

RUINED CASTLE OF THE DEMON DRAGON

A Playtest Adventure for Exploding Kingdoms

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“Once there was a mighty castle, situated in a pleasant valley. Then the Demon Dragon came, destroyed it, and made its lair in the caverns beneath the castle. Now the site is a nexus of evil, a blight on the land. Your mission is to slay the Demon Dragon and bring peace to the valley once more.”

SETTING UP

If you are playing the Ruined Castle of the Demon Dragon as a one-shot, have each player design a Drive specifically related to the Ruined Castle. Why do they desire to delve into this ruin and slay the monstrous Demon Dragon?

When the players design Allies and Rivals, tell them that their Ally should be someone who will benefit from them slaying the Demon Dragon, and that they will face a Demon and a pair of twin archers, if anyone wants to make any of those their rival. (The Demon and the Twin Archers are not named, allowing the players to fill in the details of who they are, and why they are here in the Ruined Castle.)

If you are fitting the Ruined Castle of the Demon Dragon into your campaign, have one of the character's allies mention it to the Heroes and then add the Ruined Castle to the campaign map. At your discretion, you might replace the Twin Archers with a different Rival.

USING THE MATERIALS

After the text of this adventure, there are additional materials ready to print:

- * A reminder sheet on how to play for the DM
- * Printable monster stat blocks for this adventure, including the unique-to-this-adventure Double Headed Dragon Demon.
- * Three maps, cut into four segments each. Match up the ‘A’ and ‘A’ that are in two of the corners, the ‘B’ and ‘B’, and so forth, for each of the four segments of a map, and it will be ready to use.
- * A page of cut-out icons to use as minis if you require them.

You will need a few more things in addition:

- * Pencils.
- * Tokens of some kind to track mana.
- * Lots of Polyhedral dice - d4s, d6s, d8s, and d10s.
- * Form and Class Sheets, and the Book of Exploding Rules (Find at ExplodingKingdoms.com)

ENCOUNTER ONE: THE CATACOMBS

The Catacombs are home to a Demon (Demon Incarnate/Merfolk, who may be one or more character's rival), Ghost Warriors (Phantasm/Fallen Angels), and Crypt Skulkers (Shadow Assassins). There should be one enemy for each Hero. Start with one of each and add additional Ghost Warriors and Crypt Skulkers.

Start by setting up the map. In the center of the map is the Eldritch Circle. Any creature starting its turn in the Eldritch Circle gains 1 Mana (if a Hero) or 1 Threat Point (if a Monster.)

The Heroes will set up in one corner. Set up most of your monsters near the opposite corner, so the Heroes cannot reach them in one turn. Put at least one Crypt Skulker starting in the Eldritch Circle, and your Ghost Warriors positioned so they can reach the circle with phasing on their turn.

The players must be victorious by defeating all enemies!

Tactics: Hold the Demon Incarnate back the first few turns, using its Invoke Chaos to attempt to gain Threat Points, slowly advancing it towards the Eldritch Circle. Look for opportunities to use its attacks to hit two or more heroes. If one player is a Rival for the Demon, prioritize attacking that character.

The Ghost Warriors can phase through the catacomb walls, so put them where they can do the most damage by blocking corridors the players wish to use, and setting up so they can use their attacks to the greatest benefit. Crypt Skulkers should move into flanking positions to make Brutal Attacks, and scurry about being as annoying as possible. Make sure the players understand how the Crypt Stalker's invisibility is triggered, and that they still know where the Crypt Stalker is.

INTERLUDE: TUNNELS OF THE DEAD

The Heroes encounter a maze of tunnels, filled with the undead, Furthermore, some of the tunnels are caved in, and others are flooded. How will the heroes find their goal?

This is a Challenge. Explain the Challenge mechanics. Choose a number of Hazards equal to the number of players from the list below.

