

= White Plume Mountain =

White Plume Mountain is an adventure module for the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons fantasy role @-@ playing game , written by Lawrence Schick and published by TSR in 1979 . The 16 @-@ page adventure bears the code " S2 " ( " S " for " special " ) The adventure is a dungeon crawl where the players ' characters are hired to retrieve three " notorious " magical weapons : a trident , a war hammer and a sword , each possessing its own intelligence . The adventure contains art by Erol Otus , and a cover by Jeff Dee . A sequel , Return to White Plume Mountain , was published in 1999 , and an updated version conforming to v3.5 rules was released online in 2005 .

White Plume Mountain was well received by critics . It was ranked the 9th greatest Dungeons & Dragons adventure of all time by Dungeon magazine in 2004 . One judge , commenting on the ingenuity required to complete the adventure , described it as " the puzzle dungeon to end all puzzle dungeons . " A review for British magazine White Dwarf gave it an overall rating of 8 / 10 , noting that the adventure focuses on problem solving . It is also the favorite adventure of Wired magazine 's Ken Denmead , who described it as the " amusement park of dungeons " . Other adventures in the S series include Tomb of Horrors , Expedition to the Barrier Peaks , and Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth .

= = Plot summary = =

White Plume Mountain is set in the World of Greyhawk , a campaign setting for Dungeons & Dragons . The module is a dungeon crawl , precipitated by the theft of three magical , sentient weapons : a trident named Wave , a war hammer named Whelm , and a sword named Blackrazor ( all three were introduced in this adventure ) . The weapons ' former owners each received a copy of a taunting poem , instructing them that the weapons are located in White Plume Mountain . The poem is signed by the wizard Keraptis , who thirteen hundred years ago descended into the volcanic mountain with a company of gnomes and disappeared . The player characters goal is to follow the same path and retrieve the weapons from Keraptis ' lair .

The adventure is divided into 27 encounters across a 16 @-@ page module . Encounters are varied and each presents its own challenges . Encounter seven necessitates characters jumping from platform to platform above a sea of hot mud whilst evading erupting geysers ; this in turn leads to encounter eight and a room of permanent darkness where a vampire guards Whelm . Encounter 17 occurs in a giant but fragile bubble located above a boiling lake , with the players needing to defeat a giant crab and retrieve Wave without damaging the bubble . Encounter 26 involves negotiating a magical ziggurat populated by various monsters ( including sea lions , giant crayfish , giant scorpions , and manticores ) before encounter 28 , a battle against an ogre mage who possesses Blackrazor . A final challenge on departing is an encounter with two to four efreet if the characters have succeeded in taking two or three of the magical weapons .

= = Publication history = =

The original White Plume Mountain adventure was written by Lawrence Schick , and was published by TSR in 1979 . It features interior art by Erol Otus and David C. Sutherland III , calligraphy by Darlene Pekul , and a front cover by Sutherland . The module includes a 12 @-@ page booklet and an outer folder which featured a two @-@ color cover in the original printing ; the module was expanded to 16 pages and rereleased with a full @-@ color cover by Jeff Dee in 1981 . The adventure was included as part of the Realms of Horror abridged compilation produced in 1987 . To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Dungeons & Dragons game in 1999 , a reprinting of the original adventure was made available in the Dungeons & Dragons Silver Anniversary Collector 's Edition boxed set , with slight modifications to make it distinguishable from the original ( for collecting purposes ) . Wizards of the Coast also released a sequel to the adventure in 1999 , Return to White Plume Mountain , as part of the TSR 25th Anniversary series of publications . The events in the sequel are assumed to take place 20 years following those in the original . It was made

into a novel of the same name by Paul Kidd for the Greyhawk Classics series .

