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Present

5 Room Dungeons

Volume 02

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,
John Four and Strolen



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Warts and All

By Paul Darcy

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

The sleepy town of Amphos has never rated a mention in any adventurer's guide to fame and fortune. So, it is with some surprise that a former friend and adventurer contacts you from this little hamlet located on the edge of a swamp. The once great fighter, in his note, mentions that his retirement has been interrupted by a strange mystery that requires your expertise. So, out of loyalty to an old friend, you make your way to see what is going on.

Your friend anxiously greets you as you enter the village. Leading you along, it becomes obvious that people seem to want to avoid you—a number of doors slam as you pass by. He explains that strange creatures plague Amphos and it is believed that one of them has carried off a little boy by the name of Timmy Flyspeck. You stop in front of a particular house at the edge of town: Timmy's house. The aging warrior says that he believes the boy may still be alive and there may be clues in this home, but the boy's father, while offering a reward for his son's return, strangely refuses to speak to anyone. It is up to you to find a way in.

Mr. Flyspeck is reluctant to open the door. He is a former adventurer himself (a mage), but he keeps that a secret. He may allow the party in if they have an interesting magic item as that is his one weakness. Depending on the appearance of the party, they may be able to intimidate him into granting them entry. Then again, the party may also be able to sneak in if there is a Rogue with sufficient skill. In any case, magic traps and curses upon the doorway and windows should make such a break-in difficult. Further, if the party breaks in, Timmy's father will use a ring of invisibility to try to hide and watch, perhaps waiting for an opportunity to deal with the intruders. Other townsfolk are suspicious and will not grant the party entry.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The Flyspeck home appears to be a modest one, though there are indications all is not what it seems. There is an aura of magic about the place (likely discovered if any of the traps/curses were tripped when breaking and entering). Timmy's room seems ordinary enough though he did have a fascination with frogs. A number of the amphibians live in cages set on a table near his bed.

While examining Timmy's room, a thumping is heard under the main living area floor. The sound seems to be coming from under a rug that a table sits upon—could it be the boy is here after all? If Mr. Flyspeck let the party into the house, he will deny hearing anything, but will not stand in the way if the party begins moving the furniture and rug to discover the trap door. If the party entered by stealth or force, Mr. Flyspeck will quietly try to follow the party.

The trap door leads down to a workshop filled with broken vials and scattered spell components. If it were not obvious before, it should be now that Mr. Flyspeck is a mage, though he will deny it at first. On a counter along one wall is a wand with no charges left (which may be revealed as a Wand of Polymorph) and a boy's shirt ripped open at the seams. If dust on the counter is examined, a boy's footprints will be noticed as well as what appear to be the footprints of a giant frog. There is a door in the wall opposite the ladder used to descend into this shop—it is just now swinging shut.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

The door opens into a long tunnel with another door at the opposite end which now stands wide open. There are four doors along the corridor, each opening into a small storage room. The door at the end opens inward from the side of a hill into a clearing at the edge of the swamp. If closed, the door blends in with the hillside and is difficult to see.

The sounds of insects fill your ears as well as the many voices of the frogs living there. You stand in silence a moment, the trail seemingly cold. If questioned again, Mr. Flyspeck finally breaks down. He confesses to once being an adventuring mage who gave it up to start a family in this far-away little town. His wife passed away when Timmy was very young and he, wanting to fit in and provide a good home for his son, decided to hide his former profession from the neighbors. He hid his old equipment in the workshop he built, going down from time to time to reminisce and research. Timmy must've found out because one day, after returning from the market, Mr. Flyspeck found the trap door open, his workshop a mess, and the discharged wand. Fearing the worst, he searched for his son and used his magic to cause the townsfolk to believe there were hideous creatures on the prowl to keep them away from the swamp.

A commotion is heard in the brush nearby. If the party listens before charging ahead, they'll also hear a deep, croaking voice cry out, "Help!"

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Bursting out of the brush are several giant rats. The rats are escaping, but will defend themselves from the party if attacked. The noise continues even after the rats have fled or are killed. Pushing through the brush a little ways into the sometimes ankle deep water at the edge of the swamp will reveal the source of the commotion: a young black dragon has cornered a giant frog that is desperately hopping behind trees and brush to try to escape. Looking closely, the party may notice that the giant frog is wearing a very tattered pair of pants!

