

# RESTLESS ENCOUNTERS



 Inkwell  
Ideas

(KAD)

**50+ CAMP/REST ENCOUNTERS**

## Restless Encounters

Rolling for a random encounter when the party makes camp or during each night's watch is a staple of fantasy role-playing games. But often when a roll tells the GM there is a random encounter all the GM has is a chart of possible creatures such as "1d4+2 giant rats" or "orc patrol".

The Restless Encounters deck has over 50 unusual and compelling ideas for a random night-time fantasy encounter. Whether the party is making camp as they travel the countryside or they are risking a long rest in a dungeon, this deck will have many encounter ideas that fit any situation!

As encounter outlines on cards, they give you just enough information to run the encounter quickly. You won't be bogged down in unnecessary details and they are easy to twist to fit your setting.

This PDF is a sample of several cards from the deck.

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NOTE: These will have two more  
rounds of editing before release.



# A Sinking Feeling

SI

Travelers camp in an earth elemental's mouth.

## Details

- The party spots a cave just as the weather changes for the worse.
- The cave is actually the mouth of a gigantic earth elemental, deep in hibernation and concealed from magical senses. After an hour, the PCs' metal gear begins to awaken it; sensitive PCs might feel faint tremors or a rise in ambient magic.
- Midway through the night, the "ground" begins to grow pseudopods which attempt to grab any metal goods that are lying on their own. Once grabbed, it will throw them down its gullet.
- If the PCs save their goods, the elemental becomes hungry and the pseudopods wrap up anyone wearing or carrying notable amounts of metal.
- If four or more pseudopods are sliced off, the mouth of the cave begins to collapse—the party must make a run for it!
- If the PCs are having trouble escaping, they can throw metal goods into the elemental's mouth to slow it down or stop it.
- If the PCs get a reasonable distance away, the elemental sinks back into slumber, although the cave mouth will move several hundred feet towards them before growing tired.





# Chasing Feast

S2

A predator drives prey through the camp.

## Details

- Brush rustles, and half a dozen springers (rabbit-like insects the size of a forearm) race across the area adjacent to the camp. The night is restless.
- A swarm of a hundred springers overrun camp, scattering the fire and bouncing off of sleepers.
- A wriggling diggermaw is right behind them, its pelican-like pouch spread wide by its muscular jaws like a net. It scoops up springers as it swings its head back and forth, running like a lizard. It is the size of a horse. Two more follow, driving the springers while packing bulging ventral sacs with compressed masses of twitching insects.
- If attacked, the diggermaws will forcefully vomit wads of still-fidgeting bugs and ichor, and follow up with horn attacks and rending claws. As subterranean creatures, they only surface to pursue spawnings of springers.
- The chaos may scoop up packs, swallow magical equipment, ruin gear, and possibly even snap up child-sized travelers. Injuring a diggermaw triggers a pheromone signal to the others, and killing one sends a stronger signal. Others will investigate. The smell coats those in melee range of an injured or dying diggermaw, and it doesn't wash off easily.



## Goblin Pranksters

S3

Two bands of intoxicated goblins harass the camp. They're not malicious, but are competing to pull the best pranks on the party.

### Details

- In a flash, the camp is filled with goblins as they bang pots together, scream at the top of their lungs, and hurl things into the campfire.
- The goblins fashion makeshift masks from leaves and twigs, jumping out from the shadows to startle the party members with grotesque and humorous disguises.
- The goblins play pranks on the party, like mixing potions, eating their food, throwing fake snakes and other critters, throwing water on the characters, and covering themselves in a strong yet temporary adhesive.
- They delight in a chaotic game of goblin hide and seek, which entails hiding the party's belongings in the most unlikely places for them to find.
- The two goblin leaders, distinguished by an oversized hats, direct the mischief and bark orders.
- Captured goblins quickly offer a trade with their impish charm, offering amusing trinkets or secrets about the area in exchange for their release.
- Despite their playful antics, these goblins keenly understand the area, offering valuable information to the few who can earn their respect.



# Haunted Battleground

S4

Spectral armies clash again overnight.

