

Dragons In the Dungeon

A Danger Wizard Adventure

Written By Allan Knowles



“Dragons In the Dungeon” is a starter adventure for 4-6 players of level 1 characters. To run this adventure, you will need a copy of the Players Handbook for rules references, and a copy of the Monster Manual. Creatures will be mentioned in **bold**, although not all will be hostile. As your players explore the dungeon, describe the rooms but do not reveal every detail until the players have discovered it for themselves.

Feel free to rename, swap around or modify any of the locations, puzzles, items or foes to best suit your play style. This encounter is intended to be played in one or two sessions and bring the players to level 2 by the end. There is a mix of combat, exploration, puzzle solving and role play featured in this adventure, intended to give your players a solid introduction into the world of D&D, or a refreshing return for more seasoned players. **DM Notes** are included at the end of each room’s description to offer guidance for newer Dungeon Masters.

Gather your players, help them create their characters, and prepare for a quest; it’s time for Dungeons & Dragons!

Introduction

(Read or paraphrase this to your players at the start of the session)

“Welcome heroes! The village is astir with terrible news; a small red dragon has taken up residence in a local abandoned dungeon. Calling himself Emberclaw, he is amassing an army of minions in the dark. What’s worse, he has demanded that the town offer all of its gold and valuables in tribute, or it will attack in three days!

Having no chance of defending their homes from a fiery airborne assault, the elders have chosen your group of adventurers to take the fight to this dragon in his lair. The dragon has a 1,000 gold piece bounty on his scaly head, and is sure to have more treasures hidden in the mine. With a little luck, skill and quick thinking, some of you may return alive! Gird yourselves heroes, your destiny awaits!”

DM Note- Ask the players to introduce themselves, their characters, and why they took up this quest and how they may know each other. Hand out inspiration to those who do a good job role-playing or have a creative backstory.

Room 1- The Dungeon Entrance

A ragged hole in the mountainside yawns open before the players, swallowing all light. Rough carved stone forms a dark tunnel leading away into the gloom. Stalactites hang like fangs from the entrance's ceiling, strung with moss and creeper vines. There is total darkness after 20 feet, a torch or darkvision is required to see. The tunnel is 50 feet long and slopes downwards. It is warm, damp and smells of smoke.

25 feet in lies a trip wire. A DC 12 Perception check will spot it, otherwise a player's character will walk into it, triggering a trap. Any PC that triggers the trap must make a DC 14 DEX save as flames shoot from hidden holes in the ceiling, dealing 1d6 fire damage to anyone who fails the save, half that amount to anyone who passes. Stepping over the wire avoids the trap.

At the end of the hallway is a wooden door, with a bone-shaped door handle. It is unlocked. In front of it is a black flagstone, with a grinning skull looking up. A rotten odor wafts up from it. Any character who steps on it must make a DC 12 DEX save or fall into a pit of spikes as the trap door gives way. If a PC fails the save, they fall down 10 feet and take 2d6 piercing damage. An old goblin skeleton is impaled on the spikes below. Investigating the body reveals a blood-red potion of healing, which can be drunk to heal 2d4+2 health. Opening the door causes the hinges to squeal in protest as bones clatter against the other side.

DM Note- Remember to mention the five senses when describing a scene- look, touch, hear, taste, smell. This will make your settings much more immersive for you players. Don't over do it though! Just a sentence or two is enough. As a DM, you want to listen to your players as much as you are talking to them.

Room 2- The Bone Room

Inside this square 30 x 30 foot stone room are heaps of old moldering bones. They smell dusty and are yellowed. Mixed in are rusted weapons, shields and armor, all of them decrepit and falling apart. An unlocked iron door on the far side is streaked with grime and soot.

Attacking the bones or opening the iron door will cause **5 skeletons** to rise from the bones piles, green necromantic magic flashing from their eye sockets. They will gather their ancient weapons and attack the players until one side is wiped out. Have the players roll for initiative and do the same for the skeletons. The skeletons will all act at the same time, groaning and creaking as they fight. Attacks that deal bludgeoning damage deal double damage to these skeletons since they are so brittle.

DM Note- When describing combat, get creative! Don't just say "You hit" or "Or you miss" or "That's 5 damage." Describe that ringing blow, the cracking of bones, or the wind from a pitted blade that missed your nose by a hair!

