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Present

# 5 Room Dungeons

## Volume 14

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](http://www.strolen.com) or [www.roleplayingtips.com](http://www.roleplayingtips.com).

Special thanks to manfred/Peter Sidor for editing.

Cheers,  
Johnn Four and Strolen



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Errors, omissions, or feedback? Please e-mail [johnn@roleplayingtips.com](mailto:johnn@roleplayingtips.com)



# Caravan of Courage

By Nathan Wells

## Room One: Entrance and Guardian

A young priestess is setting out on a pilgrimage and is looking for a few people to serve as guides and guards during the journey. She is offering to pay anyone who qualifies. In order to join her caravan, the heroes will have to prove that they are both competent and trustworthy.

## Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The caravan is stopping at a number of towns along its path. After visiting a few towns the heroes will notice a suspicious trend. At each town where they stop, the priestess ignores any religious buildings or holy sites, but instead has secretive visits with shady looking people under the cover of night. The heroes may try to figure out what's going on through clever roleplaying or espionage. Or, the heroes may simply try to win the priestess's trust and then ask her directly.

## Room Three: Trick or Setback

The priestess is really a member of a secret order with a political agenda. The king of the realm is on his deathbed, and his wicked son is about to inherit the throne. The king has another, illegitimate son whom the kingdom as a whole knows of only in rumors. This bastard son is actually far more qualified to be a good and noble ruler. The secret order that the priestess works for aims to put the bastard son on the throne instead of his half brother. This may pose an interesting challenge to the heroes depending on their own personal, political, and moral viewpoints.

## Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

The priestess has been traveling across the realm informing various cells of the order about the order's plans. On the day of the prince's coronation as king, the order will rally all of its members to the royal palace for a grand coup. During the ensuing battle, the priestess leads the heroes through secret passages into the interior of the palace where they will face the wicked prince. The final battle may be with the prince himself, or with one of his lieutenants, pets, or wizardly advisors.

## Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

After the wicked prince is defeated the king's bastard son can be crowned king. The heroes will have to decide what to do with the wicked prince and his supporters, if they did not die in the coup. The new king will reward the heroes suitably with tracks of land, lordships, or whatever seems appropriate.

If you're looking for a twist, add the revelation that the new king is in fact not related to the old king at all. Perhaps he was just a good man chosen by the secret order, or maybe he was the leader and originator of that order. In a tragic betrayal, the new king may attempt to have the heroes executed so that they can not reveal such knowledge to the masses.



# Escape From Slavers' Isle

By Jason Kemp

The storm was fierce. For three days, your ship battled against the winds and the waves. The crew worked tirelessly, never giving up hope. However, after three days fighting against the storm, she couldn't take it any more. Driven against the reef, the hull struck against the unyielding coral, and the ship was scuttled. Many drowned in the wind-tossed seas under the dim light of the waning moon, but you were among the few that survived to make it ashore, only to collapse in the wet sands of this unknown haven.

When you woke up, however, you were dismayed to discover that your situation had simply gotten worse, for now you have found yourself trapped in a cage, as your ship had the misfortune to sink off the rocky shore of Slavers' Isle...

## Room One: Entrance And Guardian

PCs awaken in what amounts to be little more than a jail cell, stone on two sides and bars on two sides, the last cell in a small corridor of cells. Prisoners rest in some of the other cells, a few from the PCs' ship and others who have obviously been here longer. The challenge here is to escape the cell (thus entering the rest of the cell). Escape may be accomplished by a number of means: brute force, trickery, stealing the keys, etc. The prisoners are fed twice a day, by three slavers. (For this scenario, they are hobgoblins, but they could be of any particular race.) If the PCs do not escape, they will eventually be led away to slaving ships to be sold as slaves. While there are other opportunities to escape either en route or once the characters are sold, this adventure assumes the PCs escape at some point before they are led off to be branded and sold.

When the party escapes, they may want to free other prisoners to go with them. This offers the GM opportunities to throw more stuff at the group overall, but otherwise, it shouldn't impact the adventure. After all, the party are heroes and the rest of the prisoners represent the common man that must be saved.

The corridor of cells empties into a central room that serves as the junction for other corridors. A few more guards are here, unless they've already been drawn to the party by sounds of combat earlier. In this room, the party can find some basic equipment and load up on weapons, light armor, shields, and other stuff.

