

# DUNGEON DELVE ADVENTURE #2

# DUNGEONS OF THE DREAD WYRM

by R. Nelson Bailey

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



Rumors hint that below a barren crag in a forlorn range of hills lies the lair of the great dread wurm, Felmurnuzza. This dragon has mercilessly tormented, terrorized, and plundered the nearby civilized lands for hundreds of years. However, no one has seen her for many decades. Nonetheless, these kingdoms continue to pay the fell serpent tribute out of fear. Many now say that 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 that seek to discover her treasures.

DUNGEON DELVES by Dungeoneers Guild Games are classic-style adventures with a minimal plot for use with the 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 BECMI (“Basic”) game, and most old-school renaissance (OSR) role-playing systems.

© 2018 Dungeoneers Guild Games. All rights reserved.



ISBN 978-1-5323-5430-4

ISBN 978-1-5323-8502-5 (E-book)

1002e





## DUNGEON DELVE ADVENTURE #2

# DUNGEONS OF THE DREAD WYRM

### INTRODUCTION

**Dungeons of the Dread Wyrms** is an adventure for 5 to 8 characters of levels 10 to 15 (about 80 levels total). In this adventure, the player characters (PCs) will explore the lair of a powerful red dragon consisting 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 they will likely kill the character of 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, dread tyrant of the northlands, are common among the sturdy peasant folk that live in the shadow of the pine-forested hills of the region. The lurking dread of her shadow appearing overhead has kept countless children paralyzed with fear during many late nights. When misfortune strikes these folks' lives — when their livestock takes 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 who can flatten an entire village with a flick of a tail as thick as the mightiest of oaks.

The nobles and merchants of the kingdom that border her territory are well aware of the dragon's bloody legacy of ruin. For over a century, this fell wurm burned, ravaged, slaughtered, and mercilessly tormented their citizens. No one could stop her — not entire armies, nor powerful sorcerers. Nothing could stop 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 was in consonance with this 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 magics.

For many years, this accord suited both parties. Felmurnuzza had a steady source of treasure that her kind covets, all without lifting a scaly claw. The humans lived without the looming threat of imminent death from dragon breath or slow starvation when their crops were burned. However, this arrangement has taken a great toll on the humans by emptying the kingdom's coffers at an alarming rate. To make up for the shortfall, steeper and steeper taxes threaten to overwhelm the livelihood of the commoners of the realm, 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 to ensure 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 wiles 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 get the players involved. This is by no means an oversight of design. Instead, it is an intentional feature that allows you — the Game Master — to make playing this module a unique experience, tailoring it to fit your own campaign with little difficulty. A minimal plot allows you to use this module as a stand-alone expedition, or as an adventure integrated into an existing campaign. As the GM, you should first read over the module in its entirety. Look for clues and hints in it to serve as seeds you can use to grow a plot. Think of the text of the adventure as the foundation and frame of a building that you side, shingle, and paint to fit your preferences and needs.

Listed below are a few plot suggestions to get you started:

1. The player characters come into possession of a map that shows 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 to goad bold (foolish?) heroes to seek out Felmurnuz-



za's lair and challenge her for her immense hoard. The map 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, payment of a debt owed to the character, drawing the *Throne* card from the *deck of many things*, etc. 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 that will free the kingdom from the bondage of the tyrannical dragon. The heroes will appear when a luminous star blazes so bright it can be seen in the daytime. 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 fulfil this prophecy.
5. A noble in the kingdom has been caught spying. When the wealthy noble's lavish home was searched, letters were found that listed intimate details of local nobles, merchants, and other personages, plus economic and military secrets. The noble claims that Felmurnuzza had enlisted him to spy upon 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

- 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 Abyss has taken over her lair where it rules with an iron hand. (False)
- 3 Felmurnuzza is believed to be about 800 years old, though this is not for certain. She came to this region from the snowy mountains that lie to the north some 200 years ago. (Partially true)
- 4 The dragon possesses an army of undead made up of skeletons, zombies, wights, vampires, and such. When her strength waxes, she will unleash this terror on 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 designed to bilk the common people out of their hard-earned money. Just look at their extravagant lifestyles they live if you don't believe me. (False)

