



Not-so-random Encounters

3 *reasons to use Random Encounters.* *Not-so-Random Encounters* is a 5th Edition supplement for **3-7 characters of 7th-level** and is optimized for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 5 or 8**. This document offers details for each level and makes adjustments accordingly. This supplements provides a dozen random encounters for any dungeon setting.

Random encounters can be a great way to challenge the party in interesting ways, but they can also have the effect of slowing down the pace of a session, so use them at your own discretion. Here are three reasons I use them.

1. **Characters can go nova.** Often, random encounters take place during travel that the players will have a long rest at the end of. This means that characters can try out their newest ability, flex their arcane muscles or test out a tactic to use later.
2. **They should not be random.** Obviously it goes against the name, but these encounters shouldn't be random, at least not to the DM. I always have two or three "random" encounters planned to give myself breathing room when the players decide to do something off script.
3. **They make your world feel alive.** These encounters allow you to illustrate that the choices the characters make have consequences, or that the events going on around the characters are bigger than them. *Storm King's Thunder* does this really well, making sure that the world keeps moving around the party and their central narrative.

Dungeon Encounters

Dungeons are home to many creatures, including beasts, monsters and other bizarre creatures and constructs. Each time the characters move from one location to another, you can check for random encounters by rolling a d20. On a roll of 16-20, an encounter takes place. Conversely, if the players seem restless, you can decide that an encounter occurs. Roll 1d12 and consult the Dungeon Encounters table to determine what the party meets.

Dungeon Encounters

d12	Encounter
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Cleaning Service

As the passage ahead narrows, you detect movement. Something large and amorphous slops itself towards you.

Encounter: Ewe-zze. An ooze, once part of a group of such creatures, once used to clean the halls of the dungeon, still roams the halls in search of smut to clean.

The nature of the creature are detailed on the table below.

Adventure Level	Encounter
5th	The ooze is a huge gelatinous cube with 92 hp and deals an additional 7 (2d6) acid damage with its Pseudopod attack
8th	The ooze is a gargantuan gelatinous cube with 124 hp and deals an additional 14 (4d6) acid damage with its Pseudopod attack

Development. Want to increase the challenge? Turn this encounter into a race against time. Place this encounter into a short and narrow passageway and seal the exit behind the characters. Then give them just two rounds to destroy the ooze before it engulfs them all in one fell swoop.

Purple Moss

The area ahead is is carpeted with hundreds, if not thousands, of purple moss.

Purple Moss The moss covers the entire area and is potentially very dangerous. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check will confirm this and provide the following details.

If touched, the moss ejects a cloud of spores that fills a 10-foot cube originating from the moss. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1d4 hours. A creature that doesn't need to breath automatically succeeds. While poisoned in this way, a creatures acts as if affected by a *confusion* spell for the duration. The poison can be cured by harvesting and eating the moss.

The moss is vulnerable to and will be destroyed by fire, cold, or radiant damage, sunlight or any disease curing magic.

Treasure. The moss is a valuable alchemical ingredient, each 5 foot square patch is worth 100 gp. Safely harvesting it requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check.

Weird Science

An explosion shakes the ground and the area becomes warmer by the second. Blistering towards you is a monster of manifested fire!

Encounter: Ele-mental! An elemental was summoned by a recalcitrant mage and trapped here by the strange magic of the dungeon. It wanders the halls searching for a means of escape. The nature of the creature are detailed on the table below.

Adventure Level	Encounter
5th	The creature is a fire elemental
8th	The creature is a fire elemental with 156 hp and the Fire Spin attack action

Fire Spin (Recharge 5-6). The elemental shoots a torrent of fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Pesh'aat the Phantom

One moment the space before you is empty and the next it is occupied as a ethereal humanoid floats through the very wall!

"Welcome." Rattles its raspy and empty voice.

Encounter: Phantom. A spirit is all that is left of Pesh'aat, once a mage and expert of the dungeon. In his undead madness, Pesh'aat roams the dungeon's environs in search of what, even he does not know, but he deals with the living with seething hatred. Although he doesn't immediately attack, any Charisma checks are made with disadvantage.

The nature of the creature are detailed on the table below.

Adventure Level	Encounter
5th	Pesh'aat is a spectre
8th	Pesh'aat is a wraith

Development. Pesh'aat is an intelligent undead and is an expert in the dungeon, a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check or a suitable bribe and the phantom will share some of that knowledge.

Treasure. Pesh'aat carries a *wand of the war mage +1*.



Kobold-made Traps

Kobolds are cunning and ruthless trap-makers. Combat is for fools when you are murder someone from a safe distance. Here are just a few traps that can be easily applied to any kobold dungeon.

Living blade trap

This trap is a fancy name for a relatively simple trap. The trap is triggered by a pressure plate, buried into the floor. Noticing this trap requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trap can then be disarmed with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made with proficiency in thieves tools.

Once triggered, a bunch of swords, greataxes, and other sharp objects fall down on top of the pressure plate. This creature must succeed on a saving throw to dodge. On a failed save, the creature takes all damage, taking only half damage on a success.

