

RUNAWAY HIRELINGS

CREDITS

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WHAT IS THIS?

This is the latest playable version of a game about some hirelings escaping a crazy dungeon which is generated on the fly by the Players and the Game-Master (called a Dungeon Architect here, or Dunarch for short). This is close to what will be available as printable handouts that accompany the book when it is finished.

SETUP

- Print out as many copies of the basic rules as there are Players (+1 for the Dunarch).
- Print out two copies of each Hireling sheet (front and back, then cut down the dotted line).
- Print out one copy of the Dunarch sheets.
- Print out a Dungeon Template if you are going to use one, if any.

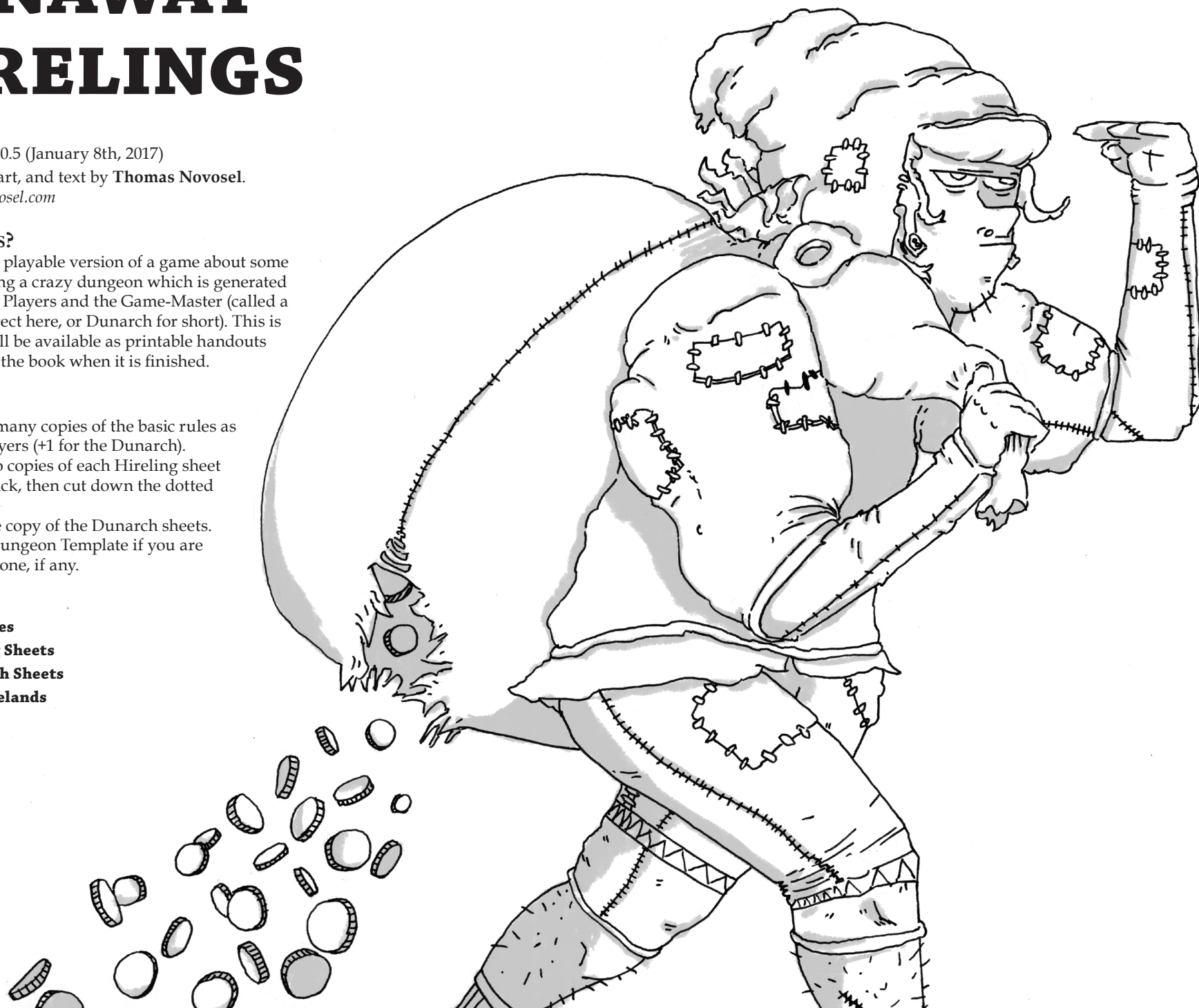
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DISCOVERY

ENTERING THE NEXT ROOM

When the group finds a “way out” or is about to enter the next room, the Player whose turn it is gains 1 flail point and must choose...

