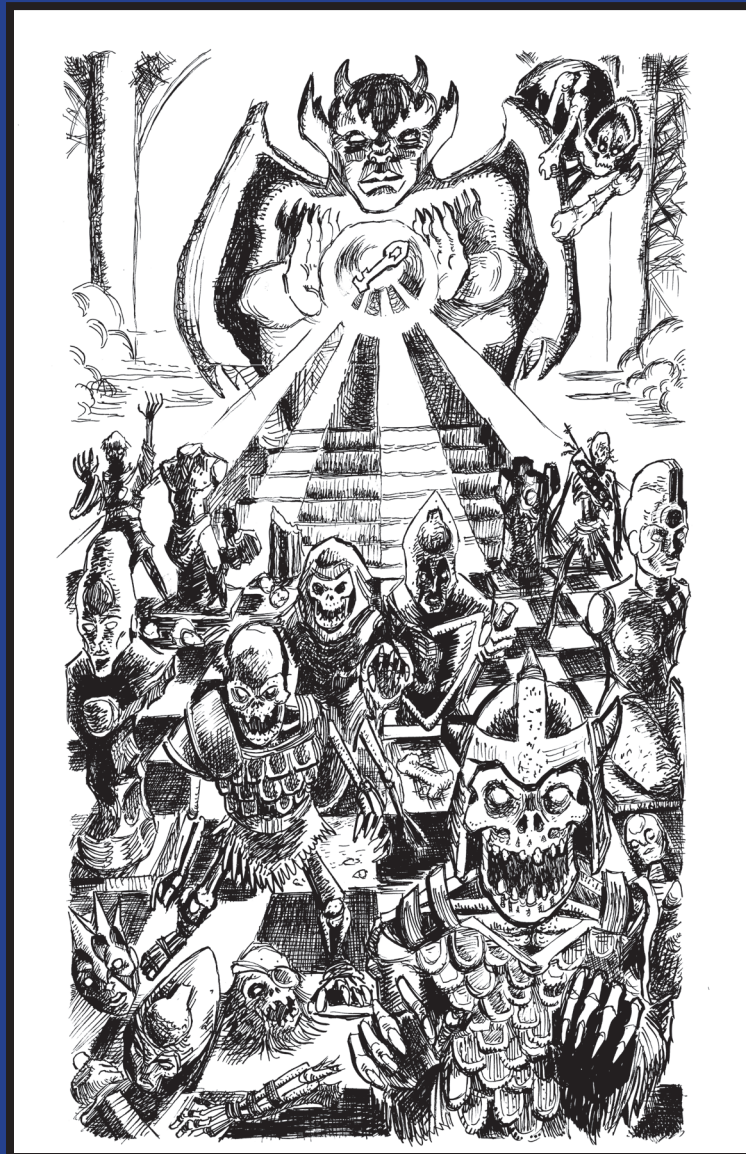


An Adventure for 4-6 1st or 0th level characters

DUNGEON OF THE DRAGON MASTER

Written and Illustrated by Elias Scorsone



PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

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Special Thanks to my family, to Anna, my wife, and my children, for their support while making this book happen. And to my friends Corey, Laura, Jesse, Amerino, Francie, and Anna, my first playtesters and fans. And to everyone who's supported me in my publishing dreams, and everyone who will play and enjoy this adventure.

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1st printing.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The Heroes learn that an army of bandits are burning the countryside, forcing the peasants on farms and in villages to flee to the city. A blind seer named Zodok tells the heroes that the town well has tunnels leading to an ancient testing ground for champions - the Dungeon of the Dragon Master - which may hold treasures to help them protect the villagers on the road to Highwall.

The heroes enter the tunnels, facing dangers and solving puzzles left by the ancient Dragon Master, and find magic items and training to become powerful champions. When they leave the dungeons, they find a village that has been ransacked by bandits, who have left the peasants caged in the cellar of the Inn while they go to get more slaves from nearby farms. The heroes may find themselves trapped when the bandits return, a situation that becomes even more complicated when a hungry dragon jumps into the mix.

If the heroes can fight off the bandits, or merely escape, and bring the refugees of the village with them, they arrive safely at Highwall with quite a few treasures for their trouble.

last part of the adventure includes a large combat against a group of bandits, with the wild card of a fire-breathing drake; this should happen after the heroes have reached level one, just so they have enough hit points and abilities to stand a chance. Either way, encourage your players to think through the fights, and drop hints about options other than running at the fight. While you shouldn't need to add anything, helping the heroes get weapons and armor before they fight would be a good idea. If all else fails, and especially for groups that need it, we remind you that Game Masters are there to support the game, not dominate and slay player heroes: help the players if they need the help, and guide them (or not) where they need it to get the most out of the fun.

If you're worried about lethality at Origin level but you don't want to fudge dice rolls, we suggest allowing players to have several player characters to start with, allowing the dice to fall as they may until the party has finished the dungeon and fought the bandits. This is a time-honored RPG tradition used in many games with high lethality. Afterwards, they can select their favourites from the ones who survive, and level them up to continue future adventures.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure is intended to be an introduction for a new campaign, both for new gamers and experienced players alike. The first part of the adventure is a puzzle dungeon, where the challenges can be solved without class abilities, and only a little combat. The second part involves a battle with the army of bandits, and a wandering fire drake.

The adventure can be played in two forms: you can either make standard 1st level characters using the core rules, or you can try the optional origin-level option for character generation, presented here.

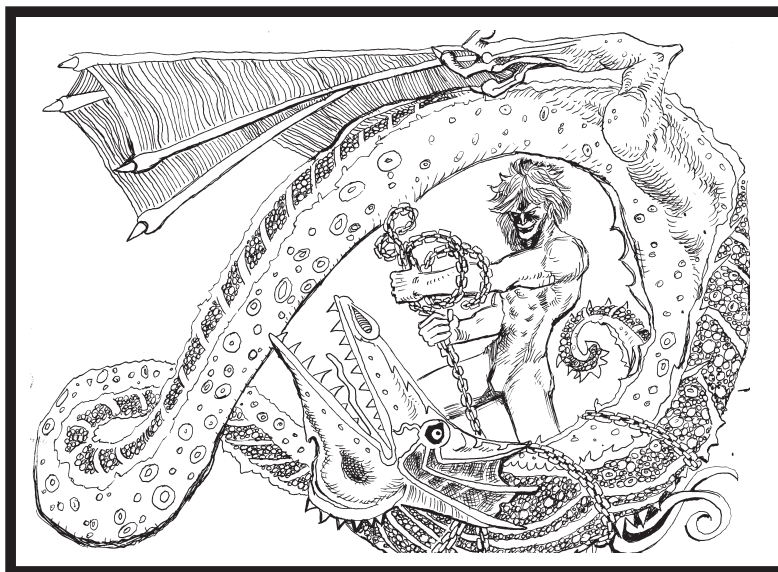
In Origin-level play, the heroes play simple commoners without adventurer class levels, which they earn during the first half of the adventure, in the Dungeon of the Dragon Master. They have their ability scores, their racial abilities, 6+ Con bonus hit points, and whatever equipment they can find. Solving the dungeon, they gain their first level in an adventuring class, as well as the treasures of the dungeon. From there, they are set loose upon the world above, and can enjoy their class abilities while fighting bandits, a drake, and whatever other dangers come their way in future adventures.

Additionally, this is the first adventure in the Highwall series of adventures. While they are designed as individual scenarios that should be able to fit into any game world, they will be able to connect into a series of adventures if you wish. Each will cover one level, from 1st to 6th, so will be able to cover that level of play.

None of the parts of the adventure require any particular class or race combination. In the dungeon there is one combat with a number of skeletons, and if this is done using the Origin level rules, the heroes will have to think their way through the combat. The



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND



In ancient days, when the magic of legend was in the world, dragons plagued humanity. One adventurer befriended some powerful outsiders named the Loxodonians, magical beings similar to elephant-like genies who had taken pity on the humans and wanted to help save them from the dragons. The kindly Loxodonians taught the champion how to chain the dragons and control them, and command the beasts to do good instead of terrorize the realm. The adventurer, now known as the Dragon Master, betrayed the Loxodonians with their own magic, and chained them up as well. The Dragon Master commanded them to make incredible wonders, grand palaces and magical items, and he controlled a vast realm and a seat of power within the Old Empire. None but the Dragon Master and the Loxodonians knew that his magic and power all came from his enslaved guests. He had everything he ever wished for, long life, wealth, power, and was hailed as the world's greatest hero.

After long ages of life and power, the Dragon Master had exhausted the Loxodonians to the point where they could no longer sustain his immortality, and he learned he would die. He did not want his legend to be forgotten as new heroes rose to power, so he had a magnificent complex filled with puzzles built to test the mettle of new champions, who would all want to prove themselves to his standard. The final room would be his mausoleum, where potentials would be given his approval before they leave. The tests were often fatal, meaning that only the greatest champions would survive, and they would have the best chance to carry on the legend of the Dragon Master in their own heroic stories.

Centuries passed, and the still-captive Loxodonians were exhausted by the effort to maintain the magical constructs of the Dragon Master. As they faded away,

the wonders faded as well, vanishing as the magical creature that created them wasted away. Now only three are left, chained in a hidden room near the Dragon Master's sarcophagus, undiscovered even after all this time, and unable to free themselves. Most of the tests have faded, leaving only a handful remaining to be challenged. As well, a creature known as a Skull Spider was trapped in the dungeon by previous challengers, and has claimed a portion of it as its lair.

On the surface, all that is left of the Dragon Master's palace is the entrance to the Dragon Master's tests and some minor foundations. A village formed on the spot when travellers discovered the entrance could be used as a well. Called "Well Water", they built an Inn for caravans stopping through for water, and they later learned to make coin from occasional adventurers seeking to enter the tests of the Dragon Master below. Most of those never returned, but those champions that did spoke of innumerable magical tests they attempted below.

Well Water's villagers are currently worried about a bandit army in the area that has been destroying villages and selling the farmers into slavery. Fearing for their lives, the villagers have been fleeing to the city for protection. Those left behind had hoped heroes might pass through to save their homes, but those hopes have faded: some adventurers had arrived to enter the tests of the Dragon Master only a few weeks ago, but they never returned after going in, and the villagers have given up hope they survived the challenges. The bandit army is large enough that the magical items gained from the Dragon Master's test would be needed to defeat them. Now only the player characters have a chance of going down into the well and surviving the challenges, and return as powerful heroes, mages, and warriors to fight the bandit army.

ACT ONE: THE COMING STORM



BANDITS ON THE ROAD

For heroes coming from outside of Wellwater, the following encounter can happen on any road near the village:

The road winds around hills and thickets, making its way to the nearest settlement, the village of Wellwater. The day is bright and the wind is at your back, making this a pleasant stretch of road... until the wind changes, bringing the smell of smoke with it. Soon enough you come around a corner and your party can hear rough of laughter, and see the grim source of the smoke.

A trio of men dressed in leather armour and armed with curved metal swords, are standing around a ruined merchant's wagon. On the ground are captive humans, who include a portly man in merchant garb and two battered-looking men in guards uniforms, have been tied up to one side of the wagon, and a pair of work horses have been tied on the other.

The three are apparently bandits of some sort, and are laughing at them and dividing their spoils.

"That caravan was stuffed with gold!" barks one, breaking open a chest filled with copper and silver coins with its sword, and sifting the coins between its stumpy green fingers.

"Aye," laughs another, "and once we raze every village between here and Highwall, Red-Eye will reward us! Our army is going to crush the peasants in these low-lands, and we'll make a mountain of gold selling them as slaves!"

At this, the merchant squeals while struggling against the ropes tying him down. With that the bandits break out into laughter, and go back to picking through the debris of the wagon.

The bandits are scouts from a large group of bandits led by Red Eye, a brutal bandit king. They came across this merchant caravan, captured the merchant and his guards, and plan to sell them off as slaves. The Merchant, Salizar, is terribly afraid of what's happening to him. If he is rescued, he will reward the heroes with gold once they get him to a town. He grew up in Wellwater, and had brought this ship-

ment to help his fellow villagers get to Highwall before the bandits attacked. Now ruined, he is very much afraid of the bandits selling him into slavery. The guards, Hendrick and Brodin, are dazed from the fight, but if freed from their bonds they will happily attack the bandits with the heroes.

If the heroes are 1st level warriors, mages, and experts, they may fight the bandits easily enough. The bandits are tired from fighting the merchant and his guards, and horses, and since they don't expect trouble they can easily be surprised. If the heroes are merely Origin-level, however, the idea of a head-on fight is probably not as good an idea as, for example, distracting the goblins by making noise or starting a fire in one direction, then sneaking around and freeing the prisoners from the shadows. The guards will attack with them, and this should tip the balance in favour of the heroes in a direct fight. The bandits are not the brightest fighters, but they have weapons that can harm the heroes.

TALKING TO SALIZAR

The merchant groans and thanks you as you free him, and as he recovers his breath, he speaks. "What a terrible thing to happen! My supplies here are ruined. I made a special run just for the villagers of Wellwater, or at least those who haven't left yet. The region here has had several poor harvests, the rains have left the fields dry, and dragons have been burning farmsteads more often of late. Life has been hard, and farmers are leaving their homes as it is. Now an army of bandits has been destroying towns, and Wellwater is in its path. It just isn't safe outside city walls, until someone deals with that army. I was bringing supplies for the few people left in Wellwater, as they flee to the safety of Highwall. These scouts ambushed me, and ruined my wagon! Please, help me get what supplies we can to the village, and I'm sure you'll be rewarded."

The Wagon has been burned and ransacked, but there is a barrel of mead, a dozen wineskins, and a crate of fifty days' rations in dried meat left over. The rest of the supplies have been ruined by the fire, including spears, wooden bows, and quivers of arrows, as well as more food and common goods destroyed by the fire and goblins. The chest of coins is Salizar's, and he will thank them for giving it back to him, and give them each 50gp for their trouble. The rest (500gp) is intended to help him set up his business in Highwall, with the help of villagers like Rorik the Blacksmith, so he politely tells the heroes he needs to keep as much as he can; the bandits attack has all but ruined him, in truth, but he hopes he can start over in the city, with some help from contacts.

THE VILLAGE OF WELLWATER

You make your way to the town of Wellwater, over rolling hills with hills of yellowed grass and dried up fields that look unlikely to produce any food for their farmers. The town of Wellwater is built at the top of a hill overlooking the area, and it looks as ragged and tired as the rest of the lands around it. Built on a broad flat square of dust-covered stone, Wellwater has clearly seen better days. Several buildings have been made of mudbrick or blackened lumber, roofs made of the same yellowed grass found on the hillsides around here.

The center of the town square is taken up by a large well, a great stone cylinder with unusually-well carved artwork on its sides, depicting majestic dragons carrying armored riders around its rim.

The people here are dressed in drab clothes, and while they get on with whatever work they're doing, take a moment here and there to look out over the fields beyond the village, as if expecting to see a dragon attacking or the bandit army arriving any second.

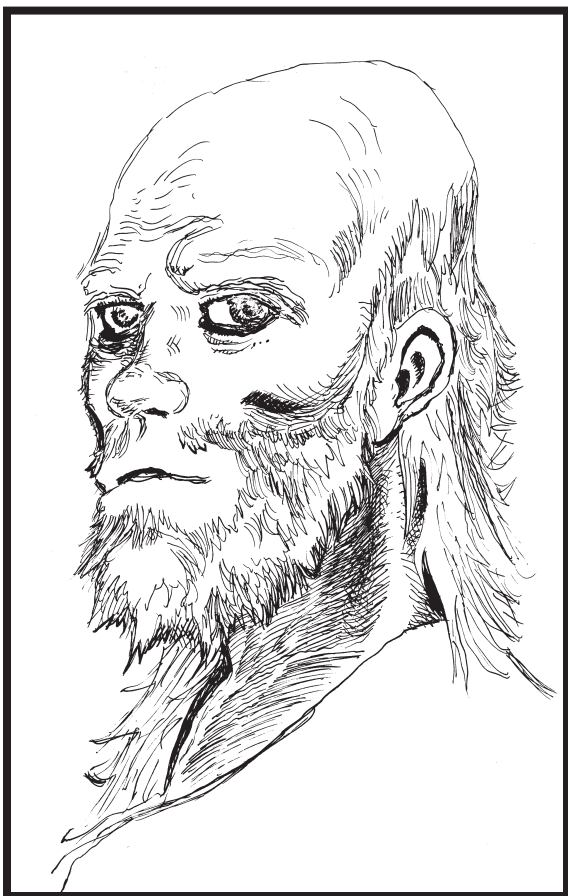
Wellwater is a poor village, its industry based on the now-abandoned farms, and the villagers that remain only here because they're waiting for Salizar to come with supplies needed for the trip to Highwall. They are finishing up a few tasks before they leave for the city, and any help from able-bodied adventurers would be appreciated.



ZODOK THE BLIND

Blind Zodok hasn't got material wealth, being more of a beggar than a mage; still, the villagers see him as lucky, a wise and kindly oracle, or at least an old man who means no harm. While he cannot reward the heroes with coin, helping him will grant them a +1 bonus to charisma checks among the villagers.

An old man in tattered brown robes calls out to you. His eyes are white, clearly blind in his old age, but nonetheless he points to you directly with his face, as if he knows exactly where you are. He smiles and calls out again. "You there! I'm blind, but the fates have given me 'the sight'. Whoever you are, would you do an old man a kindness? Young Lanu, the blacksmith's daughter, was supposed to bring me a Dragondil Flower, so that I could divine whether the trip to Highwall would bode well or ill. Lanu hasn't come back yet, and I worry she's run into trouble with that Jinx of hers... her cat, a mischievous creature, to be sure. I can't divine without an elixir made with the petals of that Dragedil flower, and the one Lanu is bringing is likely the last blossom of the season. Please, would you help an old man? I heard Lanu's voice from behind the Inn, you may find her there, and perhaps bring the flower to me?"



LANU

Behind the Inn you see a young girl calling up into the branches. "Jinx! Mister Jinx, come down here right now!"

This is Lanu, Rorik's daughter. Her cat, Mr. Jinx, has climbed into the tree and refuses to come down. If the heroes approach, she will ask for their help.

"Oh please help me," the young girl is frustrated. "My cat, Mr. Jinx, is stuck up there and he won't come down. Can you help me? I've got some candied flower petals I can share with you, if you do. If I leave him up there, he'll make noise and I'll be in trouble for playing with Mr. Jinx instead of doing my chores. But there aren't customers, thanks to the town leaving, and I can't leave Mr. Jinx in a tree! What if a dragon eats him?"

If they investigate, the PCs see a tiger-striped cat (Mr. Jinx) stuck up on a branch, looking down and somewhat frightened and unable to get down on his own. Climbing the Tree is no mean feat (DC14 climbing). Mr. Jinx will not respond to calls to come down, but if a PC talks to him directly (DC 13 Charisma or Animal Handling) he will hold still long enough for them to grab him; if the result is 20 or higher, he will even creep towards them shyly, and get into their arms. If not, the PCs must attempt to grab him (Armor Class 14) with the fear that he will scratch them (+1 to hit, 1d2-1 damage). If they can manage to get him down, even if he does scratch them, Mr. Jinx will purr and from then on assume the PCs are his best friends.

