

THE SLAVE-PIT OF DRAZHU

A two-hour Dungeon World demo by Jason Morningstar

BE PREPARED

- Print out a copy of the map and this text.
- Print out, mount (I use 3M Super77 and manila folders) and cut the cards. Make sure you use two different color backs for the two pages of lesser and greater treasure cards.
- Print out a mess of move sheets and playbooks, including the Pit Slave playbook.
- Recruit 4-8 players.

AT THE TABLE

- Tell everyone they have been enslaved by the evil lich Drazhu and his vicious minions, who have put them to work digging tunnels to expand Drazhu's underground lair. An enterprising dwarf, now dead, managed to make a detailed sketch of the complex. Life sucks, bad. Play it up!
- Put the map on the table and answer any general questions about it. There's no mystery to the layout of Drazhu's lair; the exit is well known.
- Hand out playbooks however you like. Four heroes is a good number, the classic adventuring party, but if you have a big crowd add up to four more pit slaves. They are really fun!
- Explain how to apportion stats and build characters generally. Tell them to ignore listed bonds and starting equipment. Tell them not to think about it too hard and to hurry up generally.

QUESTIONS

As they make their choices ask each a question:

Heroes

- Until recently you worked for Drazhu, what was your job and why did you end up here?
- What terrible crime did Drazhu commit that made you swear to destroy him?
- What secret were you caught trying to steal from Drazhu, and why did he spare your life?
- Who is Drazhu to you and how will you save him from himself?

Pit Slaves

- What permanent mark has the Whipmaster left upon your pale skin?
- What shameful promise have you made with the Tunnel-Keep?
- Why are you unafraid of what lurks in the killing pit?
- What secret did you learn about the Whipmaster's private chamber?

BONDS

Finally have each player write a bond with one other character. Tell them the bond and have them assign it however they like. Let them know that if they'd like to write a second or even third bond, that is totally OK, now or later.

Bonds to offer more fight-y characters

- [] is like a sibling to me, loyal and strong.
- [] is weak and in need of my protection.
- [] was kind to me in my moment of deepest despair.

Bonds to offer more sneak-y characters

- I have learned to hate [] in this hell-hole.
- I've stolen a crust of bread and a ball of twine from [].
- I owe my life to [].

Bonds to offer mre esoteric characters

- I have been counseling [] about the True Faith.
- I have seen [] in visions bathed in the sun's light and breathing free air.
- [] will make a capable and obedient assistant to me.

