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What if you steal the bandit treasure? Are they going to be able to figure out that you are the ones who took it? Maybe it's a bad idea for the Fighter to keep that star-shaped shield that was part of the treasure stash. Hmm... this leads to a complicated encounter at the inn, when the bandits show up to reclaim their loot – all 40 of them!

As a Referee, your players will do things that have far reaching consequences and your game could expand beyond the confines of the dungeon.

It's Time to Think Like a Monster

Thinking like a monster is easy. If you apply this kind of thinking to how you design your dungeon encounters, you can create interlocking agendas and personal desires for every living thing the players will face. Some monsters are just dumb critters that run around eating things, some are semi-intelligent and are fixated on one or two specific goals, and others are highly intelligent and may do things to confound the players.

The standard dungeon flunkies that appear everywhere are the kobolds, goblins, orcs, and other semi-humanoid creatures. They aren't really very different from halflings, humans, dwarves, and elves except they are evil, or mean spirited. In many ways, the smaller they are, the more devious they can be. Think of how monsters behave in horror movies: little things are tricky and malicious, big things eat you. And all of these standard creatures are basically the biker gangs of the dungeon.

Yet they aren't entirely stupid. They have a clubhouse somewhere and they also wander around looking for helpless victims to rob and eat. They may set guards or watches around their hideout. Or they may have some drums or gongs they use to call for help or send out warnings. And none of these species really get along, unless there is a much more powerful creature that is ordering them about, like a powerful wizard or baledraug.

When stocking the dungeon, ask yourself: is this their den, or are they merely a hunting party passing through here. If you have a series of adjacent rooms and you populate one with zombies, another with bandits, and the last with goblins, this may not make much sense. You may want to make sets of rooms devoted to just one type of creature, or just one encounter.

In the case of intelligent creatures, you might want to consider what they are doing here. Maybe a set of three rooms is a main meeting hall, a treasure room, and a room for hostages and prisoners. Now you've created a logical relationship between the rooms in one area. And it might be wise to put some sleepy underlings on guard duty in the outer hallways too.

Skeletons, zombies and other lowly semi-resurrected monsters may be the guards of an area ruled by evil Priests, or Wizards.

If you examine the original list for Tonisborg, Greg has added abbreviations for what rooms get used for – there are bedrooms, studies, laboratories, and more.

And the same can be said for any trapped areas in your dungeon. Something made these traps. Are they ancient traps, or has someone put them there recently as part of their defenses?

Creating a reasoned order for the encounters in some of your dungeon areas is fun. Your players will enjoy deducing the logic in these areas as they explore them. But remember not to overthink too much of it. This is a fantasy game and some things just happen "Because it is Fantasy".

The Trap, or Ambush Battle

Motivation is a powerful game element, and monsters should get more devious and tricky as one goes deeper into the dungeon. Up to now we've described some fairly obvious situations. So let's consider just how devious an enemy can be.

The party knows that the bad guys live in a certain part of the dungeon and decide to embark on a mission to exterminate them. The problem is, the bad guys aren't mindlessly waiting to be hunted down and slaughtered. They've got plans of their own and their area is like a fortress.

As the party passes through the passages leading to goblin land, the goblins are secretly opening up trap doors after the party has passed that make it so the party cannot retreat so easily. Each time the party runs across some goblins in a room, the goblins fire a few parting shots with their bows and retreat down a hallway. What the party doesn't know is that these goblins want the party to attack them. They are luring the party deeper into goblin land. Before long, it will become obvious that this is a trap and the goblins will counter-attack in full force. Not only that, but the goblins know all of these tunnels well and have been sneaking around in order to also attack the party from behind.

The Raid Scenario

Let's assume our party survives this first raid. Now the party knows that this area is a fortress. Do they ignore it and move on? Do they attack it in a series of raids, or do they plan everything out so that the goblins do not have a chance to send out alarms for help?

Maybe the smartest thing is to scout it out and find where the alarm triggers and sentries are located first.

Although this kind of example is fairly elaborate, it can be scaled to any size for any level of the dungeon. Maybe you only see one goblin and he runs down the hall away from you. What are the possibilities being created here? Maybe this time, it really is just one goblin running away, one can never be too sure.

"...it is impossible to foresee everything. The gamemaster may find that sometimes it is a good idea to just let the unexpected lead where it will."

Dave Arneson, DNA/DOA, p 7, 1989.

How to be Thief-y without Thieves, or just how Old School is your game?