Lanu will be grateful if they get him down, and give them the Dragondil flower for Blind Zodok.

The young girl beams as you bring the cat down, and hands over a large blue dried flower.

"Oh, thank you! Here, if you take this flower to the old man in the village square, Blind Zodok, I'll run home and get you my candied flower petals. Meet you at the town square?"

RETURNING THE FLOWER

If the heroes return to Blind Zodok, he thanks them when they give him the flower.

"I knew you would return to me! I sense great things from you. If you bring me to Idona the Healer, she'll finish the potion for me, and I'll tell you my vision. It's a small hut on the eastern wall of the village. Come quickly!" And with that, the old seer staggers to his feet and hobbles in the direction of a cone-topped building on the other side of the village.

If the heroes follow, go to Idona the Healer.



IDONA THE HEALER

This building is more of a cottage than the other shops in town, with a large cone-shaped thatch roof atop a short, round house. Beside it is a long building made out of wooden timbers, with an open doorway on one side where you can see cots lined next to one another. Herbs are hung around the roof of the cottage, and more grow in a small garden beside it. An older woman, her sleeves rolled up, looks up as you approach.

"Greetings, traveller. What ails you? I'm Idona, the village healer. Well, as much of a village as we've got left, now that everyone is heading to Highwall. I make herbal remedies for sickness and bandages for wounds. How can I help?"

Idona the healer is a simple herbalist and midwife, with some knowledge of alchemy but no mage training. She can brew Healing Potions, and will sell them to the heroes; if they have said they will go with the refugees to Highwall, she will give them each a free healing potion for their help.

Idona's home is a great cottage filled with herbs tied to the ceiling, and a massive wooden set of shelves that hold all manner of dried herbs, rare mushrooms, and other ingredients for medicines and poultices. Idona sleeps on a cot in the herb room, having not more space in which to live. It's not the best-looking place, but it's what this tiny town has, and that's better than most villages.

Idona the Healer's shed is a two-building affair, one half of it dedicated to a large room with large windows to let in fresh air, where a number of cots are lined up for those who come to her for help. One man lies on a cot, a local farmer who stumbled into town with a gory bite on his shoulder, blood all over his hands, and a wickedly high fever. Idona has been helping him with herbs to bring down the fever, but he's unable to communicate and just struggles in his sleep, so the

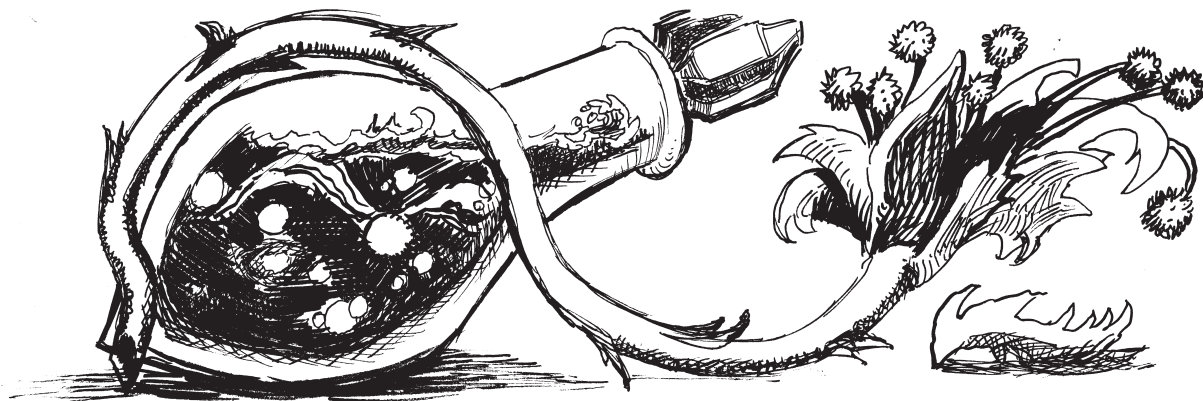
healer has had him tied down. If the PCs wait more than two days, he'll transform into an undead and start devouring the nearest victim he can find. Idona has never seen this kind of fever before, but is doing her best to calm him in case he can recover enough to make it to the city.

If the heroes have brought Zodok and the Dragondil flower, Idona will smile and bring the flower into her cottage. She will add the flower to a small brass cauldron she's had on the fire for some time, and a moment later the brew will glow bright blue. She will scoop a cupful and give it directly to Zodok, who will drink it and have his vision. Read the following:

Zodok stands up stiff, his eyes glow bright blue, and he looks at each of the heroes in turn. "You have a great destiny upon you, heroes. The currents of fate swirl about you, and you have the potential for greatness, both good and ill. The greatest of warriors, the most powerful of mages, and the most cunning of heroes, you have upon you the potential to be any of these things.

"In ancient times, where this village now stands, the Dragon Master built his home, and bound the dragons of this land in his service for centuries. Those who would be heroes would come from across the land and climb down into the dungeon tunnels below his home. There they would be tested, purified of weakness as metal in a crucible. Those who survived would become mighty, learning the secrets of sword and of sorcery, of might and magic. Though the fortress of the Dragon Master has vanished, his dungeon yet remains.

"While I cannot see whether you shall survive, I do see the currents of greatness surrounding you. Unlike many who descended before, I see that you have the chance to survive, and claim the powers and treasures below. You could save the lives of those above, or below, from slavery and death. The choice... is yours..." With that the old man's eyes fade, and he slumps down in his chair once more.



If asked, Zodok or Idona will confirm that adventurers have gone down through the Well in the middle of town, and that most never return. Yet some few do survive, and they gain powers, skills, and treasures from the experience. If the heroes survive the tests, the treasures they gain would be valuable help against the dangers of the world. As the villagers need all the help they can get, they would welcome the heroes travelling with them to Highwall, if they survive the trials of the Dragon Master's Dungeon.

GATHERING INFORMATION ON THE DUNGEON OF THE DRAGON MASTER

Wise characters would seek information on the dungeon to be had. All the villagers will direct the heroes to Zodok, the blind seer, who will prefer to speak to them near the well in the town square. However, if needed, most of the information presented below is common knowledge that any of the NPCs in town could easily share. If pressed for time, or if the heroes have a character they prefer to old Zodok, such as Rorick or Idona, feel free to paraphrase what is said below, but coming from them.

WHO WAS THE DRAGON MASTER?

You don't know? When the Old Empire began, he used powerful magic to stop the dragons that were attacking everyone, then ruled the lands around here for centuries. He was undefeated in battle, unmatched in magic, even back in the age of legends. The stories say he left behind massive palaces, giant statues, that sort of thing, all made of magic, but over time the magic that made them faded away. All I've ever seen was the town well: last proof he ever existed.

WHAT IF THE HEROES DON'T GO FOR THE DUNGEON? Argh, that's the worst! It happens. For example, your group could simply decide to lay a trap for the bandits in the town, fight them as they arrive, and delve into the dungeon later, if at all. The bandits will have scouted out the village, and plan to keep the Inn as a base. They will light up their arrows and fire at the houses, but allow the villagers to run out the front gate (to be captured) or flee into the Inn (to be corralled by the bandits). The bandits are looking to take slaves, but will slay any heroes who fight them openly. The villagers are not fighters, so will not help. If you are playing an Origin-level game, feel free to tell the heroes that fighting the bandits without class levels or magical items would be suicidal or disastrous. Fleeing to the city is another option, and the bandits probably won't follow... but the heroes wouldn't get any treasure from the fabled dungeon.

WHY DID HE BUILD THIS DUNGEON?

A test for champions, and his tomb. Those worthy would survive the challenges and be rewarded with magic and empowered with what he called the Archway of Destiny. The Dragon Master believed he could proclaim who was rightly a champion, and built the dungeon as his legacy. Now he lies there, interred below, as if to be present to reward those who survive his tests.

WHERE ARE THE LAST CHAMPIONS WHO SURVIVED?

Years ago, several heroes made it through and travelled to Highwall, becoming champions there. We had sent word, but they were off on their own adventures, and I fear they will not arrive before the bandits attack.

WHAT ARE THE TESTS OF THE DRAGON MASTER?

There are said to be hundreds of doorways, and behind each is a unique test. No two have been the same, involving riddles, traps, mortal combat, and many perils. A key is the usual prize, used to activate the path to the next test. When potential champions have finished four tests, they may enter the Dragon Master's chamber, and pass through the Archway of Destiny with their reward.

WHY HAVEN'T YOU VILLAGERS GONE DOWN THERE FOR THE TESTS?

Some have, but none have returned in some time. Four adventurers were hired by the villagers recently, in hopes that they could survive and help us with powerful weapons from below. But, it has been many weeks and having no sign of them tells us that they, too, have fallen to the tests.

WHAT IS DOWN THERE?

Those who survived have described different tests created to challenge the mind and mettle of champions, which may change depending on who attempts them. The Dragon Master's chamber is there, a room where his body rests, surrounded by treasures, and the Archway of Destiny. He is quite dead, but those who return say his body is untouched by time, resting in a crystal coffin.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?

The tales of the Dragon Master are well-known here, the legends the children grow up with. Adventurers come through town, and I collect their stories before they go into the well, and, hopefully, when they return.

THE BOAR'S HEAD INN:

The Boar's Head Inn is the one and only Inn in town. It has a large common area consisting of enough tables for several wagon trains' guards and merchants, though it is currently empty while the villagers prepare to move on. Joam, the Innkeeper, and his children Gwen and Gavin, are busy carrying barrels of ale from the cellar and putting them onto a wagon outside. They won't be staying longer than a day, so are unlikely to rent the heroes rooms, but they are happy to serve the heroes food or ale: any coins they can earn will help them live in Highwall, until the bandits have been dealt with and they can return to the Inn.

RORICK THE BLACKSMITH

A massive man in blacksmith's gear stands at his anvil, pounding iron into horseshoes. He is bald, but has an enormous moustache under an oft-broken nose, while his arms are almost as thick as his legs, sitting above a very round, muscular belly. He leans over to dunk a red-hot iron in water, and you see one of his legs has been replaced below the hip with a metal leg of iron cogs. He nods to you as you enter, and rumbles from under his moustache.

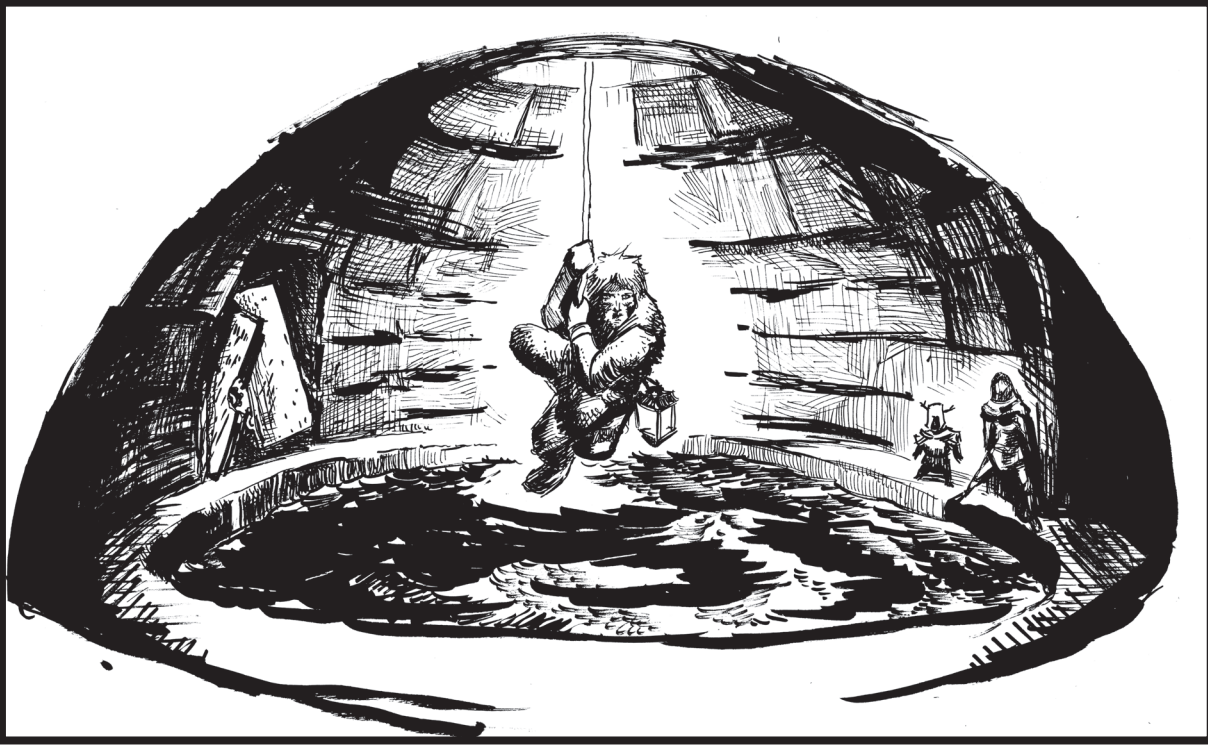
"Look around if ya want, buy what you need. Less I have to carry to Highwall, or leave for those bandits, the better."



Rorick the Blacksmith is a large man with broad shoulders, and a massive belly made of solid muscle. One of his legs is made of metal, rough clockwork he made himself that is sturdy and functional. Rorik knows how to fight and can train heroes as Warriors, but he will not join them in battle, having suffered serious trauma when he was an adventurer in his younger days – a pack of ghoulish undead devoured his friends and his leg. In a pinch, Rorik has a masterwork battleaxe in a treasure chest in his room, but while he is fine in a bar fight, bloody battle is beyond him now.

If the heroes agree to bring the villagers to Highwall when they survive the dungeon below, Rorik will give each of them a free longsword or a battleaxe, and a suit of leather armor, as payment. If they are willing to pay more, he has a suit of Hide Armor he had planned on selling in the city.

ACT TWO: INTO THE WELL



(1.1) CLIMBING INTO THE WELL

When the heroes approach the town well, they read the following:

The town well is in the center of the square, a circular stone wall surrounding a hole ten feet in diameter. On one side is a short flight of steps leading up to an archway shaped like twin dragons, with a small stage at the top of the well, as if inviting travellers to climb up the steps and dive into the hole. The villagers have constructed a wooden arm atop the archway, with a pulley and a long rope, turning the entrance here into their main water supply. The depths of the well are dark and cold, and you can see only the faint reflection of the sky on the surface of the water far below.

The villagers can help the heroes with the bucket, as many who enter the well do so by being lowered down on the bucket. Rorick himself built the pulley, and it can hold up to three hundred pounds.

(1.2) DARK WATER POOL:

As you descend on the rope, you find the shaft of the well suddenly opens onto a massive round room around it, leaving you hanging near the roof of a large chamber. The bottom of the room is flooded with dark water, probably the reason this room is so cold. The edge of the chamber has a round walkway all the way around its edges, leading to an alcove to one side that seems to have a doorway on the far end.

The heroes can climb down with a DC10 climbing check, or they can lower down one hero standing on the bucket, perhaps swinging to land on the ledge (DC15 acrobatics check or take 1d6 fall damage). Otherwise, they may fall into the cold water at the bottom and suffer no damage.

Take note of light sources here, as there isn't light at the bottom of the well. Only the shaft of light from above provides illumination, so the heroes are in dim light or darkness, unless they bring torches or some kind of magical light source.

(1.3) FONT OF DARK WATER

If the heroes swim in the pool or fall in, they find that it is icy cold, and the water is dark, with a soft current causing it to swirl. If they search the pool, the bottom is dark, under the effect of magical darkness, meaning they will be searching blindly while underwater. The entire chamber is spherical, including below the surface, and at the very bottom, directly in the center, is a DECANTER OF ENDLESS WATER that is constantly emptying into the room. When opened, the decanter is surrounded by a Darkness spell, which ends instantly when it is stoppered. Otherwise it looks just like a stone cylinder made of obsidian with a white marble stopper in the mouth, shaped like a fish holding a pearl. The village's daily water needs have always emptied it every day, so in hundreds of years the well has simply

never overflowed. In fact, when the temple was in use, what the villagers assumed was a well was in fact an ornamental pool, part of the test of the Dragon Master that forced potentials to dive into dark water. During all this time none have ever searched the dark waters for their source, so the Decanter has never been recovered. If left alone, the water will rise to the top and overflow in a matter of days.

(1.4) BROKEN DOORWAY

To the side of the pool is an alcove shaped into an archway, a pair of stone doors built into the far end. The twin doors had been carved to fit exactly into the frame, and their surface carved with curious figures surrounding what was once some kind of lock. Now, however, the doors have been cracked and pulled off their hinges to lean in the doorway, their once-elaborate lock-mechanism now a shattered into rubble and steel gears. Beyond you can see a short hallway of about eight feet, made of the same stone as the rest of the chamber, until the last pace, where the archway uses polished blue marble of a sort you have never seen before. The wall beyond the blue marble is shaped to look like a giant with a round body, four massive arms wielding wands, swords, books, and flowers in his hands, topped by an elephant-like head with four trunks and four elaborately ornamented tusks. On its rotund belly you can see a human-sized hand print.

The door was a puzzle lock, but ages ago was shattered by less-than-patient delvers, and aside from climbing over or around the doors, there is nothing stopping the heroes from going through. The blue marble at the end of the end is actually a portal to the Dungeon. It detects as having intense Conjuraton, and placing a hand on the handprint allows one to STONE MELD through the wall to the next area. The rest of the surface is hard stone and resistant to physical or magical damage.

(1.5) THE CHAMBER OF DOORS

Passing through the stone of the wall, you are reminded of swimming through mud. Yet, as you press on, you exit the stone and find yourself once more in open air. You are standing on a catwalk of stone in a great cylindrical shaft that rises up into darkness and down into a bank of vaguely glowing fog. Up and down the walls you can see a number of archways, not unlike the doorway you just passed through, each with a figure carved upon the surface. Ahead of you the catwalk becomes a set of steps leading up to a platform, on the middle of which is a great statue with four arms. This statue gives off a soft blue light that illuminates this chamber. Behind you, the shape of the archway you passed through appears traced upon the wall, but is otherwise as smooth as the rest of the room's surfaces.

This chamber is the hub of the Dragonmaster's Dungeon, with the doorways leading to each of the tests as well as the final exit from the area. Climbing the walls is exceptionally difficult (DC25) and the shaft is a one hundred foot drop to the mists below; those who do fall into the mists are not necessarily lost, however (see 1-9: Web of the Skull-Spider, below). The way back has been magically sealed, as getting here means the test has officially begun. Because the previous delvers never finished, however, more people can enter (such as the player heroes), but none can leave.

(1.6) THE KEYMASTER

The statue is virtually identical to the elephantine form on the wall of the archway, save that it is not a relief but an exquisitely carved figure, and now rides upon a stylized dragon. Each arm is pointing in a different direction, towards the sides of the chamber, directly at the alcoves up and down the walls. The ears of the figure expand behind it like gossamer wings, and sparkle with gem-like patterns. In the center of the figure's chest is a stone disc with four nodes, and a glowing stone shaft sticking out its center like some kind of tiny key. Below the figure is carved the curled form of a serpentine dragon, as if holding up this mystical elephant-like being.

