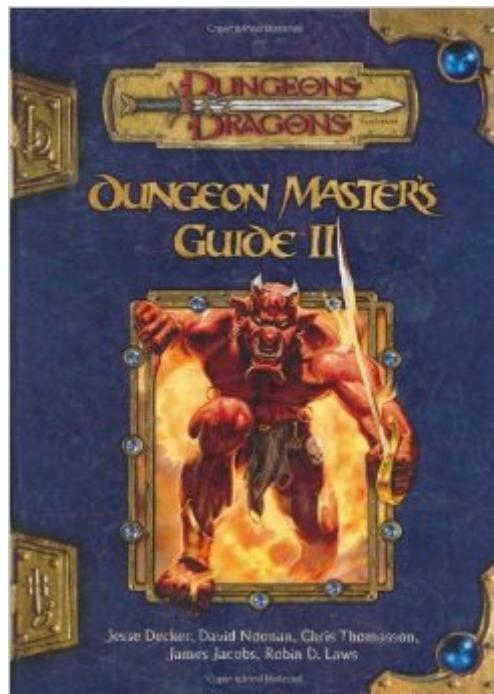


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Dungeon Master's Guide II (Dungeons & Dragons D20 3.5 Fantasy Roleplaying Supplement)



Synopsis

A follow-up to the Dungeon Master™s Guide, designed to aid Dungeon Masters and reduce game preparation time. The Dungeon Master™s Guide II builds upon existing materials in the Dungeon Master™s Guide. It is specifically designed to facilitate play, especially when the Dungeon Master has a limited amount of preparation time. Chapters include discussion on running a game, designing adventures, building and using prestige classes, and creating campaign settings. Ready-made game elements include instant traps, pre-generated locations, treasures, and a fully realized and rendered town. JESSE DECKER is the development manager for Wizards of the Coast, Inc. whose recent roleplaying game design credits include Complete Adventurer®, Races of Stone®, and Unearthed Arcana. DAVID NOONAN is an RPG designer/developer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Recent credits include authoring Complete Divine® and co-authoring Races of Stone and Unearthed Arcana. CHRIS THOMASSON previously served as Editor-in-Chief of Dungeon® Magazine. His design credits include Fiend Folio® and Monster Manual®, as well as Bow and Blade for Green Ronin Publishing. JAMES JACOBS is the associate editor of Dungeon® Magazine and has published numerous articles in Dragon® Magazine. His most recent credits with Wizards of the Coast, Inc. include co-authoring The Book of Aberrations, Races of Faerûn®, and Frostburn®. ROBIN D. LAWS, game designer and novelist, is best known for the roleplaying games Feng Shui, Heroquest, and Dying Earth, along with, Robin™s Laws of Good Gamemastering.

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Customer Reviews

This is the latest book from WOC and I found it to be very useful. It is primarily for DM's but players will find things helpful. Chapter one opens with particulars of running a campaign. There are discussions with the DM's responsibilities for running a campaign with various styles of gamers and your particular style of running campaigns. Most of it is basic like letting your players know before hand about any house rules you may have, ways of imparting information to the players about their environment and rough guidelines for preparing a game. Chapter two deals with the particulars of running an adventure, both using published and your own materials. The third chapter deals with specifics of running a campaign. Things like guilds, law and order, and building a city are contained in this chapter. I felt this part was better than the information about cities in the complete adventurers guide. Chapter four contains the city of Saltmarsh, was part of a series of modules years ago. It is expanded and really could be a useful part of a campaign. I will probably adopt it at some point myself. Chapter 5 deals with NPCs and their care and feeding. Chapter 6 deals with the characters themselves and introduces apprenticeships, mentors and teamwork options for the players. I have done similar things in the past and I feel that it is a good idea as it gives the players more continuity with the campaign and plot hooks. There is a section on designing your own prestige classes and PC organizations. Chapter 7 is about magic items. A section on signature magic items and bonded magic items is discussed and rules for doing such things.

The Dungeon Master's Guide II is not a replacement for the DM's Guide but rather a complementing supplement that adds much more additional information for the DM to use. In all there are seven chapters in the book covering the following topics: 1. Running the Game 2. Adventures 3. The Campaign 4. The Saltmarsh 5. NPC's 6. Characters 7. Magic Items. Running the game provides tips on knowing your players...their behaviors, their personalities and tendencies. Examples are given on how to add drama and developing a story in your games. Suggestions are provided for using house rules and laptops to assist the DM. While this information is nice, it's more geared towards inexperienced DMs. The adventure chapter covers things such as many new traps, map and grid design, building encounter tables, and encounters for such areas as the Abyss and Infernal planes, graveyards, haunted buildings, lost ruins, and several other specific type locations. The campaign section provides information if you want to develop your own campaign as opposed to buying an off the shelf product such as the Forgotten Realms. It provides all the information you need on setting up a medieval-type world including social and political structures, lifestyles and more. There are also 50 rumors/adventure hooks provided that the DM can use to flesh out adventures. The Saltmarsh is

recognizable to older fans of D&D as the name of an old module. The Saltmarsh is provided here as a kind of drop-in city for use in any campaign. It's ready made with all the information you need to run if you don't feel like making a city from scratch, providing maps, business locations, NPCs, guilds, adventure hooks and more.

All right. Let's begin with a discussion of irony. Not irony as in the Alanis Morissette song (the greatest irony of which almost none of the things she calls ironic actually are). Instead we will talk about true irony. Those of you who have read my previous reviews may have noticed a certain resistance to a phenomena I call "prestige class bloat." DMG II arrived at my door a bit late for a review copy, and I had some time to think about how I would view the prestige classes in this book. Every other book has drawn my anger, my disdain, sometimes even my pity for their prestige classes. But this book, I thought, "You know . . . I'm gonna give them a pass on this book. They might put the contents into the SRD at some point (it's possible). I'll let this one go." And there are no prestige classes in this book. I might weep. I might actually weep. Anyway. We won't hold that against them. We won't. My review will be objective. Honest. Actually, that won't be very hard. There's a lot to like in this book. Almost everything is useful. Some of it is downright insightful. When I reviewed the first DMG all those years ago (all right, the first 3.x DMG . . . I'm not that old, people) I was amazed at how good the advice was. This wasn't just a set of DM specific rules, it really was a guide to being a good DM. So here we are, years later, holding DMG II. Chapter 1 deals with the actual running of a game. Now, in many ways this chapter resembles the Gamemaster's Law product from ICE. For years I've said that was the best book on GMing ever written. I'm friends with one of the authors. I'm crushed to say this, but, I like this one better.

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