



# NETHERBOOK

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ISBN: 9789403683010

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A special **'thank you'** goes out to the people that got us through this ongoing emotional rollercoaster and who never stopped believing in us and in our project:

**'That Special One' supporter:**

Maria Silberbach

**Our always available emotional support-team:**

Trynke, Lisette, Ronja, Kasper, Ruben, Kristian, Femke, Folkert, Johvanni, Mams, Aunty, Anneke and Evert. Sjoerd, Gerry, Tjeerd, Karin and Ria.



# Introduction

## Here it is!

It feels awesome to write down these words...

And wow! What a roller coaster ride it was to finish this book. More than a year ago this project started as a simple idea that popped in my head: Wouldn't it be nice to create a fun little book for my kids that we can use in our tabletop role playing games? And I always had a fascination for Kickstarter projects. So I spontaneously decided to create a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign. Just something small... And the crowdfunding success completely took me by surprise. Backers from 27 different countries supported this 'hobby-project'.

I quickly noticed that this was more than I bargained for. Fortunately, one of my best friends, Wybe, (even before I could ask) offered to help me out with the book. And his help proved to be invaluable; I simply can't thank him enough!

Not only did he do a lot of investigating, a big part of the writing, playtesting and odds-calculating, he was the driving force behind the continuous improvement of the individual games and the book as a whole. His enthusiasm, eye for detail and perseverance got me through many difficult moments. Several times I was on the verge of giving up on this project, but our collaboration pulled me through. So it's fair to say, without him this book wouldn't have turned out even half as good as it is today. Or even: without him I don't know if the book would be produced at all.

Wybe: Thank you!

This past year has been challenging in many more ways than I could have ever imagined to the both of us: On a personal level, both Wybe and I lost parents during our work on the book. Both of us lost jobs and both of us started new ones. And besides those personal challenges, the world

was hit by one crisis after another: Transport, energy, rising costs, etc. etc.

So the period was intense, but in the end it has a happy ending. The book is here, our bond as friends and the ties with our families have only been strengthened by the challenges we faced.

This project has humbled me and has made me more grateful for all the amazing and loving people in my life. I couldn't have done this without any of them.

Nevertheless I am also very grateful that this project is now completed. It took far longer than I had foreseen and instead of a sprint, it proved to be a marathon. But we finished, we survived and we grew stronger.


We have gained a lot of experience and that will help us enormously in our future projects.

Let me finish this introduction with:  
I want to thank you all for your support and patience. You made this possible!

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

*Frank*





To Liesbeth Bergsma and Marten  
van der Meer, my loving parents,  
always proud but to whom I sadly  
had to say goodbye before this  
book came to be.

To Henk Lubbers, my loving  
father. I wish you were still here,  
but I still feel you will always be  
around, because I see your smile  
reflected in every smile my children  
give me.



# Dice, dice, dice

To play the games in this book, the only thing you need is dice.

The polyhedral dice that are used in the most famous tabletop role playing game in the world, are the same that are used in this book:

**d4**  
a 4 sided die



**d6**  
a 6 sided die



**d8**  
a 8 sided die



**d10**  
a 10 sided die



**d12**  
a 12 sided die



**d20**  
a 20 sided die



## Notation

The notation for dice-rolls used in this book is: (number of dice) d (number of sides).

the 'd' in this equation stands for 'die' (single) or 'dice' (plural).

So 1d20 is the short notation for '1 die with 20 sides' and 3d6 stands for '3 dice with 6 sides'.

## Additional modifier notation

In certain occurrences, it is possible that a roll uses additional modifiers.

You can come across a notation like: 3d10 + 6

This tells you, that you roll 3 ten-sided dice and then add 6 to the result.

For instance, in this case the outcome of these 3d10 are 5, 7 and 3. These add up to 15. Then you add the 6 to the rolled 15 and the final outcome is 21.

# Expressions

In this chapter you will find the explanations of the expressions that are being used throughout this book.

## The dealer

Some of the games in this book require a dealer. When this game is played within your tabletop RPG, the role of the dealer can be assigned to the Game Master. When played as standalone dice game, it is enough to designate one of the players as the dealer. To keep things fun for everyone, it is recommended to switch turns in taking the roll as a dealer.

One of the tasks of the dealer is to 'be the house' which means the dealer is designated to manage the funds of the house. So when players are designated as dealer, they don't play with their own money or stack.

