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DARK AND HIDDEN WAYS

2019S

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition
Official Game Adventure

Dark and Hidden Ways

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Down below the surfaces of worlds are where the real challenges lie.



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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]

2nd Edition Supplement

Dark and Hidden Ways

Table of Contents

Dracolich and Drow	2
Mindflayers	9
Goblins	12
Pyrohydra and Xorn	16
Aboleth and Cloakers	24
Ankheg	28
Jermlaine	30

Credits

Authors: William Tracy, Chris Mortika, Grant Boucher, and John Terra
Cover Art: Daniel Horne
Interior Art: Jim Holloway

TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva,
WI 53147 USA



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End, Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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Drow Magic-User and Dracolich

Terrain:	Limestone caves in mountainous region
Total Party Level:	56 (average 9th)
Total Magic X.P.:	70,300
Total g.p. X.P.:	71,893

Set Up

- The characters are members of the mysterious group known as the Harpers, or they are at least friendly with them. The Harpers have recently heard rumors of Dragon Cult activity near High Dale. The High Dale rests in a mountain pass that lays between the Thunder Peaks and Hooknose Crag. Legends and reliable reports have told of an old black dragon that lives in a cave on Hooknose Crag, overlooking the Vast Swamp. The Dragon Cult activity has been reported on the northern slopes of Hooknose Crag, opposite the side facing the Vast Swamp.

The Harpers fear that the Dragon Cult members are turning the black dragon of Hooknose Crag into a dreadful Dracolich. Unfortunately, the intelligence reports are almost a month old, so the black dragon has probably already been turned into a Dracolich. The Harpers have asked the PCs to investigate and, if possible, kill the black dragon or Dracolich. Its position to raid the High Dale, which is an important trade route, would give too much power to the Cult of Dragons.

- The player characters will be approached by a group of farmers who need their help. It seems that in the past month a number of livestock have been found dead in their corrals and fields. The poor animals had apparently been killed by some great beast. The killings started a month ago, right after some cows off the farm where the characters are staying disappeared. All of the farms where livestock has been killed, or disappeared, are near the slopes of Hooknose Crag.

The farmers will offer the characters a small fee, telling them that they know that it is not much compared to their usual fees for monster slaying. But then again, a few monsters that kill helpless farm animals should be easy for the adventurers to track down and kill?

- During their last adventure, the characters will have found an ancient map that supposedly shows the way to a great treasure. The treasure map shows the entrance to a cave in the lower slopes of Hooknose Crag, near High Dale.

