

ADVENTURE I™

HACK • SLASH • LOOT

They fell out of the darkness — quietly, quickly.

Without warning, they were upon us. At first, I wasn't sure what it was, but once Ferrin took a mortal wound, it was only a matter of time before we all fell. I hid in the darkness as one by one, my comrades were slain by arrows and blades. There was no way out and we were surrounded. I looked across the tunnel at Aerin and her tears betrayed her. I had to do something.

And then I remembered the orb the wizard left us. "Only in the darkest of hours should one use the Orb of Antirr." Slowly I slid my hand into the satchel, keeping quiet and still. As my fingers circled the cold glass, a thin noose dropped around my neck and pulled me from the darkness as the orb fell from my hand and shattered on the hard stone.

ROLL FOR INITIATIVE

From the Ice Caves of Azinth to the dusty plains of Malloc's black market to the shipwrecked shores of a haunted isle, Adventure I takes your PCs on 24 separate grueling adventures spanning 12 levels.

The journeys are arduous, surprising, and full of wonder. With over 50 new monsters, magic items, and spells, this book propels you on adventures like none you've ever experienced.

Join your comrades in the race to save an empire or restore a king to glory. The time is now.

Grab your sword.

ADVENTURE AWAITS

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- Reformatted, rewritten, and restructured adding new elements to adventures you already love
- New maps

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ADVENTURE I



**You are what you do... when it counts.
Heroism is not a fad.**

INTRODUCTION

COMPILATION

Jeff Ibach

WRITING

A. A. Acevedo, Ken Carpenter, J. Darby Douglas, Kat Figueroa, Marcelo Figueroa, Matt Forbeck, Andrew Getting, Travis Heerman, Sean Holland, Steve Hough, Jeff Ibach, Patrick Kapera, Lori Lane, James Macduff, jim pinto, Ree Soesbee, Rob Vaux, Eric Yarle, Kevin Wilson, Rich Wulf

ART DIRECTION

jim pinto

COVER DESIGN

Steve Hough and Mark Jelfo

COVER ILLUSTRATION

William O'Connor

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Cris Dornaus, Carl Frank, Darren M. A. Gilvert, Lisa Hunt, Amandine Labarre

EDITING

Jeff Ibach, jim pinto, Katie Yates

INTERIOR DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Nate Barnes and Mark Jelfo

LINE DEVELOPER

jim pinto

MANAGING EDITOR

Jeff Ibach

D20 RULES MAVEN

Sean Holland

PLAYTESTING AND ADVICE

Royce Groff, Sean Holland, Dawn Ibach, Rob Longmuir, Mike Leader, Jen Ly, Zung Ly, Kevin Millard, Ed Morris, Laura Morris, Darlene Rosero, Edgar Rosero, Angelo Sargentini, Charlene Sharkey, James Sharkey, Janet Thomas, Scott Thomas, Phil Van-Mater Miner, Cheryl Van-Mater Miner.

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Sean Holland deserves a huge thank you. His contributions to this book cannot be measured.

DEDICATION

You.



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Adventure I, a collection of d20 Fantasy scenarios from Alderac Entertainment Group. These modules were first released at the dawn of the d20 movement under the "Adventure Keep" title, providing Dungeon Masters with ready-to-play adventures: one-shot stories or links to home grown campaigns. For this collection, we retooled all of the game rules to comply with the new 3.5 Edition of the d20 System. In addition, we added dozens of options for running the adventures, expanded advice for the DM, created random encounter charts, helped with PC knowledge and information regarding the adventure, made bardic knowledge more useful, and added (new) improved encounters that are sure to make the adventures stellar. In some cases, the plots themselves are reworked to get the most drama out of your game and to keep internal logic consistent.

ADVENTURE CONDITIONS

Naming conventions are universal. If the adventures are worked into an ongoing campaign, replace any NPC or settlement name with one suitable to your campaign environment. Replacing an important NPC in the adventure with one the PCs have a relation with adds verisimilitude to the adventure and raises the interest level quite a bit.

Throughout these adventures, some items are standard. All doors, for example, unless specifically noted in the text have the following statistics:

■ **Basic Wooden Door:** hardness 5; hit points 10; break DC 13; locked DC 15.

Not all doors may be locked. Make individual determinations depending on the circumstances or simply roll 1d20 (1–10 it's locked, 11–20 it's open).

For lighting conditions, if there is constant activity with creatures capable of producing their own light (either with torches or lanterns), consider the lighting normal. Some kind of light is still required for creatures with low-light vision. On less-traveled pathways or personal rooms, the PCs should produce their own light-sources.

BARDIC KNOWLEDGE

A majority of the adventures have sidebars included specifically for the Bardic Knowledge special ability. This presents DCs for bards using their special class ability to gain information or obscure knowledge relating to the adventure at hand, giving PCs helpful information once they have a basic idea of what is involved. These also double as Information Gathering skill checks, or other "in the know" skill DCs at the DM's discretion (Knowledge (local) for rural town information, Knowledge (nobility

and royalty) when dealing with kings, lords, and nobles, and Knowledge (arcana) when magical lore would be in question.)

These were specifically written in order to detail what lore would be readily available, what would be told to other passing bards, or what could be known within reason. Just because a bard can take 20 on his Bardic Knowledge check doesn't mean he gains access to knowledge that simply has never been relayed. Telling him "the secret of the adventure" takes a lot of the mystery away from game play, which would effectively make this book useless, the monster stats aside.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Nearly every adventure has a random encounter table. These encounters are to extend the adventure by providing encounters the PCs would have en route to the adventure. Very rarely are these to be used while actually partaking in the adventure itself. They can represent hunting creatures, NPCs with information, or encounters with creatures with clues as to what the adventure has in store. Unless otherwise instructed, don't use them once the actual adventure plot is underway; use them for the journey there.