## Game, Round and turn

- **Game:**  
All rounds are played and there is a winner or a draw.
- **Round:**  
A round is where every player takes their turn.
- **Turn:**  
A single player's turn.

## Ability scores

Ability Scores in role playing games are your character's capabilities. Each one stands for some aspect of your character's abilities. And, your Ability Scores inform how good your character is at a given skill.

- Strength:** A creature's physical prowess
- Dexterity:** A creature's agility
- Constitution:** A creature's endurance and hardiness
- Intelligence:** A creature's intellectual capabilities
- Wisdom:** A creature's intuition
- Charisma:** A creature's force of personality

## Ability checks

An ability check tests a characters innate talent and training in an effort to overcome a Challenge. The rules in this book call for an ability check when the player takes an action that has a chance of failure. When the outcome is uncertain, the dice determine the results.

To make an ability check, roll a d20 and add the relevant ability modifier. Compare the total to the Difficulty Class (DC). If the total equals or exceeds the DC, the ability check is a success - the player overcomes the challenge at hand. Otherwise, it is a failure, which means the player doesn't succeed.

## Advantage & Disadvantage

Advantage = Roll two dice, use the highest  
Disadvantage = Roll two dice, use the lowest

## Armor class (AC)

Armor Class (AC) represents how easily you are hit and hurt by an attack. Armor class is not only influenced by wearing armor, but is also influenced by Dexterity (you are harder to hit) or for instance by being a creature with a thick hide (you are hit, but it doesn't hurt as much).

## Conditions

Conditions alter a player's capabilities in a variety of ways and can arise as a result of a spell, an



attack, or other effect, for example drinking too much. Most conditions, such as blinded, are impairments, but a few, such as bravery of the inebriated, can be advantageous.

## Contests

Sometimes one player's efforts are directly opposed to another's. In situations like these, the outcome is determined by a Special form of ability check, called a contest.

Both players in a contest make Ability Checks appropriate to their efforts, but instead of comparing the total to a DC, they compare the totals of their two checks. The player with the higher check total wins the contest. That player succeeds at the action or prevents the other one from succeeding.

If the contest results in a tie, the situation remains the same as it was before the contest. Thus, one contestant might win the contest by default. If two players tie in a contest to snatch a coin off the table, neither player grabs it. In a contest between a player trying to open a door and another trying to keep the door closed, a tie means that the door remains shut.

## Backgrounds

A character's background is meant to represent your character's life before they became an adventurer. In tabletop role playing games it is advised that all characters select a background when the character is first created, this adds depth to the characters and therefore more depth to the game.

## Damage

When a player gets hurt, they take damage. In role playing games there are various forms of damage, for instance: acid, bludgeoning, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, piercing, poison, psychic, radiant, slashing, and thunder.

A character may be vulnerable for some forms of damage, while they may be able to cope with other types of damage better.

## Difficulty class (DC)

Difficulty Class (DC) is used a lot for Saving Throws and Ability Checks. Even Armor Class is a kind of DC. To put it simply, a DC determines how hard something is to do. It could be peaking behind your neighbors cards, throwing a dart, or climbing on top of a table, different actions have different DCs.

## Exhaustion

Exhaustion is a condition measured in six levels.

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed of a player is halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit Point maximum is halved
5	The players speed is reduced to zero
6	Death

Finishing a Long Rest reduces a person's exhaustion level by 1, provided that they have also ingested some food and drink.

## Hit points (HP)

Hit points (HP) is a number measuring the amount of damage a creature, character, or object can take before being killed, disabled or destroyed.

## Inspiration

Inspiration is a rule the Game Master can use to reward players for a number of reasons ranging from role playing their character well, coming up with a clever idea, acts of heroism, or for overcoming a challenging obstacle.

Having Inspiration allows a player to gain advantage on one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw. A player can only have one Inspiration at a time, and players can give their Inspiration to one another player if they choose.



## Long rest

A Long Rest is a period of extended downtime, at least 8 hours long, during which a character sleeps or performs light activity: reading, talking, eating, or standing watch for no more than 2 hours. If the rest is interrupted by a period of strenuous activity - at least 1 hour of walking, Fighting, or other adventuring activity - the characters must begin the rest again to gain any benefit from it.

