

Fantastical Random Settlements

More crazy random tables by Radulf St. Germain

Synopsis

If you are in need of a fantasy settlement, which you party will encounter along the road, this is the right product for you! While there are already many products out there that let you roll up settlements, I would like to claim that this one is slightly different. Instead of giving you information that might not impact the game, e.g. what crop is grown in winter in which intervals¹, I want to focus on things that produce flavor and might acts as adventure hooks. Also, I am a big fan of maps, so a couple of those are included.

Rolling Up a Settlement

There are several steps for rolling up a settlement. The order here assumes that the party approaches the settlement along a road. You might need to modify this if there are different circumstances.

Early Impressions

First, there are things that your party will encounter long before they can even spot the settlement. Use this table, if you like or give the events a 50% chance to occur.

D10	Foreshadowing
1	A group of people fleeing from a <i>great evil</i> in the settlement.
2	A group of travelers who just visited the city and know about its <i>latest news</i> .

¹ Such tables can also be interesting and a lot of fun. But this is a different approach. You can easily combine the two, however.

3	Scouts belonging to the <i>main authority</i> in the settlement. They are looking for <i>something missing</i> .
4	An ambassador traveling towards the city to talk to the <i>main authority</i> about the <i>latest news</i> .
5	A party of evil adventurers attracted by the <i>great evil</i> to work for it.
6	A party of good adventurers who have heard about the <i>great evil</i> and want to vanquish it.
7	A criminal who has stolen something from the settlement (<i>something missing</i>) and mistakes the party for people coming to catch him.
8	A group of laborers who want to make money support the <i>great endeavor</i> .
9	A group of spies to want to find out the truth behind the <i>latest news</i> .
10	People working for the <i>great evil</i> (50%) or the <i>main authority</i> (50%) who come back from a mission with a prisoner belong to the <i>pariah group</i> .

What Kind of Settlement

You might want to determine this manually but you can also roll on this table. You should probably roll before the party is at the gates since some results might be detected from some distance.

D10	Kind of Settlement
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1	A hamlet with a fortification run by a remote (i.e. not present locally) <i>main authority</i> and an ancient house behind the hill (<i>cursed house</i>)
2	A hamlet with a shrine destroyed due to <i>mysterious reasons</i> , protected by a <i>hero</i> .
3	A hamlet divided into two parts separated by a river. The parts are home to two <i>rival groups</i> .
4	A small town on an island in a lake. There is a small settlement outside for its <i>pariah group</i> . Two buildings dominate its central hills, belonging to two <i>rival groups</i> .
5	A small town that has grown out of two separate settlements that have merged after a <i>great endeavor</i> ended years of conflict.
6	A small town that is very religious and has multiple temples.
7	A wizard's tower surrounded by a small town .
8	A small town that has an upper town on a plateau and several smaller quarters surrounding it.
9	A town surrounded by a powerful wall and run by the military.
10	A town with beautiful parks maintained by the local authority.

The Most Striking Thing

As the party enters or nears the settlement, they will notice one thing before anything else. This is something like a theme for the settlement and should be used to flavor many of the interactions the party has while staying here.

D10	The Most Striking Thing
1	There is a very cosmopolitan air
2	The settlement is very religious. People wear holy symbols, icons and statues abound.
3	The settlement is old and run-down.
4	An unusual racial minority is quite prominent in the settlement.

5	The settlement is unusually colorful.
6	The settlement is drab and depressing. Everything is quite functional, ornaments are rare.
7	There is a very <i>strong smell</i> everywhere.
8	One color dominates everything.
9	The <i>main authority</i> in town seems to be present everywhere and quite oppressive.
10	There is a strongly discriminated <i>pariah group</i> and signs of discrimination are common.

Special Tables

Use these tables only if directed here or if you really, really want to.

Great Evil

A great evil plagues the settlement. This table gives you some information on what it is.