Room 3- The Puzzle Room

Inside this round room, there are 4 items of interest, a door, a fountain, a statue and a pedestal. The stone door is carved with the depictions of wild animals. Birds, hares, turtles, wolves, spiders, snakes and bats swirl around each other. It is locked by magic, with no visible key hole. Only a natural 20 attack from a STR 16 or higher character will open it, although this will summon all 3 of the arcane guardians from the pedestal.

To the left of the door is a large fountain, with a single stream of water issuing from the mouth of an angel statue facing the shallow pool. The water is clouded with algae, but cool and safe to drink. There is another angel statue on the ground opposite the one already standing in place. The fallen angel is next to the lip of a fountain where a small hole an inch wide leads into the fountain's rim. Placing the angel statue back on top of that hole and turning it to face the other angel will cause the water to start flowing up into the angel and out of its mouth with a soft "click".

Additionally, there are 2 sword-hilt shaped statues on the other cardinal directions of the fountain, They each have a crystal crescent moon inlaid on one side of them. They can be turned freely, and when they are turned so that the moon faces in towards the water, they will shine moon light into the pool.

When both angels and moons are facing the water, the surface will shimmer and the water level rises. The pool becomes crystal clear, and glitters with soft light. Any character that now enters or drinks this water will be fully healed, but only once.

A clue to this puzzle may be found in a nearby statue of an angelic looking woman, a match to the smaller angels on the fountain. She looks serene, her wings swept up above her, a crescent moon floating above her head, and a glowing light carved issuing from her hand. A DC 14 Religion check will reveal that she is Larue, the goddess of night, healing and the moon. She is neutral and associated with unicorns.

On the other side, there is a pedestal, 3 feet tall, with a purple velvet cloth lying atop it. On this cloth, there are 3 keys, a gold key with 6 teeth, a silver key with 3 teeth and an iron key with 4 teeth. Around the base of the pedestal there are 3 keyholes, one depicting a cobweb motif, another with a snarling wolf motif, and a third with a bat wing. The number of teeth of each key indicates the number of letters in each creature's name depicted by each keyhole. The gold key unlocks the cobweb lock (6 teeth, Spider), the silver key unlocks the bat wing keyhole (3 teeth, Bat), and the iron key unlocks the wolf lock (4 teeth, wolf).

Each correctly matched key to lock will unlock a hidden bolt from the stone door with an audible "THUD". Placing the wrong key in the keyhole however will summon a phantasm of the corresponding creature (a **dire wolf**, a **giant spider** and **giant bat**). These creatures are made

of magic however, and have half their normal health. Roll for initiative each time one appears. They attack whoever summoned them and then move on to the next closet party member.

DM Note- If you players are stuck, you can add elements their characters may notice later. Specks of dried blood on a key and a wrong keyhole. A tiled mosaic of the fountain in the correct position hidden behind a curtain of cobwebs.

Room 4- The Prisoner

Spiraling stairs hewn into the granite floor descend 20 feet into a hot and oppressive gloom. Scenes of dragons fighting, flying and ruling over ruined castles are carved into the glistening stone walls. A DC 16 History check recalls that this area was the ancestral territory of Hellstorm, an ancient red dragon rumored to be slain by giants not far from here.

At the bottom of the stairs, there is a large chamber with 4 pillars running 2 by 2 back towards a double door 10 feet wide. There is a statue of a red dragon, Hellstorm, to the far right, and a small alcove with a cage and prisoner to the far left.

Before the great double doors are 2 bored **kobolds**. They are short, reddish-brown scaled creatures, a cross between a dog and a lizard. One is asleep, the other is dozing but trying to stay alert. A DC 11 Stealth check will allow the players to get close enough to see the prisoner is a **goblin**, and the statue has a Draconic script written on it. From behind the doors, fiery light can be seen, and chanting in Draconic can be heard, although it is too garbled to be understood. Emberclaw is rallying his troops in the room beyond. The door is unlocked but closed.