## Room Two: Puzzle Or Roleplaying Challenge

Leaving the central room down the exit corridor, the party should come to the entrance to the caves, and a steep drop-off. A wooden drawbridge connects the caves of the cliff-face with the slaver stronghold, but it is raised and located on the other side. The PCs must figure some way to handle the situation, or wait for the bridge to be lowered. Combat taking place on the bridge runs significant risks.

The party, now in the stronghold, may suffer a few "nearly caught" moments as they work their way through the stronghold (which isn't that big, all things considered), at least until they have to hide in a room off the main hallway to avoid guards. Here, the PCs meet a trapped lesser demon that is waiting to be sold into slavery. He claims to be invulnerable to the slavers' weapons and was caught by magic. He offers his assistance in exchange for his freedom. The PCs may come to an accord with the demon, or may bypass its offer and leave it chained up. If the PCs make a deal with the demon, the demon will follow the letter of the deal, looking for a way to pervert it should an opportunity arise.

## Room Three: Trick or Setback

As the PCs make their way out of the stronghold and into a position overlooking the bay, they hear a horn announcing that there's been an escape. As they watch, several hobgoblins remove some dire rats from a small pen and take them into the stronghold, with the dire rats eagerly sniffing the ground and air, pulling at their chains. The PCs should get the message that the dire rats will be used to track the PCs, in much the same way that dogs are used back in their own homelands. The PCs must make their way as quickly as possible from their hiding place, across the beach and on board one of the ships setting in the bay. The closest one also appears to be the fastest, and seems to be prepared to sail soon.

## Room Four: Climax, Big Battle Or Conflict

The ship the party has chosen is the Lord Slaver's vessel, and he's currently inside the stronghold, investigating the disturbance. If the PCs are quick, they can swarm the boat, take it over and set sail before a large body of slavers can come out of the stronghold after them. Alternately, the PCs could try to sneak onboard, but will be discovered once the vessel is out to sea, and the same fight, with more crew, will be fought. The party must face the crew onboard the vessel, plus a spellcasting first mate, Mistress Talyn. If the Captain is onboard, such as if the vessel is out to sea, he is an accomplished fighter and should give the PCs a good fight as well. If the PCs succeed, the ship becomes theirs.

## Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

In the cargo hold, the PCs will find a beautiful red-headed woman lying in a red crystal casket. The captain's log indicates that he is the middle man in a deal to deliver this casket unopened to a secretive cabal in one of the more populated ports of call. If the PCs open the casket, the woman will revive. Identifying herself only as a servant of the Crimson Magus, she will offer to aid the party in exchange for passage back to civilization. If the PCs are being pursued, she will use her magics to burn the enemy ships, to show her value. When the party arrives in civilization, she will part company with them, after promising them a favor that she will grant at her discretion in the future. If the party decides not to open the casket, they can choose to deliver it to the cabal using the captain's log, and will receive a lot of coin, to be followed later by assassination attempts as the cabal tries to clean up loose ends.



## Vault of the Wiglord

By Ken McCutchen

A Five Room Dungeon for Four 4th Level Characters

## Room One: Entrance and Guardian

### Entrance to the Tomb (EL 4)

The crumbling tomb is almost indistinguishable from the Cliffside that it is carved into. The 15ft. wide entrance is dark and uninviting, and the thunder of an approaching storm seems to warn of the danger lurking inside the forbidden tomb.

Steep pitched stairs lead to a 30' by 30' chamber with a vaulted ceiling that is nearly 30' above the floor. A large bronze door is inscribed with strange runes and is guarded by a green dragon!!!

The tomb entrance is now home to a very young green dragon, which is drawn here by the evil dwelling inside. The dragon has massed only a small treasure trove thus far, but is eager to add the adventurers' gear to his pile!

Vortrus the Green Dragon (use the stats from the D&D miniatures Green Dragon from the Abberations set)

A DC20 decipher script check or a read magic spell will reveal that the true nature of the runes with the exception of the last word being scratched beyond recognition.

Nevermore will dark dragons threaten the realm  
A great time of kindness will bless all men ...tcmbrrfqw...

## Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

### Crypt of the Fallen

The bronze double doors open into a 20' x 20' room that is dominated by a stone statue of a fallen knight. Dirt and dust cover the room and the act of opening the door had filled the room with dust. The knight holds his sword by the hilt and the blade covers the knight's face. The statue is inscribed with a series of words, which read:

*Often talked of, never seen,  
Ever coming, never been.  
Daily looked for, never here,  
Still approaching, coming near.  
Thousands for my visit wait,  
But alas, for their fate,  
Though they expect me to appear,  
They will never find me here.*

The answer to the riddle is: Tomorrow. Speaking the word aloud will unlock the secret door. Otherwise the door is locked. A DC20 search check is required to find the secret door.

Secret Stone Door: Hardness 8; HP 60; Break DC Stuck 28; Break DC Locked 28; DC 22 Open Lock.

## Room Three: Trick or Setback

### The Porticullis and the Ooze (EL5)

The secret door opens to reveal a long hallway 30' wide by 90' long. As you step into the room, the secret door slams shut behind you with an enormous BOOM! As you peer down the hallway, you can make out a 10' wide iron porticullis blocking the room's exit. The rest of the hallway is clean and free of dust and debris.

The porticullis is locked and trapped. A gelatinous cube is hiding in the room. Gelatinous cubes are hard to see, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a cube and walk into it are automatically engulfed.

Porticullis: Hardness 10; HP 60; Break DC Stuck 28; Break DC Locked 28; DC 22 Open Lock.  
Burning Hands Trap: CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (burning hands, 5th-level wizard, 5d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.  
Gelatinous Cube (see Monster Manual 1 page 201)

## Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict

### Minions Of The Wiglord

With the portcullis open, you can inspect the sarcophagus closer. As you approach, the two torch sconces erupt into flame, however the flame is cold blue. The light from torches casts an eerie glow throughout the room. The marble lid of the sarcophagus has a knight holding his sword over his face, much like the statue you've seen before. Only this time the attention to detail and craftsmanship are remarkable.

The sarcophagus hides a secret tunnel into the chamber of the great evil one. Three swarms of rats have crowded into the tunnel in an attempt to escape the dark lord below. When the adventures open the lid they need to make a DC15 reflex save or be surprised by a rat swarm.

(3) Rat Swarms (use the D&D miniatures stats from the Unhallowed set)

Swarms are extremely difficult to fight with physical attacks. However, they have a few special vulnerabilities, as follows:

A lit torch swung as an improvised weapon deals 1d3 points of fire damage per hit.

A weapon with a special ability such as flaming or frost deals its full energy damage with each hit, even if the weapon's normal damage can't affect the swarm.

A lit lantern can be used as a thrown weapon, dealing 1d4 points of fire damage to all creatures in squares adjacent to where it breaks.

## Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist

### The Wiglord's Guardian

The tunnel below the sarcophagus descends steeply 50' into a dank cavern. Water has formed strange limestone deposits throughout the room and several columns obstruct your view of the chamber. Stalactites and stalagmites in the room threaten your approach and the uneven floor is slick and wet.

Characters attempting to run across the cavern need to make a DC15 balance check or fall, leaving the prone for the remainder of the round.

Stalking in the back of the cave is a Gauth, the evil Wiglord's guardian. It will wait for the characters to enter the room before blasting away with its powerful eye rays.

Iksus the Menace, Gauth-lord of the Deep (see Monster Manual 1 page 26 for stats)



## The Towers of Wisdom

By manfred

<http://www.strolen.com/content.php?node=4392>

It is said wizards don't work well with others of their kind. Once they have a tower, woe to anyone not recognizing their superiority that is the rule. But to every rule is an exception. Once, there were three wizards, on friendly terms, that built their towers closer than anyone before. The towers are lost, the knowledge therein may be yet reclaimed.

The heroes will be agents in the never-ending striving for the advancement of knowledge. It might be their own personal interest, seeking favour of the powerful wizard that sponsors their expedition, or it's just the money.

In the ages past, a great magical catastrophe has despoiled the world, and very few liked the wielders of said magic afterwards. In fact, they were actively hunted down by a magic-hostile cult, that grew into a massive movement for a time. Those days are gone, but so are most reminders of a greater age, and much of its wisdom. But perhaps a little remains.

