

GM's Cookbook

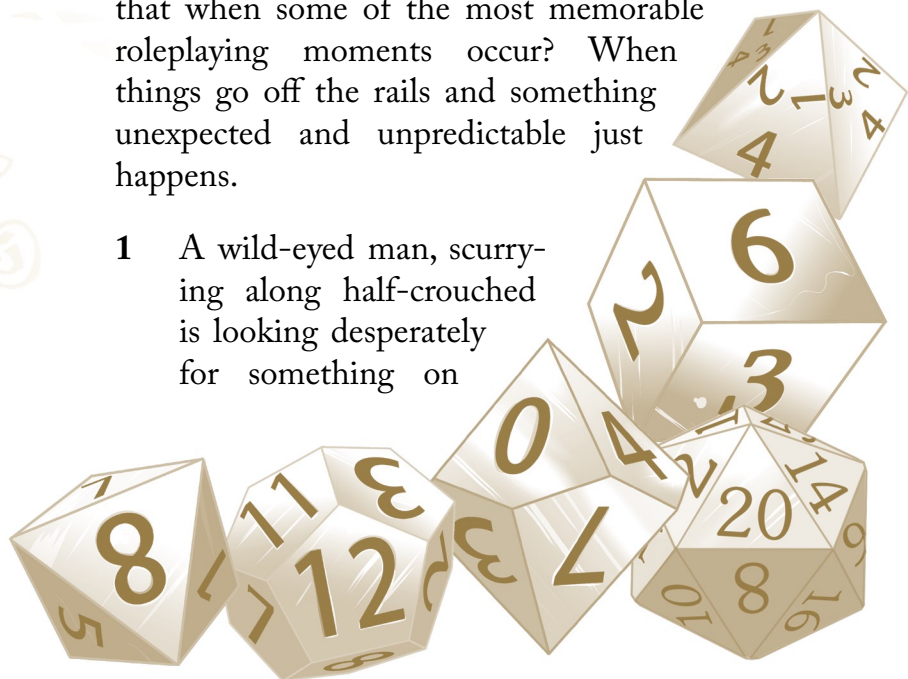
Random Events #1

Random and unexpected events can help give your campaign a realistic verisimilitude. It gives the players the idea their characters exist in a real breathing world and things are occurring outside the scope of their limited perceptions. They can hear snippets of conversation, witness strange actions that make little sense when you don't know their context, or have unexpected encounters with denizens of the campaign world.

These random events should be used judiciously; you don't want to derail the adventurers while they're doggedly pursuing clues in their quest to uncover the location of the Lost Temple of the Blind Rodent King. But you do want to add some spice when the action slacks off, or the adventurers are kicking their heels trying to figure out what their next move should be.

The random events listed in this installment of the GM's Cookbook take place in settlements, such as hamlets, villages, and cities. These events are left open-ended; you'll have to improvise if the players wish to involve themselves in the event but isn't that when some of the most memorable roleplaying moments occur? When things go off the rails and something unexpected and unpredictable just happens.

- 1 A wild-eyed man, scurrying along half-crouched is looking desperately for something on



the ground. He stops when he sees the adventurers' feet in front of him and looks up. "Have you seen it," he demands. If the characters question him he only responds loudly, "You'll know when you see it", and scurries off continuing his search.

- 2 A temple bell is sounding the hour when, on the last sounding of the bell, instead of the expected "bong" the characters hear a shrill scream. Something has befallen the acolyte who was ringing the bell.
- 3 A farmer's cart careens dangerously past, with the white-haired farmer slumped at the reins.
- 4 A tailor steps from his shop and begins sizing up a passing adventurer, quoting measurements of the character's chest, legs and arms just by looking. A passing casket maker overhears the tailor and the two begin arguing about the character's height and width.
- 5 A young man strings his lute and begins serenading a young woman in a second story window.
- 6 Two heavily armed warriors escorting a third man in stocks stop the adventurers and ask where the nearest inn is.
- 7 An outlandishly dressed artist with easel and pallet in hand stops an adventurer, insisting he be allowed to paint a portrait of him or her. The artist claims it will be greater than the portrait of the Weeping Princess of Willingham.
- 8 A sudden gust of wind blows a tumbleweed across the road, where it tumbles into a smithy and promptly catches fire.
- 9 A tall man in a large coat, his face hidden behind a wide brimmed hat, stumbles in the characters' direction. He can be heard repeating "right, right, right" in a hoarse whisper. He manages to step out of the characters' way before stumbling and falling. The oversized coat spills open to reveal it actually contains three halflings all dressed in the garb of circus acrobats.
- 10 A passing trader warns the adventurers to stay away from the inn up the road with the "sign with a badger on it". He tells them it's a den of outlaws and cutthroats.
- 11 A stray dog snatches a cooling pie of a nearby windowsill and drops it at the adventurers' feet before bolting in the other direction.
- 12 A crow settles on a nearby fencepost and begins pecking at something grasped in its claw – a bloody human eyeball.
- 13 A trio of workers, busy repairing the roof of a nearby building, leap to safety as the building falls into a sinkhole.
- 14 A dwarf woman pitches the contents of a bucket containing spoiled fruits and vegetables out a window and it lands in the adventurers' path.
- 15 A woman who appears to be a drunken wizard lurches from the entrance to a tavern. She pauses in front of the one of the adventurers, languidly circling a finger in front of his face and slurs, "I'm going to cast a spell on you, I'm going to cast a spell on you".
- 16 Two town guards approach the characters and ask bluntly if they're affiliated with the "Brotherhood of the Broken Crescent". The guards tell the characters not to start any trouble and proceed to follow them for as long as they stay in town or the rest of the day.

- 17 A decrepit old man missing a leg hobbles up to the adventurers, tells them he lost his leg in “the wars” and pleads with them for a few coppers, or something to eat. If the adventurers indulge him, he leans in close and tells them “actually, they took my leg”, and points a bony finger at a group of gnomes who are nearby selling magical salves and tonics out of the back of a dilapidated cart.
- 18 A roguish looking man wearing an foppish hat with a peacock feather in it, wielding a rapier storms up to one of the adventurers, opens his mouth, raises his free hand, and then stops short. He says, “Sorry old fruit, wrong person,” and walks past continuing purposefully up the street.
- 19 A jester standing atop a table outside a busy tavern is telling ribald jokes about maidens and unicorns to a crowd of laughing drunks when the adventurers walk by. He stops his joke to poke fun at the adventurers, pointing out anything out of the ordinary about their dress or characteristics. The jester goes on to belittle some recent mishap or failure the characters endured, listing details with inexplicable accuracy.
- 20 A man bursts up from the doors of a nearby root cellar, carrying various scrolls and parchments. He stumbles, dropping his papers, and shattering his spectacles. He wails “No, no”, pulls a holy symbol from beneath his shirt, clutches it tight and runs flat out for a nearby copse of trees. As the characters puzzle over the papers that contain scribbled notes in a dead tongue, and complicated mathematical formulae, a solar eclipse begins.

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