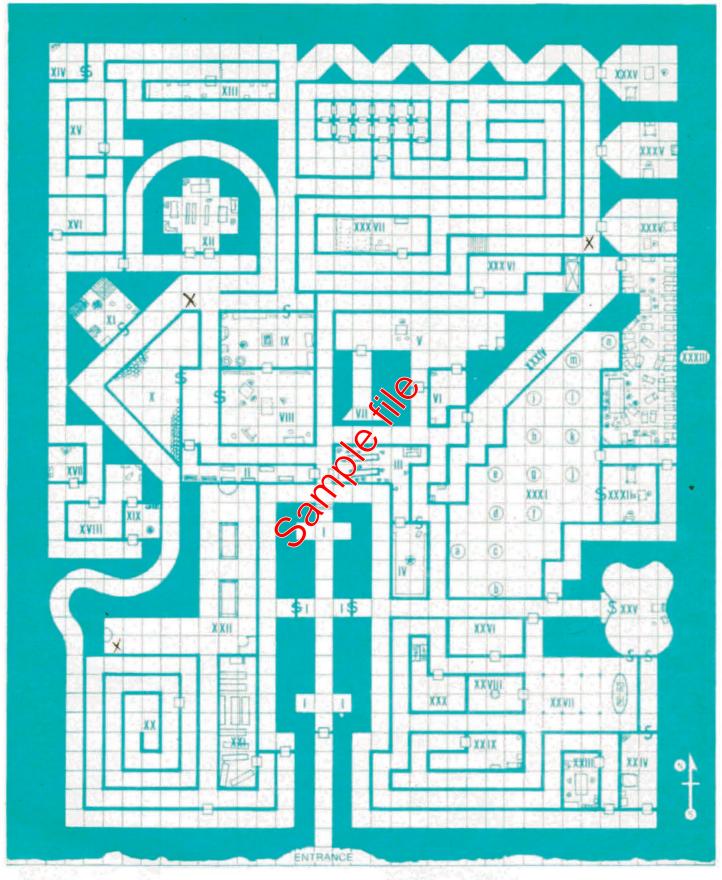# UPPER LEVEL

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

Dungeon Module B1
In Search of the Unknown

by Mike Carr

This package (a cover folder with maps and descriptive booklet within) forms a complete module for use with BASIC DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. It is especially designed as an instructional aid for beginning Dungeon Masters and players, specifically created to enable new Dungeon Masters to initiate play with a minimum of preparation. With only minor modifications, this module is also eminently suitable for use with ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® as well.

In addition to descriptive and situational material, this module also includes special informational sections giving: background history and legends, listings of possible monsters and treasures and how to place them, a list of adventuring characters, tips on various aspects of play for the Dungeon Master, and helpful advice for starting players.

If you enjoy this module, look for more releases in the D & D® family from TSR, The Game Wizards!

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Special Instructional Module

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Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®
Special Instructional Dungeon Module #B1
IN SEARCH OF THE UNKNOWN
by Mike Carr

INTRODUCTION: This package forms the special instructional module for play of Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®, and as such, is specifically designed for beginning players and Dungeon Masters. Due to its special design, it has numerous applications and serves a multiplicity of purposes.

Most material within this module is that contained in the D & D Basic Set game booklet. In some instances, new material (such as additional monsters, magic items, etc.) is included, and when this is so, every effort has been made to provide a pertinent explanation of important aspects and effects.

Those who intend to be beginning players using this module would be well advised to stop reading this now and to avoid further examination of the module details or game map. The reason for this is that enjoyment of the module will be much more enhanced when the challenge of the unknown and unexpected confronts the participants, who will not be able to benefit from any familiarity with the game situation other than the background provided by the referee. This element of the unknown and the resultant exploration in search of unknown treasures (with hostile monsters and unexpected dangers to outwit and overcome) is precisely what DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is all about, and "knowing too much" can greatly spoil the fun of the gaming experience that makes D & D so special. So, if you're going to be a player in this module, stop reading here, resist the temptation (which will be considerable) to go further in examining the contents, put the module aside, and wait for your Dungeon Master to get ready to use this package for gaming. You won't be sorry!

