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Present

5 Room Dungeons

Volume 01

Thank you for downloading the 5 Room Dungeons PDF, which contains short adventure seeds you can drop into your campaigns or flesh out into larger adventures. All dungeons in this PDF are submissions from the 5 Room Dungeon contest co-hosted by Roleplayingtips.com and Strolen's Citadel. Dungeon entries had to follow the 5 Room Dungeon template, which is provided at the end of this file (it's a great recipe for crafting your own quick dungeons too). Thanks to everyone who entered the contest. Your great entries are now inspiring and helping game masters around the world. Thanks also to the volunteers at Strolen's Citadel for their hours of editing.

You can download this file, and all other parts in the series as they are released, at www.strolen.com or www.roleplayingtips.com.

Special thanks to manfred/Peter Sidor for editing.

Cheers,
Johnn Four and Strolen

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Errors, omissions, or feedback? Please e-mail johnn@roleplayingtips.com

For any number of reasons, the PCs are set on visiting a local herbalist/hedge witch that lives a mile or so outside town and in a patch of forest.

This adventure presumes that the PCs are venturing there in a hurry, near the end of the day. Perhaps someone has fallen ill or been injured, or there has been an emergency in town that she can assist with.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

As the PCs take the path off the main road towards her cottage, they begin noticing small traces of spider web. Soon the webs grow thicker, and then stretch across the path. The PCs are forced to either enter the webs or go back.

A giant spider dwells here, and it will attack if its webs are disturbed. If one spider is not enough challenge, several smaller spiders can join in the attack.

A clever party may circle around and try to find another way to the cottage – this trap can be circumvented in this way if the DM desires, or the PCs may run into the spiders again near the back of the cottage.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Naturally the PCs will desire to search the webs. When they do, they find 3 bundles hanging from a high tree limb. Investigation indicates that these are recent victims of the spiders, and at least one is still alive and kicking. The PCs must find a way to lower each bundle to the ground and open it to rescue the victims. One is dead, but the other two are still alive. One is conscious – a halfling commoner who was on her way to visit the herbalist. The other is unconscious and close to death – he or she needs some healing or they will likely die soon. The PCs can choose to save one, both or none of the victims. The halfling has no treasure, but the unconscious traveler has a belt pouch with enough money for the PCs to live on for a week or more.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

The players travel on, struggling through webs. Eventually they reach the last turn in the path before the cottage – and discover that the stream that crosses the path has washed out the footbridge. They must cross over the fast-flowing but narrow creek in one of three ways – a running long jump, a dangerous climb through trees that hang over the stream (and risk another spider assault), or hike a mile downstream to a place where boulders make it possible to cross dry-footed. But then they must battle their way back through the webs with no path to follow…

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

The PCs reach the cottage at last, and make a horrific discovery – the whole cottage is wrapped in spider webs. The herbalist must still be inside, as a dim light can be seen peeping through one window (or perhaps smoke from the chimney). Tiny spiders are everywhere, in their hundreds. Many are spinning tiny webs and dispersing themselves on the evening breeze. One enormous spider which appears to be the "mother" has taken up residence on the roof of the cottage and if the PCs attempt to enter, she will threaten them, not attacking outright but definitely warning them off. If they attempt to enter the cottage, she attacks and the PCs must defeat her to continue. Note: there could be a roleplaying way around this fight if the DM wishes to create one.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

Within the cottage – the PCs have fought their way to the cottage, won over the spider outside, and entered the door – only to discover that their entire battle was for nothing – within the cottage on the floor lies a withered corpse. Just as they believe that the old woman has been sucked dry by the spiders, they hear a whispering noise from the loft above – and look up to see an enormous old female half-spider. Clinging to her are handfuls of the baby spiders she has just hatched.

This creature is an arena (in DnD terms) and is furious with anyone who has killed her babies. If the PCs killed the spider on the roof, she will not negotiate, but will instead attack with all her powers. But if the PCs were able to somehow communicate with the spider outside and it let them in willingly, she will listen to their requests, and can perhaps answer them.

Isles of Ice
By Mothshade

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

The challenge is set within a group of floating icebergs on another plane of existence, possibly a pocket dimension or demiplane of icy winds and bitter cold. Of course, the 'bergs can simply be placed in some polar region of the campaign world.

