

DUNGEON

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

By the *DUNGEON* Staff

THE GROUND RULES

With few exceptions, submitting an article to *DUNGEON* requires these important steps:

1. Review these guidelines.
2. Send a query.
3. Wait patiently.
4. Submit the manuscript if approved.
5. Wait patiently.

DUNGEON is the official monthly resource for Dungeon Masters, the most dedicated players of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Freelance writers just like you provide more than 90% of our content, and these simple guidelines provide you with the tools needed to get your articles and adventures published in our magazine. Before you submit an idea for publication, it is absolutely critical that you review these guidelines.

The Query

Before you start writing, send us a query outlining what your adventure or article covers and how long you expect it to be. *DUNGEON* publishes several different types of articles, each with their own guidelines and ground rules. See the Writing Tips section of these guidelines for more information on how to improve your chances of getting published for each type of article.

Adventures: Adventures are the heart and soul of *DUNGEON*. Some of the finest D&D adventures ever published have appeared on our pages, which have also introduced D&D fans to folks who have gone on to become some of the most well-known and respected names in the RPG industry.

Before you submit an adventure to *DUNGEON*, send us a brief query via regular mail or email. Your 1- or 2-page double-spaced proposal should include the following elements: a working title, an original and compelling plot, the major foes faced in the adventure, a summary of the rewards to be gained and foes to be overcome, and an estimate of the completed adventure's length in words and number of maps.

Articles: We publish a large number of articles, ranging from the tiny (Campaign Workbook) to the titanic (Backdrops). See the Writing Tips section of these guidelines for more information on our different article types. Campaign Workbook articles do not require a query, and are probably the easiest way to get into the magazine for a first-time author. Longer articles require a query, preferably by email.

A copy of our Standard Disclosure Form is included with these guidelines. You have our permission to make as many photocopies of this form as necessary. A completed form must accompany each proposal and manuscript that you submit. You can append it to the end of the submission in the case of hard copy submissions or include a scan of a signed and completed Standard Disclosure Form with your electronic submission.

We return unread all manuscripts and adventure proposals that are not accompanied by a completed Standard Disclosure Form. You do not need to include a Standard Disclosure Form with simple email queries for non-adventure articles.

Our address is:

Regular Mail

Dungeon Magazine
Paizo Publishing
2700 Richards Road, Suite 201
Bellevue, WA 98005-4200

Email

dungeon@paizo.com

The Waiting (Part 1)

An editor should reply to your query within one month of its receipt, and probably a good deal sooner. If you have not heard back after a month, please feel free to contact us again and ask for an update. The simple truth is that sometimes a submission gets misplaced, so we're happy to hear from you after four weeks of waiting.

The Manuscript

Manuscripts must be provided to us in electronic format, either on CD or attached to an email sent to dungeon@paizo.com. Please follow these simple rules:

1. If possible, please submit your manuscript as a Microsoft Word file. You can find a style sheet for Microsoft Word submissions on our website along with the writer's guidelines. If you do not have Microsoft Word, provide your manuscript in Rich Text Format.
2. On the first page of your manuscript, include your name, current email address, and home address. Also include the title of the submission. If the submission is intended for a specific section of the magazine, note that on the first page as well. **IMPORTANT:** Put the total word count somewhere conspicuous on the first page. While this bit of information might not seem like a big deal to you, it is crucial to us.
3. Include your name, the submission title, and page number on every page of your manuscript.
4. At the end of your manuscript, write a 25-word personal bio.
5. Spellcheck your manuscript and personally edit a printout before you send it our way. In fact, ask a friend to read over the manuscript before you send it in. Other people *will* catch things you've overlooked. While manuscripts do not need to be perfect, we automatically reject manuscripts that require an enormous amount of editing, no matter how brilliant they may be.

The Waiting (Part 2)

We might need as long as two months to make our evaluation of your submission. If you have not heard from us after this much time, feel free to inquire by email about the status of your query or submission. While you wait, please feel free to send more queries. Do not contact us by phone to ask about the status of your manuscript.

If you send hard copy queries or manuscripts (in electronic format on CD) and expect a response, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Likewise, if you absolutely require notice that the manuscript has arrived safely in our office, include a self-addressed stamped postcard with your submission. We'll throw it in the mail as soon as it arrives.

If we like your query, we'll respond with comments aimed toward helping you complete a manuscript with a good chance to make it into the magazine. We prefer to communicate by email, and writers who have access to an email account should find that the process moves much more quickly than those who are forced to rely upon regular mail.

Revisions

Even if we love your manuscript, we'll probably ask for revisions. This request usually comes in the form of a long email with individual change requests outlined on a numbered list. Some of these are "suggestions," while others are required changes in order to make the submission acceptable for publication.

We often ask for changes to articles to adjust style, game balance, length, or focus. Send your revision in Word or Rich Text Format attached to an email to the editor who requested the revision, or to dungeon@paizo.com if no email address is provided. Put "Revision" in the title of your email and on the first page of the new manuscript, and give a brief description of the article in the body of the email.

When we ask for a revision, it is not a guarantee of acceptance of the article. If you are unwilling or unable to revise your work as we require, we will not print your article.

Rejection

Your submission might be deemed unacceptable, even after the revision process. We often don't have time to provide a detailed explanation of why the article didn't work for us, but we try to provide some

pointers if time is available. Unfortunately, the quantity of submissions we must review each week leaves us with very little time for constructive criticism of articles we don't intend to publish. If you receive a form rejection letter, please save your submission for future inspiration and query us about new submission ideas. We never "change our minds" about articles we have already rejected, so in the face of rejection it's best to simply move on to the next idea.

We realize that rejection stinks because every member of our editorial staff has, in the past, been rejected by either *DRAGON* or *DUNGEON* magazines. We'll try to be gentle.

Articles are most often rejected because of poor writing quality, imprecise or incorrect game mechanics, failure to present information in the proper D&D style, poor formatting and organization, clichéd approach to topics, or difference between the query and the final article.

Rights & Payment

Any article published by *DUNGEON* becomes the sole property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. We purchase all rights to any submission that makes use of Wizards of the Coast's copyrighted materials or that makes changes or additions to a product of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. We do not offer royalties on the articles we purchase; we pay a flat fee. Payments are made 30 days after publication, at a starting rate of \$.05/word. Quantity of published submissions, reliability, and overall quality of submissions can push this rate considerably higher over time.

In addition to monetary payment, we send you at least one free copy of the issue containing your published work.

WRITING TIPS

DUNGEON publishes a wide variety of article types. This section of the Submission Guidelines gives specific suggestions and guidelines tailored to specific sections of the magazine.

Adventures

Every issue, *DUNGEON* features three complete DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures, one each tailored to low-level (1–5), mid-level (6–12), or high-level (13–20) parties. About once a year, we publish an epic-level adventure, but this is usually by special arrangement with the editors. High-level adventures are in high demand, but are somewhat more difficult to write due to the complexity of options available to high-level characters. A good high-level adventure has a better chance at acceptance, but is more difficult to write than a good low-level or mid-level adventure. Be careful.

Before you begin thinking about your adventure, carefully review these guidelines and Chapter 3: Adventures of the 3.5 *DUNGEON MASTER'S* Guide. You'll also find it helpful to review several past issues of *DUNGEON*, to ensure that your query does not cover ground we've recently explored in the magazine. If we've published a half-dozen adventures featuring half-dragons (and we have), it's probably a good idea to avoid half-dragons for the time being. Examining several issues of the magazine at once is probably your best window into the tastes of our editorial team, who, after all, are the folks deciding whether or not to approve your query and ultimately publish your adventure.

Length: All of our adventures range from 3,000 to 15,000 words in length. Occasionally, we'll publish a longer adventure or an adventure that spans multiple issues, but these are uniformly created by special arrangement with the *DUNGEON* staff and are only approved for authors with a proven track record with the magazine. If you're thinking about working on your first submission, it's best to start small.

