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An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®

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INTRODUCTION

The term “dungeon” refers to a simple fantasy adventure. Typically, the PCs wander from room to room, killing monsters and grabbing treasure. A “dungeon” can also be a building, battleship, space station, etc. If the adventurers are dropped into a limited area, with little or no goal except to grab what they can and get out alive, it’s a “dungeon.”

Dungeon Fantasy: Dungeons is about what heroes created using Dungeon Fantasy: Adventurers actually do: raid dungeons! For players, it offers pragmatic advice on how to (ab)use advantages and skills from the Basic Set before, during, and after a dungeon crawl. For the GM, it provides tips on how to keep dungeon adventuring challenging but fun.

Like all Dungeon Fantasy titles, this isn’t a self-contained game — it’s a play aid. It gives quick-and-dirty rules that are (mostly) compatible with the Basic Set but that don’t require gamers to search 576 pages to find them. Most important, it shows the GM what corners to cut and calls to make when his only goal is a fast-and-loose dungeon crawl.

The shortcuts and rules of thumb that follow probably aren’t very sensible outside a dungeon crawl. GURPS is generic, but this stuff isn’t — it’s all about adapting generic rules to the dungeon fantasy environment.

About the Author

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist and ended up as the GURPS Line Editor. Since 1995, he has compiled the two GURPS Compendium volumes, written GURPS Wizards and GURPS Undead, edited or revised over 20 other GURPS books, and masterminded rules for dozens more. Most recently, he created the GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition with coauthor David Pulver, wrote GURPS Powers with coauthor Phil Masters, and wrote GURPS Martial Arts with coauthor Peter V. Dell’Orto. Sean has been a fanatical gamer since 1979. His non-gaming interests include cinema, computers, and wine. He lives in Montréal, Quebec with his wife, Bonnie. They have two cats, Banshee and Zephyra, and a noisy parrot, Circe.
Delvers such as those created with the templates in *Dungeon Fantasy: Adventurers* may have dozens of skills—and dungeons can hold hundreds of challenges. The burning question, then, is "What skills do I use to get rich without getting dead?" Below are lots of answers, arranged by topic, with the operative skills (and occasionally advantages or spells) in boldface.

For the GM, this is a guide to setting up and handling common situations in dungeon fantasy games. For the players, it’s advice on how to survive a dungeon crawl. It’s also useful when choosing abilities, buying gear, and exploiting the system for a few extra coins!

### Getting Ready to Go

The GM might simply ask the players to create characters and buy gear, and then drop the PCs into a dungeon. This section won’t apply in that case. Real munchkins will want their heroes to start out in town, though, so that they can beg, borrow, and steal the most useful equipment for the upcoming quest while spending as little as possible.

### Getting Stuff Cheap

List prices in *Dungeon Fantasy: Adventurers* are the going rate. Whether a PC gets his gear through purchase, barter, or inheritance, it normally comes out of starting money at those prices. There are other options, though (none of which apply to Signature Gear).

Below, “item” means one large article (weapon, magic item, etc.) or a group of small ones (e.g., a suit of armor or a quiver of arrows). The GM should probably limit each PC to rolls for three or four items—although true munchkins will quibble!

Scrounging: Any PC may try one Scrounging roll before each adventure. Success means he can take $10 worth of nonmagical items for free. Critical success (ordinary success, for someone with Serendipity) yields a more valuable, useful item of the GM’s choice. Failures, even critical ones, aren’t noteworthy.

Crafting: Heroes with Armoury can start with ordinary arms and armor of their own making—anything listed in the *Basic Set*, but no fine swords, magic items, etc. Materials and labor consume starting cash equivalent to list cost, but roll against skill: any success reduces the price by 20%, while any failure means wastage that adds 10%. Use whatever specialty (Body Armor, Melee Weapons, or Missile Weapons) suits the item.

Brewing: Individuals with Alchemy can use the crafting rules above for any chemical or potion, while those with Poisons can use them for any poison. Adventurers with Herb Lore can start with natural preparations and healing potions (minor, major, or great) at half price on a success—but still 10% extra on a failure. Heroes with Clerical Investment get holy water at 50% off without a roll.

### About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

- *Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid)). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers the *d20* system, *Ars Magica*, *BESM*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games—and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Transhuman Space*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also get opportunities to playtest new *GURPS* books!

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Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online—with links to let you buy the books that interest you! Go to the book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.
Bargaining: A PC who has the Merchant skill can roll a Quick Contest vs. a generic skill of 15 (Merchants’ Guild members are canny!) for a given item. If he wins, he saves 10%; if he ties, he pays list price; and if he loses, the price is 10% higher than usual. He can opt not to pay an inflated price — but he’ll be unable to find that piece of gear at a better price before the adventure begins.

Black Market: As an alternative to bargaining, a adventurer can use Streetwise to get something cheaply on the black market. Use the same rules, except that losing still leaves the option of buying a legit item at list price. The catch: critical failure on the roll means the Thieves’ Guild or Town Watch confiscates cash or gear equal to 10% of the PC’s starting money!

Shoplifting: A daring PC can try a Filch roll to steal any article that would fit under a shirt – GMs judgment, but 3 lbs. is a fair limit. Pricy items are watched more carefully: roll at -1 for anything over $100, another -1 per doubling (-2 for $200+, -3 for $400+, and so on), and a further -3 for anything rare or magical. Any failure means the powerful Merchant’s Guild pillories the thief — he loses all his gear! Even a successful thief must make a Smuggling roll before leaving town with stolen goods, with any failure giving identical results.

Scoring Extra Cash

Even with the above tricks — especially with those tricks, for failed crooks — money can be tight. These next few measures may help. A PC can try each of them once while in town before each adventure, or one of them daily while awaiting a quest (see Finding a Quest, below).

Dredging and Mud-Larking: Desperate heroes can try an Urban Survival roll to seek coin in gutters. Success finds $1 times margin of success; critical success finds a useful item of the GM’s choice. Critical failure means a dire case of sewer rot: Any failure means the powerful Merchant’s Guild pillories the thief — he loses all his gear! Even a successful thief must make a Cure Disease roll before leaving town with stolen goods, with any failure giving identical results.

Bumming, Busking, and Haranguing: Adventurers can beg, perform, or give sermons for cash. Beggars use Panhandling. Buskers use Dancing, Musical Instrument, Performance, Poetry, or Singing — and those with several skills start with the best, roll once against any others, apply +1 per success or -1 per failure, and then roll against the total (if the show includes music or song, also check Musical Composition). Soapbox lecturers use Public Speaking or Theology. Success earns $2 times margin of success; critical success scores a useful gift. Critical failure means a beating (1d HP) or a broken musical instrument.

Gambling: If the PC knows Gambling, he can bet any amount. Roll a Quick Contest vs. a generic skill of 12 for sums up to $25. Higher stakes attract sharks: +1 to opposing skill for doubling (13 up to $50, 14 up to $100, and so on). If he wins, he doubles his money; if he ties, he breaks even; and if he loses, he forfeits his stake. Success at Sleight of Hand allows cheating for +3, but any failure means the crook loses his bet and is beaten for 1d HP.

Working the Crowd: Dishonest delvers can go on a spree with Pickpocket. Success nets $5 times margin of success; critical success means $50 times the margin! Any failure means a beating (1d HP); critical failure indicates swift justice in the form of a broken hand (1d months to heal, barring magic).

Debasing Coin: Really depraved scum can debase (shave or add impurities to) the King’s coin. Start with honest coin up to $1,000 and then roll against Counterfeiting. Success increases the sum by 10%. Failure means ruined coin or lost metal, costing the crook 20% of his stake. Critical failure means the King’s men stick his hand in molten silver, giving him One Hand.

Finding a Quest

The GM wouldn’t be running a dungeon fantasy game if he didn’t have an adventure in mind — but having a dungeon ready doesn’t mean that the heroes know about it!

Rumors: The GM might allow each PC one Carousing roll (for tavern talk) and one Current Affairs roll (to know a rumor already) between adventures. The player decides whether to attempt either roll, but the GM rolls in secret. Success reveals the quest — or if the GM has several dungeons ready, each success reveals one at random, and the players can choose based on hearsay. Failure discovers nothing. Critical failure finds a quest with wrong rumors, like a cave full of vampires described as “the Faerie Caverns.”

Starving: If nobody succeeds, the GM can say “A week passes,” dock everyone $150 for cost of living, and let them try again. To avoid this cost, each hero can try a Survival roll (if he camps outside town) or an Urban Survival roll (if he lives like a bum). Failure means starting the eventual adventure down 1d HP.

Advertising: Each week, one PC can use Propaganda to advertise the party’s services. The GM rolls in secret. Success brings an adventure of the GM’s choice. It’s probably the dungeon he had planned all along — but the quest’s bearer smells desperation, so clearly it’s nasty. The GM will quietly make the monsters and traps scarier. Critical failure also means bad info, as above.

Details: After learning of a quest, one PC can use Research to unearth information about the dungeon. Again, the GM rolls in secret. Success reveals something useful (e.g., “It’s full of werewolves!”). This lets heroes with suitable skills prepare accordingly; see Exploiting Weaknesses (p. 10). Failure gives nothing. Critical failure yields false info.

Scum and Villainy

At the GM’s discretion, adventurers caught shopping or selling on the black market, shoplifting, cheating, pickpocketing, or debasing coin, or who betray a sponsor, may end up with Social Stigma (Criminal Record). Thieves might even start with this! The effect in dungeon fantasy is -2 on rolls to buy or sell, beg for alms, advertise for quests, or engage future backers. Even the Thieves’ Guild is reluctant to back anybody stupid enough to get caught!

Finding a Sponsor

Once the party has a quest, it may be possible to get more money for gear by finding a backer. The group must appoint one mouthpiece to approach potential sponsors. He can try Savoir-Faire to seek merchant or noble backing, Streetwise to get the support of the Thieves’ Guild, or Writing to compose an academic proposal to the Wizards’ Guild or a temple. Apply any Charisma bonus.
Failure or critical failure means no backing. Any success gives each adventurer an equipment allowance: gear (not cash) worth $100 times margin of success, minimum $100 apiece. The catch is that the group owes the sponsor future loot worth triple the total allowance (a 200% return). The backer may settle for an artifact of special significance regardless of its value – which usually means it's worth more than the party realizes!

TRAVEL

Once the heroes have gear and a quest, their goal is to reach the dungeon. Again, the GM might simply drop them into the thick of things; if so, skip these notes. But it's traditional to trek across monster-infested wilds whilst subsisting on rat-on-a-stick.

Getting There Quickly

The GM should set a base travel time. He might roll dice, always proclaim “40 days and 40 nights!” or do something else. For simplicity’s sake, assume that this accounts for encumbrance, weather, and terrain. The GM is free to set longer times for heavily burdened parties or lousy traveling conditions (“Sorry, but the trip to the Lair of the Weather Witch will take 60 days, not the usual 40.”).

Delvers must carry, forage, or conjure three meals apiece per day of travel. When they arrive at the dungeon, they'll be down 1 FP per missed meal (and 1 HP per FP below 0!). This FP penalty will last for the entire dungeon crawl, unless the group rests with food for a day per 3 FP lost.

Naturally, the GM will roll daily for a random encounter with bandits, dire wombats, etc. More days means more chances to get killed!

Thus, it's important to minimize travel time. There are three tricks for this. For each, any success knocks 10% off travel time, failure adds 10%, and critical failure adds 20%. The results are additive, giving from -30% to +60% travel time. The party can opt out of any of these rolls.

The Golden Path: If the party appoints a guide, he can make a Navigation roll (-5 with just the shadows of the trees, -1 with a sundial, or no modifier with a compass) to pick an optimal route over the best terrain.

Wind at Your Back: If the guide has Weather Sense, a successful roll lets the party walk or sail with the wind, avoid storms . . . whatever. This is fantasy weather!

Forced March: If the party is traveling overland, everyone can try Hiking, Riding, or Skiing, as appropriate, to move quickly; use the worst result. On water, one hero can roll against Boating for a small craft, Seamanship for a large one, to make good time.

Foraging

Rations are expensive, and cumbersome to lug around a dungeon (you have to bring enough to make the return trip!). Next to the Create Food spell, foraging is the best way around that. Only a traveler who knows Fishing, Naturalist, or Survival – no defaults – can forage in a world with killer bunnies and man-eating shrubs. Roll once per trip.

Success means that he needs only half as much food from rations; e.g., 60 instead of 120 meals on a 40-day journey. Critical success means he can either consume no rations or halve the rations used by himself and one companion.

Sleeping in Armor

To answer an age-old question: No, this isn't that hard, even in real life, once you’re used to it. Paranoid munchkins are definitely used to it! The GM shouldn’t be a cad and assess terrible penalties for this. However, the occasional creepy-crawler under the armor, biting and slithering, can be fun.

Camping and Posting Watches

Camping requires no special skill, but the party should post watches. The order isn't important; when a nighttime encounter occurs, the GM will randomly determine whose watch it interrupts, and secretly roll against the higher of Perception or Observation for that PC. For sneaky monsters, this becomes a Quick Contest against Stealth (likely to be 18+ for were-leopards, undead shadows, etc.).

If the watch-keeper succeeds (wins, if a Contest), the party isn't surprised – although those who were asleep start combat lying down. Otherwise, everyone is asleep or stunned; each delver must make one IQ roll per turn, at +1 per turn after the first and +6 for Combat Reflexes, and can only react on the turn after he succeeds. So post watches – it's free.

Wilderness Camps: If a nighttime encounter involves monsters that hunt by sight, the GM will roll a Quick Contest: the monsters’ Vision vs. the party’s highest Camouflage skill, at bonus equal to the number of party members who know the skill (no defaults!) but a penalty equal to party size. Victory means the enemy spends enough time sniffing around that any watch-keeper gets a second chance to detect the monsters, as above.

Dungeon Camps: When sleeping in a dungeon, camouflage won’t work – but if the room has doors, use the same rules with Traps to set simple noise-makers. In that case, victory means the monsters awake the party; the delvers won’t be surprised. Sleeping heroes will still start combat lying down, though.

Tracking

The adventurers may have to follow a trail to the dungeon – that of the last group to die there, rivals with a lead, monsters boiling out to eat travelers, etc. Since it won't be much of an adventure if the party never gets there, they'll eventually find the trail. Make one Tracking roll per delver; at -2 in wastes (ice, rock, etc.) or -4 in goo (slime, swamp, etc.), and note the best result. Success lets the party follow the trail at full speed. Failure or critical failure means time wasted searching for tracks: add 10% or 20%, respectively, to base travel time.
EXPLORING THE DUNGEON

Huzzah! The party is now at the gates of the Durance of Doom or Tunnels of Terror. Time to see lots of monsters and kill them and take their treasure! This works best with a little forethought.

Mapping

Traditionally, the GM describes what the PCs see and the players attempt to map it. Players and GM alike should read Player-Made Maps (p. B491) to understand how this works.

For the players to be allowed to make a map in the real world, a party member must serve as “mapper” in the game world. He requires ink, paper, and two free hands. He can’t carry a ready torch, shield, weapon, etc.

When using the map (e.g., to predict where a tunnel comes out) leads to nonsense results, the players can ask the GM for help. He’ll make a secret Cartography roll for the mapper. Success means he explains what’s wrong so that the players can correct their map. Failure means he smiles smugly. On a critical failure, he pretends it’s a success and lies! Even a good map of a twisted and weird dungeon will seem wrong – the GM should never reveal that.

Light Sources

In a typical dungeon, the party will be blind without light sources. Most lights require a hand, which can’t be used for combat. Those marked * below are hands-free, and the first choice for fighters who must carry their own light.

