

Dragon per se

TRoubles often tend to fall on your head at the most unexpected moment. After the cheerful feast, our brave heroes find themselves tied and thrown into the lair of an incredibly old, deaf and almost blind dragon, who misses the times of his youth..

Introduction

After a long journey, our heroes finally found this isolated village. Local folks were kind and welcoming to our hungry and tired travelers. They held a glorious feast in their honor at the local tavern.

MASTER: Village is a good place for players to introduce their characters and to roleplay casually, if you all have time and desire to do so. Who will be the "hero" of the tavern's feast?! Who can win the singing competition?! Who will be a wrestling or a brawling champion?! And, finally, who can be the last one standing after the drinking contest?!

Next morning, they found themselves tied up, lying on the cold floor of the cave. However, some of them might feel a bit better than others.

Main Locations

The Village looks quite boring. You can see few dozens of houses and a small tavern in the center. Village chief and several tough peasants armed with axes and wooden pikes are local "guards". Locals more rely on their cunning other than brute force.

Dragon's Lair - A spacious cave, once full of treasures, now empty, except for a small pond of spring water and a haystack serving as dragon's bed. It is slightly illuminated by several torches. There is a small hole in the high ceiling of the cave through which the "sacrifices" are dropped into.

Endless Tunnels - A tangled labyrinth of aisles, caves and yawning emptiness of bottomless pits leading from the main cave to the bowels of the mountain. The tunnels are full of weird creatures, dangerous traps, as well as the ubiquitous kobolds and rare groups of spiders.

MASTER: Each time, the party descends down into the tunnels there is a risk of facing many dangers on their way (traps, webs, pits, ambushes, strange creatures, etc.) In addition, anyone can be easily lost in this endless labyrinth, unless some clever approach taken (like marking passages or reading kobold's marks and, finally, making a map of some sort).

Elder's Chamber - A heavily guarded small cave with a secret door, leading to the **stash** of dragon's former treasures. If the characters hope to find an egg here - they will be disappointed.

Spider's Halls - The dwelling place of the queen herself and her numerous servants and guardians. The passage leading to the nest is on the opposite side of the cave.

Queen's Nest - Sacred place for any spider (eggs storage). Behind the nest there is a long dark tunnel, presumably leading to freedom.

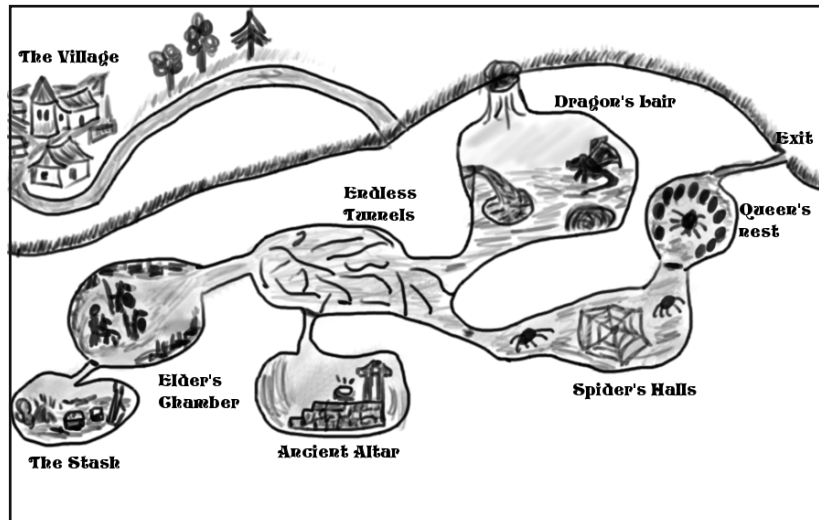
Ancient Altar - This old structure lays hidden in the very depths of the mountain. It is almost impossible to find it without knowing the path. Dragon's egg is standing right on the altar itself, serving as endless source of life to the Elder.

Perils of the tunnels

Trap - Kobolds often set traps to catch a spider, usually placed in a narrow passage. When the thin trigger is touched, the trap activates and two gratings dropped from the top, encaging the victim, the master will tell you who is in trouble. However, if spiders cannot get out of the cage, people can try to.

Web - The person in front is always in danger to be captured by the web. This sticky and tenacious substance tightly binds the victim. Any unsuccessful attempt to get out with the help of brute force results in even more trouble as the one begins to choke.

MASTER: The web is very sensitive to fire, but within this lies both a possible escape path as well as danger of being burned inside it



Kobold patrol - kobolds constantly patrol tunnels and checking their traps. A regular patrol consists of 4-5 warriors.

