

A MONTHLY EZINE WITH TIPS, RULES, AND MORE GOODIES FOR  
THE MYTHIC ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM, MYTHIC GAME MASTER EMULATOR, AND CRAFTER SERIES

# MYTHIC MAGAZINE

Creating  
Complicated  
Campaigns

Generating  
Adventure Puzzles

VOLUME 23





# MYTHIC MAGAZINE

EACH MONTH MYTHIC MAGAZINE PRESENTS NEW RULES AND COMMENTARY ON SOLO ROLE-PLAYING  
AND GETTING MORE OUT OF YOUR MYTHIC AND CRAFTER ADVENTURES.

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#### WRITING & DESIGN

*Tana Pigeon*

#### COVER ARTWORK

*Jorge Muñoz*

#### INTERIOR ARTWORK

*Tithi Luadthong via 123RF.com  
& Jorge Muñoz*

Word Mill  
GAMES

5055 Canyon Crest Dr. • Riverside, CA 92507

[www.wordmillgames.com](https://www.wordmillgames.com)

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# MYTHIC MAGAZINE

VOLUME 23

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## Puzzlingly Complicated

I didn't plan on this, but I realize this issue is all about confusion!

The first article explores complicated solo adventures and strategies for handling them. Anyone who's had one adventure lead on to another adventure, and then more, until you've built an entire world around your Character knows that things can get complicated after a while. I offer some advice and a few tools to help sort it all out and keep that complicated campaign moving smoothly.

The second article is about randomly generating puzzles for your Player Character to encounter and solve. These are the kinds of dangerous puzzles that vex your PC deep in a dungeon, or are complicated problems a sci-fi Character may need to resolve. This system for discovering and resolving puzzles can be applied to any situation where your Characters needs to solve a confusing mechanism where there is a reward for success and possible consequences for failure.

Happy adventuring!

*Nano Sp*







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## INTERRUPT

*Solutions to problems of Mythic proportions*

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# Creating Complicated Campaigns

Growing a solo adventure into a full fledged campaign is a magical experience. From what likely started as humble beginnings with a Player Character and a few ideas has grown into a full dynamic world with ever-growing lore.

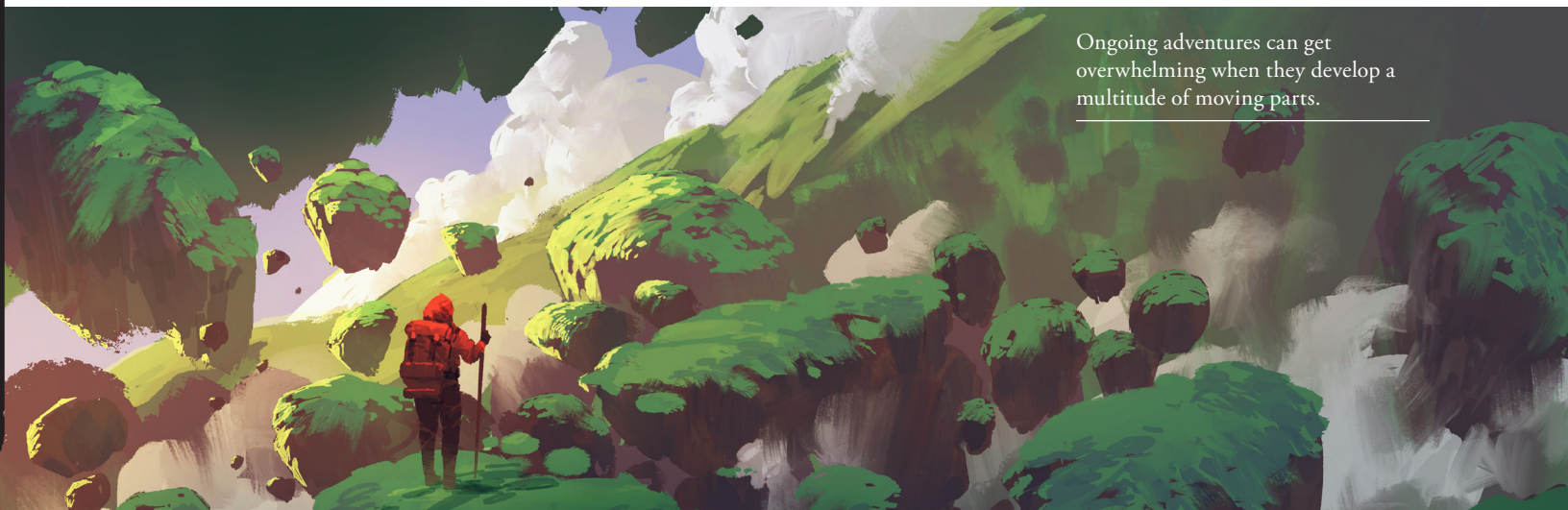
Mythic is good at shepherding an adventure from the first one to the tenth or more. However, an ongoing series of adventures poses unique challenges the further you get.

This article looks at some of those challenges and offers ideas on how to smooth them over.

## COMPLICATED CAMPAIGN CONUNDRUMS

Ragnor the Rogue's life was simple when you started playing. Steal a gem for a wealthy client and stay out of the city jail. Eight adventures later Ragnor is embroiled in a plot to overthrow the king, fighting against the return of a long forgotten evil god, dealing with a gallery of

Ongoing adventures can get overwhelming when they develop a multitude of moving parts.





personal villains and friends so large you've forgotten who some of them are, and working toward a central plot that has no end in sight. How do you keep this all in order??

Adventure campaigns can get complicated in a number of ways. Maybe they've grown through time, like with Ragnor's world. Or maybe your adventure got complicated fast by virtue of the type of plot that developed. Adventures involving many Characters with varied motivations and intrigues can make your head spin quickly.

There's a lot that can be said about complicated campaigns but let's boil it down to a couple of issues then look at some solutions.

## COMPLICATED CAMPAIGN CHALLENGES

### SUPER LONG LISTS

### MAINTAINING ADVENTURE COHESION

### KEEPING IT ALL ORGANIZED

## Challenge #1: Super Long Lists

A Mythic Characters List is likely to have five or six entries on it after the second or third Scene of an adventure. At that rate imagine how long a List might be after 80 Scenes from seven successive adventures.

You won't necessarily be continuing the same Lists after each adventure but if you're engaged in an ongoing campaign you are likely carrying over quite a few List elements in order to maintain the continuity of your narrative.

This can make for a challenge, especially for the Characters List which tends to grow faster than the Threads List. The more Characters you have in the List the more diluted it gets where you are less likely to roll up important NPCs as the game goes on.

## Challenge #2: Maintaining Adventure Cohesion

"Maintaining Adventure Cohesion" is a fancy way of saying "I have no idea what's going on anymore or where to take this adventure next." With lots of things happening in your sprawling adventure Mythic prompts may look more random than ever.

Where once Random Events and Interrupt Scenes spun your adventures into new directions, later in a convoluted campaign those Random Events and Interrupts are now derailing the story or at the least aren't pushing the adventure narrative in a constructive way.

## Challenge #3: Keeping It All Organized

Finally, even if your complicated adventure is sailing along smoothly you need good notes to



keep in mind everything that's going on. Anyone who's binge watched a streaming television show knows that by the time you are deep into season 12 you may have forgotten key moments in season 2 that got the show to this point. And where did the character I'm watching now come from again??

As a solo player, by definition, it's just you running the show. Jotting down a few notes and maintaining Lists was all fine for the first couple of adventures, but by adventure 20 if you haven't come up with some kind of guide you are likely getting some of your own established lore wrong.

## And Another Thing

I realize I am probably only scratching the surface here. Only three challenges? Really?! I'm shooting for the most obvious, big picture issues, but I expect when this edition of Mythic Magazine comes out there will be some discussion about particular problems individual solo Players are having that aren't covered.

That's good. If this feeds into a conversation then I'm happy. I don't think complicated campaigns get talked about enough. Probably because they're complicated, right? I'm hoping this article helps lay some groundwork for discussion by putting the most obvious problems on the table. Maybe, if this conversation gains momentum, it will be fuel for a Creating Complicated Campaigns Part 2 article.

To encourage discussion, there is this ...

## SUPER LONG LISTS

This is probably the most obvious and immediate problem with adventure campaigns that are complicated because they've gone on for so long. I don't know about you but I love adding elements to my Lists. An NPC doesn't even have to be important for me to throw them on the

Characters List. The taxi driver who drove my investigator across town? Let's add him to the List. You never know, he may turn out to be someone important to the adventure.

Even if you aren't adding every NPC that crops up in your adventures just adding the most important ones will fill a List over time. If you are continuing your Lists from one adventure to the next then they can get out of control.

Here are some strategies for managing super long Lists.

## List Pruning

We'll start with the default Mythic advice for how to handle a List. The end of each Scene is the time to add elements to your Characters and Threads Lists. That's also when you have a chance to remove items. While adding elements is probably what most solo Players focus on, removing elements becomes more important the



## SHARE YOUR STORY

In an effort to encourage those of you with complicated adventure campaigns to share notes and strategies, here are some online places where Mythic Players meet and swap tales.

### MYTHIC GAME MASTER EMULATOR DISCORD CHANNEL

[discord.com/invite/vc2YZ9n](https://discord.com/invite/vc2YZ9n)

### MYTHIC GAME MASTER EMULATOR SUBREDDIT

[www.reddit.com/r/mythic\\_gme/](https://www.reddit.com/r/mythic_gme/)

### MYTHIC ROLE PLAYING FAN SITE

[groups.io/g/wordmillgames](https://groups.io/g/wordmillgames)





## AS LONG AS WE'RE TALKING LISTS



Volume #17 of Mythic Magazine has the article "Creative List Tips & Tricks" which has a lot of suggestions for manipulating your Mythic Lists.

longer the List gets. The simplest way to manage a List that's thick with elements is to remove the Characters and Threads that are no longer relevant to your adventure.

