

STRANGE STONES



A random selection of Stone Circles, Menhirs, Standing Stones, Orthostats and Liths for fantasy RPG play.

by Dyson Logos

Of Stones & Woods

I have a mild obsession over standing stones.

As a kid I loved exploring the forests around my home - dreaming of finding something incredible, but happy to find the stone foundations of an old building, a line of rocks that were once a fenceline, and a clearing in the woods around a huge stone that didn't rise above the rest of the area, but prevented trees from finding root.

While the woods themselves provided a lot of interesting spaces (trees come in many shapes and sizes, and fallen trees make enormous changes to their spaces), it is the stones that held my attention.

We didn't have a magalithic culture in the region where I spent my childhood, so circles of stone set to mark the sun, natural thrones, and obelisks covered in strange runes are all elements of fantasy to my childhood. These things then turn up repeatedly in my fantasy games, and often show up on maps when I find an area needing something to break up the monotony.



Credits & Thanks

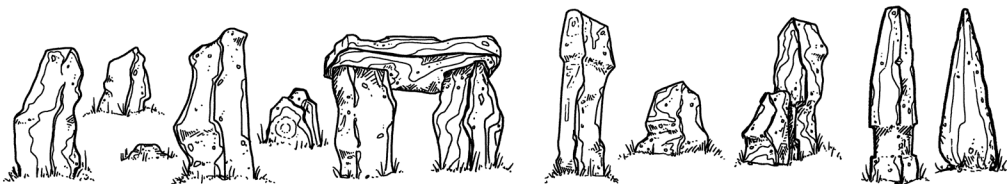
Thanks to the Venomous Pao, who runs a blog called Strange Stones that is probably at least partially responsible for this document's name (I've had the name stuck in my subconscious forever).

And while I've avoided reading it recently prior to working on this, Wormskin issue #4 also contains a random dolmen generator by Gavin & Gorgonmilk. I've avoided going back to it while working on this - but did read it when it first came out in 2016 (I gladly have all the Wormskin issues in my old school bookshelf).

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This document was originally released as a Patreon Exclusive - and after several years is now available for sale.

Most text in this document uses the Montreux Grotesk font.

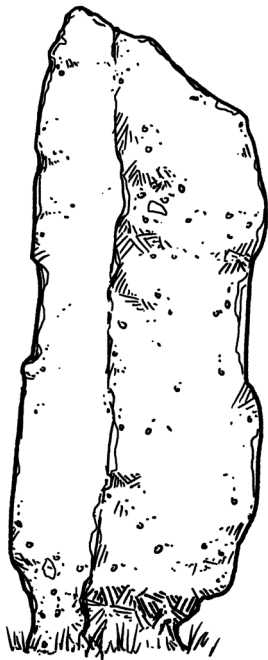


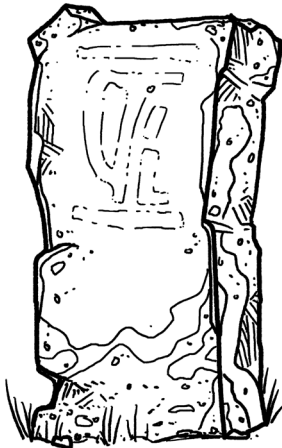
Random Rocks

This table launches into the whole structure of standing stones. If you already know what the structure in question will be (a solitary stone, a table stone, a circle, concentric circles with a throne, etc) then just go to the appropriate subtables to either roll or hunt for inspiration.

If you want more complex stone arrangements as a default, roll a d24 instead of a d20 on this table.

d20	Stones!
1	Single ancient stone worn down by the ages.
2	Single ring of simple standing menhirs.
3	Double ring of stones.
4	Large pyramid-shaped stone sits here like an unnatural hill.
5	Natural 'throne' of mossy stone.
6	Table stone held up by two smaller stones.
7	Pierced stone (either by the elements or by workmen) made into a unique menhir.
8	Fallen stones that were once a circle, now mostly buried and covered.
9	Two tall standing carved columns, once part of a temple or other structure.
10	Massive exposed bedrock with natural looking protrusions in a circle (probably formed by magic or the actions of earth elementals).
11	Massive menhir carved to resemble a knife, axe or other weapon.
12	Semicircle of menhirs with a stone "throne" at the centre of the arc.
13	Large stone lays flat at table height. Roll 1d6. [1-2] Circular, [3] Square, [4] Rectangular, [5-6] Some other shape (triangle, hexagon, highly irregular, etc).
14	Tall worked obelisk. Roll 1d6. [1-2] Triangular cross-section, [3-5] Square cross-section, [6] d4+4 sided cross-section.
15	Multiple stones placed together to form a chair or throne.
16	Two stones holding up a lintel stone.
17	d3+1 stones holding up a lintel stone.
18-20	Roll again twice and combine the results into a collection or formation of stones. Add an additional roll to the structure every time this is rolled.





