

**year
of the
dungeon**

**2011
compilation
volume 1**

**tony
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dowler**

sunday, january 3, 2010

"A few months ago, I was at my printer's when I spied a box of 4" x 3" cardstock note pads.

"What are those?"

"Oh just some leftovers from a print job. Want some?"

I took 10 of them, 200 pages in all. Within a few days I picked on up and started sketching a dungeon map on it. Pretty soon I'd done a half dozen. I started drawing more maps and handing them out as presents or business cards. I was having a blast.

Fast forward to December. I'd drawn about 60 maps and given away more than half of them. I'd been toying with the idea of starting some kind of blog again, which is when it hit me: a microdungeon blog.

This is a blog of maps for dungeon-exploration games in the style of Dungeons & Dragons. I love dungeon maps. I think they're art. But mostly I think they're fun. I've got enough maps to last the next five months, and I'm not even half-way through my paper yet."

tuesday, december 28, 2010

This is the last week of the Year of the Dungeon, and good thing, because I feel utterly spent. Keeping up a posting schedule can be exhausting. These are the last few scanned dungeons, then I'm taking a short break from Microdungeons. That doesn't mean I won't be posting, but it won't be on quite the same schedule, at least through January. The good news is, I've made 6 new microdungeons in the last 3 days! Holidays are good for drawing.

monday, february 7, 2011

I'm slowly coming out of hibernation again, and making plans for the new year. New Years is kind of a big deal. If you're going to do anything interesting with your year, now is a good time to think about it.

So what's up for this blog in the new year? **More Microdungeons:** I'm not done making these little things, not remotely. There will be a new microdungeon every week, maybe two.

There you have it—the history of 'year of the dungeon' in one page!

As I wrote before, I hope that you enjoy and gain as much inspiration from reading and looking at the dungeons within as I have in drawing them.

~ t, 02 april 2011



All contents
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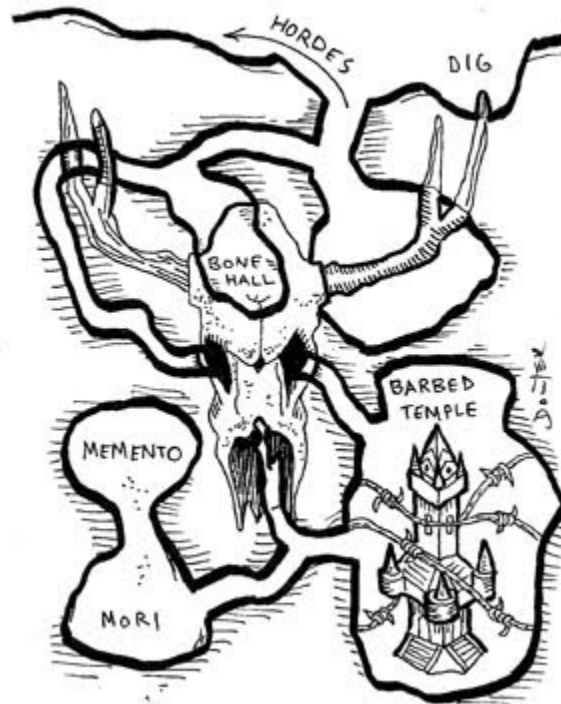


Compilation & Editing
The Fantasy Cartographic

contents

The Bone Hall	2
The Entrance to Omlek's Hall	3
Donovan	4
Entrance to Dunstone	5
How Very Curious	6
Entrance to The Harrow of Esklepius	7
Meeting	8
Entrance to Stromshire Cave	9
Demonhop Tower	10
Entrance to Skarrol	11
Goblinoid IPA	12
Slugworth's Dungeon	13
Lost in Stout	14
Bigger on the Inside	15
What Really Matters	16
About Buying the Dungeons	17

The Bone Hall



I always loved the Magic Card "Throne of Bone". Opportunities for juvenile humor aside, it conjured up images of twisted horrors entombed in deep dungeons for heroes to excavate and destroy.

The Bone Hall and environs are home to a terrifying aberration of wraith, the Marrow Spirit. Marrow Spirits inhabit the bones of their former bodies and ambush travellers seeking to exact revenge for their own lonely, desolate death. Normally the wraiths are tied to their remains, inhabiting the bones themselves, dormant until a victim approaches. In the Bone Hall, however, they become truly fearsome, able to pass through the bones walls at will, and quickly move to any part of the dungeon, ambushing adventurers from behind. They also work with the other denizens of the dungeon, coordinating their attacks in return for the promise that the killing blow will be theirs.

