

## Example Play Session

If you're an experienced player of role-playing games, this section will largely be moot for you, as you've already established a preferred playstyle and know what to expect. If you're new to role-playing, or if you are interested in seeing perhaps a different style or looking for something new, then you may find the following useful, as it helps identify the roles of the players and the GM, and how a typical quick session may progress.

### Participants:

**Mark**, playing the elven wizard Anders (he/him).

Anders spent his entire life holed up in a local hedge wizard's abode learning magic. Anxious to establish himself, he has left the hedge wizard and is looking to find lost magic.

**Alex**, playing the human fighter Faridah (they/them). Faridah was part of a small pirate hunting group, but had their ship destroyed in a battle with pirates and found themselves washed up on the shore. They made their way to the closest settlement, Granite Keep, hoping to recover and find another group to join for adventure.

**Juan**, playing the dwarven thief Ravengarde (she/her). Ravengarde grew up a street urchin, always just a step ahead of the local law enforcement. However, the noose is tightening, and she's looking for a way to get out of the keep.

**Sarah**, playing the Game Master (she/her). While she has played the game quite a bit and is experienced, the rest of the players are pretty new to the game. However, they are excited, which is the most important thing to be.

Sarah: OK, to flesh out your backstories a bit, you all are standing outside of the impressive fortress, Granite Keep. The day prior, the castellan Lorn Almar called for adventurers to find out why giant ants seem to be randomly attacking travelers along the Keep's Road. Additionally, there hasn't been word from the woodcutter's camp in more than two weeks, which is unusual. All of you have agreed to take on this task for your own reasons.

Anders, one thing stood out as odd to you. Normally ants, even giant ones, don't attack caravans and travelers. One of the survivors made comments about how there seemed to be a sickly fungus growing

on the ants' carapaces, which is most definitely unusual. You suspect something magical may be at hand.

Mark: Interesting...

Sarah: So now here you all are, standing outside the keep, geared up with supplies and ready to head out. As has been the situation every day for the past month, the sky is overcast and a cold drizzle constantly falls. The road is a muddy quagmire, and you can see how many wagons have carved ruts along either side of the road, hoping for firmer ground. You pull your cloaks tighter and begin your journey. Where to?

Alex: Faridah says, "I've never been one to doddle and stand idle, so let's be off! Which direction did they say the ants came from?"

Juan: I believe they said from the east. Let's head east and see if we can find anything unusual.

Sarah: You slowly make your way along the road east. The drizzle begins to seep into your clothing, and you all feel the uncomfortable chill reach your bones. After only an hour or two, you are second guessing your decision. The warmth of the fire in the inn sure seems appealing right about now. As you are beginning to have doubts, you spot a pile of something in the distance, just off of the road.

Mark: Be wary, we don't know what we're dealing with.

Alex: Humfft. Faridah draws their cutlass and walks up to the pile, showing no fear. But still being cautious of course.

Sarah, smiling: Of course...

Sarah: As you get closer, you see that it's a body. But a body that has been torn apart, missing both legs and one arm.

Alex: Ugh! Gross.

Sarah: But that's not all. You also see what appears to be the remains of a giant ant, about the size of a dog. A sickly green fungus grows all over its body.

Mark: That's highly unusual. Normally ants would

not kill and just leave their prey there. They would dismember it and bring it back to the mound. Is there anything else?

Sarah: What is Anders doing?

Mark: Anders will approach and study the ant and fungus.

Juan: And Ravengarde will search the area, looking for other clues.

Sarah: Anders is pretty sure that the fungus is definitely not natural, but something magical. Ravengarde, make a perception check.

Juan: Can you remind me what that is again?

Sarah: Sure. Roll a d20. If it's at or below your wisdom score, then it's a success. (Sarah knows that there is an ant trail in the area, and since it's fairly easy to detect, any ability check would be made at a +5 bonus, but the players don't know this yet).

Juan, rolling a d20: I got a 9. Ravengarde's wisdom is 11, so I beat it by two.

Sarah: (with the +5 bonus, she actually succeeded by 7). You easily discover a trail of beaten down grass leading to the north off the road. It looks like something was dragged, and even with the rain, you can see traces of blood on the blades of grass.

Alex: Great job Ravengarde! Let's follow the trail. Be alert! Ravengarde, since you are best at spotting things, like trails or traps, why don't you take the lead, Anders, you stay in the middle for protection, and I'll pull rear guard.

Mark: Sounds like a plan to me.

Juan: Ok, but I'll be about 30 yards up ahead, and will try to be stealthy while we follow the trail.

Sarah: Go ahead and make a stealth check now. It's a dexterity check.

Juan, rolls a d20: Sigh...I got a 16—not very good, and my dexterity is a 15 but I do have a +2 bonus for being a thief, so I succeeded it by 1.

