

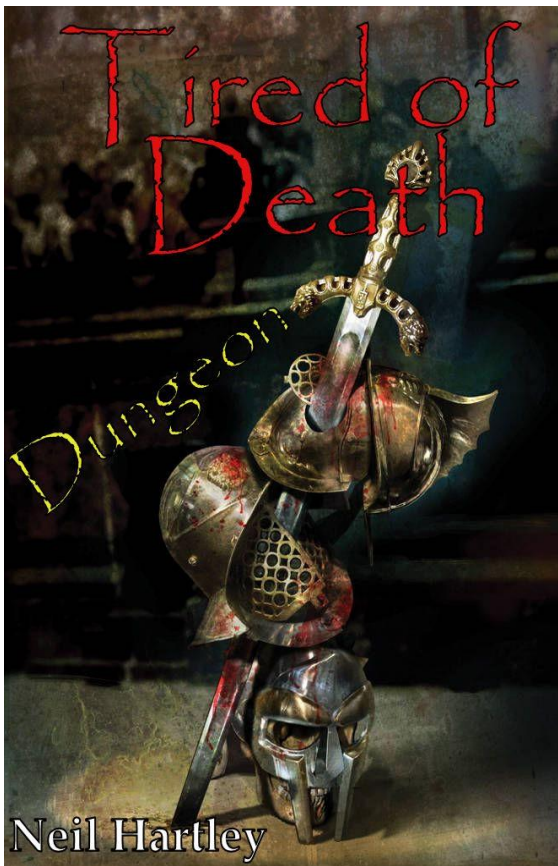
Tired of Death

Dungeon

Neil Hartley

V21a_ii

<https://www.NeilHartleyBooks.com>



Dedications

Dedicated to my Parents. Thanks for everything M&D.

Thanks also to Billy and Crunchy for proofreading and critiquing.

Chapter 1 - Dungeon.

Theodore the White swung his sword mightily, cleaving the zombie in two. It disintegrated in a dry explosion of dust and bone, choking him. Another of the monsters reached for him from behind, forcing him to reverse a short way and use his elbow barbs to fend it off. He felt the spike pierce rotten flesh, and heard the sickly sound of trapped air escaping from the zombies' gut. It fell away, dropping to the floor as its un-life drained away.

There was a brief respite as the creatures regrouped, and the fighter took the opportunity to wipe his brow, breathing hard. His armour, shined to a silver gleam just the other day, was now dented in several places and covered with grime and goo. He had lost his helmet a short while ago, knocked off even as it had protected him from a lucky blow by a club wielding skeleton, and his blond hair was tousled, sticking out randomly.

He glanced about. He was still in the same corridor he had wandered into earlier, though further along. The walls were made from smooth dark grey stone, bereft of any significant marks. The floor was also made of stone, though a little darker. The passage was narrow, leaving little room to manoeuvre, and this was limiting his ability to swing his sword effectively. However, it also hindered the zombies that were once more moving forward, reaching for him with yellowing claws outstretched. He shouted a short battle cry and thrust at a gap-toothed, grinning face in front of him, splintering the skull and tearing the head away from the neck.

A hand grasped his leg and he stamped on it hard, snapping the bone with a gruesome crack as he drove his weapon into another body, tearing a gaping hole in the side. He panted, his breath emerging in loud gasps that echoed through the passage as he pounded at the zombies. His attackers made no noise other than a windy wheezing.

He blocking another lunge, lamenting once again the impulse to do a little exploring on his own, away from the safety of his fellow adventurers. Too late for regrets now of course, though how could he have known that slab would drop and block his exit? Redthorne has insisted this area was safe. He wouldn't trust wizards any

more, that was for sure.

He grabbed a cold arm that tried to wrap itself around his neck and twisted, wrenching it clean off at the shoulder. He swung the dismembered limb like another weapon, becoming desperate now. It smashed against the side of an undead thing with a half staved-in head, doing nothing much in the way of damage.

There was a hissing from behind, indicating more zombies were approaching. With strength borne from desperation he hacked at the two still in front of him. Gray skin split and yellow ribs splintered as they fell aside under his onslaught. He pushed past, careening blindly down the tunnel, outrunning his pursuers, who moaned with rage at his escape.