- ...to name this room.
- ...introduce a problem that can be sensed (inspired by the room’s name).

The Player whose turn it was last answers the choice that wasn’t picked this turn (turn order being clockwise around the table, the first turn given to whoever has the most experience with this game). Questions are answered in the same order as they are listed above.

THIS IS NOT EXACTLY WHAT I REMEMBER

When you hear a description given by the Dunarch and want to change it, give the Dunarch two flail points and answer one...

- What type of monster is this?
- What is the true threat in this room to you?
- What here is *definitely* the key to moving forward?
- How is this not what it seems?

Your answer is now added to the description the Dunarch gave, changing the situation around you heavily. This can only be done once per room.

WHAT ELSE WOULD IT BE?

When you answer a question asked by the rules and you expand on the answers given to the initial Introducing the World prompts, you gain 1 flail point. This only applies to the questions asked to fulfill either *DOING SOMETHING LIKE YOUR SPECIALTY*, *THIS IS NOT EXACTLY WHAT I REMEMBER*, or *CHOOSING TO FAIL FOR FLAILS*.

HELPING OTHERS

GIVING AID

If you help someone in a task which is outside their specialty, describe to everyone how you are helping them and why you are qualified to help in this way. The person receiving assistance gets a +1 to the result of their die rolled. If they still fail, then you lose half as much gold as they do and are put in similar danger.

REVIVE-A-FRIEND

If you are particularly attached to your character and they have just died, you can beg your buddies to help. Another member of the party can choose to spend 2 flail points and lose 8 gold so that you can be revived back to 4 gold.

DOING STUFF

IT’S MY SPECIALTY

When your specialty is blatantly related to the task at hand, you don’t have to roll a die to do anything. Instead, if it is your first time doing it, tell everyone why you have to be the one to do this instead of anyone else.

DOING SOMETHING LIKE YOUR SPECIALTY

When your specialty doesn’t directly relate to the task at hand, the Dunarch will ask you to do one of the following:

- Tell us about the last time you did this successfully somewhere else.
 - Tell a short tale of someone who has done this before, according to local legend.
 - Describe your technique and tell us who taught you how to do this.
 - Describe the worst case scenario and how failing to do this would end terribly.
- When you answer the question chosen, you do what you set out to do successfully.

CHOOSING TO FAIL FOR FLAILS

If you opt to fail at a task that you would otherwise succeed at, choose a question and answer it:

- How did this go from bad to “Welp, this is the end”?
- At what point did time slow down and you realized this wouldn’t work?
- When have you failed before? What gave you the idea it would work this time?

When you answer the question, you lose 3 gold, are put into danger and gain 1 flail point.

DOING SOMETHING THAT ISN’T YOUR THING AT ALL

When you go to do something that can’t be related to your specialty, or could be described as fighting, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6 you do the best that a hireling with a very specialized set of skills can do. The Dunarch will elaborate on what your success means.

If you roll a 4 or below, you have stumbled and failed. Every other Player will tell you one way that this could have gone wrong. Pick which happened, elaborate on it, and then lose 2d6+2 gold.

However, if you spend 2 flail points before rolling you automatically succeed. Just tell everyone how.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

When you are rolling a die DOING SOMETHING THAT ISN’T YOUR THING AT ALL, check to see if you have an Advantage or a Disadvantage which applies. If an advantage applies, roll twice and use the higher of the two rolls. If a disadvantage applies, roll twice and use the lower of the two rolls.

Advantages and Disadvantages cannot be applied if the situation could most easily be described as fighting.