While the PCs can certainly attempt to navigate the treacherous air currents and sudden blasts of ice, there is a race of flying whales that are somewhat friendly to the adventurers and their goals that can safely bear the party in their mouths to the 'bergs.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Not only do the players need to figure out which floating iceberg is their goal, they must convince the whales to carry them there. Will all the characters trust these enigmatic creatures enough to ride forth inside their mouths?

The icebergs float through the air and occasionally collide, causing quaking and breakage. The frozen masses are honeycombed with tunnels and chambers, created by the inhabitants – frost salamanders.

The icy walls of the tube-shaped passages are incredibly slippery – an issue ignored by the frost salamanders that may negotiate ice as easily as solid ground. Many of these passages slope and twist crazily, threatening to shunt intruder's right out of the 'berg if they slide out of control.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

The heroes will find that a previous impact has broken a large portion of the iceberg free, and that the entire structure is in two pieces. They must cross a wide gap of empty air and whirling shards of razor-sharp ice to reach the other portion. Savage winds and the erratic motion of both icebergs further threaten the crossing. It is always possible that the two halves will collide at any time, or that another 'berg will drift too close for comfort.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

A large chamber houses the lair of a pair (or as many as necessary) of unusually large frost salamanders and their nest of unhatched eggs. A piece of an item that is the heroes' goal may be found here, but the greater portion lies elsewhere. Alternately, an item belonging to an individual to be rescued may be discovered, but the victim is somewhere else. Some treasure will also be collected here, from previous intruders.

The salamanders will fight savagely to protect their eggs, possibly gaining morale bonuses in combat. If more tension is needed during the battle, another iceberg could collide with this one – hurling the characters about, but not the salamanders. Adventurers that rely on fire effects in battle will find themselves suffering falling ice and sudden flash floods.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The final great chamber at the heart of the iceberg is dominated by a steaming pool of water and an enormous mass of dark ice. A large shape can be seen within the ice – it is a truly massive frost salamander (possibly part dragon or enhanced with elemental properties) lying dormant within. Also noticeable is the object of the quest – frozen within the grasp of the monster. Whether an object or a person, this thing is grasped firmly by the monstrous frost salamander and frozen deep within the mass of ice.

The heroes will have to risk freeing the gigantic salamander to reach their goal. The mass of ice is in the middle of the steaming pool…and the water is melting it in any case – as well as undermining the structure of the 'berg. Time is running out. Of course, there is some sort of fire-enchanted item at the bottom of the pool that is causing the melting – an object that can be used to great effect against the salamander…if it can be reached in time.

During the final conflict, the 'berg will probably begin breaking up – whether due to supernatural melting, or the collision of another drifting mass of ice. A faithful whale, or nearby iceberg, may be their only hope for salvation.

The Tomb of the Dragon Queen
By Joseph Rapoport

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Built within one of the many mountainous regions of Krynn, the Tomb of Dragon Queen was constructed to honor and hold the remains of the first Dragon Queen and favourite of Tiamat. The tomb is in the form of a 30' long x 20' wide x 10' high long barrow. Within the long barrow is an altar to Tiamat, which if desecrated will bring forth an Aspect of Tiamat to attack the desecrators. Except for the altar, the only other feature within the long barrow is a 10' long x 7' wide x 5' tall rectangular sarcophagus.
No magic will be able to open the sarcophagi as the sarcophagus is a solid block of stone made to look like a rectangular crypt. In fact, with a combined STR 35 check will enable the stone block to be pushed off the entrance to the true tomb.

Once the true entrance is opened, the party will hear the followed spoken in a truly malevolent voice, "Disrupt the Dragon Queen's sleep at your peril!" As the party begin moving down the 31 stairs leading down into the true tomb, once the first party member steps on the 25th step (or 6th from the bottom) the remaining party, within the long barrow, is attacked by two spectres.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Stairway and Room of Illusion

The stairs lead to a room whose floor is made to look like a black and white chessboard. In fact, this entire room is covered by an illusion. Anyone venturing upon the chessboard must make a WIS check at -2 as well as a DEX check at -2. The entire chessboard floor is actually a large 20' deep spiked pit. Anyone using TRUE SEEING or any other similar magic will discover the pit illusion as well as the ledges on each wall that lead across the pit and into the next room.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Water Room

The entrance to the third room slopes downward into a water-filled room. At the bottom of the 50' deep pool there is a small tunnel leading to the next chamber. The narrowness of the tunnel will require any character wearing heavy armour to remove his/her armour in order to travel through the tunnel.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Room of Fiery Woe

The narrow water filled tunnel leads into a large cavernous chamber. This large rough hewn, lichen lit chamber is dimly lit and will require a light source in order for the party to see that this chamber is guarded by an Ancient Red Dracolich. (This has the potential to be a truly dangerous encounter, but a Dragon Queen would hardly leave anything else as a guard to her burial/treasure chamber.)

