

DUNGEON CRAWLING WITH STYLE

By Elven Tower



EXPLORATION RULE SET



**IMMERSIVE EXPLORATION RULES
FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST RPG GAME**

DUNGEON CRAWLING WITH STYLE

Exploration Ruleset

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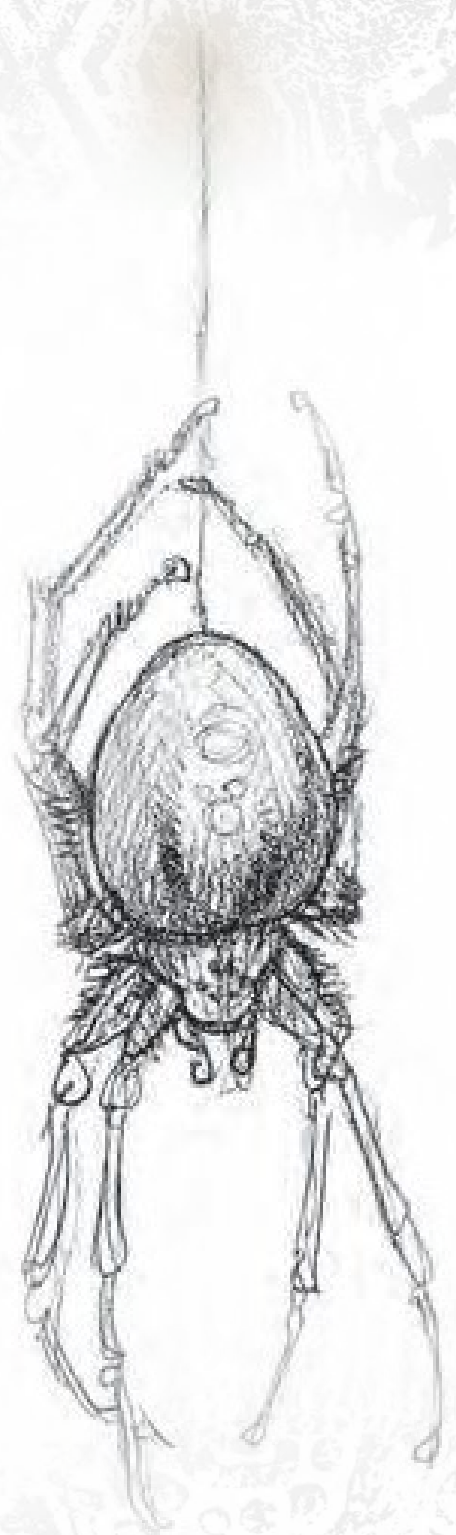
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DUNGEON CRAWLING WITH STYLE

What do you mean we're out of torches!
I don't have any oil left either...

Inexperienced adventurer ...

INTRODUCTION



Earlier iterations of the world's greatest RPG game placed greater importance on underground exploration and the tracking of time and resources. These elements were removed from the game a long time ago but we can add them back in with little preparation.

Reimplementing these systems gives great depth to dungeon delving by making storage space and lighting important again. Besides, tracking time makes the world more believable as it feels like a real thing that reacts to the characters' actions. Here are some situations that will become a common occurrence under this system:

- Encumbrance and its effect on movement speed are now easy and fun to track
- The danger of running out of light sources is real
- Engaging experience in searching and finding secrets and traps
- Dungeons react with randomized effects and encounters
- Monsters encountered may have different reactions to the adventurers

HOW DOES IT WORK

Dungeon Crawling with Style works by adding two things to your game:

- Replacing the current weight system for **The Bulk System**
- Adding a **Dungeon Turn Procedure** to track time, resources, and random effects in dungeons

The most fundamental change is that time becomes a valuable asset and a trading system for the characters' actions. In a regular game, for example, when a character attempts to use Athletics to force open a door or Thieves' Tools to bypass a mechanical lock, the DM assigns a DC, and the player rolls. There are two possible outcomes:

1. If they make the DC check, the action happens and the characters advance
2. If they fail the DC check, the game comes to a halt because nothing happens

When a fail occurs, the character may usually try again, or someone else can try until someone manages to roll high enough. This situation is common in D&D 5e and DMs handle it in different ways. This system solves it by adding time to the equation. When the same action occurs in this system, these are the possible outcomes:

- If they make the DC check, the action lasts 1 Dungeon Turn, and the characters advance
- If they fail the DC check, the action lasts 2 Dungeon Turns and the characters advance

The consequence of taking twice as long to perform the action also translates into an expenditure of resources, the possibility of triggering an encounter, or becoming exhausted.

Playing like this also removes the problem of characters that are supposed to be experts at something failing over and over due to bad luck with dice. An expert lockpicker rogue isn't likely to fail twice in a row. They will only take longer to crack a safe until they succeed. Which is the same thing that would have happened if the player keeps rolling dice until they get the desired result. This system does away with all that repetitive nonsense and cuts to the chase by advancing the plot in just one roll, regardless of its outcome.

Failure is still significant because time goes on, lights go out, and things happen while the party waits for the rogue to finish. This ties in with **The Bulk System** because spending more time in the dungeon means that the adventurers will need more torches, more oil, more food, and more time to rest.

DICE NOTATION

Some events or situations described in this document are given odds of happening. This is described as "1-in-6" or "3-in-6" and so forth. This means that the DM rolls a d6. Rolling the first number or less means that the event happens.

PREPARATION

Before we begin, we need to make some changes clear to accommodate the new system. This is mainly to make darkness challenging again.

DARKVISION

A large number of character races have the innate ability to see in the dark. In this system, darkvision works in a different way. Characters with darkvision can detect the heat energy that living things and warm objects radiate. This ability has a range of 60 feet.

Perception. Warm beings or objects appear in bright tones while colder objects appear gray and black. This kind of vision is akin to how snakes perceive their surroundings and does not provide an accurate representation of the environment.

Reading. A creature cannot read with darkvision. Paper or parchment looks dull and gray in its entirety.

Disruption. A creature can only benefit from darkvision in complete darkness. Large heat sources and visible light (natural or magical) within 60 feet impede this method of perception.

SPELLS

The cantrips *dancing lights* and *light* are now level 1 spells. Having access to unlimited magical light sources makes torches, candles, and lanterns useless and redundant. Spellcasters still get access to these spells but using them now represents the expenditure of another resource: spell slots.

The change in darkvision means races like dwarves and elves still get a secondary method of perception in the dark but its nature means that it is still more convenient for them to carry a torch or lantern. Also, if another character carries one such light source then the darkvision is suppressed for as long as there is light.