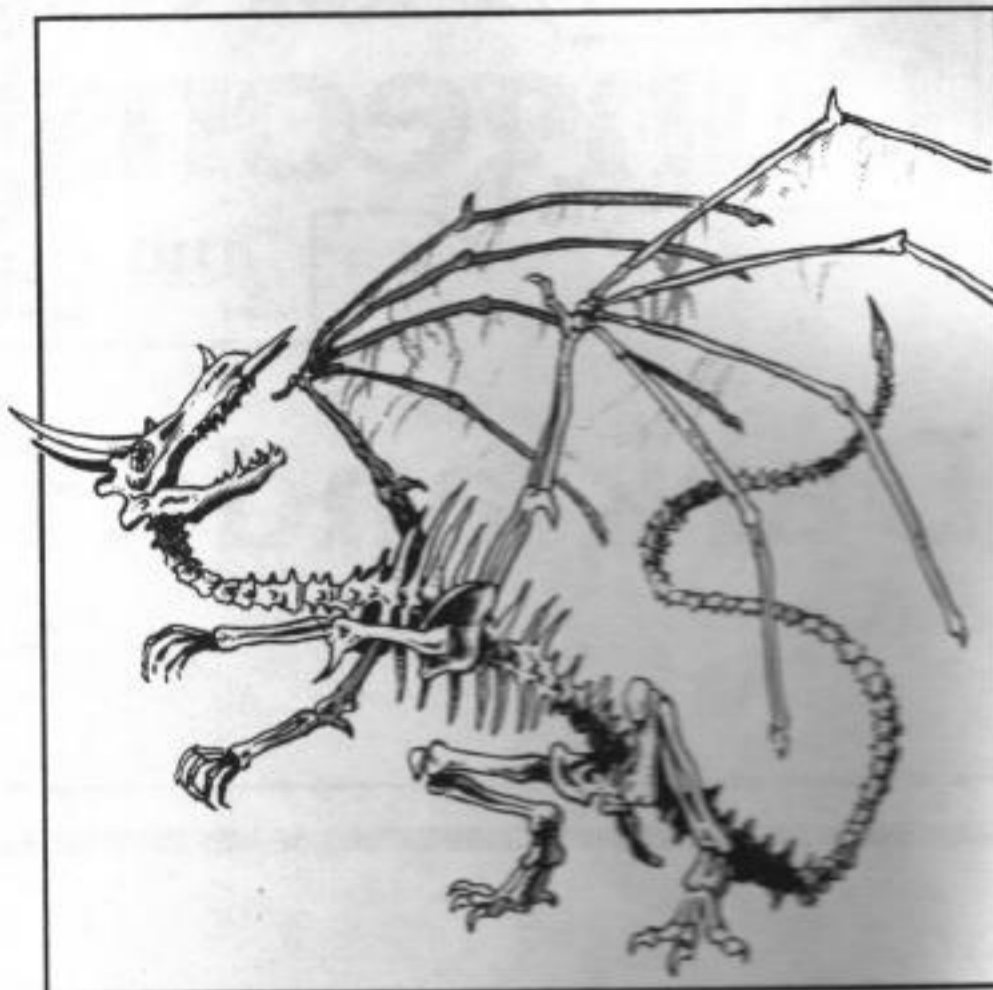
The map is actually a fake, created by a skilled forger of the Thieves' Guild of Raven's Bluff about twenty-five years ago. By pure coincidence and fate, the cave entrance marked on the rough map could be mistaken for the entrance to the lair of the dracolich.

Background

The information the Harpers have is very accurate, even though the intelligence report is indeed a month old. The black dragon that lives on the southern slopes of Hooknose Crag has been contacted by the Dragon Cult, who have offered to perform the spells that will transform the dragon, Twilight by name, into a dracolich, in return for future favors.

Twilight agreed and showed the Dragon Cult a back entrance to his lair. (Twilight's entrance to his lair is on the face of a sheer cliff.) A small group of Dragon Cult wizards moved in, set up shop, and prepared to change Twilight into a dracolich. The wizards were led by a drow wizard named Dusk, who was accompanied by his two duergar body guards.

In addition to his duergar body guards, Dusk bought along his private pack of Crawling Claws, to provide additional security. Dusk's Guardian Daemon also about, protecting Dusk's



special treasures, which the drow always carries with him. And, as usual, Dusk's familiar, an Imp, scurried along as well.

After a month of preparation and spell casting, the process was a success and Twilight became a dracolich. The other Dragon Cult wizards departed slowly, trying not to draw attention to themselves as they left the area. Dusk stayed behind a little longer, making sure that the transformation was complete, and cementing his relationship with Twilight even more tightly.

The player characters will arrive at the back entrance of the lair just as Dusk is making his final preparations: he plans to leave the next morning.

The Lair

Getting In

The dracolich's lair has two different entrances. The first entrance is the one the dracolich uses, which opens onto a large ledge on a sheer cliff located on the southern face of Hooknose Crag.

The back entrance, that used by the Dragon Cult members and the darkenbeasts, is located in the bottom of a fairly steep ravine on the lower northern slopes of Hooknose Crag, near High Dale. A small stream runs down into the ravine, and then runs along its bottom and into a cave mouth, which is the rear entrance to the lair.

The PCs should know enough (see "Set Up") to be exploring the general vicinity of Hooknose Crag, looking for anything that would help accomplish their mission. They will discover the ravine leading to the back entrance by stumbling upon chunks of livestock carrion left indiscriminately by Dusk's darkenbeasts after one of their hunting raids. In their hurry to leave, the Dragon Cult wizards did not take the time to "police the area," so these rather obvious clues to the ravine's location (and, eventually, the lair's back entrance) were not properly disposed of—and Dusk has been too busy with Twilight to be bothered.

