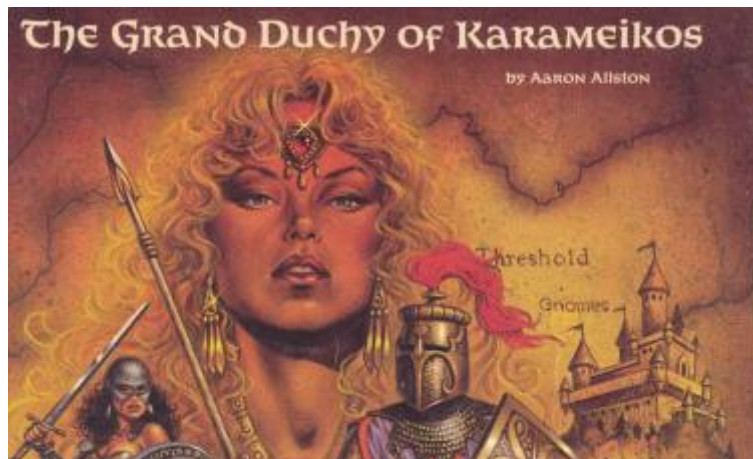


Karameikos Solo



Using AUGMENTED IMAGINATION to play D&D5E SOLO

I wanted to provide a step-by-step example of using my new Augmented Imagination framework for Solo or Co-op play, using D&D 5th Edition (as it's by far the most commonly played RPG system).

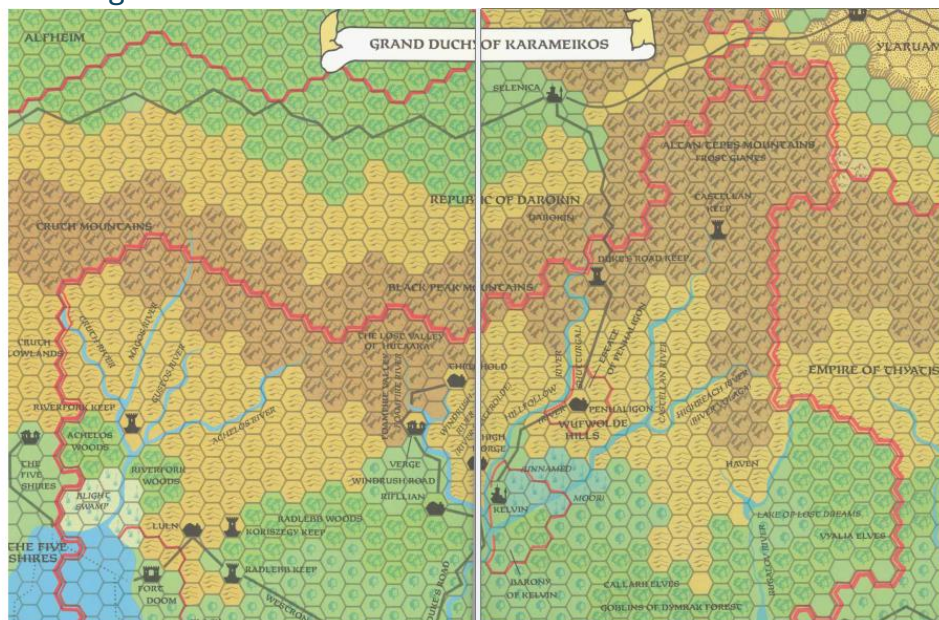
I found an old copy of GAZ01 The Grand Ducy of Karamaikos which was originally written for the BECMI Edition of D&D back in 1987 and decided to use that – mainly for the hex map and to give names to a few places and people. I'm not going to be rigidly bound to the setting.

You can find Augmented Imagination at <https://aigm.igm4u.com/aigm.html>

Starting a Campaign

Augmented Imagination has a chapter with this title. It is specifically about starting to play a game with an emergent story ie. One that emerges from imagination and randomness. Step 1 suggests finding *a hex map that looks interesting*.

