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*Survival of the Funniest*



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## INTRODUCTION

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### Introduction for Dungeon-Style Adventures

What follows is intended as a light-hearted 2nd edition AD&D adventure for a party of characters levels 2-4 (about 16 levels should be right), so paladins and other sour-pusses should beware! A mixture of character classes will— well, probably not make a lot of difference, frankly, as the main objective is for EVERYONE TO HAVE FUN (especially the DM)!

The adventure is an ideal starter for low-level characters. It is, however, important in this adventure that the players are prepared to do a little role-playing, and don't all sit around glumly with their mouths shut. To this end, it is probably best if established characters with established personalities are used.

At certain places in this module, great attention is— I think— paid to some relatively minor details. It is the belief of this author that one of the fortes of the AD&D game is the mind-bending array of challenges that low-level characters face when performing seemingly trivial tasks. The DM should not hand out any free lunches to the players as they wrack their brains to make the most of whatever meagre skills their characters possess.

This adventure is not tied to any one campaign world, but would probably work best in either the World of Greyhawk or the Forgotten Realms settings. The module features a number of monsters from the *Fiend Folio* monstrous compendium appendix [MC14] and the *Undermountain* boxed set; however, the adventure does not hinge on encounters with these creatures, so DMs who do not possess these indispensable supplements should have no trouble in finding replacements from other sources. Additional required materials are Monstrous Compendia 1 and 2, and the usual AD&D staple hardbacks: the 2nd edition *Players Handbook* and *DMG*. The *Wilderness* and *Dungeoneer's Survival Guides* will also prove useful. DMs may wish to consult the section(s) on wild magic in the *Tome of Magic*, as the adventure has links to this chaotic variant of the arcane arts. Again, however, the module can easily be played without reference to this book.

### Background to this Adventure

Jalzannel, "The Joker", a Wild Mage, had a reputation for two things: insanity and brilliance. Capricious and a paradigm of chaotic behaviour, rumours abound in some arcane circles that a number of strange magics were developed by "The Joker"— magics that to this day have never been found... It goes without saying that a number of wild mages yearn for this undiscovered information. Sigh. Wizards will be wizards. Of course, Jalzannel (known as "THE FAR TOO SMUG FOR HIS OWN GOOD, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM FROM DYING", in other, less complimentary circles) anticipated his colleagues' unhealthy desire for his hard-earned knowledge some time before his own demise. In order to have the last laugh, Jalzannel ensured that his resting place would persuade at least one group of adventurers— or "grave-robbing meddlers"— of the importance of the lighter side of life. How did he do this? Simple— he left the way to his resting place completely and utterly *passable*.

By anyone who could complete the little array of tests he devised, that is.

Jalzannel (thought he) designed the tests so that the "right" sort of person, irrespective of their personal power, could get through and plunder the spells he devised. Exactly whether his idea of the "right" sort of person matches up with anyone else's, however, remains to be seen.

After Jalzannel's death, a number of copies of a roughly drawn map began to surface in the bazaars which litter certain cities' backstreets. These maps purported to show the location of Jalzannel's undiscovered treasures. It was almost as if Jalzannel was daring thrill-seekers from beyond his grave, throwing down a silent challenge of "I'm funnier than you are." One of these maps has found its way into the possession of Zadderghast, Wildest of Wild Mages, and, being both cowardly and greedy, the mage has tracked down a likely-looking bunch of not-too-intimidating adventurers to face Jalzannel's test: *The Survival of the Funniest*. All the player characters have to do is to wander into the Jalzannel's lair and nab anything that comes to hand. Oh— and get out alive, of course!

If, and only if, the DM has had an exceptionally fine day, he may wish to hint to his chosen player that the best weapon in this little venture will be a totally awesome sense of humour.

### Humour Rating

Once the characters are inside the Comedy Club, the DM must keep track of a *humour rating* for each of them. This is very important, as a character's final rating determines whether or not he can leave the Club with treasure, dignity, or his life. Some specific adjustments to a character's rating are explicitly stated in the text, depending upon how he performs/reacts in certain situations. The DM should cautiously apply other modifiers for additional acts of hilarity as he sees fit. **The DM should give no indication of a character's initial humour rating, or of the modifications that he makes to the humour rating during the game.** The players should be totally unaware of what their humour ratings are— and, preferably, also unaware that such a score is being kept.

A character's base humour rating is 6 added to one third of his Charisma score (round fractions to nearest whole number), with the following modifications (all cumulative):

A character's humour rating can never fall below 0 or rise above 20.

Halfling	+4
Dwarf	-2
Human	0
Elf	+2
Gnome	+2
Half-Elf	+1

**Table 1 : Racial Modifiers**

<b>Warrior</b>	
Fighter	0
Paladin	-4
Ranger	+1
<b>Mage</b>	
Non-Specialist	0
Wild Mage	+3
Elementalist	0
Abjurer	-1
Conjurer	+2
Diviner	0
Enchanter	+1
Illusionist	+3
Invoker	-2
Necromancer	-2
Transmuter	+1
<b>Rogue</b>	
Thief	0
Bard	+3
<b>Priest</b>	
Cleric	0
Druid	-1
Other Priest of Specific Mythos	* <sup>1</sup>
<b>Psionicist</b>	-1

**Table 2 : Class Modifiers**

Chaotic	+2
Lawful	-2
Neutral	0

**Table 3 : Alignment Modifiers**

If the DM is called upon to make a *humour check*, he should roll a standard ability check against the character's *current* humour rating. Effects of success or failure are noted in the text.

