

# The Games People Play

A one page dungeon created by Eric Harshbarger ([www.ericsharshbarger.org](http://www.ericsharshbarger.org)), best suited for players who may have gotten a little bored with their characters...

## Outside The Manor

It is evening and a storm is moving in from the sea. Occasional lightning illuminates the shore and allows the adventurers to discern the surroundings:

**A. Start.** The party of adventurers suddenly awakens. They are lying on the sandy floor of a seaside cave. They do not remember how they got here. Before they can ponder too much, they are attacked by several Giant Crabs. No treasure to speak of.

**B. Body.** The corpse of a fighting man lies supine. Basic adventuring armor and weapons as well as a *longsword*, +1 vs. *Lycanthropes*. Tucked in the belt is a crumpled piece of parchment, its scribbled ink writing has been spoiled by the wet sand. In the body's left hand is clutched two large feathers.

**C. Cave.** A dying man (fighter) is gasping his last breath. His face and body have been terribly bloodied and battered; his fingers, ears, and nose appear to have suffered from frostbite (though it is quite warm outside). The man will grasp an approaching player and whisper, "do not approach the Master unless you have all five gems... with a complete set, he will be placated... fewer, and he will become enraged again. Here is one..." He hands the player a finely, if oddly, cut ruby. About to collapse and die, the warrior pauses and then makes one final statement: "Also... beware of the trolls." At that moment three sea trolls rush from the back of the dark cave and attack.

**D. Door To Manor.** Large, heavy oaken doors are securely locked. A gargoyle descends from the roof above; there is an iron key around his neck. He will drop to the ground, face the party, and hold forth the open palm of his right hand. If a player puts the ruby (from (C), above) in his hand, he will examine it, give it back, and unlock the door with the key. Any other attempt to enter or any hostile actions will provoke an attack. See numbered descriptions below for manor's interior.

**E. Hippogriffs' Nest.** A pair of surly hippogriffs roost here. Approach to the nest is accomplished only by climbing the cliff (skill of an expert thief needed), and will certainly provoke the creatures. Treasure: 157 gp, 351 sp, a +1 *dagger*, and a *ring of cold resistance*, and an expertly cut diamond (clearly part of the set of special gems). Corbin the wererat and his emerald may also be here (see (1) of manor).

## Inside The Manor

A house of subdued wealth. Opulent but not gaudy. Most of the rooms show signs of some recent chaos (a violent argument? a scuffle? something more severe?) All doors are unlocked (though some are hidden).

**1. Grand Hall.** The place is a complete mess. A large table with papers scattered atop dominates and several chairs are overturned. Amongst the clutter stands a short man with rodent-like features. He is carefully eyeing a finely cut sapphire and is startled by the entrance of the party. He is quite agitated and rants on about how "the Master was being completely unreasonable." He will act paranoid about the party wanting to take his gem. Eventually he will attack the party by throwing a dagger and then flee to the balcony (out the west door). If he makes it outside alive, he will transform into a rat (he is a wererat, in fact), discarding all of his possessions (various non-magical goods plus an illegible parchment similar to the one found at (B)) except the sapphire which he holds in his mouth. He will scurry along the railing toward the cliff. The party has one round to stop/catch him. After that a hippogriff will swoop down and kill the wererat, taking him to the nest (E) above. The secret door in the cliffside leading to the cellar is very difficult to spot.

**2. Cellar.** Stairs lead upward to the Kitchen (7). A couple of giant spiders have made a nest in the dark northeast corner.

**3. Dining Room.** Nothing exceptional here.

**4. Library.** Ghost of Alarina, an elven sorceress, sits weeping at table. She wails that "the devious thief was always provoking the Master" and "now I've paid the ultimate price." On the table before her is a carefully written scroll (like those at (B) and (1)), but the language is obscure. There is also another gem: a oddly cut garnet. She will let someone take the gem, but, in her sorrow, will grasp for anyone who comes near, her ghostly chill having ill effects. When leaving this room, if the party has not yet encountered Truomo the Wizard at (7), they will see him in the hallway carrying the corporal body of Alarina into the Kitchen.

**5. Servant's Quarters.** A gnome butler lies dead in his room, a dagger in his chest. The stairs at the west door lead upward to Level 3 hallway.

**6. Closet.** Nothing out of the ordinary. Linens, spare general supplies.

**7. Kitchen.** Truomo the Wizard will be hauling the body of the elven sorceress (whose ghost now haunts the Library). "I did not kill her!" he'll cry. "I swear... it was the Master... when the game got out of hand!" Perceptive players will notice blood on his hands and an empty dagger sheath at his belt. Truomo will drop the body (it appears she died from freezing) and flee to the Cellar (2). There he will be killed by the giant spiders (if they are still alive -- if the spiders are dead, then the wizard will attack anyone pursuing him into the Cellar). Truomo is a mid-level magic-user and carries typical magic items as well as another gem: a finely cut topaz.

