

## Bonus Chapter 2

# Ten Minor Quests

**M**inor quests are complications and side plots that add spice to adventures. Often, they're personal — a single character's goals in an adventure or a campaign, which tie that character more closely to the story of the game and keep that character's player invested in the campaign. They work well as secondary hooks to explain why an individual character is joining the other characters on a particular adventure — “Oh, I heard you were going to the Tower of the Scepter, and I want to come along. There's supposed to be an inscription there I'd like to read. . . .” They can also serve as minor rewards for the entire party as the PCs work through an adventure — it's secondary to their main goals, but if the characters make the effort to see the prisoners they found in the dungeon safely home, they deserve a little extra reward.

Sometimes a minor quest is a lot like a major quest. What's the difference, for example, between “Free a Prisoner” as a minor quest and “Rescue a Captive” as a major quest? Or between the minor quest “Conduct a Trade” and the major quest “Escort a Person or Carry an Object”? The difference is whether the quest is the focus (or a major focus) of the adventure. If the characters enter a dungeon looking for specific prisoners in hopes of freeing them, with that as their sole or primary purpose, it's a major quest. If they're exploring a dungeon for some other reason and find a cell with a prisoner, rescuing that person can be a minor quest. Another factor is whether the quest involves the entire party. A quest assigned to a single character is always a minor quest, whereas a quest assigned to the whole party might be major or minor. If a village elder entrusts an item to a single character and asks that character to trade it for another item in a place the party is visiting anyway, it's a minor quest. If the elder entrusts the item into the care of the whole party and sends them off to someplace they otherwise wouldn't go, it's a major quest.



Remember that the whole party shares the XP reward for completing a minor quest, even if the quest is a personal goal of a single character. *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* is a cooperative game that rewards the players for working together to achieve their goals.

## **BC2** **Dungeon Master 4th Edition For Dummies**

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This chapter sketches out ten generic minor quests you can use to add wrinkles of depth to the story of any adventure.

### ***Conduct a Trade***

When the characters travel to a distant or dangerous location, one of them is asked to bring some item to a person who lives in that location and to bring another item back in exchange. This could be a very straightforward mercantile transaction, where the characters deliver some goods and receive money in exchange (or the other way around). Or they could be asked to deliver a letter and wait for a response or to exchange two items without breaking the seal on either container.

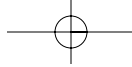
A minor quest involving this kind of trade works well as a subplot whenever characters are traveling somewhere that's not necessarily hostile. It could be an individual quest, if a mentor or some other important person asks one character to conduct the trade, or a group quest, as long as it's not the focus of the adventure. (If it is the focus of the adventure, it's more like the "Escort a Person or Carry an Object" major quest described in Bonus Chapter 1.)

### ***Find an Heirloom***

Somebody died in the dungeon the characters are exploring or was killed by the monsters the characters are about to fight. A character wants to find the body, a signet ring that person owned, or the necklace that person wore. This could be a single character's personal quest, looking for something that belonged to a parent or ancestor. It could also be a minor quest that arises in the middle of an adventure, when the characters find a body wearing a ring that identifies the corpse as the relative of someone they know, in which case the quest becomes "return the heirloom to its rightful owner."

### ***Get Revenge***

In the goblin raid on the town, a laughing hobgoblin with a pale scar across his face killed a friend or family member of one of the characters and managed to escape. The town council asks the party to hunt down the goblins and rescue the prisoners they took (a major quest), but one character has a minor quest of his own: to find the scarred hobgoblin and take revenge.



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## Bonus Chapter 2: Ten Minor Quests **BC3**

Revenge can also be a significant motivation for a character (such as Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride*) who spends his or her entire adventuring career watching for a chance to exact revenge on someone. In a case like that, you can count it as a major quest rather than a minor one.

### *Map an Area*

On a large scale, this could be a major quest — see the “Explore New Territory” and “Gather Information” quests in Bonus Chapter 1. But it also works well as a subplot, if someone asks the characters to create a map of an area they’re entering for some other reason. Perhaps a historian is curious about the layout of the ruins the characters are exploring and what that might suggest about the customs and architecture of ancient Arkhosia.

### *Copy an Inscription*

Somewhere in the ruins the characters are exploring is an inscription carved on a wall or monument — something far too large to be removed from the dungeon. Someone wants the characters to copy this inscription and bring the transcript back. Alternatively, the characters could discover an inscription that causes them some alarm, and they might take on a quest to bring the transcript to someone who needs to know about its contents. As a twist, the characters could accept this quest and find — if they make an effort to translate and understand the inscription — that the person who hired them might be up to something sinister. Perhaps the inscription contains a destructive ritual of some sort, raising the question of whether the characters’ patron has purely scholarly interests at heart.