<sup>1</sup>DM's discretion

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## AND SO TO BUSINESS

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### Starting the Adventure

The adventure starts when the characters are approached, in any way the DM sees fit, by a tall, unassuming gentleman clad in somewhat unfashionable garments that bear only a light dusting of dandruff. It should be obvious to the players that this character looks like a wizard- tall, thin, unattractive to women, that sort of thing. Whether the stranger really is skilled in the magical arts, and what he wants, however, are not at all obvious until he starts to speak. When he does, listeners will feel that the wait was not worth it, as “Zaddy “ (as Zadderghast is known to his business associates<sup>2</sup>) froths and splutters the following babble in the general direction of the characters:

*Well, hello there... um, sorry not terribly good at all this- too many books, too many books by far, you know. [Stops and laughs for no clearly apparent reason]. Um well, anyway, um onto business, I suppose. Yes business! [Dramatic pause] Jalzannel- you haven't heard of him, I suppose, but anyway, he's um... he's de- I mean missing, gone sort of, and here's the map- you know, usual sort of thing. Oh, but bring back anything- scrolls and such, I mean- with the rune on the map- that's really important. There, that wasn't so bad after all, was it! [Looks pleased with himself]. Oh- [just as characters start to speak, or after a brief pause] almost forget the money. 250 gold suit everyone? See you here in 5 days, now don't be late [stern expression more suited to dealing with unruly children]. Bye for now!*

Tell the players that the strange individual immediately vanishes in a veritable cloud of pungent lilac smoke. If any characters search the ground where the singular gentleman has stood, they may (5% chance per character) find a few flakes of dandruff. If the players decide that their characters are going to take up the challenge (assuming that the players recognise it as such), they have 5 days to travel to/find the location of Jalzannel's resting place, plunder all that is plunderable and return to wherever they are standing at the moment. If the players show no interest in this escapade at all, call them all spoilsports, grumpy-faces, a miserable bunch of role-players, and reach for the backup adventure that you prepared earlier.

### What is on the Map

In short, nothing much that makes any sense<sup>3</sup>. Instead, there are lots of squiggles, a prominent rune (that of Jalzannel), and some stains that will resist all reasonable attempts at identification. Give the players a few minutes to puzzle over the map. No matter what feeble efforts are made by their characters, the map will remain as uninformative as ever. Needless to say, there is no time for the characters to enlist external assistance in order to try and work out the strange symbols that look as if they have been randomly thrown over the map's lined parchment. It should seem to the players that they have been left with something that is about as much use as a bowl of fish paste against a Kraken. Strangely, for once, help finds the player characters in a matter of minutes...

Alert characters (the DM should think of a number between 1 and 10, and then try to avoid rolling it on a d20 to see if any character is alert) may already have noticed that a childlike figure some few score yards away is paying the group a worrying amount of attention. Generally, any attention from a stranger in a fantasy world is unwanted. Specifically, any attention from Childlike sends anyone acquainted with the halfling into five types of insanity randomly determined from those given in the DMG. Happily, the player characters are *not* acquainted with the halfling. Yet.

As soon as he is spotted, Childlike will walk over to the characters in a "peculiar" fashion (DM's should refuse to elaborate), and offer to "assist" the characters in deciphering the map. Remarkably, the thief seems to have the annoying knack of deciphering indecipherable runes. In exchange for his services, Childlike asks the characters only for "...first refusal" concerning *anything* found in, on, beyond, and around<sup>4</sup> wherever-it-is the characters are supposed to be going- in addition to "his share" of the treasure, naturally<sup>5</sup>. HE WILL NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT IS ON THE MAP, of course (he may be a halfling, but he's not stupid)! He offers to lead the characters to the location of Jalzannel's resting place *only* if the characters *promise* to keep their part of the bargain. He looks pleadingly at the most lawfully good aligned member of the party (he has a knack for always being able to pick him out in a bunch of adventurers) as he says this. Yes, of course the players will moan that they are being stitched up, but assure them that they will all be able to see the funny side of the calamitous charade later. Be convincing when you lie.

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<sup>2</sup>friends are very 80's

<sup>3</sup>DMs who enjoy this sort of thing can draw random squiggles on some paper and enjoy watching the players trying to make sense of them

<sup>4</sup> the DM should resort to incomprehensible legal jargon at this point

<sup>5</sup>Much opportunity for haggling here.

## Childlike

Childlike is a petulant and frequently pernicious halfling thief who can generally succeed in winding up everyone he encounters. He stands a mighty 3'4" short in his sturdy fake black dragon-hide boots, and, to the imminent regret of the player characters, he is the main NPC in this adventure. He is always positively pathetic in his offers to help anyone he comes across- even if the most dim-witted adventurer would deem so doing as detrimental to his health. His stats are given below. In his dealings with the PCs, he will be full of utterly useless suggestions and be puffed up with self-importance. This is the first time he has actually been successful in helping anyone- his previous attempts at assistance have resulted in a string of dead bodies stretching from city to city. He really does want to help his new-found "friends", but has a capricious, chaotic-driven streak that invariably leads any temporary companions he may have to wish that they never met him. It's sad, but then the truth often hurts!

### Childlike, halfling male T3

AL CN; hp 9; AC 8 (5 with Dex bonus)

S9; I12; W7; D17; Co14; Ch9

**PP**65%; **OL**45%; **F/RT**10%; **MS**15%; **HiS**70%; **DN**20%; **CW**45%; **RL**0%<sup>6</sup>

Base Humour Rating: 15

He carries a short sword and a dagger, and wears worn-looking leather armour.