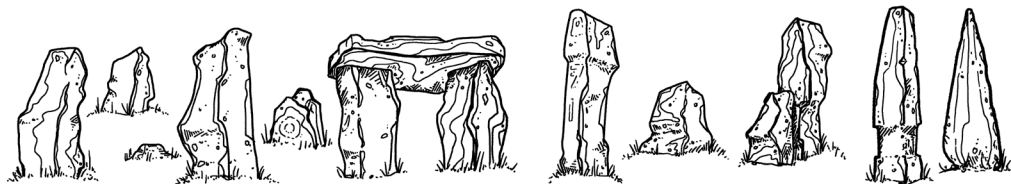
Weird Runes

I generally run with 25% of standing stones having some runes, glyphs, or writing carved into them. But if standing stones are less common in your setting, then you may want to increase this to 50 or 75% to make them more interesting.

Most runes are in ancient lost languages (needing comprehend languages or a translator) or magical tongues (requiring read magic to comprehend them).

d20 Weird Runes of Some Kind...

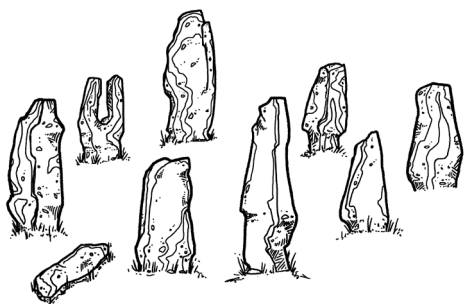
1	Text so worn down by age that nothing can be deciphered.
2	Warnings to not disturb this site.
3	Elaborate knotwork or carvings of vines and leaves.
4	Simple geometrics - circles, triangles, etc.
5	- As [4] but tracing the shapes with a finger triggers a strange effect
6	- As [5] but it must be traced in (1d4) [1-2] Blood, [2] Wine, [3] Water
7	Hand print.
8	- As [7] but putting your hand in the print triggers a strange effect
9	- As [8] but the hand must be covered in blood
10	An eye watching over the site.
11	Short historical or prophetic text.
12	Longer historical or prophetic text covers the stone(s).
13	Arcane text in a magical language. When read aloud it triggers a strange effect.
14	Arcane text in a magical language. Treat as a spell scroll generated as normal for such. Roll 1d8 when the spell is cast (+1 if the spell is transferred to a spellbook). The text fades and comes back after [1] 24 hours, [2-3] 1 week, [4-5] 1 month, [6-7] 1 year, [8] 1d12 years, [9] never.
15	Arcane glyphs that trigger a strange effect when rubbed or cleaned.
16	Depictions of animals or spirits.
17	Depictions of monsters.
18	Instructions to follow to trigger a strange effect (walk around the stones counter-clockwise, burn certain incense, sacrifice something)
19-20	Roll again twice and combine the results into a set of runes or glyphs. Add additional runes if this result is rolled again until a maximum number of results equal to 1 + the number of stones present.



Something Unusual

A further 25% of all standing stones have an element that makes them immediately stand out from the rest. They are made of strange materials, defy gravity, bear unusual decorations, glow, or attract the unusual.

Most standing stones are made of a local variety of stone, although many use a rarer (still local) stone to make them stand out more.



d20 Well, this is certainly unusual!