NOTES FOR THE DUNGEON MASTER

As a beginning Dungeon Master, you will find this module helpful in many ways. First of all, it serves as a graphic example of a beginning dungeon. For this reason, it should prove illustrative to fledgling Dungeon Masters who will benefit from a look at what another dungeon design "looks like". Those designing their own dungeons will want to note various aspects of this dungeon which will give them valuable insights into the creative process which allows them to formulate their own unique dungeon and game setting. Those going on to design their own dungeons and campaigns should be advised of the various playing aids available from TSR as official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS accessories — most notably the various sets of geomorphs (see the products list within the Basic D & D booklet for details on subjects and prices) which allow preparation of large map areas with a minimum of time and effort.

Second, this package provides an almost "ready-made" game situation which can be utilized for one or more playings. Some initial preparation is necessary in addition to reading the material through one or more times before using it in a game. The preparation, however, is interesting and fun as well as instructional, for it shows how a Dungeon Master (or DM) "stocks" the dungeon with assorted treasures and monsters before any adventuring begins. Separate lists of monsters and treasures to key with the various locations inside the dungeon insure that no two similar modules will be the same when set up by different DM's, and will also guarantee that players will not know what to expect in any given room or location. As for player characters, participants can use their own characters rolled up according to

the guidelines within the Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rulebook or choose from a list of pre-generated characters supplied here (including possible hirelings and/or henchmen to accompany the player characters in their adventuring).

Thirdly, there are several salient points of good dungeon design illustrated in this module which new DM's would be wise to note. Likewise, they should keep these factors in mind when they start to design their own game maps and situations:

1) Since it is important to offer a challenge commensurate to the players' level, this two-level dungeon design is made specifically for Basic D & D for exploration by beginning players in a party of 3 to 6 adventurers (player and non-player characters combined). This is reflected in various ways:

   a) In general, this dungeon is less deadly and more forgiving than one designed to test experienced players. It is designed to be fairly challenging, however, and is by no means "easy". Careless adventurers will pay the penalty for a lack of caution — only one of the many lessons to be learned within the dungeon!

   b) The dungeon is designed to be instructive for new players. Most of it should be relatively easy to map, although there are difficult sections — especially on the lower level where irregular rock caverns and passageways will prove a real challenge.

   c) The monsters encountered will generally be commensurate with the adventurers' ability to defeat them. For the few that are too formidable, the adventurers will have to learn the necessary art of fleeing or else employ more powerful means against them.

   d) The treasures to be found will generally be small, although a couple of more lucrative finds are possible if the adventurers are clever or lucky.

2) The dungeon includes a good assortment of typical features which players can learn to expect, including some interesting tricks and traps:

   a) Several one-way secret doors
   b) Illusions and magic mouths
   c) A wind corridor which may extinguish torches and open flames
   d) A room of mysterious pools
   e) A room of doors
   f) A water pit trap which suddenly drops adventurers to the lower level
   g) A portcullis trap where vertical bars drop behind the party in a dead end corridor
   h) A pair of teleport rooms to confuse explorers
   i) Several magical treasures — most beneficial, some cursed
   j) Mysterious containers with a variety of contents for examination

3) There is a legend or story explaining some details of the setting and providing a background (i.e., why it exists, its background, how the characters became involved with it, etc.). Of course, players/adventurers will probably only know bits of this information — or perhaps only rumors of dubious reliability. Most good dungeons (and indeed, entire game campaigns) rest upon a firm basis of interesting background and "history" as set for the players by the game moderator, or Dungeon Master.

4) The setting is neither too simple nor too difficult. Adventurers can exit by either returning to the entrance or locating the other secret exit. Two ways down to the lower level are available for discovery, and a trap may also bring adventurers unexpectedly there.

