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Present

5 Room Dungeons

Volume 04

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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The Sanctuary of Sumuho

By Dozus www.strolen.com

The powerful wizard Sumuho styled himself as a god and was worshipped far and wide. After his fall, his vast temple sank into the desert long ago. What secrets lie in the Sanctuary of Sumuho?

Prologue

Millennia ago, a powerful nomadic sorcerer of the Inhap Desert called Sumuho arose to become a figure of international renown. Founding an academy of magic, he drew away students of other famous schools. After a hundred years, the wizard made a pronouncement: he had discovered the secret of immortality, and was effectively a god. The school in the desert became a cathedral and worshippers flocked from around the world to see this new god.

This drew the ire of the Cult of Khunam, a fiercely monotheistic faith that worshipped the sun disc and the largest religious sect of the land. Offended by Sumuho's audacity and sacrilege, they summoned the Oth-Maares, warrior monks avowed to protect the faith until death - and beyond. After ceremoniously breaking contact forever from the high priests to free them from any sins the Oth-Maares might commit, they disappeared into the Inhap. Within a month, Sumuho too disappeared. His own priests either vanished or turned up dead, and his temple was abandoned and forgotten. After a few centuries, it disappeared under the sands of the Inhap. All but a few worshippers vanished, the remaining faithful waiting patiently for Divine Sumuho's return...

Opening Hook

While visiting a city or large town, the party is approached by a trio who claim to be archaeologists. Their apparent spokesman, a young man of around 25, explains that they believe they know the location of the ancient Sanctuary of Sumuho. An excavation is in order, but they would like some physical protection as well as assistance in opening the temple. The temple itself may have a few ancient traps here and there, but the fame alone would make the party rich, not to mention their share of the treasures within. If the party accepts, the trio will lead them out into the desert.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

After two days of steady traveling, the archaeologists cheerfully announce that the Sanctuary is but a few miles away. As they top the next dune, however, there is a distressing sight: an encampment of nomadic lizardmen. Notorious bandits native to the Inhap, the lizardmen are no pushover, especially given their ability to dive into and "swim" through the sand, making them difficult to track. As one of the archaeologists - a slender woman with a heavy accent - unhelpfully points out, the encampment is directly over the site of the temple. Unless one of the party is lucky enough to speak Inhapi, the lizardmen will have to be removed by force. Expect strong resistance from the dozen of the tribe, led by a scarred lizard war boss with a disfigured and mutated (yet oddly functional) third arm sticking from her side. Their armament is varied, mostly with simple bronze-headed spears, but a few with steel cutlasses and flails purloined from trader caravans. After the lizardmen are dispersed, a search of their camp finds little of value: a few small gems, a decorative garland of gnome skulls, and a chest filled with desert garments such as turbans.

Following the extinguishing of the lizardmen, another of the archaeologists - an aged but spry man - begins pulling equipment from their packs while the other two explain that, according to their research, the Oth-Maares did not simply abandon the Sanctuary of Sumuho, but hid it. Using Khunamite magics, they caused the temple to sink into the golden sands and vanish. Their research also led them to Oth-Maares texts from which they

learned the spells and techniques needed to undo the spell. As they finish explaining, the elder archaeologist dons a white vestment with orange and red embroidery. In his hands is a very tall staff with a tiny relic encased in an orb at one end. The three nod to each other and the old archaeologist begins to chant in a strange tongue. For several minutes, nothing seems to happen. Then, suddenly, the archaeologist slams the base of the staff into the ground. A circular tunnel appears under the staff, spewing out a load of sand in a ripple on the dunes. The tunnel appears to lead down to some sort of structure fifty or so feet beneath the sand.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Down through the odd sand tunnel, the party comes across what appears to be a solid sandstone door leading into the underground structure. The door is completely smooth and jointless, about twelve feet tall and peaking into an angled arch at the top. The archaeologists seem a bit perplexed by the door and are open to suggestions on how they might enter. As the crew discusses possibilities and theories, at the mention of the word "Sumuho", narrow square slits crack open in the strange door. Pupil-like bits of stone bulge outwards, staring at the crew. Then below the eye-like structures breaks open a wide rectangle. Moving like a mouth, a creaking yet thunderous voice utters a phrase in an unknown language. If any of the party respond to it, the door will answer in the language it hears from the party (e.g., if an elf PC speaks High Elvish to the door, the door will reply in High Elvish). In its odd voice, the door asks: "Who are you that have come to seek enlightenment from Divine Sumuho?"