GOLD AND HIRELINGS

CREATE A HIRELING

When you are making your first character, do the following:

- Choose a Hireling type.
- Select Equipment (where choices are given).
- Choose 1 build question and answer it.
- Mark down that you have 20 gold

NO GOLD LEFT

When you have no gold remaining, you die due to the perils and dangers of “this place”, describe how your death benefits everyone else. How does your sacrifice help your friends? How does your death allow everyone else to avoid danger and get to the next room?

Alternatively, instead of helping everyone you can spend 3 flail points and the forces that have ensnared you wrap around your friend as well, and the ally of your choice loses 1d6+4 gold. If they spend 3 flail points in response, they don't lose any gold.

Now go make a *NEW CHARACTER*.

NEW CHARACTERS

When you make a new character, do as follows. Choose a new character type and start with half as much gold as your last character started with (first character has 20, 2nd has 10, 3rd has 5, 4th has 2). Introduce yourself in the next room, tell everyone why you were left behind on the way in, or why you weren't with them in the treasure room (this is the character's only build question). Once answered, you may play as normal.

When someone loses a third character, the exit of the dungeon is in the next room.

If you are making a fourth character, this one is the same as your first (think of this as a shocking twist of events). Tell everyone vaguely how you got from where you died/disappeared, to here? (This replaces all build questions and is now your only one).

BUILD QUESTION, AGAIN

If at any time during play you answer one of your questions through dialogue or interacting with another member of the party, you gain 2 flail points as well as 4 gold. This can only be done as long as you have an unanswered build question available.

These are generally sappy or emotional moments, but as long as you work it into a meaningful moment, it works.

FLAIL POINT RUNDOWN

HOW TO GET FLAIL POINTS

You can get flail points by...

- It being your turn to choose when entering the next room
See *ENTERING THE NEXT ROOM*; Gain 1 flail point
- Expanding on the answers made to the Introducing the World prompts
See *WHAT ELSE WOULD IT BE?*; Gain 1 flail point
- Choosing to fail at a task you would otherwise succeed at
See *CHOOSING TO FAIL FOR FLAILS*; Gain 1 flail point
- Answering one of your unanswered build questions
See *BUILD QUESTION, AGAIN*; Gain 2 flail points and 4 gold

HOW TO SPEND FLAIL POINTS

You spend flail points to...

- Expand/alter descriptions given by the Dunarch
See *THIS IS NOT EXACTLY WHAT I REMEMBER*; Cost 1 flail point
- Automatically succeed when doing something unrelated to your specialty
See *DOING SOMETHING THAT ISN'T YOUR THING AT ALL*; Cost 2 flail points
- To bring a friend back to life as they die
See *REVIVE-A-FRIEND*; Costs 2 flail points and 8 gold

OTHER NOTES ON POINTS

When a Player's Hireling dies, the Player does not lose any flail points that have been gained so far. Flail points can only be lost when they are spent.

THE TRAP-POKER

EQUIPMENT:

You have the following items on your person:

- A **long metal stick**
- The Player's choice of either: a **30 ft. rope** or a **sprung troll trap**.

Alternatively, you can swap 1 of your items for a **sharpened "L" spear tip** (this is definitely a weapon when used as such, so you will get a +1 to your roll when attacking with it).

SPECIALTY:

Detecting and disarming hidden traps (pitfalls, arrow flingers, boulder rollers, collapsing ceilings, etc).

ADVANTAGE:

Rearming any trap in a dungeon that has already been sprung.

DISADVANTAGE:

When it is time to **escape from imminent danger**, your senses go wild and you will become paranoid, having to poke and prod at all things ahead of you before you can even think about running away.

CHARACTER
NUMBER:

FLAIL
POINTS:

CURRENT
GOLD:

THE TORCHBEARER

EQUIPMENT:

You have the following items on your person:

- A **bundle of torches** (3)
- The Player's choice of either: a **purse of Strikem'Anyplace matches** or a **antique silver lighter**.

Alternatively, you can swap 1 of your items for a **warped heavy lead torch** (this is definitely a weapon when used as such, so you will get a +1 to your roll when attacking with it).

SPECIALTY:

Illuminating great halls, corridors, and all manners of rooms using anything flammable, **making sure that no one can stay hidden in the shadows**.