It doesn't matter if the finished manuscript comes in at exactly the word count predicted in the query, but we automatically reject any adventure manuscript that contains fewer than 3,000 or more than 15,000 words. The ideal manuscript size is 10,000 words, and hitting or coming close to that target gives your adventure a significant leg up on longer submissions.

Campaign Settings: The ideal *DUNGEON* adventure works in any campaign, regardless of the DM's favored campaign setting. Accordingly, we favor adventures patterned after traditional sword & sorcery, the type of game exemplified by the three core rulebooks (the *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and *Monster Manual*). The fewer setting-specific details you include in your adventure, the more useful the scenario will be to the majority of our readers. Try to confine your adventure to a relatively small area; it's far simpler for DMs to insert a town into their campaigns than an entire kingdom.

All generic adventures should conform to the campaign rules presented in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* and use the same pantheon of deities presented in the core rules. The *Player's Handbook* provides a list of D&D deities; use this list instead of creating your own deities.

In addition to generic adventures, we also publish adventures set in the GREYHAWK, FORGOTTEN REALMS, and EBERRON campaign settings, published by Wizards of the Coast. Such scenarios are published less frequently than generic D&D adventures, and only when excellent adventures in these settings become available.

We are not looking for adventures designed specifically for out-of-print campaign settings (such as MYSTARA, RED STEEL, PLANESCAPE, DARK SUN, or RAVENLOFT) or for third-party settings (such as Freeport, Dawnforge, the Iron Kingdoms, Kalamar, etc.).

Feel free to use material from other official sources of D&D material published by Wizards of the Coast. Books like *The Complete Warrior*, the *Manual of the Planes*, and secondary monster books such as the *Fiend Folio* and *Monster Manual III* are excellent resources. If your adventure contains an official monster from a book other than the *Monster Manual*, however, be sure to include a complete stat block and physical description of that monster in your manuscript, since the secondary books are not required to play the adventures in *DUNGEON*.

Once or twice a year, we publish an *Oriental Adventures* or *Expanded Psionics Handbook* adventure.

Maps: Group all maps at the end of your manuscript, after the last page of text. Make sure that all maps (and diagrams, if appropriate) are rendered neatly in ink. The map grid (if any) should be clearly marked without obstructing the map's legibility. Scale lines may be used for outdoor maps. Use a straight edge to draw the straight lines on your final copy. Darken solid areas (such as rock around a dungeon complex). Whenever possible, draw the furnishings or obvious features of an area. Use icons for beds, desks, ladders, trapdoors, curtains, and so forth. Try to make your icons recognizable without a map key. Refrain from painting your maps. Only use color to indicate important map features where use of plain ink does not suffice, such as to designate bodies of water, heavily forested areas bordering plains, or other such locations.

Remember internal consistency when designing maps. Inhabited areas require provisions for bringing in food, water, light, and heat, a method of disposing waste materials, and ways for the inhabitants to get around easily. Large area maps should conform to known geographical principles; note special cases. Use numerals for rooms in dungeons and other structures, numbered consecutively throughout. (Do not start over with room number 1 on a dungeon's second level.) Always check your maps against the finished text. Make sure you have described all relevant areas on the maps and have not mislabeled anything.

For electronic submissions, it's ok to include quality scans of your hand-drawn or computer-generated maps. For printed submissions, always provide photocopies. In either case, always, always, *always* keep the original maps. Do not send us originals!

Writing Tips

Scenarios that rely on new magic items, monsters, weapons, or prestige classes to get the reader's attention are not as interesting as scenarios that present fast-paced, exciting, enjoyable adventures that utilize elements from the three core rule books. If you create something new (such as a new magic item used by an important NPC), make sure its presence in the adventure is justified, that it is fully explained in terms of its effects in the game, and that it is reasonable and fits with the game rules.

Location-based adventures are preferable to event-based ones. Unlike event-based scenarios, which tend to rely on rigid timelines, location-based scenarios are based around interesting sites that characters can explore for one or more sessions: for example, dungeons, castles, strongholds, catacombs, ancient ruins, or cities. Adventures that present fantastic locations filled with diverse, well-thought-out encounters are ideal. For more information on designing location-based adventures, consult the *DMG*.

Elements an Adventure Should Have

Incorporating the suggestions below provides depth to your design. These suggestions allow every character class a chance to shine. They provide several alternatives to straight combat encounters. The suggestions might provide you with new ideas. Look at it as an inspirational list, not a recipe to be strictly followed.

Action

Action is fun. Action is good. Promote action. Make the players want to take action. Don't coerce characters to act; when you do, you create a split between what the players want (to go on the adventure) and what the PCs want (not to go on the adventure).

Start with action. A typical gaming group has several minutes to an hour of "preparation" at the start of

a session. Once the adventure is underway, the dice should start rolling (at least figuratively) very soon. Conclude with action. Let the actions of the PCs (not the actions of NPCs) resolve the adventure. Reward action. Players would usually rather act than think. Build encounters that reward the players for taking the initiative. (This doesn't mean that the PCs should always win when they stumble through an adventure. A fight is rewarding to the players even if it's a big drain for the PCs.) Thinking is OK too. Some encounters should reward (or even require) thought. A good balance is an encounter that PCs can handle by brute force or that they can handle more easily with some good tactics.

Warn players when action is bad. If you're going to reward and encourage action most of the time, it's only fair to give players some warning when the PCs are coming to an encounter where "kicking open the door" is a bad idea. That way they can appreciate a "thinking" encounter as a good thinking encounter rather than stumbling into it and finding it to be a bad combat encounter.

Be careful about traps. If you sprinkle in traps randomly, the smart PC response is to take every room or area slowly and cautiously. That might be smart, but it's boring. Some hint that the characters are entering a trapped area helps the players slow down and be cautious when they need to without slowing the whole game to a crawl.

Danger

Randomness is dangerous. In any contest, an increase in randomness favors the underdog. The monsters are the underdogs because the PCs almost always win. Thus, any increase in randomness favors the monsters. These things increase randomness:

- High crit multiples (axes, scythes, picks, and so forth)
- Concealment (miss chances)
- Single, powerful creatures
- "Save or sink" powers: poison, petrification, death gaze, and the like.

Vary the danger level. Make some encounters weaker and others stronger. If the characters have a chance to recover or are likely to be fresh, you can increase the danger (the Encounter Level). If the characters are likely to be weak or if they must fight a series of encounters, be careful. Even a fight that they're certain to win at full strength can kill weakened party members or can drain them to the point at which later encounters become lethal.

Peak fights are cool. Players want to take on the big boss monster. Let them, but be careful. If they've had to fight past guards and traps, they'll be weak by the time they face the boss. If his defenses are good, he doesn't have to be more than a single EL above the party level to be dangerous.

Other Encounter Types

- Tactical positioning of PCs/NPCs
- Encounters you can "outsmart" (and possibly bypass)
- Encounters that reward good planning
- Monsters/encounters you should probably run from
- Roleplaying encounters ("Let's make a deal...")
- Sonic attacks (for bard to counter)
- Area attacks (so rogues and monks can use evasion)
- Encounters where PCs should have to use abilities of their level (5th-level PCs can probably use magic to fly, so encounters should assume that at least one PC can fly)
- Climbing, falling, and doing stuff in high places
- Aerial attacks
- Fear (so the paladin can shine)
- Undead (for the cleric)
- Traps (for the rogue)
- Locked doors (for the rogue)
- Secret doors (for elves and the rogue)
- Normal animals (so the druid or ranger can use her wild empathy and animal-based spells)
- Darkness (and other environmental hazards)
- Use of cover and concealment
- Nonlethal damage
- Situations in which skills and feats are more applicable than spells and items
- Grappling

- Counterspelling
- Alliances (PCs with NPCs, PCs with monsters, NPCs with monsters, monsters with monsters, and so on)
- NPCs that think like PCs
- Multiclass/prestige classes
- Monsters with class levels, or advanced monsters
- Poison and disease
- Gaze attacks
- Spell enhancement (pre-cast spells on creatures)

Things To Avoid

Avoid stereotypical material. We usually reject any adventure in which the heroes must:

- Rescue someone's kidnapped daughter.
- Solve a murder perpetrated by a doppelganger.
- Retrieve an ancient artifact.
- Battle a deranged wizard or sorcerer.
- Repel a simple humanoid infestation.
- Defeat an undead army.

