



Strange Bedfellows

The characters are hired by a rich merchant to escort him to a remote location to negotiate the release of his wife kidnapped by orcs while on her way back from visiting her relatives.

The adventure becomes stranger when the orcs ask the characters for help.

The Delivery

Tamis Lightheart is a halfling that has made quite a bit of money for himself in the trading game, importing finished steel products from a dwarf friend of his in the mountains and selling them to a eager public.

But he finds that all the money can't comfort him when his wifes carriage was attacked by a band of orcs situated in the nearby hills.

Contenting themselves to raping and eating the valets, they sent forth a message with the last remaining servant for a list of items the orcs want in exchange for the Tamis' wife returned to him unharmed.

Tamis immediately collected the requested items and hired some mercenaries that he thought would be up to the job.

This is where the characters come in. Tamis has offered them 4 sp each per day (33% more than regular mercenary pay). It is expected that intrepid adventurers will help him out, otherwise you'll need to find another adventure. Of course you could skip the hostage bit and let them come across the orcs as described later.

The Delivery

As the kidnapping is just a macguffin have the trip to the drop off point be short and uneventful. Of course you can always throw an encounter in to keep them on their toes, otherwise don't worry about it. The spot nominated by the orcs has a good vantage point for them,

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allowing them to see if anyone is going to try something stupid like a flanking attack. Perception rolls from the characters show that no ambush has been set. It seems that the orcs just wish to make a trade after all. Given orc nature its not had to believe that Tamis' wife has already been eaten and that this is a trap to lure more food in. Today though, this is not the case.

The orc chieftain, Garzlun, greets Tamis who timidly demands his wife immediately but Garzlun ignores him to inspect the cargo containing foodstuffs, clothing, blankets, pots and pans and other household items. All them time he casts sidelong glances at the characters as if sizing them up.

After a while Garzlun will indicate his satisfaction with the gear and wave a scarf to indicate to orc further up a small, wooded hill to bring Tamis' wife. While this is happening Garzlun will enquire of the party which is their leader.

The Orcs Request

Pulling the party leader aside, Garzlun will make of him his strange request.

"My name is Garzlun, and while you may think me vile and reprehensible, I have a proposition to make to you. It is well known that orcs are magically resistant, so I require your assistance with a magical problem. I won't insult you by making promises of safety, I know you prefer the word of a common street thief to that of an orc, and the truth is that if you follow me you may well die. Are you interested in listening to what I have to propose?"

If the party leader agrees, Garzlun will go on to tell him about some ruins that his band found that is said to contain an orc artifact. They have tried to explore it but have been stymied by magical effects and traps inside the ruins, over which the orcs have little command. In short, Garzlun wants the characters to enter the ruins with him to find what he is after.

In return the characters will be allowed to take their share of the loot with them, given what the orcs have seen so far, it should be a profitable venture. The characters may haggle over the amount of loot but Garzlun won't allow his men to be stiffed as this could cause a coup in which he becomes the next meal.

If the character agrees then Garzlun will be keen for them to come with him straight away. If they wish to escort Tamis and his wife back to town then Garzlun will leave a few troops at this spot that can lead the characters to the orc lair.

Under no circumstance will Garzlun willingly reveal the location of the ruins. His belief in the power of the lost artifact to improve his races lot in life is total.

Whether the characters escort Tamis or leave him to make his own way, he gets back to town safely. If they left him to get home by himself then he only pays for the trip to the meeting place. He also warns the characters not to go with the orcs (mainly cause he wants his sorry ass protected).

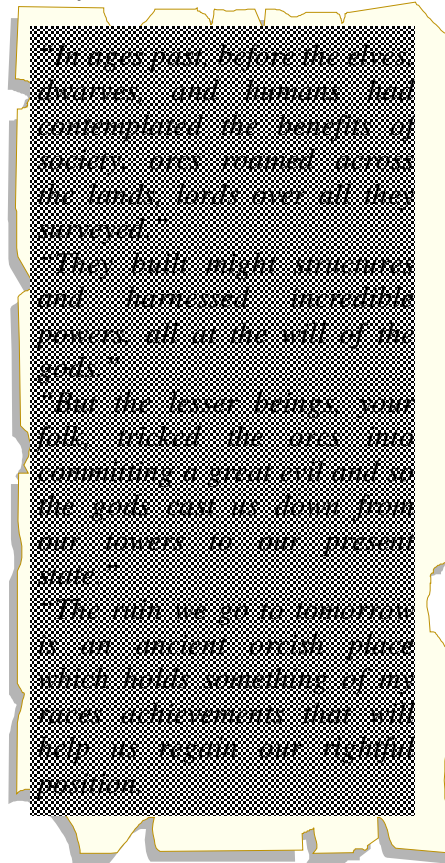
The Orc Lair

At the orc lair the characters get a bit of jeering to the effect "Hey Garzlun, have you brought some more dinner?" or "That cute one is mine".