ADVANTAGE:

Sensing the direction that people have chosen to go, by following the smell of smoke (from a fire or burnt item of any size, any time ago).

DISADVANTAGE:

While it is in the best interest of everyone for the area to be well-lighted, you do get a bit too excited when **anyone starts constructing something**. It all just looks like a future giant bonfire to you.

CHARACTER
NUMBER:

FLAIL
POINTS:

CURRENT
GOLD:

BUILD: (*CHOOSE ONE*)

You were a bit of a firebug in the past, what is the most interesting thing you have set ablaze? What will you always be compelled to set on fire?

Your well-choreographed torch maneuvers paid off earlier today, revealing a ragged figure hiding in the dark, what were their last words before they died?

Who here gets shakey when you get a crazy look in your eye while starting a fire? Why do *you* think they get this way?

BUILD: (*CHOOSE ONE*)

You once got caught in a troll trap, how can everyone else tell that this happened?

What trap did you set off on the way in which made everyone know it was a good reason to have you brought along?

Why are you on permanent retainer and even have a small bed in the barn at your employer's house?

THE PEASANT

EQUIPMENT:

You have the following items on your person:

- A potato **sack full of assorted lengths of potato sacks**.
- The Player's choice of either: a **live chicken** or a **hearing horn**.

Alternatively, you can swap 1 of your items for a **horeshoe on a cord** (this is definitely a weapon when used as such, so you will get a +1 to your roll when attacking with it).

SPECIALTY:

Concealing or carrying objects using your various bags and tried and true hording practices.

ADVANTAGE:

Lifting heavier things is not too hard, Peasants are hired usually just for their arms and prowess at carrying and walking, so this is no surprise.

DISADVANTAGE:

Trying to sneak past anything with ears is hard to do. You breathe ever so loudly when you are stressed. Hopefully no one hears!

CHARACTER
NUMBER:

FLAIL
POINTS:

CURRENT
GOLD:

THE CHRONICLER

EQUIPMENT:

You have the following items on your person:

- A fist full of **blank scrolls** (3) and an **expensive pen**.
- The Player's choice of either: **Gortox the Destructor's Tales of the End** or **Jillion the Magnificent's Mission Journal**.

Alternatively, you can swap 1 of your items for **Tiro's Story Spear** (this is definitely a weapon when used as such, so you will get a +1 to your roll when attacking with it).

SPECIALTY:

Reading, understanding, and **interpreting foreign texts and customs**.

ADVANTAGE:

If the denizens of the deeps are being disagreeable, you could always **use your knowledge of the conflicts that heroes have faced to calm things down**.

DISADVANTAGE:

Being someone who always likes to learn the tiny mundane details of every civilization, when you are in the position to avoid danger or **grab any cultural artifact**, it is near impossible to not pocket it.

CHARACTER
NUMBER:

FLAIL
POINTS:

CURRENT
GOLD:

BUILD: (*CHOOSE ONE*)

Who here reminds you the most of the subject of the book you carry?
Why do they insist that you tell them all you know whenever there is time?

Something in this place seems oddly familiar, like it has a hidden use that's useful but may actually be useless, but it looks culture-y. What does it look like?

What did your "Hero" offer you as unconventional payment for this *last* job?
Be specific.

BUILD: (*CHOOSE ONE*)

How did you get cheated out of your fortune so that you would have to live your life as a peasant?

You have an odd obsession with shiny things, what is one shiny thing that could be here that you would always risk your life to snag?

Did your "Hero" really want you to come along? Why did you beg for this assignment?

THE FOOL

EQUIPMENT:

You have the following items on your person:

- A **belt covered in small silver bells**.
- The Player's choice of either: a hieroglyph-covered **timeless comedy scarf** or a **scary goblin clown mask**.

Alternatively, you can swap 1 of your items for a **acid filled spritzer bottle** (this is definitely a weapon when used as such, so you will get a +1 to your roll when attacking with it).

SPECIALTY:

Using pranks and jabs to distract people from the topic at hand with your childish antics and harmless shenanigans.

ADVANTAGE:

Making people laugh is your talent. No matter how dark the day is, a joke is always brewing. This tends to **cheer people up**.

