How to Host a Dungeon 2nd Edition

Some of these rules refer to the first edition of How to Host a dungeon, but you can play this on its own without those rules. How to Host a Dungeon is a solo game of dungeon creation. Read more about it here:

http://tonydowler.com/projects/how-to-host-a-dungeon/

Supplies

Suggested list of supplies:

- Glass beads, go stones, or other small markers in at least two colors (black and white), more is useful
- Something to indicate bonus tokens: a different kind of bead, a die, or just a pencil mark works
- Some pens and pencils
- Some sheets of paper
- Optionally, a pad of tracing paper.
- An assortment of dice: d4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 20, %

Explanations

❍ represents a white bead. ● represents a black or colored bead.

Bead: A bead is an object, but also measures an area. One bead is an area big enough to contain a bead with a bit of padding around it, like a room, for example.

Finger: a finger is a loosely-defined distance, about 4-5 beads long, or as long as your longest finger.

Legendary treasure: a legendary treasure is equivalent to a ❍, but has a special name. Give it a name, write it on a small square of paper, and use that to represent the treasure.

Bonus token: a one-time bonus monsters can get.

Mystical site: mark these sites with an "M". Rules not done for this yet.

Trap: indicated with a pit trap symbol (⊠). Rules not done for this yet.

Some more terms, definitions, and advice will go here.

Drawing

There's no right or wrong way to draw stuff, but there is a better and a worse way. The better way is one that looks good to you and helps you make a better dungeon. Don't sweat it if you draw something then don't like it. It will usually turn out OK anyway, and you can always change your mind.

The same goes for the rules. If the rules are unclear, do what makes sense to you at the time. You'll probably get a better result following your instinct than worrying about the rules. Don't be afraid to let the rules surprise you or take the dungeon in a direction you're not expecting.

Some more on drawing rooms and tunnels.

Setting up

Take a blank sheet of paper and put it landscape style so the long edges are at the top and bottom.

Draw a line all the way across the page about an inch from the top. That's the surface of your world. Everything below it is underground.

Proceed to the primordial age.

Whenever you finish an age, Tape a new sheet of tracing paper over the previous age. Everything under the tracing paper is history. As you follow the progress of the new age, you'll draw it on the tracing paper over top of the stuff from the previous ages.

> Blue boxes for additional content that doesn't have mechanical consequences but might be fun.

The Primordial Age

Start here. This is where we create a side view of the world for your dungeon to grow in.

Strata

How to Host a Dungeon created the dungeon in a side view with the surface of the world at the top. We'll start by drawing the surface of your world. Draw a line across the page about an inch from the top, something like this:
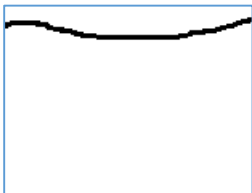
The world will be created in layers called strata. Draw your first stratum line about halfway down the page from the surface. Roll 1d10 (a ten-sided die) to see how this line will be shaped:

Roll	1d10—First Layer	
1	Start on the left and loop back again to exit on the left, something like this:	
2-3	Start on the left then curve down to exit on the bottom, something like this:	
4-7	Go across the page, something like this, straight or sloped is fine:	
8-9	Go from the right side to the bottom, something g like this:	
10	Start and exit on the right, enclosing a space something like this:	

Now pick the largest open area on the page and draw another line in it. Either choose the line you want to draw, or roll randomly. There are only a few rules:

- Try to keep the lines an inch or more apart
- Don't let the lines cross or touch
- Five or six lines is a good number, but stop when you think adding one would make the map less interesting or useful.

Your strata create several spaces. Number them lightly in pencil to help keep track of them.

Here are a few examples of completed strata:
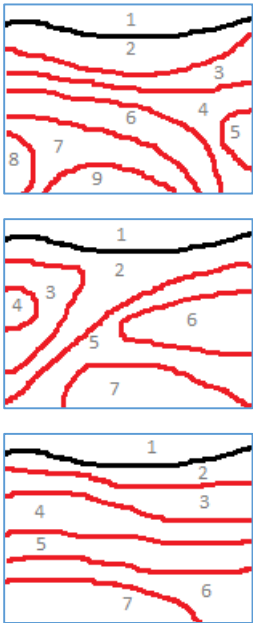
Features

Now we'll find out what your world is like by adding features. You'll do this once for each numbered area on your map that lies below the surface.