City and town adventures are a different matter, however. Frequently the adventure begins with the PCs already in the adventure setting, and there is no set path of action as there is in a dungeon setting. In this case the random encounters are more like incidental mishaps the PCs will naturally run into throughout the adventure, as the city won't sleep or cooperate with the PCs for convenience's sake!

SCALING THE ADVENTURES

Every adventure is intended for a level range of PC participating, and gives basic advice on the types of skills or classes that will be useful. In each case there is a 3-level spread of suggested PC levels. This is intentional. Take this example from the adventure Dawn of the Serpent:

"This adventure is designed for four to six PCs of levels 5 to 7. Wilderness skills are invaluable in this adventure."

If you have four or five PCs, the optimal level of the PCs participating is 6th. If you have fewer than four PCs, the ideal level for the party is 7th. If they have more than five PCs, the ideal level should be 5th.

Noting wilderness skills should clue you in that a ranger or druid in particular would be of benefit to a party undertaking the adventure. These aren't strict requirements, and not having a ranger or druid for this adventure doesn't make it impossible for a party not so equipped to complete it. These are suggestions to help the

INTRODUCTION

DM gauge the theme of the adventure. Undead are a special situation. A party tackling an adventure featuring a majority of undead are going to be at a severe disadvantage if they don't have a cleric in their ranks.

If your PCs are of a level simply unsuitable for the level range suggested, there are still ways to retool the adventures.

- **Mostly Roleplaying:** In this instance the adventure features a healthy mix of roleplaying and investigative skills. There is usually one specific threat monster and it's not encountered often. In this case it would be wise to simply replace the major creature with another monster of the appropriate challenge rating to your group. For example, the medusa in the adventure *Dawn of the Serpent* is a CR 7 creature. If you have a group of 3rd to 4th level PCs, replace the medusa with another stone-making creature, a basilisk, which is CR 5. If you have a group of 10th level PCs you could instead use a greater abyssal basilisk, which is CR 12.
- **Combat Variety:** These types of adventures feature an array of encounters with classic D&D monsters of all types. Without rewriting the adventure or spending hours reworking stats, there are some easy fixes you can implement. If your group is having an easy time of

the adventure, add an additional creature or two to the encounter. Don't do this abstractly, simply consult the DMG for the consequences of adding creatures with differing CRs to an encounter and the overall effect it has on the challenge to a group of PCs. At its most basic, taking 1 or 2 creatures away makes a combat easier, while adding 1 or 2 could make it nearly impossible.

In either case, simply adjusting the stats on the fly can make all the difference in combat. Each creature or NPC with weapons, armor or tools has them listed in their stat blocks. Replacing a guard's chain mail with leather armor and retrofitting him with a short sword instead of a battleaxe can make a difference. A creature could be wounded, having just fought a battle with another monster not in the adventure. In this case, it confronts the PCs with less hit points, perhaps 1/3rd or even more off its total. And for spellcasting encounters, not every monster with spell-like abilities or NPC sorcerer will have saved all its powers especially for the PCs...

For monsters, there is excellent, easy advice in Chapter 4 of the *Monster Manual* detailing how to "level up" monsters to make them more challenging.

Do not try to equip NPCs with magic items outside of their range just to get an edge on the PCs. Every magic item you introduce for your foes is generally going to find its way into your PCs' hands, eventually. Don't equip an NPC with anything you don't want your players to take advantage of.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE "MYSTERIOUS" STRANGER IN THE TAVERN

1d20 Adventure Trigger

- 1 An NPC relative of the group approaches them for help.
- 2 An omen or spirit talks to a druid or ranger filling out the adventure's details.
- 3 An organization (guild, church) of one or more PCs has an interest in the area of the adventure and asks them to investigate.
- 4 Bard needs to fulfill a specific quest to "live the experience".
- 5 Have a fellow adventuring band be celebrated as high heroes with special treatment just before dropping your hook.
- 6 Have the one telling the tale get the name of the villain wrong, accidentally naming a villain the PCs thought they defeated.
- 7 Have the possible tales of treasure be overly exaggerated for greedy PCs.
- 8 Illusionist needs to see first-hand a specific monster so he can accurately depict it with illusion spells.
- 9 Necromancer PC or NPC needs an anatomical examination of the featured monster.
- 10 NPC has something the party needs (exotic equipment, spell to trade, gems to purchase) and lives in the adventure location.
- 11 Paladin needs to atone for a minor transgression and is assigned the adventure by his church.
- 12 Passing bard tells the tale of the plight of the village or town where he last played.
- 13 PCs come across a (false?) treasure map leading them to the adventure location.
- 14 PCs come across a deed to a small house, keep or dilapidated inn in the region of the adventure.
- 15 Rival dares the PC to undertake the quest.
- 16 Romantic interest of the PC has a vested interest in the adventure location; dealing with the threat would endear them to him or her.
- 17 Swap out the race of those in trouble with one represented by the majority of the PCs (humans become elves or dwarves).
- 18 The Monk's spiritual journey guides him to the adventure's location.
- 19 While researching something unrelated, have the PC stumble on information about the specific magic item or spell related to the planned adventure.
- 20 While scrying on something totally unrelated, give the PC a glimpse of the terror happening in the adventure location.