

The Dreadful Dungeons of Dryun Swansig

MIXFRAR

Introduction

As 2022 drew to a close, a murmur started to grow across the RPG blogosphere about something that was being called “Dungeon 23.” The idea was that over the course of 2023, GMs should write one dungeon room per day every day of the year. Thus, by the end of the year one would have a 12 level, 365 room mega-dungeon. Brilliant!

I’ve written a handful of kinda-big dungeons over the ~30 years I’ve been at this, however, even though I’ve set out more than once to write a “mega-dungeon” it has never come to fruition. I’ve planned many, started fewer, come close maybe once, but have never actually completed one. This would be a great chance to *force* myself to do it. One room a day? Literally zero excuse. Even on my busiest day, I can find at least five minutes to jot down some notes for a room. Most days I’d have no problem spending half an hour really developing a room. Also, I figured, perhaps something like this could keep my “creative juices” flowing well enough so that my *real* projects would see more work being done on them. A good friend and fellow GM, Jeff, had mentioned that he was interested in doing this project as well, so we decided to hold each other accountable for keeping up with it as we hammered through it. And, a very conscious decision was made and acknowledged that this wasn’t going to be just a writing project, but a method with which to produce a *usable, sensible*, and most importantly *good* dungeon when we arrived at the close of 2023.

I’m beginning this document on 12/29/22, a few hours before I host game night for the “Karaccian Conquerors,” one of my two groups (the other being the “Daldoor Devils”). I look forward to coming back here in a few hundred days and finalizing the document.

-Matt Evans

Dryun Swansig

“Few people are called to become magic-users, fewer still live to reach any level of significance...”

In the year 176 AI, the Wind-folk wizard Dryun Swansig was one of the few who achieved significance. In that year, at the age of 55, Dryun had finally researched and learned how to cast the spell *Create Any Monster*, with which he hoped to conquer the entirety of Vaedz’Eb. However, as is often the case when mortal men seek power beyond anything they were meant to control, things went horribly, horribly wrong.

Dryun spent many years researching magic to contain the abominations he created, and finally came to the conclusion that his best option was to pursue lichdom and rule over his terrible creations as something more terrible than they.

In the centuries that have since passed, Dryun has taken to entertaining himself by spreading rumors of unimaginable riches which are hidden in the depths of his “abandoned” lair, and watching as foolish adventurers rush to their certain doom. What began as local rumors spread amongst braggarts at the inns scattered around the kingdom of Grassfall is now a well-known tale through almost all of Vaedz’Eb.

The Kingdom of Grassfall

Tucked away on the western shore of Eucheon along the Heartstrand River is the small, peaceful Earth-folk kingdom of Grassfall. Consisting of just two towns, three villages, a handful of hamlets and farmsteads, and a modest castle, Grassfall is the definition of quaint. The current ruler is **King Nathaniel Linington IV**, who lives with his family and small entourage in Castle Grassfall.

The capital town Clearmouth lies seven miles southwest of the castle, on the shores of the Sapphire Sea where the Heartstrand empties. Though only having a population of around 6,000 people, it’s by far the largest settlement in the kingdom. Most trade is centered around fish-

ing and sea-faring. The second largest town with 4,000 residents is Thornwell, which like the smaller villages of Newny, Mulinhill and Fairhill is centered around goat ranching.

PCs can find anything on the expanded equipment list for sale in Clearmouth, anything on the regular list in Thornwell and Fairhill, and can find things from the regular list at the GM’s discretion in the villages of Newny and Mulinhill.

Newny and Mulinhill both claim around 750 residents, but Fairhill is quiet a bit larger with around 1,500 folks calling it home. Though traffic through the village isn’t bustling and lively by any means, it goes it its fair share of adventurers coming through on their way to Dryun’s dungeon. The village hosts a relatively large public house, the Thundering Goat, which is ran by a gluttonous man named **Harry Beerstone**, whose mouth is as large as his massive belly. His prices are high (2gp for dinner and ale, 5gp for a communal cot for a night, 10gp for a private room), but he’s generally good for a rumor or a crass joke.