A conversation with the door reveals that this is indeed the lost Sanctuary of Sumuho. The door seems oblivious to the passage of time, unaware that the Sanctuary has been unopened for thousands of years. However, it is terribly stubborn and refuses to open the door. The crew must convince the door guardian that they are indeed worshippers of Sumuho and come to seek his wisdom. At the GM's discretion, the door may require some proof that they really know who Sumuho is; if only the archaeologists answer, the door guardian will refuse entrance of the "barbaric and heathen" PCs, so some knowledge of Sumuho's history would be valuable. Once the guardian is convinced, the eyes and mouth will recede and the door will crack from its hinges. The solid-looking sandstone will break into blocks, revealing a jointed and fully-articulated stone-jack. The golem will step aside to allow the party to enter the gate. Once all are inside, the -jack will reassume its form as a door. Attempts to speak to or activate it thereafter will be in vain.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Inside the Sanctuary, the party will find themselves in a cavernous room lavishly decorated. The sandstone walls look as though they were painted hours earlier, with bright frescoes depicting Sumuho's rise to power and his ascent into the realm of the gods. Holding the ceilings above them are dozens of massive marble pillars, each one covered from base to capital in hieroglyphs like a stele monument. The floors are sandstone inlaid with glass, with the center of the room a mosaic of Sumuho subduing an army of demons. Statues litter the edges of the room, mostly of Sumuho in various heroic, majestic, or divine poses. To the west lay two hallways, one ascending and one descending, and to the east is another wider passageway. Despite being underground and without windows, the room seems brightly lit by an unknown light source. The whole effect is a bit breathtaking. Incredible as it appears, however, the sanctuary does show some signs of decay, with piles of sand having leaked in through cracks in the walls, and some of the marble columns looking cracked and frail.

The archaeologists themselves are awestruck, but quickly go to task examining a corner of the room with a large statue of Sumuho holding a golden scepter. The woman speaks in a foreign language to the eldest, who nods approvingly. He smiles broadly, explaining that they were seeking proof of Sumuho's links to an ob-

scure Inhap culture and this statue may prove their findings. Carefully climbing the statue, the female archaeologist reaches for the scepter. As she pulls it from the statue's hand, she loses her balance and falls. Clinging to the scepter, her weight breaks the arm of the statue off. With a slow and ominous creak, the five meter tall statue tilts, and then falls. It shatters against a nearby column, which itself cracks in half. The ceiling emits a rumble, and soon, other pillars begin to break and smash into each other. Within seconds, chunks of the vaulted ceiling begin to crack and fall, shattering against the floor and letting down a flood of sand.

Archaeologists in tow, the party must rush into one of the adjoining corridors for safety: the ascending hallway or descending hallway to the west, or the wider passageway to the east. As they dive into the passageways, the once-beautiful temple atrium is filled by the sands of the Inhap. Now they must navigate through whichever passageway they stumbled upon.

West ascending - This dark hallway starts as a moderately sloping ramp, but after fifty feet or so it turns a corner and becomes a steep spiral staircase. It is quite a hike up the 200 stone stairs, which end in a narrow and low-ceilinged crawlspace. One of the archaeologists comments that this was probably a aqueduct or secret passageway when the temple was above ground. After a hundred feet of crawlspace, the bottom drops out of the floor in a square meter hole. If something is dropped into the hole, a splash can be heard after a long pause. The only way out seems to be through this hole. One can either drop down into the hole or lower a rope to climb. At the bottom of the hole is a seemingly bottomless pool, with steps leading into it. Climbing the steps leads into the hallway to the tabernacle room.