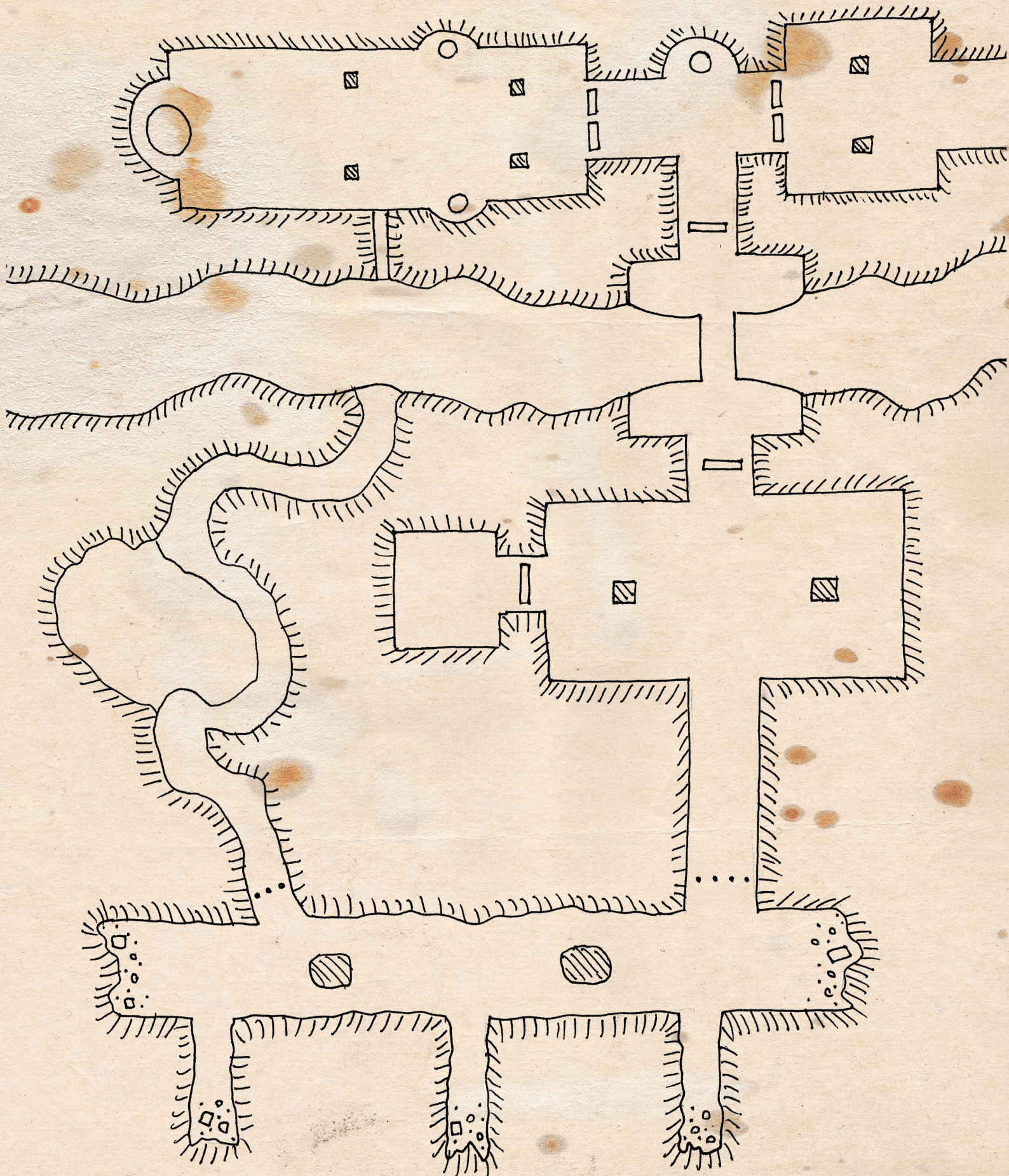
Bonds to offer pit slaves

- [] took away my pick and made me dig with my bare hands.
- [] ignored my piteous cries when the Task-Master beat me.
- [] has been a friend to me and I will never forget it.
- [] is my ticket out of here and I'll stay close behind.

FINALLY

Briefly (briefly!) explain the rules. Fiction first, moves, 10/7-9/6, bonds, you'll explain more as you play. I don't mess with XP in the interest of time, but since it is a fun part of Dungeon World, if you want to track it I recommend leveling up every 5 XP.

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I. SLAVE TUNNEL.

Start here, with an earthquake. Have a couple of cards with mining-type stuff on them ready to hand out immediately should they ask for nearby stuff. The walls of the slave tunnel begin to collapse, the metal gates to the killing pit and the orc nest shriek as they bend and fail. The goblin Task-Master is in a blind panic. What do you do?

