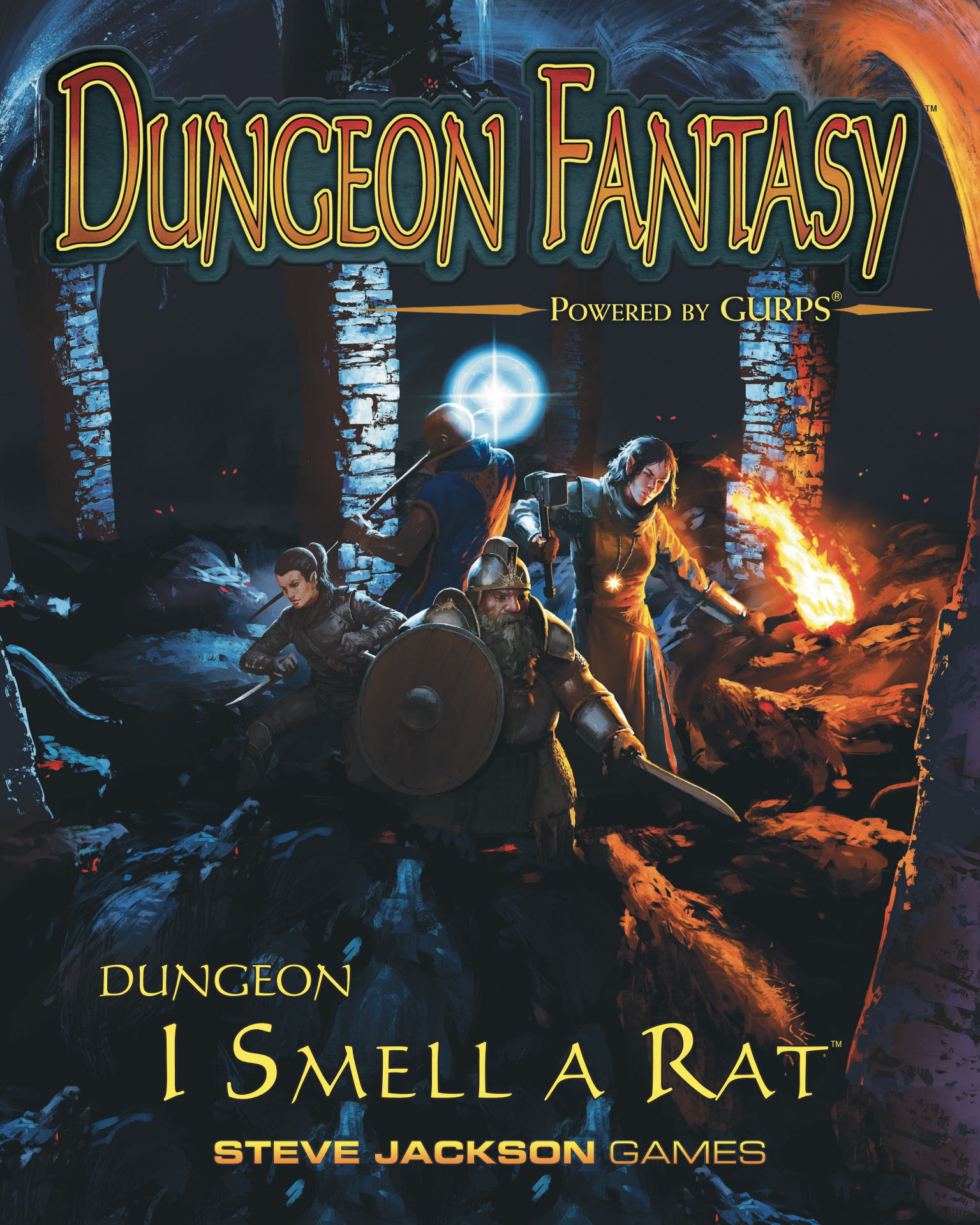


DUNGEON FANTASY™

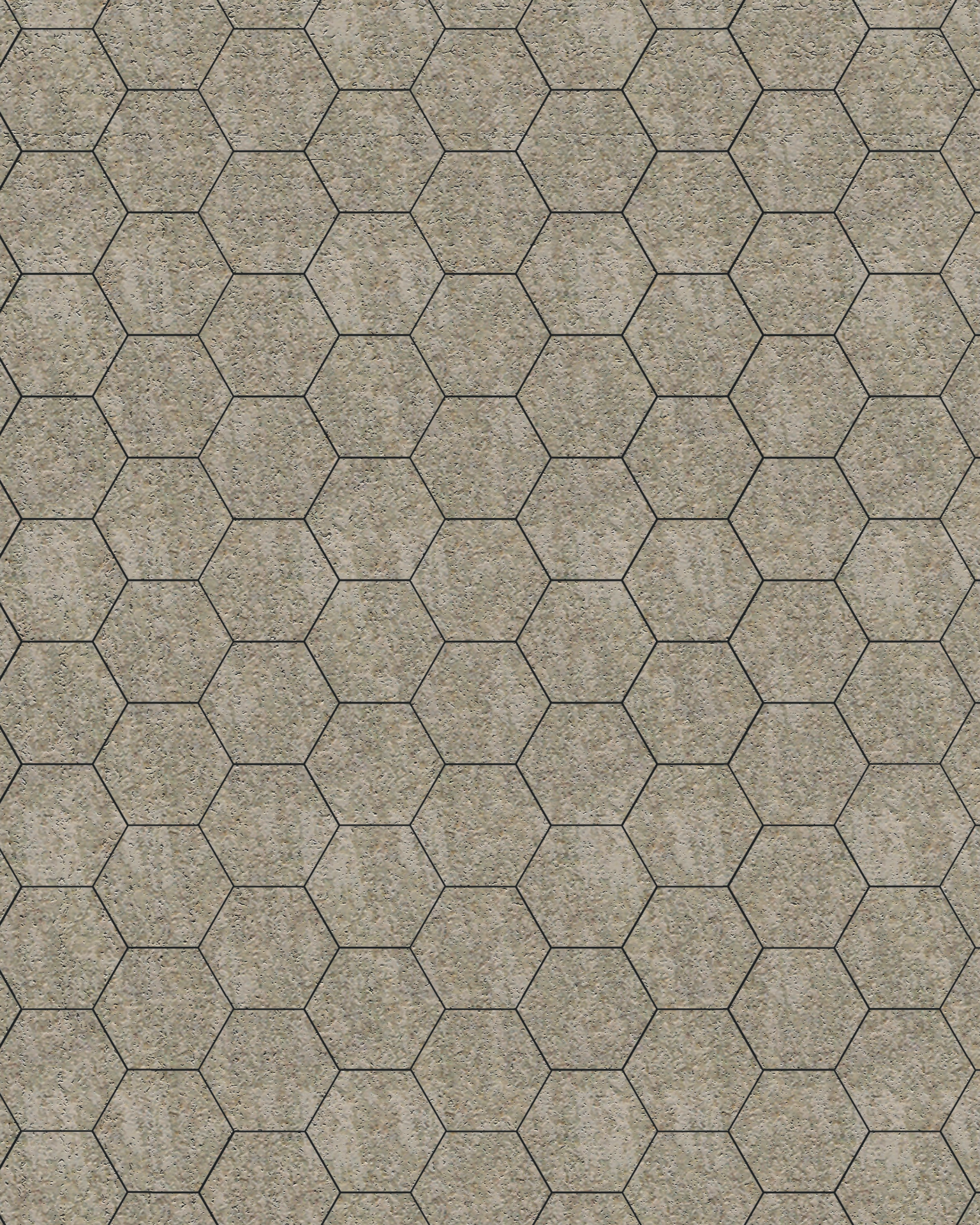
POWERED BY GURPS®



DUNGEON

I SMELL A RAT™

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



DUNGEON FANTASY™

POWERED BY GURPS®

DUNGEON I SMELL A RAT™



Written by SEAN PUNCH • Cover Art by BRANDON MOORE • Cartography by BEN MUND
Interior Illustrations by DENIS LOUBET and BRANDON MOORE

Additional Illustrations by ALEX FERNANDEZ and DAN WILLEMS

Reviewers: Miranda Horner and Jason “PK” Levine

Dungeon Fantasy, *I Smell a Rat*, *GURPS*, *Pyramid*, Warehouse 23, the pyramid logo, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are trademarks or registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license.

Dungeon Fantasy: I Smell a Rat is copyright © 2017 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

STEVE JACKSON GAMES



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>What If the Delves Say "No"?</i> | 3 |
| <i>Advice: Scaling Encounters</i> | 3 |

1. SETTING THE SCENE 4

| | |
|--|---|
| Tell Us More About This Town | 4 |
| Will Work for Food | 4 |
| <i>Speaking from Experience</i> | 4 |
| Uncle Merle's Place | 4 |
| Down There? | 5 |
| <i>Whatever Happened to Uncle Merle?</i> | 5 |
| <i>A Dark Truth</i> | 5 |
| <i>Keeping It in the Family</i> | 5 |
| <i>Desperately Seeking Merle</i> | 5 |

2. THE DUNGEON 6

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>More Than We Bargained For</i> | 6 |
| 1. Cellar | 6 |
| (a) Stairs | 6 |
| (b) Pillars | 7 |
| (c) Junk Pile | 7 |
| (d) Smugglers' Door | 7 |
| 2. Twisting Tunnel | 7 |
| <i>Advice: Running Combats</i> | 8 |
| 3. Sewers | 8 |
| <i>Sewer Encounters Table</i> | 9 |
| (a) Merle's Concealed Door | 9 |
| (b) Smugglers' Door | 9 |
| 4. Smugglers' Den | 9 |
| <i>Smugglers!</i> | 9 |
| <i>Hook: Dealing In the Devil</i> | 9 |
| (a) Blade Traps | 10 |
| 5. Rune-Limned Gallery | 10 |
| 6. Ritual Chamber | 10 |
| (a) False Wall | 11 |
| (b) Curtain | 11 |
| (c) Evil Altar | 11 |
| 7. Hidden Tomb | 12 |
| Zombie Gang Member | 12 |
| 8. Main Hallway | 12 |
| 9. First Cell | 12 |
| 10. Second Cell | 13 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 11. Third Cell | 13 |
| 12. Library | 13 |
| <i>Advice: Expecting the Unexpected</i> | 14 |
| 13. Lab | 14 |
| Scrounged Concoctions Table | 15 |
| 14. Testing Area | 15 |
| <i>Hook: Adventures in Waste Management</i> | 15 |
| <i>Hook: The Depths</i> | 15 |
| <i>Hook: Through a Portal, Darkly</i> | 15 |
| 15. Blasted Passage | 16 |
| Deep Encounters Table | 16 |
| 16. End of the Line | 16 |
| Husk of Merle | 17 |

RANDOM MONSTERS 17

| | |
|---|----|
| Sewer Encounters | 17 |
| 2 – Jelly | 17 |
| 3-5 – Leaping Leech | 18 |
| <i>Speaking from Experience</i> | 18 |
| 6-8 – Giant Rat | 18 |
| 9-11 – Giant Spider | 18 |
| 12 – Smugglers | 18 |
| Deep Encounters | 19 |
| 1-2 – Earth Elemental | 19 |
| 3-4 – Ooze | 19 |
| 5-6 – Rock Mite | 19 |

ADVENTURE MAP 20

3. REWARDS 21

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Loot | 21 |
| Scrap | 22 |
| <i>Setting Up Shop</i> | 22 |
| Getting Paid | 22 |
| Rats | 22 |
| Room and Board | 22 |
| The Ring | 22 |
| Selling the Tale | 22 |
| Bonus Character Points | 22 |

4. THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES 24

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Secrets Within Secrets | 24 |
| Adventures in Alchemy | 24 |



Alchemy is unbearably constrained by time and materials. Wizardry exchanges those limitations for annoyingly ambiguous magical laws. Some powerful forces in the universe can waive those laws, but only in return for harsh contracts. The obvious solution? Powerful forces outside the universe!

– Merle, Respected Innkeeper (and Black Magician)

INTRODUCTION

A *dungeon* is any reasonably confined area containing monsters to fight, hazards to avoid, and treasures to find, designed as an adventure for professional fortune-hunters. But that's a drily generic description, of little help to the GM who's never dreamed up such a thing, and even less useful to the first-time gamer. A worked example would be better – and luckily, you're reading one!

