

TABLE PACK · NO. 1

THE WILDERNESS PACK

Seven tables for the road, the campfire, and the watch.

A free LIDM table pack · system-agnostic · 5e-compatible (SRD 5.1)

Seven tables for the road, the campfire, and the watch — for the nights when the journey goes quiet and four people are waiting for something to happen.

Travel is where games go to die. The party says “we head to the mountains,” you say “okay, three days later you arrive,” and three days of road just evaporated. Nobody decided anything. Nothing went wrong. The map got smaller and the session got shorter, and everyone felt it.

The fix isn’t more description. A paragraph about pine trees and birdsong doesn’t make a journey; it makes a slideshow. What makes a journey is the small thing that asks a question. A fire that won’t catch on the one night you needed it. A light moving through the trees that might be a lantern, or might not. A stranger on the road who’s a little too glad to see you. Each one is a fork. Each one hands the players a choice and hands you a scene you didn’t have to prep.

This pack is seven tables for that. Roll one when the road goes flat and you’ll have something true to say in the next five seconds — and most of the time, a decision waiting under it.

THE THESIS

A real person ran a lot of bad travel before writing these. The rule was simple: if a row was just weather and mood, it got cut, and one that hands the players a problem went in its place. Atmosphere is free. Decisions are the product.

Seven tables below: the day’s march, the watch, the camp that won’t settle, weather that does something, what the foragers turn up, the signs that something’s hunting you, and who you meet on the trail.



ON THE ROAD TODAY

Roll once a day on the march when the travel needs a beat — a thing seen, met, or found that isn't a fight, but isn't nothing either.

Most days on the road, nothing tries to kill you. That doesn’t mean nothing happens. Each row is a small event with a hook or a choice folded in: a reason to stop, a reason to hurry, or a reason to argue about it for ten minutes. Read the bold part; keep the dash for what’s really going on.

D20 ON THE ROAD TODAY...

- 1 **A wagon stopped dead in the road, ox still hitched, nobody on the bench** — the driver's tracks lead off into the brush and don't come back
- 2 **A milestone with the next town's name freshly chiseled out** — someone didn't want travelers finding it
- 3 **A child sitting alone at a crossroads, waiting** — "for the man who said he'd come back." That was a long time ago
- 4 **A field of cut flowers laid across the road, edge to edge** — a local sign that means *turn around*, if anyone in the party can read it
- 5 **A toll bridge with a fresh rope across it and no toll-keeper** — somebody's collecting, and they're watching to see who pays
- 6 **A line of people walking the other way, fast, none of them talking** — they won't say what's behind them, only that the party shouldn't go there
- 7 **A horse with no rider, lathered and spooked, dragging a broken rein** — its saddlebags are full and untouched
- 8 **A shrine at the roadside, offerings fresh, but every face on the idol scratched away** — locals still feed a god they're afraid to look at
- 9 **A tree hung with small carved tokens, one for every traveler who passed and didn't make it** — there's a blank one, already carved, no name yet
- 10 **A merchant whose cart threw a wheel, offering good coin for an escort to the next town** — he's lying about what's in the crates
- 11 **Smoke on the horizon, exactly where the party is headed** — a day's march off, and growing
- 12 **A dead campfire, still warm, with five bedrolls and only four sets of boot-tracks leaving** — the fifth set leads deeper in
- 13 **A surveyor measuring the road with a chain, marking trees** — someone's planning to build, or to charge, and the locals don't know yet
- 14 **A flock of birds that won't cross a certain stretch of road**, circling back every time — animals know the ground better than the map does
- 15 **An old soldier walking home, years late, who recognizes a party member's gear** — "Where'd you get that? I buried the man who carried it."
- 16 **A well-kept grave alone in a field, fresh flowers, miles from any home** — somebody walks a long way to tend it, and won't be glad of company
- 17 **A pack of dogs, well-fed and collarless, that fall in behind the party and won't be shooed off** — they're leading, not following
- 18 **A sign pointing to a town the party's map doesn't have** — the road to it is overgrown but recently walked
- 19 **A peddler selling water by the cup, cheap**, the day before the party hits the only dry stretch for forty miles — he knows the road, and what it costs
- 20 **Nothing, all day — and that's the thing.** No birds, no other travelers, no game. The kind of quiet the land goes when something bigger has moved through

