16

You see a trap door hidden in the corner of the lair. Opening it, you find a narrow spiral staircase leading downwards. You're unsure what to expect, but you climb down anyway.

At the bottom are the castle's dungeons. Looking through portcullises into the cells, you see the skeletal remains of the dungeon's unfortunate prisoners. In the very last cell, though, there's someone alive — it's the princess, who really had been kidnapped by the dragon! Even in a dirty cell, she's radiantly beautiful, and your heart skips a beat. You find the keys nearby and quickly open her cell door. She exclaims "My hero!" and throws her arms around you in gratitude. Much as you'd like to bask in her admiration, you force yourself to be calm and remind her that you still have to escape.

You can leave the dungeons to the west, or you can try to find a shortcut through a dark tunnel in the northwest — although you'll have to push through what looks like a nasty, sticky cobweb.