If any rangers or other characters with tracking abilities check the area around the ravine, their chances of finding any tracks leading to the entrance are reduced by the fact that any tracks will be at least a week old, and that a heavy rainfall has recently fallen. If a character is actually successful in his search for tracks, he will find the tracks of several normal-sized humans at the edge of the ravine. The tracks also head northwards towards the High

Drow Magic-User and Dracolich

Dale. These are the tracks of the Dragon Cult wizards who have already left the area. The tracking characters can tell the tracks are at least a week old.

Further examination will reveal that a tree near the edge of the ravine has had its bark rubbed off. The area of bark rubbed off is thin and runs all the way around the tree. This is where the Dragon Cult members anchored their rappelling/climbing rope while they were staying in the caverns.

The walls of the ravine have an incline of about fifty-five degrees, meaning the characters will have to be careful while climbing down the sides. In addition to that, a recent rainstorm has left the sloping walls slightly wet and slippery. Using the "Climbing Rules" on pages 14-17 of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, the following modifiers apply:

Non-Thief's Basic Chance to Climb Walls: 40%
Thief's Chance to Climb Wall: Normal percentages
Sloping Walls Modifier: +25%
Slightly Slippery Surface Modifier: chance for falling is doubled

This means that the average human non-thief will only have a 30% chance of successfully climbing down the sloping walls of the ravine without falling. There are a number of rocks and trees near enough to the ravine for ropes to be tied to them, so that the rope can be used to help climb down the sides of the ravine. This will increase the human non-thief's chance of successfully climbing down the walls of the ravine to 90%.

Be sure to use the encumbrance modifiers, racial modifiers (if a climber is not human), and any modifiers for armor worn by the climber during the descent (which are all listed in the "Climbing" section in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pp. 14-16). If the characters are foolish enough to climb near where the stream cascades down the ravine walls, the chance for falling will be twice normal.

If a player character fails his climbing check, he is allowed to make a saving throw versus petrification. If the saving throw is successful, he will not take any damage while sliding down the sloping ravine walls, though he will be dazed for one round when he reaches the bottom. The fallen climber will also land in the water at the bottom of the ravine, making himself miserably wet and dirty. If he fails the roll, the thirty foot tumble down the side of the ravine will result in 3d6 damage.

After all the characters have reached the bottom of the ravine, they will easily find the back lair entrance. The bottom of the ravine is slopes gently downwards; the ravine itself is only about one hundred and fifty feet in length. One end of the ravine is dominated by a small stream that falls over the edge of the ravine and then travels along the bottom of the ravine. The ravine bottom is only ten feet wide, with a few weak looking plants growing on the rocky surface. The stream that runs down the center of the ravine is only three foot wide and is about a foot deep. At the other end of the ravine, there is a six-foot wide gaping hole in the rocky slopes of the ravine. The waters of the small stream run into the hole, disappearing into the inky darkness.

Just as the characters start to enter the cave, tell the players that a slight breeze has started blowing down the slopes of the ravine, making a low whistling noise.

Cave of Wind and Fear

The lair entrance opens directly into this cavern, which is roughly 40' square. The room is filled with stalactites and stalagmites, except for a small clearing about 10' across in the center of the cavern. Dim light from the outside falls through the lair entrance, faintly illuminating the cavern.

The small stream runs through the entrance of the cave, and then down the middle of the cave. The small stream will have also narrowed down until it's only one foot wide. The presence

of the stream and the subsequent humidity, and dripping water from the stalagmites, have made all the surfaces of the cavern very slippery (see rules for fighting on slippery surfaces on page 22 of the *DSG*).

The floor of the cave is littered with the bones of various animals and various coins. The bones and coins are scattered everywhere, except in the center of the cave where the area is clear of stalactites and stalagmites.