This is the Keymaster statue. Turn the key to one of the positions, and a set of stone steps immediately forms out of the platform and goes directly to the next archway; the key vanishes from the keyhole and appears in the node for that archway, leaving the keyhole in the center open for the key gained from the next test. Once a path has been selected by the players, the key cannot be turned: another key must be found by passing the next test, which then goes into the statue, leading to the next test, and so on until the final path leads to the last chamber. Once the characters have finished all tests and go into the final chamber, the tests reset, the first key vanishes, to be found by other would-be champions of the Dragon Master; but, as the most recent group never died and never left, their test is still ongoing, which the heroes have a chance to complete.

The last adventurers through had quested for years to find the first key, and, just as they placed it into the keyhole, were attacked by the Skull-Spider (see area 1-10). As such, the key has never been turned, leaving it for the heroes to move on with the test of the Champions. It cannot be removed, only turned towards the position of whatever doorway they wish to go to. If they move it to the first position, go to (1-6); second position is (1-7); third position is (1-8); and the fourth position (1-9). Once those have all been completed, and the heroes have put all the keys into the Keymaster, the final pathway will be open for them.



(1.7) RIDDLE OF THE SPHERES

DOORWAY

The surface of this doorway is covered in a circle filled with many rings, one inside the other, with what looks like a staff or pillar dividing the circle up the middle, half on either side of it.

The heroes may push through this doorway, just like area 1-3. The door vanishes as they enter, so they can leave at any time, but must solve it to get the key.

INSIDE THE ROOM

Entering this room, you find yourselves in a large hemispherical chamber made of polished white marble. The center of the chamber has a tall spike of stone, around which a number of spheres spin. Here an orb plods along close to the ground, there another spins and zips about, while yet others follow their own paths. Each of the spheres glows with a different light, and some with vortices of elements or energy, causing the walls to be covered in a prismatic display of colors. At the back of the wall you see a smooth archway outlined, but blank save for a small dot. On the floor beneath the spheres are several skeletons dressed in tattered or charred rags.

The skeletons are from adventurers who never solved the riddle, or touched the wrong spheres out of order; they each have 1d4 coppers, but their equipment is either so old as to be useless, or charred to ruin by the effects. The exception is worn by one figure in robes, a former sorceress, who has an amulet with a prism on a silver chain around their neck (Amulet of Protection +1); sadly she was zapped by the puzzle by accident, and never saw the rainbows the amulet made when it reflects light as a potential clue (which you can introduce to stuck players, if needed).

RIDDLESTONE

Looking at the stone you can see that it is a tall, carved block about three feet on a side, smoothly polished with grooves on its surface. At the top is a carved figure, like some kind of dragon with exaggerated features. At the base of the block a flowing script has been carved into the surface.

This stone has the riddle the PCs are looking for, the solution to the problems of the room. If they look at the surface of the stone, they will see words in whatever language they can read. As soon as one reads it, all in the room hear the riddle in their minds, spoken by the carved figure upon the stone. The carved figure is shaped to resemble a dragon (DC20 Arcana to recognize the fairly rare creature).

"From out of the spray and into the sky, I dance in the sun and we light up the eye"

SOLUTION: The answer to the riddle is "rainbow", but it must be signified by touching the Spheres in the correct order: PURPLE, BLUE, GREEN, YELLOW, ORANGE, and RED (or backwards (r,o,y,g,b,p)): illusion, apportation, plant, light, fire, and rust. Ignore the other spheres (as not all need to be used in this puzzle. When this is done, the dot on the wall grows into an archway, and hovering in the air in front of it is a large, glowing KEY. Upon taking the key, the heroes may leave.

On touching an incorrect sphere, they must start the puzzle over, and suffer the following penalties:



THE ORBS

FIRE

This glass orb is filled with a tiny Orange flame that flickers inside it, splashing around the inside, swirling and bursting in a miniature explosion, over and over again.

Characters touching this sphere take 1 fire damage, unless they have first touched the Red orb.

FROST

A tiny snow storm swirls inside this orb, then stops, the inside covering itself in fingers of frost, then crackling and bursting once more into a raging blizzard.

Touching this orb causes 1 frost damage, and characters are slowed for one round by the cold.

ILLUSION

This purple orb continuously goes from a single bubble to a small swarm of identical bubbles as it floats lazily around the room.

There is a 25% chance characters touching this Orb will pass through it when touching it, as it ceases to exist. If they touch this Orb out of order, they will have a 25% miss chance on all physical attempts to touch anything, as their senses become blurred. If they then touch the Orbs in order, the effect ends. If it is the first color they choose in the rainbow, or the last in the rainbow sequence, they may ignore this penalty. Essentially this means they must either have just touched Blue, or touch it next.

RUST

This red ball is made of rusty metal, seemingly corroded away, pitted and worn by rust.

This Orb is made of magical rust. All metal objects on the character instantly disintegrate from rust (including coins, belt buckles, weapons, etc.), which can be extremely frustrating for heroes (and their players). Play up that it is rust-covered, as the other Orbs are covered in other energies, so they have some warning. Magical items (if any) are unharmed by the rust. If this is the first Orb touched in the correct sequence (ie: next orb touched is orange, or else the Red ball is the last touched), or the last, they ignore the penalty.

APPORTATION

This blue orb blinks around the room, first in one spot and then another.

Each round this orb teleports 1d6 spaces in a random direction (roll 1d8 for north, north-east, east, etc.). Attempts to touch it require a touch-attack Armor Class 15; the character is teleported 3 spaces in a random direction (roll 1d8), and if this includes a wall, they take 1d6 damage. If this Orb is touched in the correct sequence, they ignore this teleportation.

NECROMANCY

This orb is filled with a sickly mist that swirls inside, forming and reforming into the shape of human and animal skulls.

Take 1 damage from death-magic energy; if this kills the character, in 2d4 rounds they rise once more as a skeleton.

LIGHTNING

This lightning-filled orb is filled with a tiny storm cloud that churns inside, bolts of energy flashing from inside the cloud to strike the surface of the sphere.

Take 1 lightning damage, and the character and anyone in contact with them is dazed for one round due to the shock.

PLANT

This green orb is filled with a tangle of vines, roots, and leaves that grow at an incredible rate, always seeming to blossom but never fill the orb. It is as if each moment were a season of growth in a miniature jungle.

This is the Forest Sphere, and if touched out of sequence, any wooden object on the character is made “alive”, growing leaves and roots. This will not destroy the item, only reinvigorate it. Paper products do not normally grow in this way, but books bound in wood may gain roots on the covers. Items like wands will retain their charges and magical features, but if planted in the forest will grow into a tree; the magic from the charges would be absorbed into the tree, infusing branches and sap so they would be ideal for crafting other magical items. If the orb is touched in the correct sequence, the heroes ignore this penalty.

DARKNESS

This orb is a solid ball of obsidian, a blot on the world with a perfectly clean outline wreathed in a grey-black glow.

Touching this orb will cause the character to be covered in DARKNESS, as if they are a walking silhouette of inky black. This means they cannot see, but also that others cannot see them, save for their outline. This effect is permanent until they leave the room, or someone casts a permanent light spell. Touching the Light (Lumos) Orb cancels the darkness effect.

LIGHT

This yellow orb is a ball of golden-white light, illuminating the area around it as it floats lazily around the room.

The Light orb will affect them with a Light spell, which is permanent as long as they are in this room. This immediately cancels the Darkness orb's effect.

(1.8) THE GHOST OF PINOO

This archway's door has faded, as if worn away by time. There are a few shapes that could have been images once, but are unintelligible to you now.

Upon touching the door, read the following:

As you touch the doorway, the substance of the entrance simply falls away, turning into dust at your feet. The magic animating this space appears to have crumbled away, never to return.

Which, in fact, it has: Pinoo, the Loxodonian mind responsible for this portion of the Dungeon, has indeed begun to fade.

This massive chamber is filled with shards of architecture floating in place, as if beautiful stonework had been shattered but not fallen away. A set of steps remains, each step floating in a spiral in the center of the room, leading up to a floating gem which has been broken, and a glowing key floating in the middle of it. There are several blocks floating in the air, as well as floating metal gears, blades, and spikes, all of which may have been part of deadly traps set up in this room. There are shapeless clouds throughout the room, blots of color without form in the areas with the most decay. Leading away from the key are several floating blocks that end at an archway, similar to the one you entered through.

Hovering above the room is a form made of glowing mist, the cloud shaping itself into a giant spectre of an elephant-man with four arms. The spectral form fades in and out, with orbs for eyes that look over the room but seem not to see anything.



This room was once a trial, like the others, but the magical force animating it has waned over time. Now only the ghost of the elephant-like mystic that created it remains, and the remnants of the room's architecture and traps float in place out of habit. It is as if the mind imagining this room has forgotten all but these pieces of the room.

To get to the key is a simple matter of climbing up the steps, jumping across places where the architecture has vanished (DC10 or take 1d6 damage, and DC15 or take 2d6 damage, respectively), and avoiding the floating blades and spikes that remain in the room (DC10 dexterity or acrobatics, or take 1d6 damage).

The blots of formlessness are deadly, and heroes touching them will need to make a DC15 Will save or take 1d10 damage, and a -2 penalty to Intelligence checks for one day, as the mental entropy affecting the room's creator infects the hero and their ability to think. Avoiding them is easy, but curious heroes may wish to interact with them. Objects passed through them automatically take 2d10 damage, ignoring object hardness, as the blot interferes with the substance of the object.

Taking the key is a simple matter of grabbing it from inside the crystalline shards, and then leaping to the platform with the exit archway (DC10 jump or take 2d6 damage), or going back to the entrance they came through.

The ghost is actually just a vision of Pinoo, one of the Loxonians imprisoned in area (1-12); this is just a memory of the builder, and will not respond to the heroes. The clouds are magical energy, and even blowing on them will cause the image to swirl away.

(1.9) CLOCKWORK COMBAT

This chamber is perfectly square, forty feet by forty feet, with a ceiling thirty feet up. For the most part it is smooth, but it has a number of strange decorations, in the surreal manner of the rest of the complex. To either side of the door you came through, the wall is covered in stone hands, with several pointing up to a narrow ledge ringing the entire room, with a narrow beam crossing from one side to the other. On the right wall, you see a mural with fanciful figures drawn upon it. On the left, a great mechanical wheel bears numbers from one to eight around its rim, and in the middle of the wheel is a giant hourglass with an arrow above it, pointing to the numbers. On the far wall, opposite the door, a glass cylinder rises from floor to ceiling, filled with a mysterious green liquid. On the ledge around the cylinder are twin statues, grim-faced figures with hands holding a thick metal bar across the top of the cylinder.

In the center of the room is a key in the middle of a cube of crystal. The cube hums for a moment, then one surface of the cube sparkles right before thin spikes of crystal grow out of the side of the cube. The crystal spikes expand and form themselves into another cube, identical to the first. The sands of the hourglass on the wall begin to flow, and the wheel around the hourglass turns so that the arrow above it now points to the second number. As it does so, the new crystal cube starts to hum, and two sides of it begin to sparkle...

This room is meant to challenge the heroes' skills, rather than blunt force or knowledge of magic. The puzzle requires the crystal cubes be soaked by the vat full of bubbling liquid, but to do that the heroes must unlock the vat from its slot and pour it into the middle of the room, melting them. Every round the clock moves ahead one number, and the room is filled by that many cubes; if the heroes don't solve the puzzle, they'll run out of room and be absorbed by the cubes – and be killed! Only by smashing a cube as it forms every round can they keep themselves from dying, until someone can release the vat of chemicals and dissolve the cubes. By turning the wheel back, they limit the number of new cubes filling the room, but this is only a temporary measure: somehow they need to dissolve all the cubes, get the key, and get out!

This wall bears a giant mural depicting exaggerated figures holding onto a long golden chain. Near the doorway, one with an enraged face snarls with its hands gripping the chain tightly. In the middle is a face contorted with sadness, frowning with tears dripping down its face. Farthest from the entrance, a jovial figure has dropped its chain, holding its belly while laughing.

THE MURAL

This mural gives a clue for how the heroes can solve this puzzle, with the happy faced figure no longer holding its chain showing them that making the faces laugh will unlock the vat.

THE CLOCK

This wall has a giant bronze wheel set into it, with numbers from one to eight around the rim. The center of the wheel has a massive hourglass filled with glittering blue sand that sparkles like powdered crystal. Above the hourglass is an arrow that points to the number immediately above the hourglass. The sand pours down into the bottom of the glass, and as it does, the mechanism of the wheel pushes the clock towards the next number clicking with an ominous toll.

The number on the wheel is how many new cubes will be created this round. By turning the wheel to a lower number, they reduce the number of cubes filling the room. The clock can be stopped by climbing to the ledge above the clock and pulling or pushing the wheel to the desired number. Turning the wheel requires a DC15 strength check, and it will turn the wheel 1d4 spaces in the direction the hero attempted to move it, backwards or forwards.

The hourglass has enough sand to last until the room is exactly filled with cubes. The glass is magically created to be as hard as steel, and the mechanism of the wheel cannot be torn from the wall. The best that can be done is jamming the wheel in place, at its lowest setting ("1"), but it cannot be jammed any lower than this.

THE CUBES

Each round of this test, a number of crystal cubes will form magically, the same number pointed to by the wheel on the wall. New cubes can form from any cube surface that is open, and for the round they are forming, any character may smash them with virtually no effort (2hp, 0 hardness). The cubes are simple blocks of crystal that are indestructible after they form, however, and if a character is standing in a space where one is forming and they choose not to attempt to break it, they will be locked in place by the cube. This is not immediately fatal, as the character will be frozen in stasis; they can survive for one hour before running out of air, and are even conscious – though they cannot move or speak to cast spells, a telepath could in theory still talk to their companions. The test will be over, pass or fail, long before this time. The crystal cubes dissolve immediately in the green liquid in the cylinder at the back of the room, leaving no trace. Characters frozen in the cubes will be released, unharmed, when this happens. The walkway is built above where the cubes will form until the entire bottom area is full. After that, the top half of the room will fill up, leaving the area in front of the cylinder for last. If they aren't smashed, the heroes can walk or climb upon the cubes, but cannot move them.

THE FACES

These twin statues stand on the ledge to either side of the cylinder. They are made of bronze, and have exaggerated faces like the figures on the wall mural. Their hands are tightly clenched around a thick metal bar set across the top of the cylinder. Though they are clearly statues, the faces animate as you draw close, and speak to you in gruff voices.

"What do you think you're doing here? You don't belong here! Get off of my ledge!"

The Faces here are actually the locks on the bar holding the vat of fluid in place. Rather than traditional lock picking, to bypass these locks one must alter the mood of the faces to smiling, "disarming" them with charisma or trickery. An angry face must be frightened, after which it becomes a sad face. A sad face must be cheered up, such as with a joke or a song, so that it becomes the happy face. When each of the faces are happy, the associated hands release the bar that locks the vat in place. If the heroes are doing their best but the dice are against them, consider allowing actions like doing damage to an angry face to replace an actual intimidate check. Also consider bonuses for good role-playing, and even automatic successes if the player does

a good job. A joke that makes the GM laugh, or a player who actually sings the song for their character, should be rewarded with a success. A sad story can likewise replace frightening the angry face, and so forth. Note that the mural depicts the process of unlocking the faces.

The process of unlocking the faces:

Angry face: (DC15 to Intimidate or otherwise frighten in some way):

Sad face: (DC15 Diplomacy or Perform to make the, smile)

Happy face (that lock is now open!)

THE KEY

If the heroes dump the vat down upon the creature, read the following.

The cylinder tips forward, dumping the bubbling green fluid into the middle of the chamber. The moment the liquid touches the cubes, they melt and then vanish. Only the key remains, hovering in place. Behind you, the entrance opens up, releasing you back into the chamber shaft with the four-armed statue.





(1.10) THE SKULL SPIDER'S ARMY

The bridge extends from the statue down to a doorway that is just above the surface of the glowing mists. The shape of the archway is identical to the others up and down the walls, unlike them the doorway here has been chiselled away. There is a faint glow inside the room, from the far side of a large chamber.

If the heroes get light into the room, they see the following:

This chamber is massive and square, with the center filled with a giant stone platform. Around the room are several dozen statues of dragons facing the doorway, and on your side warriors wearing armor of the Old Empire style. Some of the statues are in good shape, many of them shattered, and others reduced to pebbles. Covering the entire floor of this chamber are many, many skeletons, dressed in the shattered armor and shredded rags of adventurers. On the opposite side of the room, not on the stone platform, is an alcove with a large statue of an armored man sitting on a dragon, above his hand floats a glowing key. The key lights up the room, sending shadows across the skeletons on the floor.

If the heroes enter the room, read the following:

At the back of the room there is a scuffling sound, and a large skull with insectoid legs climbs up on a statue and glares at you. The skeletons on the floor of the room begin to shudder and rise, reaching towards you with broken weapons and boney claws. The eyes of the skull-spider begin to glow a flickering purple, and a moment later a similar glow flickers in the eyes of the skeletons shuffling towards you.

The only way to get to the key is to pass through the room. Originally the room's statues animated and attacked, in the style of chess pieces. The bones of many, many fallen adventurers were left here by them. When the Skull-Spider moved in, it animated the skeletons again and again, until they defeated and shattered the statues. Now the chamber is used as the Skull-Spider's lair, nestled behind the final statue of the Dragon Master.

There are 10 skeletons animated at the start of this round, unless the heroes have freed the adventurers in area (1-11), reducing the number by 2 per adventurer freed to a total of two skeletons at the start. Each round the Skull-Spider animates 1 additional skeleton as a free action, and it can have up to 15 skeletons active at any one time. There are a hundred skeletons in the room, but even if they've all been destroyed, the Skull-spider can simply reanimate them. Wise heroes may back up the steps, forcing the skeletons to attack them in single file. Slaying the Skull Spider stops the magic animating the skeletons, which crumble into dust and bones as soon as it dies.

(1.11) WEB OF THE SKULL-SPIDER

A web is stretched across the area here, made of several blankets of strong webbing. The material glitters with purple energy, which reflects off the mists that cloak the area and hide anything above from view. Four large bulges have been wrapped in webbing, humans with pales skin and purple-blue lips, whose peaceful gaze shows them to be either sleeping ...or dead.

This area can be found by anyone who falls from any of the bridges to the doorways in area (1-4). The webbing catches them, so they do not suffer falling damage. The webs here are not sticky, but support a great amount of weight.

The Skull-spider has been trapped in this chamber for some time, and it cannot exit due to the magic of the test, as it must complete the test first, and the Skull-Spider isn't intelligent enough to make sense of it. It has managed to carve through the nearby door to area (1-10), and used its fiendish powers to raise the skeletons in the area.

The humans in the webbing are the adventurers who had originally started this test. They have been wrapped in webbing and are being used as a magical power source by the Skull-Spider. They are not dead, only put into a necromantic-slumber similar to death. Freeing them would weaken the Skull Spider, reducing the number of Skeletons animated in room (1-10) by two per adventurer released. If released, they will start breathing, but remain asleep until brought into sunlight by the heroes. At that point they will awaken, albeit weakened, in act two. If additional characters are needed at this point, the players can replace one of the adventurers with any hero they invent, who had been among this captured party previously. Otherwise, refer to the quick reference below.