At the end of a Long Rest, a character regains all lost Hit Points.

## Proficiency bonus

A bonus added to skill checks, saving throws, or attacks for skills that a character is proficient in. Proficiency is a reflection of a character's training with a weapon, tool, or skill

## Saving throws

A saving throw represents an attempt to resist a trap, a poison, a disease, an unexpected hit or a similar threat. You don't normally decide to make a saving throw; you are forced to make one because your character is at risk of harm.

## Skills

A skill represents a specific aspect of an ability score. A player's proficiency in a skill demonstrates a focus on that aspect.

The skills that are used in this book are:

- Athletics (Strength)
- Acrobatics (Dexterity)
- Sleight of hand (Dexterity)
- Stealth (Dexterity)
- Animal Handling (Wisdom)
- Insight (Wisdom)
- Perception (Wisdom)
- Survival (Wisdom)
- Deception (Charisma)
- Intimidation (Charisma)
- Performance (Charisma)
- Persuasion (Charisma)

# Playing without a character

Most games require a character with ability scores and modifiers. When you don't have a character ready to play the games with, you can use these numbers as your skill modifiers:

### Difficulty

Very easy	+5
Easy	+4
Medium	+2
Hard	0
Very hard	-1

Another possibility (with a more random result) is to assign a 0 to two of your skill modifiers and to roll 1d4 for each of the other modifiers.

For example:

When you roll a 4, that means a modifier of +4



# Gambling Slang

If you are not familiar with the terms used in gambling, it might be overwhelming to join a game.

The following descriptions of the words used as slang will help you understand games better and they will help you maintain your poker face.

## Action

Action is the term used for casino play. You will find action on the table in games like blackjack and roulette. You might hear a dealer say, “The action is on you,” meaning it is your turn to act.

## Bankroll

The amount of money you have set aside for gambling is called your bankroll. For most of us, that is the total cash we are willing to risk in one visit to the casino. But for professional gamblers, their bankroll is the total they use for “work.”

## Bet/Betting limit

A bet, also called a wager, is the amount you stake on a round of a game like blackjack or roulette. It will also be the amount you spend on the spin of a slot machine. Some table games will have betting limits. For example, you might select a blackjack table where the maximum bet is 10 gold pieces.

## Buy-in

When you first sit down for a session at the tables, you will need to convert cash for the casino token equivalent – or chips. The total you spend is called the buy-in. In some gambling tournaments, the buy-in is the cost of entry.

## Cage

Hopefully, you will make a profit during your visit to the casino. If you do, you do not get money from the dealer. Instead, you take your chips to the cage, which is the secure area of the casino that converts your chips back to lovely cash. If you are looking at

casino terms for winning, you must get used to the cage.

## Card Sharp

A player who is considered skilled at card games is called a card Sharp. While you will be happy playing alongside a Card Sharp at blackjack, since they are only taking money from the dealer, you don't want to play against one at poker because they will be winning your money.

## Chips

Chips are the currency of the casino gambler. Chips come in various colors and denominations and are the tokens you use for playing casino table games. They are also irresistible to fiddle with, and you might often see players, particularly poker players, riffling them.

## Cold/Hot

Running cold refers to a player who is on a losing streak. A game that is not paying out might also be described as cold. The opposite, running hot, is far more appealing.

## Comps

When you visit a casino, make sure you sign up for the rewards club. You then earn points, known as comps, while you play. Over time, you can convert these points into a tangible reward, perhaps a free buffet or a discount on the casino's accommodations.

## Double or Nothing

A type of bet where you double your money if you win, but if you lose, you get nothing. Examples are ‘red or black’ and ‘odd or even’ bets in roulette.

## Face cards

Also known as picture cards, face cards are the jacks, queens, and kings in a deck of cards. In most casino games, these are all valued at ten.



## High Roller

After many successful visits to the casino, you too might become a high roller, a player with a large bankroll who will play at higher stakes, risking more for a much bigger reward.

## House/House Edge

The casino is a business called the house. You might have heard the term, “The house always wins.” Sadly, in the long run, that is true, because every casino table game is designed in the house’s favor – called the house edge. If there were no house edge, the casino would lose money and, before long, close down.

## Pit boss

When you sit down at a table for a game like blackjack, you might notice a well-dressed member of staff standing at a station near to the dealers. This is the pit boss, whose job it is to oversee fair play at all times.