This whole cave has been made to look like it is a lair for piercers. In actuality, it is the lair of a cloaker, who is hanging on to the roof of the cave, above the clear space in the cavern's center. Before Dusk and his Dragon Cult minions could move into the rear area of the lair, they had to deal with two denizens who already lived in the caves. One of these creatures was a dracolisk (detailed in the "Chasm of Statues" section). The other creature was the cloaker living in this cavern. Luckily, Dusk knew the language of the fiendish creature and made a deal with it. The cloaker would allow Dusk and his people to move safely through the caves. In return, Dusk would provide the cloaker with some treasure and further arranged for the cloaker to get some new dinner treats.

As soon as the party enters the cave, tell them that the wind whistling through the ravine has followed them inside. The whistling wind will camouflage the sounds of the cloaker as it starts moaning. It will use its first intensity moan when the party first enters the cave. While the beast uses this first type of moaning, the PCs will be made uneasy and will suffer an automatic -2 on their attack and damage rolls against the cloaker. When the characters begin to get close to where it is clinging to the cave roof, the cloaker will use its fourth intensity moan to cause nausea and weakness. Due to the limited conical area of effect, it will only affect 1-3 characters. Those affected must make saving throws versus poison or be overcome by nausea and unable to do anything for 1d4+1 rounds.

If any characters reach the center area of the cave, directly beneath the cloaker's perch, the cloaker will use its *hold person* moan to hold a character. The effect will last for 5 rounds. The cloaker will then leap down and attempt to engulf the PC held by the spell. If the characters start to win the battle, the cloaker will begin its second intensity moaning, causing *fear* in everyone within thirty feet who does not make a saving throw versus spells. Any PCs who do not make the saving throw must flee in terror for two rounds. PCs who save are not effected.

Scattered on the cave floor are 3,000 s.p. and 500 e.p. . In the center area of the cavern can be found a rusty iron sphere and a small bone or ivory spoon. These objects are actually a *Murlynd's Spoon* and the *Iron Bands of Bilarro* (see pp. 175 and 173 of the *DMG* for descriptions of these magic items).

A large opening exists opposite the opening through which the characters entered the cave. The small stream runs into this opening, and through it.

Cloaker (1): AC 3 (1); MV 1, FL 15 (D); HD 6; hp 45; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; THAC0 13; SA if victim is hit by both claw attacks he is engulfed and takes 1-4 plus his unadjusted AC each round automatically, tail can also attack for an additional 1-6, points of damage; subsonic moaning that can cause unease and mind numbing, or nausea and weakness, or *fear*, or *hold person*; SD shadow shift to obscure enemies' vision and increase its AC to 1, or create 1D4+2 shadow images of itself; AL CN

The Cave of Noxious Beauty

After defeating, or fleeing from, the cloaker, the characters will enter this cave. The cave is circular in shape, with a twenty-five foot diameter. The cave is a site of unearthly beauty and delicacy. This "living" cave is filled with draperies, flowstones, and gypsum flowers (see pages 7-8 of *DSG* for descriptions). The stream from the last cavern runs into this cavern and falls into a number of deep cracks in the cave floor.

Drow Magic-User and Dracolich

The cracks in the cave floor are not wide enough to cause the player characters any trouble, but the noxious gas rising out of the cracks will cause the characters a great deal of trouble. The gas is a natural phenomenon and is odorless and clear, making it nearly impossible for the characters to realize anything is wrong until it is too late (see page 37 of the *DSG* for a description of the effects of noxious gas).

The gas will begin to take effect two rounds after the characters enter the cave—just as the pack of 10 crawling claws hiding in the cave attacks.

Crawling Claws (6): AC 7; MV 9; HD 2-4 hp; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 vs. armored opponents or 1-6 vs. unarmored opponents; THACO 20; SD: immune to death magic, *raise dead*, *sleep*, *charm* and *hold* spells, cannot be turned by clerics, immune to holy water, edged weapons only do half damage, magical weapons cause damage as if they had no magical bonus; AL N

The crawling claws own no treasure, and nothing of value will be found in the cave. Two other exits lead out of this cave, besides the opening through which the characters entered this cavern. One exit goes to the right and one leads to the left.