This approach, however, isn't as easy with a complicated adventure.

For instance, maybe you want your adventure to be complex with lots going on and many moving parts. You might add all kinds of NPCs and Threads to your Lists to include all the content you can. You never know when that taxi driver may turn out to be a secret enemy or that woman you bumped into at the nightclub might show up as a vampire clinging to the wall of your apartment.

Some of us add as many NPCs to the List as we can because of their story potential and we are loath to cut them out just because they aren't important ... yet.

Pruning your Lists is still a good tactic with complicated adventures but there are some guidelines that may help make it work better.

## THE I DUNNO RULE

The "I Dunno Rule" gets brief mention in the core red and blue Mythic books. It basically recognizes that a random GM emulation engine like Mythic will provide lots of prompts to spur your imagination but its randomness also means that sometimes it will give you prompts that don't work for you. If you can't interpret a Mythic prompt quickly, whether it's an answer to a Fate Question or a Random Event result or whatever, then say "I don't know" and drop it and move on. In the case of a Random Event it means the Event doesn't happen after all.

Difficult to interpret Random Events can become an issue in a complicated adventure campaign, especially one with a fully loaded Characters List. Maybe your Player Character started in the Kingdom of Halvand, then spent time at the Court Of King Deneral, engaged in dungeon delving in the Tomb Of Antherat, and is now on an adventure exploring the Chittering Woods.

That's a lot of ground your Player Character has covered. Your Characters List would have people you met from Halvand in it, probably the first NPCs you encountered. A few adventures later things got more interesting as you rubbed elbows with royalty, now you have a prince, a king, and a bunch of royal family members on the List. The trip through the dungeon really expanded the List, adding all kinds of monsters and other oddities. Finally, now that you're in the Chittering Woods you made contact with a community of forest fairies which you've added to the Characters List.

That List is now all over the place with content.

So what does this have to do with the I Dunno Rule? It's this: if you are hesitant to cut down your List because every element on it, no matter how remote it may seem now, feels like it still has potential you can let the I Dunno Rule be the arbiter on whether an element stays or goes.



Instead of summarily deciding at the end of a Scene if an element should be cut from the List wait until you are required to roll on the List. If you roll a List element that causes you to invoke the I Dunno rule then that's a sign that the element should be cut.

This creates a rule around when to remove elements from a List instead of you deciding when they are no longer relevant. Now it's Mythic deciding when they are no longer relevant. Those elements get to stay on their List as long as they want, but as soon as they get called upon and you have no idea what to do with them then they get crossed out.

*Ragnor the Rogue, your Player Character, has spent two adventures in the Chittering Woods. You've been using this Character for a while, spanning ten adventures, and you've built up a lot of background for your ongoing campaign.*

*Your Characters List has been building up during all those adventures. At this point the List contains some elements that probably aren't relevant anymore. You have the "undead ogre" and "water elementals" from your excursion through the Tomb of Antherrat in there still. You also have "King Deneral", "Prince Toymin" and "Anthrill the Smith" on the List from your earlier adventures in the Kingdom of Halvand.*



It's time for new adventures in a new location with new NPCs to meet. Should you remove the old NPCs? Let them prove their continued relevance to your adventure with the I Dunno Rule being the judge.





## WEIGHTED LISTS

Weighting elements on your Lists means specific elements showing up more than once. This idea has been discussed in other Mythic Magazine articles, and is how the Lists in The Adventure Crafter work.

Using a weighted approach to Lists is helpful for complicated adventures and campaigns as it gives more importance to some List items. Whenever a Thread or NPC is important in a Scene it gets another mention on its List, up to a maximum of 3 entries. Those elements are now more likely to appear in Random Events.

Using weighted Lists, however, will require you to edit your Lists more often because they will fill up faster. You are not only adding new Threads and Characters to your Lists but you are repeating recurring Threads and Characters.

When editing a weighted List you can make choices about whether a recurring element should be cut down to fewer instances or removed entirely. These weighted elements give you an opportunity to consider an extra factor when editing a List: not only do you decide whether an element should stay or go, but you are deciding if it should stay but with fewer entries.

*You thought about removing the dungeon monsters once you got to the Chittering Wood but you left them on because who knows, maybe those creatures weren't unique to the dungeon.*

*During an encounter in the woods you trigger a Random Event which calls for an NPC. You roll "undead ogre". This particular monster was a unique encounter while you journeyed through the dungeon. In this current Scene, where your Player Character is making their way up a steep mountain, you can't think of any relevance for the ogre being part of a Random Event. There's no way*

*the ogre itself could be here and there's nothing ogre related you can imagine that might happen.*

*You invoke the I Dunno Rule and ignore the Random Event. At the end of this Scene you decide that since you had to use the I Dunno Rule that "undead ogre" should be removed from the Characters List. That element had its chance to prove it should remain beyond being part of the dungeon and it failed. Off it goes!*

*In a later Scene, when your Character is trying to convince a group of fairies that you are a friend and not a foe, you generate another Random Event. This one is NPC Action with the NPC being "Prince Toymin". The prince you met many adventures ago is nowhere near the Chittering Woods. However, it makes sense to interpret this result as your Player Character mentioning the Prince's name to the fairies and they have heard of him. In fact, it turns out Prince Toymin once helped the fairy of this woods by declaring their domain as protected by the crown. The fairies are so impressed that you know the prince that they treat you with kindness and hospitality.*

*While "Prince Toymin" may not have seemed relevant any longer to your adventure it turns out that NPC still is. You didn't have to invoke the I Dunno Rule so he gets to stay on the List.*

## Keep Your Lists Limited

In the default Mythic rules a List can be as long as you want it to be. There is no hard limit on how many elements you can include. I've talked about pruning your Lists to keep them up to date but limiting a List's size also helps keep a complicated adventure more focused.

I think 25 is a good maximum for a Characters or Threads List. Beyond this minor NPCs start drowning out the more important ones. A full List of 25 elements is still a lot but it's manageable.

Limiting your Lists to 25 elements may seem like an extra challenge in a big, complicated adventure. It's going to force you to review your Lists more often and maybe make some hard choices about what to cut and what to keep. I think this is a good thing. Your adventure can be as big or as complicated as you want, but reigning in the size of your Lists creates a mechanism to review and edit your Lists. This is much like using the I Dunno Rule as a marker for when to prune. Setting a maximum List size of 25 is another marker.

## MAINTAINING ADVENTURE COHESION

Discussing out of control Lists is a practical concern and can be addressed by sticking with some rules. However, complicated adventures and campaigns can get complicated for more reasons than long Lists.

Maybe your adventure has gone on so long that there are lots of goals and Threads going on, with several major ones. There could be many crucial NPC's whose actions are important to your adventure. Maybe some of them are up to mysterious things, which leaves big questions that you aren't sure how to answer.

I'm calling this adventure "cohesion" because your ongoing campaign should feel like a unified whole, all the parts working together. A complicated adventure or series of adventures can start to feel fractured, losing cohesion to the point where you aren't sure what is going on or where the narrative is heading. When this happens decision paralysis can set in because you're not sure where to go next.

There are lots of ways adventure cohesion can start to erode. Such as ...

- » It's a series of adventures and your Lists contain elements from multiple goals and events. You aren't sure what to emphasize.



### THE ART OF REDIRECTION

Most of the suggestions in this section about regaining cohesion dwell on redirecting the focus of the adventure to draw it back together. Your adventure likely already has a direction, probably several, but maybe some plotlines are conflicting with each other or none has risen to a level of importance to take the lead.

By redirecting the adventure you are pointing a way to go. This shifts the entire adventure in that direction, hopefully bringing elements that are operating out of synch back together.

- » You might be doing something different with your adventure that isn't quite "by the book". For instance, maybe you're running three separate Player Characters who aren't together, each with their own storylines and goals and NPCs they are dealing with. Or maybe you're operating a complicated narrative with flashbacks, the unfolding story taking place in two different times.
- » Maybe you're trying to build an adventure with lots of surprises in it so you are purposefully keeping your information level low as a Player. This is leaving everything up to Mythic with very little guidance from you which has led to such a high degree of randomness that you're not feeling the elements coming together.

If you're reading this article right now because you are in the midst of a complicated adventure that you're looking for solutions to then you are probably thinking about what's going on with your narrative that is bothering you. Chances are it's a cohesion issue: all the elements you want are there in your game but they aren't playing together nicely.

Here are some ideas to keep your adventure all nicely glued together.



## Start Over

Mythic's rules state that you should end an adventure when a main Thread has been resolved. You wrap up the adventure and then consider starting a new one, bringing over the Threads and Characters you want if you plan to build on the previous adventure. This leads from one adventure to the next, creating a campaign.

While you can end an adventure when you feel it's reached a culminating moment, you can also end it whenever you want. It could be when you are right in the middle of a big battle, or dealing with a mystery, or when you haven't solved any Threads at all.

Ending an adventure and starting over with a new one is one way to help regain a sense of cohesion to a complicated campaign.

Think about Mythic Scenes. You have Expected, Altered, and Interrupt Scenes all stringing together to form your adventure. You also have that very important first Scene. That opening Scene is unique. It isn't influenced by the Chaos Factor. While it can be constructed like an Interrupt with a Random Event it doesn't have to be. The first Scene can be just about anything you want. You have more narrative and creative control over the first Scene than you do any other Scene in an adventure.

So let's use that to refocus an adventure that has gotten lost.

*Ragnor the Rogue's time in the Chittering Woods has gotten interesting. After befriending the fairies by name-dropping Prince Toymin Ragnor has undertaken to help the fairy community reclaim a long lost magical crown taken by a group of criminal outcasts.*

*In the process of fulfilling this quest Ragnor encounters the outcasts, and finds them to mostly be a peaceful group of fairies who are on the run from their brethren. It turns out that Prince*



## PRUNING SEASON

Earlier in this article I discussed editing Lists to keep them focused and under control. That advice goes along very well with starting over.