This means that a group with at least one person without darkvision would suppress the darkvision of the rest the moment they light a torch or candle. Conversely, a group where all characters have darkvision might not need a light source but would be impeded by the limits of that form of vision.



THE BULK SYSTEM

Bulk is a simplified encumbrance system that makes tracking the stuff characters carry simple and easy to understand. In this system, bulk refers to a combination of weight and size. But it is simplified so that tracking it is not time consuming or confusing.

Characters' encumbrance and movement rate are determined by Bulk Points. The effects of encumbrance on a character are shown in **The Bulk System** table.

Consult the **Bulk Points** table to discover how characters earn bulk points.

Light armor does not affect encumbrance. All armor is not recorded as an item in the inventory.

The Bulk system

| Bulk Points | Encumbrance | Combat Speed | Miles per Day | Penalty to Checks Str and Dex based |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| 0-1 | Not Encumbered | Normal | 24 | - |
| 2 | Light Encumbrance | -10 feet | 18 | - |
| 3 | Medium Encumbrance | -20 feet | 12 | -2 |
| 4 | Severe Encumbrance | -30 feet (min. 5 feet) | 6 | -4 |
| 5 | Extreme Encumbrance | Cannot Move | Cannot Move | Cannot Move |

Bulk Points

| | |
|--|---|
| Character wears Medium Armor | +1 Bulk Point |
| Character wears Heavy Armor | +2 Bulk Point |
| Character carries Bulky Item | +1 Bulk Point per item |
| Character exceeds personal inventory limit | +1 Bulk Point per object over the limit |

BULKY ITEMS

These objects are either large, heavy, difficult to carry, or require two hands to handle. **A character gains a Bulk Point for each bulky item.** It doesn't matter in which way the character carries the object, they are encumbered all the same. Bulky items are not recorded in the general section of the inventory. Here is a list of bulky items:

- Melee weapons with the **Heavy, Two-Handed** or **Reach** properties: Glaive, greataxe, greatclub, greatsword, halberd, lance, maul, pike
- Longbows and heavy crossbows
- Shields
- Barrels, chests, tents, 10' poles, and 10' ladders
- Carried sack full of items
- Items that require two hands to carry or are 5 feet tall or more

INVENTORY

Characters have a personal inventory limit for items they can carry on their person without affecting their encumbrance. Most characters have 10 slots. Dwarves have 15 slots. Small-sized characters have 8 slots.

Bulk Points. A creature can fill all their slots with no penalty. **The creature gains one Bulk Point for each object that exceeds their personal inventory limit.** Example: A human character (10 slots) who carries 12 slots of items gains two Bulk Points.

Each item a character carries takes up one slot. However, some items can be stored in packs:

| Object | Pack |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Candles | 6 per slot |
| Multiple small items of the same kind | 1 slot |
| Quiver with 20 arrows/bolts | 1 per slot |
| Rations | 2 per slot |
| Torches | 3 per slot |

Worn items like cloaks, jewelry, or backpacks do not count for encumbrance purposes. The following objects do not count either:

- Holy symbol or similar amulets
- Ink, chalk, and pen
- Map
- Mirror or magnifying glass
- Paper
- Spyglass
- Empty bottle or vial

BULK SYSTEM SUMMARY

- Tally up armor, bulky items, and inventory modifiers to know a character's encumbrance level.
- Determine the character's encumbrance and movement rate with **The Bulk System** table.



DUNGEON EXPLORATION RULES

The process of exploring dungeons is divided into Dungeon Turns. Each turn lasts approximately 10 minutes. This is not a hard measurement. In-game, turns may last a little more or a little less but they serve as a discrete way to measure time in the dungeon. There are 6 Dungeon Turns in an hour.

Each time the party or a character chooses to do something significant, like forcing open a door, search a room for secret features, disarm a trap, etc., the action takes a Dungeon Turn to complete. Party members may decide individually what they do, if they work together, or if they stand back to guard the area or rest.

Each Dungeon Turn has a strict order in which things occur. The DM is advised to take strict time records of the events inside the dungeon. See the **Dungeon Turn Tracking Sheet** at the end of the document.

DUNGEON TURN PROCEDURE

Dungeon Events. The DM rolls on the **Dungeon Events** tables if applicable.

Actions. The party decides what to do, collectively or individually, during this turn.

Development. The DM describes the outcome of the party's actions. Including any possible encounter with monsters.

End of Turn. The DM and players update their time records.

DUNGEON EVENTS

When the party moves into a new area or spends time exploring or interacting with the dungeon, roll on the **Dungeon Events** tables. Choose an appropriate table depending on how noisy and conspicuous the party was the previous turn.

Dungeon Events - Default

| d6 | Event |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Encounter |
| 2 | Encounter Clue |
| 3 | Dungeon Effect |
| 4 | Dungeon Effect and Exhaustion |
| 5 | Torches Burn Out |
| 6 | Candles and Lanterns Burn Out |

Dungeon Events - Noisy

| d6 | Event |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Encounter |
| 2 | Encounter |
| 3 | Dungeon Effect |
| 4 | Dungeon Effect and Exhaustion |
| 5 | Torches Burn Out |
| 6 | Candles and Lanterns Burn Out |

Dungeon Events – Very Noisy

| d6 | Event |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Encounter |
| 2 | Encounter |
| 3 | Encounter and Dungeon Effect |
| 4 | Dungeon Effect and Exhaustion |
| 5 | Torches Burn Out |
| 6 | Candles and Lanterns Burn Out |

ENCOUNTER

The DM rolls on a random encounters table tailored to the dungeon. The DM should prepare the table beforehand and populate it with creatures likely to be present when the adventurers visit.

Alternatively, the DM may pick a monster or group of them that are known to be in the dungeon and start the encounter. These encounters are wandering creatures moving about the dungeon. Planned encounters in key areas of the dungeon still occur when the adventurers arrive at the appropriate location.

Example Encounter Table for a Crypt

| Roll 1d10 | Encounter |
|-----------|--|
| 1 | 1d4 zombies |
| 2 | 3 tied up prisoners |
| 3 | 1 wraith |
| 4 | 2 specters |
| 5 | 1 level-2 adventurer (cleric or fighter) |
| 6 | 2d6 skeletons |
| 7 | 1 insane priest |
| 8 | 1d3 ghouls |
| 9 | 1 indifferent ghost |
| 10 | 1d8 shadows |

- The encounter occurs while the party performs their actions in the Dungeon Turn.
- There is a 2-in-6 chance that the party is surprised when the monsters appear. Reduce this to a 1-in-6 chance of surprise if there is at least one character on watch.
- If the adventurers survive the encounter or prevent it somehow, they may resume their actions of the Dungeon Turn
- If the adventurers flee from battle then their planned actions are forfeit

The DM may roll on the following table if the encountered creatures' intentions are not obvious for the situation. This may result in interesting and unconventional encounters.