First roll on the form table to see what form it takes:

Roll	1d10—Form
1-2	**Vein.** Draw a line all the way through about the middle of this stratum.
3-4	**Intrusion.** Draw a single, round or oval enclosed area somewhere around the middle of the stratum. It shouldn't fill more than half the stratum or be so stretched out it doesn't look round any more.
5-6	**Scattering.** Roll 1d4+2. Pick that many locations scattered at random throughout the area and draw a bead-sized spot at each location.
7-8	**Network.** Draw some meandering, connected lines winding through most of this stratum. They could be looped, jagged, curlicues, hatching, or whatever.
9	**Region.** The feature fills almost all of this region! Just keep this in mind when you roll for the contents.
10	**Combination.** Roll twice on this table, combining the results.

Now roll on the feature table to find out what the feature is. Draw the feature in and label it. Maybe you'll also want to draw some rooms, caves, or tunnels to represent it.

Roll	1d10—Feature
1-2	**Ore.** This land form has rich deposits of gold, silver, mithral, or something else.
3	**Gems.** Draw some gemstone deposits. If it's a vein, intrusion, or network, just pick a few spots for gems: no more than six of them in total, but at least three.
4-5	**Water.** This land form is mostly water: an underground river, sea, water-filled caves, and so on.
6	**Magma.** This land form is mostly magma: maybe it's lava chambers or channels. If it's near the surface, add a volcanic vent if you want. If it's near the bottom of the page, maybe draw lava channels going off the page into the earth.
7-9	**Tunnels, caves, or caverns**. Draw tunnels corresponding to veins and networks, rooms or bigger caverns for larger features. Roll on the caves table for more details.
10	**Nexus.** Roll on the nexus table for details.

> **Inspirations**
>
> Waterfall, whirlpool, flume, mud pool, sunless sea
> Geothermal vent, hot spring, lava tube, lava lake
> Chasm, crack, pit, chimney, stygian depth, sunless sea
> Stalactites, stalagmites, columns, curtains, flowstone
> Crystal, geode, agate

When you get tunnels, caves, or caverns, roll to see what's in them.

Roll	1d10—Caves
1-3	**Primordial monsters.** Strange creatures left over from the creation of the world dwell here. Place ● to represent them in major room or intersections: at least two, but no more than six.
4-5	**Vegetation.** At least part of this area is dominated by an underground forest, fungal bloom, root tangle or something similar.
6-7	**Treasure.** Place ○ to represent ore, gems, or other treasure in major room or intersections: at least two, but no more than six.
8-9	**Just a cave.** Doesn't have to mean boring; could also be a chasm, cliff, or natural wonderland.
10	**Nexus.** Roll on the Nexus table to find out what.

Special features are a little different. Even if you rolled a whole region, the feature might just occupy one spot. When you draw in a feature, make your own decisions about how big it is or where to put it.

Roll	1d20—Nexus
1	**Mother of monsters.** Something horrible lives here—a dragon, the mother of monsters, a dire god, or something else. Pick a spot and place 3● 2○.
2	**Plague.** Write "plague 3" on this spot. Any civilization or monster group that explores into here will lose ●. The plague goes away once this happens.
3	**Fate.** Any monster group or civilization that explores this space will be utterly ended.
4	**Fault.** A massive fault opens up in this spot, reaching off two sides of the page in random directions. If it crosses water or magma, it may flow down into the fault, filling it up.
5	**Dungeonheart.** The heart of the dungeon is here. You decide what it looks like. Put 2 ● there. Once they're gone, replace with a legendary treasure.
6	**Gateway.** This location is a gateway to another plane of existence. The next monster group or civilization starting in this stratum comes in through the gateway.
7	**Cylcopean complex.** This network of massive chambers and corridors was left by forces unknown. If you got this result rolling on the caves table, roll on the caves table again to see what's in here.
8	**God fragment.** A piece of a dead god or maybe a piece of the early universe has fallen here. It counts as a great treasure and a mystical site, but can't ever be moved from this spot.
9	**Intellect.** There is a very, very ancient intelligence located on this spot.
10	**Bones.** This region is made of bones—maybe a huge skull, or the rib cage of the sky, or something weirder.
11	**Magic nexus.** The skeins of magic that hold the universe together run through here. Draw a nexus point, or some ley lines or something. It's all a mystical site.
12	**Phase shift—solid.** This area is full of one substance. It can be explored like normal, but some creatures might be loath to do so. Roll: 1. Ice 2. Blood 3. Salt 4. Evil.
13	**Radiation.** A radioactive substance or magical contagion makes this area dangerous. Monsters living here will by mutated over time.
14	**Darkness.** Light isn't very effective here, or it's just always dark, no matter how many torches you light.
15	**Palace.** A strange crystal palace with several rooms is embedded in this level, perhaps extending into the strata above and below too. If you got here from the caves table, roll again on that table to see what's in it.
16	**Void.** This area opens into a bottomless, annihilating void.
17	**Elemental Nexus.** The barrier between dimensions is thin here and elemental mana leaks through: earth, air, fire, water, wood, metal, smoke, lightning, bone, goodness, evil, or life force as you choose.
18-20	I need more. Choose or make one up for now.

