

# THE ONE PAGE DUNGEON CODEX 2009



Edited by Philippe-Antoine "Chatty DM" Ménard  
and Michael "Chgowiz" Shorten

# The Contest Judges

We were thrilled to have a wide variety of gamers and bloggers agree to judge and help us with the contest. We'd like to acknowledge all those involved in the organization of running of the contest:



Chatty DM AKA Philippe-Antoine Ménard is one of the crazy minds behind the One Page Dungeon Contest. He also is the person behind Musings of the Chatty DM [1], a D&D-Centric RPG blog that captures that familiar feeling of hanging out at your favorite gaming shop. It is the perfect place to discuss with friendly geeks who share your passion for RPGs.



Chgowiz AKA Michael Shorten is another crazy, obsessive geek behind the One Page Dungeon Contest. He writes the blog Old Guy RPG Blog [2] where he shares the fun and joy of the original editions of D&D, one game at a time. He's been published in Fight On! [3] and Knockspell [4], is part of Three-Headed Monster Games [5] and writes for Examiner.com as the Chicago Dungeons & Dragons RPG columnist [6].



Kensanata AKA Alex Schröder is the grumpy old-school gamer wanna-be with a German accent living in the land of the Swiss Gnomes. The RPG category of his blog [7] is where he puts his rambling thoughts on adventure design, D&D rules, RPG publishing, international shipping rates, and neo-classical gaming. He has been published in Fight On! and runs the very simple but serviceable Campaign Wiki [8].

## Footnotes

- 1 - URL: <http://chattydm.net/>
- 2 - URL: <http://oldguyrpg.blogspot.com/>
- 3 - URL: <http://www.fightonmagazine.com/>
- 4 - URL: <http://www.swordsandwizardry.com/knockspell.htm>
- 5 - URL: <http://thmgames.blogspot.com/>
- 6 - URL: <http://www.examiner.com/x-7763-Chicago-Dungeons--Dragons-Examiner>
- 7 - URL: <http://www.emacswiki.org/alex/RPG>
- 8 - URL: <http://www.campaignwiki.org/>

# The Artists



Mark Allen

Marjasall Productions

<http://portfolio.marjasall.com>

Mark is the first place (Color) winner of the 2009 Erol Otus Art Challenge by Fight On! magazine and Otherworld Miniatures. Mark is also known for his work with Troll Lord Games LLC. Cover art is used with permission, all rights reserved by the artist. The cover depicts a scene from the “Best Overall One Page Dungeon” winner.



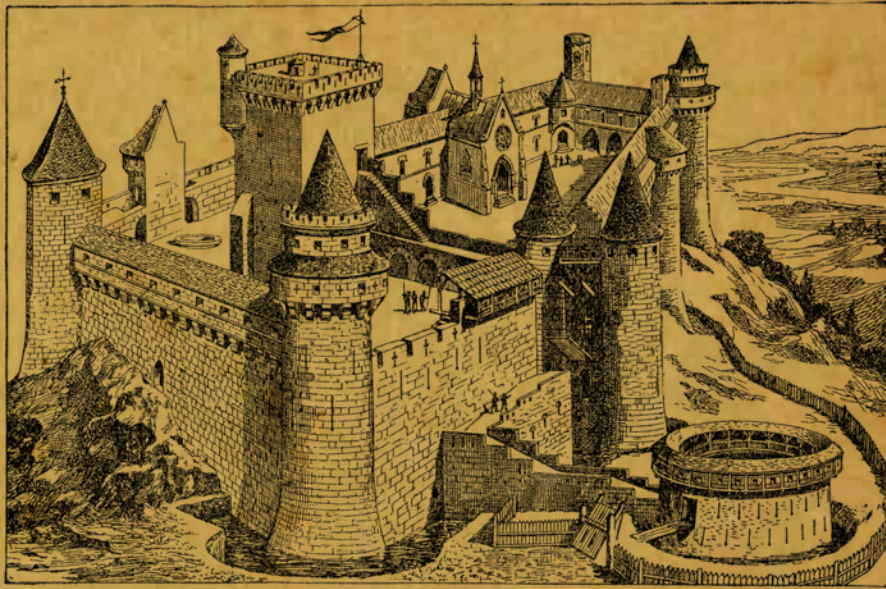
Mates Laurentiu

Lead Artist, AvatarArt

<http://www.avatarart.com/>

Mates is completely self-taught and has been penciling most of his life. Influences include DaVinci, Neville, Asimov, and stories from his grandparents.

