

# Rolling with Laughter



*A Comedy Adventure  
&  
A Guide to Running Comedy Adventures*

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## About this Adventure

In this comedy adventure, a group of unlikely heroes are sent by king Alfred to find his missing daughter, the princess Tiffany Ember. The PCs first investigate the scene of the kidnapping, and interrogate a fortune teller eyewitness. They then cross the Frightful Forest to the Goblin Market, where the goblins point out two possible culprits: a lich named Gary the Old, and the infamous witch Hater. The party travels underground and approaches each of them in turn, eventually discovering that the princess has eloped to marry her chosen lover.

## Running this Adventure

This adventure is scene-based, with each scene leading directly to the next in a predictable fashion. Just like with a James Bond movie, the interesting part is in seeing how the PCs resolve the situation they are placed in; we know that the heroes will succeed, we just want to know how.

Each scene starts off with a boxed read-aloud text, followed by a short summary of its main elements, with useful information. It then continues with following sections:

**Narrative Purpose:** The purpose of the scene from the overall plot and gameplay perspective.

**Comedic Devices:** A list of the comic devices used for some of the jokes in the scene. Some are obvious, others are more elaborate. This adventure aims to help you, the GM, in understanding some of the practices behind running comedic adventures; I hope these pointers may be of use to you as a reference for designing or inserting some levity into other adventures you run.

**Expected outcomes:** Every scene ends with a description that transitions into the next scene. Since this is a roleplaying game, there is a very real chance that the players will do something

unexpected and push in a different direction; build on each scene's Narrative Purpose to improvise a solution that still achieves that purpose, which then naturally transition to the next scene.

## Pacing & Timing

Pacing and timing are very important in comedy, and also in convention games. Scene number 6 gives you an option for adjusting the length of the adventure. If you find yourself short on time when you arrive at Scene 6, then whichever route the players choose is the correct one, leading to the end of the adventure. If time is really running out you can instead skip to the final encounter (the wedding scene).

## Leave Room for Comedy

This adventure is designed to be comedic, but "comedy" does not mean "lots of jokes". Don't try to be funny yourself, this is not a standup show. The adventure works best if run it with a semi-serious tone and let the comedy naturally evolve during play, as the players encounter absurd situations.

The goal of this adventure is to create an experience that is focused around light-hearted fun and laughter rather than a heroic tale, with a glorious and happy conclusion. Thanks to the low stakes, it should be easy for the players to get a little looser than usual, be a bit more daring, and allow for some strange and funny situations.

This adventure can be played as part of a campaign that isn't itself comedic in nature, if it's somehow removed from the game's continuity. For example, you can present a framing device in the style of "The people at the pub tell a story about your exploits, which they claim is true and accurate... Tonight we will play that story."

## The Dozens System

This adventure is system-agnostic, meaning you can run it with any game you are comfortable with.

I suggest using the Dozens system which can be summed up as “just roll a d12, high is good and low is bad”. If you’d like, you can allow bonuses for being “pretty good” (+1) or “very good” (+2) at something. See the full system description on page 24.

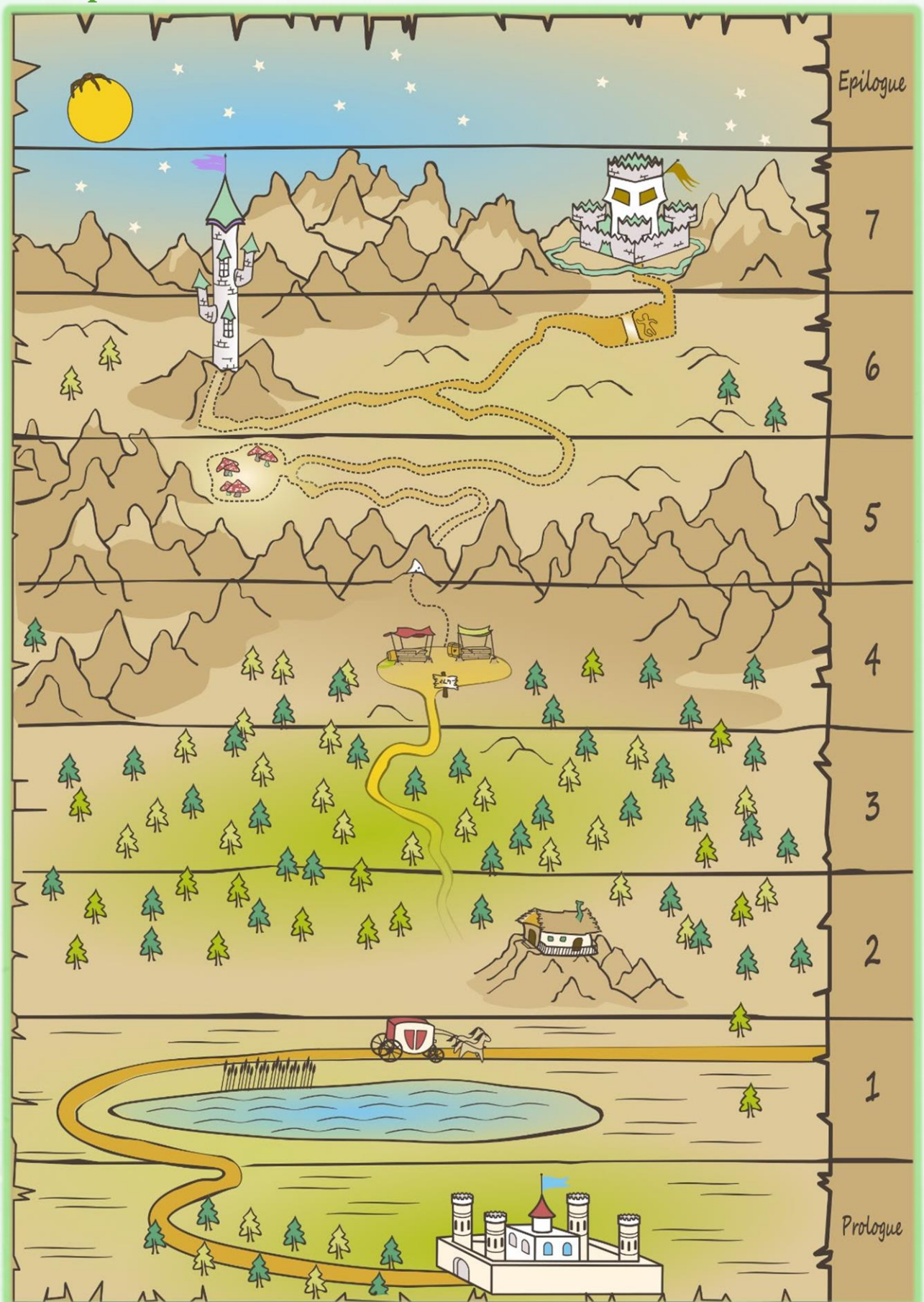
## Starting the Game

Place the map on the table and cover it with a sheet of paper. As the players advance in scenes, pull the cover sheet along the numbered guides to uncover the next area.

Put the character sheets at the center of the table. Make sure to fold the pages so that the secret information below the demarcation line is not seen. After each player has selected a character, ask everyone to unfold the sheets and read to themselves the secret information. Once everyone is ready, start the first scene.



# Map



# The Adventure

## Prologue: The Palace

You stand in the hall of king Alfred the First as he addresses you: “Heroes, I have summoned thee from the furthest reaches of this kingdom. My daughter, the princess Tiffany Ember, disappeared not an hour ago. She was taking her morning walk in her morning carriage when she was taken. You are the best of the best that actually appeared, return her to me before sundown.”

Introduce yourselves!