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

Treasury/Burial Chamber

If the party is able to defeat the Dracolich, they will have time to search for secret doors in this otherwise empty room. Upon finding the room's only secret door, the party will have found The Dragon Queen's burial chamber and treasury. This room contains the closed sarcophagus of The Dragon Queen.

The sarcophagus can be opened and will contain the mummified remains of the first Dragon Queen, but will not contain any treasure. There is, however, a very large chest against one of the walls. This chest is actually a MIMIC and will attack any who try to open or search the "chest". Once the mimic is disposed of, the party will notice that some of the mimic's blood will flow towards the wall and through the wall. There is a secret door here.

Upon opening the secret door, the party will find that they have discovered the Dragon Queen's treasury. The DM is to fill the treasury as he/she wishes although the treasury will contain a Tome of Ineffable Damnation.

The Living Vault
By Mothshade

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

This truly ancient vault is said to contain a unique and intelligent construct from a lost civilization. The heroes must vanquish a foe that can be harmed only by a specific metal – the metal from which the construct is fashioned. This metal, whatever it may be, cannot be found elsewhere in sufficient quantities.

Unlike many other dungeon sites, this vault *has* been explored before, but the prison still maintains the defences. These defences take the form of animated objects and devices remotely controlled by the vault itself.

As a result of the prison's efforts, the vault door contains an animated locking mechanism, capable of actively thwarting attempts to disarm it. A rogue or other adventurer must make attack rolls and Disarm attempts to bypass this treacherous mechanism. In addition, the vault door itself may animate as one or more smaller iron golems, once the lock is defeated.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The inner hall or chamber contains a ghastly sight – the animated heads of previous adventurers, set into wall niches and animated by elaborate metallic mechanisms. These are remains of the party that came before – and failed. It is a glimpse at one possible fate that awaits the current batch of heroes. For added shock value, the PCs could recognize one or more of the heads as friends, or even higher-level idols.

The heads retain much of the intellect and personality of their original owners – but they have become rather detached and somewhat mad. The PCs may speak with the heads in an attempt to discover more of what awaits them further in. The heads will be mostly cooperative, but none will give away enough information to fully prepare them for the final encounter.

At this point, the DM should play up the horror of the situation and roleplay the heads as disjointedly as possible. Scatter bits of useful information among barely coherent babble or childish songs. The heads could provide useful details in the form of command words to their former magic items (found in or near the final chamber), an idea of the layout of the rooms ahead, and ominous hints of the final horror to come. Whatever seems necessary and useful at the time.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

At least one of the heads lied. Whether by intention, or by accident, the PCs were given inaccurate information regarding the nature of this encounter.

This encounter area (whatever it may look like) contains a jumble of what looks like broken junk…and a fallen adventurer lying in a cleared area on the floor. Unfortunately, the junk consists of tiny animated constructs formed of broken bits and pieces of whatever has been brought in by previous intruders…and the fallen adventurer is actually just the empty husk filled with animated machinery for locomotion. This terrible double will actually act as an injured hero for a brief time, able to be shaken to consciousness by the PCs. It will seem confused and weary at first (because of the limited cognitive abilities of the animating constructs), but eventually springs to the attack, along with all of the smaller constructs lying about the place.

If more roleplaying opportunities are wanted, the PCs might have some chance of reasoning with whatever intelligence remains of the formerly-living hero that they face. Also, there is a chance that the animating mechanisms can be disabled by skill checks. Straightforward combat should not be the only solution.

At least one useful magic item left by the previously slain adventurers should be found here and the activation word or phrase should be (accurately) known to the party from their conversation with the heads.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

The rest of the animated constructs will be encountered here as a last-ditch effort by the vault to defend the inner sanctum. The chamber itself is cluttered with moving alien machinery. Gears and metal devices of all shapes and sizes whir and clatter as they perform unknowable tasks. Anyone that stumbles or falls into this machinery will take damage and possibly suffer agonizing confinement among the metal parts. It is this machinery that serves to keep the golem physically confined in the central vault.