Magnus: a powerful warrior from Northron, with long golden hair and steel grey eyes, wearing leather armor and carrying a masterwork two-handed sword +1, forged from a special metal that fell from the sky that glows blue.

Aureda: A half-elven mystic with long black hair and purple robes, Aureda has a golden marble that can be commanded to transform into a mote of light, like the light spell, that circles around her and glows as brightly as a torch.

Tindrel: A roguish young woman with short red hair and leather armor.

Valemo: A wiry man covered in scars and grey hair, wearing animal hides, Valemo has a leather pouch that creates one meal per day for any who reach into it. The food is tasteless, and eventually tiresome enough that after a few days the user will need other food.

The webs can be burned with any fire, and the floor of the chamber is only twenty feet below (2d6 fall damage).



1.12 CHAMBER OF THE DRAGON MASTER

This doorway is placed centrally in the chamber, directly opposite the entrance to the chamber.

This large round room has a great blue marble floor with golden dragon designs traced into the surface, its walls surrounded by many archways of white stone. The center of the room has a carved sarcophagus in marble, its cover made of thick crystal, showing the perfectly preserved body of an old man in fine armor made of golden dragon scales resting within. The carvings on the sides of the sarcophagus show images of dragons, their reins meeting in between the panels of crystal where the body's hands lay across his chest.

In the alcoves around the room are numerous treasures, each held by an elephantine statue similar to the one in the central chamber. The statues on the left are all that remain, with one in fair condition but looking towards the right of the chamber they show signs of being broken, and some of the alcoves have only broken shards of stone or are empty. Those that remain have treasures in some of their hands, as if items had been removed over the ages. One has a sword made of what looks like liquid silver; another has a wand made of crystal and mithril; there is a silver ring with a dragon's eye as the gem; a suit of leather armor emblazoned with a five-headed snake; a neck torq made of ivory topped with gold; a silver chalice that seems to reflect light very well; and a thick belt with an elephant-like head on the buckle.

Across from the entrance here is a stone block with a door cut through it, standing alone in its alcove. In the doorway you see a shimmering image of the village above, as if you were standing in the well on the surface, looking over the well and the village gate, where the loaded wagon and mule wait for their owners.

As the heroes enter the room, read the following:

Above the sarcophagus, the image of a heroic man in golden armor appears. It is a younger version of the person in the sarcophagus, yet still smiling and vibrant, glowing with golden light.

"Greetings, champions! You have passed the test of the Dragon Master, and I have left this message to bestow upon you your reward: the title of champion of the Dragon Master, and one of the treasures of my own armory. In my day there were dragons raging across the land, and my destiny was to command them, and make them serve me. I used my power to build the temple on the surface, and all the wonders beyond it that will last for all time. Now your time has come, to conquer lands of your own. You've proven yourselves worthy to use the Archway of Destiny, which will help you focus your potential as a champion, and return you to the entrance gate. Congratulations."

The sword is a +1 liquid silver longsword that can be commanded as a swift action to turn into a whip, or cover the wielder's forearm as a buckler. If dropped, it returns to the form of a longsword.

The wand is a *Starbolt Wand* that allows trained spellcasters to shoot a star-like bolt of magical energy as a ranged attack, doing 1d8+Int force damage on a hit. (CL3rd, evocation)

The belt is a belt of elephant strength, working exactly as a belt of giant strength +2, plus the wearer treats their carrying capacity as if they were one size category larger.

The silver ring is a ring of recall, allowing the wearer to remember details of things they've experienced, similar to having a photographic memory.

The neck torq makes its wearer immune to Silence effects, and allows the wielder to whisper a message 1/day, as the spell.

The leather armor is +1 hydra leather armor made from hydra skin, and the wearer automatically stabilizes if brought below Ohp, and gains +2 hit points each time they gain magical healing.

The silver cup improves the taste and clarity of liquids poured into it, and can cast *Purify Food and Drink* twice per day.

Stepping through the Archway of Destiny, you find yourself surrounded by a nimbus of light. You feel empowered, the magic strengthening you with a sensation of intense confidence. For a moment you see yourself standing on the back of a giant dragon, holding its chains in your hand as you soar over lands far below you, the castles and armies of your foes appearing like ants on an anthill beneath you. The wind rushing past, the roar of the dragon you ride, and the power of magic you could wield. You are aware that this is a memory of the Dragon Master himself, granting you a sense of the power that adventurers can attain. While it fades when the nimbus of light leaves you, you can still feel the after-effects of the empowerment of this archway. You return to your own body, but feel stronger, healthier, and you can sense your abilities have increased. The image of the village is only a step in front of you.

The magic of the archway allows the hero to gain a class level, if they have the experience, as if they had rested or trained. The effects are felt immediately, including access to spells they may have learned, the benefit of more hit points, and so on.

LEAVING BY THE ARCHWAY

The figure speaks to your mind as you pass through the archway. "You have passed the trial of the Dragon Master, and I deem you worthy. Remember me as you go into the world and do great things. Never forget..." And at that, you vanish.

If the heroes have gone through the Archway of Destiny, go to act 2, having finished the dungeon.

If the heroes search the statues before leaving through the Archway of Destiny, the left-most statue (the one in the best condition) has the outline of a secret doorway beneath it that can be seen automatically so long as a character is searching the statue. The statue can be moved aside on a pivot, to reveal a staircase spiraling down, leading to area (1-12). Sadly, all previous potential champions never bothered to look after they saw the treasures, and in the centuries the test has been in place none have found this secret entrance.

(1.13) THE OLIPHANTS PRISON

You enter this chamber, and find a large room filled with blocks made of glowing blue stone. The walls of the room appear solid enough, but outside the cube of the chamber a swirling cloud of stars flows around you, as if this room is displaced and floating in the heavens. On the far side of the room you see a large slab of stone with three figures sitting on it, cross-legged, but with thick chains binding them in place. Each of them are large elephantine creatures, like the statues throughout the rooms above, but these are real: giants in size, with four arms, elephant-like heads, and long ears that become like gossamer wings. Two of them have been reduced to skeletons, mere skin and bone, while the third still moves with faint breathing motion. It looks at you as you enter, with eyes like two marble spheres in its withered head, and a tired voice speaks in your mind.

"You are the first to enter this chamber in a thousand years. I am Oliphas of Loxodon, and I am the last of my kin who may still speak to mortals. Have you come to command us?"

The following answers can be given by Elephas:

WHO ARE YOU?

I am Oliphas of Loxodon, and these are my companions, Piroo and Haston. We are what you mortals would call Outsiders, creatures of magic who come from the astral plane. We left our world long aeons ago, coming here to learn of the universe, and teach the ways of magic to the young races. One of them betrayed us, and used these chains to force us to do his will. We have been bound here for millennia, our magic made to create this place, and all the palaces of the Dragon Master. As our magic was consumed, my people vanished, and the wonders they constructed vanished with them. Now only we remain, and this dungeon of the dragon master.

WHERE IS THE DRAGON MASTER?

The body in the crystal sarcophagus is the Dragon Master, refusing to submit to the ravages of time as other mortals, he uses our magic to keep his body pristine. He wished all heroes to see his face, and believe he was responsible for their first adventures.

WHY ARE YOU CHAINED HERE?

The Dragon Master captured us long ago, using these chains to bind us within this chamber, and obey his every wish. It was our magic he used to command the dragons, and our might he used to carve out his domain. We kept him alive for hundreds of centuries, until he tired of life and bid us create this tomb as a monument to his greatness. He did not release us even then, instead insisting that all heroes after him would owe their power to the test of champions within his tomb. Now we grow weak, and soon there shall be nothing left of us.

WHY ARE YOU FALLING APART?

We are creatures of magic, made of the stuff of dreams. Because of these chains and the eons of slavery, we have spent our essence on maintaining this place. We are being used up like wood burned to make a fire. My friends are not dead, but spent in this slavery, like myself. I was the most powerful, but it is only a matter of time before I lose consciousness. We will crumble into dust, and even that dust will be destroyed. There will be nothing left to return to the Astral Plane, and we will die.

HOW CAN WE FREE YOU?

You must break the seal on the chains binding us. The chains are made of cold iron, but the seals are made of clay. We cannot harm them, and only the Dragon Master knew of us in all the eons since our capture.

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF YOU ARE FREE?

We will leave. We will vanish from this place and this material universe, and return to the realm of the astral plane. There is not enough willpower left in us for revenge, even if it were in our natures. All we wish is to go home.

ARE YOU EVIL?

We of Loxodonia are creatures of knowledge and wisdom, and even the long ages of slavery and anger cannot change this. Our magic was used by the Dragon Master to do many things, all against our will and out of our control. At first we survived through anger, then despair, but now we are simply exhausted and wish to return to our bodiless existence, before we ever came to this mortal universe.

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE US IF WE FREE YOU?

The enchanted items in the chamber above were crafted without our power, and will be yours if you free us. As well, our power is what the Dragon Master's archway uses to empower champions that pass through it. The same energies will flow from us one last time when we are freed.

CAN WE CONTROL YOU AS THE DRAGON MASTER DID?

No. The clay seals were made specifically to channel the control to the Dragon Master, and no others can take his place. There is little left of us to control, and soon enough even that will vanish.

FREEING THE LOXONIANS

Breaking the clay seals on the chains is easily done with a single strike. When the last is freed, read the following:

The clay seals shatter easily in your hands, and the manacles binding the Loxodonians' wrists come apart with a loud crack. Each of Oliphas' wrists bears a red scar from the metal, and the Loxodonian sighs as each is removed. While the others are skeletal, with nothing left to sigh, you can feel relief in your mind as each manacle is removed from them.

When the last chain is removed from each Loxonian, their forms begin to alter colors, as do the stars you can see in the walls beyond the chamber: stars become inky dots while the dark beyond the stars becomes clouds of every color of light. Soon the shape of the walls becomes distorted, the dungeon's reality coming undone, and every trace of it vanishing. Now the only things that remain solid are yourselves and the Loxodonians, floating in surreal prism-clouds.

The Loxodonians, what's left of them, unfurl from their seated position, and for a moment you see a hint

of their original glory surrounding their crumbling bodies: great elephant-like men with four arms and long ears that become crystalline wings. There is a thought that glows from them like a roar, and you are surrounded by astral lights as the Loxodonians return to the realms of light and thought.

You feel yourselves absorbing the glow surrounding you, and your bodies feel stronger, faster, your minds sharper, clearer in every way. As well, you feel yourselves transported, removed from the space of the Dragon Master's Dungeon by the magic of the Loxodonians.

The Loxodonians have vanished, and the heroes have absorbed their energy. This replaces the effect from the Archway of Destiny, but the heroes still reappear at the surface in the same way. The heroes freeing the Loxodonians will each gain a class level, instantly absorbing the knowledge of the Loxodonians as well as processing the experiences they've had in this adventure, becoming 1st level characters immediately.

At the GM's discretion, they may also instantly gain +1 to one ability score.

While the Loxodonians are significantly weaker, the heroes have earned their friendship, and they may do things like answering Commune spells, or appearing in dreams with helpful ideas or warnings of great danger. This will be rare, as the Loxodonians will be healing for eons to come.

The heroes are transported to the archway, out of the dungeon of the Dragon Master.

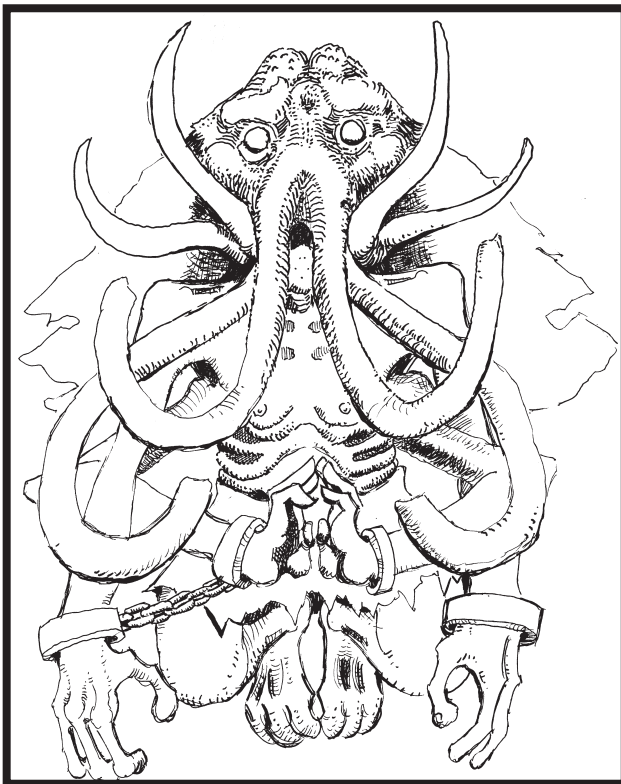
(1.14) FLIGHT OF THE LOXODONIANS

If the heroes freed the loxodonians, read the following when they appear on the surface:

You find yourselves transported to the surface, standing at the well in the center of the village.

A bright light bursts forth from the well, shooting up into the sky. You can see the forms of the Loxodonians floating skyward and fading away. Other shapes from the dungeons below float up after them, blocks of architecture or statues that vanish into the air.

The Dragon Master's Sarcophagus appears in the air above the well, hovering there before you. The crystal sarcophagus glitters in the sun before fading, leaving the heroic form of the Dragon Master floating above the well. A moment later his form begins to glitter, and as the last light from the Loxodonians fades, so does the body's youthful looks and golden armor. The magic that kept it whole is gone, and the ages that were kept away rush in at once to claim it: A moment later the figure wastes away before your eyes, crumbling into bones, and the bones into dust. A wind comes and blows the dust away: the last trace of the Dragon Master is gone, little more than dust on the breeze...





ACT THREE: THE BATTLE OF WELLWATER

The heroes arrive on the surface to find the village burned: the bandits have arrived while they were in the Dragon Master's Dungeon, set the village on fire and corralled the villagers in the only remaining building, the Boar's Head Inn. Now the bandits have gone on another raid, but they are returning soon to gather their spoils and bring the villagers to market as slaves. While heroes could flee the village and head for the hills (or, well, the city), the Inn is clearly untouched by the flames, and could explain what happened to the villagers.

(2.1) THE BURNED VILLAGE

Stepping from the archway by the well, you see the wagon with the mule still waiting at the entrance to the town. Now that you're here, however, your senses are overwhelmed by smoke and ash from the fires that have clearly burned for some time. The village of Wellwater's thatched-roofed houses have been reduced to ruins, burned down and leaving only shells of buildings, walls of piled logs. The exception is the Inn, a large building untouched by the fire save for the soot from the village burned around it.

You are now standing in the ruins of Wellwater, with no other survivors beyond your group, and the mule still standing with the wagon by the front gate.

The mule is patiently waiting at the gate, left as it was by the bandits when they attacked. Nothing much phases this mule, and it is immune to being spooked by anything but reasonable causes: actual attacks on its person, or the presence of undead. All humans seem the same, and it has changed owners so often it simply obeys whoever drives it. The wagon is loaded with the supplies the villagers were going to bring with them, and the bandits only removed the food and ale. Otherwise, there is no reason to unload only to reload the cargo. There is a post added, where the villagers will be chained when they are walked to the nearest slave market.

(2.2) THE INN

The inn has been used as the base for the bandits as they leave to attack other settlements, returning with more slaves and supplies for their army. The inside is currently abandoned, save a guard in the treasure room. The slaves are locked in their cage in the basement, one built well enough that they cannot escape on their own.

(2.2a) THE COMMON ROOM

The common room of the Inn has been overwhelmed with use, the tables and floors left with a thick layer of grime from a night of intense drinking, brawling, and bad behaviour. The stench of spilled drink is overwhelming, and every footstep in the room involves tearing free from the muck on the floor, or stepping around broken plates or chewed bones scattered on the floor.

This room has been used by the Bandits as their barracks, and they have been feasting every night on the Inn's supplies. While there are beds upstairs, the bandits usually drink themselves unconscious and sleep on the floor or in the booths, which is not rough for them as they sleep on the ground in the woods. Also, the Bandit King doesn't trust the regular men to go near the treasure, and keeps the upstairs for himself.

(2.2b) UPSTAIRS

The rooms here are mostly in good shape, as only the bandit king and his trusted soldiers are allowed here. Usually one of them sits at the top of the steps, watching the regular men brawl and drink, while the Bandit King stays in his room, planning the next raid.

(2.2c) TREASURE ROOM

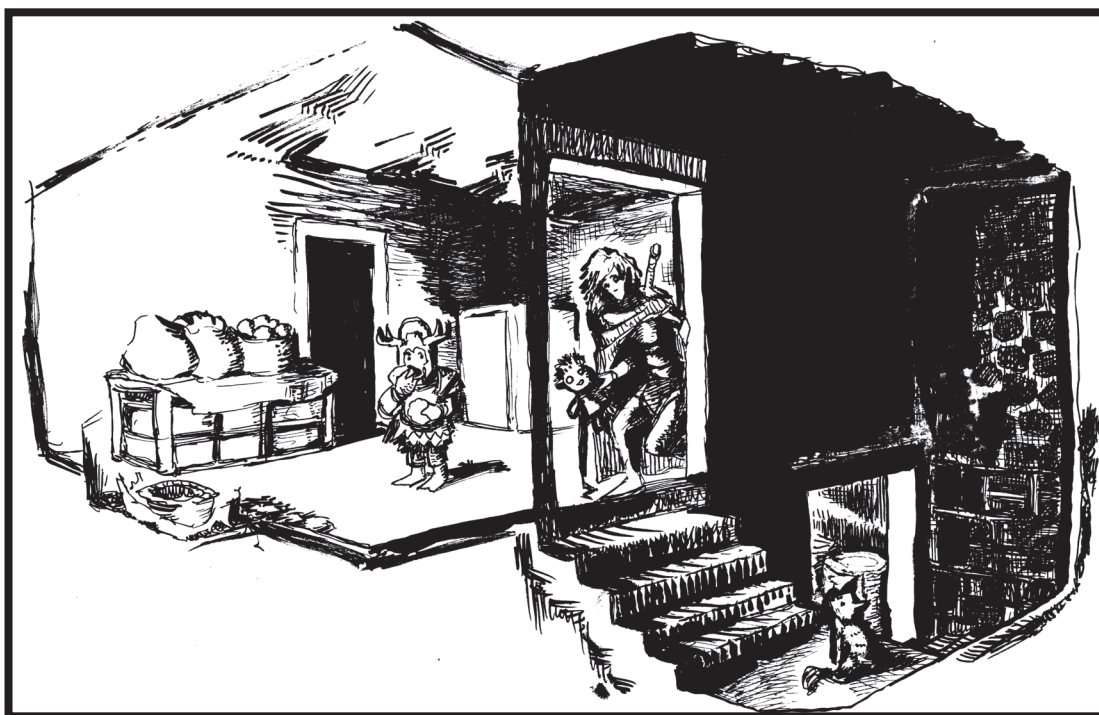
This large room has been left clean compared to the rooms downstairs, the bed made, the air fresh from the open window. In the middle of the floor is a wooden lock box left open, inside it a glittering collection of gold and silver coins, with two vials of a red potion sitting on top of them. A tiny little creature, like a bat-winged man the size of a cat, with wrinkled grey skin and a long, pointed tail, stands beside it, poking the coins with a sharp red nail. It sees you as you enter, looks in shock towards the window, and a cloud of ashen smoke begins to surround it.