The nature of the trap's save and damage are detailed on the table below.

Adventure Level	Save	Damage
5th	DC 15 Dexterity	10 (4d4) piercing damage
8th	DC 17 Dexterity	15 (6d4) piercing damage

Development. If a character disarms the trap by more than five they can safely retrieve a greataxe, longsword and shortsword.

Dragon's breath trap

This trap is also a relatively simple trap. The trap is triggered by a wire, roughly five feet from the ground. The kobolds of course can pass beneath this with ease. Noticing this trap requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trap can then be disarmed with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made with proficiency in thieves tools.

Once triggered, a blue flame shoots out into the tunnel. This creature must succeed on a saving throw to dodge. On a failed save, the creature takes all damage, taking only half damage on a success.

The nature of the trap's save and damage are detailed on the table below.

Adventure Level	Save	Damage
5th	DC 15 Dexterity	14 (4d6) fire damage
8th	DC 17 Dexterity	21 (6d6) fire damage

Development. If a character disarms the trap by more than five they can safely retrieve a flask of Alchemist's Fire.

The Sword of Greed

Although kobolds are amongst the greediest of creatures, they recognise that adventurers are similar in this respect and so use this knowledge to create deadly trap.

During your passage through the dungeon, you find the remains of a battle. The bodies of a chain-clad warrior and a robed figure lay on the floor, each of them pierced by the claws of a gigantic and vicious-looking spider. Obvious signs point to this battle having taken place within a few days.

Still clutched in the hand of the warrior is a sword that gleams in the half-light.

Trapped Sword. This scene has been manufactured by the kobolds and sword is the trap, coated in a deadly poison. If a character touches the sword they must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be Poisoned for 1d4+1 days. The Poisoned creature is Unconscious. The creature cannot be awoken without the use of a *lesser restoration* spell or similar effect. Because they are unable to wake, they will die of starvation within 1d4+1 days. The nature of the trap's save are detailed on the table below.

This time can be doubled if a characters spends at least two hours per day providing care for the poisoned character.

Adventure Level	Save
5th	DC 15 Constitution
8th	DC 17 Constitution

A Friend in Need?

From ahead come noisy bumping, clattering and cursing.

If the party chooses to investigate, read or paraphrase the following.

As you close in you find a strange scene. A goblin hunches over a chest, frantically rummaging through its depths, discarding items over its shoulder, cursing loudly as it does so. "Ergh, there's nothing, danking nothing!"

Encounter. This creature is called Kopinski (NE male goblin). He won't fight, instead falling at the party's feet, prostrating itself and begging for help. His party were killed by monsters and now all it seeks is a means of escape.

If allowed, he will join them until leave. A coward at heart, he will only fight at range. If the party deals with Kopinski generously, he will show them his "stash".

Treasure. The contents of the chest are worthless, but Kopinski's stash includes 138 gp, a potion of healing and a bag of beans.





Be Our Guest

A pair of animated creatures, that once upon a time functioned as a massage chair, has become damaged and defunct. The “chair” now takes the form of a **rug of smothering** and an **animated shrub**, although both have the construct type. Attempting to fulfill their duty, the pair will swarm upon and attempt to vigorously “massage” one character.

Underdark Hunters

Remaining motionless until a creature comes within reach, the roper gains the benefit of surprise. Read or paraphrase the following to the character it attacks first.

Your pack feels heavy and you shrug to adjust its weight, but rather than do so, the pack and the uncomfortable weight remain.

With that realisation you notice a viscous, slimy liquid on your skin and a thick tendril seeking for more purchase.

Encounter. This monster is a roper, an dungeon predator that conceals itself by appearing as a stalagmite or stalactite. The monster seeks to feed and will reel in its first victims to devour, attempting to stay out of range from the rest of the party.

The nature of the creature is detailed on the table below.

Adventure

Level	Encounter
5th	This creature is a roper
8th	This creature is a roper with 143 hp and can make an additional tendril attack per turn

Development. If you want to make this encounter even more dangerous, place it in an underground gorge. While the characters traverse a five-foot wide ledge, the roper attempts to pluck them off of it. If a character destroys a tendril, they fall into the darkness of the gorge below.

Malign Intent

They can be heard before they're seen, their skinless bones clacking on the hard stone floor and their toothy jaws snapping with an empty hunger.

As they close you notice how their bones seem to ravenously absorb any light that finds them; these are no normal undead.

Encounter. The group is made up of **shadow skeletons** (see appendix for details). These skeletons are particularly cunning and cruel. Not only are they able to act tactically, but they will also attack to cripple, rather than kill. If a shadow skeleton reduces a creature to 0 hp or scores a critical hit they deal no additional damage but instead injure it. Roll on the Crippling Injury Table below to determine the nature of the injury.

The nature of the creatures in this encounter are detailed on the table below.