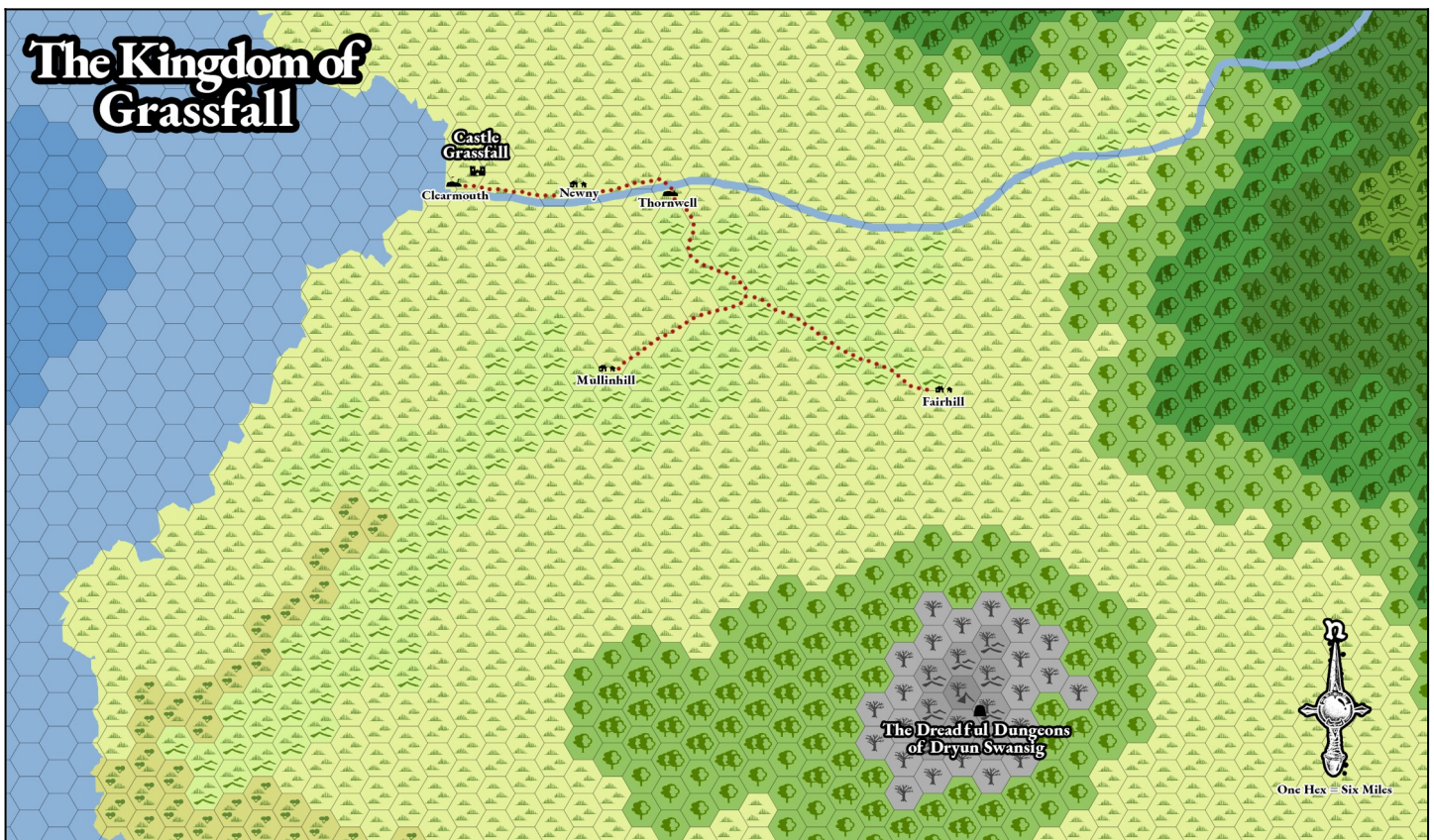
1d20

Rumor

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Thirteen dragons call the dungeon home. (F) |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | All of the creatures in the dungeon are under Dryun Swansig’s control. (F) |
| 5 | |
| 6 | The deepest anyone’s known to have gone is the 4 th level. |
| 7 | |
| 8 | Jack MacBride in Mulinhill has a key to the 2 nd level of the dungeon. |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |
| 11 | Dryun Swansig is a powerful undead wizard. |
| 12 | A vampire roams the depths of the place. (F) |
| 13 | |
| 14 | |
| 15 | There’s a secret way to the 2 nd level. |
| 16 | |
| 17 | |
| 18 | It’s been a year since the last time a party came back successfully. Since then, a new group of goblins has moved in to the first level. |
| 19 | |
| 20 | There’s a hidden entrance that leads to the 4 th level about ¼ mile away from the sinkhole. |

Outdoor Encounters

Once PCs leave the relative safety of Thornwell, they may have encounters as they travel towards Dryun's delve. Check once per day on 1d12; on the roads between Thornwell, Mulinhill, and