



## **WARNING! DUNGEON MASTER EYES ONLY.**

### **A D&D Quest through the Natural History Museum**

This quest takes about 2+ hours. It takes you around the Natural History Museum, using the exhibits as fantastical encounters to solve riddles and fight beasts. The game uses a highly simplified version of the D&D rules.

When you're running the quest, please show respect for the other guests. Keep the noise to a minimum and move over to the side of the exhibits to get out of the way.

### **Equipment**

**Dice:** Each player will need a partial set of D&D dice. (If you're doing this for a birthday, they make a nice 'treat bag' for your guests.) You can also download free dice apps on your phone. The players will need 1d20, 1d12, and 1d8. The DM will need the full set.

**Dice Bowls:** You won't have a table to roll the dice, so you'll need some kind of flat bottomed bowl with high sides. The DM holds the bowl while the player rolls. You may also want to put felt or some kind of noise dampening fabric at the bottom of the bowl. Have one bowl for every 3 players.

**Pencils & Clipboards:** The Dollar Store is your friend, here.



*Jewels:* 12 jewels to hand out to the players. You can print 12 images of jewels and cut them out. I prefer to buy cheap plastic jewels at craft stores.

*Reward Treasure:* Something to give the players when they complete the quest. I like to use big bowl of chocolate coins. Party City is also your friend.

### **Preparation**

A couple of days before your quest, print and cut out the materials as detailed at the end of this guide. You might also want to do a quick scouting trip of the museum to familiarize yourself with the route. Be sure to grab several copies of the museum map, as this guide assumes you're able to look at the map while you run the game.

### **Getting Started**

Gather on the steps of the museum. Give each player their dice, clipboard, pencil, and character sheet. Attach the character sheet to the clipboard. Have them pick one of the characters and two weapons. Have the players choose a name for their character and write it down. Attach the 3 stickers (1 character, 2 weapons) to their character sheets. Give them somewhere between 10 and 15 hit points each, depending on how risky you want the game feel—lower hit points makes it more fun, but more stressful.

Explain to the group that while you're there to have a blast, you don't want to get kicked out. So museum rules still apply: walk, stay calm, and get out of other people's way.

Head in and get your tickets. Once you have your tickets, gather everyone at the foot of the big dinosaur skeleton—aka the Emerald Dragon.

### **Encounter: Challenge Accepted**

Hand out the copies of the Challenge Accepted encounter card. Read it aloud to the group. (It can get noisy in the museum, so everyone may not be able to hear you. Distributing multiple copies of the encounter cards helps things run smoothly.)

Once the players accept the quest, have each of them step forward and tell you what type of magic they want: Fire, Water, or Light. Hand them their chosen 3 spell cards. Have them stick them to their character sheets.

Hand out the Find the Boat riddle cards. The players can read it to figure out where to go next.

## Quest Overview

### [Map of the Museum](#)

#### *Chapter 1: Securing Passage*

The Emerald Dragon sends everyone on a quest to cross the sea and slay the Red Dragon. The first riddle sends them to the Gems and Minerals room at the back of the museum. Before they get there, they are ambushed by skeletons in the Human Origins exhibit. Once in the Gems room, they steal 12 gems to appease the 12 totem poles in the Northwest Coast exhibit, letting them secure the boat they need to cross the sea. The moment they touch the boat, the players are attacked by wendigoes. Defeating the wendigoes drops the map of how to sail across the sea.

#### *Chapter 2: Voyage at Sea*

The map takes them upstairs to the African Mammals exhibit via the Ocean Life exhibit. Once in the Ocean Life exhibit, they are attacked by the giant blue whale. After the first round of combat, a magical sea turtle swims by pleading to be rescued from murderous sharks. The group has to split in half to win the two battles. Once the whale and sharks are defeated, the turtle turns into a fairy and gives them a riddle on how to find the Red Dragon. The players then complete their voyage to African Mammals exhibit.

#### *Chapter 3: Distant Shores*

In the African Mammals exhibit, they are confronted by the lion, elephant, and gorilla. They can battle and defeat the animals, but it's more fun to roleplay a negotiation for safe passage. Either way, the animals drop +1 magic rings for everyone. The turtle fairy's riddle takes them up the stairs (cliffs!) to the 4th floor, where they need to sneak by or attack the dinosaurs in the Saurischian Dinosaurs exhibit, who are guarding the entrance to the Red Dragon's cave. From there, they proceed to the Orientation Center where they engage with the Red Dragon, aka the Titanosaurus. Once defeated, the Red Dragon drops the chocolate coins.

### **Encounter: Undead Ambush**

The Emerald Dragon's riddle sends everyone to the Gems & Minerals exhibit via the Human Origins exhibit. Once the players have entered the Human Origins exhibit, call them together in front of the human skeletons. Hand out and read aloud the Undead Ambush encounter cards. Start combat!

### **Running Combat**

Note: This guide assumes at least some familiarity with the main rules of D&D. If this doesn't describe you, no worries! Head to YouTube and watch any of the countless 'how to run combat' videos. Then come back here and read on.

Each encounter is balanced for 6-8 players to kill the monsters in 2-3 rounds. It's easier and faster to split the players up into groups of 3 and divide the monsters between the groups. You can also have each group of 3 players run the full encounter. If there's a few other folks helping DM, have them each take a group.