The largest of the constructs will have the animated head of a departed adventurer. This creature will try to convince the party that it is the golem and that their quest ends here (from some last vestiges of its former personality). Of course, this is nothing more than another puppet of the vault itself.

If battle ensues, the swarm of minor constructs will attack en masse and without quarter, led by the puppet. The puppet will have the use of whatever items and class abilities possessed by the living victim that the DM sees fit. Fallen PCs will be scavenged for parts where they lie.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

This is the prison of the ancient golem. A towering, clanking construct of alien design, the golem is formed mostly from an obviously strange metal. Any attack made against the construct threatens to damage parts of its metal body – rendering them useless. For this reason, the unusual metal should not be something as simple as adamantine or mithral, it should be something notably less sturdy.

As a final horrific twist, the metal face of the golem opens during the encounter to reveal a living humanoid head of any race the DM chooses. This is the golem's creator, from ancient times. The head will attempt to negotiate for its freedom by trading the knowledge of working the needed metal into a usable form, for a new body with which to continue his or her life. Should the DM wish to create a moral dilemma for the players, this body would have to be alive, aware, and healthy at the time its head is removed and the new head attached. The golem's creator could be as choosy as the DM wishes.

If this device seems inappropriate, the final battle could simply play out as usual – with the PCs risking the destruction of the metal they so badly need, if they do not take care during the fight.

The Sunken Vault
By Nathan º

This dungeon is designed to be used in a swampy location, all encounter suggestions are chosen from a list of creatures that would take up residence in marshy surroundings and the overall theme is one of a lost deposit of knowledge or riches that has been swallowed by the lake itself. To add as much flavor as possible to this adventure a stock setting for this dungeon has been supplied.

Introduction
The town of Perrymill was once a quiet retreat built along the side of the Tremis river, where it feeds down into Bluesong lake from high up in the Kragskill mountains to the west. For the last 60 years however the town itself has sunk into the edge of the lake. This was a result of a magnificent battle between Ifrandis, the Blue Magister, and an elder water elemental that he summoned at the pinnacle of his studies.

The fight ended as Ifrandis slew the liquid lord and took it's still pulsing heart back into his tower, only to die from it's potent poison, which turned his blood to water in a short time. Ifrandis was enthralled with the element of water and many of his previous studies still inhabit the lake.

Plot Summary
The Tower of Ifrandis is one of the few buildings whose top still breaks the surface of the marsh on the west side of Bluesong lake. The tower itself is still solid if tilted, standing three stories tall and with a cellar one level down. The tower is not very large, but it is well protected. The previous owner was a collector of elemental trinkets, and the gem of this collection was acquired in his final hours. That prize is the heart of an elder water elemental.

Ifrandis is not yet dead however, but not truly alive either, having become transformed into a strange elemental creature by the poison he suffered and the power of the liquid heart. It is suggested that players have a means to gain water breathing for this dungeon.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Entering the Tower
Entrance to the tower is gain through the covered roof, a foot deep in water. The metal hatch going down into the building is magically warded and requires a password or countermagic to open. If brute force is attempted the hatch is warded with a shocking spell that should deal enough electrical damage to provide a suitable deterrent, it may affect the whole group due to the water. Once inside, the hatch will seal itself again if the command word is spoken once more.

The top floor was once a finely appointed set of personal chambers for the tower's owner. A bedroom, bathroom, closet, and small study are open and unlocked for perusal. The rooms are all in a clutter however and sopping wet with water seeping through the stones. Few if any of the objects are recoverable for their actual value. The rooms are so jumbled and littered now that movement should be somewhat impaired and the tilt of the tower should make keeping ones balance a challenge.