PREPARATION FOR THE USE OF THE MODULE

The use of this module by the Dungeon Master first requires a working familiarity with its layout and various design features. Therefore, the first step is to completely read the module, doing so with care and with reference to the two maps provided to learn the basic layout and location of the various parts described in the written commentary. A second and third reading will also prove beneficial in preparing for a game employing the module.

Once the DM has obtained a background knowledge of the situation and the various features of the area to be explored, he must **key** the two maps by placing various monsters and treasures within the dungeon complex. To do so, he utilizes the two lists provided which follow within this booklet, taking advantage of the special system to allow easy setup and reference.

Upon examination of the two game maps, it will be noticed that each prominent room or chamber has a Roman numeral for designation purposes. Each Roman numeral corresponds to a written description within the body commentary which accompanies the maps and which is contained in this booklet. Thus, a description of each such area of the dungeon is easily referenced by locating the written material within the booklet, and these are arranged in numerical order. The basic descriptions are standard, but in most cases there is no mention of either monsters inhabiting a particular area or specific treasures to be found within (except for occasional items which are part of the furnishings and which may have some unusual value). A space exists after each description with a brief area for listing either a monster or a treasure (or both) which may be within that room; exactly what will appear in each room, however, is up to the Dungeon Master, who will fill in some of the spaces to denote their presence. This is done easily through the use of the number and letter-coded lists provided for monsters and treasures, respectively. It is important to note, however, that not every room will contain a monster, a treasure, or both — in fact, a fair number of rooms will contain neither, and in some cases the treasure will be hidden or concealed in some manner. Further details on the use of the two lists is contained in the description which precedes them in the section entitled KEYING THE DUNGEON.

Once the dungeon has been keyed and the Dungeon Master's preparation is complete, he must assist the players in getting ready for the adventure. The first step is in providing them with the background outline which sets the stage for the game. This "Player's Background Sheet" (which differs in some ways from the more detailed description/background for the referee) is on a perforated sheet at the end of this booklet. It is designed to be removed and handed to the players prior to the adventure (or simply read aloud to them if you do not wish to remove it from the booklet).

Once the players know the background, they can prepare their characters for the adventure. If new characters are needed (as they will be if the players are just starting their first game), they can be rolled up by using the dice and following the prescribed procedure within the Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rule booklet. Each player also determines his amount of starting money (the number of gold pieces he has to begin with), and this amount is available for the purchase of arms and equipment for adventur-

ing. Once the players have decided upon the equipment they will be carrying, as well as their own arms and armor, they are ready to start play. A written record of abilities, wealth, and equipment owned and carried is kept by each player.

As an alternative to spending time rolling the characters up, a list of assorted adventuring characters is included on the reverse side of the "Player's Background Sheet". If the Dungeon Master decides to do so, the players can choose one of the characters listed there as their player character. In such a case, the DM then provides the pertinent specifications and ability ratings of the character to the player, who makes a note of it on the side. The DM's master list of character abilities for these characters is within this booklet.

If there are only two or three players, or if a party wishes additional assistance, one or more hirelings or henchmen (non-player characters who will be a part of the party but who will not be under the total control of the players) can be added to the group of adventurers at the Dungeon Master's discretion. These characters can also be from the list, and their specifications and ability ratings are also on the master list for the Dungeon Master.

When players have hirelings (characters who serve for pay) or henchmen (characters who serve out of admiration or loyalty), the Dungeon Master must use common sense in their employment within the game. Obviously, allowing players to assemble large bands of armed assistants at this stage of the game would be unfair and unbalancing, so it will be unusual to see more than one or two non-player characters appearing in the first games. Only after players have survived to earn some repute and wealth to attract (and afford) them will they be able to locate additional adventurers to aid their exploration.