Ending an adventure and continuing with a new one already involves List pruning. If one adventure is a continuation of the previous you are going to pull over Threads and NPCs, making choices about what to keep and what to drop.

If you limit the length of your Lists and edit them you may want to also start the adventure over when you do that. You are using the need to edit your Lists as a sign it's time to end the adventure and start a new one. You can use this as an opportunity to review your ongoing adventure, helping to ensure it makes sense and stays manageable.

*Toymin didn't so much declare a portion of the forest to be protected as he declared war on a segment of the fairy society that were unpopular with the majority. When fleeing their homes the outcast leader took the crown with him to use its power to help his people survive.*

*Now Ragnor's Player is conflicted about where to go with this adventure. Does Ragnor make good on his offer to help the forest fairies by aiding in their oppression of the outcasts, whose only "crime" is that they have the power to create flame which the other fairies consider to be blasphemous? Does he switch sides, throwing off the previous course of this adventure toward a whole new direction? What about Ragnor's association with the royal family? Is he about to burn an important bridge for himself?*

*The adventure has just gotten complicated.*

*The Player could continue the adventure, creating Expected Scenes and going from there to see what*



*happens. Or they can consider that last Scene the end of the adventure and start a new one. They can take this time to review and edit the Lists and decide what the starting Scene should be that would help refocus the adventure narrative.*

*The Player decides to generate a Random Event as the seed idea for the first Scene of this new, restarted adventure. They roll an Event Focus of NPC Positive, the NPC they roll is “Outcast fairies”, and Meaning words of “lie” and “information”.*

*Since this is a first Scene the Player takes some creative license and comes up with this: Six months have passed. Ragnor allied himself with the outcasts while pretending to still work for the forest fairies. Ragnor has been feeding them false*

*information about where the outcasts are, sending patrols in the wrong direction. Meanwhile, the outcasts have built a colony for themselves deep in a valley. They’ve become self-sustaining and are better prepared and fortified for an assault when it comes.*

In this example the Player reached a point where the amount of shifting plots had led to enough confusion that they weren’t sure where to go next. Stopping the adventure and starting with a new one gave the Player just enough creative wiggle room to define the focus of the adventure, bringing back cohesion.

They could have made this an Expected Scene instead, going with something like “Six months go by with Ragnor helping the outcasts.” However,



Discovering the outcast fairies led to the creation of more plot questions. Rather than hammer it out during the adventure with more Scenes, the Player decided to start a new adventure to better focus where events were heading.





trying to deal with this with an Expected Scene opens up the possibility of the Chaos Factor interfering which may just heighten the sense of lack of cohesion. This could still work, but starting over with a fresh first Scene is a more decisive way to redirect the adventure.

## Multiple Lists

This belongs here and not in the earlier List section because extra Lists is a good way to keep a complicated adventure organized and help maintain cohesion.

What do I mean by multiple Lists? I'm talking about having more than one Characters List and more than one Threads List for a single adventure. In one sense this will make your complicated adventure even more complicated because you have more to keep track of, but it also helps to subdivide a single adventure into multiple parts.

It could work like this: you have your Lists for an ongoing adventure that has gotten quite complicated with various communities of NPCs and lots of Player Character goals. The geography of your adventure takes place in several separate areas that your PC commonly travels through. To make it even more complicated you've decided to add a second PC to the adventure that has nothing to do with your other Character, you just thought it would be interesting.

By using multiple Lists your Lists may look something like this:

- » A Threads List for your first PC.
- » A Threads List for your second PC.
- » A Characters List for your first PC in the region they primarily roam.
- » Another Characters List for your first PC for a distant region they sometimes visit and which forms the basis of some subplots.
- » A Characters List for your second PC.

That's a total of five Lists for a single adventure. Each List has a different focus depending

ADVENTURE LISTS	
<div>LIST NAME</div>	<div>LIST NAME</div>
<div>THREADS LIST</div>	<div>CHARACTERS LIST</div>
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	24
25	25

You can find this Adventure List sheet at the back of this issue.

on which PC we are dealing with or which geographic region the Character is in at the time.

Maintaining multiple Lists is a way to categorize the elements of a complicated adventure into meaningful chunks. This makes it more likely that you will get results for Random Events and Interrupts that make sense with where your narrative is currently at, helping to maintain adventure cohesion.

## WHAT TO PUT ON THE LIST

If you decide to create multiple Lists decide what the new List and the old List are for. Maybe your fantasy Character spends most of their





time near a city but they are also adventuring in a nearby dungeon. The dungeon is an ongoing element in your adventures with the Character occasionally returning to it to explore further.

This has created a situation where you essentially have two adventures going on at the same time: what goes on in the city and what happens in the dungeon.

You might decide to break your Lists into ones that pertain to the city and the dungeon. You pull all the dungeon related NPCs off the original List and place them on the new dungeon Characters List. There may be a few Threads that are also dungeon related so you make a separate dungeon Threads List. You use the city Lists when the adventure takes place in the city and the dungeon Lists when your PC is exploring there.

The Lists don't have to be mutually exclusive, you can have the same elements on both Lists. For instance, maybe the Player has a Thread of "Find the Eye of Yeehon," a mystical artifact that is fabled to be hidden in the dungeon. This is why your Character spends so much time adventuring in there. However, the Thread also applies to the city. There is plenty of lore to be learned about the Eye that can be gleaned from experts in town. It makes sense to have that Thread be on both Lists.

## WHICH LIST TO USE

When to use one List or another is up to you. If the circumstances of your adventure seem to indicate a particular List then use it.

When you separate a List into multiple Lists they don't have to be broken down just by geography. Anything that helps divide List elements can be used. While geographic locations are easy to identify you could also use themes if your adventure has various tones (action, personal drama, etc.), areas of Player Character interest, or just about anything that pertains to your adventure.



## RAGNOR'S ADVENTURE

This is Ragnor's Player's original Characters List. It has elements on it from Ragnor's early exploration of the Tomb of Antherat, his adventures at the royal court in Halvand, and his experiences in the Chittering Forest. The Player decides that since the adventure is revolving between dealing with the forest and dealing with the kingdom they should break the List into two separate Lists.

The Player left "Water elemental" on the forest List because they still aren't sure if elementals were unique to the dungeon. Much of the other kingdom oriented material could come off, except those pertinent to the forest like Prince Toymin.

The kingdom List contains elements that might be included in an encounter regarding the kingdom. The Player included some forest elements, like the forest fairies and their leadership, since the kingdom has ties with them which could become part of a kingdom related Random Event.

### CHARACTERS LIST

- 1 Tomb of Antherat
- 2 Water elemental
- 3 King Deneral
- 4 Prince Toymin
- 5 Anthril the Smith
- 6 Forest fairies
- 7 Vagrand, fairy leader
- 8 The forest
- 9 Forest fairy council
- 10 Outcast colony
- 11 Zengal, outcast leader
- 12 Patrols
- 13
- 14

LIST NAME

Dealing with forest

### CHARACTERS LIST

- 1 Water elemental
- 2 Prince Toymin
- 3 Forest fairies
- 4 Vagrand, fairy leader
- 5 The forest
- 6 Forest fairy council
- 7 Outcast colony
- 8 Zengal, outcast leader
- 9 Patrols
- 10
- 11

LIST NAME

Dealing with kingdom

### CHARACTERS LIST

- 1 Tomb of Antherat
- 2 Water elemental
- 3 King Deneral
- 4 Prince Toymin
- 5 Anthril the Smith
- 6 Forest fairies
- 7 Vagrand, fairy leader
- 8 Forest fairy council
- 9
- 10

LIST NAME



## Adventure Redirection Table

Starting over and making multiple Lists are ways to focus and organize an adventure that has become unwieldy. These methods require intention on your part: you decide to end the adventure and start over coming up with the new first Scene, or you choose which items to put on the new Lists.

If that feels like too heavy of a hand in manipulating your adventure then you can use the Adventure Redirection Table instead. Roll 1d10 and consult the table with results pointing to an element of your adventure to focus on for a time. This will cause your adventure to gather around a single concept for a while, which can simplify a complicated adventure that has grown out of control.

Some results of the Adventure Redirection Table will call for an element to take center stage for a period of time. How long the duration last depends on what point of your adventure you rolled on the table.

- » If you rolled on the Adventure Redirection Table before an adventure then the duration of the effect lasts for the entire adventure.
- » If you rolled on the table before a Scene in the midst of an adventure then the duration of the effect lasts for 5 Scenes.

### THREAD CENTER STAGE

Roll on your Threads List. The Thread you roll is now Center Stage, meaning for the duration of this effect whenever the Event Focus Table calls for a Thread use this Thread instead of rolling for one.

This will cause a single Thread to be dominant for the duration, whether that's for 5 Scenes or for an entire adventure.

## ADVENTURE REDIRECTION TABLE

1D10	RESULT
1-3	Thread Center Stage
4-5	NPC Center Stage
6	Going Out In A Blaze Of Glory
7-8	Problem Solved
9-10	Time Jump

### NPC CENTER STAGE

Roll on the Characters List and make that NPC Center Stage for the duration of this effect. Whenever the Event Focus Table calls for an NPC it's automatically this one.

This will likely raise the importance of a particular NPC with the adventure narrative more likely to revolve around them.

### GOING OUT IN A BLAZE OF GLORY

Roll on the Characters List. The NPC selected will be part of the next Scene, which will be their last. This NPC is removed from the Characters List at the end of the Scene and should be considered gone from the adventure.

If this is a new adventure then the Scene where the NPC is featured is the first Scene. Generate the Scene as you normally would but include this NPC.