- 7 No one has seen Felmurnuzza since the start of the tribute arrangement eighty years ago. (True)
- 8 The old serpent lives under a ruined castle that sits atop a lonely crag in some nearby hills. (True)
- 9 Occasionally, the dragon communicates directly with the leaders of the realm concerning when tributes occur, how much they must pay, or where they should drop them off. Notes always mysteriously appear overnight in the king's palace 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 abandoned. A small group of humans appear a few hours later and drive 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

The numbered areas on the module's maps are keyed to a specific encounter description that has one or more section headings detailing its contents and/or occupants. Each type of section heading is described below. Note that numbered areas will only contain those headings that are pertinent to the area. Thus, an area that contains no doors will not have 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, and/or trapped when first encountered by the PCs. This might change with subsequent visits to the same area, so the GM should note any changes.

**DMs Note:** Alerts the GM of any special considerations of an area that might affect the PCs, occupants, or 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 to the players verbatim, but should instead paraphrase as they deem necessary. The area's description should be amended if its occupants or contents are destroyed, removed, or altered during the course of play.

**Encounter:** Any monsters or NPCs located in the area are noted in this section.

**Tactics:** This section provides general notes on the tactics used by any monsters or NPCs in combat upon encountering the PCs for the first time.

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

**Development:** This section notes any consequences that might arise from PCs entering a particular area 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 within 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's intelligence rating; **AL** = alignment; **L** = large size; **M** = medium size; **S** = small size; **xp** = experience point value; **THACO** = the number to hit AC 0; **C** = chaotic; **L** = lawful; **E** = evil; **G** = good; **N** = neutral; **F** = Fighter; **MU** = Magic-User; **C** = Cleric; **T** = Thief; **S** = Strength, **I** = Intelligence, **W** = Wisdom, **D** = Dexterity, **C** = Constitution, **CH** = Charisma; **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 under the ruins of an old castle atop a steep-sided crag a few days' march from the borders of the kingdom. The player characters can reach the ruins via a narrow track that leads up a precipitous ridge to the top of the rocky hill. The castle sits perched on the edge of an overhang that looks out over 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 of the castle shows no obvious sign of a dragon dwelling there. However, concealed amongst 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 some form of tracking skill, such as rangers, can spot human tracks around the ruins should they think to do so. These tracks lead from the door at the bottom of the steps, through the courtyard, and down the trail, and vice-versa.

## KEY TO FELMURNUZZA'S DUNGEONS

### PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF THE DUNGEONS

Felmurnuzza had DUNGEON LEVELS I and II constructed from the existing castle dungeons and from natural caverns found below those, respectively. The natural caverns that form DUNGEON LEVEL III were created from 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 LEVEL I and II. Mortared stone covers these sheets. Finally, 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 noted otherwise, the ceiling height is 10' in passages and 15' in rooms.

**Doors:** Most doors are constructed of heavy wood bound with iron and set 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 noted otherwise, all false doors resemble standard wooden doors except they will not open. Like these doors, false doors appear to open by pushing in. Battering down one of these doors reveals only a blank stone wall behind it.

**One-Way Doors:** One-way doors physically resemble normal doors, but only open from one side. The other side usually has no handle.

**Pit Traps:** The lid of a covered pit trap will drop 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 pit wall will stop it from closing. The lids have an effective Strength score of 16 for pushing/pulling purposes.

Any characters walking at the head of a group will most certainly fall into the pit trap. Characters directly behind them in the second ranks have a 50% chance not to fall 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 in the pit).

### Magical Defenses of the Dungeons

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

**Scrying:** The lead-lined walls prevent all forms of magical and psionic scrying (e.g., crystal balls, clairvoyance, clairaudience, ESP, etc.) into or out of 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 *rock to mud*, *stone shape*, *spike stones*, *passwall*, and so forth from affecting the stone that lies behind it. These spells will affect the plaster and dressed stone that lay on top of it, however.

**Ethereal Movement:** Gorgon and basilisk blood mixed into the mortar of the dressed stone prevents ethereal movement and phasing between the dungeon levels. Furthermore, this ward checks 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 give off false positive readings when using *detect evil* or *good*, *detect magic*, *detect traps*, and *detect snares & pits* spells. For example, a character using a *detect traps* spell in a room will discover that its walls, doors, floor, ceiling, furnishings, and other objects are trapped,