



Phelantar's Advice
for
Running Outdoor Encounters
in
The 13th Age Roleplaying Game



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Introduction and Advice

Outdoor travel and encounters are a staple of fantasy tabletop gaming, but it's a part of the genre that's also easy to turn into a boring slog if not done well. Some people may prefer a detailed and simulationist approach, but here I'll be talking about a more narrative and story-oriented way to deal with the outdoors. More standard combat encounters are beyond the scope of this writing, though you're encouraged to combine them with the things talked about here.

There are a lot of factors which go into how you should approach outdoor travel or encounters. The first thing you need to consider is "is this even necessary". It seems such a simple thing, but it's also one that a lot of GMs tend to look past. Does it benefit your game to make overland travel a more involved and detailed? Or would it be better served to speed through and get the party to their destination? There's no concrete answer to this



question, as a lot of times it depends on your campaign and your players. One group may want to hurry on to the Deadly Tower of Death to confront the evil wizard who kidnapped the king and would be frustrated at an involved session of wilderness events before even getting to the tower. Another group might feel cheated by being handwaved straight to the tower without going through some noteworthy dangers or events first.

The second and third factor are intertwined, to some extent. The second question is "would this be interesting or fun". It might seem that this is a meaningless question if you've decided that wilderness travel or encounters are unnecessary, but that's not really the case. Making the wilderness fun can more than negate the downsides to having an unnecessary encounter or event, even for the people who would otherwise like to skip past the travel to get to the next "important" part of the campaign. To take our Deadly Tower of Death example earlier. The group which just wants to get there so they can start on it might be a lot more interested if they have to pass through the razor ice caverns and deadly mana storms of the World's Spine mountains first, especially if you use the narrative/montage method described later on.

Which brings us to the third factor in approaching your outdoor encounters: "if it isn't fun or interesting, can it be made so". You might have described the area the party is going to pass through as forested hills. Though there's potentially a lot of adventure or danger to be found there for a creative GM, it might be simpler to stack the deck in your favor to start with. Ask yourself what is special about those woods or those hills? Is there something which can



immediately set the tone for the entire expedition that you can add to them? You might decide that the hills are littered with the tombs of ancient kings and are thus filled with undead guardians, traps, and dangerous magics. Or perhaps the forest is home to many fae creatures that delight in tricking and tormenting a party which doesn't pay them proper respect. In either case, you've taken a scenario which might not be very unique and turned into something players might really enjoy experiencing.

The last factor to consider is "what is the goal of doing this". If you're going to have this wilderness adventure, what is the point to it? Is it an end in and of itself, such as when the party is exploring unknown lands? Or is it a way to wear characters down and beat them up a bit before they get to their real destination? Or perhaps is it just a way to show off some cool environments and terrain you've cooked up? Knowing what you want out of the travel before the party runs into it will keep both you and the players interested and involved.

So, now that you've thought about the whats and the whys of the wilderness encounter, it's important to address how to do it. As mentioned before, although some people would prefer a simulationist bent, I won't be addressing that very heavily. I prefer to let characters move at the speed of plot and to lightly handwave the issue of supplies and the like. If players say they're getting ready and spend a handful of gold, they can assume to have the most of the supplies they need. However, I know that even with the approaches that I'll be demonstrating it can be beneficial to have some approximate numbers about things like how far someone can travel by day on foot or by horse and the like, so there will be a chart at the end to help give you a frame of reference.

There are two primary ways that I prefer to address wilderness encounters and a third that builds off the second of those two. The first is the narrative/montage method, which requires no dice rolls at all and is best suited for times where you want players to feel awesome or you don't want to take up a lot of time during a session with the travel. The second method is what I refer to as the skill method, which will require at least one die roll from all the players as well as more prep from the GM in advance. The third is a more extended version of the skill method, best used for situations where the wilderness is expected to be a significant part of a session or event.



The Narrative Method

The narrative method is a way to handle a variety of events, including wilderness travel or encounters. It's best suited for groups who are comfortable narrating or creating events without rolls or rules. It's also well suited for times where you as the GM want a wilderness scene to pass fairly quickly, either because the scene isn't very important or because your players aren't interested in dealing with another situation on the way to something else.

