



ULTIMATE TOOLBOX

ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT GROUP PRESENTS ULTIMATE TOOLBOX

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DEDICATION FOR ERIC WUJCIK, WHO INSPIRED US ALL**

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CHAPTER SEVEN

PLOT (GM ONLY)

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Table 7-7: Getting the PCs Together

- 1 All related or from the same village
- 2 Bound by charter or contract
- 3 Common goal or membership
- 4 Common social class
- 5 Conscripted or press ganged
- 6 Down to last few coppers
- 7 Former/current rivals
- 8 Grew up in orphanage
- 9 Hand-picked by king
- 10 Highly patriotic
- 11 Hired by local lord known for his fairness
- 12 Owe favor to a particular NPC
- 13 Paying off a debt
- 14 Received a mysterious letter/invitation
- 15 Rival families working off blood-oath
- 16 Served in army or aboard a ship
- 17 Serve the same church or patron
- 18 Survived the same tragic event (ambush, etc.)
- 19 Worked together before
- 20 Wrong place at the wrong time

Table 7-17: Patrons, Generic 4*

- 1 Soft-hearted queen
- 2 Strategic merchant
- 3 Stuttering lady-in-waiting
- 4 Suspicious bodyguard
- 5 Tenacious collector
- 6 Thick-skinned herbalist
- 7 Tireless paladin
- 8 Tyrannical captain
- 9 Ugly mercenary captain
- 10 Unkempt sage
- 11 Venerable courtier
- 12 Wanted criminal
- 13 Wealthy merchant
- 14 Worldly captain
- 15 Worrisome teacher
- 16 Xenophobic dwarf
- 17 Wandering cleric
- 18 Wide-eyed vizier
- 19 Wise mage
- 20 Zealot priest

* A patron may have a secondary objective beyond what he or she hires a PCs to do

Table 7-21: Unique Rewards

- 1 Access to a library or sage
- 2 Ancient or forgotten song
- 3 Answer to a troublesome riddle
- 4 Citizenship or voting rights
- 5 Council seat
- 6 Family heirloom or rare antique
- 7 Forgotten book or lost lore
- 8 Glory (parade in your honor, etc.)
- 9 Hidden truth or terrible secret
- 10 Honorary medal or title
- 11 Land or estate
- 12 Magical secret
- 13 Monument in honor of deeds
- 14 Mount/Steed of impeccable breeding
- 15 Rare formula or ritual
- 16 Religious relic or unholy artifact
- 17 Seat at table of the king (or important noble)
- 18 Ship, with or without crew
- 19 Slaves or concubines
- 20 Treasure map

Table 7-50: Gossip About a City/Town

- 1 Almost wiped out by disease a few years ago
- 2 Best or worst brothels in miles
- 3 Best or worst manners and hospitality
- 4 Buildings have unusual architecture
- 5 Cemetery has a high rate of undead
- 6 Citizens known for violent tempers
- 7 Filled with cheats and liars
- 8 Flooded every spring
- 9 Has an assassin's guild
- 10 Home to the most beautiful woman
- 11 Makes the most deadly poisons
- 12 Makes their own spirits
- 13 Mayor is a scoundrel
- 14 Outrageous taxes on imports
- 15 Regularly attacked by nearby monsters
- 16 Retired adventurer(s) live there
- 17 Starting a gambling hall
- 18 Visited by a series of unsolved murders
- 19 Weapons are banned from confines
- 20 Won't deal with outsiders