Two ancient doors, dark with age, lay ahead. One blocked the corridor; the other was set into the wall on the left. He slammed into the first one, hoping to break through. Instead he bounced off with a dull thud, dropping his sword on the floor with a metallic clang.

Regaining his balance, he looked around. Without the wizard to replenish his magical illumination it was becoming difficult to see.

He could hear the zombies closing on his position, and frantically pushed on the second door. To his immense relief it swung open with a loud creak. Slipping inside, he slammed it shut behind him. Off to the side he could just make out a broken crossbeam leaning haphazardly against the wall. He reached for it, and used it to brace the door, before slumping against it himself.

There was a loud thump as the zombies slammed against the other side, trying to gain entry. Their dead hands scratching the wood in a futile attempt to reach their prey.

“Ssssecure issss it?” a dry voice whispered next to his ear.

He jerked and reached for his sword, only then remembering it was still on the floor where he had dropped it, on the other side of the door.

“That wassss carelessss of you,” came the voice. “I bet you won’t do that twiccce.”

A cold hand caressed his hair. “Welcome to my lair mortal.”

Theodore the White turned and looked into a face, a wrinkled and ancient face, skin pulled tight over the skull. A hint of red twinkled within the depths of otherwise dead black eyes.

Thin lips pulled back to reveal long yellowing teeth. A breath of

cold, as if from a tomb, washed over him. He screamed as chill fingers wrapped around his neck, and tried pulling at a wrist that should have snapped off in his grasp, yet the hand remained firmly where it was, and squeezed.

Theodore's vision began to dim as his air supply was cut off. He tried to shout as he felt two sharp fingers pierce his eyeballs, but his body refused to co-operate. Pain ran through his head as his ocular orbs burst like ripe grapes, spilling blood down his cheeks. His body spasmed as he was lifted off the floor and pinned against the wall.

As he breathed a strangled death rattle, Theodore the White felt those ancient digits pierce his skull and rip into his very brain...

~ * ~

“It's not fair, you always get them. All we get is cut to pieces.”

Dreth looked up at the zombie, who was holding his detached arm in his left hand. He chewed on a piece of fresh brain, taken from the newly killed fighter, as he spoke. “That's what zombies do. They're just the warm up. Anyway, you had that wizard a little while back didn't you?”

“That was two centuries ago!” the zombie retorted. “And he was a scrawny one too.”

“Well, that's life,” said Dreth, shrugging.

“Ha! If only. Well, I better scrape up the remains of Arnold I suppose. Cut his skull clean in half your dinner did, and I'm all out of bone glue too.” The zombie shuffled out.

Dreth shook his head as the undead closed the door to his crypt. He looked down at the latest catch and then dragged him over to the side of the room. Another death. How many was that over the years? A hundred? A thousand? He had stopped counting.

Sure, it had been fun being undead, or whatever he was, when he was first posted here. Ripping the eyeballs out of adventurers still living skulls, tearing off limbs and generally finding horrible ways to kill and torture. After so long though, he'd begun to think of the future, and let's face it, eternity is a pretty long time.

He did a fair imitation of a sigh, and gazed around his chamber. The room was a reasonable size, due deference to his status, with another small chamber off to one side. Standard dungeon design, the walls were made of dark stone blocks, as was the floor, which was cluttered with loot. Most of the gear was armour and weapons

taken from his many victims, but a couple of chests near the back were stuffed with gold. The coins and jewels were a kind of torture in themselves. It wasn't as if there was anything he could buy around here. The other room held piles of bones, the remains of adventurers foolish or unlucky enough to cross his path.

It was his own fault, he admitted to himself. He'd made his own tomb, now he had to lie in it. When the mysterious wizard had offered a naïve young adventurer immortality, in return for acting as a guard for a while, he should really have read the small print for the definition of 'a while'.

Still, what were his choices, really? He could search for the wizard, but he knew the odds were slim that he was still alive after all this time. Then again, he could remain as he was. Sure, one day someone powerful enough to beat him for good may come through his door, but that could be a thousand years hence.

He sat down on his chair made of bones and thought about that. A thousand years. Ten centuries stuck in this place. No, it was no good. He couldn't take it, there had to be a way out.

Maybe the treasure the dungeon guarded was the answer. It was supposed to include some sort of super magical artefact, and *that* might have the power to free him. Reaching it wouldn't be easy though. He was a pretty ferocious guardian, but there were supposed to be worse elsewhere in the dungeon.

