treasure, activates trap, closes way (6)	
Sounds an alarm	
False information about: another trick/hazard, history, monster, adventure, magic item, treasure (6)	
Chaotic: create a random table with 6 of these outcomes and roll d6 on it each time.	
Reveals hidden major feature with effect: roll again starting from column 1	
Reveals hidden minor feature with effect: roll again starting from column 2	
Inconsequential effect: voice, glow, rumbling, emotion, object changes, changes feature elsewhere (6)	
Has a 2nd effect activated by taking a different action: roll on column 3, then 4.	
Has a 2nd effect, turn over the red die (1 becomes 6, etc.) and reroll the black die.	
Has a 2nd effect, reroll both red and black dice.	
Temporary mixed blessing, d6 days: change size, race, class, sex; swap abilities; 5' silence zone (6)	
Permanent mixed blessing, as above	
Red herring object: key, false magic item, counterfeit treasure, weird artefact, puzzle, useless spell (6)	
Minor treasure (d6 x25 gp/difficulty level): copper, silver, goods, gold, fine goods, armaments (6)	
Useful information about: another trick, hazard or monster	
Useful information about: area's history	
Useful information about: a magic item or treasure	
Useful information about: a different adventure	
Non-hostile being: magical spirit, ghost, trickster, holy spirit, character in stasis, animal pet (6)	
Blessing (d6 hours): +2d6 hp, +1d4 to random ability, +1 level, +2 hit/damage, know spell, immunity (6)	
Major treasure (d6 x100 gp/difficulty level): silver, gold, rare substance, gems, jewelry, fine goods (6)	
Key object for another lock or trick	
Healing effect (up to 1d6 hp/character level)	
Permanent blessing: 200 xp x level, +d3 hp, +1 to random ability, learn spell = 1/2 character level, gain skill, gain one-time supernatural favor (6)	
Magic item (1 in 6 is cursed): potion, scroll, weapon, armor, jewelry, wand/staff/rod (6)	