MASTER: When facing the party first time kobolds behave aggressively and brazenly. Patrol can catch up from behind or meet face to face.

Spiders - Like kobolds, spiders often patrol the border areas of the tunnels, preventing the enemy from moving closer to the halls and the nest. In most cases spiders patrol in pairs or even solo, unless they are on a hunt for kobolds.

MASTER: At first spiders may think our party belong to kobolds and even attack them (if they have advantage), unless they have some time to get a closer look at our heroes. It is hard to notice a spider, unless it attacks. In best case, the character might only see obscure shadows or hear a slight rustle.

Other encounters - to balance the difficulty of the game it is possible for the game master to introduce other encounters. The history of the tunnels or the mystery of the ancient altar can be good starting points to put even more fun into the game.

Creatures of the underground

The Dragon (features: remember the past, good-natured and naive) - old lizard-like creature with huge wings called Dontremember, who has not left his lair for several hundred years. Representative of the ancient family of yellow dragons. Often he does not hear the words or understand exactly what he is told, and he can clearly see things only at a distance of few meters. He is a vegetarian. Favorite delicacy is wild flowers. He thinks that all the captives just come to visit him and talk. He does not understand why and is offended when they, suddenly, disappear later. Dontremember is the endless source of ancient legends and stories he often plays main role in.

MASTER: In some of his stories the dragon can mention a sacred dragon egg - "the mother of dragons" he can't remember a lot about it, except that he held it in his hands one day. This egg can transform dragon back into young and strong creature called shining-in-the-sky. In case of the transformation, all of his hidden powers are released (features: to revive the tribe of dragons, arrogance, magical flames).

Kobolds (features: attack in superiority, insolence, cowardice) - a tribe of kobolds, who managed to survive the genocide, organized by humans several centuries ago. They took refuge in the mountain under the protection of the dragon. Over time kobolds stole all Dragon's treasures from all the "sacrifices" made to him, in return, giving him scanty gifts from the depths of the dungeon - mushrooms and stunted plants. Recently, kobolds have become addicted to human meat and therefore human sacrifices are especially valuable for them. Since the time of first contact, kobolds have constant confrontation with spiders. The best way to make a deal with kobolds is to offer them assistance in exterminating the spider's den and their queen.

The Elder (features: to command others, guile) - the oldest member of the tribe, revered by the rest of the kobolds at the level of deification. He is the one clever kobold that brought the tribe into the cave. The Elder quickly realized that the dragon was not dangerous, but could serve as a good defense against humans.

MASTER: It is rumored that the elder keeps a secret artifact somewhere, supporting his life for years.

Spiders (features: protect the queen, create web, secrecy, caution) - part of the tunnels is under control of huge spiders (the size of a large dog at average). Spider society has strict hierarchy. Warriors and workers are less intelligent and obey orders from high ranked Commanders and The Queen, who has the total authority over the tribe. In the absence of direct command, however, the behavior of spiders is controlled by their instincts. Spiders were living in peace till the time kobolds came, took some tunnels and killed some innocent workers. Since then, any spider knows that "good kobold is dead (and properly cooked) kobold".

The Queen (features: save the nest at any cost, wisdom, minor nature magic) aka The Mother of Shadows - an old giant intelligent spider, living in the north-east tunnels. Dozens of other spiders, roaming the tunnels, obey her commands. If party didn't kill any spiders before the first audience with her, she will let them go in peace, but only warn to keep away from the nest, she will not let them go there under any circumstances. If they have killed spiders, she will be angry and ready to unleash her army on them. It can be only stopped by proving that they are friends of the spiders. To prove themselves they have to bring her a dozen of live kobolds (a local spider's delicacy). If this deal is complete, she can tell them about Ancient Temple and maybe even give them a guide to it.

MASTER: The thin dark tunnel behind the Queen's nest is the only other way outside the caves

Possible exits from the caves

- 1 Small hole in the ceiling. It is now covered by a huge stone, invisible from below and hard to reach. There are no materials to build a ladder to it and magic is not working here for some reason.
- 2 Long light and dark tunnel connected to the nest. Eggs need some fresh air to grow stronger, so spiders made this small tunnel. And spiders fight anyone to the death if they come here.
- 3 Transformed Dragon can help our heroes if he wishes so.

Questions

- + Will the heroes be able to escape before the arrival of kobolds?
- + Will the dragon help our heroes in any way?
- + What kind of treasures were stolen by kobolds? Will heroes return treasures to the dragon?
- + What path to freedom will be chosen by the party?
- + Will the characters be able to resist the temptation to kill the last dragon and become famous all over the world?
- + Will they take revenge on the villagers after escaping the caves?
- + What would the dragon do after transforming and regaining his strength?