Once you've rolled up a form and feature for each stratum, tape a sheet of tracing paper over your primordial age and proceed to the Age of Civilization. Remove any beads and re-place them in the same location once you place the sheet.

Playtesters: how easy/hard was it to figure out what to do in this stage? Is the world too crowded? Too sparse?

Roll	1d10—Creation story
1	This world is the detritus of dismembered or destroyed god
2	Sky mated with ocean, birthed world(s)
3	Some deity planned it just this way
4	Some deity planned it this way, but it didn't work out as they expected
5	It's a product of natural forces and/or primordial chaos
6	It has always been and always will be. Why do you ask?
7	World came into being as result of celestial family drama. Roll: 1. Tragic 3. Comedic 4. Lyric 5. Pornographic 5. It's complicated
8	Dream of some god/wizard/monster/ordinary person
9	It's all a cosmic game
10	Roll twice and combine the results. Both are true.

Age of Civilization

During the age of civilization, one way of life rises to dominance in the world, stamping it with that civilization's ways and vision.

The first edition Deep Elves were kind of clunky and confusing, so I've re-written them. You can use any civilization from the first edition here as well. More civilizations to come!

Civilizations evolve in a series of eras of indeterminate length: a spring era, summer era, fall era, and winter era. These eras are repeated over and over until the civilization comes to its end.

Some epic treasures

Massive gemstone, goblet or urn, adamant crown, epic poem, mithral skull, intelligent sword, magical artifact

Deep Elf Civilization

Inspirations: Victorian engineering, Dante's Inferno, necropolis

Setup

The Deep Elf city starts with 3 ● (nobles) and 3 ○ (treasure, resources, and slaves). They start in a stratum that touches the bottom of the page, preferably where a cave or tunnel leads off the page. Draw three sanctums for the ● and three pits for the ○. Give the city a name.

Spring

Every spring add ● to the Deep Elf city, creating a new Sanctum if needed.

Summer

In the summer, all Deep Elf colony sites take their actions, one at a time. See the colony rules below for how this works.

Fall

In the fall, the Deep Elves create new colony sites. Colonies can be created on sites with primordial monsters, water, lava, ore, or gems, but only one colony per site. To create a colony, move 1● and 1○ from the city to a suitable fsite that's connected to the city by tunnels. If there are no ○ in the city, you don't get to colonize. Draw rooms for them there. If there are sites, but they aren't connected, instead create a tunnel up to one finger long towards the nearest available site. Maybe it can be colonized next round.

If there are no available sites on the map, instead add ○ to the Deep Elf city and expand one random colony that can be expanded.

Winter

In the winter, the Deep Elves build. Count up the total population (● + ○) in the city and find the corresponding result on the build table. If it's something they Elves have not already built (except for XXXX), they build it. Draw it on the map. Otherwise keep moving up the table until you find something they can build.

After building, if there are twice as many ○ as ●, the civilization ends in a slave revolt. If there are seven or more ●, it ends in a civil war. If the Deep Elves ever dig an exploratory tunnel to the surface, the great surface war and the legendary migration of the Elves occurs, ending the Deep Elf civilization.

The End

When the Deep Elf civilization ends, remove all ● and ○ from the map and attach a new layer of tracing paper. Place 2 ● in the pits. These act as wandering monsters in the Age of Monsters. Place two ○ in the city. Replace any legendary treasures.

