

FIVE CATAclysms

The Forbidden Barrow

Nickolas Z Brown

A Starting Adventure for Low Level Characters
With Conversion instructions for old school versions of the original fantasy Role-Playing Game



The Forbidden Barrow

This is a Forbidden Barrow, where a corrupt, assassinated King and his aides are entombed, sealed off such that the world may forget them. The entrance is discovered when an adventurer's foot pops through the ground, revealing a stairway that winds downwards into a subterranean chamber.

This dungeon is ideal for a starting adventure, where the players can be introduced to several OSR concepts without accidentally destroying the play world.

For levels 1-4

Contents

2 – How to Use this Key

3 – Wandering Monsters

4 – Dungeon Key Begins

13 – Dungeon Map

HOW TO USE THIS KEY

Preparation: None required! Any interconnections in the dungeon arise out of interaction, so you can go in just as blind as your players.

Room Keys: Any text not italicized or (parenthesized) may be read aloud to the players. (Parenthesized text is for DM eyes only, typically explaining an unseen item or function.) **Bold** text will refer to deeper explanations provided outside of this paragraph, for example:

Bold – (The bolded item would be described here.)

In addition, you may use the ctrl-f feature to find any room by typing the room # and a ':' such as '05:'

Monster Keys: Listed within each room key, and codified as per the terms below:

HD – Hit dice. Determines attack bonus, hp, and saving throw. For example, an HD3+2 Monster has (3d6+2) hit points; +3 to attack rolls, and a saving throw of (18-3=15).

Hp – A creature with an Hp value has a set Hp total, and an attack bonus of 0 unless otherwise specified.

AC – Armor Class. Attacks must match or exceed this value to hit. Monster touch AC is reliant upon AC source. Armored targets have touch AC of 10, but a dodgy bat with an AC of 14 will have touch AC of 14.

SPD – Indicates the Speed of the creature. If not listed, assume speed is 12. 12 is considered unencumbered.

ATT# - The number of attack rolls a creature may make.

Xtra1dmg – Deals one extra damage on attack.

"SvSpells" Means "Save versus spells"

CONVERSION FOR OTHER SYSTEMS

If you're not using the Five Cataclysms rule set, that's fine. The module works well with any od&d or whitebox editions, and should work for the most part with d&d 5e. All HD values are d6, but you may change these as you see fit. All AC values match the creatures thematically, so you may adjust them accordingly.

Armor Class is Ascending

Armor Class starts at 10 (typically)

Attack Bonus = Monster HD

Save = 18 – Monster HD

Speed of 12 is Human Average

Morale Checks are rolled using 2d6, rolling above 6 means failure.

A Turn is about 10 minutes, a combat round is anywhere between 10 seconds and 1 minute.

Always remember that as a Dungeon Master you have the power to change whatever you want; this module is merely suggestions. If a combat is too easy/hard for your liking, tweak it. Do whatever you need for you and your players to have fun!

EXP HOW

This module is designed for a treasure-as-exp system. EXP is rewarded 1 point per each gold-piece worth of treasure extracted from the dungeon. This way, avoiding or tricking monsters is just as viable as murdering them.

For any feedback, please send an email to FiveCataclysms@gmail.com

WANDERING MONSTERS

For wandering monster checks, roll a d8 every turn (or ten minutes). On a result of 1, roll a d6 for the table to determine what monster appears. If no monster appears or the 1 is not rolled, increase the threshold for the d8 from 1 to 2, making wandering monsters more likely to appear as time passes.

Be sure to reduce the population counter on the right as monsters are destroyed.

If an entire population is slain, remove that monster from the list. If subsequent checks roll an empty result, no monster shows up.