## Details

- As the party finishes making camp, a traveler hustles by. If asked, he plans to go to the next village instead of staying near the ancient battleground.
- A PC in tune with undead (Cleric, Paladin, etc.) has a small chance of feeling that something is wrong on this field. They may decide to move on and camp elsewhere to avoid this.
- PCs with some tracking ability may notice the field is littered with bones and arrowheads.
- At dusk, a mysterious fog rolls in. It doesn't have any special effect, but puts everyone on notice.
- Spirits of hundreds of warriors appear. They fit the description of a long-ago battle.
- They fight only each other unless a PC attacks. Then that PC is considered a foe of that faction.
- If some PCs attack a member of one side and others attack someone on the other side, the PCs may have to fight both sides. Or simply run away, leaving their equipment behind.
- Whether party members intervene or not, the characters can learn some lore of the area. They may even be able to find a commander of an army and ask questions about the battle, the leaders involved, or other myths of the time.
- After a couple hours, the battle ends & spirits fade.





## Put To Rest

S5

The PCs make camp where undead spirits are nearby. A recent victim still has all her wits about her and would like the PCs to give her body proper funeral rights so she may rest instead of tormenting others in un-death.

### Details

- During a random watch, a PC on duty spots something shimmering behind an object. Looking more closely, the PC sees it is a semi-transparent person trying to speak, but can't make noise.
- Attacking the shimmer chases it away. Unless the PCs track it, it will become a malevolent spirit in one more night and seek them out!
- Communicating with the shimmering shade keeps it nearby and once comfortable it will even approach. The PCs need to communicate with it using other methods because it can't speak. The spirit is incorporeal, so it can't use objects either.
- Via charades or other methods, the spirit tells the PCs evil undead killed her that day. If the body isn't put to rest by the next evening, the spirit will become an evil undead creature as well.
- The spirit is willing to direct the PCs to her body, and may know one or two things to avoid.
- Malevolent spirits attack the PCs on the way!
- Any funeral ritual agreeable to the PCs' religion allows the spirit to rest.



# The Worldmersible

S6

A curious alien possessing a traveler greets the party.

## Details

- A weary and sullen traveler approaches, alone and unarmed. She brings greetings from the Ephemeral Scholar.
- In a bored tone, the traveler recites her pitch. She is host to an interdimensional intelligence who considers her a “worldmersible” host. The intelligence can possess her and interact with the world. The intelligence is a scholar who is conducting research and interviews to learn about this world.
- Anyone who submits to interviews and agrees to allow the Ephemeral Scholar to examine their magical or cosmic items will be rewarded with healing, relief from the need to sleep for a week, or several hours of euphoria.
- The resentful host will make arrangements like a scheduling assistant, then close her eyes and breathe deeply. The Ephemeral Scholar will possess her, alien and oddly precise and polite. It will ask questions that seem irrelevant, like “What do you think about the smell of a horse?” and “How often do you stand in the rain?” and “Tell me about the color red.”
- Each participant will be rewarded by a touch on the wrist, and the gift will be transmitted. Then the traveler sighs, and continues on down the road.



## Haggling in Chains

S7

A captor and captive try to persuade the travelers to back one or the other.

### Details

- Two ragged and bleeding figures stagger up to the camp, chained to each other. One holds a knife to the other's back.
- They are exhausted. One is a bounty hunter, the other is her bounty. They fought across a region, losing allies, and finally they had a showdown. The hunter barely won, and now she is struggling to get her prey to the nearest settlement so she can turn him in for the bounty.
- The bounty will abruptly offer money and favors for the travelers' aid. The hunter will try to gag him, and if need be, make a counter offer. If threatened, the hunter will reluctantly offer to give the travelers the bounty if they will only make sure the prisoner is delivered to the law. (The prisoner has sworn revenge on her, so she doesn't want him freed.)
- Both may have contacts and resources that could help the PCs in their current mission, or for some personal cause.
- If the odds go against the hunter, she may try to kill the prisoner. If the odds go against the prisoner, he will make a desperate attempt to escape.





