



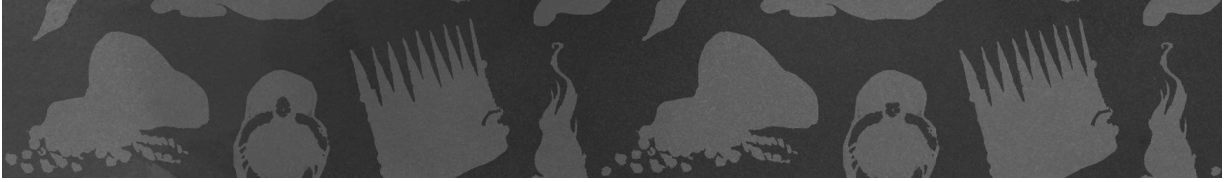
INTO THE

DUNGEON

A choose-your-own-path book

BY HARI CONNER

with additional art by FELIX MIALI,
FAYE STACEY, and LETTY WILSON



You have heard tales of a place . . .

a passage hidden away in the ruins of a forgotten castle, an opening that leads to a set of ancient and labyrinthine tunnels, full of terrible dangers, and, for those who dare to face them, endless reward . . .

Provisions are gathered, your blade sharpened, and trying to shake the feeling of dread from the grisliest of the tales you came across, you set out to find your way . . .

INTO THE DUNGEON

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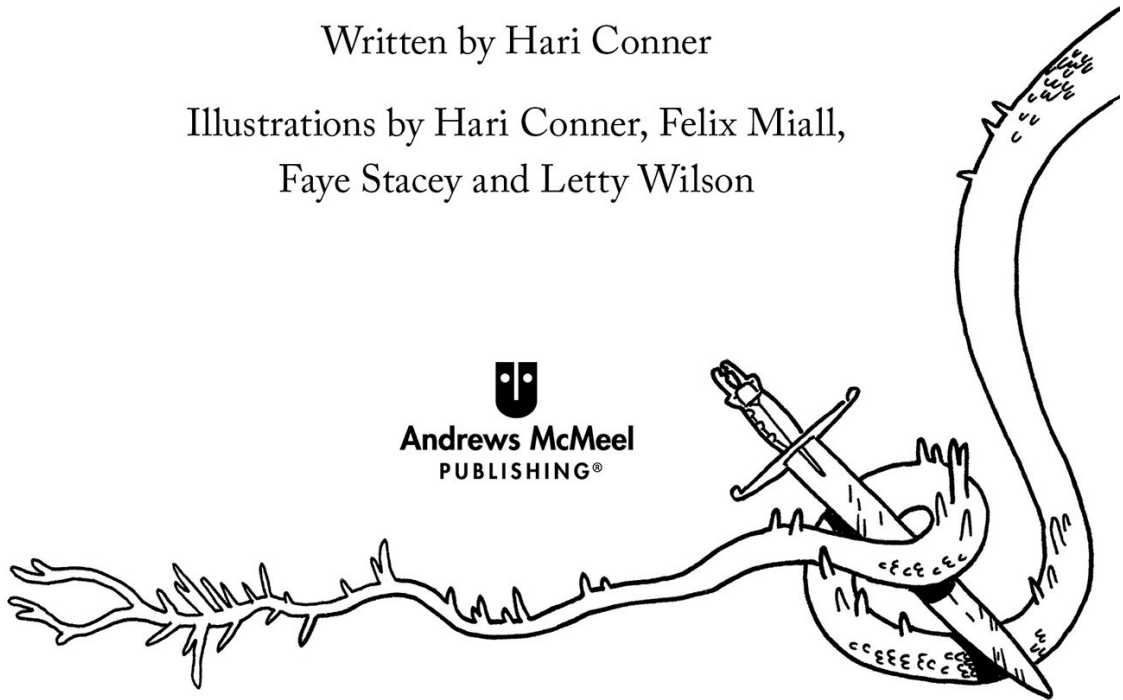
A choose-your-own-path book

Written by Hari Conner

Illustrations by Hari Conner, Felix Miall,
Faye Stacey and Letty Wilson



Andrews McMeel
PUBLISHING®



How to use this book

The book will tell you where to turn the page and what to do. All you need to play is a pencil to keep track of your health points and to write down any items you stow in the pockets of your clothes or bags.

Playing through the book will unfold the story of the dungeon, and you'll learn which paths are more and less perilous for your character.

CHOOSE A PLAYER

[Pick an existing character](#)

Some characters will be more challenging to play than others! Characters with low health will find it harder to make it through the dungeon alive. Characters' ability values (Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence and Charisma) determine how well they will handle different situations.

We encourage players to try playing a few times with several different characters, to see how their path through the dungeon differs—many stories can be unlocked only with certain characters.

You can find character sheets for existing characters [here](#), which you can use to keep track of your health and items you pick up. Grab a pen or pencil to copy the page to your own notebook, or [download the book's note pages here, to print out](#).

OR roll your own character

You can also find blank character sheets for creating your own characters [in the notes pages here](#). They are also available to [download and print here](#).

Roll a 6-sided dice (or use a dice roller online) to get Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence and Charisma values for your new character. Roll a 6-sided dice three times and add the numbers together to get their Health value.

Your character wants to explore the dungeon and find the treasure within. Think about what their name, personality and motivation might be. Why have they decided to explore the dungeon? Are they are a seasoned adventurer or new to traveling? Are they inclined to combat, thoughtful or evasive? What choices might they make?

ENCOUNTER DANGERS

Health points

Subtract points from your health value when your character takes damage. If your health value drops to zero, your character collapses, too exhausted and injured to go any further. Their journey ends lying on the floor of the dungeon, where they slowly waste away.

If your journey ends

Some choices you make may result in your character's untimely death or imprisonment forever in the depths of the dungeon. If this happens, you can start again or try a new character, making different choices this time round.

Replays, achievements and hard mode

If you just want to explore the story without having to start over, you might want to pick a character with a high health. You can also keep a note of which locations or events you turn to and double back to "rewind time" if things go amiss. Your device's Table of Contents navigation can be helpful here.

On the other hand, for a more challenging game, you might want to roll or pick a character with lower health or skill values or try to find a way through where you find a particular item or a certain amount of gold. [Go here to find special achievements](#) for an extra challenge.

Extra info

When you find items, “+” symbols indicate you should write something down as you add it to your pockets, e.g., + **length of rope**.

When your character makes a choice, it’s indicated by “>” symbols, e.g., > **Examine the door**.

“-” symbols indicate a choice or outcome decided by your character’s ability values or items, e.g.,

- **If your character’s dexterity is 2 or below, you are caught in the spikes and die instantly.**





DALIMIL, the singer

Having fallen into gambling debt, Dalimil seeks an easy path to riches and fortune.

Health 6

Strength 1

Dexterity 4

Charisma 5

Intelligence 1



LOK, the scrapper

Health 15

Strength 2

Dexterity 5

Charisma 1

Intelligence 3

Used to scraping a living however possible in the hardest parts of the city, Lok thinks the dungeon can be no worse than the workhouse or a life of thievery.



ANEIR, the soldier

Health 15

Strength 5

Dexterity 2

Charisma 3

Intelligence 4

After being demoted for refusing to follow orders, Aneir looks to restore a once-fearsome reputation and comfortable life.



XENOPHON, the scholar

Health 10
Strength 1
Dexterity 3
Charisma 4
Intelligence 5

Xenophon seeks knowledge, gold and ancient magic, even in the darkest of places.



THE ENTRANCE

This is the place.

Here at the edge of the moors stand the last ruins of what was once a castle. Huge stone blocks trace out the rooms, and spiral staircases crumble upward to nowhere. Moss and cow-parsley and clover carpet the rooms and creep up the old walls, everywhere but one last doorway. The stone arch stands intact and free of the ivy and lichen that coat the other stones, as if only the rain dare touch it.

A well-trodden track winds through the ruins to the archway, beyond which thick stone steps, bowed in the center from years of footfalls, descend downward into a dark passage. You see footprints in the mud heading toward the passage but none coming out.

A cold rain begins to fall, the wind whipping it sideways and flattening the grass and clover in waves. You think you see a distant light somewhere in the dark of the passage, and it suddenly seems terribly inviting.

Determined, you take a breath and patter downward into the darkness.

As you descend, the passage widens out into a room lit with faint, flickering torches.

[\(Go here...\)](#)



THE STORE ROOM

You are standing in a store room, full of sacks and boxes and the faint smell of rot—yet it seems not nearly so old as the castle above.

A heavy wooden door set with gleaming brass bolts and inlays leads off to your left, and at the end of the room, another passage continues downward.

- > [Search the store room.](#)
- > [Examine the heavy door.](#)
- > [Continue downward.](#)

THE ROOM OF DOORS

The room is lit by wall-mounted torches burning with a strangely steady fire. You realize you could easily take a torch from one of the brackets and take it with you. However, to fight any monsters in the future, you would have to drop the torch and let it go out.

- > **Take a torch** from the walls and carry it with you as you continue. Add the torch to your pockets—you must remove it if at any point you draw a weapon to fight a monster.
- > **Leave the torches well alone.**

In either case:

You notice two strange doors on each side of the long room and a staircase that continues downward at the far end of the room.



- > Open the blackened wooden door to your left.
- > Open the ornate golden door to your left.
- > Open the round metal door to your right.
- > Open the tall, plain door to your right.
- > Continue past the doors to the staircase downward.

BEHIND THE WATERFALL

The torch you took from the rooms above stayed lit and strangely still, as if the winds of this world did not affect it, even as your boat plunged down the river and it was sprayed and splattered by the dark, cold waters. It illuminates the river strangely evenly, and you can make out a series of stones that make steep, narrow natural steps to the side of the waterfall. You pick your way carefully downward, managing to cling on with one hand as you clutch the torch in the other, lighting the way down.

You make it down to the bottom of the falls, and notice something behind the sheet of water and a little rocky way you could walk to reach it. The torch stays alight and the same as ever as you plunge through the edge of the falling water and find, gleaming in the torchlight, a little pile of treasures someone thought to hide away.



You put in your pockets:

- + 100 gold pieces
- + a jeweled crown, wrapped in white cloth

and carefully make your way back out to the bottom of the waterfall, then through a small opening into the [next cave](#).

A WHIRR AND A CLICK

The door swings inward with an ease that doesn't seem to match its weight, and you hear a distant whirr and click as a mechanism in the door frame seems to activate. You instinctively pull back as a small wooden bolt shoots downward from a gap in the ceiling above.



- **If your dexterity is 3 or above**, you withdraw your hand just in time, and the bolt bounces harmlessly on the floor.
- **If your dexterity is 2 or below**, the bolt grazes by the side of your arm, and you **take 2 points of damage**.

In either case:

You gingerly step through the doorway with rather more care and after a few steps see a grand, bright stairway that curves away upward. The stairs are carpeted and seem lit as if from torchlight or a great chandelier above that you cannot see.

On hearing nothing further, you begin to [slowly climb the steps](#).

THE EMPTY HALL

The stairs climb and climb until you think you must be above ground level. As you climb, a few doors lead off to your left and right, but all are locked fast and immovable. Just when you think the staircase must be endless, it opens into a great hall. There is a long table lined with benches and a high-backed chair of plush red velvet at the far end. The table is laden with foods of all kinds, venison steaks and suckling pigs on beds of greens and butter, great pies and cakes and fishes and fruits, fresh eels and cheeses, bread pudding and jellies and tarts. The food steams as if brought fresh from the kitchens, and new candles flicker in silver candlesticks—but the benches lie still and empty.



Tapestries hang from the walls, and on the farthest wall above the chair is a portrait of a lordly man fresh from a hunt. He is smiling benevolently from a magnificent horse, the bloody corpse of a prize deer at his feet. The room is quiet and still and quite empty of people. You see no doors leading from the room.

- > [Approach the table.](#)
- > [Unnerved, you descend back down the stairs to the store room and continue on downward. This is not the treasure you seek.](#)

THE BEAST FELLED

With a burbling cry, the beast falls to the floor with a great crash and lies unmoving in a widening pool of blood.



You're all too aware of the noise you've made echoing through the dungeon below but notice the other three cages, their doors open.