The goblin prisoner is named Smek, a merchant who was captured by the kobolds and to be fed to their master Emberclaw. He is unarmed, hungry, and knows the kobold guards have the key to his cage. If treated kindly, he reveals that there is a password that opens a secret door. He can't remember it now. He will offer to help the characters if they free him although he is cowardly and no fighter. If freed, he gives one of the characters a lucky ring, which allows the bearer to reroll an attack, skill check or saving throw of 1 once per day.

The dragon statue has a riddle carved into it, written in Draconic, the language of dragons. If the characters cannot read Draconic, the kobolds can and might be "persuaded" to help translate. They are loyal to Emberclaw, but also value their hides.

The words say "I do not breathe, but I require air. I do live, but I grow. I do not eat, but I consume. What am I?" If a character says "Fire", or "Igri" in Draconic, the dragon statues eyes smolder red, and a hidden passageway rumbles open behind him. It leads to a tight, 5 foot tall tunnel that slopes up 30 feet along the side of the next room. At the end, there is orange light from the room beyond spilling in over a 3 foot crack in the wall. It is large enough for a Medium or smaller sized character to squeeze through.

If the players enter the next room through the double doors, they will be in full sight of the monsters beyond. If they enter through the tunnel, they will be hidden from view by stalagmites on a ledge 10 feet above the ground level.

No matter how they enter the next room, have them level up before you continue further. They're going to need the extra health.

DM Note- Smek is a great opportunity to be silly. If you feel comfortable, practice your best goblin voice, and add a couple jokes to endear him to the players. You could also come up with names and personalities for the kobolds if you think the players will want to talk to them, too.

Room 5- The Dragon's Lair

This chamber is huge, a natural cave roughly ovoid in shape 80 x 40 feet. The stottie strewn ceiling is 30 feet above. Smokey torches are lit around the room. A large boulder stands in the middle, where Emberclaw, a **red dragon wyrmling**, addresses his small but faithful army of **10 kobolds**. He is describing the terror they will unleash on the characters' nearby village, and all the plunder they will take back to their cave to buy even better weapons, armor and warriors. He plans to take up the mantle of Hellstorm and one day surpass even his incredible might as the rightful ruler over this land, above and below.

The kobolds cheer loudly, masking most sound and making Stealth checks roll with advantage (roll twice and take the higher number). The double doors are 30 feet away from the boulder, with kobolds standing in between. Smaller rocks, stalagmites, and kobold sleeping rolls and campfires dot the rest of the cave, except for in the back behind the boulder.

There, hidden under the lee of the stone ridge where the secret tunnel leads, is Emberclaw's sanctum. He has a small bed made from Smek's ox cart, piled high with expensive stolen silks and furs. A heap of gold and silver, 534 gold pieces and 1,498 silver pieces, lie at the foot of this bed. Bones of Smek's ox and other unfortunate trailers litter the floor. There is also a Wand of Magic Missiles with full charges and a +1 longsword called "Scar Giver" visible within this treasure horde as well. A character that touches any of the coins or magic items however will immediately draw Emberclaw's attention. His magical nature has attuned him to the slightest disturbance of his hoard.

Emberclaw is proud, headstrong and belligerent. He will never surrender, but may try to escape if a fight goes poorly and he is reduced to a quarter of his health. He cares nothing for his kobold lackeys and will spend their lives callously.

In battle, he will take to the air and target the magic users first, then the healers, then the warriors. The kobolds will fight fanatically, but will start to waver when half their number is down. If the players are not doing well and Smek is with them, he may offer a wounded character a hidden potion of healing he had been holding on to "in case of bad-bad times".

DM Note- Allow time for your players to strategize and plan. Rushing headlong into this fight could lead to a Total party Kill (TPK). Reward sound reasoning and don't forget to hand out inspiration.

The Epilogue

If the players defeat Emberclaw, they may return to their village as conquering heroes, hailed as saviors of the town and gratefully awarded their 1,000 gold prize. If they are defeated, consider leaving some or all alive, but now as prisoners that the next party must rescue. This time, the traps may be changed, and more powerful monsters recruited by a paranoid Emberclaw. What happens next is up to you, the dice and your friends. Good luck!

Thank you for playing! I hope you enjoyed this adventure and continue to play D&D for years to come. If you have any comments, notes, suggestions or questions, please head to Dangerwizard.com or email me at dm@dangerwizard.com. Congratulations on completing your first adventure of many and good luck!