

The Shadows of Redmark



House Rules

THE SHADOWS OF REDMARK HOUSE RULES

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The following rules include some resources in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* (XGE).

Tone

While we take the campaign seriously, the mood of play is more whimsical than some other campaigns, which allows us to laugh and blow off steam.

Low-Level

We believe the sweet spot for playing without incurring overly long combats is around levels 3 to 8 or maybe 10. These rules reflect this lower level focus.

Long-Term Play

We also enjoy long term campaigns with recurring NPCs and depth of character development. To support long term campaigns at lower levels, we have introduced incremental leveling.

Common Magic Items

To avoid high-powered magic items which can unbalance the game, we keep magic items somewhat limited in number and power. Many of the magic items acquired during game sessions will be of the mundane variety, such as:

- Common Magic Items (XGE p. 136)
- Custom Common Items (XGE p. 140)
- Consumable (often single-use) magic items

Magic Item Choice

To ensure each character has items balanced in level with their fellow party members, we award Treasure Points for players to buy their own magic items.

Moderated Riches

It's easy for characters to come into too much money and suddenly have no need to adventure. Custom rules help keep the money and treasure found to a reasonable level.

Death and Dying Rules

To better accommodate drama and story, death saves are made in private, players narrate flashbacks with each saving throw, dead characters revive to live on till the end of a session, and the GM and player should discuss if a dead character should be redeemed.

Nomination for Inspiration

The GM is a busy person and sometimes may forget to award Inspiration. To combat this, players should feel free to nominate others (or even themselves) for a point of inspiration, subject to the usual GM approval.

Returning to Home Base

In order to allow a narrative explanation about why characters aren't present or new characters arrive in any game session, at the end of each game session, characters end each game session in (or en route to) the city-state of Redmark. If exploring beyond Redmark, then establish a basecamp that serves the same purpose. When a PC isn't present during any given game session, they have remained at the home base or base camp or have gone for supplies or some other similar narrative reason.

Digital Records

Characters need to be maintained in a digital format and shared with the GM after each game. This can be using D&D Beyond (export your character as a PDF and upload to the drive), by maintaining a form-fillable character sheet, or keeping written records and uploading photos of your hand-written character sheet.

CUSTOM MECHANICS

Critical Hits

Critical hits are calculated as: **max damage dice and modifiers + extra roll. Modifiers aren't doubled.** This applies to enemies as well as player characters.

Hit Points

Take the higher of an HD roll or the average for the HD roll (rounded up) plus your CON modifier.

Identifying Magic Items

Magic items can only be determined using the *identify* spell. Then normal Attunement rules apply. Ignore the normal component cost for the use of the *identify* spell in this context.

Drinking Potions

Drinking a potion is a Bonus Action. Don't forget: enemies can also drink their potions just as quickly!

Zones

Sometimes the GM may opt to narrate combat instead of using a detailed battlemat. In these cases, players should ask questions and trust the GM to adjudicate questions about range and positioning. If you are using zone rules, they supersede normal movement rules.

The GM can sketch out zones, a rough shape that marks an area of combat. This area might be a single room, a section of a forest, or other abstract location.

Movement when using zones has a few special rules.

Normal Move: Creatures can move freely within a zone or move to an adjacent zone during their turn as part of their normal move action.

Running: Running will allow you to move either two zones, or move out of melee and then move to an adjacent zone.

Melee Status: Creatures are either in melee or out of melee within a given zone. If you're in melee, the rules assume you're always moving and you can be adjacent to any creature also in the melee you like.

Moving Into and Out of Melee: Creatures can use their move action to move into melee, or out of melee, but cannot then move to an adjacent zone unless they use a run action. Moving out of melee prompts an opportunity attack unless you use the disengage action.

Hiding: Characters who wish to hide can generally find cover assuming there are objects in the area.

Area Attacks: When a spell calls for a specific area of effect such as a cone or cube, the GM will make a judgment call on which targets are likely affected, erring on the side of benefiting the players. If in doubt, roll dice to determine the number of targets affected.