This list is not all-inclusive. There are many more overused plot devices that might seem new and fresh to you, but that we see many times each month. (This includes beginning your adventure in a tavern or inn. Don't do it.) We're looking for new ideas or fresh approaches to old ideas. We do not accept adventures that require evil PCs or that ask the PCs to slay good characters or monsters.

Avoid excessively linear plots that force the story toward an inevitable conclusion or "railroad" the actions of the PCs. The adventure should be flexible enough for PCs to make choices and decisions that could affect the outcome of the story. Avoid rigid timelines.

High-level adventures should keep the balance of the game in perspective and should challenge the players without damaging the DM's world set-up. Adventures that require the characters to kill deities or "save the world" are not likely to be accepted. Avoid adventures that propose dramatic changes to the campaign world. This includes adventures in which the fate of entire kingdoms hangs in the balance, where the world is threatened by some great cataclysm, or in which deities play active roles in the outcome of a scenario.

Tastelessness should be strictly avoided. Do not submit adventures involving the destruction of children or helpless persons, cruel mistreatment of animals, excessive gore or violence, descriptions of Satan or Satanism (boo!), or game versions of major real world religious figures. Explicit sex, the encouragement of substance abuse, offensive language, and bathroom humor cannot be used.

Remember that the PCs are the protagonists and central figures of the adventure. Do not use NPCs to help the player characters excessively. NPCs who step in and eliminate all opposition to the PCs, lead the PC party, and accomplish the PCs' goals for them are very dangerous to campaigns. Set up the adventure to challenge the PCs, and let them make it on their own.

Do NOT ...

- Design magic items or spells that confer dodge bonuses
- Use defunct rules from previous editions (including rules that were dropped in the transition from 3.0 to 3.5)
- Create a character ability that requires an activation check for use (for example, 30% chance to succeed at something)
- Create a feat or a magic item that allows a nonspellcasting character (of a nonspellcasting class) to cast a spell
- Use the word "memorized" when referring to the preparation of spells; "prepared" is the correct term

Features

Although *DUNGEON'S* focus remains strongly on adventures, we do publish certain types of feature articles on occasion. Most of these articles are commissioned by the staff from some of our favorite game designers, but others come straight from reader queries. We're currently accepting proposals for the

following three feature types:

Creature Catalog: These 2,000–8,000-word articles present 3–6 new monsters for the D&D game. Follow the monster creation guidelines in the appendices of the 3.5 *Monster Manual*. Try to fill niches that have not already been filled. Always make sure that your monsters are visually compelling. Often, if a monster doesn't "look" cool, it'll never get used by our readers. In your query, list each monster, its type and CR, and a couple of sentences about what it does, what it looks like, and what cool powers and abilities it has. In your final manuscript, include a brief introduction that puts the monsters into context, but keep most of the words dedicated to the monster descriptions themselves. We favor themed "packages" of monsters ("Monsters of the Deep," "Psionic Threats," etc.) over random assortments of critters.

Backdrop: A new feature for the magazine, Backdrops present a new locale for the DM to introduce into his campaign. Backdrops can range in scope from a demiplane to a single city location, such as a tavern or temple. See "Into the Isle of Dread," in *DUNGEON* #114 for one example of such a feature. Backdrops run from 4,000–10,000 words. Be specific in your query about what type of "tool" the Backdrop provides the DM (in the case of the Isle of Dread, it's a dinosaur-filled jungle island). Also include some crunchy game elements such as random encounter tables or a new monster or two. The emphasis should be on "plug-and-play," with maximum portability between campaign settings.

Cities of Adventure: These articles, such as "Hardby: City of the Scorned" (*DUNGEON* #109) are essentially Backdrops, but the complex nature of a city means there are a lot more factors to consider. In your query, specify what your city "brings to the table" that will make a DM want to add it to his campaign. Also note that the finished article should include a brief appendix with up to five complete stat blocks for personages important to the city. Cities of Adventure articles range in length from 8,000–10,000 words. Before you send in a query for a City of Adventure article, take some time to answer the questions in Appendix 1 of this document.

Campaign Workbook

Campaign Workbook articles are 1,100–1,250-word articles offering short tips and tools to help a DM with a specific part of his or her campaign. Review the Campaign Workbook sections of *DUNGEON* #114 forward to get a sense of what we're looking for. These are brief, fun articles meant to be read and enjoyed in a single sitting. You do not need to send a query for Campaign Workbook articles, but you do need to send a completed Standard Disclosure Form. Here are the various Campaign Workbook article types:

The Cast: Tips related to NPCs. Articles might be anything from a list of three informants and some words on the use of informants in a campaign to five complete stat blocks for archers of various levels.

The City: Suggestions to enhance city campaigning. Articles might range from a collection of encounter tables by neighborhood types to a list of a dozen guilds and related adventure hooks.

The Dungeon: Short suggestions for dungeon adventuring. Ideas might range from a discussion of how to add a three-dimension element to make dungeon rooms more interesting to a list of 20 different pit traps.

The Journey: Tips related to wilderness adventuring. Ideas might range from a discussion of how to handle woodland ambushes to a list of adventure hooks related to wayside shrines.

Critical Threat: A brief NPC sketch. Look to issues of the magazine for tips on format. Always be able to fill in the blank in the following sentence: "In the campaign, this NPC fills the role of the _____."

APPENDIX 1: CITIES OF ADVENTURE

THIRTY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CITY

The key to designing a compelling fantasy city is presenting a strong "sense of place." Before you start writing your **Cities of Adventure** submission, develop a familiarity with your locale by answering the following 30 questions.

1. Who rules the city?

2. How does the ruler maintain power?

- 3. What factions or personalities plot against the ruler? Why do they do so?**
- 4. What four enemy types are common to campaigns set in this city?**
- 5. Which local NPCs are the PCs likely to befriend? Why?**
- 6. What three things about your city make it unique?**
- 7. What monsters lurk in the city?**
- 8. How powerful are the city's trade guilds?**
- 9. Is there a wizards' guild?**
- 10. A thieves' guild?**
- 11. What deities have temples in the city?**
- 12. What is the most popular religion in your city? What about your city's character makes this religion popular?**
- 13. From whom are the PCs likely to seek healing?**
- 14. Where will the PCs buy weapons, armor, and equipment?**
- 15. What's the best inn/tavern in town?**
- 16. Which tavern is most likely to be the site of a bar fight?**
- 17. Where will the PCs buy, sell, and trade magic items?**
- 18. How does social class affect the lives of citizens in your city?**
- 19. What do the social classes think of each other?**
- 20. How corrupt is the city watch? The courts?**

21. How dangerous is the city at night?
22. What are the three most beautiful things in the city?
23. How does the city protect itself?
24. What does the city smell like?
25. What do the citizens do to have a good time?
26. What do the citizens fear more than anything else?
27. What would a bard like about the city?
28. What would a barbarian, druid, or ranger like about the city?
29. What would your significant other/spouse like about the city?
30. WHY DO ADVENTURERS COME TO YOUR CITY?

APPENDIX II: ADVENTURE DESIGN GUIDE

Use these guidelines and templates when designing D&D adventures. When concepting your adventure, remember that we rarely print adventures that run over 15,000 words in length, and prefer to print adventures that are about 10,000 words long. Here's some things to think about when you're getting ready to write up your adventure.