- > [Move quickly to the next room.](#)
- > [Examine the cages.](#)

APPROACH THE TABLE

The food smells delicious, and you find yourself unable to recall when you last ate. A bowl of shiny apples sits right at the edge of the table. You take a step forward. They look crisp and sweet. When did you last eat an apple that looked so good? You find you have picked up the apple and have it in your hand. It seems solid and ordinary.



- If your intelligence is 4 or higher, you pause for a moment to look across the table.
- If your intelligence is 3 or below, you find yourself unable to resist taking a bite.



THE ROOM OF RICHES

The golden door swings easily open to reveal a room decked out in fine cloths that line the walls. On the dusty carpet sit two chests of dark wood, a plush armchair, a bookcase with a mess of books spilled out on the floor below and a bed with high posts, dusty drapes and a figure sitting upon it.

The figure has long, tousled hair, a loose shirt and fine-boned face and looks quite hopeless and dejected, until lifting their head at the sound of your footfalls.

“Oh, traveler! Have you come to this place to finally free me of my bonds, or do you stumble upon it? It is no matter. Here is my tale:

The lord of the hall set his sorcerers upon me and bound me with a spell to this room, never to age and never to leave, for I am Mihai, the prince and rightful ruler of these lands, or was once. He locked me away long ago so he could preside above, unquestioned. I see no days or nights here in this room and have here idled for perhaps a hundred years or more. I have long lost count, and adventurers are fewer and farther between. You have only to help me break my spell and I will reward you with all the riches of my kingdom.”

As the prince speaks, his voice lilts up and down as if reciting a poem, and

you have the sense he has said this piece many times before, waiting here alone in this quiet room.

- > Ask the prince what you must do to break the spell.
- > You feel uneasy, wary of what a bargain may entail, and head back toward the door.



FLEE THE HALL

You turn and begin to run back down the staircase, now dim and dank and dripping, the carpet rotting away and the steps slick.

- **If your dexterity is 2 or below, take a point of damage** as you slip and clatter down the stairs.
- Otherwise, you right yourself and make it down unharmed.

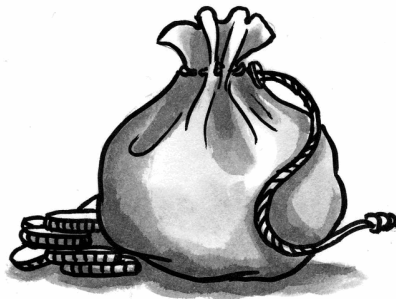
You hear the sounds of silverware and laughter and most of all of eating, but gradually the noise recedes and you stumble back into the store room, pulling the heavy door shut behind you and following the passage downward, hoping desperately nothing has followed you from that place.

> [Continue downward.](#)

AN UNREAD LETTER

Though there are occasional torches, the passage behind the door is low and not well lit, and you find yourself crouching to make your way through. Some way along, you see another small passage off to your left: dark, winding and slightly foreboding and, under a torch, a skeleton bundled in rags. On the skeleton you find and take

+ a pouch of 15 gold pieces



and a small note that you are able to read in the torchlight.

Alder, if you are reading this note on my mangled corpse, then know that I have failed to find you, and your stupid obscure riddles have been the death of me. Your mysterious instructions failed to lead me to the "surprise" that would let me escape the Lord once and for all, failing even to mention which door I ought to take. Unless my surprise was to be finding where the prince had been locked up all these years before he sweetly asked to cut my leg off, or that the Lord keeps an enormous dragon who burned my best cloak to a crisp, in which case I am thoroughly finished with you.

I have had to rest here to tend to my wounds and if you find me still breathing insist you take me above ground and nurse me back to health, since this is all your fault.

—Kamen

A cold, dry wind seems to blow from the passage away to your left, and you find it strangely inviting.

- **If you have the smooth black stone in your pockets**, you find yourself walking down the passage to your left, as if this were the **obvious and only choice**. Otherwise, you are able to choose to:

- > **Take the passage to your left.**
- > **Continue onwards.**

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A LOST TREASURE

As you hand over the shining woven necklace, you realize the eyes of all the creatures are upon it. The one who takes it has skin that's furrowed and warped with age and seems to look at the necklace with recognition, as if it were something they knew from long ago. The creature carefully hangs it around their neck, then all of a sudden, the creatures begin to bow, lying prostrate on the floor before you. Even the children click excitedly to each other, seeming to know what this necklace is.

Two of the creatures run off, frantically clicking to each other and diving into the water. They return with a dripping, dirty sack retrieved from some hiding place beneath the surface and present it to you, meaning you to take it. Inside is

- + **a large, rough gemstone the color of blood**
- + **a dark ring** shining with runes etched upon it
- + **120 gold pieces.**

You take the sack and, still a little afraid you will be eaten or perish down here, make for the water. The creatures seem happy to let you do as you wish, still clicking to each other in excited, hushed tones. One of the mer-creatures takes the sack and swims alongside you, guiding you through the fastest route as you swim back. As you surface, the creature disappears downward and emerges with

- + **an ancient sword.**

which it places along with the sack of gold neatly beside the things you left on the shore, before inclining their head and disappearing.

You stow the things away in your pockets, relieved to be returned safely, and make your way to the tunnel out, eager to [get out of this place.](#)



SPEAK TO THE LORD OF THE HALL

The lord gestures expansively around, seemingly unaware of the rot and the dust and the appearance of his guests.

“Welcome, traveler. The harvest has been prosperous and the hunt bountiful, and we have more than we can eat. Stay awhile and join us.”

- **If your charisma is 4 or more, [go here](#).**

- **If your charisma is 3 or less:**

You hesitate a moment, and the lord’s face twists in anger, and the hall seems to darken. “Why do you not sit with us? It is a great insult to refuse a lord’s hospitality. Eat of our food and drink of our wine.”

- > **[Pick up the least-rotted thing from the table and take a small bite to appease the lord.](#)**
- > **[Flee.](#)**

THE SMALL GLASS KEY

As you pull the small key from your pockets, the monster moves toward you and seizes it immediately. Without explaining what she's doing, she rushes over to the dais, running her hands over the smooth stone until a small hidden door clicks open.

"You'd be amazed how well you get to know a room when you've been stuck in it for hundreds of years," she grins breathlessly. Inside the dais, shimmering and visible only from certain angles, are a set of delicate, ghostly chains made of runes, so difficult to see they almost look as if they're made of glass. The monster runs her hands over them, and as they move, you see the illusion outside the windows wobble slightly. You peer around, now seeing shimmering runes surrounding the box and the monster like a set of elaborate ribbons suspended in the air. She traces them to a knot above the box and, watching closely, seems to pluck a lock of the same material out of the air, fitting the small key into it. As the key turns, the room turns blindingly white for a second.

When the light has faded and the spots dancing before your eyes fade away, the chains are gone. You see the circular room, now dark and damp, with windows that look out onto the dark rock of the cavern walls, and in the center, a human figure, laughing and whooping. She passes you the box, thrilled to have the spell finally broken, and empties the pockets of her now-too-big guard robe, pulling off the jewels that adorned it. From the box, you pocket

+ a milky, opalescent hunk of rock
+ a thin, dark ring shining with runes

and from her robes, she hands you

+ 4 small, glittering gems of topaz
+ 35 gold pieces.

She thanks you profusely, insults the door, then runs off down the stairs. You

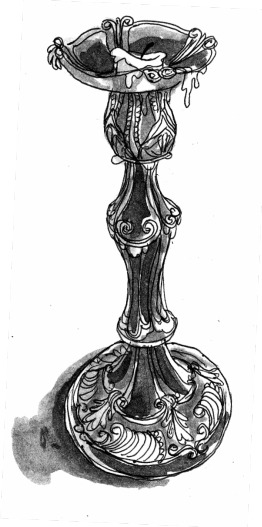
follow, slightly dazed by these events, but see no further sign of her, and eventually the steps open up into [a wide cavern](#).

THE LORD'S KIND OFFERING

You bow to the lord as if nothing were amiss and thank him for his kind offer. You tell him you would love to stay but alas have pressing matters to attend to and much farther to go before the day is out.

“As you will,” the lord says, distracted, as he plunges his hand into one of the dishes and begins to eat the dark sludge within. “You are welcome to any dish or drink, or if you must go, take a candle to guide your way.”

Still smiling carefully, you take a silver candlestick, covered with wax and a stub of candle that burned out long ago, and back away from the table. The guests take no notice of you as you leave, engrossed in their meal, and you carefully descend down the now-dank and dripping staircase, shutting the heavy door behind you and continuing downward through the store room.



+ Add 1 silver candlestick to your pockets.

[\(Go here.\)](#)

MOLDERING SUPPLIES

You find several things best left behind: bread rolls moldering in strange colors, scraps of hide (though from what animal you cannot fathom) and a single cracked skull.

But in the corner of a dusty box, you come across

+ a length of rope

+ a small bottle of sweet wine



And carefully stow them away in your pockets.

- > [Turn to the heavy door.](#)
- > [Continue downward.](#)

THE DARK PASSAGE DOWNWARD

You continue down the steps that lead away from the store room, noticing rubble here and there that must once have been doorways, now collapsed and impassable. The main stairway is mostly clear but becomes darker and narrower as you go on. You find yourself feeling your way down the passage toward a distant light below.



Suddenly, your foot hits the next step and finds studded metal that presses down with your weight. You pause, foot still on the strange step. Nothing seems to have happened . . . yet.

- > [Lift your foot but wait before descending.](#)
- > [Continue walking as normal.](#)
- > [Run down the rest of the stairs.](#)



THE LORD OF MIRTH AND MERRIMENT

You bite down, and the food is delicious, the greatest thing you have ever tasted.

You see now that the tables are full of ordinary, merry guests, eating and drinking, and always had been. At the head of the table, the lord smiles graciously and laughs and jokes with the others, and you sit at an empty space on the end of the bench, suddenly at ease.

You find you have no desire to leave for now and help yourself to the bread pudding. The turnips look very good, too, and you're terribly hungry. You try the eels and the bramble pie and think it best to taste some of the venison and pig and sausages before you leave, out of courtesy.

The room is warm, the wine sweet and the food wonderful and satisfying. You find yourself still hungry, perhaps more so than before, slowly eating and eating, each dish better than the last and never seeming to run out. You find a deep pleasure in the very act of chewing and swallowing, the feel of the food in your throat, greater perhaps than anything you've felt before. And when you begin to grab the food in great fistfuls, the other guests only laugh and join you.

All thoughts of the dungeon and its treasures eventually fade from you, replaced only by a desire to consume.

And there you remain, feasting at the lord's table, where there are no days and no nights and no end to the banquet.

Your journey ends here.

WAIT FOR IT . . .

As you step off the pressure plate, you hear something heavy thud somewhere far below. You wait, breath held, on the stair above, as something thumps around for a long time before falling silent.

- > Continue down, treading again on the pressure plate.
- > Continue down, carefully stepping over the pressure plate to avoid it.

A RUSH OF WATER

The blackened wooden door creaks as you open it and leads into a room with a single torch illuminating it. The room seems more a natural cave hewn out from the rock, with rough walls coated in algae and moss rather than stonework or bricks. You hear rushing water, and as you continue in and your eyes adjust, you see a little wooden boat tied up at the side of a steep, dangerous-looking river that rushes downward into a darkness below.

The boat looks well enough made and has two small oars tucked away inside it. As you approach, you notice a brown paper package at the bottom of the boat. It looks as if it's been there a very long time. Unwrapping the package, you find:

+ 10 gold pieces
+ a length of rope
+ a warm cloak, in the fashion of some hundred years ago.

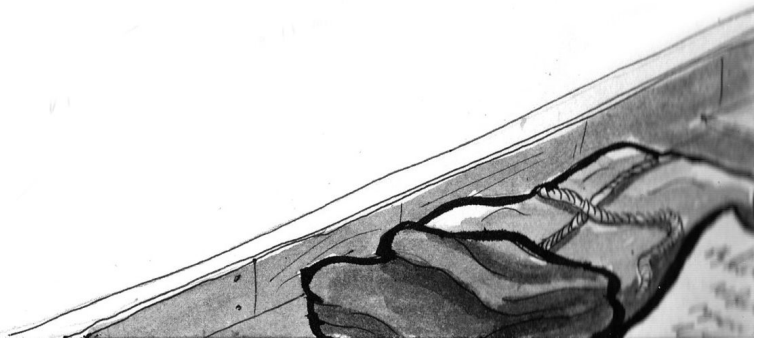
As you lift the old cloak, a scrap of paper flutters down, and holding it up to the torchlight, you read a scrawled message in faded ink:

Kamen, my dear, if you are reading this, the plan has worked and you have finally escaped that cruel lord of the hall. We shall be reunited again in a matter of hours, if you follow my instructions closely. This boat is woven through with enchantment and shall weather this little steep current without faltering. When you reach the lower pool, row quickly ahead and do not stop to look back or search around for treasures no matter what you see beneath the water; it shall be far more danger than it is worth. Follow the channel out to the sea and there I shall find you and we shall be away.

