# WILDERNESS PREVIEW: WOW, THAT'S A LOT OF SYMBOLS!

Hello, welcome to the Dungeoneer Wilderness preview! I'm Thomas Denmark, the designer, and illustrator of Dungeoneer. Over the next few weeks I'm going to give you a sneak peek at the two new up and coming Dungeoneer sets; Haunted Woods of Malthorin — a forest-turned-nightmare — and Den of the Wererats — a city over-run with vermin.

When originally designing Dungeoneer, I knew I'd want to do a Wilderness expansion, but at the time I didn't know I'd be doing two Wilderness expansions at the same time! To understand why we developed two sets at the same time I have to go over how card games are printed. There are standard layouts on the printing press that allow for 110 cards on a sheet. This is why the previous Dungeoneer sets each had 110 cards in them. When Vault of the Fiends was released, we were pleasantly surprised at how well the game was received. Thematically, it was a gamble to choose such a "weird" theme (more on that later), but mechanically it was exactly what Dungeoneer needed, with more map cards and "pumpable" cards that could be increased in their effectiveness to pose a threat to high-level heroes. Coincidentally, this made Vault of the Fiends a much more challenging set to play, and lead to its being perceived as an advanced Dungeoneer set.

When players combined the original Tomb of the Lich Lord with Vault of the Fiends, they experienced more richness in gameplay, and a longer, more satisfying game. But they also found that mixing 220 cards could be a bit much, especially when you're just looking for that quick dungeon-delving fix. This had an impact on how we decided to do more expansions for the game, and the 55-card expansion was born! Besides being more cost effective for the cus-tomer, at half the price, it makes Dungeoneer more true to its design goal of being an expandable game. It was still like designing one 110 card set, but we got two for the price of one, so to speak.
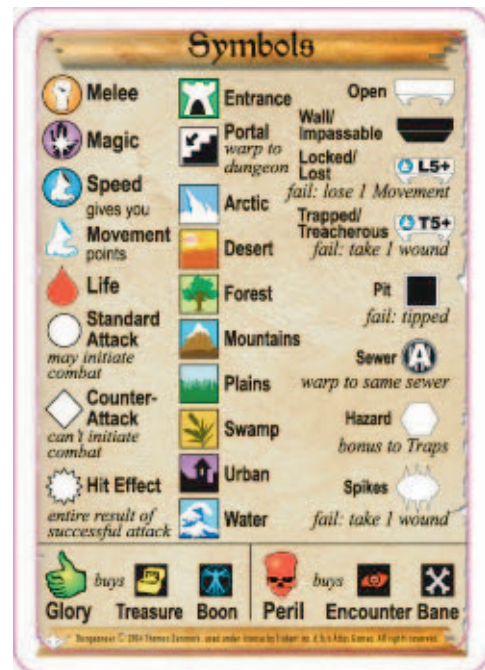
As you can see by the sample Symbols card here, there are a lot of new symbols. It's really not as much as it seems, though. There are Terrain symbols for the Wilderness map cards, and one new Obstacle type called Sewers. Sewers will be explained later, in a few weeks, but this column is all about Terrain. Designing the Wilderness sets inevitably led to creating different kinds of terrains; this also became the strongest mechanical element of the new sets. With each map space identified by a terrain type, we were able to create all kinds of Adventure cards that took advantage of the terrain. For example, take a look at Forest Quake — one of the powerful new cards that has a global effect on the game.

When you spend your opponent's 5 Peril points to play Forest Quake, all heroes on a forest space are in trouble! They are guaranteed to either lose a Treasure or take a wound. This card takes advantage of the Terrain types, and gives the player a little room to strategize when to play this card: wait until everyone, except you, is on a Forest space and hit them with this little surprise. As a designer, I'm beginning to appreciate cards that have a guaranteed effect, as opposed to relying on a random die roll. This puts more power in the player's hands, and makes the game more strategic.

Here is a sample Wilderness space. Notice the white border? This keeps it distinct from the black-bordered Dungeon spaces. Also, you can see the terrain symbols in the bottom right, and the Portal symbol in the bottom left, which indicates this particular Wilderness space can connect to a Dungeon Entrance.

How exactly does the Wilderness work with the Dungeon? That's a very good question. The basic idea is that the Wilderness is above and the Dungeon is below, so the maps are built separately. Physically, the maps are built side by side on the table, and when you place a Wilderness map card with a Portal symbol on it, you place a marker "A" on the Portal and a corresponding "A" marker on the Dungeon Entrance. This indicates that you can move through the Portal, just like an Open exit, to the Dungeon and visa versa. This becomes really interesting when you've got multiple Portals, connected to different Dungeon Entrances - you can end up with some crazy movement options like moving one space in a Dungeon that could equal several spaces in the Wilderness. Fun stuff!

Stay tuned, next time we'll take a look at the big, bad guy of the forest himself: Malthorin the dark elf.

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