

# INTERLUDES

**B**ooks and movies often deal with prolonged periods of time in the form of long treks across hostile environments or extended stays at relatively safe locales. The heroes also engage in small talk that reveals something about their past or further develops their personality. These interludes not only show both the trials and normal lives of the protagonists, they're also used to build and release tension. Most importantly, however, they develop the heroes by revealing their backstories and personalities.

Such "Interludes" are rare in roleplaying games where we focus primarily on action and the next encounter. Interludes are a difficult thing to replicate in roleplaying games because situations like these are largely passive. A grand vista or amusing anecdote told by the Dungeon Master is story-telling—not roleplaying. Alternatively, the Dungeon Master might turn the interlude into a series of combat and obstacle encounters, but that runs the risk of overshadowing the excitement of the destination or locale itself.

The system detailed below turns trips and interludes into memorable events with a high degree of player interaction. It requires the rest of the group to do a little story-telling, acting, and improvisation. Encourage everyone to get involved—even the shy players who don't normally get into this aspect of roleplaying games. They'll be rewarded when it's over and might be encouraged to enjoy the roleplaying part of the game as much as the more "crunchy" aspects.

## TYPE OF INTERLUDES

There will generally be two types of Interludes. One is the regular Interlude and the other is a Dramatic Interlude. Dramatic Interludes should occur between legs of a long trip or downtime between adventures or sections of the adventure. Dramatic Interludes will involve more story-telling on the part of the player and can involve more significant events that can be crafted by the player. These could involve a possible encounter, or the acquiring of some sort of treasure.

Regular Interludes are much more minor and do not require as much storytelling, though the players should not be discouraged from stronger storytelling.

## RUNNING AND INTERLUDE

The Dungeon Master should run an Interlude during natural down-time such as when healing up after a fight, performing research, or between legs of a long trip. A Regular Interlude should always be used with a short or long rest.

To start, pick a player and have her draw a card. A regular deck of playing cards could be used or something like the Harrow Deck from Pathfinder or Taroka deck from Wizards of the Coast. The results tables listed below assumes the use of the Harrow Deck from Pathfinder. For Regular Interludes, the Suit determines the general topic as shown on the Interlude Table below. Each entry requires the player to tell a story in the voice of her character. The tale should be substantial enough to take a few minutes and may draw in other characters' participation as well.

The next time the Dungeon Master feels an Interlude is appropriate, he should pick a different player so that everyone has a chance to participate and reap the rewards.

For Dramatic Interludes use the second table with more detailed results that depend on the name of the card that was drawn. Most of the entries require the player to tell a longer and more substantial story. The narrative needs to take several minutes and be fairly substantial, but again could involve other heroes in the party, and possibly other characters from the hero's backstory.

## REWARDS

Participation, effort, and creativity should be rewarded in interludes. After a player completes her tale award her an action point or inspiration for the tale.

## INTERLUDE EXAMPLES

A hero with the Injury Dramatic Interlude, for example, shouldn't get rewarded by saying "Ugh was cleaning his halberd last night and accidentally cut himself." He might instead describe in more detail a story—perhaps even bringing the other player characters into it—where Ugh and another hero Emme were fighting a practice duel and things got out of hand. Ugh then describes more of what happened in the sparring session, then goes into more detail about how things got out of hand. Perhaps they argued and Ugh asks the Emme if she remembers exactly what it was all about...

After sitting down to rest after a battle, Hob draws a Charisma card, pulls out his pipe, and begins to tell the tale of how he is looking for the perfect smoking pipe. All because the first man of wealth that he ever saw had a smoking pipe. Since then Hob has always associated pipes with wealth and means.

Ugh draws a Strength card, and talks about the time he travelled down to eastern Breland near the border with Darguun into the Armored Hobgoblin. There he was challenged to hobgoblin standing push match.

Ugh related the rules of the game, and how he was able to beat the two current champions. He gained some of the first respect in his life that nite as the tavern bought him a few drinks after winning the competition.

During a trip up the Wynarn River to drop some scouts off, Noctis draws a Companion Dramtic Interlude card. He comes into contact with a merchant Keelboat on the way to Varna. It contains a gnome family of tinkers. He remembers how his parents use to ply the seas together onboard an elemental galleon as Captain and first-mate. So Noctis immediately strikes up a conversation with the family asking about how business is going, any dangers ahead, or if they have heard any rumors. After a lively conversation they do share a rumor that they have heard about lost contact with the priests at a place called the Vale of the Dancing Waters.