Sarah: To the best of your guess, Ravengarde, you think you're being stealthy. (Sarah knows that some monsters may have an ability to better detect creatures, so Ravengarde might be stealthy and might be detected, depending on what creatures she encounters. Sarah knows Anders has a wisdom of 11, and Faridah has a wisdom of 10, so neither has a bonus to perception and Ravengarde's success of 1 is still a success). Faridah and Anders both lose sight of you as you disappear into the tall grass.

Mark: How can we keep our 30 yard distance if we can't see you?

Juan, to Sarah: Can I make occasional flicks or clicks that they can see while still being hidden from everyone else?

Sarah: Sure, since they are actively looking for you and know you're there somewhere, that makes sense to me that you can do that. After about an hour following the trail, you all hear a howl in the distance. Sounds like a wolf howl.

Mark: How close?

Sarah: Very close. Ravengarde, make another stealth check for me please. (Sarah knows that the wolves have extra senses to detect creatures, so he will secretly impose a -5 penalty to Sarah's roll.)

Juan, rolling a d20: A 5! Woot! That's way better. I succeeded by...well...a lot lol! 12 to be exact, if that matters.

Sarah: (Knowing that even with the penalty, she still remains hidden from the wolves). Doesn't appear to matter in this case lol. Ravengarde suddenly sees two wolves bursting through the tall grass just to the right of her, but they seem to not notice her and leap right past, headed for Anders and Faridah.

Juan: Can I take a swipe at them as they run past?

Sarah: Let's have everyone roll initiative first. And if your side goes first, then sure. Juan, are you rolling for your side? Roll a d20 and apply your initiative modifier.

Alex: Yeah, Ravengarde will roll for our side, as she has the highest dexterity.

Juan, rolling a d20: I got a 13, plus 1 for my dexterity modifier, so we go on a 14.

Sarah: Well, I got a 7, so you get to go first, and yes, you can get a swipe in as they run past Sarah.

Juan: Alright! And since I'm hidden, that means I get a +4 bonus to my attack, and since I'm a thief, if I hit, I do double damage, right?

Sarah: Yep

Juan, rolling the d20: I rolled an 11, +4 for surprise, +1 for my base attack bonus, for a total of 16.

Sarah: That's more than enough to hit the wolf. Roll for damage.

Juan, rolling a d6 for her short sword: I got a 4. Doubled that becomes 8 points of damage.

Sarah, looking a bit disappointed as the wolf only had 7 hit points: Well then. As the wolf dashes past you, you bring your sword in a wide arc, biting deep into the wolf's side, cutting its belly completely open. It stumbles a few times before settling on the ground in a heap.

Mark: Woot!

Juan: That's how we do it back home lol!

Sarah: Fine, fine, but there's still one more left. Anders and Faridah, what are you doing?



Alex: Well, I'm gonna run forward in front of Anders and try to intercept the wolf.

Sarah: As of now, you can use your action to move all the way up to the wolf as it's currently about 50 feet away, but you wouldn't be able to attack. Otherwise you can move 20 feet to be in front of Anders and not lose your action.

Alex: OK, then I'll move in front of Anders, and then dodge.

Mark: I will use my action to try to throw a dagger at the wolf. (Rolls the d20, getting a 5. Mark adds 1 for his high dexterity). I'm guessing a 6 still misses?

Sarah: Yep (the wolves have an AC of 12). Now it's the wolf's turn. Faridah has placed herself as the closest target, and the wolf will take advantage of that, leaping at you with snarling and snapping teeth. (Juan rolls the d20, getting a 17. The wolf has 1 HD, which gives it no extra bonus to hit). Does a 17 hit you?

Alex, sighing: Yeah. My AC is 16 with the dodge, so that still hits me.

Sarah: The wolf's teeth penetrate the leather, sinking deep within your thigh. You take (rolls 1d6 for damage and gets a 3) 3 points of damage.

Alex: Ouch. I'm still looking good with 8 HP left, but not happy.

Sarah: Ok, it's your turn again.

Mark: Let me go first this time, if you all don't mind. (The other players agree). OK Sarah, I'm gonna summon my magical energies, forming a glowing shard of energy in which I point towards the wolf. (Mark is casting magic missile as he envisions it, and rolls 1d4+1 for damage). The shard streaks forth and inflicts 4 points of damage.

Sarah: The wolf loosens its grip on Faridah in a yelp of pain, but is still alive and kicking. Well, biting at any rate.

Alex: Not for long. Time to get my revenge. (Alex rolls the d20 and gets a 14, adds +1 for strength, and

another +1 for being a first level fighter). I got a 16? That hits, right?

Sarah: Alas, yes.

Alex: I drive my cutlass downward into the wolf, doing (rolls a d8 and adds +1 for strength) 7 points of damage!

Sarah: The blade cuts through the spine of the wolf, dropping it instantly lifeless to the ground.

Juan: I look around. Any more wolves?

Sarah: There doesn't appear to be any. The waning light of the day, already dim due to the thick dark cloud cover, reveals nothing but silence and your own heavy breathing.