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Table 7–25: Villains

1	Bangorot: Master cultist who seeks the means to destroy a powerful artifact of good and light
2	Bella Gnor: Former cleric of the god of valor who grew corrupt and greedy
3	Bitarra: Fireball throwing wizard that wants to burn everything down to the ground
4	Ceratin: Thief wronged by one too many dwarves who now wages a secret war
5	Commander Sabian: Military leader from a now conquered nation leading an insurgent campaign
6	Cryntona: Corrupt priest who seeks to destroy all knowledge on an ancient trapped god of good
7	Drognor: Former physician became obsessed with death and now is the master of poison
8	Hiirta: Blight druid of the Bleak Cabal who seeks to corrupt a power node lay line to darkness
9	Jadesinger: Witch in the mountain that seeks a way to maintain eternal youth
10	Khalvok Estendis: Corrupt magistrate of large city who helps release caught thieves from the guild
11	Klopfen Bloodguard: Champion of a dark god, raised to follow the cult's dark desires
12	Longekalt Staze: Pirate of the high seas, raised to value the coin more than the value of close friends
13	Lungalis: Seeks to raise an army to defeat a leader that once humiliated him long ago
14	Mercutio Tramtola: Wields sorcerous powers from a demonic pact for hire against nobility
15	Mishka Hakira: Jealous student of arcane arts who uncovered a book of forbidden spells
16	Nascarlith: Master illusionist who uses both sorcery and alchemy to hide any traces of crimes
17	Rhumtal Lectrotis: Former high priest of the god of the dead turned necromancer at large
18	Skiltar Rhume: Lecherous puppetmaster of local beggars and owner of a seedy theatre house
19	Wykurt Sevan: Accidentally drank a poison and survived but it drove him insane
20	Yuntaris: Peerless archer of the east, now hires out his crew as a long-range assassins

Table 7–29: Brute Details

1	Agebaloen "Lock Picks" Diveeye: Half-elf street rat who spent most of his youth in various prisons
2	Aralcuag "Dead Shot" Dawntracer: Elven archer who fights for coin instead of racial honor
3	Braighn "Cutman": Hobgoblin axe-wielder known for hacking at his foes long after they are dead
4	Eradin "Scars" Kaulman: Human sword thrower covered with scars who brags of his many kills
5	Frelk Slatefighter: Hairless human brawler known for his signature "Unarmed Death Strike"
6	Heinrick Jameson III: Human rapier fighter who frequently wears flamboyantly-colored clothes
7	Ilurars "Bruiser" Coralbane: Slow and dimwitted half-orc with the strength of two men
8	Jamie "Blood Dagger" Farhunter: Human (with ogre blood) known for her murderous past
9	Kayle "Raven Hair" Risian: Half-elf archer known for her precise shots and signature fletchery
10	"Little Torr" Steelbattler: Dwarf almost as tall as a human and an excellent sword fighter
11	Lyle "White Skull" Proudbarrel: Bald dwarf with a white skull painted on his head
12	Nidohuit "Quiver" Shothunter: Human adopted by an elven barbarian tribe; hunts dwarves for sport
13	Penel "Bloodloss" Greenbottle: Angry human woman whose rosy lips are frequently poisoned
14	Reenreen "Pigaxe" Brownbarrel: Fur covered troll said to have a wild boar for a father
15	Rotob "One Ear" Gembuilder: Hobgoblin axe man who lost an ear when a bugbear bit it off
16	Tireghaeb "Double Daggers" Jadeblade: Elf known for plucking out the eyes of her victims
17	"Two Punches" Grimbreaker: Human ravager, well-trained in the art of bare-handed fighting
18	Ungar "Long Beard": Dwarf said to have strangled two men with his beard before it was shaved off
19	Wykirk "Tattoos" Simien: Bugbear who tattooed the faces of her first three victims on her back
20	Zhang "Green Tooth": Half-orc who's physical strength is only matched by his horrid teeth

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Table 7–36: Evil Wizard Names

- 1 Aduiz the Visionist
- 2 Agnakir Chamari
- 3 Aleshian the Cabalist
- 4 Bondiak Seeneye
- 5 Casonlon Apparition
- 6 De'Tlakar Circalis
- 7 Derelith Conjuris
- 8 Girithiav Oozemein
- 9 Inklooria Magicztome
- 10 Klamentile the Theurgist
- 11 Kylvayne Windmaster
- 12 Lycias Veinweaver
- 13 Mariuk Spellbinder
- 14 Pentalis Boneburner
- 15 Serefyn Furyflame
- 16 Skelryn Mistmaster
- 17 Solnaryz Phantasmist
- 18 Succent Blooddry
- 19 Thasalian Onecast
- 20 Wuiliar Curseman