- The Adventure Background section should be no more than 5% of the total length of the adventure.
- Remember that sidebars take up more space in the magazine than their word counts would indicate. Try to keep the number of sidebars in your adventure to a minimum.
- NPCs and creatures with class levels, advanced Hit Dice, or templates take up more room than generic creatures straight out of the *Monster Manual*. If your adventure has lots of classed NPCs or advanced monsters, you need to reduce the number of encounters to compensate for the increased word count.
- A good way to estimate an adventure's length is to count up the number of encounters in the adventure. Multiply this total by 500 (a rough average for a single encounter's word count). If your dungeon map has 15 encounter areas labeled on it, you can expect the length of encounters to run at about 7,500 words. Higher-level encounter areas tend to be wordier, averaging at 750 or even 1,000 words.
- Don't forget that stat blocks for monsters and NPCs have a considerable "footprint" when it comes to word count. An average NPC stat block can run well over 300 words on its own.

Introduction (Mandatory)

The adventure's introduction should begin with a "teaser," a short paragraph that summarizes the theme and plot of your adventure and serves as a hook to catch the reader's interest. Think of the teaser as your best chance to catch a DM's eye, and come up with something representative of your adventure that encourages the reader to read the rest of it.

The second paragraph should indicate what game system the adventure utilizes (at this time, *DUNGEON*

publishes adventures for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS only, but you should still indicate this), what level of characters the adventure is designed for, and what game world the adventure is set in. If the adventure is tied to a specific location in a world, indicate where the adventure takes place. If your adventure utilizes material from non-core books like *Complete Warrior* or *Fiend Folio*, you don't need to mention this here; simply mention usage as it appears in the text with a short sentence.

Adventure Background (Mandatory)

This section provides the DM with a clear, brief summary of events leading up to the adventure, including any pertinent historical details and villainous machinations. The main thing to keep an eye on in this section is length. If you can't present an adventure background in 500 words, it's probably too complex and should be simplified. As a general guideline, the adventure background should be no more than 5% of the adventure's total length.

Adventure Synopsis (Mandatory)

This section provides a clear, concise summary of the adventure for the DM. Outline surprises and plot twists here, not during the course of the adventure. Introduce key NPCs here, and indicate both what the central conflict of the adventure is and detail the most likely way the PCs can resolve this conflict.

Adventure Hooks (Mandatory)

This section helps DMs lead the PCs into the adventure. Although it's fine to structure the adventure so that one of these hooks is the preferred way to start the adventure, all adventures need at least three different hooks. At least one hook should be simple and straight-forward ("Deliver this message to the high-priest of St. Cuthbert in Homlett"). Others can exploit alignment, class, race, or society. Hooks should not presume anything about the PCs' actions, nor should they follow the standard adventure hook that presumes they are mercenaries available to the highest bidder. The hooks don't necessarily need to be associated with the adventure's plot. Adventures for 1st-level characters should include some hooks that assume that the PCs don't yet know each other.

One adventure hooks in particular we've seen quite enough of are those that have a relation or friend of a PC call for help. You should also avoid hooks that rely on the coincidence of the PCs' presence in the area for the adventure to start. The party should always have a reason to go on an adventure.

The Adventure's Encounters (Mandatory)

At the start of the adventure's encounters, you can include additional sections that detail rumors, background information the players can uncover in research or by using bardic knowledge checks, town statistics, the time of year the adventure takes place in, and other relevant bits. If the adventure is for higher-level characters, include information that can be learned by divination spells as appropriate.

The adventure itself consists of a series of planned encounters keyed to a map, timeline, or flowchart. Each encounter can include any or all of the following sections: Read-aloud Text, General Description, Creature(s), Tactics, Trap(s), Treasure, Development, and Ad Hoc XP Adjustment. Do not include sections that are unnecessary for a given encounter. For instance, an area devoid of traps does not require a Trap section. If you find that you don't have anything to say for any of these categories, the area is not an encounter and should not be assigned an encounter number. The editors greatly dislike printing the words "This room is empty," in *DUNGEON*.

Each encounter should be rated with an Encounter level (EL #) in the main encounter header, allowing the DM to quickly assess the possible threat to his or her PCs. The EL is the properly calculated CRs of all creatures and traps in a particular encounter (see page 49 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*). A sample encounter header would appear thus: **23. Vampire's Den (EL 13)**.

Certain encounters are structured so that the threats are not felt simultaneously. It's one thing if the pit trap is in the center of the room and the hill giant keeps bull rushing its enemies into the pit—calculating the total EL by using the CRs of the monster and trap is expected. But if the trap is on a chest hidden in a closet and never makes itself felt during a fight, reasonably that trap's CR should not be figured into the EL (unless its CR is higher than the monster's CR, in which case the reverse holds true). Likewise, if an encounter is designed such that NPCs initially encountered are friendly, but on a repeat visit are revealed as a threat, the EL in the encounter's main header should not give the EL based on the second visit, because it is not true for the first visit to the encounter.

Consult Appendix IV for a sample encounter written in the *DUNGEON* style.

Dungeon Features (Mandatory)

Some dungeons (or wilderness regions, or demiplanes, and so on) have features that are common throughout. How high are the ceilings? How are rooms illuminated? What types of doors are prevalent? (This includes such information as thickness of door and the material doors are composed of, which has rule-specific implications for hit points and hardness.) What about wandering monsters? Rather than repeat this information throughout the adventure, keep the information in this section.

Read-Aloud Text (Optional)

This section generally precedes the other entries of an encounter, although part of the general description might precede it if important to the encounter. The read-aloud text is meant to be read or paraphrased aloud to the players at an opportune time. It also provides the DM with a description of the room and its contents. Read-aloud text provides a bare-bones description of the encounter area; it does not make any reference to the viewer. Avoid phrases such as "you see," "as you enter the room," or other phrases that assume any action whatsoever on behalf of the players. You should also avoid including descriptions of any creatures in the room, since their activities and positions in the room often depends on multiple factors (such as if they hear the PCs coming, if it's night or day, and so on).

Read-aloud text for an encounter should only rarely run more than a few sentences. Long sections of read-aloud text are better served as player handouts.

General Description (Optional)

This section provides the DM with information on interesting features, creatures, traps, and other specifics of the encounter that play off the read-aloud text. Unusual magical or environmental effects, the room's purpose (if not obvious from the read-aloud text), explanatory text about unusual features described in the read-aloud text, and statistics for objects found in the room that are likely to be broken go into this section.

Creature(s) (Optional)

Any creature the PCs might encounter is described here. Provide a physical description of the monster or NPC, as well as general motivations and background info. If the creature has information to impart to the characters, include that information here, along with the creature's starting attitude and what happens if the PCs use Diplomacy, Intimidate, or magic to alter its attitude.

Include the creature's abbreviated statistics if it appears in the adventure almost exactly as it does in the *Monster Manual*. In this case, include only the number of creatures appearing, hit points, and special equipment, as well as a *Monster Manual* page number for easy reference. Full statistics for creatures should only be included if the creature is significantly non-standard from the way it appears in the *Monster Manual* (for example, it has class levels or advanced Hit Dice), or if the creature is taken from a non-core book like *Monster Manual II*, *Fiend Folio*, or the *Draconomicon*. See Appendix III for the proper way to format creature statistics.

Tactics (Optional)

Use this section to describe specific and unique tactics the creatures take in combat. Even unintelligent monsters can take advantage of terrain in combat. If an NPC uses magic to enhance his statistics, list what spells and items he uses to prepare for combat, and show how those effects modify his statistics. Reactions to the sound of combat from other creatures nearby should be noted in this section, as well as conditions that might lead the creatures to surrender or flee the encounter.

Trap(s) (Optional)

This section describes any traps that the PCs might trigger in the encounter. The section ends with a trap stat block (see Appendix III for proper formatting notes) for all traps found in the encounter. If the creatures use the traps in some way against intruders, you should detail those actions in the Tactics section but refer to those tactics here.

Treasure (Optional)

Any treasure the PCs can find during the encounter is described here, above and beyond any possessions owned by the creatures in the room (a creature's possessions are detailed in that creature's stat block).