ROLL TWICE AND COMBINE

For a day with weight: the first roll is what the party meets in the morning, the second is what's waiting at dusk — and the two are connected if you decide they are. (The people walking away fast, and the smoke on the horizon where the party's headed.)



WHAT YOU HEAR ON THE WATCH

Roll for the character standing watch when the camp's asleep and you want the night to lean in — some of it's real, some of it's nothing, and the player shouldn't know which.

The watch is the best horror tool in the game and most tables skip it. One person, awake, in the dark, with everyone else's lives on them. The trick is that not every roll is a threat — if every sound is a monster, the players stop being scared and start being bored. Mix the real in with the nothing so they can never relax. Read the bold part to the watcher; keep the dash for whether it's anything at all.

D20 ON YOUR WATCH, YOU NOTICE...

- 1 **A light, far off through the trees, that holds still** — a campfire, or a lantern someone's holding very steady, watching back
- 2 **The fire dies faster than it should**, like the dark's leaning on it — nothing's there; the wood was green, but the watcher doesn't know that
- 3 **Footsteps, slow, circling the camp just past the firelight** — and they stop the moment the watcher stands
- 4 **One of the horses staring at the same spot in the dark, ears flat, refusing to look away** — it's a fox; the horse is right to hate foxes
- 5 **A voice, low, from the trees, saying a sleeping party member's name** — once, then nothing. (Did they hear it, or dream the edge of sleep?)
- 6 **Every insect and frog goes silent at once** — something large is moving through, and the small things know before the watcher does
- 7 **A child crying, somewhere out past the dark** — there are no homes for miles; the thing that learned that sound is good at it
- 8 **Wet, dragging sounds, getting closer, then stopping at the treeline** — it's a deer caught in brush, panicking; or it isn't
- 9 **The smell of woodsmoke that isn't the camp's fire** — someone else is close, upwind, and didn't want to be found by light
- 10 **A shape standing at the edge of the firelight, perfectly still, that wasn't there a blink ago** — a stump, seen wrong in the dark. Probably
- 11 **Coins, or something like them, clinking softly somewhere in the dark** — a slow, patient sound, like someone counting
- 12 **The watcher's own breath fogging — on a warm night** — the cold's a few feet across and moving, or the watcher's just tired and spooked
- 13 **A bird calling that only calls at dawn**, hours early, from one direction — somebody's signaling, and somebody answers
- 14 **The bedrolls — there's one too many lumps by the fire** — a count comes up right; the watcher's nerves are wrong. This time
- 15 **A long, low sound rolling across the ground more than the air** — felt in the chest before the ears — far off, and big, and not in any bestiary the party owns
- 16 **Eyes at the treeline catching the firelight — low to the ground, paired, patient** — they blink out of sync, which means there's more than one set
- 17 **Singing, faint, beautiful, from the direction of the water** — and the watcher very much wants to walk toward it
- 18 **A branch snaps directly overhead** — nothing's in the tree when the watcher looks; the branch is on the ground in the morning, fresh-broken
- 19 **A traveler walks into camp out of the dark, hands up, asking to share the fire** — exhausted, harmless, and being followed by what the watcher's been hearing
- 20 **Dead, total quiet — and then the watcher realizes the night-sounds stopped a while ago and they only just noticed** — whatever silenced the woods has been here long enough to learn the camp's rhythm

QUICK KEY

Rows 2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14 are *nothing* — the wilderness playing tricks, so a paranoid party occasionally cries wolf. Rows 1, 6, 9, 13, 16, 19 are *something real and mundane-ish* — people, predators, a problem the party can act on. Rows 3, 5, 7, 11, 15, 17, 18, 20 run *wrong* — save those for the night you want the watch to wake the others. **Roll twice** to braid a false alarm into a real one: the deer in the brush (row 8), and then the smell of smoke that isn't theirs (row 9) — so the party relaxes a beat before they shouldn't.