The base idea for this method is that you start with the player to your immediate left or right and ask them to describe an obstacle, danger, or event that the party has run into and then ask them to describe how their character was key in getting the group past it. Once the first player has described an obstacle and how they got past it, go to the second player and around the table until everybody has had an opportunity to narrate something. In a wilderness situation, for example, a player might describe how the party stumbled on a cave holding an owlbear and then go on to describe how they collapsed the cave entrance on the owlbear before it could come out and attack them. Alternatively, a player could describe that they came across a swiftly flowing river and that they shot an arrow tied to an arrow across to allow the party to pass.

The benefits of this method are many. It's very simple, so it goes quickly even for people who aren't as interested in narrative scenes. If you're time-challenged or the players are wanting to hurry along to the next story-related event, this method can allow you to mix things up without spending a lot of time. It allows players to showcase their characters doing something awesome or interesting without the potential of a poor dice roll shooting them in the foot. It's also a good way to break up more complicated scenes or combat encounters since they're more laid back and have no possibilities of failure.

As far as the drawbacks, the biggest one is that players who aren't good at creating or narrating without prompts might feel a bit too much put on the spot with this method. The solution? Give them a prompt. Suggest the seed of an obstacle or danger, something very basic that they can then grow into something unique. Then have them use their backgrounds or One Unique Thing as the basis for how they get past it. You could also skip someone if they're having trouble and come back to them later, but you could also encourage the rest of the players to help figure out the obstacle, so long as the chosen player gets to solve it.

A complication to come from this method is when players take the narrative control they get through this method and go wild. The first thing to mention is that you should give the players a lot of control here. Smacking their ideas down will only result in players who are reluctant to take control in a meaningful way later. Instead, if players go too far or narrate something which goes against the spirit of the campaign, turn it into a negotiation. Find a common point which fits the intention and the spirit of what the player wants to do, but fits in better with your expectations at the table. So, if a player describes a situation which lets him narratively destroy the entire army of the Evil Wizard, instead suggest that he destroy a powerful squad of that army or leave the whole army in confusion. The player still gets to do something interesting and potent without derailing the entire adventure in so doing.



Narrative Method Example

Bob the Barbarian, Sam the Cleric, and Brittani the Bard are playing a scene where they need to pass through a forest in order to reach the court of an Elven noble. The party has had a lot of combat in the last couple of sessions, so the GM decides they need a breather with a narrative scene as they travel through the forest. The forest probably isn't very dangerous, so the skill method isn't really necessary, but it also isn't particularly interesting. So the GM decides to change it to a fey forest, full of faerie creatures.

GM: **sets the scene, describing the forest before turning to the player on his left** So, Brittani, you're in the forest on the way to the court. I want you to describe something for me. An obstacle or danger that the party ran into on the way.

Brittani: Hmm. I've got an idea. So we're walking down a hunting path and we run into a patrol of Elf rangers who think that we're poachers hunting... unicorns or something.

GM: Okay! That sounds cool to me. Now, how was your character key in getting past these Elf rangers and heading onward?

Brittani: Me? Okay. I... have a background called "Royal Negotiator" right? So I talk to the rangers, tell them our mission, persuade them we're good guys... and they agree to escort us all the way to the court.

GM: So, I'm mostly okay with that, but the escort thing is a little too much. How about that they just escort you for a few hours, to the edge of their patrol area?

Brittani: I think that's alright with me.

GM: Okay, let's move on to then. Sam? The party is in some sort of danger. What is it and what do you do to avoid it?

Sam: Okay, so you know how you brought up a unicorn earlier? We found it. And it doesn't like us. Mostly because of what Bob did back the last time at the inn.

Bob: Hey!

Sam: You're the one who slept with the entire staff of that inn, so don't blame me. Anyway, the unicorn senses the vast impurity and wants to attack, but I step in front with my holy symbol and talk it down. My goddess is one of light and purity, so I should have a good idea of the right things to say in this situation.

GM: That works for me. Now, on to Bob... **scene continues until all players have gone**



The Skill Method

The skill method begins similarly to the narrative method, but veers away from a purely narrative resolution and will use dice rolls as well as potential consequences for failure. As with the narrative method, you'll start on the player immediately to your left or right and then ask them to describe an obstacle, danger, or situation that the party needs to overcome.

