

Magazine Review: Dungeon #150 Final Issue

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This issue has it all. Extra letters-to-the-editors, extra articles, extra maps and extra long adventures. Plus it throws in a separate, poster-sized Map of Mystery to top it off. The theme to the issue is the past as there are many nods to Greyhawk and older versions of D&D. Quite fittingly, the quote used in the table of contents is from one of Gary Gygax's Gord the Rogue books, "Come Endless Darkness".

Warning: DMs Only

This review is meant for DMs only and may contain minor spoilers.

Cover Art

The cover art of this final issue is an excellent piece by popular artist Wayne Reynolds. It shows an all-out battle between an old Greyhawk nemesis, Demogorgon, and a band of stalwart adventurers in one of the epic battles in the Savage Tide series. Although I enjoy this piece, I have been seeing just a bit too much Demogorgon recently to truly appreciate it...

Adventures

Kill Bargle by Jason Bulmahn

The title of this 3rd level adventure plays on the Kill Bill movie title quite appropriately. It is straightforward romp in the classic dungeon crawl style filled with enough traps and monsters to excite the savage breast. What is so extraordinary about the adventure is that it is a re-telling of the original story found in the Dungeon & Dragons Basic Dungeons Masters's Rulebook. Although it has been updated to 3.5E, it plays by the old versions rules. In almost all cases, this adventure only uses monsters, spells, magic items and treasure from the original Basic Game. A good read and an excellent low-level adventure that can be used anywhere.

Quoth the Raven by Nicolas Logue

This tale of mystery and murder set in the city of Sharn is filled with madness and revenge. As a follow-up to "Chimes of Midnight" from Dungeon #133, it pits the characters against a diabolical madman who promises to keep on killing until he is stopped. Can the PCs solve the mystery before he kills again? This is well-written and an

excellent follow-up to the original adventure.

Prince of Demons by Greg A Vaughan

This 40-page adventure completes the Savage Tide Adventure Path. As the cover art depicts, it involves an epic battle with Demogorgon and is designed for 20th level players. I haven't followed the Adventure Path series this time around and I have never been big on demons and devils so this story has less appeal to me. It does have two other shots of Demogorgon for those who just can't get enough.

Dungeon Index

I love a Dungeon Index and have used a number of them online to find just the right adventure in my collection of magazines. This index is superior in many ways because it lists out more than just the adventures. It also lists the different Campaign Workbook article, Maps of Mystery and other oft ignored parts of the magazine.

Unfortunately, it does not contain the type of adventure, terrain type or main villain type like I have seen elsewhere. I like to see these details when searching for an adventure. I think it is a matter of time before the elements in this issue's index are incorporated online and we get one complete index. I look forward to that.

As a bonus at the bottom of the page there is the Top 10 Villains and Top 10 Locations from the pages of Dungeon Magazine. I can't agree with all of the choices and they are a bit too oriented to recent issues, but it's a fascinating read that might peak your interest enough to track down an issue or two.

Dungeoncraft

Designing Mysteries that Last by Wolfgang Baur

This well-written article covers the creation of a mystery adventure that is less hack-and-slash and more cerebral. It discusses the difficulties in design and then lays out the important factors in making it successful. Clues, false trails and witnesses are just a few of the topics covered. It even discusses divination spells and how to counter them. You can't go wrong with anything from Wolfgang Baur.

Campaign Workbook x4

These Campaign Workbook articles concentrate on a specific element in an adventure and flesh it out. Frequently the topic is specific to only one type of adventure while others can be used anywhere.

Bar Fight! by James Lafond Sutter

This is an excellent example of why the Campaign Workbook series is so useful. It sets out 11 short scenarios that can be used in any bar to create a random or not so random encounter. It's easy to take these ideas and flesh them out a little for your purposes. Instead of meeting your contact discretely at the local tavern, what if they have to save him from a bunch of drunken revellers? What if your contact is fighting on the other side? The article even comes with the stats for a typical bartender and brawler.

The Godtrap by F Wesley Schneider

Players with gaming experience in Castle Greyhawk might appreciate this device but I am afraid it is beyond me. Although I've read the article a number of times, I'm still left wondering what to use it for. Basically a godtrap is used to transcend mere mortals into godhood. I'll leave it at that without making myself look stupid with further commentary.

Fiend-Sage by Sean K Reynolds

This critical threat segment details a fiend-sage demon, the "head of a small but far-reaching network of spies, agents, slaves and allies". It's an interesting, high-level character to add to a specific demons and devils adventure but less useful otherwise.

Dergholoth by Todd Stewart

Detailed as a wandering monster, this yugoloth subtype is usually a soldier in the Blood War. An excellent art piece by Julie Dillon shows off this fiend's gruesome appearance.

Downer

I've never been a fan of Downer but this long-time comic strip has quite a following. In this final strip the current storyline is wrapped up neatly. Then in a series of single summary panels, artist Kyle Stanley Hunter brings all of the story arcs to their rightful conclusion. Paizo is currently offering pre-orders on Downer - Volume 1 for September 2007 and Downer - Volume 2 for November 2007.

Map of Mystery

This issue has the 2-page final instalment of the Dungeon Delve maps. These maps have always had consistently high quality and the maps found here are no exception.

Conclusion

This issue has a bit of everything for the Dungeon fan and makes a fitting final issue. I definitely give it two thumbs up and suggest it is a valuable tool for any DM.

dDemonicAngels is the online identity of Bil White, a freelance writer from Montreal. He can still remember buying the red D&D book in college and the spark of wonder it created in him. Nothing has been the same since.