<each player introduce their hero >

“Heroes! Should you fail me, you will be disgraced, your guilds disbanded, your families imprisoned, your friends harassed, and your pets confiscated! But worry not, for I am sending with you my most trusted tracker and friend, Ernest. Now, make haste to the scene of the kidnapping, on the trail of the morning carriage.”

Ernest, whom you have mistaken for a pile of rags on the floor, raises his head from the table and you are aghast to discover that he is completely drunk, before he falls asleep again.

### Scene elements

- **State the problem:** The princess Tiffany Ember has disappeared
- **Characters introduction:** Let the heroes introduce themselves.
- **Reward, penalty, and time frame:** Define the penalty for failure and the timetable (until sunset).
- **Ernest the tracker:** A drunken has-been, Ernest doesn't have any useful skills for this (or any other) adventure.

If questioned, the king mentions the kingdom's two resident arch-villains as

potential culprits: the evil lich Gary the Old or the evil witch Hater. Both live far away, to the north of the kingdom.

Ernest will fall asleep in the throne room. Allow the party to leave without him. If the party wants him to come with them, they must carry him along (he will fit over any character's shoulder or in any backpack). Ernest will continue to be a hindrance to the characters: he falls asleep during every scene, always needs to be carried, makes a loud noise if the party is trying to be stealthy, etc. He will never be of any actual help.

**Narrative Purpose:** This scene is an exposition, meant to present the plot and give every player a chance to introduce their character. Ernest is comic relief, whenever describing him feel free to elaborate on how slowly he moves and how incapable in handling even simple tasks.

### Comedic Devices

- The princess taking her morning walk in a morning carriage is a funny term as it implies a walk yet it is done in a carriage. It plays on the stereotype of a spoiled princess who cannot be bothered to walk even when she is literally out for a walk.
- The king's promise of retribution for failure starts off as a threat but then escalates to absurdity. The use of hyperbole in the threats makes them comical rather than alarming.
- Ernest is described by the king as a gifted tracker but is then revealed to be a useless drunk. The more extreme Ernest's condition is the funnier the twist.

**Expected Outcome:** Having received their quest from the king and learning that time is of the essence, the party set forth on their adventure. Ernest is either left behind or carried by the characters.



## Scene 1:

### The Scene of the Kidnapping

You approach the place from which the princess was kidnapped and see what is obviously a morning carriage, judging by the lively sunflowers and rainbows painted on it and the parasols attached over the hitched horses.

The coach is stranded in the middle of the road, along with two horses, three guards, and four chipmunks, all standing motionless in their respective posts.

#### Scene elements

- **Carriage:** A morning carriage standing still on the main road.
- **Sleeping guards:** They've been put to sleep by magic. Their names are Fabian, Frederick, and Francis, and they all love the princess dearly. All guards are very good (+2) at guarding duties.
- **Horses and chipmunks:** Sleeping and have no real importance.

Whenever the carriage is examined, elaborate and exaggerate its description, with anything that reminds you of the word "morning". Since "a morning carriage" is not an actual thing, so you can feel free to describe it and elaborate as much as you want to the point of absurdity.

Some clues include the fact that there are no signs of struggle (which may suggest that the princess was charmed by magic), and that there are animal footprints on the ground (proper tracking may reveal they belong to a gryphon).

The sleeping guards can be easily awakened. When the first guard is woken up, the startled man will yell "Oh my God! The princess has been kidnapped, we must alert the king!" The second will do the same, but the third will yell "Oh my God! I forgot my lunch at home!"

If questioned, the guards will truthfully state that they have been

accompanying the princess on her morning walk in the morning carriage, as they do every morning. All they know is that they heard a beating of wings, then the chanting of a magical spell being cast and then laughter from a nearby hill, right before they fell asleep.

Upon examining the nearby hill, the heroes will spot a small cottage with a mysterious figure sitting on a rocking chair on its front porch; see the next scene.

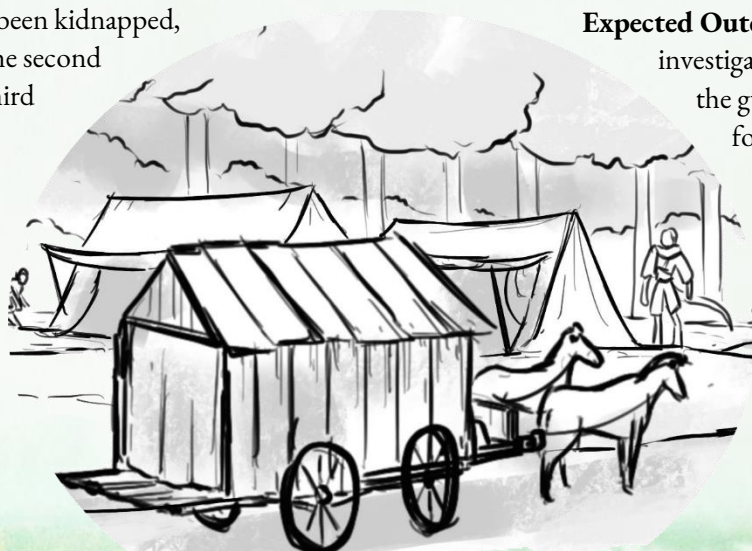
The chipmunks are presented as flavor text, but it is my experience that you can never know which details may spark the imagination of the players; that is why I occasionally add details that are purely decorative; if they garner interest or delight, I find a way to give them more room in the adventure. The chipmunks can be adopted by a character, questioned by magic, or just ignored. Their presence is also a setup for a much later scene, toward the end of the adventure, where they appear as wedding guests (Scenes X and Y).

**Narrative Purpose:** This is a relaxed investigative scene, with clues to discover and people to question. It provides a conflict-free opportunity for the players to get a feel for their characters.

#### Comedic Devices

- The description of the morning carriage (which isn't a thing that existed) is using hyperbole to create a comical effect.
- The Rule of Three is a principle that suggests that an element that repeats three times is inherently humorous, satisfying and/or effective (once is a fluke; twice is a coincidence; three times is a pattern). The responses given by the guards create a repeating pattern that is broken with the third reply.

**Expected Outcome:** The heroes investigate the scene, question the guards, discover the fortune teller as a possible eyewitness and make their way to the fortune teller cottage.



## Scene 2: The Fortune Teller

As you approach the cottage you can't help but notice the scent of cooked cabbage. A sign says "Mysterious Madam Mistra! Reader of past and present! No question too small, no compensation too big".

### Scene elements

- **Cottage:** The fortune teller's cottage is of flimsy construction, with a thatched roof and small dirty windows.
- **Mysterious Madam Mistra:** This is Shannon, better known as Madame Mistra, a "wise and old" fortune teller who isn't very wise nor is she very old. She can only "tell" of what she sees in the present and remembers from what she saw in the past. So, like everyone, basically. The fortune teller is very good (+2) at arguing, and has a special panache with haggling (+1).

The fortune teller was a witness to the kidnapping while sitting on her rocking chair on the front porch. She is reluctant to share her knowledge without proper compensation; this is her livelihood, after all. She can be persuaded to use her crystal ball to tell the heroes all she knows about the kidnapping.

The crystal ball has a sticker that says "Warning! Events seen in the ball are closer than they appear".

Madam Mistra will claim that "Seeing the present requires great power", and during the reading she will say "As I look into the crystal ball I see... me, seeing the princess fly away upon a griffin and heading north, landing beyond the Frightful Forest".

**Narrative Purpose:** This scene presents an opportunity for the characters to deal with an adversarial NPC. The old woman will require convincing.

### Comedic Devices

- Madam Mistra is a parody of the stereotype of a fortune teller, since she only has the ability to see what she already sees.