Fairhill encounters happen on a 1-2, while off the roads they occur on a 1-4. To determine which encounter happens roll 2d4, with a +2 if the encounter happens on the road.



Level One

In a small valley, clear of trees and easily visible is a sinkhole. Many small totems and fetishes of goblin make surround it, and smoke gently wafts up from the depths.

The sinkhole is roughly 20' in diameter, and drops down about 30'. A ladder, roughly hashed together by goblins, juts up from the bottom of the hole. It's only capable of supporting 150 pounds though, and will collapse if more weight than that is placed on it. If a PC weighing more than 150 pounds climbs down it, roll 1d6 to determine how high up they were when it broke. On a 1-2 they fall from 10' up, on a 3-4 they fall from 20' up, and on a 5-6 they fall from 30' up.

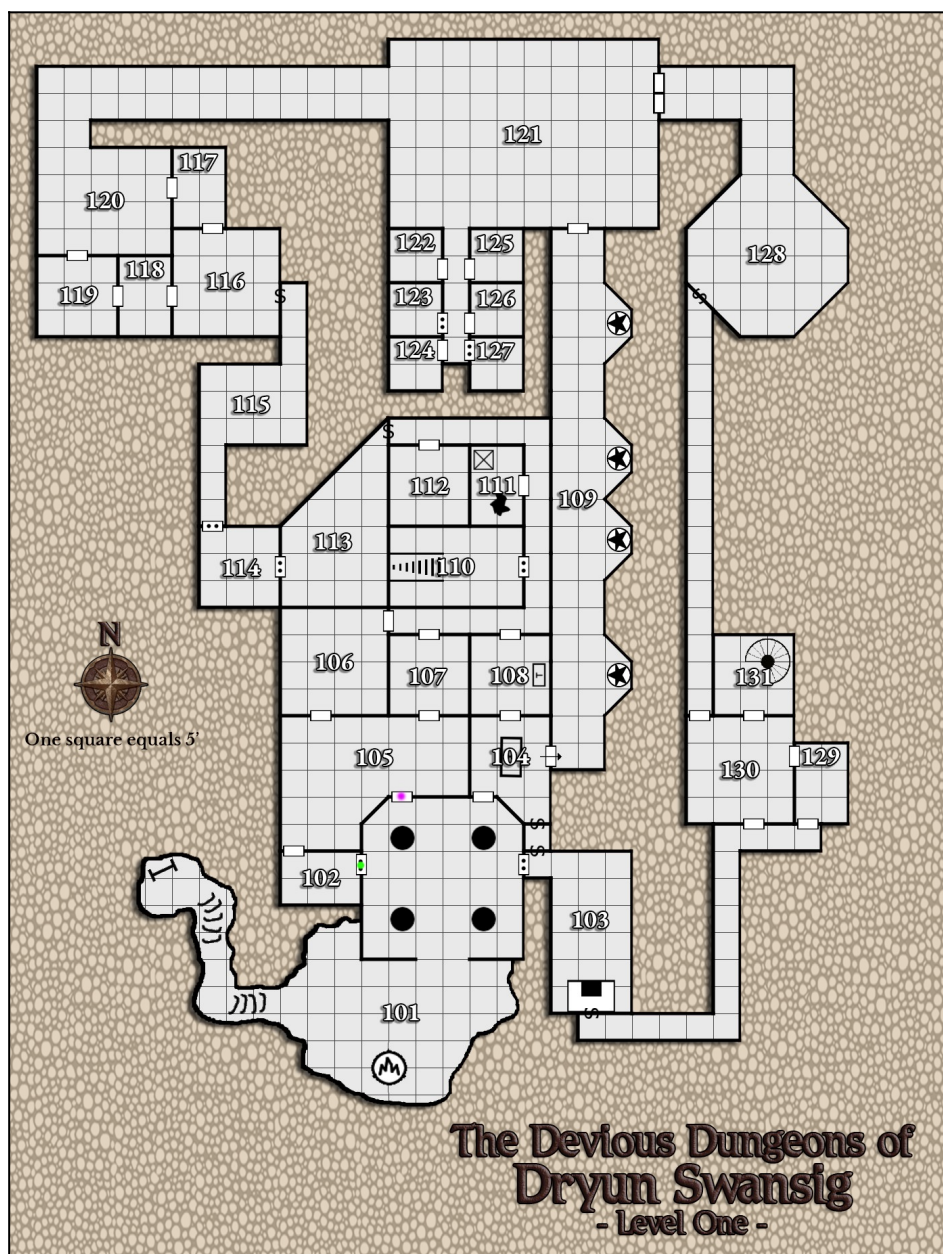
The natural cavern is limestone, and the steps drop down 10' each section. The dungeons themselves are made of precisely cut granite blocks and doors are made from ironwood planks banded with steel, unless otherwise noted. Rooms are dark unless otherwise noted.