One of the great controversies of traditional gaming, is whether or not to include a special "Thief" class, or whether any character type can play a Thief. Some feel the Thief class ruins the game, others feel it is iconic. We won't enter into that debate here; however, we have to note that when Tonisborg dungeon was designed and played, there was no Thief class - only Fighting-men, Magic-Users, and Clerics. Or, Warriors, Wizards, and Priests.

For those wanting to experience Tonisborg as its original explorers did, we will offer a few words of guidance on playing without a Thief class.

Thieves, as a class unto themselves, was a concept initially explored by Daniel Wagoner in California and soon broadly introduced to the game by Gary Gygax.

Although Thieves originally are characters with specialized skills for stealing things, they also could move silently, hide in shadows, climb walls, pick pockets, pick locks, and remove traps. Within the context of dungeon quests, they ended up being more like a scout and bomb disposal crew rolled into one character. It was their job to sneak around and also open possibly booby-trapped treasure chests.

That's not to say there weren't Thieves in early Blackmoor; one of the earliest characters, "McDuck," was a professional Thief and leader of a guild of Thieves, preying on the town merchant's monopoly that was controlled by original player Dan Nicholson. For McDuck, and other characters with other professional leanings, their skills were a matter of their background and might, or might not, give them a better chance at doing something "Thiefy". McDuck, might, at Referee discretion, be given a better chance at being sneaky, for example, or backstabbing someone, but otherwise would not be treated any differently than a character who captained a ship or ruled a barony. In the early dungeons, these sorts of background professions were secondary to the character's skills with weapons or magic, and anybody could attempt anything, often with equal chances to all other character types.

But for a generation of gamers accustomed to the formal specialized skills of the Thief class and the special problems dungeon designers devised to utilize these skills, it can be a challenge to think about how to play a game where everybody and nobody is a Thief. So let's take a look at some common thief-y situations and ways the original players may have dealt with them.

Room and Corridor Traps

These are the sort of traps built into the architecture – the covered pit and swinging pendulum and so forth. The first, and most classic, solution that players devised for these sorts of traps is the noble Ten Foot Pole.

In addition to the myriad uses a pole can be put to, prodding and pushing sections of floor or corridors with one was a classic means of tripping a trap from a safe distance. It can also be used to detect traps – especially pit traps – in the first place. However constantly tapping a pole down the corridor is bound to both warn and attract the locals.

Poles aren't the only tool for trap hunting, and players should be encouraged to be creative in this regard. One popular trick is pouring out water or some other liquid near a suspected trap. Often, if there are small cracks in the surrounding structure, the water will seep in. Weighted bags tossed at suspected pressure plates are another example, and these can work especially well when a rope is attached for easy retrieval.

A Referee shouldn't be giving their players clues about traps unless the players specifically state that they are examining an area or taking precautions to avoid traps.

It should also be remembered that dungeon architecture is the special purview of dwarves. In the original rules they aren't given a special ability to detect architectural traps, but it is easily inferred. Curiously, the Beyond this Point be Dragons draft grants dwarves a 1-2 in 6 chance of finding secret doors under a heading labeled "Doors, Traps, and Secret Doors", but no mention of traps occurs in the paragraph. Reasonably then, dwarves may be given that 1 - 2 in 6 chance to detect any architectural discrepancies, including not just secret doors, but also things like pressure plate traps and so forth.

By the way, the same observational skill could reasonably be applied to wood elf characters and those with outdoorsman background when traveling through the wilderness – a situation not likely to come up in Tonisborg, of course.

The best means of finding traps however is through magic, specifically the second level Cleric spell Find Traps. Some magic swords, if you are lucky enough to get one, also have this spell ability.

Lastly, let's not forget this bit of wisdom:

"Of course there is always the ever popular "Halfling On a Rope."

*Dave Arneson, ODD74 forum, Tools for searching for traps?,
Nov 2, 2008, 11:52am*

Arneson here is adding his thoughts to a discussion about sending various animals and monsters ahead of the party. A clever party will in fact treat dungeon encounters as a possible resource. Why kill all those giant rats when maybe you can catch 3 or 4 of them and turn them loose in that corridor where you think that poison gas trap may be waiting?