*For instance, in Ragnar's ongoing campaign the Player decides to start over with a new adventure to get the campaign focused again. They roll on the Adventure Redirection Table and get Going Out In A Blaze Of Glory. The Characters Table roll gives "King Deneral". The Player interprets*





*this to mean that the adventure starts off with the king's death and Prince Toymin ascending to the throne. This is a major change in Ragnor's ongoing adventure and helps the Player reshape the narrative.*

Interpret how this NPC leaving your adventure would fit into the Scene.

Going Out In A Blaze Of Glory has the dual purpose of setting the tone of a Scene or adventure with a dramatic departure of an NPC and pruning the Characters List by removing the NPC.

## PROBLEM SOLVED

Roll a Thread from the Threads List. This Thread is automatically resolved in the next Scene. This is similar to rolling Close A Thread as an Event Focus for a Random Event.

Whether the next Scene is the first Scene of an adventure or an Expected Scene you are testing against the Chaos Factor, whatever happens in the Scene this Thread getting resolved becomes part of it.

## TIME JUMP

The next Scene takes place after a significant passage of time. Enough time should go by that some ongoing events of your adventure may automatically resolve themselves. This doesn't mean Threads will be closed but smaller unresolved elements of your adventure can be neatly tucked away with a summary explanation.

A Time Jump is like starting over. You're letting the passage of time smooth over some of the ongoing action in your adventure to make way to focus on something. Construct the next Scene as you normally would, whether it's a first Scene, or an Expected, Altered, or Interrupt Scene. Whatever Scene you come up with will include the passage of enough time where some things should naturally change.



## INTERPRETING REDIRECTIONS

The Adventure Redirection Table indicates focusing on one element of your adventure, regardless of what the next Scene is. Generate the Scene as you normally would. For instance, come up with the first Scene of a new adventure. For an ongoing adventure, compose an Expected Scene and test it. Figure out the Altered or Interrupt Scene if it becomes one.

No matter how the Scene pans out it will still include the result of the Adventure Redirection Table. You'll have to interpret how that result fits into the Scene you've generated.

*Ragnor's adventure got exciting with Prince Toymin becoming king, the forest fairy patrols discovering the outcast colony, and Toymin sending an army to clear them out at the forest fairy leader's request. This culminated in an epic battle where the outcasts were able to repel the invaders.*

*The Player wasn't sure where to go at this point so they rolled on the Adventure Redirection Table before the next Scene. They got Time Jump.*

*The Player comes up with the Expected Scene idea of, "Their forces chastened, the forest fairies back off and let the outcasts live in peace. For now." Testing that against the Chaos Factor, Mythic says the Expected Scene happens.*

*The Player also includes a Time Jump, and interprets it to mean that the next Scene takes place a year later. The outcast fairies have been living in peace in their colony, building and expanding. More fairies have joined them and they are becoming a legitimate nation. Ragnor has been living with them during this time and helping. In his defeat, Toymin has washed his hands of the forest fairies and their disputes.*

## KEEPING IT ALL ORGANIZED

Every Mythic adventure, if it goes on long enough, will get complicated just by the sheer volume of events that have taken place. It's like an unfolding serialized television show that has potentially unlimited episodes. That's a lot to remember.

Keeping your adventure organized is important. Organization may be as simple as using the Adventure Sheets from the core Mythic books or it may be something more sophisticated like an online blog or an app.

With all the various suggestions in this article for keeping a complicated adventure under control simply maintaining records may be the most important thing you can do.

### Make It Fun

Documenting your adventure shouldn't be a chore. If you're using a method to keep track of adventure details and you aren't enjoying it, I highly recommend switching up and trying something else.

Here are a few commonly used strategies for recording adventure details:

#### SUMMARY

You don't have to write down everything that happens in your adventure, but recording important stuff in summary form is useful. Maybe you just record a few details of a Scene, and give the Scene a number to identify the order, and that's it. When you're deep into adventure number eight, after having experienced 76 Scenes, looking back at a summary of your early adventures will remind you at a glance what happened way back then.



### KEEP IT TOGETHER!



Mythic Magazine #4, in the article "Getting Prepared For A Solo Adventure", has more ideas on keeping yourself organized during an adventure.

### BLOG

Writing your adventures into an online journal like a blog brings with it easy formatting to make it look nice and instant organization. You can also share it with others if you like.

### STORY MODE

If you want to treat your adventures more like an epic novel you can go further than simply summarizing. Writing your adventures like a story slows down the adventure process but it allows you to dig deep into the details of your adventure and breathe more life into it.

### APPS

There are lots of apps and digital aids out there to help with recording adventures. The options range from standard word processing software to sophisticated online tools like virtual tabletops.

If you are interested in exploring digital options I recommend hopping online and consulting with





My adventure notebook. I record adventures here in journal format, noting the events of Scenes and jotting down important details. I have to admit I like when this book gets messy with pieces of paper sticking out of it, reference images jammed in there, messages scribbled in the margins, and notes scrawled on every page about past events. It makes my adventures feel more like a lived experience and it's easy to look back and remind myself of critical details.



other Players. Ask them what they're using. There is such a wide variety of options that seeking guidance from Players with tastes like yours may be the easiest route to finding an app that works best for you.

The links on page 5 with "Share Your Story" are a good place to start.





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## VARIATIONS

*New rules and twists on current rules*

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# Generating Adventure Puzzles

*Bering the Magnificent advanced into the shadowy room, cobwebs clinging to the ancient stone ceiling while warm steam churned across the floor. The wizard had suffered through the terrors of the crumbling ruins and he knew he was close to the treasure chamber.*

*Before him, dominating the room, a giant mechanical assembly stood. It had golden hands, like a clock, each pointing to a faintly glowing symbol. A dais with three levers stood before the machine.*

*Bering realized this was a test. Use the levers to move the hands of the “clock” and arrange them to point at the correct collection of symbols. And then ... something would happen. The artificer of this dangerous place had a penchant for puzzles and Bering suspected this was the last game.*

*Carefully he pulled a lever and it moved the largest hand to the next symbol causing it to glow. Bering knew if he solved this riddle his quest may finally be over. But if he got it wrong, who knew what would befall him.*





## DANGEROUS PUZZLERS

While classic dungeon crawls are famed for their monsters, traps, and treasures, they are also well loved for clever puzzles. Solve the puzzle correctly and gain your freedom or a treasure. Get the puzzle wrong and maybe the walls begin to close in on you or a giant spider is released to make a meal out of you.

Puzzles aren't just limited to dungeons. A bomb rigged with an intricate fail-safe is a type of puzzle as is a damaged warp core of a starship that requires careful reconfiguring where failure can spell disaster.

This article presents a system for creating and resolving puzzles in solo Mythic adventures. I'm defining "puzzle" loosely so this system can be applied to a wide variety of circumstances. Any situation requiring your Player Character to figure a mechanism out that has consequences for failure and success can be considered a puzzle.

### Conceptualizing Puzzles For Solo Play

So how do we create a puzzle as we play and solve it without knowing the answer to it? We do it the same way we resolve any tension and mystery filled concept in Mythic, we create the details as we go.

You don't need a solution in hand to create a puzzle. To start with all you need is some inspiration for what kind of puzzle you're dealing with. You can formulate any idea for the puzzle, using your imagination, without having to worry about the solution to it yet.

For instance, Bering's clockwork puzzle was generated using the tables in this article. What I described is what the results inspired me to describe. Even though I came up with a mechanism that looks like a clock and points to



### GOING WITH IT

Following your expectations and allowing for loose interpretations of prompts is common advice in Mythic rules. When it comes to generating random puzzles you may have to step it up even more. Randomized puzzles work best if you let your imagination run with them.

This article presents various Meaning Tables for generating details about your puzzle. It probably won't be sufficient to roll for just one word pair per puzzle. I recommend rolling for multiple word pairs until they all come together into something that is meaningful to you.

For instance, to describe the clockwork puzzle at the start of this article I first rolled "extravagant" and "physical". This implied to me something large and complicated, but it wasn't enough. I rolled again and got "technology" and "move". This implied to me a machine with visible moving parts. I still didn't see a puzzle in that so I rolled again and got "choice" and "object". This made me think of a control panel. Putting all of that together inspired me to make the elaborate clock with levers Bering can manipulate to set the hands to point at the glowing symbols.

colored symbols I have absolutely no idea what any of that means.

So yes, you start this system by creating a puzzle from scratch. The solution to the puzzle, and the possible consequences of what happens when you try to solve it, are worked out as you go using a combination of Fate Questions and Elements Meaning Tables.

This may sound puzzling so far, so let's get into how it's done!

## DESCRIBING THE PUZZLE

Your Player Character has come across a puzzle. You may have determined this through a Fate Question or maybe this is how you interpreted a Random Event. See the sidebar Puzzling Encounters for ideas on how to introduce puzzles into your adventure.

The first thing to do is to describe what the puzzle looks like. On the next page are a set of three Elements Meaning Tables, all related to puzzles. Use the first table, Puzzle Descriptors, to generate inspiration for what the puzzle looks like.

This is likely going to require multiple rolls on the table. Puzzles, by their nature, are confusing. It's unlikely that a single word pair is going to paint a full enough picture for you. Keep rolling word pairs until an idea comes together.

You should come up with something that is mysterious yet has a means to resolve it. Be creative and keep in mind that you, the Player, are in the dark about what this puzzle is about. Come up with something that sounds interesting, maybe strange, but with elements that you have no idea what they mean.

*Your science fiction Player Character Simone is leading her team as they explore a derelict alien spacecraft. The ship seems mostly dead although some systems seem to be functional.*

*Through Fate Questions the Player determines that Simone has entered some kind of control room. Maybe this operates the ship. The Player decides to treat this as a puzzle to see if Simone can figure out how to manage the controls.*

*To describe what the controls in the room look like the Player rolls on the Puzzle Descriptors Table and gets "colorful" and "timed". She interprets this to mean there is a large wall of brightly colored dots that when pressed blink with ticking sounds*



## PUZZLING ENCOUNTERS

The rules in this article treat puzzles as a very specific adventure element: your Player Character runs across a "puzzle", now what happens?