As the head designer for AvatarArt, Mates creates character portraits that consistently earn acclaim. Being a RPG player himself, he finds it easy to relate to the enthusiasm of AvatarArt’s patrons.



# On The One Page Dungeon Template

## The Origin of the One Page Dungeon Template

by Michael Shorten and David Bowman

*In December of 2008, Dave of Sham's Grog 'n Blog wrote about a personal project called "The Dismal Depths". A discussion on the OD&D Boards (a forum dedicated to the original 1974 edition of Dungeons & Dragons) about megadungeons had prompted Dave to reconsider how he went about creating his dungeons. (The posts and comments have been slightly edited for brevity)*

The notion of a no-frills megadungeon was the kindling for this project, but what truly pushed it over the edge into actual design process was a comment by one of my favorite odd74 posters, Dwayanu in this thread [1]. For ease of clicking and scrolling, here's the blurb:

*I'm trying out an approach of mapping by sectors of 30x30 squares. That leaves room on the same page for a succinct "key."*

Now, in hindsight I don't think Dwayanu meant for his design process to result in anything more than a handy key on the map, but his words

### Footnotes

- 1 - URL: <http://odd74.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=adventures&action=display&thread=196>
- 3 - URL: <http://shamsrog.blogspot.com/2008/05/empty-room-principle.html>



# Secrets of the Old City - A One Page Dungeon Level by Waysoftheearth

## Background

Almost every inhabitant of The City has heard that it was built upon the ruins of an older place – indeed, evidence of the Old City is everywhere. And rumors of its hidden treasures persist, even now.

The histories recount that the Old City was buried by cataclysmic ashes long before The Kingdom grew up to resume the industry of these parts.

However, few among the wisest scholars know that the Old City was itself founded upon an even deeper ruin – a far more ancient and treacherous place. None now recall who the *Ancients* were, or what disaster befell them...

## The Old City

The Old City now lies buried some 30' below The City, above. Its dilapidated streets now serve as a drainage system. The stink of rubbish and sewerage is pervasive throughout the dank tunnels, as are rats and centipedes.

Most of the Old City buildings are at least partially collapsed, and filled with rubble. Some few may yet be entered – as may scores of unexplored crawlways.

The two principal causeways have been shored-up by dubious stone work, and are dimly lit through the overhead sluice grates and by torches maintained by the City Guard. The remainder of the Old City is of far older stone work, and is unlit.



## Map Legend

(\*) **Torch.** 1-2 lit, 3-4 guttering, 5-6 spent.

(S) **Secret Entrance.** Hidden in the broken stonework.

(?) **Unexplored Crawlway.** An opportunity for the referee to extend the Old City.

(#) **Sluice Grate.** Drainage from The City's streets 20' to 30' overhead. A narrow grate that admits sewerage, storm water, and a dim shaft of daylight (or moonlight).

(&) **Yellow Mold.** This hazardous growth is almost indistinguishable from other filth in the dark sewers.

## Keyed Areas

[1] **Entrance.** Spiral stair descends from the surface to a locked door. A sign on the door says "Keep Out".

[2] **Guard House.** 3 bored **City Guards** are here, shuffling work rosters, cleaning gear, drinking coffee, and playing cards. They will object to PCs trespassing in the sewers, and may even try to arrest them.

[3] **Causeways.** A foul 9" deep slick of city waste crawls toward area 16. Luckily, a 2' wide ledge is raised 3" above the filth along either side. Unluckily, it is slippery and broken in many places. Fallen stones make tiny, unsteady islands amid the horrid flow.