Garzlun will explain that the characters are here to help explore the ruins but that won't stop some high-spirited ribbing. Orc psychology hates most other living

things so the characters are due for some invective. Garzlun in his way as a host will offer ale (an orc brew akin to brake fluid) and any female or male that they can bully into submission for 'companionship'.

If asked about the artifact Garzlun will tell the characters a bit of orc history that he has learned.

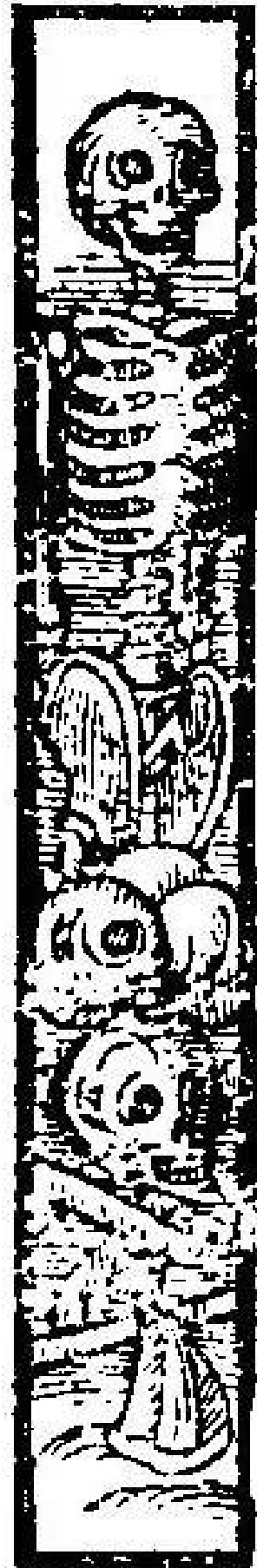


In Garzlun's mind, use of the actual item is less important than its existence, proof that the orcs were once a mighty race as important as the elves, dwarves and humans hold themselves.

Getting There

The trek along the mountains will take 2 days. The first day is considered wandering through Normal Wilderness and the second day is Magical Wilderness.

As the orcs know the way quite well and the adversaries they are likely to face then they get a -20 bonus to reduce the chance of an encounter.





The Ruins of Dalor Than

After two days of travelling, poking through from the bedrock of the mountain, can be seen a sturdy barbican of ancient workmanship, impressive even to the eyes of a dwarf.

Its builders were indeed the orcs of old that ruled the lands before their destruction at the hands of the dragons. Studying the ruins though gives mixed opinions.

The decorative work is simple, utilitarian almost. The figures depicted on the walls are little more than stick figures. In essence they could be done by any of the races, orc, human, dwarf, elf, or halfling. Any elf would decry it as being elven as the images are too flat and uninterested, probably from early man, or dwarven who are also lacklustre artists.

A dwarf would be less interested in the pictures as the actual structure itself. They would note the complex groinings and buttresses and state simply that if it is not dwarven made then it is at least from dwarven inspiration; though the pictures are definitely not dwarven, there not stout enough.

A human would most likely claim anything showing remote brilliance is bound to be one of their lost ancestor nations (that's what humans are like).

The oddest part of the dungeon is that each room has its own artificial lighting and heating. This is supplied by a glass jar filled with a yellow gas. When activated it can provide a glow of any desired brightness and heat if desired. They are simple to operate but initially require an Easy (+40) Attunement roll. They globes are powered by the mana generator in the lower level and pulling them from their mountings break this connection. The orcs have no idea how to operate them.

To all this positing Garz lun will smile quietly to himself.

1 – Entrance: Read this passage the first time the characters reach the fortress.

Tasting from the mountain like an exposed skull shows the entrance to the ancient fortress of unknown origin. Hopefully inside the remains of its creators will be found.