Seeking hirelings and henchmen is a matter to be handled by the Dungeon Master. A player's success in attracting either will depend upon the financial rewards offered (in the case of hirelings) or the charisma of the seeker (in the case of henchmen). Once a henchman or hireling has decided to join a group (this usually being determined by a secret dice roll by the Dungeon Master), the non-player character will generally function according to the directions of the player character being served. However, in some situations — most notably, those involving great risk or danger — the Dungeon Master serves as the "conscience" of the henchman or hireling, and may cause him to balk at ordered action or perhaps even desert in the face of danger or as a result of unrewarded courage or accomplishment. For example, if a party is facing a hazardous situation and a player tells his henchmen to do something which would seem more dangerous than the actions pursued by the other player adventurers, the henchmen may hesitate to act upon the order — or in some cases might simply run away if the chance of death is great (this being determined by the DM's secret die roll at the chances of his choosing, depending upon the situation). Likewise, if a henchman successfully executes a hazardous action (slaying a dragon without much help, for instance) and does not get a proportional reward, then he will understandably consider deserting the player character who ill-treated him. In such cases, the DM will determine the outcome, and, as always, his decisions (often the result of die rolls at appropriate chances which he determines) are final.

An alternative to having either hirelings or henchmen under player control is simply to have non-player adventurers available for single-game participation. In this case, an additional character accompanies the group and participates, but is independent of player control other than to be

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helpful and generally cooperative. The Dungeon Master runs the character in essence, although his actions will generally follow the desires and suggestions of the players (unless an unduly hazardous action is demanded). The independent character participates in return for a share of the treasure gained, and this share (which will at least be proportional, or even greater than proportional if the character is better than the player characters) must be agreed upon before the adventure starts. If your players are trying to attract such help, roll a die to see how hard a bargain the extra character drives in order to be convinced that participating is worthwhile . . . After the adventure has been completed, the extra character might simply take his treasure share and disappear from further use, or if the DM desires, be available for similar service in future quests. The section entitled THE CHARACTER LISTS gives additional suggestions for the employment of non-player hirelings and henchmen.

Once the players have completed their preparations for the game, the referee finishes "setting the stage" by bringing the player characters from the background story to the place where the game adventure will begin. This is usually simply a matter of providing a brief narrative (such as, "Your group, after purchasing supplies and getting organized, left their town and went cross country till a deserted pathway was found which led into the hills, and finally to a craggy outcropping of rock . . . "). Use of the LEGEND TABLE (described elsewhere in this booklet) is also made at this time.

To start the adventure, the players must decide on an order of march for all of the characters in their group — who will be in front, who in the middle, who at the rear, and so on. This should be diagrammed on a sheet of paper and given to the Dungeon Master for reference, and any change in the order of march during the adventure should be noted. In a standard 10' wide corridor, the most common arrangement is two adventurers side by side in each rank, although three characters could operate together in a single rank if all of their weapons were short and easily wielded (daggers or small hand axes, for instance).

One player in the group should be designated as the leader, or "caller" for the party, while another one or two players can be selected as mappers (at least one is a must!). Although individual players have the right to decide their own actions and relay them to the Dungeon Master as play progresses, the caller will be the one who gives the DM the details on the group's course of action as they move around and explore (such instructions as "We'll move slowly down this corridor to the east . . . " or "We'll break down this door while so-and-so covers our rear . . . " are typical directions given by a caller to the DM). In the course of the adventure, the caller will naturally discuss the options available to the party with the rest of the adventurers, but it is he who the DM relies upon for the official instructions (although individual players can still pursue alternate courses of action at appropriate times, if they insist, by telling the Dungeon Master). Once a caller (or any player) speaks and indicates an action is being taken, it is begun — even if he quickly changes his mind (especially if he realizes he's made a mistake or an error in judgment). Use your discretion in such cases.

The player or players mapping the explored area should use graph paper. Orient them according to the same directions on the referee's map (with the top being north in almost all cases). After that, allow them to draw their maps from your descriptions as they wish — but make certain that your verbal descriptions of the areas they explore are accurate (although you can say such things as "approximately sixty feet", especially in large or open areas, or places where

there are irregular rock surfaces). Above all, avoid the considerable temptation to correct their maps once they have drawn them. It will not be uncommon for players to show you their map (especially if they're confused) and ask you, "Is this right?". In most such instances, you should avoid correcting any mistakes there, unless it would be obvious through the eyes of the adventuring characters. Encourage good mapping skills and an attention to detail rather than falling into the rut of continual player map questions.

