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Present

5 Room Dungeons

Volume 13

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 Wizard's Challenge

By Thewizard63

<http://www.strolen.com/content.php?node=4389>

A local Wizard, rumored to have lost his mind, like he has his hand, Has issued a Challenge and a prize for all. Simple-Enter his tower and find him to claim your prize.

Background

The eccentric wizard Xarn is a recluse. Almost comically dress in clashing reds and purples. His most notable feature is in fact a lack of one. His hand, missing from some terrible accident, is still a living visible stump. His Tower is visible from town. And his rare visitations to town always cause quite a stir. The rumors have it, that he is tinkering with the fabric of life. Others say his is looking for his lost hand. Others say his is ripping through the fabric of Reality. Most figure that he's stark raving mad, others suspect incredible genius. A month ago he walked into Luckys tavern, and bewitched the inn-keeper, Lucky, to tell all new-comers of the challenge Xarn issued.

The Challenge:

"Those who dare, and have the prowess may enter my Tower unmolested. Or, for those whose curiosity might just kill them, for I will tell you the truth of my stump. Enter with only a word of Truth. After, you will face a series of Challenges. In my years and travels I have amassed great treasures which I am willing to share with those proven to be worthy individuals. These will test your faculties so the weak need not apply. Once begun your acceptance is binding, for there is no way out save for success. Good Luck."

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

Shaft of Light

To approach the dark foreboding tower you must enter a twisted forest, filled with a clinging mist and unusual noises. A feeling of being not right overcomes you. Every time you glimpse something you look again, to see if you're seeing right. your mind questions, Did that Bird have two heads? Did that squirrel have spiders eyes? Did that Fox have bee markings? Did you hear Humming from that tree? There is an almost understandable muttering surrounding you. You feel eyes staring at you. The players fear builds as they walk. About $\frac{3}{4}$ in, they most conquer that fear or risk running away. (Mind-effecting, easy)

Background: This forest was planted from modified seed; the plants radiate an aura of fear. It resonates with humanoids. The creatures, in the woods are early moderately successful experiments that are primarily harmless. Their oddity only reinforces the weird feelings already radiating from the plants.

When you finally exit the forest near the base of the tower, you stand in front of large thick wooden door. A mouth forms in the door and booms. "Tell me, what it is you truly desire, and you shall enter and your challenge will begin." (this is a great way for characters to share history, and plot hooks for their characters)

There's a chance an observant character will see that the tower has no mortar and the stone seems to almost breathe.

If answered truthfully a hole the shape of the character will materialize, closing after they pass. This is done with each party member. PCs on both of sides of the door can hear the answer. When all are present the door booms, Now the challenge begins. The room they stand in is plain cut stone and round with thin windows allowing some light in. An ornate circular rug from a far off land is the only decoration. A bright beam of purple light shines down a center hole in the ceiling. At the top of the shaft is what you seek. Your success depends on how this problem is - resolved

The party must get to the top to reach the next room up the shaft. This can be achieved in any manner that works. It should be set up 2 steps back for every 3 steps forward. The harder the group pushes and works together to succeed, the easier it will be.

General Note: the stones that make up the shaft walls are alive and they serve Xarn. They are hive-minded creatures (like ants) and work as one entity to change the tower itself to his needs. They will shift as needed to make the climbing harder or easier. They were developed with an oil like defense which works in two ways. Oil is secreted to make them slippery, resisting willing relocation. The same oil can be forced out violently, much like a skunk used when being attacked. This oil when atomized, and breathed causes nausea. These can also become easier to grip, by roughing its feathers They have even been know to move in and out like a snail.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The Choice

Once at the top of the hole. An image materializes. "Congratulations. Not in succeeding, but in passing the initial challenge. Behind you is a door for each of you. Beyond those doors is your next challenge. It's simple enough. All you need to do is Choose."