The stairs down pass by the open door to the small study, in which a rather ill-tempered Naga has taken up residence and will attack the party unawares if possible. If possibly out-matched or utterly over powering for the group, she may choose instead to parley if caught, or strike up a deal with the group to retrieve the heart for her in return for knowledge of the rest of the tower and safe passage through her area. She has no wish to face the creature she knows is below.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The Library
This entire floor is dedicated to Ifrandis' scholarly collection of books. A very large selection of material is available here that ranges across a vast variety of topics and many of the texts are rare and hard to find. Unfortunately all of them are ruined from the moisture and seepage. There are two closets here and a locked room between them holds the bulk of Ifrandis' magical texts. In the middle of the room is a moderate sized dark blue crystal ball that had been anchored above the floor by four silver chains that latch onto bronze brackets in the ceiling and secure the orb via silver rings that pinch it.

The room itself does not have a visible path leading down. The tables, chairs, and bookcases that line the walls can all be searched or moved but no obvious means is available. The books in the closed room contain Ifrandis' diary, his spell books, rare and magical texts, and a few trinkets he favored. However it also contains the secret to proceeding, a scroll with the command word that activates the orb.

The crystal ball is a predefined foci for the spell on the scroll, and when the spell is cast upon the sphere it will turn the ten foot radius or stone underneath it into a spiral staircase of firm water down into the next floor. This is unfortunate however as the floor below is flooded.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Ground Level

The first floor of the tower was breached during it's lonely years, and the front door to the building actually leads straight out into the bottom of the lake. The room is filled with water, and If the characters have not resealed the entry hatch on the roof then once the magical stairs to the library are opened the water raises very quickly, bubbling and churning up through the levels of the tower. If the PC's do not have water breathing this could be deadly. The characters must succeed at swimming away from the stairs or risk being battered against walls and ceilings as the water level rises. If they fail too greatly they should become trapped!

If the PC's manage to survive the tower filling with lake water, then what they find is a single large room dimly lit by light filtering in from outside. If the PC's can see clearly they will notice the large ten foot mosaic on the floor, made from tiled bits of lapis lazuli. The mosaic starts dark blue at the outer edge and lightens as it comes to meet a single golden disk at the center of the mosaic, approximately 1 foot in diameter.

The water stairs from above touch down on this mosaic, and if the same password that is used for the hatch above is used here then the mosaic will melt down into another set of stairs identical to the first set, and which descends down into the laboratory.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Laboratory

Unlike the the first set of stairs this entire floor of the tower is protected by a warding spell to keep unassisted water that is inside in, and the water that is outside out. This means that the lake water on the first floor will not filter down into the lower level as long as the warding is active, or unless the PC's actively bring it into the warded area. This ward is what has kept the creature that was once Ifrandis trapped here for more than half a century. Ironically his own spells of protection have become his prison.

This level of the tower is filled with tables, water tanks, aquariums, tubes, vials, vats, and other paraphernalia. The whole of which has been smashed and destroyed in various fits of rage of the years, visited upon his prison by the creature that was once Ifrandis. As he held the heart of the elder elemental in his hands Ifrandis had felt his blood turning to water, killing him. In an act of desperation Ifrandis drank the watery blood from the still throbbing heart and completed his unique transformation. Later he would absorb the heart entirely, gaining a unbelievable control over the element he long had felt an affinity for. Now a creature of water he desires to leave but cannot gain his own freedom.

Ifrandis will linger a moment when the PC's enter his chambers, watching in disbelief. If the PC's cannot venture a guess as to the creatures name and speak it aloud rather quickly then he attacks without mercy. If they speak his name it will bring him to a point of attempting to converse with them (Aquan is suggested). If the PC's are able to free him Ifrandis may become a powerful ally (this is a good point to introduce a subplot), but if they fight and slay him the heart will be left behind when his slain form turns to pure water. The powers of the heart are left to your discretion.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

Liquaries's Core

The true name of the elder water elemental that Ifrandis battled was Liquaries, and the heart is his last remnant. Whatever other powers the you feel adequate to bestow upon the heart, it's pulsing form can be used to resurrect the elder if used properly. This may either gain the PC's an ally or be the source of an unintended rampage as the Elder retaliates against what he sees as forceful servitude. The one thing that is certain is that the heart is both item and entity.

The heart itself is an oddly warm and glowing organ of semi-solid water than only deforms slightly when pulsing. It glows with a soft yellow light from deep inside and it's hue can change with it's proximity to water, from darker to lighter. If other water elementals become aware that the PC's have the heart of Liquaries they should grow angry and if able will attack the PC's in order to retrieve it. The transformation that Ifrandis was subjected to could be replicated, if the heart's blood is consumed and the PC is infected with the same blood-to-water poison from another elder water elemental.