Range to Zone Mapping: Zones are a more abstract way of measuring things, generally the size of a room or area of combat. The table below gives a rule of thumb for how to convert traditional units of measurement to zones. With ranged attacks, consult the zones chart to determine the range difficulty.

RANGE (1"=5')	ZONE
<= 1" (or <= 5')	Melee (Adjacent)
3" (or 15')	This Zone
6" (or 30')	1 Zone Away
12" (or 60')	2 Zones Away
24" (or 120')	3 Zones Away
48" (or 240')	4 Zones Away
72" (or 360')	5 Zones Away
96" (or 480')	6 Zones Away
200"+ (1000'+)	7 Zones Away

Optional Rule — Hitting the Most Damaged Opponent: Creatures in melee always attack the most damaged opponent in that zone's melee. Likewise, ranged characters always attack the most damaged opponent.

Optional Rule — NPC Targeting: NPCs or monsters on the other hand split their attacks evenly between PCs, unless it makes sense to concentrate their attack. If in doubt, the GM can determine targets randomly.

TIERS OF PLAY

Play is organized by level in four tiers which match the tiers of D&D Adventurers' League organized play.

TIER	LEVEL RANGE
1	1-4
2	6-10
3	11-16
4	17-20

ADVANCEMENT

Incremental Leveling

Incremental leveling allows you to take portions of your upcoming classes level benefits early, and thereby get smaller portions of your level more often rather than go for prolonged periods of time without leveling benefits. Once you reach a level, you have six increments which eventually lead to you reaching the full benefits of the next level.

Level increments are awarded according to the GM's discretion. In our Shadows of Redmark campaign, this is **about once every 1 or 2 game sessions**.

All players take the same incremental advances at the same time in this order:

1. Half Your Level's HP
2. Downtime (No Lifestyle Costs)
3. Eight Treasure Points
4. Full Level's HP
5. Downtime (No Lifestyle Costs)
6. Full level-up

1. Half Your Level's HP

Start at 1st level with maximum HP allowed. Thereafter, take the higher of an HD roll or the average for the HD roll (rounded up) plus your CON modifier. This is the full HP you'll eventually get for this level. Record this. **Take half of these hit points (rounded up) now**, and the rest when you gain your Full HP.

2. Downtime (No Lifestyle Costs)

You receive ten downtime days. Unlike normal downtime, downtime awarded as a level increment doesn't incur lifestyle costs. Free downtime like this represents a lucky break where you come into a bit of money and free time and finally have time to achieve some personal pursuits.

Use the rules described by "Downtime Activities" (XGE p. 125-134). These downtime activities supersede those listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Downtime awarded as an incremental leveling reward are in addition to any normal downtime activities your GM may allow before, during, or after a session.

The allowed XGE downtime activities are:

- Buying a Magic Item
- Carousing
- Crafting an Item
- Crime
- Gambling
- Pit Fighting
- Relaxation
- Religious Service
- Research
- Scribing a Spell Scroll
- Selling a Magic Item
- Training
- Work

Note that many downtime activities require a certain amount of money; the scarcity of money needed can spawn player-driving quests to achieve the necessary cash.

Here are the costs typically associated with some downtime activities:

- **Buying a Magic Item** — Common Items are 1d6+1x10 gp and uncommon items are 1d6 x 100gp

- **Carousing** — 10 gp for low class, 50 gp for middle-class, 250 gp for nobility
- **Crime** — 25 gp for information gathering, 25 gp fine if caught
- **Gambling** — 10 gp for the lowest stake you can set (up to 1,000 gp)
- **Research** — 50 gp (each +1 costs 100 gp, up to +6)
- **Scribing a Spell Scroll** — Cantrip 15 gp, 1st Level spell 25 gp, 2nd Level spell 250 gp

Most other activities don't have a cost.

In addition to the above, here are two new downtime activities.

Inspirational Interludes

When you roleplay an Inspirational Interlude during downtime, you roleplay a quick scene that reveals something about your character's past. **An Inspirational Interlude costs 10 working days of downtime and automatically grants one banked Inspiration.** Banked Inspiration does not expire at the end of the session and does not count against the normal one-Inspiration limit.