He sat back, picked a goblet of flesh off the corpse of the unfortunate Theodore the White, and considered his options...

~ * ~

Crug the Barbarian growled, his muscled body gleaming in the dull light. "Sure trap?" He gestured forward with his overlarge sword.

"Of course I'm sure. Some sort of trip mechanism I think," Littlehorn replied, annoyed at having his expertise challenged.

The halfling thief was clad in black leather, with a short bow and quiver slung over his shoulder. Several daggers were strapped to his chest, and he carried a small pack on his back. It was all standard dungeon exploring issue. Sighing, he turned and examined the ground just ahead of them once more. The corridor looked the same as the others they had been wandering around in for the past several hours. This area of the dungeon was obviously designed to confuse, and it did a good job of it. The section here

was straight, sloping down slightly. He'd stopped because one of the cobbles ahead looked a lighter grey than the others, and seemed to be slightly higher.

He glanced over his shoulder at his three colleagues, who were standing a little way behind him. A faint breeze came out of the gloom to the rear, as if trying to push them onwards

The barbarian looked bored. He swung his huge sword idly in one hand, and ran his fingers through long dark hair with the other. He wore only a loin cloth and a pair of sandals. Standing next to the large man was the wizard, Redthorne. Dressed in long red robes, he was scowling and leaning on his staff. His beard tumbled halfway down his chest, and the traditional pointy hat sat jammed down over his ears. It had fallen off in a scuffle with some orcs earlier, and was now slightly bent near the tip.

"You'd better move forward and see to it," the wizard ordered. "One of us would just blunder into it if we went together."

"Why do you not cast a detection spell?" the final member of the group asked. The cleric, Nom the Noble, was standing and trying to peer into the darkness through the eye slits of his helmet, which covered the upper half of his face. His armour was coloured white, and he held a matching shield with a circular emblem painted on it, the symbol of his god. By his side, a wicked looking mace was attached to a wide leather belt.

"We're not far in," replied the wizard. "I don't want to waste magic now. The thief is up to this, aren't you?"

Littlehorn nodded. "Wait here," he said, and moved off carefully, scanning the ground intently.

Behind him he heard Nom speak again. "I feel death nearby."

Littlehorn rolled his eyes as he inched forward, and replied without looking back. "We're in the most dangerous and ancient tomb this side of the Very Black Mountains. Of course there's death nearby. It's all around us."

"Probably Theodore," grunted Crug, as the thief dropped down to slide forward on his belly.

"Yes, I told him not to wander off on his own," Redthorne said.

"Shhh!" hissed Littlehorn, as he detected a small wire ahead.

"There's something... **Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhh!!**"

With a crash that echoed off the walls, a stone slab slammed down behind him, cutting him off from the rest of the group.

Simultaneously a spike shot up out of the ground, piercing his leather armour and stabbing into his leg. His magic light went out, leaving him in total darkness.

He rolled over, pulling his leg off the barb with a wet squelching sound. Clutching at his thigh he tried to staunch the bleeding. He could dimly hear the pounding and shouts of the rest of the group from the other side of the new wall.

“Damn!” he moaned. “Damn damn damn!” Reaching around, he groped about in his pack for a bandage.

There was a noise nearby. A grinding, as if part of the wall was moving.

“Is that you Crug?” he whispered.

There was no reply. Littlehorn squinted into the dark, but even with his night vision he could see nothing. His hand located the bandage and he drew it out of the bag, trying to move without making a sound.

There was an echo of a whisper. He froze, even as a cold sweat broke out on his forehead. His heart thumped in his chest and his breathing sped up.

Silence.

He started, very slowly, to move again when the bandage was torn from his hand. A cold breeze sprang up, chilling him to the bone. Littlehorn dragged himself to one side and pulled out his dagger. A sound in front of him! He swung the blade blindly.

Something, his bandage he quickly realized, was thrown around his neck, and he was yanked back. Cold fingers pulled the knife from his hand whilst something held his legs. The halfling groped desperately at the cloth, trying to free himself.

There was the chill kiss of metal along his midsection, cutting through the leather armour, slicing neatly up from pelvis to chest.

“Aaahhhhhh!” His breath felt icy in his throat.