## Getting to the Comedy Club

Jalzannel chose as his resting place an underground lair which he located some several score feet below a forest floor. This forest can be wherever the DM desires: but the time constraint of having to meet Wild Mage II 5 days from the PCs first meeting should be borne in mind. Childlike will be able to identify the forest recorded on the map, and suggest several inappropriate ways to get there. The means by which the characters travel to the outskirts of the wood are beyond the scope of this module which continues once the characters have reached the edge of the forest. If the players do not have the assistance of Childlike, it is up to the DM whether or not they can locate the forest in the time available- or at all.

## Random/Outdoor Encounters in the Forest

The characters may be subject to a random encounter or two in the forest as they travel towards their destination. These encounters are completely optional, and DMs wishing to hurry on (tut, tut!) with the main thrust of the adventure should proceed to "A Sticky Situation" below.

The chance of a random encounter is given in Table 56 in the 2nd edition DMG. The random encounter table given below can be used if the DM does not have a suitable alternative. It is suggested that the characters be made to wander through the woods for the best part of a day or so before arriving at the entrance to the Comedy Club.

1. Beetle, Bombardier [8]: AC4; MV9; HD 2+2; hp 10 each; THACO19; #Att1; Dmg 2d6; SA Acid cloud; SD Firing cloud; MR Nil; S S (4' long); ML 13; XP 120 each
2. Boar, Wild [6]: AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 16 each; THACO 17; #Att 1; Dmg 3d4; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; S S (3' at shoulder); ML 10; XP 175 each
3. Ettercap [1]: AC6; MV12; HD5; hp 39; THACO 15; #Att 3; Dmg (1d3)x2, 1d8; SA Poison; SD Traps; MR Nil; S M; ML 13; XP 975.
4. Garbug, Black [3]: AC5; MV 6, Fl 12[C]; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THACO 19; #Att 7; Dmg 1d4, 1(x6); SA paralysation, blood drain; SD Nil; MR Nil; S M; ML 15; XP 650 each.
5. Bear, Brown [1]: AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 41; THACO 15; #Att 3; Dmg 1d6(x2), 1d8; SA Hug; SD Nil; MR Nil; S L; ML 9; XP 420
6. Worgs [6]: AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 18 each; THACO 15; #Att 1; Dmg 2d4; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; S M; ML 10; XP 175 each
7. Ogre [2]: AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 26 each; THACO 17; #Att 1; Dmg 1d10; SA +2 to damage; SD Nil; MR Nil; S L; ML 11; XP 175 each.

<sup>6</sup>These % values assume that Childlike is wearing leather armour; consult Table 29 in the 2nd edition Players Handbook for adjustment based on the type of armour worn.

8. Spider, Huge [6]: AC6; MV18; HD 2+2; hp 8 each; THACO 19; #Att1; Dmg 1d6; SA Special; SD Nil; MR Nil; S M; ML 8; XP 270 each.
9. Umpleby [1]: AC4; MV9; HD6; hp33; THACO15; #Att1; Dmg1d4; SA Electric shock; SD Immune to electrical-type attacks; MR Nil; S L; ML 14; XP 420. The creature will follow the characters around and generally get on their nerves...

### Travelling Through the Forest

If Childlike is with the player characters, he will ignore all the paths that the characters come across, plunging recklessly through the undergrowth as fast as his little legs will carry him. At all times he will be constantly assuring the player characters that they are definitely going the right way (he looks at the map only once, upside-down, and then stuffs it in a pouch), although his expression is one of a small child who knows he has just done something incredibly naughty. The idea is that this, in conjunction with ever-louder and nearer-sounding hostile forest-noises, does not fill the players with confidence.

At any convenient point in this journey, Childlike whoops with joy as he bursts out of a particularly stubborn bush onto a seldom-used path. At least, Childlike assures the PCs that the path is seldom used. Surprisingly any rangers in the party are inclined to agree with him.

After travelling along this new path for a little while, play out "A Sticky Situation" below.

[If Childlike is not with the party, then the DM is obviously not following the storyline given here, and so can do what he likes.]

### A Sticky Situation

En route to the shaft that leads to Jalzannel's lair is an adherer, lying in wait for unwary, and soon-to-be-very-unamused player characters! The creature has covered itself with bits of forest, and is waiting by the slightly visible path that leads to the entrance to the Comedy Club.

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Adherer: AC3; MV9"; HD4; hp23; THACO17; #Att 1; Dmg 1d3; SA Adhesion; SD Adhesion; MR Special; S M; ML 12; XP 650.

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The creature incurs a -4 penalty to the characters' surprise rolls, and will attempt to enfold unfortunate characters in its loving embrace. The monster has no treasure. Childlike stands around gawking uselessly during this encounter, deftly avoiding the creature's sticky clutches.

After this encounter, have the characters proceed along the path just a little way longer, before...

## 1. Onward and Downward

*In the middle of the forest is a stone square on the ground, worn down somewhat by the passage of time. On the stone square is an intricate pattern of lines, circles, and other geometric shapes.*

These lines trace the outline of a very oddly shaped plug, which seals the entrance to Jalzannel's lair. The plug weighs in excess of 1,200lb, and has dimensions of approximately 2'x1'x1'<sup>7</sup> There are no discernible handles or other signs of any opening mechanism. The characters will either have to pull the plug out (it is slightly wedge-shaped so that the stopper cannot be pushed into the shaft), or resort to some magical means of gaining ingress, like a *reduce* spell.