So how do you run across puzzles in the first place? There are a number of ways you can introduce puzzles into your adventure.

The most direct way is to ask with a Fate Question. "Do I encounter a puzzle?" This may be a logical Question to ask if your Character is adventuring in a place that you know has puzzles in it.

You don't have to define something as a puzzle for it to act like a puzzle. Any mechanism your Character has to figure out that has consequences could be treated like a puzzle. If your rogue is inspecting a locked chest and discovers it has a trap in it you could treat that like a puzzle.

You can consider something to be a puzzle if it seems like it is. For instance, maybe your post-apocalypse survivor comes across a technological item they don't understand. They spend time messing around with it to see how it works. You can treat that experience like a puzzle and use the rules in this article.

If you want puzzles to be an active element in your adventure you could add them to the Characters List, writing "Puzzle" as if it were an NPC. When a Random Event generates one you can skip the usual Event generation rules and use the puzzle rules instead.

*for a few seconds before stopping. Each button has its own timed pattern.*

*The Player wants more information about the panel so rolls on the Puzzle Descriptors Table again and gets "frantic" and "mechanical". The Player interprets this to mean that if certain dots are pressed that correspond to a mathematical*



## MEANING TABLES: ELEMENTS

### PUZZLE DESCRIPTORS

1: Access	51: Intellect
2: Active	52: Knowledge
3: Amusing	53: Large
4: Anxious	54: Lethal
5: Art	55: Lock
6: Assist	56: Lure
7: Attain	57: Maze
8: Balance	58: Mechanical
9: Barrier	59: Message
10: Beautiful	60: Missing
11: Bizarre	61: Move
12: Brave	62: Multiple
13: Careful	63: Mundane
14: Caution	64: Mysterious
15: Change	65: Normal
16: Choice	66: Object
17: Code	67: Obscured
18: Colorful	68: Official
19: Combination	69: Old
20: Communicate	70: Open
21: Competition	71: Oppose
22: Complete	72: Pattern
23: Controls	73: Personal
24: Countdown	74: Physical
25: Damaged	75: Portal
26: Danger	76: Power
27: Delicate	77: Precision
28: Disarm	78: Problem
29: Dismantle	79: Question
30: Disrupt	80: Release
31: Elements	81: Repair
32: Enemy	82: Resolve
33: Energy	83: Reward
34: Environment	84: Riddle
35: Extravagant	85: Risk
36: Fear	86: Simple
37: Frantic	87: Skill
38: Free	88: Solve
39: Frightening	89: Speak
40: Game	90: Start
41: Goal	91: Stop
42: Harm	92: Strange
43: Historical	93: Struggle
44: Imitate	94: Technology
45: Information	95: Tension
46: Innocent	96: Threatening
47: Inquire	97: Timed
48: Inscription	98: Water
49: Inside	99: Weapon
50: Inspect	100: Words

### PUZZLE REWARD

1: Access	51: Meager
2: Advice	52: Mechanical
3: Aid	53: Message
4: Allies	54: Move
5: Answers	55: Mundane
6: Art	56: Mysterious
7: Assist	57: News
8: Attain	58: Normal
9: Attract	59: Object
10: Befriend	60: Odd
11: Benefits	61: Official
12: Bestow	62: Open
13: Betrayal	63: Outside
14: Bizarre	64: Overthrow
15: Break	65: Partial
16: Calm	66: Path
17: Challenge	67: Peace
18: Change	68: Physical
19: Clue	69: Portal
20: Communicate	70: Possessions
21: Control	71: Postpone
22: Defense	72: Power
23: Delay	73: Progress
24: Deliverance	74: Reassuring
25: Desire	75: Release
26: Disrupt	76: Replenish
27: Energy	77: Resolution
28: Entrance	78: Resource
29: Environment	79: Return
30: Equipment	80: Revealed
31: Escape	81: Riches
32: Exit	82: Safety
33: Expectation	83: Simple
34: Free	84: Small
35: Friendship	85: Start
36: Gift	86: Stop
37: Goal	87: Strange
38: Good	88: Success
39: Gratify	89: Task
40: Guide	90: Tool
41: Help	91: Transform
42: Hidden	92: Trap
43: Hope	93: Travel
44: Ideas	94: Treasure
45: Important	95: Triumph
46: Increase	96: Truce
47: Information	97: Valuable
48: Joy	98: Victory
49: Key	99: Weapon
50: Liberty	100: Wishes

### PUZZLE CONSEQUENCE

1: Adversity	51: Imitate
2: Alarm	52: Imprison
3: Betray	53: Increase
4: Bizarre	54: Information
5: Blades	55: Injure
6: Block	56: Inside
7: Ceiling	57: Key
8: Change	58: Lethal
9: Choice	59: Loss
10: Cloud	60: Lost
11: Conflict	61: Mechanism
12: Consequence	62: Mental
13: Constrain	63: Message
14: Control	64: Misfortune
15: Countdown	65: Move
16: Create	66: Mundane
17: Creature	67: Mysterious
18: Damage	68: Open
19: Danger	69: Pain
20: Deceive	70: Path
21: Decrease	71: Physical
22: Delay	72: Portal
23: Depletion	73: Possessions
24: Deprive	74: Postpone
25: Destruction	75: Power
26: Disrupt	76: Projectile
27: Divide	77: Punish
28: Drop	78: Release
29: Elements	79: Reveal
30: Enemies	80: Ruin
31: Energy	81: Scary
32: Environment	82: Setback
33: Escape	83: Simple
34: Explode	84: Stab
35: Expose	85: Start
36: Failure	86: Stop
37: Fall	87: Strange
38: Fear	88: Struggle
39: Fight	89: Suffering
40: Fire	90: Summon
41: Floor	91: Suppress
42: Frantic	92: Take
43: Free	93: Threaten
44: Free	94: Toxin
45: Frightening	95: Trigger
46: Harm	96: Trouble
47: Heavy	97: Violent
48: Helpless	98: Walls
49: Illness	99: Water
50: Illusion	100: Weapon



*sequence based on their timed counts then dots all across the board will frantically begin to flash.*

*The Player is happy with the description of this puzzle. It's essentially a math problem, coming up with the correct sequence of pressed dots based on the click counts associated with them which gives a larger response from the board.*

You can see from the example above that the Player described a puzzle that gives detail while at the same time they have no idea what it means. It's just a jumble of nonsense at this point but there is a hint of possible logic in there. This is how a puzzle should feel.

Feel free to describe as much or as little detail as you like. The Player in the example created a mathematical puzzle but hasn't defined anything more specific. What are the specific number of seconds each dot clicks when touched? Is there any pattern to the times? How many dots have to be pressed to make the panel go frantic?

If you want specifics you can infer it from the details you've already generated. For instance, maybe the Player decides that every button clicks for 3, 5, or 7 seconds. If you press any three buttons then the whole board lights up for 3 seconds. So maybe the solution to the puzzle involves the correlation of which three buttons you press.

## SOLVING THE PUZZLE

So far you've described a puzzle that is not much more than random details cobbled together that make little sense. Now it's time to try and solve the puzzle by trying to make sense of it.

Come up with the best solution to the puzzle you can think of. In our example, maybe Simone decides that the buttons describe a sequence. You're supposed to press a 3 timed button, then a 5, then a 7, to turn on whatever mechanism this

panel controls. Maybe the fact that the buttons are timed is also relevant. When pressed the whole panel lights up for 3 seconds. Maybe that indicates that the first three buttons prime the controls, and then another 3 second button is expected to be pressed.

That all sounds plausible enough. It sort of makes sense with the original description. But who knows, right? This kind of uncertainty and confusion is what we want. This is a puzzle! With just two steps you are already deep into the solving of a puzzle. With some prompts you came up with random details that loosely tie together in an unknown way, and then you try to apply meaning to it.

Now we find out if you're right.

Ask the Fate Question "Is the puzzle solved?" Define the Odds based on how confident you are

PUZZLE SOLUTION TABLE	
"IS THE PUZZLE SOLVED?"	RESULT
YES	Your solution was correct! Resolve the puzzle reward.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	Your solution was correct! Resolve two puzzle rewards.
NO	Your solution was incorrect. You can try again.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	Your solution was incorrect and you triggered a consequence.
RANDOM EVENT	The Event is related to the puzzle. Don't roll on the Event Focus Table, consider the puzzle as Context for the Event Focus.





about the solution you came up with. Maybe you think you came up with a really clever solution that closely matched the puzzle design in which case you might give Odds of Near Sure Thing. Or maybe you have no idea and your solution is just a random guess, in which case you give Odds of Very Unlikely.

*Simone goes with her theory that the timed clicks identify the proper sequence of buttons. She presses a 3, 5, and 7 button in that order. As the panel lights up with buttons frantically blinking for 3 seconds she presses another 3 button. She steps back to see if that was the solution and if something happens.*

Resolve the Fate Question and consult the Puzzle Solution Table to see if the puzzle is solved.

Any mechanism your Character doesn't understand can be a puzzle. Can you solve it, and what happens if you do? What happens if you fail badly?







## ABSTRACT OR SPECIFIC?

These puzzle rules are a combination of specific details and abstraction. Probably the most specific step in this process is coming up with the puzzle itself with the Descriptors Table.

It's up to you how specific you want to get in detail or how much you want to abstract it. It's fun to think about puzzles, so maybe you come up with a very specific puzzle then a very specific solution. By the time you're done you know exactly how the puzzle functions.

Or, maybe it's enough that you roughly know what the puzzle looks like. You might decide solving it is abstracted, you don't come up with a detailed explanation you just ask "Does my Character solve the puzzle?"