1. Imagine a Setting



These old D&D Gazeteers each have a fold-out hex map that fits with all the others to build up the world of Mystara.



Next, the framework suggests you *just zoom in and pick an area that looks interesting to use as your home region*. I liked the name Penhaligon, so decided to start in that area. It looks like a riverside town at the edge of the Wufwolde Hills.



I'm going to use the Augmented Imagination web page to store my Lists (People & Other Monsters, Places, Things) and I can already add a few places to my List of Places directly from the map...

	Places of Interest
1	Penhaligon, river-side town
2	Wufwolde Hills
3	Unnamed Moor
d4	
5	

So, if I ever need to roll for a place, I can start with a d4 (or a d6) to get one of these or one of the empty slots.

2. Imagine a few LOCAL FOLK

Bear in mind that I still don't know who or what I'm going to play at this point, but the framework suggests I imagine a family member and then a person of authority in the area.

Let's imagine that my character's mother is an apothecary, selling potions and herbal remedies in the town. We'll call her Thelma. She owns a small shop and lives above it with my character.

For the person in authority, the name Penhaligon made me think of a British actress Susan Penhaligon. I'm going to imagine she is the Baronetess, recently widowed, Lady Susan is struggling to maintain her position. Possibly the nearby Barony of Kelvin wants to annex her lands.



	People & Other Monsters
1	Mother - Thelma, Apothecary in Penhaligon Town.
2	Lady Susan Penhaligon - recently widowed, struggling to maintain her title.
3	Baron Kelvin
d4	
5	

3. Pick a nearby hex as a place to start



I choose to start a few hexes south of the town, over the Wufwolde Hills, at the edge of the Unnamed Moor.

"A moor in England is an expanse of uncultivated, open land, often characterized by acidic soil, low-growing vegetation like heather and grasses, and a history of human management such as grazing and fire. While the term typically refers to upland areas, **it can also describe low-lying, wet, peaty areas that were once marshland.**"

As the Moor stretches down from the hills to the river, I'll go with that "low-lying, wet, peaty" definition. Perhaps my (as yet undefined) character is out collecting peat to take home for a year of drying and then use as domestic fuel. If so, they will need a mule or a cart to carry sufficient peat bricks to be worthwhile.

4. Answer These Three Questions...

4.1 Why are you here?

As I still haven't thought much about who or what I'll be playing, let's stick with the idea of cutting Peat for fuel.

4.2 Why are you alone?

I suspect it would be unusual to be out here alone 12-18 miles walk from the town, perhaps other peat collectors are at a Town Festival, but my character is avoiding it and stubbornly came out here to work because of a recent break-up with their romantic partner. I haven't even chosen a gender or class or race yet, so I'm keeping this generic.

4.3 Why are you heading home?

I'll say I've collected some Peat and grown calm enough to realise it's not safe out here on my own! I've just spent a scary night alone on the Moor and it is likely to take the whole day to walk back through the hills. We'll call it an expected **TWO SCENES** to get home.

5. Work out the FIRST SCENE for the Journey home.

The basic procedure in Augmented Imagination is as follows...

Step 0: Estimate HOW MANY SCENES you want your intended activity to take.

Two Scenes.

Step 1: Choose your preferred/intended type of Scene

The options are Combat, Environment, Knowledge or Social.

Environment Scenes are often a good choice for a Journey, so I'll go with that.

Step 2: ROLL a d6 to determine the SCENE FOCUS

I got a "3", COMBAT!

Normally, we'd now roll for the Scene Details on the COMBAT Table, but the guidelines suggest that we now Create our Character so that we can let the character's nature and capabilities influence what we imagine when we first see the Scene Details.