This is the Bandit King's personal chamber, and it holds the treasures the bandits have gathered. It is the only locked room at the Inn (DC20), the Bandit King having the only key. The door is not trapped, because the Bandits don't believe there is anyone who knows they're here. However, by the window is an imp who serves the bandit king, and is guarding over the treasure. If the room is entered, it will fly off to warn its master, who will come prepared for the heroes.

This Imp-like creature is Noot, the fiendish servant of the bandit king, who serves the human so long as the bandit army attacks the countryside. Noot was taking a nap while the bandits went on a raid, content to guard the ill-gotten gains. Roll initiative and on Noot's turn, the imp surrounds itself in a miasma of ash (as the spell BLUR) and dives out the window. If successful, it warns the bandits.

(2.2d) KITCHEN

The kitchen is a large room ringed with counters, piled high with pots and used crockery. There is a door out to the back, one leading to the common room, and a third doorway left open, leading down wooden steps to the cellar. The room has a large counter and an iron stove, which is still lit, soup simmering in a black iron pot. There is a soft whimpering sound on the air, like a kettle about to boil or the whistle of the wind.



The bandits like their food hot, and the bandit king punishes bandits who mess with their food with at least a good thrashing. The whimpering sound heroes can hear the sound of sobbing coming from behind the door to the cellar.

(2.2e) CAGED VILLAGERS

This cellar is where the goods of the inn have been stored. Near the stairs are some of the barrels of ale, wheels of cheese, and bushels of potatoes meant for the meals of patrons. The far end of the cellar has been blocked off with an iron cage, meant to guard the valuables of the inn from thieves. Now a collection of humans stand behind the cage bars, the villagers of Well Water. A young girl sobs, and the other villagers lean against the bars, defeated.

The Villagers are all here, having been captured by the bandits, rounded up and locked into the cellar of the Inn. The bandits intend to sell them to slavers, and the villagers had no real ability to put up a fight. Other than some bruises, the villagers surrendered, having no real options. The bandits then burned the village, and locked them up until they return. The cage is built using incredibly strong metal bars (Hardness 20, 100 hit points), built when the town was more affluent, and proof against any assault the heroes could do. The lock is masterwork in quality as well (DC30 disable device). The only key is kept by the bandit king, who took the keys from the Innkeeper and put the leather cord on his neck and tucked it under his shirt before leaving. The villagers overheard the bandits talking about the other villages in the region, how they would raid them for more slaves; the bandits are expected to return soon.

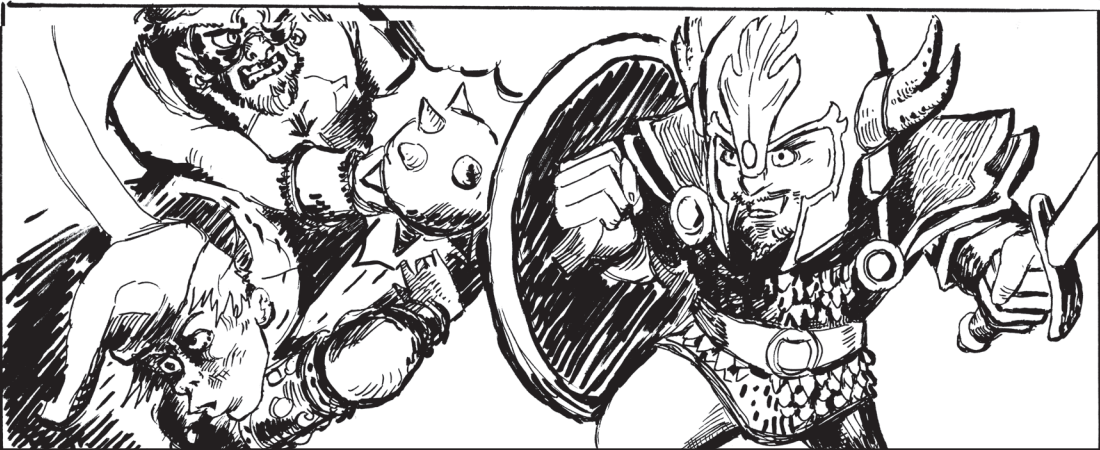
THE BANDITS ARRIVE

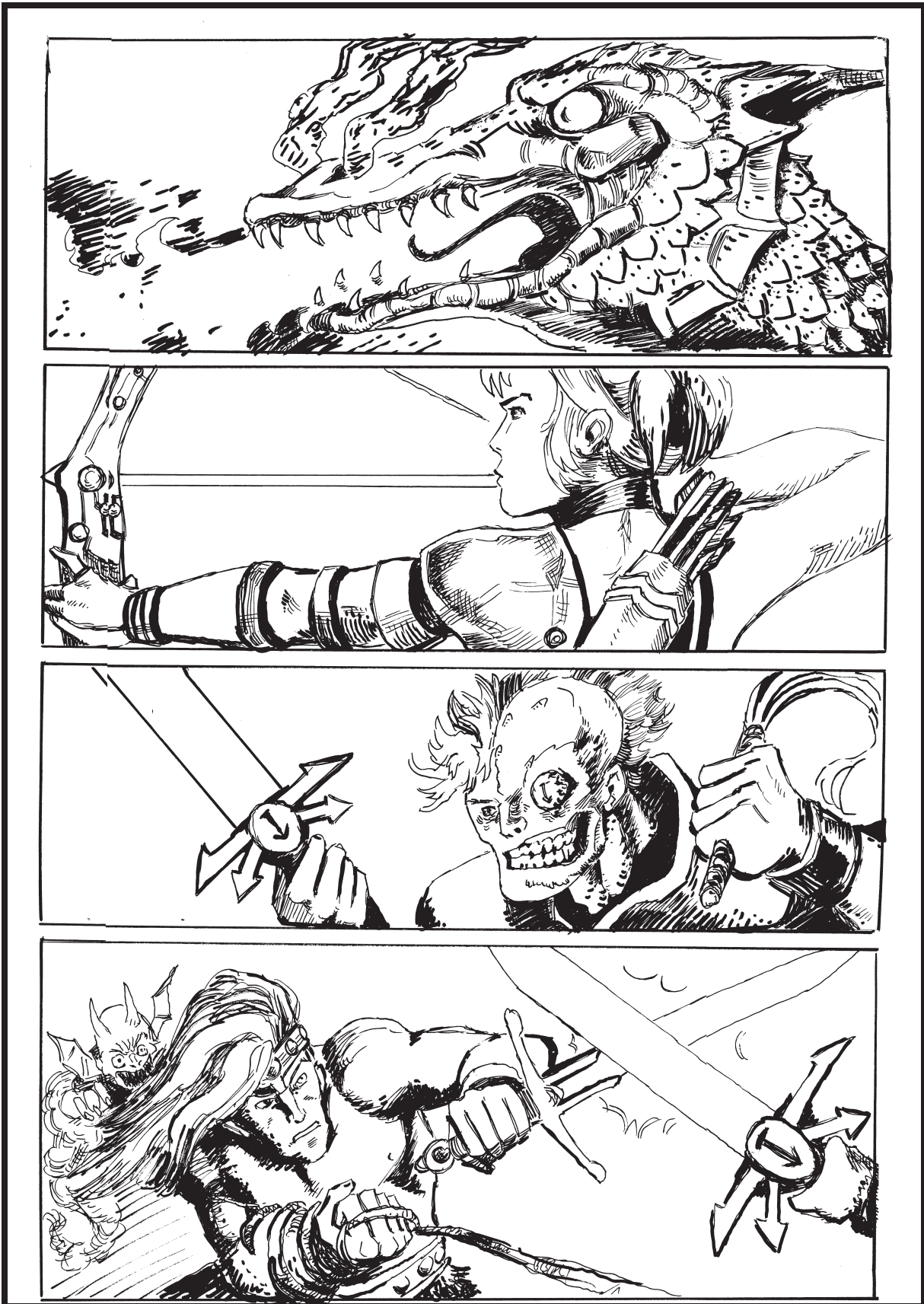
Whenever you feel it appropriate, the bandits will come back to the village. This could be while they are in the cellar with the villagers, or exploring the town, or just as they are about to leave.

Heroes still in the Inn can and should be able to use it to their advantage, making the bandits come at them through the doors, or using spells or arrows through the windows. If the heroes are trapped in the open and cannot run back to the Inn before the Bandits can react, they will be surrounded, and they are more than likely to be overwhelmed. This is not recommended, and is probably a bad idea for 1st or even 2nd level heroes! The bandits are over-confident, so may well allow the heroes "a sporting chance" to get back into the Inn, more as mockery than sportsmanship; something the villains should regret, if the heroes turn the tables on them. As well, the dragon arriving shortly is also meant to make the battle more even, or turn it in the favour of the heroes.

If the heroes have gone unnoticed, the bandits will saunter in with a handful of villagers from their raid on an ox-drawn wagon from the next village over (a farm with a family collective, many of whom had already escaped to the city, but nine of them were captured and brought here), along with various food stuffs and supplies. The bandits will drive the ox in towards the Inn, only suspecting the heroes if some of them are wandering around outside, or if they did something to significantly change the area: boarded up the Inn, moved the mule wagon or unpacked it, or somehow got the villagers out and are in the town square.

If, on the other hand, the heroes alerted Noot, the Imp in the treasure room, and failed to stop it from escaping, the creature warns them and they use tactics to take the inn. Half of the bandits have arrows and short bows, and





will take cover behind some rubble and aim for heroes near the windows. Others will charge in through the front door (eight), while four attempt to sneak in through the back door.

RUNNING THE BATTLE

First, roll 2d4 to determine how many rounds before the Dragon arrives (see below). Second, as soon as they discover the heroes, have the bandits spread out, half with bows, the rest charging the house, or sneaking around the back. Third, if the bandits have the Ox-pulled Wagon in the village, with the cage of slaves on it, the ox will startle and move around the village during the battle, moving forty feet (8 spaces) each round, potentially trampling targets in its path (Reflex DC14 to dodge out of the way, or take 2d6 damage).

Finally, the bandits and the dragon are not overly clever foes, and even newly-minted heroes should be more than a match for them; as a result, feel free to give the heroes more leeway in defeating them, knocking them over with each mighty strike, exploding them with every spell, aweing their foes with each spell of healing, and so on. Heroes who step it up with cinematic stunts like climbing on the back of the dragon to strike it down, should be allowed to revel in their heroic status.

Red Eye, the Bandit King, will remain on his horse during most of the attack, yelling orders. If one of the warriors challenge him, he will gladly enter melee for the love of slaughter. Even the arrival of the dragon (see below) only makes this battle more interesting, though he'll have his bandits fire arrows at the beast while he waits to strike the killing blow and take all the glory. Alternatively, he'll let the beast slay his men, while he rides around behind the Inn and attack the heroes himself, aiming to be the last bandit-king standing. If the Imp from the treasure room is with him, the two of them will work together, with the imp moving around to flank the Bandit King's targets. He will not flee for any reason, believing that he will lose the respect of his men, and the fear of his victims, if he does.

When the bandit-king is killed, the bandits will immediately lose morale and flee, taking only what they can carry with them. This will be a stunning defeat for the bandits, who may never be a unified threat like this for a generation or more.

THE DRAGON'S IRE

The fires of the village, the actions of the bandits, and perhaps even the heroes ending the magic of the Dragon Master's Dungeon, have served to draw a dragon to this area. Young and reckless, the whip-tailed fire Drake desires nothing more than to eat humans and carry off their treasures. Read the following:

Even over the sounds of combat, you can hear a rumbling sound filling the air, coming from all directions. The rumbling becomes a tremendous roar, and one of the bandits points to the sky and shrieks "Dragon!" On cue, a massive bolt of fire strikes the ground in the middle of the village, and a moment later a long reptilian form lands in that place. It is a red scaled, serpentine drake with great leathery wings, and a whip-like tail with a tip like a red hot iron poker that flicks around it, as if with its own mind. Tendrils of smoke trail from its nostrils, and the wyrm lets out a shriek as it joins in the battle.

This is a whip-tailed fire drake, a sub-breed of dragon with the mind of a beast compared to the true dragons, but still a fearsome foe. The young drake is only here to cause havoc, set a few fires, and devour some people before flying off to cause more death. It doesn't have a plan, other than chase fast-moving prey, and use its fiery breath to light up the Inn. Note that targets engaging it in melee will be lashed with its fiery tail as a free action each round, in addition to whatever other actions it takes.

It will do one of the following, in order of preference, each round: breathe fire on someone; attack with its bite, swallowing foes it brings to zero hit points; whip targets moving in range with its whip-like tail; spend a round eating someone; set the Inn on fire with its breath weapon; or smash something. It will whittle down the bandits surrounding it first, as they are the easiest targets. If the heroes are in sight, it will attack them, too. This includes if it can see them inside the inn, and it will chomp at them through the windows if it thinks it can get them. If it takes more than half its hit points in damage, or it runs out of targets it can see and the Inn is already on fire, it will fly away.

If the Inn is on fire, smoke will fill the upper levels, and after a few rounds it will spread down to the cellar. If the heroes have not managed to get the villagers out, they will be in danger of smoke exposure; this shouldn't happen, but it is strongly encouraged to play up the danger of this, so the heroes fight the Bandit King to get the key and open the gate before it is too late!

AFTER THE BATTLE

The villagers will be sad that their homes were destroyed, but will be very grateful to the heroes. The countryside has been devastated by these bandits, and the dragons and other threats that seem to be growing in the region. Bringing them to the city may well be the best option. The villagers will take the wagon supplies, and would want the wealth stolen by the bandits returned to them, save 50gp for the heroes. While a meagre reward in coin, the villagers need every penny. If the heroes will still journey with them to Highwall, they will increase it to 100gp total. Out of 1000gp for all the villagers, this is a hefty sum. And, of course, the city is many days away by foot, and other adventures can still be had along the way...

NEW MONSTERS



This creature is a wrinkled humanoid with bat-like wings and a long, pointed tail. Its eyes seem perpetually frightened, looking this way and that for any threat.

Mist Imps are minions of evil creatures, usually mortals who have given themselves over to the forces of evil. They serve as messengers of the dark powers, giving assignments to their mortal masters. Mist imps hide and observe targets, fleeing to get help if spotted. They do not engage in combat directly, but will support more powerful allies by flanking targets.

Mist Imp CR 2 XP 800
CE Tiny Outsider (chaotic, evil)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +2 Size, +4 natural armor)
hp 28 (4d10+8) Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4

Immune to death effects, mind-affecting effects, necromantic effects, poison, starvation

OFFENSE Speed 20 ft., Fly 40 ft. Melee claws +3 (1d6-1) Special Qualities:

Mist Form

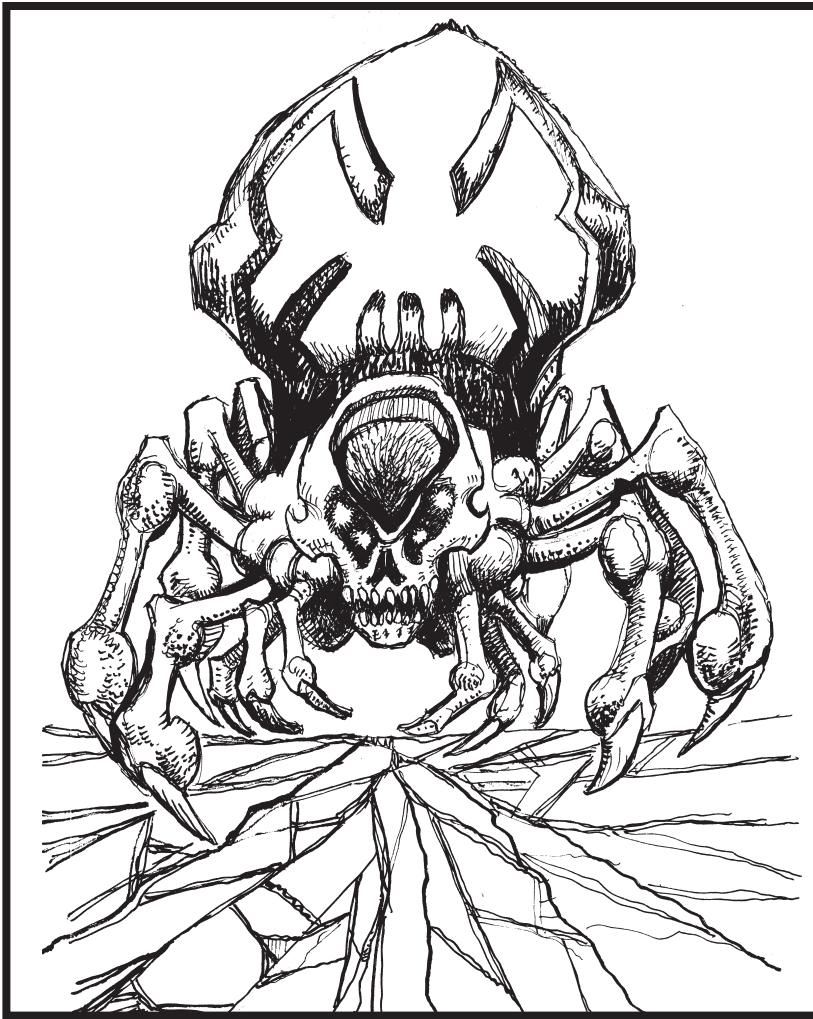
STATISTICS Str 8, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +3; CMD 16 Skills Bluff +7, Flying +10, Perception +7, Stealth +10; Racial Modifiers +5 Flying, +5 Stealth

SPECIAL ABILITIES Mist

Form (Su): Mist Imps can transform their bodies into a semi-mist form that is nearly-insubstantial. This gives them 50% immunity to damage from physical sources like weapons.

ECOLOGY Environment varies, lower planes. Organization solitary, Treasure incidental



The black-shelled spider-like creature has a skull-like head, and glowing eyes in its sockets. A strange energy surrounds it, chill and ghostly.

Skullspiders are creatures of the lower planes that crawl up into the mortal world to haunt graveyards. They capture mortals and keep them in their webs, using them to power their animated skeletal minions. A cluster of skullspiders that lairs in a catacomb below a city can have a virtually limitless army of skeletons at their command. As the stasis of their poison has no time limit, there are now-lost cities where only the lairs of the skullspiders were left untouched; in their webs are citizens who have slept for centuries, with no idea their age has passed away.

Skullspiders are not intelligent, but are cunning. They have no goals save collecting more souls to power their animation abilities, and simply go about their business hunting mortals or animating corpses as guardians.

