5.1.3 Dungeon Masters Guide

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Chapter 1: A World of Your Own

Sandbox

Key Concepts

The aim of these house-rules and rulings is a gritty, points-of-light, world, that offers a higher degree of challenge than with the standard rules. The narrative is driven by—people and places; knowledge, motives and means; consequences; foreshadowing and recurrence; and consistency.

Calendar

Times of the Day

The following divisions are typical of many settlements –

1. **Early** watch (3am to 6am)
2. **First** watch (6am to 9am)
3. **Second** watch (9am to 12noon)
4. **Middle** watch (12noon to 3pm)
5. **Fourth** watch (3pm to 6pm)
6. **Fifth** watch (6pm to 9pm)
7. **Late** watch (9pm to 12midnight)
8. **Last** watch (12midnight to 3am)

Out of the Abyss timeline

1489 DR, **Ches**, our heroes were captured during the Spring Equinox.

1490 DR, **Hammer**, almost two years passed since escaping Velkynvelve, ending in defeat.

Cross-Planar Escapades timeline

1490 DR, **Alturiak**, surviving characters travel the planes to find what they need to protect the Feywild.

Rebel Alliance timeline

1500 DR, the turn of the century.

World Population

Class-equivalence Among the Population

At tier 0, about 1/4 are "skilled" and the remainder "untrained". About 1/100 people have tier 1 character class-equivalence, with an order of magnitude fewer per tier above that.

Monster Manual stat blocks such as the Mage represent class-equivalent NPCs in abstract and are

usually sufficient to run them; more detail can be added from their character class where required. Their **Hit Dice** suggests their tier.

Locating (non-named) NPCs

When players want to locate and gain access to a non-named NPC with class-equivalence, as they might when seeking training, the following DCs might be used—

- An Intelligence (Investigation) ability check **DC 5*tier** might locate a higher-tier NPC, so long as they are not taking steps to avoid being found; **+5** to that DC if the search is conducted in a settlement with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants;
- Small towns can be collected into one **catchment** to determine the number of tier 4 and epic NPCs among them;
- Settled regions generally decline to about **half** of the baseline;
- Conversely, centres of excellence and catchments on a war footing gradually evolve to **10x** these figures: as many as 1/10 are tier 1 and then scaling as before. In such places and times, **−5** from the search DC. Losing sides return abruptly to norm.

Slavery

Where Slavery is Practiced

Slavery is common in places such as Thay and the Underdark; especially among drow, duergar and fomorians. About 1/5 such creatures own on average **5** slaves, while 1/50 own on average **50**. About 1/10 slaves are skilled, of whom 1/10 have tier 1 character-class equivalence.

Value of Slaves

Adult slaves in good health are priced on the basis of 2 years earnings from their labour and are expected to survive 10 years in service. A seller could be forced down to half the starting price through circumstances or hard bargaining. Prices are sometimes paid in trade goods or promises of goods such as shares in future harvests.

Torture

Effects and Survival

Torture is no more effective than other methods in obtaining the truth, and is principally used to instil fear in communities through exemplary punishment of those who draw attention to themselves.

Provided its jailers don't choose to kill it, a creature can survive in brutal conditions for years. After a number of days equal to its **Constitution** score, it's hit point maximum is reduced by 1. This repeats until the creature dies or is released. For valued prisoners, jailers might allow periods of recuperation to recover these points.

Jailers can choose to prevent short or long rests for creatures they have imprisoned, and they can spend a day of downtime to reduce one ability score of a prisoner by 1 point. The prisoner resists by making a saving throw for that ability against a DC equal to their torturer's passive Wisdom (Medicine), for

Strength, Dexterity or Constitution, or passive Charisma (Intimidation), for Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma. A prisoner loses **1d8** hit points at the end of each day of such treatment.