West descending - The descending pathway snakes in a sloped spiral down several stories. The path is dark, but torchlight reveals a few glyphs on the walls every few meters. The path suddenly ends into a thick, undecorated steel door. On close examination, although the door seems to be in perfect condition, its hinges seem to be corroded. Breaking the hinges will allow the door to fall forward, leading into a large chamber. In the center of the room is a large skeleton, a chain draped around what was once a massive neck. Even the archaeologists are unsure what this huge beast may have been. Beyond the skeleton of the creature is a door leading to the tabernacle hallway.

East passageway - The walls of this wide passageway are made of pure white marble, covered in runes and glyphs. The passageway continues for a hundred meters or so before ending in a series of three doors. Two of the doors are filled with collapsed debris and sand, leaving only the door on the left available to travel through. A short hallway leads into what appears to be a sacristy, filled with ancient vestments and liturgical items used to worship Sumuho in his heyday. The colors of the garments are still bright, but the material is weak and mostly threadbare. Most of the other liturgical items, however - braziers, censers, scepters, food dishes, et cetera - are in good shape. All are made from precious metals, and many are gemmed and otherwise decorated. The walls are plainly decorated with a broad purple band stretching across the room. An examination of the bar reveals a loose brick; removing it will reveal the bricks under it are unmortared as well. Behind them is a small crawlspace, wide enough for one person, leading into the hallway of the tabernacle room.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Finally the party makes it into the tabernacle room. The hallway leads into a very tall chamber. The far wall consists almost entirely of a huge door made of electrum. Intricately detailed, Sumuho's name is inscribed in several languages. The portal is dotted with gemstones, and in the center of the double doors is an embossment of (presumably) Sumuho's bearded foreign face. A large brazier sits on either side of the room, burning some unknown fuel and casting an eerie glow on the tabernacle. The archaeologists can hardly contain their

excitement. "Finally, after all these years!" the eldest exclaims, "we have found the Tabernacle of Sumuho, which contains the Sacrament!" The archaeologists revel and chatter among themselves until one of the party interrupts them. The archaeologists then get very dark looks on their faces. "The Sacrament is all that is left of Sumuho's glory," the young man says.

"And," adds the woman, "it is the one thing we must destroy."

Briefly, the archaeologists explain that they are Oth-Maares of the most ancient order. Apparently the destruction of Sumuho was not complete and he has been sensed carving out chaos from his ancient temple. They have been sent to finish the job their ancestors started. Unfortunately, as they are sworn to complete secrecy, the PCs cannot leave the sanctuary. Ever. The golden scepter taken from the statue begins to glow in the archaeologists' hands and, as though out of nowhere, they produce weapons and advance on the party. The golden scepter - apparently a relic of the old Oth-Maares left to guard the tomb - seems to have transformed the eccentric historians into paladins and clerics of Khunam*. They use advanced levels of magic, both offensive and defensive. Breaking the scepter will greatly weaken their power, but it is enchanted and very durable. After the harrowing battle, the party is left with three dead Oth-Maares and the huge tabernacle.

*For those using variants of d20 D&D rules, Khunam's domains are Sun and War.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The only place left to go now is the tabernacle. The large electrum doors open easily without so much as a creak from the ancient metal. Peering in the darkness behind them, the PCs can see that this is no ordinary tabernacle. The doors lead into a long, narrow, high-ceilinged room completely gilded in electrum. Embossed and engraved on the walls are row after row of hieroglyphs. The electrum surface reflects the party's lanterns down the hallway, creating an almost mystical glow. Thirty or so yards down the room ends into a large altar upon which sits another, smaller tabernacle. Opening this tabernacle will reveal a sort of marble thick frame, encased in platinum and marked with runes. From each corner of the square frame is a braided cable of silver; suspended from these cables is a mummified human head (looking something like this: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/mummy/images/ikra-01e-seti-1.jpg>). As the PCs peer into the tabernacle, the eyes of the head flash open and the jaw creaks. The gray and shriveled orbs rotate about as the yellowed teeth grind against one another. Finally the head utters something: "So, you have come to hail I, Divine Sumuho!"