A light usually eliminates darkness penalties to combat and vision, for everyone, in a semicircle in front of the bearer – who’s presumably holding it so that he can see:

- Candle, Continual Light spell (level 1)*, Light spell*: 1 yard
- Continual Light spell (level 2)*, Glow Vial*, Lantern, Torch: 2 yards
- Continual Light spell (level 3)*: 4 yards

Spells like Glow and Sunlight eliminate penalties over their entire area of effect. One of the most useful things a caster can do when combat starts is cast such a spell!

For simplicity’s sake, assume that if the party has any area-effect source, vision and combat are possible at -3 out to triple the range of the best source; e.g., 6 yards if a torch, 12 yards if a 4-yard-radius Sunlight spell. After that, the ambient level applies: -3 for the lamps and candles in an evil temple, -8 for glowing slime, or total darkness for shadowy tunnel.

Other lights throw a beam that eliminates darkness penalties in a path 1 yard wide, in the direction of the carrier’s choice (pointing it is a free action each turn), out to a fixed range:

- Helmet Lamp*: 5 yards
- Bull’s-Eye Lantern, Light Jet spell: 10 yards

Marching Order

The party should establish one marching order for traveling single-file down narrow passages, another for moving two abreast along typical interior corridors, and a third for walking three abreast in spacious hallways. Be sure to note gaps (between, to one side, etc.). It usually makes sense to put people who know Traps in front, fighters with long weapons behind those with short ones, and delvers with missile weapons where they’ll have a clear shot.

Positioning casters demands careful thought. Placing them in front lets them detect supernatural dangers but exposes them to physical ones better faced by nimble thieves and armored knights. Putting them back lets them cast unmolested . . . unless attacked from behind. They’re probably safest in the middle and/or protected by a tougher buddy.

When it becomes important to know who can see by what light sources, trips a trap, is in front (or back!) when the monsters come, etc., the GM will use the current order. If the players want to change this, they must tell the GM. Otherwise . . . too bad.

Hidden Doors

Secret Doors: Secret doors are things like pieces of wall that spring open, altars that roll aside, and fireplaces that drop into the floor to reveal hidden portals – but only when some hard-to-find control is manipulated. Finding them always requires an active search; the GM rolls secretly against the highest of Vision, Observation, or Per-based Traps for each searcher. Success reveals a door, if there is one; it may require an IQ-based Traps roll to open. These rolls often have steep penalties!
Concealed Doors: Concealed doors are ordinary doors behind or inside other items, like tapestries and wardrobes. They require a roll to find, as for a secret door, but not to operate. However, the GM may wait for a player to declare that he’s looking behind the curtain or whatever – so pay attention when the GM describes the area!

Scouting Ahead

It’s useful to send a thief or a scout ahead of the main marching order to reconnoiter – especially if he can run fast!

Sneaking: Roll against Stealth to sneak ahead. Normally, any success will do – but if you happen upon a sentry, this becomes a Quick Contest against the better of his Hearing or Vision. In a dark dungeon, you can’t sneak with a light source; you’ll need a spell like Dark Vision, Infravision, or Sound Vision.

Information Gathering: Spotting pits, counting orcs, noticing doors, and so on requires no roll. A successful Observation roll will reveal interesting details: the pit is freshly dug, the orcs have a shaman, the second door looks more worn, etc. It will also determine patrol frequency and sentry placement, but that’s a Quick Contest vs. Stealth or Camouflage for hidden sentries. If you can get within 7 yards (×2 with a telescope, ×2 per level with the Hawk Vision spell), you can use Lip Reading to learn what intelligent monsters are saying – perhaps even a password! Detecting traps requires a Traps roll; see Traps and Hazards (p. 8). Noticing monster tracks calls for Tracking.

Dogging: To follow a monster to its lair or treasure without being noticed, win a Quick Contest of Shadowing against its Vision. Any other result means it sees you and may try to eat you. This is where the “run fast” part comes into play (don’t overlook the Haste spell!).

A wizard can cast Wizard Eye or Wizard Ear to do these things remotely; enemies are at -7 to spot such effects, and can’t see Invisible Wizard Eye or Invisible Wizard Ear. But spells aren’t a perfect replacement for old-fashioned reconnaissance – magic is fatiguing, and few wizards are skilled at noticing sentries, tracks, and traps. Savvy mages prefer to assist thieves and scouts with spells like Hide, Hush, Invisibility, and Mage Stealth.

Signaling

Gesture can communicate a simple concept – “six monsters,” “attack,” etc. – without compromising stealth. The player writes what he wants to relay and hands the note to the GM, who rolls in secret. Success means he tells everyone the message. Failure – or an attempt to relate anything complex (e.g., “a death brain and two dire wombats”) – means he says nothing. Critical failure means he gets to be evil.

Mimicry (Animal Sounds or Bird Calls) can deliver a prearranged signal to warn the party. Outdoors, assume this is stealthy. In a dungeon without animals or birds, it’s likely to warn monsters, too. Failure simply means the others don’t hear the call of the wild.

If a party member spots danger and doesn’t signal, or fails, the GM may roll secretly for an ally’s Body Language. Success means the GM gives a hint (“Bob looks like he’s seen a ghost.”).

Breaking and Entering

Delvers often run into obstacles (literally, if they lack adequate light) while sneaking around corridors and mapping passages. Some have to be skirted – by one brave soul or by the whole party – while others must be removed.

Dungeon Parkour

Martial artists, swashbucklers, and thieves sometimes use athletics to reach difficult areas. This lets them get into position to deploy a rope or a portable ladder to help less-agile friends. All of these rolls have a penalty equal to encumbrance.

Balancing: Roll Acrobatics to traverse something narrow, at -2 if it’s taut or rigid (a ledge or a rail) or -5 if it’s slack (an ordinary rope). A pole helps balance – add +2 for a quarterstaff or a 6’ pole, +3 for a 10’ pole. Failure means a fall, but allows a DX roll to catch something and try a pull-up to get back on. Critical failure (or failure on a DX roll to catch yourself) drops you into the depths. Those with Perfect Balance don’t have to roll!

“... With Spikes”

The dungeon-delving tasks discussed here assume the basic, plain version of each situation or hazard. The GM may assess penalties for trickier versions. A handy way to think about it is like this: for every nasty qualifier added, the roll has another -1. For instance, balancing on a slimy, twisting, smoke-obscured ledge is at an extra -3. This lets the GM “scale up” threats to challenge even experienced delvers.

Climbing: Most dungeon-sized climbs require one Climbing roll, at no modifier for a steep slope, -2 for a rope straight up, or -3 for a vertical wall (no penalty with climbing spikes). Failure means a fall from halfway up; critical failure means a fall from the top.

Diving: An Acrobatics roll at -4 lets you dive through a narrow opening – under a pendulum, between two rollers, etc. Failure means you end up stuck halfway through, which may hurt! Critical failure adds 1d-3 HP of injury (DR doesn’t protect).

Jumping: If an obstacle is small enough for anyone to hurdle, the GM should let people do so on a DX roll. If it’s wide, it calls for an expert with the Jumping skill, who can run and jump up to skill/2 yards. In either case, success gets you across in one piece. Failure allows a DX roll to catch the far side (no consolation with a shallow hazard) and try a pull-up. Critical failure – or failure on the last-ditch DX roll – means you fall right in.

Leg Up: A friend can boost you to reach a high area. He makes a ST roll while you roll Acrobatics at -2. If you both succeed, you can reach anything up to the sum of your heights and try a pull-up to get yourself up there. Failure by either of you lets you retry, but your partner must pay 1 FP per repeated attempt. On any critical failure, you collapse in a pile and each take 1d-3 HP of injury (DR doesn’t protect).
Pull-Up: Make a ST-based **Climbing** roll to pull yourself up onto anything you can reach: your height plus 1.5'. On a failure, you hang there and may retry, paying 1 FP per repeated attempt. Critical failure means a strained arm (crippled for 30 minutes) and a fall – *bad*, if you’re trying to recover from another failed stunt.

Running Climb: If two obstacles are within a couple of yards, you can run at one height and kick off back and forth between them to gain additional height before a pull-up. Use the better of **Acrobatics** or **Jumping**, at -4 to gain Basic Move/4 yards or -6 to gain Basic Move/2 yards (round up). Failure means a fall from that height; critical failure means maximum falling damage!

Skidding: To cross ice or similar, make a DX or DX-based **Skiing** roll at the combat penalty for bad footing – usually -2. Failure means you fall; roll DX-4 to stand up before you can try again (this is when the ice weasels attack). Critical failure adds 1d-3 HP of injury (DR doesn’t protect) to a random limb.

Squeezing: Roll against **Escape** to wiggle through a narrow crack. Success gets you to the other side. Failure means you won’t fit, and can’t retry. Critical failure means you’re stuck and must be rescued.

Swinging: If you can affix a line to an overhead anchor (toss a grapnel, climb up and tie it, etc.), you can swing across a hazard. Regardless of the rope’s true length, **effective length** can’t exceed the distance from anchor to ground. You can swing up to 3/4 of that length from a vertical rope, or 1.5 times that length if it starts 45° off-vertical. Make an **Acrobatics** roll at the range penalty for that distance (p. B350). Failure allows you to retry. Critical failure drops you into the hazard!

**Bridging Hazards**

In all cases above, *if one* party member gets past the obstacle, he can coordinate with somebody on the far side to set up a ladder (no roll) or a line (roll vs. **Throwing** to toss a line, but not to carry one) so that the others can safely join him, provided the group has a rope, ladder, etc., long enough to reach! Once this is ready, people can be hoisted up – or cross using handholds, or on hands and knees – one at a time. This requires no roll – or a DX roll, if the GM feels mean (probably DX+5, unless he’s being really mean).

Water Hazards: It’s possible to swim across water – make a **Swimming** roll, with the usual consequences for failure (p. B354). Most water in dungeons has Things That Bite, and then you’re stuck using Water Move (Basic Move/5), while your combat skills can’t exceed your DX-based Swimming level.

**Picking Locks**

Reliable locks are either anachronistic or costly in a “medieval” setting, yet portals in dungeon fantasy are often locked. (Somewhere, gnomish craftsmen are growing wealthy selling locks to stupid goblins.) Picking them is a **Lockpicking** roll, at -5 with a knife or similar crude tool, no modifier for proper picks, or +1 or +2 for good or fine tools, plus anywhere from +5 to -5 for cheap through fine locks. It’s traditional in dungeon fantasy for lockpicking to be a fiddly physical task, so this skill roll is DX-based, and gets **High Manual Dexterity** bonuses. **Puzzle** locks still require IQ-based rolls.

**Muscling Through**

Delvers don’t have to unlock or skirt doors and other barriers. They can **pull through** many obstacles! The disadvantage is that stealth is impossible – *each* attempt at the tasks below has a chance of being heard.

**Bashing**: You can destroy a door or a chest with a crushing or cutting weapon. Don’t bother with attack rolls! Roll damage at +2, or +1 per die, for All-Out Attack (Strong) – plus another +1 per die with **Forced Entry** at DX+1, or +2 per die at DX+2. The GM will subtract DR, multiply by 1.5 if you used a cutting attack, and reduce the target’s HP until it breaks. Swords dislike such abuse, and have a 3 in 6 chance (2 in 6 if fine, 1 in 6 if very fine) of bending: -1 to skill. Crowbars revel in destruction, and deliver swing+2 crushing.

**Forcing**: Another option is to apply boot or shoulder to the door and overpower its attachments without annihilating it. Roll a Quick Contest: ST vs. the lock or hinge’s HP (6 to 46). You may add **Lifting ST**, +2 for a crowbar, and +1 with **Forced Entry** at DX+1 or +2 at DX+2, but have a penalty equal to the hardware’s DR (-3 to -24). For a *barred* or *wedged* portal, use the bar or wedge’s DR (-1 to -16) as a penalty, if greater than the lock or hinge’s DR; similarly, the portal resists with the bar or wedge’s HP (14 to 37), if higher than the lock or hinge’s HP. You must **win** to open the door. Repeated attempts have a cumulative -1 and cost 1 FP each.

**Bending**: To pry apart metal bars in a grate or a portcullis, use the rules for forcing. A metal bar gives from -6 to -24 for DR, and has from 12 to 46 HP.

**Lifting**: If the problem is a *heavy* barrier (fallen lintel, unlocked portcullis, etc.), the solution is to lift it. This is a two-handed lift; use Basic Lift × 8 lbs., figured using ST plus **Lifting ST**. Add another 5% to BL per point by which you make a **Lifting** roll.

Hii-yah! For all the feats above, martial artists can make a **Breaking Blow** roll (-1 for wood, -5 for metal) to divide object DR by 5 and/or a **Power Blow** roll to double ST. This costs 1 FP per skill per attempt.

**Traps and Hazards**

Monsters aren’t the only things that can kill delvers (or at least give them a really bad day). Dungeon security systems include all manner of infernal devices. In *all* cases, if an adventurer with **Danger Sense** is on a fast path to enjoying one of these dangers, the GM should make a secret Perception roll for him. Success warns him that he’ll be in danger if he continues – but not what the danger is!

**Dealing with Traps**

A *trap* is a mechanical device – covered pit, shuriken launcher, overhead chute full of rusty morningstar heads – intended to harm those who trigger it. Everything to do with traps is a function of the **Traps** skill.

**Finding**: Detecting a trap requires a *Per-based* roll, with **Acute Vision** bonuses and darkness penalties. **Concealed** traps give a penalty. The party is assumed to be looking for traps at all times. The GM rolls secretly against their *best Traps* skill – separately for each group, when split up – to see if they notice each trap. When fleeing or similarly rushed, the roll is at -5!
Disarming: Disabling most traps calls for a DX-based roll, with bonuses for High Manual Dexterity. Tricky traps give a penalty.

Rearming: By making the roll to disarm again, it’s possible to rearm some traps after the party has passed.

Stealing: Small traps (leg-hold traps, tripwires, etc.) can be taken once disarmed. This is a standard IQ-based roll.

**Tricks**

A trick is a non-mechanical trap – mirror or other optical illusion (IQ roll at a penalty to discover), temporary spell (Detect Magic cast on dodgy-looking scenery, or an active Mage Sight spell, to reveal), enchantment (Magery allows a Perception + Magery roll to detect), etc. Details are up to the GM. It’s impossible to prepare for every trick!

Portals: A favorite trick of evil wizards is a magic portal that transports the party somewhere bad. If you’re tricked into walking through one of these, Magic Resistance won’t help! You’ll also be disoriented and forced to Do Nothing for the first turn after you arrive – when the zombies attack – unless you can make a Body Sense roll.

**Dangerous Stuff**

Other unpleasantness includes . . .

Gunk: Some “traps” aren’t triggered but consist of vile glop sitting where heroes will touch it; e.g., contact poison on treasure or flesh-eating acid in a mud puddle. To spot these, adventurers get a Pen-based roll against Poisons for toxins, or Alchemy for acid, volatile oil, etc. Acute Vision adds if the goo is visible; otherwise, Acute Taste and Smell helps sniff it out. Such rolls often have penalties! Make a standard IQ-based skill roll to wash it off safely, with failure meaning it gets on someone.

Potions: Magic potions (see Dungeon Fantasy: Adventures for examples) can guest-star as gunk. Use the rules above, but mages get a Perception + Magery roll to spot this. Removing such gunk requires an Alchemy or Hazardous Materials (Magical) roll.

Evil Runes: Nobody knows who carves them, but Evil Runes that drain life, explode, etc., show up regularly in dungeons. They’re enchantments of some sort, but don’t correspond to standard wizardry spells; they require a Thaumatology roll to distinguish from orc graffiti or a mason’s mark, and defy Analyze Magic. Most are permanent and target intent, affecting delvers who “cleverly” try to avoid them using 10’ poles or pull-ropes. The usual solution is to send the barbarian up, because he has the most HP.