The dragon is hungry and will not take kindly to intrusions. Upon discovery, the dragon will forget its meal and attempt to deal with the obvious threat: the party! The giant frog remains, petrified now, watching the combat.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

On driving away or killing the dragon, the giant frog will hop forward to Mr. Flyspeck. The man will recognize his son's pants on the huge amphibian and be overjoyed. If the party had not figured the clues out already, they will learn that little Timmy indeed found his father's workshop, played around with the Wand of Polymorph, and accidentally turned himself into a giant frog. Panicking, he fled the workshop into the swamp. He happened to return to try to re-enter the house when the party was there, but while he managed to push open the secret hillside door and nudge open the inner door (it was open a crack), he could not open the trap door. Hearing voices and noise above, he once more fled back into the swamp to be discovered by the young dragon prowling for a meal.

Timmy's father changes his son back into a boy and is very happy to have him back. He offers the party a suitable reward (DM discretion). The town should also offer a reward of some type for killing or driving off the black dragon. One note: depending on the relative power of the party, the dragon's age and abilities can be adjusted to make the encounter more ... fulfilling :)



Temple of the Volcano God

By DJ Mindermast

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Courtyard/Front Door

The face of the temple juts out from the side of a volcanic mountain. It is built of a bright white stone that can reflect sunlight almost strongly enough to blind onlookers. Reddish-orange geometric designs that evoke flames wrap around the building and line the open doorway. A line of Corinthian columns stands out in front of the building wall itself, made of the same white stone and with the same designs wrapped around them.

In front of the doorway stand four guards with spears. The volcano god's symbol is engraved in the spearheads. Unless the PCs have taken great pains to disguise themselves as locals, the guards will not allow them into the temple.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Outer Chapel

This room is uninhabited at the moment. Unlike the exterior of the temple, it is carved straight from the mountainside, and the stone walls have a sandy color to them. An altar stands in the center near the back wall, with an unlit brazier in the middle of it. The only source of light is the large doorway.

The main thing for the PCs to notice here is that the entire back wall is a bas-relief depiction of the volcano god himself, with his commandments and words of wisdom inscribed here and there in the empty spaces. Closer inspection reveals that a door has been cut into the stone, although there is no obvious way to open it. Right over the doorway are the words "My fire shall be your guiding light."

The only way to open the door from this side is to hold do it a torch, candle, or other flaming object lit from the brazier on the altar. How the brazier is lit does not matter, as long as that becomes the source for the next flame. When the flame touches the door, it opens on its own, and stays open until someone closes it (a handle on the inside makes this task a little easier).

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Trapped Corridor

The PCs are now winding their way inside the mountain. The corridor here is about 10 feet wide, with roughly carved walls and floors. Plain stone pillars stand in the center every so often, keeping the ceiling up. About two thirds of the way in, it starts to smell of sulphur. If the trap is not found first, someone (choose randomly) will step on a section of floor which rests on a central axle, allowing it to drop the victim into magma below it. The trap is only wide enough to catch one person, and the lava is not deep enough to drown anyone (not that that should be their major concern).

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Inner Sanctum

The priest is in here, kneeling in front of a stream of magma that flows through the chamber. Although he is not right at the edge, he is closer than it seems anyone should be able to get to anything that hot. Six acolytes stand around him, several feet back. The acolytes are armed with short spears, although they are not particularly good fighters. However, the priest's powers are stronger when acolytes are present; the more that die or run away, the weaker he gets.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

Inner Sanctum, part 2

Across the river of magma (15 feet wide) stand three heat-resistant ceramic urns, filled with gold, gems, and anything else the PCs may have been seeking. There are no other exits from the room, so if they want the treasure, they'll have to figure out a way to get it across the river.



The Necromancer's Cave

By Morpha

Setting: This dungeon is a short cave whose entrance sits where there USED to be a waterfall a while ago. The idea of this dungeon is that the occupant's KNOW the party is coming. Perhaps they set off an alarm spell or they were forewarned of the PCs impending arrival. It can be easily scaled for any CR.

