



bringing  
**FIRE**

GM 101



Part 1.  
**Dungeon storming**



## *Dungeons & Dilemmas*



*The Dungeon as a Narrative Framework  
and Encounters as Moral Puzzles*

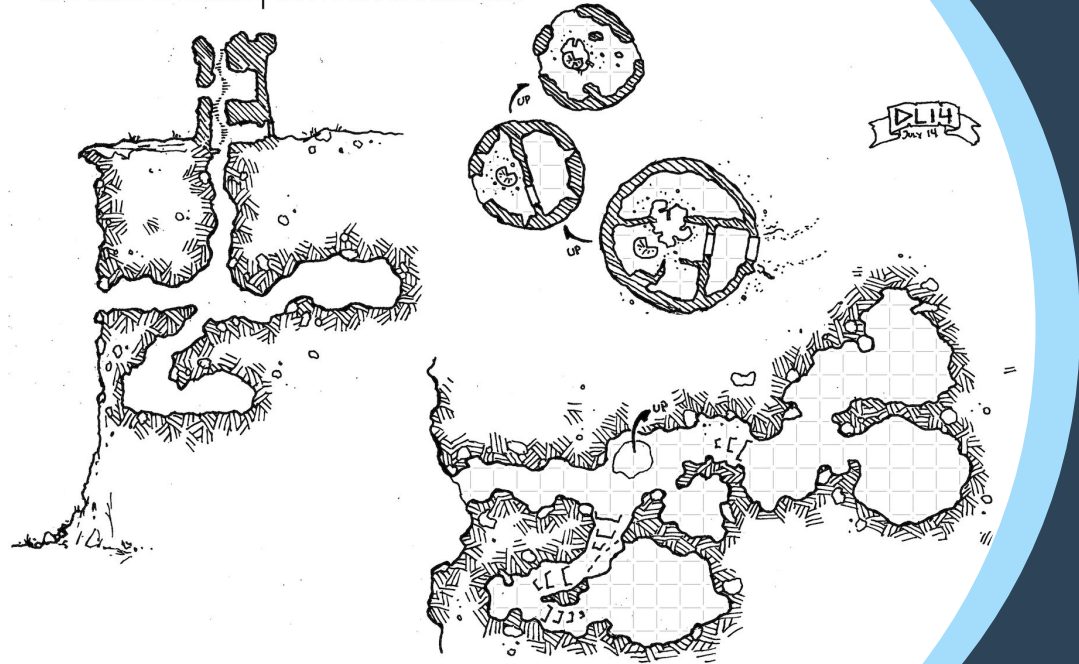
JESSE BURNEKO

## A Dungeon Is A Story

1. Somebody built this place for a reason.
2. Then something terrible happened here.
3. But something of the past remained.
4. Then something new arrived.
5. New met old!
6. And the consequences spilled out around them



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## Step 1.

Who Built This Place?  
Why?



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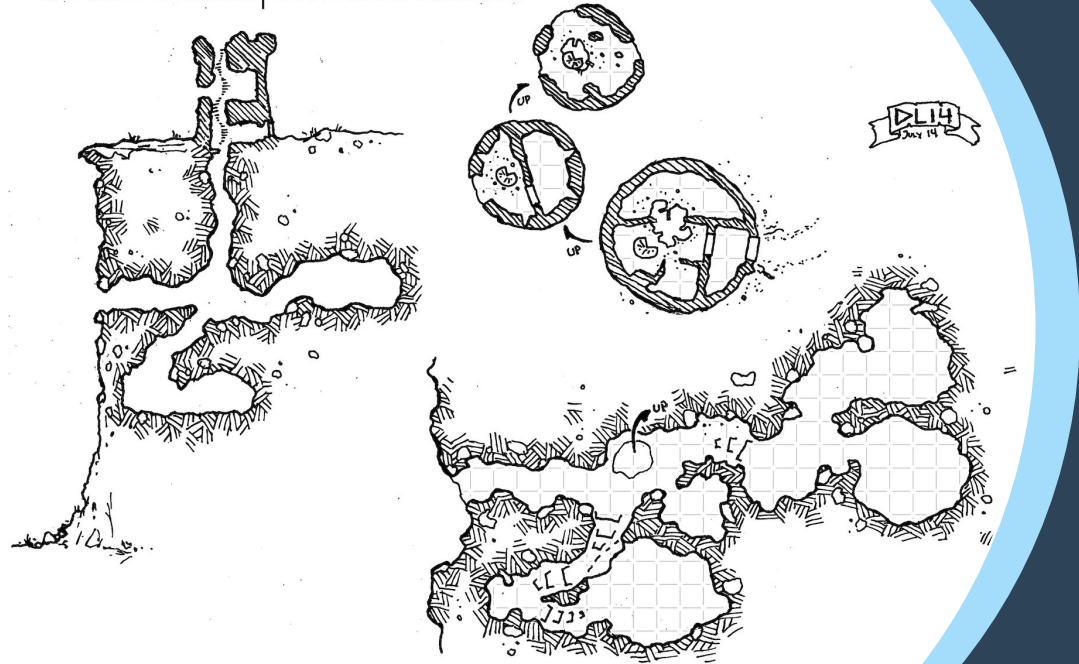