## **Room One: Entrance and Guardian**

The wizard employing the PCs will relay the story of three masters of the magical arts, that lived quite near to this town. Each of them had a tower, but they built it on one property, to coordinate their research. Their towers were destroyed in those turbulent times, and no one was able to find the remains. But then he found a vital clue in the city's chronicles: the destruction was not caused by a random mob, as was often the case, but it was organized by the Cult itself. And the Cult liked to record its conquests in detail, so they might have the crucial information all other resources failed to preserve!

The Cult is an enlightened order, that protects society from the abuses of magic, so speaks its gospel. To the public, they are a harmless group of grumblers; the users of supernatural but know, that they are always eager to burn a few witches, so it's better to not provoke them. One of them has the records of that period. The ideal way would be to get the book, and return it without anyone noticing - *no matter how the PCs get it, there must not be a connection to the wizard hiring them; or to any wizard for that matter.* Simply beating them all up and looting the place without witnesses could prove hard in this city, and murdering is out of question. Skilled thievery or impersonating other cultists could do the trick.

The book describes in vivid detail, where the towers were located, how they were destroyed and razed to the ground. Whoever wrote the bombastic sentences wasn't the smartest tool in the shed, but noted several siege engines were 'borrowed' from a nearby fort, and fully employed against the towers.

## **Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge**

The location is thickly overgrown, and the ruins are nigh to invisible under the shrubs; there are three of them, in a triangle, in the middle the remains of a fountain, all as it should be. It will take some work to clear the place, and sifting through the mess will produce little evidence of a wizard ever living here, even the amount of rubble does not hint at a large tower. Maybe this was just a peasant settlement.

What happened here? The wizards have chosen a place with numerous caves for convenience, and thought their designs were sturdy enough to withstand anything. True, their towers held during the siege, the other buildings around didn't. As the supporting structures crushed, all the weight of a tall tower concentrated on a small space... until it spectacularly fell right into the earth, seemingly collapsing. The elated mob destroyed the other buildings, and at last could celebrate victory, hanging and burning one of the wizards that managed to get out.

The heroes will have to dig deep, until they uncover the roof of a tower. Breaking through it, they can access the interior, and make their way in somewhat reversed order, from the top to the bottom. The inside is damaged by the fall and the years, but there are mechanical creations (so-called "-Jacks"), active even today. After hundreds of years, even those, that are not aggressive, may have misaligned processing units (a technical term for insane constructs).

## **Room Three: Trick or Setback**

Each of the three towers will be different, individually suited for the wizard that inhabited it. Examples:

- this wizard was particularly good with levitation spells. With the occasional niche is the tower completely open, and there are no stairs or ladders. To slip here, and fall, hitting furniture on the way down can be lethal. Any mountaineers among you?
- this wizard specialized in enchanted mechanical life-forms, so his tower is full of various constructs, some never finished, some quite unusual.
- this wizard was a master of defensive spells, and his tower contains the most locks and traps. Have fun.

Among all the digging, climbing, and fighting or negotiating with weird constructs, there will be found items of some value, and even the treasure they came here for: books and scrolls, anything even remotely arcane they shall take and deliver. But that is not everything.

A large library is hidden deep beneath the fountain, and subterranean corridors, that were once accessible, lead to it. It is not accessible from above, in fact, the the rock is here hardest, the library well protected. Perhaps they find out themselves, or talk it out of a friendly construct. Without it, their journey will be of little value.

## **Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict**

It was a beautiful library with many tomes of great value, built to withstand any danger. It did not withstand centuries of neglect, however. The stream leading into the fountain, once so carefully directed, has found its way inside, and now is the place completely wet, and most books destroyed.

But the last guardian remains. A large human-like construct, some might say golem, created with the utmost precision and the full mobility of a human body, a master warrior was its example of movement. Once, it might have easily killed such a party, now it is feeling the effects of moisture, and even the best impregnation can't seem to halt its slow degeneration. It will attack.

It will be obvious, that it can't fight at its full potential, it will be slow, and sometimes clumsy. But it is strong, and each hit will be dangerous, with a weapon, or without it. During the fight, it can easily destroy the few still preserved tomes, and many of the tables and shelves will be overturn or broken. It's not easy to kill, smart parties may just keep it occupied, until they pick the more valuable tomes, and run away.

## **Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist**

The true gain of this place is knowledge - what exactly it will be, how accessible, and how useful, depends on the Game Master. New schools of magic or spells can be introduced and new problems along them.