The Right Cave is the Wrong Cave

The opening to the right opens into a long straight tunnel that travels for a hundred feet before entering a large cavern two hundred feet in diameter. The roof of the cavern is like a dome and rises to a height of fifty feet. The floor of the cavern is sandy and devoid of features except for a huge rock that sits in the center of the cavern. A man-sized figure in armor can be seen leaning against the large rock, which is about ten feet in width. On the walls, near the ceiling, are a few wide ledges that are submerged in shadows of darkness.

The large rock in the center of the cavern is a huge lodestone (see page 42 of the *DSG* for a description of the magnetic properties of lodestone). An unanimated skeleton inhabits the suit of chain mail, which is non-magical and rusted through in several places. The poor victim was trapped by the lodestone many years ago.

As soon as several of the characters are caught by the magnetic effects of the lodestone, the 6 darkenbeasts hiding in the shadows on the ledges near the ceiling will attack. (Dusk had six local cows stolen and then turned them into darkenbeasts. These darkenbeasts not only provide extra security for the operations, but they also brought fresh meat to the cloaker—as well as the dracolisk, which will be encountered in the next chamber.)

Darkenbeasts (6): AC 4; MV 18; HD 5+5; hp 40; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 3-12 or 1-4/1-4/3-12; THACO 15; SD immune to mind control; MR 25%; AL NE.

The darkenbeasts have no treasure and neither does the dead man attached to the lodestone in the cave. Nothing of value is in this cave, nor does it have any other exits, which means the characters will have to go through the gas-filled cave again and take the left exit out of there. This means that the characters will have to make saving throws again or be affected by the noxious gas.

The Chasm of Statues

If the characters take the left passageway out of the cave of noxious beauty, they find themselves in a long tunnel that travels straight for two hundred feet. The tunnel leads into a vast cavern that is about five hundred feet wide. The cavern is split in half by a chasm that runs all the way across the cavern's width. The chasm is roughly fifty feet across and about a hundred feet deep, with a raging river running through the bottom. The river disappears into dark opening at each end of the chasm.

Halfway down the length of the chasm is a column of stone with a large, flat top that is even with the regular floor of the

cavern. The top of the column is about thirty feet wide and sixty feet long. This means that a character jumping from the edge of the chasm to the flat top of the stone column will have to jump 10'.

The flat top of the stone column is scattered with enormous pieces of rock that have apparently fallen from the roof of the cavern. Due to the jumbled maze of rocks on the top of the column, it is impossible for the characters to know that there is anything on the top of the column besides large rocks.

On the edge of the chasm, across from the top of the stone column, are a number of life-like statues. If the players look down towards the bottom of the chasm, near the stone column, they will see another statue, broken to pieces, on a ledge about twenty feet below the top of the chasm.

The only exit from the cavern can be seen on the other side of the chasm, on the opposite wall.

The top of the stone column is currently inhabited by a cunning dracolisk that has been trapped on the stone column by the Dragon Cult members.

The other denizen of the caves that Dusk and his wizards had to deal with was this dracolisk. The black dragon, Twilight, admitted that the dull-witted beast was his offspring, the result of a dalliance with a basilisk. Since its birth, the dracolisk had stayed in the lower caves that were connected to Twilight's lair. Finally, Dusk was able to trick the dumb creature into trapping itself on the large "island" of rock located in the middle of a deep and wide chasm in this chamber. Dusk has had the darkenbeasts bring some meat to the dracolisk, hence the rotting carrion outside the caves in the ravine. The dracolisk now serves as another obstacle for any intruders. Note: The dracolisk's wings have been clipped so that it cannot fly; because of its huge weight and bulk, it cannot jump across to the other side of the chasm either.

The easiest method of crossing the chasm will be for the PCs to jump across to the top of the stone column, cross to the other side of the stone column, and then jump across to the other side of the chasm. Of course, the hungry dracolisk that lives on top of the column will have something to say about this.

