

You never should have left the farm. "Be an adventurer" they said! "Gold, magic, and glory will be yours!" they said. Now those well-wishers, encouragers, panders, and hangers on are all gone, left behind in the stinking taverns and warm beds of civilization. You and your companions? You're deep in a lightless cavern, in over their heads with meager supplies, swords you don't know how to use, and a few flickering torches. You're not the only ones there either.

There's a monster in the darkness too, a great beast with terrible claws who can mimic the voices and forms of man, dwarf, and elf. A beast whose true form is only revealed in the ever-so-distant light of day. It could be anyone. Hells...it could be you.

Keep your sword close, your torch high, and a wary eye on your companions and maybe you'll be able to get

## **OUT OF THE DEPTHS**

### **Set Up**

At the beginning of the game, nominate one person to be the Dungeon Master, the sadistic overlord of the Cavern of the Faceless Horror. The Dungeon Master (or DM) describes what happens in the darkness from the perspective of the party, makes sure everyone follows the rules, and details the cavern. At this point, the GM should write "Adventurer" on a number of sheets of paper equal to the number of other people in the group-1, and "Faceless Horror" on one sheet, then passes them out to everyone face down, so no one is certain who's who.

If you're an Adventurer write down "Sword", "Rations", "Armor", "Treasure" and "Torch" along with a name on your piece of paper. Assign d4, d6, d6, d6, and d8 to them, one die per item. When you use one of those items, you'll roll a die with that many sides to see how well it works in your hapless hands.

If you're the Faceless Horror write down "Horror" on your piece of paper. You can use this identically to any of the items an Adventurer has, at any die size from d4 to d12. If you use anything higher than d8 though, the jig is up unless your fellow players are real dolts (or are generous with their coins).

### **Goals of Play**

If you're an Adventurer, your goal is to kill the faceless horror and hold onto enough supplies to get of the cavern alive so you can return to a simple (and safe) life of tilling the earth. If you're the Faceless Horror your goal is to kill all of the Adventurers without them discovering your true form, or to be taken along with the Adventurers into the light of Day so that you can work your evil on the surface world. If you're the DM, you want the dangers of the Dungeon to claim the hapless Adventurers and the Faceless Horror both.

### **How to Play**

The Adventurers and the Faceless Horror disguised as one of their party (who was dragged off and replaced before all this) have just slain a wyrmling dragon and claimed its meager treasure when all light in the cavern (including torches) suddenly gutters out. Everyone can hear one another, but no one can see anyone else (not even the horror), at least not without relighting a torch.

Adventurers (and the secret horror among you) feel free to talk amongst yourselves openly, but when it comes time to act, time is broken down into turns. During a Turn every Adventurer and the Horror writes down one of the following and hands it over to the DM face down (or use a private message if you're playing online). Then roll the die associated with the item listed, the DM will describe its effects based on the result and what each character can see or sense. Then more talking and another turn.

**Shine a Light on Someone (Torch or Horror):**

Roll Torch or Horror. On a 4 or higher you can see one other character and what they're doing for this Turn and the turn after it. If you get a 3 or lower, your torch burns out before it does anything useful and you take -1 Torch. If you get a 0 or lower you wander into a horrible trap in the darkness and die-the DM will describe how your companions find you. If someone doesn't have anything to hide, they can always say "I'm coming into the torchlight" and willingly reveal their action to everyone. Don't trust people who do this-they usually have ulterior motives.

### **Kill Someone (Sword or Horror)**

Roll Torch or Horror. If they're trying to Kill You, whoever gets the higher result kills the other person. If they're not, a 4 or higher kills them. The GM will describe the sounds of the fracas (and if anyone has a torch) a little of what it looks like and the mutilated corpse that results. If you get a 4 or lower you're wounded and take -1 to Sword.

### **Defend Yourself (Armor or Horror)**

Roll Torch or Horror. If someone tries to Kill You and you get a 4 or higher then you fend them off and gain +1 to one of your stats from "leveling up". Unless you've shed some light on them you don't know who attacked you (unless they tell you). If you get a 3 or lower you fend them off but you're wounded and take -1 to all stats. If no one was trying to kill you, you take -1 to a stat of the GM's choice from growing paranoia. If you get a 0 or lower, you end up getting killed, either by your attacker or by getting into a situation where your armor spells your doom. If you're feeling noble, you can opt to defend someone else.

### **Find The Path (Torch or Horror):**

Roll Torch or Horror. If you get 4 or higher describe how you get one step closer to getting out of here and mark a check on your sheet. When the group has twice as many checks between them as there are people in the group, you're out of the caverns, safe...maybe. (It's assumed everyone stays together. Anyone splitting up would get eaten by gues.) On a 3 or lower you lose your way a bit and take a -1 to Torch. On a 0 or lower lose a check, or if you don't have one you get separated from the group and die horribly.

### **Share the Loot (Treasure or Horror)**

Roll Treasure or Horror. If you get a 4 or higher describe the treasure you're offering another player to do what you want next turn. If they accept, they add "magic treasure" to their sheet that can spent to add +1d4 to one roll of their choice. If you get a 3 or higher, some of the treasure falls through your hands never to be seen again (or gets pocketed by greedy party members) and you take -1 to Treasure. On a 0 or lower the gleam of your treasure attracts monsters (perhaps 1d6 Owlbears) that carry you off into the darkness and tear you to pieces.

### **Feed and Water Yourself (Rations or Horror)**

Roll Rations or Horror. If you get a 4 or higher you've managed to feed yourself or one other person of your choice: whoever you fed gets +1 to their next roll and doesn't mark an X this turn. If you get a 3 or lower, you've managed to feed someone and don't get an X but your supplies are running low. Take -1 to Rations. If you get a 0 or lower then you're out of Rations and need to rely on someone else to feed or water you to avoid getting Xs. If you get 3 or more Xs on your sheet, you've died of starvation or thirst. If you're a Horror and someone has died this turn, you don't mark an X-you live off the energy of Death (still might be a good idea to pretend to eat though).

### **Turns**

After everyone has made a roll, each character that hasn't Fed or Watered themselves gains an X, representing starvation and thirst. Three Xs means you're dead If 10 or more turns pass without the party getting out of the cavern, rocks fall and everyone (including the horror) dies.