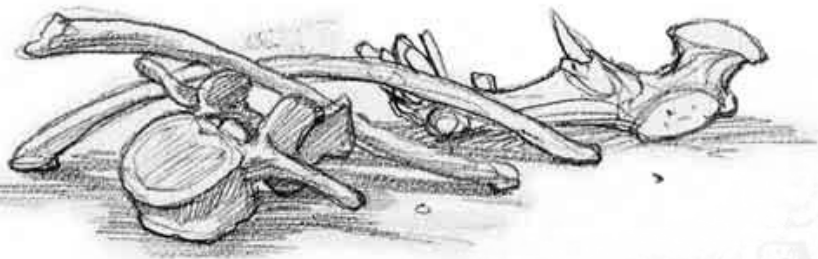
| Roll 2d6 | Attitude | Reaction |
|----------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 | Hostile | Attacks immediately |
| 3-5 | Unfriendly | Might attack with provocation |
| 6-8 | Indifferent | Defends itself if attacked |
| 9-11 | Talkative | Would rather talk or flee |
| 12 | Helpful | Wants to help |

ENCOUNTER CLUE

Here the DM attempts to provide a clue or series of clues that foreshadows a coming creature, trap, or situation further into the dungeon that may cause harm to the characters.

Examples:

- The bodily remains of a person killed by the dungeon's boss
- The sound of grunts and sadistic laughter in the distance
- Splattering of blood and blood tracks as if someone was dragged away from the location
- A dead body with acidic burn wounds
- A dead body, destroyed by necrotic energy



DUNGEON EFFECT

The DM rolls on a random-effects table tailored to the dungeon. The DM should prepare the table beforehand.

- Weird, interesting, and unsettling events that may occur in the dungeon
- None of these effects should include an encounter.
- Effects that spend or reduce the party's resources are encouraged

Example Dungeon Effect Table for a Crypt

| Roll 1d8 | Encounter |
|----------|---|
| 1 | A gust of cold wind blows suddenly and extinguishes any torches, candles, or uncovered fires. The torches are spent. |
| 2 | Dense mist covers the ground for 1 Dungeon Turns. |
| 3 | Edible mushrooms have grown from a crack on the wall. (Pick for one ration) |
| 4 | Unnatural darkness fills the area for two turns and reduces all light ranges 10 feet. |
| 5 | A current of dirty water filters through the ceiling on a random adventurer. The water spoils up to 1d6 rations on their backpack. |
| 6 | Howls and cries in the darkness. A random adventurer must declare who or what they pray to for strength. |
| 7 | 1d4 tormented spirits emerge from the ground and scream. They do not harm the adventurers but are noisy enough to attract something else. |
| 8 | A door behind the adventurers slams shut and becomes stuck. |

EXHAUSTION

The party must rest for a turn to avoid exhaustion. The penalty for not resting is a -1 to attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and death saves.

- This effect is cumulative up to a -5 if this result comes up five times without the party resting
- Resting to remove a penalty of -2 or higher also requires consuming one ration per adventurer
- Ignore this result for the first 3 Dungeon Turns of exploration or if it is rolled twice consecutively
- Exhaustion is likely to occur once per hour (6 Dungeon Turns)

TORCHES BURN OUT

This result causes lit torches to be spent unless they were lit the previous turn.

- This is not a sudden effect and allows the character to relight a new torch
- Ignore this result for the first 3 Dungeon Turns of exploration or if it is rolled twice consecutively
- Torches are likely to burn out once per hour (6 Dungeon Turns)

CANDLES AND LANTERNS BURN OUT

This result causes lit candles and lanterns to slowly burn out. Within the **Dungeon Turn Tracking Sheet** at the end of this document, a candle has 2 checkboxes and a lantern has 4 checkboxes. Mark a checkbox on each lit candle and lantern when this result comes up.

- Candles are spent when the second checkbox is marked. They last two hours on average (12 Dungeon Turns)
- Lantern oil is spent when the fourth checkbox is marked. They last four hours on average (24 Dungeon Turns)
- This is not a sudden effect and allows the character to prepare a new light source

LIGHT SOURCES

- Available light sources are candles, torches, bullseye lanterns, and hooded lanterns
- They require a free hand to hold
- Lanterns and candles may be placed on the ground but doing so reduces their light range in half
- A candle on the floor has a 3-in-6 chance of going out in any given Dungeon Turn
- Lanterns require flasks of oil
- Lowering the hood on a hooded lantern reduces the light range to a 5 ft. radius
- A torch can be used as a weapon for 1d4 fire damage
- A lantern may be used as an improvised weapon for 1d4 bludgeoning damage and a 3-in-6 chance of destroying the lamp

ACTIONS DURING A DUNGEON TURN

Here are some actions that the adventurers may attempt during a Dungeon Turn. Characters may choose different actions during a Dungeon Turn, thus accomplishing several things per time segment.

DOORS

Underground locations often have many doors, entrances, portcullises, and trapdoors. They may be locked or stuck.

Secret Doors. The DM provides clues as to the location of secret doors when the adventurers search the area near them. (see **Searching** below). Interacting with them and finding a way to open them is the real challenge (see **Traps and Hidden Things** below).

Locked Doors. A character can bypass locked doors by rolling a Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. Success means the mechanism is bypassed in 1 Dungeon Turn. Failure means the character takes 1d4 extra Dungeon Turns to accomplish the task.

Stuck Doors. A character can force open stuck doors by rolling a Strength (Athletics) check. Success means the character opens it in 1 Dungeon Turn. Failure means the character opens it in 2 turns and causes some noise (see **Dungeon Events** above).

- Using a crowbar gives advantage on the check

Break Down the Door. A character can destroy a door with the appropriate tools.

- A wooden door can be destroyed with axes and shovels in 1 Dungeon Turns; this is very noisy
- A stone door can be destroyed with pickaxes and shovels in 2 Dungeon Turns; this is very noisy. There is also a 2-in-6 chance of the tools breaking
- Using weapons, like swords and maces, as tools has a 3-in-6 chance of destroying the weapon

MOVEMENT – EXPLORATION

The party moves slowly when exploring a dungeon. They check for traps, search hidden objects, look for secret doors, draw a map, etc. The party has an exploration speed of 90 feet per Dungeon Turn.