## Step 2.

What Terrible Thing  
Happened Here?



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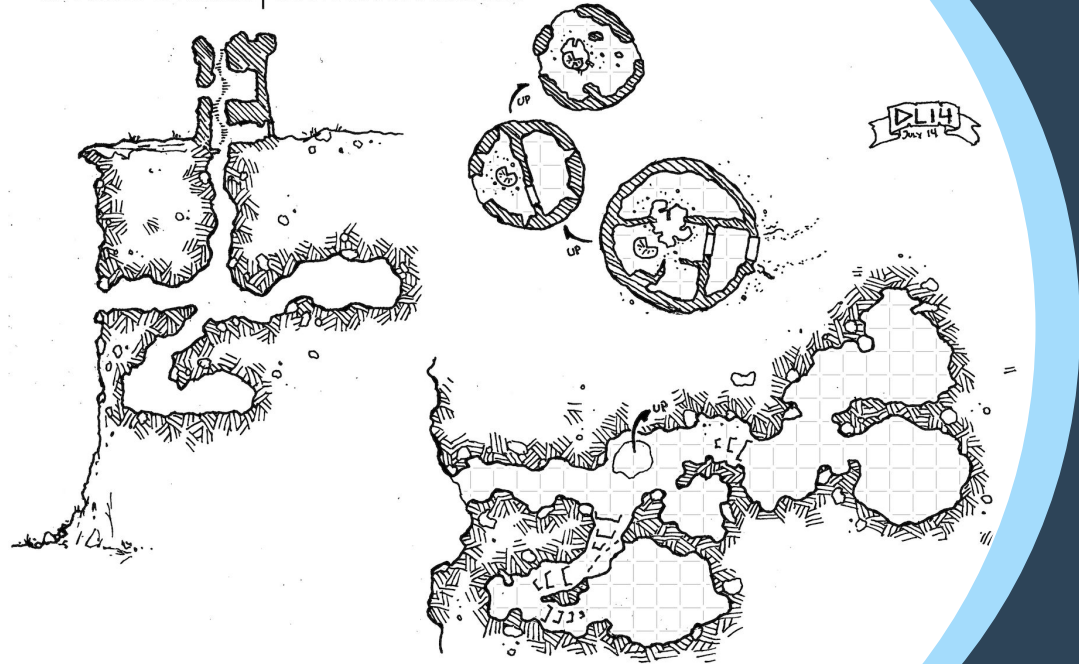


## Step 3.

Who or What Was Left Behind?