Why Like 5 Room Dungeons?

By Johnn Four

This format, or creation method, has a number of advantages:

- Any location. Though I call them 5 Room Dungeons, they actually apply to any location with five or so areas. They don't have to be fantasy or dungeons. They could take the form of a small space craft, a floor in a business tower, a wing of a mansion, a camp site, a neighbourhood.

- Short. Many players dislike long dungeon crawls, and ADD GMs like to switch environments up often. In addition, some players dislike dungeons all together, but will go along with the play if they know it's just a short romp. This helps ease conflicts between play styles and desires.

- Quick to plan. With just five rooms to configure, design is manageable and fast. Next time you are killing time, whip out your notepad and write down ideas for themes, locations, and rooms. Knock off as many designs as you can and choose the best to flesh out when you have more time and to GM next session.

- Easier to polish. Large designs often take so long to complete that game night arrives before you can return to the beginning and do one or more rounds of tweaking and polishing. The design speed of 5 Room Dungeons leaves room most of the time to iterate.

- Easy to move. 5 Room Dungeons can squeeze into many places larger locations and designs can't. If your dungeon goes unused or if you want to pick it up and drop it on a new path the PCs take, it's often easier to do than when wielding a larger crawl.

- Flexible size. They are called 5 Room Dungeons, but this is just a guideline. Feel free to make 3-area locations or 10-cave complexes. The idea works for any small, self-contained area.

- Easy to integrate. A two to four hour dungeon romp quickens flagging campaign and session pacing, and can be squeezed into almost any story thread. It also grants a quick success (or failure) to keep the players engaged. The format is also easy to drop into most settings with minimal consistency issues.

Room One: Entrance And Guardian

There needs to be a reason why your dungeon hasn't been plundered before or why the PCs are the heroes for the job. A guardian or challenge at the entrance is a good justification why the location remains intact. Also, a guardian sets up early action to capture player interest and energize a session.

Room One challenge ideas:

- The entrance is trapped.
- The entrance is cleverly hidden.
- The entrance requires a special key, such as a ceremony, command word, or physical object.
- The guardian was deliberately placed to keep intruders out. Examples: a golem, robot, or electric fence.
- The guardian is not indigenous to the dungeon and is a tough creature or force who's made its lair in room one.
- The entrance is hazardous and requires special skills and equipment to bypass. For example: radiation leaks, security clearance, wall of fire.
- Room One is also your opportunity to establish mood and theme to your dungeon, so dress it up with care.

Room Two: Puzzle Or Roleplaying Challenge

The PCs are victorious over the challenge of the first room and are now presented with a trial that cannot be solved with steel. This keeps problem solvers in your group happy and breaks the action up for good pacing.

Make Room Two a puzzle, skill-based, or roleplaying encounter, if possible. Room Two should shine the lime-light on different PCs than Room One, change gameplay up, and offer variety between the challenge at the entrance and the challenge at the end.

Note, if Room One was this type of encounter, then feel free to make Room Two combat-oriented. Room Two should allow for multiple solutions to prevent the game from stalling.

Room Two ideas:

- Magic puzzle, such as a chessboard tile floor with special squares.
- An AI blocks access to the rest of the complex and must be befriended, not fought.
- A buzzer panel for all the apartments, but the person the PCs are looking for has listed themselves under a different name, which can be figured out through previous clues you've dropped.
- A concierge at the front desk must be bluffed or coerced without him raising the alarm.
- A dirt floor crawls with poisonous snakes that will slither out of the way to avoid open flame. (A few might follow at a distance and strike later on.)
- The PCs must convince a bouncer to let them in without confiscating their weapons.

Once you've figured out what Room Two is, try to plant one or more clues in Room One about potential solutions. This ties the adventure together a little tighter, will delight the problem solvers, and can be a back-up for you if the players get stuck.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

The purpose of this room is to build tension. Do this using a trick, trap, or setback. For example, after defeating a tough monster, and players think they've finally found the treasure and achieved their goal, they learn they've been tricked and the room is a false crypt.

Depending on your game system, use this room to cater to any player or character types not yet served by the first two areas. Alternatively, give your group a double-dose of gameplay that they enjoy the most, such as more combat or roleplaying.