## From The Shadows

S8

A cursed campsite generates dangerous shadows of the travelers.

### Details

- The PCs have a small chance to spot that the wood they've gathered for the campfire is unnatural or that this area is cursed.
- Anyone who stays the lit area for a few minutes has a shadow creature made in their likeness. The source can either be the undeath-infected firewood or a general curse/death effect in the area.
- Once the campfire reaches full blaze, observant PCs may notice their shadows moving unnaturally. They do not match the PCs' movements.
- The shadows attack! (If no one noticed the unusual shadows, they have surprise.)
- The shadows share the PCs' secrets with the other party members to upset them.
- Each time a shadow hits its matching PC, the shadow takes a random power from the PC and the shadow gains the power. Ex: a special ability such as rage, the unused spell slots of a spell level, turning undead (which would change to something that damages good/divine creatures), etc.
- When a shadow is slain, all abilities stolen from its matching PC return to the PC. However, any spell slots used by the shadow, powers with limited uses, etc., are lost until they recharge (as normal).



# The Cascading Face

S9

The road warden is seeking a shapeshifting villain. He demands the PCs submit to an inspection.

## Details

- A road warden approaches on an exhausted horse. As he gets closer, the party spots a wild-eyed chicken on his lap.
- The road warden yells at the travelers. He is in pursuit of a master of disguise known only as the Cascading Face; it could be anyone. Fortunately he has a magical chicken who can detect the foul criminal. He demands they line up and submit to inspection by the chicken. (There is a 1 in 6 chance the chicken will react strongly to anyone.)
- If someone is identified, then the warden will pull on their face and hair and generally try to reveal a disguise. He will reluctantly agree they are not the Cascading Face.
- Perceptive travelers may be able to detect that his chicken is not magical at all. True sight or similar magic may also reveal that the road warden is a shapeshifter, the actual Cascading Face. However, he has forgotten his own identity. The road wardens and other law enforcers are not searching for him, they have no idea he exists.
- Eventually he will cry out, "Carry on!" and he will mount up and ride off into the darkness.



# Firebug Problems

S10

Magical heat-eating insects quench camp flames.

## Details

- The PCs are camping for the night in a cold environment with minimal shelter when a swarm of hungry firebugs begin to appear in the trees.
- Firebugs are tiny flying insects; their touch is cold enough to deal damage. They're attracted to large heat sources such as fires, and glow a faint blue.
- The firebugs will swarm towards the campfire, trying to put it out by absorbing its flames. If the PCs let them eat and leave, they'll come back each time the fire is re-lit as soon as it grows large enough to attract them.
- Fire magic makes firebugs stronger, and they're immune to cold, but the PCs might be able to use other forms of energy to chase them off.
- The PCs could try to start a much larger fire elsewhere to distract the bugs and fill them up; this runs the risk of starting a dangerous forest fire.
- There are three waves of firebug swarms in the area which will be attracted to any heat.
- The PCs could try to capture the bugs and sell them in town, if they have containers. They are potentially valuable sources of cooling for artificers.





## Beast's Territory

S11

The party unwittingly set camp in the domain of a fearsome beast, which now sees them as intruders.

### Details

- The party may spot a cave high on a sheer cliff.
- It stalks in the trees just beyond the light of the party's campfire, and it knows not to squander its advantage with a fair fight.
- The first strike alerts the party they're being hunted, and the deep growl follows behind it.
- The beast waits in the shadows for the moment when the party lets down their guard or turns their back before striking again.
- It employs hit-and-run tactics to inflict deep wounds and end the fight before the party can all stir awake and hold defensive positions. It regenerates between strikes
- The creature is so fast that a held action alone isn't enough to ensure a hit, but they also have to pick a cardinal direction to watch.
- It will go out of its way to ensure it isn't caught in the light too long, and the party can use this to their advantage.
- This fight could last through the entire night, requiring the party to have a strong enough constitution not to pass out from a war of attrition.
- The party may be able to follow its tracks to its lair and find trinkets it felt were valuable.



# Dropping In

S12

An injured dwarf drops into camp. (Literally!)