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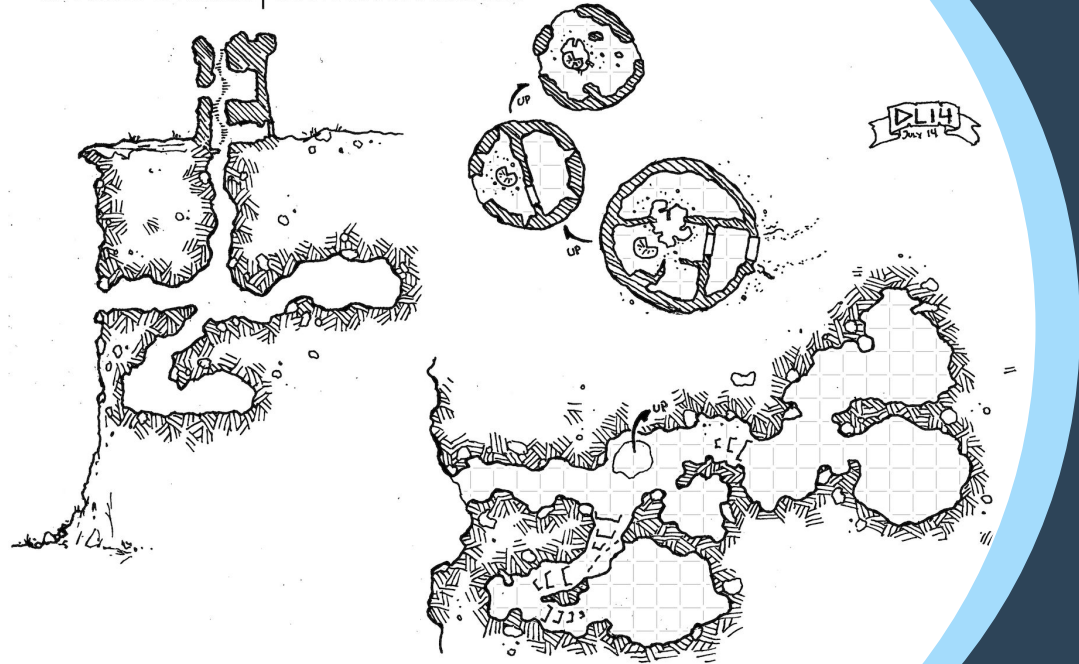


## Step 4.

Who or What Came Here Next?



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## Step 5.

What Happened When  
New Met Old?





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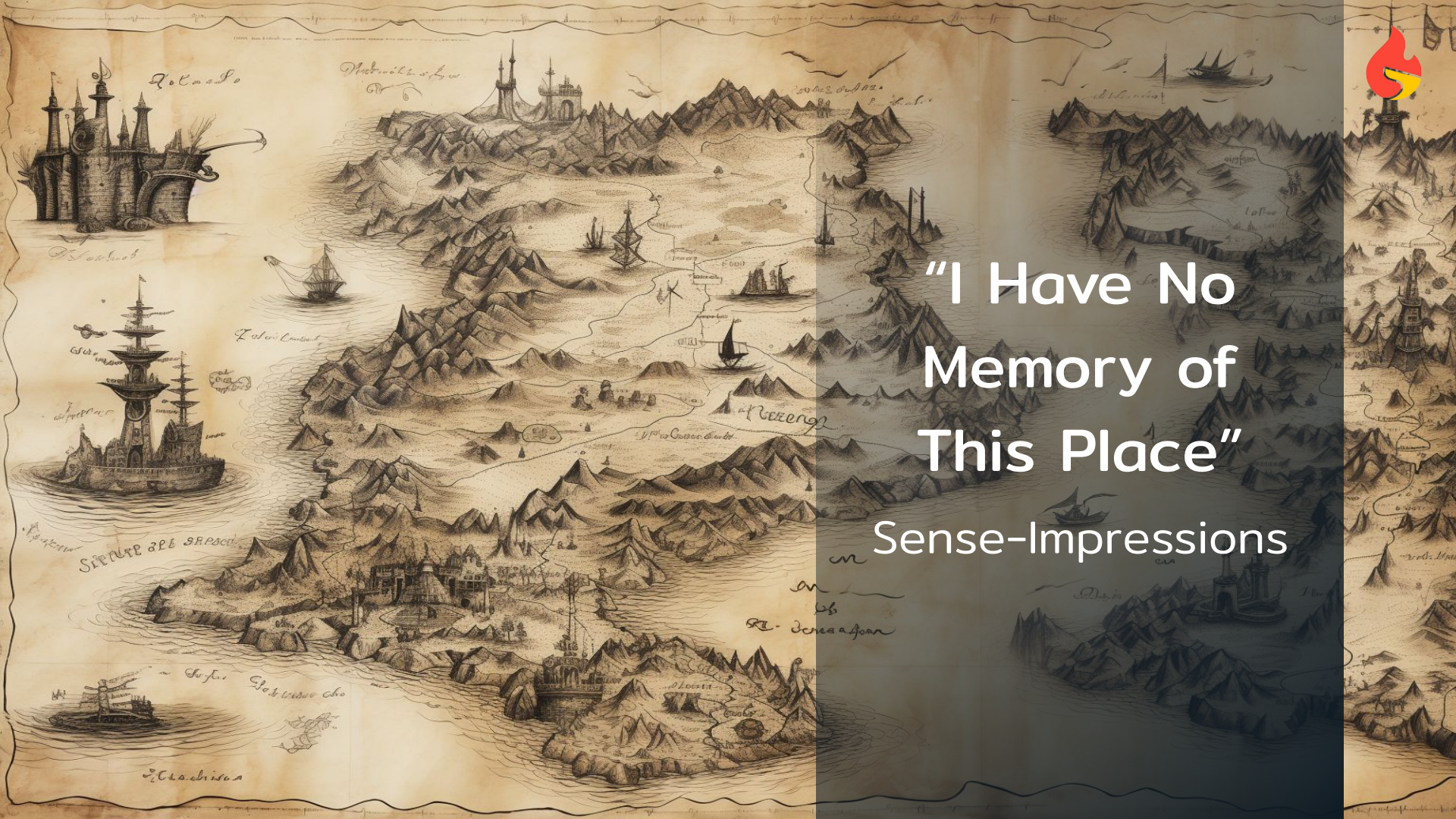