However, instead of asking the same player to narrate how their character got them past the situation, instead turn to the next player and have them tell you what they did to try to get past. Then they'll roll an appropriate background check (or potentially another method such as an Icon relationship roll) at a target number of your choosing. If they succeed, then they move on without any complications or issues. If they fail, they still move onward (through the concept of failing forward), but they and the party are subjected to some sort of danger as a result of their failure. After their roll, and potentially the consequences coming from it, the rolling player describes another danger that the next player must get the party out of. You continue in this method until all players have had a chance to both describe a danger as well as to roll to avoid a danger.

A key difference here is the possibility for failure. A bad dice roll shouldn't keep the party from making progress, but it has the potential to beat them up and represent the effort or danger involved in wilderness situations. Another important difference is that you as the GM should probably have some dangers or traps ready to go for if, or when, the players fail rolls. This step isn't strictly necessary if you go off the chart with skill DCs and impromptu damage from the core rulebook, but if your improv skills and knowledge of that chart are imperfect then you could spend more time consulting it than adjusting something you had created earlier.

The risk of failure, at least for individual steps, is also the appeal of this method. You might find, or your group may think, that being able to narrate your way through a diabolical forest or enemy patrolled hillside without some risk is boring or unrealistic. The consequences can heighten the excitement of an adventure as players get beaten and battered before even arriving at the Deadly Tower of Death. However, with this in mind players should generally not be at any real risk of death here. Even more important is the fact that, regardless of how many times they fail or how badly they fail each roll by, players fail forward and arrive at their destination. Failure just means that their follow up task could be even more difficult.

The main complication here is that unless you can improv well using the skills and impromptu damage chart, you'll need to spend more time preparing using this method. What does that prep entail? In short, you need to come up with a danger, a number for the attack roll the danger uses, and the damage/consequences of being hit with the attack. Examples of dangers and advice on creating your own will be discussed later.

It may seem unusual to make an attack roll after the player has already failed a roll to get to this point and you may even want to skip the attack roll and just inflict consequences. Having an attack roll gives players a second chance to avoid the mess they find themselves in, so you might use it if the players just barely failed the roll or if they're in a comparatively safe



area. Skipping straight to inflicting damage or consequences could be better when in an exceptionally dangerous area or the player has rolled exceptionally poorly.

Skill Method Example

Having dealt with the elven court, the party has a demonically tainted artifact that they need to destroy. The problem is that the only elven magi capable of doing so has been enslaved by a Sorcerer-Prince and must be rescued from his island fortress. This is a dangerous undertaking even before dealing with the minions of the prince and the fortress itself, so the GM decides to use the skill method to get them there and let those risks play out at the table.

GM: So, you've landed on the far side of the island, so the forces of the Prince don't know you're coming. It's still a dangerous trek to his fortress though. Let's see, this time we'll start with Bob. Bob, what's a danger you guys ran into here?

Bob: Hey, can I go back to when we were sailing to the island instead? I've got an idea.

GM: Sure, I don't mind. So what's this idea of yours?

Bob: Great! So, we're sailing along and we run into this huge storm, but when we come out of it, we don't know where we're at. Do I go ahead and solve this one?

GM: Nope. We're rolling this time and that means that Sam gets to save the day. Sam, what're you doing now that you guys are lost at sea?

Sam: That's a hard one. Hmm. Okay, so I have the background "Resident Librarian", maybe that means I've seen star charts and navigational aids?

GM: Seems reasonable to me. Let's see if you can remember any of the useful charts and what they mean. Roll using Intelligence against a target number of 20.

Sam: Not my best stat, but here goes. **Sam rolls a 2 on the dice, ending with a 9 total** Not even close, just a 9.

The GM checks his notes and prepared dangers, but doesn't have anything specific to being lost on an ocean. He does have one for a field of thorny briars which could be repurposed to represent reefs and shallow waters, however.

GM: So Sam? You remember enough of the charts to get going in the right direction again, but you were so blown off course by the storm that even though you're back on track you end up running to a maze of reefs. Your ship hits one of the reefs and though it isn't damaged, it throws all of you guys around pretty bad. Enough to crack skulls or leave you bruised and bloody. **Sam failed his roll badly enough that the GM decides to skip the attack rolls and just roll damage. This obstacle will hurt the whole party as it fits best with the new description**

GM: So, Sam you take 11 damage, Bob you get 9, and Brittani gets lucky with just 4. Now Sam, it's your turn to describe something dangerous that happens on the island and Brittani,



you get to solve it... **The scene continues until all players have described an event and rolled against another event**



Extended Skill Method

The extended skill method is a tweak on the base skill method which tallies the successes and failures when rolling, then adds benefits or consequences for the group as a whole. It may have narrative influence or mechanical influence (or preferably both), allowing the skills rolled to have a more direct impact on what follows.