THE CAMPFIRE SPUTTERS

Roll at camp when you want a small wrongness — not a threat yet, just the grit in the gears that puts the party on edge before anything's actually happened.

Big dangers announce themselves. Dread is built out of small things going slightly wrong: the fire that won't take, the food gone bad a day early, the dog that won't lie down. None of these will kill anyone. All of them make the players start watching the dark. Each row is a complication, a chore, or a tiny mystery — fuel for tension, or for a half-hour of paranoia over nothing.

D12 AT CAMP TONIGHT...

- 1 **The fire won't catch** — every time it's about to take, it gutters — the wood's fine, the night's dry; it just won't, and the party will have a cold, dark camp unless someone figures out why (they won't; sometimes the woods just say no)
- 2 **The day's rations have gone off** — all of them, at once, weeks early, smelling sweet and wrong — someone, or something, got to the food, or the heat in this part of the woods isn't natural
- 3 **A piece of gear is gone** — not lost, gone; the pack was closed. Pick something that'll hurt to miss: the rope, the tinderbox, one person's boots
- 4 **The dog (or horse, or mule) won't settle**, pacing the edge of camp, hackles up, staring out — it won't say at what, because it's a dog, but it's never been wrong before
- 5 **The water's turned** — drawn clear an hour ago, now it's cloudy and tastes of iron — the stream upstream has something in it the party will want to find before they refill
- 6 **Someone's boots are full of small stones in the morning** that weren't there at night — a prank, a warning, or the work of small hands while the camp slept
- 7 **The fire burns the wrong color for a few minutes** — green, or blue, or too white — from a log the party gathered without looking; what tree was that, and where did it grow
- 8 **Two party members each swear they took the same watch** — the timeline doesn't add up, and there's an hour nobody can account for
- 9 **Everything metal in camp has gone cold to the touch and stays cold** — blades, buckles, coin — and warms up the moment the sun clears the trees
- 10 **A circle of mushrooms has come up around the camp overnight** that wasn't there when they bedded down — locals would know to never have slept inside it
- 11 **The smoke from the fire won't rise** — it pools low and rolls along the ground, away, in one direction, against the wind — like it's being pulled toward something
- 12 **Everyone slept too well** — too deep, too long, no watch kept and nobody woke to keep it — and it's an hour past when they meant to be up, with the strong sense that something decided to let them live

ROLL TWICE AND COMBINE

When you want the camp to feel haunted without a monster in sight: a small theft (row 3) and the dog that won't settle (row 4) tell a story the party will write for themselves, and the story they invent will scare them worse than anything you'd have rolled. Let them. Don't explain it the same night.

WEATHER TURNS

Roll when the sky should do something that matters — not flavor, but weather that forces a choice or changes what's possible.

"It rains" is not an event. Weather earns its place when it makes the party decide something: push on or hole up, cross now or wait, keep the fire or keep hidden. Every row here comes with a cost and a fork. The bold is what the party sees coming; the dash is what it does to them.

D12 THE WEATHER TURNS...