The Entrance to Omlek's Hall



Omllek's Hall is a considerable delve generally declared to be a Dwarven City, though a brief exploration will dispel this myth, for the doorways are tall and narrow, and the ornamentation is rather un-Dwarfish. Only its upper levels have been explored, and its original builders are a mystery. The only known entrance is a narrow window in a cliff face. Bandits sometimes use the upper halls as a base, but the narrow entrance means that only lightly armored or small size persons can easily enter and exit.

Donovan



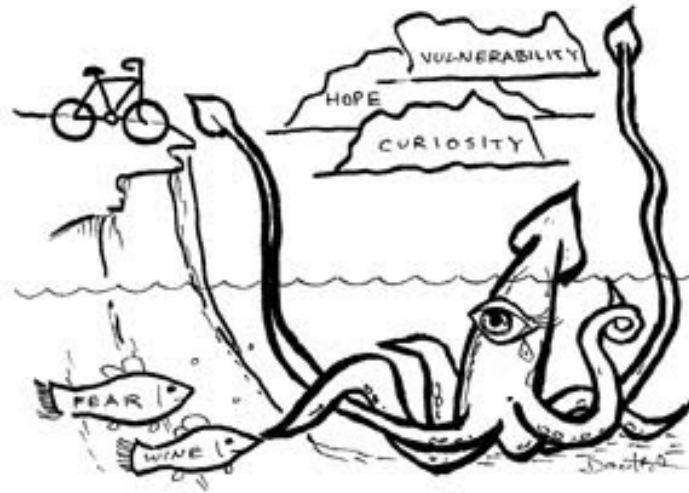
The world is packed full of secret and cursed places. The world is packed full of secret and cursed people.

Entrance to Dunstone



The Hallowed Hall of Dunstone lies under Wiltork Hill, guarded by the village of Gaboro. Dunstone is not so much a dungeon as a hill carved into the shape of a city. It's residents are long gone, but the place seems to have an unnatural attraction for wild beasts, solitary ogres, and especially bats. Dunstone artifacts, especially procelain and metalwork, fetch a high price, but the inner halls, where the best finds are made, are dangerous and unstable.

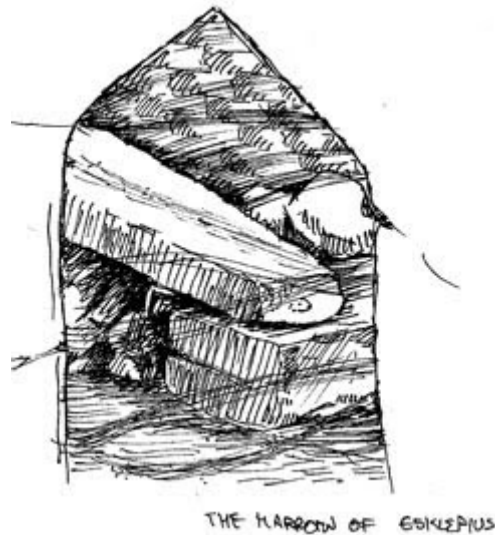
How Very Curious



Is that even a microdungeon? I'm not entirely sure. What is a dungeon except a map of certain threats, moods, places, and creatures?

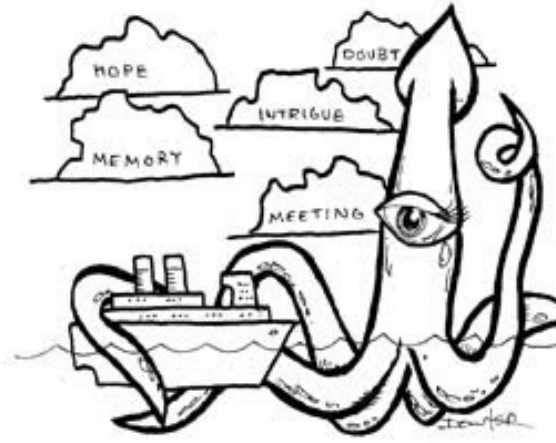
Enough philosophy. A friend of mine asked me to make a squid-flavored dungeon for a biking friend of theirs. This isn't the dungeon that she finally accepted, but I do like this one anyway.

Entrance to The Harrow of Esklepius



The Harrow of Aklepius is a tomb complex of rather mundane appearance, partially rubble-choked, a half-day's hike from Yakboar. The principle hazard is the so-called Harrowing, which manifests as a growing sense of dread and finally terror capable of paralyzing interlopers and sending them fleeing for the light. A curious presence haunts the place, constantly stirring the dust into eddies and streams. The local kids make a game of seeing how far into the Harrow they can get before the fear drives them forth. A few adventurers have gone further into the complex, but so far no one has emerged with any appreciable treasure. Nevertheless, local legend places a significant horde just around the corner of the deepest hall yet mapped.

Meeting



Another squid dungeon this morning, as I run off to work meetings...