For example, if the majority of players succeed on their rolls while traveling to the Deadly Tower of Death, they may find a cache of potions that the Evil Wizard has hidden away for his army. Or possibly their skillful approach players might surprise their opponents during the first combat encounter in the tower.

On the other hand, if more players fail than succeed then their clumsy floundering towards the tower has alerted the enemy to their presence and fights will be somewhat more difficult. Or

maybe they have alerted the Evil Wizard to start the ritual of ultimate power a little earlier, putting the players between a rock and a hard place. This is in addition to any battering the party has taken from individual skill roll failures.

You also might use the extended skill method to represent a longer period of time or a more perilous excursion. Every full set of party rolls could represent a single day, with multiple rolls from each player before you get to the end. The concern with doing this is that you run the risk of burning players out as they'll have to make up a lot of different dangers and come up with a lot of ways to overcome them. Another concern is that this could severely wear on party resources such as recoveries or potions. You might not outright kill any characters by doing this, but you could put them into an unwinnable situation if you extend the skill method too far.

If you're going to use the extended method in this way, it should be the focus of the adventure where exploration or the travel is the primary goal and combats aren't waiting for them between or after skill rolls. Unless of course you want to run a more brutal or unforgiving campaign, which is perfectly okay if that's what you and your group like. In addition, players who feel like they've run into an unwinnable situation can always take a campaign loss to recover and eventually continue forward.



Extended Skill Example

Long after dealing with the Sorcerer Prince, the party is now on their way into the snowy northern mountains to find a ruined observatory so they can be present for a stellar event related to prophecy. The GM wants this part of the campaign to focus on exploration and travel, not combat, but he wants it to be a grueling and dangerous excursion. So he'll use the extended skill method to represent the days (or even weeks) of travel in dangerous wilderness. He decides that each player will describe something and roll three times each, which should get the feel of a long wilderness scenario. He also decides to have some rewards and consequences, both overall and for each round of rolling to spice things up and incentivise players to roll well.

This example picks up during the second round of rolling. The first round ended in a player victory (more successes than failures), but this round is on edge with Bob succeeding his roll and Sam failing his. If Brittani succeeds her roll, they'll win both the round and the overall scenario, though the players don't necessarily realise that.

GM: Okay Sam, what's Brittani going to have to face down this time?

Sam: I have a good one for this. Perfect for Ms. City Girl. So we find a cave for shelter during the night and are cooking up some fish we caught in a stream, when we realise that further back in the cave is a bear... and her cubs. Who are now awake and smelling our fish.

Brittani: You are not my friend right now, Sam. I hope you know that. None of my Icon relationships work and my backgrounds seem unusable too... hey, wait. I'm going to roll "Teller of Tavern Tales". I'm sure that in all my time in taverns with crusty explorers and veteran adventurers, I've heard of ways to deal with bears.

GM: It's a bit of a stretch, but okay. Roll it. You need a 25.

Brittani: **Brittani rolls a 17, putting her total roll at 28** I got it! I think... I heard from an old gold miner that if a bear gets lots to eat, especially in cold weather, it's going to fall asleep and not wake up very easily. So we feed them our fish, Sam and Bob go to catch more, and the bears eat at all before going back to sleep. So now we can get some rest before leaving.

GM: Nice job, Brittani. So you guys came out pretty well for today. In fact... **the group has succeeded at this round of rolling, so the GM has decided they get a reward** ... when you watch the bears go back to sleep, you notice a glint of metal leaned up against the cave wall. Looking closely, it appears to be some sort of sword. A rapier, in fact. Anything mundane would have rusted away, but this is bright and sharp as you pull it from the sheath. You feel a surge of power and realise this is a magical weapon.

Brittani: Awesome! Ms. City Girl came through and don't you guys forget it.