Table 7–46: Villain Affectations, Objects

- 1 Animal skin belt and boots
- 2 Badge of station or superiority (orb, etc.)
- 3 Chains worn as bandoliers
- 4 Decorative arm bracers
- 5 Expensive clothing or impeccable dress
- 6 Falcon on his arm
- 7 Gold-rimmed monocle
- 8 Ineffective, but ornate breastplate
- 9 Inlaid and ornate iron crown
- 10 Intelligent, loyal, and sentient familiar
- 11 Obnoxious jewelry (rings on every finger, etc)
- 12 Ornate jewelry
- 13 Pair of massive hunting dogs on a chain
- 14 Personalized, exotic, high-quality weapon
- 15 Pocket watch or timepiece
- 16 Signet ring with personal mark
- 17 Top hat
- 18 Unholy or desecrated symbol
- 19 Walking stick with hidden blade
- 20 Well-used book of quotations and prose

Table 7–40: Hidden Agenda

- 1 Acquire political power seat
- 2 Alliance with evil faction or race
- 3 Bound by blood oath or debt
- 4 Confusion
- 5 Deconstruction or societal experiment
- 6 Destruction of local church
- 7 Disorder
- 8 Earn favor of a cult or secret society
- 9 Enslavement of particular peoples
- 10 Genocide
- 11 Keep army busy, fed, or trained
- 12 Main goal is a diversionary tactic
- 13 Overthrow of local government
- 14 Placate an even more powerful villain
- 15 Quietly usurp the magical power of another
- 16 Revenge for an unperceived slight
- 17 Spread fear of the unknown
- 18 Universal mysteries
- 19 Unknown (magically coerced or otherwise)
- 20 Unleashing a powerful ritual

Table 7–62: Clues 8

- 1 Specially-ordered perfume/cologne
- 2 Specific book missing from library
- 3 Spell book with wizard's private sigil
- 4 Spell components for a specific charm
- 5 Spell components for a specific illusion
- 6 Tattoo indicates affiliation or magic
- 7 Torn banner with clan symbol or heraldry
- 8 Torn scroll with address
- 9 Unfinished letter to loved one
- 10 Unfinished novel with locations and names
- 11 Unfinished painting with hidden meaning
- 12 Unfinished song on an old parchment
- 13 Urn with message painted around lip
- 14 Visit from a mysterious interloper
- 15 Wagon wheel tracks lead up to wall
- 16 Water spills between cracks in stone floor
- 17 Wax impression of a key
- 18 Wax stamp with monogram or heraldry
- 19 Well-made, custom mask or disguise
- 20 Withered old map to someone's home

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Table 7-75: Quests

- 1 Charter a ship to a dread sargasso to discover the fate of a legendary pirate's lair
- 2 Discover a lost oasis and return an ancient hero's flesh to stone
- 3 Discover the fate of a needed sage and wizard by searching the remains of his tower
- 4 Discover the ingredients to an antidote for a poison which has been resistant to healing
- 5 Dispose of a ruler's scepter in a whirlpool of lava to break his tyranny
- 6 Escort a powerful merchant group to a town of wealthy pirates in seas of danger
- 7 Explore an old dragon's cave to verify stories of its demise
- 8 Explore the tunnels unearthed by a previously hidden secret door
- 9 Find a riverside cave hinted at in bard's song to discover a lost lake of prehistoric creatures
- 10 Follow a map created by a blind astrologer to learn the truth of a prophecy
- 11 Follow a map to a supposed abandoned or lost dwarven gold mine
- 12 Free a mountain pass from the marauding of some giant cave insect and its brood
- 13 Pass through the Ice Caves to discover the lost well of the rainbow pool, a key to immortality
- 14 Penetrate the deepest glade of a nearby forest to gain an audience with the treant and dryads there
- 15 Rescue a powerful weapon smith jailed in a rival city and return him to forge an item of rule
- 16 Slay a dragon large enough to craft dragonscale shields for the king's personal elite guardians
- 17 Steal the all-seeing eye of a trio of hags for manufacture in a powerful magic item of redemption
- 18 Stop an evil satyr's blood curse on a forest stream to win an audience with the elf princess
- 19 Travel to an imprisoned island to return someone or something turned to gold at the shrine
- 20 Traverse a maze of the vampire crypts; find the mummy buried in an ancient tomb of a lost empire