During the Interlude, the player speaks in the voice of their character, perhaps talking to the character's companions near a campfire or over a tankard of ale. Other player characters are free to participate as the player weaves a tale of their past.

Choose from one of the following topics:

Desire: Describe something your character wants (or perhaps already has). Is this a legendary magic item, fame, or perhaps revenge?

Foe: What unknown enemy has kept you awake at night? Are they still at large and plotting against you, or did you vanquish them in years past?

Love: Wax eloquent about a love interest. Was your love forbidden? Is the lover alive? Does your love interest even know you exist?

Tragedy: What misfortune haunts your past? Was a family member killed? Did you lose something previous such as an estate or prized family artifact?

Victory: Describe some great achievement or triumph from your character's past. What impact did this event have on your character's life? Was there some catch or drawback from making this accomplishment?

Treasure Quest

When you undertake a Treasure Quest during downtime, you roleplay a quick, single scene and roll a die to determine the outcome. Succeed and gain treasure; fail and you gain a foe. Treasure Quests cost 10 working days of downtime.

Both player and GM can work together to set up a single scene featuring only that character that makes sense. The players or GM make up a bit of backstory of what the PC did to lead up to this scene. The GM then describes the scene which begins at a climactic moment. This threat (often an NPC in a local city) opposes the character and will interfere with the character's objective. The player describes the uber-amazing thing they're doing to attempt success. A random number from 1 to 6 will determine your character's fate.

Example: The player's character Hilgurd has entered the city catacombs below the city on a tip there is a treasure hidden beneath the sarcophagus of St. Yulug. The hero arrives only to find a sinister member of the Thieves' Guild named Chopa had the same tip and arrives just as the hero is retrieving the treasure from its cache.

Roll a D6 to determine the outcome (there are no modifiers and no other characters will be present to assist).

1. A foe prevails and prevents you from acquiring treasure. Your foe (or their ally) will continue to plot against you in the weeks to come.

2-5. You receive a potion or scroll of your choice from Table A.

6. Your reward is greater than anticipated; you receive a potion or scroll of your choice from Table B.

Example: Hilgurd fights his foe for the fate of the treasure. The player rolls a 1. The Thieves' Guild opponent Chopa manages to steal the treasure and escape before Hilgurd can thwart a retreat. During a future downtime, Hilgurd again encounters Chopa, this time in a museum where they each attempt to steal a relic. The player rolls a 4. Hilgurd steals the treasure first, receives 4 Treasure Points, Chopa arrives to find an empty pedestal where the relic once lay.

Other Downtime Activities (From Adventurer's League)

Spellcasting Services. "You can spend a downtime day to have an NPC cast a spell for you. Alternatively, you can use this downtime activity

to cast a spell yourself or benefit from a spell cast by another character that is at the same table as you without the need for resources such as spell slots, etc. The DM alone has ultimate discretion on whether use of downtime is feasible during the session (i.e., there are multiple days of inactivity that make it an option)."

Copying Spells. "Characters copying spells into a spellbook must use this downtime activity. You spend up to 8 hours copying spells into your spellbook and/or making their spellbook available for other characters to copy from for each downtime day you spend. Characters playing the same adventure together can "trade" spells with each other using this activity. Each wizard has their own "language" used for scribing spells and can't benefit from the Help action when scribing—even if assisted by other wizards."

Brewing Potions of Healing (XGE). "Brewing potions of healing requires the use of an herbalism kit."

Scribing Scrolls (XGE). "You must know or be able to prepare a spell before you can scribe it to a spell scroll. This cost is in addition to the spell's component cost."

3. Eight Treasure Points

In addition to whatever treasure you manage to acquire during the course of adventuring, as a level increment, you receive **eight treasure points you can use to buy the magic item of your choice.** Treasure points represent the between-sessions adventuring and negotiation you use to find, loot, or buy items.