The crafty dracolisk will hide until a character actually sets foot on the top of the column. It will then come out of hiding and attack the unfortunate character. If anyone else tries to cross the chasm to help the lone character, the dracolisk will take the time to spit acid or turn its petrifying gaze towards the would-be rescuer while he is crossing the chasm.

Scattered on the top of the stone column are 1,000 s.p., 200 e.p. and six gems (worth a total of 3,000 g.p.).

After defeating the dracolisk, or deciding upon a different route to cross the chasm, the players should have no trouble reaching the other side of the cavern where a dark opening exits from the cave. (Rules for jumping and crossing chasms are located on pages 17-19 of the *DSG*.) The Dragon Cult members got across the chasm by using the *carpet of flying* that Dusk owns.

Dracolisk (1): AC 3; MV: 9/FL 15 (E); HD 7+3; hp 53; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/3-12; THACO 13; SA spit acid 3 times per day for 4-24, turn to stone with gaze; AL CE.

The Gauntlet

After leaving behind the chasm and the dracolisk, the party will be entering a long cave tunnel containing many stalactites and stalagmites. As the characters move down the tunnel, they may set off four different traps that have been set in the tunnel. Due to the number of stalagmites and stalactites in the tunnel, the characters will only be able to move single file on a clear, relatively unblocked path down the center of the tunnel. (In fact, the stalagmites are so thick in this tunnel, that if any character tries to go off the central path to traverse this tunnel, all movement is reduced 50%, and all skills/abilities checks are conducted at 50%.) The tunnel is fairly straight, slopes gently upwards, and is a hundred and fifty feet long.

Drow Magic-User and Dracolich

This section of the lair's caverns is guarded by the two duergar dwarves (a fighter/priest and a fighter/thief) who serve as body guards for the drow wizard. Unless the player characters are very careful, the duergar will be well prepared for them by the time the party gets through the tunnel. Also, unless the player characters are somehow able to defeat the duergar silently, the drow wizard will hear the fight and be ready for the party after they have defeated the duergar.

This tunnel has been prepared by the duergar to be a veritable gauntlet of traps. The first is placed twenty-five feet down the tunnel, where a thin trip wire has been strung across the path. If the trip wire is activated, it will cause a small cave-in, arranged by the duergar to make enough noise to warn them of intruders and cause some damage to those intruders. The character that set off the trap, and those within ten feet of him, will suffer 4d8 damage (save versus petrification for half damage), as per the cave-in rules in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pp. 38-42.

Of course, PC rogues have a chance to find and remove this trap before it is sprung, though their chances are reduced by 5% times the difference between the PC's experience level and that of the duergar fighter/thief who set the trap (9th level). Also, any number of spells, such as *find traps* or *true seeing*, will aid in the discovery of this trap. Indeed, some spells can negate this trap altogether.

After dealing with the cave-in trap set by the duergar thief, the party will have to deal with three magical traps set by the duergar priest. The first of these, a *wyvern watch* spell (2nd-level clerical spell), is just twenty-five feet beyond the cave-in trap. When the spell is triggered by a PC's approach, the lead character, and anyone 5' behind him, must save versus spells or be paralyzed for nine rounds. If the PC's saving throws are successful, the spell "misses" but remains in place and may affect following PCs. The paralysis effects of this spell can be lifted by *dispel magic* or *remove paralysis* spells.

There is also a 30% possibility that the spell was cast too long ago (more than 8 hours) to have effect, in which case it will not "go off" at all.

This spell/trap was set as a delaying tactic, to give the duergar more time to prepare for the characters, provided the dwarves heard the party set off the cave-in. However, if the party successfully avoided the cave-in trap and can silently negate the effects of the *wyvern watch*, the duergar will still have no advance notice of the party's approach unless the duergar thief can make a successful Hear Noises roll.

