

DUNGEON DELVE ADVENTURE #2

DUNGEONS OF THE DREAD WYRM

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A FIRST EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 5-8 CHARACTERS LEVELS 10-15



Rumors hint that beneath a barren crag in a forlorn range of hills lies the lair of the great dread wyrm, Felmurnuzza. This dragon has mercilessly tormented, terrorized, and plundered the nearby civilized lands for hundreds of years. Yet no one has seen her for many decades. Nonetheless, these kingdoms continue to pay the fell serpent tribute out of fear. Many now say she sleeps that sleep of death—her legendary fabulous hoard unprotected and ripe for the taking. Of course, if the rumors of her death are not true, a grim death surely awaits those who seek to discover her treasures.

DUNGEON DELVE adventures by Dungeoneers Guild Games are classic-style modules designed to fit into any campaign for the Advanced 1st edition game. With little effort they can easily be adapted to most fantasy role-playing games, including the Advanced 2nd edition game, the Original game, the B/X and BECM (‘‘Basic’’) games, and most old-school renaissance (OSR) role-playing systems.

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DUNGEONS OF THE DREAD WYRM

INTRODUCTION

Dungeons of the Dread Wyrn is an adventure for 5 to 8 characters at levels 10 to 15 (about 80 levels total). In this adventure, the **player characters (PCs)** will explore the lair of a powerful red dragon, which consists of three dungeon levels. The dragon has placed many deadly traps, tricks, and guardians to thwart intruders from reaching her inner sanctum and looting her precious treasure. Many of these traps are unforgivingly deadly and will likely kill a character controlled by a careless or inexperienced player. The **Game Master (GM)** should warn players: **THIS ADVENTURE IS LETHAL—ONE OR MORE CHARACTERS ARE LIKELY TO DIE.**

BACKGROUND & NOTES FOR THE GAME MASTER

Legends concerning the red dragon Felmurnuzza, the dread tyrant of the northlands, are common among the sturdy peasant folk who live in the shadow of the region's pine-forested hills. The looming dread of her shadow overhead has left countless children paralyzed with fear on many late nights. When misfortune strikes their lives—when their livestock falls ill or a powerful storm blows down crops—she is always to blame. These legends speak of a baneful reiver who has skewered a hundred score men on her talons and can flatten an entire village with a flick of a tail as thick as the mightiest oak.

The nobles and merchants of the neighboring kingdoms are well aware of the dragon's bloody legacy of ruin. For over a century, this fell wyrn burned, ravaged, slaughtered, and mercilessly tormented their citizens. No one could stop her—not entire armies, nor even powerful sorcerers. Nothing could halt her reign of terror and destruction.

After years of devastation, the leaders of the kingdom had had enough. They sent an ambassador to negotiate with the serpent. They would give her what she wanted—treasure. More treasure than even a king had seen, if she would agree to leave the people and their settlements in peace. To their surprise, Felmurnuzza agreed to the arrangement. It was agreed that every five years, the humans were to deliver her a cartload of treasure as tribute—coins of the realm, glittering jewels, masterfully crafted jewelry, and items imbued with magic.

For many years, this accord suited both parties. Felmurnuzza had a steady source of treasure her kind covets, all without lifting a scaly claw. The humans lived without the looming threat of imminent death by dragon breath or slow starvation when their crops were burned. However, this arrangement has taken a great toll on the humans, emptying the kingdom's coffers at an alarming rate. To make up the shortfall, taxes have grown steeper and steeper, threatening to overwhelm the livelihoods of the realm's commoners, who are pushed deeper and deeper into crushing poverty as the years pass.

To safeguard her great wealth, Felmurnuzza constructed a lair that is a veritable fortress, ensuring that the human folk of the region could never dethrone her as the true sovereign of their lands. She threatened and enslaved sorcerers, miners, artisans, and engineers to construct a dungeon of devious traps that could stop anything from a small band of adventurers to an army from robbing her of her precious treasure. Here, the dread serpent whiles away the days in contented slumber, dreaming of precious jewels and mountains of coins yet uncollected.