Check for wandering monsters every 20 minutes (1 in 6 chance); in rooms 101-108/111-112 they are 2d4 **goblins**. For rooms 113-131, roll 2d4: on a 2, there are 1d3 **ghouls**; on a 3-6 there are 1d6+2 **skeletons**; on a 7-8 there are 1d4+2 **zombies**.

101 – The Goblin Sink-Hole

A large fire illuminates this cavern, which butts up against the antechamber of Dryun's devious delve. Seven **goblins** are milling about, four of them around the fire in the cavern, and three of them sparring in the columned chamber. They aren't immediately aggressive, but will tell the PCs that this is their home now (they've lived here almost a whole year unmolested) and ask them to please leave. They know nothing of Dryun Swansig, nor anything about the lower levels.

AC: 15 **HD:** 1 (d6) **Size:** S **MV:** 20'
Att: spear **Dmg:** 1d6
Special: darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** Avg **AL:** LE **XP:** 5+1
HP: 6, 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2



They have a total of 67ep between them, and one of them has a key to open the door to room 103 which is locked (CL 5).

The door to room 102 is locked and **trapped** (CL 5). If it is opened or if an attempt is made at picking the lock without flipping a small switch on the handle (which the goblins are aware of), a needle poisoned with type IV poison (CL 3) will prick the hand of whoever interacted with the door. PCs wearing leather gloves aren't affected.

The door to room 105 is *wizard locked*; the goblins have never used this door.

102 – Goerk's Room

The leader of this small band of goblins, a **hobgoblin** named Goerk, lairs in this small room which is lit by candles on a crate. Entering from the eastern door gains automatic surprise against him. Goerk is wearing plate mail, carries a large wooden shield, and wields a **long sword** +1. He wears the key to this room around his neck.

AC: 18 **HD:** 1 (d10) **Size:** M **MV:** 30'
Att: long sword +1 **Dmg:** 1d8+1
Special: darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** Avg **AL:** LE **XP:** 5+1
HP: 10



The large crate with candles atop it rests against the northern wall, and along the southern wall is a sleeping pallet of hay and filthy rags as well as a small locked chest. The key for the chest is hidden in the pallet.

The crate contains four months of iron rations. The chest holds 1,760sp, a bracelet worth 100gp, a locket worth 1,000gp, and a pendant worth 4,000gp.