- The sticker on the crystal ball is a reference to the warning on some car side mirrors "Warning! Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear". Both the ball and the mirror share some characteristics (glass objects that one glances into) but since they belong in very different settings and genres, their juxtaposition causes a humorous confusion.
- The characters will probably have different and contradictory approaches to negotiation (discussion, haggle, intimidation, etc.). The debate on how to negotiate with Madam Mistra has a strong comedic potential based on the wildly different approaches.

**Expected Outcome:** Our heroes negotiate with the fortune teller to get information then head into the Frightful Forest.

## Scene 3: The Frightful Forest

You walk along the pleasant paths of the Frightful Forest. Sunshine lights your way, birdsong welcomes you and the many happy and fluffy animals of the forest approach you to nuzzle against your feet.

### Scene elements

- **The Frightful Forest:** A beautiful, well-lit, and safe forest named after the duke Ferdinand Frightful.
- **Fili the gnome:** Fili is dressed all in blue and is carrying on his back a large sack, filled with unlabeled potions. Fili is a very good potion maker (+2) and a decent runner (+1).
- **The ogre:** The ogre is in fact 3 gnomes painted green standing on top of each other in a trench coat (Gili, Bili, and Tili). The top one is speaking through a rolled up piece of parchment, the middle one is holding a large arm made of painted cardboard, and the bottom one mutters curses. The gnomes always remain hidden behind a tree, in order to avoid revealing their secret. The "ogre" is very good at yelling threats (+2) and decent with wielding its club (+1).



As they progress through the forest, the party will encounter Fili the gnome, running toward them. He will tell the heroes that a huge ogre is chasing him, trying to steal his precious potions. The gnome will beg for help. If the party promises to assist him, he will give them as many of his potions as they ask for or even join them as a guide through the forest and beyond, offering random potions on occasion.

A few moments after Fili appears, the ogre growls in a loud voice. It hides behind a huge tree trunk, waving one of its arms menacingly.

A short confrontation ensues. Once defeated or discovered, the three gnome (Gili, Bili, and Tili) fall down and apologize profusely, claiming this was all meant as a prank.

The gnomes noticed a large winged creature that headed up north and seemed to land near the Goblin Market.

The bag holds 12 unlabeled potions, since Fili had to pack them quickly and the labels fell off. If the heroes use a potion, roll a d12 randomly to determine which one:

1. Potion of enlargement
2. Potion of shrinkage
3. Increase-strength-by-a-lot potion
4. Enhance-sense-of-smell potion
5. Coloring potion (changes your skin color to bright red)
6. Potion of seeing in the dark
7. A decanter of very potent red wine
8. Flying potion (you float a foot above the ground)
9. Potion of stickiness (everything sticks to your hand)
10. Potion of fire breathing (you can only breath flames, so you must carry around a some sort of open flame at all times)
11. Potion of invisibility
12. Potion of fondness (you become very fond of the first person you see)

**Narrative Purpose:** Experience combat and gain items, both are always fun.

### Comedic Devices

- The giant ogre turning out to be three gnomes is a subversion of the players' expectations.
- The gnome's blue clothes are a reference to the old [Golden Axe](#) video game. If you and your players are at the right age group to appreciate this, you can enhance the joke with the appropriate sounds effects; otherwise, the reference can simply be ignored. A good reference is one that doesn't detract from the experience if you don't know its origin. If someone is not familiar with Golden Axe, they will simply treat this as a silly outfit.
- Some of the potion effects have no obvious useful application, instead offering a lot of comic potential by creating unexpected situations. Make sure to have the effects interfere with the gameplay in impactful ways, such as having unwanted items stick to characters, drunk characters making unhelpful statements or making actions more complicated because of physical changes.

**Expected Outcome:** Our heroes save Fili the gnome, confront the ogre, possibly gain some potions and/or Fili's assistance, and continue north toward the Goblin Market.

## Scene 4: The Goblin Market

The road leads north between two desolate hills. A cracked signpost along the road points forward with the inscription "The Goblin Market". Beyond the bend you can see what once might have been a grand marketplace but now is only a collection of rotted wooden buildings and empty stalls.

In the middle of a standard line of stands there stands a lemonade stand. Two goblins look at you anxiously from behind it, with bowls of fruits and jugs of various liquids. They seem to be the only people around.

### Scene elements

- **The Goblin Market:** An old marketplace, which was deserted many years ago.
- **A lemonade stand:** A derelict wooden stand, complete with a sign, a pile of fruits and jugs of lemonade. The goblins offer the following for sale:
  - Lemonade (1 copper),
  - Dwarven ale, "made from 100% real dwarven ale" (1 silver),



-One last bottle of Ancient Dragon Wine (1,000 gold).

If anyone drinks from the wine they become a little inebriated, and start displaying a draconic mindset (have a desire to hoard gold, believe they are ancient beings of power, etc.).

- **Wrong and What:** These are the two goblins. Wrong is the talker of the two and What is the strong silent type. Note that if anyone says the words "wrong" or "what" in conversation, the respective goblin will immediately respond with "yes?". The goblins are very good at noticing life-threatening dangers (+2) and decent enough salespersons (+1).

The goblin What used to work for Gary the Old, while Wrong worked for Hater the Witch. Both were low level minions and both were fired last week because their masters were planning a special event, of which the goblins know nothing about.

The goblins will try to sell the party lemonade, and later offer themselves as guides or porters to the party. Goblins are naturally inclined to serve strong masters. They will attempt to show their worth by telling the party that both the lich and the witch have secret entrances to their homes, both rising from the Underdark, a huge network of underground caves. Outside the caves entrance the party can notice footprints belonging to a gryphon.

If the goblins are killed, a map with the secret entrances to the castle and the tower will be found on their bodies.

**Narrative purpose:** Add two new and helpful NPCs to the party. This is also a chance to play some adorable NPCs with funny voices.

#### Comedic Devices

- The names of the goblins can cause some playful misunderstandings during conversations, with a lot of unexpected repetition. Every time a character uses the word "What" or "Wrong" the relevant goblin will reply "yes?". You can enhance this effect by giving the goblins distinct shrill voices so the players will automatically know that the goblins are the ones that replied.

- The goblins' wares and pricing escalate in leaps and bounds, utilizing the Rule of Three, and also the Broken Pattern - the first two items make sense, then the third is unexpected or contains a twist.
- The presence of alcohol is a setup for the character of Ligmí the dwarf, who believes people shouldn't drink. This is humorous because it contradicts the trope of the stereotypical ale-loving dwarf, and because of Ligmí's strong feelings on the topic.
- "[...] standard line of stands there stands a lemonade stand" - a tongue-twister and a play on words.

**Expected Outcome:** The heroes interact with the goblins, gain their help (or their map) and learn of the hidden entrances to Hater tower and Gary the Old castle. Lacking other options, they then continue toward those entrances.

## Scene 5: Through the Underdark

You spend an immeasurable amount of time in the underground tunnels. The next turn leads you into a large open cavern, where a strange forest of giant purple mushrooms surrounds you from all sides. You manage to notice a tunnel exit at far ahead, just as shadowy shapes appear from between the mushrooms. Dark elves.

The ambushing elves are led by a dark priestess of the spider goddess "Foolish mortals," she exclaimed, "you are too late, the sacred blood stone has been offered! Tonight, the spider queen will enter this world. You are all doomed!"

#### Scene elements

- **A forest of giant mushrooms:** Many giant purple mushrooms filling up the wide cavern.
- **Dark elves:** They just finished a ritual to summon the spider queen. They are very good at wielding dual scimitars (+2) and decent at disappearing into the shadows (+1).
- **LaKira, dark elf priestess of the spider queen:** She is very good at channeling the dark powers (+2) and decent at intimidation (+1).

When the dark elves realize that the party wasn't sent to stop them, they will be disappointed, possibly even offended, muttering that no one takes them seriously.

They will continue to whine but otherwise will ignore the party.