I Smell a Rat is a *simple* dungeon. It's a single level made up of a little over a dozen "interesting" areas. For new gamers playing delvers who are just starting out – and new GMs! – this simplicity makes it an ideal introduction to *Dungeon Fantasy*: It illustrates all the key concepts on a manageable scale.

Experienced players might explore the whole thing in one game session, which may represent an easy afternoon's work for a party of seasoned adventurers. To spice things up for such veterans, many situations in *I Smell a Rat* come with advice

on ramping up threats to better match the heroes' capabilities. There are also "hooks" for using the dungeon as a springboard to grander quests. To new gamers, these resources offer replay value and inspiration for future adventures.

Finally, while it should be obvious, it never hurts to spell things out for munchkins:

This book is for the GM. Players are to keep their hands off until after their characters have explored the dungeon and moved on!

If the GM sees obvious signs that somebody has read ahead (anticipating every secret is a big clue) . . . well, this *is* a game. The GM can play, too. Tougher monsters and skill penalties – and swapping a few of the surprises – should keep things challenging!

WHAT IF THE DELVERS SAY "NO"?

For *new* delvers, the whole point is to accept a basic quest to learn the ropes. If they reject it, starving at \$150/week apiece until they realize there's no other work should change their minds. If it doesn't, the temple may pressure the group's cleric or holy warrior to step up as a "good act," the Thieves' or Wizards' Guild might notify the party's thief or wizard that there's something fishy to investigate here, or elder druids could charge a PC druid with discovering what has stirred up the local rat

population. In all cases, it's implied that refusal will bring repercussions (and earn fewer character points!).

If this is just one possible adventure for seasoned veterans, they may decide that killing rats for \$400-500 isn't worth their time – fair enough. If the players are experienced enough to feel that way, the GM is hopefully skilled enough to cook up another adventure. Alternatively, the GM can try the social pressure tactics suggested above – or have the heroes hear rumors of one or more of the hooks on pp. 9 or 15.

ADVICE: SCALING ENCOUNTERS

This dungeon's battles *should* be fun for a well-rounded party of six 250-point adventurers. Matching opponents is an art, however! Some combats may prove unbalanced for large, small, capable, narrowly focused, or well-played groups. Each encounter offers solutions, but here's some general advice:

Headcount. Most encounters base the number of monsters on party size; e.g., "one per two delvers" or "a number equal to group size." Fixed numbers assume six adventurers; scale these to group size and round *up* (minimum one monster).

Capability. Above, count near-noncombatants (e.g., unarmored bards without combat spells) as *half* a delver. Count devastating fighters (with several of 3d+ damage, multiple skill 12+ attacks, active defenses of 14+, and DR 6+) as 1.5.

Preparation. Being ready can outweigh raw numbers; e.g., the Demons from Between the Stars in area 14 (p. 15) are toast if even one delver has mastered light-bringing spells, overpowering if *nobody* has light. Adjust monster numbers by up to 50% either way in such situations.

Reinforcements. Never increase monster numbers ahead of time if you're unsure about the adventurers or situation. A fight that's going too easily for the heroes can attract "off map" reinforcements, unless that's totally implausible (e.g., in a closed room). Keep bringing in backup until things get challenging!

If the encounter cannot be scaled in number – e.g., the husk of Merle (p. 17) is unique – adjust monster abilities the same way. This normally means damage and DR, as with the stone golem in area 11 (p. 13). Where skills or defenses are grossly mismatched, adjust them toward the delvers' *average* level.

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

This adventure takes place in town. Thus, *There and Back Again* (**Exploits**, pp. 17-18) and fatigue due to *Travel* (**Exploits**, p. 64) won't apply. The delvers won't need camping gear and rations, much less horses and carts. In a sense, they won't even have to leave the inn . . .

TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS TOWN

The town that's the backdrop for this quest is left to the GM – the adventure isn't tied to a specific, named location. Here's what *does* matter:

- The town can't be isolated. This adventure revolves around a roadhouse on a busy trade route, so it wouldn't make sense to choose the Vanished Village on the edge of Lake Lost, where travelers never pass – or where the locals sacrifice visitors in a huge bonfire, or to bees.
- The town must enjoy the benefits of magical engineering – that is, Earth spells. The dungeon assumes the existence of multi-story buildings with cellars, built next to roads with sewers underneath. The dungeon would be difficult to explain in a settlement with no structures fancier than thatch-roofed cottages.
- If the town is where the delvers are launching their careers (making this their first real adventure), it should be big enough to boast shops that could have sold them their starting gear. If they begin with swords, metal armor, magic items, and specialized tools, it might be a genuine *city*.

Thus, this town can believably offer the full range of civilized amenities, including a tavern where rumors start, a few shops run by the Merchants' Guild, a temple that sells healing, local chapters of the Wizards' and Thieves' Guilds, and a modest Town Watch. The delvers can attempt all the usual pre- and post-adventuring tasks here. If they're just starting out, the GM might even game out shopping for gear in preparation for the adventure.

If the GM is stuck coming with up a good name, try "Aranea." It has a cheesy fantasy sound to it and gives savvy players a minor clue to an early encounter without giving away the *real* surprises.

WILL WORK FOR FOOD

Once the delvers are equipped and ready to hack 'n' slash, it's time to find work. Use *Finding a Quest* (**Exploits**, p. 14) – but if this is the first adventure of fresh-faced heroes, it's traditional for a quest to find them. Make all **Carousing** and **Current Affairs** rolls at +4, meaning that even

adventurers relying on defaults get unpenalized **HT** and **IQ** rolls, respectively.

With everybody rolling, success is *almost* assured and means the heroes receive the quest during the day, when they're well-rested. Failure all around leads to looking for a place to spend the night, learning that the local inns are full thanks to a Clowns' Guild convention, and being told ". . . but try Merle's." When they get to Merle's at day's end, they find work waiting when they need rest: Dock everyone 3 FP, which they can only recover after completing enough of the adventure to earn a place to rest (see *More Than We Bargained For*, p. 6).

Speaking from Experience

When I shared my unsettling dream of Uncle Merle, Mother was unsurprised: "Damned sorcery finally got the better of him. Go quickly! Barricade the cellar until you can hire mercenaries to go down and kill anything that moves. Invent a pretext for this – the family reputation is at stake."

– Lee, Journeyman Merchant

UNCLE MERLE'S PLACE

If the delvers succeed at the roll to find a quest, a woman who calls herself "Lee" approaches them during the day. Lee is a no-nonsense individual in her mid-thirties, dressed in clean-but-practical clothing. Nothing about her suggests money, exactly, but her manner hints at business.

Lee quickly explains that her family runs several roadhouses in the region (a **Current Affairs** roll confirms she belongs to a wealthy merchant clan), that her uncle, Merle, just passed away, and that she was sent to take over his business. When she arrived, she found the inn closed. On opening the door, she realized why: Scratching noises in the cellar and a foul smell pointed to an infestation of giant rats, known to be a problem in the area due to poorly maintained sewer tunnels.

Lee needs a well-armed group to kill the rats, and she's willing to pay eight copper (\$8) per giant rat head, to a maximum of one gold piece (\$400) if by some misfortune there are 50 or more rats. Winning a Quick Contest of **Merchant** skill vs. Lee's 15 can talk her up to \$10 per rat, maximum \$500. Whatever the final price, she's *also* willing to include one week's room and board at the inn (worth \$150 per person) after the party exterminates the rats.

If the delvers agree, Lee escorts them to Merle's. From the outside, it looks to be a large inn in excellent repair. But as soon as they step inside, the odor and the *scratching* become obvious . . .

If the delvers fail to find a quest and meet Lee at night while seeking a place to rest, they realize the situation at Merle's right away. *Then* Lee makes her pitch.

DOWN THERE?

Once the brave rat-slayers reach an accord with Lee, she shows them to the cellar door. Anybody with points in the **Forced Entry** skill finds it strange for a basement door to be made of such thick wood (**DR 3, HP 33**) and to boast a *bar* (**DR 4, HP 23**). What was Uncle Merle keeping down there? They can ask Lee,



but she doesn't know – and **Detect Lies**, a **Truthsayer** spell, etc. can confirm this (Lee has **IQ 12, Will 12**).

Lee tells the delvers that if they want to lighten their load, they can leave anything they won't need for killing rats with her. She also warns that she plans to bar the door behind them, as she doesn't want giant rats coming *up* – everybody knows they're strong enough to push doors open. Anyone who wants out just has to knock. (Of course, if they want out *in a hurry*, it takes Lee 2d seconds to hear them, reach the door, and remove the heavy bar.)

Paranoid delvers won't trust Lee with their gear – or to let them out! – but **Empathy**, the **Sense Emotion** spell, or anything similar reveals that she isn't trying to pull a fast one. Lee needs help badly enough that she tolerates strangers casting noninvasive spells (like **Sense Emotion**), if they insist.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO UNCLE MERLE?

Canny delvers will realize that something seems *off* – and not just the smell. Why do the townsfolk think Merle's might have rooms available? That suggests Merle's death and the inn's closure are too recent to be common knowledge.

If Merle's demise was so sudden, what happened? And how did Lee find out and get here so quickly?

Why is Lee in such a hurry to exterminate rats? In a world where casting **Final Rest** on the dead is traditional (to prevent unseemly undeath), wouldn't Merle's funeral arrangements be her first priority? If the PCs visit the temple, any cleric can learn that nobody has seen to that.

If giant rats *are* a pressing problem, why is nobody else hiring rat-catchers? Lee's job is the only one in town.

And why is the cellar door a huge slab, barred from upstairs?

A Dark Truth

The truth is that Uncle Merle was practicing black magic in the basement, and his roadhouse offered the perfect cover. It placed him above suspicion as a pillar of the community. It gave traveling delvers a place to stay, and Merle paid them handsomely for knowledge and artifacts the temple and Wizards' Guild deemed forbidden. His far-flung fraternity of sorcerers could visit as anonymous travelers when they convened to perform their unspeakable rites. And the sprawling cellar – ostensibly for warehousing his family's shipments – concealed excavation of a subterranean ritual space.

But like countless other spellcasters unsatisfied with ordinary wizardly and clerical magic, Merle and his

nameless friends dug into darker secrets. They started with forbidden spells – rituals for creating undead and constructs – and graduated to demonic pacts. When *that* didn't scratch the itch, they bargained with Elder Things.

As with all stories involving Elder Things, the next part is "Everybody died. The end."

Yet life is never that simple when black magic is involved. That's *why* such arts are forbidden . . .

Keeping It in the Family

What does *Lee* know? That Merle was a wizard – not an adventurer, but the stay-at-home type who normally joins the Wizards' Guild. That he *wasn't* a Guild member (something his wealthy merchant family would want to conceal!). And that he apparently locked his secrets in the basement.

All this would be useful to know *before* venturing into the cellar. Finding it out in polite conversation requires an **Influence** roll using **Diplomacy** at -5. Magic (e.g., **Mind-Search**) or **Interrogation** could extract the information at no penalty, but such violence ensures that Lee won't be interested in paying the "heroes" – she bars the door, abscond with anything they leave behind, and see to hiring assassins! However the delvers handle it, Lee has **Will 12**.

Desperately Seeking Merle

Cunning delvers who suspect that Merle isn't dead may try a **Seeker** spell to find him. If Lee is still on good terms with them, she happily provides a tunic that belonged to him. Unfortunately, the spell fails – see *End of the Line* (pp. 16-17) for why.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DUNGEON

The sordid details of what lies beneath Merle's place (and beyond) are keyed to the map on p. 20. Each area is numbered – read the description to learn what's there. Some areas have features labeled with letters, which are important enough to merit their own brief write-ups.

MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR

It soon becomes apparent that a rat-infested basement is only the tip of the iceberg. Caggy players will suspect this from the start! Upon discovering this, the adventurers may decide to backtrack, visit town (to rest, heal, sell treasure, and buy supplies), and then resume the quest. That's more than fine – the distances are amenable to it.

The PCs can sell rat heads to Lee on any return trip, unless they've offended her and driven her off (*Keeping It in the Family*, p. 5), but she refuses to cut a new deal to clear the rest of the dungeon. She *will* let the delvers use the inn as their base of operations for the agreed-upon week, if they've cleared the cellar.