**Curses 101**

Some dungeon areas are cursed by squid shamans, satanistas, etc. Possible effects include something resembling the Curse spell (-1 to -3 to success rolls), disease-like symptoms (injury or attribute loss), flying objects (inflicting damage or stealing gear), and possession (spinning head and vomiting). They might be persistent (constantly affecting a room) or triggered (e.g., afflicting those who touch an altar), and may be confined to the area or haunt the victim after he leaves.

Detection: Those with Holiness or Power Investiture get a Perception roll at a bonus equal to advantage level to recognize a cursed zone before it’s too late. If they’re not in front, though, somebody may already be cursed! An Occultism roll will also reveal the danger, if there’s a visible altar, idol, or the like that will curse those who mess with it (e.g., by prying the rubies from the idol’s eyes). The GM makes such rolls in secret.

Analysis: A separate Occultism or Theology roll – at a penalty for altars of forgotten cults or unspeakable gods – may turn up clues about the curse’s effects and triggers. The GM rolls in secret. Critical failure means the curse affects the analyst. It isn’t wise to stand around the evil altar, thinking hard about what the squid motif means!

Cleansing: Making a cursed area safe to enter or a cursed altar safe to pillage requires an Exorcism roll by someone with Holy Might. This is a Quick Contest vs. the (possibly high) Will of the evil force possessing the area. A blessed or high holy symbol gives +1 or +2, respectively. This takes three hours, if time matters, and fails automatically if anyone casts any magic within the exorcist’s sight. The exorcist must win to prevail. Otherwise, he can’t retry for a week (others can). If his roll is a critical failure, he suffers the curse.

Treatment: If a person is cursed, use the procedure for cleansing, but add the higher of the victim’s ST or Will to the exorcist’s roll.

Magic: Those with more FP than time may use a Remove Curse spell for cleansing or treatment. This works just like Exorcism, but costs 20 FP and takes only an hour.

**Monsters**

A monster is any hostile being – including not only creatures like dragons and trolls, but also dangerous and warped animals, evil humans (like bandits and cultists), former humans (zombies, werewolves, etc.), slimes, and magical creations (notably golems and animated statues). Dungeons are full of ‘em. Adventurers normally handle monsters through combat (p. 10), but there are other options to consider before or even instead of fighting.

**Recognition**

It’s good to know the opposition. The GM makes identification rolls in secret – but only if somebody asks and has the right skill:

- **Heraldry** to recognize bandits, orc tribes, etc., by their mark. They always have a mark, like a pig’s head on a stick.
- **Hidden Lore** specialties (Demons, Elementals, Undead, etc.) for supernatural entities with complex hierarchies or cultures.
- **Naturalist** for giant, dire, and warped versions of normal animals. Anybody can recognize lions, tigers, and bears, but things like greater dire numbats are trickier.
- **Occultism** for freaky-weird things, like Spawn of Thulhu.
- **Thaumatology** for golems and other wizardly automata.

Success identifies the target, plus one useful tidbit (favorite weapon, special power, weakness, etc.) per two points of success. Failure reveals nothing. Critical failure means the GM lies (“It’s mostly harmless, and likes apples.”).
Negotiation

Intelligent monsters that aren’t bloodthirsty and pure Evil might be willing to parley. This is advisable when the party can’t afford a fight; e.g., everyone is wounded, power items are exhausted, and the cleric is somewhat dead.

Make a reaction roll (3d). Modifiers are infinitely variable, but generally, the GM will assume a basic -5 (these are monsters, not merchants), and allow only the bonus for the speaker’s Charisma and +1 for Social Chameleon. If the sum is 10+, the monsters will listen instead of attacking immediately.

Making Deals: Deal-making is pure roleplaying. The PCs offer something, the GM counteroffers, and so on. If everyone seems to agree at some point, roll Diplomacy – at -3 with nonhuman monsters, unless the bargainer has Cultural Adaptability. Success means the monsters accept the deal. Failure means it isn’t good enough after all, and the party must make an extra concession (usually loot) to close the deal. Critical failure means war! This roll isn’t secret. The party will hear the orc boss yell, “Get ’em, boys!”

Language: Most intelligent beings in dungeon fantasy have at least some command of the “generic human” or “common” tongue of adventurers. The GM may rule that these orcs speak only Orcish, however! In such cases, the Diplomacy roll is at -1 for an Accented grasp of the monsters’ language, or at -3 for Broken comprehension. If no one knows the right language, hand signs may work: roll against the lower of Diplomacy or Gesture. The -3 for nonhumans still applies in all cases.

Skeevy Bastards: The GM might have decided that these monsters are cheats, and have no intention of honoring any deal. He’ll roll secretly against the bargainer’s Detect Lies skill – and if anyone in the party has Danger Sense, he’ll roll for that. Success means he warns the players. Otherwise, the heroes won’t see trouble coming.

Trickery

Intelligent (IQ 6+), free-willed monsters that aren’t too intelligent can sometimes be fooled. This is a chance to get creative with skills that rarely see use. Possibilities include feigning injury or death to draw the enemy into an ambush (Acting), posing as fellow monsters (Disguise or Disguise (Animals)), using noises or voices to distract them (Mimicry or Ventriloquism), duping them with a snake-oil pitch (Fast-Talk), mesmerizing them with old Bardic mind tricks (Captive, Hypnotism, Musical Influence, Persuade, Suggest, or Sway Emotions), exploiting their appetites or fears (Psychology (monster)), or even showing some leg (Sex Appeal, best saved for mostly compatible species).

The only goals of much importance in dungeon fantasy are getting past the monsters without a fight (like negotiation, but without giving up anything) or getting the drop on a big horde in order to whittle them down a little. Most such “dirty tricks” involve a Quick Contest against the IQ of the leader of an organized group or the smartest monster in a rabble. The trickster is at -5 if the monsters are already on the verge of combat (e.g., they chase the party around the corner, only to come across a nude Marge the Barbarian rippling her unibrow knowingly). If the party wins, they avoid the fight or score a second of surprise (the monsters are stunned, but roll vs. IQ to recover; at +1 per turn). If they tie, the attempt has no effect. If they lose, it backfires in some way; e.g., a hidden archer shoots the trickster mid-speech.

“Good (Three-Headed) Doggie!”

Druids, elves, etc., may take exception to adventurers who kill animals, even in self-defense. The following alternatives work as written on natural animals, at -5 on giant or dire ones that share the mindset of their natural brethren, and not at all on supernatural things that merely resemble animals (e.g., hellhounds).

Call of the Wild: An Animal Handling roll – at -5 for man-eaters, cumulative with the -5 above – allows Nature Boy to distract a beastie while the party passes. A Mimicry (Animal Sounds) roll lets him lead it away from the party, although he’ll need a plan for dealing with it when it finds him.

Doggie: Winning a Quick Contest of Disguise (Animals) against the animal’s Perception lets someone pass uneaten. One person can use his skill to disguise as many party members as he wishes, although some may object to being smeared with dung.

Soothe the Savage Breast: As in most fantasy, Musical Influence does affect animals.

COMBAT

Delvers spend a lot of time killing monsters in order to take their stuff – and monsters smarter than slimes tend to fight back. Combat is one situation where the GM will need to break out the Basic Set. It’s too complex a topic to summarize in a few paragraphs! However, the Basic Set doesn’t directly address several dungeon fantasy standbys.

Exploiting Weaknesses

Dungeon denizens often have bizarre flaws. Some weaknesses require a skill roll to discover – and it’s more fun if the players don’t know these initially! If the players forget a weakness, they must roll again unless somebody in the party has Eidetic Memory.

Higher Purposes: Heroes with such Higher Purpose advantages as “Slay Demons” or “Slay Undead” get +1 on all attack and damage rolls against the relevant foes, and to all active defenses and resistance rolls against those monsters.

Supernatural Flaws: A delver who has a suitable Hidden Lore specialty can ask the GM to roll against skill in secret when combat begins. For every two points of success, the GM will disclose one form of Dread, Fragile, Revulsion, Susceptible, Uncontrollable Appetite, Vulnerability, Weakness, or similar disadvantage that the monster possesses. Failure reveals nothing. Critical failure means the GM lies!

Turning Undead: A hero who has True Faith (Turning) may take a Concentrate maneuver and roll a Quick Contest of Will with any undead or evil spirit he can see (roll just once for a mob with uniform Will). A blessed or high holy symbol gives +1 or +2, respectively. If he wins or ties, the monsters can’t come closer to him than yards equal to margin of victory, minimum one yard; those that are closer must move away. This lasts while he concentrates and for 1d seconds afterward.

Vitals: A successful roll against a suitable Physiology specialty will reveal where to find the equivalent of the brain, vitals, etc., on a creature for which this isn’t obvious – assuming it has such areas! Any failure means the PC simply doesn’t know.
Dungeon fantasy is about the adventures of a team of delvers. If the GM decides that a task requires the party to pull together – or that a group effort would be fun for more of the players if it involved more of the heroes – he can use one of these rules:

With a Little Help From My Friends. If the GM feels that a hero with the skill needed for an undertaking would benefit from assistants who know the same skill or complementary skills, each helper may try his skill roll first. This gives a modifier to the final roll: +2 per critical success, +1 per success, -1 per failure, and -2 per critical failure. For example, a bard using Singing to distract monsters as a form of Trickery (p. 10) might benefit from a musical accompaniment from a few of his bard friends, who would roll against Musical Instrument.

Medic!

The best way to get healed in battle is to yell for the cleric to cast a healing spell – or to swing a healing potion. Another unrealistic dungeon fantasy tradition is combat-speed bandaging. This requires a First Aid or Esoteric Medicine roll, at -10 for "instant" use! The medic must take a Concentrate maneuver, be close enough to touch the patient, have one hand free, and have bandages, a first aid kit (+1), or a healer's kit (+1) ready in his other hand. Success heals 1d-3 HP; critical success restores 3 HP. Failure has no benefit; critical failure costs 2 HP. Technically, this takes time – but compared to 30 minutes, it's instant!

"Onward to Victory!"

Fantasy warriors often shout orders, wave battle standards, and strike inspiring poses. In dungeon fantasy, this can serve a purpose . . . if the fighter is willing to stop hacking and slashing for a second! The options below require at least one turn and a Do Nothing maneuver. (Everything here is doing something, but overlooking this lets badly wounded heroes contribute while trying not to pass out.)

Advice: You can observe and advise your friends. Choose one companion to aid. On his turn, he can listen to you – or ignore you! If he listens, make your Tactics roll. The result affects all his attack and defense rolls that turn: +2 on a critical success, +1 on a success, -1 on a failure, or -2 on a critical failure. Reroll each turn. If multiple people try to advise a fighter, he chooses whose advice to take, and only that person may roll.

Encouragement: A successful Leadership roll gives +1 to your side's Fright Checks, resistance rolls against mind control or fear, and self-control rolls for disadvantages that would affect combat. Critical success gives +2. This bonus lasts until your next turn, but you can roll and shout for as many turns as you like. Failure, or several people trying this at once, gives no benefit (but no penalty).

Observation: You can take a turn and ask the GM to roll Strategy for you. Success means he'll reveal the enemy's general plan – if they have one – beyond “kill 'em all!” For instance, “Guard the altar,” “Keep the party away from the west wall,” or “Kill the guy wearing the Sacred Talisman.” Failure means he lies.

Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem. In a situation where everyone needs to look out for himself but some party members lack the right skill, skilled adventurers might be able to cover for unskilled ones. Start with the best skill level in question, add a bonus equal to the number of delvers who know the skill (no defaults!), and subtract a penalty equal to party size. An example is when concealing the group's camp using Camouflage; see Camping and Posting Watches (p. 5).

Pulling Your Weight. For combined feats of strength, the GM must first decide how many sets of hands can contribute; e.g., two heroes could lift a chest that had two handles, while four could cooperate to raise a 4-yard-wide portcullis. If combining ST for a ST roll or to deal damage (e.g., with a battering ram), use the highest ST plus 1/5 the total of the other ST scores (round up). If working together to lift a weight, add together everybody's Basic Lift.

Playing Dead

If you wish to opt out of combat, feign death. This is a free action at any time – just fall down, drop your weapon (monsters never trust a "corpse" with a ready weapon!), and stop moving. If a monster that attacks only the living (e.g., zombie) would attack you, roll a Quick Contest: Acting vs. the higher of its IQ or Perception. It gets bonuses for special senses (like +4 for Discriminatory Smell); you're at +1 at half HP, +2 at 0 HP, +3 at -HP, +4 at -3xHP, and +5 at -4xHP (you're really dead at -5xHP, and succeed automatically). If you win, your would-be tormenter overlooks you and eats another party member.

Recognizing Magic

Those who know a spell recognize it automatically in combat. Should it become important to identify an unknown enemy spell ("Is Sir George asleep or dead?"), a player can ask the GM to roll against his PC's Thaumatology skill. Success means the GM reveals the spell – or the closest spell, for spell-like effects that aren't spells. Failure, as always, means he lies!

Roguish Skills in Battle

Thieves aren't as tough as front-line fighters. In an ideal world, they would avoid fights. Yet they're often out in front, scouting or looking for traps, when the whacking starts. Fortunately, roguish skills can be helpful in combat.

Backstabbing: When the GM starts combat time, anyone may try a Stealth roll to hide in shadows, duck into the bushes, etc.

Modifiers: A basic -5; any encumbrance penalties; +5 if the party is ambushing, no modifier in a stand-up fight, or -5 if the party is ambushed; and -5 anywhere but in bush or shadowy tunnels.
Success lets him attack his nearest foe (GM chooses) from behind; critical success lets him get at any enemy. On a combat map, start him one step away from and behind his target. He gets -4 to hit because he can afford to be completely telegraphic against an opponent who can’t see him; this helps offset the -3 for vitals (x3 injury), -1 for skull (-2 DR but +4 injury), -8 for chinks in torso armor (halve DR), or -10 for chinks over the vitals or skull (half DR and extra injury). The victim gets no defense. The sneak can opt to make this an All-Out Attack, with further bonuses, but this isn’t wise – attacking reveals his presence!

Hidden Weapons: A small blade can be hidden in the palm, along the forearm, etc. This requires a Holdout roll, at no modifier for shuriken, -1 for daggers, -2 for larger knives, or -3 for sabers, shortswords, and smallswords. Success means that when combat starts, the first attack with that weapon will be hard to see coming: -2 to the target’s defense. Ensuing blows won’t surprise anyone.

Practical Poisoning: Anybody can poison a blade – a long action that must be done before combat. There are tricks for getting a larger dose to the target with one blow. The poisoner may apply two or four doses, if he has enough. When he hits, make his Poisons roll. Failure means it isn’t any more effective than one dose. Success gives -2 to HT rolls to resist and +2 damage for two doses, or -4 to HT rolls to resist and +4 damage for four; e.g., four doses of monster drool require a HT-4 roll to avoid 8 points of injury.

Traps: Traps add to the fun when setting an ambush. Make one Traps roll per trap. Repeated attempts are allowed but take a minute apiece – and critical failure means the trapper is affected! On any success, record the margin; during the fight, the GM will make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area. On any success, record the margin; during the fight, the GM will make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area, with a penalty equal to this margin (allies who know about it can make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area). On any success, record the margin; during the fight, the GM will make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area, with a penalty equal to this margin (allies who know about it can make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area). On any success, record the margin; during the fight, the GM will make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area, with a penalty equal to this margin (allies who know about it can make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area). On any success, record the margin; during the fight, the GM will make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area, with a penalty equal to this margin (allies who know about it can make a secret Vision roll for anyone who enters the trapped area).