- 1 **A downpour, fast and total** — the trail turns to a river of mud, tracks wash away, and the river ahead will be uncrossable by morning if they don't move now
- 2 **Fog so thick the party can't see the next one in line** — they travel at a crawl and roped together, or they stop and lose the day; and anything could be ten feet off the trail
- 3 **A heat that doesn't break after dark** — water runs short a day early, tempers go with it, and armor becomes a choice between protected and able to walk
- 4 **First snow, early and heavy** — the pass ahead closes within the day; cross it now in the storm, or turn back and add a week
- 5 **A dry, screaming wind that doesn't stop** — fires won't light, voices don't carry past arm's reach, and by the second day everyone's nerves are sanded raw
- 6 **A hard freeze overnight** — the waterskins burst, the ground rings like stone, and whatever was tracking the party can now be tracked right back across the frost
- 7 **A flash flood down a dry gully the party's camped in or crossing** — wall of water and debris, minutes of warning if someone's paying attention; grab what you can and climb
- 8 **Lightning, close and constant** — the highest thing on open ground gets hit, and the party's carrying the highest things: spears, mail, the iron-shod staff
- 9 **A warm spell mid-winter, the thaw** — the frozen river or lake the party meant to walk across goes rotten and treacherous; cross fast, cross slow, or go around
- 10 **Hail the size of fists** — no cover means real damage; the party has minutes to find some, and so does everything else out here
- 11 **A sky that goes wrong-colored and still before a storm** — every animal goes to ground; the party has perhaps an hour to do the same before something arrives that the locals have a name for
- 12 **A clear, perfect, windless day in country that's never clear** — the kind of calm that the people who live here pack up and leave for; the party won't know why until it ends

QUICK KEY

Rows 1, 2, 4, 7, 9 are *route* problems — the weather closes, opens, or blinds a way and the clock starts. Rows 3, 5, 6 are *attrition* — they grind resources and patience, good for the middle of a long haul. Rows 8, 10 are *immediate danger* — roll for cover. Rows 11, 12 are *omens* — the weather's the herald, not the threat; pair with whatever's coming.

WHAT THE FORAGER FINDS

Roll when someone hunts, fishes, gathers, or searches the ground for what the land will give up — useful, useless, or the first hint of what else lives here.

A foraging roll shouldn't just be "you find three days of food." The wilderness is a ledger of who came before and what's still out there, written in tracks, leavings, and the things people drop when they run. Mix the genuinely useful in with the ominous so a good roll might feed the party — or warn them. Read the bold; the dash is what it really means.

D20 THE FORAGER FINDS...

- 1 **A clean kill, fresh — a deer, most of it still there** — good meat for the taking, and the question of what brought it down and left this much
- 2 **A snare-line, professionally set, recently checked** — someone traps this ground and will notice their catch walking off
- 3 **A patch of good roots and greens, more than enough** — and the older, half-rotted remains of someone else's harvest, abandoned mid-dig
- 4 **A clear spring, cold and sweet** — with a cup left beside it, and a coin in the bottom, and the sense that the cup is meant to be used and refilled
- 5 **Fish, easy to take, the pool thick with them** — too easy; nothing's been eating them, and fish that nothing eats are usually telling you something
- 6 **A cache buried under a cairn — dried food, a knife, a sealed letter** — someone meant to come back for this and didn't
- 7 **A body, days old, no obvious wound** — coin still in the purse, pack still on the back; robbery wasn't it
- 8 **Berries, ripe and plentiful** — and identical to a kind that isn't; one party member knows the difference, or someone's rolling the dice on dinner
- 9 **Tracks of something big crossing a game trail**, the prints sunk deep and clawed — heading the same way the party is
- 10 **A beehive, heavy with honey** — and the climb to it, and the swarm, and the bear that's been working the same tree
- 11 **An old fire-pit, cold, ringed with stones**, and a small pile of clean-picked bones beside it — some of them aren't animal
- 12 **Edible mushrooms in good number** — among them a few of the kind that doesn't kill you but shows you things; can the forager tell them apart in a hurry
- 13 **A scrap of cloth on a thorn, then another, then another** — a trail someone left on purpose, leading off the path, to be followed by the right person
- 14 **A dry, sheltered hollow, perfect for camp** — already used, recently, the ash still soft; whoever it was may want it back tonight
- 15 **Game, plenty of it, and skittish** — they spook at nothing, bolt at shadows; something's been hunting them hard and lately
- 16 **A child's shoe, then nothing else** — no tracks, no signs, just the one small shoe, far from anywhere a child should be
- 17 **A salt lick or a mineral seep where animals gather** — reliable food if the party waits, but they won't be the only thing waiting for the animals
- 18 **A standing stone, old, with fresh offerings at its base** — fruit, a carved bird, a lock of hair — someone tends it, and tends it often
- 19 **Good water and good ground and not a single track or dropping anywhere** — game-rich country that the game refuses to enter; ask why
- 20 **Exactly what they were looking for, clean and plentiful** — and a clear set of bootprints standing where someone watched the forager work, then walked off