DISADVANTAGE:

When you need to make it clear that it is dangerous, no one takes you seriously. They just assume you are telling jokes that are in poor taste, so sometimes **people won't take your words seriously in high stress environments**.

CHARACTER
NUMBER:

FLAIL
POINTS:

CURRENT
GOLD:

THE ITINERANT MONK

EQUIPMENT:

You have the following items on your person:

- A pocket copy of the "**20 Ways to become One with the World**".
- The Player's choice of either: a pair of **silent stepping slippers** or a **ceremonial peace chalice**.

Alternatively, you can swap 1 of your items for a **thorned peace chalice** (this is definitely a weapon when used as such, so you will get a +1 to your roll when attacking with it).

SPECIALTY:

Using your soothing voice and smart words to calm nature down from the brink of destruction (a tree is falling, by talking about peace you slow its fall).

ADVANTAGE:

You are very cautious in how your steps and actions disturb the world, this does make it **harder for people to track you** as you leave no footprints or dust disturbed.

DISADVANTAGE:

When you want to be loud, you are too soft in speech for most people to hear you. Thus **danger that threatens your life makes you too quiet to be heard**.

CHARACTER
NUMBER:

FLAIL
POINTS:

CURRENT
GOLD:

BUILD: (*CHOOSE ONE*)

What thoughts are always in your head and what topics must you always insist on discussing? Who doesn't like to talk about this?

Where is the academy you attended and what makes it hard for others to understand why people would go there?

Why did your "Hero" think you'd be useful on this expedition? What troubled their soul which meant you had to be brought along? Tell everyone now.

BUILD: (*CHOOSE ONE*)

Is it hard for people to take you seriously? Who here can never take you seriously? Why?

Do you have a classic or show stopping act? Tell everyone about it! And maybe show them later.

Which prop did your "Hero" not let you take along? When would it have come in handy, like, all the time?

THE “SLOP” CHEF

EQUIPMENT:

You have the following items on your person:

- A **porcelain stew ladle** and a **rusted pot with last night's leftovers** inside.
- The Player's choice of either: a single plump **dead chicken** or an **apron** that says “Best at Cooking”.

Alternatively, you can swap 1 of your items for a **dented cast iron frying pan** (this is definitely a weapon if used as such, so you will get a +1 to your roll when attacking with it).

SPECIALTY:

Using culinary expertise, which might as well be chemistry, to **create slight acids or heavy meat candies out of whatever food-like ingredients are about**.

ADVANTAGE:

Preparing food for monsters. To make them sleepy, content or enraged upon consumption.

DISADVANTAGE:

Your big secret is that you have a very particular taste, **anything that smells foul, tastes spoiled, or the slightest bit of muddy water will send you over the edge and make you sick**, and unmoveable. Someone will have to carry you, you will be so offended.

CHARACTER
NUMBER:

FLAIL
POINTS:

CURRENT
GOLD:

BUILD: (*CHOOSE ONE*)

What recipe have you been unable to master or get “just right”? How does it haunt your cooking dreams?

You saw some plant on the way through which is a rare delicacy in the village, what did it look like and why weren't you able to grab it before?

Why did your “Hero” think you’d be useful on this expedition? What was there favorite food that you took extra care in preparing before leaving town?

THE DUNARCH

THE PREMISE

Read the following outloud before you start playing:

“Here you are, your bosses are dead on the floor, blood pooling under their cloaks and mighty swords. A shattered wand is spread like used toothpicks all around the big bad guy. They led you in, they defeated great monsters and solved complex puzzles to reach this, the treasure room.

The rumored fortune!

Gold, jewels and the most magnificent fabrics. But, they could not have been prepared for what would wait here, protecting such delicious riches. They fought valiantly while you cowered behind a rock. They were hit with mighty fists and claws as you cheered them on. and you hid behind a rock. They suffered the blasts of explosive magicks! And they died just as the boss monster did, but you survived.

But what now? You have gold in your packs and have buried your heroes, tears have been shed (maybe), and now you must flee back from whence you came. You must run away as fast as you can back to the entrance. Hopefully the path out is easier when you blindly flail your way forward!”