[4] **Submerged Pit Trap.** The ledges are badly broken hereabouts, and a number of slippery "stepping stones" may tempt explorers. Hidden by the filthy runoff is a 10' deep, 6' wide fissure. Anyone slipping into it will vanish into the foul muck and risk drowning.

[5] **Works Depot.** A large area mostly cleared of rubble. Tools and equipment suitable for maintaining the sewers is stored in a locked, dilapidated building.

[6] **Thieves' Entry.** An unsteady stair hidden within a ruined building leads right up to a loose sluice grate. Shifting the grate aside a slim PC may access the sewer.

[7] **Toad's Grotto.** A **Giant Toad** lurks beneath the filthy mire, likely attacking by surprise, and possibly swallowing whole. It submerges itself for protection. The grotto contains evidence of a recently eaten Goblin.

[8] **Goblin Foothold.** A band of 12 **Goblins** have recently arrived in the sewers, but have already sent word to summon their cousins. They know of the toad and of the thieves. Their treasure is limited to the result of today's minor mischiefs in The City, above.

[9] **Thieves' Den.** A gang of 7 **Thieves** hide out in this ruinous knot of free-standing Old City buildings. They may feign cooperation, but betray and rob the PCs given half a chance. They have amassed a modest hoard which is hidden in 2 separate stashes; a small locked chest of coins lies beneath a loose floor-board, and a sack of silver wear is hidden up a chimney chute. They know of and avoid the Ogre.

[10] **Renegade's Stash.** A double-crossing thief stole the gang's prize loot and smuggled it here. His **Rot Grub** infested corpse still clings to a small lockbox that contains a small coin purse and an enchanted lantern.

[11] **Trip Wire Traps.** Set by the thieves to warn them of visitors. Causes stones to topple off a wall with a clamour, possibly causing injury.

[12] **Spiders' Ante.** A web-strewn cave littered with skeletal remains. 4 **Large Spiders** are hidden in dark recesses, watching over 23 un-hatched giant spider eggs. One of the dried corpses wears a silver ring, but an alluring gleam is visible ahead (see area 13).

[13] **Spider's Lair.** Another web strewn feeding ground where a **Giant Black Widow** awaits. She will likely surprise from above and behind, possibly dragging her luckless victim into a dark tunnel to be devoured. The gleam visible from area 12 is from a brass helm. Former victims' goods make up the loot, but access to area 14 is the main prize.

[14] **Old Gem Cutter's Workshop.** Forced entry into this Old City building may reveal a small trove of Old City vintage coin, uncut stones, as well as gem stones.

[15] **Old Watch Tower.** The only access is via an open window space some 14' above (reachable by an Ogre). The tower contains a dark stair up to a condemned ruin in The City's poor quarter, where children sometimes play. Optionally, also leads down to dungeon level 2.

[16] **Drop Hole.** The causeway filth drops some 30' into a wretched cesspit (welcome to dungeon level 2).

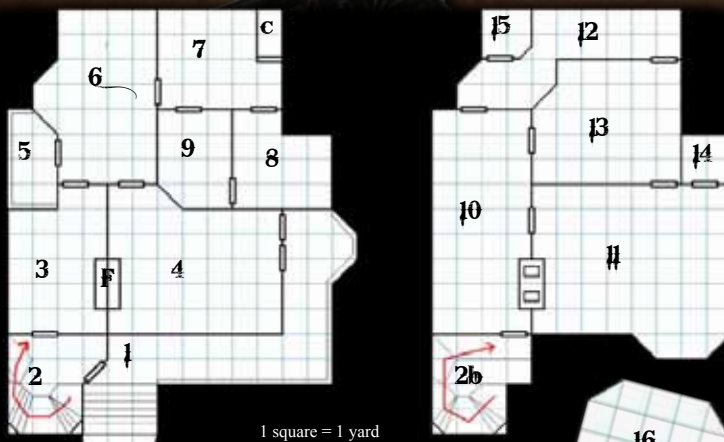
[17] **Fugitive's Hideout.** A terrified **Girl** has escaped the Ogre's cook-pot (area 18) and hides in this tiny cave. A single shaft of light falls from an awkward crack between street cobblestones, 30' above. Her poor parents will pay a modest reward for her rescue.