Skull Spider (CR 2, XP 800) NE Medium outsider (evil)
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE: AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 natural armor) hp 20 (4d8+4); Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4
Immune to death effects, mind-affecting effects, necromantic effects, poison, starvation

OFFENSE Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.
Melee bite +3 (1d6 plus Skullspider Poison)
Special Attack web (+5 ranged, DC 12, hp 2)
Special Qualities: Skullspider Animate Dead, Skullspider Poison, Web Drain

STATISTICS Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 2
Base Atk +3; CMB +3; CMD 16 (28 vs. trip) Skills Climb +16, Perception +5 (+8 in webs), Stealth +7 (+11 in webs); Racial Modifiers +5 Perception, +5 Stealth (+8 in webs), +16 Climb

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Skullspider Animate Dead (Su)
Skull Spiders animate one corpse per round as a skeleton with 5hp. They can have up to ten, plus two per captured mortal soul in their web. The animated skeletons will not go beyond one hundred feet of the skull-spider.

Skullspider Stasis Poison(Su): Skullspider Poison is a powerful sedative that causes the subject to enter a deep death-like stasis. This is not a sleep spell or enchantment effect, so elves are affected by it. Target is apparently dead, being unconscious.
Bite—injury; save Fort DC 14; frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; effect Target is asleep. cure 1 save.

Web Cocoon (Su): Skull Spiders create webs in their lairs where they cocoon victims. The victims are in stasis indefinitely, providing the Skull Spider fuel for animating skeletons. Releasing a victim is simply a matter of cutting the webs of the cocoon (hardness 0, hp 5).

ECOLOGY Environment graveyards, lower planes
Organization: solitary, cluster (4-8), hive (10-30) Treasure incidental

WHIP-TAILED FIRE DRAKE

CR 5

N Large Dragon

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, -1 Size, +4 natural armor)

hp 50 (5d12+20) Fort +x, Ref +4, Will +4

Immune to fire, sleep

OFFENSE Speed 40 ft., Fly 80 ft. (clumsy)

Melee claws +3 (1d8+x)

Special Attacks: Breath Weapon, Tail Strike.

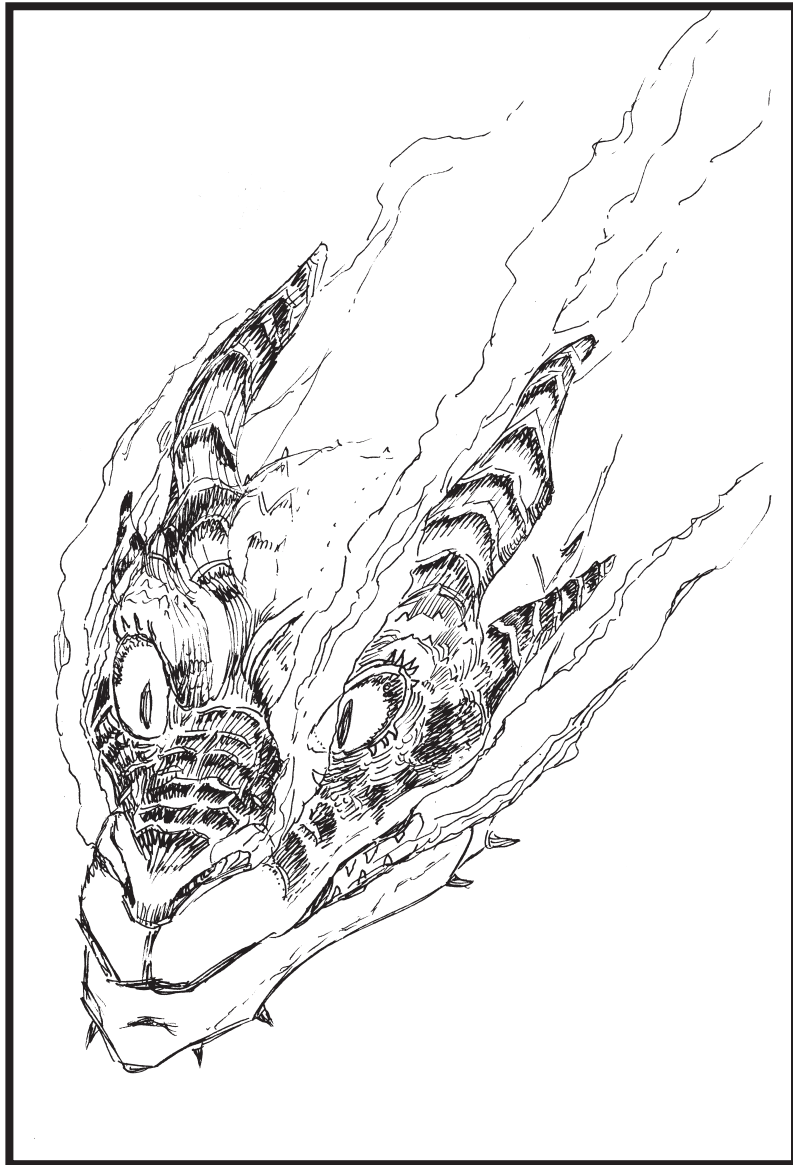
Special Qualities: Scent, Fire Immunity.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15

Base Atk +5; CMB +3; CMD 20

Skills Bluff +7, Flying +10, Perception +7, Stealth +10; Racial Modifiers +5 Flying, +5 Stealth

**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Breath Weapon (Su)** Whip-tailed Fire Drakes spit bolts of fire.**Tail Lash (Su)** Every round Whip-Tailed Fire Drakes gain a bonus tail lash attack doing 1d6+5 fire and bludgeoning damage, in addition to its normal actions. Additionally, the constantly-moving tail has many opportunity attacks against creatures the Whip-Tail Fire Drake threatens, up to 5 each round, or its dexterity modifier, if higher. These replace the Fire Drakes normal opportunity attacks.**ECOLOGY**

Environment hills, forests, Organization solitary, Treasure incidental

DESCRIPTION

This dragon has a long body, like a coiled red snake with four legs and a pair of leathery wings. Its scales are red but with charred black tips and white spikes all down its spine, from the horns on its head to its tail. Its whip-like tail has a tip like a red hot poker, flicking back and forth as if with a mind of its own.

Whip-tailed fire drakes are wild dragons with great power but the minds of beasts. Known for flying about the countryside, devouring sheep, and burning up all the thatch-roofed cottages in their paths. Burnt meat is its diet, and so smoke and forest fires attract it.

Whip-tailed fire drakes never fight to the death, fleeing after suffering enough hurt or when confronted by credible threats. They will hide and heal, but if they have a chance they will track down their attackers and attempt to ambush them, seeking revenge.



RED EYE

Human Fighter 3: CR 3 XP 800 CE Medium Human

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 chain shirt)

hp 32 (3d10+12) Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +5

OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Longsword +8 (1d8+4)

Special Attack: Eye Bolt (+5, 1d8+4 fire damage)

STATISTICS Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 18

Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 16; Skills Climbing +8, Intimidate +8, Riding +5, Stealth +5

Feats: Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (eye bolt)

Eye Bolt (Su) Red Eye's red eye can fire a ray at a target as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack, doing 1d8+4 fire damage on a hit. The damage is Charisma based.

GEAR: Chainmail, longsword.

This large bandit is armored with black leather and spiked shoulder pads, armed with a massive sword, and with fully half his face scarred by fire. Despite that, his most prominent feature is a massive red orb in his left eye socket that has a hot glow from the center. The giant of a man exudes hatred, and his desire to cause pain seems palpable.

Red Eye is a fiend cultist, and has been for as long as he can remember. The bandit king woke after a fire burned half his face off, taking his eye and his memory, and leaving him with an enjoyment for causing pain. Despite many opportunities to stop, Red Eye's cruelty persevered. One bandit attack saw him find the Red Eye in the belongings of the wizard they killed. Putting it in his eye socket, he came face-to-face with a fiend who, surprisingly, got along with the bandit. Red Eye's potential got him a minion and a mission: devastate everything in his path, sell the innocent into slavery, and cause pain. There was nothing else required than to unleash him upon the world. The bargain was not to corrupt him, but bring him officially into the fold.

Red Eye will fight to the death, accepting no defeat from the heroes. He cannot be reasoned with.

HUMAN BANDITS

This leather-clad human has a masked face, and a red eye painted on his clothing..

Red Eye's bandit army is filled with all manner of criminals and low-life scum. Gathered from prisons and gallows in other kingdoms, the bandits are selected from among the prisoners for being brutal and inhumane. Furiously loyal to Red Eye not only for fear but also their personal inclination, the bandits are happy to enslave the commoners of the countryside. The bandits will fight to the death if Red Eye is alive, but will flee to the hills if he dies.

Human Warrior1 CR 1/4 XP 200

NE Medium Humanoid, Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor) hp 6 (1d10+1) Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4

OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Short Sword +1 (1d6+1), Short Bow (1d6)

STATISTICS Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10,

Cha 8; Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 11

Skills Bluff +2, Intimidate +2, Stealth +4

Organization bandit army (40)

APPENDIX TWO: ORIGIN LEVEL OPTIONAL RULES

Not all stories start at 1st level, and some heroes come from humble origins before they lead armies or cast powerful spells. As well, NPC class levels, like “Expert” and “Commoner” may not be realistic for your campaign. After all, how can 20th level commoners even be possible? For this reason, this module includes optional rules for Origin-level characters.

Origins are character packages that grant a minor ability, some skills, and some starting equipment. The purpose of the Origin is to give players the option of “before we were great and powerful” stories, as well as replacing non-adventurers with simple characters, removing the issue of 20th level peasants, non-adventurers who would be more powerful than a majority of heroes. These characters understand the need for skilled heroes, as even simple monstrous rodents are a potent challenge for commoners. Players learn to think outside their abilities to solve problems, and can lead to creative adventures and roleplaying.

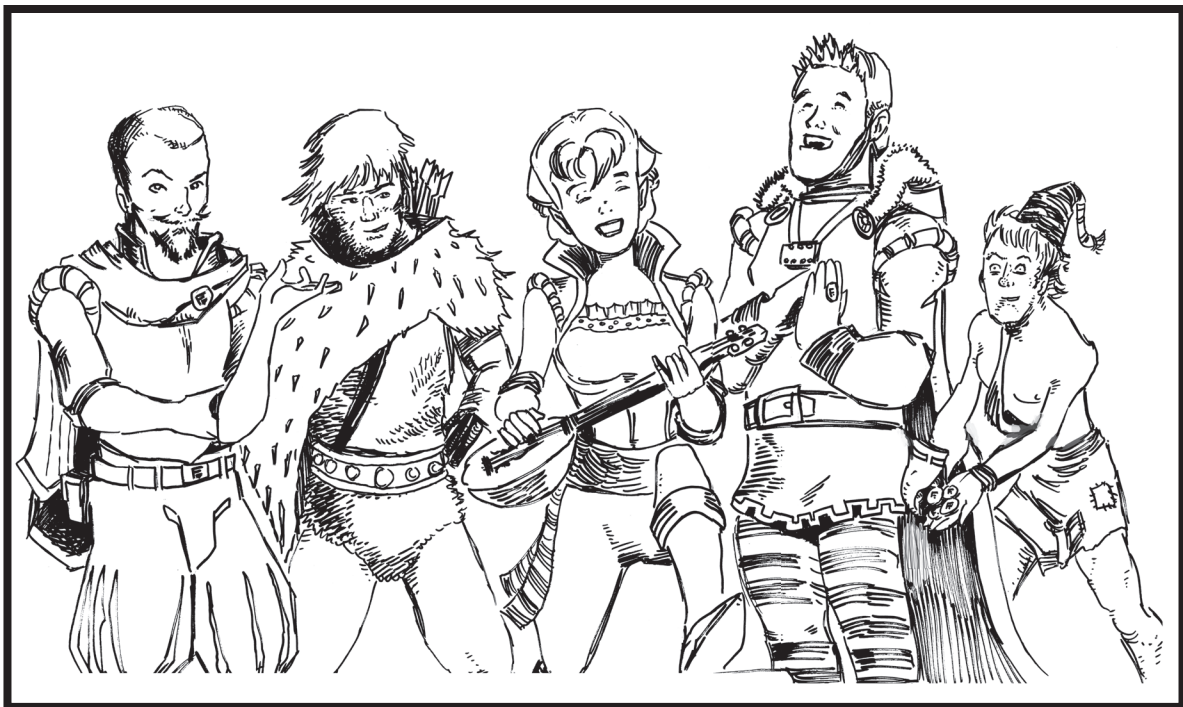
When using Origins, the character gets 6 + Con modifier hit points, but otherwise uses only their ability scores and skills from their Origin level.

To create an Origin-level character, use the standard method your group uses for ability scores, pick a race,

and then choose the Origin. The character gains 6 + Con modifier hit points, which are replaced when they reach 1st level in a Class. For example, if an Innkeeper reaches first level as a Fighter, they replace the 6 + Con hit points of their Origin level, and instead have 10 + Con hit points for their level of Fighter, not 16.

Origin Skills represent the training of that profession. The skill is always considered a class skill for that character, and they enjoy a +2 bonus to skill checks with that skill even if they never put ranks into it when they reach 1st level. All other checks may be accomplished with ability score modifiers. While a character may have interest in a skill they hope to use later, during class levels, for Origin level they are still practicing with it before their proficiency really blossoms. If an Origin gives a skill that would be given by the character’s class, they are free to replace that skill with others from the class skill list.

Origins should replace the Traits from the PFRPG, which doesn’t have official rules for characters without levels in adventuring classes. They have more specific concepts, and may not reflect the class the characters eventually take, but rather how they grew up: peasants or nobles, performers or soldiers, regardless of their later class training.



Origin abilities are what the character can do outside of skills. The Barbarian origin can ignore harsh weather effects, while the Merchant can haggle with vendors for better prices. These are similar to feats, but are specific to the Origin.

Starting Equipment and Money are things the character had on them when adventure came to call. Street Rats have only a few rags and a single copper piece they scrounged up, while Aristocrats start play with fine clothes and gold. This is not a matter of fairness, but realistic expectations meant to immerse players in the setting. The gold that class-level heroes start with is gained by the Origin-level character somehow, or else they must find other ways to outfit themselves for a life of danger and adventure.

Quirks are the opposite of Origin Abilities, in that they are special challenges the character may face due to their origins. Not all Origins have quirks, and none of the quirks are intended to be combat-oriented or crippling flaws. Instead they should encourage roleplaying and story. The Aristocrat may find themselves answering the call of their family for an arranged marriage, but this may not stop their adventures. In fact, getting to the wedding, meeting their bride or groom, and dealing with factions who want to sabotage their marriage, are the basis of a grand adventure (and not just the adventure of spending your life with a spouse).

The Origins described below are merely a selection of examples, which could be standard people that could be met in a fantasy setting. If your group has a unique setting, other Origins could easily be created along these lines. Some may not fit in your setting, such as the time-lost 80s teen.

Hit Points: 6 + Con

Training: Simple Weapons, plus Origin ability

ACROBAT

You learned acrobatics to please crowds from an early age. You are in great physical shape, and can swing through the air with the greatest of ease. You can brave extreme heights, and face death as often as normal adventurers.

NATURAL TUMBLER You can tumble your full speed, rather than the normal reduced rate.

Skill Bonuses: Acrobatics, Perform (dance), Climbing

Starting Equipment: Entertainer's clothes, tightrope, ten-foot pole

Money: 20sp

ARISTOCRAT

Princesses and heirs to the throne, or even simply the children of wealthy merchants, Aristocrats are wealthy and privileged members of society. They dress in fine clothes and eat the best foods, and normally enjoy the attentions of servants and suitors. Some find themselves caught up in adventures, and once they get over the mud on their silk slippers, Aristocrats remember the fighting spirit their ancestors used to found their kingdoms. Aristocrats have some access to the wealth of their families, but never control of it until they are the heads of their houses or rulers of their own kingdoms. For real wealth they need to adventure like everyone else.

STIPEND: Aristocrats have families that pay for minor expenses, within the reach of their influence. Each month an Aristocrat is paid in gold by their families (100GP or whatever is equal to 50 days' wage for a commoner, if your campaign uses a different coinage system). This can only be done at a stronghold of a family, and only from the house book keeper (a very miserly character, even if outwardly jovial), and therefore only within the family's reach. They may collect multiple months at once, if they have missed a month due to travel times, but never in advance. Cheating one's own family is a dangerous game, and different branches of a noble house do check their accounting against one another, catching aristocrats who travel and claim more than their share. The penalty is being cut off from their Stipend, or worse.

SKILLS: Diplomacy, Knowledge (nobility)

NOBLESS OBLIGE (Quirk): Aristocrats have obligations to live up to, including arranged marriages, diplomatic missions, and keeping up appearances. Aristocrats who fail to do this are cut off from their families as if they had been blacklisted, and lose their privilege and all other benefits. Serious failings can result in vengeance from the family, expunging the embarrassment with bloody efficiency. The GM should add in quests and obligations that need to be roleplayed during the game, and remember the publicly known actions of a player character Aristocrat when deciding whether they are holding up their family name properly.

Starting Equipment: Clothing (Noble finery), Signet Ring; **Money:** 100gp

BANDIT

You are a highwayman, a pirate, or other manner of tough whose job is to rob from the rich... and maybe everyone else, too. Most bandits are villains, and make up the ranks of criminal gangs of thugs and cut-throats. Heroic bandits are very rare, but these daring rogues most often fight against unjust regimes of invaders, stealing back what invaders have taken from their subjects and keeping the hope of the common folk alive. These idealists may start out helping, but if they do not turn from their profession before it is too late, what started as stealing for a cause will become a life of crime hurting the common folk they claim to protect.

STAND AND DELIVER When ambushing a target, bandits gain a +1 bonus to the DC victims must roll to avoid surprise. If they do surprise a target, they gain a +1 bonus to initiative after the surprise round. This is only for ambushes.

SKILLS: Stealth, Intimidate

Starting Equipment: Clothing (common clothes), dagger, sling, mask, sack; **Money:** 1 cp

BLACKSMITH

You live by your craftsmanship and your strong arm, making the Tools and gear needed for any settlement. While you are most at home in front of a fire with a hammer and anvil, and have knowledge of metals and ores, the desire to see the world, a world that hungers for your skill and goods, draws many blacksmiths to travel, and some to adventure.

MASTER SMITH: For items you make yourself you get 10% off the cost of materials, considering your skill is beyond that of even characters who have the same Craft Quality. You can also repair your own items for free, needing only the Tools to do so (forge, hammer, anvil, materials, etc.) and money for new materials. Also, you can operate as a Blacksmith in a community, enough to make a living and cover costs for your work.