Remember, the total treasure available for the PCs to find in an adventure should be reflected in the

adventure's level. Make sure to study Table 3—3 on page 51 and the sidebar on page 54 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* to determine how much treasure to include in the adventure, and remember that NPC gear counts as well as treasure detailed in this section when determining totals. You don't need to adhere exactly to the totals given in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, but you should stay as close as you can.

Some adventures feature a large number of magic items that normally cannot be used by PCs. Other adventures feature creatures with Improved Sunder or other attacks that can ruin magic items. In adventures like these, it's okay to give out higher amounts of treasure, since the PCs likely lose more of their gear than normal during the course of the adventure. Also, adventures with lots of NPCs tend to have a lot of treasure in the form of gear and equipment, and as a result should have a proportionally lower amount of treasure in these sections.

Avoid petty treasures, such as pouches of a dozen silver coins in a high-level adventure. Keeping track of miniscule amounts of treasure isn't worth the time and effort, and only slows down the game. Give individual creatures worthwhile treasures or give them nothing.

Remember, if you want to give a specific encounter a larger amount of treasure, you can compensate by not giving out treasure in other encounters.

Development (Optional)

Sometimes the PCs' actions can have unusual ramifications or affect later encounters. The PCs may find things have changed the second or third time they pass through the purple worm's lair after they kill the monster the first time through, for example. This section details how the encounter "evolves" once the PCs finish it, and how this evolution can affect other encounters in the adventure.

Ad Hoc XP Adjustment (Optional)

As per page 39 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, certain encounters can place the creatures at a tactical advantage or disadvantage. In these cases, you may judge that the PCs deserve extra (or less) XP for overcoming a situation in which they have a disadvantage (or advantage) over the creature. Use this subhead in your encounter to note the XP adjustment for the encounter.

Likewise, not every encounter in your adventure should involve killing monsters or overcoming traps. Some encounters may be puzzles, mysteries, diplomatic situations, or role-playing opportunities. A distraught merchant might have his business revitalized by a group of PCs using Perform to attract more customers. A green and blue crystal door might open only after a spellcaster has channeled 20 levels of spells into its glowing facets. A huge library might require several Knowledge checks and Search checks to fully explore and uncover hidden clues. The PCs should gain experience for completing any encounter that advances the plot of the adventure, and you can use this section to indicate what sort of XP award the DM should give the PCs for its successful completion.

Concluding the Adventure (Mandatory)

Describe the possible consequences resulting from the adventure's success or failure, including rewards, punishments, and spin-off adventures for later gaming sessions. Most groups roleplay the consequences of a successful (or failed) adventure, and they should be provided with tools in this section to do just that. Make the players feel as if they've accomplished something (or that their failures have had repercussions beyond their own damaged reputations).

Scaling the Adventure (Mandatory)

All adventures in *DUNGEON* include a "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. This sidebar contains suggestions the DM can use to modify the adventure's antagonists and encounters for PCs of higher or lower level. You should provide tips for a spread of two character levels in either direction from the level for which the adventure is designed, except in cases where this would move the adventure out of its designated challenge level (above 5th level for low-level adventures, below 6th level or above 12th level for mid-level adventures, and below 13th level for high-level adventures). If your adventure is for 18th level or higher, you should include some notes on how to scale the adventure into the epic realm (level 21 and above).

This sidebar should be no longer than 500 words.

Adapting the Adventure (Optional)

If the adventure takes place in a specific game world that is removed from the core D&D experience (such as *EBERRON* or *ORIENTAL ADVENTURES*), or if the adventure makes extensive use of non-core materials (such

as the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* or the *Planar Handbook*), include an “Adapting the Adventure” sidebar. This sidebar should tell the DM how to adapt the adventure for use in a D&D game that uses only the three core rulebooks, and should include substitutions for world-specific monsters, magic items, deities, locations, and other non-core material.

This sidebar should not be more than 500 words. If you find that you can’t provide substitutions for everything in 500 words, focus on providing adaptation advice for the most unusual aspects of the adventure.

Author Bio (Mandatory)

The final paragraph of your adventure should be a short author bio—something to let the readers of the magazine know who you are. This shouldn’t be more than one or two sentences, and yes, it counts against the adventure’s total word count!

Appendix (Optional)

If you introduce only one or two simple magic items, a couple of new feats, or a single new spell, you can simply detail these new rules in a sidebar. If, on the other hand, your new rules are extensive (several new spells, new magic items, a new monster, a new prestige class, and so on), put them in an appendix at the end of the adventure. As a general rule, if your new rules bit is more than 300 words long, it should be in an appendix.

Showing Your Work

When you include stat blocks for NPCs and advanced monsters, you should indicate how you calculated skill point totals, and how a creature’s Armor Class, saving throws, and attack rolls are calculated. Showing your work enables the editors to more thoroughly evaluate your adventure in a timely fashion. It’s generally best to duplicate your stat blocks in a separate document from your adventure, and change the color of the text of your work so it’s obvious what’s stat block and what’s behind-the-scenes-math. Showing your work in the text of an adventure only makes your word count inaccurate and makes the editors sad because they have to manually delete out the math.

You should also show your work for any DC whose total contains nonobvious adjustments, and when you price out market values for new magic items.

There might be other occasions that also require you to show your work, though that is up to your discretion (only you know what sort of calculation went into a particular creation—if you’d rather demonstrate to the editors that your choice wasn’t based on simple fancy, then showing your work is a good idea).

APPENDIX III: STAT BLOCKS

In *DUNGEON*, the majority of the stat blocks are creature stat blocks, although you may also need to include stat blocks for cities, objects, and traps. All of these stat blocks follow specific formats; make sure to follow these formats exactly in your adventure.

Creature Statistics

As the issues go by, we’re constantly adjusting and improving the way we present stat blocks; we’ll be updating this section of the writers’ guidelines as we update our stat block styles. Specific things to remember when building any type of creature stat block follow.

Simple Stat Blocks

Creatures that are in every way standard versions of monsters of the same name in the *Monster Manual* do not require full-length statistics. When such creatures are described under Creatures, the entry should contain an abbreviated stat block indicating creature name, number appearing, hit points, and a *Monster Manual* reference page. The abbreviated statistics can include a few minor changes (such as an orc that wears plate armor and thus has a lower speed and a higher AC), but if the creature is changed significantly, it’s a *Monster Manual* variant.

Gorgon (3): hp 85; *Monster Manual* 137.

Complex Stat Blocks

Creatures that have advanced Hit Dice, class levels, or appear in books other than the *Monster Manual*

should always be represented by complex stat blocks. The various components of a complex stat block are as follows.

Creature Name, Gender, race, class, and level: The first element of a creature stat block looks like this: Creature's name, [Gender] [race] [class and level of first class acquired]/[class and level of next class acquired]. Spell out all class names and prestige class names in stat blocks. If the creature's Hit Dice are advanced, put "advanced" before its race. For "generic" monsters that don't have specific personalities in the context of the adventure, you need only list the creature's race. If multiple creatures of this type are encountered, indicate the number encountered in parentheses at the end of this information.

CR: The creature's Challenge Rating. If there are multiple creatures encountered, this gives the Challenge Rating for only one creature; the overall Encounter Level should be calculated and indicated as part of the encounter header.

Size and Type: The creature's size category and its type (and any subtypes). Capitalize size categories, but not types. A humanoid creature's subtype need only be indicated if its subtype is different from the name of its race.

HD: The creature's Hit Dice. Additional hit points from Constitution are appended with a plus sign. If a creature has different Hit Dice from multiple classes, combine all Hit Dice of like value into one entry, separating different Hit Dice with the word "plus." Additional hit points gained from feats like Toughness and other abilities are separated by the word "plus" at the end of all Hit Dice. Thus, an ettercap Rogue 5/Sorcerer 3 with a Constitution of 13 and the Toughness feat would have the following Hit Dice: 5d8+5 plus 5d6+5 plus 3d4+3 plus 3.

hp: The creature's hit points. Most creatures should have average hit points, although you can roll hit points randomly if you want. Creatures with elite stats or class levels gain maximum hit points on their first Hit Die.

Init: The creature's modifier on initiative checks.