Each PC encounters nearly the same thing. When they grab the handle to open the door, they are pricked with a needle. When the door opens, an unpleasant odor hits as the character enters. In this small bare room a loved one is bound and tied to a wall. Next to the opposite wall, out of reach of the loved one is a table with a flask holding a yellow translucent liquid, and a note. The loved one looks very ill. Bloody vomit is seen in one corner.

The Note Reads:

*My challenge I offered, you took,
and so you shall be challenged and shook.
Disease afflicts your loved one. This potion is the cure.
You have been infected upon entering. So, your choice it should be sure.
Fibers of character are sure to show.
So drink it up, or pass the swallow?
Make a choice and make it quick. Your time is as a standard wick
Will you win or will you lose, Leave the room when you chose.*

Background: The loved ones in truth, are normal tower denizens bewitched to look, talk and act like the PCs loved ones. (almost literally reacting to how the player pictures their loved ones would in their mind) the denizens are really infected, and told that they will only be cured if they succeed in fooling the PCs. This is a very strong enchantment and incredibly hard to see through. Once they choose who, if anyone drinks, the challenge is over.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

A-maze-ing

When the PCs enter the round room again, they see an archway and a hallway beyond. The disembodied voice of Xarn speaks, "At the end of this hallway is the ladder up. There you will find what you seek." Past the archway is a long hallway. (Impossibly long for the tower's size) The 10' high hallway has no ceiling. A ladder leads up the ceiling of this cavernous room. The top 3' of the walls are made the living bricks. (They attempt to stop anyone trying to climb on the walls. Or fly out.)

About halfway between the archway and the ladder, the environment changes before the PC's eyes. Either side hallways appear, or walls do, or disappear. In essence a second maze phases in, while the current one phases out. This change stays for a number of minutes and switches to yet another one, and to a fourth and back to the first. Then it cycles through them repeatedly. Some of the walls are living brick and can move, the walls move at 60 per appearance cycle. (Thanks Treasure Tables for the idea!) They phase in for one of the 4 cycles. (DM note: make four(4) identically sized mazes. Have a ladder near the center in the same spot for all. Do whatever you want with them, put a letter-number grid so when you switch, you know where they are)

To make matters worse for the PCs there are numerous half-breed minotaur's (experiments) who have been given a home here. They love this maze as it gives them something to do and purpose in life. They are constantly looking for what changes. There are a few cleaning oozes. All the players need to do is get to the ladder, which everyone can see from anywhere in the Maze.

If a party member Phases (example: blink spell), they see all 4 mazes at once and are probably going to wind up trapped, except they can walk through the current real walls, with normal dangers.

Special Notes:

* The ladder has an anti-magic field emanating from it. (approximately 10')

* Remember the PC who gave the disease cure potion to the loved ones will start being effected by the disease-most likely in this room.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Allow myself to introduce... myself

Environment effects: The anti-magic from the ladder suppresses all magic light. Until the hatch is closed the breeze is strong enough to put out lantern (50% for hooded lanterns) when the group arrives it should be dark. When they close the heavy hatch any magic light will no longer be suppressed. They've now enter a maze-like Hall of Mirrors.

"It's finally time to take a GOOD look at yourself. Oh, and there is a door here somewhere... Bwahahaha-haaa..." Booms the wizard's familiar voice.

As the hatch slams shut and torches and lights are re-lit, the party will find themselves in a standard hall of mirror. Only one of each party member's multitude of reflections is an evil-half. They are really malicious spirit trapped in the mirror. The only way for them to escape is to take someone in. These reflections are exact copies of the PCs, except without the disease.

As one might expect, the reflections will try and confuse the PCs as to who to help attack. (The spirits can sense each other.) In a Hall of weirdly angled mirrors, It is very difficult to detect, enemy. The party must first decide who is real or false. The spirits have no such difficulty. The spirits also read surface thoughts and will use them against the party.

If the PCs survive, one of the mirrors will have a hard to find handle. Through this door is what they set on this challenge for.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

Xarn awaits the PCs with his goblin assistant Rumi. Xarn is a slight man dressed in Red flowing Wizard robes, with purple trim. He has a similarly appointed hat. And smaller square spectacles. His crow's feet wrinkles disappear into shoulder length salt and pepper hair.