GETTING STARTED

This **DUNGEON DELVE** adventure contains little or no plot and has no predetermined adventure hook to engage the players. This is by no means a design oversight. Instead, it is an intentional feature that allows you—the Game Master—to make playing this module a unique experience, tailoring it to your own campaign with little difficulty. A minimal plot lets you use this module as a stand-alone expedition or as an adventure integrated into an existing campaign. As the GM, you should first read the module in its entirety. Look for clues and hints to serve as seeds you can use to grow a plot. Think of the adventure's text as the foundation and frame of a building that you side, shingle, and paint to fit your preferences and needs.

Here are a few plot suggestions to get you started:

1. The player characters come into possession of a map showing the location of Felmurnuzza's lair. This is one of the many maps the dragon has distributed far and wide. The map contains cryptic verses that goad bold (foolish?) heroes into seeking out Felmurnuzza's lair and challenging her for her immense hoard. It also contains much false information to frustrate any would-be thieves.
2. The local nobles and merchants have grown tired of the burden of paying the dragon tribute each quinquennial. They hire the player characters to find her lair and destroy her once and for all.
3. One of the player characters receives an old castle as an inheritance from a relative, as payment for a debt owed to the



character, or by drawing the *Throne* card from the *deck of many things*. Unbeknownst to them, it is none other than the ruined castle that sits atop Felmurnuzza's lair.

4. An ancient prophecy speaks of a group of heroes who will free the kingdom from the tyranny of the dragon. The heroes will appear when a luminous star blazes so brightly it can be seen in daylight. Amazingly, the player characters fit the description of these heroes. As the bright star appears in the sky, a high priest from the kingdom seeks them out to fulfill this prophecy.
5. A noble in the kingdom has been caught spying. When the wealthy noble's lavish home was searched, letters were found listing intimate details of local nobles, merchants, and other personages, along with economic and military secrets. The noble claims that Felmurnuzza enlisted him to spy on the kingdom. The dragon has designs to replace the king with a puppet king—none other than the noble spy. The king hires the party to thwart the dragon's machinations in his realm.

RUMORS

The party may wish to learn about Felmurnuzza before entering her dungeons. By asking the right people, such as sages or archmages, the party can learn a few or all of the following rumors. Roll a d10 or select as you see fit from the following rumors:

1d10 Rumor

- | 1d10 | Rumor |
|------|---|
| 1 | Felmurnuzza is a massive 200'-long red dragon with a head the size of a house who can speak and use magic. (Partially true) |
| 2 | The dragon has been dead for some years now. A great demon from the pits of the Abyss has taken over her lair and rules with an iron hand. (False) |
| 3 | Felmurnuzza is believed to be about 800 years old, though this is uncertain. She came to this region from the snowy mountains to the north about 200 years ago. (Partially true) |
| 4 | The dragon commands an army of undead, including skeletons, zombies, wights, vampires, and similar creatures. When her strength waxes, she will unleash this terror upon the kingdom. (False) |
| 5 | Felmurnuzza is not of this world. She came through a magic portal from another plane, where she was spawned. (True) |
| 6 | The dragon is just a lie fabricated by the lords of the realm to bilk the common people out of their hard-earned money. Just look at their extravagant lifestyles if you don't believe me. (False) |
| 7 | No one has seen Felmurnuzza since the tribute arrangement began eighty years ago. (True) |
| 8 | The old serpent lives beneath a ruined castle atop a lonely crag in the nearby hills. (True) |
| 9 | Occasionally, the dragon communicates directly with the realm's leaders about when tributes are due, how much they must pay, or where they should drop them off. Notes mysteriously appear overnight in the king's palace, sealed in silver scroll tubes. Sages have noted that the handwriting has a distinctly elven look. (True) |

- 10 Every five years, the wagon of treasure is driven into the lower reaches of the hill range where Felmurnuzza lives and then abandoned. A small group of humans appears a few hours later and drives the wagon away. No one is sure where the humans go, but the wagon is always found later, deserted, a few miles from where it was left. (True)

ADVENTURE SECTIONS

Each numbered area on the module's maps is keyed to a specific encounter description that includes one or more section headings detailing its contents and/or occupants. Each type of section heading is described below. Numbered areas include only the headings pertinent to the area. Thus, an area with no doors will not include a "Doors" heading.