INTRODUCING THE WORLD

Ask the following outloud and write down the “big ideas” from the answers that are decided upon by the group.

About this dungeon...

- Where is this dungeon in the world?

- Why would your employers adventure here?

In the treasure room...

- What is the treasure room made of?

- What monster killed your employers?

- What was this creature’s purpose here?

Ask these questions as you describe the scene around the characters. Zooming in from the dungeon, to this room, and finally down to the characters.

INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS

Once those questions are answered, have each Player introduce their character, telling everyone: their name, which hiring type they are, what items they have, and the answer to their build question.

RUNNING THE GAME

At each new room present the hirelings with a challenge based around the information given to you from them activating *ENTERING THE ROOM*. This challenge must be dealt with before the group can proceed to the next room.

Be sure to also **expand on descriptions** as well, (using the names and problems given by the Players as inspiration) so that each room will be unique and cool.

If someone is explaining how their specialty applies to it and it feels like a stretch, then it doesn't count. It should be pretty easy to tell when something wouldn't work.

WHEN DOES IT END?

The last room of the dungeon should appear when:

- Someone has lost their third character
- When you only have 20 minutes before your out of time to play

This is mostly for convenience, if you can't play for much longer have the next room be the exit so you can tie a bow on the session and call it good.

THE LAST ROOM, THE EXIT

The last room functions just as those before it when entered, except that all gold lost here is doubled. Almost as if your luck is running out as the light at the end of the tunnel becomes visible.

If you lose a character in this room, you cannot make another one.

The challenge in this last room should be related to two of the ones passed through so far, combining them in some way or explaining something that was unexplained.

AT THE END OF THE GAME

Once everyone has exited the dungeon, or at least those that are still alive have gone back to the unnamed village from which they came from. Everyone has riches to spend! Have each Player answer the following questions:

- What will you be doing with these riches and hard earned knowledge?
- What will you be doing at this moment, 10 years from now?

If someone had a character die, ask them to tell everyone what their tombstone would say.

NOTES

PLAYER	<div></div>	PLAYER	<div></div>	PLAYER	<div></div>	PLAYER	<div></div>	PLAYER	<div></div>
	GOLD		GOLD		GOLD		GOLD		GOLD

THE NEEDLELANDS

INSPIRATIONAL IMAGERY

- All across the walls and ceilings, and dotting the floor are elongated thorns, some as thick as an arm, others as big around as a small boulder. The long briars could hook or skewer anyone who steps wrong or fails to consider that a shortcut climbing over a ravine of these things is a “bad idea”.
- Nearby, on the surface, is a village. The people there occasionally travel to the large cracks in the ground outside their town to throw garbage, junk, and stolen property (treasures?) down the crevices. This results in the spikes along the higher parts of the walls having items dangling from them and occasionally thorns will crack and fall onto unsuspecting creatures below.

SPINES AND SPIKES...

The Dunarch will choose two questions out of those listed below to use in place of the “About this dungeon...” questions for the beginning of the session:

- Which race used to live in the Needlelands and is now extinct?
- What did the monsters here eat? What makes it valuable?
- Where do the needlings keep their captives?
- Why has no one explored the Needlelands before now?
- How does someone enter the Needlelands? What makes it difficult?
- When did the creator of the Needlelands disappear? Why?

PEOPLES AND CREATURES

Listed below are the names of a variety of people, creatures and things that call the Needlelands their home (even if just temporarily):

- Minlock the Infallible Squire
- Needling Hordes (Razz, Churts and Lordles)
- The Fallen Ones (Billy, Samantha and Charles)
- Spine Snakes
- The Four Horned Sand Beetle
- Colossal Stone Head (K’Haras, K’Dule)

DUNGEON ROOMS

If someone can’t think of a name for a room when they really need one, they can look at the list of dungeon rooms below for inspiration or just use one as is.

- Bottomless Howling Chasm
- Hall of Conehuts
- The Prisoner’s Wall
- Leaking Sands Tunnel
- Shattered and Scattered Spines Great Room
- Rotten and Forgotten Feasting Hall
- A Massive Briar Bridge
- The Remains of Expeditionary Camp “32”
- Court of the Sandflowers
- Fourteen Chiselled Tales of Thirst