6. CREATE YOUR CHARACTER

The Framework includes some suggestions for how to play 5E with a single character instead of having to run a group of characters and I prefer to do it that way, so will create a 3rd Level Solo Character using the Standard Array for their Abilities, max HP at 1st level and average HP at subsequent levels, and with the following rules modifications from the Appendix of Augmented Imagination...

- a) you may want to allow a Solo hero to try and give themselves Advantage on an attack by making a relevant Skill check as a Bonus Action (eg. Stealth or Deception for a feint, Acrobatics to swing on a chandelier), or an Intelligence Save representing a clever idea, if they can't get chances for Flanking bonuses from allies. Perhaps risking Disadvantage if the roll fails. Come up with some narrative justification to exercise your creativity.
- b) You may want to ignore the extra damage from critical hits made against your Solo character.
- c) You may want to have your character's critical hits always do maximum damage.
- d) You may want to let your character always gain maximum hit points each Level and when spending hit dice to recover or when receiving healing from potions and spells.

- e) You may want to award your character Inspiration whenever they roll a “1” as it can be easier to have a “mechanical” rule like this than to have to judge if something you did is worthy of gaining Inspiration.
- f) You may want to ignore the rule about Death Saves with a “1” counting as two fails, or even determine that any successful Death Save, stabilises and restores the hero to 1 hp. In this way they can avoid ignominious deaths by bleeding out and only die when it seems narratively fitting that the enemy actually finishes them off.
- g) You may want to give your Solo Character the Rogue’s Cunning Action (Hide, Disengage or Dash as a bonus action)
- h) You may want to allow your Solo Character to begin at a higher Level. Typically, 3rd Level is a decent place to start, with more options (Feats & Class Abilities, spells, hit points etc)
- i) You may want a non-magical character to be able to cast spells, so feel free to grant them Magic Initiate Feat and/or multi-class into one of the spell-casting classes.

I’m using the Roll20 VTT and its built-in Charactermancer to build the character. The first choice is **RACE**... I fancy being a **Half-Elf** and imagine that my mother is the human parent. Perhaps the mixed-race origin is part of the reason they are alone on the moor! There are a couple of tribes of Elves (Vyallia Elves and Callarii Elves) mentioned further east & south on the hex map, so it’s likely I was influenced by that.

I get +2 Charisma and take +1 in Intelligence & Dexterity, pick the alignment Chaotic Good and the Skill Proficiencies of Survival and Stealth. I choose Goblin as my additional language (perhaps there are goblins in the Moor and some of them are suppliers of herbs to my mother’s shop).

As a half-elf, I get Darkvision 60ft & Fey Ancestry (Advantage on saving throws vs Charm and can’t be put to sleep by magic).

Next it’s **CLASS**... I decide to be a Sorcerer and choose the skill proficiencies Arcana and Insight along with the Sorcerous Origin – **Storm Sorcery**. This gives me additional Primordial Languages... Primordial, Auran, Ignan & Terran.

I also get **Tempestuous Magic** - Starting at 1st level, you can use a bonus action on your turn to cause whirling gusts of elemental air to briefly surround you, immediately before or after you cast a spell of 1st level or higher. Doing so allows you to fly up to 10 feet without provoking opportunity attacks.

ABILITIES... Str: 8, Dex: 13 +1 = **14**, Con: **10**, Int: 15 +1 = **16**, Wis: **12**, Cha: 14 +2 = **16**

BACKGROUND... I choose **Guild Artisan (Alchemists & Apothecaries)**. This gives me proficiencies in Insight & Persuasion (so I’ll swap Insight for something else as I already chose it... Perception). Nb. Choosing Perception isn’t strictly allowed as it isn’t on the Class or Background lists, but this is a Solo game and I’m pretty sure WotC won’t be sending the Pinkertons in to hassle me about it.

I also get the Tool Proficiency - Alchemist’s Supplies and another Language Proficiency (Elvish as it’s my father’s tongue).