Exploration of the entire area comprising the module may well take more than one game session. It is also quite possible that adventurers (especially if wounded or reduced in number) may want to pull out of the stronghold and prepare for a return visit when refreshed or reinforced. If this is done, they must work their way to an exit and discuss with you the pertinent details and time passage until their return. In such cases, the exact status of areas already explored will depend upon your judgment — whether areas cleared of monsters might in some cases be re-occupied by new ones, doors left open closed again and locked, or whatever.

If the exploring adventurers wish to suspend the game temporarily during a rest period (when the adventuring characters stop to sleep, as they must do every 24 hours), appropriate notes should be made of each adventurer's status so that resumption of the game can begin at the same point on the next meeting of the players. Their choice of where to camp is a factor to consider, as well, since a check for wandering monsters must be made up to three times for any 8-hour period they remain there (these checks are made at a normal 1 in 6 chance). It is customary to have one or more adventurers in the party standing guard at any one time, as the party members sleep in shifts in order to always have continual protection (although the devious DM may give a slight chance of a guard being asleep if a monster comes . . .). Just as with march order, it is important that players provide the DM with the sleeping location of each member and the placement of the guard or guards, since this may be crucial if and when a monster approaches from a given direction.

Experience points earned and any benefits gained will only be applicable if and when the adventurers successfully exit the dungeon; experience gained in an adventure is only credited after the adventure is complete. However, successfully exiting the dungeon and then returning later would allow the characters to use experience gained on the previous foray, if applicable.

TIME

As adventures go on, the Dungeon Master is responsible for keeping track of time elapsed.

In normal movement and exploration, each turn is considered to be ten minutes (see page 9 of the Basic D & D booklet for details). If an encounter or melee occurs, the Dungeon Master immediately (but temporarily, for the duration of the encounter) adjusts the time frame to melee turns consisting of ten 10-second melee rounds (see page 20 of the Basic D & D booklet).

Every third turn of adventuring, the DM should take a die roll for the possible appearance of wandering monsters at the indicated chances (which are normally 1 in 6, but which may vary depending upon location and dungeon level). Some occurrences (such as noise and commotion caused by adventurers) may necessitate additional checks.

Paper and pencil can be used to tally time, and the DM

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should monitor its passage as he sees fit, but keeping in mind that exploring, mapping, and examining various features takes up considerable time — with the larger the area and the greater the care taken in examining, the more time consumed. Wasted time is also a factor which should be noted, as players may waste time arguing or needlessly discussing unimportant manners or by simply blundering around aimlessly. On the other hand, time can pass quickly if adventurers move rapidly through areas which have been previously explored and mapped. In all cases the DM should use his good judgment and common sense.

Generally, eight hours of each twenty-four must be spent resting and sleeping, and prudent adventurers will sleep in shifts with a guard always awake. As a general rule, three checks will be made each "night" for possible wandering monsters.

The passage of a day — or 24 hours — will mean the healing of 1 hit point of damage for each character.

COMPUTING EXPERIENCE

At the conclusion of an adventure (the party's emergence from the dungeon), the surviving characters divide the treasure (with equal shares generally awarded to each and magical or special items diced for by eligible characters) and experience is computed. Henchmen and hirelings usually get an equal share of any treasure, although their experience point award may vary at the Dungeon Master's discretion from half to the full amount awarded to player characters, depending upon their accomplishments.

As an example, let us assume that two first level player characters (a magic-user and a fighter) and a first level hireling (a fighter) survive an adventure and return to the outside world from a dungeon which has claimed several of their comrades. The treasure they carry out with them amounts to the following: 630 g.p., 9 50 g.p. gems, a scroll of 2 magic-user spells, a +1 sword, and a +1 **ring of protection.** In the course of their adventure, their party caused the following monsters to be slain: 8 kobolds, 5 orcs, and a giant tick.