Apparently, the legendary wizard really was immortal. Sumuho prattles on, apparently seeing the PCs as worshippers who have come to remove him from this desert grave. The jealous Khunamites, he explains, attempted to murder him and placed his head in this magical case to prevent him from using his supernatural powers. They failed, clearly, as these "loyal clerics" have come to free him from the tomb. So long as Sumuho believes the PCs are his faithful, the wizard-god is happy. He may even reveal hidden rooms with extra treasure. If carried, he will peel away the tabernacle walls with his power and lead them back out into the desert, where he orders them to build a new church, summon the faithful, find a new body for him, and begin anew.

If there is any suggestion that the PCs are not, in fact, Sumuho worshippers, he will grow furious and launch an attack from his weird frame. Sumuho fights with high level magic spells, able to cast multiple spells at once if need be. If in the sanctuary still, Sumuho may attempt to destroy it and bring the Inhap down on their heads. Attacks on the head seem fruitless, with the dried torn flesh and broken skull reassembling itself after

every blow. Shattering the marble box encasing Sumuho's head, however, will kill him. Oddly, killing Sumuho causes all the treasures of the sanctuary - the Oth-Maares scepter, the sacristy loot, the electrum walls of the tabernacle - to turn to sand. If the PCs are truly witty, they might be able to trick Sumuho and stash him somewhere while they loot the tomb, leaving the wizard-god alive and content while they make off with the goods.



Crossbones Island

By Chaosmark www.strolen.com

Yar...I do indeed know of Crossbones Isle, stranger. But ye'd be better suited to avoid that place like a widowed wench.

A drink ye say? Why sure. What sailor won't talk over a drink? Siddown laddie, and I'll speak with ye until the rum runs low...

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Crossbones Island is the fabled treasure trove of the fearsome pirate Gustaf, a small island far to the southwest of Iocappa Port. From coast to coast, it's one gigantic jungle, lad, filled with monsters and creatures of myth. Risin' out of the middle of the Island is a large mountain. Can't miss it for the world. In that remote, desolate patch of sea be Crossbones Island.

Crossbones Island is a medium-large island out in the middle of the sea. Obviously the coordinates are unknown to all but the rarest of sailors, but that doesn't prevent people from spreading around their speculations as fact. Assuming one actually gets the right coordinates to the island (or perhaps they're caught in a storm and randomly happen upon it), the entire island is a jungle, with the exception of the mountain in the middle.

Within the jungle, there is a large ecosystem, with any number of creatures, both familiar and unfamiliar to most adventurers. This ecosystem includes:

- Jaguars
- Panthers
- Gorillas
- Swarmsnakes
- Scrats
- Blood Spiders

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

If ye can get yerself to that desolate place, and past all the creatures that might take offense at yer trespassin' on their territory, ye'll still have to make your way to the mountain. The very ground itself will suck you up, leaving naught a trace. Saw three good men die that way before we figured out how to pull them out without getting pulled in ourselves. Poor lads. That's a death e'en Brownbeard hisself wouldn't use on a traitor. Then ye'll get to the mountain, and the trouble is just starting...

The forest on the island, being surrounded by an entire sea, is at points littered with bog-ish areas. The old sailor and his crew-mates encountered a patch of quicksand, and had to learn the hard way that if you get

caught, you need to not struggle, and let your buddies pull you out from firm ground, preferably with a branch or rope of some sort.

The quicksand areas are scattered everywhere in a ring around the mountain, with only one or two safe paths that can be taken through the hazardous terrain.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

So there we were, covered in dirt and grime and all sorts of muck from our trek through that demon forest. When we finally got to the mountain, it was almost too easy to get to the fabled cave where Gustaf left his treasure. But when we got there, there wasn't nothin' there but an engravin' on the wall! Well, none of us could figer it out, so we had to go back with nothin'. Someone else must've stolen the treasure and left that nonsense scrawled on the wall to send everyone else on a wild goose chase. That be all I know laddie. Good luck in yer expedition, though I'm warnin' ye now, it's a worthless voyage.