Skill Bonuses: appraise, craft (any)

Starting Equipment: Leather apron, Common clothing, small anvil, smith's hammer (1d4 Damage)

Money: 1 sp

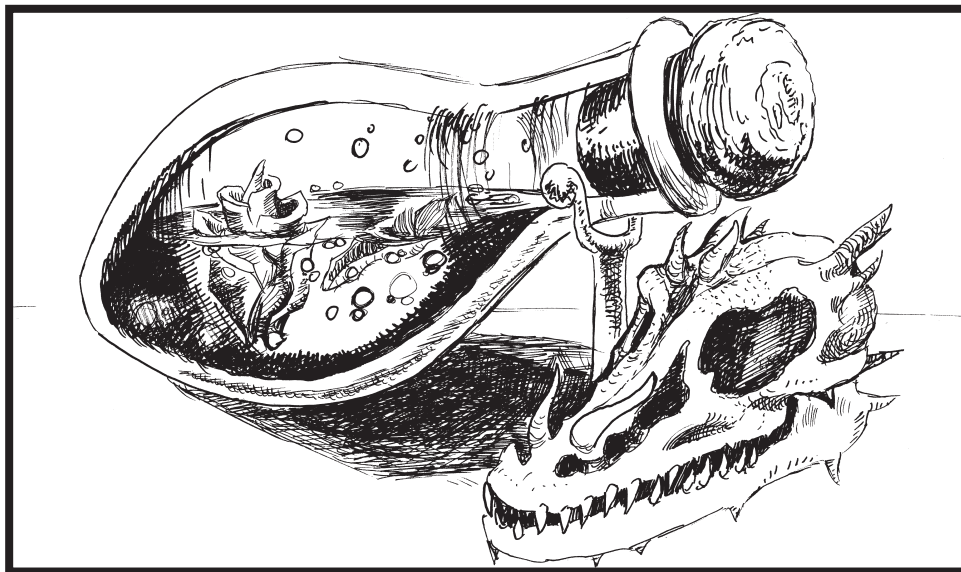
BARBARIAN

Mighty-thewed men and women who dwell in the wild places of the world, Barbarians are resilient to all that life throws at them. Living simply, they know no greater joy than having a good weapon in their hand, the thrill of battle, and above all else freedom. Living in the harshest parts of the world, they are resistant to the extremes of cold and hot weather, and need only the barest of fur to gird themselves, though most wear armor and whatever they must to hold weapons. Barbarians have a strong code of honor involving warrior ways and respect for nature and other people. They are thus frequently at odds with the "softer" civilized folk, who they see as corrupt by soft living and evil magic. This includes a strong distrust for sorcery, which they see as too often reeking of the taint of demons. Only their tribal healers are permitted, and actually are revered, meaning outsiders had best attempt to prove themselves as being "wise men" rather than "necromancers" if they wish to avoid violence.

WEATHER RESISTANCE: Barbarians live their lives in the harsh wilderness, and are accustomed to it as civilized folk will never be. Barbarians can ignore the ravages of weather in any but the most arctic or volcanic of environments. They are still susceptible to starvation and thirst, or intense heat and arctic cold, but can get by without environmental penalties in any environment where they don't take Damage. When they do, they take one Level less Damage than others (they take penalties when others take Damage, they take Damage when others are automatically killed).

SKILLS: Climbing, Survival

Starting Equipment: Clothing (Barbarian furs), one weapon (knife or sling); **Money:** 1 cp



ENTERTAINER

Whether as a wandering tale-teller or a tavern dancer, you have a gift for drawing the attention of others through talent or sheer force of personality. You make a living making others happy, even if only for a moment, and while it lasts it is an incredible life. You have one special talent, be it dancing in a palace, playing music, juggling, telling tales or singing poems. When you use it, people take note.

PLAY THE CROWD: When you use a Perform check instead of a Profession check to earn money, you may re-roll a Perform check made in this way, taking the best result.

Skill Bonuses: Bluff, Perform (any)

Starting Equipment: Entertainer's clothes (based on entertainment Type), and one musical instrument or other prop (juggling balls, dramatic mask, etc.).

Money: 1cp

HUNTSMEN

Huntsmen dwell in the wilderness and survive by tracking food and knowing the woods, working as guides and hunters. Some are considered dangerous vagabonds and drifters, unable to fit in with normal folk. But, those who become heroes often have the kindest hearts. Huntsmen live by hunting animals dangerous to farmers (wolves, foxes, crop-eating rabbits), and selling furs to townsfolk and nobles.

MASTER TRACKER You gain the Track ability for free. If you gain it through another means (such as through a Path or class) you can re-roll failed Tracking checks.

Skill Bonuses: Survival, Knowledge (nature), Animal Handling

Starting Equipment: Commoner clothing, fur cloak, tent, bedroll, backpack, sling, dagger, kit for snares
Money: 1 sp

INNKEEPER

You grew up in the common rooms and kitchens of an Inn, as a scullery maid or innkeeper's child. You know the inns and outs of hospitality, and the interesting characters who passed through town have made you aware of the world beyond your door, including bands of adventurers telling their tales.

INNSIDER SAVING You save 20% on all costs within an Inn or tavern, and can run an Inn or similar establishment. If you do, you can reduce all costs for goods related to that Inn by 10%.

Skills: Appraise, Diplomacy

Origin Qualities: Craft (cooking), Profession (innkeeper)

Starting Equipment: Commoner clothing, apron, towel, ten days' food

Money: 1sp

MERCHANT

You trade in goods, and travel with shipments from port to port, buying and selling. You can make a great deal of money with a golden tongue, but lose it all on the road thanks to bandits, thieves, and the rigors of life in a wild world.

HAGGLE You get 10% off prices for all goods. In a market with only one supplier you get only 5% off. This does not include costs for manufacturing goods, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the costs associated with crafting magical items, for which you pay full price.

SKILLS: appraise, diplomacy, profession (merchant)

Starting Equipment: Noble Finery, one wagon, one mule, 50gp in goods. **Money:** 1gp

SAGE

Wisemen and scholars, Sages are able to glean facts from ancient sources, and are much sought after by adventurers hoping to decrypt the writing on a tomb, identify discovered artifacts, and finding clues to perilous riddles.

STUDIOUS: Sages save 20% of all costs related to researching, including researching new Spells, new magic item designs, and information regarding Creatures and treasures. This is specifically the gold piece value for study, and does not include the costs of making items, for example.

Once per day a Sage may re-roll a failed Knowledge check. If the Sage has a book they can check for the information, such as a library or even a subject-related spellbook, they do not need to spend an Action Surge. The Sage may only do this once per question or subject, and the GM may opt to do the re-roll in secret. The Sage must take the result of the re-roll, even if it is worse the second time.

SKILLS: Knowledge (any two)

Starting Equipment: Scholar's robes, one book or leather bag of pages, quill and ink, tea cup

Money: 1gp

SOLDIER

Soldiers are the rank and file of any military. This origin is for soldiers who have been discharged from the military following war, which is an almost constant reality in such dark times. Even when the myriad noble houses aren't raiding one another, soldiers march for days to help their allies, fight off bandits, and keep ready to fight off other threats, including fantastical beasts like dragons and ogres.

HARDY: Soldiers can march for long periods without getting tired, stay up for long hours without sleep, and other feats of endurance because of rigorous training. Ignore lack of sleep penalties to attacks for the first three days, but after that the penalties kick in at their full rate, the soldier getting their full penalty all at once.

Skills: Profession (soldier), Endurance; Light Armor Proficiency

Starting Equipment: Commoner Clothes, one backpack, one tent, one bedroll, one wineskin, leather armor

MONEY: 10sp

STREET RAT

A member of the lowest caste of society, an orphan or abandoned child, you were raised by the streets to survive. This life may not be your choice, however, and you have dreams of rising above your origins, thus the call to a life of adventure.

SCROUNGING FOR FOOD Street Rats are used to starvation and only need to eat one meal a day to avoid penalties, unlike other characters who must eat two meals per day. As well, in a large town or city they can survive off the streets, living in squalor but not needing to pay inn and food fees. This includes finding the best bins to scavenge, the best bridges to sleep under, etc.

You do not have to worry about starvation, and do not suffer stress from not paying such money, unless you choose to not use this ability. You will look impoverished and suffer a -2 penalty to Persona checks with non-street rats while using Scrounging for Food.

SKILLS: sleight of hand, stealth, Profession (beggar)

DUCKING THE GUARDS (quirk): Guards will always blame you for petty thefts when they know your origins, whether or not you were really involved, and even if not this time then next time for sure. Expect to have to prove your innocence and run for your life frequently if ever law enforcement discovers your origin as a Street Rat.

Starting Equipment: Rags. **Money:** 1cp

TIME-LOST TEENAGER

Drawn through a rift in time, this youngster has found themselves in the body of an adventurer in a fantasy setting. Their strange ideas are still with them, such as Constitutional rights, cheeseburgers, pizzas, and loud music. They wander the world, adventuring in the hopes of someday finding a way home. Only humans may take this Origin.

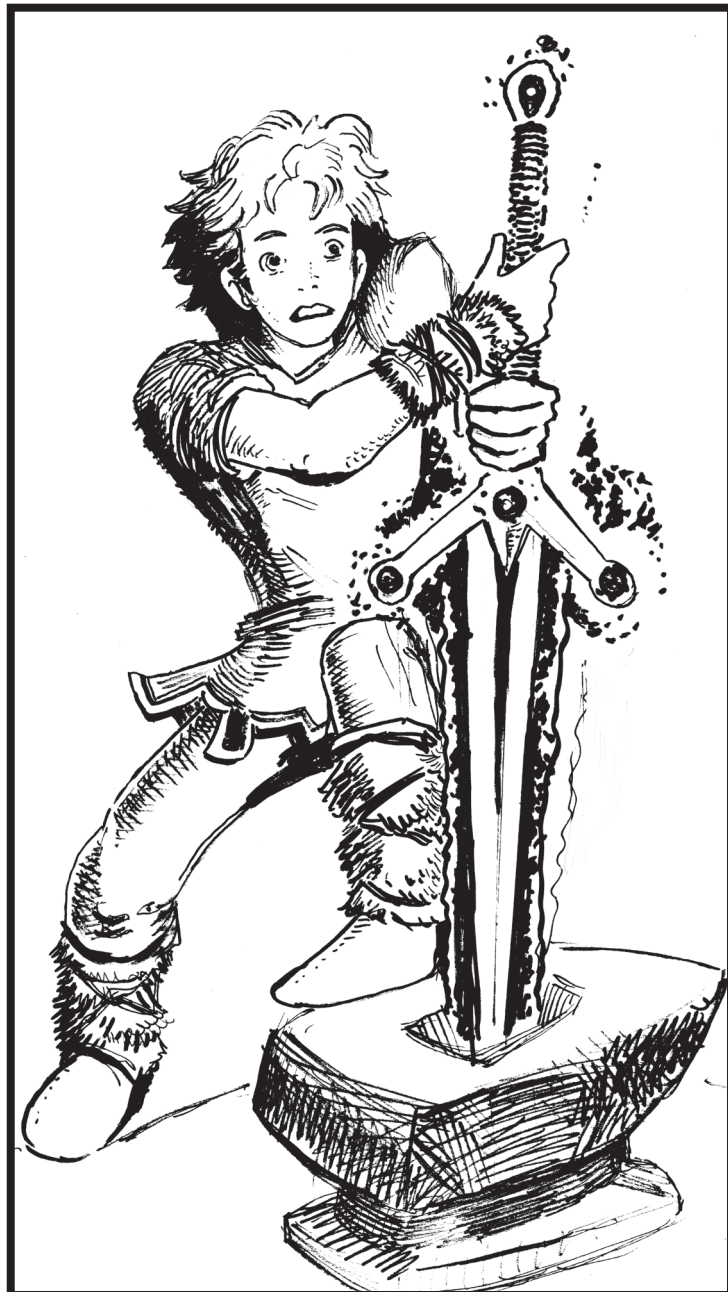
JIVE TALK: This character is allowed to make modern pop-culture references or otherwise crack-wise in-game with modern jokes. For the most part, NPCs will not understand, but may feel appropriately insulted when the right movie reference is used to insult them. However, as the character Levels up, they cannot increase modern skills, but only those skills they encounter as they adventure (just like everyone else).

SKILLS: Bluff, Disable Device

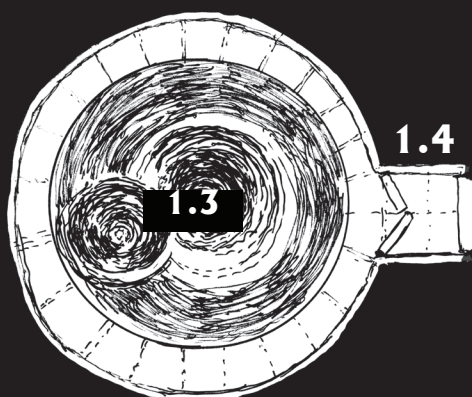
STRANGE IDEAS (quirk): Whenever a modern concept is suggested by this character, normal folks scoff at it, thinking it laughable (at best) or foul witchcraft (at worst). Examples include modern science, more liberal social norms like abolishing slavery, oral hygiene, inalienable human rights, the germ theory of disease, and others.

Starting Equipment: Casual Modern Clothes (Jeans, sneakers, brightly colored t-shirt with band names or superheroes on it), backpack, music-playing device (cell phone or cassette player), deck of collectable game cards, one sandwich (any), one pack chewing gum, one can pop or bottled water, one bus pass

Money: five bucks (no Urth value)