The GM should remember that on each trip through, the heroes must face any traps or curses they haven't neutralized. There are also new checks for wandering monsters in areas that have them. If the delvers leave for a day or more, the GM may have wandering monsters stray into *adjacent* areas, too.

Finally, if the adventurers are *fleeing monsters* on their way out, don't forget that Lee needs 2d seconds to unbar the basement door. If the group managed to offend her, they have to bash that door instead. Fortunately, the monsters prefer to avoid being seen above ground in town, but they wait in the cellar . . . and Lee won't pay a cent or let the PCs rest at the inn while there's moaning and growling down there!

1. CELLAR

The basement has the same floor area as the inn (roughly 60' × 50'). It's remarkably deep, the ceiling rising 12' overhead. Being windowless and unlit, it's in total darkness until the delvers bring light. Per *Light Sources* (**Exploits**, p. 19), torches or lanterns allows *some* visibility out to six yards – but nothing behind the pillars (p. 7) can be seen at all. This means that from the stairs, most of the room is in impenetrable shadow.

There's little down here, but the floor is matted with layers of dense spider webs – only the stairs (below) are web-free! Webs are described under *Giant Spider* (**Monsters**, pp. 31-32). However, the density makes them easier to see (unmodified

Vision roll, or *Per*-based **Traps** roll at +5), but means that no DX roll is permitted to avoid them and that clearing each hex demands *three* points of fire damage (e.g., three seconds with a torch). Anybody walking in a web hex is grappled by webs with total **ST 14**; anybody falling down in two web hexes is grappled at **ST 28**.

As soon as anybody touches or starts torching the webs, the giant spiders that spun them attack. One **huge spider** (p. 18) per party member should do – but if the adventurers are powerful, make that two or even three. In addition, anybody who gets webbed is set upon by a **big spider**. The spiders aren't affected by their webs.

Delvers can clear floor hexes in order to fight there, but the stairs are more defensible. Once the fight is over, efficient adventurers may burn off all the webs so they can search the place. This would take someone with a torch, **Flame Jet** spell, etc. about 15 minutes; divide time by the number of people involved. Doing so uncovers the remains of 40 dead giant rats, which can be decapitated for heads to sell to Lee. Partially clearing the area means proportionally fewer rats (e.g., 1/4 of the cellar yields 10 rats).

(a) Stairs

The stairs up to the main floor follow the walls in the northeast corner and are made of sturdy wood. They afford web-free footing for up to seven delvers to strike down over the railings, plus one in the corner. The huge spiders start six yards from the stairway and scurry up the stairs and supporting uprights, entering close combat on their second turn. There's room for seven to attack at once, from the partial hexes adjacent to the stairs.

The stairs rise six feet from the basement floor to a landing, turn, and rise another six feet. They're considered bad footing (-2 to hit, -1 to defend, +1 movement point/hex) for delvers but not spiders – but heroes engaging climbing spiders get +2 to defend for high ground (so a net +1), while the spiders defend at -2 against *melee* attacks from above. *Ranged* attackers get +2 to hit (canceling bad footing) when shooting downward. Once the spiders enter close combat, relative height is irrelevant – as are weapons without reach C!

Anybody who wants to destroy the stairs must hack through **DR 2, HP 200**, but this is ill-advised. First, it inflicts falling damage (*Exploits*, pp. 67-68); the fall is four yards (**2d-1 crushing**) from the very top, three yards (**1d+2 cr**) from anywhere else above the landing, and two yards (**1d+1 cr**) from the landing. Second, it drops everybody into webs; roll vs. **DX** to avoid falling prone in *two* web hexes. Third, it cuts off escape.

(b) Pillars

The six robust stone pillars that support the inn obstruct an entire hex apiece. Treat them as impassible and indestructible in combat. A spellcaster *could* remove them with Earth spells, collapsing the inn and killing spiders and delvers alike (well, unless they can survive about **20d crushing**). This is probably a bad idea.

Each pillar bears two torch brackets. If all 12 are occupied by lit torches, ignore all darkness penalties in the cellar.

(c) Junk Pile

The southwest corner is filled with a pile of rubble: casks, planks, crates, and a huge mound of loose dirt. Lighting permitting, a successful **Vision, Observation**, or *Per*-based **Traps** roll spots the top of an opening peaking out over this – a concealed doorway! A **History** spell cast to look one day back finds that spiders and rats use this passage; cast to look a week or more back, it also reveals that the barricade was created using some kind of unknown magic.

Excavating the exit requires good old-fashioned elbow grease: 10 hours of digging and hauling, divided by the number of participants. (**Shape Earth** or **Earth to Air** can remove the dirt, which makes up most of the pile, but have to cope with 15 cubic yards.) However, the heap is coated with sticky webs which are nearly invisible in the mess (**Vision** roll at -10 or *Per*-based **Traps** roll at -5). If undetected, touching the pile means being grappled by the hand(s) with **ST 19**. This normally traps only the *first* person to touch it, unless the delvers unwisely dive in all at once.

Once someone is grappled – or if the webs are detected and avoided, once the delvers are too busy clearing detritus to hold weapons – a **humongous spider** (p. 18) erupts from the debris and attack. If the delvers are

winning too easily, the GM can have *more* humongous spiders squeeze into the fight from the southwest exit. This should be a straightforward fight if the adventurers have cleared webs from the cellar. If not, note the sticky hexes on the battle map.

(d) Smugglers' Door

In the south wall near the southeast corner is a well-made secret door built into the masonry. This demands a **Vision, Observation**, or *Per*-based **Traps** roll at -5 to find – only allowed if *actively* searching the cellar for hidden doors – and then an *IQ*-based **Traps** roll to deduce the location of the latch that opens it. Treat the stone panel as a six-inch-thick wall if somebody wants to destroy it; see *Walls* (*Exploits*, p. 82).

This exit offers a way around the junk pile (above). It was *not* known to Merle – the people he bought the inn from used it to smuggle goods through the sewers. A **History** spell reveals nothing useful, even if cast to look a year back, as the passage hasn't been used in years.

2. TWISTING TUNNEL

The jagged opening in the cellar wall behind the junk pile (above) leads to a rough 40' passage about 3' wide and 6' tall, with an S-shaped curve in it. Obvious shovel marks suggest it was *not* dug with magic. Delvers must march in single file.



A *Per*-based **Prospecting** roll (defaults to **Perception** at -5) warns that the tunnel is amateurish: height and width vary, reinforcement is inadequate. It also meanders 40' instead of following a straight line to an objective 20' away – though that's obvious only *after* passing through.

There are no monsters or traps here, but the old planks used to reinforce the ceiling and walls – and to bridge muddy holes in the floor – aren't up to code. Anyone on foot must make a **DX** roll.

Modifiers: A basic +4; +2 if warned of the danger by someone who made the earlier **Prospecting** roll; +1 per level of dwarven **Pickaxe Pendant**; -2 at Light, -4 at Medium, -6 at Heavy, or -8 at Extra-Heavy encumbrance. (This is an excellent example of where to steepen penalties if the adventure seems too easy!)

Failure means stumbling into a jutting beam or sharp rock, putting a foot through the floor, or something similar. Roll on the *Hit Location Table* (**Exploits**, pp. 99-100). That body part takes **1d-3 crushing**.

Critical failure (*any* failure, with **Total Klutz**) caves in the tunnel around that person and those immediately behind or in front in the marching order. Each takes **2d crushing**

as *Large-Area Injury* (**Exploits**, p. 53). The adventurer who critically failed and everyone in front can struggle on; those behind are blocked. Digging through wastes two hours if working from one side, or an hour if working from both (magic must remove two cubic yards of dirt) – and those who made it through before the collapse face one check for wandering monsters per hour of digging, just as if they were in the sewers (below).

3. SEWERS

The twisting tunnel (pp. 7-8) and smugglers' den (p. 9) both lead to a branch of the town's sewers. This 6'-wide by 6'-tall, stone-lined conduit looks sturdy; success against **Prospecting** or **Thaumatology** reveals it was engineered using magic. It would take a major effort to cave in – say, a maximum-power **Earthquake** spell (which the sewer would resist with **HT 14**).

There are no walkways here and nowhere to anchor a bridge. Those without suitable magic (**Levitation**, **Flight**, **Walk on Air**, **Walk on Water**, etc.) or abilities (e.g., **Spider Climb**) have to wade *through* calf-deep sewage. Each wader must roll against **HT** – modified as usual for **Fit**, **Resistant to Disease**, etc. – to avoid contracting sewer rot: -1 on all attribute and skill rolls until **Cure Disease** is received. The instant onset is odd; if anyone succumbs, success at **Esoteric Medicine** implicates black magic . . .

Traveling west means heading into town, while going east means eventually coming out in a fetid bog – neither of which is very interesting (though see *Adventures in Waste Management*, p. 15). However, searching for hidden doors is likely to prove fruitful, and an enterprising group could hunt giant rats to sell to Lee.

While in the sewers, check for wandering monsters:

- Once per hour spent waiting or wandering around.
- Once per attempt to search for hidden doors, successful or not.
- Once per attempt to bash or force a door, or mine through sewer walls – or once per hour spent digging, if the twisting tunnel collapses.

The roll is **9 or less** on 3d – but if the party *deliberately* tries to attract rats to hunt, it becomes **12 or less**. Success means a roll on the *Sewer Encounters Table* (p. 9).

If combat occurs, people wading in sewage are fighting on bad footing: -2 to hit, -1 to defend, +1 movement point/hex. Jellies, leeches, sewer rats, and spiders *won't* suffer these effects! Adventurers also need light to fight properly; the dim glow of sewer slime gives a severe ambient darkness penalty: -8.

ADVICE: RUNNING COMBATS

A smooth combat encounter starts before the session begins!

- Read the area description. Pay attention to lighting, footing, and obstacles, noting associated penalties.
- Examine the map. Decide which hexes each side starts the fight in.
- Review the monsters. Descriptions discuss tactics and key abilities. Diffuse, Extra Life, Homogeneous, Injury Reduction, Supernatural Durability, Unkillable, and Unliving magnify a creature's resilience and danger level, while Unnatural diminishes them; see Chapter 2 of **Monsters**.
- Prepare the combat turn sequence (**Exploits**, p. 28).
- Update your GM Control Sheet (**Exploits**, p. 110).

In action, play monsters appropriately. Mindless creatures charge, cunning ones fall back to lure out overconfident foes and worsen enemy range penalties, and so forth; see *Tactics (Monsters)*, pp. 6-7). If you know *Dungeon Fantasy* better than the players do, be fair – don't invoke little-used rules or bully weaker PCs. If a monster *should* do this, warn the players.

Manage players swiftly. If somebody is dithering, suggest one or two options that exploit the PC's strongest capabilities. If someone wants to do something there's no rule for, chose a fitting skill, modify it for the deed's audacity, and *roll the dice*!

Finally, until everyone learns the rules, announce what's being rolled, at what modifiers, and *why*. Be systematic. If something gets overlooked – a modifier, a roll, a minor monster's turn – *game on*. Chalk up aberrations to the fog of war. Don't change the past!

Sewer Encounters Table

Roll 2d.

- 2 – Jelly** (p. 17). SM +2, with ST/HP 25, and completely blocks the passage. If the delvers are experienced, so were the last ones the jelly ate: It absorbs abilities and has a few extra tricks, such as Luck and Magic Resistance!
- 3-5 – Leaping Leeches** (p. 18). A good-sized “school” – roll 1d to learn how many attack *each delver*. Heroes with unarmored legs or feet are hit automatically if wading in sewage! Otherwise, the leeches must leap for unarmored areas.
- 6-8 – Giant Rats** (p. 18). An onslaught that outnumbers the delvers 2:1 (3:1, for a tough group), charging four abreast in a rodent wave attack. Anyone wounded must check for sewer rot *again*.
- 9-11 – Giant Spiders** (p. 18). A humongous spider, plus a number of huge spiders equal to group size skittering along the walls and ceiling.
- 12 – Smugglers!** They know their way around the sewers – half attack from either direction, putting the delvers in the middle. This encounter can occur only once; afterward, treat as **6-8**.

(a) Merle's Concealed Door

In the south wall across from the twisting tunnel (pp. 7-8) is a wooden door with a thin layer of mortar on it to disguise it, further concealed by a film of sewer slime. Once per attempt to find hidden doors, roll **Vision**, **Observation**, or *Per*-based **Traps** at -2 to discover this. Once spotted, it's just a locked door: Roll vs. **Lockpicking** to open it. It can also be bashed or forced: the door has **DR 2**, **HP 29**, while its lock and hinges have **DR 6**, **HP 12**.