Illumination: Notes the type of illumination in an area when first encountered by the PCs. Generally, the absence of this heading indicates that the area has no source of illumination.

Door(s): This section indicates whether any doors to the area are open, locked, or trapped when first encountered by the PCs. This might change on subsequent visits to the same area, so the GM should note any changes.

GM's Note: Alerts the GM to any special considerations in an area that might affect the PCs, occupants, or the environment.

Description: This section provides a physical description of an area as it appears when first encountered by the PCs. The GM should not read this section verbatim to the players but should instead paraphrase as they deem necessary. The area's description should be updated if its occupants or contents are destroyed, removed, or altered during the course of play.

Encounter: Any monsters or NPCs in the area are listed in this section.

Tactics: This section provides general notes on the tactics any monsters or NPCs use in combat when they first encounter the PCs.

Alert: This section informs the GM of any special considerations that may arise after the PCs enter the area.

Development: This section notes any consequences that might arise from PCs entering a particular area and that could later affect encounters in other areas.

Alarm!: This section notifies the GM of any actions or developments in the area when a general alarm has been raised.

Treasure: Any treasure found in the area is detailed in this section.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear throughout this module:

AC = Armor Class; **MV** = Move; **MC** = Maneuverability Class; **HD** = Hit Dice; **hp** = Hit Points; **#AT** = Number of Attacks; **Dmg** = Damage; **SA** = Special Attack; **SD** = Special Defense; **MR** = Magic Resistance; **INT** = monster Intelligence rating; **AL** = Alignment; **L** = Large size; **M** = Medium size; **S** = Small size; **xp** = Experience Point value; **THAC0** = the number to hit AC 0; **PsA** = Psionic ability; **C** = Chaotic; **L** = Lawful; **E** = Evil; **G** = Good; **N** = Neutral; **S** = Strength; **I** = Intelligence; **W** = Wisdom; **D** = Dexterity; **C** = Constitution; **CH** = Charisma; **CM** = Comeliness; **d** = type of die; **rd/rds** = round/rounds; **cp** = copper piece; **sp** = silver piece; **ep** = electrum piece; **gp** = gold piece; **pp** = platinum piece



THE RUINED CASTLE

Felmurnuzza's dungeons lie beneath the ruins of an old castle atop a steep-sided crag, a few days' march from the kingdom's borders. The player characters can reach the ruins via a narrow track that climbs a precipitous ridge to the top of the rocky hill. The castle sits perched on the edge of an overhang, overlooking a steep-walled valley hundreds of feet below. Its ruins are little more than piles of rubble, with a few intact walls no more than 15' high. The crumbling courtyard shows no obvious signs of a dragon's dwelling. However, concealed among the fallen stones, the party can find a set of stairs cleared of rubble. The stairs descend 30' to a wooden door set into an archway. It is obvious that this door has been recently placed here—too new for supposedly abandoned ruins.

Players with tracking skills, such as rangers, can spot human tracks around the ruins if they look for them. These tracks lead from the door at the bottom of the steps, through the courtyard, and down the trail, and vice versa.

FELMURNUZZA'S DUNGEONS

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF THE DUNGEONS

Felmurnuzza had DUNGEON LEVELS I and II constructed from the castle's existing dungeons and from natural caverns beneath the castle, respectively. The natural caverns that form DUNGEON LEVEL III were created by an ancient magma chamber that lies far below the hill the castle sits atop.

Walls: Thin sheets of lead line the bedrock walls, floors, and ceilings of the worked areas of DUNGEON LEVELS I and II. Mortared stone covers these sheets. A layer of painted plaster conceals the stone walls. Flagstones cover the dungeons' floors. Ceilings have stone buttresses every 20'. Interior connecting walls are 1' thick.

Ceiling Height: Unless otherwise noted, the ceiling height is 10' in passageways and 15' in rooms.

Doors: Most doors are heavy wooden doors bound with iron and fitted with pull rings on both sides. Single doors can withstand 50 hp of physical damage—80 hp for double doors—if the party needs to batter one down with brute force. A bar adds 20 hp when in place. Unless noted otherwise, all doors open into rooms. The notes above also apply to secret doors.