Reaching out from the mountain is a 20' wide stone causeway littered with rocks from the mountain face above.

Flanking the causeway are two 30' wide towers.

A portcullis bars the way into area 3 but the bars have been bent in one spot.

Garz lun explains that they lost their first guard here when he was zapped by the portcullis when he touched it. The tried to lift the portcullis with staves but couldn't budge it. They finally managed to pry some bars open to allow passage to squeeze through. A hard task when you can't touch the bars.

Maneuvering through the gap requires a Light (+20) Agility or Acrobatics roll. Touching the bars exposes the character to a +50 Medium Electricity critical.

2 – Tower Lower Levels: Read the following text box to the players.

The rooms you have entered into have not been used for centuries and thick with dust and vermin spore. The supplies they hold look as though they have fallen to the vicissitudes of time. In one corner is a ladder going up to the roof.

These rooms hold very little of value as most has succumbed to time. Diligent searching and a Very

Hard (-40) Perception roll will reveal an ancient relic armour (01 – 50) or weapon (51 – 100) (see page 150).

3 – Tower Upper Levels: Read the following text box to the players.

Dominating this level is a strangely designed ballista that looks as though it has fared better than most items in the fortress. From its mounts it could fire on many targets.

The ballista has no string nor any device to pull one back. A seat is mounted on the left hand side of the ballista. In front of the seat is a bar with two levers and a press stud.

The levers operate elevation and rotation (but not towards the mountain or towers) and the press stud fires a +50 Large Heat Bolt.

This is powered by the mana generator downstairs, removing it from its mounts breaks this connection.

4 – Entry Hall: Read the following text box to the players.

Beyond the portcullis is a large 40' wide by 50' deep room with 4 exits, two left and two right, leading from it. A weapons rack of rusted weapons is at the rear of the room.

Through the portcullis, which opens down (the orcs were trying to lift it up), is a large 40' by 50' room where mounted or foot troops can be rallied for combat.

A weapons rack at the back of the room contains many ordinary weapons and a few stranger looking ones. The stranger looking weapons bear a resemblance to a spear but have a distinct handgrip midway along the shaft which has a socket for some other item.

At a guess the socket would hold a decorative gem and is missing due to pilferage, however that would mean it was a large gem. The socket is in fact for a crystal that can hold mana, allowing a trained user to fire disruption bolts. Disruption bolts are a Medium Impact critical with a extra Small External Poison critical of the same value. The wielder can use his skill with a crossbow to make attacks with this weapon.

5 – Prison: Read the following text box to the players.

A solid timber door with iron bands presents itself to you. It bears the marks of axes and other attacks. "It is very well locked," states Garzlun simply. Indeed instead of the usual lock you are faced with a copper plate placed at shoulder height.

This door is magically locked. It can be opened by an Attunement roll, or a Dispel Magic skill roll. The door has a repeating Mage Seal (cost 20PP) and gets a +100 bonus to resisting Dispel Magic.

The room beyond consists of a 40' long corridor with an unlocked door at the other end and four iron gates on each side showing into 10' wide by 20' deep cells. The whole area has not been disturbed in centuries, but a Routine Perception roll will notice fresh tracks in the dust and something being dragged. A character would estimate that this passage was used about a week ago, coinciding with the orcs first visit. Garzlun will state that this might explain what happened to his missing warrior.





6 – Torture Chamber: Read the following text box to the players.

You are amazed at the state of this room. While all the others bear the burden of ages, this room looks like it has been recently used. Everything has been kept clean and tidy and the workable in the middle has been in its proper use, far too good to be used as the missing etc. The other orcs live in anger and superstition.

This room is a torture chamber, no bone about that one. This makes for good evidence that the structure is neither dwarven nor elven, who don't take time to torture their victims.

Anyone making a Healing roll over the body of the orc can determine that he was operated on while alive, and without recourse to pain killers. He took several days of agonising pain before he died. This revelation will cause the maddened orcs to tear the room apart, but this is a good thing as it will make the secret door on the eastern wall noticeable with a Medium (+0) Perception roll instead of a Very Hard (-40) one.

A second Light (+20) Perception roll is needed to locate the opening mechanism or it can be bashed down with Medium (+0) Strength roll.

The corridor beyond has been hewn from the rock.