Lock Picking and Lock Traps

Frankly, in the original game, such things were rarely an issue. There was little reason to ever pick a lock when a hammer and an iron spike was the only "key" necessary, and here again, once a lock was disabled, a Ten-Foot-Pole would come in handy to pry open whatever it was from a safe(r) distance. But if a lock really needed to be picked, almost anybody could do it...eventually. Even then, when there was a need to speed up the process, a vial of acid can work wonders on a lock

Combination safes are a different matter, of course. In fact, it was the existence of combination safes in Daniel Wagoner's game that led them to invent their special "Box Man" Thief character in the first place. Does Tonisborg have any combination safes? That's up to you as the Referee, but if it does then perhaps one of your player characters with a checkered past has some skill in that area, or perhaps the combination is scrawled on some little scrap lying amongst the detritus of that empty room nearby or wherever you imagine. It may be that the players must resort to magic to get the safe open, or else haul it out of the dungeon and bludgeon it till it pops. Those are the traditional RPG ways of doing things.

Traps inside a container, like a chest with poison gas, aren't really much

different from architectural traps. In all these cases it is up to the players to be observant and ask the right questions to locate traps, and then to avoid or attempt to disarm them through some careful, innovative means, and it is up to the Referee to decide the success or failure of these attempts with the help of the dice.

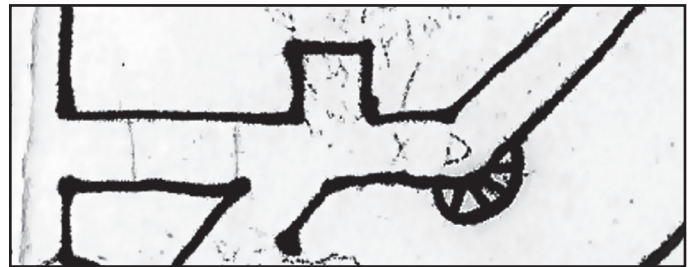
Additionally, this same approach can be applied to the other Thief skills: Picking Pockets, Hiding, and Climbing Difficult Surfaces. Like any manual skill, all of these actions involve a character's Dexterity. However, only the most difficult and dangerous of attempts should call for a die roll. (See the rules for Saving Throws.)

The original rules, as well as Blackmoor supplement, had sections that discussed skilled professionals who can be hired to do specific tasks. These are townspeople that one can hire occasionally. Perhaps the lock specialist has no fighting or dungeon adventure abilities at all, and merely travels with the party as a non-player character who is called on only when special circumstances arise.

Fleshing Out Tonisborg's Architecture

Although most dungeon maps may look more or less the same, they are designed by someone who has a fairly good idea of what is where, how things look, and what could happen, even if it isn't written down anywhere. They can be anything from knowing that an area is full of mist, to knowing that these monsters over here have an alliance with the monsters in another area and can call for help. For now, focus on things that relate to the setting.

This enlargement from level 2 is a good example of Greg's "on the map" style of dungeon decor notation.



The letter X in the hallway relates to some barely legible text on the original map. Yet this notation does not relate to more detailed information about monsters and treasures that are found in the numbered dungeon level key on the margin of the map.

As you can see, an original Fantasy Game Master such as Greg Svenson, will often make small notes on the map, and keep the specific details in his head, because anything he creates will likely be killed or destroyed by the adventurers as they play.

Our problem is that we aren't Greg and we can't know what that little note means. In fact, these maps are so old even Greg can't remember most of what he had planned for his dungeon.

While you can certainly run Tonisborg as is, by using Greg's dungeon room key, (the long numbered lists with monsters and treasures that match up to each numbered location on his maps) it more than likely will lead to a somewhat bland and featureless game, as you do not know what else is there. Ideally, you are the kind of Referee who wants to do more than just phone in the adventure. This goes back to the concept of the living dungeon, where a Referee is providing much more than a hack and slash experience of rolling dice and killing monsters. The object of playing this dungeon is to invent an alternate reality for the players to explore.

The only way to make this your own dungeon game, is to invest some time going over the maps, so that you understand how all the levels are interconnected and which staircase leads to other locations. You will also need to do some pregame preparation that makes the maps into something more than a maze game.