A **History** spell cast to reach a week or more back reveals that the door's users were up to *something evil*.

(b) Smugglers' Door

In the north wall of the sewers is a secret door identical to the smuggler's door in the cellar (p. 7).

4. SMUGGLERS' DEN

Unrelated to Uncle Merle's extracurricular activities (but see *Dealing In the Devil*, in box) is the fact that his inn was formerly used by Thieves' Guild smugglers to sneak illegal goods – and secretive people – into and out of town through the sewers. This small (20' × 12') chamber is where the gang met and stashed things. Its two entrances are well-made secret doors from the outside, but visible and easily opened from within (no rolls required). Beware the blade traps (p. 10) just beyond!

The room is well-sealed; dry torches bracketed on the east and west walls can still be lit to illuminate the area.

SMUGGLERS!

The smugglers' den offers clues that Merle's inn was once a front for illegal commerce: intricate traps and the Thieves' Guild sigil on the strongbox. If nobody deduces this, the GM should make a secret **Streetwise** roll and give a hint on a success.

Once the delvers enter the sewers and start making noise, there's a chance – rolled on the *Sewer Encounters Table* – that smugglers show up to reclaim the silver flask before greedy adventurers get it. Such scoundrels will attack on sight! For starting heroes, there are 50% more thugs than there are PCs (e.g., nine for a group of six); for a visibly powerful adventuring party, double their number show up (e.g., 12 for a party of six). Use these combat stats:

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ST: 12 | HP: 12 | Speed: 6.00 |
| DX: 12 | Will: 10 | Move: 6 |
| IQ: 10 | Per: 12 | |
| HT: 12 | FP: 12 | SM: 0 |

Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 10 **DR:** 1

Cheap Shortsword (14): 1d+2 cutting *or* 1d impaling. Reach 1.

Torch (14): 1d+2 crushing + follow-up 1 point burning. Reach 1.

Traits: Ambidexterity; Bloodlust (12); Night Vision 5.

Skills: Boating-12; Brawling-12; Shortsword-14; Smuggling-12; Stealth-14; Streetwise-12.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Equipped with light leather armor (too sewage-soaked to resell!), a cheap shortsword (\$160), and a torch. Unwilling to negotiate – their mission is “leave no witnesses,” and they all have Bloodlust.

Hook: Dealing In the Devil

These goons might be more than a random encounter! The GM may decide they're the hired thugs of shrewd smugglers who trade in illegal and *dangerous* supernatural artifacts . . . evil spirits sealed inside flasks are just a taster. Such criminals would react badly to nosy adventurers discovering their secret den *or* killing their foot soldiers.

In that scenario, the smugglers are still using their secret room, and Merle's fraternity knew about them and were customers for their goods (explaining the room's location). This can lead to further encounters. Perhaps a second, better-armed party of ruffians, wizard in tow, accosts the PCs in the cellar at mission's end. Maybe the heroes have to run a gauntlet of bandit ambushes as they travel to their next adventure. There's certainly a route through the sewers to the gangsters' headquarters – the Thieves' Guild hall or somewhere more sinister – in which case this hook can tie into *Adventures in Waste Management* (p. 15).

Most of the loot that passed through here is long gone, but one item remains: A small iron strongbox (**DR 12, HP 10**, 15 lbs.) with a good padlock (**DR 6, HP 5**, 2 lbs.; roll vs. **Lockpicking** to open). A roll vs. **Streetwise** – or **Heraldry** at -3 – spots a Thieves' Guild sigil on the box.

Inside the strongbox is a sealed silver flask (0.5 lb.). This is nonmagical – but **Sense Danger**, **Sense Evil**, **Sense Foes**, and **Sense Spirit** spells all can detect something to worry about. Opening the flask releases a **flaming skull** (*Monsters*, p. 27), which attacks at once, staying in close combat with its victim. Remember that it's Diffuse and tricky to destroy!

Canny delvers *won't* open the flask. After the adventure, they can take it to the temple for safe disposal or the Wizards' Guild for "examination"; either group pays \$500, no questions asked. A group that saw the Thieves' Guild mark might instead bring it to that organization, which offers \$750 in credit toward any *Covert Ops and Security Gear* (*Adventurers*, pp. 113-114) or *Poisons* (*Adventurers*, pp. 115-116). If sold "as is" to merchants, use *Getting a Good Price* (*Exploits*, pp. 15-16) with a value of \$500.

(a) Blade Traps

The smugglers expected trouble: The floor of the small (3' × 3') alcove beyond each secret door is cantilevered so that it

drops 3' when stepped on, using the victim's weight to project scythe-like blades from the walls at leg level.

Detect: **Per**-based **Traps** at -2 to spot loose floor stone.

Disarm: **IQ**-based **Traps** at -5 to find hidden deactivation lever. Failure means trap can't be deactivated, only avoided.

Avoid: **DX** or **Jumping** to hop over the trigger, if detected.

Save: No.

Effects: **1d cutting** to each leg.

Shots: Infinite.

Rearm: Yes. *Steal:* No.

5. RUNE-LIMNED GALLERY

Beyond Merle's concealed door (p. 9) is a 20' passage that starts with a few steps *up* (out of the sewage!) and then slopes gently downward. In stark contrast to the twisting tunnel (pp. 7-8), this passage is smooth and straight. While only 3' wide, it's arched to 8' in height. A **Prospecting** or **Thaumatology** roll makes out that it was carved using magic, not tools.

The walls of this corridor are etched with glowing runes that illuminate it, removing darkness penalties. A **Thaumatology** roll identifies these as *Evil Runes* – and warn that walking the passage invokes sinister magic resisted with **HT** (giving clerics and wizards and chance to help out with a **Vigor** spell or just generic **Magic Resistance**). Success by 5+ deciphers enough to know the trap *won't* trigger for visitors who've sold their souls to The Devil . . .

Detect: Automatic (very obvious!), though **Thaumatology** is needed to learn details.

Disarm: No.

Avoid: Dig another passage with magic or sell your soul . . . not very practical.

Save: No.

Effects: Resist Dehydrate-15 with **HT** or burn up for **3d-3 injury**.

Shots: Infinite.

Rearm, Steal: No.

6. RITUAL CHAMBER

This 30' × 30' room boasts temple-like architecture, its vaulted ceiling soaring 15' overhead – an impressive accomplishment for a secret room beneath a town! It has **high sanctity** for worshippers of The Devil, **low sanctity** (-5 to clerical spells) for clerics of Good. Clerics can sense this on a **Perception + Power Investiture** roll, at -3 unless specifically asking.

Three dangling lanterns light the area with daylight-strength **Continual Light**, blood-red in hue. Outside of evil areas like this one, they're just standard lanterns (2 lbs. each).



Looters can sell them to the temple in town as curiosities; value for this purpose is \$150 apiece.

Other features of note are a false wall to the west, a curtained-off passage to the east, and an altar with a gaping hole behind it to the south, all described below.

Before exploring, however, the delvers must battle a guardian **peshkali** (*Monsters*, pp. 45-46) armed with six scimitars (treat as cavalry sabers: \$500, 3 lbs. apiece). This is a powerful foe with Supernatural Durability . . . but if the delvers are *very* capable, or go right for its fatal flaw (lopping off arms), the GM can have The Devil send *more* to help out!

If somebody *tears open* the false wall or *touches* (or jumps on!) the altar during the battle, things get hairy for the delvers even without extra demons. The GM should make all rolls to notice these dangers before the fight begins.

Once the peshkali is defeated, this room is relatively safe to rest in – well, unless someone messes with the false wall or the altar!

(a) False Wall

A 10'-wide by 7.5'-tall section of "wall" to the west is actually canvas stretched over an opening, painted with depictions of demonic depravities. It's a clumsy cover-up – the GM should give delvers a (secret) **Vision**, **Observation**, or *Per*-based **Traps** roll at -3 to spot the concealed doorway, even if nobody is actively searching (e.g., on first entering the ritual chamber). If that fails, roll again without the -3 if the adventurers search after defeating the peshkali. And at *any* point, those standing in immediately adjacent hexes get **Smell** rolls to detect a foul odor emanating from behind the painting . . .

The painting itself has **DR 1**, **HP 1**. Almost any hit – e.g., stray projectile, Explosive Fireball, or someone forcefully knocked back into it during the peshkali fight – rips it open, revealing the hidden tomb (p. 12) and starting *another* battle.

(b) Curtain

On the east wall, a black velvet curtain covers a 6'-wide by 8'-tall exit to the main hallway (p. 12). This is fine and deeply dyed (\$40, 2.5 lbs. as treasure), but devoid of unusual properties.

(c) Evil Altar

The source of this room's sinister sanctity is a blood-stained stone altar (about 12' × 3') near the south wall. At a glance upon entering the ritual chamber, a cleric or holy warrior can register that it's *Evil* on a **Perception** + **Holiness** or **Perception** + **Power Investiture** roll. After the battle with the peshkali, closer investigation with **Occultism** can also figure this out.

If someone who hasn't sold their soul to The Devil touches the altar, they are struck with the lowest level of the **Curse**



spell (*Spells*, p. 51) at effective skill 15. This can occur over and over if a victim is cursed, loses the curse, but *then* touches the altar again. It can *seriously* ruin the delvers' day if they foolishly bump into the altar while battling the peshkali.

Cleansing the altar requires three hours and winning a Quick Contest of **Exorcism** vs. Will 15. **Remove Curse** can be used instead, but at -5 for low sanctity. See *Curses 101* (*Exploits*, pp. 23-24) for complete rules. Victory ends the altar's cursing ability and all active curses, and renders the ritual chamber a **normal sanctity** zone (causing its lanterns to fall dark . . . an annoyance if done before battling the foes in the hidden tomb!).

Once the altar is cleansed – before that, if the looters don't mind being cursed – it can be searched. An unconcealed compartment within holds a diabolical-looking sacrificial dagger. This has no special properties beyond being ornate and valuable (\$200, 0.25 lb.).

Behind the altar is a hole ripped in the wall, leading to the blasted passage (p. 16).

7. HIDDEN TOMB

This is a dusty 30' × 10' room with a relatively low ceiling (7.5'). Within is a horde of **zombies**. These were created from urban gang members, using blood sacrifice instead of mana-based wizardly magic, so their stats differ from those of the zombies described in **Monsters** – see below.

The zombies' standing orders are to wait until needed but to kill anyone they see who isn't one of their masters (i.e., Merle's fraternity). Thus, the instant the false wall (p. 11) in the ritual chamber is torn open, the undead attacks! There are 15 of them, standing three abreast in five rows, and they surge into the ritual chamber once triggered.

There's plenty of room for the GM to adjust this encounter to the adventuring party. The "tomb" has space enough for 30 zombies, if that would be a better challenge. Conversely, if the delvers are weak or few in number, there might be only two or three rows of zombies (six to nine undead) – or they might attack only one row at a time.

In any event, note that a brave cleric or holy warrior with **Turning** can try to step into the gap and keep *all* the zombies at bay while associates seal the opening using obstacles or magic.

After the fight, anybody who cares to examine the corpses can make a **Diagnosis** roll to realize that all were killed by a stab through the heart. If the sacrificial dagger in the ritual chamber is found, its unusual cross-section is a perfect match to the wound.

Zombie Gang Member

A beefy ruffian, abducted on the street, ritually sacrificed, and reanimated for use as muscle.

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ST: 13 | HP: 17 | Speed: 6.00 |
| DX: 12 | Will: 8 | Move: 6 |
| IQ: 8 | Per: 8 | |
| HT: 12 | FP: N/A | SM: 0 |
| Dodge: 9 | Parry: 9 | DR: 1 |

Club (13): 2d crushing. Reach 1.

Punch (14): 1d crushing. Reach C.

Traits: Appearance (Monstrous); Automaton; Bad Smell; Cannot Learn; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in areas without evil sanctity); Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; No Blood; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Reprogrammable; Single-Minded; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Unliving; Unnatural.

Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-13; Wrestling-13.

Class: Undead.

Notes: Unaffected by Death Vision or Sense Life, but susceptible to Pentagram, Sense Evil, Sense Spirit, and Turn Zombie. Effective grappling ST is 14, due to Wrestling. Equipped with a club and light leather armor (DR 1, included above), neither in good enough shape to have

resale value. Animated by truly evil magic. Cannot negotiate or reveal useful information.