Table 7-82: Secrets 4

- 1 The Land of Kalaria is so cold everyone who dies there finds their spirit trapped in crystals of ice.
- 2 The Land of Turnbel trains Eldritch Knights to one day fight the armies of the apocalypse.
- 3 Loremasters of Kryton possess the knowledge to speak the true language of arcana.
- 4 Making an arrow tip from the rib bone of a dragon creates a dragonslaying arrow.
- 5 The mayor of Loftwick is the only man to ever escape from the prison of Abreinth.
- 6 The mayor of Serdoon 'honored' the woman who spurned him by petrifying her in his garden.
- 7 Mirrors crafted with silver frames are gateways for devils.
- 8 Mixing holy water and wine heals wounds from fiends as a potion of cure moderate wounds.
- 9 Moskos the wizard has perfected a potion to cure lycanthropy.
- 10 The mysterious assassin "The Cloaker" is actually the illusionist Atlorn.
- 11 The noble family Khyrst hires bards to tell false tales of their greatness.
- 12 On the scalp of the pirate Tharus Belgrun is a treasure map leading to Diamond Isle.
- 13 Rangers of the Vormus Craggs can meld into stone.
- 14 The dark red fog over the plains of Karlainth corrupts all who touch, turning them to chaotic beasts.
- 15 Rengarth Abbey teaches monks a mystical style of sorcery and martial arts.
- 16 The Ruins of Gnar were once a great fortress commanded by a mortal who ascended to godhood.
- 17 Ruland the druid has a pair of dire leopards as animal companions.
- 18 Satyrs brew an alcohol that can mimic any alchemical elixir.
- 19 Scribing arcane spells with the feather of a phoenix produces empowered versions.
- 20 Seven elder air elementals wait to dispense wisdom to those who ascend Mount Hollai.

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Table 7–100: Job Postings 2

- 1 Discover who poisoned a recent shipment of wine
- 2 Discover why a barbarian tribe attacks travelers moving through a valley
- 3 Encode secret messages for the King and help keep our country safe
- 4 Escort aristocrat to find lost pirate treasure
- 5 Escort dwarf merchant on trip to neighboring city
- 6 Explore a recently discovered island
- 7 Explore a tower others say moves across the landscape
- 8 Explore and map ruins of an ancient city
- 9 Extra guards needed for a local celebration
- 10 Find out why wolf pack attacks on nearby farms have suddenly increased
- 11 Find the pass through the mountains that the goblin tribes use
- 12 Flood washed away family heirlooms; need someone to locate and return objects
- 13 Get back stolen wizard's spell book
- 14 Goblin translator needed for court case
- 15 Guard an important caravan train heading across borders
- 16 Guard nobles while hunting
- 17 Help bolster the city watch as important ambassadors come to town
- 18 Help clear out Kobolds and their traps out of the new mine to earn a great reward
- 19 Help quell riots over recent overthrowing of the ruler
- 20 Hunt down a monster that has been plaguing local roads

IN OTHER WORDS...

Ricardo Montalban realized early in his career that the best type of villain does not see himself as villainous. He may do villainous things, but the character feels that he is doing them for righteous reasons. Likewise, with heroes, Montalban said he always tried to find a flaw in the character because no one is completely good or completely evil.

The best antagonists think themselves the protagonists of a story. Many tragedies explore dark characters, showing vile people getting away with the worst crimes. There is so much gray between absolute good and absolute evil, it is impossible to define anyone with these terms. The best villains started in a tavern just like you.



ENCOUNTER DESIGNER

Especially useful for fleshing out a travel sequence or making a city or community come to life, this form focuses ideas and themes for interesting encounters that showcase your world, make a trek seem worthwhile, or liven up a city when a character gets sidetracked. The best part—most of the answers to this form can be found by flipping to any page in this book.

This chart was originally designed to bridge the gap between the quick travel sequence (the “Indiana Jones” red-line style) or the detailed (and often bogged-down) trip where the GM describes every mile in excruciating detail. The party can travel just long enough until it comes upon some part of the world you want to showcase. It’s specifically designed so that every encounter card should not (and need not) lead to combat. When the players are presented with options and decide to move on or ignore the encounter, that’s their loss.