**8. Guest Bedroom.** Has been slept in recently by Corbin (wererat thief from (1)). Typical traveling possessions lie about.

**9. Guest Bedroom.** Things are tidy and in order. Buried within the ashes of the fireplace are 3 silver pieces.

**10. Tower.** Serves as a storage shed for hardware, rope, and the like. Probably the best spot from which to start a climb toward the Hippogriffs' Nest (E).

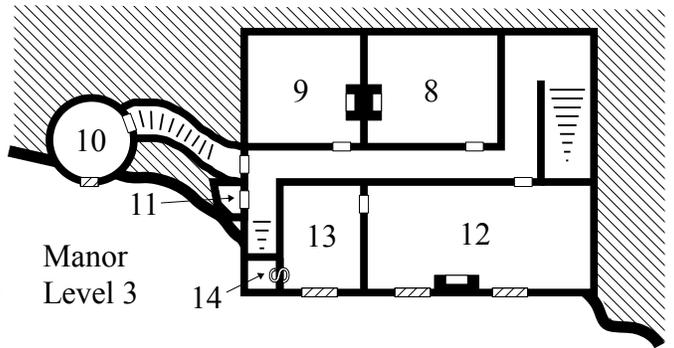
**11. Garderobe.**

**12. Master Bedroom.** Standing at the window, looking out toward, the sea is the Master of the manor: Mordevan Eldritch, a Lich. When the party enters he will turn slowly and study them quietly for a moment. "Are you the latest who have come to play in a game? Have you come prepared?" If the party answers "no" or has not collected all five gems from about the house, Mordevan will become irate ("How dare you waste my time!") and attack (he favors cold-based spells) if the party does not immediately leave the room (he will not pursue). If the adventurers show him the five collected gemstones, he will become much more friendly. He takes the precious stones, and runes begin to glow on their many facets. Perceptive characters will note that the glowing runes are actually numbers. "Follow me to the Grand Hall downstairs. I'm afraid it's a bit messy after the tumultuous affairs of this morning, but we will make do." If the party follows him toward area (1) he will continue his banter: "Have you brought character sheets of your own? No? No worries... there are plenty of extras. You can assume whatever roles you want... I have quite an adventure in mind for you." Once seated around the table in the Grand Hall, Mordevan will continue (a flame twinkling a bit brighter in his one eye), "some players think I'm a bit ruthless, but I think we'll all have a good time. Now... your characters begin completely unawares, awaking suddenly and finding themselves on the sandy ground of a strange cave, you smell the salt of the sea. A clattering nearby alerts you to the presence of several giant crabs..."

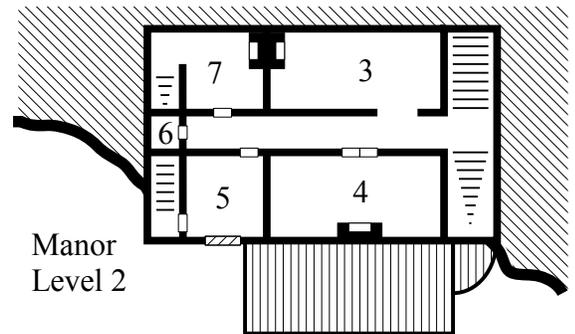
**13. Private Study.** Mordevan's spellbooks and many magical treasures fill this room. There are also several copies of bestiariums, monster manuals, and tomes about gods and demigods. The secret door to the closet (14) is very difficult to spot and is trapped. Failure to disarm will cause poisoned needles to project from the handle (save at -2 or die).

**14. Treasury.** A room with vast wealth in coins and jewels. On the wall is a map that reveals the location of a boat moored up the coast; a chance for the party to leave this place...

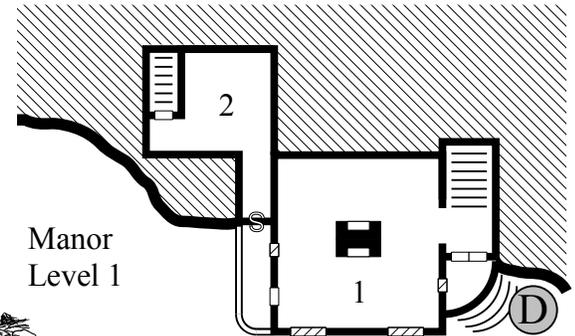
**Final Note:** This scenario does leave open the option of the Game Master actually allowing the players' characters to roll up characters within *their* world. Any experience earned by characters' characters might transfer "upward" to the characters themselves at a 10-to-1 ratio. Of course, maybe the characters' characters will eventually have reason to roll up characters of their own; but let's not get carried away...



Manor  
Level 3



Manor  
Level 2



Manor  
Level 1