The bottom of the boat and the package are coated in dust, and though you see there are runes running around the edge of the boat, they are greatly faded, as if many years have passed. You wonder what happened to Kamen.

> [Leave this room and try another door.](#)

> Take the boat down the river.



CONTINUE ON . . .

As you continue downward, you hear a thumping and scraping coming from the room below and, rounding a corner, see a sliver of light and glimpse a stone room lined with cages. The bars have been raised, leaving the doors open, and a huge beast paces the room.



You can see a door on the far side of the room, leading farther into the dungeon.

- > [Decide to fight the beast.](#)
- > [Focus only on getting to the door on the other side of the room.](#)

DOWN THE RIVER

Stepping into the boat and untying the short rope, you push off the side of the dark pool with an oar, out into the rushing water. Immediately, the boat is swept downward, catching and spinning on boulders. The enchantment seems to hold, and the boat suffers no damage, though once or twice you are almost thrown out of the boat and find yourself clinging to the sides to stay on board.

The light is very faint now, but in the darkness up ahead you think you hear the water swelling to a roar as if falling from a great height.

You faintly make out some part of the cavern that seems to have fallen in, diverting your boat from the steep underground river that continues bouncing downward on the right, toward a sudden drop where instead the water cascades over a sheer edge.

- **If your strength or dexterity is 4 or above, [go here](#).**

- **If both your strength and dexterity are 3 or below,** you scramble for the rocks nearby but are unable to hold on in the swift current and plummet over the edge in your small boat. You plunge below into a shallow pool.

You take 4 damage—though the water breaks your fall a little, your ankle twists on a rock under the water, and the boat crashes down on top of you, the enchantment giving way as it splinters into fragments.

If you had a torch with you, it is lost, but otherwise you feel around and find everything in your pockets as you left it and your weapon intact.

You manage to wade and paddle away from the waterfall and through a small opening, where you crawl from the freezing water onto the bank and find yourself in [a large cavern](#).

THE WRONG MOVE

One of the mer-creatures lets out a sharp and decisive series of clicks and takes a sharp stone tool from the ground, hitting you across the face until you taste blood.

You stand to try to flee, but one of the others is holding you down while another searches your pockets, the crowd of children winding toward you out of the darkness.

More and more mer-creatures emerge from the water, and you find yourself being tied down by a great crowd, struggling to no avail and unable to break free. The children swarm hungrily over you, pulling away clothing and examining your limbs and torso like a piece of meat.

Just as the first child sinks their sharp teeth into your flesh, you feel the stone tool hit your head once more, plunging you into darkness.

Some years later, another traveler may come across the things you left by the edge of that underground lake and wisely decide not to enter the water.

No one will find your bones.

Your journey ends here.





A NARROW ESCAPE

One of the mer-creatures reaches forward inquisitively to take your gift, holding it up to the torchlight, smelling it and turning it over in their hands, intelligent enough to see it is finely made and worth having—though you are not sure whether they plan to use it in the same way as intended.

Making a series of clicks to the others, the creature inclines its head and it seems to drift away back into the camp, having lost interest in you. The children still watch you from the darkness with their pale eyes, perhaps less obedient than the older creatures.

You see nothing of value in the small, dirty camp, and now that you have a moment to focus, realize it smells very strongly of rotting fish. The creatures have returned to their business, and not needing to be told twice, you dive back into the pool and swim as fast as you can back to the first cave, arriving spluttering and freezing on the shore. You gather your things and hurry to the small tunnel that seems to [lead out of the dungeon before they can change their minds.](#)

RUN DOWNWARD

Running down the steps, you hear a heavy thud from below and realize too late you're running toward the source of the noise. You emerge into a room lined with now-open cages and a huge beast there waiting, taking up the whole center of the room.

The beast slashes and bites at you, and you take 2 points of damage, scrambling backward into the stairwell.



The beast snaps at you but cannot reach you.

You can see a door on the far side of the room, leading farther into the dungeon.

- > Decide to fight the beast.
- > Focus on getting to the door on the other side of the room.



EXAMINE THE HEAVY DOOR

As you look closer, you see the brass patterns of the door are vines and ornament that entwine upward into a central insignia you do not recognize, topped with a crown and surrounded by rich fruits and meats. You see no keyhole.

- > [Push on the door.](#)
- > [Return to the store room and continue on downward.](#)

A SINKING FEELING

You try to swim on but slowly realize you may be sinking.

Your head feels very light now, and you desperately need to breathe. Dazed, you look around in the blackness, but the dim light now seems the same in all directions, and you struggle to see which way leads to the surface.

Before you know what has happened, you've taken an involuntary breath, and you feel cold water rush into your lungs as the world seems to fade around you. Your final thought is how close you came to escaping this place, before the darkness overcomes you.



Your journey ends here.



FIGHT THE BEAST

- **If your strength is 5 or above:** Drawing your weapon and holding it ready, you charge into the room and cleave effortlessly through the beast's skull before it has a chance to reach you. [Go here.](#)

- **If your strength is 3 or 4:** Drawing your weapon, you step into the room and swipe at the beast's head. The blade sinks a little way in, carving a thick scar and pouring blood into its eyes. The beast claws at you but seems to be swiping blindly, only catching the edge of your leg.

You take 2 points of damage but push your way to the other side of the beast and slice at it again and again, before driving the sword up into its belly and felling the creature ([go here](#)).

- **If your strength is 2 or below:** Drawing your weapon, you step into the room and swipe at the beast's head, but the blade seems to bounce harmlessly from its skull. Enraged, the beast lunges toward you and bites, taking a great hunk out of your arm.

Take 6 points of damage.

- > Try to flee to the door.
- > Strike again.

SECOND TIME LUCKY

With impressive bravado in the face of failure, you swipe again at the huge beast, which immediately swats you to the floor, and you feel your bones crunch against the flagstones.

You begin to think your bravado perhaps not equal to the strength of the creature, which crushes you underfoot and opens its great maw, ready to tear your head from your neck.

In the last seconds before the world turns black, you think perhaps you won't make it to the treasure after all and, then, nothing ever again.

Your journey ends here.





EXAMINE THE CAGES

The cages recede into the darkness, and you realize to search them fully, you'll have to go inside.

- > [Move on to the next room.](#)
- > [Enter the cage with the pile of bones.](#)
- > [Enter the cage that seems empty.](#)
- > [Enter the cage where you see a faint glow in the far corner.](#)

TWICE TRODDEN

As you press down on the plate, you hear another thud below and a strangled, bestial cry. You continue down the steps and come out into a room lined with cages with thick, dark bars. Though most of the cages are full only of bones, one is occupied by a huge beast that snaps and reaches toward you but is thankfully trapped on the other side of the bars.



You realize the pressure plate must raise and lower the bars when activated. When the bars were raised, the beast saw nothing and eventually returned to curl up in its cage, where you trapped it again. You move swiftly through the room and close the door behind you, thankful not to face the thing behind you. [Go here](#).



THE CAGE OF BONES

You search through the pile of mostly human bones, suspecting one larger set belonged to another beast once caged here, now long perished. Among the rags, you find some gold pieces in the remains of pockets and pouches of the ex-adventurers that once passed through.

The beast has begun to smell, and you suddenly wonder whether the blood leaking through the cracks in the floor is dripping out somewhere below.

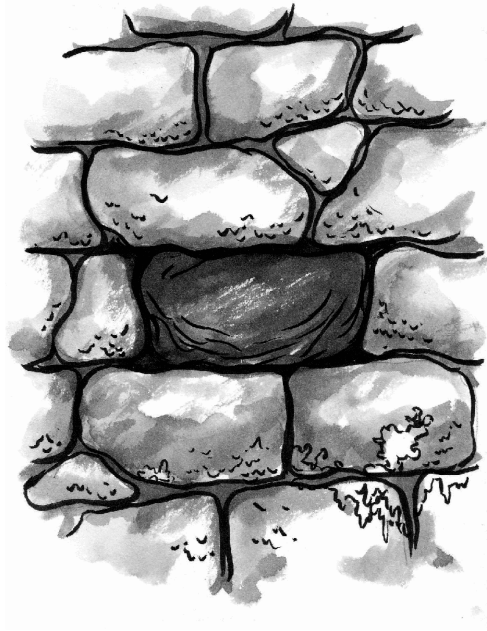
You put:

+ 25 gold pieces

away in your pockets and hurry out of the door [into the next room](#).

THE EMPTY CAGE

This cage seems empty, with nothing inside apart from the scattered straw on the floor. However, as you venture inside, you notice one of the stones on the far wall looks a little different from the others.



- > Take a chance and press on the stone.
- > Leave it be and continue out of the room of cages.

THE FAINT GLOW

- **If your intelligence is 3 or above:** As you step into the cage, you look around carefully before proceeding. You push aside some straw and notice a metal pressure plate hidden beneath. Stepping around it, you see the glow is only some kind of fungus in the corner. You quickly leave the cage and decide to [move on to the next room](#).

- **If your intelligence is 2 or below:** As you walk toward the corner, you hear a click as you tread on another pressure plate and the bars behind you drop to the ground. You turn and shake the bars, which are horribly solid in their fittings. The glow in the corner is some kind of fungus growing in the filthy cracks between the stones.



You examine every inch of the cage in increasing desperation and find no way to escape. After a few hours, you slump slowly downward in the quiet of the room, your only company the slowly decomposing carcass of the beast, your quest for treasures ended by the very need and curiosity that set you on this path to begin with.

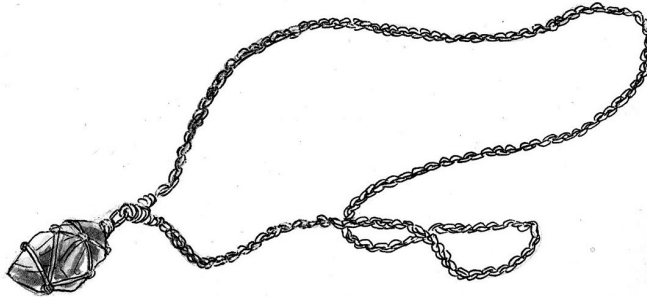
Perhaps some future adventurer will pick through your bones.

Your journey ends here.

TAKE A CHANCE

You have a feeling this stone was placed here by someone different from whoever laid the pressure plate on the stairs—perhaps someone or something trapped here or something far, far older.

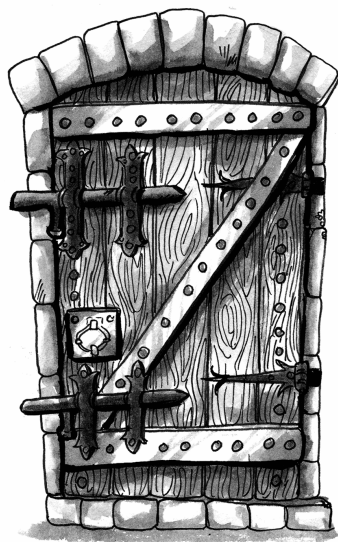
You push lightly down, and the stone pushes all the way in, revealing a little hollow underneath it. In the hollow is a necklace of shining, interwoven threads. It seems made not of gold or silver but something otherworldly and beautiful, with a pendant of a rough gemstone woven around and tied into the fabric of the cord.



You take the

+ otherworldly necklace,

stow it safely away in your pockets, and move [on to the next room.](#)



GET TO THE DOOR

- **If your dexterity is 5 or above:** You slip underneath the belly of the creature as its jaws crunch uselessly down in the space where you once stood. In the time it takes for the beast to turn its bulk to face the door, you've tried the handle and already slipped through, closing it behind you.
- **If your dexterity is 4 or below:** The beast bites at your leg as you try to dart around its side and its teeth find the mark.

You take 3 points of damage but, limping, make it to the door and slam it behind you before the beast can turn to reach you.