If the party attacks, the elves will offer a token resistance, but, since they've already achieved their goal of offering the blood stone (whatever that means), they retreat, believing the dark goddess will arrive soon anyway.

The dark elves leave no tracks as they escape. If the players insist on pursuing this plotline, remind them that their mission to save the princess is time-sensitive.

**Narrative Purpose:** This scene is a set up for an upcoming joke (at the end of the adventure) but it's also about subverting adventure tropes, presenting the classic cult of evil dark elves performing evil rituals — that have nothing to do with the game's plot.

#### Comedic Devices

- This is clearly a serious threat but since it's not related to our heroes' current adventure, we can ignore it. This scene is emphasizing the ridiculousness of the overly-simplistic logic of some adventures.

**Expected Outcome:** The heroes encounter the dark elves but continue forward.



**Lakira** The dark elf

*Have actually very little to do with this story*

## Scene 6: Two Roads Diverged in a Dark Cave

You come upon a split in the tunnel, where a large sign reads “Right to Gary the Old’s castle, left to Hater’s tower.”

There are no traps or creatures in this scene.

#### Scene elements

- **A junction:** A T junction
- **A sign:** stating the options

If the party decides to first go to Gary’s castle, then it will be a red herring and the princess will be at Hater’s tower (proceed to Scene 7: The Bridge under the Troll at page 10).

If the party decides to go to Hater’s tower, then the princess will actually be at Gary’s castle (proceed to Scene 11: The Purr-ciever at page 15).

In other words, whichever choice the players make will be the wrong one; however, this is an excellent opportunity to listen to the players’ speculations. Use these to enhance the description of the following scenes.

**Narrative Purpose:** This is a decision point meant to make sure that the players will first follow a red herring, to enhance the tension before the final confrontation.

#### Comedic Devices

- None.

**Expected Outcome:** The heroes decide on a specific destination and continue.

Check how much time you have left for the game. If you need to wrap up quickly, just have the goblins lead the party directly to the final encounter and skip the lead up encounters.

## Scene 7:

### The Bridge under the Troll

You continue down a widening cave, your footsteps echoing off the cold walls, until you come across a curious marking on the floor, made with a bright white chalk. It looks like a pair of parallel lines crossing another pair of wall-to-wall parallel lines.

As you ponder the meaning behind the markings, you see the hulking figure of a giant troll approaching from beyond a bend in the tunnel, roaring “Pay the toll to cross the bridge!”

#### Scene elements

- **A bridge drawn on the floor in chalk:** The chalk markings on the floor are an attempt to draw an image of a bridge over a ravine.
- **Rrrrask the troll:** Due to the steep climb in real estate costs, Rrrrask had to move out from his previous home beneath a beautiful bridge, to this underground cave. Rrrrask is very good with his large metal mace (+2) and decent at negotiations (+1).

The “bridge” is just a crude drawing spanning the floor of the cave. The troll demands a toll for passing over the bridge and beat everyone who tries to pass not on the bridge.

There is also a humanoid-shaped marking on the floor next to the painted bridge, in the style of dead bodies in police investigations. The goblins will recognize the outline as “Luckless”, one of their fellow goblins from the market. If asked, the troll will say that luckless “fell” to her death.

You should mention that the troll is very strong, to encourage the players to think of solutions other than combat. Some solutions that came up during previous plays include: challenging him to a dual, beat him in a game, and offer to negotiate a better real estate deal on his

behalf. Allow the party to overcome this obstacle in any way they see fit, thus opening the way for a myriad of humorous options

**Narrative Purpose:** This is a filler encounter to raise the tension before the main encounter with Gary the Old.

#### Comedic Devices

- This is a parody of the classic trope of the troll under the bridge. In this case, because the troll had no bridge, he had to make one.
- The chalk marking of the goblin body is a familiar trope from modern police shows, juxtaposed on a high-fantasy adventure.

**Expected Outcome:** The party confronts the troll and finds a way to gain passage.



## Scene 8: Gary's Castle

You emerge from a secret door into a grand hallway. On your right is an open door through which you can see a large hall, in which a dozen tables with mustard-yellow tablecloths are being set by skeletal waiters, preparing the room for a festive dinner. The skeletons are wearing hospital green aprons and are busy placing plates and cutlery.

To the back of the chamber sits Gary the Old, a shriveled figure on a raised platform, who screams at the waiters with a raspy voice.

### Scene elements

- **A banquet hall:** The large hall is set to accommodate several dozen guests for dinner.
- **Skeletal staff and guards:** Many undead servants are busy preparing the place for a dinner party. They are very good at charging mindlessly to their doom (+2).
- **Gary the Old, a lich:** An elderly, cuddly, undead uncle. Gary is very good at necromantic magic (+2) and has a decent talent for oil painting (+1).

The old lich is preparing a family dinner. All of his extended living family members are about to arrive in a few hours and he is frantic with worry because he has so many relatives with food allergies and preferences (no gluten, no sugar, vegan, no flowers, only eats pineapple, etc.).

As the party appears, Gary will ask them if they are the special vegan-only, gluten-free pastry chefs he called for. Gary wants his family to feel welcome and eat well, and he is not shy about sharing his feelings.

Getting on Gary's good side is easily done, by asking him about his family, his dinner plans or his health, or by pretending to be the pastry chefs he's looking for.

Gary has no idea who the party is or what happened to the princes. If asked about her, he will be quick to

blame Hater the witch as he thinks she is a "very bad neighbor" and that "those youngsters today, they have no respect!"

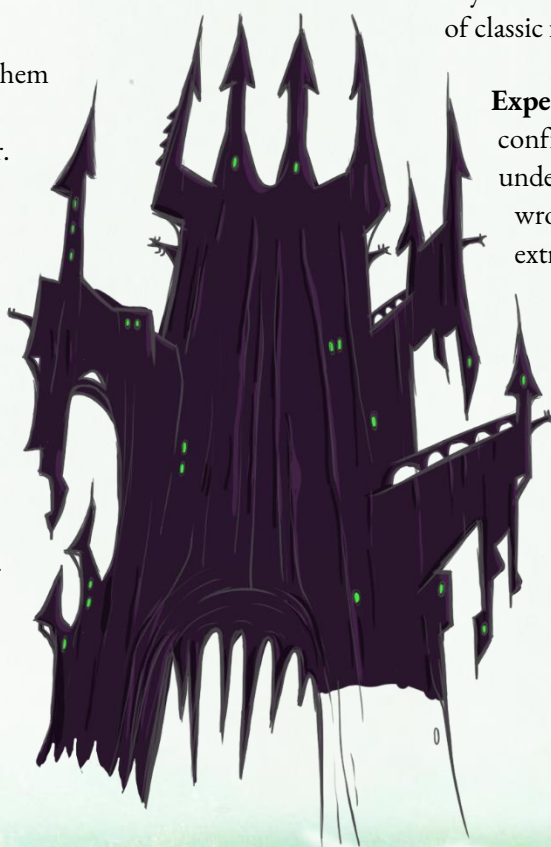
If the party gained his trust, he will happily teleport them outside of Hater's tower ([Scene 9: The Purr-ciever](#)). Otherwise, they must turn back and take the other path in the junction.

**Narrative purpose:** This is potentially pleasant interaction is irrelevant to the plot, meant to emphasize the time limit of the quest and get the players to hurry to Hater's tower before sunset.

### Comedic Devices

- Subverting the players' expectations and catching them off guard is the key to this scene. Try to keep to the tropes of a powerful lich, a grand undead magician, with a raspy voice and commanding aura, but apply it to the mundane and banal. Any lich may call "Who dares to enter my domain?" but not many would then add "Are you with the catering staff?"
- If Corelealion the elven cleric tries to "turn undead", both Gary and his staff will turn sideways, then continue to do what they were doing, while grumbling that everything is more difficult when you can't face forward. This is a pun based on the expectations of players who know the similarly-named ability from many iterations of classic fantasy role-playing games.