A hand, cold as death, reached into the slit in his stomach, pulling at his insides even as he thrashed about futilely, sobbing and gagging on bile.

A low hiss in his ear. “Trouble breathing? Let me help.” The hand pushed up under his ribcage, an alien intrusion in his guts, and squeezed.

“AAAAaaaaargggggmmmmmmfffff!” Littlehorn gagged as his insides were brutally thrust upwards, forcing themselves up his

throat, distending it obscenely, and vomiting them out of his mouth in a mash of tissue and blood.

~ * ~

“Hmmm. I love halfling!” The zombie threw away a femur and sat back with a smile on his face.

“Yars, thmmfks frrr hemmfing us,” said his friend, mouth full of liver.

“Think nothing of it,” replied Dreth, sitting in his chair and watching the two undead gorge. He waited. The zombies were typical of their kind. Both were clad in dirty rags, with rents in the cloth revealing yellow rotting skin underneath, pot-marked with boils, lesions and sores. Their teeth were brown and yellow, and both had wispy grey hair that barely covered the flaking skin on their skulls.

“Wait a minute!” the first one frowned. His name was Cuthbert, and he was unusually bright for a zombie.

Here it comes, thought Dreth.

“Why are you being so **nice** all of a sudden?” he asked. “I mean, I’ve been down here hundreds of years, and you’ve never helped us before. Why now?”

“Ythhs, why now?” echoed his friend, who was called Percy.

Dreth tapped the arm of his chair, which was made of arm. “I have come to a recent decision. I’ve decided that I’ve had enough of this ‘life’.”

“Oh, I see.” Percy lost interest, and bit back into the still steaming organs of the halfling.

Cuthbert though, who was brighter, or at least fresher, looked at Dreth. “Call me old fashioned, which I am, but I get the feeling that you aren’t doing this as a goodbye present. Anyway, isn’t it against the rules to abandon your post? I mean, you’re a **Guardian!** There are probably things they can do to stop you wandering off you know.”

“Like what?” Dreth said. “Give me a letter of bad conduct? Dishonourable discharge? I don’t think so. Hand me that hand will you?”

Cuthbert picked up the pale appendage and passed it to Dreth. “No, I mean, you know... *Guardians.*” He tried to wink knowingly, but only succeeded in looking like a bewildered, and very unhealthy, owl.

“Guardians to Guard the Guardians? Who Guards them? Who Guards the Guardian Guardians?” Dreth picked a ring off a finger and stuffed the hand into a pack.

“Stop saying Guardians. You know what I mean.” Cuthbert picked up a foot from the pile and nibbled on a toe. “Look, as a favour the lads and me would be willing to come in and cut you up real good. Eat you if we have to. That would kill you wouldn’t it? Release you from damnation and all that. I could look after your maggot collection, if that’s what’s worrying you.”

Dreth sighed, which was particularly impressive in a wheezy sort of way. He put his pack down and turned to face the undead. “Look, I don’t want to die okay? At least not without seeing some of the world anyway. You know how old I was when I... I became like *this*?”

“No,” said the zombie, spitting out a toenail.

“Well,” Dreth looked around the room. “Truth is I can’t remember, but probably not very old. The point is, even if you cut me up into little cubes, I *wouldn’t die*! I would just be little-cube shaped, and very uncomfortable.”

“Oh. I see.”

“Cuthbert, how long have you been down here?”

Cuthbert shrugged, a rather one sided gesture as his left arm was over on the table. “A couple of hundred years maybe.”

“Why don’t you leave?” Dreth picked up his sack again and peered inside.

“Well, it’s a job you know? I was never very good at being alive, truth be told.” Cuthbert looked uncomfortable for a moment. He took another bite of foot and masticated noisily. “Anyway, ten minutes out there and I’d be hacked apart by some over-zealous Cleric or something.”

Dreth tied his pack off and looked at the undead munching on the remains of the thief. “Why don’t you come with me? It’ll be an adventure.”

“No, thanks, I was never the adventurous type. Anyway, I’m okay here. It’s not that bad really.”

“When I said, ‘why don’t you come along?’ I wasn’t really asking.” Dreth examined a variety of swords and other weapons he had saved from his many victims.