That choice is yours. Maybe the puzzle is so confusing that it's just too much work to figure out more detail about it, so you step back and abstract the solution. Or maybe the solution you come up with is so intriguing that you spend a considerable amount of time solving the puzzle.

The bottom line is to have fun with your puzzles. The rules provide a strategy for designing and solving them. How much color you want this process to add to your adventure is up to you.

## Yes

Your solution was the correct solution, the puzzle is solved! The next step is to resolve the puzzle reward.

## Exceptional Yes

The solution is correct and the puzzle is solved. When resolving the puzzle reward there will be two rewards.

## No

Your solution is wrong. Whatever approach you thought was correct was off base. You can try again.

## Exceptional No

Not only was your solution wrong but it triggers a negative consequence of some kind. This might be an intentional trap built into the mechanism or some other undesirable effect that is triggered.

## Random Event

If a Random Event is triggered when answering this Fate Question then treat the Random Event as related to the puzzle. For instance, if Simone's Player got a Random Event maybe they interpret it to mean they hear sounds elsewhere in the ship, like machinery moving. It seems messing with the buttons activated something.

A Random Event is a good opportunity to add embellishment to whatever answer you received from the Fate Question. If the answer was Yes and you also get a Random Event then the Event might be something additional that happens along with the puzzle reward.

## PUZZLE REWARD

Your Player Character is trying to resolve the puzzle for a reason. Maybe you know what that reason is, maybe you don't.

Once the puzzle is successfully solved we determine what the reward is.



## Known Reward

If you already know what the reward is you can use that expectation without rolling. For instance, the puzzle was trying to rewire a locked door to get it to open. Once solved the door opens.

## Unsure Reward

You think you know what the reward is but you aren't sure. In our example of Simone trying to figure out the alien control panel the Player theorized that the controls will activate the ship. However, they aren't sure that's what will happen.

If you have a good idea what the reward is but you aren't sure then phrase it as a Fate Question. If the answer is No then roll on the Puzzle Reward Table (more on that below) for inspiration of what the reward is.

## Unknown Reward

You have no idea what will happen when the puzzle is solved. In this case roll on the Puzzle Reward Table.

## Extra Outcome

If you got an Exceptional Yes to the puzzle Fate Question then two rewards are produced. It's likely that even if you knew or suspected what the first reward would be you probably won't know for the second. Use the Puzzle Reward Table to work out inspiration for it.

*Bering the Magnificent manipulates the levers of the clock mechanism, the giant hands moving. Symbols begin to glow and when he gets them into the pattern he wanted the machine begins to hum. A massive stone door across the room begins to slide open, revealing the treasure chamber!*



## USING SKILLS

This system boils solving the puzzle down to a Fate Question. If you are playing Mythic with a chosen RPG you could use its task resolution system to help.

Instead of solving the puzzle with Mythic you could pose it as an attribute or skill task in your RPG system. Maybe it's a roll against the Player Character's Intelligence score or they have a skill that applies to the puzzle.

You're still going to ask the Fate Question "Is the puzzle solved?" but the RPG resolution results will factor into it.

If you succeed on the RPG resolution roll then you can consider the puzzle successfully solved. Resolve the Fate Question with Odds of Has To Be. If you roll a No or Exceptional No treat it as a Yes.

If the resolution roll failed then do the opposite: treat the Odds as Impossible with a Yes or Exceptional Yes treated as a No.

*Bering's Player rolled an Exceptional Yes for the Fate Question of "Is the puzzle solved?" The Player already knew that the puzzle's reward would be: opening the treasure chamber. However, getting an Exceptional Yes means there is a second reward as well. The Player has no idea what it might be so they roll on the Puzzle Reward Table for inspiration.*

## PUZZLE REWARD TABLE

Use the Puzzle Reward Table to generate inspiration for what happens when a puzzle is successfully solved. As with the Puzzle Descriptors Table you may have to roll on this multiple times to get a satisfying interpretation.

*Simone successfully solved the puzzle and her Player thinks this will activate the ship. They ask the Fate Question "Does the ship power up?" but Mythic comes back with No.*



## PRE-PACKAGED PUZZLES

This Mythic puzzle system is meant to be used as you play, generating puzzles, solutions, rewards, and consequences as you go. However, Game Masters can also use this system to create puzzles ahead of time for adventures you're building.

Follow the same procedures in this article to make a puzzle ahead of time. You can be more freeform about it since you are looking for inspiration. Maybe you follow the puzzle system up to a point then run with your ideas from there.

You'll find a few defined puzzles in sidebars on the following pages showing examples of puzzles constructed with this system.

*To figure out what happens the Player rolls on the Puzzle Reward Table and gets "communicate" and "equipment". That's clear enough to the Player who interprets it this way: The room comes alive with crackling sounds, and then something is speaking to Simone and her crew in an unknown language. She realizes the panel is a communications console and she just dialed up an alien on the phone.*

## PUZZLE CONSEQUENCE

Your solution to the puzzle was wrong. Now something is happening. Probably something bad.

Whether we're talking about classic dungeon crawl puzzles or a magic book found in an old attic or a high-tech puzzle there is less fun to seeking the reward of the puzzle if it doesn't also have a consequence for failure.

Puzzle consequences are triggered when you generate an Exceptional No to the puzzle solving Fate Question. The consequence could be something intentionally built into the puzzle. For

instance if you don't replace the gold idol you take from the platform with something that weighs exactly the same then the temple around you will collapse. The consequence may be unintentional. If the puzzle is a gamma bomb your Character is trying to defuse the consequence may be that it leaks radiation that makes your Character sick.

Puzzle consequences follow the same procedure as puzzle rewards. Decide if the consequence is known, unsure, or unknown.

*Let's say on Simone's first attempt to figure out the alien control panel she blew it and got an Exceptional No. The Player considers for a moment if they know what the consequences would be. They think this panel controls the ship but they aren't sure. Even if it does they don't know what the consequences of failure look like. The Player decides the consequence is unknown.*

If the consequence is known then proceed with your expectation about what happens. A puzzle consequence should be something your Character didn't intend to happen, probably something detrimental although not necessarily so.

Maybe you're unsure. You have some idea but decide to test it with a Fate Question. If you get any No results to this Question, or you don't know what the consequence is in the first place, then roll on the Puzzle Consequence Table.

## PUZZLE CONSEQUENCE TABLE

Your Character tried to solve a puzzle and got it wrong. Now something happens and it's probably something bad. Let's be honest, when we see a puzzle in action we're all curious what happens when the puzzle is done wrong. Consequences are often more interesting than rewards, even if it means bad times for our Player Character.

For inspiration about what happens when a puzzle fights back you can roll on the Puzzle Consequence Table. Just as with the other puzzle tables you may have to roll more than one word





## BRIZAS' BIZARRE BOX

This strangely beautiful puzzle box created by the arch lich Brizas is a handheld cube made of polished brass and a cold black metal. It's intricately carved with geometric shapes that when pushed will move, changing the shape of the box. It is fabled that should the box be solved a potent reward will be revealed, but the box can also summon servitors of the Gods of Chaos who will show up to punish the failed puzzle solver.

**The Solution:** It just takes time and a bit of luck. The shapes are complicated and there is no way of knowing what is supposed to go where. It takes one day of messing around with the box before a roll can be made to see if it is solved.

**The Reward:** If correctly solved the puzzle box will begin to convulse and expand until it resembles a full size humanoid composed of brass and black metal. The magical automaton is extremely strong and durable, with secret powers of its own. It will serve the puzzle solver for one year. After that time the thing will leave, taking itself somewhere else in the world where it will revert back to a box, ready to be found by someone new.

**The Consequence:** A botched attempt to unravel the box will cause it to shake violently, dark energy spilling out of it. A magic portal will tear open and a creature from the Dimension of Chaos will step through. This monster delights in the suffering of the puzzle user and will attack immediately.

*Puzzle Descriptors: Art & Active, Strange & Object.*

*Puzzle Reward: Friendship & Assist, Art & Partial.*

*Puzzle Consequence: Open & Danger, Frightening & Suffering, Creature & Physical.*

pair to get a satisfying interpretation.

*Simone's Player needs to resolve a consequence to her Character failing to figure out the alien*

*control panel. She has no idea what will happen so she rolls on the Puzzle Consequence Table.*

*She gets "conflict" and "simple". This sounds like some kind of a challenge, although a simple one. The Player wants more information so rolls again and gets "misfortune" and "imprison". This makes the original result more clear. The Player interprets it this way: Simone presses the series of dots, expecting it to activate the ship. Instead of the ship coming alive there is a harsh beeping noise and the door to the room slides shut trapping her and her team inside.*

## PUZZLING POSSIBILITIES

This Mythic puzzle system is applicable to a wide range of puzzling role-playing situations. Here are some suggestions:

### Classic Dungeon Puzzlers

This is what inspired the idea in the first place, the classic dungeon puzzler. There's often a fine line between this and a trap since dungeon puzzles tend to be deadly if not solved correctly.

If you want to increase the danger of puzzles for a dungeon you can change the No result for the puzzle Fate Question to be that of Exceptional No, "Your solution was incorrect and you triggered a consequence." An Exceptional No would become, "Your solution was incorrect and you triggered two consequences."

### The Dangerous Repair

You've seen this situation a million times in movies and tv shows. Maybe it's a ship's engine on the brink of exploding, or a wildly psychopathic artificial intelligence that needs to be turned off, or maybe the brakes system on a runaway train ...





## TRAIN STOP

This puzzle is the culmination of a wild west adventure where a deranged madman has sabotaged the brakes on a train while it traverses a mountain pass. Your Player Character has to repair the brakeline and stop the train before everyone on board is killed.

The madman has made a game of it, leaving a hole open in the control room where you can view the brake cables under the train. He left a note saying "A to B unless to C, C to B unless to A."

**The Solution:** Four cables and four connection points are labeled A, B, C, and D. The correct connections are plugging cable A into slot B, and cable C to slot A.

