

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

*As clever players will gather from a reading of the Legend of the Tomb, this dungeon has more tricks and traps than it has monsters to fight. THIS IS A THINKING PERSON'S MODULE, AND IF YOUR GROUP IS A HACK AND SLAY GATHERING, THEY WILL BE UNHAPPY!*

*Tomb of Horrors* had been around for a while when we first played it, but its dark reputation had passed us by. We were an isolated enclave of high-school gamers, mainlining AD&D and Traveller in our small corner of the Canadian hinterland with no lifeline to the rest of the hobby. We knew Gary Gygax's twisted imagination, of course, from *Homlet* and *Barrier Peaks* and the meat-grinder that was the giants-drow series. Though we all DMed in a kind of chaotic rotation, it was Dave who'd run most of the Gygax canon, and who prepped the *Tomb* for us that night in 1982. As a result, we were pretty sure we knew what we were in for.

On Dave's face as we started, I remember a smile I'd never seen before. . . .

We were ready, though. We were savvy. We were the "thinking persons" that Gygax spoke of in the module's introduction—the slacker core of our high school's geek elite. We were methodical. We were paranoid as all hell. We were confident.

And we died. Badly. Over and over and over again.

The body count in that first session (back in the day of eight players at the table and most people playing two or more characters at a time) was beyond comprehension. My PC was one of the few survivors, swearing oaths of vengeance with all the rest as we bankrupted ourselves paying for group-rate resurrections—and then went back for more.

Success came slowly, built on perseverance and blind luck and sheer "Do nothing; touch nothing!" terror. Victory and the destruction of the demilich came finally in the form of one of those tedious campaign stories you really don't want to hear. But the larger point is that for those of us who kept coming back to it, the *Tomb* was a challenge like nothing we'd ever played before.

This was an adventure in which it wasn't enough for your character to be the best at what he or she did. To survive the *Tomb*, you—the player, the person behind the character sheet—had to be even better.

This adventure isn't a new work based on or inspired by the original. This is *Tomb of Horrors*—sharpened, not blunted, by the 4th Edition rules. There are some changes, to be sure. Those who know the original will hopefully find at least a few surprises herein. But the heart of this updating of Gary Gygax's masterwork is the raw ingenuity and sense of ever-impending doom that made the original *Tomb* what it was.

Your players already know how good their characters are. Now they get to find out how little that matters. . . .

— Scott Fitzgerald Gray