First, decide what type of encounter it is (it could have multiple entries). Is it a *Challenge*, likely to lead to combat and confrontation? Is it strictly a *Roleplaying* encounter where no real combat stats are required at all? Is it *Static*, set in a singular location only, or is it *Dynamic*, occurring anywhere the PCs are at the time it’s needed?

Then, what is the encounter for? Is it an interesting scene to show off something important to the players? Who is the opponent or roleplaying encounter with? Is it some sort of trap or pitfall? What is the goal or purpose of the thing in question? Is it providing or hampering passage through an area? Is it imparting or withholding important information or resources? Does it want to encounter the party or simply avoid it?

Where is the encounter taking place, a city or town? The wilderness? By a river, at the base of a mountain, along a well-worn road? Some of the charts in here could even suggest another plane or by a dungeon entrance!

Then there are the how and when of the encounter. This is where you can throw in a little plot twist or complication to make the encounter more interesting. This also includes interesting environmental effects.

In your encounter notes include a summary of the purpose and use for the encounter or a page reference for pertinent rules.

Take the information sparked above by the different categories and write yourself a little narrative at the bottom summing up the purpose and use of the encounter, or a note to jog your memory to a page in a rulebook with information pertaining to the encounter.

Finally, think about some generic non-combat skills that may come into play and circle them and brush up on their use.

ENCOUNTER DESIGNER

Ø Challenge

Ø Static

Ø Roleplaying

Ø Dynamic

OPPONENT

WHO

Monster / NPC

Scene / Trap

GOAL

WHAT

Passage / Info

Resources / Avoiding

LOCATION

WHERE

City / Forest

Dungeon / Other

MOTIVE

WHY

COMPLICATION

WHEN

HOW

ROLEPLAYING SKILLS

PLOT OUTLINE

Campaign Name _____

Unique Campaign Hook _____

GM _____

Campaign Theme/Tone _____

Plot

Plot _____

Adventure Core Location _____

Meeting Location _____

Instigation _____

Story Goal _____

Patron _____

Reward _____

Relevant Gossip _____

Secrets _____

Secret Keepers _____

Villain

Villain _____

Villain's Goal _____

Hidden Agenda _____

Trigger _____

Weakness _____

Tricks _____

Lair _____

Affectations _____

Henchmen _____

Brute _____

Misc

En Route

Getting There _____

Clues _____

Paths _____

Complications _____

Twists _____

Surprise Ending _____

Encounters

USING THIS CHAPTER

Adventure Awareness

15 Post: A public post asking for the meeting or job to be completed

Meet Me At The...

15 Stone bridge

Patrons, Generic 4

18 Wide-eyed vizier

Adventure Instigation

18 Someone going wants group to join them

Connections

8 Deception: One goes along with another's plans to learn enough to take the original's place

Adventure Location 2

4 Mountain of

Adventure Location 3

17 Eternity/Forever

Getting There, Detailed

8 Between two warring nations

Story Goal

10 Infiltrate a difficult location

Villains

5 Commander Sabian: Military leader from a now conquered nation leading an insurgent campaign

Villain Goals 2

15 Revenge

Villainous Names

10 Gitario the faithless

Henchmen

3 Brainwashed sycophant

Villain Affections, Personal

8 Extremely handsome or beautiful

Personalized Reward

5 Favor of the king

The adventures notice a posted parchment asking for interested scouts to meet someone at the old bridge at midnight. There, they meet Johan, a wide-eyed vizier bearing a badge of the kingdom. "You will be escorting his ward, Hoscath, to the Mountain of Eternity far to the west between two warring kingdoms." [Secretly, Hoscath is going along to learn enough to return and take old Johan's place at court.] Johan ensures the party a favor of the king. Johan tells the party the evil Commander Sabian is there plotting something evil, and he wants the group to infiltrate the place. Sabian was in the army of one of the warring nations until late. In the mountain lair he's attended by his loyal bodyguard, Gitario the faithless, little more than a brainwashed sycophant. Sabian is very charismatic and likely has many followers.