7 – Guardians Room: Read the following text box to the players.

The passage in the rock opens into a larger 20' x 20' cavern with another exit. As you move towards the exit strange leering creatures materialise from the shadows.

Two demons have been bound into this room to guard the temple beyond. Like all demons they are a weird agglomeration of species. These look like large vultures with lions claws instead of wings and a serpents tail instead of legs.

Demons Class II: Lvl 4; Size M; BMR 12'; Init 4; DB 55; Hits 80; Attacks 70 L-Krush, Haste; Outlook Berserk.

Haste: as the spell, 2 extra attacks for 3 rounds or 3 extra attacks for 1 round

8 – Temple of Largual: Read the following text box to the players.

Having sent the demons back from whence they came you have ventured on to find a 40' by 40' room with a large basalt altar at the far end. You look in consternation at the trappings until Garzlun murmurs "Largual". Largual is the ork, god of death and misery, scourge of the lands and driver of the orcs to damnation. It is said that they worship him to keep him from doing even worse evil.

On oppressive weight of tangible evil exudes from this room. Even the orcs seem cowed.

From behind the altar emerges a gaunt orcish figure that challenges the characters "Seek ye the path of truth or eternal damnation?" If they answer that they are after the truth then Orphgla will start to espouse the canon of the church of Largual: stuff like 'The strong maketh the will', 'The weak shall be as grist', etc, etc.

Garzlun wants to lop his head off but would prefer the characters help, without saying as much.

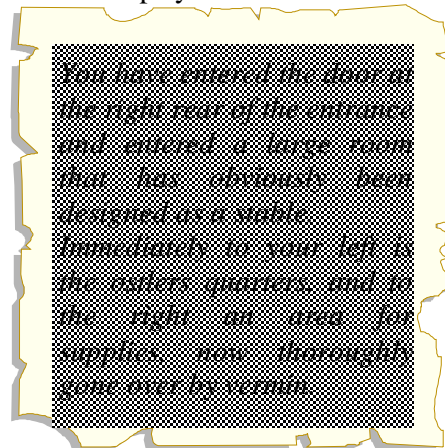
If the characters answer that they are seeking eternal damnation then he will try to subdue and then torture them in room 6.

Undead Class III: Lvl 10; Size M; BMR 12'; Init 8; DB 70; Hits 120; Attacks 85 M-Krush; Outlook Cruel.

100 PP: +80 (24 ranks) Divine Hammer, +80 (24 ranks) Sleep, +72 (18 ranks) Earthen Transmutation, +72 (18 ranks) Drain Life

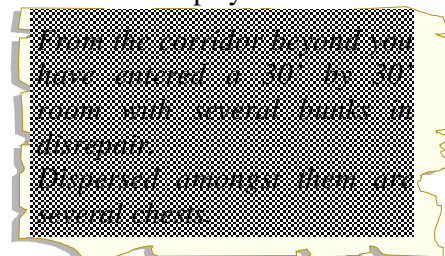
Forest Scale (worn), 2 sp, cartographer's kit, longsword, drums, herb case, puzzle box, notebook (with notes for 8 spells).

9 – Stables: Read the following text box to the players.



Really there's not much more to say than that. An ancient relic bit and bridle may be found, and if any of the orcs are hungry probably a rat or two could be found.

10 – Barracks: Read the following text box to the players.



This barracks could hold 18 troops in 6 triple bunks. Each set of bunks also has three dryrot affected footlockers with it.

Resting amidst the debris of one footlocker is a small poisonous snake who has been happy eating

rats. He doesn't take kindly to being disturbed.

Snake: Lvl 2; Size S; BMR 10'; Init 8; DB 80; Hits 40; Attacks 55 S-Puncture, Poison; Outlook Berserk.