The enemy consists of some undead orcs, dwarves or other low level humanoids and a boss necromancer.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Entrance: The PCs must wade through the river to get to the entrance to the dungeon. The terrain provides no other means. The DM may choose to place piranha's or other annoying water dwelling creature here, a giant squid is not native to rivers but would have been placed here by the occupants of the cave as a 'guardian'. While wading towards the entrance concealed enemies are firing arrows at the party from within. Upon reaching the entrance they find that it has been walled off by barrels and footprints of at least 4 humanoid creatures lead off through a now closed (and locked) heavy reinforced door that has been set into the back of the cave.

The room had Orcs or Dwarves (any suitable low level Humanoid will do). They had waited concealed behind the barrels and sacks of sand (1/2 cover) to fire arrows at the intruding PC's. Once the PCs had made it to the entrance they retreat through the door, locking it behind them. If the party is of a high level these barrels may be filled with Napalm, Alchemists Fire, etc and explode (trip wire, alarm spell, etc). The sacks of sand serve as a wall to stop the cave flooding when the water level rises, though also as a nice bit of cover.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

After spending some time to get the door open (open lock, bashing it in, etc.) the first PC to enter needs to spot the caltrops that have been placed by the entrance to the door. If not, he gets a foot full of spikes. And the 'enemies' now crouch behind an upturned kitchen table (the bowls and cutlery all over the floor), and have readied their arrows at the now entering party. Surprise round, fire and then retreat through the door, closing it as they go through.

Depending on how this goes the enemy might press their advantage before retreating once again, throwing their flasks of Acid at the poor PC's now moving through the door one at a time over the caltrops. Well, so much for the fighters full plate armour (if they hit of course and do enough damage).

This room serves as the enemy's kitchen a table in the center has been turned over to provide cover. A cauldron and cooking utensils sits in the corner. Some crude wooden stools are placed around it.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

The Cave appears to end in this room. This room is larger than the others and there are beds lying around the walls. A chest sits at the back of the room and the 'enemies' surround it, bows drawn and swords ready to be unsheathed. If there are hostages one or more of them may be in this room, behind the enemies.

They let loose their arrows, drop their bows and ready their weapons. The enemies fit here the party, hopefully worn down by the Squid, rain of arrows (or bullets), exploding barrels, caltrops and flasks of acid will find these low level enemies a bit of a challenge, especially when they come back from the dead numerous times after being killed.

They open the chest to find some goodies, take the equipment from the enemies...but whatever they are after (item or hostage etc.) is not in this room. The DM can be harsh or easy on the PC's depending on level..

There is a false wall at the back of the room carefully disguised in some way. It could be difficult to locate or one of the PC's could notice that part of a bed was knocked 'into' the wall during combat.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

A necromancer of some kind (evil cleric or sorcerer) sits in this room, viewing the other rooms of the cave and surrounding terrain (outside of the cave) on a crystal ball, pool of water, computer monitor etc. He has had time to cast his spells making him battle ready and has one minor magical item that makes him slightly more difficult. Perhaps one that makes it harder for arrows to hit him...

This room appears to be a study or personal quarters. A bed, much better quality than the cots that were in the previous room sits at the far end with a table of instruments in the center, and a small stack of library books. A vault-like door adorns the back wall.

The mage, necromancer, sorcerer makes it hard for the PC's to deal with him. He threatens to kill or destroy the quarry they seek in the last room. The enemies from the previous room rise once more to fight, the PC's trapped around the entrance to the room, enemies on both sides. The necromancer is desperate and knows he has been defeated. He will barter with the PC's for his life in exchange for the quarry they seek. But will attempt to backstab them at any chance.

The Vault door is magically sealed as well as being a foot thick of steel. It is trapped and it isn't going to be easy to get in there without the password. The Necromancer knows this and is the reason why the PC's SHOULDN'T kill him.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

What the PCs are after is in this room. The end of the cave has a smooth small rounded room, where the water from the waterfall has carved away the rock.

The mage may try to lock the PCs in this room... if they make him go in with them he will have his minions close the door behind them and then try to teleport out. He will then flee, leaving his minions outside to attempt to be rid of you when you finally get out.

Conclusion - This dungeon is a pain in the butt. The PCs HATE it when low level monsters hurt them so another good example of not needing high level creatures to give your party a challenge. They HATE it even more when the BBEG gets away. So this is a great quick little quest that the PC's can embark on to thwart

their most hated NPC's evil plans. Of course the PC's can kill the Necromancer guy if they want since there's no reason to say he gets away. This may have been the location they finally track him down too after they usurp his evil empire or undead legion. A once powerful enemy reduced to hiding in caves.

