

Adventures in the Improbable

Richard Dienst

"That'll be five silver pieces," the gatekeeper of Arkcross said.
 "Five?! I'll give you two," Khelzad, a thieving dwarf, offered.
 "Look, I don't usually bargain, but let me check What's your charisma?" the gatekeeper produced a pair of dice.
 "Eight," sighed Khelzad, consulting a crumpled piece of parchment.
 "Is that including the constitution-charisma trade-off?" The man was scanning a chart Khelzad answered in the affirmative.
 "Sorry, it's still five silvers. I'm 'uncertain' about you," the gatekeeper apologized.
 The dwarf had barely paid at the gate before a beggar accosted him.
 "Spare a copper sir?" he whimpered.
 "No, my good man. Cash is tight these days," Khelzad quickly said.
 "Oh come on. I saw your sheet at the gate. You've got two hundred gold pieces and your wisdom's ten! You would figure out that I could be of great help to you," the bum looked up with a gleam in his eyes. He offered a dirty, wrinkled palm.
 "I guess you're right. Here," the dwarf flipped a coin to him.
 "Well?"
 "Well what?"
 "Aren't you going to ask me for some information? That's the only reason you ever pay a beggar," the ragged man explained.
 "Oh. I'm sorry, but I'm only first level. Twelve more experience points and I'll make second. What can you tell me?" the dwarf thought hard.
 "Let's see," thought the rogue. "How about this tidbit: the Thieves' Guild is in back of the Laughing Mute Inn?"
 "Fine, thanks," Khelzad mumbled and wandered toward the Inn. He walked up the broad wooden porch and through the double doors to the already busy Common Room. People of all races were laughing, drinking, and gambling. A few travelers sat at the bar, a group of fighting men sat at a large table, and some shady-looking thief types drank near the back door. The bartender, a tall Elf, was pouring countless tankards and mugs of ale and mead.

Khelzad bought a mug of rum and wandered over to the thieves.
 "Mind if I join you?" Khelzad nonchalantly asked. One man looked slowly up and surveyed the dwarf. He chuckled, stood, and ground his heel into the dwarf's soft leather boots.
 "That's about a pip's worth," the man muttered. "Mark it off."
 "All right," Khelzad moaned as he made an ink mark on his paper.
 Distracted with the hostility, Khelzad thought it best to approach the Guild more directly. He limped around to the back, where a single door, marked by an impaled dagger, was lit. The tenderfoot thief wisely knocked on the door.
 Minutes passed before a woman cracked the door. No light came from within.
 "What d'you want?" she rasped.
 "I want to see the Guildmaster," Khelzad boldly said, standing up straight.
 "He's busy now."
 Reluctantly the bearded thief paid ten gold pieces.
 "E'll see you now," the woman smiled as the door was opened.
 "So—you wants to join our little Guild here," the Master grinned at Khelzad.
 "Yes, sir."
 "Are you able?"
 "Yes, sir."
 The Master proceeded to rattle off questions, including Khelzad's pips, dexterity score, weaponry, and strength bonuses. The answers were written down carefully.
 "Let's see . . . a good dex, nice strength, and decent equipment. I think you'll fit in well here," the Master tossed the dwarf a Guild medallion, dagger, and cloak.
 "Thank you, sir."
 "Listen, Khelzad my boy, I'm getting tired tonight. Mind if we time-freeze here and pick it up Wednesday night?"
 "It's okay by me. Is that my percentile die?"
 "Yeah. Here's your Greyhawk too. Those charts sure make thieving easier to run."

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS HAVE FEELINGS, TOO

Rick Krebs

Non-player characters should be more than a string of numbers, especially in regards to how and why they react to player characters. What follows is a basic format for rounding out the NPCs in your villages or dungeons.

Roll a 6 sided die:

1. Fears, afraid of
2. Loves
3. Dislikes
4. Likes
5. Hates
6. Roll 1 love and 1 hate

If desired, simply decide NPC's general nature. If strong, use love, hate, if mild nature, use like, dislike, and roll for each on table 2. Then roll a 6 sided die again. If a 1 is rolled, the character also has a phobia to be rolled on table 2. Once likes, dislikes, fears, etc. are rolled on chart 1, consult chart 2 for the specific nature. Reroll any contradictory characteristics.

Table 2: Use percentage dice (2d20)

01 - 02 Dwarves	58 - 60 Fightingmen
03 - 04 Elves	61 - 62 Rangers
05 - 06 Halflings	63 - 64 Barbarians
07 - 09 Clerics/religion	65 - 66 Amazons
10 - 13 Magic Users/magic	67-68 Pets
14 - 16 Illusionists	69 - 70 Insects
17 - 18 Assassins	71 - 72 Reptiles
19 - 22 Thieves	73 - 74 Lawful Characters
23 - 25 Druids	75 - 76 Neutral Characters
26 - 28 Bards/the Arts	77 - 78 Chaotic Characters

29 - 31 Monks	79 - 80 Sailors, soldiers
32 - 33 Paladins	81 - 82 Silver
34 - 35 Gems	83 - 84 Plants/plant life
36 - 37 Jewels	85 - 86 Gossip/rumors
38 - 39 Gold	87 - 88 Education/knowledge
40-41 Work	89 - 90 Higher levels
42 - 43 Ruler	91 - 92 Slavery
44 - 45 Alcohol	93 - 94 Mixed races (½ elves, ½ Orcs, etc.)
48-49 Men	95 - 96 Water
50 - 51 Beautiful Women	97 - 98 Users of Magic Items
52 - 53 Ugly Females	99 Pick any one
54 - 55 Children	00 Everything/everybody
56 - 57 Strangers	

Examples of tables usage:

Option 1:

Salbeluut, owner of an Inn, receives a roll of 2 on table 1, we consult table 2, where on he rolls a 21. He loves thieves. Expanding on this we decide that his inn will become a drop for the thieves guild. Allowing a safe haven and a "fence" for footpads and their gains.

Option 2:

Aphfoy, another Inn owner, is given a mild nature (likes, dislikes). He rolls a 36 for likes (jewels), and a 40 for dislikes (work). His roll for fears is a 1 indicating he has some fears, phobia. A roll of 70 indicates he fears insects. So a party of adventurers arrives at Aphfoy's Inn, and they need an additional member of the party. Using tales of fabulous jewels found in a nearby dungeon, it is easy to get Aphfoy to close the inn (all work and no play . . .) and join the party. But if the party encounters any insects in the dungeon they better not count on Aphfoy sticking around.