“Bastard. Everyone always picks on us Zombies, we’re the scum

of the undead world, isn't that right Percy?" He nudged the other zombie, who was sucking an eyeball out of the skull with a slurping sound.

"Eh? You what now?"

Cuthbert made a tutting noise and attempted to take a deep breath, though this was not altogether successful as his lungs were quite rotten.

One sword that seemed to throb with black energy caught Dreth's eye. The hilt was silver and gold, inlaid with various red gems. White runes were engraved up the length of the blade. He picked it up and swung it about, testing the balance.

"Hey! Watch where you're waving that thing! Nearly had my arm off! My other one I mean."

"Sorry," Dreth said, not very sincerely. He found a suitable scabbard and strapped the sword on around his robes. "How do I look?"

"Like a dead man walking."

"Haha. Very funny. Now, finish your adventurer. There's one more thing I need your help with."

Cuthbert tucked the foot into his belt and stood up. "Now what?"

"There's a group coming through the tunnels. This one," he pointed to the now mostly eaten thief, "and that stupid fighter who pulled your arm off were members of their party."

"So?"

"I want to take one with us."

"You what?" Cuthbert gawked at him, spitting out several teeth.

"Are you mad? Oh wait, you mean as a snack."

"Nope, I mean whole and upright. Sometimes the fully alive can get past things that we... not quite living can't."

"Why just one then? Why not take the group? There are still three left."

Dreth rubbed at his forehead. The trouble with zombies was that their brains were mostly rotten, they weren't too great on thinking. "There's a wizard, a Cleric and a barbarian. All of them together may be a bit hard to control out of our little area. One though, one would be manageable."

"Well, I'm not taking the Cleric, that's for sure." Percy folded his arms. "They give me the creeps. Have you ever been turned? Not nice I can tell you. A friend of mine was turned a while ago, he's

been off his game ever since. Hardly even bothers to shuffle along properly any more.” He shook his head sadly.

“The Barbarian would be the easiest,” said Cuthbert, getting back on topic.

“Perhaps so, but the wizard would probably be the most useful,” Dreth said.

“Dangerous those mages,” Percy countered. “The current record holder for the Pit of Doom was a mage. The Giant Spiders were cleaning up for months.”

“Still, something to be said for a good spell caster” Dreth kicked the halflings’ mutilated head across the room, bouncing it off the wall so it came to rest against a pile of skulls.

“Good shot,” said Cuthbert.

~ * ~

“Crug no like,” Crug said in his most eloquent tones. “Crug think trap.”

“I concur with our brawny friend,” the Cleric interjected. “My instincts say we should pay heed.”

The three surviving adventurers were huddled in another passageway. Having failed to open the slab that had trapped Littlehorn, they had backtracked and taken another route in the hopes of finding their friend. They hadn’t found the thief, but they *had* narrowly avoided two spiked pits, one swinging axe, a fireball activated by a pressure pad, and three tripwires. They were still no nearer to finding their companion, and tempers were beginning to fray.

“Look, of *course* it's a trap. The whole place is one giant trap.” Redthorne rubbed at his forehead in annoyance. “I admit I made a mistake hiring that worthless thief, or I should have at least hired two. Still, he’s gone now, and I say we push ahead with our mission. Unless you are going to renege on your agreements?” The mage raised his staff in a threatening gesture.

“Nom does not break his sworn oath!” declared the Cleric.

“Renegade is what?” said the Barbarian.

“Just move forward,” sighed Redthorne. “Slowly!”

The three set off down the corridor, which had a number of shadowy alcoves along the walls, containing nothing they could detect. They traversed the tunnel with no mishaps, much to their relief, and emerged into a large dark cavern, the use of which was

not apparent.

There was a slight noise, though it wasn't possible to identify where it originated from, as the whole place seemed to echo. The three stepped into defensive formation, with Crug in front, his enormous sword raised high. Nom clutched the Orb of his god, Grom, and muttered a blessing, whilst Redthorne held his staff and readied magic.

A skittering noise came from the left. Crug swung round as a large black spider appeared out of the dark and lunged towards him. Two more of the creatures materialized from the right and Redthorne turned to face those, staff blazing white in his hands. More movement could be made out in the shadows.

Behind them, from the tunnel they had just emerged from, came another sound. Nom turned to see a zombie, arms outstretched, lurching towards them.