APPENDIX THREE: MAPS



1.2 Well Room

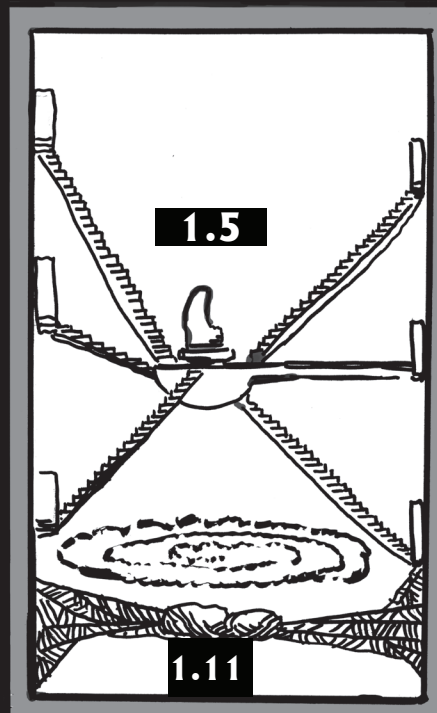


1.4 Well of Doors

1.6

1.12

1.8

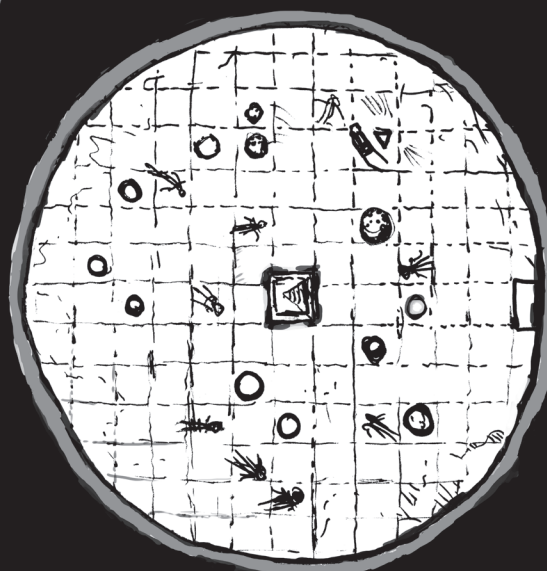


1.4 Well (sideview)

1.9

1.4

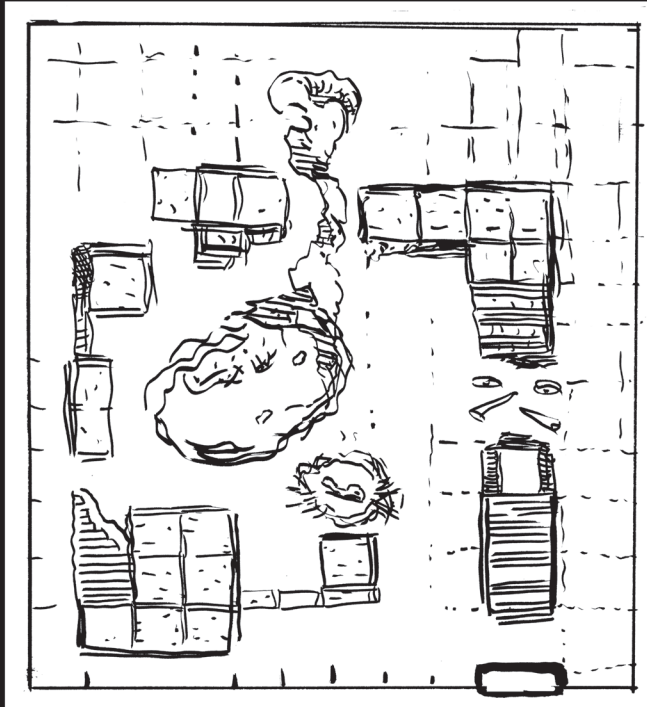
1.10



1.9 Riddle Room

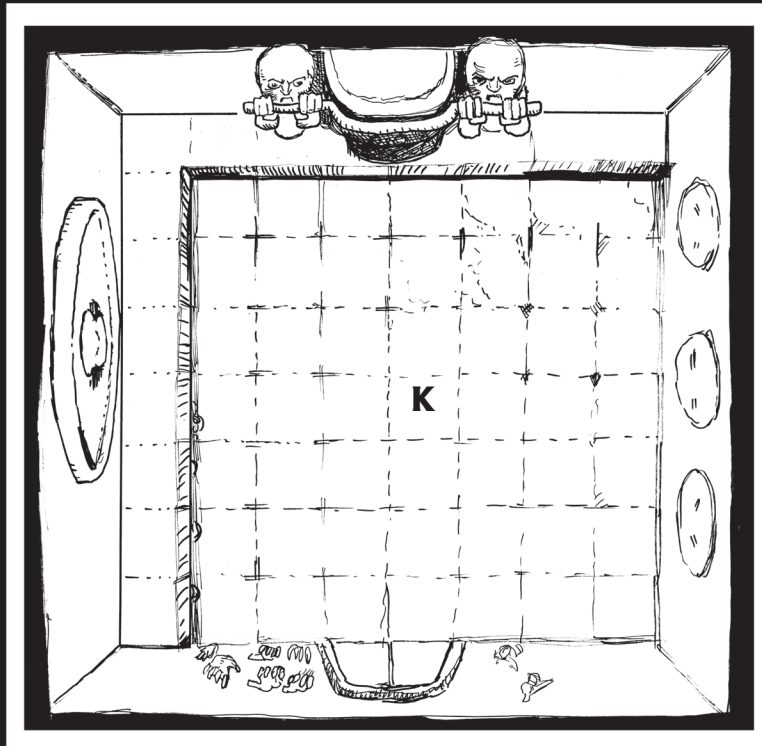


1 square = 5 feet



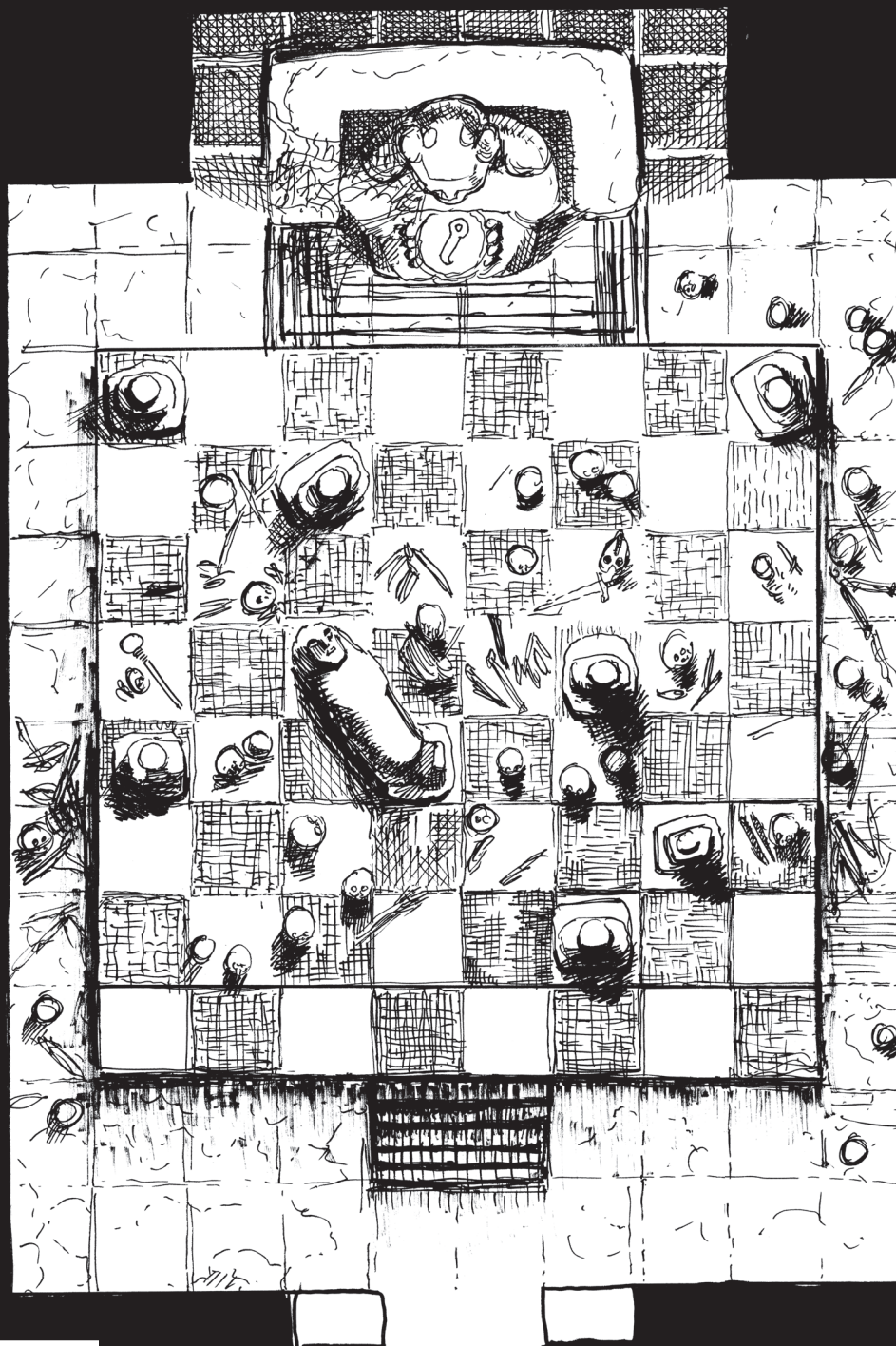
**1.8 GHOST OF
PINOO**

1 square = 5 feet



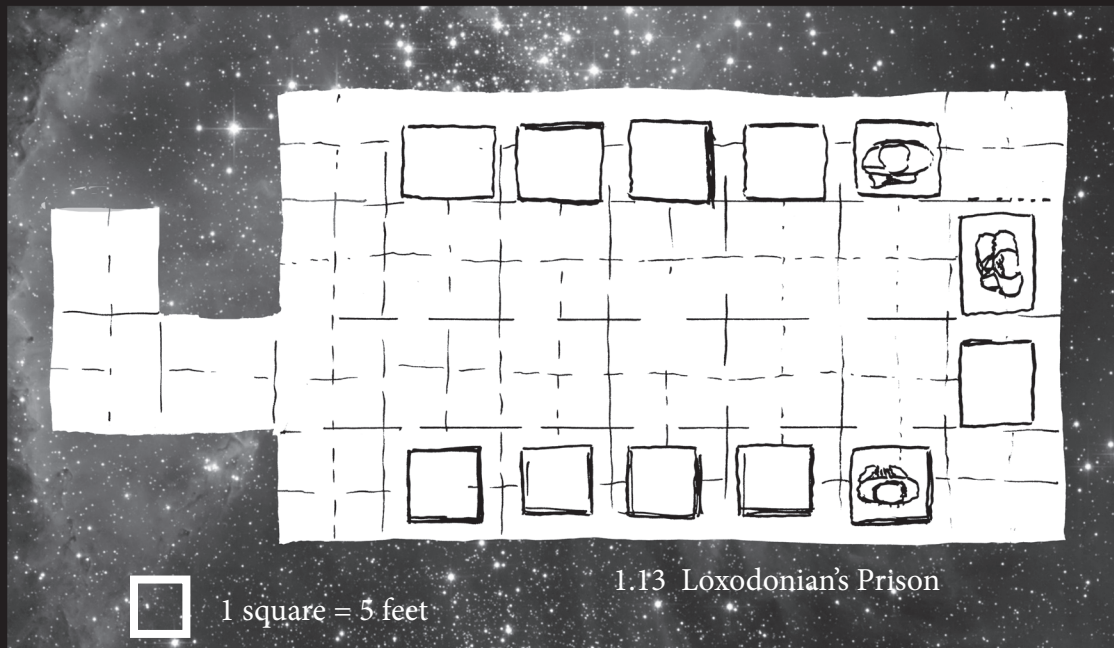
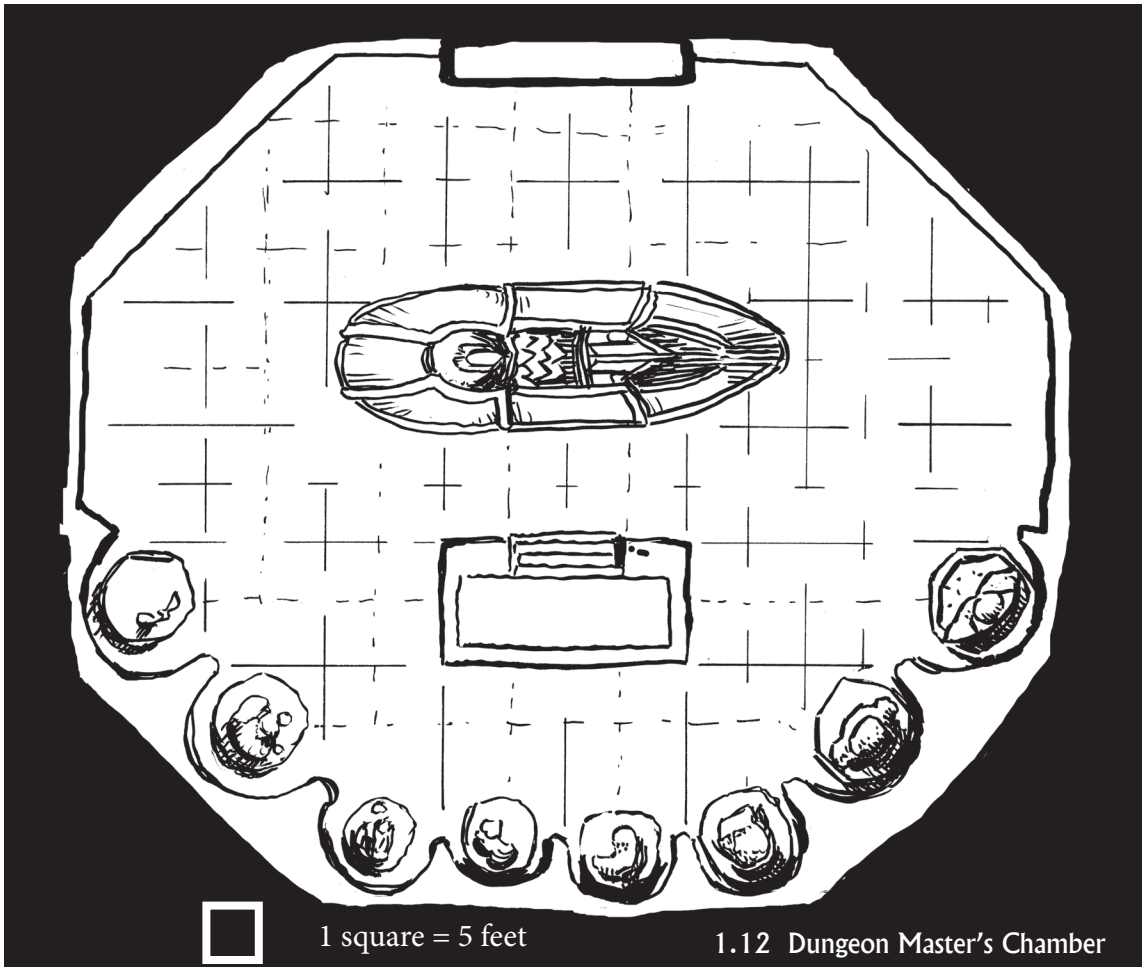
1.9 CUBE ROOM

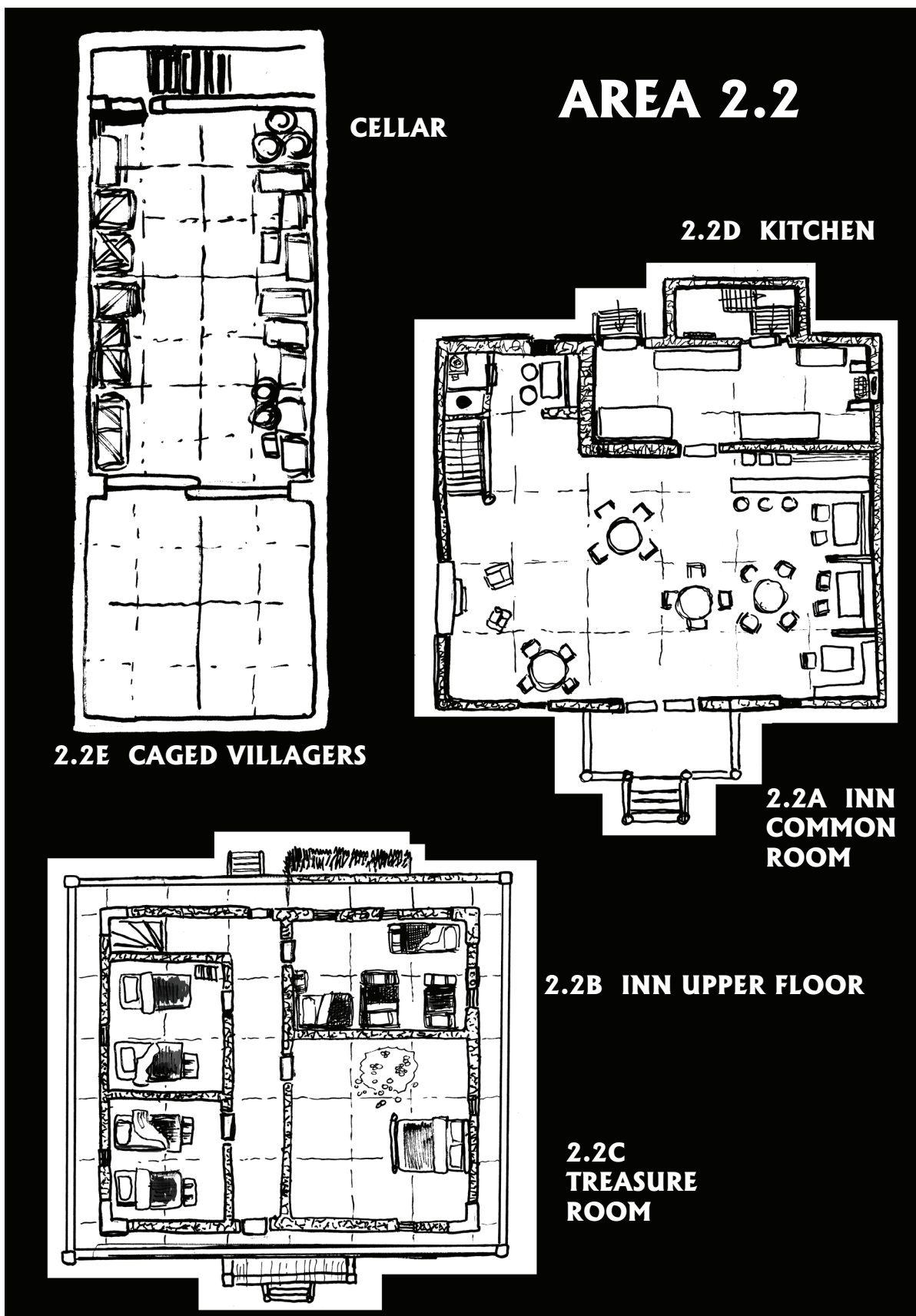
1 square = 5 feet

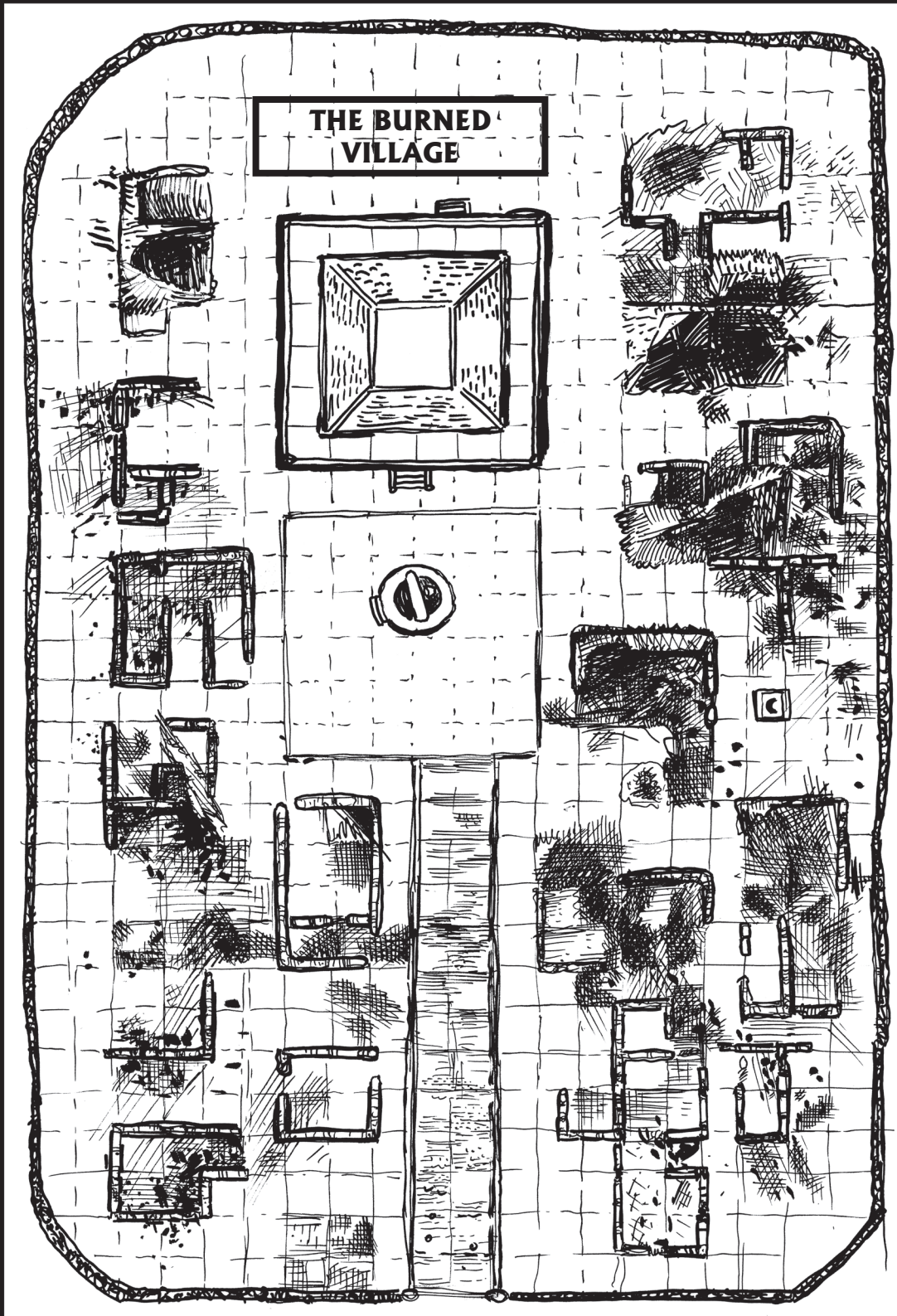


1 square = 5 feet

1.10 Skull Spider's Army







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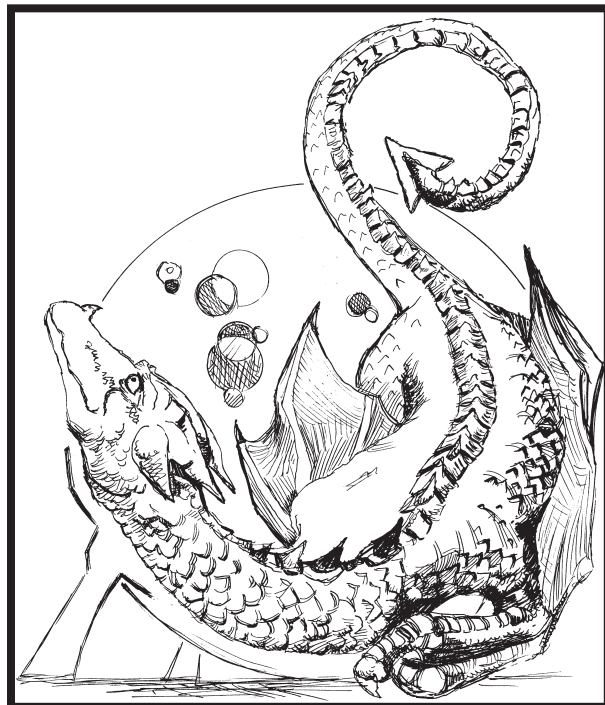
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The coming of a bandit army gives the heroes a reason to delve into the dungeon of the dragon master, an ancient testing ground for heroes created by a powerful warlord to serve as his tomb. The rewards of the Dragon Master's Dungeon include powerful magical items that could mean the difference between life and death for the villagers of Well Water. Yet the dangers are many, and most who attempt the dungeons never return. Can your band of novice heroes survive the depths of the Dragon Master's Dungeon, in time to fight the Bandit Army and its psychotic leader known only as "Red Eye"?

HW1: "Dungeon of the Dragon Master" is a fun introductory adventure for 4-6 1st level heroes OR a band of complete novices using the optional Origin or "0-level" rules presented inside. The adventure serves as a great introduction for player characters during their first experiences of heroics, challenging the players as well as their characters.

- * A great adventure for new GMs
- * New monsters to challenge your players and their heroes.
- * Dozens of illustrations, including full-page art to show your players.
- * Hand-drawn maps of adventure locations.
- * Full rules for Origin level characters, including a selection of common Origins, skill bonuses, and origin abilities, including Innkeepers, Merchants, Blacksmiths, and many, many more.