Siege Tower

Gargantuan object

Armor Class: 15
Hit Points: 200
Damage Immunities: poison, psychic

A siege tower is a mobile wooden structure with a beam frame and slats in its walls. Large wooden wheels or rollers allow the tower to be pushed or pulled by soldiers or beasts of burden. Medium or smaller creatures can use the siege tower to reach the top of walls up to 40 feet high. A creature in the tower has total cover from attacks outside the tower.

Trebuchet

Huge object

Armor Class: 15
Hit Points: 150
Damage Immunities: poison, psychic

A trebuchet is a powerful catapult that throws its payload in a high arc, so it can hit targets behind cover. Before the trebuchet can be fired, it must be loaded and aimed. It takes two actions to load the weapon, two actions to aim it, and one action to fire it.

A trebuchet typically hurls a heavy stone. However, it can launch other kinds of projectiles, such as barrels of oil or sewage, with different effects.

Trebuchet Stone. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 300/1,200 ft. (can't hit targets within 60 feet of it), one target. *Hit:* 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage.

Diseases

A plague ravages the kingdom, setting the adventurers on a quest to find a cure. An adventurer emerges from an ancient tomb, unopened for centuries, and soon finds herself suffering from a wasting illness. A warlock offends some dark power and contracts a strange affliction that spreads whenever he casts spells.

A simple outbreak might amount to little more than a small drain on party resources, curable by a casting of *lesser restoration*. A more complicated outbreak can form the basis of one or more adventures as characters search for a cure, stop the spread of the disease, and deal with the consequences.

A disease that does more than infect a few party members is primarily a plot device. The rules help describe the effects of the disease and how it can be cured, but the specifics of how a disease works aren't bound by a common set of rules. Diseases can affect any creature, and a given illness might or might not pass from one race or kind of creature to another. A plague might affect only constructs or undead, or sweep through a halfling neighborhood but leave other races untouched. What matters is the story you want to tell.

Sample Diseases

The diseases here illustrate the variety of ways disease can work in the game. Feel free to alter the saving throw DCs, incubation times, symptoms, and other characteristics of these diseases to suit your campaign.

Cackle Fever

This disease targets humanoids, although gnomes are strangely immune. While in the grips of this disease, victims frequently succumb to fits of mad laughter, giving the disease its common name and its morbid nickname: "the shrieks."

Symptoms manifest 1d4 hours after infection and include fever and disorientation. The infected creature gains one level of exhaustion that can't be removed until the disease is cured.

Any event that causes the infected creature great stress—including entering combat, taking damage, experiencing fear, or having a nightmare—forces the creature to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage and becomes incapacitated with mad laughter for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the mad laughter and the incapacitated condition on a success.

Any humanoid creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of an infected creature in the throes of mad laughter must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or also become infected with the disease. Once a creature succeeds on this save, it is immune to the mad laughter of that particular infected creature for 24 hours.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the DC for this save and for the save to avoid an attack of mad laughter drops by 1d6. When the saving throw DC drops to 0, the creature recovers from the disease. A creature that fails three of these saving throws gains a randomly determined form of indefinite madness, as described later in this chapter.

Sewer Plague

Sewer plague is a generic term for a broad category of illnesses that incubate in sewers, refuse heaps, and stagnant swamps, and which are sometimes transmitted by creatures that dwell in those areas, such as rats and otyughs.

When a humanoid creature is bitten by a creature that carries the disease, or when it comes into contact with filth or offal contaminated by the disease, the creature must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become infected.

It takes 1d4 days for sewer plague's symptoms to manifest in an infected creature. Symptoms include fatigue and cramps. The infected creature suffers one level of exhaustion, and it regains only half the normal number of hit points from spending Hit Dice and no hit points from finishing a long rest.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the character gains one level of exhaustion. On a successful save, the character's exhaustion level decreases by one level. If a successful saving throw reduces the infected creature's level of exhaustion below 1, the creature recovers from the disease.

Sight Rot

This painful infection causes bleeding from the eyes and eventually blinds the victim.

A beast or humanoid that drinks water tainted by sight rot must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become infected. One day after infection, the creature's vision starts to become blurry. The creature takes a −1 penalty to attack rolls and ability checks that rely on sight. At the end of each long rest after the symptoms appear, the penalty worsens by 1. When it reaches −5, the victim is blinded until its sight is restored by magic such as *lesser restoration* or *heal*.

Sight rot can be cured using a rare flower called Eyebright, which grows in some swamps. Given an hour, a character who has proficiency with an herbalism kit can turn the flower into one dose of ointment. Applied to the eyes before a long rest, one dose of it prevents the disease from worsening after that rest. After three doses, the ointment cures the disease entirely.

Poisons

Given their insidious and deadly nature, poisons are illegal in most societies but are a favorite tool among assassins, drow, and other evil creatures.

Poisons come in the following four types.

Contact. A creature that touches contact poison with exposed skin suffers its effects.