**The Reward:** The brakes start to work correctly slowing the train to a safe and gradual standstill.

**The Consequence:** You've run out of time. The train picks up too much speed to make it around the next bend and flies off the tracks.

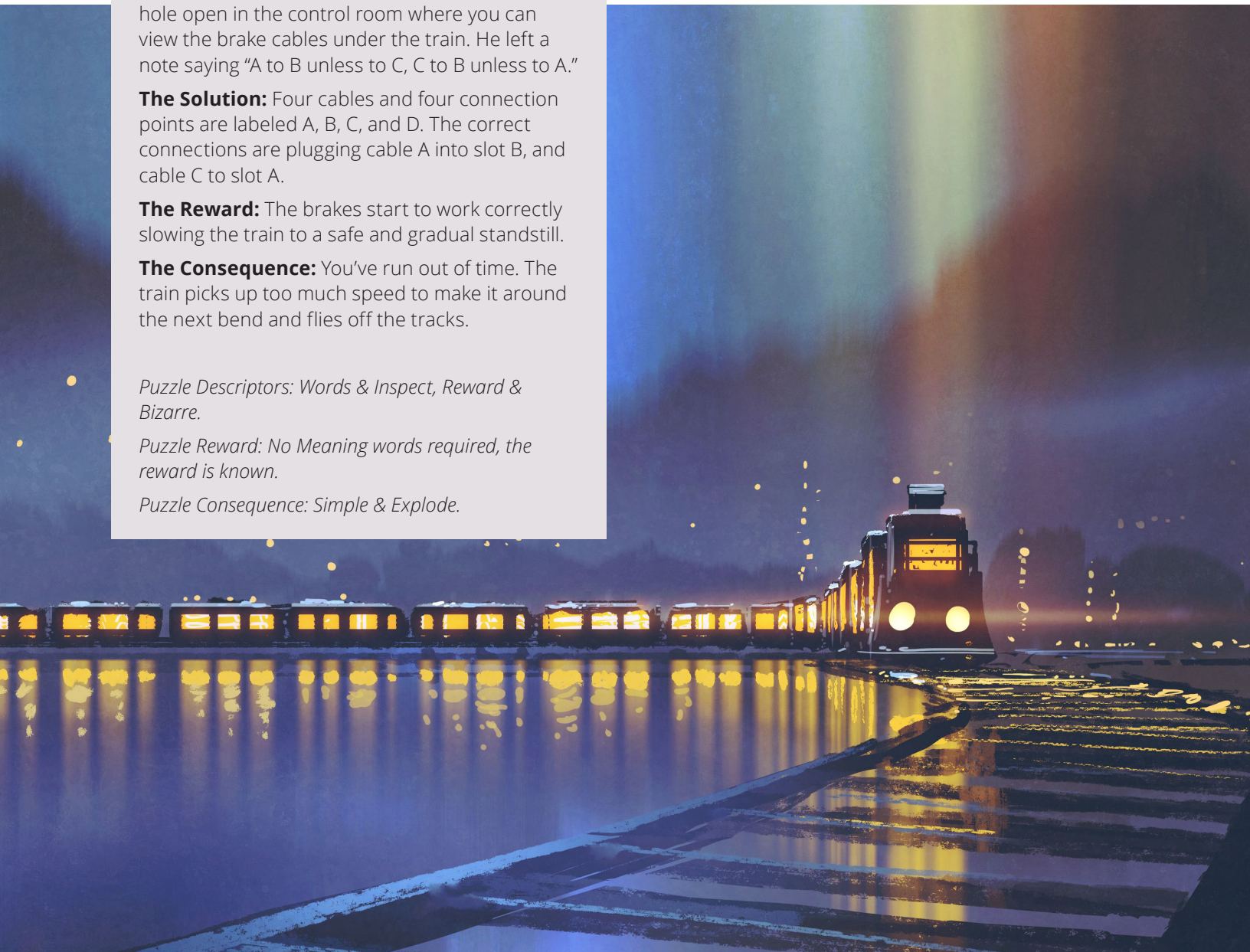
*Puzzle Descriptors: Words & Inspect, Reward & Bizarre.*

*Puzzle Reward: No Meaning words required, the reward is known.*

*Puzzle Consequence: Simple & Explode.*

something is badly broken and in need of a crucial repair with the consequences being dire.

This is a puzzle disguised as a crisis situation. Regardless of how it comes to pass it still contains all the elements of a good puzzle: a confusing situation requiring skill or luck to resolve, a solution that's available if only you can find it, a reward for resolving the puzzle, and possible consequences of making things worse if you don't.





You can use the puzzle system for a dangerous repair even if your Character is already aware that something needs to be done. The surprise isn't in the crisis itself, it's in how to resolve it.

For instance, your Character has been trapped in a high tech building run by an out of control artificial intelligence trying to kill them. Braving dangers at every turn, the Player Character makes their way to the central control room where they hope to access the mainframe and recode the AI to shut it down.

The Player knows all of this, it's been the focus of the adventure. When the PC makes it to the control room and is ready to face the task, now is when the Player can turn it into a puzzle. While they know their Character has to reprogram the AI, they can use the Puzzle Descriptors Table to describe exactly how that looks. Maybe they roll "change" and "information", which they interpret as: The PC needs to access the computer terminal, find the root directory of the AI, and change the parameters from hostile to friend.

Or, if they rolled "controls" and "stop" they might go with an interpretation of: The computer system is complicated, however it's powered by layers of cables feeding into the machine. If the access panel covering the cables can be removed and the correct cables severed the AI is disabled.

## Have You Tried Turning It Off And Back On?

Figuring out how to use a complicated object is also like a puzzle. Maybe it's a piece of alien technology or a customized machine where your Player Character needs to figure out how it works. This could be applied to a post-apocalypse setting far in the future where Characters in the wasteland recover relics from the past and try to understand them. While a hoverboard may have been an everyday item in 2200 AD, by 2400 AD



## FORCE FIELD SEALED

We are in the far future, long after the bombs fell and civilization was left in ruins. Your Character has discovered a gauntlet with buttons on it. While the Player knows the device is an ancient, high tech personal force field, their Player Character who has grown up in the wastelands has no idea what it is or how it works.

**The Solution:** To activate it a 3 digit personal pin code needs to be entered. This can be found through simple trial and error.

**The Reward:** A personal force field is activated, a shimmering translucent purple shield that surrounds the bearer of the gauntlet protecting them from harm. It'll remain active through several hits, then power down and won't come on again until an hour later.

**The Consequence:** By messing with the controls it's possible to partially activate the device without the pin code. This is dangerous, however, as a fork of the force shield will appear for a moment that will stab out in a random direction possibly causing serious damage.

*Puzzle Descriptors: Code & Intellect.*

*Puzzle Reward: Postpone & Return.*

*Puzzle Consequence: Path & Energy.*

it's a complete mystery.

In this situation the puzzle was never meant to be a puzzle, it's the Character's lack of understanding that turns it into a puzzle. The reward is obvious: learning how to use the thing correctly. Consequences could include hurting yourself in the process.

Even if you know what the object is you can still generate descriptors as a way to describe what the process is like trying to figure out the object (see "Force Field Sealed" for an example of this.

# ADVENTURE LISTS

LIST NAME

LIST NAME

## THREADS LIST

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## CHARACTERS LIST

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## ADVENTURE REDIRECTION TABLE

1D10	RESULT
1-3	Thread Center Stage
4-5	NPC Center Stage
6	Going Out In A Blaze Of Glory
7-8	Problem Solved
9-10	Time Jump

## MEANING TABLES: ELEMENTS

### PUZZLE DESCRIPTORS

1: Access	51: Intellect
2: Active	52: Knowledge
3: Amusing	53: Large
4: Anxious	54: Lethal
5: Art	55: Lock
6: Assist	56: Lure
7: Attain	57: Maze
8: Balance	58: Mechanical
9: Barrier	59: Message
10: Beautiful	60: Missing
11: Bizarre	61: Move
12: Brave	62: Multiple
13: Careful	63: Mundane
14: Caution	64: Mysterious
15: Change	65: Normal
16: Choice	66: Object
17: Code	67: Obscured
18: Colorful	68: Official
19: Combination	69: Old
20: Communicate	70: Open
21: Competition	71: Oppose
22: Complete	72: Pattern
23: Controls	73: Personal
24: Countdown	74: Physical
25: Damaged	75: Portal
26: Danger	76: Power
27: Delicate	77: Precision
28: Disarm	78: Problem
29: Dismantle	79: Question
30: Disrupt	80: Release
31: Elements	81: Repair
32: Enemy	82: Resolve
33: Energy	83: Reward
34: Environment	84: Riddle
35: Extravagant	85: Risk
36: Fear	86: Simple
37: Frantic	87: Skill
38: Free	88: Solve
39: Frightening	89: Speak
40: Game	90: Start
41: Goal	91: Stop
42: Harm	92: Strange
43: Historical	93: Struggle
44: Imitate	94: Technology
45: Information	95: Tension
46: Innocent	96: Threatening
47: Inquire	97: Timed
48: Inscription	98: Water
49: Inside	99: Weapon
50: Inspect	100: Words