## DRAMATIC INTERLUDE RESULTS

Card Name	General Theme	Result
The Paladin, The Dance, The Trumpet, The Hidden Truth, The Winged Serpent, The Empty Throne	<b>Boon</b>	You and your companions find something of significant value. Describe the scene, including what it is, how you found it, and any guardians or obstacles that had to be defeated to obtain it (though you normally shouldn't game this out). Work in a significant role for everyone. The gift should be something of value, but not a game breaker and shouldn't be a significant magical item. It could be an art object, some sort of book, a gem, a weapon, a common or uncommon spell scroll or potion.
The Keep, The Cricket, The Survivor, The Wanderer, The Midwife, The Theater	<b>Companion</b>	During your trip your group encounters someone or some group on the way, some merchants, a local farmer, a troupe of performers, a detachment of guards or soldiers. You have an interaction with the group. What happens? Do you hear any rumors? Do you trade something with the travelers? Did these travelers remind you of someone from your past?
The Big Sky, The Juggler, The Desert, The Joke, The Publican, The Unicorn	<b>Memento</b>	You find a trinket or item of some sort on your trip that reminds you of something in your past. During a quiet moment, you relate that tale to your companions. You may also keep the memento if you like. Either make up a trinket or roll on one of the trinket tables.
The Forge, The Locksmith, The Brass Dwarf, The Inquisitor, The Queen Mother, The Marriage	<b>Wonder</b>	Somewhere along the way is a glorious vista, ancient wonder, sun-dappled forest, or other thing of beauty. Describe it in character and add a personal anecdote of the most beautiful thing your hero ever saw, or tell a story the wonder might remind him of.
The Bear, The Peacock, The Teamster, The Foreign Trader, The Owl, The Twin	<b>Anecdote</b>	Something funny happens during the trip that reminds you of a funny (or at least shocking) story from your own past. Relate it to your companions.
The Uprising, The Rabbit Prince, The Mountain Man, The Vision, The Carnival, The Courtesan	<b>Trial</b>	A part of the trip was particularly grueling, exhausting, or mentally draining for your hero. Suffer a level of exhaustion and describe what happened. Work in an anecdote from your past into the tale.
The Fiend, The Avalanche, The Tangled Briar, The Rakshasa, The Eclipse, The Tyrant	<b>Obstacle</b>	An extremely difficult obstacle bars your way. Describe the obstacle in some detail, then figure out how to negotiate it with your group. When the task is finished and everyone is resting up, tell the rest of your group about another obstacle you once faced.
The Beating, The Crows, The Sickness, The Idiot, The Mute Hag, The Betrayal	<b>Injury</b>	You suffer a grievous injury of some sort. Explain how it happened, working in something about your character's backstory as you do so.
The Cyclone, The Demon Lantern, The Waxworks, The Snakebite, The Lost, The Liar	<b>Trouble</b>	Something really bad happens. Your group is ambushed by enemies, stalked by a monster, or loses their way (and a significant amount of time). Describe the scene, then turn the game back over to the Game Master to run the encounter. After the fight, tell a story relating the events to something in your own past.

## INTERLUDE RESULTS

Suit of Card	General Theme	Card Interlude Result
Strength	<b>Victory</b>	Tell the group about a victory or personal triumph in your hero's past. How did it affect them afterward? Was there a reward? As with all categories, the concept of victory can take many forms.
Dexterity	<b>Skill</b>	Tell the group a tale or about an encounter involving the use of one of the skills your hero is proficient in. This could be recently or in the past. Maybe it was a competition, intentional or not, and you created an adversary or it was something your hero failed at, or won recognition for.
Constitution	<b>Tragedy or Loss</b>	Describe a tale of tragedy, loss or misfortune from your hero's past, featuring an antagonist from the past if possible. If the hero has a dark secret of some kind, hint strongly at it, drop clues, or otherwise give the rest of the group a glimpse into your hero's dark side during your narrative.
Intelligence	<b>Training</b>	Describe a tale that involved your training, training in the class you are in, in a skill or trade you acquired, in your education as a child, training that happened as you leveled up. If possible share a glimpse or piece of one of your teachers or mentors or senior commanders during your narrative.
Wisdom	<b>Love</b>	The hero tells a story about love—love lost, found, or waiting. It could be a person back home, someone left in some distant town, a family member, a philosophical concept, or, perhaps, something more sinister.
Charisma	<b>Desire</b>	Tell a tale about something your hero wants (or already has). It might be a material possession, recognition, a political goal, or even a trip they wish to take to some amazing destination.

### CREDITS & CHANGELOG

Last updated on Apr 18th, 2017

This was put together by Freewolf ([/u/Freewolf](#)), and posted to my Homebrew site for my [D&D 5E campaign set in Eberron](#).

Praise be [the master](#) for creating [The Homebrewery](#).

#### VERSION 1.1

- Changed some formatting.

#### VERSION 1.0

- Tied the cards drawn to the Harrow Deck from Pathfinder.
- Created this initial version from the Savage Worlds: Dramatic Interludes and Savage Worlds: Explorer's Edition on Interludes.