Ingested. A creature must swallow an entire dose of ingested poison to suffer its effects. You might decide that a partial dose has a reduced effect, such as allowing advantage on the saving throw or dealing only half damage on a failed save.

Inhaled. These poisons are powders or gases that take effect when they are inhaled. A single dose fills a 5-foot cube.

Injury. A creature that takes slashing or piercing damage from a weapon or piece of ammunition coated with injury poison is exposed to its effects.

Poisons

Item	Type	Price per Dose
Assassin's blood	Ingested	150 gp
Burnt othur fumes	Inhaled	500 gp
Carrion crawler mucus	Contact	200 gp
Drow poison	Injury	200 gp
Essence of ether	Inhaled	300 gp
Malice	Inhaled	250 gp
Midnight tears	Ingested	1,500 gp
Oil of taggit	Contact	400 gp
Pale tincture	Ingested	250 gp
Purple worm poison	Injury	2,000 gp
Serpent venom	Injury	200 gp
Torpor	Ingested	600 gp
Truth serum	Ingested	150 gp
Wyvern poison	Injury	1,200 gp

Sample Poisons

Each type of poison has its own debilitating effects.

Assassin's Blood (Ingested). A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 6 (1d12) poison damage

and is poisoned for 24 hours. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and isn't poisoned.

Burnt Othur Fumes (Inhaled). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage, and must repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns. On each successive failed save, the character takes 3 (1d6) poison damage. After three successful saves, the poison ends.

Carrion Crawler Mucus (Contact). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated carrion crawler. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned creature is paralyzed. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Drow Poison (Injury). This poison is typically made only by the drow, and only in a place far removed from sunlight. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Essence of Ether (Inhaled). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 8 hours. The poisoned creature is unconscious. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Malice (Inhaled). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature is blinded.

Midnight Tears (Ingested). A creature that ingests this poison suffers no effect until the stroke of midnight. If the poison has not been neutralized before then, the creature must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 31 (9d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Oil of Taggit (Contact). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 24 hours. The poisoned creature is unconscious. The creature wakes up if it takes damage.

Pale Tincture (Ingested). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) poison damage and become poisoned. The poisoned creature must repeat the saving throw every 24 hours, taking 3 (1d6) poison damage on a failed save. Until this poison ends, the damage the poison deals can't be healed by any means. After seven successful saving throws, the effect ends and the creature can heal normally.

Purple Worm Poison (Injury). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated purple worm. A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Serpent Venom (Injury). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated giant poisonous snake. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Torpor (Ingested). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 4d6 hours. The poisoned creature is incapacitated.

Truth Serum (Ingested). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature can't knowingly speak a lie, as if under the effect of a *zone of truth* spell.

Wyvern Poison (Injury). This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated wyvern. A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Purchasing Poison

In some settings, strict laws prohibit the possession and use of poison, but a black-market dealer or unscrupulous apothecary might keep a hidden stash. Characters with criminal contacts might be able to acquire poison relatively easily. Other characters might have to make extensive inquiries and pay bribes before they track down the poison they seek.

The Poisons table gives suggested prices for single doses of various poisons.

Crafting and Harvesting Poison

During downtime between adventures, a character can use the crafting rules in the *Player's Handbook* to create basic poison if the character has proficiency with a poisoner's kit. At your discretion, the character can craft other kinds of poison. Not all poison ingredients are available for purchase, and tracking down certain ingredients might form the basis of an entire adventure.

A character can instead attempt to harvest poison from a poisonous creature, such as a snake, wyvern, or carrion crawler. The creature must be incapacitated or dead, and the harvesting requires 1d6 minutes followed by a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check. (Proficiency with the poisoner's kit applies to this check if the character doesn't have proficiency in Nature.) On a successful check, the character harvests enough poison for a single dose. On a failed check, the character is unable to extract any poison. If the character fails the check by 5 or more, the character is subjected to the creature's poison.

Madness

In a typical campaign, characters aren't driven mad by the horrors they face and the carnage they inflict day after day, but sometimes the stress of being an adventurer can be too much to bear. If your campaign has a strong horror theme, you might want to use madness as a way to reinforce that theme, emphasizing

the extraordinarily horrific nature of the threats the adventurers face.

Going Mad

Various magical effects can inflict madness on an otherwise stable mind. Certain spells, such as *contact other plane* and *symbol*, can cause insanity, and you can use the madness rules here instead of the spell effects in the *Player's Handbook*. Diseases, poisons, and planar effects such as psychic wind or the howling winds of Pandemonium can all inflict madness. Some artifacts can also break the psyche of a character who uses or becomes attuned to them.

Resisting a madness-inducing effect usually requires a Wisdom or Charisma saving throw. If your game includes the Sanity score (see chapter 9, "Dungeon Master's Workshop"), a creature makes a Sanity saving throw instead.