If the characters elect to raise the plug, so doing will require 100 strength points acting together, and will probably necessitate hammering in an iron spike or two so as to gain purchase. Hammering in an iron spike or any other equally noisy activity is 100% certain to attract the attention of a nearby shocker who is busily engaged in its favourite pursuit of examining the forest's plant life:

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Shocker [1]: AC0 or 10; Mv15; HD5; hp 27; THACO15; #Att 1; Dmg 3d4 electrical; SA Special; SD Special; MR Special; S M; ML 15; XP 2,000. The creature will not necessarily attack- a normal reaction roll should be made, modified by the Charisma of the character who first tries to communicate with the shocker.

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to the Dungeoneer's Survival Guide p.20-21 to see if a character can fit through the hole whilst wearing armour.

The DM should reduce the chance of this encounter in line with the effectiveness of any method of noise-reduction used (a *silence* spell would reduce the chance to 0%).

If the characters' muscles are not up to the challenge, designing some kind of improbable contraption to give them a mechanical advantage in lifting the plug is quite acceptable- provided that one of the characters has skills in something engineering or mining related<sup>8</sup> and makes a successful proficiency check with a 0 to -4 penalty. This penalty should be determined by the DM depending on just how the characters intend to build their contraption, what materials they have brought with them, and how annoying the DM is feeling at the time. If none of the characters has a suitable proficiency or skill (as adjudged by the DM), then an Intelligence check with a -6 penalty should be made for the character belonging to the player who had the most input into the design of whatever construction the players say they are using<sup>9</sup>. If any ability roll or proficiency check fails, the outcome is a collapse of the pulley system and 1d3 damage to anyone who was attempting to hoist at the time. A successfully constructed pulley may allow the plug to be lifted out and swung to one side by a combined total of as little as 25 Strength points.

The characters can try any number of winching mechanisms they like. However, each attempt (successful or not) takes 1d4 turns and requires a successful proficiency roll or ability check. Remember the chance of a random (i.e. non noise-triggered) encounter!

It should be noted that the plug and the shaft that it seals are lined with lead, and constructed using a substance that is resistant to stone-affecting spells such as *rock to mud*. Also, the same material renders ethereal travel ineffectual. Digging will prove fruitless. There is only one way in...

## 2. The Test of Fortitude

*As you peer nervously over the lip of the shaft, you are filled with trepidation. The shaft you see before you is well-lit, and this illumination allows you to see several hundred- or maybe even thousand feet straight down. As you squint and stare, you think that you can just make out the bottom of the shaft- possibly. Arranged in a spiral formation around the pockmarked black walls of the shaft are some semi-rusted iron rungs, closely-spaced enough for even a dwarf or halfling to descend, if they wished to.*

Childlike will refuse to go down the shaft first.

The immense extent of the shaft is completely illusionary, the whole tube being a mere 40 feet deep; the diameter is 8 feet. Referring to the information on p.33-39 of the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, the walls of the shaft should be categorised as "Cliff, rough, no ledges" for purposes of climbing attempts. The *Wilderness Survival Guide* contains rules for belaying, abseiling etc. which will not be covered here. Characters inspecting the walls closely will discern that, at a number of points on the surface of the shaft, there are small (1" or so) diameter recesses.

The rungs on the walls of the shaft are at vertical intervals of 1 foot. *Only* if the rungs are examined closely will daubs of faded paint- or a substance resembling blood, perhaps- be seen smeared haphazardly over the rusted metal. The paint seems to be a different colour on each rung. The rungs themselves, although looking in a state of ill repair, are quite secure. However, every 7th rung is trapped. Stepping on a trapped rung will cause the rung to move downwards slightly (with the same sort of "clonk" noise that an expensive car door makes on closing). Simultaneously, gouts of scalding steam will be vented from several of the small recesses in the shaft's walls. These gouts cause 1d4+1 points of scalding damage only to the character who triggered the trap. Further, a scalded character must make a Dexterity check or fall off the ladder, hitting the floor of the shaft. If the player wants to attempt a saving throw to avoid half the damage caused by the gouts of steam, he can, but apply a -4 penalty to any Dexterity check he makes to avoid falling off the rungs. ("As Gar twists and turns to avoid the steam, the rungs become slippery with the condensation...") All falling damage should be halved, due to the soggy nature of the landing (see below). The rungs stop after a depth of 30 feet: any character can jump and land safely from this distance.

A permanent *dispel magic* fills the bottom half of the shaft, in order to hinder those annoying player characters who have an inexhaustible means of magically flying/descending in total safety. The *dispel magic* should cause wizards and any flying or levitating characters severe inconvenience- that's the intention!

Just to round things off, 3 flying snakes have made their home in a cracked alcove halfway down the shaft.

<sup>8</sup>for example, mining or rope use non-weapon proficiencies

<sup>9</sup>cruel DM's may insist that their players sketch out a rough diagram of their vaunted apparatus. Remember, though, that player characters are not expected to be qualified mechanical engineers!

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Snakes, Flying [3]: AC5; MV 9, Fl 21 [B]; HD 1+4; hp 9 each; THACO 19; #Att 1+special; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA Acid Spray; SD Nil; MR Nil; S S; ML 12; XP 120 each. The snakes will not leave the shaft.

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Characters fighting the snakes whilst holding a rope or clinging to the rungs will be at a disadvantage; consult p.30 of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* for details. Anyone firing missiles at the snakes through the hole at the top of the shaft is at -4 to hit, due to the restricted field of view.