Alex: I bind my wound. Don't need an infection.

Mark: Are you hurt badly? Do we need to go back to Granite Keep?

Alex: Nah, I'm fine. Faridah has survived much worse. Tis but a scratch!

\*\*\*\*\**skip forward to the party discovering the giant ant mounds*\*\*\*\*\*

Sarah: Lying ahead of you in a clearing is a giant mound of dirt more than 20 feet wide and 6 feet tall. You can see a worn trail leading up to the mound.

Juan: Ravengarde will cautiously approach the mound.

Sarah: You can see that at the top of the mound is a large hole descending fairly steeply into darkness. You see nothing with your dwarven vision except the floor 20 feet below, and you hear nothing.

Mark: Let's be extra careful here. Can we climb down?

Sarah: You can certainly try. The ground is soft and a bit loose, but you think it's possible to do so.

Alex: No worries at all! Faridah draws their cutlass and tries to climb down.

Mark: I'll follow.

Juan: As will I.

Sarah: I need to you all to make a climbing check. That's a strength or dexterity check, your choice.

Alex: I'll use strength. And I got a 5, so I succeed easily.

Mark: Dexterity for me. Ugh. I got a 17. I failed.

Sarah: Ouch. Anders slips and falls in the loose dirt, falling downward and landing on the dirt floor below. Luckily the dirt is pretty soft, so you only suffer (rolls a d6) 2 points of damage.

Mark: Ugh! As a wizard, that's half of my hit points!

Juan: I will use dexterity. And I get a +2 bonus for being a thief. I rolled a 15, but that's still a success.

Sarah: You all are now in a dark natural chamber. There is no sound, but those of you with special vision can see a tunnel leading to the north.

Alex: I don't have infravision, so I will need a torch. Faridah will light one. (The other two players grumble and mumble something about the inferiority of humans).

Sarah: With a lit torch, the small chamber is fully illuminated and your light streams down the tunnel. The air is very musty, almost rotten like compost, but it is breathable.

Juan: OK Faridah, you have the torch, so stay back far enough for me to sneak and not have my vision messed up by your torchlight. I rolled a 13 for stealth, which succeeds by 4. I'll move forward and scout ahead.

Sarah: Noted. (Sarah knows that ants have a special ability to sense vibrations, so they would effectively impose a -5 penalty to Ravengarde's stealth check). As you sneak ahead, you come to a four way branch. These tunnels are approximate 5ft wide by 5ft high, and somewhat circular.

Juan: I'll go right. Always go right, when in doubt.

Sarah: You take the right passage, and after winding for about 60 feet or so, opens into a large chamber. Along the far wall are stacks of organic garbage, including vegetable matter and unidentified animal parts; possibly human as well.

Juan: Gross!

Sarah: Tending to the decomposing heap are three giant ants, each more than three feet long. They are covered with patches of slightly glowing green fungi. As you enter the room, they seem alerted to your presence. (With the -5 penalty, Ravengarde's check would have failed against them). Roll for initiative everyone! (Sarah rolls the d20 and gets a 9).

Juan rolls initiative and gets a 15.

Sara: You win again. What are you doing?

Juan: They see me for sure?

Sarah: Appears that way. Before we start, Anders, make an intelligence check.

Mark rolls the d20: I got a 9, well below my intelligence of 15.

Sarah: Nice success. You seem to recall that many natural creatures are afraid of fire.

Mark: Faridah! Use your torch and get up here!

Alex: It's our turn, so that's exactly what I'm doing. I'm moving up to Sarah and will use my action to dodge in case they get close.

Juan: While Faridah does that, I'm gonna throw my dagger at one. I rolled a 15, does it hit? (Sarah says it does). I do 3 points of damage to the first ant (Sarah notes that down).

Mark: I'm going to move forward behind them, peek around them and cast my magic missile shard at the wounded one. 5 points of damage. Max roll, oh yeah!

Sarah: The magical shard blasts through the ant (as it only had 2 HP left). (Juan looks at the ant's stat block and sees that they are afraid of fire unless they make a wisdom check, and they have a wisdom of 7. She rolls for each of the remaining two ants, getting a 3 and an 18). One of the ants seems fearful of the flames and refuses to come near you, Faridah. The other one seems driven by a blind rage and attacks Ravengarde! (Juan rolls the d20 and gets a 15, which hits Ravengarde. He then rolls for damage and gets a 7). The iron-like mandibles rip into your side for 7 points of damage!

Juan: No! I only had 6 HP. That drops me!

Alex: Wait, what? Ravengarde is down?

Sarah: Yes, and there's two ants here with you.

Will the party survive the encounter? Or will they all perish? What happens to poor Ravengarde? If the party survives will they bring her body back to Granite Keep and spend the large amount of coin needed to bring her back? Or will Juan roll up a new character? Who really knows...