In either case:

The beast seems to claw and scabble at the thick door behind you but cannot break through. You see now the door is reinforced with bars of iron.

Breathing hard, you turn your attention [to the next room](#).



THE WATERFALL'S EDGE

You reach out and grab on to one of the rocks that juts from the black water just as the little boat crashes over the edge of a great waterfall and plummets down into the darkness below. You manage to cling to the rock and haul yourself up to a small ledge.

- **If you took a torch with you, [go here](#).**

- **If you do not have a torch,** you feel and scramble your way down the rocks to one side, your limbs aching and your body cold and soaking until you reach the foot of the falls. You feel around blindly and find fragments of the boat, its old enchantments having finally given way, and wade past it through a small opening where the only glimmer of light seems to be. You pull yourself up onto the bank and see you have made it to **[a much larger cavern](#)**.



BREAK THE SPELL

When you ask the prince what must be done to break the spell, he hangs his head.

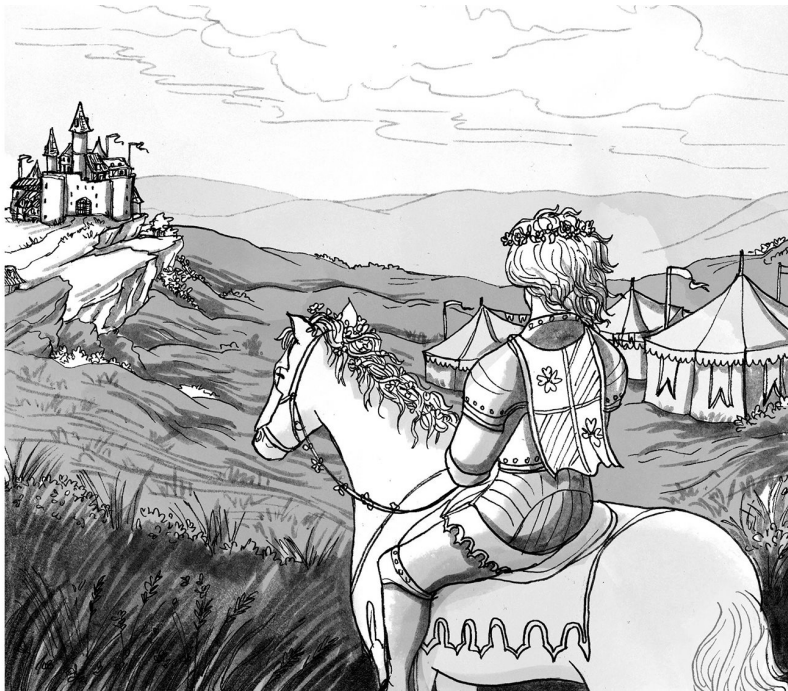
“The truth is, the spell is woven of an old and terrible magic that can only be undone the way it was made: with flesh and blood. An offering of flesh must be willingly made by one unbound by any spells. I need not take much—perhaps a finger. You see now why travelers before you have refused to help, but I promise you shall be rewarded if only I am to be free of this wretched place.”

You see his eyes gleam, and he speaks this final part, shining perhaps with hope, perhaps something else.

- If your charisma is 4 or more, you can try to appease and charm the prince without letting him cut off your finger ([go here](#)).

Otherwise, you must:

- > [Let the prince cut off your finger.](#)
- > [Retreat toward the door.](#)



OF CASTLES AND QUEENS

You tell the prince of your sympathy for his situation and ask to speak a little while and learn a little more of him, since he is a stranger to you and you met him in this strange place.

At first the prince seems to bristle, but as you turn the conversation to how terribly bored he must be, he begins to forget his indignance and speak of himself, keen to talk to someone after all this time. You ask of his life before he came here, and he tells you of rides on the moors and the May festivals, of castles and queens. You ask how his hair can shine so when he is trapped in this unchanging and hopeless place, and he returns a small smile. And after what seems a long while speaking of his own life and troubles, he asks of yours. You tell him of why you came down into the dungeon and all the circumstances surrounding it, weaving a tale of all your hardships into a sweet and melancholy story. When you finish speaking, you see the prince is watching you, carefully.

“Perhaps it is too much,” he says quietly, “to ask a stranger for such a thing. But your journey through this place is so perilous, and you have still a long

way to go. If I am to let you leave, you may yet perish on the lower floors, and then what use shall your fingers be to you?”

You remain calm and tell the prince sweetly that you hope very much not to perish.

He pauses, watching you. “I have been a very long time in this place, all the while alone and knowing that here I shall stay bound for all the rest of time. It has changed me, I think. At first I hoped so very much to see the sun again, to see my sisters and my friends. But with the passing of time, I hope more and more for it to be over and nothing else.”

You sit quietly beside the prince for some time and think on the man he must have been, once. After hearing his stories, you cannot help but think kindly toward him, trapped in this room for so long, and find you are very close to him. You can feel his breath soft on your neck.

- > **Pull away and carefully tell the prince you have no choice but to leave him here.**
- > **In that brief moment of connection, lean forward to kiss the prince.**



THE VAULT

The round door is unlocked and swings inward easily, though you see it is thick and heavy, as if the door to a vault.

The room beyond is a great cave with a sprawling pile of coins and treasures, and atop it a great creature is curled, the likes of which you have seen only in stories.

At first you think it sleeping, but as you take a step into the room, you see a huge eye crack open and hear a deep, winding voice like the wind through the trees.

“I heard your approach, small one, your footfalls above. You have awoken me from my slumber, and I do so hate to be disturbed. Tell me: what shall you do to appease me, to please me? Have you wits, or is your only use as a

snack?”

- > If you have a jeweled crown or silver candlestick, you can offer it to the creature.
- > If you have a charisma of 3 or above, you can tell the dragon a story.
- > Try to run from the dragon.
- > Fight the dragon—think of the riches you could claim if it were slain.



NO CHOICE

The prince lets out a deep sigh as you pull away from him, telling him as gently as you can that you must continue into the dungeon. You think you see a flash of anger before he smooths his hair and quietly tells you, “Then I must let you go. But I would not have you travel into the depths with nothing.”

He opens the chest at the foot of the bed and presents you with a bundle wrapped in cloth, containing

+ 50 gold pieces
+ a jeweled crown,

which you put away in your pockets.

Finally, he gives you a tiny crystal, which he urges you to swallow, insisting it will help you on your journey.

- > Swallow the crystal.
- > Politely thank the prince, but do not swallow the crystal, exiting tactfully from the room before tossing it away.

BONES AND RAGS

You stoop as you follow the passageway round, which seems to grow smaller and tighter as you go. After a minute or two, you reach the source of the noise—a little set of wind chimes hanging from a stalactite on the roof of the passage. Drawing nearer, you see they are tied haphazardly together with twine and seem to be made of teeth and bones.

Ahead of you, there is a small opening in the end of the passage with filthy rags hung up to act as a makeshift door and a flickering light from within. There is a faint sound as if of a creature, a guttural snuffling that makes your stomach turn.

You get down on your hands and knees to crawl closer to the entrance, warily calling, “Who’s there?” as you lift the rags to see within.

Inside, surrounded by more bones and rags and sheets of browning parchment, is a little creature with face like a bat, illuminated by a single stub of foul-smelling candle and frozen mid-bite of what looks like a mouse.



They make a little screeching noise and scramble away from you.

- > Talk to the creature.
- > Fight the creature.
- > Return, repulsed, to the intersection of passages.

SOME SOLID ADVICE

You realize the creature is squeaking in fear and try to calm them, telling them you mean no harm. After a while they manage to slow their breathing and say, in a reedy little voice, “What are you doing all the way down here? It’s all monsters and magics and terrible things. I thought for certain you were trying to eat me, like all the others!”

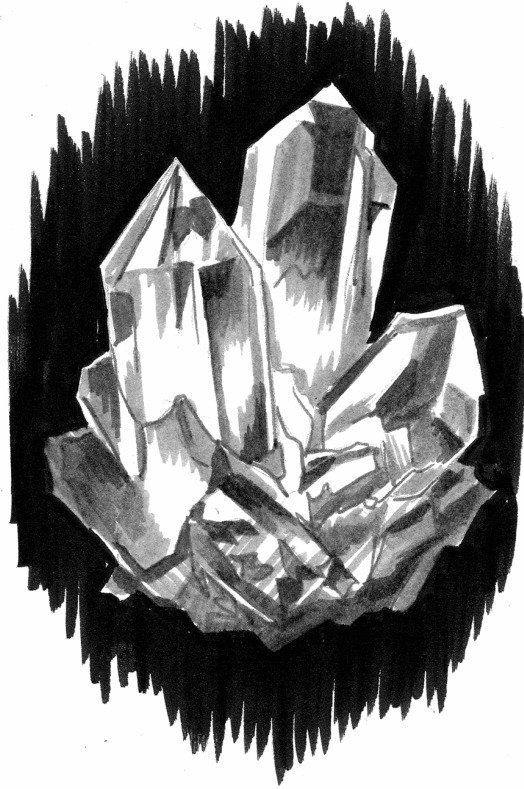
You reassure the creature you are not going to eat them, crawling forward to sit in their little cave. You tell them you seek the treasures in the dungeon and a little of how your circumstances led you here.

The creature listens, hanging on your every word, before hurriedly starting to give you advice. “There’s a corridor opposite here you mustn’t go down; there’s a terrible thing there that tricks adventurers you had best leave well alone. And there is a smooth black little rock somewhere in this place you must not carry with you.”

- **If you are carrying the smooth black stone**, you can choose to remove it from your pockets and toss it away into the passage behind you.

You realize the creature is still talking: “And don’t take a torch down the path of horns!! And if you go down and down all the steps, you will reach a great deep pool. There are shinies at the bottom but folk with teeth who live there, and there is an opening that leads out into the daylight. And it’s safest—if you want to be safe, that is—to go down the river to get there and go straight out the tunnel. If you crawl down this passage, I can show you the way.”

- > **If you have a warm cloak in your pockets, you can offer it to the creature.**
- > **Ask the creature how they ended up here.**
- > **Ask immediately for the way to the river.**
- > **Thank the creature but return to continue down the main passage.**



THE CRYSTAL

You place the crystal in your mouth, somewhat dubious, and gulp it down. You feel a change come over you as your senses sharpen.

Your intelligence score increases by 1.

Thanking the prince in earnest, you turn from the room, though not fast enough to miss his face fall back into sadness as you [close the door behind you](#).



TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Trusting your instincts, you lean forward to kiss the prince. As your lips press against his, unknowingly offering flesh to the bonds that weave the spell, he sighs into the kiss, then seems to twist away into white mist and then nothingness. You are left alone in the room with the dawning realization that thanks to you, he is finally free from the confines of these walls.

The chests seem to be open. You search through, and stash in your pockets:

- + **fine silken clothes**
- + **a jeweled crown**
- + **150 gold pieces,**

before leaving the room and closing the door carefully behind you, and finding yourself back in the hall of doors, [to choose another.](#)



EFFORTLESS BUTCHERY

As you draw your weapon, the monster tiredly tells you she would rather not kill you, but you are making it very difficult not to.

If your dexterity is 5 or above, you manage to move a little out of her way as the weapon cleaves off a large chunk of your arm, and **you take 5 points of damage**.

If your dexterity is 4 or below, in a flash of steel she swiftly hacks off your arm with an expert flourish that belies years of training.

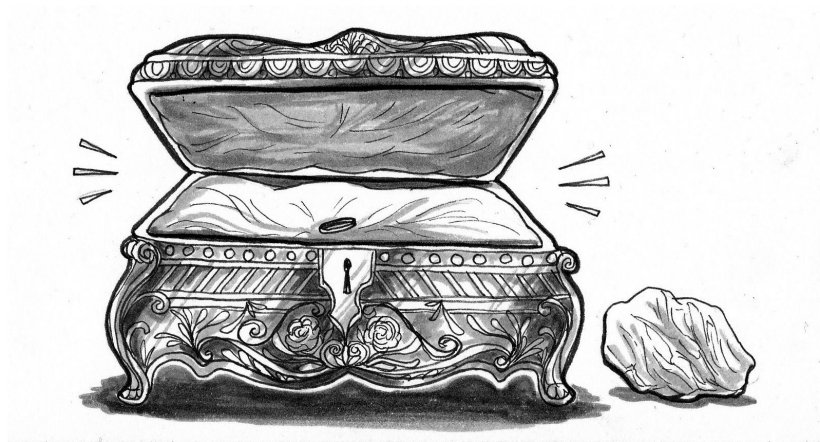
Howling in pain, you take **9 points of damage**. If you survive the hit, she sighs, taking a piece of cloth and binding the wound, warning you off such foolish behavior in the future.