As soon as anyone passes through the mouth of the shaft, a *magic mouth* spell that has been cast on the wall of the shaft will announce "For goodness sakes, GO AWAY!" in an ancient and foreboding-sounding language that is unknown to the player characters. The DM should, if he can stand the embarrassment, read out the following-

*Ackh Nackh Garlin-gy-goth,  
Searun Dackh!  
Hellin Nackh!*

*Ackh-Nackh Herrim Dask!  
Searun Jess!  
Hellin Nackh!*

in as menacing a voice as possible.

This message should *not* be understood by the PCs. After five feet of the shaft have been descended, there will be another *magic mouth* message, saying "I hope that you understood that last message!". This time the announcement is in common. After ten feet, a third *magic mouth* will announce in the common tongue "I wonder if that *grease* spell is still working!", and a final message will be spoken after descending 20 feet: "...and don't forget to watch out for the poison gas at the bottom!"

#### **Humour Rating Modifiers**

Action	Rating Modifier
Going down the shaft first	+5
Being attacked, dropped, or steam-cleaned...	-2 to +4, depending on just how well the player took it!

### **3. Test of Fighting Whilst Seriously Disadvantaged**

*The bottom of shaft is filled with murky water, some two or three feet deep. In the north wall of the shaft is a large iron door. On the surface of the door is an unhappy-looking visage in bas-relief, eyes looking wistfully at a large keyhole just by its right ear.*

The door has been *wizard-locked* at 20th level, and seems completely unaffected by the permanent *dispel magic* that pervades the lower half of the shaft. The face on the door will start to talk to any characters who find themselves at the bottom of the shaft. The voice, the DM should state, sounds like rusty iron plates being grated together. Despite this, it is obvious that the inflection is monotonous and depressing. The doors will dolefully inform anyone who cares to listen about how people who are not funny, and who go through life with too serious an outlook, usually end up with their souls bound to large, impassable steel doors at the entrances to hideously dangerous dungeons. The face will ignore any attempts to be drawn into a dialogue, and any character who tries to ask the door about anything to do with the dungeon will incur a penalty on his humour factor (see below).

Anyone attempting to force the door does so at a -4 penalty, due to the less than ideal conditions at the bottom of the shaft. Any violent acts against the door draw forth monotonous, depressed cries of "Ouch" "What did I ever do to you" "Stop it, that tickles!" etc. and incur a penalty on the humour factors of the characters responsible as they are not entering into the spirit of this adventure.

The key to the door is of course in the yucky liquid at the bottom of the shaft. Unfortunately, so is a crystal ooze! There is a 10% chance per character per round spent searching of finding the key, up to a maximum of 30% per round (more than 3 characters just don't help). Unfortunately, there is a 20% (non-cumulative) chance per round, irrespective of the number of characters searching, of a PC encountering the crystal ooze.<sup>10</sup> Consult p.85 of the *Wilderness Survival Guide* for details of

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<sup>10</sup>This creature is 100% undetectable because of the filthy (if not to say lumpy) state of the liquid at the bottom of the shaft.

penalties incurred by characters fighting in the thigh-deep water, and remember the cramped confines of the shaft when warriors prepare to swing their two-handed swords!

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Crystal Ooze [1]: AC8; MV1, Sw 3; HD 4; hp16; THACO 17; #Att 1; Dmg 4d4; SA Poison; SD Special; MR Nil; S M; ML 10; XP 420

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When the door is finally opened, the iron slab slides upward. A huge blast of cold air belches forth... All torches and unprotected lanterns are blown out effortlessly.

#### Humour Rating Modifiers

Action	Rating Modifier
Trying to cheer the door up	+3
Asking the door lots of un-funny questions about the dungeon	-3
Trying to force the door	-2

#### 4. The Test of Who Can Tell the Best Joke

If any character can see, read the following:

*Beyond the door is a short tunnel, about 10 feet in length, 7 feet high and 4 wide, whose sides are completely covered in very brightly-coloured (one might even say garish) runes, sigils, and other peculiar glyphs. The tunnel slopes downwards slightly towards an unassuming red brick wall that is covered with scrawled words and phrases illegible from your current position.*

No matter how the party decides that they are going to enter the tunnel, only one character can enter at any one time.

As soon a character steps into the tunnel, he is very brightly illuminated by a number of directional *continual light* spells. Further, rather tiresome (because it sounds as if it is trying to be overly jolly) music bellows forth from an unseen source. Note that as time progresses (i.e. with each successive character who enters the tunnel), this music starts to slow down, almost as if a battery is running flat.

When any character steps into the tunnel, he appears immediately halfway down its length. At the same time, a disembodied face appears in front of the brick wall. The face is larger-than-life, bright orange, and wears a big jester's hat. Every time a character enters the tunnel, the face says:

*Ho Ho! Well, I hope the audience likes you, or you'll be in trouble! [Raises voice] ...and now, ladies and gentlemen, the amazingly funny, ludicrously hysterical <insert character's name here> [Pause whilst cheering and heckles are heard from all around] Well, go on then- let's hear your joke!*

The player in question should now tell a joke. The DM should assign the joke a "funniness" rating from between -6 and +6, and add this to the character's current humour rating (note that any joke the *player* says which references anything outside the Realms or AD&D world will automatically get a negative score). This is the character's new humour rating. Childlike, after racking his brains, says the following-

"What does an Urdunnir [a dwarf-like creature from MC14] say if you ask him his name? Ur-dunno! (Ur-dunno! Get it? I dunno? Urdunnir?)"