Spd: The creature's base land speed, followed by speeds for other modes of movement. Remember that some kinds of armor can impact land speed.

Armor Class: Indicate a creature's standard Armor Class, touch Armor Class, and flat-footed Armor Class. When showing your work, include all AC modifiers, but in the actual text of the adventure, do not show AC modifiers.

Base Atk: The creature's base attack bonus without any modifiers.

Grp: The creature's grapple bonus (base attack + size modifier + Str bonus + miscellaneous bonuses).

Atk: The single attack the creature makes when taking an attack action (modified attack bonus, whether the attack is melee or ranged, how much damage the attack deals, and the weapon used for the attack).

The default stat for any weapon is its damage. If the weapon's critical hit statistics (threat range and damage multiplier) are different from the minimum values (which are 20 and x2), provide those values after the damage figure and use slashes to separate each. If a weapon deals an additional form of damage, include the additional damage by appending the word "plus" to the weapon's damage and then list the additional damage or effect. *Examples:* (1d6, club), (1d10/x3, dwarven waraxe), (1d10/19–20, bastard sword), (1d10+1 plus 1d6 fire/19–20/x4, +1 flaming keen scythe).

Full Atk: All the physical attacks the creature can make when taking a full attack action.

If a creature's attack and full attack are effectively the same, you do not need to include separate entries in the stat block for both. Simply list the creature's attack routine once, preceded with Atk or Full Atk. *Example (from a frost worm's stat block):* Atk or Full Atk +21 melee (2d8+12 plus 1d8 cold, bite).

Space/Reach: How large a square the creature takes up on the battle grid and how far its natural reach extends. You can omit this entry from the stat block if the creature's Space/Reach is 5 ft./5 ft.

SA: The creature's special attacks, listed alphabetically. Spells and spell-like abilities are always listed under special attacks. Include any saving throw DCs or attack rolls required for the special attack. Special attacks that are substantially different than those detailed in the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, or the *Monster Manual* must be reprinted in full after the creature's Languages (see below).

SQ: The creature's special qualities, listed alphabetically. Special qualities that are substantially different than those detailed in the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, or the *Monster Manual* must be reprinted in full after the creature's Languages (see below).

AL: The one- or two-letter abbreviation denoting the creature's alignment.

SV: The creature's saving throw bonuses.

Ability Scores: The creature's ability scores in the customary order (Str, Dex, Con, Int, Wis, Cha).

Source: The book and page number where the creature's full entry is located, if the creature is from a non-core book.

Temporary Effects: If the creature's stats are affected by temporary effects (a vampire encountered in the area of a *desecrate* spell, or a minotaur cleric who casts several spells on herself before entering combat), include those bonuses in the stat block. Indicate that the bonuses are included earlier in the Creature section. If a specific creature is almost always encountered with temporary effects, it's better to include them in its stat block than it is to force the DM to factor them in during play; it's far easier for the DM to factor them out as they are dispelled or otherwise lost.

Skills: In a new paragraph, a list of all the creature's skills and modifiers. Don't forget to include bonuses from ability scores, race, magic items, familiars, class abilities, armor check penalties, skill synergy bonuses, and other bonuses. Remember that creatures that have land speeds of less than or greater than 30 ft. have additional modifiers to Jump checks, and creatures that are smaller than or larger than Medium have additional modifiers to Hide checks. Remember also that humans gain additional skill points. Finally, if a creature increased its Intelligence score as it gained additional Hit Dice or class levels, it may gain more skill points at those higher levels. Don't just calculate that wizard's skill points based on his final Intelligence at 20th level!

Feats: In a new paragraph, include a list of all the creature's feats. Make sure the creature can qualify for all its feats. Remember that humans gain a bonus feat. Any bonus feats gained from race, class, or other sources should be indicated with a superscript B.

Languages: In a new paragraph, list all the languages known to the creature. This should include racial languages, bonus languages from high Intelligence (but not from Intelligence points gained after 1st level), and languages purchased with skill points. List languages alphabetically.

Detailed Special Attacks and Special Qualities: If the creature has special attacks or special qualities that require further details, place them in new paragraphs here.

Spells: If the creature is a spellcaster, list the spells it knows or has prepared in a new paragraph here. If a creature can cast different kinds of spells, each group of spells gets its own paragraph. Before you list the spells the creature knows or has prepared, list its caster level. If the spells are specialist wizard spells, list the creature's prohibited schools here. You need only list the number of spells it can cast per day if it casts spells spontaneously, like a bard or sorcerer. List the ranged touch, melee touch, and save DCs by the particular spells to which they apply. Include all the math, including Spell Focus and Weapon Focus. Do not list this information at the start of the paragraph. When alphabetizing spells, ignore the words lesser, greater, and mass, and alphabetize using the next word. For example, in 6th-level spells, *mass cure moderate wounds* comes before *harm*. Don't use a times sign for multiple spells; just add the number of duplicate spells prepared in parentheses after the spell. Mark domain spells with a superscript D. Mark new spells with an asterisk.

Domains: If the creature has access to cleric domains, list them in a separate paragraph after the creature's cleric spells. List each domain's granted power in parentheses after the domain name; don't list these domain powers as special attacks or special qualities.

Spell-Like Abilities: Treat spell-like abilities in the same manner as you treat spells, but in a separate paragraph. Include save DCs and touch attack values as appropriate. The last line of this paragraph should indicate the caster level. There is no need to say "the save DC is Charisma-based" since spell-like abilities almost always use Charisma to modify the save DC.

Spellbook: If the creature keeps spells in a spellbook, list them in a new paragraph after the creature's wizard spells. You do not need to repeat spells the creature has already prepared. For 0-level spells, it's okay to say "all" instead of mentioning every spell by name. For a specialist wizard, prohibited schools should be mentioned here as well. Spells mentioned only in this paragraph do not require save DCs or touch attack particulars.

Possessions: List any items held, carried, or worn by the creature here, in the following order: armor, melee weapons, ranged weapons with ammunition, permanent stat-boosting items, other permanent items, temporary or one-use items such as potions and scrolls, nonmagical items of value, purely flavor stuff like identification papers, coins.

Capitalize the first character after the colon if it's a letter. Be sure to include ammunition if the creature has a projectile weapon. Indicate the number of charges or uses remaining for an item if appropriate. When you have multiple identical magic items, list the Arabic numeral first in Roman (not italic) type. Expensive items have their features and value listed in parentheses. Don't forget to include expensive spell focuses and material components.

Minions: If a creature has a familiar, animal companion, or special mount, include its stat block at the end of the creature's stat block. You can use simple stat blocks if the creature's Hit Dice are identical to the standard creature detailed in the *Monster Manual*.

Sample Complex Stat Blocks

Ironruntusk, Male half-orc barbarian 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid (orc); HD 2d12+4; hp 20; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+4, club); SA rage 1/day; SQ fast movement, illiteracy, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +4, Jump +12, Swim +10.

Feats: Athletic, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Common, Orc.

Rage: When Ironruntusk rages, his statistics change as follows—hp 24; AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+7, club); SV Fort +7, Will +2; Str 21, Con 18; Climb +12, Jump +14, Swim +12.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, club, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, tanglefoot bag, ragged fur cloak, a crude map of the city that indicates the location of the Green Dagger Guildhouse, belt pouch containing 79 gp.

Shator Demodand: CR 16; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar); HD 15d8+60; hp 127; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 70 ft. (poor); AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +15; Grp +25; Atk +22 melee (2d6+11, +2 *guisarme*) or +20 melee (1d6+6 plus paralysis, claw); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (2d6+11, +2 *guisarme*) or +20 melee (1d6+6 plus paralysis, 2 claws) and +18 melee (2d6+3 plus paralysis, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with +2 *guisarme*); SA paralyzing slime, spell-like abilities, spells, *summon demodand*; SQ darkvision 120 ft., damage reduction 15/good, freedom of movement, immune to acid, immune to cold, immune to fire, immune to mind-affecting effects, immune to poison, outsider traits, scent, see invisibility, spell resistance 30; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +12; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 21, *Fiend Folio* 45.