Playtesters: what do you think of the civilization you ended up with? Were you able to follow the procedures? Did the civilization die too early or live too long?

Pop	Construction
1-4	**Breeding pit.** -1●, +1○
5	**Fearsome shrine.**
6	**Arena of death.** -1○
7	**Oubliette.** After this civilization ends, put 1 ● here.
8	**Expansionism.** Expand a mining or slaver colony, if available.
9	**Macabre Theatre.** This is a mystical site
10	**Crystal Palace.** Room is two beads in size and can be used for ● or ○ later.
11	**Tyrants Fortress.** -1○. Contains a legendary treasure
12	**Saint's Tomb.** Mark with an "X"
13	**Tyrant's Bastion.** Add ● here, the tyrant ruler of all Deep Elfdom
14	**Indulgence Hall.** Can be built multiple times.
15	**Exploratory tunnel.** Tunnel 1 finger towards the surface from the city. Can be built multiple times.

Deep Elf Colonies

Mining Colony

Inspiration: strip mine, shaft mine, drill site, chain gang

When Deep Elves colonize a site with ore or gems, it will be a mining colony. Move 1BXB 1BWB from the city and create new rooms for the at the mining site.

In the summer, the colony will mine out an area of ore a bit bigger than one bead or tunnel to one ○ of gems and remove it. If there are any Dark Elf processing colonies, then add 1 BWB to the Dark Elf city. Expand one processing colony if possible. If there are no processing colonies, leave the BWB where it was mined.

If the mining colony has 2 or more BWB, expand it. If it's exhausted (no more ore or gems to mine), abandon it, removing all beads, creating a tomb room (marked with an "X"), and then add 1○ to the City.

Roll	1d6—Mining colony expansion
The first time the mine is expanded, roll below. The second time, dig an exploratory tunnel from the city 1 finger towards the surface instead. After that, this site can't be expanded any more.	
1-2	**Loathsome basilica.** -1○. Add legendary treasure
3-4	**Gallery.** Add a legendary treasure
5-6	**Labyrinth.** -1○

Processing Colony

Inspiration: lava forge, water wheel, arcane engine, manufactory

When Deep Elves colonize a site with water or magma or a mystical site, it will be a processing colony. Move 1● 1○ from the city and create new rooms for them at the processing site.

In the summer, if there are no mining sites, one processing site may spend 1○ to expand itself.

Roll	1d6—Mining colony expansion
The first time the mine is expanded, roll below. The second time, add 1 ○ to the city instead. After that, this site can't be expanded any more.	
1-2	**Wanderlust.** Build a ship, lava barge, or underdark gateway
3-4	**Aqueduct, bridge, or steam pipes.** Possibly to city or other colony
5-6	**Gallery.** Add a legendary treasure

Monster Pens

Inspirations: slave pits, bazaar, hive of scum and villainy

When deep elves colonize a site with primordial monsters, it will be monster pens. Move 1○ 1● from the city and create new rooms for them at the colony site.

In the summer, if there are any uncaptured monsters, remove one of them from the map and add 1○ to the City.

Roll	1d6—Monster pens expansion
The first time the mine is expanded, roll below. The second time, extend an exploratory tunnel 1 finger towards the surface.	
1-2	**Torture pit**. Add a trap here ⊠
3-4	**Reanimator tanks.** +1 ○ here.
5-6	**Menagerie.**

The Great Disaster

No new rules for this yet. Use the old How to Host a Dungeon, or just skip it.

Age of Monsters

The age of monsters is a time of unbridled conflict punctuated by deals of convenience and rare, short-lived alliances.

During this age ● represents some monsters and ❍ represents some treasure.

In the first era, three monster groups arrive—one delver group, one breeder group, and one alpha predator.

Whenever a group arrives, roll a random location. First, choose a stratum at random. Then roll 1d4 to determine where in the stratum they arrive, with a 1 being the far left, a 4 being the far right, and other numbers being a point somewhere in between.

If at any time a monster group arrives at a location that's already inhabited by another group, the arriving group of migrants invades the existing group.

Invasion: When an invader arrives, they encounter the group that' already there. If either group is destroyed, the winner claims the location. Otherwise, the invaders move aside and take up residence in any nearby empty area.