Waterdeep in 1489 (settled, pop. ~2m)

The **City of Waterdeep** refers to the settlement inside the walls. **Greater Waterdeep** refers to the settlements immediately outside the walls. The **Province of Waterdeep** refers to the agricultural region inland, and up and down the coast. Waterdeep controls 30-40 miles all around; with guards patrolling up to 15 miles past Aphail, but only as far as Zundbridge to the south. The rest of the region is defended by militias and private forces.

City (winter): ~200k *density = 40m²/person i.e. spacious*

City (summer): ~800k *density = 10m²/person i.e. crowded*

Greater & Provincial (year round): ~1.6m *density = large garden to sizeable farm per family*

Total (winter): ~1.8m / total (summer): ~2.4m

Tier 1 = 10,000   DC 5

Tier 2 = 1000   DC 10

Tier 3 = 100   DC 15

Tier 4 = 10   DC 20

Epic+ = 1   DC 25

Food production (including fishing) is about adequate for the permanent population, but imports are needed in the high season.

Blingdenstone in 1489 (war footing, pop. 4700/300)

1371 DR, the drow destroyed Blingdenstone in retaliation for the deep gnomes aid to Clan Battlehammer (Battle of Keeper's Dale) some decades earlier. Dozens of bebilith demons were summoned that slaughtered around 9,000 gnomes.

Late 1489 DR, conquered by Orcus. After suffering terrible afflictions and losses, the surviving gnomes fled to Gauntlgrym. Several great heroes fell to delay the host of undead.

Tier 1 = 47/3*   DC 10

Tier 2 = 4-5/0-1   DC 15

Tier 3 = 0-1/0   DC 20

*outskirts/inner

Gauntlgrym in 1489 (war footing, pop. 5,000)

Tier 1 = 500   DC 0

Tier 2 = 50   DC 5

Tier 3 = 5   DC 10

Tier 4 = 0   DC 15

Epic+ = 1   DC 20 (Bruenor Battlehammer)

Detachments to Blingdenstone

Tier 1 = 200   DC 0

Tier 2 = 20   DC 5

Tier 3 = 2   DC 10 (Yurgunn Deepdelver, Forge Cleric; Rangrim Helcral, Crown Paladin)

Detachments Harpers, Order of the Gauntlet, Emerald Enclave, Lords Alliance and Zhentarim

Tier 1 = 200   DC 0

Tier 2 = 20   DC 5

Tier 3 = 2   DC 10 (Bor Starag, Zhentarim Diviner)

Gracklstugh in 1489 (war footing, pop. 10,000 free)

1372 DR, during the Silence of Lolth, King Horgar Steelshadow IV led the armies of Gracklstugh to victory against Menzoberranzan at the Pillars of Woe. The duergar were pushed back when Lolth returned in **1373 DR**.

Tier 1 = 1000   DC 0

Tier 2 = 100   DC 5

Tier 3 = 10   DC 10 (includes the Deepking)

Tier 4 = 1   DC 15 (Wizard)

Gracklstugh Slaves

Unskilled	20,000	**150gp (3d4*20)**	*i.e. 2sp/day earnings*
Skilled	2,000	**1500gp (3d4*200)**	*i.e. 2gp/day earnings*
Tier 1	200	**3000gp (3d4*400)**	*i.e. 4gp/day earnings*
Tier 2	20	**6000gp (3d4*800)**	*i.e. 8gp/day earnings*

Field army (~1500 free, 1500 slaves)

Tier 1 = 150   Kavalrachni, Stone Guards

Tier 2 = 15   Xarrorn, Priests

Tier 3 = 1-2   Deepking, Head Priest

Expeditionary force (~500 free, 500 slaves)

Tier 1 = 50   Kavalrachni, Stone Guards

Tier 2 = 5   Xarrorn, Priests

Tier 3 = 2   Deepking, Head Priest

Menzoberranzan in 1489 (centre of excellence, pop. 20,000 free)

Tier 1 = 2000	DC 0	
Tier 2 = 200	DC 5	
Tier 3 = 20	DC 10	
Tier 4 = 2	DC 15 (including Gromph Baenre)	
Epic+ = 0-1	DC 20 (Matron Baenre)	