**Expected Outcome:** The party confronts Gary the Old and understands that they are in the wrong place. They should extricate themselves and move on to Hater's tower.



## Scene 9: The Purr-ciever

You open a wooden door to find yourselves in the closet room - a room full of closets. The walls are lined with purple tapestries depicting many cats performing various feline daily activities such as sleeping, eating and pushing mugs off of tables.

You can hear voices from beyond a door at the far side of the room, but the path is blocked by a huge ball of fur with a giant central eye and a toothy grin, the top of its head is composed of tentacles ending in cat paws.

### Scene elements

- **Closet room:** With many closets and wardrobes along the walls.
- **The Purr-ciever:** A many-pawed floating cats' eye, a monster created by Hater. The Purr-ciever can neutralize magical spells directed at it by swallowing them. It can also be tricked much like any cat (red dots, catnip, the sound "pssst" etc). It is very good at attacking with claws (+2) and loud meowing (+1).

The secret entrance leads into the tower through the back of a closet. The other closets in the room are labeled with strange names (such as Narnia, Middle Earth and Westeros). All the wardrobes other than the one the party entered through have a wallpaper taped to their back, making it seem as if the wardrobe is a portal to a faraway place. All the closets contain black dresses for every conceivable event.

The Purr-ciever is very territorial and will attack any creature attempting to walk toward the door behind it.

**Narrative purpose:** This is the last big obstacle before the final scene. Don't let it end too quickly and make sure that the Purr-ciever manages to hurt the party a bit so they will feel that they overcame a challenge.

### Comedic Devices

- The creature's name is a double pun, playing on the word "purr", and the word "perceive" which is similar to "behold". This is a reference to a famous monster owned by Wizards of the Coast.

- The names on the wardrobes are a tongue-in-cheek reference to the Narnia stories, where a wardrobe is a portal to other worlds.

**Expected Outcome:** The party overcomes the Purr-ciever and opens the doors to the main hall of the tower.

## Scene 10: The Cat Wedding

A grand ballroom stands before you, clearly set for a beautiful wedding, decorated with purple lavenders. Dozens of cats, and two chipmunks, sit in rows of tiny chairs.

Next to the altar there's a priest with a bushy beard and a black pentagram on his priestly robes. He is chained to the altar with manacles. Princess Tiffany Ember and Hater the witch stand before the altar, both in fine wedding attires.

As you enter, the priest just finished saying "I'm sorry, your highness, without willing witnesses I cannot marry the two of you".

### Scene elements

- **Hall set for a cat-themed wedding:** Complete with table ornaments, oil paintings of the couple and a buffet.
- **A host of cats:** These are the wedding guests, all ex-purr-tly dressed and well licked.
- **Father Fletcher, a priest:** He's chained to the altar and also a secret devil worshipper. Very good at channeling divine powers (+2).
- **Princess Tiffany Ember:** A beautiful princess. Very good at being a spoiled brat (+2) and good with royal decorum (+1).
- **Hater the witch:** Mistress of the mystical arts. Very good at witchery (+2) and good at quilting (+1).

This is the wedding of princess Tiffany and the witch Hater. They have been having a secret affair for several months and are very much in love. The truth is that princess Tiffany ran away from home so she could marry her true love. She was afraid her father would never agree to her marrying a witch. The princess did not tell Hater that she ran away from home, so if this

fact is mentioned by the party Hater might be confused and will probably admonish Ember that she's acting like a child.

The princess refuses to return to the castle without first getting married to Hater.

The priest can be persuaded to marry the couple in various ways: he can be threatened; the party can convince him that they come with the blessing of the king; etc. He is also secretly a devil worshiper so a player playing Delvin the Green (if present) can just tell him the secret phrase ("You want to buy some cinnamon?", to which the priest answers "only on mid-winter nights")

Once convinced, the priest marries the two and asks if anyone would like to say a few words to congratulate the couple.

Once the ceremony is done, Hater teleports the party back to king Alfred's throne room.

Make sure to explain that both Hater and the princess are genuinely in love. Elaborate on the decoration and the lovely wedding cake. Use the goblins and the cats to keep the atmosphere festive and happy. The heroes can try to kidnap the princess, but this will place them at odds with Hater; should they kill her, they will have to suffer the anguish of the princess who lost her love. The easiest way to solve this is for the priest to ask the characters to officiate as witnesses, after which both Hater and the princess will agree to accompany them to the castle.

**Narrative purpose:** This is the climax of the story, during which the party resolves the question of how to make the princess return to her father the king.

### Comedic Devices

- It is said that you can tell a Shakespearean comedy by the fact that everyone gets married at the end. This scene creates an ironic twist by revealing to us that the princess was never kidnapped and was never in danger.
- The fact that the priest refuses to perform the wedding because there aren't any witnesses is humorous because many other aspects of the situation are a lot more problematic (the priest being chained to the altar, the absence of guests, the fact that the princess is eloping to marry a notoriously evil witch) yet the only thing that he finds important enough to insisting upon is this minor technicality.
  - The two chipmunks are a call back to the chipmunks from the first scene ([Scene 1: The Scene of the Kidnapping](#)).

**Expected Outcome:** The party convinces the princess to return with them (with or without Hater). Continue to the final scene, [Epilogue](#):

[All's Well That Ends Well](#) at page 18.



**Hater the witch**

*Not what you had in mind, right?*

## Scene 11: The Purr-ciever

**Note:** This scene is mostly identical to [Scene 9: The Purr-ciever](#), is it presented here so you won't have to turn pages back and forth.

You open a wooden door to find yourselves in the closet room - a room full of closets. The walls are lined with purple tapestries depicting many cats performing various feline daily activities such as sleeping, eating and pushing mugs off of tables.

You can hear voices from beyond a door at the far side of the room, but the path is blocked by a huge ball of fur with a giant central eye and a toothy grin, the top of its head is composed of tentacles ending in cat paws.

### Scene elements

- **Closet room:** With many closets and wardrobes along the walls.
- **The Purr-ciever:** A many-pawed floating cats' eye, a monster created by Hater. The Purr-ciever can neutralize magical spells directed at it by swallowing them. It can also be tricked much like any cat (red dots, catnip, the sound "psst" etc.). It is very good at attacking with claws (+2) and loud meowing (+1).

The secret entrance leads into the tower through the back of a closet. The other closets in the room are labeled with strange names (such as Narnia, Middle Earth and Westeros). All the wardrobes other than the one the party entered through have a wallpaper taped to their back, making it seem as if the wardrobe is a portal to a faraway place. All the closets contain black dresses for every conceivable event.

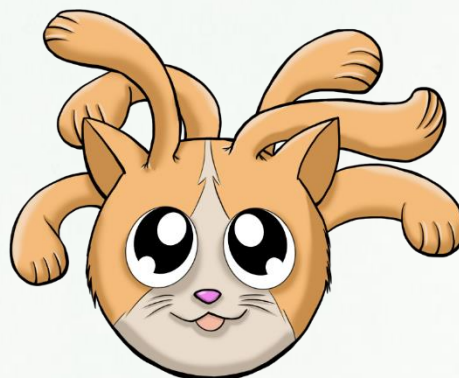
The Purr-ciever is very territorial and will attack any creature attempting to walk toward the door behind it.

**Narrative purpose:** This is a filler encounter to raise the tension before the main encounter with Hater.

### Comedic Devices

- The creature's name is a double pun, playing on the word "purr", and the word "perceive" which is similar to "behold". This is a reference to a famous monster owned by Wizards of the Coast.