Roll	1d6—New Arrivals
1	A delving group arrives
2	A breeder group arrives
3	An alpha predator arrives
4	Wandering monsters move in
5	A special feature is placed
6	Adventurers enter the dungeon

For wandering monsters, special features, and adventurers, see the original How to Host a Dungeon rules or ignore these results.

Encounters

When a group encounters one of its neighbors, roll on the Encounter table. The group that's taking its turn is the aggressor. The moves are described under each monster.

Add +1 to the roll if the aggressor has more ●. Add +1 to the roll if the aggressor has a bonus marker (and then remove the marker). A group can never have more than 1 bonus token.

Roll	1d10—Challenge
-1	Aggressor does their **disaster** move.
2-4	Aggressor does their **failure** move.
5	Roll on the **weirdness** table to find out what happens.
6	The aggressor does their **meeting** move
7-9	Aggressor does their **success** move.
10+	Aggressor does their **dominance** move.

Monster Eras

Each era during the age of monsters do the following:

1. Roll for arrival of a new monster group using the New Arrival table below.
2. Each monster group takes their actions for the era, as described in the rules for that monster group, in the order they arrived.
3. Check for the end of the monster age. If at any time a monster group amasses 10❍ in treasure, the age of monsters ends and the age of villainy begins. If there are too many monster groups on the map to manage, end the age of monsters and being an age of villainy.

Weirdness

Roll	1d12—Weirdness
1	**Alliance.** The two groups form an alliance. Both get a bonus tokens. In addition, neither may encounter the other as long as either has a bonus token.
2	**Assimilation.** The group with fewer ● loses half its WXW and ● (rounded down) and then joins the other group. They are one group now.
3	**Driven out.** The group with fewer ● packs up and moves a finger away from the larger group, possibly invading any group it runs into.
4	**The dogs of war.** Both groups are reduced to 1●.
5	**Walled off.** The group with more ○ (or both if tied) loses 1○. Create a new wall closing off the passage between the two groups.
6	**Besieged.** The group with more ○ loses 1○ and its' territory is reduced back to only those rooms actually occupied by its beads.
7	**Power struggle.** The group with more ● splits into two groups. Split up the ● and ○ as evenly as possible. One of the groups moves 1 finger away to found a new monster group there.
8	**The Bazaar.** TBD
9	**Mutation.** TBD
10	**Cosmic horrors.** TBD
11	**Revelation.** TBD
12	**Magic mishap.** TBD

Move reference

	Delvers	Breeders	Alpha predators
Fumble	**Retreat.** Lose 1●, pay 1○	**Collapse.** Lose 2●	**Flee.** Alpha predator moves or tunnels 1 finger away and sets up a new lair.
Failure	**Appease.** Pay 1○	**Bribe.** Pay 1○, gain a bonus token	**Serve.** The group encountered gains a bonus token
Meeting	**Build up.** Gain a bonus token	**Embattle.** Lose ●, slay ●	**Extort.** Loot 1●
Success	**Heist.** Loot 1○	**Raid.** Loot 1○	**Hunt.** Slay 1 ●
Crit	**Sack.** Loot 1○ and slay 2● or exterminate	**Infest.** Gain 1● here, loot ○	**Terrorize.** Slay 1● and gain a bonus token or exterminate.

Keywords

- **Pay:** The aggressor loses ○ and the group encountered gains ○. If the aggressor doesn't have enough ○, they lose ● instead.
- **Slay:** The group encountered loses ●.
- **Loot:** The group encountered loses ○ and the aggressor gains it. If there's not enough ○ to loot, the group encountered loses ● instead.
- **Lose:** The aggressors loses ●.
- **Exterminate:** if the group encountered is an alpha predator, they are killed and removed.

Playtesters: A group that acts earlier in the round has a bit of an advantage over one that acts later. Is this a problem? Should it be random? Should order be determined some other way?

Delving Groups

Delving groups are typically well-organized builders and miners. Delving groups start with 3BXB 2BWB.

When a new delving group arrives, roll on this table to find out who:

Roll	1d6—Delver Migrants
1	**Morlons.** Can mine magma or vegetation.
2	**Dwarves.** Start with +1○
3	**Ant Lions.** On a "heist" result, instead pupate, adding 1●.
4	**Human Miners.** Start by digging down 1 stratum from the surface above their arrival point instead of arriving where rolled.
5	**Neanderthal.** Start with no ○, but +1●.
6	**Fungaliths.** No special rules

Actions

First, the delvers seize any BWB in their territory. If the delivers have more ○ than ●, add 1 ●.