Troop: Troops are automatically targeted by traps; they are assumed to be unprepared. Likewise, a trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368). A trained or legendary foe automatically targets with traps. When making a Vision roll, a hero may substitute Acrobatics for DX when evading a trap (p. B368).

Acrobatic Stand: If you’re lying down, you can jump to your feet using one Change Posture maneuver instead of two by making an Acrobatics roll at -6 plus encumbrance penalties. Failure means you end up sitting; critical failure means you fall face-down!

Athletics in Combat: Scenery permitting, the feats under Dungeon Parkour (p. 7) can be part of any Move or Move and Attack maneuver. During a Move and Attack, they count as the “Move” portion, and both your attack roll and roll for the stunt take an extra -2.

Tumbling: During a Move maneuver, you may try to cartwheel or roll at full Move. Make an unmodified Acrobatics roll. Success means that anyone who makes a ranged attack on you adds your full Move to range. Failure means you only get half your Move and no special benefits. Critical failure means you fall down and go nowhere!

Taunt and Bluster

Delvers often want to drive the aggression of monsters away from allies – especially wimpy allies. Many skills work for this: Animal Handling to provoke dumb animals, a suitable Psychology specialty to distract things that have a psychology, Religious Ritual to aggravate evil monsters (especially demons), and Singing to taunt foes smart enough to understand insults (IQ 6+). Take a Concentrate maneuver and roll a Quick Contest of skill against the higher of the monster’s IQ or Will. If you win, that foe decides to attack you from now on. A tie means it continues to fight as it was. If you lose, it targets a hurt or otherwise vulnerable party member! Win, lose, or tie, if you roll a critical success, your mark also makes an All-Out Attack on its next turn.

You can try Intimidation to drive off an intelligent monster; but not one with IQ 0-5, Indomitable, and/or Unfazeable (which excludes animals, golems, undead, most plant-monsters, many demons, etc.). Roll dice as above. If you win, that foe attacks somebody other than you next turn, and must move away from you to do so (so if you step between it and a friend, you can protect your friend) – and if you rolled a critical success, it must make a Will roll or flee the battle. If you tie or lose, though, it wants your lungs!

After the Battle

After succeeding at the “killing the monsters” part, the party will want to move right to the “taking their stuff” bit. There are occasionally steps between killing and looting, however.

Prisoners

Sometimes, the monsters aren’t dead – they’re charmed, knocked out, pinned, put to sleep, or trapped. In that case, the party has to decide what to do with the prisoners.

Chains and Irons: Top priority is to ensure that they don’t escape. Shackles are ideal, but not every party brings those (thieves hate them), and they rarely come in dragon size. Rope or cord will do; divide the prisoner’s BL by 50 to get the needed weight in pounds. Make a Knot-Tying roll to estimate this amount and bind the target. Failure means he’ll wiggle free as soon as nobody is looking. Critical failure lets him...
burst out immediately. In the case of a spellcaster, any failure means he wasn’t gagged and blindfolded securely enough to prevent casting!

Whips and Thumb-Screws: Monsters often know things – like where the secret door is and how to open the trapped chest safely. Win a Quick Contest of Interrogation vs. Will to get an answer; assume that any penalties for ferociousness are canceled by bonuses for Bad Things Done by Greedy Munchkins (and Best Left Unsaid). Losing by 5 or more means the prisoner lies.

Elbow-Length Gloves: Make a Search roll to find objects that the prisoner is trying to hide in unexpected places on its hairy, dirty body.

Patching Up

When Ed the Barbarian is face-down in a puddle of blood and you need him to bash the vault, the surest fix is to pour a healing potion in his ear or ask the cleric to heal him. However, clerics and druids study nonmagical healing skills for a reason.

For the tasks below, one attempt is allowed. Failure produces no change. Critical failure inevitably makes things worse.

Antidotes: In a wilderness setting, an hour and a Pharmacy (Herbal) roll will cook up an antitoxin for a known poison – if the victim can hang on for that long.

Bandaging: Assume that dungeon fantasy is TL3 for the purposes of first aid. It takes 30 minutes to restore 1d-3 HP. This requires a successful roll against First Aid (+1 with first aid kit) or Esoteric Medicine (+1 with healer’s kit). See also Medic! (p. 11).

Bleeding: Ignore Bleeding (p. B420) in dungeon fantasy unless some monster, poison, or weapon specifically causes it. The usual cure is a particular degree of magical healing. Taking a minute and making a bandaging roll will also work – but apply a penalty equal to the healing needed (e.g., -4 if the effect requires 4 HP of healing to stop bleeding).

Horrible Grubs: In the event of skin-boring grubs, burrowing arrowheads, or similar unpleasantness, healing magic can cure the injury but not solve the problem. That takes a Surgery roll – at -5 without real surgical instruments (e.g., just a dagger). Failure means 2d injury, critical failure means 4d injury, and either means the grubs are still there.

Weird Afflictions: Make a Diagnosis roll to reveal what’s wrong with somebody who isn’t responding to healing, or to avoid -5 when casting Cure Disease. Roll Poisons to identify poison and avoid -5 on Neutralize Poison. Use Thaumatology to deduce the spells needed to cure an ongoing magical effect.

Weird Treatments: Magic spells have no penalty to cure a diagnosed affliction. If the party lacks the right spell, taking a day out to make an Esoteric Medicine roll (+1 with healer’s kit) might work. Of course, the GM may cackle and apply penalties, and a day holds the potential for many random encounters with monsters that can smell suffering. Not to mention that fantasy diseases and poisons often kill in hours or minutes!

Fido and Ol’ Paint: Use the same rules to patch up the party’s pets, but Veterinary replaces Esoteric Medicine and First Aid.

Searching the Bodies

Dead enemies, like live ones, may have hard-to-find loot on them. Make a Search roll to find this. If several people search, use their margins of success to determine who finds the best stuff. The GM should reveal search results to the players in secret. That makes it easier for the thief to palm evil, mind-warping things that the cleric would destroy!

Dead Monster Bits

Taking rings from dead hands isn’t enough for the truly greedy – some will want to keep the fingers. The necessary preparations must be done while the kill is fresh. If the party returns to an undefended room full of carrion, assume that massive dungeon rats (or grubs, pedes, or something) carried it off, or at least ate the valuable eyes.

Poisons: Make a Poisons roll to milk toxins from a mundane venemous creature (like a cobra, even a giant cobra), or a Hazardous Materials (Magical) roll to extract any agent with weird magical powers. Failure ruins the lot. Critical failure poisons the looter.

Mundane Parts: Make a Naturalist roll to know what furs, horns, etc., are useful for raw materials or medicine (in dungeon fantasy, this skill does cover “unnatural” things like giant worms). Roll against a suitable Physiology specialty to find any internal part of this kind. To remove a pelt, yank out claws, etc., make a Survival roll. To take out internal organs, roll Surgery. Any failure on the extraction roll spoils the loot.

Magical Parts: “Mana organs” require a Thaumatology roll to find and know how to properly extract, and a Surgery roll to remove. Failure on either roll ruins the body part.

Loot

All that glitters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.

– William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice

And now for the feature presentation: booty, plunder, spoils, swag, treasure . . . loot.

Cracking Chests and Vaults

Use the rules under Picking Locks (p. 8) and Muscling Through (p. 8) to open loot containers – and Dealing with Traps (p. 8) for any traps on them. A few notes:

- Bashing open a container using Forced Entry will set off any trap on it!
- When picking a trapped lock, use the lower of Lockpicking or Traps. Success opens the lock – which, when done correctly, also leaves the trap untriggered. Failure means the lock stays shut but the trap goes off.
- Some traps aren’t visible from outside an enclosed chest. A looter can feel for these and try to interrupt them as he opens the chest. This is working by touch: make a DX-based Traps roll at -5, but with any bonus for High Manual Dexterity.
Identifying the Good Stuff

Not all loot looks like loot. Some has hidden properties that make it more valuable – or trash. Professional dungeon-crawlers need special skills to figure out what to keep, sell, and discard. Except as noted, the rolls called for here identify the treasure but not its fair market value.

Coin: Assume that any delver who isn’t completely illiterate (as barbarians often are) can count and evaluate coin: a copper farthing is $1; a silver penny, $4; and a gold piece, $80. Copper is $62.50/lb.; silver, $1,000/lb.; and gold, $20,000/lb. To avoid being ripped off, bring scales and weigh it all!

Stones: Everybody knows that shiny rocks are valuable. To tell semiprecious stones from gemstones, make a Merchant roll. All trained dungeon fantasy merchants seem to know about gems.

Luxury Items: To know fine incense from cathouse perfume, rare tropical woods from common types, ermine from rat fur, etc., roll against a suitable Connoisseur specialty.

Rare Artifacts: Some things, especially artwork, are valuable because of who made or owned them, or by dint of some other historical quirk. Make a Connoisseur roll to spot a potential item of this kind – and a Forgery roll to discover whether it’s real or a fake! A Heraldry roll might deduce makers or past owners from marks left on the item (GM’s decision).

Superior Weapons and Armor: Roll against an appropriate Armoury specialty to spot better-than-average arms and armor, including such properties as “balanced,” “dwarven,” and “meteoric.”

Blessed Items: A Perception roll with bonus equal to Holiness or Power Investiture lets those with either trait spot a blessed (or cursed) item. A cleric can take four hours to pray to his god and get the full details by making a Religious Ritual roll. Critical failure triggers any curse present.

Magic Items: The most reliable way to spot magic items is for a wizard to make his Perception + Magery roll on sight or on touch. Use the Analyze Magic spell to reveal specific enchantments. A delver with a backpack alchemy lab can take an hour and make an Alchemy roll at -2 to learn the item’s general abilities (not specific spells) – but critical failure wrecks the item! If the item is legendary, a Hidden Lore (Magic Items) roll will identify its common name and known functions.

Magical Writings: The reader of a book must know its language to have any hope of knowing what it’s about. Skimming a spellbook reveals what spells are in it. Roll Hidden Lore (Magical Writings) to discover other properties (“Those who read this will turn into a duck!”), with any failure activating bad effects. Either takes four hours – or an hour and a half with a Speed-Reading roll. Magic scrolls show up to Magery; make a Thaumatology roll to learn what spell a scroll casts.

Potions: These are visible to Magery. Roll Alchemy to analyze a potion’s effects. The tester can use a backpack alchemy lab, take four hours, and at worst ruin the potion on a critical failure . . . or taste the stuff, which takes 10 seconds but means that bad effects affect him on any failure!

Naturally Occurring Money

Even an “empty” room – especially a cave – may contain loot. To identify the ore that the goblins were mining, the strange metal in the excrement of that rock-chewing worm, etc., make a Prospecting roll. The GM decides how much is there, and how long it takes to mine.

Determining Value

Looters who want to estimate an item’s fair value must fully identify the booty first; e.g., “A fine, balanced broadsword of smiting, blessed by the Squid God, known to be the blade that Hack Slashman used to slay the great wyrm Blargh.” The GM will make a secret Merchant roll. On a success, he’ll reveal a round figure based on what the delvers know. This will be bogus if the party is missing major details, or if the roll fails!

DISPOSING OF THE SPOILS

Once the loot is identified and evaluated, it’s time to decide what to do with it all.

Keepers

What the party keeps and what it sells is entirely a matter of intraparty negotiation. Approaches include:

• Split loot by shares, seniority, etc. Enforcement takes the form of “If you cheat, the others will pound you!”

• Allocate items to those who can make the best use of them. This sounds altruistic, but munchkins often prefer it because it makes the party more powerful.

• Free-for-all! Keep whatever you grab! (Thieves tend to play by this rule no matter what the rest of the party does.)

However it works, skills don’t affect negotiations. PCs can Fast-Talk and haggle with NPCs, but weaseling each other is pure roleplaying.

Fixer-Uppers: Armor is an unusual special case, as it’s made for a particular user. If the new owner’s SM isn’t that for which the armor was designed, it will never fit. If SM matches, the armor may fit with adjustments. Make an Armoury (Body Armor) roll, at -1 per unusual property (dwarven, magical, spiked, etc.) – but -5 for fine. Success fits the armor to the new wearer. Failure means it won’t fit him (“Sorry, Bob, but most people aren’t as freakish as you.”) but, with further adjustments, might fit somebody else. Critical failure ruins it for good.

Getting a Good Price

True munchkins will want to sell swag they can’t use to get money for better gear. Dungeons with vast unexplored depths – or ones that repopulate or rearrange when nobody is visiting – often have a perpetual merchant encampment outside. A few might have shops inside, surrounded by mana-free areas and patrolled by armed ogre guards from Stinkerton’s. Otherwise, the party has to drag the spoils back to town; see Travel (p. 5), and remember that a trip takes longer when hauling 523 lbs. of copper coins, the worldly goods of 114 dead goblins, and a gold cockroach the size of your head . . . while driving off the inevitable bandits bent on stealing it all.

Coin always fetches its full value. For everything else, start with the lower of actual value and what the seller believes his item is worth (see Determining Value, above). As noted in Dungeon Fantasy: Adventurers, the sum that an adventurer will actually receive depends on his Wealth: Dead Broke yields

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0% of this price (a euphemism for “Get out of my shop, you bum!”); Poor, 10%; Struggling, 20%; Average, 40%; Comfortable, 60%; Wealthy, 80%; and Very Wealthy, 100%. The wealthy can weasel out of taxes and are assumed to be good for any damages caused by stolen, cursed, or exploding articles (the Merchants’ Guild collects taxes for the King and insurance from its members). Thus, selling is most profitable if the richest party member does it – and if he’s smart, he’ll take a percentage.

There are a few ways to bend the rules, however.

“For you, a special price!” Make a reaction roll (3d) before each selling spree. Add any bonuses for the hero’s Appearance and Charisma. If the total is 16+, the merchant likes the seller: treat the PC’s Wealth as one level higher (cumulative with the effects of haggling, if attempted).

Haggling: For each item, a PC with the Merchant skill can roll a Quick Contest vs. a generic skill of 15. If he wins, treat his Wealth as one level higher for that sale; if he ties, he receives his usual rate; and if he loses, treat his Wealth as one level lower. Thus, even Dead Broke delvers can cut deals, while Very Wealthy ones shouldn’t bother. The seller can reject the offer, but other merchants will be reluctant to make another – no repeated attempts until after the party brings its next haul to town!

Black Market: A seller can try to move goods on the black market. Use the haggling rules, except that Streetwise replaces Merchant and losing leaves the option of selling to a merchant. Critical failure on the roll means that some sniveling snitch turns the PC in for tax evasion or violating Guild privilege, and the Town Watch or King’s men seize the item for good.

The Temple: Those with Clerical Investment can trade luxury items and rare artifacts suitable for a temple (statuary, incense, etc.), and blessed items, as if their Wealth were a level higher – no roll required. They don’t get cash, though, but credit for merchandise in town.

Scrap

Greedy delvers who bring a wagon and haul back everything may end up with tons of scrap – rusty iron gratings, partly sun-dered doors, etc. Make one Scrounging roll for the party at the adventure’s end. Success means the junk might be of some value to someone. Failure indicates that it really is garbage.

In town, make one Current Affairs roll to discover whether anybody is buying scrap (“Archmage Recnam Orcen is excavating a new, um, cellar, and could use such wares.”). Success finds a buyer who offers $1d¥100 per half-ton wagonload – take it or leave it. Any failure reveals nothing, but for each week the party stays in town (at $150 apiece for food and lodging), one PC can try a Propaganda roll; success means he finds a similar deal through the power of advertising.

