

Sample file

Out of the Box

Encounters for the Fifth Edition
of the world's greatest roleplaying game

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Out of the Box at D&D Beyond

You'll be able to run encounters through D&D Beyond's Encounter Builder but will have to use assets provided by Out of the Box encounters like the maps and descriptions. It was the only way to do it without giving away the book for free there. You'll have to be logged in to access the content, which you'll find individually by clicking on the encounter title below. You can also find Out of the Box's home at D&D Beyond through this [link](https://www.dndbeyond.com/nerdarchy/out-of-the-box) (<https://www.dndbeyond.com/nerdarchy/out-of-the-box>)

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Foreword

I can't begin to tell you how often I've stressed myself out over developing a unique or interesting combat encounter for my adventuring party, let alone having to quickly develop one when a campaign takes a turn I wasn't expecting! Countless times I've found myself attempting to write in a vacuum, tearing my hair out in my attempts to surprise and challenge my players in new and extraordinary ways. Sometimes I'd pull it off! Other times, not so much. This was the difficulty of the "dark days," when supplementary content for DMs was not only difficult to find, but difficult to vet for balance. Forum boards and wikis could only help so much when you have no real means of trusting the source. However, we live in a wonderful time when the community has grown and developed support for stressed Dungeon Masters on a scale I had only dreamed of.

Nerdarchy in particular have been a bastion of creativity and encouragement for DMs of all ages and experience levels, bringing both quality commentary and accessible content to the space through their online videos, their thoughtful blogging on all things Tabletop Roleplaying Games, and eagerness to help those seeking guidance on social media with their own difficulties running their home game. Their crew of talented writers, designers, and genuine enthusiasts of the hobby are a fantastic example of what makes this play-space so welcoming and wonderful. They've put their hearts into sharing the experience they've gained in their years playing and running their own games, as well as study on game design and preparation philosophies, and this product is no exception.

Each encounter outlined within is presented with reasoning for their development and sources of inspiration, making it rather simple to see where the ideas within are coming from, and how best to implement them into your existing narrative. The descriptions that follow are given a succinct and easy-to-digest framework for presentation, showing you all the moving parts you can utilize to maintain and advance the challenge for your players without pre-defining the surrounding story too tightly (which I find a trap some supplements fall into,

making it difficult for some to tailor it into their own creative story). Many of these encounters concisely outline a handful of variables, helping you prepare for some of the expected, and giving you an idea of the unexpected that may fall in-between. Beyond that, the breakdowns present suggested combatants (should battle break out), as well as the level of treasure and rewards to be acquired by surmounting the dangers within... and then a series of complications that can arise based on the actions taken by the adventurers who have stepped up to the task of your challenge. The thorough-yet-compact presentation of the conflicts within this collection make for a rapidly comprehensive resource for Dungeon Masters to pull from, take inspiration from, and even offer a format for developing their own encounters should they enjoy the contents within.

I cannot recommend this collection enough. I've been inspired by a number of the hooks in these pages, and hope you will be as well.

— Matt Mercer

How to Use This Book

We designed each of the 55 Out of the Box encounters to stimulate collaborative storytelling between Game Masters and players. Puzzles, traps, hazards and creatures present challenges and problems for any group of adventurers. The intent of each encounter is to create opportunities for exciting and dynamic stories to emerge through these elements.

To help you discover the encounter best suited to your needs and the needs of your players you'll find helpful tools and guides throughout this book. Text appearing **in bold** within each encounter indicates the names of creatures, while spells and magic items are printed *in italics*. New creatures and items created for Out of the Box can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B at the back of this book. Anything else you need including creature statistics, rules and guidelines can be found in the Fifth Edition System Reference Document.

Each encounter in Out of the Box contains similar elements, outlined below.