This joke has a modifier of 0. And that's being generous. The player in question should then make a humour check against his current humour rating. If the roll is failed, the tunnel starts to spin amidst boeing and hissing sounds from the unseen audience. Nothing like a bit of genuine roll-playing, eh? The spinning tunnel causes 1d4+1 points of damage to the character within its confines, and said character tumbles *through* the brick wall into area #5.

If the check is made, there are tumultuous cheers, the disembodied face assures the character that he will be a smash hit, and the character vanishes into area #5.

**Humour Rating Modifiers**

Action	Rating Modifier
Joke's score	-6 to +6
Trying to attack the disembodied face	-4
Player stands up and acts out joke properly	+2 (irrespective of joke)

**5. Test of Curiosity**

Only when all surviving characters are in this room should the following description be read to the player characters:

*You are in a curiously stark 20' square room containing a plain wooden table, brightly illuminated by a pool of golden light. On its top is a cube-shaped box, about 1' along each side. The box is bright blue, with a bright yellow, irregular star on the face facing you. On this yellow star is emblazoned a bright red question mark. Next to the box is what looks like a pile of coins. At the south wall is a brightly-coloured exit portal, illuminated by tawdry flashing blue and pink lights.*

The box cannot be moved, nor can the table on which the box rests. The box and table are both immune to attacks from normal and magical weapons, and both make their saving throws against magical attack forms as "Metal, Hard" [Check with 2nd edition DMG on whether this is still a valid magical attack form]. Both box and table are AC-4, and have 50hp each. If either is destroyed- from a magical attack form or by smashing up with magical weapons, for example- both box and table will explode, inflicting 4d4 hit points of damage to everyone within 10 feet, and everyone in the chamber will be transported to area 6. A save vs. breath weapon reduces the damage by half.

The box is immune to all divination magics, and its contents cannot be discerned even by X-ray vision, clairvoyance or similar means. Even if someone manages to look "inside" the box without opening it, all he or she will see is an opaque grey nothingness...

The pile of coins looks like 100 platinum pieces. This is a trick of the light- the money is silver.

In essence, every character must either take the money or open the box before he will be allowed to leave the room through the only exit, and each character may only perform *one* of these actions *once*. Effects of trying to take the money twice, or attempting to take the money and open the box are given below in the "Cheating Table".

After entering the room, all the player characters will start to hear (the same) voices. These voices urge the characters to do one of two things: open the box or take the money. The voices start off by merely hinting at one of these two courses of action: "Hey, I wonder what's in the box?" "Nah, probably nothing! I'd take the money." "But it could be something valuable or important!" "No way- more likely a poisonous spider or an even ickier creature! You've got to be nuts to open it and stick your hand in with all that money next to it!" As the characters deliberate, images of riches, wondrous suits of armour and powerfully enchanted staves flicker on an off on the wall behind the table,

Any character can walk over and take the money. That character can then leave the room through the glowing neon-like exit that appears in the south wall (accompanied by shouts of "You shudd'a open'd da box").

Any character can open the box. So doing has the same effect as drawing a card from a **Deck of Many Things** (big version). There is one important point to note: the *first* person (including Childlike) to open the box can only draw a *beneficial* card. The DM or player should keep drawing from the deck until such a card is drawn, returning any baneful cards to the deck before shuffling it. After the effects of the deck have taken place/been dealt with, that character too can pass through the exit. Childlike will rush over to the box and open it after three rounds (the DM should keep a close check on the real elapsed time since the table appeared, using a clock or watch) unless restrained.

Ten seconds after any character has opened the box or taken the money, more money reappears and the box, if open, shuts. A voice then inquires says "Step right up folks, and make your choice!" All characters have to either open the box (and face the consequences) or take the money before they can leave.

**Cheating Table**

Character's Current Humour Rating	What Happens
15 or more	Loud voice says: "Now, now, don't be naughty; you can't do that!" Box cannot be opened, nor coins picked up by that character, no matter how hard he tries.

10-15	Object of the character's attentions is transformed into an iron cobra [MC14], which immediately attacks that character. The cobra vanishes after the combat has ended
Less than 10	Random baneful card from the Deck of Many Things affects that character

Iron Cobra [1]: AC0; MV12; HD1; hp8; THACO19; #Att1; Dmg1d3; SA Poison; SD Special; MR Nil; S S; ML 12; XP 420. There is a penalty of 4 to the character's surprise roll when the cobra appears, no matter how ready the player says he is! The cobra's poison is not of the standard type. Instead, the affected character must save vs poison at or be affected by an *unluck* spell until he leaves the Comedy Club.

### Humour Rating Modifiers

Action	Rating Modifier
First character to open box	+5
Subsequent character opening box	+2
Attempting to destroy the box/table	-5
Trying to force the door	-2
Taking the money	-2

## 6. The Test of Adaptation

*You are in a large, circular chamber, some 60 feet in diameter. The ceiling is domed, perhaps thirty feet high at its peak. The ground that you are standing on is packed, cold earth. The soil is littered with broken weapons of all kinds, and you can also make out some backpacks, blankets or such like items some yards from you. Half-embedded in the ground are what look like a number of worn, yellowed bones. The walls to this chamber are hewn from chilling stone, stone that does not bear the lines of a single crack nor break. The room's illumination is provided by a small globe, suspended somehow in mid-air ten feet below the roof's highest point. As you survey your bleak surroundings, either your eyes are becoming more accustomed to the light, or the light is slowly getting brighter. Then, from nowhere, you hear a voice which softly intones the words: "Welcome, my friends, to the bastion of chaos."*

The light is indeed slowly getting brighter, and, after fifteen rounds will be at its brightest. At this time, **The Event** will take place (see below). Characters thus have a few minutes to try and make preparations for the unknown: DMs should keep a close track of time, paying particular attention to game time that will be used up by such actions as searching for secret doors etc. The characters should not be aware of how much time they have; only that the light in the room gradually increases in intensity up to that of a souped-up *continual light* spell. As time progresses, inform the characters that they can just hear a deep thrumming sound which, although very restrained, hints at a vast source of power or energy. Play up the unease factor in this chamber- the players should be convinced that something absolutely horrific is going to happen very, very soon. For once, you may not be deceiving them that much...