Menzoberranzan Slaves

Unskilled	40,000	**150gp (3d4*20)** *i.e. 2sp/day earnings*
Skilled	4,000	**1500gp (3d4*200)** *i.e. 2gp/day earnings*
Tier 1	400	**3000gp (3d4*400)** *i.e. 4gp/day earnings*
Tier 2	40	**6000gp (3d4*800)** *i.e. 8gp/day earnings*

House Mizzrym, 4th House of Menzoberranzan (allied House Baenre, House Xorlarrin)

Matron Miz'ri Mizzrym CE Cleric Tier 3

Courdh Mizzrym CE Wizard Tier 3

~~Ilvara Mizzrym (destroyed, Corrin) Clr10~~

Dominates Menzoberranzan's slave trade

14 nobles (7 priestesses, 1 high priestess); 13 house males (8 fighters, 5 wizards); 300 drow soldiers; 400 slaves (200 goblins, 100 orcs, 100 bugbears)

House Vandree, 7th House of Menzoberranzan (allied House Baenre)

Matron Fiirnel'ther Vandree CE Cleric Tier 3

~~Asha Vandree (destroyed, Corrin) Cleric Tier 2~~

~~Shoor Vandree (destroyed, Corrin) Fighter Tier 2~~

Vicious, vindictive, and determined to rise to the top

13 nobles (4 priestesses, 2 high priestesses); 7 house males (5 fighters, 2 wizards); 150 drow soldiers; 120 slaves

House Duskryn, 9th House of Menzoberranzan (allied House Srune'lett)

Matron Prae'anelle Duskryn CE Cleric Tier 3

Zelzpassa Duskryn CE Cleric/Rogue Tier 3

Xarilyn Duskryn CG Cleric/Rogue Tier 2

Jorlan Duskryn CE Fighter Tier 2

Neheedro Duskryn (medusa, insane) CE Sorcerer Tier 2

Holds the charter (from House Baenre) for looting Blingdenstone

14 nobles (6 priestesses, 2 high priestesses); 10 house males (8 fighters, 2 wizards); 3000 drow soldiers; 200 slaves

Chapter 3: Creating Adventures

Campaign Advancement

Slower Pace (halved)

Level 1—Characters typically advance after two sessions
Tier 1—Characters typically advance once per four sessions
Tier 2—Characters typically advance once per six sessions
Tier 3 & 4—Characters typically advance once per four sessions

Level	Sessions/Level	XP/Session	Adventuring Days/Session	Encounters/Session
1	2	150	0.5	2
2	2	300	0.5	2
3	4	450	0.4	2
4	6	633	0.4	1
5	6	1250	0.4	1
6	6	1500	0.4	1
7	6	1833	0.4	1
8	6	2333	0.4	1
9	6	2667	0.4	1
10	6	3500	0.4	1
11	4	3750	0.4	1
12	4	5000	0.4	1
13	4	5000	0.4	1
14	4	6250	0.4	1
15	4	7500	0.4	1
16	4	7500	0.4	1
17	4	10000	0.4	1
18	4	10000	0.4	1
19	4	12500	0.4	1
20				
	86		33	104

An Adventuring Career

Up to 90 four hour sessions might be needed to go from level 1 to level 20; narrating about 200 encounters over 33 "adventuring days[1]". Another 250[2] days could be required for rest and recovery, plus as many as 500 to train. Thus, a character's career from level 1 to 20 might span two years of a character's lifetime, adventuring continuously.

Creating Encounters

Encounter Classification

Encounters are classified as either attritional (Hard threshold) or lethal (Deadly threshold). The former are likely to merely deplete resources; the latter might result in character deaths.

Encounter Multipliers

The following revised multipliers are used for number of monsters faced –

Number or Monsters	Multiplier
1	0.5
2	0.75
3 to 6	1
7 to 10	1.25
11 to 14	1.5
15+	2

Encounters Between Rests

On average, characters should be able to handle 3 attritional and 1 lethal encounter between long rests. One adventuring day might span a couple of sessions, with one or two encounters resolved in each. Characters might take a short rest every session, and a long rest every other session.