GOBLIN TASK-MASTER

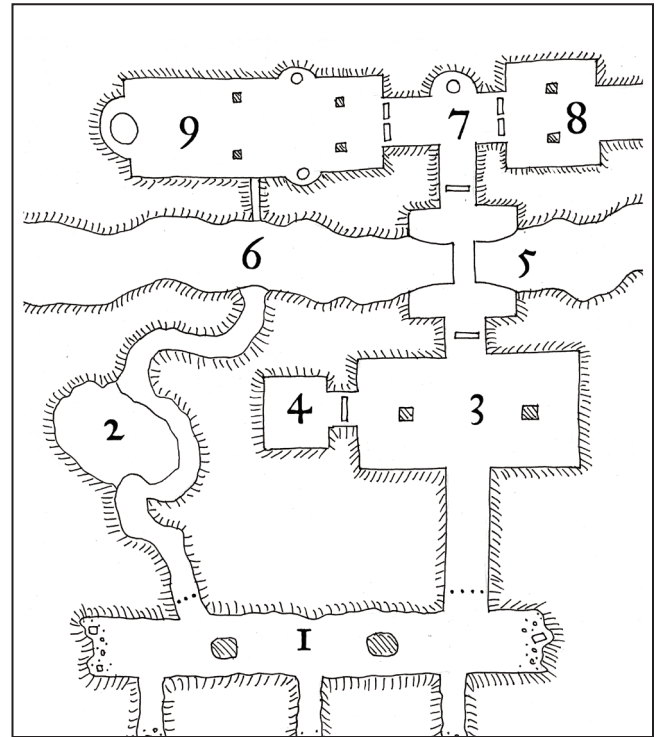
Small, Intelligent, Cowardly

Cudgel (d4 Damage Stun Close) or Knife (d6 Damage Close)

3 HP, 1 Armor

Instinct: To keep the slaves in line

- Sound the alarm - the Whipmaster is nearby.
- Punish disobedient slaves
- Make a deal



Hand out a few lesser treasure cards if they want to loot the Task-Master's corpse. As a general rule be free with the treasure cards! Make it your goal to give them all away by the end of the session, which means a few in each area.

2. KILLING PIT.

Nest of horror where misbehaving slaves are disposed of. Webs, darkness, a slippery ledge, mummified husks of pit slaves and a giant poison spider. Play up the terror. What do you do?

GIANT SPIDER

Solitary, Large, Devious

Mandibles (d6 damage Close, Reach, Poison)

10 HP, 1 Armor

Special Qualities: Jumping

Instinct: To weave webs

- Enmesh in webbing
- Make a surprising leap
- Lurk in the shadows

When bitten by the spider, roll +CON

On 10+ no problem. You're tough.

On 7-9 choose 2:

- You aren't immediately paralyzed (Note: Antitoxin cures)
- You aren't debilitated (Note: Antitoxin cures)
- You don't take a savage amount of damage (Note: An additional six points or so)

The killing pit probably has some lesser treasure scattered down in the bottom, I bet.

3. ORC NEST.

A filthy hive of rag-piles and debris illuminated by guttering fire beetle grease torches. The Whipmaster and two orc thugs start here; it's possible the goblin will raise the alarm and call them away.

ORC WHIPMASTER

Magical, Intelligent

Whip (d8 damage Close, Reach, Near, Ignores armor in hands of the Whipmaster)

6 HP, No Armor

Special Qualities: One eye

Instinct: To hate

- Rend flesh with infernal magic
- Take an eye
- Make a sacrifice

ORC THUGS

Intelligent

Jagged club (d6 damage, Reach)

4 HP, No Armor

Instinct: To punish misbehaving slaves

- Intimidate
- Pin someone under a net
- Beat them into submission

There's surely some lesser treasure here.

4. WHIPMASTER'S CHAMBER.

A more elegant filthy nest and a variety of magical spoils and debris stolen from slaves. The Whipmaster's pet cave rat lurks beneath the bedding here. Is the door trapped?

CAVE RAT

Small, Nasty
Bite (1 Damage Close)
6 HP, No Armor
Instinct: To devour and spawn

- Pierce armor with sharp front teeth
- Destroy and despoil
- Retreat into the caverns

The cave rat guards the Whipmaster's greater treasure, no doubt.

5. CHASM BRIDGE.

Check your time - you can totally omit the vines or even make the bridge intact if you need to. But if things are moving along, the stone bridge across the bottomless cavern is shattered and impassable thanks to the earthquake. What do you do? The edges of the chasm are also infested with assassin vine.