I have always ran this sort of dungeon in every system and setting I have ever GM'd. In my experience the fighter barbarian type character who is usually the first through the door is usually so angered by the end of this they destroy everything in sight including the Necromancer boss, before even giving him a chance to speak. This is why i give him the password to get into the vault. If they kill him, they then have to figure out how to get in there. For DND a good rogue, a wizard or sorcerer who can transmute rock or walk through walls is handy. If they can't do it themselves they will have to find someone who can or come back later and if there's a hostage in there then they have to be quick don't they.



Merchant's Crypt

By Aki Halme

A wealthy merchant has died, and interred in a crypt, situated on a small cemetery at the middle of an affluent town. Much wealth was found missing after his demise, and rumours began to circulate; had the merchant taken his gold to the grave with him? Unfortunately the grave robbers came back from the grave as undead hungry for human flesh, and killed several before they were destroyed. Plant life above the crypt has begun to wither, including several big trees, and animals steer clear of that area of the otherwise peaceful cemetery. So do most people these days.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Above the ground

The town watch is taking no chances anymore. The crypt has been sealed by the order of the town council, and guardsmen stand watch over the entrance. There is also a barricade and an alarm system. Since the guards keep a constant vigil in addition to their other duties the guards are typically not very strong – a rotating shift of a few guards at a time, involving most or all of the town watch. There are also other patrols in town, and they occasionally walk past the cemetery and sometimes talk for a while with the guardsmen there, as the grave duty is the most disliked of all town watch tasks. The watchmen next to the crypt are well motivated, as they, like most people in the town, have lost friends, acquaintances, or family members in the undead grave robber attack, which makes them very difficult to bribe.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Antechamber

This room is right past the barricade. It is a pleasant, rectangular room with stone seats and tables for up to a dozen people. The room is lined with marble plates, and has magical lighting. There's also a small fountain with clear, fresh water. All in all, the room is pleasant to be in, and it soothes aches and pains – even heals wounds. The longer a person stays in this room the harder it will be to leave, as the pleasures the room gives are addictive. Walking right through is easy, but after a half an hour some will be hard-pressed to leave; a few hours that they may need to be dragged out against their will. Once a person leaves the room the addiction will ease without after-effects.

The healing magics that were placed in this room were minor to begin with – conveniences rather than major benefits – and have been warped by negative energy emanating from the depths of the crypt. The room provides all it has provided before, but takes its power from the life force of living inhabitants. The total

health of the people in the room slowly diminishes in exchange for the pleasures and soothing and healing that takes place. Those that spend too long in the room will find their lifeforce totally sapped away, and eventually replaced with negative energy, which causes the person to rise as undead, hungry for positive energy to replace the coldness.

Leading onwards from this chamber is a heavy stone door at the bottom of a short flight of stairs. It is unlocked and its surface is clean and smooth, except for a large copper ring that makes it easy to pull the door open. Once open, it easily stays open (for now). The other side of the door is smooth, and the door only opens one way, deeper into the grave.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Catacomb

Leading downwards from the entry hall is a winding corridor that gradually turns as it keeps descending. The walls are lined with shelves with corpses on them. Using fire here would be a singularly bad idea as the corpses as well as the shelves and some loose materials on them are flammable and the air supply finite. A significantly amount of fire would also cause the air to expand, causing the upper door to slam shut, and possibly bend so that prying it loose will be hard – especially as the door is smooth, with nothing to grab. The catacombs show traces of negative energy, but the corpses are just that – dead people. Should the party molest them and be later discovered having done so, the town officials would be unlikely to be pleased, unless very good reasons could be found.