Familiar Areas. The DM may allow the party to move

| Light Source | Range | Average Duration |
|------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Candle | 10 ft. radius | 2 hours (12 Dungeon Turns) |
| Torch | 30 ft. radius | 1 hour (6 Dungeon Turns) |
| Bullseye Lantern | 40 ft. cone | 4 hours (24 Dungeon Turns) |
| Hooded Lantern | 30 ft. radius | 4 hours (24 Dungeon Turns) |
| <i>Light</i> | 20 ft. radius | 1 hour (6 Dungeon Turns) |

faster in areas that they have previously explored. They may move up to (270 feet) per Dungeon Turn.

RESTING

If the party is exhausted from extended exploration, they may spend a Dungeon Turn to recover their strength. The party may only rest at a familiar and safe area within the dungeon.

Random combat encounters and certain dungeon events may occur and ruin the party's rest, requiring them to spend another Dungeon Turn to attempt to rest.

SEARCHING

The adventurers may spend a Dungeon Turn inspecting a room for hidden features, treasures, and traps. If more than one character is searching, the party must declare a Search Leader. The Search Leader rolls a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check against the DC for the situation (with advantage if two or more characters search). The DM informs the player what skill is more appropriate for the situation.

Area. Each character may search an area of 20' x 20'. Extra characters searching may increase the area being searched or provide advantage if searching within the same area.

Duration. Searching takes one Dungeon Turn. On a fail, the character or party takes an extra 1d2 Dungeon Turns searching.

Result. Searching always reveals any hidden features or secrets in the inspected area. The only difference is the time it takes whether the character succeeds or fails. The following features are always found:

- Hidden objects, trinkets, and treasures
- Hidden buttons
- The location of a secret door, but no information on how to open it
- Clues about the presence of a trap but no precise information on how it operates (see **Traps and Hidden Things** below)

OTHER ACTIONS

When a character attempts any other significant action, the DM must inform them how long the action will take and whether it is noisy or not.

- Most actions take 1 Dungeon Turn but the DM is the ultimate arbiter when deciding if an action may take 2 or more Dungeon Turns
- If an action requires a skill/ability check, the default consequence for failure is that the action takes double the time to occur
- The intention here is to grant the character or party a success for whatever situation they attempt to succeed at, but at the same time, punish them through extended time and extra resources for any failures that occur.



TRAPS AND HIDDEN THINGS

Dungeons often hide great treasures and ancient relics but so do they house incredible dangers. Exploring uncharted locations with the hope of wealth and power are the reasons why adventurers delve deep into the earth.

THE PROBLEM

In 5e, discovering hidden features depends on how great a character's Perception and Investigation score is, and how well the modifier assists the character when they roll. We have passive Perception to allow for applying the Perception skill without rolling if their Perception score meets or exceeds the DC, so why not have a passive Investigation score as well?

Perception applies when you are just looking around, or listening, or smelling even. Investigation is for when you are actively poking around, lifting things, moving things, etc to find clues. Allowing Investigation as a passive goes a long way to solving characters fumbling their Investigation checks when they should be succeeding.

D20 dice are swingy. It is not an uncommon event to happen. If there is a trap or a secret door to be found, it is not fun at all that no one finds it. Worst of all is that they are bound to find it if they just keep trying. Sooner or later, someone is going to roll high enough to find it. When this happens, in-world immersion is broken because the players may well understand that there is something to be found, especially if it was the DM that asked for a Perception check. But no one rolled high enough. So now, they just keep on throwing dice until someone makes it. It adds to the problem that there is no consequence for just continuing trying. There is no consequence for lost time or lack of ability.

THE SOLUTION

The **Dungeon Exploration Rules** laid out above solve this problem by adding time-tracking to the game. The adventurers find whatever is hidden if they try long enough (or roll an infinite number of dice). Applying the character's passive Perception or passive Investigation score side-steps the need for rolling where they will succeed with the passive use alone. If they need to roll, due to passive scores not being high enough, then the player would roll the character's Investigation check, applying modifiers for additional characters assisting. If they succeed, all's good. If they fail, they still succeed but they have taken additional time and resources to achieve the same result and risk whatever consequence the DM applies for that failure (additional combats due to noise, an ambush by a wandering encounter, etc.).

ABOUT TRAPS

Traps are a design hole in most games. Finding them through a Perception check is not fun. Walking down a hallway, springing a trap, and rolling a Dexterity save makes the character act only in a reactive way. Often the fun part is the disarming or interacting with the trap but it depends on the party knowing that it is there.

Our design philosophy is that the more dangerous something is, the more obvious it is to the party. In that sense, traps are never hidden from the characters but rather described in a way that not only makes them obvious but also dangerous.

Some examples:

- The party reaches a hallway and notices two things:
 - There are a series of holes on the walls on both sides of the hallway
 - There is a skeleton of a previous victim lying on the floor. It is not obvious what killed him
- The party finds a large iron statue of a man holding a large diamond in its hand
 - There are deep scorch marks on the ground
 - There's an obvious mechanism of copper pipes and gears under and behind the statue
- The floor in the middle of the chamber appears to be made from a different material
 - The very center is also covered by a carpet with a small wooden chest on it
 - The floor tiles leading to it appear cracked and uneven

Once the party knows that there is a trap before them the real game begins. How will they deal with it? Will they leave it be and forfeit the treasure it hides? Will they attempt to understand how it works so that they can somehow use it to their advantage?

These are the conversations that are worth having when a trap is in a room. Rolling to find it, or rolling to save oneself from it is not that interesting. Furthermore, regardless of how the heroes decide to approach the problem, it is time-consuming. And time is the spinal cord of this system.

SAMPLE GAME

The following example depicts a few Dungeon Turns when the adventurers visit a haunted crypt. It makes use of the example random tables depicted above.

Dungeon Turn 1: *GM rolls 3 on the **Dungeon Events** table and 2 on the **Dungeon Effects** table; resulting in mist on the floor.*

GM: After a long hallway, you reach the main chamber of this dungeon. It appears it once was a kind of place of worship. A buried chapel of sorts. Only rocks remain of the altar. There used to be a statue there but it on the ground, in pieces. There's a closed wooden door on the east wall and an open hallway to the west.

Mist emerges from the open hallway as you enter the chamber and covers the entirety of the room. You can't see your shoes or the floor at all.

PC1: My cleric wants to inspect the broken statue and find out what it used to represent. Perhaps it's a religious figure I know something about.