D10	Great Evil
1	The ghost of a member of the <i>pariah group</i> kills people regularly (<i>regular interval</i>).
2	The <i>main authority</i> in the village started to behave tyrannical for <i>mysterious reasons</i> .
3	Goblinoids harass travelers from and to the city.
4	An evil wizard has taken up residence in the settlement and treats the locals as slaves.
5	A giant non-intelligent monster lairs near the settlement and devours livestock and even people.
6	Deserters have moved in, first as guests but then neither leaving nor paying.
7	An evil cult plagues the city.
8	Two <i>rival groups</i> have started to fight in earnest for <i>mysterious reasons</i> and the settlement suffers.
9	There are mysterious accidents due to <i>mysterious reasons</i> .

10	Two <i>great evils</i> battling each other in town.
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Latest News

Something really interesting (not necessarily bad) has happened in the settlement and everybody is talking about it.

D10	Latest News
1	A <i>great evil</i> was ousted from the settlement after a long time by the new <i>main authority</i> .
2	A <i>great endeavor</i> has been planned and will be started very soon.
3	Something important disappeared (<i>something missing</i>). People blame <i>mysterious reasons</i> .
4	Something quite valuable (<i>something missing</i>) was recently rediscovered.
5	A <i>pariah group</i> has been forced to leave the settlement.
6	A new <i>source of wealth</i> has been discovered and attracts many people.
7	A new <i>main authority</i> has replaced the former <i>main authority</i> .
8	Two <i>rival groups</i> have started working together on a plan for a <i>great endeavor</i> .
9	There are false rumors of a <i>great evil</i> having its eye on the settlement.
10	An item that was under the protection of two <i>rival groups</i> has disappeared (<i>something missing</i>). Each group blames the other.

Main Authority

Well, somebody has to run this place and keep things in order. These are the people who do it.

D10	Main Authority
1	A noble house and its retainers
2	A council of elders
3	A religious order
4	A knight
5	A wise but awfully distracted wizard

6	A young dragon
7	A mysterious hermit living just outside of the settlement
8	A guild or a council of guilds
9	Two groups from this table (roll d8) in a council
10	Three groups from this table (roll d8) in a council

Something Missing

There is something that belongs to the settlement but now it is gone.

D10	Something Missing
1	A holy statue
2	A magical item of protection
3	The ring/crown/scepter of authority
4	The settlement's money reserve (possibly in gems and maybe not all of it)
5	The heir apparent.
6	The book of rights and ownership
7	The tablet with the holy commandments that must be met to avoid a great doom.
8	The plans for a <i>great endeavor</i> .
9	The ownership documents to a <i>source of wealth</i> on the border between this and a neighboring settlement.
10	A box with an imprisoned demon.

The Great Endeavor

Something big is in the works.

D10	The Great Endeavor
1	An advanced irrigation system
2	A new temple
3	A new fortification
4	A new <i>source of wealth</i>
5	An isolated home for a <i>pariah group</i> .
6	A giant prison camp
7	A sewer system
8	A mausoleum for the current ruler (or one of them).
9	A new bridge or road
10	A lavish home for the <i>great evil</i> in town.

Pariah Group

There are some people in the settlement that are disliked. Maybe they are useful or maybe they are allowed to stay out of pity. Nevertheless, they do not fully participate in the settlement's social life.

D10	Pariah Group
1	Beggars
2	People afflicted by a disease (e.g. lepers)
3	Wizards (maybe only of certain schools)
4	Dwarves
5	Elves
6	All non-humans
7	Butchers, surgeons and other people who touch blood
8	Grave diggers
9	Merchants
10	Religious minority

Rival Groups

There are two groups in the settlement that do not like each other. They do not (typically) fight openly but they try to outdo each other, oppose each other's plans, and go to different inns.