Selling the Tale

At the end of a dungeon crawl, the heroes can take a week to immortalize their recent adventures. Each may try one roll – Cartography to map the journey, Musical Composition to compose a ballad, Poetry to pen an epic, or Writing to create a learned work on the Squid Cult, ochre slime mating rituals, etc. Success creates something worth selling: the creator gets $100 (of course, it costs $150 a week to live at the inn, which explains why most authors live in garrets). Critical success is literally that, and scores $500. Dungeon fantasy worlds don’t have presses, syndication rights, etc.; those who aren’t happy with their fee can deny the world their brilliance, but it won’t help.

Last Ditch

Dungeon fantasy is about the rousing sound of tunnels collapsing, the bracing smell of suffocating gas, and the salt spray of (your friends’) blood. Sometimes, though, things go really wrong thanks to unlucky dice. Then the GM may wish to grant hints or assistance. When checking for aid, failure shouldn’t make matters worse – if things are so bad that brave adventurers are begging, it isn’t funny to have The Devil show up and curse them, too.

Seeking Guidance: If the players are merely at a loss for what to do next, they may make a Meditation roll to seek enlightenment (popular with martial artists), or a Theology roll to decide “What would my deity do?” Success means the GM gives a small hint – nothing as clear as magic divination, just a cryptically worded shove in the right direction. This has the benefit of making contemplative PCs actually seem contemplative.

Praying: “There are no atheists in dungeons.” Adventurers who really need help can pray! Roll vs. the highest of IQ, Meditation, or Theology, at a base -10, +1 per unspent character point sacrificed, +1 per Holiness or Power Investiture level, and -3 for wizards with Social Stigma (Excommunicated). Success means a fortuitous coincidence saves the supplicant; e.g., his pack snags, stopping his fall. Critical success means a miracle; e.g., his god teleports him to safety. (Gamers familiar with the computerized adventures of @ will find this comforting.)

Altars and Shrines: Dungeons often contain ready-made altars and shrines – just not ones holy to friendly gods. Someone with Clerical Investment and an hour to spare can make a Religious Ritual roll to sanctify such a site (provided that it isn’t actually cursed). Success makes it holy; only critical failure angers the resident god enough to blast him. With a proper shrine, he can then lead the party in a prayer for aid. Roll against Religious Ritual at -10, plus Holiness or Power Investiture, plus the total of all points sacrificed by everyone. Success and critical success work as above, but benefit the entire group.

Pass the Plate: When a god answers delvers’ prayers, anyone who benefits is advised to donate $1,000+ to the temple when he’s next in town. Otherwise, the helpline will be busy next time . . .
If you’re not the GM, please stop reading.

– The Management

Much of what the GM needs to know appears in Dungeon-Crawling (pp. 3-15). With the rules for kicking in doors, sneaking around, looting, and so on spelled out, it’s simple to come up with challenges for the heroes – just decide on things like how hard the locks are to pick, how many HP the doors have, what monsters live there, and how much gold is in the hoard! Some additional advice on such matters follows, with cross-references to earlier rules that may be relevant.

Dungeon Design

Dungeons don’t have to make sense, but they do demand some forethought so that the GM isn’t making things up while the players tap their toes. Dungeon fantasy is all about what the heroes do – that’s why most of Dungeon Fantasy: Dungeons consists of ways for PCs to exploit their skills! Before starting a dungeon adventure, the GM should make notes on the elements below so that when the players do things, he’s ready to respond.

Archetype

What is the dungeon? Answering this question can be a big help when making maps and “winging” the answers to the players’ questions! Some possibilities:

Cave: Unlit and damp, with deep fissures, ponds, and similar natural dangers. A cave won’t have “rooms” or “levels” as such, but erosion can produce the same effect. It may house cave-dwellers (bears, giant bats, etc.) or intelligent monsters that have taken it as a lair and installed traps, doors, etc. Open caves make it easier for distant foes to hear the party; tighter ones can challenge armor-clad heroes to wiggle through narrow openings.

Cellar: Might be lit, albeit poorly (-3 to Vision), and even in use; in the latter case, the users are either hostile or rarely seen (perhaps monsters are eating them). Extended cellars have numerous small rooms separated by thick walls that support the building above, and thus have lots of doors and traps – but also easily secured rooms for resting in. Monsters tend to be either humans or kept pets, unless something has burrowed in.

Labyrinth: A deliberate dungeon, created to challenge those within. Some are meant to keep something in – usually a terrible monster. Others are designed to tax explorers to the limit, but reward those who reach the far side or some inner area. Labyrinths tend to twist and sprawl; feature endless obstacles, tricks, traps, and monsters; and often require adventurers to use all of their skills to survive.

Mine: Dark, unless in use (parts in use will be lit at -3 to Vision). “Traps” are more like mining hazards – collapsing galleries, suffocating or explosive gas, and so on. Mines can go for miles and have many levels, but consist almost entirely of claustrophobic tunnels. Monsters might be the miners (evil gnomes, kobolds, etc.) or whatever ate them (giant worms, balrogs, etc.). Treasure often consists of raw ore or uncut gems.

Prison: Prisons resemble cellars with some important differences. They have guards, torturers, plenty of locked doors, and traps that offer a way for the guards to pass. There will also be cooks, kitchens, and even work areas for slave labor. Both the prisoners and the guards may qualify as monsters! An important subcategory is the menagerie: a prison for beasts. Wizards in particular seem to imprison some very unusual things . . .

Sewer: Sewers run under metropolises. They may have entrances all over town, but the interesting parts are remote. Sewers are wet, rank, and unhealthy; the heroes will have to make lots of HT rolls! Many have both deliberate traps (set by assassins and thieves) and bad engineering (e.g., collapsing walls). Inhabitants include slimes, giant rats, and undead drowning victims. Some sewers are dimly lit by glowing slime (-8 to Vision).

Tomb: Tombs tend to be dark, sealed, and dry. Many are labyrinthine, with cunning tricks and traps for foiling
Tavern Tales and Moldy Books

After designing the dungeon, the GM should decide what delvers can learn about it through hearsay and/or research (see Finding a Quest, p. 4). This step comes last because having all the facts at hand makes it easier to concoct useful tidbits that give a fair return on the PCs' investment in skills of little use outside town.

Rumors

Come up with a few general rumors about the dungeon to give to adventurers who make their Carousing or Current Affairs rolls: archetype (cave, mine, etc.), dangers obvious from the outside ("Halfway up a volcano, and full of fissures and lava pits."). A simple description of monsters seen nearby ("Ahr! Blue goblins, as sure as I be standin' here!"), fabled loot ("Everybody knows there's a Holy Sword in there."). Critical success reveals a detail instead; see below.

Details

Write down a few specifics to share with heroes who succeed at Research rolls: particular inhabitants ("The Passages of Pain are said to be the lair of the lich Ruinas, necromancer extraordinaire."). construction ("The complex is the work of Hell Gnomes, masters of cunning locks and Evil Runes."). unambiguous dangers ("It's called the Cave of Curses for good reason—bring an exorcist."). or hints about treasure that go beyond greedy speculation ("The Holy Sword rests within, true. However, Evil placed it upon the Altar of Doom, since it could not be unmade. Only the strong of will can lift it."). Critical success gives an especially valuable tidbit—a weakness of one of the worst monsters, a password, a partial map, etc.

Also note a couple of fatally flawed details for researchers who critically fail. Again, these shouldn't disagree with other findings. If holy water heals the lich Ruinas, he's unlikely to discourage bogus rumors that it burns him . . .

Also cook up two or three bits of hogwash for delvers who critically fail! These should be consistent with the accurate rumors. For instance, if success reveals "The Vault of Vileness is next to the ocean," critical failure might add "It's full of kraken!" when the Vault is actually a sealed tomb full of undead.

Maps

The next step is to map out the dungeon—get some graph paper and start drawing rooms and passageways. Caves tend to have irregular areas linked by narrow tunnels. Mines and sewers, being manmade, are fairly regular; most have more corridors than rooms. Warrens could go either way, depending on the residents. Cellars, prisons, and tombs typically have lots of rooms and reasonably predictable, squared-off floor plans. Labyrinths vary too much for generalizations beyond "confusing."

Don't worry (much) about cartography or architectural soundness, but remember these things:

Scale: Decide how many feet or yards each graph-paper square or hexagon represents.

Walls: Draw reasonably thick walls, and note their HP and DR—for when the players decide to carve a shortcut! Most dungeon walls are stone, with ablative DR (see p. B46). A 6' wall is about as thin as it gets, and has DR 78, HP 94; a 1' wall has DR 156, HP 94; a 2' wall has DR 312, HP 118; and a 3' wall has DR 468, DR 135.

Ups and Downs: In a multilevel dungeon, you'll need one map per floor or level. Be sure to include staircases, ladders, ramps, shafts, magic lifts, etc. Keying these between levels (say, with colors or letters) lets you see at a glance where the heroes will end up.

Area Labels: Number any area that you think might contain interesting features or an encounter; so that you have a way to refer to it in your notes. Each set of "generic" areas (connect- ing tunnels, prison cells, etc.) can share a number and a description. It's best to number areas in the rough order you think the adventurers will reach them, so that as the party explores the dungeon, you can consult your notes with minimal page-flipping.

Legend: You'll need symbols that represent doors, secret doors, stairs, ladders, and so on. You'll find it easier to answer the players' questions if you box off these symbols and always use the same ones in all of your dungeons.

For rules covering maps made by adventurers, see Mapping (p. 6) and Selling the Tale (p. 15).
Area Information

Looking at your map, write down the area labels in numerical order and note anything interesting in each area as you go. Your notes don’t have to be wordy, but they should be thorough. A four-room dungeon can be hours of fun if it has lots going on, while 1,337 rooms with identical doors, no furniture, an orc apiece, and minimal loot is a recipe for boredom. “Interesting” is subjective, but here are some classics.

Doors and Locks

Area entrances in dungeons often have doors, grates, portcullises, or similar barriers.

Locks: Such portals may be locked; see Picking Locks (p. 8). Standard Lockpicking penalties range from +5 to -5. Especially tough locks might go down to -10! A Magelock spell can’t be picked – it requires Counterspell or Lockmaster.

Doors: If lockpicking fails, the party lacks a thief, or the delvers simply want to break stuff, forced entry becomes an issue; see Muscle Through (p. 8). Any lock or bar can be forced. Typical values are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Lock/Hinge DR HP</th>
<th>Bar/Wedge DR HP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-Heavy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The door itself can be bashed. Wood has ablative DR (see p. B46), while ironbound wood and iron don’t. Use these numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Wood DR HP</th>
<th>Ironbound DR HP</th>
<th>Iron DR HP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-Heavy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metalwork: Gratings, grilles, etc., can be bashed or bent. The stats below are per bar; defeating one bar lets a Skinny person pass, two lets most adventurers get by, and three allows Fat or Very Fat delvers, or those with Gigantism, to squeeze through. Weight is for lifting unlocked portcullises; ST is the minimum effective ST needed without extra effort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>DR HP</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>ST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18 lbs</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23 lbs</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-Heavy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35 lbs</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vault</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46 lbs</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inhabitants

Many areas should have monsters! Put their complete stats on a separate sheet that you can refer to whenever they show up. All you need to note in area information is the type and number of foes, any deviations from standard abilities and equipment, and perhaps a few important rolls (especially Hearing and Vision for sentries; see Scouting Ahead, p. 7). For advice on monster stats, see Perilous Encounters (p. 20).

Nasty Surprises

Traps and Hazards (p. 8) discusses many unpleasant gimmicks that could lurk in a dungeon. A few clever dangers – hidden on entrances, in rooms, and/or on furnishings – are a major part of what makes dungeon crawling fun! Avoid the temptation to put them everywhere, though. That will just make the players paranoid and turn the game into a tense-but-tedious mine-clearing mission. Some specific notes:

Traps: Describe unique traps in the notes for the area that holds them. Many traps are “generic,” though, and show up repeatedly. Keep stats for these on a separate reference sheet, as recommended for monsters. Area information merely needs to note the traps’ location, plus deviations from the standard versions.

Curses: Try to make these unique. Curses that show up often enough to get “generic” stats will seem lame – not weird and creepy! To describe a curse, specify its resistance roll (if any) and effects: damage (type and amount), or injury if it comes off FP or HP and ignores DR; afflictions (such as attribute penalties or temporary disadvantages); or spell-like effects (every malign spell in GURPS Magic is inspiration for a curse). If the curse is due to an evil spirit, note its effective Will for would-be exorcists.

Evil Runes: These differ from curses primarily in that they’re uncommon but not rare, and mostly cause instantaneous effects similar to wIZARDLY spells – usually Burning Touch, Deathtouch, Dehydrate, Frostbite, Icy Touch, or Shocking Touch. Note the spell, effective level, any resistance roll, and damage. Gunk: Gunk requires a resistance roll and effects, like a curse. Resistance is normally against HT, generally at a penalty; effects typically mirror acid, poison, or potions. Note whether the gunk must touch skin or can leach through armor (similar to Oozing Doom; see Dungeon Fantasy: Adventurers). Some gloop can rust or rot gear! For that, make a HT roll for the equipment – again, possibly at a penalty. Delicate tools (like lockpicks) and articles with moving parts have HT 10, while armor, weapons, and heavy tools (like poles) are HT 12. Fine combat gear and good tools get +1, very fine weapons and fine tools get +2, orichalcum gets +2, silver or dragonhide usually gets +1, and meteoric iron is immune to magical goo. Failure most often means the item is ruined.

 Tricks: Even more so than curses, tricks should be remarkable. What makes a trick tricky is that it’s unexpected! For things like portals and shifting passages, indicate where the adventurers end up by keying the entrance(s) and exit(s) exactly as you would for a staircase between levels.

See Fiendish Traps (p. 19) for a handy format for writing up not only traps, but also curses, Evil Runes, gunk, and tricks.

Obstacles

Some areas should include obvious quandaries that call for the Dungeon Parkour (p. 7) and/or Bridging Hazards (p. 8) rules. These include interesting spots that are hard to reach and self-evident dangers that can be avoided but not disarmed, broken, or resisted; e.g., acid pits. Note any of the following that apply:

- The height of a vertical challenge: drop to a lower area, distance from the floor to the top of a giant altar or to a small opening halfway up a wall, depth of a pit, etc.
Falling Damage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Damage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 yard</td>
<td>1d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yards</td>
<td>1d+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 yards</td>
<td>1d+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 yards</td>
<td>2d-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 yards</td>
<td>2d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 yards</td>
<td>3d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 yards</td>
<td>3d+2</td>
</tr>
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<td>20 yards</td>
<td>4d</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 yards</td>
<td>5d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 yards</td>
<td>5d+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 yards</td>
<td>6d-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 yards</td>
<td>6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 yards</td>
<td>6d+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 yards</td>
<td>7d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 yards</td>
<td>7d+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 yards</td>
<td>8d+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 yards</td>
<td>9d+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The width of any horizontal challenge: chasm, icy surface, lava pit, water, and so on.
- Penalties to rolls to defeat these challenges; see “. . . With Spikes” (p. 7).

Be sure to spell out the consequences for those who fail!

Some examples:

- **Falls**: Those who fail to cross chasms, narrow ledges, pits, steep slopes, etc., smash into the ground. Don’t bother doing the math on p. B431. Just use the above table.

- **Pits of Death**: Falling damage becomes impaling when there are spikes at the bottom! Ignore falling damage for liquid-filled pits – but acid means 1d-1 corrosion damage per second, while lava does up to 8d+2 burning damage per second (and tends to be rather final, so use sparingly).