GM: Some section of the statue are under the dense mist and are hard to see, some of them you can't see at all. Please roll a Religion skill check with disadvantage. (**PC1** rolls an 8 and fails the check)

PC2: My rogue character wants to examine the closed door on the east wall.

GM: It is a reinforced wooden door with a good locking mechanism that stands above the dense mist. It is currently locked.

PC2: I'll spend my turn trying to pick that lock then.

GM: Please roll a Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check. (**PC1** rolls an 8 and fails the check)

PC3: My paladin adventurer wants to be on watch while his friends inspect the room. He stands near the west hallway where the mist came from.

The GM must now adjudicate the characters' actions:

GM: The cleric fails to identify the broken statue. He must spend an extra Dungeon Turn inspecting the broken pieces while the mist clears.

The locking mechanism appears to be more complex than anticipated. It's going to take you two Dungeon Turns to crack it. So, the rogue continues working on it.

End of the 1st Dungeon Turn; 10 minutes on average have passed.

Dungeon Turn 2: *GM rolls 1 on the **dungeon events** table and triggers an encounter. He rolls an 8 on the **Random Encounters** table; resulting in 1d3 ghouls!*

PC1: My cleric spends the turn inspecting the statue again. We need to know who it represents.

PC3: I'll continue my watch (paladin PC).

The GM rolls for the opportunity of surprise (default 2-in-6 but it's 1-in-6 because the paladin stands guard). He rolls a 4; resulting in no surprise.

GM: Before the rogue finishes with the lock, something else emerges from the darkness of the west hallway. Two humanoid figures jump into the torchlight and attack. Their bodies are dead and some of the sections of their skin are missing. A look of undead hunger shines in their empty sockets.

The battle ensues and the adventurers survive the encounter with no losses. Their actions resume. The cleric identifies the statue as that of Saint Girald. He was an important clerical figure in an ancient religion that later splintered and disappeared more than 300 years ago. He was known for his deeds in battle.

The rogue manages to open the lock. The 2nd Dungeon Turn ends. 20 minutes on average have passed.

Dungeon Turn 3: *The battle is noisy. GM rolls 5 on the **Dungeon Events - Noisy** table; torches burn out.*

Torches burn out and must be replaced. Two of the adventurers carried torches and announce that they replace them with new ones. This action is automatic and does not spend much time. The players also announce they want their characters to explore what's behind the now unlocked door.

GM: There is a 30-foot long hallway behind the unlocked wooden door. The floor tiles in the middle of the hallway appear to be different than in the rest of the dungeon. They are cracked and look more fragile. There also appears to be a little bit of hay on the stone tiles. Something doesn't add up.

The GM has just given clues of the presence of a pitfall trap. It is of a recent addition; a denizen in the dungeon put it here recently to protect what's ahead.

PC2: I know what this is. It must be a trap of sorts. But how does it work?

PC3: My paladin wears plate armor and won't go near that section of the hallway. If this is triggered by weight then I won't go near it.

PC1: What if we walk around it? We could hug the wall on either side and move slowly to the other side.

PC3: That sounds like a good idea but I won't try it first!

PC1: Hey! I have an idea. If it's a pit, maybe I can drop water and see if it filters down through the cracks. That's what I do.

GM: You open a waterskin and pour the clean water on the floor near the cracked area. The water meanders around the stone tiles and then disappears down the floor when it reaches the cracks. You hear it splashing down below the floor level.

PC2: You had it right! It's a pit! I'm going to use my crowbar to hit it from as far as I can to make it crumble.

GM: The rogue lies down on the floor and hits the cracked stone tiles with the crowbar and the trap triggers. A whole five-foot section of the floor collapses into a 30-foot-deep spiked pit. As you first suspected, there is a thin section of floor hugging the north wall where you can cross if you stick to the wall and walk sideways.

The PCs declare they want to do just that and cross to the far side of the pit by hugging the north wall. The 3rd Dungeon Turn ends. 30 minutes on average have passed.

Dungeon Turn 4: **GM** rolls 4 on the **Dungeon Events** table; resulting in dungeon effect and exhaustion. The **GM** rolls a 5 on the **Dungeon Effects** table; dirty water spoils 1d6 rations.

The GM informs the players that the adventurers are exhausted and need a breather. They agree that it is a good idea to rest next to the exposed pit trap. The GM explains that when they get up from their rest, the cleric notices that he placed his backpack on the floor directly under a trickle of dirty water without noticing. 4 rations in the backpack are now inedible.

The 4th Dungeon Turn ends. 40 minutes on average have passed.

Dungeon Turn 5: **GM** rolls 3 on the **Dungeon Events** table; resulting in an encounter clue. The adventurers have declared their characters will explore the room after the hallway with the pit trap.

GM: The room contains several alcoves on the north and south of the room. Each alcove contains a stone coffin on a raised dais. The coffin lids are all the same. They are engraved with the likeness of a knight. The bas-relief is old and eroded.

However, there is a severed leg in the middle of the room. The blood is dry but the leg is still fresh and has not decomposed yet. It can only be a few hours since this happened. There is a pool of dry blood around the severed limb and marks of dragging, as if whatever was left of this person was dragged farther east, through another hallway.

The person who placed the pit trap is likely to be the victim here. The poor fellow was torn to pieces by three ghosts.

PC1: My cleric casts *protection from evil* and stands guard.

PC2: My rogue will search the area for hidden things or treasures.

GM: Please roll an Investigation check. (**PC2** rolls a 14 and succeeds on the check)

PC3: My paladin uses his Divine Sense ability to see if a fiend is nearby.

GM: You detect an undead presence near the ceiling. Three undead humanoids cling to the ceiling and jump on you to attack!

The surprise roll is not relevant in this situation because the paladin's ability reveals the undead.

Combat starts! The cleric casts spirit guardians to deal damage to all ghosts. The rogue works together with the paladin and manages to sneak attack one ghost twice. Finally, the paladin uses its smite evil ability to vanquish the remaining undead.

The three ghosts are slain. The rogue finds a false bottom in one of the stone coffins and retrieves 50 gold pieces after the combat.

The 5th Dungeon Turn ends. 50 minutes on average have passed.

THE MINOTAUR MAZE

SAMPLE DUNGEON

God help our souls. They'll destroy the town if no one stops them!

Concerned Townspeak

BACKGROUND LORE



Life in Teria has been unremarkable for a few generations. It is a large town of hard-working people who often smile at strangers and do their best to enjoy their everyday activities. But a dark shadow stains the memories of the oldest townsfolk. Memories of a time long ago when a cruel creature ruled over the region.