#	# of enemies that appear	Monster Description	Population
1	A swarm of undead Rats!	UNDEAD RAT SWARM HD4 AC12 SPD9 Only takes 1 damage from non-area attacks. Takes double damage from area attacks. *Does not recover Hp upon surviving combat	1 remains
2	An Armed and Armored Wight with a Great-sword!	ARMORED WIGHT HD2+2 AC18 SPD9 xtra1Dmg Gets 1 extra attack on a target adjacent to first target.	1 remains
3	1d4 Globes of Flaming Flesh!	FLAMING FLESH – <i>The flesh slaps around on the floor, flopping towards its target to set it ablaze.</i> HD1 AC8 SPD6 On Hit, target must SvBurst or catch fire, taking 1 damage for 1d6 rounds.	112 remain
4	A Gibbering Ghost!	GIBBERGHOST – <i>It gibbers maddeningly, causing those who can hear it to lose their minds.</i> HD1 AC12 SPD9 Incorporeal Does not attack , but those who can hear its gibbers must SvSpells, or be confused for that round. When confused, their action is determined by d6: 1 - 2, they roll an attack against themselves 3 – 4, they attack an ally 5, they do nothing 6, they attack the ghost	1 remains
5	1d6 Charred Skeletons!	CHARRED SKELETON HD1 AC10 SPD9 Fire resistant	112 remain
6	An Acidic, Convulsing Mound of Organs!	ACIDIC CONVULSING MOUND OF ORGANS HD2+2 AC10 Non-magical armor/shields that block the Mound's attacks have their AC value permanently reduced by 1. Non-magical weapons that strike the mound have their damage output permanently reduced by 1.	2 remain

01: A decrepit stairway winds downwards about 100'. The stairs are as stone slabs set into the walls, many of them crumbling or broken away. If you're not **careful**, you could lose your footing.

Careful – (It takes a full turn to get down the stairs carefully. If someone tries to go faster, they must pass a dexterity check, or they'll fall down or off the stairs. Roll a 1d10 to determine how many d6 of damage a person who falls receives.)

02: Before a **sealed doorway** stand two **skeletons** in heavily rusted armor, motionless in place. Each is armed with a spear and shield.

Sealed Doorway - (The crypt's entrance can be busted open with a concerted effort of hammer or pick for one full turn.)

Skeletons - (Approaching the entry will cause them to animate, attacking whomever is near. Will not pursue those who flee up the stairs.)

2 x SKELETAL GUARDIAN

HD1+1 AC15 SPD9

03: There are 8 **tombs** set into the floor here, each emblazoned with a royal sigil. At the far end of the room is a large fireplace, within which burns a silent **purple flame**.

Tombs - (Within these floor-tombs rest the former royal guard. Each wears fancy armor of the kings-guard, and **each is worth 500gp** as treasure, but weigh 5 stones each. However, 1 of the 8 royal guards is an animate undead, who will attack upon being disturbed.)

Purple Flame – (The fireplace cannot be snuffed out except by dispel magic. If someone sticks a weapon or other object into the fire, that item will be wreathed with purple flame for up to one hour, causing it to deal an extra 1d6 damage to the next target it strikes.)

UNDEAD ROYAL GUARD – *Wields sword & shield*

HD4+4 AC18 SPD9 ATT#2

If it gets the chance, will stick its sword in the **purple flame** to gain the extra d6 damage buff.

04: Scattered across tables and the floor are many **tomes & parchments**. Long-dried inkwells sit here and there. The West and South walls appear to be sealed tombs, with **ancient text** adorning their faces.

Tomes & Parchments - (These ancient texts will crumble when touched, disintegrating and being illegible. However, there is one magical scroll that remains intact, upon it the 2nd level spell, "Blood

Siphon”: On touch, caster damages a target for 2d6 Hp, transferring the health either to themselves or an ally with another touch.)

Ancient Text – (The West tomb reads “Court Arcanist Feraldi.” The South tomb reads “Scripter MorMinoa.” Both tombs can be cracked open by pick or hammer.)

05: This tomb has more tattered scrolls laying all around, but against the west wall is a slab upon which are many rotten blankets, and a **skeleton**. In the skeleton's lap is a large dusty tome, and in the hand is an elaborate pen. Behind the skeleton on the wall is a small display of more elaborate fountain pens, meant to hold 5 but now holds 4. **Each looks to be worth 200gp.**

Skeleton - (The Skeleton is Scripter MorMinoa. If anyone sets foot in the tomb, he will turn his head and begin writing rapidly in his book. He will first inscribe that the invaders became stunned by his appearance, stunning the party for a round. He will then begin writing about lacerations appearing in their flesh, dealing them 1d6 damage once per round. This hits automatically.)