In this instance, the treasure is rather easily divided: the gold pieces are split into 210 apiece, 3 gems are awarded to each character, the scroll goes to the magic-user (since he is the only one who can use it), and the two fighters roll dice for the sword and the ring, with one going to each (in some instances, a non-player character may end up with the best treasure this way, but such is the luck of the dice . . .). This gives each adventurer the equivalent of 210 g.p. cash, plus 150 g.p. in gems (if traded or sold for gold pieces), plus one other item which can be retained and used.

The monsters slain are considered for experience point values as follows (see page 11 of the Basic D & D booklet): the 8 kobolds are worth 5 points apiece as creatures under 1 hit die, the 5 orcs are worth 10 points each as 1 hit die monsters, and the giant tick is worth 50 points (35 points as a 3 hit dice creature plus 15 points for its special ability to cause disease). The total value of all monsters killed is thus 140 experience points — 40 for the kobolds, 50 for the orcs, and 50 for the giant tick. This divides to 46 experience points per surviving adventurer for monsters slain.

Total experience points for each adventurer, assuming they were of first level (a higher level of experience would dictate a fractional adjustment), would be 360 (the g.p. equivalent of coins and gems) plus 46 (for the monsters killed), or 406 points each. No additional points are awarded for the special or magical items.

Once enough points are accumulated, a character can rise to the next higher level of experience, and gain the benefits of the new level. Wealth obtained, besides counting initially for experience, can be used to purchase equipment or supplies, defray everyday expenses, attract hirelings, sponsor various enterprises, or can be spent in any manner (including payments of tithes to the church, especially for clerics!).

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE DUNGEON MASTER

The Dungeon Master, as referee, is the pivotal figure in any game of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. Accordingly, his ability and expertise — as well as fairness — will be important factors in whether or not the game will be enjoyable for all of the participants, as well as for himself.

D & D is a role-playing game, and is unlike traditional games which have a firm basis of regulated activity and repetitious action. D & D is free-flowing, and often goes in unknown and unpredictable directions — and that is precisely the reason it is so different and challenging. The Dungeon Master is best described as the moderator of the action, for he oversees the whole process, keeps the game moving, resolves the action based upon events occurring and player choices made, and monitors the actions and events outside the player group (i.e. handles monsters encountered, determines the actions of non-player characters encountered, etc.). His responsibilities are considerable, but his foremost concern should be to provide an enjoyable game which is challenging to the players. This means that risk should be balanced with reward, and that game situations are neither too "easy" nor too deadly. Above all, he must be fair, reasonable (without kowtowing to the unreasonable demands of the players), and worthy of the respect of all the participants.

Beginning Dungeon Masters who are not familiar with the game often ask the most common first question, "Exactly how do you referee the game?". The answer is that there is no single best way — different DM's have different styles, just as individual players do. However, there are certain guidelines which are important to follow . . .

First of all, it is crucial to keep in mind that D & D is a game based on player interaction and player choice. The game generally follows the course of the player's actions — if not always their plans! As moderator, you present an ever-changing situation as it occurs (sort of like an unfolding story, or even a movie, if you like to think in those terms), and the players respond pretty much as they desire. As the game goes on, you are presenting them with a hundred different opportunities and choices — exactly how the game goes will depend upon their response to those opportunities and choices. For instance, if players decide to walk down a corridor and find a dead end with three doors, they have a number of choices — simply turn around and ignore the doors, listen at one or more before proceeding elsewhere, try to open one or more (either normally, by forcing them, or even by simply bashing them in), or whatever. You describe the situation, then await their decision as to a course of action. Of course, some decisions will be more difficult, or quick, or crucial to survival — and as always, imagination and resourcefulness, as well as quick thinking, will usually be rewarded.

Second of all, a good DM remains "above the battle" and does not attempt to influence player actions or channel the activity in a particular direction. The Dungeon Master should do all he can to assist players in their quest without actually providing important information unless the players themselves discover it or put the pieces of a puzzling problem to-