The Labyrinth of Seresh-ka

Posted by Kradlo - 2006/05/24 17:53

Here's a dungeon I ran years ago at DunDraCon for the debut of D&D 3.0. The dungeon was designed with several criteria in mind. The entire adventure had to conclude within the posted time for the room. The dungeon had to fit on a 4-foot diameter round table. And the dungeon had to be buildable with two Room & Passage Sets, one Deluxe Room Set, one Wicked Additions Set, and two Wicked Additions II sets, plus the Ogre's Den.

The choice meant that I only had to bring six boxes of Master Maze (plus the Ogre's Den), instead of taking a piece from this set here, two pieces from that set there, etc.

http://home.earthlink.net/~thomasgrable/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderpictures/labyrinth2.jpg

The fountain used was actually a cast resin piece from Kilroy Productions that I'd painted, but the one from the Floor Set makes an excellent choice.

Unfortunately, I don't know how to objects to the map yet (perhaps Lonestarre and pfworks will enlighten me). I'll try to describe the elements as best I can.

The PCs were given a prophecy that led them to the Labyrinth:

If Seresh-ka's labyrinth you'd dare
Then journey to gaze upon Despair
A Hunter's moon and Skirin's eye
These are the signs that time is nigh
The final piece for you to chart
The crimson pulse of Shagrath's heart
Enter the maze's shadowed gloom
Beware lest it become your tomb
Turn and turn and turn again
You're back where you began
To seek your prize, to find your mark
Extinguish light and welcome dark
What's the prize? What's the treasure?
Do you know your own measure?
From each extract a hollow cost
You'll pay the price or you are lost
If you are clever, bold, and wise
You will receive the final prize
Salvation for a troubled land
The Ancients' Cup is in your hand

The dungeon entrance was an enormous face set in a howl of anguish, called the Face of Despair. Wind (?) passing through the open mouth gave the sound of agonized moaning. Under the light of a triple full moon (Arduin has three moons), the Face could speak:

Apprenticed to the master mage
Ambition did prepare the stage
So misery became my lot
When black betrayal did I plot

But Seresh-ka was crueler still
For faithless servant he'd not kill
But bound instead in stony pain
Exposed to every wind and rain
To look on starless nights and weep
To pray for surcease, pray for sleep
And yet my hopes have died in vain
I fear that I will go insane
I remain yet in granite bound
My plaintive moans my only sound
But when the moons in triad rise
I can then utter more than sighs
My sins to you I must unfold
My crimes laid bare, my folly told
My story sung through poet's rhyme
But trapped in stone 'till end of time

When triune moons appear on high
In fullness bright in blackened sky
From dusk 'till dawn the way is clear
But tarry not if you hold dear
Your freedom and your sanity
For bound within you'll ever be

To look upon the master's maze
Then pass within before the day's
Warm light does shine upon my face
You have but ten full hours' grace
To search among the stony halls
For prizes rich within the walls
So pause not long in reverie
Or Seresh-ka's menagerie
Will gain more souls that rue their fate
That they did seek the exit late

The PCs had to enter through the open mouth of the Face of Despair (symbolized by the Demon Gate piece). The Labyrinth had several enchantments bound into it. The dungeon walls were magically hardened, and were virtually unbreakable. Teleportation and gates worked, but only to enter the dungeon. Once inside, all attempts to teleport or travel dimensionally failed. Also, while inside, occupants did not require food, water, or sleep. Indeed, sleep was impossible, which would have an effect on your reasoning after a while.

The "cave-in" section was an illusion, which I'd hoped the PCs would find last (they did). The PCs explored the rest of the dungeon, finding interesting encounters, but not the Cup of the Ancients they sought. Finally, they returned to the four-way passage that they'd first encountered, and one looked at the caved in section. They'd attempted to dig through it, and found only more rubble. One PC started thinking.

"If the dungeon walls are virtually unbreakable, how can there be a cave in?" They remembered the prophecy. "To seek your prize, to find your mark/Extinguish light and welcome dark." So, they put out their torches, and in the dark found they could walk right through the illusion.

Once past the illusory cave-in, they reignited their torches, and found an entrance to a huge and empty room. One section (the upper right on the map) had a raised floor (I'd used the 4" x 6" floor piece on pillars), with stair leading up to it. Other than that, it was just a big, empty room. They started to enter, when their sorceress became suspicious.

She cast see invisible and found that inside the room was a giant spider the size of a small bus. The spider became visible like a Romulun warbird as it cast Elric's Thunderball, a combination of fire and lightning. This was a Spiga, specifically Uthosian, the last child of Shelob the Great. The Monster Manual had not come out yet, so I gave her the powers of a level 16 sorceress (I didn't know the levels would stack on top of her monster hit dice, so she just had the 16 hit dice). Uthosian was giving them one hell of a tough fight when the elven sorceress cast flesh to stone on the Spiga. The sorceress overcame Uthosian's spell resistance, and Uthosian failed her saving throw. That saved the day.

Overall, the dungeon was a huge success, due in large part to the excellent play and teamwork of the players. They were a great bunch, good roleplayers all, and we had a blast.

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The Labyrinth of Seresh-ka
Posted by LoneStarr - 2006/05/25 11:38

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Doors, pillars, pedestals, etc. can be found in the 'Objects Tile' group, selectable with the select box in the lower left corner of the software.

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The Labyrinth of Seresh-ka
Posted by Kradlo - 2006/05/25 12:49

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Thanks! The map has been edited now.

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The Labyrinth of Seresh-ka
Posted by whitewind - 2006/06/25 12:02

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Cool dungeon, thanks for sharing!

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The Labyrinth of Seresh-ka
Posted by jkratzer - 2006/06/25 16:27

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Krad -

Day-yum! That sounds like one fantastic jaunt through that dungeon; wish I'd been there!

Good mapwork, too.

See ya!

Jim

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The Labyrinth of Seresh-ka

Posted by Kradlo - 2006/06/26 11:27

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I've got to admit, this group was one of the best I'd ever run. They worked together as a team, remembered their objective, and stuck to it until the end. I gave them a mean, tough fight at the end, and they pulled out all the stops. They made me glad to be a GM.

I'm looking forward to running games here in Michigan, now that I have the space.

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