SCRIPTER MORMINOA – *An ancient scribe who learned too late that he could only scribe the truth.*

HD2 AC8 Immobile

Once per round, he writes a sentence which describes an injury the adventurers take, dealing 1d6 damage automatically.

Upon defeat the tome will crumble, leaving the tattered page which describes how the adventurer's flesh was being ripped apart by unseen blades.

06: This tomb is decorated by strands of glowing starlight that cross the ceiling and walls, and in the center is a stone pedestal upon which sits a **golden urn** and a **spellbook**, which **looks to be worth 1000gp.**

Golden Urn - (This urn functions as the magic jar of the Arcanist within. After the urn is looted and has been carried awhile, Arcanist Feraldi will attempt to possess a person with a secret save vs spells. He prefers a magic user. If he succeeds, he will attempt to escape, with the urn and his spellbook. He may cast spells as a 5th level magic user.)

Spellbook – (Contains Ordinary spells up to 3rd level spells. Seems oddly... ordinary.)

ARCANIST FERALDI

HD4+2 AC10

Casts spells as 5th level magic user; 4 lvl 1 spells, 2 lvl 2 spells, 1 lvl 3 spell.

07: This chamber was clearly once a place of reverence, but now it is reduced to a sort of antiquity display, as dozens of holy symbols hang from small chains from the ceiling, above altars and statuettes devoted to many **gods**. The North and West walls are sealed tomb entrances with **ancient text** upon them.

Gods - (This room may be used to introduce your players to different deities in your game.)

Ancient Text - (The west reads as “Bishop Pormqui,” and the North reads as “Avetrix the Zealot.”)

\$ - The symbols and statuettes are worth a little money but are heavy as far as treasure goes. There are 50 stones of stuff here that **can be sold for a total of 500gp**.

08: There are many **fancy accoutrements**, surrounding a bishop-looking skeleton with a **marvelous hat**. The sigil of a **spider** is emblazoned on every item here.

(However, all of this treasure is cursed. If taken from the tomb,

Fancy accoutrements - Elaborate cushions and clothes and symbols, **worth 2000gp in all while weighing 10 stones**. (Cursed as per **Spider**).

Marvelous Hat – It is masterfully crafted and embedded with precious stones, worth **1500gp total**. (Cursed as per **Spider**).

Spider – (All of this treasure is cursed. If removed from the tomb, the players will find that every room they enter will be full of ravenous red spiders, hell-bent on killing the party. Each room will have 1 ravenous red spider per 10'x10' square, and the room will be stuffed full of webs making it difficult to traverse. Each room full of spiders will repopulate if exited and entered again. Returning the treasure lifts the curse.)

RAVENOUS RED SPIDER

Hp1 AC13 SPD12

Size: Small

09: (Party must roll surprise as the tomb’s resident immediately screams in fury and charges.) The tomb otherwise contains bits of bone and metal, with long-dried blood stains.

AVETRIX THE ZEALOT – *An unarmored, frothing undead who wields the **Zealous Hammer of Srongar** in both hands.*

HD5+5 AC10 ATT#3 xtra2dmg.

Zealous Hammer of Srongar - +1/+1 Hammer. Grants wielder resistance to cold, or resists 1 damage per d6 of cold damage. *Srongar is the long-forgotten God of Winter Storms.*

10: Dozens of **skulls** are suspended from chains or settled on metal spikes in this room, their mouths all agape in silent laughter. The East and South walls are clearly sealed crypts, with words upon them in an **ancient language**.

Skulls - (Upon entering the room, the skulls will all begin to chitter and chuckle, some whispering and others shouting. The cacophony is eerie, and if someone remains in the room for a couple minutes, they will be forced to save vs spells, or roll a d6. 1-2 means they flee in terror for 1d6 turns. 3-4 means they are charmed, and will try to get everyone to leave the tomb, and will fight if necessary. 5-6 means they will be stricken with horrible laughter, unable to act for 1d6 days.)