Skills: Bluff +20, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +24, Disguise +20 (+22 acting), Gather Information +7, Hide +17, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +20, Move Silently +17, Search +17, Sense Motive +21, Spot +20, Survival +3 (+5 following tracks or on other planes).

Feats: Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Spell Penetration.

Languages: Abyssal, Common, Demodand, Infernal.

Paralyzing Slime (Ex): Fortitude save (DC 21) or become paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. A shator may spit a globule of slime as a +17 ranged touch attack with a range of 30 feet.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*detect magic*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *fear* (DC 19), *invisibility*, *spider climb*, *tongues*; 3/day—*cloudkill* (DC 20), *fog cloud*, *ray of enfeeblement* (+17 ranged touch), *stinking cloud* (DC 18); 2/day—*dispel magic*; 1/day—*mass charm monster* (DC 23). Caster level 15.

Summon Demodand (Sp): Once per day, a shator can attempt to summon 1d2 shators with a 30% chance of success, or either 1d4 kelubars or 1d6 farastus (shator's choice) with a 70% chance of success.

Sorcerer Spells Known (caster level 8; 6/8/7/6/4): 0—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 15), *flare* (DC 15), *ghost sound*, *read magic*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *ray of frost* (+17 ranged touch); 1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *true strike*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 17); 3rd—*blink*, *fireball* (DC 18); 4th—*confusion* (DC 19).

Serini Glistermane, Female elf ranger 13: CR 13; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 13d8–13; hp 47; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +13; Grp +14; Atk +15 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +13/+13/+13 ranged (1d8+3, +2 *bane vs. dwarves composite longbow* using Manyshot); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +17/+17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+3, +2 *bane vs. dwarves composite longbow*); SA archery combat style mastery, favored enemy (dwarves) +4, favored enemy (humans) +4, favored enemy (good outsiders) +2, spells; SQ animal companion, camouflage, evasion, swift tracker, wild empathy +17, woodland stride; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +12, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Handle Animal +10, Hide +17, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Search +10, Survival +9 (+11 in aboveground natural areas or underground).

Feats: Dodge, Endurance^B, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Precise Shot^B, Manyshot^B, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot^B, Shot on the Run, Track^B.

Languages: Common, Elven, Halfling, Sylvan.

Ranger Spells Prepared (caster level 6): 1st—*longstrider, speak with animals*; 2nd—*wind wall* (DC 13); 3rd—*cure moderate wounds*.

Possessions: +1 *light fortification studded leather*, +2 *bane vs. dwarves composite longbow* (Str +1) with 40 arrows, *masterwork dagger, amulet of health +2, gauntlets of ogre power, ring of protection +1, cloak of elvenkind, quiver of Ehlonna*.

Lorikar, Tiger Animal Companion: hp 46, *Monster Manual* 281.

Ssythar Nahazir, Male halfblood yuan-ti sorcerer 10: CR 15; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 7d8+7 plus 10d4+10; hp 72 (86 with *false life* spell); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +12; Grp +14; Atk +15 melee (1d6+2/18–20, masterwork scimitar) or +14 ranged (1d8+2/×3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+2/18–20, masterwork scimitar) and +9 melee (1d6+1 plus plus poison, bite) or +14/+9/+4 ranged (1d8+2/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA poison (Fort DC 14, 1d6/1d6 Con), produce acid, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ alternate form, chameleon power, darkvision 60 ft., *detect poison*, immunity to possession and mind affecting effects when within 30 ft. of altar, scent, spell resistance 16; AL CE; SV Fort +6 (+10 within 30 ft. of altar), Ref +10 (+14 within 30 ft. of altar), Will +16 (+20 within 30 ft. of altar); Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 22.

Skills: Bluff +17, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Intimidate +8, Hide +12 (+22 when using *chameleon power*), Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (religion) +14, Listen +16, Spellcraft +12, Spot +16, Use Magic Device +15 (+17 scrolls).

Feats: Alertness^B, Blind-Fight^B, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Empower Spell, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell.

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Infernal, Terran, Yuan-ti.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*animal trance* (DC 18), *cause fear* (DC 17), *entangle* (DC 17); 1/day—*deeper darkness, neutralize poison* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 19). Caster level 8th.

Sorcerer Spells Known (caster level 10; 6/7/6/7/6/4): 0—*acid splash* (+14 ranged touch), *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic, disrupt undead* (+14 ranged touch), *ghost sound, message, open/close, read magic, touch of fatigue* (+14 melee touch, DC 14); 1st—*disguise self, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, shield*; 2nd—*command undead, false life, see invisibility, scorching ray* (+14 ranged touch); 3rd—*displacement, lightning bolt* (DC 17), *slow* (DC 17); 4th—*enervation* (+14 ranged touch), *Evard's black tentacles* (grapple +18); 5th—*teleport*.

Possessions: Masterwork scimitar, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, *cloak of Charisma +2, ring of protection +2, empowered wand of idiocy* (as per the empowered *touch of idiocy* spell; 12 charges), *wand of poison* (8 charges), *potion of barkskin* (+3), scroll of *crushing despair*, scroll of *dominate person*, silver cage pendant (worth 15 gp), pouch of 10 pp.

Ssythar's statistics assume he's had time to cast *mage armor* and *shield* and drinks his *potion of barkskin* +3.

Snake Familiar: CR —; Tiny viper; HD 17; hp 36; Init +7; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +12; Grp +1; Atk or Full Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA deliver touch spells, poison; SQ empathic link, improved evasion, scent, speak with snakes, speak with master; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +11, Bluff +5, Climb +11, Concentration +16, Hide +15, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +13, Spellcraft +6, Spot +13, Swim +5, Use Magic Device +6.

Feat: Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse^B.

City Stat Blocks

Much like creatures, settlements that appear in adventures have a wide range of information that the DM must know to run encounters there. Pages 137–143 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* cover the details of creating city stat blocks. The format for writing stat blocks for settlements is as follows.

Name (size): [Power center type: Conventional, Nonstandard, or Magical]; AL [alignment abbreviation]; # gp limit; Assets # gp; Population #; [Racial mix; Isolated, Mixed, or Integrated] (race #,

race #, race #, etc.)] NOTE: The number that follows each race name is a percentage of the entire population, not the exact number of individuals of that race.

Authority Figure(s): [Name, gender race class & level.]

Important Characters: [Name, gender race class & level (title or position); Name, gender race class & level (title or position); Name, gender race class & level (title or position); etc.]

Notes: Place any special notes about the community here.

Sample City Stat Block

Marsember (metropolis): Conventional; AL LN; 100,000 gp limit; Assets 180,035,000 gp; Population 36,007; Mixed (79% human, 7% halfling, 4% half-elf, 3% elf, 3% gnome, 2% dwarf, 1% half-orc, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: Lord Bledryn Scoril, male human Fighter 9 (the King's Lord of Marsember); Ayesunder Truesilver, male human Fighter 15 (Warden of the Port).

Important Characters: Blentra Whaelbuckler, female human fighter 9/rogue 1/harper scout 2 (Harper agent); Charnae Truesil, female human aristocrat 2/expert 6 (Constable of Marsember); Delthrin the Deadmaster, male human necromancer 7/loremaster 5 (mysterious necromancer and defender of the city); Elestra Blaebur, female human bard 6 (popular singer and dancer who secretly delivers messages for War Wizards); Filfaeril Stormbillow, female human wizard 16 (retired adventurer and magic item merchant); High Morninglord Chansobal Dreen, male human cleric 12 (highpriest of Morningmist Hall); Scoril, male human fighter 4 (Herald of Marsember); Szwentil, male human fighter 3 (merchant and shipwright); Vindala Chalanther, female human illusionist 15 (tutor and mage for hire).