## Details

- A dwarf crashes through the tree canopy overhead, falling into the camp. (If they have a clear view of the sky, the party may spot a huge eagle flying low, dropping the dwarf.)
- The stunned and gasping dwarf is covered in blood; a little is his, the rest is from the giant eagle that was carrying him. He has ripped and punctured shoulder armor to match the talon grip.
- The dwarf explains he was in a tight spot, cornered by orcs, and the eagle swooped in and saved him. However, the eagle was injured by their arrows, and could not fly him too far.
- They probably got far enough that the orcs won't pursue, though. Right? Anyway, he has this magic ring that summons eagle backup when in a pinch, but all the glinting gems set in it are cracked, so it's probably used up.
- If they patch him up and give him some food and a place to recover, he thanks them; otherwise, he will be on his way. He has to reach a somewhat nearby mountain, but he won't say why.
- If the party won't or can't help him get to the mountain, can they throw the orcs off his trail?



## Trading Caravan

S13

The party has finished dinner when they spot another camp several hundred yards away. They are “mystical” traders, but actually running many scams.

### Details

- From this distance, the PCs can make out a couple wagons, but not much else.
- The PCs can walk over and check on the other camp. A look at the wagons tells the PCs these are traders with knowledge from “beyond”.
- The camp’s occupants greet the PCs enthusiastically. They will share food and drink in exchange for news and stories. They likely know rumors.
- Exceedingly polite, the traders are always trying to make a sale or even buy items from the PCs. They have some gems that allow them to buy expensive items, but these gems are generally worth half what they say due to difficult to spot flaws.
- If the PCs have a couple low magic items, the traders explain a wizard in their group can combine the magic resulting in a single better item. (Ex: Sword +1 and Dagger +1 can become Sword +2.) He will do this for a small fee overnight, although the PC can stay behind. They keep the other “useless” item, but just added a fake extra enchantment to the one they give back.
- Regular items the traders sell have subtle flaws.
- If accused, the traders claim “honest mistakes.”





## Road Taxes

S14

The tax collector finds the party and assesses dubious taxes. He seems to be hiding something.

### Details

- A solitary rider approaches on a big black horse with a custom lantern pole fixed to the saddle, wearing the livery of the road wardens.
- Still mounted, the road warden suspiciously questions the sentry about those at the camp, why they are traveling, where they left, where they're headed, why, and what they're carrying.
- The unfriendly road warden assesses them a tax and associated fines and fees. He charges them for using the road, slipshod mounts, oversize wagons without a permit, using firewood without the landowner's permission, excessive armament, unsecured magical equipment, and whatever else comes to mind. The total may be about 1d6 x 50, adjusted to taste. He's just making it up anyway.
- Discerning sentries may see that the road warden is a little bit drunk and also bruised, recovering from a beating.
- If they defy him, he will threaten them with backup, and he'll ride off. (He is lying, he won't tell anyone about this.) If attacked, he will flee. If paid, he will coldly saunter away. If pressed for more detail, he may reluctantly explain he has gambling debts.



DEAN SPENCER

## The Grand March

S15

During the night, the PCs hear marching headed in their direction. They soon spot a line of constructs headed toward them, on their way to another location. The constructs fight back if attacked, but won't stop, however they can be rerouted.

### Details

- While the PCs make camp, the perceptive among them spot trampled areas of grass or earth, or pulverized stones around their tents. Intelligent PCs might determine this is due to either constant footfall or an immense weight being put upon the site (or both), and suggest moving camp.
- During the night, the PC on watch hears a distant rumbling. If they have a good sense of hearing, they might be able to make out the footfall of a marching army. As the march gets closer, it might awaken PCs who are currently resting.
- When the marchers get close, it's easy to spot that they are automatons. If the PCs attack them, they attack back, but otherwise continue to march. Their path will go right through camp!
- Working together, the automatons (up to two-dozen of them) are a formidable foe.
- Clever PCs might think to reroute the automatons by creating barriers between them and their camp. Or the party might be able to feverishly move their camp out of the way.