If or when a party of adventurers has made their way past the many and diverse dangers of the island forest, they will find themselves close to the mountain that juts up from the center of the isle. If they happen to search around the base, they will quickly find a single cave-opening, with tool marks all along the walls as evidence of human-creation. The inside is completely empty, devoid of anything except for a few lines of a riddle still etched onto the wall of the cave.

"It runs smoother than most any rhyme, and loves to fall but cannot climb."

The answer is water, and thus the players need to splash water onto the wall. Any seaman worth his salt would have recognized the value of having fresh water around, and thus would have plenty to spare for the wall. Once they do, wherever the water touches will dissolve the wall, which was made of dried, compacted sand. Due to the dimness in the cave, it isn't obvious from plain sight that the back wall is made of compacted sand, but it is.

At any rate, once they have broken through the wall with various amounts of water and hard work, their next challenge begins in a room that quickly widens from the narrow hallway they were in before.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Once past the wall of sand, there remains just one challenge that the players must overcome. Themselves.

Where before all traps and challenges were mundane, Gustaf saved the magical defense as his last resort. The sand wall covers a line of magical glyphs that concentrate and contain magical energies within the area of the cave past the line. Once a PC steps across the line, there is no going back. The air itself becomes a solid wall to their flesh, impassible.

At the same time as they become trapped (whether one at a time, or all at once), shadowy versions of the characters form from the shadows of the room, animated by the magic contained and focused by the glyphs of the room. In order to survive and walk through the glyph-line again, the characters must defeat their counterparts, who will most definitely work together.

These 'shadow puppets' are more durable than the PCs are, but do not have the same abilities or powers. They are the same in appearance and size only. However, that size doesn't matter in the least, for they're all

the same strength (above average strong). It should be a rough fight for the toughest of the PC party, and without teamwork the 'puppets' will divide and conquer.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

Having gotten past the last of the treasure's protection, there are a few different options available, depending on what treasure you might wish to impose upon your characters.

The first, and easiest, to handle is to have the treasure be a huge stinkin' pile of gold, jewels, and other riches. This is probably what they've been expecting.

The second, is that there is a few nick-knacks here and there, the place having been cleaned out before by other adventurers (or perhaps by Gustaf himself, who would've left the traps active as he left, to keep the legend of his treasure alive and protected.

The third, and potentially most interesting, is that there is nothing there, but there is a map of some kind leading to another treasure trove of Gustaf's, perhaps the true one that no-one has ever heard of or found.



Swamp Music By Nik Palmer

The players must cross or get to a point inside or traverse a swamp or moor.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Rat Hill

Rain comes. A downpour continues through the day. The swamp/moor begins to flood! The party seeks refuge on a hill above the flooding, but the hill is home to a den of evil giant rats. As the rain continues, the rats swarm the hill. Hundreds of tiny rats swarm over the hill, while the largest Rodents of Unusual Size attack the smallest party member.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Thicket

The group rests in a clearing, but is set upon by a creeping carnivorous plant that uses the clearing as a trap area. It closes the exits with thick brambles and begins to attack the party with pollen gas attacks and strangling vines.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Witches Hut

The Swamp hermit witches hut is a rare find. It's rumored you only find it if SHE wants you to... What does the swamp witch want from you? Everyone who has met her has walked out of the swamp cursed or worse!

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Serpent Pond

A hydra lives in a swamp pond.... you don't **think** it's spotted you..... yet.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The Faerie Ring

The Faeries and Pixies have a stone circle and magic mound that you stumble across. In thanks for defeating one of the swamp dangers above, they offer the party various drinks and delicacies that with shape change the player or cause them to behave silly, but have no effect on fey creatures. The fey will play tricks and cavort with the players, If the faeries are happy with the players, they will let them pass without ill effect (all shape and behaviour changes are removed). They may request a present from characters who are not deemed "good sports" and may force a quest or mission upon characters who are "bad sports" to their humor and games.



The Windspire

By Nathan Meyer

Along the perimeter of the vast plains of Veshara there once stood a line of Windspires, towers meant to tame the fierce winds and rains of the wild lands. Placed almost a thousand years ago by a now crumbled empire to protect it's borders by buffering the realm with the same forces that assailed them, the spires have nearly disappeared from the edge of the plains. Torn down by neglect and time, creatures and weather.