Also, as mentioned before, things will change quickly and you may want to use some method for tracking these changes for future adventures. Some Referees like to use numbered 3" x 5" card files for this. Others

Fighter E

Level 1 HP 6, AC 6, Mv 12"
S:10 I:9 W:14 C:9 D:10 Ch:10
LANGUAGES: Alignment,
WEAPONS: Sword, Dagger
ARMOR: Leather and Shield

Treasure Type A: 4000sp, 30 pieces of Jewelry (1 value: 800gp, 1 value: 900gp, 4 value: 1000gp, 1 value: 1400gp, 5 value: 2000gp, 1 value: 3000gp, 6 value: 4000gp, 5 value: 5000gp, 3 value: 6000gp, 2 value: 7000gp, 1 value: 9000gp), Magic Map (Leads to an Axe +1 and a Sword -2 Neutral (CURSED Sword)
Name: Hulo
Int: 7 Ego: 4, Empathy
Powers: Detect Evil and/or Gold)

Location 5:12) Giant

1 Giant (Alignment: Chaos or Neutrality, Movement: 12", Armor Class: 4, Hit Dice: 8 - 12+2)

Treasure: The giant carries 5000gp in his bag.

Location 5:13) Worm

A purple worm found a treasure here, and here it stays.

1 Purple Worm (Alignment: Neutrality, Movement: 6", Armor Class: 6, Hit Dice: 6-10, Attacks: 2 (bite damage: 1d6 + 2 + 20% chance to swallow/sting damage 1d6 + poison)

Treasure Type D: 8000cp, 3000sp, 3 pieces of Jewelry (1 value: 3000gp, 1 value: 5000gp, 1 value: 6000gp)

Location 5:14) Medusa

Rooms 14 and 15 are the lair of a very old medusa who has long been revered and worshiped. This room has the statue of one of her favorite victims (Referee's choice as to who and what the statue is/was).

1 Medusa (Alignment: Chaos, Movement: 6", Armor Class: 8, Hit Dice: 4)

Treasure Type F: 8000gp, 11 pieces of Jewelry (1 value: 1000gp, 2 value: 2000gp, 2 value: 3000gp, 2 value: 4000gp, 2 value: 5000gp, 1 value: 7000gp, 1 value: 8000gp), Ring of Water Walking

Location 5:15) Temple

Here the devotees of the medusa would come to worship. There is a large statue of a fiery devil in an alcove in the southwest corner. The devil statue is actually a fire elemental that was long ago petrified by the medusa. In front of the statue is an open box filled with silver coins (offerings).

This long abandoned room is now being haunted by a wraith.

1 Wraith (Alignment: Chaos, Movement: 12", Fly: 24", Armor Class: 3, Hit Dice: 8)

Treasure Type E: 8000sp, Wand of Fireballs, Scroll of 1 Spell (Lightning), Sword +3 (Int 3, Lawful)

Location 5:16) Manticores

Roaming the corridors in this section are two hungry manticores guarding a small pile of treasure.

2 Manticores (Alignment: Chaos, Movement: 12", Fly: 18", Armor Class: 4, Hit Dice: 6+1)

Treasure Type D: 4 Gems (2 value: 100gp, 1 value: 500gp, 1 value: 1000gp), 4 pieces of Jewelry (1 value: 5000gp, 1 value: 6000gp, 1 value: 8000gp)



Dungeon Level 6

This level comprises several different sections. Area 6:1 is the lair of a pair of griffins, an enchanter hides in room 3, rooms 7 through 11 are under the sway of a terrible baledraug, and areas 12 through 16 serve a great wizard.

Location 6:1) Griffins!

Behind this secret door is the lair of two griffins. Do they leave the dungeon at night to hunt? Are they a mated pair with a deeply secluded nest or have they been chained or trapped here for centuries? You decide their story.

2 Griffins (Alignment: Neutrality, Movement: 12", Fly: 30", Armor Class: 5, Hit Dice: 4)

Treasure Type E: 6000sp

Sword +2 Lawful

Name: Sgreg

Int 11, Ego 6, Languages (2)

Powers: Detect Secret Doors, Detect Traps, Detect Shifting Walls and Rooms

Location 6:2) Gargoyles

There are 4 gargoyles trapped (?) in this secret room.