103 – Hidden Hearth Hatch

Five **goblins** are in this room, preparing some wolves for stew; they suffer a -5 to their Surprise check.

AC: 15 **HD:** 1 (d6) **Size:** S **MV:** 20'
Att: dagger **Dmg:** 1d4
Special: darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** Avg **AL:** LE **XP:** 5+1
HP: 7, 6, 6, 5, 4

The room contains a shelf with low quality herbs, spices, and cooking tools, and a chest which contains ten bottles of spoiled, cheap wine and a *potion of cure light wounds*.

The goblins are all aware of the two secret doors (CL 3) that lead between rooms 103 and 104, and will use them to get help if possible during combat. None of the goblins know about the secret door in the fireplace, though.

The hearth currently has a fire going in it, heating up an iron cauldron full of sour wolf stew. The fire needs to be extinguished and the bricks allowed to cool before the secret door (CL 10) can be found.

104 – Fine Dining

Five **goblins** are sitting around a table dining on sour wolf stew. Between the “food,” belching, farting, and just goblins in general, the stench in this room is almost unbearable. PCs entering must save vs. poison (CL 8) or suffer a -1 to hit and damage while in this chamber.

AC: 15 **HD:** 1 (d6) **Size:** S **MV:** 20'
Att: knife or fork **Dmg:** 1d2
Special: darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** Avg **AL:** LE **XP:** 5+1
HP: 7, 7, 6, 2, 1

The door to the east has a rough cut patch of raw, poorly dried leather nailed to it, with a warning in the goblin tongue scrawled upon it with yellow paint:

DIS DORE OPUNS JUS DA
 OUT WAY AN YUR GUNNA
 GIT STUK IF YU GO HEER
 SO DUNT DO IT DUMDUM!

The eastern door, which is indeed one-way, swings shut on its own one-and-a-half turns (fifteen minutes) after being opened, thus giving no immediate indication that it does, indeed, close on its own. It *can* be spiked open (something the goblins never thought to try), however the mechanism by which it closes is fairly stout, and it takes two or more spikes to keep it open. Additionally, and much to the dismay of anyone who finds themselves stuck on the other side and decides to brute-force themselves out of the situation, the door itself is actually made of a large plate of ½”-thick iron, with wooden facades on each side. So, simply trying to hack through the door to get back through is a futile attempt.

Dryun Swansig’s humor is nothing, if not blunt and painfully simple.

105 – Garrison of Goerk’s Guards

The **goblins** and **hobgoblins** which Goerk has chosen as his personal guard stay in this large chamber. This group will *not* parlay at all, and attack intruders immediately.

Hobgoblins

AC: 15 **HD:** 1 (d10) **Size:** M **MV:** 30'
Att: long sword **Dmg:** 1d8
Special: darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** Avg **AL:** LE **XP:** 5+1
HP: 9, 6, 4

Goblins

AC: 15 **HD:** 1 (d6) **Size:** S **MV:** 20'
Att: short sword **Dmg:** 1d6
Special: darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** Avg **AL:** LE **XP:** 5+1
HP: 6, 6, 5, 2

The group has a total of 47ep and 103gp.

106 – Amber Skull

A 4’ tall, 1’ diameter simple cylindrical pedestal made of basalt stands in the center of this room. Hovering a few inches above it and emitting a sickening yellow glow is a life-size skull made of amber. It ignores any being with a chaotic alignment, but will randomly turn to stare at any neutral or lawful beings.

A lawful being leaving the room will immediately draw the attention of the skull, who spins to face the being, throws open its mouth and screams, causing 1d4+2 points of damage and searing an image of a skull about 3” tall into the skin of their back over their left shoulder blade. This can be avoided by covering the skull so that it can’t “see” the lawful creature leave.

PCs who try and take the skull will find that not only does it not budge from its spot, but that touching it causes 3d6 damage (save vs. death for half). Those who attempt to damage either the skull or the pedestal will find it impervious to damage of any sort.