8. MAIN HALLWAY

Past the curtain-covered exit from the ritual chamber (pp. 10-11) is a 6'-wide by 8'-tall passage that runs 60' eastward. There are three exits in the north wall and three more in the south. All are sealed by stout doors except for the middle exit to the south: an open archway that leads to another 30' of similar corridor ending in heavy double doors. See the descriptions of the adjoining areas for details on the doors.

There are no monsters or traps here, but there *are* some thaumatological curiosities. First, each exit has a torch bracketed on the wall to either side (12 in all). These torches appear magical on a successful **Perception** + **Magery** roll. Analysis with **Alchemy** reveals them to be alchemically treated to burn for a *day* instead of an hour – but in town, they sell as ordinary torches (\$3, 1 lb.), because “. . . if that really worked, everybody would be doing it.”

Second, the north and south walls and their closed doors have been coated in a rust-colored paint. An **Alchemy** roll establishes that the pigment is based on meteoric iron. It isn't quite as effective as the solid metal: It gives -10 to spells cast *on* or *through* the walls and doors from within the corridor, and doesn't retain magical impressions for the **History** spell to probe, but can be scraped off with noisy effort (one minute per square foot, and completely precludes stealth). It cannot be usefully collected.

9. FIRST CELL

The locked ironbound door to this chamber has **DR 15**, **HP 39**, while its lock and hinges have **DR 9**, **HP 18**. Opening the lock requires an unmodified **Lockpicking** roll. Anybody with the **Forced Entry** skill realizes the door is built to keep something *in*, not *out* – but unlike a prison door, it features no slot or window.

Delvers dead-set on using magic to open the door can do so at -10 unless they scour away the anti-magic paint (described for the main hallway, above). Scraping off the paint won't eliminate the -10 to cast spells *through* the door, though – there's coat on the far side, too!

Once the door is opened, there can be no doubt that this 15' × 22' room is some kind of cell: It contains no furnishings, and the walls are painted with the same unattractive, anti-magic paint as the main hallway.

The occupants are **corpse golems** (**Monsters**, pp. 18-19) in DR 2 leather armor made from tanned human skin. They attack immediately and *leave* their cell in pursuit (without the key to lock the door, merely slamming it in their faces won't accomplish much). For most adventuring parties, a number of golems equal to half group size offers a good fight. If the heroes are especially powerful, give them one each!

Remember that corpse golems *look* undead – delvers who've never encountered them must roll **Hidden Lore (Undead)** or **Thaumatology** at -5 to know the difference.

There's no treasure here to speak of. An **Armory (Body Armor)** roll *can* adjust the golems' armor to fit an SM 0 delver – treat as heavy leather armor: DR 2, 36 lbs. – but the wearer suffers -3 to reactions from all civilized NPCs! The sickle blades rust to nothing when the golems are destroyed.

Afterward, anybody who examines the remains can make a **Diagnosis** roll to realize that the dead bodies used to construct these golems were killed by a thrust through the heart – a perfect match to the sacrificial dagger in the ritual chamber.

10. SECOND CELL

This room is very similar to the first cell (pp. 12-13), with two notable differences. First, door is *iron*, with **DR 25, HP 46**. Its lock and hinges still have **DR 9, HP 18**, opening the lock still requires an unmodified **Lockpicking** roll, and there's still anti-magic paint to cope with.

Second, the occupant is a **golem-armor swordsman** (*Monsters*, p. 35) equipped with a broadsword and medium shield. With DR 17, this may prove a *very* challenging foe for the typical gang of starting delvers . . . especially as they have to “kill” it twice! But if the heroes have extremely damaging attacks, the GM can put two or three golems here.

The only treasure is the broadsword (\$600, 3 lbs.) and the scrap of the golem's armor (\$1d×100, 200 lbs.). The shield is too beat up to be worth selling.

If all the armor is peeled off the golem(s), a **Diagnosis** roll reveals that the slain swordsman within was killed by a stab to the heart – yet another perfect match to that sacrificial dagger in the ritual chamber.

11. THIRD CELL

This room, too, is very similar to the first cell (pp. 12-13), with the differences being the door and the occupant. The ironbound door has **DR 30, HP 49**. Its lock and hinges have **DR 12, HP 23**. The lock still requires only an unmodified **Lockpicking** roll, and there's still anti-magic paint to deal with.

The occupant is a **stone golem** (*Monsters*, p. 54) wielding an oversized maul. The weapon is too clumsy for SM 0 adventurers to use, and too crude to sell as treasure.

If the GM wants the golem to be more challenging, toughen it up! A **greater stone golem** might have **ST 30, HP 45**, and



DR 6; punch for **3d crushing**; and swing a maul for **5d+8 cr**. An **epic stone golem** could have **ST 40, HP 60**, and **DR 8**; punch for **4d+1 cr**; and do **7d+5 cr** with its maul. The explanation might be harder stone or huge size: **SM +2, Move 7**, and **+1 reach** (C-2 with the fist, 1-3 with the maul).

12. LIBRARY

The door is the first clue this is *not* a cell like the rooms across the hall. It isn't nearly as massive: **DR 2, HP 29** wood, with **DR 6, HP 12** lock and hinges. However, the lock is better: -2 to **Lockpicking**. Both sides are coated with meteoric iron paint – described for the main hallway (p. 12) – which prevents easy use of magic.

The room itself is 15' × 22', with bookshelf-lined walls. A long table with two chairs per side occupies the middle; squeezing between this and the shelves is awkward. An oil lamp on the table can be lit to illuminate the room. In a conspicuous gap between shelves in the center of the south wall sits a lectern bearing an imposing black tome.

A cleric or holy warrior *entering* the room (not just gazing into it) gets a **Perception + Holiness** or **Perception + Power Investiture** roll to realize there's an evil force here. The **Detect Evil** ability can do so *without* stepping inside. Non-clerical casters can use **Sense Evil**. If the big black book is visible, it's clearly at the heart of the curse.

If the delvers elect to stay out, nothing happens. However, at least a few of the books *must* hold interesting information or be valuable . . . especially the impressive black one! This is a great time for self-control rolls for **Curiosity** and **Greed**.

As soon as anyone is more than four yards into the room (to pillage it, try **Exorcism** on the black tome, etc.), books start flying from the shelves like rabid bats, pummeling anybody in the library – and the furniture slides to block escape! *Each second* in this “book storm” inflicts **1d crushing** as *Large-Area Injury* (**Exploits**, p. 53) and requires a **ST** roll to avoid being knocked over and spending *more* time there. Running out of the chaos costs +2 movement points per yard . . . so those with Move 5 or less can run just one yard/second toward the door, Move 6-8 allows two yards/second, and so on.

Once triggered, the madness continues until somebody *destroys* the black book. It's leathery: **DR 2, HP 18**. It also has **Magic Resistance 10**, making attempts to use magic to deal with it very difficult. However, it suffers *double* injury from fire (mundane or magical).

ADVICE: EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED

This adventure accounts for delvers refusing the quest, fleeing, shaking down their quest-giver, even occupying the dungeon. Yet no plan survives contact with players . . .

No fixed address. Social machinations in town – however clever – should be neither easier nor more profitable than *Selling the Tale* (p. 22). Adventurers lack the connections to do any better than this.

Miner threat. Heroes are welcome to carve shortcuts. Each hex (or fraction) between open areas is rocky earth: two cubic yards of stone for magic, four person-hours of labor with pickaxe and shovel. While mining, roll 3d hourly; a **9 or less** indicates visitors from the *Sewer Encounters Table* (p. 9) in areas 1-4, the *Deep Encounters Table* (p. 16) in areas 5-16.

The Devil, you know. Those selling their souls to The Devil can enter areas 5 and 12 unscathed, safely touch the altar in area 6, and avoid fighting demons in areas 6 and 13. They acquire Social Stigma (Excommunicated). Clerics and holy warriors lose *all* special advantages, skills, and spells. Permanently. Nobody gets cool powers.

That old black magic. Merle's magic wasn't clerical, druidic, or wizardly. Delvers *can't* learn it – the only teachers are gone.

Once the room calms down, it can be searched. Most of the books end up being destroyed, but two large spellbooks are sturdy enough to survive:

Elrem's Curses: A wizardly spellbook containing the **Death-touch**, **Entombment**, **Flesh to Stone**, and **Wither Limb** spells. Worth \$400 to the Wizards' Guild. 12 lbs.

The Lesser Kunsian Book of the Dead: A clerical spellbook containing the **Affect Spirits**, **Astral Block**, **Astral Vision**, **Entrap Spirit**, and **Summon Spirit** spells. Worth \$500 to the temple. 12 lbs.

13. LAB

Like the library (pp. 13-14), this room has a wooden door with **DR 2, HP 29**, with **DR 6, HP 12** lock and hinges. However, it boasts a more secure lock: -4 to **Lockpicking**. Like every door in this part of the dungeon, both sides are coated in the meteoric iron paint described for the main hallway (p. 12), which interferes with magic use.

The room is 15' x 22' and lit sickly green (darkness penalty is only -3) by an ominous cloud of vapor, which emanates *evil* to spells and abilities capable of sensing that. The area is strewn with upended furniture, while fragments of shattered glassware reflect the eerie glow. There was obviously an explosion here! There may be salvage, however.

A delver with **Scrounging** and **Alchemy** may roll against the *lower* of those skills – or two people can cooperate at the lowest skill -1. Critical success assembles a backpack alchemy lab that's as good as any sold in town: \$1,000, 10 lbs. Success yields a cobbled-together and bulky version: \$500, 15 lbs. Failure gives nothing. Critical failure exposes the scavenger(s) to poison: **2d injury**, or only **1d** with a **HT** roll.

If the group has only **Scrounging**, they can at least collect intact glassware. Success finds 2d pounds, worth \$10/lb. in town. Critical failure still means being poisoned!

If the party has or scrounges a backpack alchemy lab, they may opt to try one *final Alchemy* roll, at -2, to turn the magical reagents spilled all over the floor into a few useful concoctions. Success gives one roll on the *Scrounged Concoctions Table* (p. 15) per point of success, minimum one roll. Failure yields nothing. Critical failure means a **6d crushing** explosion!

When the adventurers *leave* for the main hallway, they are stalked by the greenish vapor – a **toxifier** (**Monsters**, pp. 56-57) that Merle's colleagues tried and failed to exploit in the experiment that blew up the lab. The rear-most person (people) in the marching order may roll a Quick Contest of **Hearing** vs. the demon's **Stealth-16**. If the delvers *win*, they notice a hissing sound in time to spread out and prepare. Otherwise, they are ambushed by the monster, which has time to position itself precisely in the party's midst and start poisoning them. The GM can add extra toxifiers to occupy more of the hallway, if the party could laugh off just one.

It's possible that the PCs decide to cast a spell like **Sense Foes** or **Sense Spirit** in the lab, detecting the toxifier so it won't be able to ambush them. If so, it flees at Move 12, hides, and waits. An ambush in the sewers (pp. 8-9) on the way out would be nasty . . .

Scrounged Concoctions Table

Everything here is described in *Adventurers*. These crude creations look and smell so icky that they are impossible to sell in town – but they work just fine! Roll 2d.

- 2 – Strength potion (0.5 lb.)
- 3 – Faerie ink (0.5 lb.) and developer (0.5 lb.)
- 4 – Alchemist's fire (1 lb.)
- 5 – Visibility dust (1 lb.)
- 6 – Glow vial (0.5 lb.)
- 7 – Acid (1 lb.)
- 8 – Alchemist's matches (0.25 lb.)
- 9 – Glue (1 lb.)
- 10 – Minor healing potion (0.5 lb.)
- 11 – Paut (0.5 lb.)
- 12 – Liquid ice (1 lb.)

14. TESTING AREA

At the south end of the side branch of the main hallway (p. 12) is an imposing pair of doors, sheathed in a shiny copper alloy and embossed with demonic visages. The doors are heavy (**DR 15, HP 39**), their hinges and lock impressively solid (**DR 12, HP 12**). The lock isn't particularly complex – **Lockpicking** has no penalty.

There's no meteoric iron paint on these doors. A **History** spell cast to probe a week or more back reveals the portal's users were serving Evil. **Sense Evil**, **Sense Foes**, and **Sense Spirit** hint at evil, hostile, or demonic entities, respectively. Spells that peer into the area beyond discern the room described below but *not* its hidden occupants.