In either case:

You give up, cowering, letting your weapon clatter to the floor in the face of such effortless butchery.

- **If you have fine silken clothes, a warm cloak, or jeweled crown,** she takes these things from you.

She sends you on your way down the passage, where you stumble downward, faint from loss of blood and numbed by shock, [into the cavern below.](#)



NOT WORTH THE TROUBLE

The monster considers for a moment. Though you've not been terribly persuasive, she seems to have had little company or excitement for a few hundred years. She steps aside and pointedly tells you that although a magical oath binds her to protect this treasure, if she didn't notice you taking it, there would be nothing she could do.

She wonders idly aloud whether someone taking the box would free her of guarding it, but as you take it down from the dais, nothing happens, and she lets out a deep sigh, slumping back down to the floor again. Inside the box you find

+ a milky, opalescent hunk of rock
+ a thin, dark ring shining with runes,

which you stow away in your pockets. You think it a strangely empty box to have magically guarded for hundreds of years, and wonder what the ring does and whether this lord was ever able to use it.

“Close the door after you, won't you?” the monster calls as you step back out of the room. “Or else I'll never hear the end of it from the door.” You close the still-chattering door behind you, and descend down a set of steps [into a wide cavern below](#).



AN OFFERING OF FLESH

You set your mind to the prince's terrible plight and the reward that may follow and avert your eyes as he takes a small knife to the last finger of your nondominant hand.

Take 3 damage as he slices through the flesh and bone above the knuckle, though he ties it quickly with a scrap of cloth. You look up and see the prince is smiling a too-wide smile, the gleam in his eyes seeming now crazed and hungry.

- **If your dexterity is 3 or above, you snatch back the finger, trusting your gut, and hurry from the room.**
- **If your dexterity is 2 or below, go here.**



WEALTH UNENDING

Before you are able to act, the prince pinches your finger between his teeth, tearing the flesh from the bone and swallowing hard. He makes for the open doorway and laughs with relief as he crosses over the threshold, unharmed. He bows before you, eyes manic and dancing, from the other side of the doorway. "Enjoy your riches," he calls behind him, as he makes for the staircase down.

When you start after him, you find you cannot pass through the doorway, as if a wall of sheer stone lies ahead of you. You search each inch of the invisible barrier to no avail, and then each drawer and chest in the room, each space under the mattress and carpet, and find no crack or corner or hint of a way out, only chests full of gold pieces and gems and jewellery. Many hours pass, and you find you have no need of food or sleep.

Eventually, you pick up one of the books from the floor, sprawl out on the bed and begin to read, your hair tousled, giving up on all hope of escape.

Your journey ends here.



A WELCOME KINDNESS

Remove the warm cloak from your pockets to give to the creature.

The creature's face suddenly lights up, and in a moment their expression turns from anxious to terribly excited.

“For me?? Truly? But you know it's so cold down here this will make a perfect little blanket and keep me warm and happy if I have to go up and down to catch my dinner.” They turn it over in their hands, delighted. “Oh, oh, but I must give you something in return, you know, especially if you're running around fighting all these terrible monsters.”

You thank the creature politely but, seeing only the rags and scraps of papers on the floor, wonder whether you really want to take anything from them.

“I know a little spellcraft, you know, and I'll just—” and before you can object or ask what they are doing, the creature has pulled a ghostly rune right off one of the scraps of parchment to float through the air into your forehead. For a moment, you feel dizzy, and then suddenly strangely

fortified, as if the cave is a little brighter and you are full of energy following a long night's rest.

Your strength score increases by 2.

- > Ask the creature how they ended up here.
- > Ask the creature to show you the way to the river.
- > Thank the creature and return to continue down the main passage.



AN OBVIOUS QUESTION

- **If your charisma is 2 or above:** [Go here.](#)
- **If your charisma is 1:** You bluntly ask what the creature is doing living in this hole. The creature shrinks down a little, their ears drooping, and mutters something about their family leaving them behind.

There is a long silence that gradually turns cold. Awkwardly, you thank the creature and return to the passage and [continue down the stairs.](#)

RETREAT

As you take your first step back toward the door, you hear the prince cry out, “What are you doing?” and, when you take another, hear a long scream that seems to ring in your ears over and over.

“NO!” The prince lunges toward you, face twisted in fury, a small knife drawn from his pocket.



- > [Push the prince away and run.](#)
- > [Draw your weapon to fight the prince.](#)

FLEE THE ROOM

- > **If your strength or dexterity score is 3 or above**, you block and dodge the prince as his knife stabs wildly at you, and you manage to push him backward into the room and run out the doorway.
- > **If both your strength and dexterity are 2 or below, you take 2 points of damage** as the prince's blade strikes true and you wriggle and stumble backward out of the doorway.

In either case:

He comes toward you again but seems trapped as if behind glass by the arch of the door, howling and spitting curses for a while.



Eventually, he slides downward to the floor, weeping hopelessly, perhaps at his confinement or perhaps at what it has driven him to.

He speaks no more, and you turn your attention to the [other doors of the room.](#)

A STORY OF HARD TIMES

You carefully ask the creature why they have chosen to make their home here, given that this place is so full of monsters they are afraid of, telling them you think them very brave.

At this, their ears perk up a little, and they begin to tell you of the little house they grew up in and their family.

Falling on hard times, their mother and eldest siblings had ventured down into the dungeon in the hope of finding treasures they could trade for food to last them the long winter. The family quickly found themselves overwhelmed and, on encountering a huge beast, fled back up to the entrance—not noticing their smallest member had fallen behind in the commotion. The little creature eventually snuck around the beast while it slept, only to find themselves deeper in the dungeon. Here, they made the best home they could, surviving on fish from the river, moss from the walls and rats.

“That was some months ago, now . . .” they finish, trailing off, looking dejected.

You tell the creature how brave and resourceful you think them and ask them why, if they know the way out, they do not leave the dungeon.

“If I return home empty-handed, my family still shan’t last the winter, and it all will have been for nothing. I’m their last hope!! We don’t need much, and I have been trying my very hardest, but . . . I’m just so afraid of all the traps and monsters and things I haven’t been able to get any treasures at all, yet. I’m beginning to worry I never will.”

- **If you have 5 gold pieces in your pockets**, you can offer them to the creature, encouraging them to escape the dungeon ([go here](#)).

> [Ask the creature to show you the way to the river.](#)

> Thank the creature and continue down the main passage.



FIGHT THE SMALL CREATURE

As you draw your weapon, you realize the creature's screech was out of terror, and they continue to squeak and snuffle, hiding their face behind their little hands but otherwise leaving themselves quite exposed and defenseless.

- > Strike the killing blow. You have been tricked too many times to take a chance on a monster again.
- > Lower your weapon and try to calm and speak with the creature.

DRAW YOUR WEAPON

You draw your weapon, but the prince comes at you undeterred. You swipe a warning arc, but he runs at you frantically, slashing at your arms.

You take a point of damage and swing your weapon in earnest.

Your blade cuts cleanly through the prince's throat, and he falls to his knees, burbling blood. His face softens all of a sudden and his lips move, trying to form words.



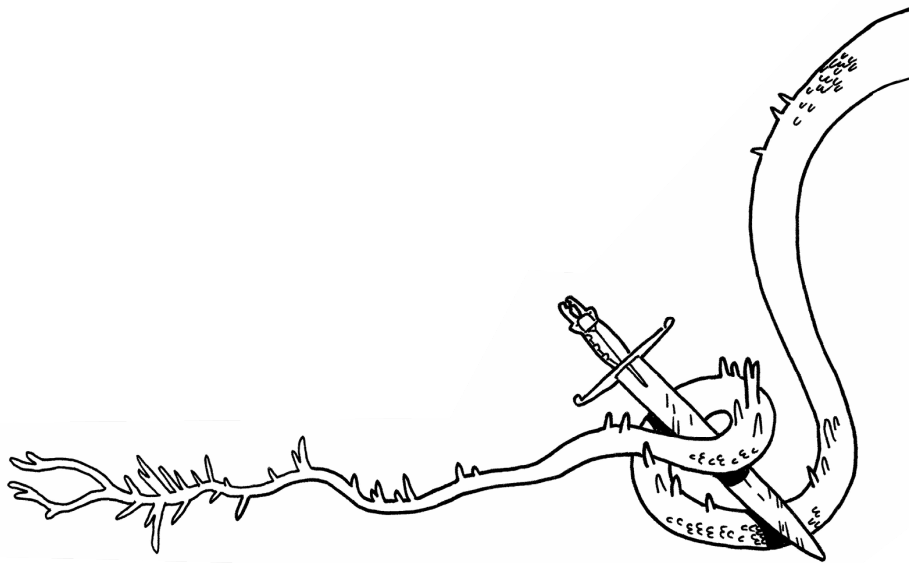
“Thank you,” he whispers, as he falls to the floor, unmoving, but finally free of his prison.

You are able to open one of the chests, searching through and stashing in your pockets:

+ fine silken clothes

+ a jeweled crown
+ 50 gold pieces,

before leaving the room and closing the door carefully behind you and finding yourself back in the hall of doors, considering whether to try another.



A GIFT TO AN ELDER

Remove the jeweled crown or silver candlestick from your inventory as you present it to the dragon.

The creature's eyes light up as you carefully place your gift in front of you at the edge of its hoard. "Ah, certainly you have a use after all," says the voice, as the dragon smiles a long, slow smile.

If your charisma is 2 or below, you manage not to scream in fear, and the creature allows you to leave ([go here](#)).

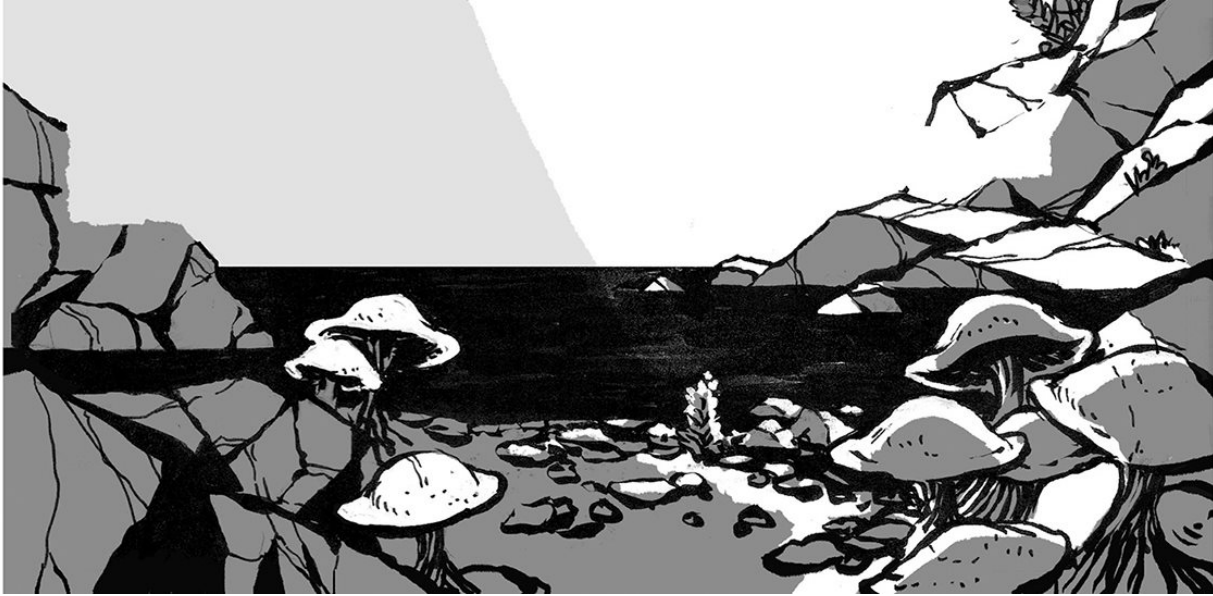
If your charisma is 3 or 4, you smile pleasantly at the creature and ask if it wishes anything else of you before you leave, to hear tales of your adventures or the outside world. The dragon gives a wide smile and inclines its head, encouraging you to go on ([go here](#)).