The scenario continues onward with another round of descriptions and rolls, but the overall success is now assured due to the party winning out on two rounds out of three. With that in mind, the GM could skip ahead, but he wants the party to have the full exploring experience

Creating Dangers and Obstacles

For the narrative method, you have no prep to do. The players are doing all the work, all you have to do is stay flexible so you can work with the stuff that players throw your way. For the two different skill methods, some prep is probably in order. For those of you who are confident in your ability to create on the fly, as well as your knowledge of the rules, all you need is the skill and impromptu damage chart from the core rulebook.

If you're not as interested in winging it, you're still going to need that same chart, but you'll be creating stuff using it instead of working straight from it. To start, you need to figure out what the target number for your players will be. Going by the skill check DCs per tier is a good start. If it's a somewhat rough area they're traveling through and the characters are level 3, then a target number of 20 for their skill rolls is a good start. When using the chart, however, it's easy to get sucked into the nice increments it presents. If you think that your players will have too easy a time with a DC of 20, but think that a DC of 25 might be too much, go with 22 or 23 instead. That kind of nuance in your target numbers can be important.

Next you can start in on individual dangers. How many you prepare is really up to you, but you probably want three dangers for every two players, give or take. That'll give you some flexibility in responding to the sorts of scenes and scenarios the players come up with. For each individual danger, you first need to come up with a concept for what the danger is. Is it a dangerous storm? A treefall? Avalanche? Poisoned waterhole? Is this a danger which is going to affect the whole party? Just one person? Maybe just a few of them? It can be useful to keep your dangers somewhat high level. And by that, it means "Shamanistic totem traps left by orcs" is not only unlikely to be used again, but it's also probably too specific to easily transmute into another sort of danger. Whereas "rockfall" could be used several times without being stale and easily transformed into something else like a volley of arrows or a sudden rain of hailstones from the sky.

Once you've figured out what the danger is, you can start in with both the attack roll and the damage or consequences. Again, starting with the impromptu attacks/damage chart is a good way to start and you should tweak and adjust from there. With the attack, there are two important things to keep in mind as you work with the numbers presented. First is that an attack which targets PD or MD should probably be lower than one which attacks AC, because most players will have a higher AC than the other two defenses. An attack bonus against PD or MD which is too high could nearly be an automatic hit, which might not fit in with your expectations. Dropping such an attack bonus by 1 or 2 could be better. The second thing is that an attack which targets the whole party should maybe end up with a slightly lower bonus, otherwise you might do a lot more damage than intended to the group. That being said, you can ignore both of these points if it suits the particular obstacle or campaign. Also, don't be surprised if you don't have many attacks which target MD. It's not necessarily an easy defense to target with a trap or hazard.



Lastly is the damage or consequences. Starting with the chart is normal at this point, but I really recommend you deviate from it a lot to suit the exact nature of the obstacle. Generally speaking, single target damage should have multiple smaller dice and damage against multiple targets should have fewer dice, but of a larger value. You can also “trade in” a dice for a static bonus to the damage, so instead of rolling 3d6 for the damage, you roll 2d6+3. This increases the minimum damage at the cost of the maximum damage potential.

But more interestingly, there can be other consequences involved. Instead of dealing damage (or perhaps in addition to dealing damage), you could remove a recovery, give penalties in the next combat, or even break/damage equipment. For example, if the party runs into a nasty winter storm, it may not do damage directly, but instead the characters lose a recovery to represent the fatigue and physical discomfort. A player caught under a treefall might have their healing potion crushed in addition to taking some damage. A party which wanders into a group of mushrooms which give off a psychedelic spore cloud might have their MD penalized for the first round of their next combat.

If you're using the extended skill method, you'll likely need to do more prep. You might decide you need more dangers if the players are going to have to roll multiple times before the skill challenge is settled. You might need to decide on what the rewards and consequences for a round of rolls are, as well as the overall reward or consequence is if there are multiple rounds of rolling.

Rewards aren't difficult to create. The obvious reward is equipment of some sort. This could be a true magic item (or more than one) or it could be a few consumable items like healing potions or magical runes. Alternatively, you could give out bonuses to the next combat, such as increased attack rolls or damage, increased defenses, or even starting the Escalation Die at 1 or more. If combat isn't likely, you could give bonuses to upcoming skill checks. This would be especially helpful in an extended skill challenge. Alternatively, there could be a story-related reward involved. Their quick delivery of a vital message might impress the king, who then grants them a boon, for example.

