

THE MISTY MOUNTAIN

Far away, at the edge of civilization, where the world ends and nightmares begin, rise mountains of impassable evil, walls between this world and the next, wherein may be darkness from Ages gone by or an Age yet to be. The greatest such mountains may hold the secrets for any journey, its treasure, its villain, or even one's undoing. That is if one is brave or foolish enough to seek such a place...

PREPARING TO PLAY: When you are all gathered to play, and every one of the Players is prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

You thought it was legend. Indeed, until now, a hope for its falsehood and your journey a fool's errand burned in your heart, growing with each mile until now the inferno within wishes it was indeed only a legend. Yet there it is. You have come far and through many adventures to see it, and now you do not like the look of it at all.

The mountain. Grondorin. Throne of Iron. It has many names, but the locals simply refer to it as the Misty Mountain. A precise name, if one not too imaginative, for the slopes of this lonely stone pinnacle are ever shrouded in mist rising from the lake within its shadow. There dwells a small village of Men amidst this otherwise empty desolation, their longhouses and fishing ships as sacred as their sheep and cattle, as no trees grow in this barren land any more.

Yet though they live in fear, the villagers welcome you as warmly as they would their kin. Fine rooms and rumors alike are found at the Copper Kettle Inn. The sign above the door is nothing less, the first sign of many you see how the villagers hang countless pots and containers to gather what little rain falls in these parts. Yet at the inn they none-the-less serve up a plentiful bounty, mostly of fish. "The yearly caravan came but a week past, bringing food from all faraway lands." says the scullery maid. "We trade Dragon scales for goods, as they fall plentifully from the mountain's lord, a Fire-Drake of legend."

Rumors: The locals are indifferent to the mountain and its legends. Indeed, nearly everyone in town has a different belief as to what rules the mountain and what can be found up there. The party can gather enough tales to constitute 2 rolls on the following chart (re-rolling any duplicate results).

Rumors

Value	Rumor about the mountain
15	Of old did a Dwarf Kingdom thrive on the mountain, its treasure attracting all the evil that has ever dwelled therein (true)
11	The Dragon of old was placated every full moon by the song of Maidens (true)
8	The Dragon hears all who approach its lair across the desolation (partially true)
4	In older days, the village elders chose by lottery the yearly sacrifice of a Maiden to placate the monster of the mountain (true)
3	The Dragon is an illusion, a dream (false)
1	The scales fell from beasts of yore, now long vanished from the earth (false)

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN: Once the party reaches the mountain's slopes, they will face a rugged 12-mile journey zigzagging their way up until they find any cave or lair. This endlessly winding exploration will penalize their Wilderness Movement Rate by -10 miles a day. Run both of the following Encounters, the first at the beginning, and the others every 1-6 miles thereafter.

1) The desolation

The mountain rises like an iron stalagmite to pierce the clouds, yet never do they bleed, the Heavens as dead as the withered lands below. Here no rain or snow ever falls, here the only song is of carrion-bird calls, here no longer a river flows, and nothing green ever grows. The mists cloak the land like the spirit of the world waiting for its body to die. It is a lonely, cold and quiet climb up the mountainside.

If anyone sings for any reason, his voice will resound far and wide, almost magically and with a choir of Angels. If anyone sings while they travel, they will benefit from it later on.

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2) Dry pool

Your way up the mountainside has been mostly along dried riverbeds and rivulets, with rest stops in dry pools which once fed waterfalls. The next one you find, however, is already a campground, but for the ghosts of beasts, if such things exist. For the dry, cracked ground of this ancient pool is littered with the bones of many strange beasts, charred black like the surrounding rocks.

Many strange beasts were drinking when the Dragon first came, and annihilated them. If any of the remains are disturbed, a random Character will chance to pick up the skull of what looks like a horned horse which will at once glow with fiery light within, trailing smoke from its eye sockets rather than its nostrils! If spoken to, it will give a cryptic comment that confirms or denies the truth in the rumor of the highest value the party heard. This skull is also worth 155 gold to the people of the village (who can trade it next year).

3) Gathering mist

Climbing ever higher on the increasingly steep mountainside, the last few hours have seen the mists growing thicker as well. Soon you can see naught but the rugged cliff you climb upon. The rest of the world is obscured by the mountain's rancid breath.

In order to go on, each Character must make a Challenging Courage Check. Those who fail this Check will not voluntarily proceed further on the mountainside. However, once each day a frightened Character may re-attempt this Check. One may also be encouraged by another Character (who indeed has already made his Courage Check) by way of singing or making a Simple Charisma Check. This Check, however, may only be made once by each brave Character for each fearful Character.

CHAMBERS OF FIRE: Towards the very top of the mountain is a great cavern, of old the throne room for a new Dwarven Kingdom. Once the party reaches it, run the following Encounters one and all and in the order they are presented.

4) Loose ledge

In many places the mountainside has been broken by fire and strength beyond Mortal ken. Now the path leads along an unstable ledge, threatening to crumble beneath your every step.

If the party spaces themselves out to a good 100' apart, there is no danger. Otherwise, there is a chance in 8 for every 50 Encumbrance one totals (between body and carried Burden) that the ledge breaks, sending him plummeting to his doom.

5) Great entrance

The trail leads past several old posts, charred all but to cinders. Here of old were sacrifices bound to placate the beast they would name 'Lord'.

A search of this area might find the wedding ring of a Lady. Empowered by her restless spirit, it will become a 'ring of protection' if present at the time the Dragon of Encounter 6 is slain.

6) The Dragon's lair

The mountain path at last ends before a massive cave. Inside, the air is filled with the foul reek of an evil older than the world. The ground both inside and out is littered with the singed bones and blood-stained, broken weapons of many who dared enter, floating in the shallow quagmire of a primordial filth that is the Dragon's bile.

The tunnel runs 200' to the Dragon itself, and it will use its breath for a Challenging ambush on those approaching. However, if the party sand back in Encounter 1, the Dragon shall be sleeping, and if awoken with the party already past its tunnel, it will Parley if a woman is present.

Due to the fame of this Dragon, it must have no less than 10 treasures.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: All those who help to fell the Dragon of the Misty Mountain will become revered in these lands, gaining +2 to each of their Legend Scores.