If your charisma is 5 or above, you give the creature an ostentatious bow

that it seems to enjoy greatly. You apologize for having disturbed the dragon and explain that it was only because of the terrible dangers you faced above that you stepped so loudly. Seeing the creature take an interest, you begin to weave a tale of your adventures through the dungeon thus far into a song that echoes sweetly through the vast room, and in due course, the dragon falls back into a deep slumber. Still singing, you quietly manage to pocket

+ 80 gold pieces

before you see the dragon stir a little and think it best to tiptoe back to the vault door and close it carefully behind you ([go here](#)).



THE CAVE

Far, far above you, an opening ringed with greenery lets in a shaft of daylight that casts a dim light over a wide cavern. Dust swirls in the air, and though an underground river rushes somewhere off to your left, the cave itself is cold and still.

As you step forward, a small rock bounces off the toe of your boot and plops downward into what you now see is a dark pool of water that takes up most of the cave. Peering downward, you think you see something glistening deep, deep below and a tunnel leading away beneath the water. The water is very clear, and it's hard to tell how far down the pool goes, but you think diving for long enough to explore would take some strength.

At the far end you see a small tunnel and hear the faint sound of wind blowing through and a hint of fresh air.

- **If you are carrying a torch**, you can toss it out over the water to try to get a quick, clearer glimpse of what lies under the surface ([go here](#)).
- > [Leave your heavy gold armor and cloak at the water's edge and dive to explore the pool](#). You can keep the items in your pockets with you.
- > [Keep your armor on and pockets full of gold and dive to explore the](#)

pool.

- > Skirt around the pool and make your way down the tunnel. You are ready to escape this place.

A GLINT BELOW

You make out a dark box, half hidden under the silt deep at the bottom of the pool with a rusted lock that glints in the fading light from above.

Kicking the lock, the box springs open, revealing

+ 40 gold pieces
+ an ancient sword,

which you sheath and stow away, before kicking off from the bottom, heading back to the surface.

If your strength is 3 or above, you reach the surface just as your head begins to spin from lack of air and emerge unharmed, pulling yourself up onto dry land.

If your strength is 2 or below, you realize you have gone too long without air. Straining and desperately paddling upward, you take an involuntary gasp, and a mouthful of dank, freezing water enters your lungs. You **take a point of damage** but manage to surface, hauling yourself spluttering and retching onto the bank and scrambling to find the things you left on the shore.

In either case:

It takes you some time to recover, and the cold of the water seems to have taken root in your bones. Something about this place makes you uneasy, and after sitting for a while, you think you hear bubbles coming up from deep below. Feeling a sudden urgency to move, and wondering how long you've been down here—hours? days?—you scramble up, collecting your things, and begin to make your way around the pool to the tunnel, wanting very much to see the sky again ([go here](#)).

AN OFFER OF HELP

When you call out to them, the figure in the corner only sobs harder, making no move. If it is a child, you think, they seem filthy and helpless, unable to stem their flow of tears. You crouch down and stretch your hand out to the child, perhaps to comfort them or encourage them to speak, and realize you cannot pull it back.

Glancing down, you watch in horror as what you thought was the child's arm ripples and warps, slowly coating your hand like a thick slime, and you begin to feel your fingers burn as if dipped in acid. You see them start to disintegrate through the translucent ichor. The figure unfurls into a grotesque, limbless creature, still faintly making the noise of a child sobbing.



- > Try to fight the creature.
- > Cut off the ends of the fingers infected by slime, taking 2 points of damage, and flee back to the main passageway to continue downward.



THE ROILING HORROR

The figure unfurls fully into a creature that reminds you of jellyfish or loose organs, flailing out toward you with tentacle strands of thick goo.

- **If your dexterity is 5 or above**, you dart around, dealing swift slashes to the creature and avoiding the tentacles. You seem to catch an important sac within the creature and it deflates suddenly, letting you pull away and extricate yourself from the now-inert thing. You make your way quickly back to the main passage and continue down, thankful you escaped with so little harm done ([go here](#)).

- **If your dexterity is 3 or 4**, you become entangled with the monster, your limbs caught within the thing, burning as the flesh is eaten away.

You take 4 damage, slashing at it hopelessly over a long, exhausting fight. Eventually, your blade connects with some vital, pulsing organ within the thing and it slumps down to the ground, so you can slowly extricate yourself

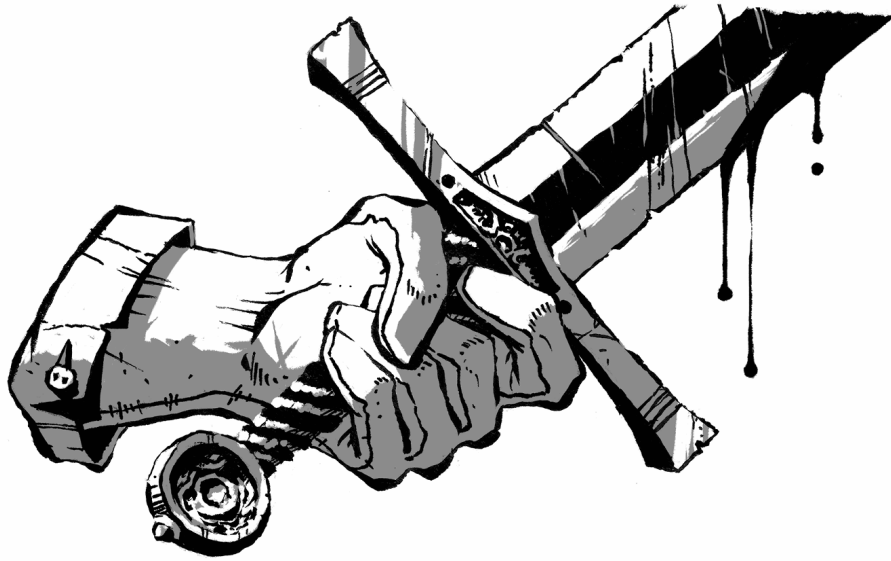
from the now-inert slime. Wiping away the goo, you stagger back to the main passageway and continue down, cautioning yourself to be more wary next time ([go here](#)).

- **If your dexterity is 2 or below**, the monster almost completely engulfs you. You're able to keep your head above its surface and eventually fell it by waving your blade around inside its body, but only once you have been partially digested by the thing, **taking 6 points of damage and permanently lowering your strength value by 2**, as your rash-covered, skinless limbs are no longer able to muster the energy they once had.

After resting for some time, you manage to summon the strength to slowly crawl and then stagger back to the main passageway to limp down it ([go here](#)).

AN ANCIENT POWER

You draw your weapon and charge, swiping toward the dragon and drawing blood.



Yet the creature does not move at all, staring amused and unblinking, and when you look back, you see no mark or gash where your weapon just carved. The dragon lazily extends a huge claw and easily gouges into your chest as if you wore no armor or protection at all.

Take 4 points of damage.

As you lie gasping on the floor, trying to quickly stem the flow of blood, the dragon lets out a great exhalation that you think may be a laugh.

“I think it would be very unwise for you to try that again, small one,” says the voice. “Now, are you going to entertain me or prove . . . unsatisfactory?”

- [If you have a charisma of 3 or above, you can try to entertain the dragon with a story.](#)

> [Try to run from the dragon.](#)

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

You think it best to avoid this creature altogether and decide to flee.

- **If your dexterity is 4 or above**, you immediately whip back out and hide behind the door. A jet of strange, bright flame shoots from the room, further blackening the door opposite but leaving you untouched on the other side of the heavy door, which you quickly swing shut and hear click so it cannot be opened ([go here](#)).

- **If your dexterity is 2 or 3**, you start out of the door but **take 6 points of damage** as a jet of flame streaks toward you, catching at your legs. You manage to escape the room, slamming the heavy metal door behind you and patting out your smoldering clothes ([go here](#)).

If your dexterity is 1, you stumble as you try to retreat and are caught by the full force of a jet of flame that instantly chars your body to a crisp before you can figure out what's happened.

Your journey ends here.



THE UNDERWATER TUNNEL

- **If your strength is 1 or below:** You swim down through the wide tunnel, some way below the surface. You begin to feel dizzy with lack of air and swim blearily upward, only to feel yourself hit solid rock and the roof of the tunnel. You've gone too far to make it back but see no sign of air pockets or the next cavern ahead of you.

- **If your strength is 2 or 3:** As you swim through the wide tunnel, you find yourself short of breath and see no sign of the cavern ahead of you. You realize you will not have the strength to make it any farther and, turning in the water, swim desperately back to the dim light of the first cavern. Straining and desperately paddling upward, you take an involuntary gasp, and a mouthful of dank, freezing water enters your lungs.

You take a point of damage but manage to surface, hauling yourself spluttering and retching onto the bank and scrambling to find the things you left on the shore. You gather your things and trudge around the edge of the pool, unable to bear the cold and exhaustion any longer, to make your way to the tunnel.

- **If your strength is 4 or above:** The underwater tunnel is longer and deeper than it first seemed, but swimming as fast as you can, you make out another cavern a little way ahead, smaller than the first but faintly lit by torchlight. Just as you feel unable to hold your breath much longer, the tunnel widens and you kick up toward the surface to breathe a deep lungful of air.



CAPTURED

Before you can gather your bearings and find the shore, webbed hands close on your arms and haul you from the water. Dragging you to the edge of the cavern, they throw you down against the wall. You see several gaunt figures covered in spines and fins staring down at you and, beyond them, a series of crudely built tents crowding the small room, with piles of rags that serve as beds and a firepit. You think you see more, smaller mer-creatures crowding around, children staring at you from the darkness with pale, shining eyes. They look very thin and very hungry.

You hear a series of clicking noises and realize they are communicating with each other, perhaps discussing your fate. You reach around for the few things still with you in your pockets.

- **If you have an otherworldly necklace**, the creature's eyes light up immediately as you draw the shining thing from your pocket.

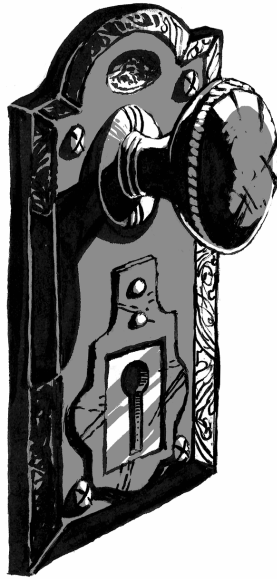
> **[Hand over the necklace.](#)**

> **[Pull it back to your chest, away from them.](#)**

- **If you do not have the necklace, but instead have a small bottle of sweet**

wine, fine silken clothes or a silver candlestick, [go here](#).

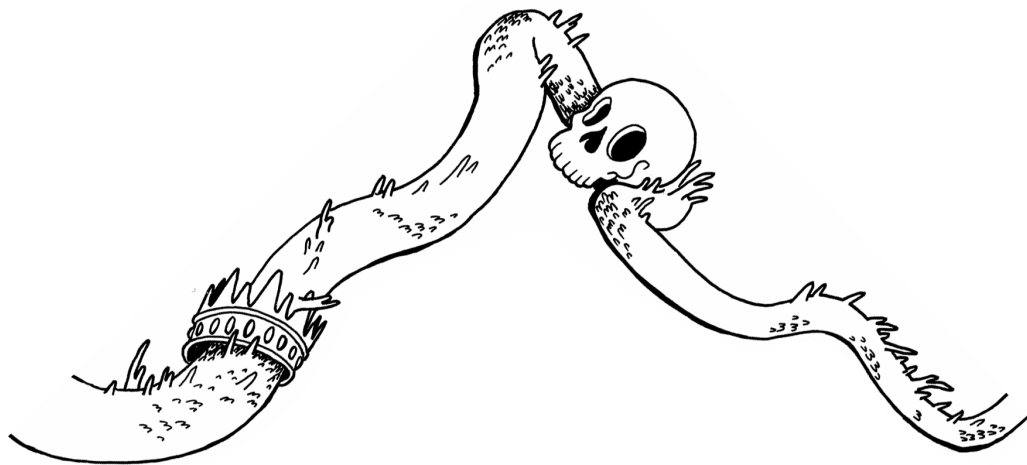
- If you have none of these things, [go here](#).