It all started a hundred years ago when a group of bandits arrived at Teria and informed the people that a new overlord had claimed the area. The bandits claimed they now followed and worshipped the Great Horned King. They demanded the town to pay tribute and bring a young sacrifice per month to appease the merciful Horned King. The townsfolk laughed at them and thought it was all an elaborate ruse to rob them of their belongings. They didn't even consider the possibility of it being true. Some of the bandits were arrested by the town's constable. The rest fled back to the wilderness.

A week later, the bandits returned in the company of their king. It was 12 feet tall, with fur covering most of its body. The king's musculature would impress even the bravest man. But the most striking feature was its bullhead, with two-foot-long black horns.

Some brave fools lost their lives trying to oppose the Horned King before the rest of the people in Teria agreed to meet the monster's demands. Bandits and other low-lives joined the cult of the Horned King, and the town of Teria faced almost five decades of despair. The town gave the minotaur and its followers food parcels, silver coins, and the monthly sacrifice of a young soul to appease its anger.

It was so until the minotaur and the cult around it suddenly stopped coming, almost fifty years ago. The locals knew the location of the monster's lair but none of them or their children dared explore the place, lest they anger the monster once more. Time passed and the Horned King became nothing but a shadow of the past. In time, Teria grew to become a large town surrounded by rolling hills and farmlands.

A NEW THREAT

The bygone horror and the generational fear of the Horned King has returned. It all started a few weeks ago when farmworkers were attacked by undead abominations in the fields. Some of them fled to tell the tale; others died in the fields. This time around, Teria is better prepared to handle threats. The large town is now surrounded by a 15-foot-tall wooden palisade and a group of strong men willing to protect it.

Some undead have clashed against the palisade unsuccessfully. The guards have destroyed most of them so far. But they come in larger numbers. Worst of all is that there are not enough men to guard the wall well. Some flailing undead have managed to dig under it or climb it. Once inside, the dark abominations managed to take some innocent lives before the tithing-men and the guards stopped them.

THE RETURN OF THE KING

Scouts and guards on the wall claim to have seen a tall, hulking figure in the darkness when the undead attack. They say the monster has long pointy horns and glowing red eyes. People have already noticed that the monster is consistent with the old tales of the Horned King that old people tell young children to scare them at night. No one knows how or why yet, but it appears that the minotaur overlord has returned from the death to collect what it is owed.

THE TRUTH

The minotaur died almost fifty years ago while meddling with ancient magic. What it tried to achieve no one knows but it paid the price with its own life. The strange magical vibrations in the lair as a result of the failed arcane ritual killed it along with all its cult followers.

The same energy that killed them turned them into undead monsters. It took decades to finish the transformation. The minotaur and its followers have no recollection of their past selves, nor do they remember their lives. Their last objective was to seek tributes for the Horned King. They can feel the town of Teria nearby.

THE MISSION

Townspeaker Jaldin has approved a reward of 1200 gp for the Horned King's head. This is an open bounty for whoever dares to visit the minotaur's lair. Two generations ago, the townspeaker would never dare offer such a bounty but the town has grown and its wall makes it more defensible. Some people in town, the wary ones, claim that Jaldin is risking a lot by doing so.

Jaldin has a crude map of the region and can point to the location of the lair, as described by an old person in town who still remembered where it was.

The entrance to the minotaur's lair is four hours from Teria, in the northern forest range. Reaching the lair, the adventurers have a 50% chance of encountering 1d6 of the cult follower **zombies**.

The following tables are meant to be used with the *Dungeon Crawling with Style* rules laid out at the beginning of this document. This is a Tier 1 adventure (levels 1 to 5), but not all elements are balanced to be fair. The adventurers may stumble upon unbeatable challenges in the lair.

Maze Random Encounters

| Roll 1d10 | Encounter |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 1 | 1d4 zombies |
| 2 | 1 rust monster |
| 3 | 1d8 shadows |
| 4 | 2d6 giant rats |
| 5 | 1d4 ghouls |
| 6 | 2d4 skeletons |
| 7 | 1 wraith |
| 8 | 1d4 lost bandits |
| 9 | 1 indifferent ghost |
| 10 | 1 undead minotaur |

LOST BANDITS

1d4 road bandits came across the maze entrance by chance and decided to inspect the place three days ago. They got lost and ran out of light sources. They've been in the dark for two days. They already lost two men.

INDIFFERENT GHOST

The ghost of a teenager dressed in out-of-fashion attire appears and looks at the adventurers. It is indifferent to them but he may be convinced to share some information. This lad was given as a sacrifice seventy years ago against his will. It has roamed the hallways of this maze for decades and knows the place well.

UNDEAD MINOTAUR

The undead minotaur knows there are intruders inside the maze. It has supernatural abilities that let him control the maze. It creates magical temporal secret doors and moves walls to accommodate its movement. The minotaur moves through the maze unimpeded and can approach the party from behind with ease (surprise 3-in-6).

It charges at the adventurers and attempts to attack with its gore. Regardless of the result, the undead minotaur stays for a round or two before disengaging and escaping through a magical secret door.