CRR (120) – No affect

CRR (110) – 1d100+20 on Internal Poison critical

CRR (100) – 1d100+10 on Internal Poison critical

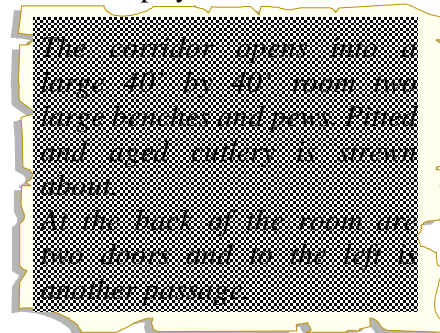
CRR (90) – 1d100 on Internal Poison critical

CRR (80) – 1d100-10 on Internal Poison critical

CRR (70) – 1d100-20 on Internal Poison critical

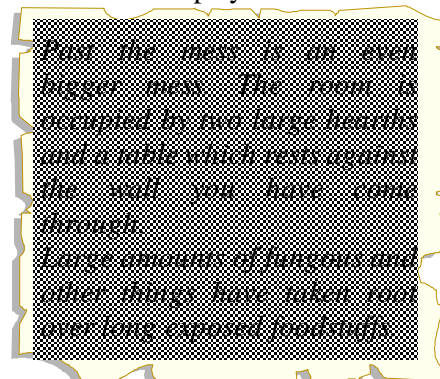
Failure – Character receives maximum result from the Internal Poison critical

11 – Mess: Read the following text box to the players.



Exceedingly ordinary, the only thing of worth in this room is the ancient relic cutlery. All the pieces together add up to 10 gp.

12 – Kitchen: Read the following text box to the players.



This can be a very dangerous room as the local fungi have developed a rather aggressive policy regarding the

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acquisition of prey (in a dungeon would you have it any other way?) Moving through the room stirs up changes in the air currents that the local fungi are very adept at detecting. When they do they release spores that inhibit rational thought and cause creatures in its area of affect (the kitchen) to attack each other.

Each character needs to make a Stamina RR (120). Those that fail will be taken with a great fury and attack the nearest creature. This rage last for a number of rounds equal to the amount that the character failed by divided by 5.

13 – Grand Hall: Read the following text box to the players.

You have entered a larger 20' wide corridor with a mosaic floor stretching left and right. To the left it opens into a large room and to the right it extends into darkness. Another smaller passage is directly opposite from you.

Characters can make a Very Hard (-40) Perception roll from the temple end of this hall to hear a steady thumping/whirring noise from area 21 downstairs. At the stair end this roll becomes Hard (-20).

Along the hall are three traps, each individual, and each marked with a specific tile pattern to help the residents (when there were some) avoid them.

Eastern Trap: Standing on this tile vents a stream of superheated gas requiring a +80 Medium Heat critical roll. Locating the trap requires an Extremely Hard (-60) Perception roll.

Middle Trap: Standing on this tile releases a cloud of poison gas requiring a +60 roll on the External Poison critical table. Locating it requires an Extremely Hard (-60) Perception roll.

Western trap: Stepping on this tile electrifies the 10' x 10' section of floor. All on it are affected by a +80 Medium Electricity critical. Locating it requires an Extremely Hard (-60) Perception roll.

14 – Temple: Read the following text box to the players.

The hall opens into a large 40' wide by 50' deep room with a concave rear wall. Inside the concavity stands the statue of a large individual. Adorning the walls are murals depicting what would appear to be a story.

A character with a modicum of intelligence can read a story from the murals. Get any character trying to do so to make a Hard (-20) Intelligence roll to see what he determines. If you treat the roll as a percentage maneuver you can tell then as much as the percentage rolled including any unknown pieces under that.

- 10% A being called Galdor drags himself from the illimitable waters.
- 20% He creates lands upon which to walk.
- 30% Shrubs spring from under his feet.
- 40% Animals are formed from sweat dropping from his brow.
- 50% He creates dragons to control the elements.
- 60% He creates giants to control the animals.
- 70% With the dragons help, the giants create the orcs.
- 80% The orcs wield powerful magic to make many wonders.
- 90% The orcs create the other races.
- 100% New gods are introduced.

The statue is a depiction of the giant Dedromal. According to many current religions, determined by making a Medium (+0) Mundane Lore: Religion, Dedromal is a wicked giant said to have taught the orcs how to appreciate the flesh of other humanoids.

The way he is depicted in this temple is that of a nurturer, helping his charges learn new ways of helping themselves.

The statue is in fact a magic item and anyone who makes an Extremely Hard (-60, normally Absurd (-100)) Insight roll can contact Dedromal. A successful Mental Focus roll can improve this roll.

15 – Scribes Quarters: Read the following text box to the players.

You have entered a simple 20' by 20' room with a large desk and chair.

This room was used by a scribe for the complex. While all the papers have become brittle with age, there is a set of ancient relic quill pens worth 20 sp.