Only one still stands, the last Windspire. It is rumored to house one of the great arcane treasures known as Spirestones, which empowered the towers to act as shields against the storms. The spires were rumored to have been sealed and protect by powerful Magi.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

The Entrance

The lands surrounding the Windspire are sparse, mostly dry shrubbery and tall grasses. The Windspire itself stands some ten stories tall above the plains. Entrance to the tower is normally gained through the iron bound white stone door at the base of the spire. While there are windows that might be entered, the ability to do so is hindered by the tornado like winds that cloak the upper portion of the spire due to the presence of the Spirestone.

The door is, of course, magically locked and a matched key is necessary to gain access. If the key is not available then access to the tower may be gained from the same window which the small murder of adolescent wyverns jet forth from, the creatures make their nests on the first floor of the tower which is 2 stories tall.

The small nest of wyverns likely becomes aware of the PCs outside the window due to the sounds they may make. The PCs should need to deal with them no matter their means of entry. Once dispatched however the room really contains nothing more than their nests and a flight of stairs that lead up to a well bound iron door that seals the entrance the inner flute of the tower. The door is not locked but should require a good deal of strength to open, as there is a wind tunnel on the other side pressing against it.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The Windvault

For six stories up the inside of the tower is hollow, with thick fluted stone walls buttressed on the inside by octagonal beam supports that allow a fierce outer wind to scream down the flutes of the tower, and once they hit the bottom are funneled back up the center. This is meant to cause an equalization of air pressure from the inside to match the storms outside, and is a by-product of the Spirestone.

The downward wind through the flutes make it nearly impossible to climb the inside of the tower, however the fierce updraft in the center will allow clever PCs to use homemade parachutes, or a floating spell (i.e. Feather Fall) to take advantage of the wind and carry themselves to the top of the Windvault. This should cause the PCs to make balance based rolls to keep from crashing into the side of the walls and taking the damage of a long fall down.

The top of the Windvault ends in a walkway that should be reachable once they reach that height, where the force of the updraft dwindles to a degree insufficient to fly them up any higher. From the catwalk stairs will take them up to Saferoom directly under the stormdeck, the hatch up into the Saferoom is not locked.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

The Saferoom

The safe room is a contained lock-down area for the Spirestone, and as such is an Anti-magic zone inside the confines of the floor. It is 3/4 the diameter of the rest of the tower, positioned in the middle of the Windvault at the top of the shaft, allowing air to pass around it's outer edge from the Stormdeck above. The whole floor is a large circular room with an unlocked hatch on the floor that opens down onto the catwalk below.

The room is lined with lockers for mundane servicing equipment to keep the tower in an operational state. Ropes, locks, block & tackle, wind-shear suits, weighted boots, repelling harnesses, and other gear can be located here. The middle of the room has a large central platform that is flanked at it's four corners by a steel chained winching system. The winching system, when properly utilized, can lower the holster that contains the Spirestone onto this platform where it may undergo any manipulation required.

When the holster is lowered down from the Stormdeck the room, which is normally wind-free will be flooded with gale-like force and will likely knock about the unprepared. Once the holster, and the stone, are inside the room the wind ceases. To remove the Spirestone from the tower safely requires an anti-magic container of some kind, otherwise the stone's powers will return full-force once it leaves the room. From here the Stormdeck may be reached by climbing the winching system once the stone is lowered, or by a single ladder that leads up to a locked hatch that opens out onto the deck.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

The Stormdeck

There are two non-magical means to reach the Stormdeck, one is to somehow traverse the tornado-esq winds cocooning the tower and land on the deck, where those same winds are originating. Unless the Spirestone is lowered into the Saferoom this is generally a monumental feat. The other method is to unlock the access hatch and open it onto the surface of the deck, a less monumental feat but if the stone has not been lowered into the Saferoom this could be deadly.