Consequences are more difficult than rewards, but there are still some easy options. Dealing damage for overall failures isn't the best choice, but it's still there. Taking away recoveries is probably a better method of draining player resources in this case. Combat penalties are also an easy and quick option, causing status effects (like Dazed) for the first turn of combat, penalties to attack or defense, or maybe even a couple of extra enemies. You can also have players break or lose equipment, though this should perhaps be used with a light touch. Taking away some rations and a healing potion or rune might elicit an accepting groan. Taking away a beloved magical weapon might spark more serious protests.

The good thing about doing all of this prep is that it's all reusable. Write your dangers on index cards and keep them in a box, so you can bring them back up the next time you have wilderness travel. In time, you'll have such a stockpile that you rarely have to make new ones, just adjust old ones to fit the current situation. It'll also be easy to compile lists of possible rewards or penalties that you can just pick from to fit the situation. Story rewards (and



penalties) will still have to be done on a per-case basis, but that's probably best as part of regular session preparations anyway.



Danger Creation Examples

The GM needs to prepare some dangers for when his players venture into the northern mountains in search of the observatory. He's already decided that this will be an extended skill challenge and as such he'll need more dangers. Normally, he'd make four or five of them for a skill challenge, but he decides that he'll make eight instead. That means he'll have plenty to work with as players describe the situations they're in. The party is level 6, putting them in the middle of Champion tier. He wants this to be very challenging, so he sets the general DC for this skill challenge at 26. To make up for it, when the players succeed in a roll, the next player will get a bonus to their roll.

His first danger is probably the most obvious one: Sudden Blizzard, representing players getting caught out in the weather. An easy one to reuse if needed as well. The GM decides that this will be a hard one to avoid once it's triggered and it'll also attack the entire party. Normally, a "hard" attack at Champion tier would be a +15. But since this will target the PD of the entire party, he decides to drop it to +12 instead. Damage for a group in this case would be about 2d12. This seems solid, but the GM wants to do something else instead. The blizzard normally isn't going to do any damage, but instead is going to cost anybody "hit" one of their recoveries to represent the effect of the cold and wet on their stamina. On the other hand, if the blizzard "hits" with a 16+, then it'll deal 7 damage in addition to the recovery.

The GM needs several more dangers so he gets on to the second right away. This one will be an avalanche, which seems pretty versatile. It's another full party and PD attack, which the GM isn't really happy about because it might seem too repetitive. But on the other hand, it really fits the scenario so he'll let it roll. It shouldn't be quite as hard to avoid as the blizzard, so he'll make this a +10 attack roll. But if someone is hit, they should be pretty beaten and bruised, so instead of the suggested 2d12, it'll be 2d8+6.

For the third danger, he needs something which isn't going to hit the whole group and hopefully will target another defense. There are a lot of possibilities, but the GM goes with Angry Wildlife. It might be a hungry bear, a surprised badger, a clutch of baby frost worms, whatever. It's not full on fight, just a brief and bloody encounter before the party either flees or drives the creature off. This is an attack versus a single player and it's versus AC, so the GM goes with a +14 on the attack roll. The suggested damage is 4d8, which seems pretty much in line with what the GM wants out of it. The character might get really mauled, but they also might come out relatively unscathed.

The hazards so far have been logical ones to have in this area. But the GM feels there should be something more exotic and unexpected. He decides that the area is volcanically active, so there are occasional eruptions of superheated steam or even lava in some areas. The unlucky character here has stepped in the wrong place at the wrong time. It should have a very good chance to hit AC, so the GM goes with a +16 on the attack. The damage should be pretty bad, but it might be more interesting if it wasn't just damage. Maybe some consumable item, like healing potions, shatter or burn in the heat in addition to the damage. So the GM goes with 3d8 damage and lose 1 consumable magic item (rune, oil, potion) of the player's choice.



Sample Rewards and Penalties

If you don't have the desire or time to make up your own penalties or rewards for skill challenges, this list should serve well enough. For those of you wanting to make your own, these can be a base from which to tweak and adjust to fit your particular campaign.