## Step 6.

What Signs of Trouble  
Now Point Here?

A long, narrow tunnel with a series of stone arches. The walls and ceiling are covered in dark, gnarled roots or vines. The floor is made of rough, uneven stones. Several wall-mounted sconces with lit candles provide a warm, orange glow. The tunnel recedes into the distance, where a bright light emanates from an opening at the end. The overall mood is mysterious and slightly ominous.

# Dangers & Discoveries



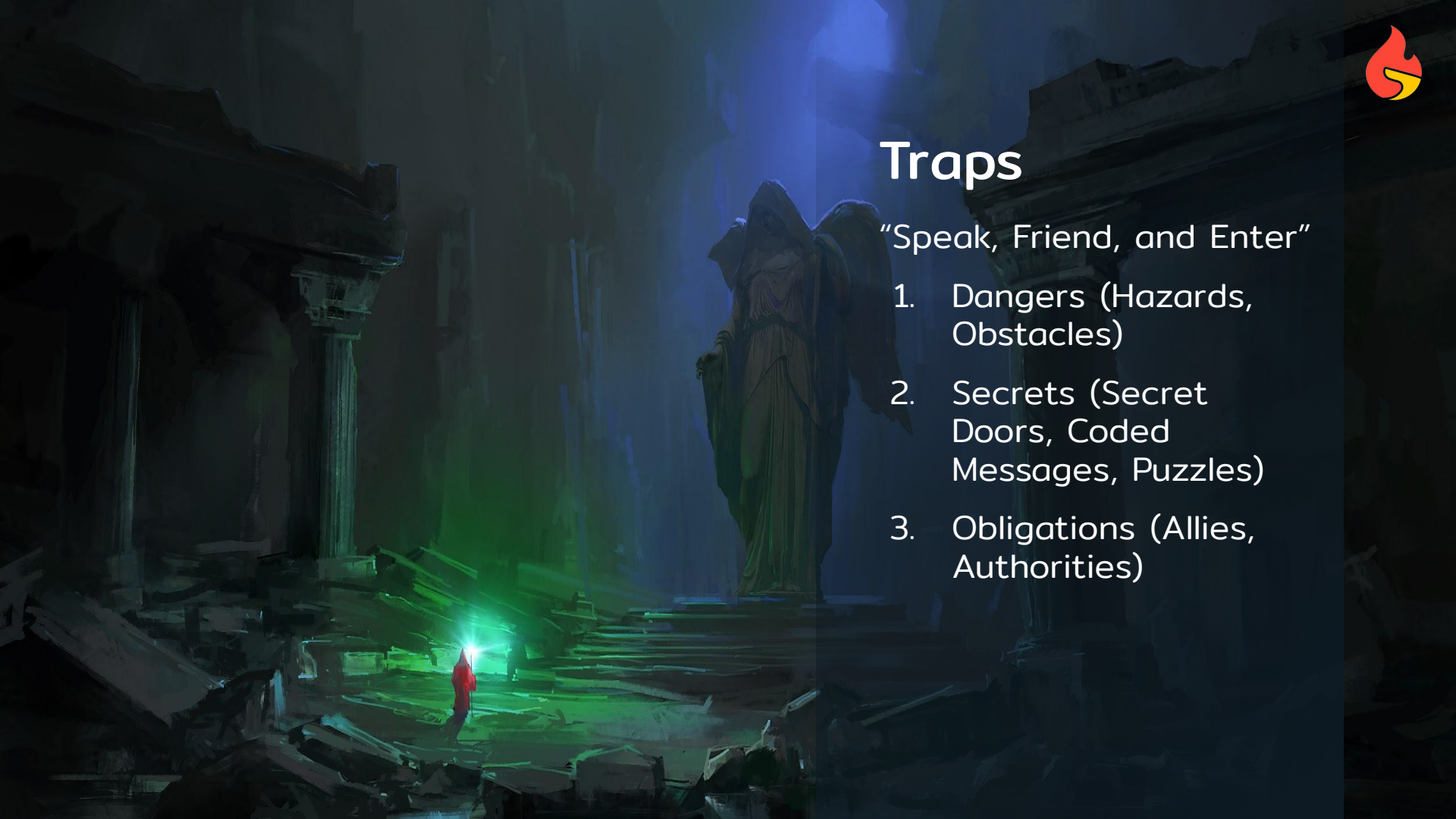
"I Have No  
Memory of  
This Place"  
Sense-Impressions