Madness Effects

Madness can be short-term, long-term, or indefinite. Most relatively mundane effects impose short-term madness, which lasts for just a few minutes. More horrific effects or cumulative effects can result in long-term or indefinite madness.

A character afflicted with **short-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Short-Term Madness table for 1d10 minutes.

A character afflicted with **long-term madness** is subjected to an effect from the Long-Term Madness table for 1d10 × 10 hours.

A character afflicted with **indefinite madness** gains a new character flaw from the Indefinite Madness table that lasts until cured.

Short-Term Madness

d100	Effect (lasts 1d10 minutes)
01–20	The character retreats into his or her mind and becomes paralyzed. The effect ends if the character takes any damage.
21–30	The character becomes incapacitated and spends the duration screaming, laughing, or weeping.
31–40	The character becomes frightened and must use his or her action and movement each round to flee from the source of the fear.
41–50	The character begins babbling and is incapable of normal speech or spellcasting.
51–60	The character must use his or her action each round to attack the nearest creature.
61–70	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
71–75	The character does whatever anyone tells him or her to do that isn't obviously self-destructive.
76–80	The character experiences an overpowering urge to eat something strange such as dirt, slime, or offal.
81–90	The character is stunned.
91–100	The character falls unconscious.

Long-Term Madness

d100	Effect (lasts 1d10 × 10 hours)
01–10	The character feels compelled to repeat a specific activity over and over, such as washing hands, touching things, praying, or counting coins.
11–20	The character experiences vivid hallucinations and has disadvantage on ability checks.
21–30	The character suffers extreme paranoia. The character has disadvantage on Wisdom and Charisma checks.
31–40	The character regards something (usually the source of madness) with intense revulsion, as if affected by the antipathy effect of the *antipathy/sympathy* spell.
41–45	The character experiences a powerful delusion. Choose a potion. The character imagines that he or she is under its effects.
46–55	The character becomes attached to a "lucky charm," such as a person or an object, and has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws while more than 30 feet from it.
56–65	The character is blinded (25%) or deafened (75%).
66–75	The character experiences uncontrollable tremors or tics, which impose disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws that involve Strength or Dexterity.
76–85	The character suffers from partial amnesia. The character knows who he or she is and retains racial traits and class features, but doesn't recognize other people or remember anything that happened before the madness took effect.
86–90	Whenever the character takes damage, he or she must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as though he or she failed a saving throw against the *confusion* spell. The *confusion* effect lasts for 1 minute.
91–95	The character loses the ability to speak.
96–100	The character falls unconscious. No amount of jostling or damage can wake the character.

Curing Madness

A *calm emotions* spell can suppress the effects of madness, while a *lesser restoration* spell can rid a character of a short-term or long-term madness. Depending on the source of the madness, *remove curse* or *dispel evil* might also prove effective. A *greater restoration* spell or more powerful magic is required to rid a character of indefinite madness.

Experience Points

Experience points (XP) fuel level advancement for player characters and are most often the reward for completing combat encounters.

Each monster has an XP value based on its challenge rating. When adventurers defeat one or more monsters—typically by killing, routing, or capturing them—they divide the total XP value of the monsters evenly among themselves. If the party received substantial assistance from one or more NPCs, count those NPCs as party members when dividing up the XP. (Because the NPCs made the fight easier, individual characters receive fewer XP.)

Chapter 3, "Creating Adventures," provides guidelines for designing combat encounters using experience points.

Indefinite Madness

d100	Flaw (lasts until cured)
01–15	"Being drunk keeps me sane."
16–25	"I keep whatever I find."
26–30	"I try to become more like someone else I know—adopting his or her style of dress, mannerisms, and name."
31–35	"I must bend the truth, exaggerate, or outright lie to be interesting to other people."
36–45	"Achieving my goal is the only thing of interest to me, and I'll ignore everything else to pursue it."
46–50	"I find it hard to care about anything that goes on around me."
51–55	"I don't like the way people judge me all the time."
56–70	"I am the smartest, wisest, strongest, fastest, and most beautiful person I know."
71–80	"I am convinced that powerful enemies are hunting me, and their agents are everywhere I go. I am sure they're watching me all the time."
81–85	"There's only one person I can trust. And only I can see this special friend."
86–95	"I can't take anything seriously. The more serious the situation, the funnier I find it."
96–100	"I've discovered that I really like killing people."

Absent Characters

Typically, adventurers earn experience only for encounters they participate in. If a player is absent for a session, the player's character misses out on the experience points.

Over time, you might end up with a level gap between the characters of players who never miss a session and characters belonging to players who are more sporadic in their attendance. Nothing is wrong with that. A gap of two or three levels between different characters in the same party isn't going to ruin the game for anyone. Some DMs treat XP as a reward for participating in the game, and keeping up with the rest of the party is good incentive for players to attend as many sessions as possible.

As an alternative, give absent characters the same XP that the other characters earned each session, keeping the group at the same level. Few players will intentionally miss out on the fun of gaming just because they know they'll receive XP for it even if they don't show up.