## Playing the Board

When a player uses all of the cards on the table and no personal cards are used to form a hand in games like poker.

## Railbird

It is common to see people watching games played in a casino. They are called railbirds, but they must be at a safe distance so as not to influence the game or players in any way.

## Tell

A tell is a something about a player’s behavior or demeanor that is claimed by some to give insight into that player’s assessment of their game.

## Toke

A toke is another term for a tip. It is considered polite to occasionally tip the dealer during a winning streak in blackjack, or after a good pot in Lich King Poker.

## Whale

Casino bosses love whales. These are a step up from high rollers, super-wealthy individuals who come to a casino with vast amounts of cash they wish to gamble with. They don’t care if they win or lose, so long as they have fun.



# Casinos and Betting

While you can present the games in this book to your players in inns, taverns, back-alleys and even on the road, you might be interested in creating your own gambling house. In this chapter you will find everything you need to do just that, as Morrovion takes you by the hand on your first day as a new employee of the Velvet Flame Gambling House.

This chapter will help you create your own casino, organize races to bet on and give you an idea of how you can run all of that in your game.

## Welcome to your first day

Early on a clear blue morning, you walk up to a set of finely decorated dark wooden doors with a golden inlay, depicting a set of scales weighing chunks of ore over a ruby carved to resemble a fist.

*“Welcome to the Velvet Flame! Unfortunately for you, esteemed guest, our doors do not open before noon. Such a shame, such a waste, but I do not make the rules”*

The voice of a catlike humanoid in fine dark red garments answered the instant you knocked.

*“What is that? Oh, you are the new employee? Very well, very nice, very good indeed. Come in, welcome, welcome to the Velvet Flame, welcome to the job! My name is Rain-through-the-Mist, but you can call me Rain. Also, if you could leave that dagger you are hiding beneath your robes...”*

As you hand over your concealed weapon and smile at the feline guarding the door, you are allowed in. Large stone planters flank the entryway and, just like your first visit a tenday ago, you are amazed by the dancing strips of velvet that mimic the flames of a burning fire. You can feel air blowing so it must have something to do with those rotating sails in the tower on the roof, even though it is not windy outside and you do not recall them spinning, as they did last time.

You retrace your steps from when you came in for the interview and make your way past the lobby and the currently empty gaming tables to the back office. Just as you're about to knock on a door, you hear a voice and turn around. A male Tiefling with a red beard tells you:

*“I would not bother Galm...Mister Bloodknuckles this early on the day, not until he has counted his money at least. He asked me to get you started today. I am Morrovion and for the time being, I oversee the daily operation of this fine gambling.”*

## Creating your own casino

### Choosing a name

Every casino needs a good name, one that immediately paints a picture. You can roll on, or pick from, the tables below to generate a name for your place of gambling and let it inspire you to imagine the reason it is called that name.

Roll a d20 twice to determine the first and second part of the name of your casino. Roll another d10 to find out a possible suffix, though you can leave that out if you do not want it.

If you roll a one on the 'First Part'-table, you choose a location in your world where the name casino is named after. That can be any location in your world and does not necessarily have to be the name of a town as naming a casino after a mountain, lake or forest can immediately give it a sense of grandeur.

Anything in square brackets refers to a separate table where you can roll again to make that part of the name more specific. For example, if you roll a two on the 'First Part'-table, you should look at the 'Color' table and roll the appropriate die to determine the outcome.

If you do not immediately like the sound of the name you rolled, try to imagine a back story for it by visualizing what the name expresses. If you can't think of anything or still do not like it, roll again until you are satisfied or just replace the part you do not like with a new roll or manual pick.



**First part**

d20	Outcome
1	<Location>
2	[Color]
3	[Rock]
4	[Direction]
5	Amber
6	Big Shot
7	Brass
8	Crazy
9	Crimson
10	Crown
11	Fortun(at)e
12	Jackpot
13	Golden
14	Lucky
15	Noble
16	Roadside
17	Royal
18	Sky
19	Star
20	Velvet

**d20 Color**

1	Beige
2	Black
3	Blue
4	Brown
5	Crimson
6	Cyan
7	Green
8	Grey
9	Olive
10	Orange
11	Pink
12	Purple
13	Red
14	Teal
15	White
16	Yellow
17	Copper
18	Bronze
19	Silver
20	Gold