16 – Servant's Quarters: Read the following text box to the players.

From the corridor you have entered a 20' deep by 40' wide room with many beds and footlocks, all with the indelible mark of time. Unlike the barracks you entered before, this room has a more haphazard look.

This room hold about 5 families of humans. This might not be readily apparent initially until a child's well-crafted doll is discovered, with human features. As an ancient relic it is worth 1 sp.

17 – Storeroom: Read the following text box to the players.

This room is half filled with old crates and barrels that have been broken open and most of the contents scattered and ruined. Apparently it was also a storeroom.

Yes it was a storeroom. No there is nothing salvageable. On the bright side there is nothing nasty waiting for the characters to poke their fingers in the wrong place.

18 – Bathroom: Read the following text box to the players.

The corridor opens into a 40' by 40' room with several benches around the walls. At the back of the room are two tubs that hold water.

The tubs do indeed hold water that can be magically heated and cooled using a control stud found on each tub. It looks like an ornamentation so may be overlooked. A character will need a to pass a Hard (-20) Perception roll to notice it. The controls are very easy so Attunement rolls are Routine (+60).

One of the tubs has leaked some magic into the water, causing it to animate over the years. Not being socially adept it will attack the party.

Water Weird: Lvl 10; Size L; BMR 0'; Init 8; DB 85; Hits 100; Attacks 90 M-Krush, 45 T-Cold Bolt; Outlook Bellig.

The water weird can sprout 1d6+3 heads on any given round, each of which can attack. It can also fire Tiny water bolts with a bonus of +60.

As a magical construct it is not affected by mundane weapons, though emptying the bath does a Slash attack equivalent to the implement used.





Bucket	Medium
Cooking pot	Medium
Hand	Tiny
Hat	Small

A brass fitting has also been imbued with magic and if taken works as a dwarven beard ring.

19 – Lounge: Read the following text box to the players.

The corridor opens into a large 40' by 40' lounge with two thick comfortable sofas and a side table. Hanging on the wall is a faded and rather tattered map that still shows a good deal of the area's underground. A dwarf is conducting a ceremony under the watchful eyes of a dragon and giant. On the wall opposite is another door.

The description is pretty much all there is to this room.

20 – Bedroom: Read the following text box to the players.

This 40' by 40' room once served as the den of a high ranking official of this complex. Once richly appointed the shine has definitely faded from the gold and silver inlays now. A large wooden desk with gold handles on the drawers saw the room utilized as a study. On it is a silver fibrous quill and ink set. Dominating one corner of the room is a large double bed on which lies a body.

The body is completely dead and under no circumstances will it animate. The body has been rather well preserved in the environment and study will discern definite orcish

features. Its clothing is of a style and cut that betokens value and the cloth, even in tatters speaks of high quality.

In one hand of the stiff is a small vial that once held poison, though determining this would be nearly impossible.

On the desk can be found a locked journal. To open the lock requires a Hard (-20) Locks & Traps roll. Inside is the story of Felgarun Wisecrafter. It details how he was chosen from amongst the leading artisans to oversee the building of the underground complex and the creation of the mana generators below (though no details are given as to how they were built).

The story goes on to state the need for security after the schism that had developed amongst the peoples with distrust even hitting the new races. The writer notes the aggressive attitude of some of the members of what is called the guild of artificers and the need on two occasions to fend off attacks from outside parties and the discovery of a spy.

While he abhorred the idea the writer commissioned the construction of an interrogation room, though he was disturbed by the hired inquisitor and always referred to him in a suspicious manner.

In the end of the journal the writer details how one of the dragons was slain by an arrogant artificer and that the dragons have gone on rampage of slaughter, hardly checked by the giant overseers. With the world as he knows it coming to an end, the writer mentions taking precautions to light his pyre and that he would imbibe of the waters of death.

On no account anywhere does the writer refer to himself as an orc. The book is made of a strange metallic appearing pages and is practically invaluable to a collector of such treasures.

21 – Office: Read the following text box to the players.

50' down the stairs is a 20' by 20' room with a table and chairs plus a desk and chair. On the west wall is a set of double doors from which a whirring/thumping can be heard.

This room served as a guard room to keep unauthorised personal out. The table and chairs are all a bit time worn.

22 – Power House: Read the following text box to the players.