You can spend these treasure points as soon as you resolve the downtime, or save them to buy future, more expensive magic items.

Spending Treasure Points

There are two categories of magical items that you can purchase with treasure points. Evergreen magical items are items always available to purchase in bigger cities. Unlocked magical items are items which are more esoteric and as such, only one player character may purchase such an item. Once the item is purchased by a player character, it becomes locked and no longer available. The GM is always free to unlock the item again (or add brand new items to the unlocked list never unlocked before) at a later date based on the campaign progression and player interest.

If two player characters want to purchase the same unlocked magic item, have the players roll dice to see who gets it first. Alternatively, it becomes a roleplaying moment. The GM should establish a scene where both characters have an opportunity to get the item and then roleplay out the scene to see which character gets their wish.

Evergreen Magical Items

Purchase	Treasure Points Cost	Rarity	Magical Item Table	Tier
Bag of Holding	8	Uncommon	A	1-4
Potion of Greater Healing	8	Uncommon	A	1-4
Spell Scroll (cantrip-2nd)	8	Common	A	1-4
Spell Scroll (3rd)	8	Uncommon	B	1-4
Rod of the Pact Keeper +1	16	Uncommon	F	1-4
Shield +1	16	Uncommon	F	1-4
Wand of the War Mage +1	16	Uncommon	F	1-4
Weapon +1	16	Uncommon	F	1-4
Chain Mail +1	20	Rare	G	2-4
Chain Shirt +1	20	Rare	G	2-4
Leather +1	20	Rare	G	2-4
Potion of Superior Healing	8	Rare	C	1-4
Scale Mail +1	20	Rare	G	2-4
Spell Scroll (4th-5th)	8	Rare	C	1-4
Rod of the Pact Keeper +2	20	Rare	G	2-4
Shield +2	20	Rare	G	2-4
Wand of the War Mage +2	20	Rare	G	2-4
Weapon +2	20	Rare	G	2-4

Potion of Supreme Healing	16	Very Rare	D	2-4
Spell Scroll (6th-8th)	16	Very Rare	D	2-4

Unlocked Magical Items (1 Per Party)

Purchase	Treasure Points Cost	Rarity	Magical Item Table	Tier
Eyes of Minute Seeing	8	Uncommon	C	1-4
Cloak of Elvenkind	16	Uncommon	F	1-4
Slippers of Spider Climbing	16	Uncommon	F	1-4
Chime of Opening	8	Rare	C	1-4
Portable Hole	16	Rare	D	2-4
Cape of the Mountebank	20	Rare	G	2-4

4. Full Level's HP

Receive your remaining HP for this level.

5. Downtime (No Lifestyle Costs)

As you did in increment 2, you earn 10 downtime days and don't pay lifestyle costs during this downtime.

6. Full level-up

Receive any remaining class features, spells, and other benefits for the level which you haven't already received.

Progression Approach

Beginner's Luck Rule

In order to both allow players to experience all the normal early levels, but also allow you to quickly become competent and not as easy to kill, level your character up using the following Beginner's Luck rule.

Your character **starts at Level 1, moves up to Level 2 at the midpoint of your first session, and then advances to Level 3 at the end of your first session.**

Leveling during your first game session uses the normal full level-up approach and doesn't use incremental leveling. After the 1st session, you begin your next session at Level 3 and level up incrementally thereafter.

Advancement Summary

If you start with the Beginner's Luck rule and receive at least an incremental level every game session, these rules would allow you at least 43 game sessions of play before you reached 10th level.

LEVEL	TIME AS THIS LEVEL	LEVEL INCREMENTS
Level 1	About 2 hours	0
Level 2	About 2 hours	0
Level 3	GM's Discretion	0
Level 4	GM's Discretion	6
Level 5	GM's Discretion	6
Level 6	GM's Discretion	6
Level 7	GM's Discretion	6
Level 8	GM's Discretion	6
Level 9	GM's Discretion	6
Level 10	GM's Discretion	6

Actual time to reach level 10 might be 50 or 60 games if the GM awards an advancement about every one or two sessions.