Maze Dungeon Effects

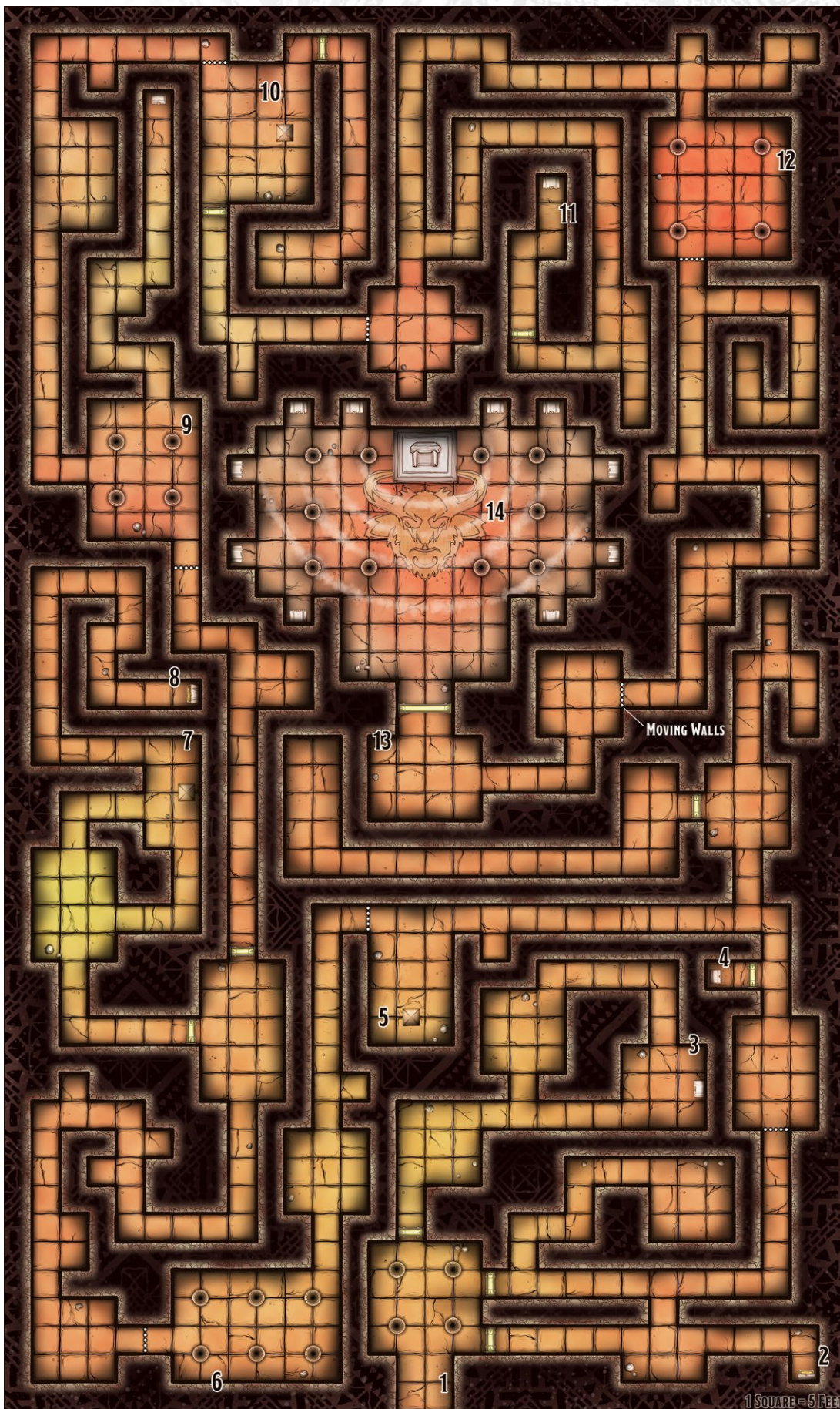
| Roll 1d8 | Encounter |
|----------|---|
| 1 | A gust of cold wind blows suddenly and extinguishes any torches, candles, or uncovered fires. The torches are spent. |
| 2 | Dense mist covers the ground for 2 Dungeon Turns. |
| 3 | The closest movable wall (see map) appears and impedes passage. It is clearly a fresh feature. It can be brought down with the appropriate tools in 3 turns or it goes away if this result is rolled again. |
| 4 | Unnatural darkness fills the area for three turns and reduces all light ranges by 10 feet. |
| 5 | A current of dirty water filters through the ceiling on a random adventurer. The water spoils up to 1d6 rations on their bag pack. |
| 6 | Howls and cries in the darkness. A random adventurer must declare who or what they pray to for strength. |
| 7 | Edible mushrooms have grown from a crack on the wall (pick for one ration). |
| 8 | A door behind the adventurers slams shut and becomes stuck. |

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Terrain. The maze floor features granite flooring in bad condition. The floor tiles are cracked and eroded after decades of abandonment and disrepair.

Doors. All doors in the dungeon have a 75% chance of being locked. A dexterous locksmith may bypass any of these door mechanisms with some effort and time (DC 15 Thieves' Tools).

Moving Walls. The maze is not a static underground complex. It shifts and moves with the undead minotaur's will. Rolling a 3 on the **Dungeon Effects** table (see above) causes a movable wall to appear or retreat.



The DM may also choose to activate this feature when narratively appropriate. The wall can be brought down with shovels, pickaxes, or similar tools in three Dungeon Turns. This is very noisy.

The Obelisks. There are three obelisks in the minotaur's maze. They are crucial foci of the ancient ritual that ended the Horned King's life fifty years ago. A *detect magic* spell reveals a strong necromantic aura in each of the obelisks. A spellcaster searching the area learns that they can spend a spell slot to interact with the obelisk and turn off its magic aura. Deactivating one or more of the obelisks changes the battle in area 14.

The Chests. There are several stone chests in the maze. They are all locked. Some of them feature complex traps in the locking mechanisms. And some of them are not chests at all but **mimics**. A dexterous locksmith may bypass any of these locks with some effort and time (DC 14 Thieves' Tools).

1. A COLD WELCOME

The entrance in the forest leads down a staircase. It descends 80 feet into the depths of the forest to a 20 ft. by 20 ft. landing with three closed stone doors. Four **zombies** guard the ancient chamber and attack immediately.

2. THREAT OF POISON

The chest features a **poison needle trap**. Attempting to pick the lock reveals the presence of a secondary mechanism in the lock. A strong and sturdy individual may resist such poison (DC 16 Constitution save, 4d6 poison damage or half on a success).

Treasure. 250 gp, 320 sp, and two *spell scrolls* with random wizard spells.

3. NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

The chest in this room is a **mimic** in disguise. It can be identified by inspecting the room (DC 16 Investigation). The monstrosity waits until a person gets stuck in its slime and then attempts to bite.

Treasure. Defeating the mimic releases the treasure inside it. It contains seven rubies (worth 50 gp each), 3 emeralds (worth 70 gp each), and a single golden ring with a large diamond (worth 150 gp).

4. LOST RICHES

The stone chest behind the door contains valuable items and riches from Teria Town. These items were given as tribute to the Horned King more than fifty years ago.

Treasure. The chest contains 350 gp, three random trinkets, the deed to a house in Teria, and a golden amulet (worth 120 sp).

5. THE FIRST OBELISK

The first obelisk is guarded by three **ghouls**. They do not leave the room to pursue trespassers. It is necessary to destroy the undead here to interact with the obelisk (see **Area Descriptions** above).

6. GUARDIANS IN THE DARK

Four **zombies** hide in the shadows of this room, behind the pillars. They are immobile and make no sound. Only a perceptive person might notice their undead presence (DC 14 Perception). They wait until at least 1 person walks into the middle of the room and jump from the shadows to attack.



7. THE SECOND OBELISK

The second obelisk is guarded by two **ghouls** and one **specter**. They do not leave the room to pursue trespassers. It is necessary to destroy the undead here to interact with the obelisk (see **Area Descriptions** above).

