

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

## Reverse Dungeon

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## Introduction: The Other Foot

Welcome to *Reverse Dungeon*! This is the adventure where everything is backward. Instead of playing bold adventurers who journey into monsters' lairs to wipe them out and loot their stuff, the players take the role of the monsters, determined to stop pesky heroes from invading their homes. Instead of being "the good guys," the players get the chance to be "the bad guys." This module is also unusual in that it's not one adventure but a sequence of three, unfolding like a reverse campaign. Players do not necessarily keep the same monster characters throughout; in fact, they can switch to different characters between each scenario, and sometimes in the middle of a given scenario (a monster's life is often nasty, brutish, and short).

## Using The Reverse Dungeon

*Reverse Dungeon* is unlike other adventure modules TSR has published and thus requires the Dungeon Master (DM) to read the module ahead of time at least as carefully as he might for a standard adventure. Because the player characters (PCs) play monsters, the players are familiar with the dungeon ahead of time and may work to devise traps, ambushes, and other nasty surprises for nonplayer character (NPC) adventurers. In a sense, the players become co-DMs, at least while preparing the dungeon. Of course, PCs are not automatically aware of NPC adventurers' plans or movements; that remains the purview of the DM.

This product is set up in three sections: Goblintown, The Vault Level, and Lichland. Generally speaking, each section corresponds to a physical level of the entire dungeon (see the "Reverse Dungeon Cross Section Map"). Additionally, each section assumes the PCs play monsters associated with the level in question. Each section contains several separate scenarios orchestrated by the DM that involve the invasion of adventurers or rival monsters into the PC monsters' dungeon territory. When all the scenarios of a section are played out, for good or ill (see "Consequences," below), the players move on to the next section.

Although each section allows the PCs to pick a new monster to go with the new section, the DM should allow players to hold onto their monster characters if they want to, although this requires the DM to "beef up" lesser monsters to stand up to more dangerous

threats presented, especially for goblin PCs. Allowing goblins to pick up and use some of the artifacts presented in The Vault Level is one way of evening the playing field. Another way is to allow each PC to control a small goblin troupe of 5 or 6 lower-HD goblins.

Each of the three sections contains a subsection entitled "Scenarios." Refer to these sections to find out how NPC adventurers and rival monsters intend to threaten the PC monsters in each dungeon. Besides providing several scenario outlines, each "Scenarios" section also provides complete NPC statistics. Note that threats aimed at one level that are not eradicated by the PC monsters may have to be dealt with in the next level, by the next set of PC monsters, if the DM desires.

Finally, familiarize yourself and your players with the information contained in "Appendix A: Playing the Bad Guys" before actually starting the adventure. This provides a great introduction to the concept of *Reverse Dungeon* and provides both players and DMs with guidelines on how to proceed.

## Plot Synopsis

The scenarios of *Reverse Dungeon* focus on the dungeon complex below a large hill, as shown in the "Reverse Dungeon Cross Section Map." Natural geological processes formed a series of limestone caverns hundreds of thousands of years in the past. An ancient culture subsequently expanded the caverns through mining. These mines later served as home for several demihuman races, until the hill and caverns were claimed by a wizard named Blaise some 600 years ago. Blaise expanded the mines and caverns into a true dungeon complex, and he capped the hillock with the traditional wizard's tower. Today, the tower stands in ruins, goblins have reinhabited the upper caverns, and most outsiders assume that Blaise is long gone. This assumption is false.

Blaise, now a lich, resides in the third level of the dungeon (labeled "Lichland" on the Cross Section Map). The wizard allows the goblins to inhabit the uppermost level of the dungeon (Goblintown), since he has no use for the level and finds the goblins a convenient cover. In fact, the current generation of goblins are not even aware of what the lower levels hold (though they suspect the tunnels exist).

As the adventure opens, the goblins have led an entirely autonomous existence. However, frequent



raids into nearby human civilizations have drawn unwanted attention, and adventurers are about to begin to invading Goblintown. The PC goblins have the opportunity to defend their lair and possibly take the battle to the nearest NPC adventurer marshalling point: the village of Ardeche. If Ardeche falls, the goblins are victorious.

The second section, The Vault Level, physically lies directly below Goblintown. Appreciative of "wizardly tradition," Blaise created this trap-and-monster-filled level to guard magical curiosities accumulated by the wizard over the years. The scenarios in this section deal with various threats to the security of the vault, allowing the PC monsters to defend the dungeon with their native wit and monstrous attributes.

The final section, Lichland, is the bottommost artificial level of Blaise's dungeon (though a cavernous area called the Hellspike Grotto lies directly below Lichland). Here, Blaise and his undead servants plot monstrous evil and attempt to bind demons to their service. PCs have the opportunity to play powerful undead creatures. The scenarios in this section are fairly straightforward: The demon-binding has gone awry and must be dealt with, but worse, clerics of a local monastery have begun to infiltrate the dungeon and, if not repulsed or destroyed, could prove the undoing of Blaise and the PC undead. A final preemptive strike on the monastery by the undead could cement their hold on the region and ensure the dungeon's continued existence. If the threat of the monastery and its holy power is not eliminated, the dungeon eventually falls, with the monsters destroyed or scattered.

## Consequences

The AD&D game rewards normal PCs who successfully complete adventures by providing level advancement. Rewards (and consequences) are handled a bit differently in *The Reverse Dungeon*.

In Goblintown, rules are provided to allow PC goblin characters to advance to higher HD creatures as they survive the depredations of dungeon-looting adventurers. Likewise, possibilities for advancement, or at least powering-up, are given in the second two sections, as the PC monsters fight off threats to their areas.