I also decided to let the character take a Rapier instead of a Light Crossbow as a weapon proficiency and as starting equipment as my Fire Bolt cantrip should cover my ranged attack requirements and I need some sort of blade to use my Green-Flame Blade cantrip.

For Cantrips, I went with Fire Bolt, Mage Hand, Control Flames & Green-Flame Blade.

For 1st Level Spells, I went with Feather Fall & Detect Magic as my Spells Known

I'll get two more Spells Known because I plan to start at 3rd and will have 2 x 2nd Level Slots and 4 x 1st Level Slots to cast them with.

I'm giving myself a Mule (assume it's owned by my mother) to carry the Peat (and also to carry my Bedroll and Hemp rope as, with only 8 STR, **she** is encumbered already!



I decided on the name **Zephyr**, perhaps my father gave it to me, sensing the presence of my sorcerous origin.

Going up to 2nd Level gets me 4 more HP, 2 Sorcery Points, the Flexible Casting ability and the 1st Level spell Thunderwave.

Going up to 3rd Level gets me 4 more HP, 1 more Sorcery Point and the 2nd Level spell Knock. I also took the Metamagic abilities, Quicken Spell and Careful Spell.

I prefer to choose my Personality Traits, Ideals, Bonds and Flaws rather than roll them randomly and often make them up instead of picking from the supplied lists. I'll pick one of my two Personality Traits (Stubborn) and my initial Bond (Love of Mother) and let the rest develop during play, maybe the Flaw will be linked to what drove her out into the wilderness alone.

As mentioned above, I've also given her the rogue class feature - Cunning Action (Disengage, Dash or Hide) as she is likely to need something to help her survive as a lone heroine.

7. Play the Journey Home

7.1 First Scene

We already know that Zephyr is unexpectedly getting straight into a COMBAT Scene, so we'll continue with the basic Scene Procedure...

Step 3: Roll for the Scene Details

COMBAT Scene: RESCUE - Either YOU are rescued by, or you have the chance to rescue, an NPC or NPC party. 'Identify a Target' then choose or roll a Motive for the enemy.

With this result, I could decide to run a combat encounter that is heavily weighted against Zephyr and then have somebody turn up to rescue her. Alternatively she could come upon some enemy/enemies holding a captive and have a chance to stage a daring rescue. Let's go with the latter and see WHO needs rescuing, roll for the Enemy Motive and then try to determine who (or what) the Enemy are.

Identify a Target...

If there is an "obvious" or "particularly suitable" target, feel free to just choose that, or Ask the Bones after deciding whether it is 50/50 or LIKELY or ALMOST CERTAIN.

If necessary, you can roll on the Identify a Target Table below instead...

1d6	Type	Instructions
1	Biome Encounter	Roll on the current Random Encounters by Biome table
2	Biome Encounter	Roll on a different Random Encounters by Biome table
3-6	People	Roll on the People & Other Monsters List

I only have a couple of "likely" captives on my People & Other Monsters" list, Mother, or Lady Susan. I suppose it COULD be Baron Kelvin, but that might require me to come up with some other faction that wants him out of the way and that seems too complex for this initial example.

I'll Ask the Bones whether it's my Mother (probably came out here looking for me!) and say it's LIKELY... 3d6 and add the two highest.

Ask the Bones Likely: 9 (5,4,2) Yes

Now to work out who has captured (or is threatening her)...

I'll go for the Random Encounter by Biome for the Moors, which means I have to add a couple of entries for the Moors and then roll 1d4 to see what I get.

MOORS

1. Goblins
2. Wolves
- 3.
- 4.

I added Goblins and Wolves, but then rolled a 3, so have to come up with something new.

I'll say "Bandits" and add them as item 3.

Step 4. PLAY out the Scene

My usual process is to set the encounter up in the Roll20 VTT with tokens and then run the combat as fairly as I can manage. Three bandits, one has grabbed the bridle of the pony and pushed Thelma off. I've knocked off half her HP 2/4 (she's only a Commoner). I decided that the feisty old lady (or her pony) would have kicked the bandit, so knocked 3HP off him too.