ASSASSIN VINE

Solitary, Stealthy
Thorns (d4 damage 1 piercing ongoing, Close, Reach, Messy)
6 HP, 1 Armor
Special Qualities: Plant
Instinct: To grow

- Attack the unwary
- Entangle someone in strangling roots
- Attack from any crack or loose soil

When trapped by an assassin vine, roll +Dex

10+ You wiggle out because you fear no vegetable

7-9 You wiggle out but the vine puts you in a precarious spot or on dangerous ground, probably hanging from a weak little vine over the chasm I bet

6- and you're wrapped up tight and keep taking damage

Perhaps a mix of greater and lesser treasure is scattered around here, hidden by the orcs.

6. CHASM WEB.

Check your time - you can omit the assassin vines and web and add a precarious ledge over to an intact bridge (see #5) if you need to. Otherwise, a sticky death-web leading across the chasm to a secret tunnel the spider uses for cavorting with Drazhu. Could it be a way to sneak up on him? The web is hella sticky, yo but it spans the cavern. What do you do? There are assassin vines (See #5) here as well.

Tangled in the web, hanging over the cavern, there's sure to be some greater treasure!

7. ANTECHAMBER.

A blackened statue of a fallen god sits in a niche with dull gems for eyes. Large double doors lead toward the exit and toward Drazhu's inner sanctum.

Stonefall Corpse Trap

Both doors leading out of the antechamber are trapped, potentially triggering massive blocks that seal off the exit and causing desiccated zombies to shower down. from their holding pen above the antechamber. The holding pen also offers a way to get above Drazhu's sepulchre for some ninja-style drop-down attacking.

ZOMBIES

Horde, Magical
Claw, Rend, and Bite (d6 Damage, Close)
6 HP, No Armor
Instinct: to hound the living

- Groan unnervingly
- Encircle and overwhelm
- Find a way in, over, or around

Special Qualities: When a character joins the ranks of the dead, it retains half of his/her max HP.

Some greater treasure is definitely hidden here. Maybe up in the zombie holding pen?

8. EXIT.

This way to freedom! Don't you want to kick Drazhu's ass? After what he did to you, seriously? No? OK, sunshine and sweet air are just a moment of cowardice away.

9. DRAZHU'S SEPULCHRE.

This is a large and ornate tomb with upright coffins resting in cool, dusty niches. At the far end is a massive throne upon which Drazhu rests. He's undead, with grey skin mottled with black mold, and he wears a king's rotting finery. The orc Tunnel-Keep hides behind a coffin, waiting for a chance to attack with advantage.

For his part, Drazhu is kind of a dick, self-important and ostentatiously evil. The earthquake was caused by his Great Working; his ritual will be complete when the floor of his sepulchre runs red with the blood of heroes.

ORC TUNNEL-KEEP

Intelligent, Organized

Jagged blade (d6+2 damage 1 piercing)

5 HP, No Armor

Close, Messy

Instinct: To fight for her master

- Fight with abandon
- Hit from behind and be sneaky
- Defend Drazhu

DRAZHU

Solitary, Magical, Intelligent, Dickish

10 HP, 2 Armor

Icy talons (d8 damage 1 piercing) Close, Messy

Soul Rip (d6 damage, ignores armor) Near, Far

Instinct: To build

- Set a ritual into motion according to plan
- Gloat and explain the futility of resistance in the face of destiny
- Destroy his own works in a fit of petulant rage

Special: If not dealt with by a cleric Drazhu will arise again at 4HP for one last round of backstabbing terror.

Whatever loot remains, it will be here in the sepulchre.

WRAPPING UP

Thank everybody for playing and ask them to sign the map. Answer any questions and let them know where they can get a copy of Dungeon World. Let them keep their playbooks but gather up the cards for next time!