The actual mixture of encounters between long rests will vary greatly, but overall attritional encounters should be around twice as frequent as lethal ones.

Monster Recovery

By RAW it appears that named monsters—as NPCs—use the same resting rules as characters. For the campaign, all creatures use the same resting rules.

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[1] **Adventuring days** relate to refresh of abilities, rather than the day-night cycle: they can span any amount of calendar time.

[2] Using resting times nearer the Gritty Realism option in the DMG, and a training option similar to that suggested under Downtime.

Narrative Quests

Quests can reduce the number of combat encounters required to advance, awarding XP to characters at the Medium threshold for their level.

To satisfy a quest, a prefigured narrative outcome must be achieved. It must come with costs and risks, be possible to fail, and have consequences for failure. Completing a significant quest might grant inspiration.

Encounter Lethality

Risk of Death

A party could face a score of truly lethal encounters over their journey from level 1 to 20. If each one offers a palpable chance of death—say about a 1:12 (per character)—even half-a-dozen such encounters are likely to claim one or two lives.

Attritional encounters must be an order of magnitude less risky—perhaps 1:120—but a party might come to face a hundred f them, and is unlikely to come through half that number without losses.

The Role of Revival

On average such encounters could kill a character thrice over. Half the time, powerful revivification magic puts them back on their feet.

Deaths (P = 4)	to Tier 2	to Tier 3	to Tier 4	to Epic
from Tier 1	2	7	14	19
from Tier 2		5	12	17
from Tier 3			7	12
from Tier 4				5

Party Tier	Revivals	Permanent Deaths
Tier 1	1	1
Tier 2	+3	+2
Tier 3	+4	+3
Tier 4	+3	+2
Epic		

Chapter 6: Between Adventures

Downtime

Absence while Building a Stronghold

Work can continue while a character is away, with each 2 days absence adding 1 day to the construction time.

Training

Finding and Paying for a Trainer

Characters must find a trainer at the tier of the level they want to <u>attain</u>. Their fees are typically: tier 1 = 20gp, tier 2 = 200gp, tier 3 = 1500gp, tier 4 = 10,000gp. Time taken is as the DMG.

Chapter 7: Treasure

Magic Items

When "You" are the Caster

Where the wording of the item makes you the caster, as implied by "*as if you cast*" or "*that you can cast*", you must maintain concentration if required.

Dawnbringer (OOTA)

The sword can adjust her default radiance. She prefers brighter to dimmer, but she is sympathetic to group needs. She needs 24 hours concentration to make the change. She loses concentration if she is drawn or uses any of her powers, or is attacked or harmed. Telepathic communication or her current bearer dying will also distract her. Dawnbringer can set her default radiance to 5', or back to 15'.

Gnome Relics (OOTA)

The Armor of the Golden Hills, Dagger of Shining Jewels, and Shield of Daffodils.

Items & Gold / Party

Tier	Cons.	Perm.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Gold/Hoard	Hoards/Level
1	2.53	0.62	1.47	0.66	0.44			0.53	0.05			375	1-3
2	9.34	2.88	4.78	2.8	1.68	0.27		2.1	0.5	0.09		1,875	3
3	15.36	4.85	5.83	4.27	3.88	1.47	0.24	2.34	1.1	0.84	0.24	9,375	2
4	20.24	6.04	5.83	4.27	4.96	3.71	1.89	2.34	1.3	0.99	0.99	46,875	2

Tier 1 — Per Party by Level 4

Accumulated by end of tier = 2,625 gp / adjustment = none

Tier 2 — Per Party by Level 10

Accumulated by end of tier = 36,375 gp / adjustment = halve rolled

Tier 3 — Per Party by Level 16

Accumulated by end of tier = 148,875 gp / adjustment = quarter rolled

Tier 4 — Per Party by Level 20

Accumulated by end of tier = 523,875 gp / adjustment = eighth rolled