Entrance to Stromshire Cave



STROMSHIRE CAVE

A warm wind blows from Stromshire cave every morning from sunrise for the first few hours of the day. In the evening, after sunset when the land cools, air is drawn inwards. Local legend maintains that the breath is caused by an enormous dragon living at the very bottom of the cave where a rockfall caused by a regional hero trapped it. Bennick the Sage, a feature at the local taverns, maintains that the cave itself is alive and breathing, and that it may one day take up other lifelike pastimes, such as eating or getting up and walking. Naturally the place includes the other common features of a dungeon entrance: rumors of lost treasure; missing adventurers; the occasional monster raid... but the mystery of the air remains for now a mystery.

Demonhop Tower



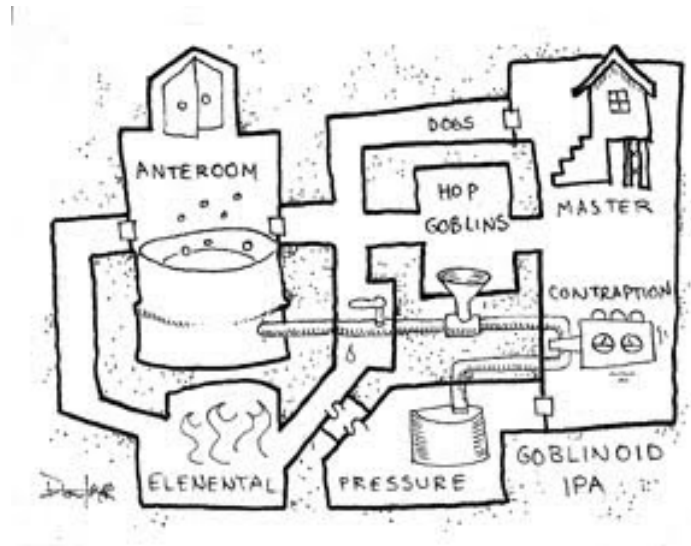
For Paul... because you can never have too many beer-themed dungeons.

Entrance to Skarrol



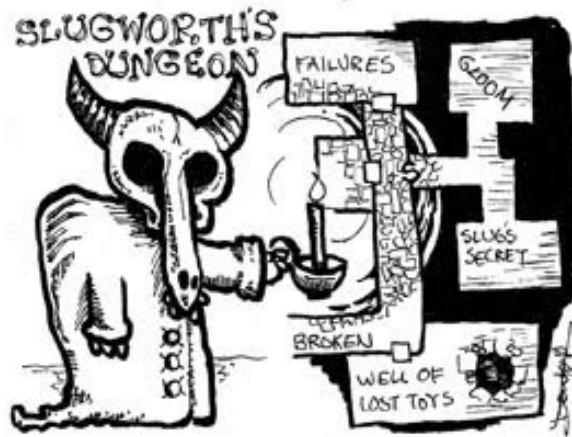
Just finished a big work project, and now my brain is resting. Hence, I offer you Skarrol. No one knows what's inside. It's a brand spanking new dungeon entrance with no legends, tales, rumors, or history!

Goblinoid IPA



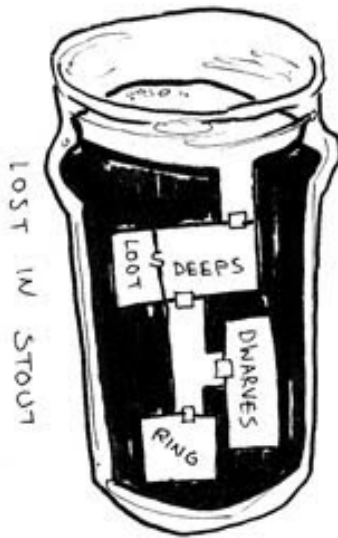
The joys of Dwarven Stout are well known, but Goblinoid IPA has its followers as well. It's a bit harder to find, as Dwarves brew Stout by natural instinct, whereas to force Goblins to create their brew in any quantity requires a powerful leader to unite them. Nevertheless, the occasional stash of happily fermenting Goblin IPA has been enough for discerning adventurers to develop a taste for this rare treat. Just don't ask what ingredient gives it that distinctive citrus tang.