[18] **Ogre's Lair.** A narrow ledge 20' above overlooks a grisly cave occupied by an **Ogre** and his pet **Worg**. A giant cook-pot in the middle of the cave is surrounded by children's shoes (former victims). 2 terrified **Boys** are penned in at the rear. The Ogre wears a stout ring mail shirt and carries a great flail, the Worg wears a collar that protects it from magic. If pressed, the Ogre throws black toadstools into his fire, creating a *stinking cloud* that he and the Worg are immune to, or upends his boiling cauldron. The Ogre's loot is children's dolls and toys, and the gear and coin of slain guards. The boys' poor parents will pay a pittance for their rescue.

## Random Encounters

2d6	Encounter
2	1 <b>Girl</b> (escaped from the Ogre).
3	d3+1 <b>Boys</b> (1-2 fleeing for their lives, 3-4 lost and afraid, 5 looking to become brave adventurers, 6 looking to join the thieves).
4	d4+2 <b>Thieves</b> (1-2 heading to a job, 3-4 setting a tripwire trap, 5-6 returning from a job with loot).
5	d4+2 <b>City Guards</b> (1-4 on patrol, 5 returning with wounded, 6 making dirty deal with local thieves).
6	1d6 <b>Giant Centipedes</b>
7	<b>Rat Swarm</b> of 4d6 x10 Rats.
8	1d6 <b>Giant Slugs</b>
9	d4+2 <b>Goblins</b> (1-3 scouting, 4 setting a trap, 5 disarming a trap, 6 hiding loot).
10	1 <b>City Surveyor</b> (apparently surveying state of The City's foundations, but...)
11	1 <b>Ogre</b> (1-3 scouting, 4-5 heading out child-snatching, 6 returning with a child).
12	1 <b>Wight</b> (tormented spirit of an <i>Ancient</i> that has found its way up from deeper levels).

# The Horror of Leatherbury House



## Introduction

The investigators arrive at Leatherbury House in the early evening. A short gravel walk leads to the front porch. The house is in a bad state of disrepair and the front porch is partly overgrown with ivy. A large dead willow tree stands right next to the house.

## Room Key:

- 1. Front porch:** The front porch of the mansion is partly overgrown with ivy. Both entrances to the house are locked. The windows have been boarded up. No sounds can be heard from within the house.
- 2. Staircase:** The staircase leads up to the second floor. The door to the living room is closed but unlocked. The floor is thickly covered in dust and there are a lot of cobwebs in the corners of the room and the staircase. When the players first enter this room, footsteps can be heard that seem to come down the stairs but nothing can be seen. There's a chance of  $15+$  on a  $d20$  that one of the steps of the staircase breaks when a player step on it. This is automatic when two players step on the same step at the same time.
- 3. Living room:** The living room contains several comfort chairs that are covered with white linen sheets. The large open fireplace on the right wall obviously hasn't been lit for ages. On a small coffee table in the corner of the room lies a leather-bound book. When someone opens it, the pages turn to dust. When a player examines the fireplace closer, it suddenly starts burning with an explosive flame possible hurting the player that examined it. The poker is missing from the fireplace. Two crossed longswords are hanging above the fireplace.
- 4. Foyer:** This large room contains a couple of comfort chairs covered with white-sheets, a large grandfather clock and the fireplace on the left wall. On a roll of  $15+$  on a  $d20$  scratching sounds from above can be heard. When the players stay in the room to examine it more closely, a swarm of bats comes flying down the chimney and out of the fireplace, attacking the players. Strangely the bat corpses disappear after a few minutes leaving no traces.
- 5. Porch:** The porch on the left side of the house is in slightly better condition than the one in the front.
- 6. Dining hall:** The dining hall is dominated by a large dining table surrounded by six heavy chairs. On the far side of the room there is a large cupboard. The furniture is covered by large greyish-white linen sheets. Everything is covered by a thick layer of dust. Four zombies are standing in the middle of the hall, clothed in servants' livery. They don't move or attack as long as the players keep a distance of at least one yard. The cupboard contains various dishware and silver cutlery.
- 7. Kitchen:** In the kitchen two undead dogs guard the door attacking anyone who enters. The cupboards contain normal kitchen utensils and spoiled food. The steel door to the cellar is locked and can only be opened with the key that hangs on a chain around Robert's neck. Even brute force won't open that door.
- 8. Storeroom:** This storeroom contains two empty barrels and several cup-

boards with spoiled food. Aside from that the room contains two female zombies that attack the players as soon as they enter the room.