1	Bears a prominent keyhole. If the right magical key is used it triggers a strange effect.
2	As [1] above, but the keyhole is well concealed and hard to find.
3	Glow faintly in the dark.
4	Positioned in a manner that should fall over, and yet doesn't.
5	Floating d12" above the ground.
6	Has 1d6 x 1d6 gems embedded in the stone. Prying them out is treated as a bad idea. Value is determined as normal for gems.
7	Is very smooth like a fine sculpture.
8	As [7], but smoothed down to a polished near-mirror finish.
9	Has massive cracks, but is still standing.
10	Each stone is made of two or more contrasting stone types, perhaps merged magically.
11	Unusual Material: Huge pieces of bone.
12	Unusual Material: Jade
13	Unusual Material: Metal (roll 1d6). [1-3] Rusty iron, [4-5] Steel, [6] Silver or Gold plated
14	Unusual Material: Quartz
15	Unusual Material: Coal
16	Unusual Material: Veins of bright purple, red, green or other colour mixed into the stone.
17	Home to a lot of wildlife - bird nests, deer, etc.
18	Completely painted in one or more bright colours.
19-20	Roll again twice and combine the results to produce some extra-funky standing stones!



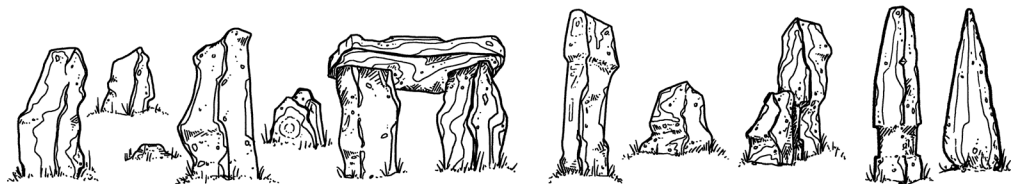
Strange Effects

A number of results in the previous tables trigger a strange effect. In addition, sitting on a standing stone throne or making a living sacrifice on an appropriate standing stone can (50%) also trigger a strange effect. As can just about anything that you decide (teleporting into a stone circle, casting a potent spell, killing a mythical creature, etc).

Generally speaking, once a strange effect has been determined, the trigger will cause that strange effect each time. Most strange effects can only be triggered (roll 1d6) [1] once per hour, [2-3] once per day, [4] once per week, [5] once per month, [6] once per year.

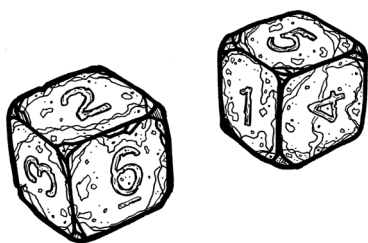
d66 Whoa! What happened?

- | | |
|----|---|
| 11 | Teleported to a location appropriately linked to these stones within 1d10 miles. |
| 12 | As [11] except all within 30' are teleported. |
| 13 | Continual Light / Continual Flame is cast on your hand or weapon as appropriate. |
| 14 | Blessed as the Bless Spell for 2d12 hours |
| 15 | Spellcasters who prepare spells have their prepared spells randomized from their known spells. |
| 16 | Gain advantage on all Strength checks for d12 days |
| 21 | Gain advantage on all Intelligence checks for d12 days |
| 22 | Gain advantage on all Wisdom checks for d12 days |
| 23 | Gain advantage on all Dexterity checks for d12 days |
| 24 | Gain advantage on all Constitution checks for d12 days |
| 25 | Gain advantage on all Charisma checks for d12 days |
| 26 | Gain advantage on next saving throw |
| 31 | Gain advantage on all saving throws for 24 hours |
| 32 | Healing wave heals 2d8 hit points to all within 30 feet |
| 33 | Healing wave heals 4d8 hit points to all within 60 feet |
| 34 | Healing wave heals 6d8 hit points to all within 120 feet |
| 35 | Creates food and drink for 1d12 people per stone |
| 36 | Sanctuary spell effect for 2d12 hours |
| 41 | Primary weapon becomes +1 (or is improved by +1) for d12 days |
| 42 | An elemental is summoned - unless the triggering person is of the same faith as the circle makers the elemental is immediately hostile. |



d66 Whoa! What happened?