D10	Rival Groups
1	Two religious groups worshipping the same god(s)
2	Two religious groups worshipping different gods
3	Two noble houses
4	Two schools of magic
5	A school of magic and a religious order
6	Two guilds
7	The <i>main authority</i> and a potential new <i>main authority</i> .
8	Two <i>pariah groups</i> .
9	The <i>main authority</i> and a <i>pariah group</i> (roll d8+2)
10	A noble house belonging to the non-dominant religion and the main religious order of the settlement.

Source of Wealth

The settlement has access to (or will have, had...) a source of money.

D10	Source of Wealth
1	A special delicacy/type of food (e.g. salted fish, wine, olives etc.)
2	Mineral wealth (a gold mine, a river with gems in it, amber etc.)
3	Superiorly crafted weapons and armor (maybe of a specific type)
4	Beautiful bachelors and maidens to marry off to rich and influential people around the country
5	A school teaching specialized knowledge
6	Specialized items needed for religious services (incense, holy crystals)
7	Healing herbs
8	Famous clothing
9	An illicit drug
10	Magical ingredients

Cursed House

The settlement has a cursed house which people avoid.

D10	Cursed House
1	Sealed temple to a god no longer worshipped here
2	The manor of a vampire who avoids outsiders
3	The manor of a long dead bloodline whose ghosts still haunt the place
4	The home of a wizard who disappeared mysteriously several years ago.
5	A place that appears for a night out of nowhere at a <i>regular interval</i> and has swallowed all who entered it.
6	Home/prison to the ruler who was disposed by the current <i>main authority</i> .
7	Home to a really pleasant nobleman cursed to look like a beast and falsely suspected of great evil.

8	A monastery/nunnery built upon a great seal that blocks a gate to hell.
9	A former <i>hero</i> who broods here because he/she could not recover an important item that was lost years ago (<i>something missing</i>).
10	An inn run by really creepy people who secretly work to enable a <i>great evil</i> .

Hero

There are heroes in the settlement and this is what they are.

D10	Hero
1	A proud knight
2	A grizzled veteran warrior with eyepatch
3	A half-senile wizard of incredible power
4	A kindly and portly priest
5	An outlaw archer who takes from the rich and gives to the poor
6	A druid with animal companion
7	Twins with staves who fight like one
8	A lesser fey with a magical sword
9	A paladin with demon blood
10	A kind but slightly dumb giant

Time Intervals

Some things happen at regular intervals. Roll here to determine what the interval is.

D10	Regular Interval
1	Every winter solstice
2	Every full moon
3	Every year on the same (random) day
4	Every new moon
5	On the hottest day of summer
6	On the first day of spring
7	When the first snow of the year starts to fall
8	During strong storms
9	When the stars are right
10	When the death bells toll

Mysterious reasons

Mysterious and unexplainable evil events take place in town. Clearly, there is something sinister behind all this.

D10	Mysterious reasons
1	Mind-controlling monsters from underground pull the strings.
2	A fey prank has gotten out of control and any attempts by the fey to fix it make it worse.
3	A rival settlement/nation has sent a wizard to cause trouble.
4	An ancient curse was unleashed when a local tomb was robbed.
5	An ancient half-forgotten promise to a hag was broken and this is her revenge.
6	A wounded, dying angel rests nearby and his nightmares manifest this way.
7	A demon is serving a member of the <i>pariah group</i> and has some fun on the side.
8	A devil is tempting a member of the <i>main authority</i> by secretly causing these problems and offering a remedy.
9	A magical disease affects the mind of anybody who drinks water from a certain contaminated well.
10	A devil and a demon are fighting a proxy fight in the settlement.

Strong Smell

D10	Strong Smell
1	Herbs
2	Moldy, fungal smell
3	Freshly cut wood
4	Coppery smell almost like blood
5	Sulphur
6	Smoke and Soot
7	Rotten food
8	Flowers
9	Incense
10	Yeast

Color

D10	Color
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1	Red
2	Green
3	Blue
4	Yellow
5	Purple
6	Orange
7	Gray
8	Black
9	White
10	Brown