107 – Just Passing Through

Other than a handful of goblin spears propped up in the northwest corner, and a small empty crate in the southeast corner, this room is empty.

108 – Gaming Goblins

A pair of **hobgoblins** are sitting at a small table along the eastern wall playing cards.

AC: 15 **HD:** 1 (d10) **Size:** M **MV:** 30'
Att: long sword **Dmg:** 1d8
Special: darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** Avg **AL:** LE **XP:** 5+1
HP: 8, 7

A total of 57gp is scattered on the table.

109 – Gallery of the Grotesque

Four statues carved out of red jasper proudly stand down the eastern wall of this long corridor. They all depict horrible, twisted, demonic creatures. When a living creature gets within 5' of one of the statues, they begin emitting a blood red glow and a deep hum which buzzes through everything near it. Other than those two effects, the statues are innocuous.

As mentioned above, the western door into this hallway is made of iron, is one-way, and closes itself after fifteen minutes unless spiked open with two or more spikes.



110 – Main Stairs to Level Two

The door to this room is similar to the one-way door to room 109 in that it is constructed of an iron plate with a wooden facade, though this one can easily open from either side, as long as it is unlocked. Parts of the facade have been hacked away by explorers past, revealing the iron core.

The current goblin inhabitants don't have a key, and have never accessed this room or the lower levels. The lock itself is very basic (CL 3), and thieves get a +2 bonus to picking it if the party has been unable to track down Jack MacBride and his key.

111 – Trapped Toilet

The flagstones have been removed and a hole has been dug out in this room to serve as the goblins' latrine. The stench is almost unbearable, to the point where a PC must save vs. poison to even be able to stomach entering the room without violently retching for 1 turn (the sound of which will draw wandering monsters on a 1-4).

In the northwest corner of the room, some engraved writing can just be made out, though it is covered with moss which would need to be cleared to actually read the markings. The ceiling in this area has a brownish "paint" on it.

Stepping on the marked area causes the **trapped** flagstone (CL 8) to spring up with incredible force, hurtling whoever stepped on it into the ceiling at breakneck speed and causing 3d6 damage. Victims may attempt a CL 8 dexterity save for half damage.

After being set off, the flagstone remains raised for 30 minutes before resetting into the floor. Digging in the exposed earth around the spring mechanism of the trap reveals a **dagger +1, +2 vs. undead**.

The engraving on the wall reads, once the moss is cleared, "DON'T STAND HERE, IT'S DANGEROUS."

112 – Lever Alone

Jutting out from the floor in the center of this room is a lone lever, made of jade. Pulling the level causes a magical whirlwind to surround a random PC in the room, and teleports them to room 115. If the lever is pulled with no one in the room (say by attaching a rope to it and pulling from the hallway), nothing happens.

113 – Alchemy Lab

The secret door to the east is CL 8 to detect; the locked door to the west is CL 5.

Many tables and shelves are covered in crumbling parchments, empty bottles and jars, odd tools, and other decrepit alchemy equipment. PCs who search the room have a 1 in 6 chance of disturbing a patch of **yellow mold**. Spending at least 20 minutes searching yields a key to room 114.

114 – Garrisoned Ghoul

Both of the locked doors to this room are CL 10, though the key is located in room 113.

A bed, the frame and bedding long ago ripped to shreds, lies in a heap along the western wall. A lone **ghoul**, absolutely ravenous from countless years being trapped in here, attacks with complete abandon as soon as this room is entered.

AC: 14 **HD:** 2 (d8) **Size:** M **MV:** 30'
Att: 2 claws, 1 bite **Dmg:** 1d3/1d3/1d6
Special: paralysis, darkvision 60'
Save: P **Int:** None **AL:** CE **XP:** 20+2
HP: 11

115 – Wait, Where Am I?

The secret door to the north is CL 10 to find; the locked door to the south is CL 10 to pick.

PCs who teleported to this room from pulling the lever in 112 will find themselves alone in a pitch black chamber. Other than the bones of long-dead adventurers who poofed into this room but never found their way out, this chamber is completely empty.