He and his assistant stand behind a low pedestal with a large mirror mounted on top. They are grinning widely when they enter.

In a whispery voice, He greets everyone, "Welcome brave souls. You have passed the challenge I have put before you. And I am proud of you all. You have spoken your desires, and I know why you are here. I have also watched your actions, and they too speak of your wishes."

"Before I answer any questions, we will get to the heart of it. I shall put a last choice before you individually."

Xarn will then address each PC and re-cap their choices and actions, and their stated desires. He will present them each with two items. Each will aid in one of the two paths, Desire vs. Deed. For those that are afflicted with the disease, he also offers them the cure. If they choose the potion, after everyone has made their choice, he will offer them to pick between the remaining to items and accuse the PC of thinking him a cruel heartless man. The Goblin-Gumi will always mimic the expressions Xarn has, and will agree with his master.

If asked, Xarn will explain that the challenge was to find suitable characters to venture forth to reclaim his hand. When asked, he explains that his hand was lost during an unfortunately desperate situation involving casting a Djinni bottle into a Bag of Holding. This caused a dimensional rift to rip open, fold back on itself, and capture his hand before repairing itself. His hand is alive and technically attached. It is floating in-where he thinks-is the realm of forgotten creatures. He asks the party if they wish to travel with him to this dimension, and assist him. Otherwise the challenge is over and the PCs can return to town unmolested.



Drop of Blood in the Bucket

By mrcelophane <http://www.strolen.com/content.php?node=4391>

The setting a Necromancer's lair. This short scenario works best if the Necromancer has appeared before and this is the final battle between the two. It should appear early on in the Adventurers questing history, and they should think this is the hardest thing they will face.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

There is an obvious entrance to the cave, with satanic markings and all. However, if the adventurers search, they will find an alternate entrance. It is hard to find and behind Shrubbery. It is a small wooden door that the Necromancy uses. If you try to go through this, a magic force field will keep you out. It can be dispelled, but it should be hard to do.

The main entrance has a bunch of Zombies, led by the Necromancer's assistant. You could make him as strong as you like, whatever race you like, but he should be a recurring villain, like the Necromancer. The main entrance itself is locked by a arcane lock that you cannot unlock unless you have the key that the assistant holds.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

Brain Dead

As you walk in, a rather large inscription should tell adventurers a riddle:

We cannot think, yet we know what you do not
We don't have brains, yet in our heads we form words
These words we have can help you out
To bad our Tongues were the first to rot!

After a few minutes pass to allow the adventurers to ponder this, Skeletons will drop from the ceiling, each wielding weapons. These should not be made to tough, but serve as a tiny challenge. If the players smash their heads, they should find a tiny scroll in side each one. The scroll should have one letter on it, really big.

All the letters combined should make the word:

"Death"

This is the password. The letters should be scrambled in not come in the order of the appearance of the Skeletons. If you are to say the password to the door, they will hear a loud click. The door will now swing open easily if pushed,, but swing back once let go.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Turn Around

There should be a short narrow hall way to another door. Above it should be another inscription:

Sorry but to the password there is more
Return from where you came to open this door.

The Travelers than have to go back to the room they just left and kill(?) more skeletons and take the letters out. However, the Skeletons fall at greater rates, with three skeletons to a party and only one having a letter. The letters should read

"Is Only The Beginning"

So the complete password is "Death is only the Beginning"

Again, scramble the letter. The password has to be said to the door at the end of the hall again, with the same results.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

The Necromancer

The Necromancer sits upon his thrown of bones, applauding the Travelers for getting that far. But as always, he has to try and kill them anyway.