A SIMPLE LOCK

When you try the door, you find it locked. The door is of a plain wood, not especially sturdy, and the lock seems simple.

- **If both your strength and intelligence are 4 or below, you must [try another door or continue on](#).**
- **If your strength is 5 or above, you can shove, kick and shoulder the door [until it breaks inward](#).**
- **If your intelligence is 5 or above, you can work a piece of wire in the keyhole until it [clicks open](#).**



AUDIENCE WITH AN ANCIENT

Nervously, you begin to tell the dragon one of the old tales, but after a while it flicks a claw at you, irritated.

“Do not tell me tales from the Lost Age. I know it far better than you, having lived through it myself. Tell me a tale I have not heard before.”

You try again, this time telling the dragon a somewhat embellished and more eventful version of your life's events and the circumstances that led you here to the dungeon, concluding with your encounter with the beast above. A little lamely, you make some remark about hoping the story has a way to go, yet.

The dragon is silent. You feel a bead of sweat slowly trickle down your brow but resist the urge to brush it away, keeping your smile. It is very hot in this metal room, and you notice something glowing ominously inside the creature itself. After some time, as if thinking on your fate, the dragon exhales with a huge, deep chuckle. “Very well, small one, you may go and finish your tale and take one thing from my collection, in case you make it from this place with your life.”

Not wanting to get any closer to the heat emanating from the thing, you grab something from close by and stow in your pockets **one of the**

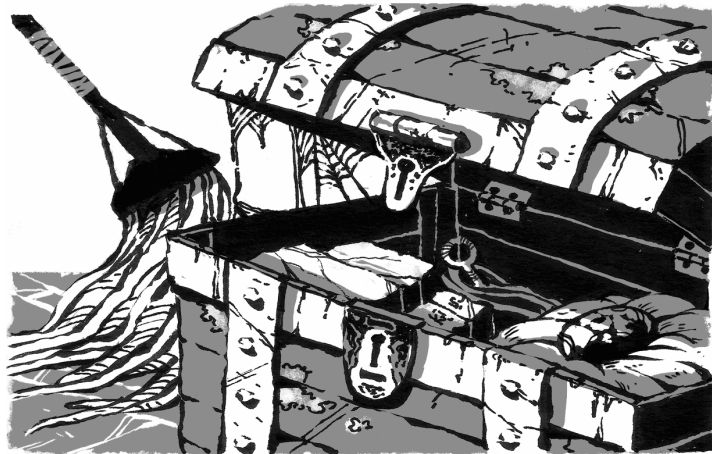
following:

- + a milky, opalescent hunk of rock**
- + a small, glittering topaz**
- + a bundle of fine silken clothes**
- + a small pouch clinking with 20 gold pieces.**

You walk from the room, smiling and thanking the thing graciously much more calmly than you feel and shutting the huge vault **door behind you with a sigh of relief.**

THE CHEST IN THE BROOM CUPBOARD

The room you enter is much smaller than you expected, more of a cupboard, with a broom propped against one wall and a single heavy sea-chest in a dusty corner full of cobwebs. The lock on the chest looks broken open, and you could easily lift the lid. As you approach, you hear a faint hum from inside.



You throw back the lid of the chest and step backward, expecting some kind of trap or beast, but all that is inside the box are a few small items. The humming seems to be coming from a smooth black stone polished to a shine. The stone's strange crystalline humming grows louder as your hand draws nearer, then stops entirely as you touch it. You feel some kind of powerful energy emanating from the smooth stone and have a sense that it has a will of its own. Whether it is good or evil, you cannot tell. You can **choose** to pick up:

- + **the smooth black stone**—or to leave it be. You also find:
- + **a milky, opalescent hunk of rock**
- + **a small key that seems to be made of glass, wrapped in velvet cloth,**

stowing them in your pockets before returning to the [room of doors](#).

THE ROUGH-HEWN STAIRWAY

The stairway downward is no longer neatly built stones but rough and jagged, as if hewn from the rock. You step carefully, descending for what seems like a long time. Once or twice you find networks of rooms, which, upon searching, you find completely empty, as if already plundered. All are covered by a thick coating of dust, their only contents now-broken shackles bolted to the walls and a long-rotted chair.



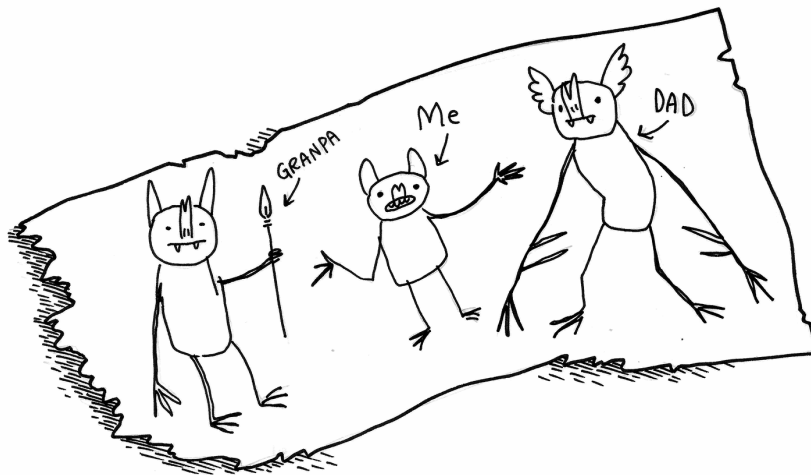
Finding nothing of interest and certainly no treasures, you go on down the central passage, eventually reaching a point where two rough-hewn corridors branch off to your left and right. Down the left corridor, you hear a chime and clink, as if of bells. To the right, you think you can make out the sound of muffled sobs. Ahead, the main passage continues down.

- > [Take the left corridor to investigate the chiming noise.](#)
- > [Take the right corridor to investigate the sobbing.](#)
- > [Continue downward.](#)

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

Crawling through the gap, you swing your blade and easily fell the little creature, whose muffled crying is suddenly cut off as you end their life.

You search the rags and dirt on the floor and find absolutely nothing of value, only some scrawled, mysterious runes on the parchment you cannot make out and clumsy little drawings made in charcoal.



“Better safe than sorry,” you think to yourself, trudging on downward, trying to fight back the sinking feeling in your stomach that you have killed an innocent creature who might have [helped you on your way](#).



THE LORD OF ROT AND RAGS

You look up again at the tapestry opposite you, into the eyes of the smiling lord above his kill, and all of a sudden remember the archway in the ruins and the dungeon you sought to explore. How strange it is to have found a banquet laid out in a great hall, when the landscape seemed quite desolate and empty, how strange that the benches are empty and none eat at the table.

As the thought comes to you, you see that the tapestry is not new but faded and tattered, the lord's face twisted in a grimace of satisfaction and the deer still bleeding out, never granted a quick death.

On the table, the candles are long burned out, the food furred and covered in mold, the apple in your hand turning to a thick slime as you let it fall from your grasp. The benches are not empty but full of thin, pale figures in tattered rags who tear hungrily at the feast before them, shoveling the disintegrating dishes into their mouths, scrabbling at the bones and slime and maggots that wriggle across the silver plates.

And there at the head of the table is the lord, standing with his arms raised in a gesture of welcome.

- > Speak to the lord.
- > Turn and flee.



A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT

Remove 5 gold pieces from your pockets to give to the creature, telling them that they can take it back to their family, and that you are sure they will make it out of the cave safely, having avoided the monsters for so long.

The creature seems inspired by your words and overwhelmed by the gold, which they seem to consider an impossibly large amount, meaning a lot more to them than it did to you. Tearful with happiness, they shake your hand over and over and begin to pack up the little scraps of parchment with the runes and small drawings, bundling them into the cloak. They enthusiastically write down your home address and promise to visit you.

Finally, they concentrate hard on one of the runes and it lifts from the page, floating toward you and into your chest. You feel suddenly invigorated.

Restore your health points to their original starting value.

You thank the creature, wish them luck and return to the main passageway to [continue downward](#).



THE RIDDLE DOOR

Behind the door, the passage widens into a hallway well lit by torches.

A little way along, a great door covered in strange, scrawled runes leads off to the right-hand side. As you approach, three skeletons carved into the door begin to shift and move slightly in the wood itself, then open their mouths and begin to chatter excitedly in voices that sound like the creaking of a great ship.

“Welcome, traveler!”

“I was going to say that—”

“So you have come all this way to challenge us, the riddlers three—”

“One of us only lies; the other only tells the truth. The third sort of

alternates in a pattern you must determine. You can ask six questions—”

The carved skeletons interrupt and talk over each other, trying to explain something about a bag of seed and turtle soup. You have to listen carefully to get the gist of what they're talking about at all, which seems to be a rather confusing puzzle.

- **If your intelligence is 3 or below**, you have very little interest in their obscure ramblings and continue off down the corridor. The door continues to squabble among itself, not even noticing you are gone, and you descend a long stairway to emerge into the [wide space below](#).
- **If your intelligence is 4 or above**, you've read of this puzzle before and completed it long ago. You confidently tell the door that though the hen can't be in the boat at the same time as the seed, it must only tell the truth because it's its own grandmother. On hearing the solution, the door stops squabbling, a little disappointed, and [grudgingly swings open](#).



THE WAY TO THE RIVER

Crawling on hands and knees, you follow the creature past their little abode down a steep passageway in the rock. After a long and uncomfortable crawl, you begin to hear the sound of rushing water and emerge into an almost completely dark room, you think at the shore of a swift river.

The creature looks terrified, insisting it can go no farther, as it is afraid of the monsters beyond, but points you to a faint glow in the distance and retreats back up the tunnel. You wade through the water through an opening and find yourself in [a large cavern](#).



CURLED UP IN THE CORNER

The rough, dark passageway comes to an abrupt stop. Curled up in the corner, you think you can make out a child crying.

- [If you are carrying a torch or have an intelligence of 5 or above, you can look more closely.](#)
- > [Try to help the child.](#)
- > [Return to the crossroads and go down the other corridor with the chiming noise.](#)
- > [Return to the crossroads and continue downward.](#)



LOOK MORE CLOSELY

For a second, you think you see a slight ripple on what you assumed were the child's hunched legs. When you bend down to get a better look at their face, you sense something a little off—almost as if their eyes are in slightly the wrong place, as if pasted on slightly askew. One of the sobs, now you are listening closely, has the strange edge of a gurgle to it.

When you see another ripple along their “arm,” you step back, horror creeping into your mind. Something about their movements reminds you sickeningly of a snake, poised to strike. Though you are not sure what you are looking at, one thing is certain—it is definitely not a child.

- > **Suppressing your dread, you draw your weapon, determined to fight the horror.**
- > **Return swiftly to the main passageway to continue downward.**

TWO DOORS

At the bottom of the passageway, the ground levels out into a rough-hewn ledge, lit by the same strange, steady light of the torches you saw above. You may take a torch with you if you are not carrying one.

- > **Take a torch from the walls** and carry it with you as you continue. Add the torch to your inventory. You must remove it if at any point you draw a weapon to fight a monster.
- > **Leave the torches alone.**

In either case:

You see two doors ahead of you with patterns and studs of dark, shining metal. At the center of the left door there is a carving of the skull of some kind of antelope but with horns you have never seen before. At the center of the right door is carved a great flat skull, ridged and knobbed, with rows of tiny teeth, that is unfamiliar to you—perhaps a kind of salamander?



- > [Go through the door with the horned skull.](#)
- > [Go through the door with the great, ridged skull.](#)

THE LABYRINTH

You feel drawn to the small passageway and with a new sense of vigor plunge down the steps, feeling almost pulled forward in great anticipation of what you may find here. The passage branches again and again, and you confidently pick directions at random. Driven on as if by a new purpose, you walk and walk, finding no end—in fact, walking ways you're sure you've been before. You walk for hours and hours until your feet begin to ache, climbing narrow stairways and descending through others, turning corners and following the passageways as they wind around to where they began. You grow more and more tired, until your feet are blistered and sore and bleeding, and the excitement you felt begins to wear away.

You realize you have grown very cold, and the air feels thick, as if you cannot gulp enough of it down to sustain you. Still, you have a sense that you cannot stop or rest, not because you must reach a destination but now as if something pursues you. Onward you trudge, seeking now not to reach some final place but to return to the passage you came from. But no matter what you try, taking the left fork every time, or the right, you still seem to walk the same paths again and again. The tunnels grow colder still, and you notice you have eaten the last of the supplies you brought with you. After a while, you are unable to walk and begin to crawl, desperate to continue, until you eventually collapse.