Possible Hazards:

- * A horde of undead attacks the Heroes.
Danger: Take 10 damage.
- * A twisty network of caved-in tunnels stymies the Heroes' progress.
Danger: DM gains 2 Threat Points for the next encounter.
- * The way forward is blocked by a massive iron door.
Danger: DM gains 2 Threat Points for the next encounter.
- * The cursed tomb of the vampire lord- how will the Heroes get through?
Danger: Player chooses one: Take 15 damage, or Perma-Dazed.
- * A flooded tunnel leads into the caverns beneath the ruins, filled with a deadly current.
Danger: Take 10 damage.
- * A magical stone floor that emits Poisonous Miasma.
Danger: Perma-Harrowed 5.

ENCOUNTER TWO: FLOODED RUIN

The Flooded Ruin hosts Deep Ones (Large Merfolk/Titan Wolf), Cultists, and the Deadly Assassin Twins (Gemini Warriors/Gemini Warriors/Arcane Arrow, who may be one or more character's Rivals.) With three players, start with the Twins, a Deep One, and a Cultist, and add an additional Deep One or Cultist for each player.

A Locked Portal leads down to the next level.

The players must be victorious by defeating all enemies or by getting the Key and unlocking the Locked Portal.

This level features lots of Water, which is Difficult Terrain, except for creatures that have a swim speed (such as the Merfolk).

At the start of the battle, tell the players that one of the Deadly Assassin Twins has the key to the Portal. When the Deadly Assassin Twins are defeated, put a Key token in one of their spaces (GM's choice.) A creature in the same space as the Key can pick it up as a free action. If a PC holding the key moves adjacent to the Portal, they unlock it. If a creature holding the key is reduced to 0 hp, they drop the key in their space.

Tactics: Hold your forces back and make the players come to you. Have the Merfolk stay in the water as much as possible where they can put their Swim Speed to use. Dragon Cultists should gain Threat Points and launch long range Eerie Note attacks. The Deadly Assassin Twins should always be in range of the same target, allowing them to make their attacks Brutal. Once the Deadly Assassin Twins are defeated, monsters should target anyone trying to get the key- and your own monsters can pick up the key and move away if they get to it first!

Monster Templates Go Here: Deadly Assassin Twins (Gemini/Gemini-Arcane Arrow), Merfolk, Dragon Cultists

INTERLUDE: THE TRAP-FILLED HALL

A great hall cuts down inexorably through the rock, and as it gets deeper and deeper, things get hotter and hotter.

This is a Challenge. Choose a number of Hazards equal to the number of players from the list below.

Possible Hazards:

- * Giant stone hands emerge from the walls to crush party
 Danger: Each party member takes 5 damage unless you take 15 damage.
- * Screaming Ghosts of the dead warn the Demon Dragon of your arrival.
 Danger: DM gains 3 Threat Points for the next encounter.
- * Mystically carved eye-sigils in the wall attempt to implant a suggestion
 Danger: Perma-Ensnared by the Demon Dragon.
- * Boiling Acid Pit ahead, filling the air with miasma.
 Danger: Perma-Harrowed 10, Perma-Slowed.
- * The demon dragon breathes flame through a grate before vanishing.
 Danger: 10 damage, Perma-Harrowed 5.
- * A pool of white-lava covers the path, turning the stone walls red.
 Danger: 15 damage.

ENCOUNTER THREE: THE DEMON DRAGON'S LAIR

The Demon Dragon's Lair features a pool of Lava. The Lava is treated as Difficult Terrain (creatures with a Swim speed can ignore this), and Hazardous Terrain: any creature entering a square of Lava during its turn takes 5 damage per square, and takes an additional 5 damage if it ends its turn in a Lava space. Creatures with a Swim speed do not ignore this damage.

Throughout the cavern are six Pillars that hold up the ceiling. Any creature next to a pillar may use a Major action to collapse that Pillar, and make the following attack: Close Wave 4, must include space of Pillar in the area of the attack: 3d6 damage to creatures in Wave.

When the final Pillar is collapsed, after the attack the entire battlefield is difficult terrain for the rest of the encounter.

The Heroes must defeat the Demon Dragon to be victorious!