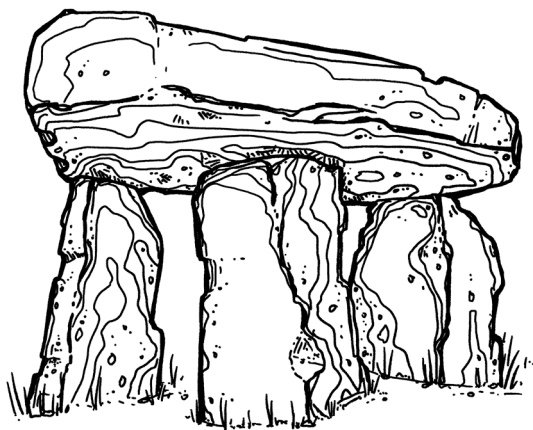
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| 43 | Gain the ability to cast a spell once. Pick or randomly determine a spell of (roll 1d6) [1-2] level 1, [3-4] level 2, [5] level 3, [6] level 4. Spells will typically be druidic or clerical, but might be from any list. |
| 44 | Gain the ability to cast a spell as [43] above, but can be cast 1d4+1 times. |
| 45 | Gain the ability to cast a spell as [43] above, but can be cast once per day for the next (roll 1d6) [1-3] week, [4-5] two weeks, [6] month. |
| 46 | Gain the benefit of a shield spell against the next 1d6 successful attacks or magic missile spells. |
| 51 | Remove curse is cast on all within 120 feet. |
| 52 | Portal opens to another world or plane associated with the standing stones (or to a very distant land) and remains open for two way travel for 1d6 hours. |
| 53 | Bestows a feeble curse on the person triggering the strange effect. |
| 54 | Bestows a minor curse on the person triggering the strange effect and a feeble curse on all within 120 feet. |
| 55 | Bestows a major curse on the person triggering the strange effect and a minor curse on all within 120 feet. |
| 56 | All melee weapon attacks are imbued with elemental energy for the next 1d12 days, adding 1d8 damage of the appropriate type. |
| 61 | Gain the benefit of a Contact Other Plane spell. |
| 62 | An anti-magic shell covers the area of the stones + 1d6 x 10 foot radius beyond for 1d10 x 1d10 minutes. |
| 63 | A wall of fire encircles the area of the stones for 1d12 hours. |
| 64 | Gain the effects of a potion rolled for as normal (reroll non-imbibed potions). |
| 65-66 | Roll twice for extra-special strange effects! |



To roll d66, you take 2d6 and read them as you would read percentile dice - one die is the first digit, the other is the second.

In the illustration above, I've rolled a 25.





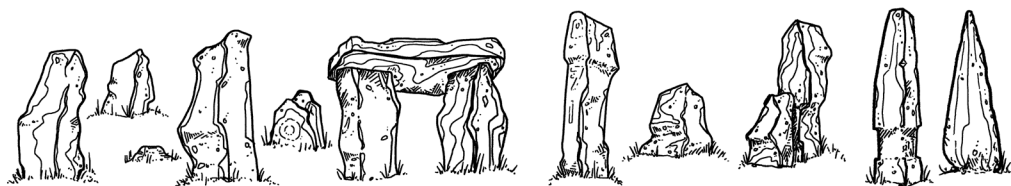
That was a Bad Idea

There's a reason that these strange stones have stood for so long.

Destroying or defacing standing stones can trigger a whole bunch of weirdness and bad mojo.

d20 Oooops...

1	Triggers one last strange effect
2	Triggers 1d3 strange effects
3	Curses the defiler with a feeble curse
4	Triggers a strange effect and a feeble curse on the defiler
5	Triggers a strange effect and a feeble curse on all within 100 yards
6	Curses the defiler with a minor curse
7	Triggers a strange effect and a minor curse on the defiler
8	Triggers a strange effect and a minor curse on all within 100 yards
9	Curses the defiler with a major curse
10	Triggers a strange effect and a major curse on the defiler
11	Triggers a strange effect and a major curse on the defiler and a minor curse on all within 100 yards
12	Curses the defiler with a divine curse
13	Curses the defiler with a divine curse and a major curse on all within 100 yards
14	Curses the defiler with a divine curse, a major curse on all within 100 yards, and a feeble curse on all within 1 mile
15-20	Nothing happens



Feeble Curses!

d12 Foiled Again!

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Hair falls out and will not regrow |
| 2 | Disadvantage on next saving throw |
| 3 | Lose one prepared spell for the day |
| 4 | Itchiness causes -2 on attack rolls |
| 5 | Miss next attack |
| 6 | Next spell cast will fail |
| 7 | Roll 1d20 under Dex whenever trying to run to avoid falling |
| 8 | Gradually change race to a random humanoid race (purely cosmetic, no game effects) |
| 9 | Automatically are surprised next time you need to check for surprise |
| 10 | Dogs and horses are skittish and difficult to control in your presence |
| 11 | -1 penalty on all d20 rolls |
| 12 | Grow an extra thumb on each hand |

Minor Curses!

d12 Foiled Again!