QUICK KEY

Rows 1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 17, 20 deliver something *useful* (with a string). Rows 2, 13, 14, 18 mean *people* are near. Rows 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 16, 19 are *warnings* — something hunts this ground. Rows 8, 12 carry a *risk roll*. **Roll twice and combine** for a find with a sting: a clean kill the party can eat (row 1) sitting right beside the big clawed tracks heading their way (row 9) — dinner, and the bill for it.



SIGNS OF WHAT HUNTS THESE WOODS

Roll to show the predator before the party ever meets it — tracks, kills, and territory-marks that say something dangerous is near, and let the dread do the work first.

The monster is scariest before it has a face. Show the party what it's done before they see what did it — the kill it left, the mark it makes, the way the woods change around it — and they'll build the threat bigger in their heads than any stat block. These are the breadcrumbs. Drop one or two on the approach; let the party put it together. The bold is what they find; the dash is what it tells you, the DM, about the thing.

D12 THE PARTY FINDS...

- 1 **A kill wedged high in the fork of a tree, half-eaten and stored** — it climbs, it's strong, and it's coming back for the rest
- 2 **Claw-marks gouged into the bark at a height no one in the party can reach** — fresh, sap still weeping; it stood here and marked its line, and the party's about to cross it
- 3 **A wide circle of woods gone silent and dead** — no birds, no insects, no small game, the plants yellowing — something living here has been here a long time, and nothing else can stand it
- 4 **Bones, picked clean and arranged** — not scattered the way a kill scatters, but set out, deliberate; something out here doesn't just eat, it keeps
- 5 **A game trail with every print on it heading one direction — away** — even the predators are fleeing whatever's behind the party now
- 6 **Scat, fresh, full of belt buckles, buttons, a tooth with a gold cap** — it's been eating people, and not long ago
- 7 **A tree shredded to splinters at the base**, ground torn up around it — not feeding, not marking; this was rage, or play, and the party can't tell which is worse
- 8 **A trail of blood that isn't the prey's** — the thing was hurt taking its last kill, which makes it hungry, and careless, and close
- 9 **The same three-toed track, everywhere, in a slow ring around the party's route** — it's not crossing their path; it's circling it, and the circle's getting tighter
- 10 **A nest or den, recently left, big enough to walk into** — lined with the gear of the things it's eaten, still warm
- 11 **Every animal the party has seen for a mile is the wrong color — pale, sun-starved, hiding** — they live in the cracks of something's territory, and they've learned to never be seen
- 12 **A warning, left by people — a wall of skulls, a painted boundary, a line of stakes** — locals marked how far the thing ranges, and the party just stepped over the line

ROLL TWICE AND COMBINE

To escalate across a day's travel: the silent dead woods in the morning (row 3), then the fresh claw-marks at noon (row 2), then the circling tracks at dusk (row 9). By the time the thing actually shows up, the players have already met it a dozen times in their own heads — which is exactly where you wanted it.

A STRANGER ON THE TRAIL

Roll when the party meets someone on the road and you need that someone to have a want, a story, and the chance of being something other than they appear.