Slugworth's Dungeon



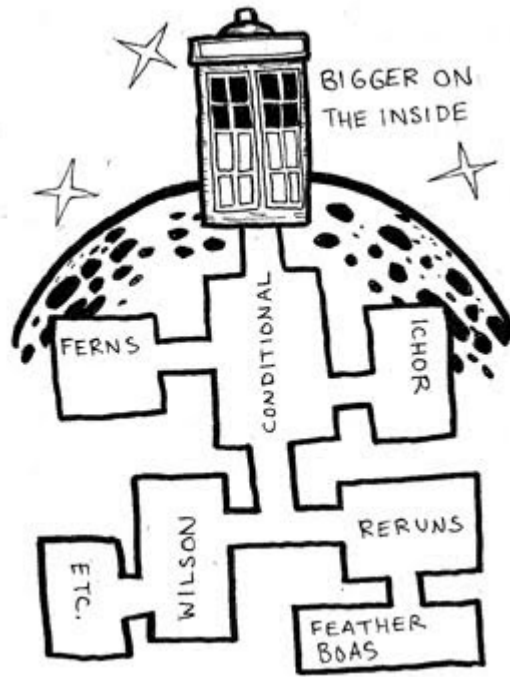
Slugworth is perfectly willing to show you his dungeon. For each room that Slugworth shows you, revealing the plans he and his master have spun and revealing their secrets, something happens. After the well, a swarm of inimical lost toys creeps out and silently follows the party through the dungeon. In the room of failures, they are shown horrors that shake them to their souls. Slug's Secret reveals that perfidy of those who hired the party in the first place. And in the gloom, where sign and wisdom fail, he strikes.

Lost in Stout

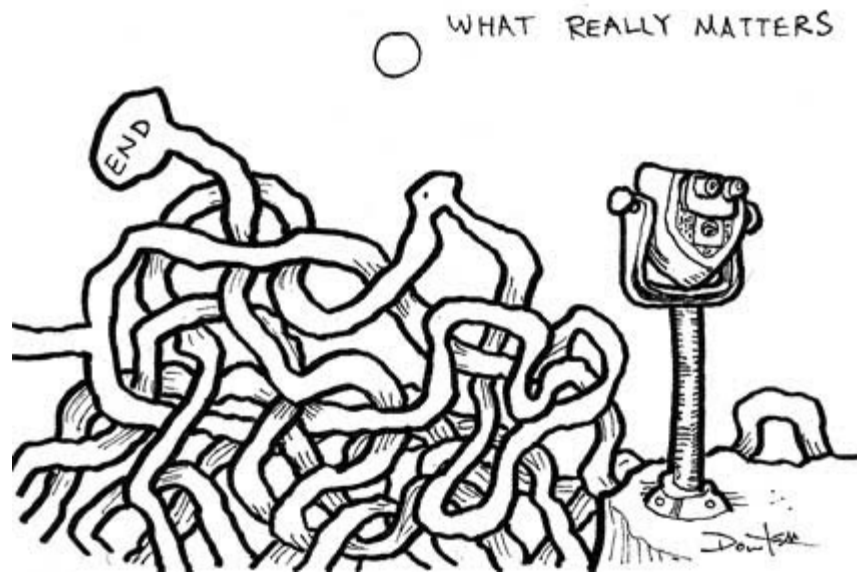


"Lost in Stout" is a Dwarven phrase meaning both deep meditation and madness. Given that Dwarven madness produces spectacular craftsmanship and murderous frenzy in about equal proportions, it adds a bittersweet tone to any conversation about Dwarven Beer. And this brew itself provides a rare bittersweet palette that is only more appreciated the more one imbibes.

Bigger on the Inside



What Really Matters



I do get depressed occasionally, though for me it's more of an inconvenience than a debilitating condition. And lately I've been sick too. When I get in an extended down mood, it doesn't stop me doing art, but my focus changes. Instead of feeling enthusiastic and energetic and having to pick between a bunch of different ideas, it's more of a struggle to find any idea at all that I want to work on. Usually I just sit down and draw whatever. I often get something I think is pretty decent. It's not a good time for working on big projects, but at least I can work.

About Buying the Dungeons

There's been a spate of people wanting to buy dungeon originals lately, so here's the drill. Many of the dungeons on the blog are for sale.

I've been waffling very hard about selling the dungeons online and for how much. Frankly I've come to the conclusion that the way original art is priced and sold is completely screwy and I'm not into it. There will be a blog post on that later, you better believe.

So for now I'm selling the originals at \$25 each. That's basically a fee to cover my time and effort and shipping. Or else corner me in person when I've got a few minutes to chat and I'll draw you one for free on the spot. I might ask you to buy me coffee.

I've got some cool plans for the new year, which will include things like some nice letterpress editions and reproductions and the like which I'll be able to offer at a nice price point, so if \$25 feels steep, hang in there. I've got you covered.

To purchase, email me at tony.dowler@gmail.com, or DM @tonydowler on twitter and tell me which dungeon(s) you like. I'll let you know if they're available or not. Unfortunately, the town and wilderness maps aren't currently available at all.

Oh, and the physical details: each dungeon is drawn in pen and ink on 3"x4" cardstock and placed in a 4"x5" matte frame with foamcore backing. Dungeons may have small smudges or pencil marks owing to the process by which they were created.

If you're interested in custom commissions, email me and we'll chat. I offer reasonable rates, but I'm totally jammed with other life commitments.

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