

The Devil's Due

by Daniel Baldwin

On the road to their next destination, the heroes come across a wrecked carriage with tell-tale signs that it was attacked by orcs. Guards, servants, and horses lie dead around the carriage. Who were they serving and protecting? The only clue is a woman's religious vestments amongst the remaining rifled-through possessions. A successful easy test of religious knowledge identifies the clothing as belonging to a priestess of a local sun goddess. Little do they know, an evil mage intends to sacrifice the priestess to release a powerful devil.

Due to their large numbers and hasty return to their lair, it is an easy task for the heroes to track the orcs. The orcs' trail leads in the direction of some mountains, and requires more than a standard day's travel. If the heroes want to make haste for the best chance of rescuing the orcs' prisoner, they must successfully make an easy test against their constitution, or be exhausted in the fights to come. The trail takes them to a ruined fortress in some hills at the base of the mountains. The orcs did not properly tend to the area around the fortress so there is ample cover for the heroes to use to sneak up to the fortress, assuming they are stealthy enough to avoid detection by the two orc sentries at the top of the watchtower (Level 3, unless the heroes don't make haste; see below). The sentries in the tower are armed with longbows and have half-cover from crumbling crenellations.

General Notes about the Fortress

The walls are about 18" thick stone. The ceilings are about 10' high throughout (enough room to swing a sword). The stench of filth and body odor is present wherever orcs and goblins are around. There is enough natural light from the outside (assuming daytime) on Levels 1 and 2 for low-light conditions. There is no light on Level B1 as the orcs and goblins rely on their night vision. On Level B2 there is low-light from torches and candles set by the mage. There are enough cracks and loose stones that climbing any of the walls is moderately difficult. Unless described otherwise, all doors are old wooden doors bound in rusty iron. Doors leading to the outside are locked but easy to pick. All other doors are unlocked unless otherwise stated.

If the heroes make haste...

Level 1: In Room A two orcs are on guard duty eating dinner at the table. Just off of Room A is a storage room filled with food items and sundries. The stairs in Room B lead up to Room E on Level 2. The stairs in Room C lead down to Room H on Level B1. There is a ladder in Room D that leads up to Room G on Level 2. From Room G, a ladder leads up through a trap door to Level 3 (the top of the watchtower).

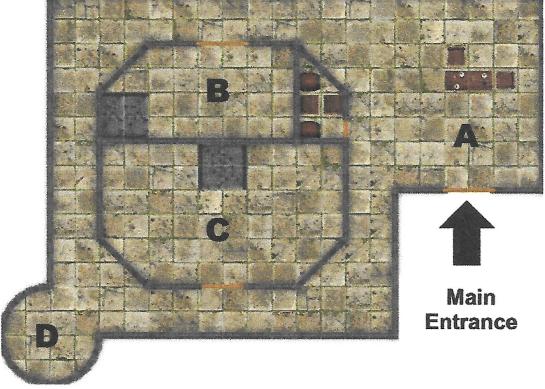
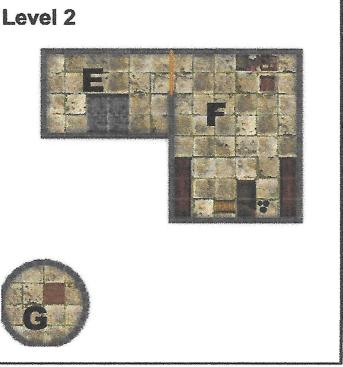
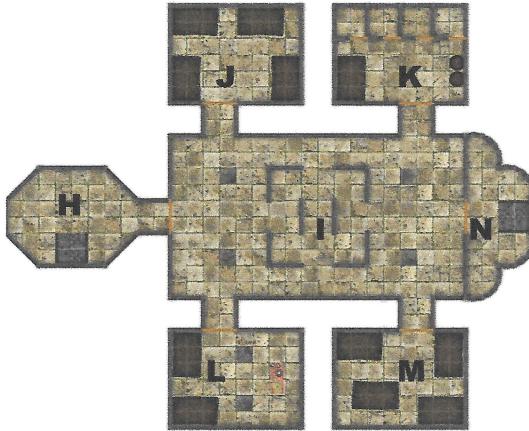
Level 2: Room F contains the mage's living quarters. His bed and a chest are on the south end of the room. The lock on the chest is difficult to pick. The chest is also trapped with runes on the inside lip of the chest that summon a fire elemental when the chest is opened without the proper key. The runes are difficult to detect and disarm. Inside the chest is a potion of fire resistance, a potion of healing, a small diamond worth 50 gp, a pearl worth 100 gp, 233 gp, and a magic +1 dark elf dagger that glows red whenever dwarves are nearby and is permanently enchanted with standard poison.

Level B1: If the heroes maintained their stealth so far, there are a dozen goblins resting in Rooms J and L (half in each room) and six orcs resting in Room M. If the heroes were detected, the orcs are waiting in Room I, and the goblins in their respective rooms, to ambush the heroes. A female elf ranger named Laineth, the priestess's guide, is held prisoner in a cell in Room K. Her cell's lock is moderately difficult to pick. She is seriously injured and delirious from infected wounds. Magic or a difficult healing check is necessary to save her. In any case, her condition is too weak to be of any immediate assistance to the heroes. Stairs in Room N lead down to Room O on Level B2.

Level B2: The door leading into Room P from Room O is a heavy stone door. It cannot be opened without alerting the mage, who is performing his ritual and about to sacrifice the priestess on an altar in Room P. The mage is a 9th level magic user and carries the key to the chest in Room F. If the ritual is completed, the magically sealed metal vault door to Room Q will open and the devil will be released. If the heroes kill the mage, the devil will telepathically communicate with the heroes, saying "If you finish the ritual, I will show you great power!" It intends to show them great power by killing them all once it is free. The priestess is a human named Lithia, and she is eternally grateful for being rescued. She is a priestess of a sun goddess and can cast powerful divine magic. She requests that the heroes take her to her original destination, and henceforth can be a powerful ally to the heroes.

If the heroes don't make haste...

The mage was able to complete his ritual and release the devil! See below for details on the devil. The devil subsequently set about killing everything in the dungeon, including the mage that released it, with one exception: Laineth, the elf ranger imprisoned in Room K. See "If the heroes make haste..." above to determine what was killed. It did not disturb the treasure in Room F, but it did swallow the key to the chest when it ate the mage. It is currently feasting on the remains of all the orcs and goblins. Feel free to place it in whichever room you deem appropriate. Be sure to describe the carnage.

Level 1 (Ground Level)  <p>Main Entrance</p>	The Devil Inside: The devil can be any devil with the following modifications. It is half fire elemental. As such, it is immune to fire and vulnerable to cold damage. Its melee attacks do an additional 1d6 fire damage and anyone struck by them has a 50% chance to catch fire. It is covered in a chitinous shell of molten rock that provides it with protection equivalent to plate armor or improves its armor value by +2 (whichever is better). Heat and fire radiate from the joints in its shell. Any metal object it swallows melts. The devil's true name is Ba'lzeroth and if the heroes somehow discover that, they can use it to command the devil. http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/ Maps made by the author at http://pyromancers.com/
Level 2 	Level B1 
Level 3 	Level B2 