However the Stormdeck is accessed it is generally considered an unwise health choice not to have secured the stone first. If the stone has been contained then the deck shows itself to be a wide open surface, covered in vented steel grates that allow the domed steel peak to funnel part of the winds down into the Windvault. The grates are based on circular quadrants and the steel chains of the winching system are the only thing to decorate the deck... aside from the Tempest Elemental that makes it's home here.

The living storm was attracted to the presence of the Spirestone, and enjoys it's energy to the point of addiction. When the stone is lowered into the Saferoom the Tempest is momentarily confused, until the hatch opens and the PCs appear. Putting two and two together the Tempest promptly attacks those that have robbed it of it's treasure.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot twist

The Spirestone

In order to offer protection against the raging weather of the plains, the Spirestones were placed in the Windspires for the purpose of creating a stationary "buffer storm" that would counter the fierce weather of the region. When the stone is active on the deck it creates a huge weather signature that is controllable.

The stone itself is a little more than a foot in diameter, and made of a semi-transparent green stone that has many of the properties of quartz but is obviously not, due to both it's resiliency and it's weight. The stone, despite the power it generates, is quite heavy at 350 lbs. It's weight and the holster are also why the stone doesn't blow itself away.

The source of the stone's power is at your discretion, however it is a powerful item that could be used to generate force for any number of ambitious projects and nations would likely pay a great deal in lands or goods to obtain it. The true trouble with the stone is getting access to it, however immediately afterwards the act of transporting it out of the Windspire should present a large barrier to any group that doesn't have an extra dimensional space, or an anti-magic container handy.



The Message

By Morgan Joeck

Room One: Entrance And Guardian

Travel through a war zone can be tough, to say the least! The PCs have been tasked with bypassing the enemy base and delivering a vital message to the general commanding forces on the other side of the base. Going around the fray is impossible as the protagonists have been trapped in a valley. In order to get out, the party, as a small and unnoticed group has to sneak out the front past the sentries at the mouth. Should they be seen, the party will have to kill them quickly before they can return to the base and warn others. If they're not spotted, the party will have to face the roaming wildlife that inhabits the area. A fight would draw attention. Can the PCs defeat the animals and flee in time?

Room Two: Puzzle Or Roleplaying Challenge

In all the commotion, the party has lost their bearings and stumbles into a kobold camp. The kobolds want nothing to do with the fight, content to clean up afterwards, but if a party of richly laden adventures just happen to stumble into their heavily defended camp, they'd be more than happy to charge them a "toll" and

send them on their way. They don't want to kill them lest they incur the wrath of whatever side they're on. Can the PCs negotiate down the demand so that they can continue on with what they need? No fighting allowed unless the party wants to attract the attention of the enemy camp nearby.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

As the PCs stumble down the Kobolds' mountainside lair, some loose rocks tumble downhill and into a minefield! The explosion doesn't startle the camp nearby – they're used to the occasional rabbit getting blown up. In order to go around the minefield (away from the enemy camp), they have to cross the very large river that curves around the mountain and borders the minefield. There are small islands in it, but the river is inhabited by foul monsters (that prevent the party from going up/downstream and provide a difficult challenge should the party not run from them.)

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle Or Conflict

Across the river now, a few rabbits get blown up in the minefield. Three explosions that night arouse the suspicions of the camp nearby. A squad is sent out to investigate, and the party is detected. On their bank of the river, there is an impassible cliff face, and two groups of soldiers approach from either side (on the opposite bank still) to flank the party to keep them from fleeing. The party has to fight off at least two groups of soldiers, at a range, to flee.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The heroes reach the quiet camp and find the general in his tent. They attempt to deliver the vital information to him about their current position and state of affairs hopefully. The general is uneasy and tries to send them away before they tell him anything. He tries to convince them that they need to go tell the battalion even further back about this news and slips them a note. Before the party can read it/once they tell him the information, the enemy mastermind who had taken the camp and kept the general as bait to uncover the party's information reveals himself. He has folks nearby who rush to his aid when he makes his presence known. With the general on their side, the party has a fighting chance, and if they succeed, the general awards them with commendations and any appropriate rewards.

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.