**Expected Outcome:** The party overcomes the Purr-ciever and opens the doors to the main hall of the tower.



## Scene 12: The Hall of Cats

The doors open to a large ballroom, set for afternoon tea. There are dozens of cats in various purple dresses, coats and top hats sitting around numerous tables with milk bowls and chocolate chip cookies.

Opposite of the entrance, at the head of the long table, sits Hater the witch. She looks at you curiously while sipping tea.

### Scene elements

- **Hall of cats:** The main room is set for a tea party with dozens of cats.
- **A host of cats:** These are the tea party guests, all finely dressed and expertly licked.
- **Hater the witch:** A mistress of the mystical arts and definitely a cat person. Very good at witchery (+2) and decent at quilting (+1).
- **Mitzi Fluffjoy, a cat:** A magnificent Persian cat with white fur and blue eyes. Very good at proudly ignoring everything around it (+2).

Hater's tower is basically one huge room filled with cats of all shapes and sizes. She is waiting for a vet to come by and help Mitzi Fluffjoy, who has a hairball stuck in its throat.

Hater doesn't know anything about the princess. The party can gain her good graces by asking about her cats, pretending to be the vet and helping Fluffjoy, or other means. She may tell them that she had seen a gryphon

land near the Goblin Market a while ago, and that she knows that Gary the Old is planning an event of some sort because he borrowed her magical chafing dish.

If the party really made an impression, Hater may offer to teleport them in a puff of purple smoke to the entrance to Gary's castle.

**Narrative purpose:** This is potentially pleasant interaction is irrelevant to the plot, meant to emphasize the time limit of the quest and get the players to hurry to Gary the Old's castle before sunset.

#### Comedic Devices

- Having a main villain concerned over her sick cat is somewhat of a funny moment. Unless *you* ever had a sick cat, then it is a moment of sympathy.

**Expected Outcome:** The party interacts with Hater, defeats her or gains her favor. They then make their way to Gary the Old's castle, either by running back through the tunnels or with Hater's teleport spell.

## Scene 13:

### The Bridge under the Troll

**Note:** This scene is mostly identical to [Scene 7: The Bridge under the Troll](#) at page 10, is it presented here so you won't have to flip pages back and forth mid-session.

You continue down a widening cave, your footsteps echoing off the cold walls, until you come across a curious marking on the floor, made with a bright white chalk. It looks like a pair of parallel lines crossing another pair of wall-to-wall parallel lines.

As you ponder the meaning behind the markings, you see the hulking figure of a giant troll approaching from beyond a bend in the tunnel, roaring "Pay the toll to cross the bridge!"

#### Scene elements

- **A bridge drawn on the floor in chalk:** The chalk markings on the floor are an attempt to draw an image of a bridge over a ravine.
- **Rrrrrask the troll:** Due to the steep climb in real estate costs, Rrrrrask had to move out from his previous home beneath a beautiful bridge, to this underground cave. Rrrrrask is very good with his large metal mace (+2) and decent at negotiations (+1).

The "bridge" is just a crude drawing spanning the floor of the cave. The troll demands a toll for passing over the bridge and beat everyone who tries to pass not on the bridge.

There is also a humanoid-shaped marking on the floor next to the painted bridge, in the style of dead bodies in police investigations. The goblins will recognize the outline as "Luckless", one of their fellow goblins from the market. If asked, the troll will say that luckless "fell" to her death.

You should mention that the troll is very strong, to encourage the players to think of solutions other than combat. Some solutions that came up during previous plays include: challenging him to a dual, beat him in a game, and offer to negotiate a better real estate deal on his behalf. Allow the party to overcome this obstacle in any way they see fit, thus opening the way for a myriad of humorous options

**Narrative Purpose:** This is a filler encounter to raise the tension before the main encounter with Gary the Old.

#### Comedic Devices

- This is a parody of the classic trope of the troll under the bridge. In this case, because the troll had no bridge, he had to make one.
- The chalk marking of the goblin body is a familiar trope from modern police shows, juxtaposed on a high-fantasy adventure.

**Expected Outcome:** The party confronts the troll and finds a way to gain passage.

## Scene 14:

### An Old Fashioned Wedding

You emerge from a secret door into a grand hallway. On your right is an open door through which you can see a large hall. Large mustard-yellow ribbons and banners decorate the hall and a score of skeletal honor guards in hospital green tabards stand in rows, along with two chipmunks.

Next to the altar there's a priest with a bushy beard and a black pentagram on his priestly robes. He is chained to the altar with manacles. Princess Tiffany Ember stands before the altar, in a flowing white bridal dress, next to her is the menacing lich Gary the Old.

As you enter, the priest just finished saying "I'm sorry, your highness, without willing witnesses I cannot marry the two of you".

#### Scene elements

- **A banquet hall:** Set for a grand, though out-of-style, wedding.
- **Skeletal staff and guards:** Many undead in fine suits, attending as wedding guests. They are very good at charging mindlessly to their doom (+2).
- **Father Fletcher, a priest:** He's chained to the altar and also a secret devil worshipper. Very good at channeling divine powers (+2).
- **Princess Tiffany Ember:** A beautiful princess. Very good at being a spoiled brat (+2) and good with royal decorum (+1).
- **Gary the Old, a lich:** An elderly, cuddly, undead uncle. Gary is very good at necromantic magic (+2) and has a decent talent for oil painting (+1).

This is the wedding of princess Tiffany and the lich Gary the Old. They have been having a secret affair for several months and are very much in love. The truth is that princess Tiffany ran away from home so she could marry her true love. She was

afraid her father would never agree to her marrying a lich.

The princess did not tell Gary that she ran away from home, so if this fact is mentioned by the party Gary might take offence as he will fear that she is ashamed of their relationship.

The princess refuses to return to the castle without first getting married to Gary.

The priest can be persuaded to marry the couple in various ways: he can be threatened; the party can convince him that they come with the blessing of the king; etc. He is also secretly a devil worshiper so a player playing Delvin the Green (if present) can just tell him the secret phrase ("You want to buy some cinnamon?"), to which the priest answers "only on mid-winter nights").

Once convinced, the priest marries the two and asks if anyone would like to say a few words to congratulate the couple.

Once the ceremony is done, Gary teleports the party back to king Alfred's throne room.



Make sure to explain that both Gary and the princess are genuinely in love. Elaborate on the decoration and the lovely wedding cake. Use the goblins and the cats to keep the atmosphere festive and happy. The heroes can try to kidnap the princess, but this will place them at odds with Gary; should they kill him, they will have to suffer the anguish of the princess who lost her love. The easiest way to solve this is for the priest to ask the characters to officiate as witnesses, after which both Gary and the princess will agree to accompany them to the castle.

**Narrative purpose:** This is the climax of the story, during which the party resolves the question of how to make the princess return to her father the king.

Gary the old

*"You're only as old as you act"*

### Comedic Devices

- It is said that you can tell a Shakespearean comedy by the fact that everyone gets married at the end. This scene creates an ironic twist by revealing to us that the princess was never kidnapped and was never in danger.
- The fact that the priest refuses to perform the wedding because there aren't any witnesses is humorous because many other aspects of the situation are a lot more problematic (the priest being chained to the altar, the absence of guests, the fact that the princess is eloping to marry a notoriously evil lich) yet the only thing that he finds important enough to insisting upon is this minor technicality.
- The two chipmunks are a call back to the chipmunks from the first scene ([Scene 1: The Scene of the Kidnapping](#)).
- If Corelealion the elven cleric tries to "turn undead", both Gary and his staff will turn sideways, then continue to do what they were doing, while grumbling that everything is more difficult when you can't face forward. This is a pun based on the expectations of players who know the similarly-named ability from many iterations of classic fantasy role-playing games.

**Expected Outcome:** The party convinces the princess to return with them (with or without Gary the Old).

Continue to the final scene [Epilogue](#):

[All's Well That Ends Well](#) Well on page 18.

