

Spark Tables

(*Dominic Bailey*)

In his excellent RPG, *Electric Bastionland*, Chris McDowall provides Spark Tables for the use of the referee (although he uses the term 'Conductor'). These are simply a few d20 tables sprinkled with setting-appropriate terms to act as inspiration when you need something to kick start the imagination. When my own game prep process of staring out the window and drinking coffee fails me, I resort to similar measures. After all, if someone has a good idea then I'm all about stealing it (and implying that it is my own work, ha).

I saw these particular tables, or early versions of them, used at *Dragonmeet* a couple of years ago when we pressured Chris into running a game for us with zero notice. He'd brought a manuscript of *Electric Bastionland* to show around at the con and after a few minutes of reading it and being long-time fans of its forerunner, *Into the Odd*, we coerced Chris into running it there and then. He took a few moments to sketch out a map and rolled on two spark tables for each location, combining the results into something Bastion-appropriate for us to encounter. Then we were off and a good time was had.

Using random tables to provide GM inspiration is as old as the hobby itself, and it's the sort of thing that I find most useful on my own prep. I'd rather create a tool for a specific session or campaign that I can reference again later than devise some specific story twist for this week's game. The latter are better developed at the gaming table during play in any case. Of course, you could always use something designed for this very purpose such as the *Tome of Adventure Design* by Matt Finch. This is filled with tables, and while it has an old school D&D bent, there's a ton of material and it's not really system- or setting-specific. Setting-specific stuff is good, though, and at its best when you come up with it yourself to match the content and style of your own games.

To that end, I'm including two spark tables written for use with my own *Dragon Warriors* campaign. These were written back when we were still in *Albion* and are somewhat less useful now that the PCs are up to their necks in strife and woe in the *Principalities of the Crusades*.

Oh, and get *Electric Bastionland*. It's really good.

Roll d20 as many times as you like on each table, combining the results to gain elements of inspiration for this week's game.

| Roll | Result | Roll | Result |
|------|-------------------|------|---------------------|
| 1 | Cobwebs | 11 | Faerie |
| 2 | Crumbling castle | 12 | Hollow hill |
| 3 | Twilight | 13 | Mere |
| 4 | Moss | 14 | Hunger |
| 5 | Rain | 15 | Rust |
| 6 | Mud | 16 | Stone ring or henge |
| 7 | Shadow | 17 | Cairn |
| 8 | Forest | 18 | Birds |
| 9 | Revenant | 19 | Iron |
| 10 | Ivy-covered stone | 20 | Haunt |

| Roll | Result | Roll | Result |
|------|------------------------|------|------------------|
| 1 | Sorcery | 11 | Heresy |
| 2 | Execution | 12 | Black magic |
| 3 | The church | 13 | Mercenaries |
| 4 | Tournament/disputation | 14 | Bones |
| 5 | Crypts/tomb | 15 | Abandoned chapel |
| 6 | Statue | 16 | Charcoal burners |
| 7 | Thorns | 17 | Plague |
| 8 | Beasts | 18 | Death rituals |
| 9 | Horns | 19 | Runes |
| 10 | Graves | 20 | Hunt |

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