Notes: Marsember's network of canals can make it difficult for people to get around. Fortunately, a large number of skiffs are available for easy transport along the canals. The greatest landmark in town is undoubtedly the King's Tower, the abode of Lord Bledryn Scoril and the city garrison. Other notable buildings include Morningmist Hall (the rosy walled temple of Lathander) and the frowning ramparts of Starwater Keep.

Object Stat Blocks

Any items that the player characters may need to interact with in some manner should have statistics in the manuscript. Common examples include doors, walls, chests, and altars.

Object: # in. or ft. thick; Hardness #; hp #; Break DC #. NOTE: You can add additional DCs, such as Escape Artist or Open Lock, as necessary.

Sample Object Stat Block

Dangling Iron Cage: 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 40.

Trap Stat Blocks

All traps in your manuscript must be accompanied by a trap stat block. Pages 67–76 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* provide a wealth of detail about the design and construction of traps; study these pages well if your adventure includes traps. If your trap doesn't include one of these elements, feel free to leave those elements out of your stat block. Additionally, if the trap is obvious and can be destroyed by damage, incorporate an object stat block into the trap stat block.

Some complex traps are difficult to condense into a stat block. In such a case, you should build as much of the stat block as you can, and refer the reader as appropriate to the text of the adventure in the stat block.

Sample Trap Stat Block

Slashing Blades Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; hidden lock bypass (Search DC 25, Open Lock DC 30); Atk +16 melee (2d4+8 plus poison/x4, 2 scythes); poison (dragon bile, Fortitude DC 26 negates, initial 3d6 Str, secondary none); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 21.

APPENDIX IV: SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

83. TORTURE CHAMBER (EL 15)

This oddly shaped room is obviously a well-stocked torture chamber. All of the standard appliances are here; the iron maiden, the rack, cages, strappados, a fire pit, and several tables covered with tongs and pliers and knives and hooks. The entire place is lit with guttering torches. Four cells are built into the oddly-shaped corners of the room.

This torture chamber was built and stocked by Tomorast to interrogate prisoners, but in practice it's been used more on his own followers who have, in one way or another, aroused his ire and wrath. Currently there are three prisoners here; only cell C is empty.

Creatures: Three highly skilled assassins serve Eli Tomorast here as both jailers and torturers. These three are named Korian, Lesiter, and Drueth, and they take great joy and pleasure in their jobs. If they aren't aware that the PCs are in the complex, they are either in the process of torturing one of the prisoners (70% chance, in which case all three are here) or playing a game of cards (30% chance, in which case all three are in area **84** instead).

There are currently three prisoners kept in this room. Cell A (to the north) contains a dying human named Rexus Kirian (human male expert 1), a merchant from Hardby who was snatched from his caravan on the way through the Abbor-Alz toward Nyron by a group of Seeker guards who mistook him for someone else. The assassins have since determined that Rexus has nothing they need, but they keep him around anyway because the irony amuses them and he's good to practice on.

Cell B (to the east) contains a barely conscious Seeker guard named Rollo, a brute of a thug who was caught robbing Aldest and Nemill's room (area **33**). Rather than execute him on the spot, the two Seekers were angry enough to turn him over to the torturers for a slow, lingering death.

Cell C is empty, but Cell D is not; it contains an unconscious githyanki woman named Aan'achi. An exile from the githyanki city of Tu'narath, she appeared out of nowhere a few days ago in area **78**, after using *plane shift* to escape capture after her views on religion were discovered. Already wounded and with no spells left, she was quickly subdued by the cultists and brought here for evaluation. The three assassins recognize that she's a githyanki and have sent word to Tomorast for advice, but have not heard back on how to deal with her yet. For now, the assassins have been preventing her from getting any rest or preparing spells by tormenting and torturing her.

Korian, Lesiter, and Drueth, Male human rogue 7/assassin 5 (3): CR 12; Medium humanoid; HD 12d6; hp 42 each; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +8; Grp +9; Atk +13 melee (1d4+2, *dagger of venom*) or +13 ranged (1d4+1, thrown masterwork dagger); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d4+2, *dagger of venom*) or +13 ranged (1d4+1, thrown masterwork dagger); SA death attack, sneak attack +7d6, spells; SQ evasion, improved uncanny dodge, poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +2; AL CE; SV Fort +3 (+5 against poison), Ref +13, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +16, Craft (torture device) +12; Diplomacy +3, Disguise +11 (+13 acting), Escape Artist +4 (+6 with ropes), Gather Information +11, Hide +19, Intimidate +18, Jump +3, Listen +14, Move Silently +19, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Tumble +14, Use Rope +14.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Gnome.

Possessions: +2 shadow silent moves chain shirt, *dagger of venom*, 5 masterwork daggers, *slippers of spider climbing*, 5 doses of large scorpion venom.

Rollo, Male Human Seeker Guard: hp 47 (currently 2), see area **25** (currently has no possessions).

Aan'achi, Female githyanki cleric 10 (Olidammara): CR 11; Medium humanoid (extraplanar); HD 12d8+24; hp 94 (currently stabilized at -5); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3-1, unarmed strike); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d3-1, unarmed strike); SA spells, turn/rebuke undead, psionics; SQ darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 15; AL CN; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +14, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Hide +14, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (religion) +15.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon (nunchaku), Improved Disarm, Weapon Finesse.

Psi-like Powers: 3/day—*blur*, *daze* (DC 11), *dimension door*, *mage hand*, *telekinesis* (DC 16).
1/day—*plane shift* (DC 18). Caster level 10.

Spells (caster level 10): No spells currently prepared.

Domains: Luck (reroll one die roll 1/day), *Trickery* (Bluff, Disguise, Hide are class skills).

Possessions: Aan'achi's possessions are in area **84**.

Tactics: If the three assassins hear the PCs coming, they abandon their victim and quickly climb up near the ceiling and into the shadows where they hide. All three victims are far too afraid of the assassins to dare give their positions away to the PCs. The assassins each select a different PC to study for three rounds before making death attacks; once combat begins the assassins make use of trip attacks in an attempt to get a PC to fall into a torture device. A PC that is tripped must also make a Reflex save (DC 12) to avoid landing in or on a device for 1d6 points of piercing damage. If things go against the assassins, they make for the nearest prisoner and use him or her as a hostage to bargain for their life.

Development: Rexus Kirian is insane with pain and horror. If rescued, he proves useless and can do little more than gibber and cry until he's healed (curing his insanity requires a heal or greater restoration). If cured, he wants nothing more than to escape back to Hardby; he promises what he thinks the PCs want in return for rescue, but in fact he was nearly bankrupt when he was caught; his risky trip to Nyrond through the Abbor-Alz to sell several casks of wine was his last chance to avoid destitution. His Bluff check is fairly poor (Bluff +2), and unless the PCs are uncommonly understanding and generous with him, he flees north toward the Lake of Unknown Depths as soon as possible to live out the rest of his life in seclusion.

Rollo is a crass, rude, self-important piece of work, but if rescued he can nevertheless provide the PCs with some valuable information. As a mercenary hired by the Seekers, he knows a fair bit about the layout of Tomorast's Hold, and has heard rumors that those who are indoctrinated into the cult of Kerzit and move down to this level are eventually sacrificed. You can use him to give the PCs other bits of information as you see fit. He now wants only to escape and start a new life elsewhere.

Aan'achi proves to be the most helpful of the three prisoners if rescued. Although she is horribly afraid that her kin are tracking her (they are, but they currently have no idea of where to start looking for her) and is confused and unsure of what world she has stumbled into, she repays kindness with friendship and can become a strong ally, especially if the PCs are in need of a healer (if she is first healed herself and allowed to pray for her spells). If she realizes the PCs have some of her gear, she asks for its return. If the PCs threaten her after reviving her, she simply flees with *dimension door* or *plane shift* and tries her luck elsewhere, although she'd rather not use *plane shift* before recovering her gear.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs XP as if for a CR 10 award for each of the prisoners they rescue from the assassins. Note that for lawful-minded characters, seeing that Rollo faces judgment in a nearby city for his crimes as a mercenary still counts as "releasing" him.

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