Schick wrote the module while applying for a job with TSR . He took what he felt were the best parts from his previously created dungeons and put them together to create White Plume Mountain . After looking at it , TSR hired him and published the module without making any changes . Looking back in an interview , Schick said that he was " a little embarrassed to this day by Blackrazor , inasmuch as it 's such a blatant rip @-@ off of Elric 's Stormbringer ; I would not have put it into the scenario if I ever thought it might be published . " Schick later admitted that it was gratifying to have his adventure published as @-@ is , " but also a little embarrassing , since the adventure was really just a sampler of clever ideas that were never fully fleshed out . Its central conceit , a ' funhouse ' dungeon full of tricky obstacles designed to challenge adventurers for the amusement of a mad wizard , was already a cliché even at that date . "

In 2005 , an online version of the adventure was released as a free download , updated to conform with v3.5 rules ( Wizards of the Coast periodically alters the rules of Dungeons & Dragons and releases a new version ) . The revised module is designed for characters of the seventh level of experience . Return to White Plume Mountain has also received a v3.5 update and is likewise available for free download on their website . In both of the revised modules , the classic weapons associated with them ( Blackrazor , Whelm and Wave for White Plume Mountain , Frostrazor for Return to White Plume Mountain ) have been converted into Legacy Weapons .

All four modules of the S @-@ series were included as part of the Dungeons of Dread hardcover collection , released on March 19 , 2013 . In the foreword , Schick wrote that " unlike Tomb of Horrors , the challenges in White Plume Mountain were designed to make players think , work together as a party , and ultimately win through and feel successful . Players liked that . "

= = Reception = =

White Plume Mountain was well received by critics . Dungeon Master for Dummies lists White Plume Mountain as one of the ten best classic adventures , referring to it as a " classic dungeon crawl . " It was ranked the 9th greatest Dungeons & Dragons adventure of all time by Dungeon magazine in 2004 , on the 30th anniversary of the Dungeons & Dragons game . Judge Mike Mearls commented on the ingenuity required to complete the adventure , describing it as " the puzzle dungeon to end all puzzle dungeons " . Further , when speaking to why it is one of the top adventures ever , he said that while it lacked the " sheer brutality " of Tomb of Horrors , it made up for it with " crazy , over the top , pure fun " . Another Judge , Clark Peterson , said that he liked the three magical weapons : Wave , Whelm , and Blackrazor . To Peterson , just the inclusion of Blackrazor makes White Plume Mountain a " classic " . The editors of Dungeon felt that the adventure was defined by the ziggurat and its monsters .

Kirby T. Griffis reviewed the adventure in The Space Gamer # 37 . Griffis found the background interesting , namely Keraptis having stolen the magical weapons from prominent dealers , and the player having been hired to get them back , with only a cryptic poem to help . He found the module well organized and its content more believable than most , and despite its shortness he stated , " This on the whole is a very good module . There are no real flaws . "

Jim Bambra reviewed White Plume Mountain for the British magazine White Dwarf , and rated it favorably at 8 / 10 overall . He gave playability , enjoyment , and skill ratings of 9 / 10 , and a complexity rating of 7 / 10 . He noted that the adventure focuses on problem solving , with " many interesting problems for players to overcome " . Comparing it to the challenges in the previous S series adventure Tomb of Horrors , Bambra found White Plume Mountain " quite lenient . " Where in Tomb of Horrors a wrong decision would leave the player 's character dead , in White Plume Mountain it merely leaves the player frustrated . The adventure 's tests are " designed to stretch a party to its limits , not deal death at every opportunity " .

Ken Denmead of Wired says that White Plume Mountain is his favorite adventure , if not necessarily the best . For him , it was the " amusement park of dungeons " . He describes the story arc , where the adventurers are hired to retrieve three magic items , as similar to the A @-@ Team or The Equalizer : " You 've been hired to help when no one else has been able . " He felt that while the

sword Blackrazor was a " blatant ripoff of Elric " , it was " still way cool " .

Denmead commented on several of the adventure 's encounters . He felt the cavern with boiling mud , hanging disks , and geysers , was " just cruel " . Concerning the permanently dark room that houses a vampire , he commented on the ease with which one player 's character can easily hit that of another in the gloom . He describes the room where a giant crab guards the trident Wave as " basically a bubble inside a tank of boiling water " , noting the crab knows not to pierce the walls and asks , " Are you that smart ? " Also , if the players end the adventure with the magic weapons , they need to " bribe " their Dungeon Master to allow them to keep the items .