Ancient Language - (The South reads "Saruk the Diplomatic" and the East reads "Domingo the Songful").

11: Within the crypt is a **skeleton** in a **white robe**, held up by a metal stand. The robe glitters with magic.

Skeleton - (If anyone sets foot in the room, the skeleton will begin speaking, but his voice is magical and may charm 1 person per round.)

White Robe – (The white robe is magical, and will grant +1 to charisma modifier while worn. However, it cannot be worn along with armor.)

SARUK THE DIPLOMAT

HD2 AC8 Immobile

Will spend each action attempting to charm others to his way, with a save vs spells, turning the party against itself one person at a time.

If only one person remains, they will be ordered to leave and never return or speak of this place.

12: Within this tomb is a **skeleton**, surrounded by simple furnishings. The skeleton appears to be standing against the wall, and has an abnormally long neck, covered with **golden rings**.

Skeleton - (If anyone sets foot in the room, Domingo the Songful will begin singing, loudly, causing a wandering monster to arrive. After the first, continued singing will prompt additional checks.)

DOMINGO THE SONGFUL

HD2+2 AC8 Immobile

Will sing loudly to prompt a wandering monster check each round. A new wandering monster could potentially show up every round.

Golden Rings - The golden neck bands are worth 300gp in total.

13: From the ceiling hang many **hooks**, stained with ancient blood. They sway slightly, despite a lack of any apparent force. The North and East walls are sealed tombs, **ancient words** inscribed upon them.

Hooks - (If someone enters the room, a few hooks will make attacks against them as HD1 creatures. There are 30 hooks in total, but each can only make one attack, as after they do, they become motionless. They reset after 1 day.)

Ancient Words - (North reads as "Warlord Kallatrix." East reads as "Gorbitund the Butcher").

14: Within this tomb is a pile of bones and rotten gore, upon which rests a **skeleton** clad in leathers, who wields a large hook. Mounted on the wall behind him are the skulls of **4 beasts**, each plated with gold and encrusted with a gem.

Skeleton - (Gorbitund the Butcher will immediately attack if the tomb is entered.)

4 Beasts - The gold plated skulls weigh 1 stone each, but each is worth 300gp. 4 in total for a sum of 1200gp.

GORBITUND THE BUTCHER

HD4+4 AC13 ATT#2 xtra1Dmg.

If party flees, Gorbitund's successful kills will be dragged into his tomb where they will be dismembered and torn apart.

15: The **Warlord** is decked out in **fancy armor** and wields a **bejeweled great-sword**, and stands a head taller than the other **4 armored skeletons** in his crypt.

Warlord - (He will awaken immediately, but not so fast as to surprise, and send his troops on the attack. If he is not defeated here, he will become a wandering monster along with his guards.)

Fancy Armor - Worth 500gp.

Bejeweled Great-Sword - Worth 1200gp.

WARLORD KALLATRIX

HD5+5 AC16 ATT#2 xtra1Dmg

Intelligent, and will order troops to break enemy formations to bring down casters.

Carries 5 gems worth 500gp.

4 x KALLATRIX GUARDS

HD1+1 AC16 xtra1Dmg

16: Within the room is a **well**, and from it seeps a deathly smell.

Well - (50' down is a blackish-purple liquid that shimmers slightly. If someone is to drink it, they must first save versus death. If they fail, they become undead and must then save versus paralysis. If they fail again, they will be a mindless undead, hostile to living creatures, but if they pass, they will be an undead in control of their actions. Being undead has certain pros and cons, but they will still gain experience

and levels as normal. Heals from Clerics, however, will prove deadly, and they'll be awful swimmers. But, they won't drown!)

17: There are over a hundred small wall **crypts** here, some of them have been broken open from the inside, their contents missing. A light thumping sound can be heard from the remaining crypts, creating an unsettling ambience.

Crypts - (Inside each crypt is a **charred skeleton** and a hunk of **flaming flesh**; this room serves as a source for both wandering monsters. The # of **charred skeletons/flaming flesh** remaining will be indicated by the remaining tombs in this room. Unfortunately, there is nothing of value inside the crypts. **If a crypt is busted open**, the resident flesh & skeleton will scramble out and attack.)