4 Gargoyles (Alignment: Chaos, Movement: 9", Fly: 15", Armor Class: 5, Hit Dice: 4)

Tonisborg - Level 6

Map Legend:

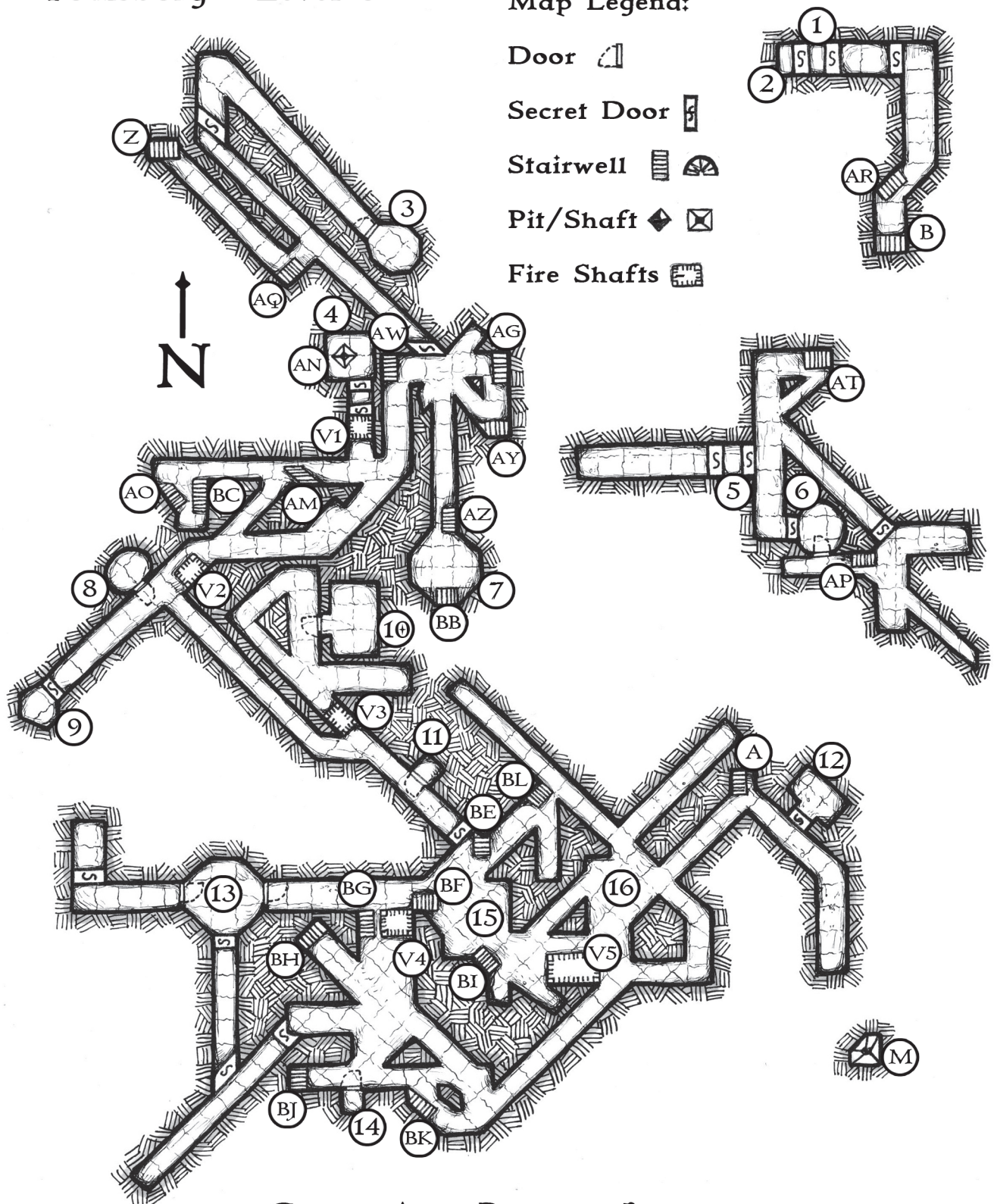
Door 

Secret Door 

Stairwell 

Pit/Shaft 

Fire Shafts 



Connections Between Levels:

Stairwells	AO- 5, 6	AY- 6, 7	BG- 6, 7	Pits/Shafts
A- 1, 4, 6	AP- 5, 6	AZ- 6, 7	BH- 6, 7	
B- 1, 3, 5, 6	AQ- 6, 7	BB- 6, 7	BI- 6, 7	M- 1, 8, 10
Z- 3, 4, 5, 6	AR- 6, 7	BC- 6, 7	BJ- 6, 7	AN- 5, 6
AG- 4, 5, 6, 7	AT- 6, <small>Down to Nowhere</small>	BE- 6, 7	BK- 6, 7	Fire Shafts
AM- 5, 6	AW- 6, 7	BF- 6, 8, 9	BL- 6, 7	V1 V2 V3 V4 V5-
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*It is possible stair AT leads to 10-21 but was never marked as such.

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