Even though the product is presented in three sections for ease of use, the DM should remember that the dungeon is a single entity. Thus, how well the PC

monsters do in the initial level will have some effect on the scenarios of the subsequent levels. Such effects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) PC monsters of the previous level may be available as henchmen of the PC monsters of the next lower level if the previous levels' scenarios played out to the advantage of the monsters.
- 2) If the PC monsters of the previous section fail or die, the DM should complement the current sections' scenarios with the threats noted for the previous section, if applicable.

## DM Difficulties

Just as the players may have a some difficulty fitting into their new roles, Dungeon Masters used to traditional adventures may have a little trouble adjusting to the *Reverse Dungeon*. Usually, the DM has a keyed map and reads out descriptions of new areas as the player characters explore them. Here, in five out of the six adventures, the players are familiar with the layout of the dungeons—as familiar as we are with the rooms in our own homes—and it's the NPCs who don't know the floor plan.

This means, of course, that the DM has to master the trick of masking DM knowledge. Just as in normal adventures, when the monsters under the DM's control do not always know the locations or plans of the PC heroes, the NPC adventurers exploring those areas should fall into traps, make wrong turns, and miss a few secret doors. The NPCs may be smart, experienced, and tough (especially in Lichland, the last section), but they're not omniscient. Don't deny your players the thrill of seeing an intruder walk right smack into some horrible trap or ambush their PCs have labored to set up. By the same token, though, don't eliminate the occasional "aarrgh!" when the pesky NPC adventurers sidestep disaster at the last second (either through skill or sheer dumb luck).

## A Final Note

*Reverse Dungeon* is all about taking roleplaying one step further to see what the view looks like from the perspective of the folks who normally exist only to provide challenges to the heroes. With luck, players will not only have a blast seeing how the other half lives (so to speak) but may come away from this adventure with a new appreciation of their foes and, thus, of their heroes as well.



## Goblintown

In this first part of the adventure, the player characters are goblins belonging to the Yar-Gock tribe. They are about to receive the unwelcome attentions of a band of adventurers dedicated to wiping out the “threat posed by that vile band of humanoids” and, incidentally, loot all their treasures. The goblin characters must survive multiple attacks on their lair, repel the marauding heroes, and eventually raid the nearby village to end the threat.

### Rules for Goblin PCs

Goblin player characters should be rolled up the same way as any other PCs, with the following modifications:

- Goblins do not choose a class, unless it is the goblin shaman.
- **Ability scores:** roll 2d6 for each stat, assigning the results to Str, Dex, Con, Int, Wis, and Chr. Add +1 to Con and subtract -2 from Chr.
- **HD:** 1-1 (1 to 7 hp).
- **THAC0:** 20
- **Armor Class:** Goblins are AC 10 when unarmored, or AC 6 when wearing typical goblin war gear—thick leather armor (the equivalent of studded leather) and a small wooden or leather shield.
- **Damage:** 1d6 (spear, club, stone-headed mace, short sword) or 1d4 (sling stone). The Yar-Gock tribe lacks the capacity to make metal weapons, but they have a small hoard of short swords and metal-tipped spears looted from unsuccessful adventurers in the past. Most of these are in the hands of the tribal leader (the Mogur) and his bodyguards; the rest of the goblin warriors have to make do with flint-headed spears, clubs, and sling stones (1d4 damage per stone).
- **Size:** Small. Goblin warriors average about 4 feet high. This enables them to survive and even thrive in cramped quarters but limits them to smallish weaponry such as the short sword, spear, and mace.
- **Special Abilities:** infravision (60 feet range), detect new construction (25% chance).
- **Special Weakness:** partially blinded by sunlight or other bright lights (-1 penalty to all attack rolls).

Compared with typical PCs (humans, elves, dwarves, and even halflings), goblins are weak and unimpressive. They prefer ambushes and tend to run away from fights where they lack an overwhelming numerical advantage. The average goblin warrior knows that if he fights one-on-one with even a novice (1st-level) adventurer, he'll very likely lose. This has given them a reputation as cowards, but what others call cowardice, goblins call being smart, playing it safe, and above all staying alive. “Live to fight another day” is a tried-and-true goblin philosophy.

Where goblins do excel, and what enables them to hold their own in a hostile world, is teamwork. Individually weak, the goblin war band can be effective and deadly when its members work together. They also are very good at using their home terrain to their advantage, where darkness and cramped quarters prevent larger and stronger foes from using their size and weaponry to best advantage. Goblins often employ traps to even the odds. All these strategies should come into play in the course of this adventure/scenario.

Some players, and not just power gamers, may become frustrated by the prospect of playing such relatively weak player characters. Encourage them to give it a try anyway; the change could do them good. However, to give them a fighting chance against the damage-dealing machine that is an adventuring party, allow them multiple player characters. During character creation, have each player roll up not one but three goblin warriors. He or she now has the option of running the characters one at a time or all three simultaneously. The “three characters at once” option simulates the goblins' innate lawfulness and ability to work together effectively against larger, more powerful, but less organized foes. It's up to the player to decide whether the three are related, a goblin clique, or simply an informal group whose interests tend to coincide. Wise players will use the multiple characters to increase their options, spread around damage, and rescue the fallen, thus giving all three greatly improved odds of survival.

### Leader-Types

At the start of the adventure, all the PCs are ordinary goblin warriors. However, they have the potential to advance through the course of the