If there are any sources of un-mined ore or gems in the delver's territory, they mine out an area about 1 bead in size. Place a new BWB in the mined-out area.

If the delvers didn't mine, they explore 1 finger in one direction in search of resources to mine. If they enter the territory of another monster group, they encounter that group.

If the delvers still haven't encountered any groups, and their territory is adjacent to any other groups, encounter one of those groups.

Encounter Table

	Delvers
Fumble	**Retreat.** Lose 1●, pay 1○
Failure	**Appease.** Pay 1○
Meeting	**Trade.** Gain a bonus token
Success	**Heist.** Loot 1○
Crit	**Sack.** Loot 1○ and slay 2● or exterminate

Breeding Groups

Breeding groups quickly grow their numbers and inhabit territory wherever they can to survive in the dungeon. Breeding groups start with 2● 1○

When new breeders arrive, roll on the Breeder table to find out who.

Roll	1d6—Breeder Migrants
1	**Kobolds.** On a "bribe" result, gain 1● instead of a bonus token.
2	**Halflings.** Start from the surface digging down in the first stratum above their arrival point.
3	**Gnolls.** +1● at start
4	**Wererats.** When they wipe out another group, add +1●.
5	**Darkling spirtes.** -1○, but start with a bonus token.
6	**Orcs.** When raiding, loot an additional ○.

Actions

First, add 1●. If the breeders have more ○ than ●, add 1 ●.

If there's any un-claimed ○ in their territory, the breeders seize 1○.

The breeders explore, expanding their territory 1 bead in every direction. If there's no space left to expand, they dig one finger towards another part of the dungeon instead. If this exploration touches the territory of another monster groups, the breeders encounter one of them.

If the breeders haven't encountered anyone yet, and there are any monster groups adjacent to their territory, the breeders encounter one of those groups.

If the breeders didn't encounter anyone, and there are any empty rooms in or next to their territory, add 1●.

Encounter Table

	Breeders
Fumble	**Collapse.** Lose 2●
Failure	**Bribe.** Pay 1○, gain a bonus token
Meeting	**Embattle.** Lose ●, slay ●
Success	**Raid.** Loot 1○
Crit	**Infest.** Gain 1● here, loot ○

Alpha Predators

Alpha predators are large, powerful monsters that forage the dungeon for food.

Alphas are a little different from other monsters. 1 alpha ● counts as 3. 1 alpha ● outnumbers a group of 2 breeder or delver ●. When an alpha loses 1 or 2 ●, it is unharmed.

When a new alpha arrives, roll on the alpha table to find out who:

Roll	1d6—Alpha Predator Migrant
1	**Dragon.** +1◯. If a dragon ever needs to expend ◯, it sleeps for a turn instead.
2	**Hill Giant**. On an "extort" result, loot 2◯. If arriving near magma, it's a Fire Giant.
3	**Xorn.** Forages for ◯ instead of ●. Can forage for gems if no ◯ is available.
4	**Ogre.** If it ever has 3◯, remove one of them and add a bonus token. Now an Ogre Magi.
5	**Ankheng.** No special rules.
6	**Ettin**. If driven out as the result of an encounter, encounter 1 more time instead, keeping the result of the second encounter.

First, the alphas forage for food. An alpha may journey up to 1 finger in any direction in search of wandering monsters, primordial monsters, or monster groups to prey upon. Choose one random target to encounter.

After encountering, the alpha may gather on un-owned ◯ within range and add it to its horde.

If the alpha did not encounter anything, it expends 1◯ instead to feed itself (but never a legendary treasure). If it also has no ◯ to expend, the alpha will move its lair 1 finger away in search of better hunting grounds. This can include creating a new tunnel to another area of the dungeon.

Alpha predators	
Fumble	**Flee.** Alpha predator moves or tunnels 1 finger away and sets up a new lair.
Failure	**Serve.** The group encountered gains a bonus token
Meeting	**Extort.** Loot 1●
Success	**Hunt.** Slay 1 ●
Crit	**Terrorize.** Slay 1● and gain a bonus token or exterminate.

Age of Villainy

No rules for this yet. Use the old edition of How to Host a Dungeon, or just skip it.