8. THREAT OF FIRE

Opening the chest triggers a fire jet trap. The fire shoots from a hole on the wall 1/2 a foot over the chest. Attempting to lift the lid reveals the workings of a secondary mechanism in the chest. If triggered by unwary visitors, only a person with fast reflexes may jump out of the way of the 20-foot-long fire jet (DC 16 Dexterity save, 3d6 fire damage or half on a success).

Treasure. The chest contains 100 gp.

9. AWAITING SHADOWS

The ceiling of this room is considerably taller than the rest of the dungeon; considerably so that the light from the characters torches and lanterns won't illuminate the ceiling above. Six **shadows** cling to the ceiling and wait for the best opportunity to rain down on unsuspecting adventurers. The shadows resemble Teria's townsfolk; the traditional features of their clothing are distinguishable in their semi-corporeal bodies.

10. THE THIRD OBELISK

The third obelisk is guarded by two **zombies** and one **wraith**. They do not leave the room to pursue trespassers. It is necessary to destroy the undead here to interact with the obelisk (see **Area Descriptions** above). This is a deadly encounter but the adventurers may choose to skip it due to the impending danger.

11. FORGOTTEN WEALTH

The chest contains valuable items that belonged to the bandits that became the Horned King's cult. The items were placed here as a tribute to the minotaur who expected gifts from its followers too.

Treasure. The chest contains 415 gp, 320 sp, 1840 cp, and a *+1 dagger*.

12. A PORTRAY OF HATE

This is the only chamber in the dungeon with any kind of decoration on its walls. The granite is scarred with deep engravings in the walls and pillars of this room. The engravings depict a large Horned King sitting on a stone throne. In the images, hundreds of lowly followers follow the minotaur and comply with its orders without question.

Some images also portray the minotaur king beheading people, warring with cities, and punishing its followers. A knowledgeable individual (DC 16 Intelligence) may discover that the reliefs date back to less than a hundred years from the amount of erosion.

HORNED KING - UNDEAD MINOTAUR

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

HP 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 40 ft

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 11 (+0) | 16 (+3) | 6 (-2) | 16 (+3) | 9 (-1) |

Skills Perception +7

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 17

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Charge. If the undead minotaur moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 2d8 piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed 10 feet away and knocked prone.

Labyrinthine Recall. The undead minotaur can perfectly recall any path it has traveled.

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the minotaur can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the undead minotaur to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the undead minotaur drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Great Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

13. THE ANTECHAMBER

A ten-foot-wide stone door leads to the center of the maze. There are two **ghouls** in this room standing next to the door. The ghouls do not attack. Instead, they move to open the stone door when the adventurers reach this scene. It takes them almost a minute to push the large stone door to the side to reveal the entrance. If the adventurers attack the ghouls, they stop what they are doing and attack.

14. THE UNDEAD HORNED KING

This is the largest chamber in the maze. Ten closed stone chests line the walls of the throne room. Surrounded by pillars, a large stone throne dominates the room. The **undead minotaur** sits on it. The minotaur was cruel and evil in life but even it may have congratulated humans in surpassing the threats in its maze.

But that being is no more. The undead minotaur cannot be reasoned with as it doesn't feel fear or pain. It knows only hate and destruction.

Four **skeletons** aid the undead minotaur in this fight. So do the two **ghouls** from area 13, if they are still around. These fiends fight until slain.

The Obelisks. A **specter** joins the fight for each obelisk (a maximum of 3) that remains active when the battle begins. They protect the undead minotaur and prioritize spellcasters.

Treasure. The ten chests hold the minotaur's hoard. Collectively, they contain 5700 gp, 7000 sp, 500 cp, an assortment of varied gemstones worth 250 gp, three *potions of healing*, and three *spell scrolls* with random wizard spells.

DEVELOPMENT

The townsfolk in Teria are grateful for the adventurers if they manage to bring the head of the undead minotaur. Townspeaker Jaldin pays the reward and grants the heroes the title of "Protector of Teria".

If it is known that the adventurers came back from the dungeon laden with treasure, a considerable number of people consider that treasure to be the property of their families; stolen from their grandparents or great grandparents more than fifty years ago.

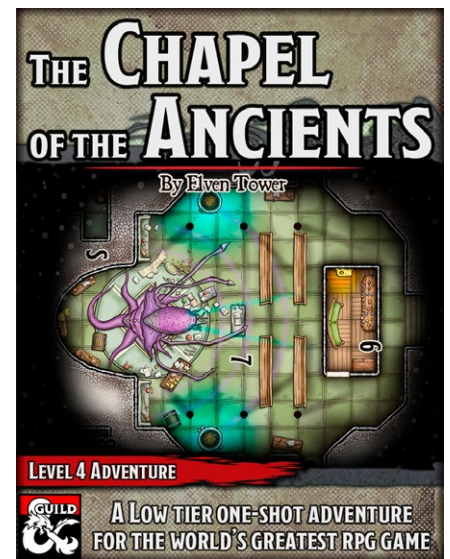
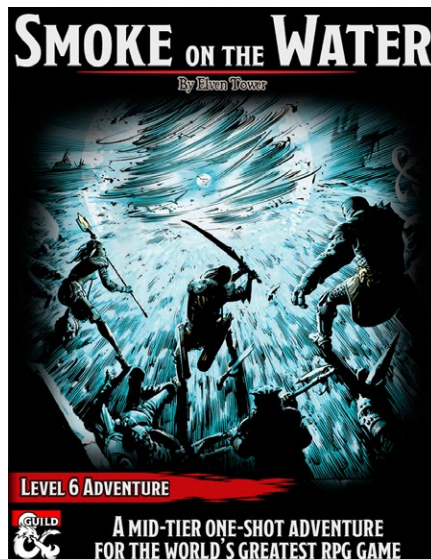
The adventurers have several options:

- If the adventurers agree to surrender at least 80% of the treasure found in the maze, the townsfolk are satisfied and throw a party for the brave adventurers
- If the adventurers agree to surrender at least 40% of the treasure found in the maze, the townsfolk are dissatisfied but call it a day. A small group of seven disgruntled farmers (**commoners**) attempts to rob the adventurers that night.
- If the adventurers refuse to surrender at least 40% of the treasure, the townsfolk revolt against them. A mob of farmers and artisans (35 **commoners**) attempt to arrest them after they collect the bounty from Townspeaker Jaldin. If the adventurers are arrested, they are put in jail to await the trial. Townspeaker Jaldin does not dare oppose the mob in this situation.

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