Adventure

Level	Encounter
5th	The group is made up of three shadow skeletons
8th	A group of three shadow skeletons is led by an evil priest (animate dead is prepared in place of dispel magic)

Crippling Injury

d6

Injury

- Broken Leg.** Your speed is reduced by 10 feet and you cannot take the Dash action. Magical healing of at least 10 hp repairs the broken limb.
- Broken Arm.** You cannot use weapons that have the Two-Handed property. If you carry a shield or weapon in your off-hand you cannot use this item. Magical healing of at least 10 hp repairs the broken limb.
- Broken Ribs.** Whenever you attempt an action in combat, you must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, you lose the action and can't use reactions until the start of your next turn. Magical healing of at least 10 hp repairs the broken ribs.
- Festering Wound.** Your hit point maximum is reduced by 1 every 24 hours the wound persists. If your hit point maximum drops to 0, you die. The injury heals if you receive magical healing of at least 10 hp.
- Teeth Knocked Out.** You have disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks. When you cast a spell with a verbal component there is a 25% chance the spell will not work. If the spell fails, you still used your action to try to cast it, but the spell did not use any slots or material components. The injury heals if you receive magical healing of at least 10 hp.
- Lose a Finger.** You have disadvantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks and Dexterity checks to use fine tools (such as thieves tools) using the hand with which you lost the finger. Magic such as the **regenerate** spell can restore the lost finger.



Passive Predators

A slight movement of the shadows is all the warning you get before something wormlike falls upon you.

Encounter. A pack of gricks have taken up residence in this area, treating it as their hunting ground. Their worm-like bodies blend in to their surroundings, making them patient and deadly predators. They will stay hidden and lie in wait atop piles of debris or rock formations until a character comes close enough to attack.

The nature of the creatures are detailed on the table below.

Treasure. The gricks recently killed a traveling merchant who had sought refuge in the dungeon. The merchant carried a pouch of 50 gp and five gems, each worth 10 gp.

Adventure

Level Encounter

5th	The pack is made up of three gricks .
8th	The pack is made up of three gricks , each with 48 hp and +1 to attacks and damage

Benevolent Dictator

Passing through a veil of discarded skin, you realise the monster that shed it must be twenty foot long, its serpentine trunk as thick as a redwood.

"Welcome." A voice whispers through the gloom.

Prepared for danger, your heightened senses pick out the direction its sibilant tongue came from and you notice it for the first time.

No mere snake, this monster has the face of a beautiful woman, her features equal parts desperate and welcoming.

Encounter. This creature is a naga, an intelligent serpent created to guard the treasures of a lost and forgotten race. It might be that this creature is protecting loot that it now considers its own, or perhaps it intends to stop the characters from removing items that could be a danger to themselves or the world as a whole.

The nature of the creature are detailed on the table below.

Adventure Level Encounter

5th	The creature is a spirit naga .
8th	The creature is a guardian naga .

Riddle me this. In both instances, the naga seeks to avoid conflict if possible, either for self-preservation or to protect the characters. Instead it will offer the party a contest of riddles. If the party can correctly guess the answer to all three of the serpent's riddles it will allow them access. If the characters attack, attempt to cheat or bypass the naga, it attacks.

Riddle One. *I am wasted by a foolish man, spent by an average man, and invested by a wise man. Everyone succumbs to me. Who am I?*

Time.

Riddle Two. *I cover cities and destroy mountains, I can make men go blind, but I still help them see. What am I?*

Sand.

Riddle Three. *Two friends stand and travel together, one nearly useless without the other.*

Boots.

Treasure. The naga protects a *wand of wonder*. If combat breaks out the **spirit naga** will wield this item. Even if they win, the **guardian naga** will attempt to persuade the party not to take the wand for fear that its power will harm innocents.

Scarred for Life

"Surrender now and you can choose amongst yourselves whom we will kill." A whispering voice swarms through the darkness above. Following the sound like a thread reveals a monstrosity clutched to the ceiling.

The head and upper body are that of an elf, but from there down chitinous armour covers an arachnid's body.

Quiet shuffling around you reveals more spiderkin scuttling out of warrens, hungry eyes follow your movements.

Encounter. A single drider leads a clutch of spiders. True to its word, if the party surrender, the monster allows them to select one of their own. The spiders will swarm this one, killing and eating them, but will allow the rest to journey onwards. If combat starts, the drider uses its first action to cast *faerie fire* on as many enemies as it can.

The nature of the creatures are detailed on the table below.

Adventure Level Encounter

5th	One drider leads six giant wolf spiders .
8th	One drider (spellcaster variant) leads four giant spiders .

Development. If you have a drow in your party, why not have this drider related to them? Perhaps through blood or to fulfill some vendetta.



Appendix

Skeleton, shadow

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Damage Resistances fire, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Undead Nature. The shadow skeleton doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The shadow skeleton makes two scimitar attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Finger Darts. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is surrounded by a shadowy aura for 1 minute. While surrounded by the aura, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) necrotic damage when hit by the scimitar attack of a shadow skeleton. Any creature can take an action to extinguish the shadow with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check. The shadow also extinguishes if the target receives magical healing.

The skeleton's ribs are filled with shadow essence, which slithers in constant motion like the writhing of eels in a carcass. The whole sight is disquieting as it moves itself with a gliding, almost liquid step.



Credits

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