Collectively your jaws drop. This room would have to be one of the most impressive pieces of architecture you have ever seen. Its walls stretch out of sight into the darkness.

The whirring/thumping you discover is a bipartisan noise with the thumping coming from large metal housings from which a large metal rod is flowing in and out of. The whirring is emanating from large cylindrical tubs.

A dull red glow comes from far off to your left. There is a door on the same wall you came in from to your right. About 50' in front of you is a sturdy pillar stretching to the roof.

The metal housings are 4 giant pistons. Inside is a piston head about 20' in diameter. Water is feed into the pistons from a natural spring and flashed into steam by magma (the dull red glow). This action drives the pistons up and down turning a cam that is in turn attached to 4 mana generators on the right hand side of the room. The generators

pump out several hundred power points a round to a system that has been disconnected for a quite a few thousand years. The potential for abuse of power here is enormous.

A row of tables along the north wall hold a variety of half-completed magical do-dads. One table has a large gems and a charging mount suited for the spear from room 4.

In the spot where a body is marked are several corpses pulled limb from limb. The preparations spoken of in the journal from room 20 included getting the security golem to destroy the generator in such a way it would explode. The engineers who had no idea what was happening valiantly tried to stop it but were all killed. They did do enough damage to it that it stopped trying to wreck the engines. It has instead gone back to its original programming of protecting the power house from intruders.

Golem (wounded): Lvl 10; Size L; BMR 12'; Init 0; DB 90; Hits 150; Attacks 130 L-Krush; Outlook Prot. The golem is working with a -20 penalty gained over a thousand years ago.

If you don't want this edifice falling into player or NPC hands, have critical parts be damaged in the ensuing fight, completing the last orders of the chief artificer and setting the machinery for a self destruct course.

23 – Workstations: Read the following text box to the players.

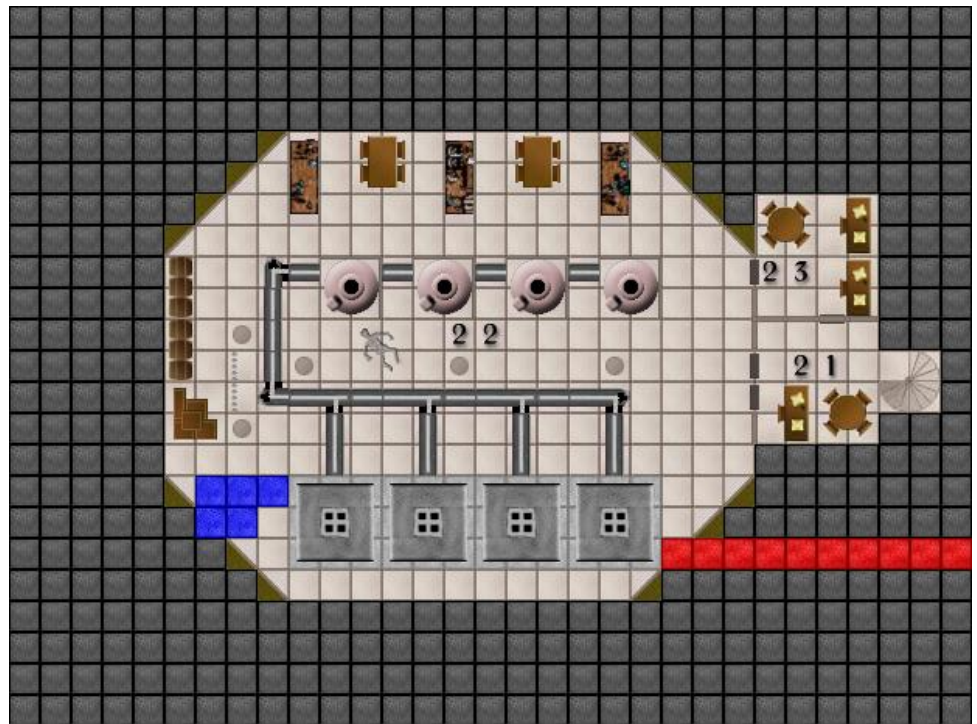
You leave the constant din of the machines outside for the relative quiet of this 40' by 40' room caparisoned with a large desks and a table with chairs.

Unfortunately, time has ruined any plans and designs that were kept in here.





Entrance Level to the Ruins of Dalor Than



Power House level of the Ruins of Dalor Than