The D&D Adventure / One-Shot Creation Form

The Questions

- 1. The 'one thing' you have
- 2. How does this 'one thing' lead to a threat?
- 3. What was the course of events that lead to the current situation?
- 4. How does the responsibility fall to the characters?
- 5. Why would the characters work together to solve this threat?

The Explanation

1. What is the 'one thing' you have?

You have some idea: a monster, a villain, a genre, a "what if it was like James Bond, but high fantasy?"-type idea. It can be anything, from one sentence to half a page of text. Whatever you do, ensure the 'main idea' is the first sentence, and be brutally honest. This is for your eyes only. So if you have the idea "Die Hard, but in a Harry Potter-like wizard school", then just write that down. Don't talk around it. There was a spark in your mind that made you go 'aha!', so write down that spark.

2. How does this 'one thing' lead to a threat?

This one idea must form a problem or threat worthy of characters to solve. People will starve/become ill/drown/die. The world doesn't need to end, but if left unsolved, this threat will escalate and cause more harm. If an item has been stolen and the characters have to retrieve it, you have to answer the 'why'. Because if nothing happens due to the item being missing, then is it really worth the risk and hassle of going out and retrieving it?

3. What was the course of events that lead to the current situation?

You need an outline of events that tells you what happened. No long winded text, it can be a simple bulleted list (I actually prefer those). But you must be able to put the backstory together, to avoid plot holes and other writing errors. You can create a cool monster, make it a threat to a village, and once you outline the course of events you might think "wait, where did this monster actually come from?" Not every possible question needs an answer, but you should at least have thought about it, so you can actively decide whether or not a particular question should remain a mystery.

4. How does the responsibility fall to the characters?

Did the villagers even attempt to solve it themselves? In other words: provide evidence that your threat is not mundane and that the characters are uniquely capable of solving it. The bar could be really low: "We went to the doctor and tried every medicine he could think of, but nothing worked" is enough. This is basically your prepped answer for the inevitable "have you tried turning it off and on again?"

5. Why would the characters work together to solve this threat?

This can be generic, this can be specific to your group of players, but you should at least have an answer. A part of the introduction can be that the players have been a mercenary group for a short while, no further details required (unless the players would like to add more backstory and RP). It can be as extensive as you want it to be, with party-members being family, having a personal history together, or being part of the same guild. Just make sure that there's a baseline reason for the characters to not just turn around and walk away.