“Undead to the rear!” he cried, raising his orb.

“Deal with them then! We'll take the arachnids,” the wizard commanded, throwing white fire at a giant Black Widow.

“I kill spider!” Crug said, covered in green gunk. The remains of a greater tarantula lay on the floor next to his feet.

Nom faced the zombie and raised his Orb. He cast his mind out to the Might of his god, and reached for the Power. The mighty deity Grom responded, sending the force of Good through his vassal and towards the undead in an invisible wave of energy. The creature made a hissing sound and staggered backwards as the magic impacted.

“My thanks to my Lord,” muttered Nom and, taking his mace in hand, strode forward to finish the foul beast, which was now fleeing up the passage.

The wizard shouted something behind him, but Nom was intent on his prey, and ignored the warning. The zombie lurched around a corner into an alcove and cowered against the wall as the Cleric approached.

“Die creature of evil!” Nom raised his mace of Smiting and brought it down upon the creatures' skull.

Or tried to. Something restrained him. He looked up and saw a thin hand, pale skin barely covering the bone, gripping the shaft of his raised weapon.

A dry voice whispered next to his ear. “Perhapsss not.” Nom

straightened as sharp claws dug into his back, just below his armour. He screamed in pain as cold fingers wrapped around the base of his spine, severing all control to the lower part of his body. He pitched forward, to be caught by the zombie he'd so recently cornered.

"Time for the zombies to fight back Cleric," it hissed in his face, blowing fetid breath over him.

There was a wet sound, and Nom felt a cold sensation along his back as his spine was forcibly wrenched from his flesh. The restraints on his armour snapped and it fell to the floor with a dull clang. The tearing sound was loud in his ears now, and with the last moments of his life Nom saw his corpse fall forward, a long bloody hole where his backbone had been, terminating at a ragged tear where his head had been twisted away from the neck.

Blood spread outwards in a dark pool on the stone floor, and Nom's spirit ascended to join his god.

~ * ~

"You cut it fine is all I'm saying," Cuthbert complained as they walked along. "Another second and I'd have just been a load of rotting breakfast."

"You were never in any danger. That medallion I gave you warded off the Cleric's power didn't it?"

"Maybe so," Cuthbert looked down at the dull black necklace hanging around his rotten neck. "But it still hurt."

"Well here then, you deserve this one." Dreth handed over the Cleric's head, now permanently etched into a look of horrified surprise. The still attached spinal column dripped blood and muscle tissue.

"Oh nice! I do like a good lollipop." Cuthbert took the remains and licked at the still dripping backbone. "Yummy."

They wandered back along the dark corridors to where Percy was waiting.

~ * ~

"Where are they now then?" asked Percy, looking jealously at Cuthbert as he savoured the tongue of the holy man.

"The spiders pushed them back, they're resting just outside the Troll caverns." Dreth arranged his cloak about him so that it looked the most ominous. "We still need to separate them before they leave our territory completely."

“Why not just rush them?” Cuthbert asked, waving Nom’s jawbone about. “Oooh! A gold tooth! I always wanted a gold tooth!” He wrestled with the jaw, pulling at the item in question.

“I suppose we could,” Dreth considered it. “We should be able to take them easily enough now the Cleric’s out of the way. We need to act quickly though, if they wander into the trolls we’ll have a hard time getting the mage alive.”

“I dunno,” said Percy. “That wizard seems to be pretty powerful. I think we should push them into the goblins. Then we can take the wizard whilst the Barbarian is fighting them. We know the tunnels in that area, and the goblins are scared of you.”

Dreth looked up in surprise at this unusually bright idea from Percy. “Not a bad choice, though we aren’t on the best terms with the Goblin King if you remember.”

“Pah! Goblins. I can’t be held responsible if I accidentally eat one of them can I?” Percy looked disgusted.

“Maybe so, but you could have checked that it wasn’t their princess first,” Dreth said.

“Look at me! I have a gold tooth!” Cuthbert danced around grinning, his new denture forced into a gap in his gums.

“Just concentrate on the problem at hand please, or I’ll give your lollipop to Percy.”

“Bah, you were never fun,” the zombie cradled the Cleric’s head and sat down. “Why don’t we get the spiders to attack them, and take the wizard in the confusion? Worked for this one,” he patted his toy.