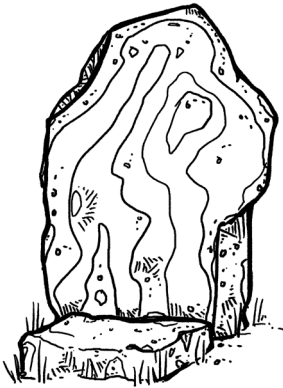
- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Disadvantage on all saving throws |
| 2 | Disadvantage on all attack rolls |
| 3 | Disadvantage on all social rolls |
| 4 | +/- 1 penalty on all rolls of all dice (whatever makes the roll worse) |
| 5 | -2 damage per die on all attacks and spells |
| 6 | Can never tell the truth |
| 7 | Must always tell the truth |
| 8 | All spells cast must also roll on the wild surge table |
| 9 | Rations, water, wine, etc all spoil within 24 hours |
| 10 | Starts all combats surprised |
| 11 | Your shadow becomes hostile and cunning, will wait for an opportune moment to attack (as the monster of the same name) |
| 12 | Wounds take twice as long to heal, and healing magic is only half as effective |



Major Curses!

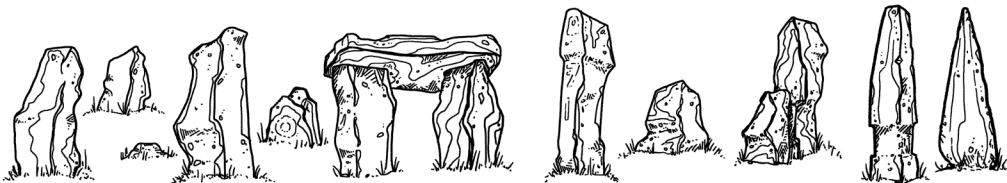
d12 Foiled Again!

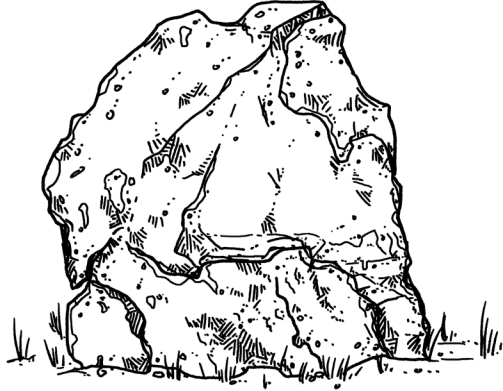
1	Struck blind and deaf
2	Polymorphed into a frog or other harmless animal
3	Re-roll your highest ability score using 2d8
4	Cannot heal damage taken by any means
5	Instantly die if reduced to 0 hit points
6	Lose all spellcasting ability
7	+/- 3 penalty on all rolls of all dice (whatever makes the roll worse)
8	Nightmares / Daymares prevent all sleep or rest or meditation
9	Age 1d6 years per day
10	Disadvantage on all attacks, checks, and saves
11	Non-artifact weapons wielded will break on the first blow
12	All attacks against the cursed victim gain advantage



Curses are easily lifted in most fantasy RPGs with a simple remove curse spell. The trick is to not tell someone they are cursed... some of these curses can take a long time in play to discover - and often by the time they are discovered, they have already wreaked some major havoc (curses like instant death at 0 hit points, or all attacks against the character being granted advantage).

And if the gods choose to polymorph you into a foul dragon who eats their companions, who is going to show up with a remove curse spell anyways?





Divine Curses!

d12 Foiled Again!

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | +/- 6 penalty on all rolls of all dice (whatever makes the roll worse) |
| 2 | Re-roll all ability scores with 2d8 |
| 3 | Automatically fail all saving throws |
| 4 | Triple damage is received from all sources |
| 5 | Age 1d6 years per combat round |
| 6 | d6+1 companions or friends and family are subjected to random major curses |
| 7 | Every time you kill an enemy, make a Constitution save DC 15 (or a save vs death) or join them in death |
| 8 | Lose all class and level abilities, becoming a simple commoner for the duration |
| 9 | Polymorphed into a hostile and violent dragon with no memories of prior life (of a power level roughly capable of fighting the curse victim's companions) |
| 10 | Suffer damage equal to the damage you deal from attacks and spells |
| 11 | Cannot communicate in any spoken, gestured, or written language |
| 12 | d3 each of feeble, minor, and major curses |