### PUZZLE REWARD

1: Access	51: Meager
2: Advice	52: Mechanical
3: Aid	53: Message
4: Allies	54: Move
5: Answers	55: Mundane
6: Art	56: Mysterious
7: Assist	57: News
8: Attain	58: Normal
9: Attract	59: Object
10: Befriend	60: Odd
11: Benefits	61: Official
12: Bestow	62: Open
13: Betrayal	63: Outside
14: Bizarre	64: Overthrow
15: Break	65: Partial
16: Calm	66: Path
17: Challenge	67: Peace
18: Change	68: Physical
19: Clue	69: Portal
20: Communicate	70: Possessions
21: Control	71: Postpone
22: Defense	72: Power
23: Delay	73: Progress
24: Deliverance	74: Reassuring
25: Desire	75: Release
26: Disrupt	76: Replenish
27: Energy	77: Resolution
28: Entrance	78: Resource
29: Environment	79: Return
30: Equipment	80: Revealed
31: Escape	81: Riches
32: Exit	82: Safety
33: Expectation	83: Simple
34: Free	84: Small
35: Friendship	85: Start
36: Gift	86: Stop
37: Goal	87: Strange
38: Good	88: Success
39: Gratify	89: Task
40: Guide	90: Tool
41: Help	91: Transform
42: Hidden	92: Trap
43: Hope	93: Travel
44: Ideas	94: Treasure
45: Important	95: Triumph
46: Increase	96: Truce
47: Information	97: Valuable
48: Joy	98: Victory
49: Key	99: Weapon
50: Liberty	100: Wishes

### PUZZLE CONSEQUENCE

1: Adversity	51: Imitate
2: Alarm	52: Imprison
3: Betray	53: Increase
4: Bizarre	54: Information
5: Blades	55: Injure
6: Block	56: Inside
7: Ceiling	57: Key
8: Change	58: Lethal
9: Choice	59: Loss
10: Cloud	60: Lost
11: Conflict	61: Mechanism
12: Consequence	62: Mental
13: Constrain	63: Message
14: Control	64: Misfortune
15: Countdown	65: Move
16: Create	66: Mundane
17: Creature	67: Mysterious
18: Damage	68: Open
19: Danger	69: Pain
20: Deceive	70: Path
21: Decrease	71: Physical
22: Delay	72: Portal
23: Depletion	73: Possessions
24: Deprive	74: Postpone
25: Destruction	75: Power
26: Disrupt	76: Projectile
27: Divide	77: Punish
28: Drop	78: Release
29: Elements	79: Reveal
30: Enemies	80: Ruin
31: Energy	81: Scary
32: Environment	82: Setback
33: Escape	83: Simple
34: Explode	84: Stab
35: Expose	85: Start
36: Failure	86: Stop
37: Fall	87: Strange
38: Fear	88: Struggle
39: Fight	89: Suffering
40: Fire	90: Summon
41: Floor	91: Suppress
42: Frantic	92: Take
43: Free	93: Threaten
44: Free	94: Toxin
45: Frightening	95: Trigger
46: Harm	96: Trouble
47: Heavy	97: Violent
48: Helpless	98: Walls
49: Illness	99: Water
50: Illusion	100: Weapon



PUZZLE SOLUTION TABLE	
"IS THE PUZZLE SOLVED?"	RESULT
YES	Your solution was correct! Resolve the puzzle reward.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	Your solution was correct! Resolve two puzzle rewards.
NO	Your solution was incorrect. You can try again.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	Your solution was incorrect and you triggered a consequence.
RANDOM EVENT	The Event is related to the puzzle. Don't roll on the Event Focus Table, consider the puzzle as Context for the Event Focus.

## MEANING TABLES: ACTIONS

### ACTION 1

1: Abandon	21: Carry	41: Failure	61: Move	81: Return
2: Abuse	22: Celebrate	42: Fight	62: Neglect	82: Ruin
3: Activity	23: Change	43: Free	63: Negligence	83: Separate
4: Adjourn	24: Communicate	44: Gratify	64: Open	84: Spy
5: Adversity	25: Control	45: Guide	65: Oppose	85: Starting
6: Agree	26: Create	46: Haggle	66: Oppress	86: Stop
7: Ambush	27: Cruelty	47: Harm	67: Overindulge	87: Struggle
8: Antagonize	28: Debase	48: Heal	68: Overthrow	88: Suppress
9: Arrive	29: Deceive	49: Imitate	69: Passion	89: Take
10: Assist	30: Decrease	50: Imprison	70: Persecute	90: Transform
11: Attach	31: Delay	51: Increase	71: Postpone	91: Travel
12: Attainment	32: Desert	52: Inform	72: Praise	92: Trick
13: Attract	33: Develop	53: Inquire	73: Proceedings	93: Triumph
14: Befriend	34: Dispute	54: Inspect	74: Procrastinate	94: Truce
15: Bestow	35: Disrupt	55: Intolerance	75: Propose	95: Trust
16: Betray	36: Divide	56: Judge	76: Punish	96: Usurp
17: Block	37: Dominate	57: Kill	77: Pursue	97: Vengeance
18: Break	38: Excitement	58: Lie	78: Recruit	98: Violate
19: Care	39: Expose	59: Malice	79: Refuse	99: Waste
20: Carelessness	40: Extravagance	60: Mistrust	80: Release	100: Work

### ACTION 2

1: Adversities	21: Elements	41: Illusions	61: Nature	81: Reality
2: Advice	22: Emotions	42: Information	62: News	82: Representative
3: Allies	23: Enemies	43: Innocent	63: Normal	83: Riches
4: Ambush	24: Energy	44: Inside	64: Opposition	84: Rumor
5: Anger	25: Environment	45: Intellect	65: Opulence	85: Spirit
6: Animals	26: Evil	46: Intrigues	66: Outside	86: Stalemate
7: Art	27: Expectations	47: Investment	67: Pain	87: Success
8: Attention	28: Exterior	48: Jealousy	68: Path	88: Suffering
9: Balance	29: Extravagance	49: Joy	69: Peace	89: Tactics
10: Benefits	30: Failure	50: Leadership	70: Physical	90: Technology
11: Burden	31: Fame	51: Legal	71: Plans	91: Tension
12: Bureaucracy	32: Fears	52: Liberty	72: Pleasures	92: Travel
13: Business	33: Food	53: Lies	73: Plot	93: Trials
14: Competition	34: Friendship	54: Love	74: Portals	94: Vehicle
15: Conflict	35: Goals	55: Magic	75: Possessions	95: Victory
16: Danger	36: Good	56: Masses	76: Power	96: War
17: Death	37: Home	57: Messages	77: Prison	97: Weapons
18: Dispute	38: Hope	58: Military	78: Project	98: Weather
19: Disruption	39: Ideas	59: Misfortune	79: Public	99: Wishes
20: Dreams	40: Illness	60: Mundane	80: Randomness	100: Wounds



## MEANING TABLES: DESCRIPTIONS

### DESCRIPTOR 1

1: Abnormally	21: Curiously	41: Fully	61: Kookily	81: Peacefully
2: Adventurously	22: Daintily	42: Generously	62: Lazily	82: Perfectly
3: Aggressively	23: Dangerously	43: Gently	63: Lightly	83: Playfully
4: Angrily	24: Defiantly	44: Gladly	64: Loosely	84: Politely
5: Anxiously	25: Deliberately	45: Gracefully	65: Loudly	85: Positively
6: Awkwardly	26: Delightfully	46: Gratefully	66: Lovingly	86: Powerfully
7: Beautifully	27: Dimly	47: Happily	67: Loyally	87: Quaintly
8: Bleakly	28: Efficiently	48: Hastily	68: Majestically	88: Quarrelsomely
9: Boldly	29: Energetically	49: Healthily	69: Meaningfully	89: Quietly
10: Bravely	30: Enormously	50: Helpfully	70: Mechanically	90: Roughly
11: Busily	31: Enthusiastically	51: Helplessly	71: Miserably	91: Rudely
12: Calmly	32: Excitedly	52: Hopelessly	72: Mockingly	92: Ruthlessly
13: Carefully	33: Fearfully	53: Innocently	73: Mysteriously	93: Slowly
14: Carelessly	34: Ferociously	54: Intensely	74: Naturally	94: Softly
15: Cautiously	35: Fiercely	55: Interestingly	75: Neatly	95: Swiftly
16: Ceaselessly	36: Foolishly	56: Irritatingly	76: Nicely	96: Threateningly
17: Cheerfully	37: Fortunately	57: Jovially	77: Oddly	97: Very
18: Combatively	38: Frantically	58: Joyfully	78: Offensively	98: Violently
19: Coolly	39: Freely	59: Judgementally	79: Officially	99: Wildly
20: Crazy	40: Frighteningly	60: Kindly	80: Partially	100: Yieldingly

### DESCRIPTOR 2

1: Abandoned	21: Disagreeable	41: Good	61: Macabre	81: Remarkable
2: Abnormal	22: Disgusting	42: Graceful	62: Magnificent	82: Rotten
3: Amusing	23: Drab	43: Hard	63: Masculine	83: Rough
4: Ancient	24: Dry	44: Harsh	64: Mature	84: Ruined
5: Aromatic	25: Dull	45: Healthy	65: Messy	85: Rustic
6: Average	26: Empty	46: Heavy	66: Mighty	86: Scary
7: Beautiful	27: Enormous	47: Historical	67: Military	87: Simple
8: Bizarre	28: Exotic	48: Horrible	68: Modern	88: Small
9: Classy	29: Extravagant	49: Important	69: Mundane	89: Smelly
10: Clean	30: Faded	50: Interesting	70: Mysterious	90: Smooth
11: Cold	31: Familiar	51: Juvenile	71: Natural	91: Soft
12: Colorful	32: Fancy	52: Lacking	72: Nondescript	92: Strong
13: Creepy	33: Fat	53: Lame	73: Odd	93: Tranquil
14: Cute	34: Feeble	54: Large	74: Pale	94: Ugly
15: Damaged	35: Feminine	55: Lavish	75: Petite	95: Valuable
16: Dark	36: Festive	56: Lean	76: Poor	96: Warlike
17: Defeated	37: Flawless	57: Less	77: Powerful	97: Warm
18: Delicate	38: Fresh	58: Lethal	78: Quaint	98: Watery
19: Delightful	39: Full	59: Lonely	79: Rare	99: Weak
20: Dirty	40: Glorious	60: Lovely	80: Reassuring	100: Young







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