The road is where strangers happen, and the best ones aren't simple. Every person here wants something, and some of them aren't people at all — they're something wearing the shape of a traveler because a traveler is easy to trust. Give the party the surface and the want; decide whether the twist is true before they pull on it. Read the bold; the dash is what's underneath, for you.

D20 ON THE TRAIL, THE PARTY MEETS...

- 1 **A peddler with a full cart and a wide smile** — wants company on a dangerous stretch, and is steering them toward where his partners wait
- 2 **A hermit who hasn't spoken to anyone in a year** — wants news of the world, and will trade real knowledge of these woods for an hour of conversation
- 3 **A family fleeing with what they can carry** — wants the party to turn back, won't say from what, only that "it took the Aldens whole"
- 4 **A wounded soldier, sole survivor of a patrol** — wants help carrying a warning to the next town; the warning is real, but he started the fight
- 5 **A pilgrim walking to a shrine, footsore and joyful** — wants nothing, gives a blessing, and is the only honest person the party meets for a week
- 6 **A hunter tracking a "wolf" that's killed too cleverly to be one** — wants an extra few blades, and is closer to the truth than he knows
- 7 **A pair of children, alone, well-spoken, too calm** — want to be escorted home; home is a long way off the road, and they're very insistent about the route
- 8 **A toll-taker at a rope across the road, official-looking** — wants coin for "passage and protection"; there's no authority out here that he answers to
- 9 **An old woman gathering herbs who knows the party's names** — wants nothing she'll admit to, and is right about one thing she has no way of knowing
- 10 **A merchant guard who's lost his caravan** — wants to attach to the party; he didn't lose the caravan so much as leave it, and they may come looking
- 11 **A traveling judge or tax-man with a small armed escort** — wants the party's papers, their business, and a reason not to be suspicious of armed strangers
- 12 **A minstrel who'll sing for supper** — wants a meal and an audience, and carries gossip from three towns the party's headed to
- 13 **A figure in a hooded cloak who won't show their face** — wants only to pass, says nothing, and is exactly as bad as it looks, or hiding something far more ordinary
- 14 **A man leading a string of empty horses** — wants to sell one cheap; they belonged to people who won't need them now, and he won't say how he came by them
- 15 **A frightened messenger riding hard** — wants the party to clear the road, carries a sealed letter, and is being chased by the people the letter's about
- 16 **A jovial group of "fellow travelers" inviting the party to share their fire** — want the party comfortable, fed, and asleep; count the bedrolls against the faces
- 17 **A scholar mapping the old roads** — wants a guide and protection, pays well, and is looking for the exact place the party should never take him
- 18 **A beggar at a crossroads who asks one strange question** — wants the right answer, and remembers everyone who gives the wrong one
- 19 **A trader who deals only in fair exchange and never coin** — wants something the party owns and offers something they need; the trade is honest and the cost shows up later
- 20 **Someone who looks exactly like a person one of the party knows is dead** — wants to be recognized, greets them warmly, and either it's a stranger with a common face, or it very much isn't

ROLL TWICE AND COMBINE

For a stranger with a second floor: the surface (the first roll) and the truth under it (the second). A “pilgrim walking to a shrine” who’s actually “leading a string of dead people’s horses” is a better scene than either alone — and the tell is in the gap between what they say and what they’re carrying. Drop the tell early, pay it off late, same as any good lie.



IF THIS IS USEFUL, THE REST IS TOO

The Wilderness Pack is yours, free, for as long as you’re subscribed. Print it, fold it into your screen, scrawl new rows in the margins.

If it earns a spot at your table, here’s what else lands in your inbox: **The Weekly One-Shot** — a complete, ready-to-run adventure every week. A villain with a reason. A real choice for the players. The boxed text written, the stat blocks sorted, the twist already built. Open it Thursday, run it Friday. That’s the paid tier, and it’s built on the same idea this pack is: that the quiet stretches of a game should be yours to fill on purpose, not to scramble through.

No pressure. The tables work either way. See you on the road.



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