# Traps

“Speak, Friend, and Enter”

1. Dangers (Hazards, Obstacles)
2. Secrets (Secret Doors, Coded Messages, Puzzles)
3. Obligations (Allies, Authorities)





# Monsters

“Fly, You Fools!”

1. Villains, Servitors, Beasts, Foils
2. Special attacks?  
Special defenses?
3. Monsters bleed exposition...



# Treasure

“Ill Tidings...in a Fair Hand”

## 1. Rewards

- a. Wealth
- b. Trinkets/Mementos
- c. Prizes and Titles

## 2. Friends

- a. (True) Allies
- b. Mentors
- c. Contacts
- d. Innocents
- e. Pets

## 3. Opportunities

- a. Clues
- b. Rumors
- c. Lore



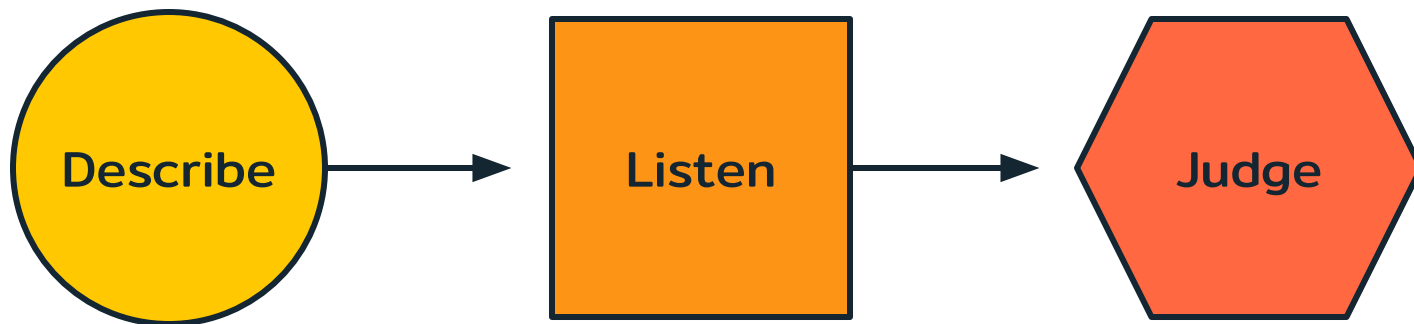


Part 2.

# Running the Game



# The Essential Procedure





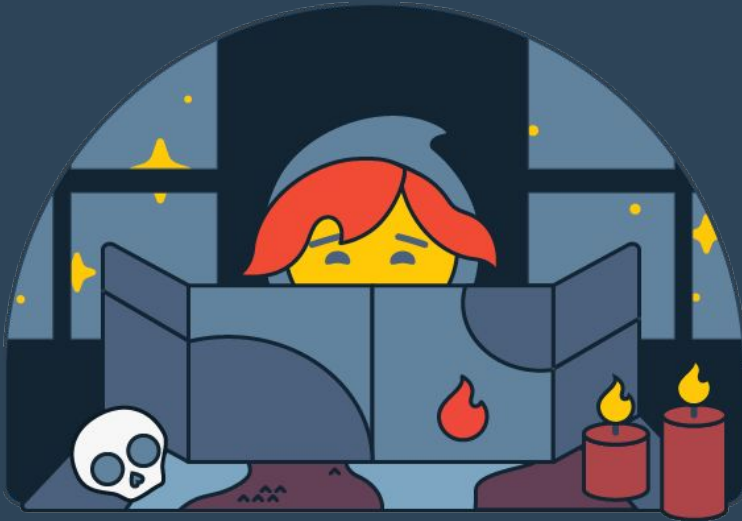


## The GM Hot Seat

When it's your turn to be the GM, take charge of the game. Take the opportunity to practice things you want to get better at or experiment with techniques to see how players react.