The wizard will claim all the materials for himself, but will require help with the research. A PC may be employed, but also other colleagues and dangerous knowledge may slip into the world, generating more plots.

The Cult won't be friendly with this old magic in the world again, and quite angry with the PCs, if they learn of their involvement.

## Additional resources:

For the various constructs, I suggest [X-Jacks](#), but they may be replaced with other suitable critters.

[Loster](#) is the cultist that keeps the books on the history of his order.



## Through the Maze

By Margaret Coffey

### Room One: Entrance and Guardian

The PCs are seeking a macguffin – a mushroom that can cure any disease, a powerful and rare spell component, a quest item. They learn that the macguffin lies in a secret cave behind a waterfall.

PCs must cross to the other side of a waterfall. The waterfall creates a dangerous current and undertow in the pool, but giant, smooth rocks lead to the waterfall itself. PCs must cross by jumping and balancing on the wet, slippery rocks to avoid falling into the water and risk drowning (or at least being moved away from the waterfall). Once the PCs reach the waterfall, they must jump through it to get to the other side.

Once on the other side, the PCs land (face first?) in a hip-deep pool of still water, where they must battle or escape a giant constrictor snake.

### Room Two: Puzzle or Roleplaying Challenge

The PCs escape from the pool and encounter a ring of statues of princely appearance. Behind each statue is a door. There is one statue/door combo for each PC, plus one extra set. The statues say in unison: "Only one door leads to that which you seek. The other paths lead to sacrifice. True balance will allow you to find the one true path." The GM comes up with some test or challenge for each PC that does not rely on that PCs' primary ability. For example, the first statue speaks: "Who among you is the strongest?" That PC steps forward and must answer a riddle. The smartest must dance a jig (feel free to LARP that). The most agile must lift a heavy stone above their head. And so on, testing each player in one of their non-primary skills. Perhaps there are materials that may help these PCs in these tasks – a rope and pulley may help someone lift a heavy stone, depending on the nature of the challenge the GM sets. For each challenge successfully overcome, one door closes.

### Room Three: Trick or Setback

If the PCs overcome all of the challenges, then only one door is open to them, and they may continue on. In this case, the final statue says: "You have proven yourselves worthy, but there are challenges still to overcome."

For each failed attempt, one additional door remains open. In this case, the final statue says: "Now you must choose your path. One path leads to peril and that which you seek. If you choose the wrong path, you may still reach your destination, but you will be called upon to make a sacrifice." The statue may also give a clue as to which is the correct door. As the PCs choose a door and enter, that door closes behind them.

If the PCs choose the correct path, they go to the big battle. If the PCs choose one of the other paths, they encounter a long winding maze that after some time eventually leads to a rickety rope bridge that crosses a deep chasm. The PCs must leave behind some/all/their most precious possession/GM's choice in order to safely cross. If the PCs cross safely, then they enter the big battle.

### **Room Four: Climax, Big Battle, or Conflict**

The final battle takes place in a large and very particular room. The floor and walls are smooth and the floor is slightly slick. The floor seems as if it is balanced on a ball centered below the floor. As the PCs enter the room, the floor on that side descends. In order to maintain a level, the PCs must find some way to balance their collective weight. If not, eventually the floor tilts far enough that the PCs begin to slide towards an edge, and may fall into the chasm that is beneath this room. The macguffin is in the center of this room, perhaps on a pedestal. The PCs must reach the center, without causing the room to tilt so far that they ... or the macguffin... fall into the chasm below. Once the PCs reach the center, doors open in the center of each of the four walls and out step four large brutes – guardians of the macguffin. The guardians approach the PCs at the center, and the PCs must battle them - again without tilting the floor too far.

### **Room Five: Reward, Revelation, Plot Twist**

As the battle ends and the PCs claim the macguffin, the room begins to shake, and the floor begins to tilt, rising on the side of the only exit left open – opposite of where they entered, and rising much faster than it did when the PCs were exploring this room. The PCs must scramble uphill to reach the exit, or else they will slide into the chasm below. Moving towards the rising side does not balance the floor – unless the macguffin is returned to its place in the center of the room. If the PCs exit safely, a corridor leads them uneventfully to the surface at the top of the waterfall, where they find....

# 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.