Tunnel-Keep's Chainmail

This filthy hauberk is worth **1-armor**.

The Whipmaster's Armor

Leather covered in metal scales and vicious spikes, still stinking of his unwashed hide.

It is worth **2-armor** but makes you **clumsy** (you suffer -1 ongoing to anything related to agility or speed)

Orc Furs & Leathers

Disgusting piles of rags formerly worn by your tormentors.

If you have the stomach to wear them they confer **1-armor**.

A Greasy Sack of Loot

How much gold? 22 gold.

Dangerous, applied.

A thief's poison. The target treats the next creature they see as a trusted ally, until proved otherwise.

Goldenroot

When you drink an entire healing potion, heal yourself of 10 damage or remove one debility, your choice. Seriously, it will totally work.

Healing Potion

Adventuring Gear

Adventuring gear is a collection of useful mundane items such as chalk, poles, spikes, ropes, etc. When you rummage through your adventuring gear for some useful mundane item, you find what you need just this once.

Shoring Timber

A massive beam of oak. Raaaaaar!

Close, two handed, clumsy, forceful

Clumsy means you have a -1 ongoing to use it. Forceful means it can knock a foe down.

Battered Shield

Rusty and uncared for by its barbaric former owner.

If you use it you gain **1-armor**.

A Chipped Gem

A blood red ruby worth 35 gold.

Thrown, near

These nasty items can be used as throwing daggers or multipurpose spikes.

Iron Thorns

Reach

A nasty piece of work to be sure, bent and barbed.

Goblin Spear

Tunnel-Keep's Broadsword

A jagged and unwholesome weapon.

Close, +1 damage

Mining Pick

A tool you are all too familiar with. It can be very effective as a weapon.

Close, two handed, clumsy, piercing

Clumsy means you have a -1 ongoing to use it. Piercing means it ignores 1 point of armor.

Tunnel Hammer

A tool you are all too familiar with. It can be very effective as a weapon.

Close, two handed, clumsy

Clumsy means you have a -1 ongoing to use it.

Whipmaster's lantern

A crude but functional lantern. It is filled with fire beetle oil.

A dented metal mining bucket and long, slender chain used for hauling debris.

Drag Bucket

Adventuring gear is a collection of useful mundane items such as chalk, poles, spikes, ropes, etc. When you rummage through your adventuring gear for some useful mundane item, you find what you need just this once.

Adventuring Gear

Fever Dream of the Ancient Roc-Keeper

This powder, when eaten, grants the ability to fly for a short time. A *very short time*.

Lossëhel

Who knows where this gorgeous and deadly Elven sword came from! It's extraordinary and worth **60 gold**.

Cave Bow & Arrows

A gnarly little recurve bow designed for goblins to use underground at short range.

Close

A nice hand axe worth 10 gold

That's the name carved on the shaft.

Wayfarer

Close, precise

Precise means you use DEX to Hack & Slash instead of STR.

Near, 3-ammo

When you have a few minutes to bandage someone else's wounds, heal them of 4 damage and expend a use.

Three Bandages

The Black Ring

A beautiful ring affixed with a multifaceted gem of the darkest black worth **50 gold**.

The band is fitted for a delicate hand.

Adventuring Gear

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Crown of Perdix the Great

Perdix was a cruel tyrant. Anyone wearing his crown is granted an additional hold upon a successful Parley move.

Filled with grey paste, it has a spider carved onto the stopper.

Quartz Jar

A ragged cotton sack filled with 450 copper pieces.

A Fool's Horde

Precise means that it uses DEX rather than STR to Hack & Slash.

Precise, Two handed

This brutal killing tool inflicts a dreadful curse upon its user.

Cursed Chain of the Heretics of the Gamburch

Ungu's Venom

A glass vial of black, sticky poison taken ages ago from the dead fangs of Ungu. The *very best thing* would be to throw it in some chasm, for it will bring only pain and trouble. Seriously, what are you doing with this? Get rid of it, it can only profit evil. *Why are you putting it in your pocket?*

The Bloody Mantlet of Krandor

A red velvet mantlet, much frayed and filled with magic.