For every character who spends at least ten minutes searching, there is a 20% chance of finding one of the following:

1. a **Wand of Function Swapping** (new magic item)
2. gems worth 100gp each
3. a **Potion of Extra-healing**
4. a **Potion of Super-heroism**
5. a **Dagger +2**
6. a **Longsword +1, +2 vs Magic-using and Enchanted Creatures**

Each item can only be found once. Scratched onto the chamber's wall, at eye level, is the rhetorical question: "You may know yourself well, but how well do you know your friends?" in the common tongue. Apart from these features, there is nothing else of use, or even of interest, in the chamber. As is the case for the other rooms in this complex, there is only one method by which the characters can leave- and that is to pass the Test of Adaptation. Hacking at walls, *plane shift*, *teleport*, digging etc. are all futile- but let the players try, of course. As the fifteen minutes draw to a close, read the following:

*The small sphere of light seems to explode, a silent detonation which wrenches your minds from your bodies. All is a gyrating nothingness, until blessed relief comes as your souls are once again restored to their corporeal dwellings. You blink sporadically, and look thankfully at each other once again. Suddenly, you are almost paralysed with fear. By all the gods! What fiendish trickery is this! You struggle to stay on your feet, so great is the horror that engulfs you. <PAUSE here> As you look around this dire, hateful room at one another, you see that each of your companions bears the same appalled expression- so you are not alone. And yet you do feel alone, very alone, as would any soul which had come to rest in a body that was not its own. For as you look round the group, you see yourself staring back at you with the same shocked expression!*

Yes, that's right, it's swapperama time! The characters have been affected by a strange and long-forgotten *soul-swap* magic, which has caused each of their minds to be placed in another's body! The DM can choose which-mind-goes-in-which-body as he wishes; either randomly, or to cause maximum amusement.

The most interesting bit of all this, though (hee, hee) is that the DM should pick up the character sheet from each of the players and give the sheet to the player whose body now houses that character's soul! Each player now has to role-play the character of another player which is now trapped in another body... This sounds more complicated than it is, honest! However, mayhem could rule here, so the DM should read the following to try and instil some order on the ensuing chaos!

Not all abilities are swapped. A player's new "hybrid" character keeps all the *physical* scores from the character the player started the adventure with, including the following:

#### Abilities Retained

- Strength
- Dexterity
- Constitution
- Hit Points
- Physical form, clothes, items etc.

However, the "hybrid" character's *mental* attributes are those of the new soul! These attributes include the following:

#### Abilities Swapped

- Intelligence
- Wisdom
- Charisma
- Non-weapon proficiencies
- Weapon proficiencies
- Psionic Abilities
- Spellcasting abilities
- Alignment
- Class
- Level
- Saving Throws
- THACO (may be modified by strength of body as normal)

In other words, the "hybrid" character has the *class* of the new *soul*, and the *body* of the *old* character.

This happens even if physical ability scores are too low for this to normally be permissible<sup>11</sup>. Note that all class restrictions still apply. Thus, a wizard character whose soul found itself in the body of a fighter would not be able to cast any spells until armour was removed (see the *Wilderness Survival Guide* for rules on how long this takes). The player who had, up to this point, been playing the fighter character, now has to role-play the party's wizard who is rather concerned at being trapped in someone else's body! A fighter who is now in a wizard's body, however, would be able to swing a sword (if he had one to hand) even though the wizard's strength score might be below the minimum starting strength score for a warrior. A paladin could find himself in the body of a halfling, and would retain all his paladin abilities. Note that all weapon *non-*

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<sup>11</sup>The reasoning behind this is that, although only characters of certain abilities can *start* as a certain class, once you have made the difficult transition into this class, your abilities can drop below the class minimums without you suddenly being unable to use any of your class's abilities.

*proficiency* penalties should be stringently applied<sup>12</sup>. You might think "Well, what's the problem- the characters can swap weapons, armour and other items at their leisure!" Well, you would be wrong. **As soon as what has happened has sunk in**, draw the players attention to the large, hungry monster that has just appeared by digging its way up out of the ground in a matter of seconds...

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Umber Hulk [1]: AC2; MV6, Br 1-6; HD 8+8; hp41; THACO 11; #Att 3; Dmg 3d4(x2), 1d10; SA Special; SD Nil; MR Nil; S L; ML 13; XP 4,000

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As soon as this fell beast is slain, all characters' souls are restored to their bodies, and the bodies (whether alive or not) are transported to area #7 below. If any "hybrid" characters were killed, determine which actual characters were killed by looking at the *bodies* that have passed away. Example: the "hybrid" character which had the body of the fighter but the mind of the wizard has been dispatched. When the characters awake in area #7, the original fighter character (both body and soul) is dead, and the wizard character- assuming his body has survived- is alive.