Five or so bulky men wielding Battle Axes should come out somehow and attack the Adventurers. Should you kill one of them, The Necromancer will resurrect them. One will always stay in front of the Necromancer and take all the hits for him, getting healed instantly by the Necromancer. The only way to finally kill these guys is to separate either their hearts or head from their body, or wait until the Necromancer runs out of Magic. After that, you can kill the Necromancer. The last room is behind his throne, which his concubine, who hid behind it after the fight broke out, will tell you.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

This is going to be a long day...

As you enter the final room, you will here bells ringing everywhere. Torches immediately light themselves to reveal the Necromancers spellbook and other personal things on a large round table. After about ten seconds, Men will begin to appear in puffs of smoke. Each of them is wearing the same clothes as the necromancer. As they appear, they will say things such as:

"You called a meeti-, GASP, you're not ~~~~!"

And such. Also, make it evident that they are Necromancers, for they are. You have a loooong way ahead of you...



Temple of the Four Elements

By Nathan Wells

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

The temple is guarded by a priest of the four elements. They must judge the heroes worthy of entering the temple through trial by combat. The priest is a proficient magic user and will cast spells associated with each of the four elements. The heroes need not destroy the priest. Once it becomes obvious that the priest will not win against the heroes he will admit defeat, and grant the heroes access.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The temple houses an air elemental, an earth elemental, a fire elemental, and a water elemental. Each is extremely jealous of the others and resides in a separate room of the temple. Each can be convinced to offer the heroes their favor through clever roleplaying, along with expressions of honor and respect. Each elemental is aware of how friendly the heroes are with the other elementals, and will get offended if the heroes show just as much, or more, attention to another elemental.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Once the heroes have won over an elemental, the elemental will offer them its favor. There is, however, a catch. The heroes must first perform a few duties for them. Depending on the power level of the heroes, these duties may be extremely simple tasks that don't even require them to leave the temple, or they may be small quests in themselves. The other elementals, out of jealousy, will also send minor minions to hinder the heroes' efforts.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

Once the heroes have performed a number of tasks for a specific elemental, that elemental will have one last favor to ask before it will bestow its favor on the heroes. Each elemental has an intense rivalry with one of the others. The air and earth elementals are rivals, and the fire and water elementals are rivals. The final task will be to defeat the elemental's rival in combat.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The elemental finally bestows its favor on the heroes. This may come in the form of magical weapons, armor, or other items. It could be access to new powers associated with the specific element. Perhaps the heroes have freed the elemental from its station at the temple and it is now free to accompany the heroes for an important, and particularly challenging, quest. Maybe the elemental reveals that it can now grant an inordinate amount of power to one of the heroes, but in return the hero must agree to become the next guardian of the temple. For an even more dramatic reward, one of the heroes is transformed into an elemental of the same type as their patron!



Random 5 Rooms Dungeon Generator

By Davide Quatrini

You need only a d6 for using the following tables (roll it once for each room). In diceless games simply choose the result you like most.

Room One: Entrance and Guardian

1-2. The dungeon is an ancient dwarven stronghold. The entrance is a magically sealed stone door, and the guardian is a clockwork dwarf fighter.

3-4. The dungeon is an orcish mine. The entrance is a small trapped cave, and the guardian is a domesticated grizzly bear.

5-6. The dungeon is an illusion. The entrance is a phantom bridge made of fire, and the guardian is an illusory dragon.

Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

1-2. In Room Two PCs find the ghost of a dwarven hero. If they want to give peace to him they'll must find his corpse and bury it (using a complex dwarven ritual).

3-4. In Room Two PCs find a magical scroll. If they solve the puzzle contained in it (Q: 1, 2, 5, ... A: 26) they'll receive a magic item from a far demiplane.

5-6. In Room Two PCs find a madman entrapped in the dungeon. If they cure him (using spells, for example) he will reveal vital information about the place.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

1-2. This place is trapped: if PCs try to open or break the lock of the exit door a sphere made of solid force will entrap them.

3-4. This place is trapped: if PCs remain in the room for a minute or longer the walls will release poisonous gas.