HOW OFTEN YOU INCREMENTALLY LEVEL	GAME SESSIONS TO REACH LEVEL 10
Every Session	43
Every Two Sessions	85
Every Three Sessions	127

DEATH SAVES, DYING, AND NEW CHARACTERS

Death Saves Made in Private

Usual D&D rules; except the player must roll in private & cannot announce the results of the rolls (the other players at the table won't know your death save status).

Death Saves Flashbacks

For each death save roll, the player should describe a memory that flashes before their eyes.

Mortal Wounds

Once you die (whether by failed saving throws or some other means), your character is marked for death and you'll cross the threshold soon. The GM will tell you when. Generally your character will stabilize and become conscious but with a mortal wound that cannot be healed, even by magic. The GM may allow you to play your character until the end of that game session or whenever your GM determines makes the best narrative sense, with no chance of resurrection.

New Characters and Redeemed Characters

If your character dies, or if a player wants to switch to a new character, the new character starts at the same character level as all other players in the party. Having a will made out beforehand may mean the new character is a friend or family member who inherits their valuables.

But death isn't necessarily final. When a player character dies, the GM and player should have a conversation and decide if the player wants to redeem their character. Here are some examples of ways a dead character can be redeemed and return to the campaign:

- 1. You can take the body and pay to have a high level cleric cast Raise Dead.
- 2. The character's soul can make a deal with a god when they get to the Astral Plane.
- 3. You can have the evil villain raise them from the dead to be their servant until their friends rescue them.

Don't let the death rules limit you. This game is about the imagination and telling great stories. Redeemed characters can make for great stories! The player can potentially play an NPC or temporary character until their old character returns.

MONEY AND EXPENSES

Target Gold Awards Per Level

In order to reward characters with enough money to purchase essentials and pursue most downtime activities, but at a level that keeps the characters needy and not rich enough to forsake adventuring, consider the following gold reward guidelines.

Target Gold Awards

TIER	MAX GP AWARDED PER CHARACTER PER LEVEL
1	80 gp
2	240 gp
3	1,600 gp
4	6,000 gp

Expenses

Paying the rent and having enough money for food matters, so we track lifestyle costs. See below for a cost guideline. Note that living a Modest or higher lifestyle costs more but will grant you more influential contacts.

Lifestyle Expenses from PHB

LIFESTYLE	PRICE/DAY
Wretched	—

Squalid	1 sp
Poor	2 sp
Modest	1 gp
Comfortable	2 gp
Wealthy	4 gp
Aristocratic	10 gp minimum

Squandered Money

Part of what drives the need for characters to adventure at lower levels is scarcity of money. Generally, characters are kept poor and always one step away from eviction or other financial disaster.

Occasionally, if the players are getting too wealthy, **each character gets one point of banked Inspiration if someone in the party describes how the party squandered away their wealth** (excluding magic items, unique weapons, and money enough for half of the rent due). This could be due to bad investments, carousing, or other mishap. Banked Inspiration does not expire at the end of the session and does not count against the normal one-Inspiration limit.

CHANGE LOG

In the 1.3 version the following things changed:

1. Added Zone rules
2. Remove the generic Magic Item table (it implied you could buy anything from any of the tables, which conflicted with the more specific listing of the later table).
3. Removed the Players Choice progression option
4. Made the Beginners Luck rule the default rule

In the 1.2 version the following things changed:

5. Removed references to multiple GMs
6. Added Normal advancement chart (previously it was only a Beginner's Luck chart).
7. Added Basecamp option to returning to Home Base
8. Added Death Saves Flashbacks
9. Added more details on New Characters
10. Added section on Redeemed characters

In the 1.1 version the following things changed:

1. Added descriptions for Sequential and Player's Choice Progression options.
2. Added a 'Spending Treasure Points' with D&D Adventurer's League style Evergreen and Unlocked magic item tables.
3. Converted 'Level Requirement' range to Organized Play style 'Tiers' to reduce confusion.
4. Reorganized the content to make better sense.