Room Three ideas:

- The PCs rescue a number of prisoners or hostages. However, the victims might be enemies in disguise, are booby-trapped, or create a dilemma as they plead to be escorted back to safety immediately.
- A collapsed structure blocks part of the area. The debris is dangerous and blocks nothing of importance, another trap, or a new threat.
- Contains a one-way exit (the PCs must return and deal with Rooms One and Two again). i.e. Teleport trap, one-way door, 2000 foot water slide trap.
- The PCs finally find the artifact required to defeat the villain, but the artifact is broken, cursed, or has parts missing, and clues reveal a solution lies ahead.
- Believing the object of the quest now lays within easy reach, an NPC companion turns traitor and betrays the PCs.

Another potential payoff for Room Three is to weaken the PCs as build-up to a dramatic struggle in Room Four. It might contain a tough combat encounter, take down a key defense, exhaust an important resource, or make the party susceptible to a certain type of attack.

For example, if Room Four contains a mummy whose secret weakness is fire, then make Room Three a troll lair (or another creature susceptible to fire) so the PCs might be tempted to burn off a lot of their fire magic, oil, and other flammable resources. This would turn a plain old troll battle into a gotcha once the PCs hit Room Four and realize the are out of fire resources.

Don't forget to dress Room Three up with your theme elements.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle or Conflict

This room is The Big Show. It's the final combat or conflict encounter of the dungeon. Use all the tactics you can summon to make this encounter memorable and entertaining.

- As always, generate interesting terrain that will impact the battle.
- Start or end with roleplay. Maybe the bad guy needs to stall for time to let PC buffs wear out, to wait for help to arrive, or to stir himself into a rage. Perhaps the combat ends with the bad guy bleeding to death and a few short words can be exchanged, or there are helpless minions or prisoners to roleplay with once the threat is dealt with.
- Give the bad guy unexpected powers, abilities, or equipment.
- Previous rooms might contain warning signals or an alarm, so the bad guy has had time to prepare.
- The bay guys tries to settle things in an unusual way, such as through a wager or a duel.
- The lair is trapped. The bad guy knows what or where to avoid, or has the ability to set off the traps at opportune moments.
- The bad guy reveals The Big Reward and threatens to break it or put it out of the PCs' so reach so they'll never collect it.
- The bad guy has a secret weakness that the PCs figure out how to exploit.
- A variety of PC skills and talents are required to successfully complete the encounter.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

Here's your opportunity to change the players' bragging to "we came, we saw, we slipped on a banana peel." Room Five doesn't always represent a complication or point of failure for the PCs, but it can. Room Five doesn't always need to be a physical location either - it can be a twist revealed in Room Four.

Room Five is where your creativity can shine and is often what will make the dungeon different and memorable from the other crawls in your campaigns.

In addition, if you haven't supplied the reward yet for conquering the dungeon, here is a good place to put the object of the quest, chests of loot, or the valuable information the PCs need to save the kingdom.

As accounting tasks take over from recent, thrilling, combat tasks, this would also be a good time to make a campaign or world revelation, or a plot twist. Perhaps the location of the next 5 Room Dungeon is uncovered, along with sufficient motivation to accept the quest. Maybe the true identity of the bad guy is revealed. New clues and information pertaining to a major plot arc might be embedded in the treasure, perhaps sewn into a valuable carpet, drawn in painting, or written on a slip of paper stuffed into a scroll tube or encoded on a data chip.

Room Five ideas:

- Another guardian awaits in the treasure container.

- A trap that resurrects or renews the challenge from Room Four.

- Bonus treasure is discovered that leads to another adventure, such as a piece of a magic item or a map fragment.

- A rival enters and tries to steal the reward while the PCs are weakened after the big challenge of Room Four.

- The object of the quest/final reward isn't what it seems or has a complication. i.e. The kidnapped king doesn't want to return.

- The quest was a trick. By killing the dungeon's bad guy the PCs have actually helped the campaign villain or a rival. Perhaps the bad guy was actually a good guy under a curse, transformed, or placed into difficult circumstances.

- The bad guy turns out to be a PC's father.

- The true, gruesome meaning behind a national holiday is discovered.

- The source of an alien race's hostility towards others is uncovered, transforming them from villains to sympathetic characters in the story.

- The true meaning of the prophecy or poem that lead the PCs to the dungeon is finally understood, and it's not what the PCs thought.