**9. Bathroom:** This bathroom contains a bathing tub, a toilet and a bathroom sink. The first time anyone opens the water-tap blood gushes out.

**10. Hallway:** The hallway on the upper floor is empty aside from three paintings on the right. The paintings are portraits of Lord Winston Leatherbury, his beloved wife Elenore and their son Robert when he was approximately six year old. When the players pass these portraits the faces start slowly to change into terrible grimaces. When examined closer, the paintings start floating from the wall, arms with clawed hands emerge from the picture frames and start attacking.

**11. Master bedroom:** This was obviously the bedroom of Lord Winston and his wife. A large bed stands in the middle of the room. Although the room hasn't been used for many years it still is in a surprisingly good condition. On a roll of  $10+$  on a  $d20$  the silvery laughter of a woman can be heard. On the nightstand lies a small bronze key. The armoires contain old and half-rotten clothes.

**12. Robert's bedroom:** The walls are covered in dried blood and all the furniture has been smashed. When the players enter the room, the shadows seem to grow even darker. Then suddenly an elite zombie (Robert warped by his father's curse) and two zombies attack the players out of the shadows. Robert carries a iron key on a chain around his neck. His father's musket pistol causes double damage against him but not the other zombies. In the remains of the furniture Robert's diary can be discovered that reveals what he has done!

**13. Study:** The walls of the study are covered by bookshelves that contain hundreds of books. Lord Winston was a learned man and had books about several fields of study from the natural sciences to the occult. In the middle of the room stands a large desk. The desk is locked but can be opened with the key found in the bedroom (see room 11). The desk contains various papers, a golden pocket-watch, a silver locket containing a portrait of Elenore Leatherbury and a musket pistol and some blackpowder and  $2d6$  balls.

**14, 15. Bathrooms:** The bathrooms in the upper floor are dusty and filled with cobwebs but otherwise unremarkable.

**16. Cellar:** The cellar contains several shelves along the walls filled with the remains of rotten food. A wine rack stands before the back wall of the room. A closer examination shows that the wine rack contains  $d20$  bottles of expensive wine and that the wall behind it has a different texture than the rest of the walls. When the players move the rack from the wall, a wraith (Lord Winston) appears from behind the wall and attacks them. The locket of his wife (see room 13) can keep him at bay and he disappears as soon as the sun is up again. When he is defeated he reappears on the next night. He can only be laid to rest by burying his remains that can be found behind the wall.

## Background:

It's the year 1889. A group of investigators has been contacted by Lady Catherine Westmoreland. She is the heir to Leatherbury House, a mansion in the country, that has been abandoned by her family for over 50 years now, and the locals believe that the house is haunted. Lady Catherine wants the investigators to look into this.

Lord Winston Leatherbury had made quite a fortune in his early years and after the death of his wife his interest turned to the occult. His only son Robert was a good-for-nothing that spent his father's money on women and gambling. One evening Robert lost a lot of money in a game and so he asked his father for money. Lord Winston was outraged and told him that he won't be paying for any of his escapades again. The discussion got heated and then Robert struck his father down with a poker. He panicked, dragged the lifeless body down to the cellar and bricked him up behind a wall, not realizing he was still alive. When Lord Winston awoke he screamed for help but nobody could hear him. With his last breath he uttered a terrible curse. Shortly after that several servants died in accidents in the house and finally Robert fell ill and died shortly thereafter. A few weeks the dead servants and Lord Winston's son rose again from their graves, bound by the curse to defend Lord Winston's fortune even in death...