- **Water**: Failure leads to drowning (see Swimming, p. B354).

Special Features

A dungeon area might contain all manner of weird and wonderful stuff – most of it bad, some of it good, and all of it entirely up to the GM. Old favorites include:

- **Altars**: These might be cursed (see Curses 101, p. 9) or blessed (see Last Ditch, p. 15), or raise effective sanctity for evil clerics in the area.

- **Enchanted Fountains**: These affect people who drink from them, those who bathe in them, or items dipped in them, causing corrosion (1d-1 corrosion for a dip, 3d injury if swallowed), poisoning (note damage and the penalty to any HT roll to avoid it), potion effects, and so on. Some have a whole table of random effects – or even separate tables for drinking, bathing, and dipping!

- **Mana**: Areas with other-than-normal mana (see Mana, p. B235) can be an interesting challenge on occasion. Don’t fill a whole dungeon with no-mana areas just for kicks, though – that’s boring for wizards and bards, and unfair to PCs with Magical Signature Gear.

- **Natural Features**: Ore veins (specify net yield in $ and lbs.), weird fungus (glows, or poisons those who eat it, or heals those who eat it), and so on.

- **Sanctity**: Areas can have different sanctity levels, too. This affects clerics exactly like mana affects wizards. Use this sparingly – clerics are the only healers in most parties!

- **Statues**: These may talk, posing riddles for the players to solve. Getting the answer right might open a door or even grant a wish. Or perhaps the statue seems mundane, but is an NPC that the party can free with a Stone to Flesh spell (but be sure to offer a clue). Treat walking, attacking statues as monsters!

Secret and Concealed Doors

Secret and concealed doors are de rigueur in dungeon fantasy! As with traps, avoid the temptation to put them everywhere. Pressing against every last 10’ wall section while making an “ugh-ugh” noise is fun in 1990s video games, but not at the gaming table.

As noted in Hidden Doors (p. 6), a secret door requires a roll to spot and another to operate, while a concealed door demands only a detection roll but the searcher must be looking inside or behind the right scenery have any chance of success. Assign each such door a penalty to any rolls involved (typically from -1 to -10). Each concealed door also needs a piece of concealment – include this in the area information. Well-placed red herrings (a big cabinet here, a tapestry-lined hall there) make nice additions to any area.

Booty

An area or its inhabitants will often have swag – see Treasure (p. 28).

FIENDISH TRAPS

Traps give the GM an opportunity to exercise diabolical creativity. For each trap, briefly note what it is and what triggers it, and then list the following:

- **Detect**: The skill needed to find the trap – usually Traps, but Alchemy or Poisons for gunk, or Thaumatology for Evil Runes – along with any difficulty modifier. Such rolls are always Per-based. Not every trap is detectable! Only magic can spot a trap concealed entirely within a wall or a chest, or behind a door.

- **Disarm**: The skill required to render the trap harmless. This is most often DX-based Traps, but gunk may require Alchemy, Hazardous Materials, or Poisons. Some traps allow alternative skills – for instance, Armoury (Missile Weapons) would be as good as Traps for neutralizing an accessible crossbow. This roll, too, may carry a modifier. Also note whether failure triggers the trap! Some traps can’t be disarmed – consider a pit with an illusionary floor over it. The only solution might be to spot and avoid such a trap.

- **Circumvent**: How to avoid the trap if it’s found but not disarmed. This might not even require a roll; it’s simple enough not to step on the big, red tile. If there is a roll, it’s just about as always against DX – or Acrobatics or Jumping, if higher. As always, there may be a modifier. By definition, failure means triggering the trap!

- **Evade**: Whether the trap offers a last-ditch chance to avoid its effects when triggered. In most cases, this is a Dodge roll, possibly a qualified one (“A Hearing-2 roll lets the victim hear a click behind him. He can roll Dodge at -2 to duck.”). For gas or blinding powder, though, it might be a HT roll for the target to hold his breath or shut his eyes quickly. A few undetectable traps can be stopped by somebody carefully reaching into the trapped area to feel for and intercept traps – a DX-based Traps roll at -5 plus any High Manual Dexterity bonus.
**Sample Traps**

**Concealed Crossbow:** Crossbow concealed behind tiny hole in wall, triggered by loose floor tile.

- **Detect:** Per-based Traps at -9.
- **Disarm:** DX-based Traps. Failure triggers!
- **Circumvent:** Automatic (don't step on tile).
- **Evade:** Hearing roll at -2 allows Dodge at -2.
- **Effects:** 1d+5 impaling.
- **Shots:** 1.
- **Rearm, Steal:** No – crossbow is inside wall.

**Frozen Runes:** 30’ stretch of floor covered in Evil Runes casts magic on anyone who passes.

- **Detect:** Per-based Thaumatology, or Perception + Magery for mages.
- **Disarm:** No.
- **Circumvent:** DX-5 to walk without stepping on runes.

**Illusion-Covered Pit:** 30’-deep spiked pit under 10’x10’ square of illusionary floor.

- **Detect:** Per-based Traps (or suitable spell).
- **Disarm:** No.
- **Circumvent:** DX or Jumping – or automatic with ladder, board, etc.
- **Evade:** No.
- **Effects:** 3d impaling.
- **Shots:** Constant.
- **Steal:** No.

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**Monsters and Player Knowledge**

It’s only fair to permit delvers who learn monster strengths and weaknesses through skills and spells, or by losing body parts, to exploit that knowledge; see Recognition (p. 9) and Exploiting Weaknesses (p. 10). The GM has no special obligation to respect player knowledge gleaned from game supplements, though! The time-honored response to this munchkin tactic is to mix things up: vampires dislike rowan or wormwood instead of garlic, or are laid to rest by burial under a sword stuck in the ground instead of by being staked through the heart; the “fire dragon” breathes lightning (or a jet of fire ants!) instead of flame; and so on.

**Perilous Encounters**

Killing monsters is necessary in order to take their stuff. Since that’s the main point of dungeon fantasy, it’s crucial that the GM do a respectable job of determining when and where monsters show up, what they can do, and how many try to eat the heroes at once.

**Encounter Types**

Dungeon fantasy encounters customarily fall into two categories.

**Wandering Monsters**

“Wandering monsters” are hostile things that traipse around looking for trouble. They might actively patrol a wilderness area or an underground dungeon. They could even pop in from Hell without rhyme or reason!

Handle these by assigning each outdoor area or dungeon level odds of an encounter. A roll of 6 or less on 3d suits “safe” roads, while 9 or less is best for most wilderness and dungeon. Save odds of 12 or less and 15 or less for Hell, giant wasp hives, and similarly monster-infested locales.

Assess up to +3 to the roll if the delvers are doing something stupid that will attract attention (e.g., hauling a ballista through the dungeon). Conversely, deliberate attempts at caution (e.g., everybody making Stealth rolls and using Infravision instead of lights) might give up to -3. The GM is welcome to assign further situational modifiers.

The GM must also set the frequency of such rolls. Hourly rolls are about right when moving around indoors, searching for secret doors, etc., while daily rolls work well when traveling outdoors. Also roll once per night when the party camps, once whenever the party stops to conduct an exorcism or other long task, and once per attempt to bash or force a door.

The GM decides what shows up (and how quickly) when a roll indicates an encounter. Some areas have just one sort of monster; others have dozens. Old-school GMs will want to put together a random encounter table for each area and let it determine the party’s bad fortune!

**Set Encounters**

“Set encounters” are run-ins with monsters that the GM has deliberately placed in one particular dungeon area. This might still involve rolling dice! Area information that says something like “9 or less chance of 2d orcs” or “touching the altar summons a demon on 12 or less” can give a dungeon better replay value.
Creating Monsters

Just about any creature from any GURPS supplement can work as a dungeon denizen. If it wasn't designed for fantasy, simply change the special effects. For instance, an alien that zips through space, blasting people with psionic pyrokinesis, becomes a demon that flies through the air; blasting people with magic fireballs. Simple!

Like traps, monsters are fun to design. For each homemade monster, the GM should have enough information to resolve not just combat, but made monster, the GM should have enough information to resolve not just combat, but

Notes:

Whether it will negotiate or feign willingness to negotiate (see Negotiation, p. 10), whether it's truly evil (matters to clerics and holy warriors), useful body parts (see Dead Monster Bits, p. 13), etc.

Sample Monsters

These monsters might prove useful to GMs who are in a hurry or who need inspiration for their own critters.

Acid Spider

This giant spider has a relatively tiny body – “only” 7” across – attached to long, hairy legs that lift it 7” off the ground. It can walk unhindered over all but the tallest of men. A hunting spider, it lurks in dark cracks, waiting for warm prey to happen by. It then jumps on its quarry, bites with fangs capable of penetrating plate armor; and injects fast-acting corrosive venom that partially digests its prey.

Acidic Bite (15): 2d+1 impaling + follow-up 1d-3 corrosion (10 one-second cycles).

Traits: 360° Vision; Combat Reflexes; Extra Legs (Eight Legs; Long, Can walk over SM 0 or smaller adventurers without needing to evade); Horizontal; Infravision; No Fine Manipulators; Super Jump 1 (10-yard jump); Wild Animal.

Skills: Jumping-16; Stealth-15.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: Acid glands contain enough acid for 3d acid grenades ($10 each). Specimens with higher ST and HP aren't unheard of; Move, leaping distance, and acid are unchanged.

as-Sharak

The as-Sharak are elemental sorcerers who sold their souls for power... only to be turned into monsters in Hell and returned to the living world to punish similarly arrogant mortals. With the physique of great cats (but upright, like men) and some of the magical powers they so craved as mortals – but their mind shattered by madness – these demons guard troves of hidden lore, lying in wait for power-hungry wizards. They believe that taking sufficient mortal lives will eventually break their curse.

Bite or Front Claw (16): 1d+2 cutting.

Breath (16): Can breathe a 5-yard-wide x 20-yard-long cone of magic breath once a day. Effects depend on subspecies:

• Agni (Fire) as-Sharak: Breath of Flame (5d+1 burning).
• Akasha (Spirit) as-Sharak: Removal of Life (2d fatigue).
• Suffocation damage; DR has no effect on this respiratory attack, but Doesn't Breathe protects completely.
• Jala (Water) as-Sharak: Ocean's Frozen Spray (3d-1 crushing, no blunt trauma or knockback). Roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage or be frozen (paralyzed) for (20 - HT) minutes, minimum 1 minute.
• Prithvi (Earth) as-Sharak: Desert's Sand (3d+1 crushing). Roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage or be blinded for (20 - HT) minutes, minimum 1 minute.
• Vayu (Wind) as-Sharak: Rending Storm (5d+1 crushing).

Hind Claw (14): 1d+3 cutting.

Weapon (16): Shamshir (3d+1 cutting or 1d+3 impaling).

Traits: Combat Reflexes; Detect (Supernatural); Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Higher Purpose (Punish invaders of protected place); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Vitals); Night Vision 5; Supernatural Durability (Can only be killed by supernatural damage).

Skills: Brawling-16; Broadsword-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Stealth-14.

Class: Demon.

Notes: Some wear armor; if so, add armor DR to natural DR 2. Treat a shamshir as an ordinary cavalry saber (p. B271). Wizard as-Sharak with IQ 12+, Magery 2+, and spells are rumored to exist. Unwilling to negotiate. Truly evil.

Crushroom

A crushroom is a man-sized, ambulatory fungus. It resembles a huge mushroom with dozens of tentacle-like “feet” surrounding its base (allowing it to move) and a gaping maw on top (permitting it to eat delvers). Made of solid vegetable “muscle,” it’s fantastically strong. Druids believe that crushrooms are nonsapient, although rumors abound of intelligent fungus-men with hallucinogenic spores.

ST: 40
HP: 40
Speed: 4.50

DX: 10
Will: 10
Move: 4

IQ: 2
Per: 10

HT: 12
FP: 12
SM: 0

Dodge: 7
Parry: N/A
DR: 2

Bite (10): 4d crushing.

Traits: Constriction Attack; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous, No Blood); No Fine Manipulators; Unfazeable.

Class: Plant.

Notes: Bite counts as a grapple on opponents of SM 0 or smaller, and is followed by the Constriction Attack. Crushrooms aren’t intelligent enough to negotiate. Plant spells affect them normally.

Dire Wolf

Dire wolves are huge, strong, fast wolves with thick, wooly coats, keen senses, and a taste for human flesh. Tales of orcs using them as mounts are apocryphal – they’ll eat orcs, too. While one dire wolf might be no challenge for adventurers, they tend to occur in packs of up to 20 . . .

ST: 16
HP: 16
Speed: 6.00

DX: 12
Will: 11
Move: 9

IQ: 4
Per: 14

HT: 12
FP: 12
SM: +1

Dodge: 9
Parry: N/A
DR: 2

Bite (14): 1d+1 cutting.

Traits: Discriminatory Smell; Night Vision 2; Quadruped; Temperature Tolerance 1 (3° to 70°); Wild Animal.

Skull: Brawling-14; Tracking-14.

Class: Giant Animal (despite the name).

Notes: While not sapient, dire wolves use effective pack tactics. Each pack has an alpha male with ST 17, IQ 5, HP 17, Will 12, Per 15, damage 1d+2 cutting, and Tactics-12.

Doomchild

Doomchildren (plural – there’s always a horde) are pint-sized demons, barely sapient, that attack viciously with unexpected strength and speed. Bulging eyes and bloated heads mar their disturbingly childlike appearance. They’re very fragile; one solid hit will kill them. On dying, though, they explode in a cloud of flame, just like a magical fireball.

ST: 8
HP: 8
Speed: 7.00

DX: 18
Will: 10
Move: 10

IQ: 6
Per: 10

HT: 10
FP: 10
SM: -1

Dodge: 10
Parry: 11
DR: 0

Weapon (18): Large knife (3d-2 cutting or 1d+2 impaling).

Death Blast: 3d burning explosion + linked 1d cutting fragmentation (flying bone shards!) on dying.

Traits: Berserk (12); Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Striking ST +10 (ST 18); Unfazeable.

Skills: Knife-18.

Class: Demon.

Notes: Unwilling to negotiate. Truly evil.
Erupting Slime
Most slime is only dangerous if touched or if it drips on a careless delver. This one is unusual in that it oozes around, spewing globs of toxic gunk at anything that moves, with the goal of killing the target in order to engulf it and thus reproduce. Left undestroyed in an area with dead bodies, erupting slime will convert a body into a new slime in an hour. This doubling will continue until the slimes run out of corpses. Someone turned to slime cannot be resurrected!

ST: 0     HP: 10     Speed: 6.00
DX: 12    Will: 0    Move: 1
IQ: 0     Per: 10   SM: +1
HT: 12    FP: 12    DR: 0
Dodge: 9  Parry: N/A

Slimeball (12): Ranged attack (Acc 3, Range 10/100).
Penetrates armor in DR seconds, and then delivers 2d toxic, reduced to 1d toxic with a HT roll.

Traits: Amphibious; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Infiltration, Can ooze under barriers and through tiny holes); Invertebrate; No Legs (Slithers); No Manipulators; Vibration Sense (Air).

Class: Slime.
Notes: Nonsentient – can’t communicate or negotiate.
Unaffected by Animal or Plant spells that don’t specifically target slimes. A dead slime can be used (or sold) as one dose of Oozing Doom.

Flaming Skull
Flaming skulls are semi-corporeal undead that resemble flying human skills wreathed in fire. Streaking into close combat, they deliver flaming bites to their living prey. Owing to their size, speed, and diffuse nature, they’re difficult targets, and can often inflict great damage before being destroyed. The jury is out on whether they’re necromantic creations or free-willed evil spirits who loathe mortals.