Rather than worry about the perfect combat balance, the encounter cards give 'approximate' HP for each of the monsters. This is to allow you room to fudge the results of combat to keep things fun and moving along. This is especially important with younger players. Don't feel obligated to stick to the math.

The monsters attack first every time. Roll a d20 for each monster's attack, add their bonuses, and compare it to the armor class of each player. If it's a hit, roll damage. Have the player record their reduced HP on their character sheet.

Once each monster has attacked, it's the player's turn. Choose someone to go first and ask them what they want to do. They can attack one of the monsters with their weapons or cast a spell. To cast a spell, they have to roll a d20, add their bonuses, and be higher than the DC of the spell. Attack spells require a second roll to beat the AC of the monster. Healing spells can be directed at any player and take the full turn. Using a cloaking spell takes a turn, but gives triple backstab damage if their next attack is a hit.

Track the HP of the monsters on your copy of the Battle Tracking Sheet.

### **Challenge: Stealing the Gems**

Once the skeletons are defeated, the riddle takes everyone to the Gems & Minerals exhibit. Hand out and read aloud the How to Steal Gems instruction cards. Divide the players into groups of 3, then send them out to casually mingle with the crowds. Each time a group successfully steals a gem, have them come back to you and hand them one of the 12 gems. Once all 12 are distributed, gather everyone together. The riddle then directs everyone to the Northwest Coast exhibit.

### **Encounter: Spirits Awake**

Gather outside the south door (left side on the map) of the Northwest Coast exhibit. Hold everyone there until one of the players figures out that they are supposed to lay 1 gem at the base of each of the totem poles. (Pick up the jewels up quickly! Don't litter.) Once complete, gather everyone by the large canoe. Hand out and read aloud the Spirits Awake encounter cards. Run the combat. Once the wendigoes are defeated, hand out copies of the Crossing the Great Sea map, which were dropped by the wendigoes.

### **Encounters: From the Depths and A Rescue at Sea**

Gather everyone under the blue whale in the Ocean Life exhibit. Hand out and read aloud the From the Depths encounter cards. Run the first round of combat. Then hand out and

read aloud the A Rescue at Sea encounter cards. Split the players in half and have half of them head over to the exhibit with the sharks and the turtle. Complete the combat for both encounters. Once the whale and sharks are defeated, gather everyone in front of the turtle, and hand out and read aloud the The Rest of the Way encounter. Then hand out copies of the Dragon Cave riddle cards. Have the players complete the rest of the sea voyage to the African Mammals exhibit on the 2nd floor. The new riddle tells them where to go from there.

### **Encounter: Repel the Invaders**

Once the boat lands on shores of the African Mammals exhibit, hand out and read aloud the Repel the Invaders encounter cards. The players can attack, but it's much more fun to roleplay a delicate negotiation to allow the players safe passage. Act out the conversation as best you can! Have fun with it. Either way, once the encounter is resolved, award the players their magic rings. Hand out the ring stickers and have them attach them to their character sheets. Then have the players read the riddle to figure out where to go next: up the stairs to the 4th floor and the Saurichian Dinosaurs exhibit.

### **Encounter: Guardians at the Gate**

At the entrance to the Dinosaurs exhibit, hand out and read aloud the Guardians at the Gate encounter cards. By now, you'll have a sense of your players' interests. If they are bored with combat, have them cast their cloaking spells and try to sneak past the dinosaurs to the Vertebrate Origins exhibit, rolling checks against the dinosaurs' intelligence. Award the players +1 or +2 bonuses to their rolls if they are using the physical space of the museum hall to hide in the crowds and duck behind the exhibits. If your players like to fight, have the dinosaurs notice the players and attack right away.

#### **Running a Stealth Check**

Roll a d20 for the dinosaurs, adding (or subtracting!) their intelligence bonus. Have the players roll a dexterity check. If the player's number is higher, they are still hidden and can decide what they want to do next. Sneaking past the dinosaurs should take at least 2 checks. If the players fail a stealth check, you can decide if the dinosaurs attack or if the players have a chance to run past them. Keep it fun and mix it up.

### **Encounter: Time to Save the World**

Gather everyone at the north (right side of the map) entrance to the Orientation Center, which contains the skeleton of the Titanosaurus—the Red Dragon! Hand out and read aloud the Time to Save the World encounter cards. Run the combat with as many grand and majestic descriptions as you can muster. Note that the dragon takes one attack turn, hitting everyone in the party with (AoE) damage. Fudge all the dragon's rolls so that there's enough doubt about the outcome, players have to heal each other, etc. Make it tense and

dramatic. Once the Red Dragon has been defeated and you've performed your best deathbed soliloquy, hand out the chocolate coin treasure.

## **Resource Files to Print**

### *This Guide*

- Print 1 copy for each of the DMs and helpers
- Use letter-sized printer paper

### *Battle Tracker*

- Print 1 copy for each of the DMs and helpers
- Use legal-sized printer paper

### *Character Sheets*

- Print 1 copy for each player, plus a couple of extras.
- Use letter-sized printer paper

### *Characters, Weapons, Rings & Spell Stickers*

- Print 1 copy for every 3 players
- Use letter-sized full sheet sticker paper
- Cut out each item so it can be used as a sticker

### *Encounter Cards*

- Print 1 copy for every 3 players
- Use letter-sized beige cardstock

### *Final Encounter Card*

- Print 1 copy of every 3 players
- Use legal-sized beige cardstock