A LOREIFY HOMEBREW SUPPLEMENT

HOUSE RULES YOUR TABLE WILL STEAL

ten table-tested rules, why each one works, and where each one bites

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Every long-running table quietly stops playing by the book. These are the ten most-adopted house rules we've seen across hundreds of campaigns — each with the reason it works and the failure mode nobody warns you about.

1. POTIONS ARE BONUS ACTIONS

The rule: Drinking a potion on yourself is a bonus action. Feeding one to someone else still takes an action.
Why it works: Nobody buys healing potions when they cost a full turn. This single change makes the potion economy real.
Where it bites: Bonus-action-hungry classes (monks, dual wielders) benefit least. Accept the asymmetry or let those classes drink as part of movement once per fight.

2. MAX ROLL, THEN ROLL AGAIN

The rule: On a critical hit, take the maximum of the weapon's damage dice, then roll them once and add.
Why it works: Nothing kills a crit like rolling double 1s. Crits should always feel like crits.
Where it bites: Monsters crit too. A max-damage smite from your paladin is fun; a max-damage multiattack from a giant is a funeral. Decide up front whether it's symmetric.

3. SECRET DEATH SAVES

The rule: Players roll death saves behind the DM screen or privately. The table doesn't know the count.
Why it works: Public death saves turn dying into a math problem ("she has two fails, we have one round"). Hidden ones turn it back into panic.
Where it bites: Some players find it too stressful. Read your table — this rule is for groups that want their hearts in their throats.

4. LINGERING INJURIES AT ZERO

The rule: The first time a character drops to 0 hit points in a fight, they gain a minor lingering injury — a limp, a scar, a ringing ear — until their next long rest in safety.
Why it works: Going down means something without adding a death spiral. The scars become story.
Where it bites: Keep injuries flavorful, not mechanically crushing. "Disadvantage on everything" injuries make players sit out the session.

5. THE RULE OF COOL TOKEN

The rule: Each player gets one token per session. Spend it to attempt something clearly outside the rules — swing from the chandelier into a mounted grapple — with a fair DC instead of a "no."
Why it works: It licenses creativity while capping it. The token makes "wild idea" a resource players save for the right moment.
Where it bites: The token attempts the cool thing; it doesn't guarantee it. Say that out loud in session zero or feel the betrayal later.

6. POPCORN INITIATIVE

The rule: Roll initiative only for who goes first. After acting, each combatant chooses who acts next — ally or enemy — until everyone has gone; the last to act picks who opens the next round.
Why it works: Combat becomes a shared tactical puzzle. Setting up combos ("go, then the wizard drops the fireball") is electric.
Where it bites: It's slower with new players and can be dominated by the loudest voice at the table. Try it for one arc before adopting it.

7. MILESTONE LEVELS, SESSION ZERO CONTRACT

The rule: Level-ups happen at story milestones, announced one session in advance — never as a surprise mid-arc, never more than four sessions apart at low levels.
Why it works: XP bookkeeping dies; pacing lives. The advance notice preserves the anticipation XP used to provide.
Where it bites: Without the cadence promise, milestone becomes "whenever the DM remembers." The four-session ceiling is the actual rule here.

8. GROUP CHECKS, ONE VOICE

The rule: For party-wide checks (sneaking, persuading, searching), the most proficient character rolls once with advantage if at least half the party could plausibly help — and with disadvantage if anyone actively hinders.
Why it works: Five stealth rolls means someone always fails. One roll keeps the fiction of a party that's actually competent.
Where it bites: Players in heavy armor still want their clanking to matter. Let hindrances create story ("the paladin waits outside") rather than just penalties.

9. THE RETCON WINDOW

The rule: Any ruling can be revisited between sessions, and its correction applies going forward only. Mid-session, the DM's call stands.
Why it works: It ends rulebook archaeology at the table. Games keep moving; fairness gets its day in court later.
Where it bites: Someone has to actually remember what was ruled. Write rulings down the moment they happen or the window is fiction. (Yes — this is a note-taking rule wearing a house-rule costume.)

10. DOWNTIME IS CURRENCY

The rule: Between arcs, each character gets downtime days to spend: training, crafting, carousing, research, or building something in the world (a contact, a reputation, a bar tab).
Why it works: The world feels lived-in, and quiet players get spotlight scenes without combat pressure.
Where it bites: Downtime generates a flood of small canon — the contact's name, the debt owed, the rumor overheard. If it isn't recorded, it never happened, and players learn to stop investing.

ADOPTING HOUSE RULES WITHOUT CHAOS

Introduce one rule at a time. Announce it, run it for three sessions, then vote to keep or kill it. Rules adopted this way survive; rules dumped in as a batch during session zero get forgotten by session four — usually because nobody wrote down which ones were live. Keep a living "table canon" page in your campaign notes and this problem disappears.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

AUTOMATE YOUR SESSION NOTES

Half these rules only work if someone writes things down — the rulings, the injuries, the downtime canon, the promises made while carousing.

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