**Humour Rating Modifiers** (Note: these scores are determined for each *player*, and should be applied to that player's usual character when the player gets his normal character back at the end of this encounter)

Action	Rating Modifier
Role-playing in new role	-4 to +4 for each player, determined by the DM
Player lets "hybrid" character die	-4 for being stupid and/or nasty

**Helpful Hint:** it may be an idea for the DM to do some preparation for this encounter (groan!), drawing up hybrid character sheets for some planned mind/body swaps. (On the other hand, why bother? Just let the players suffer...)

## 7. The Final Challenge

*This room is an archetype of chaos. The walls are flashing panels of light fused at mind-bending angles; panels that pulse crazily with a thousand different hues. In the exact centre of the room- at least, at what passes for the centre of this disorientating chamber- is a sphere of light from which tawny beams shoot off wildly in all directions. Encased within this sphere is what you assume is, finally, the object of your quest through these catacombs of confusion. A scroll case innocently beckons. As you ponder on the effects of reaching for this prize, a mighty voice bellows forth a challenge: "Let he who has passed the test claim his reward!"*

Only the character(s) with the highest humour rating can safely claim the scroll case, and this is the *only* way out of this chamber for all the PCs. No other attempt at moving the scroll- whether by magic, mechanics, or another character, will be successful. **As soon as an appropriate character walks up to the sphere of light and grasps the case**, read the following:

*What have you done! Your hand seems bonded to the cylinder The ground shakes as lumps of rock, stone, and tangible magic rain down on you. Tortured reality screams, space bucks and weaves, and the outcome is inevitable. The image of a face carrying scars of wisdom dances crazily before you for the briefest instant, before a mighty explosion tears your puny existences to shreds. <Lengthy Pause>*

Proceed to the next section, "Back to Normality".

**If an "inappropriate" character** dares to reach for the case, check his humour rating...

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<sup>12</sup>it is unlikely that the wizard's soul, trapped in a fighter's body, would suddenly acquire the know-how to use a mighty two-handed sword!

Humour Rating	What Happens Is...
16-19	A kind voice intones, "No- it is not you, my friend". There are no ill effects; another character may try his luck...
10-15	The character if affected by a wild surge- the DM should re-roll until a suitably funny effect is indicated
6-9	The character takes 2d8+1 damage in a blinding flash of multi-coloured light, and is knocked to the floor
0-5	The character takes 2d8+1 damage as detailed above. if the character is still alive, an outraged voice shrieks: "Begone, lugubrious defiler!" A curse is cast against the character, who gets no saving throw. The curse is a permanent version of the reverse of the priest spell remove curse in the 2nd edition Players Handbook. A limited wish or more powerful magic is required to remove the curse- dispel magic, remove curse and similar spells will not do so. Other characters can try and take the scroll, if they wish...

## 8. Return to Normality

After the correct individual has taken the scroll case, the characters will awake in the forest next to a friendly wooden sign on which are neatly printed the words "The way back". Bitterly cold rivers of steam- or something that looks like steam- cascade from the scroll case, which is rimed with frost and is icy cold to the touch. On the scroll case are clearly written the words: "WARNING: Only To Be Used by Name Level Wizards of the 19th and Higher Rank. Contains Self-Actuated Sentient Theories of Capriciousity and Chaossic Randomness!" This message is embossed in silvery runes that seem to writhe with a life all of their own. The scroll is trapped with a special magical ward, which, on triggering, has the effects of a triple-strength *explosive runes* spell, completely consuming the contents of the case with a magical fire. If any character other than the one who took the scroll attempts to open the case, then the trap is unleashed!

On the scroll is information which will halve both time and money required for researching any new or existing wild magic spell: this information can be understood only by wild mages of 19th or higher level. If anyone else reads the scroll, the information is not understood. Much like other magical books, the information on the scroll vanishes after the scroll's contents have been studied (this takes 1 month of *uninterrupted* study): thus, only one individual can benefit from the arcane knowledge. The knowledge cannot be conveyed to anyone else, nor recorded in any other form (see **Manual of Bodily Health** in the DMG).

It is up to the characters to decide what to do with the scroll. The scroll would sell to a suitable wild mage (if one can be found) for a considerable sum of money. Of course, the characters can always return the scroll to Zadderghast as arranged. If this is done, the mage will take the scroll, pay the characters as promised and vanish. If the characters decide to keep the scroll for themselves, the DM may wish (after adjusting the alignments of any lawful characters who know about this scheme) to have Zadderghast pursue the characters in an attempt to recover what he sees as rightfully his. The abilities of Zadderghast are left to the DM.

In any case, 1d4 days after leaving the lair of Jalzannel, the player character who took the scroll will find in his possession a **Gem of Retaliation**, a present from Jalzannel to use those uncouth invocation spells!

### New Magic Item: Wand of Function Swapping

This wand, fashioned from a pinky, plastic-like substance, shoots out a narrow green beam at one character who can save vs. wands to see if the beam hits or not. The range of the beam is 60 yards. If the beam strikes (saving throw failed), the magical functions of two of the target's items (determined randomly or at the DM's discretion) are swapped around for 2d4 rounds. If the target less than two magic items on his person, then there is no effect. Note that only the *magical* properties are swapped.

Example: a warrior is hit by the beam. It is determined that his sword and wand are affected. His +3 sword now acts as a **Wand of Secret Door and Trap Location**, and has no magical bonuses "To Hit" or on damage rolls, while his wand does 3 hit points of damage on every successful strike (note non-proficiency penalties), and has the intelligence, ego etc. that his sword had!

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