### Epilogue:

#### All's Well That Ends Well

You stand before king Alfred as he looks at the happy couple with a huge smile. Apparently, nothing could have pleased him more than seeing his daughter returning home.

"Well done!" the king exclaims, "What a feat! All's well that ends well. You deserve all of the credit and reward, my dear... friend and counselor... Ernest!"

As Ernest looks around in confusion, having clearly very little idea of where he even is, the rest of you simply take a step back, happy to put this whole affair behind you.

Royal waiters fill your glasses with the finest wine and you raise them in salute to the successful completion of your adventure.

Out the window, as the sun sets, you can just barely see the shape of a giant spider, summoned in a vile ritual by dark elves, devouring the descending sun. But that is none of your concern, you are done with your adventure.

Cheers!

A happy ending is a staple of comedy. If the princess has been married or is accompanied by her chosen love interest, then the king is overjoyed by the true love he sees blossoming in his daughter's eyes.

Remember to have the king give as much credit as possible to Ernest (if the party forgot about him, all the better). If any NPC joined the party, such as Fili the gnome or the goblins, give them too a lot of credit, at the expense of the party.

**Narrative Purpose:** Wrap up all elements of the story.

### Comedic Devices

- Ernest, who didn't contribute anything to the quest, is getting all the credit for the adventure.
- The dark elves' ritual, which was merely a side note in this adventure, is revealed to have terrible consequences - which nobody seems to care about. This is a jab at the nature of "side quests" in adventures and how nothing matters to adventurers beside their own quests with no relation to the world around them.

- The End -





## Delvin the Green

*A druid of the great forests of the south*

Standing in majestic a green cloak and holding a staff of ancient oak is the great druid Delvin the Green. The air around you is shimmers with an almost tangible energy of all the glory of nature. The gaze of your deep red eyes pierces hearts and minds.

You are really good at **Being a friend to the creatures of the forest (+2)** and can also perform **Druid magic (+1)**.

---

Do not laugh, keep a straight face.

### **Secret information:**

Does this look like a job for a demon of the third circle of Hell? I mean, you work and work, aiming for that big promotion for the second circle, and then the boss comes over and goes all "We need you to go up there, this king summoned us to and help save his princess. Just do it secretly so that no one will suspect that the king is a devil worshiper, OK? Then we can discuss your promotion."

Bloody lame if you ask me. So anyway I have to wear this stupid body and pretend that I'm a druid, and help these stupid humans find this stupid princess. Then again, if I don't do this *right*, I'll probably spend a decade trimming Cerberus' claws.

I know that some of the people of the kingdoms are secret worshippers of the Great Demon, they all have beards and we can know each other by asking them the secret phrase "You want to buy some cinnamon?" and they will answer "only on mid-winter nights".

**Note:** You are pissed. You are trying to hide it by drinking a lot of burning tar (your favorite!). Your listed abilities are false; you can't actually do any druid magic. Your real abilities are: really good at **Creating and controlling fire (+2)** and also **Have a talent for devilish deals (+1)** and **Intimidation (+1)**.



## Sylvin the Silver Saint

*The silver sword of justice*

In a shining silver armor, wielding a gleaming sword of justice, stands Sylvin the Saint. A hero of righteousness. A true paladin of the powers of light, you are dedicated, body and soul, to the service of your God.

You are really good at **Sword stunts (+2)** and can also perform **Healing Touch (+1)** and **Move with heavy armor (+1)**.

---

Do not laugh, keep a straight face.

### **Secret information:**

So I was raised in a secluded paladin's college. It was... ehh, not *best*. This is my first ever mission without the supervision of an elder paladin. I'm young, I'm good-looking, and after this mission I'll... have to return to the secluded college. Which sucks.

Unless - I get married. Once I'm married, they won't be able to order me back to the college. I could do whatever I want! And I want a lot of stuff! I'll have to admit, I'm desperate to get my hand on someone. Anyone. I just need to hear an "I do".

## BinZap the White

*An arch-mage of the White Order*



In white robes of wizardry, holding a glowing staff of power, BinZap is an awe-inspiring sight. Radiating with arcane power, every flow of your robes makes a flourish of magical energy. Pearly shine surrounds your every move.

You are really good at **Using the magic of the ancients (+2)** and also **Versed in the arcane lore (+1)** and **Wielder of the Staff of Power (+1)**.

---

Do not laugh, keep a straight face

### **Secret information:**

Dear God, I hate these allergies. You would think that angels can't get allergies. Ohh yes, I'm an angel. I'm allergic to hay fever, cats, and demons and lately I just can't stop sneezing, must be the hay. You probably think that angels - *Ha-cho!* Sorry, that angels from the third circle of the heavens won't ever bother to take the form of a human. And that's usually true. But I am "going undercover". We've had a report that the princess was kidnapped by devil worshippers! *Ha-cho!* So, I came here, pretending to be a human so I could uncover those devil worshippers and also, you know, rescue the princess.

**Note:** Your listed abilities are false; you can't actually cast any spells. Your real abilities are: Really good at **Summoning little angels to fake the effects of magic (+2)** and also **Remember ancient lore (+1)**.

You also can't lie about anything, but you can at least hide the truth by omission and misdirection. You can discover demons by smelling them up close, which might be a bit problematic with your runny nose.

## Corelealion of the Golden Leaf



*High cleric of the elven forest*

The long golden hair parts slightly to reveal two pointed ears. The color of your eyes match the avocado-green and salmon-pink robes of the high elven clergy you're wearing. The holy symbol on your chest glows on its necklace of pearls.

You are really good at **Divine magic (+2)** and also **Possess healing powers (+1)** and **Can turn the undead (+1)**.

---

Do not laugh, keep a straight face.

### **Secret information:**

Please, call me Leon. I am an elf that appreciates the finer things in life. I found a home in the Holy Eleven church and became one of the high elven priests... well, at least for one more week. Then my membership card expires, because I never actually performed any holy missions.

Why should I? Holy missions are such a bore. But now, for the first time in my life, I will arise and go on an adventure. All I need is one successful quest! I will do everything for this mission to succeed! I will even endanger my soft silky skin and perfect nail polish.

I suspect that one of the party members is secretly another cleric from my order that is here to evaluate my performance. So I'm going to make the best impression on everyone in every way! By the time this adventure is over every single member of this party will sing my praise.

## Ligmi the Dwarf of the Gray Halls



*A prime example of dwarvenkind*

With bushy hair and bushy eyebrows, Ligmi is a perfect specimen of dwarvenhood. As you stand dourly in the corner of the room, you seem to bear the weight of centuries of burden.

You are really good at **Dwarven knowledge (+2)** also good at the **Famed endurance of the dwarves (+1)** and **Stonecunning lore (+1)**.

---

Do not laugh, keep a straight face

### **Secret information:**

I am so tired of everyone expecting all dwarves to act the same. No, not all of us like quaffing ale, not all of us wear those horrendous suits of armor, and not all of us lose their mind over the sight of gold.

If you would bother to ask, you will know that I am actually a vegan, who abstains from alcohol, takes long power walks, and practices yoga and the power of positive thinking. My body is my temple. And I will gladly volunteer this information and opinions to whoever asks or even mentions any of these topics.

**Note:** Disregard the abilities given before, your real abilities are: Really good at **The power of positive thinking (+2)** and can also perform **Yoga flexibility and power walk (+1)** as well as **Preaching about their beliefs (+1)**.

## Dozens: The Role-Playing System

The Dozens role-playing system comes in three flavors: Freeform, Player-driven, and Full. The aim is for new players to start off with the Freeform version, transitioning to the Player-driven version once they feel more comfortable, eventually graduating to the Full version.