False Doors: Unless otherwise noted, all false doors resemble standard wooden doors. Like standard doors, false doors appear to be designed to open when pushed, but they do not move. Battering down one of these doors reveals only a blank stone wall behind it.

One-Way Doors: One-way doors look like regular doors but open only from one side. The opposite side usually lacks a handle.

Pit Traps: The lid of a covered pit trap drops whenever 40 lbs. or more is placed on it. When triggered, the hinged lid falls to one side. Six seconds after dropping, a hidden spring mechanism returns the lid to the closed position. Jamming a solid object between the lid and the pit wall prevents the lid from closing. The lids have an effective Strength score of 16 for pushing or pulling.

Any character walking at the head of a group will almost certainly fall into the pit trap. Characters directly behind them in the second ranks have a 50% chance of not falling in. Modify this roll by +5% for each point of Dexterity the character possesses above 14 (e.g., a character with a 17 Dexterity score has a 65% chance of not falling into the pit).

Magical Defenses of the Dungeons

Powerful magics infused into the very walls of Felmurnuzza's complex serve to hinder those who try to circumvent its physical defenses.

Scrying: The lead-lined walls block all forms of magical and psionic scrying (e.g., *crystal balls*, *clairvoyance*, *clairaudience*, *ESP*) from entering or leaving the dungeon. These forms of scrying will work within a room but not between rooms or levels. This protection does not extend to any of the natural cavern areas.

Stone-Affecting Spells: The lead lining also prevents spells such as *transmute rock to mud*, *stone shape*, *spike stones*, and *passwall* from affecting the stone behind it. However, these spells will affect the plaster and dressed stone that lie on top of it.

Ethereal Movement: Gorgon and basilisk blood mixed into the mortar of the dressed stone prevents ethereal movement and phasing between dungeon levels. Furthermore, this ward restricts ethereal movement within a dungeon level.

Detection Spells: An enchantment causes all walls, ceilings, floors, doors, and non-living, inorganic objects on DUNGEON LEVELS I and II to produce false-positive readings when using *detect evil* or *good*, *detect magic*, *detect traps*, and *detect snares & pits spells*. For example, a character using *detect traps* in a room will find that its walls, doors, floor, ceiling, furnishings, and other objects are trapped, even if they are not. This non-detection enchantment will begin affecting all items brought into the dungeons after one week.

Interference from this enchantment also halves thieves' *find/remove traps* ability. Furthermore, thieves can pick up false-positive readings in some areas that are not trapped. The chance of a thief finding a false positive in an area with no traps is the same as their reduced *find/remove traps* chance. If a thief tries to remove one of these "false-positive" traps, roll for the player in secret as normal. Whether the die roll succeeds, tell the player that their character cannot determine how to remove the trap.

Archway Amulets: AREAS 9, 10, 26, 27, and 35 contain teleportation archways that allow travel to and from specific rooms in the complex. See these sections for additional details. Felmurnuzza and her drow wizard servant, Inmaric, each possess unique magic amulets that allow them to teleport between any of the archways in the complex and bypass any wards laid on them. For example, the archway at AREA 9 normally teleports those who enter it to AREA 10. However, those who enter with an amulet can use the archway at AREA 9 to move to any of the other four archways they know about.

Random Encounters

No random encounters occur within Felmurnuzza's dungeons. However, the GM should note the locations of free-willed, intelligent creatures that can move during the adventure. Once it is determined that intruders are in the complex, these creatures will take proactive steps to thwart the party. What these actions will be is entirely up to the GM, based on the party's actions. For example, the party enters the **Silver Gate** room (AREA 38) and decides to rest there for a few hours. If the party has yet to encounter Inmaric, the dark elf, he has a good chance of discovering the party's location. He will then take appropriate steps to deal with them effectively (e.g., rally any remaining defenders, summon monsters to deal with the intruders, lay ambushes, etc.). In short, play intelligent monsters as proactive defenders of their dungeons, not as static automatons mindlessly waiting for the player characters to appear and slay them.