The room behind the doors is 40' × 30' and 15' high. It is unlit. Explorers who bring light or can see in the dark notice that the chamber isn't just completely unfurnished, but also scorched, pockmarked, and cracked in a manner that suggests it was used to test weapons, grenade potions, or combat spells – probably all three.

There won't be much time for investigation, though, because the moment the doors are opened, four **Demons from Between the Stars** (*Monsters*, pp. 19-20) – one from the shadows in each corner – start advancing. Those in the southeast and southwest corners charge from in front, while those in the northeast and northwest corners may attempt **Backstabbing** (*Exploits*, pp. 57-58) if they can roll 15 or less on 3d. If the delvers don't light the place up, the Demons run in and out of darkness, backstabbing repeatedly. If the heroes retreat from the room, the Demons bide their time – unless they go berserk!

Hook: Adventures in Waste Management

The sewers don't *have* to be nothing but a series of hourly wandering-monster checks. To the west, the system might branch out into a labyrinth – particularly if “town” is a large city – and lead to further adventures in *other* cellars, cavernous junction chambers, or even the built-over ruins of some forgotten metropolis. To the east, the channel out of town could pass under a graveyard and link up with burial catacombs full of undead. The eventual outfall may dump waste into an underground river that flows to the nearest sea . . . after a subterranean odyssey through monster-filled caves!

Hook: The Depths

At 1,000' in length and eventually reaching a depth of about 120', the blasted passage (p. 16) could easily cut into *other* subterranean spaces: natural caverns, ancient ruins, burrows or mines of underground monsters, or even dungeons dug by evil masterminds who have nothing to do with Merle or the nearby town. The GM should give delvers the identification rolls under *Archetype (Exploits)*, pp. 80-81) to distinguish the trail of the current adventure from various side-quests.

Hook: Through a Portal, Darkly

To challenge *really* advanced groups, the GM can have the entity occupying Merle's body open a portal to . . . elsewhere. Perhaps terrifying Elder Things – eyes of death, spheres of madness, watchers at the edge of time, maybe even a mindwarper – start coming through, and the party must battle wave after wave of monsters while temple or Wizards' Guild experts complete a ritual to seal the rift. Trusted heroes might be charged with the entire task, meaning that only *some* of them can fight. Most difficult and dangerous of all, the adventurers may have to venture through the gate! See *Other Planes of Existence (Exploits)*, p. 84) for ideas.

Demons from Between the Stars have mediocre defenses, are affected normally by most attacks, and are dispelled at -1xHP (they're Unnatural), making this battle easy for organized delvers who can illuminate the area with maximum-power **Continual Light**, or **Glow** or **Sunlight**. To offer a challenging encounter, the GM may increase the number of Demons, maybe even adding a leader who can cast **Darkness** or **Blackout**. However, a party that cannot conjure magical light faces relentless backstabbing by assailants who heal with each hit; in that case, the GM might instead *reduce* the number of foes to keep things fun.

After the battle, the heroes can investigate. A **Religious Ritual** or **Thaumatology** roll can distinguish an intact **Pentagram** spell among the messy markings on the floor. If the delvers discover this *before* encountering – or while fleeing from! – demons, golems, and undead elsewhere in the dungeon, they might think to take refuge within it. It has effective skill 15, but it *won't* keep out Elder Things (like Demons from Between the Stars!).

There's no treasure *in* this room. However, if greedy looters think to strip the metallic sheeting off the double doors, they can make off with 20 lbs. of coin-purity copper. They can melt this down into ingots (a **Counterfeiting** roll on returning to the inn) and sell it for a cool \$1,000!

15. BLASTED PASSAGE

The hole in the wall behind the evil altar in the ritual chamber (pp. 10-11) is the mouth of a 10'-wide tunnel that slopes gently downward to the south and then twists out of sight. Unlike the cellar and sewers, and the chambers excavated by

Merle's gang of sorcerers, this isn't the squared-off work of engineering or magic – it looks as though something *blasted* its way out of the ritual chamber, and a **Prospecting** roll confirms this. The exposed rock emits a lambent glow, constantly changing in color (darkness penalty is only -3).

The passage extends for 1,000' but is convoluted enough that visibility never exceeds 60'. Sounds carry for at most 120'. At the 200', 400', 600', and 800' marks, roll 3d; on **9 or less**, roll on the *Deep Encounters Table* (below). Any battle that results occurs in a three-hex-wide, 20-hex long segment of rough-walled tunnel with 10' of clearance overhead. It's always safe to rest afterward.

Deep Encounters Table

Roll 1d.

1-2 – Earth Elementals (p. 19). One per two delvers tunnel out of the walls (the GM might want to reduce the number for a group that lacks negotiating abilities *and* the means to defeat DR 9). They're *wild*, not summoned, and enraged over the hole bored through their domain. A delver with **Spirit Empathy** can use **Diplomacy** or **Fast-Talk** for an Influence roll to explain that the group isn't responsible and is hunting down the offender. A druid is *especially* likely to be believed; add **Power Investiture (Druidic)** to skill. If this fails or nobody tries, combat is inevitable.

3-4 – Ooze (p. 19). An ooze corrodes its way out of a tunnel wall and tries to eat the delvers.

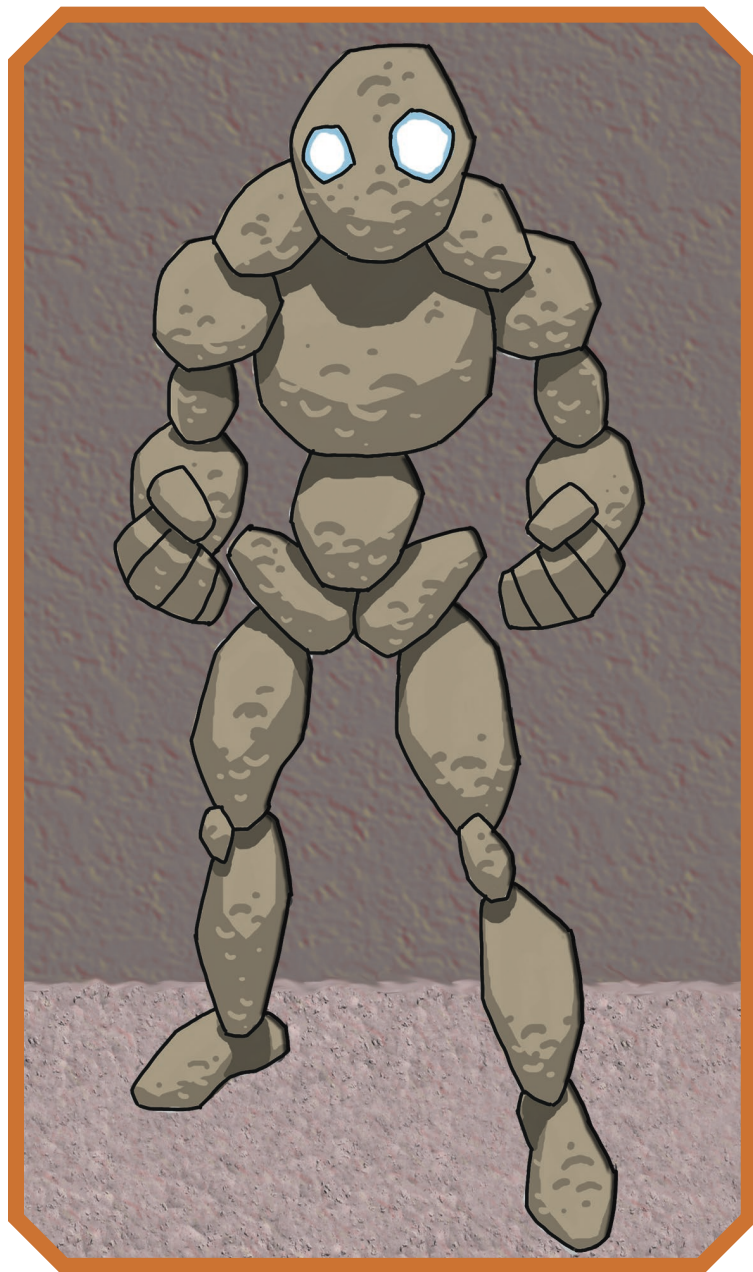
5-6 – Rock Mites (p. 19). A number equal to group size is sitting mid-tunnel, eating rocks. If the delvers wait, the mites eventually wander off down a fissure without a fight. But there's violence if the adventurers push past or attack.

16. END OF THE LINE

At the south end of the blasted passage (above) is a roughly circular area about 30' across. The ceiling is a dome that rises 15' above the rocky floor. The weird glow is especially intense here, removing all darkness penalties.

Standing in the center of this chamber is what appears to be a man in a filthy robe that still bears visible occult markings. His head is bowed, as if in prayer or meditation. If the adventurers shout, approach any closer than the end of the passage, cast a spell, or attack (these are *delvers*, remember!), the figure looks up at them with glowing eyes that shift with the same weird colors as the walls of the cave.

This *was* Uncle Merle. Now it's the husk of Merle's dead body, occupied by some sort of Elder Thing. The heroes have no choice but to fight! The husk of Merle roams about, laughing maniacally, blasting people, and taking punishment until reduced to -10xHP and destroyed.



When finally taken down, there won't be enough of Merle left to identify. However, a **Search** roll – digging among the gory remains – uncovers a gold-and-ruby signet ring. A **Heraldry** roll recognizes the markings as being associated with Merle and Lee's rich merchant family. A **Merchant** roll estimates value at \$775; weight is that of a standard coin (0.02 lb.).

Husk of Merle

The undead body of a man with the insane mind of an Elder Thing within. It neither casts spells (as might be expected of a black magician!) nor engages in physical combat, but instead attacks and defends using eldritch energies.

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| ST: 9 | HP: 9 | Speed: 5.50 |
| DX: 10 | Will: 18 | Move: 5 |
| IQ: 14 | Per: 14 | |
| HT: 12 | FP: N/A | SM: 0 |
| Dodge: 8 | Parry: 12 | DR: 5 |

Eldritch Blast (18): 3d burning. Ranged, with Acc 3, 1/2D 10, Max 100. Can be dodged, but not blocked or parried. The Thing *can* use this on foes trying to grapple it, at the usual -4. It can also use it to parry any ordinary melee or ranged weapon, Missile spell, or magical jet; apply the standard -4 per parry after the first.

Traits: Appearance (Monstrous); Dark Vision; Dependency (Loses 1 HP per minute in no-mana areas); Disturbing Voice; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Hard to Subdue 6; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Magic Resistance 6; No Blood; No Sense of Smell/Taste; No Vitals; Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Unfazeable; Unhealing (Total); Unkillable; Unliving.

Skills: Innate Attack (Gaze)-18.

Class: Elder Thing.

Notes: Parry, DR, and eldritch blast are all the result of manipulating energy fields. Totally mad, truly evil, and utterly unwilling to negotiate.

RANDOM MONSTERS

To spare the GM the bother of bookmarking every last monster that *might* appear in a random encounter, the stats (only!) for the creatures on the two wandering monster tables are repeated below. For complete entries, see **Monsters**.

SEWER ENCOUNTERS

See the *Sewer Encounters Table* (p. 9).

2 – Jelly

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| ST: 25 | HP: 25 | Speed: 5.00 | see Monsters , pp. 38-39 |
| DX: 8 | Will: 0 | Move: 1 | |
| IQ: 0 | Per: 10 | (Ground or Water) | |
| HT: 12 | FP: 12 | SM: +2 | |
| Dodge: 8 | Parry: N/A | DR: 2 | |

Engulf: If the jelly starts its turn in close combat with prey, or can move there on its turn, it tries to engulf its target; no attack roll is necessary and its quarry may defend only by dodging *and* retreating. Failure means being sucked inside and pinned if of lower SM than the jelly, or partly stuck in the jelly and grappled if of equal or greater SM. The victim can break free by winning a Quick Contest of ST (allowed only every 10 seconds if pinned); the jelly has +10 to ST if pinning or +5 if grappling. The typical jelly can pin/grapple one foe; later enemies are pushed along in front of it unless they *win* a Quick Contest of ST to prevent it from moving.