### *Free a Prisoner*

As a minor quest, freeing a prisoner works best if the characters enter the dungeon without knowing there are prisoners inside. If they know going in that there are prisoners to be rescued, that’s a weighty enough concern that it ought to be a major quest, a significant element of the adventure.

You could also nest a minor quest inside a major quest that involves freeing captives. If the major quest is to rescue the 12 townsfolk captured by the drow raiders, they might have an additional minor quest to make sure the

## BC4 Dungeon Master 4th Edition For Dummies

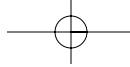
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prophet among the captives gets back safely to the temple. What makes this worth a quest of its own is that the prophet requires special handling in some way — if he takes any damage, for example, he might speak a word of Supernal that deals thunder and psychic damage to everyone within 5 squares.

### *Acquire a Signature Item*

The paladin's personal goal of acquiring a *holy avenger* sword is an obvious example of a quest to acquire a single item, but you can work with your players to make a quest for a magic item both more flavorful and more relevant at any level. After all, a paladin who knows the Enchant Magic Item ritual can make his or her own *holy avenger* at 25th level, which isn't a very satisfying conclusion to a lifelong quest. You could recast that quest goal as acquiring a specific blade that belonged to a renowned paladin of legend. Then you can let the character find that blade at whatever point in your campaign it seems appropriate. The *Adventurer's Vault* sourcebook contains advice and rules on how to use a legendary item like that in your game, letting its powers and properties improve over time as the character builds a connection to the item.





This is typically an individual character's goal, but it doesn't have to be. The characters in a party might share a goal of acquiring a set of magic items — an assortment of weapons, implements, and armor — that were made by the same ancient crafter for a common purpose. Such a significant goal could easily be a major quest.

## *Achieve Status*

Another quest that works well as a single character's personal ambition, achieving status could mean earning a noble title through valiant deeds, gaining notoriety as the most powerful wizard in the world, or securing membership in an elite organization. This is also a case where you can let your players help you develop the world in which your campaign takes place — they can do some of the work in creating the organizations they want their characters to belong to. Does your fighter want to join an elite order of knights? Let that player help you determine what those knights are all about and perhaps even what the character has to do to earn membership.

On the other hand, if you put some thought into organizations that operate in the area of your campaign, you can give the players ideas of something for their characters to aspire to. If your campaign is going to involve a lot of dragon slaying, let the players know early on about an ancient knightly order, almost forgotten, that studied the arts of dragon slaying, something they can hope to join.

Membership in an organization, or any kind of status in the world, can be reflected in the rules of the game as a paragon path or possibly even an epic destiny. You can adapt paths and destinies from published sourcebooks to fit your world, or invent them yourself, either combining elements from different published sources or creating them from whole cloth. Just remember that a paragon path or epic destiny isn't something for nonplayer characters, so don't tie them too strictly to organizations. The topaz guardian paragon path shouldn't be something that all members of the Topaz Order join, but a representation of what a player character (a great hero in the world) might become if he or she is a member of that order.

## *Acquire a Patron*

The characters have to find someone who will act as a patron for them. That could mean seeking out a specific person (the great mage Maldrick, for example) and convincing that person to employ them, or maybe it means moving

## **BC6** **Dungeon Master 4th Edition For Dummies**

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within a specific social circle (such as the mages' guild of Tanis) until they find someone who will act as their patron. If you use this as a quest and not just the object of a single skill challenge, it should involve multiple encounters — perhaps the characters must win a contest to secure royal patronage, or they must complete a series of tasks to prove their worth to the great mage.

This could be an individual goal, with a single character seeking a mentor or a sponsor for membership in an organization, or something the entire party aspires to. In either case, a patron serves as a great source of future quests, a hook for many future adventures.

### *Resolve Mistaken Identity*

Someone delivers a message to a character and then disappears, but the message was intended for someone else. Someone verbally or physically attacks a character in town, calling him or her by the wrong name and refusing to listen to reason. People start thanking the characters for good deeds they didn't do, or the characters are arrested for crimes they didn't commit. Mistaken identity can be a single incident or a recurring theme, presenting a problem the characters have to resolve.

The best thing about this quest is the ongoing complications it can introduce into an adventure, throwing wrenches in the characters' plans and interesting twists in events all along the way. It can interfere with the characters' ability to get things done in town, create a persistent admirer who follows the characters into danger, or add comic relief to an otherwise tense storyline. The issue can be a simple accident or something more sinister, such as a group of doppelgangers impersonating the characters in order to soil their good names or get them in trouble.