**Second part**

d20	Outcome
1	[Animal]
2	Bank
3	City
4	Club
5	Diamond
6	Flame
7	Flower
8	Fountain
9	House
10	King / Queen
11	Labyrinth
12	Lodge
13	Palace
14	Paradise
15	Resort
16	Temple
17	Tower
18	Treasure
19	Vault
20	Wall

**d8 Rock**

1	Basalt
2	Granite
3	Limestone
4	Marble
5	Obsidian
6	Sandstone
7	Shale
8	Slate

**d8 Direction**

1	North(ern)
2	East(ern)
3	South(ern)
4	West(ern)
5	Northeast(ern)
6	Southeast(ern)
7	Northwest(ern)
8	Southwest(ern)

**Suffix**

d10	Outcome
1-5	-
6-8	Casino
9	Gambling Hall
10	Card Club

**3d10 Animal**

3	Badger
4	Bat
5	Bear
6	Beetle
7	Boar
8	Bull
9	Coyote
10	Crow
11	Deer
12	Dog
13	Donkey
14	Eagle
15	Fox
16	Frog
17	Hedgehog
18	Horse
19	Leopard
20	Lion
21	Lizard
22	Monkey
23	Owl
24	Pig
25	Rabbit
26	Rat
27	Snake
28	Tiger
29	Turtle
30	Wolf



### Types of casinos

Once you have a name and a story behind it, it is time to visualize the general theme of the casino. Is it a back-alley dive or a luxurious, over the top symbol of decadence? Naming the former something better suited to the latter is always a fun thing to do. Imagine a group of adventurers looking for the 'Royal Flower Casino', expecting a place where high rollers like them would be treated as kings, only to find a ramshackle cabin in a dark alley where any money they won't lose at the rigged games will surely be attempted to be taken from them by force.

The location of a casino can greatly depend on whether it is legal and how wealthy it is. A rich casino might be allowed to build something huge while a proprietor with less money and more issues with the law might be forced to operate out of a secret back room. This does not mean that there is nothing between these extremes or that they always must do just this. A wealthy legal casino could have started out illegal and small, just as a former booming casino has been forced to all but close due to lack of visitors after a new king declared gambling illegal.

### Locations

Not every place of gambling has to be situated in a conventional building or part of it. Below are a few examples of more original locations for a casino and a short description of how they could operate. In addition to the reasons given in each description, all of these could be a necessity for the proprietor because gambling is illegal in your world, competition is too great inside the city, or they just don't want to adhere to certain rules.

#### **Boat**

Perhaps a wealthy merchant wanted to start his own casino but none of the surrounding towns were large enough to make the profit required to support the level of grandeur he desired. In this case a casino built on a boat that can travel the rivers or coastline would be a fitting solution. Possible issues would be pirates if on open water

and letting gamblers know where they'll be at which date.

#### **Caravan**

For the same reasons someone might want to build a casino on a boat, they could also start a caravan. Another reason might be that a group of traveling merchants, minstrels or a nomadic tribe wanted to make a few extra gold pieces. A travelling circus or freak show might also offer gambling, either out in the open or in a back room. Just like with a casino on a boat, it could be difficult to let potential customers know their location on a given date and a caravan traveling with great riches would make an excellent target for highwaymen.

#### **Cave**

A system of natural caves could be an interesting location for a casino, both legal and illegal. For illegal gambling houses, a network of hidden rooms and secret escape tunnels would provide a perfect place to remain unseen or at least have a chance of escaping when the law shows up. For legal casinos large open caves with reliefs carved into the walls can be quite a sight to behold, perhaps reminding gamblers of Dwarven strongholds. Reaching such a cave system can prove problematic, depending on the location and if not, all tunnels have been properly explored or closed off, danger might lurk in the dark.

#### **Mine**

Like a natural cave system, a mine can also be used. This mine could be recently abandoned and as the prospectors decided it was no longer viable to keep digging, they sold it. Or the mine could have been abandoned for ages. In the first scenario a legal casino is more probable while an illegal one is more likely to use the second one. An active mine could also retrofit the older parts of the mine, near the entrance, as a casino to finance the excavation of the newer deeper tunnels. The same dangers a casino in a cave could face are also possible inside a mine, especially if it was abandoned long ago. Apart from this, cave ins are a risk if the mine is still in active use.