Immobilize (Resisted by HT-4): Anyone who isn't in completely sealed armor and who is pinned or grappled by the jelly, engages it in a shoving match (no matter who wins the Quick Contest of ST), or touches it with bare skin must roll resistance once per second in contact. Failure means paralysis for minutes equal to margin of failure.

Liquefy: Anyone *pinned* takes 1d-1 corrosion damage per second; anyone *grappled* or *shoved* suffers 1d-3 corrosion per second. This is *Large-Area Injury* (**Exploits**, p. 53). The prey's organic items and armor permanently lose DR 1 per 5 points of cumulative damage. Inorganic equipment is immune. Dead victims are dissolved and *gone*, while inorganic gear is ejected.

Traits: Acute Detect 10; Amphibious; Detect (Organic Matter); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Injury Reduction 4; Invertebrate; Invisibility; No Blood; No Eyes; No Head; No Manipulators; No Neck; Slippery 5; Slithers; Spider Climb (Move 1); Universal Digestion.

Class: Slime.

Notes: An SM +2 jelly can fill a two-yard-wide passage to 6' of height yet lurk in a one-yard-wide space, pin or grapple not one but two targets, and push 1,250 lbs (but drag only 312 lbs.). A feared subclass of jellies absorb victims' *abilities* along with the bodies, allowing the GM to add any trait that seems fun, from Luck to another monster's contact poison! Unaffected by Animal or Plant spells that don't specifically target slimes. Nonsentient – *can't* communicate or negotiate.

3-5 – Leaping Leech

see *Monsters*, p. 40

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| ST: 0 | HP: 1 | Speed: 6.50 |
| DX: 16 | Will: 10 | Move: 1 (Ground or Water) |
| IQ: 1 | Per: 10 | |
| HT: 10 | FP: 10 | SM: -9 |
| Dodge: 9 | Parry: N/A | DR: 0 |

Leaping (16): Up to 4 yards! Against an armored victim, this targets the face (at -5) or eyes (-9). Leeches can cluster on body parts; only one can fit on a human-sized eye, but there's no practical limit to how many can cling to limbs, extremities, or the head. The leap does no damage, but . . .

Leeching: This attack cannot penetrate *any* DR, not even Tough Skin. One second after hitting bare flesh, though, the leech begins to suck blood. It inflicts 1 HP per second for 1d-2 seconds (minimum 1). Then it's gorged and drops off.

Traits: Amphibious; Gills; Vermiform; Wild Animal.

Skills: Jumping-16; Swimming-18.

Class: Animal.

Notes: A leech that steals 2 HP or more has SM -8 – and if such a distended leech is killed, it *bursts*, showering everything nearby with gore. Anyone (except other leeches!) within one yard must roll vs. HT to avoid being blinded for 1d-3 seconds (minimum 1). A safer option is to pick it off, but leeches are slimy and difficult to remove. Grabbing a leech in one second requires a DX roll, at -9 for SM; *carefully* doing so takes two seconds but requires no roll. Then roll vs. ST at -3 to pull it off; this inflicts 1 HP of injury. Even 1 point of flame damage will make the leech let go.



There's something down there. I can hear it scratching around and I can smell it!

– Lee, Journeyman Merchant

6-8 – Giant Rat

see *Monsters*, pp. 30-31

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

Bite (15): 1d-1 cutting. Reach C.

Traits: Night Vision 5; Semi-Upright; Striking ST 2; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-15; Stealth-15.

Class: Giant Animal.

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

9-11 – Giant Spider

see *Monsters*, pp. 31-32

Huge Spider

This spider is around 4.5' across, including the legs, with a 1.5'-wide body.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| ST: 12 | HP: 12 | Speed: 6.50 |
| DX: 14 | Will: 10 | Move: 8 |
| IQ: 3 | Per: 10 | |
| HT: 12 | FP: 12 | SM: 0 |
| Dodge: 9 | Parry: N/A | DR: 2 |

Bite (16): 1d-1 impaling + follow-up 2d toxic, or 1d with a successful HT roll. Anyone who loses more than HP/2 to cumulative toxic damage is paralyzed until fully healed. Reach C.

Traits: 360° Vision; Ambidexterity; Extra Legs (Eight Legs); No Fine Manipulators; Spider Climb (Move 6); Semi-Upright; Subsonic Hearing; Wild Animal.

Skills: Brawling-16; Stealth-14.

Class: Giant Animal.

Notes: A spider this size will ambush from above, attack frontally with the advantage of numbers, or go after victims entangled in webs (effective ST 12).

Humongous Spider

This spider is 6' across, including the legs, with a 2'-wide body.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| ST: 19 | HP: 19 | Speed: 6.00 |
| DX: 13 | Will: 10 | Move: 7 |
| IQ: 4 | Per: 10 | |
| HT: 13 | FP: 13 | SM: +1 |
| Dodge: 9 | Parry: N/A | DR: 3 |

Bite (15): 2d impaling + follow-up 1d toxic (HT to resist). A victim who loses more than HP/2 to cumulative toxic damage is paralyzed until fully healed. Reach C, 1.

Traits: As huge spider, but Spider Climb is at Move 4.

Skills: Brawling-15; Stealth-13.

Class: Giant Animal.

Notes: This monster often hunts *outside* its lair, where it prefers to get the (literal) drop on prey. In its lair, ST 19 webs make it a daunting foe . . . and it is smart enough to wait until at least a few delvers are snagged.

12 – Smugglers

see p. 9

DEEP ENCOUNTERS

See the *Deep Encounters Table* (p. 16).

1-2 – Earth Elemental

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| ST: 25 | HP: 25 | Speed: 5.25 |
| DX: 8 | Will: 9 | Move: 5 |
| IQ: 7 | Per: 7 | |
| HT: 13 | FP: 13 | SM: +1 |
| Dodge: 8 | Parry: 8 | DR: 9 |

see *Monsters*, p. 25

Stony Fist (10): 2d+4 crushing. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C, 1.

Traits: Absolute Direction; Dark Vision; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Ham-Fisted 2; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; No Blood; No Neck; Pressure Support; Subsonic Hearing; Tunneling (see notes).

Skills: Brawling-10.

Class: Elemental.

Notes: Can tunnel *through* earth at Move 3 or stone at Move 1 – navigating via Absolute Direction and Dark Vision – to emerge almost anywhere underground! These ones are *wild*, not summoned, so they're unaffected by the Banish spell and don't vanish when wounded to -1×HP.

3-4 – Ooze

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| ST: 0 | HP: 12 | Speed: 7.00 |
| DX: 16 | Will: 12 | Move: 8 |
| IQ: 1 | Per: 12 | |
| HT: 12 | FP: 12 | SM: 0 |
| Dodge: 11 | Parry: N/A | DR: 0 |

see *Monsters*, pp. 44-45

Stinging Touch (16): 1d+1 corrosion + follow-up 1d+1 toxic (HT-4 to resist). Corrosion is only to targeted body part, but keep track of it: armor there *permanently* loses DR 1 per 5 points of cumulative damage. If blocked or parried by a shield or a weapon, *that* starts to corrode. Orichalcum gear won't corrode – but orichalcum armor provides the wearer with DR, not total immunity. Any failed HT roll to avoid death by someone taken to -1×HP or worse by either facet of this attack means the victim liquefies to ooze food and is beyond resurrection. Reach C, 1.

Touch-Me-Not (Resisted by HT-4): Fools touching an ooze with bare skin must resist or take 1d+1 toxic. Duh.

Traits: Combat Reflexes; Diffuse (Infiltration); Division (see notes); Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Indomitable; Invertebrate; No Eyes; No Fine Manipulators; No Neck; No Head; Regeneration (1 HP/second, but only if on a surface); Sensitive Touch; Slithers; Spider Climb (Move 8); Subsonic Hearing;

Temperature Tolerance 5 (Cold); Temperature Tolerance 5 (Heat); Unfazeable; Vibration Sense (Air); Wild Animal.

Class: Slime.

Notes: Ooze is Diffuse and affected normally only by area, cone, or explosive attacks. Other attacks are less effective *and* risk making it multiply: Whenever such a blow causes ooze to roll against HT to stay alive (at -1×HP and below), success means it lives and failure by 3+ means it dies – but failure by 1 or 2 (“mortal wound”) indicates the energy of the killing blow enables it to absorb part of whatever it's on (ground, tree, wall, etc.) and split into *two* oozes! Initial HP equal half of the parent's full score (a HP 12 critter yields two HP 6 oozes, one of those gives two HP 3 specimens, and so on), but Regeneration can top it up to HP 12 – and newly spawned oozes slither away and take All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge) until fully regenerated. Unaffected by Animal or Plant spells that don't specifically target slimes. Far too stupid to negotiate!

Speaking from Experience

As our power grows, it shall – with no particular effort on our part – transform sewer creatures into frightening monsters: foul rats, spiders, leeches, and slimy things. These need not serve us to serve our purposes.

– Merle, Respected Innkeeper (and Black Magician)

5-6 – Rock Mite

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| ST: 12 | HP: 12 | Speed: 5.00 |
| DX: 10 | Will: 12 | Move: 4 |
| IQ: 0 | Per: 9 | |
| HT: 13 | FP: 13 | SM: -1 |
| Dodge: 8 | Parry: 8 (unarmed) | DR: 5 |

see *Monsters*, p. 47

Bite (10): 1d-1 cutting + follow-up 2d burning. Any bite counts as a grapple, and inflicts 2d burning every turn thereafter! Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Brittle; Doesn't Breathe; DR 25 vs. heat/fire only; Homogeneous; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Mind Control; Immunity to Poison; Lifting ST 6; Mute; No Blood; No Head; Pressure Support; Regeneration (1 HP/12 hours, but only if in contact with stone); Sealed; Single-Minded; Stubbornness (12); Weakness (Shape Earth or Earth to Air inflicts 3d HP/casting).

Skills: Wrestling-10.

Class: Mundane? Despite appearances, it *isn't* an elemental!

Notes: Lifting ST gives effective ST 18 for grappling. Unaffected by Animal or Mind Control spells. Nonsentient – *can't* communicate or negotiate. Rumors claim rock mites are the “drone workers” of a larger rock-man civilization, whose metal-filled lairs are guarded by a warrior caste with huge jaws and a *crushing* grip.



Adventure Map

Areas that appear on the full-sized maps but not here are for *Dungeon Fantasy: Against the Rat-Men*, available from warehouse23.com.

CHAPTER THREE

REWARDS

Completing this adventure can be relatively profitable for delvers who scrounge and drag back *everything*.

LOOT

The payoffs for this quest are mostly in goods – only some of which can be sold in town. Here's a summary. Any value marked with an asterisk (*) is a *maximum* selling price, but the delvers get less in most cases; see *Getting a Good Price (Exploits)*, pp. 15-16). Any special skills needed for evaluation are noted as well.

3. Sewers

see pp. 8-9

If smugglers are met, *each* has:

- Cheap shortsword (\$160*, 2 lbs.).
- Light leather armor (18 lbs.) that can be kept and used, but not sold.

4. Smugglers' Den

see pp. 9-10

- Small iron strongbox (\$250*, 15 lbs.) *if not bashed*.
- Good padlock (\$400*, 2 lbs.) *if not bashed or forced*.
- Silver flask (0.5 lb.). Worth \$500 to the temple or Wizards' Guild, or \$750 in credit with the Thieves' Guild, if unopened – or \$500* as an ornamental metal object (opened or not), in which case it requires a **Merchant** roll to evaluate.

6. Ritual Chamber

see pp. 10-11

- Three evil lanterns (2 lbs. apiece) that can be sold to the temple if identified with a four-hour **Religious Ritual** roll (\$150* each) or simply sold in town as lanterns (\$20* each).
- Six peshkali scimitars (\$500*, 3 lbs. apiece).
- Black velvet curtain (\$40*, 2.5 lbs.). Requires a **Connoisseur (Luxuries)** roll to evaluate.
- Sacrificial dagger (\$200*, 0.25 lb.).

7. Hidden Tomb

see p. 12

Each zombie has:

- Club (3 lbs.) that can be kept and used, but not sold.
- Light leather armor (18 lbs.) that can be kept and used, but not sold.

*Thieves will come
seeking the treasures
we worked so hard for.
Let us do our best to
discourage them: traps,
curses, even demons
if need be.*



– Merle,
*Respected
Innkeeper
(and Black
Magician)*

8. Main Hallway

see p. 12

- 12 alchemical torches that burn for a day apiece, which are intact enough to sell, but only as regular torches (\$3*, 1 lb. apiece).