ST: 0     HP: 10     Speed: 6.00
DX: 14    Will: 10   Move: 12 (Air)
IQ: 10    Per: 10   SM: -5
HT: 12    FP: N/A   DR: 0
Dodge: 9  Parry: N/A

Flaming Bite (14): 2 points burning. This Cosmic attack ignores all DR!

Traits: Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse); No Fine Manipulators; No Legs (Aerial); Unfazeable.

Skills: Stealth-14.
Class: Undead.
Notes: Unwilling to negotiate. Truly evil.

Flesh-Eating Ape
Flesh-eating apes superficially resemble the banana-eating kind, but have a mouth full of meat-tearing teeth and a predatory temperament. They’re strong, combative, and have a nose for flesh, tracking tasty humans by scent. Due to their physical power, adventurers are advised to slay them before they get into close combat and grapple!

ST: 17    HP: 17     Speed: 6.00
DX: 12    Will: 10   Move: 7
IQ: 6     Per: 10   SM: +1
HT: 12    FP: 12    DR: 1
Dodge: 9  Parry: 10 (Unarmed) DR: 1

Bite (14): 1d+2 cutting.
Fist (14): 2d crushing.

Traits: Arm ST +2 (ST 19); Brachiator; Discriminatory Smell; Ham-Fisted 1; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-14; Climbing-14; Wrestling-14 (+2 ST when grappling).

Class: Dire Animal.
Notes: Flesh-eating apes are smart enough that Animal spells won’t work – use Mind Control magic. Arm ST and Wrestling skill give effective ST 21 for grappling, and some apes like to use Neck Snap (at ST-4, or 17, for 4d-1 damage; see p. B404) on grappled victims.

Foul Bat (Batchala)
These gigantic bats lack the fear of fire and men possessed by normal beasts. Their stench at close proximity can overcome victims before a single bite is delivered, and their mouth carries toxins that make wounds weep and bleed, causing weakness.

ST: 10    HP: 10     Speed: 6.50
DX: 14    Will: 10   Move: 13 (Air)
IQ: 3     Per: 10   SM: -5
HT: 12    FP: 12    DR: 0
Dodge: 9  Parry: N/A

Foul Bat (Batchala)
These gigantic bats lack the fear of fire and men possessed by normal beasts. Their stench at close proximity can overcome victims before a single bite is delivered, and their mouth carries toxins that make wounds weep and bleed, causing weakness.
Dodge: 9  Parry: N/A  DR: 1

Bite (16): 1d+1 cutting + follow-up 1 FP.

Stench (Resisted by HT): Smell-based emanation in one-yard radius. Those who don’t resist are nauseated (-2 to attribute and skill rolls, -1 to active defenses, and possible vomiting; see p. B428) for minutes equal to margin of failure.

Traits: Acute Hearing 8 (Hearing 18); No Fine Manipulators; Sonar (20 yards); Striking ST +5 (ST 15); Wild Animal.

Skills: Aerobatics-14; Brawling-16.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: Some colonies have a demonic leader who has IQ 10+, Indomitable, Magic Resistance 10, and Unfazeable. This is a demon, not a dire animal with the Wild Animal meta-trait.

Frost Snake

This white-furred serpent is feared by barbarian cultures in the Frozen North. It hunts by seeking body heat, and can function even in extreme cold. Its surprisingly strong bite delivers venom, and it can also weaken prey with an exhalation of pure cold.

ST: 10  HP: 10  Speed: 7.00
DX: 14  Will: 10  Move: 7
IQ: 2  Per: 12
HT: 12  FP: 12  SM: 0
Dodge: 10  Parry: N/A  DR: 2

Bite (16): 1d cutting + follow-up 2d toxic (HT-4 to resist).

Chill Breath (14): 1d(5) burning (Jet, Range 5/10). This is extreme cold, not fire!

Traits: DR 20 (Limited, Cold/Ice); High Pain Threshold; Infravision; Striking ST +3 (ST 13); Temperature Tolerance 10 (-135° to 40°); Terrain Adaptation (Ice); Vermiform; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-14; Stealth-14.

Class: Dire Animal.

Notes: Cold organ worth $50 to alchemists, who use it in liquid ice potions.

Giant Rat

There’s little to be said about giant rats: they’re as cunning and dextrous as regular rats, but huge, the size of the children they carry off as food. Almost all dungeons have them – especially sewers. They’re fodder for well-equipped adventurers, but every now and then, 20 or 30 of them will get crazy and swarm a party anyway.

ST: 9  HP: 9  Speed: 6.50
DX: 13  Will: 10  Move: 7
IQ: 5  Per: 12
HT: 13  FP: 13  SM: -1
Dodge: 9  Parry: N/A  DR: 1

Bite (15): 1d-1 cutting.

Traits: Night Vision 5; Semi-Upright; Striking ST +2 (ST 11); Wild Animal.


Class: Giant Animal.

Notes: Anyone wounded by giant rats must make a HT roll to avoid infection with some disease or other. Sewer rot (-1 on all attribute and skill rolls until stopped with Cure Disease) is typical.

Golem-Armor Swordsman

This construct consists of a flesh golem – made from a formerly living swordsman – riveted inside solid metal plates that are also animated, thereby augmenting strength. It’s virtually indestructible… and when the flesh golem is slain, the armor reanimates on its own as an “armor golem” and must be destroyed a second time. Fortunately for delvers, the vast weight of metal used (200 lbs.) makes the thing slow and clanking, and it seems to have the usual human vulnerabilities at the head and vitals.

ST: 13  HP: 13  Speed: 7.00
DX: 13  Will: 10  Move: 2
IQ: 10  Per: 10
HT: 13  FP: N/A  SM: 0
Dodge: 8  Parry/Block: 12  DR: 17

Weapons (16): Broadsword (3d+1 cutting or 1d+4 impaling) and medium shield (1d+2 crushing).

Traits: Automaton; Berserk (12); Cannot Learn; Combat Reflexes; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Extra Life 1; Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (No Blood); Reprogrammable; Striking ST +5 (ST 18); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total).

Skills: Broadsword-16; Shield-16.

Class: Construct.

Notes: Usually carries an ordinary broadsword and a medium shield (DB 2), but these may be magical. The golem’s massive armor can’t be worn by a man, but is worth $1dx100 on its own as scrap! No golem will negotiate or reveal useful information.

Horde Zombie

Horde zombies aren’t necromantic servitors, but victims of a horrible curse. Anyone slain by a horde zombie will rise as one a minute later and try to eat any living person in sight. While capable of speech, horde zombies only ever moan the name of the body part they wish to eat: “Braaain,” “Spleeeen,” “Skinnnn,” etc. They’re mostly weak fodder – but if enough of them attack, the danger of being grappled, pinned, and eaten is real. On the other hand, they’re easy to outrun, and usually forget about victims who duck out of sight (6 or less chance of staying on the trail).

ST: 13  HP: 17  Speed: 5.00
DX: 8  Will: 8  Move: 4
IQ: 8  Per: 8
HT: 12  FP: N/A  SM: 0
Dodge: 8  Parry (Unarmed)  DR: 0

Bite/Punch (12): 1d crushing.

Traits: Bad Smell; Cannot Learn; Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Sleep; Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Immunity (All mind control); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Incurious (6); Indomitable; Infectious Attack (Must kill victim); Injury Tolerance (No Blood, Unliving); Temperature Tolerance 10 (-115° to 60°); Uncontrollable Appetite (6); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total).
Skills: Brawling-12; Wrestling-12 (+2 ST when grappling).

Class: Undead.

Notes: While “intelligent,” horde zombies are uninterested in negotiation and immune to trickery. They just want to eat. They aren’t truly evil – they’re more a force of nature.

Mindwarper

Mindwarpers are Things from Beyond Time and Space, with genius-level intellect and devastating psychic powers. No mortal has survived to describe one, but ancient lore suggests that they’re humanoids with pebbly skin (similar to that of a starfish), no nose, and hands and feet that consist of suckers surrounded by writhing cilia instead of digits. An encounter with a mindwarper generally ends in madness or death. Fortunately for humans, mindwarpers don’t work well together; a mindwarper is likely to be the boss of a dungeon, found on the lowest levels, surrounded by mindless fodder.

ST: 10
DX: 10
IQ: 18
HT: 12
Dodge: 8
Parry: 13 (x5)
DR: 10

Speed: 5.50
Move: 5

Psychokinetic Lash (20): 3d crushing (x5). This ranged attack (Acc 3, Range 10/100) can be dodged but not blocked or parried.

Traits: Compartamentalized Mind 4; Dependency (Mana; Constantly); Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Flexibility; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Vitals); Magic Resistance 6; Pressure Support 3; Regeneration (Very Fast, 1 HP/second); Temperature Tolerance 5 (-15° to 100°); Terror; Unfazeable.

Skills: Innate Attack (Gaze)-20; many IQ-based skills at skill 16-20.

Class: Elder Thing.

Notes: Parry, DR, attack, and Terror are psionic. Compartamentalized Mind lets the mindwarper psychokinetically strike and parry five times per turn! A mindwarper will often feign willingness to negotiate; it may even honor a deal that involves delvers agreeing to a horrible, soul-tainting quest. Truly evil.

Peshkali

Peshkali are powerful demonic sentinels set to guard forgotten places. They have a muscular, vaguely humanoid torso with six arms, while their lower body is that of a great serpent. What they lack in sorcery or astonishing powers they make up in strength and martial prowess.

ST: 20
DX: 12
IQ: 10
HT: 12
Dodge: 10
Parry: 13 (x6)
DR: 4

Speed: 6.00
Move: 6

SM: 0

Weapons (18): Six clubs (3d+3 crushing), scimitars (3d+3 cutting or 2d impaling), or spears (2d+1 impaling).

Traits: Combat Reflexes; Constriction Attack (+2 to grapple and ST per arm used after first two!); Doesn’t Breathe; Doesn’t Eat or Drink; Doesn’t Sleep; Double-Jointed; Extra Arms 4; Extra Attacks 5; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Infravision; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Brain, No Neck, No Vitals); No Legs (Slithers); Supernatural Durability (Can only be killed if all six arms are crippled); Unfazeable.

Skills: Broadsword-18 or Spear-18; Wrestling-16 (+2 ST when grappling).

Class: Demon.

Notes: Unwilling to negotiate. Truly evil.

Siege Beast

These gigantic, stooped brutes are stupid, ill-tempered, and completely loyal to the dark forces that control whatever dungeon they’re found in. Their purpose in life is to tow siege engines and guard gateways. They wade into battle with a massive hammer like a meat tenderizer riveted to one hand and steel bands nailed directly to their leathery hide. Fortunately for delvers, siege beasts are flesh-and-blood creatures, not constructs, and thus are subject to poison, strangulation, and blows to vital areas.

ST: 30
DX: 12
IQ: 8
HT: 12
Dodge: 9
Parry: 11
DR: 10

Speed: 6.00
Move: 5

SM: +2

Weapon (16): Hammer (5d+5 crushing). Cannot be dropped!

Mailed Fist (16): 3d-3 crushing.
Metal Boot (14): 3d+4 crushing.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Fanaticism; Hard to Kill 4; High Pain Threshold; Very Rapid Healing.
Skills: Axe/Mace-16; Brawling-16.
Class: Mundane.
Notes: Siege beasts aren't supernaturally bound and can be tricked or even negotiated with. Mind control also works – but given a siege beast's Will (and the triple cost to cast spells on SM +2 targets), this isn't usually practical. A siege beast's “weapon” and “armor” consist of 180 lbs. of low-quality scrap.

Stone Golem
A stone golem is a magical automaton created as a guardian. Most golems found in dungeons have outlived their creators, and carry out obscure orders completely by the letter. Some warn delvers away from a particular place or action, and attack only those who fail to heed the warning; others simply attack on sight.

ST: 20 HP: 30 Speed: 6.25
DX: 11 Will: 8 Move: 6
IQ: 8 Per: 8
HT: 14 FP: N/A SM: +1
Dodge: 9 Parry: 9 DR: 4

Stone Fist (12): 2d-1 crushing.
Weapon (13): Huge (SM +1) maul (3d+8 crushing) or executioner's sword (3d+6 cutting).

Traits: Automaton; Cannot Learn; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Fragile (Unnatural); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous, No Blood); Pressure Support 3; Reprogrammable; Unfaezeable; Unhealing (Total); Vacuum Support.

Notes: This is a basic model; there's no actual limit to ST, HP, DR, or skill. If clad in barbarian-sized (SM +1) armor; add armor DR to natural DR 4; DR 5 bronze plate (total DR 9) is common. No golem will negotiate or reveal useful information.

Toxifier
Toxifiers might be mistaken for ghosts due to their smudgy, semisolid appearance. However, they're actually demonic clouds of greenish poison vapor. They attack simply by standing near victims and engulfing them in a lethal mist of contact poison. They're largely unaffected by weapons other than those specifically designed to injure spirits, and are unusually strong-willed and hard to repel with magic.

ST: 0 HP: 10 Speed: 6.00
DX: 14 Will: 16 Move: 12 (Air)
IQ: 10 Per: 10
HT: 10 FP: 10 SM: 0
Dodge: 10 Parry: N/A DR: 0

Toxic Attack (Resisted by HT-4): Contact agent emanated in a two-yard radius. Those who fail to resist take 1d toxic damage and are nauseated (-2 to attribute and skill rolls, -1 to active defenses, and possible vomiting; see p. B428) if injury reaches 2/3 of HP. Nausea lasts until healed above 2/3 HP.

Traits: Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Dread (Blessed Objects; 5 yards); High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Indomitable; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse); No Legs (Aerial); No Manipulators; Silence 2; Unkillable 1 (Achilles Heel, Magic Weapons); Vibration Sense (Air); Vulnerability (Wind ¥2).

Skills: Aerobatics-16; Stealth-14 (18 vs. Hearing).
Class: Demon.
Notes: Unwilling to negotiate. Truly evil.

Triger
A triger is nothing more than a mutant tiger with three heads. It can bite three times instead of just once – and this bite is deadlier than a regular tiger bite due to the unusual strength needed to support two extra necks and heads!

ST: 19 HP: 19 Speed: 6.00
DX: 13 Will: 11 Move: 10
IQ: 4 Per: 12
HT: 11 FP: 11 SM: +1
Dodge: 10 Parry: N/A DR: 1

Bite (15): 2d cutting (x3).
Front Claw (15): 2d cutting.
Hind Claw (13): 2d+1 cutting.

Traits: Combat Reflexes; Extra Attacks 2; Extra Heads 2; Night Vision 5; Peripheral Vision; Quadruped; Temperature Tolerance 1 (24° to 90°); Wild Animal.

Class: Dire Animal.
Notes: Some mutant tigers have even more heads! For every Extra Head, add +1 to ST and HP (increasing damage to

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**MASTERING DUNGEONS**

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match), plus another Extra Attack. Triger skins are prized for rugs, and can fetch up to $1,000 apiece.

Balancing Encounters

Determining suitable encounters for the party is an art, not a science. There’s no mathematical formula for it, and nothing helps as much as GMing experience. A few guidelines:

Offense: In all but the most trivial of encounters, there should be at least one creature that can threaten the PC with the highest DR. If basic damage that high would slaughter the delver with the lowest DR, consider alternatives – especially armor divisors and attacks that don’t interact with DR (innate Deathtouch spells, poison gas, etc.). Against a party with huge active defense scores, look at high skill (permits a Deceptive Attack) or options that bypass defenses (e.g., spells that work via resistance rolls, area effects, or Stealth to allow a surprise attack). Most monsters can attack only once per turn. Those with Extra Attacks get multiple shots at bypassing active defenses, resistance, and DR, and should generally have slightly lower skill and/or damage.