Zephyr and her mule have just come upon the scene, not yet noticed by the bandits but would have to make a Stealth check to avoid being spotted once combat begins if she wants to try and get surprise.

Round 1

After rolling initiatives, two of the Bandits get to act first.

Are they content to just Intimidate Thelma?

Ask the Bones Likely: 7 (4,3,2) No But
--

I could roll for the “Minor Benefit” but in this case, I’ll just decide this means they intend to knock her out rather than start with a gruesome murder scene!

I usually use a house rule that attempting to KO with an unsuitable weapon is done at Disadvantage, so Bandit 2 will step up and strike normally with the hilt of his scimitar as he has Advantage because the old lady is prone.

He hits and the 5 damage is easily enough to knock her out. Zephyr will scream, giving away her position (and I’ll judge that’s enough to grant her Inspiration as she’s given up her chance for surprise).

Bandit 1 will move down to engage Zephyr, but have to double move, so no attack this round.

On Zephyr’s go, she’ll thrust at the bandit with her Rapier, no point casting Green-Flame Blade as there is no other enemy close enough to take the magical damage and she doesn’t want them to know she’s a sorcerer until it’s too late.

She hits for 4 HP, Bandit 1 is down to 7/11. She’ll deliberately make noise and swing wildly to make the mule back away, in case she needs to cast Thunderwave later and she’ll step sideways so the trees make it harder for them to surround her.

Bandit 3 will attempt to calm Thelma’s pony and tie the reins to the nearby tree. He makes a decent Wisdom check (Animal Handling) and the pony is secured.

Round 2

Bandit 2 is close enough to run over and slash at Zephyr. Would he want to take her alive?

Ask the Bones Likely: 9 (6,3,1) Yes

So, they’ll either attack at Disadvantage with their Scimitars, or try to Grapple (I’d say the initial attempt to Grapple would be at Disadvantage too as Zephyr is waving two feet of sharpened steel around, but it would be clear that she is physically not much of a threat).

Grapple? I’m picking that as the “good” result for me, as it doesn’t result in immediate damage.

Ask the Bones Likely: 8 (4,4,1) Yes But

As the “yes” is supposedly the “good” result, I rolled for the Drawback (the But) and got

Drawbacks: It drew attention

So, someone or something else is nearby. I’ll work out what at the end of this round.

Shouting loudly “Grab her!”, the bandit attempts to grapple, rolling a 2 & 9, so Zephyr only has to get 2 to avoid him (as Grappling is an opposed roll). She’ll dodge (she does get -1 on Athletics and +2 on Acrobatics!). She side-steps easily with 16.

Bandit 1 will step around her to get Advantage from flanking and will also grapple. (the Advantage and Disadvantage because she’s armed will cancel out).

He gets 11. Zephyr manages to dodge again with 17.



There are two of them on her now, but they aren't in a good position for a Thunderwave spell as it is a 3x3 square effect that the caster has to be on the outside of.

Fortunately, I gave her Cunning Action (one of my recommendations for playing a single character), so she can Disengage as a Bonus Action and step to the right of Bandit 2, then cast Thunderwave to get them both.

She casts it using her Level 2 Spell Slot to get extra damage 3d8 and gets 13. The two bandits will have to make a DC13 CON Save to avoid being killed.



Both fail (on a 4 and a 9) and are blasted to bits and their corpses hurled 10ft back by the spell.

Zephyr is then free to take the rest of her move towards the remaining Bandit, not quite closing with him.

I like to use a Morale Check for enemies when their party is reduced by 50% or more, or whenever there is a clear display of superior power. I tend to use the Ask the Bones mechanism and decide whether it is Almost

Impossible, Unlikely, 50/50, Likely or Almost Certain that their Morale will break. In this case, seeing both his friends killed in a very loud explosion, it seems Almost Certain (roll 4d6 and add the highest two)...