9. First Cell

see pp. 12-13

Each corpse golem has:

- Suit of human-skin heavy leather armor (36 lbs.) that can be kept and used, but not sold.

10. Second Cell

see p. 13

Each golem-armor swordsman has:

- Broadsword (\$600*, 3 lbs.).
- Scrap armor (\$1d×100, 200 lbs.).
- Medium shield (15 lbs.) that can be kept and used, but not sold.

12. Library

see pp. 13-14

Two spellbooks:

- *Elrem's Curses* (12 lbs.), worth \$400 to the Wizards' Guild or \$400* on the open market. Requires a **Thaumatology** roll to evaluate.
- *The Lesser Kunsian Book of the Dead* (12 lbs.), worth \$500 to the temple or \$500* on the open market. Requires a **Religious Ritual** roll to evaluate.

13. Lab

see pp. 13-14

- Backpack alchemy lab (\$1,000*, 10 lbs.) or makeshift version of same (\$500*, 15 lbs.) or 2d pounds of glassware worth \$10/lb*.
- Random alchemical items that can be kept and used, but not sold.

14. Testing Area

see pp. 14-15

- Copper worth \$1,000, if melted down using **Counterfeiting**.

16. End of the Line

see pp. 16-17

• Merle's signet ring (\$775*, 0.02 lb.). Requires a **Merchant** roll to evaluate. Can instead be traded to Lee; see *Getting Paid* (below).

Scrap

At the end of the adventure, roll vs. **Scrounging**. Success yields 1,000 lbs. of various cellar junk, sewer flotsam, broken doors, smashed furniture from the lab and library, etc. to drag back to town for extra cash. This is worth \$1d per 10 lbs.

Setting Up Shop

Calculating players might ask, "Once we've cleared the dungeon, can we use it as our hideout in town?" The GM *could* permit this, but there are good reasons not to. For one thing, unless the delvers disappear, never report back to Lee, sell no treasure, *and* avoid the smugglers, word reaches town – at which point the Town Watch or perhaps even the King's Men will want to seal up the evil place, the Thieves' Guild will want to occupy it as a secret base, and the Wizards' Guild or temple will want to ward it with magic or commandeer it for research. If the heroes manage to keep it a secret from mortals, don't forget that Merle showed demons *and* Elder Things how to find it, and these will come calling. Adventurers who push their luck should be allowed to stay for a week or two, only to have the dungeon turn ugly – fast.

GETTING PAID

Lee is a woman of her word and honors her deal with the delvers, provided that they didn't try to pry information out of her by physical or magical force (see *Keeping It in the Family*, p. 5).

Rats

The bounty on the rats is \$8 per giant rat head to a maximum of \$400 – or \$10 per rat to maximum of \$500, if the delvers won a Quick Contest of **Merchant** skill vs. Lee's 15. The cellar (pp. 6-7) yields 40 rats, while the sewers (pp. 8-9) should provide the balance.

Room and Board

Lee also lets the delvers stay at her inn for free for a week *if* they can escort her to the cellar – lit by torchlight – and *show* her that there are no monsters left, just dust and rubble. The adventurers may claim this as they explore the rest of the dungeon (see *More Than We Bargained For*, p. 6), immediately after they're done, or on a future visit.

The Ring

If the heroes turn over Merle's signet ring (from *End of the Line*, pp. 16-17) to Lee, she is *very* grateful. She can't pay extra cash she doesn't have, but she *can* use her family's influence with the Merchants' Guild to ensure the heroes sell all other proceeds of this adventure – everything but the ring – at *full* value without needing to go through *Getting a Good Price* (*Exploits*, pp. 15-16).

SELLING THE TALE

This isn't the kind of expansive quest that inspires ballads and epics . . . there won't be *much* interest from anybody but Lee, and she has already set her terms. Still, a well-spoken representative of the group might warn the town elders of an evil hideout in the sewers. A successful **Savoir-Faire** roll accomplishes this, earning a reward of five silver (\$100) one day later, after the Sewer Inspector confirms the story.

If the explorers *don't* do the heroic thing, and instead keep the town in the dark, they can attempt to sell the location of the place to shady occultists (most likely *more* black magicians) – or, if they discovered evidence of smuggling, to the Thieves' Guild. Either would be a **Streetwise** roll, and net \$20 times margin of success. Playing both sides is possible but necessitates omitting certain facts: -2 to each roll.

Cocky delvers might even try to blackmail Lee's family with the fact that Merle was a black magician, which would require them to tell no one *and* keep Merle's signet ring as evidence. This backfires – the word of freebooters carries little weight against that of established money. Lee stoically honors her deal, but the group is treated as two Wealth levels *lower* than usual when trying to sell the adventure's loot. They would be wise not to room at Lee's inn unless they enjoy being drugged and shanghaied. They certainly encounter "bandits" on the road upon leaving town. Evil begets evil.

BONUS CHARACTER POINTS

The GM may award bonus character points in whatever way seems fair. For veterans who blow through the whole adventure in one or two sessions, 5 points per session plus another 5 points for completing the quest should suffice.

For beginners, here's one possible suggestion *for the entire adventure*, however many sessions it takes. The GM might give out all points at adventure's end or separate awards for each session's activities. Either way, the minimum is 0 points – even for an absolute disaster!

Adventure

These awards aren't associated with specific dungeon areas.

Initially refusing Lee's offer: -1 point for being unadventurous
Using Mind-Search, Interrogation, or other unpleasant tactics on Lee: -1 point for being evil

Visiting all dungeon areas other than area #4 (which has its own award!): +1 point

Clearing dungeon of all **non-wandering** monsters in areas #1, 6, 7, 9-11, 13, 14, and 16: +1 point
 Fleeing monsters and bashing basement door, endangering town: -1 point for being craven
 Turning over Merle's ring to Lee **instead of** selling it or keeping it for blackmail: +1 point
 Keeping dungeon location from townsfolk and **either** selling the information to shady characters **or** trying to blackmail Lee: -1 point for being evil
 Party members killed: -1 point/death, even if resurrected
 Needed GM cheat or divine intervention: -1 point per incident

1. Cellar

see pp. 6-7

Defeating spider horde near staircase: +1 point
 Defeating humongous spider(s) near junk pile: +1 point
 Clearing cellar of **all** spiders and webs, lighting torches, and showing Lee it's safe: +1 point
 Chopping down stairs and falling into webs: -1 point for being stupid
 Trashing pillars and collapsing inn: -2 points for being reckless and evil (on top of penalty for any PC deaths)

2. Twisting Tunnel

see pp. 7-8

Nothing of note. If digging out from a cave-in brings wandering monsters, count them in the award for the sewers (below).

3. Sewers

see pp. 8-9

Everybody cleverly avoids contact with sewage and HT rolls for sewer rot: +1 point, awarded once regardless of time spent
 Wandering monster battles: +1 point per monster type (jelly, leaping leeches, giant rats, spiders, smugglers), to a maximum of +5 points
 Caving in sewers: -1 point for being needlessly destructive

4. Smugglers' Den

see pp. 9-10

Finding this "bonus area" from either side and **either** defeating the flaming skull **or** extracting the silver flask without opening it: +1 point

5. Rune-Limned Gallery

see p. 10

Figuring out a clever way around the Evil Runes without triggering them: +1 point

6. Ritual Chamber

see pp. 10-11

Defeating peshkali: +2 points
Deliberately tearing open false wall during peshkali battle, dragging zombies into the fray: -1 point for being stupid
 Cleansing evil altar without anyone getting cursed: +1 point

7. Hidden Tomb

see p. 12

Defeating zombie horde in battle **or** cleverly sealing them in tomb without fighting them: +1 point



8. Main Hallway

see p. 12

Nothing of note.

9. First Cell

see pp. 12-13

Defeating corpse golems: +1 point

10. Second Cell

see p. 13

Defeating golem-armor swordsmen: +1 point per death (so +2 points)

11. Third Cell

see p. 13

Defeating stone golem: +1 point, or +2 points if GM makes it a huge, epic golem

12. Library

see pp. 13-14

Destroying black tome without triggering "book storm": +1 point

13. Lab

see pp. 14-15

Successfully creating alchemical concoctions: +1 point
 Defeating toxifier(s): +1 point

14. Testing Area

see pp. 15-16

Defeating Demons from *Between the Stars*: +1 point, or +2 points if they didn't get to backstab even once due to delvers' clever actions
 Cleverly luring supernatural foes here and using Pentagram against them: +1 point

15. Blasted Passage

see p. 16

Wandering monster battles: +1 point per monster type (earth elementals, ooze, rock mites), to a maximum of +3 points
 Negotiating passage with earth elementals **instead of** fighting: +1 point

16. End of the Line

see pp. 16-17

Defeating husk of Merle: +2 points

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES

The hooks on pp. 9 and 15 suggest ways to extend this dungeon – if the GM wants to create another adventure! Here are some ready-to-use add-ons.



The cellar may be full of closets and cracks for rats to hide in. Check every corner.
– Lee, Journeyman Merchant

SECRETS WITHIN SECRETS

Some players insist on searching for secrets *everywhere*. Finding the smugglers' den (p. 9) and hidden tomb (p. 12) will encourage this. It can be fun to humor them!

The GM may attach a secret chamber to *any* area in Chapter 2. Alternatively, roll 3d: A room has an additional secret on **6 or less** if this is a minor diversion, on **9 or less** if a major theme.

Door

Finding the secret door requires a **Vision, Observation**, or *Per*-based **Traps** roll, at a modifier of **2d-12**. Keep negative numbers; e.g., rolling 2 gives -10, while 12 gives 0 (no modifier).

Roll **1d** for how it's opened:

- 1-2 – No Mechanism.** Just turn the knob!
- 3-4 – Lock.** Roll vs. **Lockpicking** to open.
- 5-6 – Secret Latch.** Roll vs. *IQ*-based **Traps** to open.

For forcing and bashing, assume a wooden door. Roll **1d** for the strength of it, its hinges, and any lock (*Doors, Exploits*, p. 82):

| Roll: | 1-3 | 4-5 | 6 |
|-----------|---------|-------|-------------|
| Strength: | Average | Heavy | Extra-Heavy |

Room

The room is 1d hexes in size, shaped to slip between nearby map areas: squared-off, long and snaky, irregular cavern, etc.

Contents

Forgotten closets are excellent places for Merle to have confined more constructs and undead! Roll **1d** for what attacks when the door opens:

- 1** – No monster.
- 2** – **Bronze Spiders** (*Monsters*, p. 17).
- 3** – **Corpse Golems** (*Monsters*, pp. 18-19).
- 4** – **Flaming Skulls** (*Monsters*, p. 27).
- 5-6** – **Zombie Gang Members** (p. 12).

There's one monster per two PCs (one per PC, for zombies), to a maximum of one per hex of room size.

Once any monsters are defeated, roll **1d** for loot:

- 1** – Nothing.
- 2-3 – Concoctions.** Roll 1d-3 times (minimum once) on the *Scrounged Concoctions Table* (p. 15).
- 4-5 – Occult Paraphernalia.** 2d pounds of sinister junk worth \$25/lb. to the Wizards' Guild.
- 6 – Remains.** Someone ritually killed by Merle's fraternity, bearing an identifier (tattoo, cheap signet, etc.). If the room held corpse golems or zombies, this is one of *them*. Anyone with **Streetwise** knows about rewards for missing persons: \$1d×20 in town.

ADVENTURES IN ALCHEMY

Merle's fraternity managed some cool alchemical tricks. Savvy delvers may want to profit from these!

Anyone with **Alchemy** can try reverse-engineering. Each attempt requires a sample, a week in town doing nothing else, and an Alchemy roll.

Success finds a formula which the Alchemists' Guild will buy – *once*. A month later, the Guild will start selling the item, which works as described in this adventure.

Day-Long Torches (p. 12). Requires one such torch. Roll Alchemy at -8 to reverse-engineer; each attempt consumes a torch. Formula sells for \$700. Torches are \$60, 1 lb.

Meteoric Paint (p. 12). Requires scrapings of paint gathered with an Alchemy roll. Roll Alchemy at -12 to reverse-engineer. Formula sells for \$3,200. Vials of this utility potion coat 60 square feet and are \$1,600. 0.5 lb.