Defense: Some monsters are fodder, and just get squished. These aren’t necessarily trivial; numbers and effective offense can let them chip away at the party before being exterminated. Others are evasive, and difficult to hit. This might be due to high Dodge, or it could be because of some innate spell-like defense that lets them blink aside, turn insubstantial momentarily, etc., on a roll of 15 or less, or even automatically, once or twice per turn. Yet others are tough, with enough DR to turn all but the heroes’ biggest physical attacks, sufficient HP to soak up several hits from those attacks, Regeneration, and so on. An interesting option is Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction). This divides all wounds by 2, 3, or more after DR, the net effect of which is that strong warriors can’t kill the creature in one blow, while weak ones can at least injure it somewhat.

Mobility: A creature that has Move 11-20 can step two yards, one with Move 21-30 can step three yards, and so on, allowing it to approach, strike, and dart out of reach – very annoying! Flying monsters with lots of room to maneuver can stay completely out of reach, shooting fire breath, dropping rocks, and so on. This forces the party to resort to missile weapons (which usually aren’t as nasty as melee attacks) or spells (at -1/yard, for Regular spells). Creatures capable of teleportation, melding with stone, etc., can make every attack a surprise attack and leave the adventurers little option but to Wait and react. Only give out such abilities if the PCs have some way to defeat the monsters.

Monsters come in three broad power levels, which modify the above assumptions:

Fodder monsters appear in hordes that outnumber the party. They should have weak attacks that are dangerous mainly because the threat of lucky dice (critical hit, maximum damage roll, winning a Quick Contest, etc.) increases when each PC faces many enemies per turn. Such creatures should still be able to injure the PC with the lowest DR, though! There’s no need for Extra Attacks – a mob of fodder is essentially a distributed monster that has lots of attacks already. As noted above, fodder monsters don’t require especially great defenses. They often have the mobility advantage, though, nipping in and out like jackals or piranha, or swarming through the air like hornets.

Worthy monsters can challenge the heroes when the numerical odds are more-or-less equal. Most use the offense, defense, and mobility guidelines as written. Tradeoffs are possible, however, and can make the encounter interesting. The GM might nudge offense up a bit at the expense of defense, or vice versa. It’s still unwise to punch offense up to instant-death levels, even for a critter with no defense (ultimately, the monsters’ survival doesn’t matter, while the PCs’ does), or to make defense near-perfect, even for an enemy that can’t hurt the party (dungeon fantasy is about killing monsters, remember!). Mobility enhances offense and

Combat Rules

Fighting is vital to dungeon fantasy, so the players (especially those playing warriors) might want to use lots of combat options – including those from Tactical Combat (pp. B384-392) and GURPS Martial Arts. That’s fine! But all of this can slow down what’s supposed to be a fun romp, so the GM may wish to implement the following rules.

Trademark Moves

Much of the time wasted in fights has to do with the players working out odds and consulting obscure rules. To combat this, the GM may suggest or even require that each player work out a few “trademark moves” that cover an entire turn’s worth of actions, and write down the effects in advance. For instance, “All-Out Attack (Strong) for 2d+3 cutting, thrown as a Rapid Strike with a chop to the neck, at skill 13, followed by a Deceptive slash at the torso for -2 defenses, at skill 14.” To encourage this, the GM might let anyone who takes the time to work out such a move spend an earned point on a perk that gives +1 to all skill rolls made to use it.

Dumb Monsters

While the heroes can try all manner of crazy, complex moves to show off their skills, letting monsters do the same thing almost doubles the time it takes to play out a battle. Therefore, monsters shouldn’t try fancy options such as Deceptive Attack, Dual-Weapon Attack, Feint, Rapid Strike, and combat techniques unless the GM specifically designed them to use such tactics to be challenging.

“And Stay Down!”

Fights can last forever when high-HT monsters keep making HT rolls. To get around this, fodder monsters are defeated if injured at all – even a 1-HP tap from the wizard’s wand will do. Worthy monsters are finished when reduced to 0 HP or below. Only boss monsters fight to negative HP and attempt repeated HT rolls. “Defeated” monsters that aren’t killed or knocked out might cower, play dead, flee, surrender, etc. Unnatural ones might even vanish!
defense somewhat – remember that when making other trades.

Boss monsters, like dragons, are meant to challenge the entire party all on their own. They can be superlative in every category! Any attack might be lethal, so the PCs can't just swarm in with a hail of All-Out Attacks. Multiple attacks are likely, especially if the boss won't have fodder for backup. Such creatures are often both evasive and tough; the heroes might even have to discover a special vulnerability in order to win! Some serious foes like this lack mobility, and sit there trading blows, but this isn't universally true. A boss might be a challenge because of mobility, moving all over the place so that only one PC can actually fight it at a time.

**TREASURE**

Loot shouldn't be boring – see *Identifying the Good Stuff* (p. 14) for ideas. Specify the weight of each item or collection of small items, plus a “fair market value” (which you can pull out of thin air, if you like!) for use with *Getting a Good Price* (p. 14). For coin, gems, and luxuries, that's all you need. A few articles call for additional details:

- **Rare Artifacts:** Note whether objets d’art are real or fake. If any item has identifying marks (hallmark, coat of arms, etc.) that hint that it's more than meets the eye, jot that down, too.
- **Weapons and Armor:** Adventurers will want to use these immediately! Specify all the special properties of such things, including any enchantments. Also note items meant for users with SM other than 0.
- **Magic Items:** Most of these will see use right away, too, so note every enchantment and foible. Also assign a price to the underlying object, without its spells, for the benefit of spellcasters who want to turn it into a power item.
- **Blessed Items:** Treat these like magic items. The only significant difference is that the magic is divine, not wizardly,
and grabs the eye of those with Power Investiture, not Magery.

Magical Writings: List any spells in a spellbook. This is an excellent way to hand out spells that you might not otherwise allow.

Potions: See Dungeon Fantasy: Adventurers for a basic list. Potions with almost any spell-like effect are possible. Unheard-of elixirs found down dark holes boiling with evil monsters are hard to sell, though — nobody wants to drink poison.

Unique Items

Don’t be afraid to include the occasional artifact that just does what it does: a musical instrument that gives +1 to all Bard-Song rolls, a bow that gains +1 to effective ST (up to double ST) per turn it’s held drawn and ready, armor that changes size to fit any wearer, and so on. Not every “magic item” needs to make sense in terms of enchantments found in GURPS Magic (or equivalent blessings). Some use weird magic, or are home to spirits with strange capabilities, or are relics of cosmic power! These can’t be detected or analyzed in the usual ways, and might not even seem that special. They may only reveal their secrets after much trial and error. But they often end up being the most memorable items in the campaign, because they’re truly unique.

How Much?

Some GMs believe that it’s easier to deal with too little loot than too much. This is a shaky claim. Even a disastrous dungeon crawl should garner enough cash that the PCs can afford to recharge power items, replace used-up arrows and potions, donate to the temple, and live in town for a week or two. Otherwise, nobody will show up for the next adventure. Why would skilled professionals do a perilous job that demonstrably doesn’t pay?

On the other hand, soaking up money is easy. Prices are suggestions, and will go up if word gets around that the delvers struck it rich. Even if the GM dislikes such stratagems, there’s always a way to coax cash out of adventurers: rituals that charge power items far beyond their usual limits for an exorbitant fee, expensive one-of-a-kind artifacts found by other parties, maps to extremely rich dungeons, training costs, guild memberships that grant access to hitherto unknown spells, and so on.

As well, there’s no obligation to make all booty — even powerful treasure — salable. A wagon-load of potent magic items might sell only as scrap if they’re unique artifacts that no wizard in town can analyze, or if they all bear the Number of the Beast. Goods stolen by monsters are still stolen once recovered; the King, Merchants’ Guild, etc., might not consider “finders, keepers” much of a defense. Potions with unknown ingredients can’t be sold. And so on.

Finally, if you give the heroes things they can use, they won’t sell them! It’s a good idea to include at least one gewgaw that each party member will fall in love with, and to make these the best items in the haul. All the rest together might barely cover beer and bed, but that won’t matter if the barbarian got a new axe and the bard got a magic lute.

Playing Hard to Get

Most treasure is found in three places, each with its own challenges:

Dead Bodies: This is the easiest treasure to get at — kill, peel, and take. Don’t forget to assign Search penalties for small, valuable items on the dead, though!

Containers: Locked containers work like locked doors; see Doors and Locks (p. 18). Most common containers won’t stand up to a beating: a wooden chest has DR 2, HP 14; an ironbound one, DR 5, HP 18; and a solid iron strongbox, DR 12, HP 10. Two things keep adventurers from simply bashing, though. First, valuable, fragile goods, like potion bottles, will break on 1-4 on 1d (let impulsive players learn this the hard way!). Second, bashing will set off any traps present (see Fiendish Traps, p. 19).

Troves: Piles of loot at the bottom or back of the dungeon, in the lair of the boss of all boss monsters, might just sprawl all over the place like the classic dragon’s hoard. But monsters appreciate security, too! Why else would they live in an underground fort full of traps and locked doors? A trove is quite likely to be in a vault with a stout door; good lock, and/or traps, all of which use the usual rules — but often with extra-large penalties to rolls to get at the treasure.

Beyond the Dungeon

One last bit of advice to the GM: the dungeon is the centerpiece of dungeon fantasy, but standard, less-munchkin fantasy adventures can work, too. If the players are having a blast with their characters, and the cachet of killing monsters and taking their stuff hasn’t worn off after one or two dungeon crawls, consider a quest outside the dungeon.

Wilderness Adventures

Travel (p. 5) and Wandering Monsters (p. 20) treat wilderness as a way for the GM to keep adventurers on their toes while yomping to and from the dungeon, but this isn’t the only possibility. When ignoring finicky details such as ecology, the main differences between the Mines of Madness and the Bog of Badness are that the latter has no doors to bash and no roof overhead, and its monsters and hazards have an outdoor theme instead of a subterranean one. Both can still be dismal, monster-infested, trap-riddled places that demand careful searching and mapping.

Wilderness expeditions favor outdoorsy heroes such as barbarians, druids, and scouts, and might even be good starting adventures for parties made up of these character types. On the other hand, for a group of more “urban” types — particularly bards and thieves — such quests could be demanding, making them suitable challenges for experienced PCs who’ve already braved several dungeons.

Guidelines especially useful for outdoor adventures include Camping and Posing Watches (p. 5), Tracking (p. 5), Mapping (p. 6), Scouting Ahead (p. 7), and “Good (Three-Headed) Doggie!” (p. 10). For loot, consider Naturally Occurring Money (p. 14).
Town Adventures

Dungeon fantasy normally treats “town” as an abstraction. Transactions with shops, inns, and temples consist of a few rolls of the dice followed by an exchange of funds. The Town Watch, King’s Men, Merchants’ Guild, and Thieves’ Guild are impersonal forces that somehow manage to dictate prices and even mete out punishment to heroes who could wipe the floor with clerks, watchmen, and soldiers.

If the GM wants, though, these things could be adventures of their own. Prowling alleys at night, breaking into buildings, stealing from shops, and fighting anybody who tries to interfere differs very little from sneaking down tunnels, bashing doors, killing monsters, and taking loot. This sort of “urban dungeon crawl” is excellent for bards and thieves, and the prevalence of lighter armor and weapons in the city means that martial artists and swashbucklers won’t play second fiddle to barbarians and knights in combat.

Town adventures will make regular use of Scoring Extra Cash (p. 4), Negotiation (p. 10), Trickery (p. 10), and Getting a Good Price (p. 14). Dungeon Parkour (p. 7) is, as the name suggests, an excellent way to get around rooftops.

Making Everybody Useful

The templates in Dungeon Fantasy: Adventurers give each character type the ability to handle a relatively narrow set of tasks. Their competencies overlap some, but each enjoys areas of unique proficiency. This venerable convention of dungeon fantasy has a purpose: as diverse challenges in the game bring the capabilities of different specialists into the spotlight, the players take turns at the center of attention, which lets everybody have fun.

It’s the GM’s job to give each hero a few chances to shine on every adventure – preferably about as many as his companions. This is sometimes tricky. Some suggestions:

Barbarian: Obstacles that demand high ST (portcullises, bars to bend, etc.) let him show off his muscles out of combat. His great height and ST enable him to give friends a leg up, making him a surprisingly good partner for the thief. Avoid the temptation to gloss over travel – give him the chance to show off his outdoor skills. Giant-sized items that only he can use are a fitting reward.

Bard: Don’t rush through business in town before and after dungeon crawls; these activities showcase the bard’s social abilities. Work in monsters that are susceptible to taunts and trickery, and a few that will negotiate. Surprise the party with the occasional artistic turn; e.g., the faerie queen who demands a command performance. Include ornate and magical instruments in hoards.

Cleric: Healing is always in demand, so spotlighting the cleric rarely requires much work. It’s no fun to be little more than a walking, breathing healing potion, though! Toss in a few cursed items and areas to identify and exercise, undead to turn, and the occasional disaster that necessitates an organized prayer for help. Blessed items and ornate holy symbols shouldn’t be too rare.

Druid: With his abilities weakened underground, it’s crucial that part of each adventure happen outdoors. Don’t make every monster a demon, Elder Thing, or similar horror – include hostile animals and plants, too. Play up desperate poison cures, the mysterious properties of slimes, etc. Most druids aren’t materialists, but an interest in plants and nature can make him useful. Giant-sized items that only he can use are a fitting reward.

Holy Warrior: Ensure that his Higher Purpose and knowledge of monsters and their weaknesses come into play – these things differentiate him from the knight and the cleric. As with the cleric, curses to deal with can elevate his importance. A common quest item for such champions is the “holy sword”: a blessed weapon that only those with Holiness can wield.

Knight: Given his importance in combat, the knight won’t ever be far from the spotlight. The trick is making him useful without his sword in hand. Try to play up his skill at Leadership and Tactics – let him verbally assist the thief trapped in combat across the chasm, or lead a horde of weak-but-friendly monsters. Mighty weapons and armor are, of course, what he craves.

Martial Artist: Few challenges put a greater premium on tremendous DX and athletic skills than those involving mighty leaps and deft steps. This gets boring by itself, so mix in some weird stuff that depends on chi rather than on mana, sanctity, or skill (e.g., Forgery). Welcome rewards include better tools and ornate holy symbols.

Scout: Like the barbarian and the druid, the scout lives for outdoor action, so don’t omit travel and tracking. Be careful not to cripple his archery skills by setting every combat encounter in dark, close tunnels where he has no shot – and include some out-of-combat challenges for him, like shooting lines across chasms. Obviously, his ideal prizes are ever-better bows and arrows.

Swashbuckler: The swashbuckler is easily entertained. He can rival the knight in combat and the martial artist at athletics, and his Luck lets him take fun risks. Since the archetype attracts fans of dash and flair, handle crazy stunts with “Sure! Roll at -10!” instead of “No.” Have his blade of choice show up in treasure – or give him ways to improve his existing blade, if he’s bound to it.

Thief: The party won’t get far without the thief. With all the locks, traps, and scouting missions in dungeon fantasy, his biggest theft may well be the spotlight – at least out of combat. If he somehow gets bored, challenge a rarely used skill (e.g., Forgery). Welcome rewards include better tools and small-but-valuable items to palm (out of sight of his companions!).

Wizard: The wizard – like the cleric, knight, and thief – is indispensable. He can spot magic items, counter hostile magic, identify books and potions, and defeat multiple enemies with a glance. Dozens of spells keep him from getting bored easily. Items are the key to keeping the player happy: books of lost spells, ornate artifacts for power items, and so on.
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