1-armor

Sword of The Bastard Daughter of Ormathon

This brilliant enchanted shortsword serves as either a mirror or a lantern, as the user wishes. It cannot be turned off.

Close

A heavy crockery jug with an old cork and a thick coating of red sealing wax. What could be inside? Maybe it is a *magic potion!* Maybe you should chug it down like cheap wine!

Stopped Jug

Once you put them on, you cannot take them off until they have been bathed in blood

+1 damage

Killing Gloves of Zahir Slonk

Make a promise to the demon Arum-Shun and choose an area you can see: it's filled with supernatural darkness and shadow. *Do not make a promise you cannot keep.*

Ink of Arum-Shun

NAME

LOOK

Choose one for each:

- Terrified eyes, angry eyes, haunted eyes or innocent eyes
- Messy hair, filthy hair, or roughly cropped hair
- Greasy rags, tattered rags, stinking rags or no rags
- Puny body, pale body, sore-covered body or filthy body

GEAR

Choose one:

- A big stick with some bloody hair stuck to it (yours)
- A coil of fraying rope and a chunk of chalk
- Some kind of vermin that has befriended you (name it)
- A broken holy symbol and a toothache
- A dented flute and a bag of human excrement
- Some cave mushrooms and a pointy stick

DAMAGE: D4

WHAT IS GOING ON?

You are a filthy peasant thrown into the Lich-King Drazhu's slave pit for reasons you don't even recall. One day you were planting wheat with a moldboard plow and the next you were in a cage underground. Life here is hard, senseless, and mercifully brief.

SLAVE PIT RULES

- Please whipmaster or be whipped.
- Drazhu have bad day, you have bad day.
- Speak when spoken to.
- Spider silk not edible.
- Break rocks, get food. Not break rocks, not get food.
- Humans are murdering scum, repeat after me.
- Pit spider always hungry for humans who feel clever.
- Break more rocks. Work hard and live. Be lazy and die.
- Have nice day!

Custom playbook for

DUNGEON • WORLD

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ARMOR

HP

4

4

Current Max Base

All stats begin at -1. Any time you make a stat-based move, you may first elect to permanently raise the relevant stat. Check the modifier you wish to raise the stat to: +0, +1 or +2. You can have two +0, two +1 and one +2 stat. One of them will remain at -1. Depending on the order you fill these in, a few might "fall into place" on their own—for example, if you leave both +0's until the end. If this happens, you need not use those stats to assign the bonus. Feel free to swap two stats if you've discovered something new about yourself! But don't make a habit of it.

Base Mod Highlight

STR

Hack and Slash

DEX

Volley, Defy Danger

CON

Defend, Make a Saving Throw

INT

Spout Lore

WIS

Discern Realities

CHA

Parley

STARTING MOVES

GROVEL

When you supplicate yourself before your master roll +CHA. On a hit your master hesitates to consider your plea. One 10+ choose 3; on 7-9 choose one. On a miss you've made your master angry.

- You won't be hurt any more for the moment
- You can quietly return to your cage
- This transgression won't be noted
- You won't be stripped of your clothing and goods

SQUIRM

When you try to fit in some small space inconspicuously, roll +DEX. On a hit you manage to fit in there somehow. On a 7-9 you leave something hanging out, or can only hold your position briefly, or are firmly stuck.

ADVANCED MOVES

Ha, ha, ha! You are a fountain of mirth my friend.

Seriously, *advanced moves*, hilarious.

BONDS

Add bonds to your fellow pit slaves as you get to know them and have memorable experiences. More is better! Do you trust them? Do you want to know their secrets? Do you respect them? Is someone kind or cruel to you? Do they need you to keep them safe?

XP