116 – Spooky Scary Skeletons

Regardless of from which door, as soon as this room is entered eight **skeletons** animate from piles of bones along the southern wall and in the northeast corner and mindlessly attack.

AC: 13 HD: 1 (d12) Size: M MV: 30'
Att: spear Dmg: 1d6
Save: P Int: None AL: N XP: 5+1
HP: 12, 12, 10, 10, 8, 4, 2, 1

117 – Colorful Mouth

A statue of Dryun Swansig, carved out of gleaming white marble, stands in the center of the northern wall with a gleeful look on its face.

When the room is entered, the statue says “SSSSSHHHH!!” via a *magic mouth* spell. After this, speaking more than five words (regardless of whether or not they were all spoken by the same person) will cause the statue to shoot off a *color spray* spell into the room, hitting anyone not standing directly to the left or right of the statue.

118 – Floor Spikes

The floor of this small room is pockmarked with countless ½” diameter holes; it is otherwise empty.

Both of the doors are **trapped** (CL 2 to discover, CL 10 to disarm) so that they cause 1’ tall sharp iron spikes to jut out from the holes if either door is opened from the inside, causing 2d4 points of damage. PCs standing in the room may make a CL 5 dexterity save for half damage; PCs who specifically state they’re trying to avoid standing on the holes before the trap goes off take half damage on a failed save and no damage on a success.

The spikes stay up for 10 minutes after being sprung. In that time, a silver ring set with an emerald worth 250gp can be found around one of the spikes.

119 – Them Bones

Four lidless coffins contain animate **skeletons**. Two are situated along the southern wall, and two are along the western wall. The beings mindlessly attack when the room is entered.

AC: 13 HD: 1 (d12) Size: M MV: 30'
Att: spear Dmg: 1d6
Save: P Int: None AL: N XP: 5+1
HP: 12, 8, 5, 1

120 – Dryun’s Riddle

Shortly after this chamber is entered, any light sources are extinguished and a misty, purplish projection of Dryun appears hovering in the center of the room. He speaks in a sinister whisper:

“The man who built it did not need it. The man who bought it did not use it. The man who used it did not want it. Of what do I speak?”

Dryun will allow the PCs to confer with each other, and will confirm with them when they give an answer that it is the one they want to give. The answer he seeks is “a coffin,” and upon hearing it he’ll fade away and all light sources will reignite.

If an incorrect answer is given, he’ll laugh menacingly and the PCs will black out for 1d3x10 minutes (a CL 15 wisdom save will negate this). For every 10 minutes the PCs are out, check for wandering monsters (1 in 6 chance). If an encounter occurs, when the PCs come to they’ll find they’ve been completely stripped of all of their gear (weapons, items, clothes, etc.). A lone, lit torch has been left for them in a wall sconce, as has a simple staff for each party member. Each staff has been charred at one end; a clue to where they can find their stolen items.

All of their gear can be found in room 130. The charred ends of their staffs allude to the hearth location of one of the secret doors which give access to that room.

121 – Lots And Lots Of Skeletons!

A terrifying sight awaits those who enter this large, brightly lit chamber as eighteen **skeletons**, clad in rusted plate armor and standing around the perimeter, simultaneously turn their eyeless gaze on the intruders. Large, black candles in brass sconces and two sizable wooden chandeliers covered in countless candles more cast the skeletal warriors’ shadows jaggedly across the room. They’ll not pursue out of rooms 120, 121, or 128.

AC: 13 HD: 1 (d12) Size: M MV: 30'
Att: spear Dmg: 1d6
Save: P Int: None AL: N XP: 5+1
HP: 12, 12, 12, 11, 10, 10, 10, 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 2

122 – Goodnight, Zombie

In the northwest corner, a **zombie** lies on a rotting bed. It woefully moans when the room is entered, slowing sitting up.

AC: 12 HD: 2 (d8) Size: M MV: 20'
Att: slam Dmg: 1d8
Special: overwhelm, slow
Save: P Int: None AL: NE XP: 10+2
HP: 11

Well hidden inside the moldy mattress is a *Wand of Magic Missile* which has 13 charges remaining.

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