FLAMING FLESH – *The flesh slaps around on the floor, flopping towards its target to set it ablaze.*

HD1 AC8 SPD6

On Hit, target must SvBurst or catch fire, taking 1 damage for 1d6 rounds.

*See Wandering Monsters to track remaining flaming flesh.

CHARRED SKELETON

HD1 AC10 SPD9

Fire resistant

*See Wandering Monsters to track charred skeletons.

18: An enormous **heap** of broken bones and skulls. The **heap** stands 8 feet tall.

Heap - (If someone disturbs the heap, 1d10 **broken skeletons** will rise up and begin to attack. They are weaker than the standard skeleton, but there are lots.)

(If the bones are all cleared away, it will reveal a trapdoor in the floor. Inside will be a coffer which contains **1500gp and 5 gems worth 200gp each**.)

BROKEN SKELETON – 200 remain

Hp1 AC8 SPD6, deal only 1 damage on hit.

1d10 of them spawn each additional round the players remain in the room.

Area attacks kill as many skeletons as they do damage.

19: The southeast corner has a small **altar** before a red sun. There is an image of a person laying down before the red sun, which glows gently.

Altar - (If someone lays upon the altar, a demon will appear in their mind to offer a bargain. The player may relinquish 2d6 of their maximum hp to gain 1 to a stat of their choice. However, they will also gain 1 corruption, losing hallow if they have any. A player can only do this once per level. The 2d6 reduction cannot kill, but it may set a person's maximum hp value to a negative number.)

20: 9 pedestals stand in a semi-circle, each cast in a source-less spotlight. The central one stands taller than all the rest, and upon it rests a glowing golden **gavel**, inlaid with precious stone bands.

Gavel - (When a person picks it up, visions shall assail them for 1d6 turns, the gavel gripped in their hand. It is no curse, and it is not magic, for 'tis holy. Upon awakening, the character shall now be a Cleric of Justice, as they are possessed by the spirit of Justice. They shall be constantly quested to pursue tasks of Justice, the first being to release the innocent specter held under this crypt's final chamber. They serve justice above all else, and should they knowingly commit an injustice themselves, they will be stripped of all hallow, revert to their normal class, and suffer crippling non-suicidal depression for 3d6 days.)

(**Gavel is worth 1500gp** after the spirit of justice is transferred out of it.)

An archon of justice will seek to wrong misdeeds, and reserves killing only for creatures of pure evil. All others are to be incapacitated, and the Justice Cleric will attempt to redeem them.

21: A **swirling pool** of ghostly liquid, within which can be seen the ghastly tendrils of many spectral figures. It appears to be draining towards the center, but the pool is not being depleted. An **ancient canoe** rests before the pool, a single paddle laid across its breadth.

Ancient Canoe – (This mysterious vessel is capable of staying afloat atop lost souls, where an ordinary craft would simply fall through, leaving the passengers at the mercy of ravenous spirits.)

Swirling Pool – (Falling in is lethal. However, if the canoe is taken, it may be directed towards the center, where a portal will form, that leads into an expansive cavern with squirming red walls. The river beneath them, a river of souls, flows inexorably towards a yawning **black maw**, from within which no light escapes. The teeming mass of souls frantically tries to resist, but is being pulled downstream anyways. Unless the canoe is coated with 10 vials worth of holy water, the 1d6 lost souls will attempt to clamber aboard to take control of the canoe to make good their escape, back through the portal!)

LOST SOUL

HD1 AC10 drain 1 maxHP on hit.

Only harmed by magical or silvered weapons.

Black Maw – (The portal to oblivion, or the realm of dissolution; a place of true death. All but the most powerful will immediately perish, as their essence and material is dissolved to nothing. Deals 10d6 untyped damage every round to any *thing* within this realm.)