### Difference between the versions

- In Freeform the players roll whenever the GM asks for it. High is good, low is bad, and everything is at the GM's discretion.
- In a Player-driven game, the players know if they succeeded or failed a roll: a result of 1-5 is a failure, while a 6-12 is a success. Players also decide what their characters excels at, and add an appropriate bonus to the roll.
- The Full version contains a bunch of extra rules for specific actions, such as aiding other characters, working in opposition to other characters, and more.

### Development Principles

I've been using Dozens for years in convention and introduction games. It's very easy to explain and run; a d12 is exotic for people who are unfamiliar with RPGs; critical failures and successes are not too rare (16.6% of the rolls!); and it provides a good methodology on how to introduce an understanding of the rules to the players while playing.

Dozens was designed with these principles in mind: Easy to learn, few rolls, single die type, and interesting results (critical failures and successes) shouldn't be too rare.

### GM Guidelines

1. Story, fun or GM call can trump any rule at the GM discretion.
2. Risky choices should be handled by rolling a d12 and adding relevant bonuses if such exist.
3. Only roll if the result would lead to an interesting outcome, be it a success or a failure.
4. If an action's outcome has no importance, just assume it's a success and move on.
5. Assign bonuses, not penalties.

### Freeform Dozens

If you are running a game for people who are unfamiliar with role-playing games, you probably don't want to start off with a long-winded explanation of the mechanics. Simply state that the outcome of every action is determined by a roll of the 12-sided die and that a higher result is always better.

Tell players when and why they roll ("roll the die in order to see if you manage to climb over the electric fence") and explain the outcome that follows the result ("unfortunately, a 4 is not high enough. You slip and fall, suffering a massive shock").

## Player-driven Dozens

In Player-driven Dozens a lot of the narrative control is at the hand of the players. The players describe their actions and the outcome is determined as such:

**1 - Critical Failure** - A completely terrible and unlikely result occurred. The GM will describe the specifics, but player ideas and input should be appreciated.

**2-5 - That didn't go as planned...** - You fail to accomplish your task in the manner you planned. This doesn't necessarily mean that you failed; you might have succeeded but caused unforeseen complications to arise.

**6-11 - Success** - You succeed and do something cool!

**12 - Critical Success!** - You succeeded far beyond any reasonable prediction, probably by sheer luck.

It's important that the player knows the result of their actions immediately after the die is rolled. The immediate feedback prevents any gap of tension between the declaration of the action and the result.

### Describing the Outcome

While the GM has the power to narrate the die's result, by default, we suggest to give that power to the players as often as possible. You can prompt them using phrases such as "How exactly did you do it?", "Give us a description" or "Why don't you tell us how that hurt you?".

## Full Dozens

This section describes additional rules for the Dozens system.

### Character Proficiencies

Each character has a specific skill they're really good at, for which they get a +2 on their rolls. This should be specific in a way that relates to the character, the world and the story. "Wielding the sword of my ancestors" is a good proficiency, "Fighting" is too general.

Each character also has two things that they are kinda good at, for which they get a +1 on their rolls.

My paladin is really good at **Sword fighting (+2)** and can also perform **Healing touch (+1)** and **Be a good listener (+1)**.

As for everything not covered by a character's proficiencies, the GM decides if they can or can't do it. As a rule of thumb, allow everyone to at least try, unless you feel the suggestion doesn't make sense.

Character proficiencies can't stack, only the highest apply.

### Handling Challenges and Difficulty Rating

Any challenge that the party tries to overcome has a difficulty rating (or DR) assigned to it, the number of successes required to overcome the challenge. If no DR is specified, assume the challenge requires one success to overcome.

If you manage to score a number of successes equal to the DR of the challenge, it is taken out of the conflict. If the challenge is a creature, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are dead or unconscious; they could run away, burst into tears, start begging for their life or accept the character's arguments.

If a character tries to overcome a challenge but fails, you can provide a bonus to an opponent or an ally on their next attempt. This represents taking advantage of the characters' failed attempt either by an enemy capitulating on the failure or an ally learning from the failure and trying a new approach. It can also represent a very limited success, one that makes the challenge somewhat less difficult ("I loosened it up for you").

For example, suppose there is a magical lock on a door that requires 1 success to open. A wizard tries to unlock the door and fails. The GM decides that the wizard still managed to loosen the lock a bit, so now any following try will have a +1 on the roll.

A challenge but can take many forms. It can refer to a single enemy (e.g. a swordsman guarding the hallway, with DR1); a group of creatures each, with different difficulty ratings (e.g two goblins with DR1 and a hobgoblin commander with DR3); or a whole group that operates as a unit (many kobolds, counting together as DR5). This flexibility allows you to scale the difficulty of a challenge, and how prominent it should be in the narrative.

### **Taking Damage**

Harm in Dozens is abstracted, representing physical injury, emotional anguish, or an expenditure of effort. A player character takes damage when another character rolls a success against them, or at the GM's discretion when they fail in a risky attempt (climbing down from a tall balcony, calming a raging bull or standing up to a bully).

NPCs don't track damage. They are defeated after the player characters score a number of successes equal to their DR.

As a rule, each player character can take 3 points of damage before they can no longer participate in a scene. The exact nature of "not being able to participate" depends on the circumstances. It may be that the character is unconscious, running away crying or paralyzed in pain.

### **Giving Bonuses**

If the players do something smart or cool, reward them for it. Consider giving a +1 or +2 bonus in the following cases:

- You can grant a bonus before attempting a specific action if a player describes something really creative or cool (for example, swinging from the chandelier rather than just taking the stairs).
- You can grant a bonus to all of the next rolls in a specific scene (for example if all the characters planned something together, like a well thought out back heist or if they got some magical support for an activity).
- You can grant a bonus to all the initial rolls in a challenge (for example if the party planned an ambush to their enemies). This is your call.

Avoid imposing penalties. If you feel an action would result with a penalty, then give a bonus to the opponent's next action ("you slip and now the orc has an easier time focusing on his next

attack”) or raise the number of successes needed to complete the challenge (“you twist the lock in your hand and now it’s going to be more difficult to pick it open”).

### **Initiative**

The GM decides who goes first. If it’s not important then let the players go first. If you want to create a sense of danger, have the monsters go first. If it’s critical to know who does something first, have both parties make an opposed roll, the higher result wins.

### **Aiding Other Characters**

If a character is trying to collaborate with another character, have the first one make a roll, granting the second one’s action a +1 on a success or a +4 on a critical success. If the aid action fails, add +1 to the opposition’s next action. On a natural 1 just make everything worse in any way you can think of.

### **Opposing Actions**

When there’s a need to resolve an immediate conflict between two opposing characters, whether PCs or NPCs, both roll and whoever rolled higher have their way. Such rolls can resolve issues such as “who grabbed the magical orb first” or in case of a dual, who struck the first blow.

Note success or failures for both parties as normal. For example, a hero and a foe both reach for a magical orb, rolling a 5 and a 2, respectfully. The hero wins the opposed roll and therefore grabs it first; however, since the result is a failure, the GM determines that the orb then slips from the hero’s hand, falls and rolls away.

### **Example of play -**

Jane (the GM): OK, guys, the troll lifts his club and moves toward you, what do you do?

Aviv (Paladin): I lift my sword and swing at the vile beast (rolls a 6, adds 2 due to his “wielding my sword for justice”). A success!

Jane (The GM): Awesome, the troll tries to counter with his club and (rolls a 3) fails, your sword cuts the troll’s club nearly in half. You’ll need another success to finish him off.

Eran (Bard): I play an annoying tune on my bongo drums to distract the troll (rolls a 2, adds 1 for “grabbing attention”). Damn, that’s a failure.

Jane (the GM): OK, apparently the troll knows that tune and he likes it! He becomes energized and you’ll need 2 more successes to finish him off.

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Thank you for taking the time to visit this small part of my world.