“How would we get them back into the spider’s lair?” said Dreth. “They know it’s there now. Besides, the spiders lost quite a few of their kind in the fight, I doubt they would go for it.”

“We could offer the Barbarian to them,” suggested Cuthbert, trying to see his reflection in an old helmet.

“No fair! You got the Cleric!” protested Percy. “The Barbarian is mine!”

Cuthbert grinned a gold tinted grin and held the noggin close. Dreth shook his head and considered the options. “We may have to go with the goblins, I’d prefer to lure them into the troll caverns, but I can’t think of any way to do that.” He sat down on his chair and then jumped slightly as a piece of parchment slid under the door.

“What’s that then?” asked Percy.

“How should I know? I’ve never had anyone slip anything under the door before.” Dreth thought a moment. “Well, except for a thief one time. Anyway, give it to me.” He waggled his fingers.

“Yes your highness,” Cuthbert said sarcastically, picking up the paper and handing it to Dreth, who was silent for a minute as he read the spidery script.

“So?” Asked the zombies in unison, when he finally put the parchment down. Dreth passed it back to Cuthbert, who squinted at it in the gloom.

“What’s it say?” said Percy, who had forgotten how to read. He peered over Cuthbert’s shoulder as his friend read the notice out loud, tracing the text with a finger.

Deceased and Desist Order.

It is come to our notice that ‘Dreth’, subsection 3b, area 4 (undead), designation: Undead Way Guardian (advanced level); henceforth referred to as ‘The Resident’, has been engaged in unauthorised activities. To wit: Venturing outside allotted dungeon domain (undead).

Furthermore: It has come to our attention that the Resident’s lair has been left unattended for unacceptable periods of time, and that the Resident has engaged and distracted several zombies, designation: Guardians (Fodder level), from their assigned patrol areas.

Such activity is in direct breach of agreed protocols and directly contravenes the contractual duties of the Resident.

This order is the first and only warning, as specified in subsection 4,509, paragraph 52, lines 309-466, for the Resident to return to Dungeon Guardian (advanced level) duties. Failure to abide by the terms of the contract will result in disciplinary agents being dispatched.

Thank-you for your attention. Have a nice day.

DM.

“Fodder level is it?” muttered Percy. “Cheeky buggers. I’m a professional I am. That’s downright degrading.”

“Who’s DM?” asked Cuthbert, passing the note back to Dreth.

Dreth shrugged. “No idea, don’t care.” He scrunched the notice

into a ball and threw it on the floor.

“Do you still have this contract?” Cuthbert said, as Percy wandered off grumbling to himself.

Dreth scratched his head. “I don’t think so. I signed it before... before I became like this. After the wizard changed me I didn’t really think about it.”

“So you’re going to stay here now then?” inquired Percy, who had started rummaging through a pile of old equipment in the corner. “Hey! Look! I found a wand!” He held up a long stick.

“Let me see that,” Dreth said. He examined the artefact closely for a moment. “Hmmm, a wand of illusion, still a couple of charges left.” He rubbed his chin. “I think I have an idea...”

~ * ~

“Are you listening to me warrior?” Redthorne poked the barbarian with his staff.

“Crug hear. Crug no like. Cleric dead for sure. Just...” the fighter counted on his fingers for a moment, “two of us now. Not good. This place bad.”

The mage leaned back against the wall of the alcove they had taken refuge in after the spider fight. “Yes, I know. However we’re blocked off from the exit. Big dropping slab remember? We have no choice but to push on.” He consulted a piece of parchment. “I think I know where we are anyway.” He pointed at a location on the map. “According to this there are goblins that way somewhere,” he waved his hand to their right, down a dark corridor.

“Goblins easy kill. No problem.”

“Yes, for once we’re thinking along the same lines. The important thing is... **We must not split up!** Do you understand? Hey! Are you listening to me?”

“Quiet. Crug hear something.”

“Don’t quiet me! This dungeon seems to work by picking people off one by one, if we stay together... Hey! Where are you going? Weren’t you listening to what I just said?”

“Crug hear woman! Maiden need help! Quick!”

“What the... Don’t be an idiot! What’s a woman doing down...” The wizard cursed to himself as the barbarian stood up and started jogging off to the left. “Blast the moron!” He scrambled around, stuffing papers into his pack before scrambling after his sole

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