Remember the GM fundamentals of **Describe** - **Listen** - **Judge**, and think about how to use NPCs and fictional details to:

1. Reveal information
2. Set up adversity or challenges for PCs.





## Techniques of Description

After a turn as GM, claim 1 XP if you...

...added sound, smell, feel, or taste to a visual description.

...portrayed an NPC with a distinct behavioral trait or way of speaking.

...revealed an in-game secret or hidden fact while speaking as an NPC.



**What do you do?**



## Techniques of Listening

After a turn as GM, claim 1 XP if you...

...asked a leading question and used the answer in the game.

...asked a PC to show you their character's reaction to something.

...provided confirmation for a PC's speculation or supposition through your description.

...handed out any Good Move tokens.

...hit "pause" to check in with players



**Listen**



What happens  
next?





**Judge**

## Techniques of Judgment

Karma—What Should Happen

Drama—What Needs to Happen

Fortune—What Luck Brings



**Character Name** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Fantasy** \_\_\_\_\_

**adjective**

example: brave, clever,  
wise, strong, or good

**noun**

For example: warrior, thief,  
wizard, dwarf, or witch

When the GM tells you to roll, you get 1 die if you're doing something that a normal person can try to do, +1 die if your noun or adjective implies you have experience or aptitude with it, and +2 dice if both noun and adjective imply experience or aptitude.

**Damage Suffered** \_\_\_\_\_

**Level** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reserves Spent** \_\_\_\_\_

You start at level 3. You can take hits equal to your level, and then you die. Each hit gives a 1-die penalty whenever you roll. You can "expend your hidden reserves" to add bonus dice to your rolls a number of times equal to your level.

**XP** \_\_\_\_\_

Gain experience points (XP) by claiming XP for your PC Play Style or GM Techniques. When you've acquired XP equal to the square of your current level, you level up and reset XP to zero (so you need 9 XP to go from third to fourth level).

## Judging by Karma (What Should Happen)

The rules are the (meta)physics of the world

- Effectiveness
- Resources
- Positioning

After a turn as GM, claim 1 XP if you...

...invented a new rule to cover a gap or ambiguity in the existing ones.

...settled an in-game question by choosing an option that made use of your prep.

...settled an in-game question by taking the PCs' plans and preparations into account.

...settled an in-game question by having a PC roll and Letting It Ride.



## Judging by Drama (What Needs to Happen)

After a turn as GM, claim 1 XP if you...

...hit “fast forward” to get to something interesting or important.

...settled an in-game question by choosing an option that made trouble for the PCs.

...hit “rewind” to adapt to preferences at the table





# Judging by Fortune (What Luck Brings)

After a turn as GM, claim 1 XP if you...

...settled an in-game question by making a table and rolling for the answer.

**Action Results Table**

<b>Roll</b>	<b>Result/Effort</b>	<b>Succeeds</b>	<b>Evades</b>	<b>Weakens</b>	<b>Defeats</b>	<b>Heals</b>
1-2	Embarrassing	Never	No one	No one	No one	Nothing
3-6	Sloppy	If easy	Very weak	No one	Very Weak	Nothing
7-10	Prosaic	Up to routine	Weak	Weak	Very Weak	Nothing
11-15	Competent	Up to hard	Capable	Capable	Weak	1 hit
16-18	Masterful	Up to formidable	Strong	Strong	Capable	2 hits
19-20	Brilliant	Up to nigh impossible	Very Strong	Very Strong	Strong	3 hits



Part 3.  
**Debrief**



You're a GM!  
What do you do next?



## The Next Step

Run one game session

- Prep an adventure
- Create some characters...or have your friends do it
- invite people to play
- Run the game!

Tell us about it!

- What worked?
- What did you learn?





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