5-6. This place is trapped: if PCs touch the illusory chest contained in the room the ceiling will collapse on them.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

1-2. The final boss is a terrible dragon. It will accept treasures in exchange for PCs lives.

3-4. The final boss is a little humanoid army: a lot of orcs, trolls and ogres. They will accept food and prisoners in exchange for PCs lives.

5-6. The final boss is a powerful illusionist. She will accept magic items and new spells in exchange for PCs lives.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

1-2. PCs find an ancient and powerful dwarven artifact in the dungeon. They must pay attention: the Dwarf King is searching for it.

3-4. PCs find NPCs prisoners in the dungeon. They must pay attention: one of them is a polymorphed demon.

5-6. PCs find a large amount of gold, silver or platinum in the dungeon. They must pay attention: the metal is cursed.



Promised Aid

By Jonas Dorn

Background: Centuries ago, the empire was in great danger. One evening, a messenger from a so far unknown power came to the emperor, and offered him a deal: He would get the assistance of X heroes, but he had to pledge that he would send his best X heroes of his own once the other power was in need. Of course the emperor agreed, and within a week, X heroes appeared and saved the empire. They were given great honors and large amounts of gold and expensive items.

Now, the time has come to for the empire to reciprocate.

Optional: I would place the other power underground, and have a tower appear in the garden of the emperor's castle, whose door is a replica of the old contract. Once the PCs enter the tower, it starts to tremble and slowly, then faster and faster sinks into the ground.

Of course, there are plenty of other methods to transport the PCs, such as by teleporting them somewhere, or have them board a spaceship which is on autopilot.

Room One: Entrance And Guardian

The players arrive among ruins – are they too late? Worse, there is a "welcome committee": A horde of strange enemies who attack them immediately, and some kind of commander with two aides another figure next to him. The PCs dispatch of the horde with ease (2 rounds of combat at most, e.g. 1 fireball). When they approach the commander, he breaks out laughing and turns to the figure beside him.

"Is that hope I see in your eyes? So sweet. I sent my weakest troops against your saviours, now you can spend the last moments of your life seeing how I destroy them".

The commander stabs the other through the heart, and starts attacking the PCs, while ordering the aides to not let anyone get to the dying prisoner. He turns out to be a significant challenge for the PCs, and if they can't kill him quickly, the prisoner dies.

When the commander dies, the aides fall apart – it seems that they were some sort of animated armor (or maybe undead), whose existence depended on the life of the commander.

Room Two: Puzzle Or Roleplaying Challenge

If the prisoner died, the challenge is to figure out what is going on (easy: there is a battle; the PCs observe troops being moved towards it), how to get there (for example, they can disguise themselves as troops), and how to possibly stop the army (the fact that the aides fell apart should give the PCs the idea that they have to attack the commanders).

If the prisoner survives, he can tell the PCs what is going on, and that they need to eliminate the 3-5 commanders of the invading army. He leads them through a secret passage (if underground: through stunningly beautiful caves), though they find that they have to cross the entire camp of the enemy army to get to the commanders. The former prisoner is no help in that, because he is frozen with fear, or because he died right after giving all important info to the PCs.

Room Three: Trick or Setback

Setback: The disguised PCs are ordered somewhere away from the commanders' tents, they are discovered and have to bluff their way out of the tricky situation, or when they arrive, the commanders have already left for the battle against the last holdout of the good side's forces.

Room Four: Climax, Big Battle Or Conflict

The PCs finally make it to the commanders, who are at least as strong as the commander they battled before, but now there are multiples. There may be interference from enemy aides if the commanders alone are not challenging enough.

Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

The PCs save the day and all is well. Or they learn that they just helped the wrong side (room 1 was a set-up), in which case the DM should drop lots of hints so that the PCs have a chance to figure it out during the big battle. As another twist, 1-2 of the PCs may have been ordered by their local lords to kill everyone else and pretend it was their local kingdom, not the empire that sent the help and should get the reward ("These others? Yeah, they were lieges of my duke, too, but they all died in battle").

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.