Why is there a swirly death pit in this chamber, which will likely lead to great lamentations of foolish adventurers? It doesn't matter. But what does matter is that lost souls are quite useful in certain... applications. It would be a necromancer's dream come true, were they able to dream, or even sleep for that matter. Which they certainly can't. Many pretend, but really it's just a ruse. Next time a lich tries to convince you he's asleep, don't believe him, he's clearly got shenanigans prepared, and you'll be the punch line of his favorite joke. The joke is your death. Now, you know why the dead never stop grinning.

22: This long hall is filled with **blades** that swing from pendulums at all heights. The **blades** and the pendulums are made of steel, kept in motion by a hidden **mechanism**.

Blades - (Players may work their way through this hall slowly but safely. However, it will take 3 turns, and with wandering monster checks, this may be disastrous.)

(If the players are rushed through for whatever reason, they must endure 9 attacks. The pendulums attack as HD7 creatures and deal 5xtraDmg on hit. Naturally, that is for the entire length, so if they are 2/3 the way through, they need only endure 3 attacks.)

Mechanism – (An enchanted piston is connected to the appropriate parts to provide motion for this machine. The piston may be salvaged.)

23: A **narrow bridge** leads to the far end of the room, cracked in places. Although it is stone, it doesn't look all that sturdy. 5' beneath the bridge is a pit of **liquid**, and though it is clear, it doesn't quite look like water.

Narrow Bridge - (The bridge is ancient, and will break in places as a heavy person crosses. Each point of the bridge can only hold up to 15 stones worth of a person plus their things. Thus, anyone travelling 9 speed or less may break the bridge: Roll a d6 for each portion they cross over, and on a 1, that 5' segment breaks. The player must then roll a save to grab onto the edge, or fall into the acid below, where they will take 1d6 dmg/round until they manage to get out. Bear in mind that those in heavy armor cannot swim.)

(The bridge has 13 segments, each supported by individual columns such that the entire thing won't collapse at once.)

Liquid – (It's acid. If you fall in, take 1d6/rd until you manage to get out. If you're wearing heavy armor, you can't swim, so have fun with that.)

24: The room has a lower area and an upper area. The lower area is a path that leads to some stairs, flanked by 4 stone **coffins**. The upper area has a larger more elaborate **sarcophagus**, likely not valuable enough to heft out (**500gp, 50 stones**.)

Coffins - (If these lower coffins are breached first, only 1 **False Guardian** per coffin opened will emerge. This is the ideal way to isolate the **False King**, as when the **Sarcophagus** is opened, the lower coffins will open anyways.)

Sarcophagus - (If the large sarcophagus is cracked open, the lid will burst off, causing 1d6 damage to anyone nearby if they fail a save vs burst. The False King will rise from his tomb, call out to his guardians, who will emerge from the 4 lower coffins, and a fight will ensue. They will pursue the invaders all the way to the entrance of the dungeon. They will not collapse the bridge, as they are not weighed down by flesh.)

FALSE KING

HD7+7 AC16 ATT#3 1xtraDmg
Wields a battle axe

4 x **FALSE GUARDIANS**

HD3+3 AC18.
Wield sword + shield.

Aftermath - (If the players are defeated, the King and his Guardians will guard this room.)
(Once the dust clears, a stairway down into the true tomb will be seen inside the False King's Sarcophagus.)

25: Upon a grand slab are many chains restraining a **specter** of a man. He looks up from his bonds when you enter. In a faint voice, he whispers: "Help me.... release me..."
Surrounding the tomb are many **chests**, big and small.

Specter – (This is the specter of an innocent man, impersonated and then replaced by the false king. Cursed to linger here for all eternity. He has suffered long, and is incapable of conversations involving more than 2 words.)

Chains - (If the chains of the specter are broken, he will whisper "Thank you..." and fade away. Those who broke the chains will gain 1 hallow if their hallow is less than 5. If a justice Cleric led them to complete this task, they will gain 2 hallow instead.)

Chests – (There are nine chests of blackened wood.)
(Five 10-stone chests which contain 1500gp each;)
(Three 20-stone chests that hold 3000silver pieces each;)
(A small 1-stone chest containing 40 gems worth 50gp each.
(**Grand total of 10,400gp value.**)

They may find it difficult carrying such heavy treasure back across the acid bridge.

Forbidden Barrow
 ── Roughly 10'