Rewards

- True magical item of of the appropriate tier.
- Cache of 1d4+1 potions, runes, or oils of the appropriate tier.
- Treasure worth roughly 50gp per character level (ie, level 4 characters would get 200gp worth of treasure in total).
- A story-related boon or benefit, like being owed a favor by an NPC or allowing an even greater success at their current task.
- +1 bonus per tier to upcoming skill checks.
- +1 to attacks per tier for the first round of the next combat encounter.
- +1 to one or more defenses for the first round of the next combat encounter.
- Start the Escalation Die at 1 during the next combat encounter.
- Treat all players as having the Strong Recovery feat for the next combat encounter.
- An incremental advance outside of any normal advances.
- The party gains an ambush round in the next combat
- Remove one or more enemies from the next combat encounter

Penalties

- A character loses a key piece of equipment (magical item, important mundane item, consumable item)
- A story-related consequence, such as making important NPCs angry or making their current task more difficult.
- The character or party suffers a status effect for the first round of combat (Dazed, Hampered, or Vulnerable being the best options)
- The party has a -2 penalty to attack for the first round of their next encounter
- Add one or more enemies to the next combat encounter
- The Escalation Die doesn't advance on round two as normal, instead staying at zero for two rounds of combat.
- Each character's next skill check is at a -2 penalty.
- The character or party loses 1 or more recoveries
- The party is ambushed in their next combat



Sample Dangers and Hazards

These hazards are for the Adventurer Tier, with each row representing normal, dangerous, and very dangerous events respectively. Scale them up (increasing the attack and the damage) and tweak the descriptions as need be to represent higher tier dangers.

Falling Tree	Wildlife Trap	Tainted Water	Cloud of Insects
<i>This huge tree has been dead for years, but has decided to fall just now. Lucky you.</i>	<i>This trap was meant to capture or kill wildlife. Instead it got you.</i>	<i>The water at the last place you filled up your waterskins was less than clean.</i>	<i>You've managed to attract the attention of a huge cloud of biting and stinging insects</i>
+10 vs AC against 1d3 characters	+5 vs AC against 1 character	+6 vs PD against the entire party	+5 vs PD against 1 character
1d8+4 damage	2d6 damage and the character is stuck for 1 round in the next combat	1d8 damage and lose 1 recovery	-1 to all defenses for the first round of the next combat.

Nasty Fall	Wolf Attack	Terrible Storm	Magical Wards
<i>Falling down a hill or out of a tree is an ignoble way of suffering injury.</i>	<i>These wolves are starving and hoped you were a good meal</i>	<i>There's something sinister and unnatural about this storm</i>	<i>The wizard who put these magical protections here is probably long dead, but that won't help you.</i>
+12 vs AC against 1 character	+10 vs AC against up to 3 characters	+8 vs PD against the entire party	+7 vs MD against the entire party
1d6+6 damage & the character loses 1 piece of equipment -player choice	3d6 damage (this is not a combat, just a brief encounter)	2d10 damage and roll a saving throw (11+) or lose 1 recovery	1d12 damage and begin the next combat Dazed for one round.

Rain of Arrows	Realm of Nightmares	Death Totem	Toxic Flora
<i>Someone has issues with you being around here and have sent a volley your way</i>	<i>Rumors are this area was haunted or cursed and hostile to living creatures. It is.</i>	<i>A barbarian tribe has left a totemic figure full of death magic here to discourage intruders.</i>	<i>You've had the bad luck to stumble into a patch of toxic plants, leaving you feeling sick and tired</i>
+13 vs AC against the entire party	+11 vs MD against the entire party	+13 vs PD against 1 character	+10 vs PD against 1d3 characters
3d8 damage	2d8 damage and the character is Vulnerable (16+ save ends) for the next battle	2d6+8 damage and enemies get +1 damage when attacking this character in the next combat	2d8 poison damage and -2 to all attacks (save ends) in the next combat.



November Patron Thanks

Thank you to all these Patrons for making this work possible.

Joshua Ramsey, Are Sørli, Paul DeMartino, Lowell Francis, Matthew Caulder, Dane Ralston-Bryce, Bryan Rennekamp, Sasha, Wesley Hall, Michael Bowman, Michael Hasko, Patrick Malone, Jean-Christophe Cubertafon, Matt Greenfelder, Clark Olson-Smith, Matt Hogan, Tim Densham, Richard Green, and Simon Rogers.

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Special Thanks to ASH LAW, Ryven Cedrylle, and the other writers of Tales of the 13th Age who originally pioneered some of these concepts and helped refine them.



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