You fall into an uneasy sleep, full of nightmares of a formless horror that draws you downward deep into the earth, from which you do not wake.

Your journey ends here.



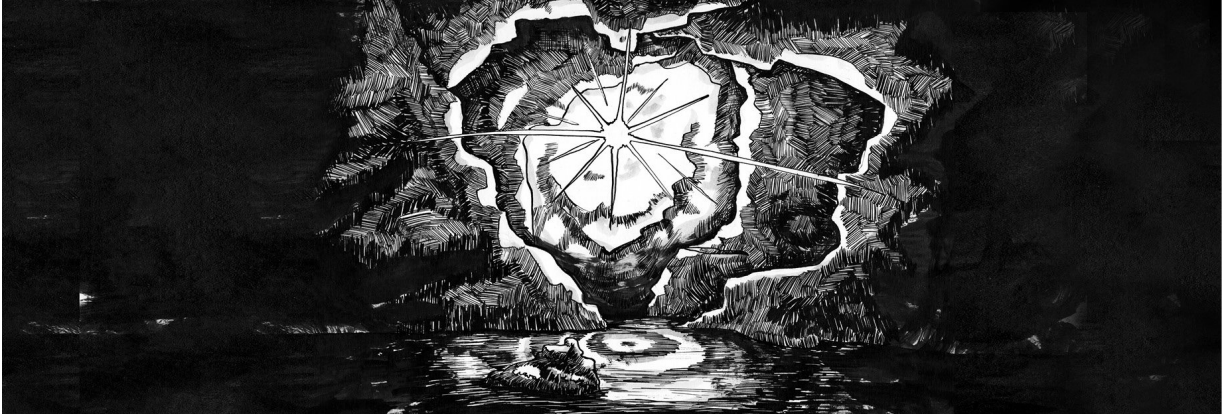
BENEATH THE SURFACE

The light grows slowly dimmer as you descend farther into the pool, and you find it much deeper than it appeared from above. You will have less time than you thought to explore the bottom, and realize you must choose between exploring the bottom of this pool or venturing farther into the underwater tunnel.

- [If you have the smooth black stone in your pockets.](#)

Otherwise:

- > [Investigate the bottom of the pool where you thought you saw something glinting.](#)
- > [Continue on to the underwater tunnel.](#)



AN ARC OF LIGHT

Thinking you will have little use of it in the water, you throw the strange torch in a high arc out across the pool. It barely flickers as it flies through the air, the flame seeming to dance while giving out a steady, unwavering light. At first you see very little but the cave roof, then the torch plunges into the water and remains illuminated, the flame seeming to grow green and pale, still burning as it sinks down into the water.

You clearly see a dark box, half hidden under the silt deep at the bottom of the pool, and a tunnel extending away beneath the water to another cavern. At the bottom of the pool you see cave-fish skeletons, not rotted away from age but eaten and torn into recently by sharp teeth, discarded with bits of the white bloated flesh still attached.

You back against the wall of the cave a little and see movement—a gaunt, finned creature a little larger than a person swimming down to the torch. They move their head from side to side, squinting at the bright light, then cautiously grab the handle, taking the torch with them back into the tunnel, until the light disappears. In the torchlight, you saw their pale eyes swivel, the spines of their hands and points of their teeth, and wonder whether more creatures occupy a deeper cavern.

- > [Leave your heavy gold armor and cloak at the water's edge, and dive to explore the pool.](#) You can keep the items in your pockets with you.
- > [Keep your armor on and pockets full of gold and dive to explore the](#)

pool.

- > Skirt around the pool and make your way down the tunnel. You are ready to escape this place.

THE SOUND OF SCURRYING

Eventually, the passage heads downward in a steep, narrow stairway carved from the rock. You wonder how far beneath the moor you must be and whether you have traveled some way under the ground or whether the dungeon abides by different, arcane laws that govern the distances traveled.

- **If you are not carrying a torch**, you continue on unimpeded. There are no torches lining the walls now, but you can make out a dim light ahead and continue on toward it, until the stairway widens out into [a much larger space](#).

- **If you are carrying a torch**, you hear a scurrying sound above and realize the bright flame has drawn a flurry of beetles, moths and spiders that drop from some crack in the ceiling above. Some are a pale, translucent color and much larger than their counterparts in the world above, many up to your knees.

- **If your dexterity is 5 or above**, you are able to leap and dodge through the swarm and sprint down to the room below, still holding the torch, without being followed.

- **If your dexterity is 4 or below, you must drop the torch** and begin to swing wildly at the knee-high swarm with your weapon. The things crowd around the dropped torch, seeming to eat the light from it as the flame slowly diminishes, and you are able to stumble down out of the stairway with only a few bites and scrapes, **taking 2 points of damage**.

In either case, [go here](#).



GUARDED TREASURES

You enter a large circular room, lit by shafts of sunlight that fall from windows that look out on a strange, shifting landscape. Apart from the fact that you are far belowground, there is something else wrong with the view, and if you think about it too much, or try to describe what is there, you begin to get a headache.

In the center of the room is a tall dais, lit with another strange beam of bright light from no natural source. There is an ornate box sitting atop it and an extremely bored-looking monster sitting underneath it, looking up at you.

“Don’t tell me,” she says, getting to her feet and drawing a huge and dangerous-looking weapon, “you’re here for the ancient treasure that was stolen from the dynasty of princes by the lord of the hall.” Then, muttering: “I bet the lord died ages ago; I don’t even see why the spell still binds me here.”

You inform her you have not heard of that particular treasure, but she

implies she still has to hack you to pieces if you want to take the box.

- **If you have the small glass key,** you can show it to the monster and ask whether it fits the box on the dais.
- **If you have no key but a small bottle of sweet wine OR a charisma of 4 or above,** you either give the creature the wine or invent a story about how you need the treasure to save an orphanage.
- > **Fight the monster**—it seems you have to prove yourself to get this treasure.
- > **Leave the room** and continue down the passage you were on until you reach the next room—this seems like more trouble than it's worth.



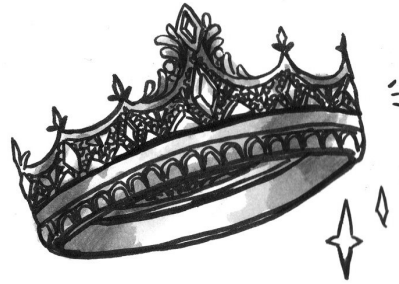
A HINT OF FRESH AIR

Stooping and crawling through the tunnel, you follow the trickle of water that runs through it. The air begins to feel warmer and fresher in your lungs, and after a short while you emerge into the bright daylight, on what you recognize as a rocky beach some miles from the archway where you first came in.

Whether you are weighed down with treasures or horribly empty-handed, hearty and hale or bruised and bloody, stumbling out with less limbs and no inclination to go adventuring again, you have emerged from the dungeon alive.

Unsure of whether you spent hours or many days down below the surface, you stumble exhausted to a nearby town to find food and shelter and rest for a few days, before continuing on to the city to survey what you have brought back with you and whether you have found what you were looking for.

[Go here.](#)



COUNTING YOUR TREASURES

If you have a jeweled crown, it can be sold for 40 gold pieces or donated to a historical society, where you discover it to be one of the last relics of the high princes who ruled the moors in the Lost Age.

If you have a silver candlestick, you discover any candle placed in it will last for many years, giving out a ghostly, ever-burning light. You can keep it, or it can be sold to a guild of scholars for 30 gold pieces.

You can also sell:

a small, glittering topaz for 15 gold pieces.

a milky, opalescent hunk of rock for 25 gold pieces.

a large, rough gemstone the color of blood for 100 gold pieces.

If you have less than 5 gold pieces: You are happy to have escaped the dungeon with your life but emerge barely any richer than you went in. The amount of damage to your boots and clothes and cost of the supplies you entered with almost balance out with the treasures you came out with.

If you have 5-49 gold pieces: Though you are able to buy yourself fine meals and good lodgings for a number of months, the treasures from the dungeon gradually run out, and you find yourself wondering whether your time in the dungeon was worth the trouble.

If you have 50-149 gold pieces: You are able to buy yourself a modest house and a fine suit of armor or to travel the world for some time. Though there are times of hardship, the treasures you found in the dungeon see you well

for many years.

If you have 150+ gold pieces: The treasure you found in the dungeon is enough to buy a fine house and live comfortably for the rest of your days. Whether you choose to live in finery, provide for your family or travel the world on further adventures, you want for nothing.

If you played DALIMIL and survived the dungeon, your friends are shocked to see you emerge, alive, from your foolish venture. Though you had heard outlandish tales of the dungeon, the truth of the place was stranger still, and whether you found enough money to pay your debts or not, you sing exaggerated accounts of all that befell you there to great acclaim for the rest of your days.

If you played LOK and emerge with *100+ gold pieces*, you finally buy yourself a small home and furnish it with the things you had always dreamed of: a bed and clean clothes and good food. You reward the few people who had treated you kindly three times over—the woman who looked the other way when you stole bread ends up with a larger shop in a nicer part of town and you as her best customer. Though some of your old habits prove hard to shake and you often wake curled at the foot of your bed clutching a knife, you spend the rest of your days making a simple and honest living and could not be happier.

If you played ANEIR and emerge with the ancient sword, your prowess in combat is greater than ever before. Your blows always strike true, and you win back your reputation and more, though perhaps return a little more bloodthirsty than your peers remember.

If you played XENOPHON and emerge with a dark ring shining with runes, you find within it a great arcane power that you study for many years. Whether you pursue your studies alone or with others, eventually, you harness the power of the ring and a great many of the world's mysteries become clear to you.



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ACHIEVEMENT BINGO

Get 4 in a row (diagonal counts!) in the least number of playthroughs, or for the ultimate completionist dungeon veteran, collect them all . . .

[Tap to download and print.](#)



[Download and print the note pages here.](#)

Roll-your-own character note pages

Name:
About:

Strength (1d6)

Dexterity (1d6)

Charisma (1d6)

Intelligence (1d6)

Total health (3d6)

--

Appearance (write or draw above)

Current health:

Notes:

Current gold:

Pockets:

Set character note pages
(see page 4 to choose a set character)

Name: DALIMIL

Strength	1
<hr/>	
Dexterity	4
<hr/>	
Charisma	5
<hr/>	
Intelligence	1
<hr/>	
Total health	6
<hr/>	

Pockets:	
Current health:	Gold:

Notes:

Name: LOK

Strength	2
<hr/>	
Dexterity	5
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Charisma	1
<hr/>	
Intelligence	3
<hr/>	
Total health	15
<hr/>	

Pockets:	
Current health:	Gold:

Notes:

Set character note pages
(see page 4 to choose a set character)

Name: ANEIR

Strength	5
<hr/>	
Dexterity	2
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Charisma	3
<hr/>	
Intelligence	4
<hr/>	
Total health	15
<hr/>	

Pockets:	
Current health:	Gold:

Notes:

Name: XENOPHON

Strength	1
<hr/>	
Dexterity	3
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Charisma	4
<hr/>	
Intelligence	5
<hr/>	
Total health	10
<hr/>	

Pockets:	
Current health:	Gold:

Notes:

HELLO, WE MADE THIS

Author & artist info



Hari Conner (author & artist)

Comic artist, huge nerd, low HP, definitely still trapped in the dungeon.

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[60](#), [86](#), [95](#).)





Felix Miall

Fantasy trash, leading expert in the field of drawing armor, probably tried to fight the dragon.

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Artist ([p11](#), [14](#), [16](#), [21](#), [25](#), [34](#), [35](#), [69](#), [73](#), [77](#), [79](#), [80](#), [82](#), [85](#), [89](#), [91](#), [97](#).)





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fayestacey-illustration.co.uk

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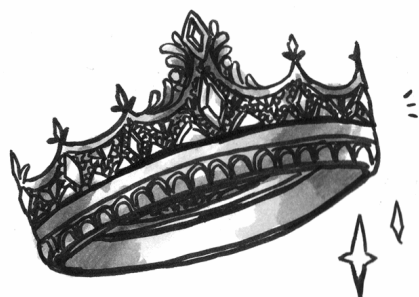
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