

INTRODUCTION

Remember the golden days of role playing, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat, intriguing dungeons, and no NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

The *Forgotten Portal* is designed for five characters of 4th to 6th level, with a total of 20 to 25 total character levels between party members. At least one striker, two controllers, and one defender character are essential for good game play, and a varied mixture of different character classes is recommended. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs are in the Xulmec City State of Anthua, seeking a hidden, fantastic location in the steamy jungles (see the Adventure Hooks below for ideas on what the PCs could be seeking). Their Xulmec guide has led them along the banks of the Tototl River to a majestic waterfall called the Atotzin that cascades nearly 1,800 feet off a plateau. The guide beckons to a hidden cave system that leads to the top of the plateau and high altitude jungles that conceal the location the PCs seek. The PCs pass through many natural chambers, battling giant-sized natural denizens, and discover a makeshift tomb to a long-forgotten Xulmec hero containing his undead body with his silver armaments. As they exit the caves on the plateau, they encounter a wounded tyrannosaur returning to its lair. With the aid of a wandering band of Xulmec warriors, the dinosaur is defeated. When the warriors see the silver armaments the PCs carry, they beg them to return to their nearby village, Teputzitoloc.



At the village, the elder explains to the PCs the significance of the silver weapons, and the terrible curse that has afflicted the village the past several months. A few months ago, the high priest began demanding sacrifices of villagers' blood, instead of crops or gold, a practice instituted centuries ago by an ancient savoir who gained favor from the gods themselves. The PCs are drawn into the plight of the village against their misguided high priest. They investigate a nearby shrine and discover the true reason for the shift to blood sacrifices. Unfortunately, there is a good chance the PCs further upset the natural balance if they slay one of the village's protectors, the evil feathered serpent Itzcoatl. Deep in the depths of the shrine, the PCs discover a recently activated portal, the source of the malignant force that has corrupted the high priest and spirited away the village's celestial protector.

GAME MASTER'S SECTION

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. Loc — the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. Pg — the module page number that the encounter can be found on. Type — this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). Encounter — the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. EL — the encounter level.

SCALING INFORMATION

The Forgotten Portal is designed for five characters of levels 4–6, but you may adjust it to suit parties of different sizes or level. If alterations to the adventure are performed, remember to adjust all treasure accordingly. Consider modifying the adventure as follows:

Weaker parties (4 or fewer characters, or lower than 4th level): Reduce Atocuetzpal by two levels in area 1–2. Reduce the wounded tyrannosaur's hit points by another 25 or even 50 in area 1–5, depending on the strength of your party. Remove two levels from Quahtlatoa in area 1–7. In area 2–9, make the living idol an elite monster rather than a solo monster. In area 2–18, replace the firelasher elemental with an elite wraith. Remove one of the glyphs of warding and one of the illusory rat swarms from area 2–22. Remove two levels from Itzcoatl in area 2–27. Remove one elite dire jaguar and two levels from Tlacocelot in area 2–28.

Stronger parties (6 or more characters, or higher than 6th level): The adventure should prove challenging for larger or higher-level parties, but if your group is especially capable, consider the following changes. In area 1–5, give the tyrannosaur full hit points. In area 2–18, make the firelasher elemental the standard 11th level version. In area 2–27, add one level to Itzcoatl, and have him fight to win. Add another elite dire jaguar and two more zombie rotters to area 2–28.



Location	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-2	8	C	Atocuetzpal, advanced vicejaw crocodile	5
1-3	9	C	Five spitting frogs	4
1-5	9	C	Wounded tyrannosaur	6
1-6	10	T	Falling block trap	3
1-7	12	C	Quahtlatoa, male human mummy	6
2-1a	18	C	Giant constrictor snake	3
2-1b	19	T	60-foot pit trap	1
2-2	19	C	Four xochatateo	5
2-3	20	C	Eight zombies	5
2-4	21	T	40-foot spiked pit trap	3
2-5	21	C	Two elite dire jaguars	5
2-6	22	C/P	Three piranha swarms Secret door puzzle	4
2-9	24	C	Living idol	6
2-14	26	T/P	Spike trap Door puzzle	2
2-16	27	T/H	Javelin traps Sliding wall obstacle	2+
2-17	28	T	Pit traps Poison dart traps	Varies
2-18	30	C/T/P	Firelasher elemental Reverse gravity trap	6
2-19	32	T/P	Water torrent trap Chain puzzle	4
2-20	33	C/P	The Moon Crab	6
2-21	34	T	Maize maze trap	4
2-22	35	C	Pazuzu statue Glyphs of warding Illusory rat swarm	7
2-23	36	C/T	Two sloping pit traps Two viper swarms Poisoned javelin trap	4
2-24	37	T/P	Fire trap	5
2-25	37	C/P	Twelve animated wicker men The game	7
2-27	39	C	Itzcoatl, adult feathered dragon	8
2-28	41	C	Tlacocelot, male Xulmec Clr8 Two elite dire jaguars Six zombie rotters	9

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The hook for this adventure is based on the PCs searching for a hidden location in jungles of Anthua. Exactly what the PCs seek, and how they arrived at the waterfall is up to the GM. Below are a few sample hooks, and the GM is encouraged to use the one that suits his home campaign the best, or create a new one. If using *DCC #55: Isle of the Sea Drake*, the clue in area 1-4 can also point to the majestic waterfall Atotzin, and hint at what lies beyond. Whether or not any of the fantastic locations listed below actually exists is at the discretion of the GM, and the focus of his campaign.

- The PCs are searching for a legendary city of Teocuitpetl, rumored to have avenues of paved gold. Perhaps the PCs or their patron is interested in material wealth, or they seek a powerful magic item hidden in the city, or an NPC claimed to reside in the city. All previous investigations have led to dead ends. However, the hired Xulmec guide provided stone tablets that speak of the legendary city beyond the gate of water. Perhaps the waterfall Atotzin is that gate.