Ask the Bones Almost Certain: 9 (5,4,4,1) Yes

Bandit 3 could surrender or make a run for it, I could roll to find out, but it seems sensible for him to run for it in the face of unexpected magic. He will use the Dash action and run 60ft to the South-East, (nearly off my map!)

At the end of the round, I'd decided to roll to see who (or what) had become aware of the combat. The echoes of the Thunderwave would have been deafening and might have made them change their mind about joining the fight anyway!

I'll roll 1d4 on the Random Encounters table which currently contains Goblins, Wolves & Bandits. I rolled 2 and got Wolves, but it seems likely the enormous boom will have frightened them off.

Ask the Bones Almost Certain: 12 (6,6,2,1) YES! And

I'll interpret that "And" as there is a distant cry from Bandit 3 as he is overtaken and torn apart by the wolves.

After the Combat

Zephyr rushes over to her unconscious mother, fearing the worst, but is relieved to find Thelma is still breathing. She bundles her cloak under her head to make her comfortable.

Step 5 Roll for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Roll 1d6, on a 1 there is an immediate additional Scene before you have time to rest and recover.

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?:NO - You get some breathing space between scenes if you want/need it unless you think it is more appropriate for the narrative to continue immediately.

After an hour, Thelma wakes up on 1 HP.

Zephyr has had time to search the bodies and calm down the pony and the mule.

Using the table of Individual Treasure: Challenge 0-4 on page 136 of the 5E Dungeon Master's Guide (but only checking for Silver & Gold), the 2 bandit corpses are carrying...

11g, 17s & 12g, 18s = 23g & 35s

7.2 Second Scene

Step 1: Choose your preferred/intended type of Scene

I'll make a SOCIAL Scene the Chosen Scene Focus this time, imagining a mixture of tears and recriminations on the way home.

Step 2: Roll a d6 to determine the SCENE FOCUS

I instead get a KNOWLEDGE Scene. Perhaps this can be something I learn from the Bandit corpses or something my mother tells me?

Step 3: Roll for the Scene Details

KNOWLEDGE Scene:RUMOUR - You learn a Rumour. Consult the RUMOUR Table.

RUMOUR:POINTS TO A PLACE: - There is something here that could tell you the location...Choose somewhere or roll on your 'Places of Interest' to determine a location... that contains...Choose something or roll on the Sparks Tables or roll on your 'Treasure & Things' or roll on the 'Random Encounters by Biome' or roll on your 'People & Other Monsters' list.

I decide that one of the Bandits has a letter in his pocket that suggests the location of something interesting.

Spark 1: Eager, Spark 2: Trouble

The two Sparks don't suggest anything immediately that could be there but I'll instead say that the letter seems like the writer is very "eager" for the reader to go and check out the location and the map describes a cave near where the Highreach & Castellon Rivers meet.



Step 4: Play the Scene

Zephyr will need to make an Investigation check DC12 to see if she can piece together the exact location. She succeeds with a 14. Sometimes, a scene can be just a simple skill check.

Step 5: Roll for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?:NO - You get some breathing space between scenes if you want/need it unless you think it is more appropriate for the narrative to continue immediately.

Wrap Up

Zephyr and her mother get back home to the town of Penhaligon (I'd decided on a 2-Scene Journey and didn't get any random Additional Scenes).

I imagine Thelma gave her a good telling-off about going out into the Unnamed Moor on her own.

It seems Zephyr may have just had an emotional break up with a partner (as yet undetermined) and this can be the thing that shakes her out of her "normal" life and into a life of adventure.

She has the information in the letter pointing her to a location that the Bandits were "eager" to go to (and would lead them into "trouble"), so that's something we can follow-up next time.

I add "Bandit Leader (3 bandits killed in session 1)" to the list of People & Other Monsters.

I add "Mysterious Cave by the Two Rivers" to the list of Places.