The catacombs were uncharted, and opened by the workforce building the grave. As the work had already been begun, changing the plans would've been costly and mean admitting a mistake. Rather than risk the consequences, the work force sealed a section of the catacomb with an intentional cave-in at the lower end, and cleaned the passage to serve as a part of the crypt, and hushed up the findings. The bodies were left as they were. They did not know that the discovery was intentional, and the site chosen so that the merchant could acquire a powerful magical item. The merchant died soon after, and ended up buried with the item he had coveted.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Merchant's Crypt

At the bottom of the winding passage is a rectangular room, quite similar to the entry level, except for a large stone coffin, writings of the life of the merchant, and some flowers, now dry enough to be almost dust as they were left here during the merchant's burial ceremony, a year before present time. This room is also magically lit when life is detected within, but fortunately lacks the amenities of the first room. The room reeks of negative energy, and counts as unholy despite its appearance – this due to the powerful evil magical item the merchant had sought. It's nature is chosen as fits the campaign, but it is located within the merchant's coffin (or is the coffin), and has over time drenched the merchant in negative energy, causing him to rise as a powerful undead monster; whether intelligent or not, is up to the GM. I'd leave him intelligent, but driven insane by the slow subversion to unlife and the containment that followed it, locked in his own coffin. He may have eventually become non-corporeal, as opening a coffin and getting attacked by what's inside is a bit of cliché. Still, the magic item binds the merchant to its defense, so he can't leave rooms 4-5.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The Grave Itself

Uncovering the magical item – whether by opening or breaking the grave, removing an item from a container, or some other means that fit the campaign.. I picture it as a huge sentient black sword.. floods areas 3-5 with negative energy. This makes the crypt even more unholy than it was, and also fills the

catacomb area with negative energy, causing the corpses there to rise as undead. For a final quirk, the magic item that has caused all the trouble weighs (or can weigh if it so chooses) a lot, enough that two people are needed to carry it, and has an unpleasant tendency to sink into stone if left alone. It is also too large to be effectively used in such small surroundings. This leaves the party with the unenviable task of fighting undead creatures in an unholy area while constantly carrying a heavy, hard to destroy magic item.. and if successful, still needing to explain its actions to the town watch.



The Temple Defiled

By Tyler Turner

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

This dungeon takes place in a remote location, within some sort of ring of vision-obstructing land. The church could be in a ring of hills, at the bottom of a ravine, against the side of a rock-face, a wall, or even in the middle of a particularly dense forested area.

The only significant detail about the church is its simplicity (one to three rooms actually inside), and the fact that its original inhabitants have long abandoned it for its new dark master.

The guardians of the church appear as soon as the players cross into the ring of land into vision (and ideally close proximity) of the church. Many (5-10) imps emerge from the dilapidated statues, stoneworks, and other areas around the front of the church. However, every one the players kill merely causes another one to jump from out of sight to join the fray. Only when the players kill the alpha imp, identifiable by his slightly larger size and position in the back of the melee, will the fiends cease their relentless assault.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Now, with that out of the way, the players must actually make it inside the church, which is magically barred. A gargoyle animates and begins conversing with the players as soon as they discover the door locked. The gargoyle is jovial and amused, but also under orders from his master. The only way to unlock the door is for the gargoyle to speak its master's name.

Thus, as the gargoyle reacts amiably to the players, they must convince, or more likely, considering the gargoyle is only supposed to open the door for his master, trick him into saying his master's name. Killing the gargoyle is also an option, but if they do, the master of the church should enter the encounter significantly better prepared/buffed/etc etc.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

As the players enter the church, they notice both of the side walls lined with statues of the church's master in menacing positions, though each one very subtly different, as well as a stone podium in the center. On the podium is a piece of paper and a piece of flowing cloth. The paper details that the master can only be defeated by shrouding her exact likeness with the cloth.

Various clues should be situated around the room as far as which statue is the correct one. However, one or two clues should point to the truth: The clues and statues are all fake and a trick by the master. If the players shroud any of the statues, the statue will crumble and consume the cloth, and the players will be cursed temporarily, and be much more susceptible to the master's magical threats.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Magically hidden, standing on the altar, is the master, watching the players struggle with her trick. If the players fall for it, she'll chuckle a bit, betraying a bit of her whereabouts to the players. Once she is discovered, she will scold the players for their rudeness and do battle with them.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The witch should have a key of some sort on her person, which would be used to open a chest directly behind the church altar. In this chest could be a sought after item, or perhaps a run-around to delay the acquisition of the item. Also there is a note, apparently from the _true_ witch to her student or less powerful sister, warning that a few adventurers were coming, and that she needed a house sitter to exterminate the pests once they arrived.

Why Like 5 Room Dungeons?

By John 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 they 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 bad guy 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.