Thirty feet farther down the tunnel, a *glyph of warding* has been engraved on the floor of the tunnel. The glyph will explode for 9d4 points of fire damage (save versus spells for half damage). This spell can be dispelled by magic or foiled by a rogue's find-and-remove-traps skill. If this trap is triggered, it will definitely provide all the warning the duergar dwarves need to prepare an ambush for the party at the end of the tunnel and in the next chamber.

The final trap in this gauntlet will be set up 30' from the far end of the tunnel. It consists of a rope enchanted with the 3rd-level clerical spell *snare* (making it 90% undetectable without magical aid). This is another delaying trap since the rope will not damage anyone, only bind them.

As with the *wyvern watch* spell trap, there is a 30% chance that this spell was cast too long ago to have its full effect. If 30 or less is rolled on percentile dice, the *snare* was cast more than 8 hours previously, in which case the rope (if it ensnares a party member) can be broken by any character with Strength 14 or greater (roll a successful Strength ability check to break the rope snare). The snare can also be cut off with any magical weapon or with any edged weapon wielded with at least a +2 attack bonus (from any source).

The party will be able to see the end of the tunnel from the area where the *snare* spell takes effect. If the party has succeeded in moving down the "gauntlet of traps" without making any noise, and if the duergar fighter/thief has not made a successful Hear Noise roll while the party traversed the tunnel, then the PCs will have the normal chances of surprise against the dwarves when they reach the end of the tunnel and enter the next chamber (still apply the -2 surprise modifier to the party's die roll for the duergars' stealth). Otherwise, the duergar will have heard them by now and will prepare an ambush for the party's arrival in the next cavern.

The Incredible Shrinking Grey Dwarves

The duergar guard post is a large cavern at the end of the trapped tunnel and is roughly 20' square. The duergar are stationed on a 10' high ledge situated on the right side of the cavern, near the opening into the trapped tunnel. On the ledge is an opening that leads to the quarters of the duergar and their leader, the drow wizard.

If the players are entering the area and the duergar know of the party's approach, the grey dwarves will use the following plan of attack:

In the first round of combat, when the characters walk into the cave and are several feet from the entrance, the duergar priest will cast *flame strike* (6d8 points damage, save vs. spell for half damage) from the ledge, trying to get as many of the characters in the area of effect as possible. The duergar fighter/thief, wearing both a *ring of blinking* and his *cloak of displacement*, will use his innate ability to turn invisible, climb quickly down a rope ladder from the ledge to the cavern floor, and begin moving along the cavern's walls to get into position to backstab one of the PCs.

In the second round, the fighter/priest will hurl his *hammer +3, dwarven thrower* with all his might at a specific spot in the ceiling, trying to cause a small cave-in. If he succeeds, all the characters in the chamber must make a saving throw versus petrification to dodge the falling pieces of rock. Anyone who fails their saving throw will take 4d8 damage from falling debris.

By the third round, as the dust clears from the cave-in (if it occurred), the invisible duergar fighter/thief will be behind a chosen character, probably a spell-caster, and will attempt to



Drow Magic-User and Dracolich

backstab his victim with his *short sword of quickness* +2 (first attack in any melee round, quadruple damage from behind). At that time, the duergar fighter/priest will command the duergars' two steeders, who have been perched on the wall above the tunnel opening, to jump down from their perch, land on one of the stunned characters, and attack.

During the fourth round, the duergar fighter/priest will turn invisible, climb down from the ledge, and begin sneaking near the party. Meanwhile, the duergar fighter/thief, after backstabbing his target, will activate his *ring of blinking*. The "blinking" fighter/thief will then attack characters randomly with his magic weapon. (While he is doing this, since he is using a *short sword of quickness*, he can strike first and possibly disappear before his victim has a chance to react, though this may not occur. The DM is advised to pay strict attention to how this ring works; it does not make this duergar as invulnerable as might first be suspected.) The duergar fighter/thief will attack in this manner for six rounds—at which point the ring will stop working—or until someone figures out a way to stop him.

The steeders will continue their attacks until destroyed.

In the fifth round of combat, the duergar fighter/priest will be close enough to throw his *Rope of Entanglement* at a spellcaster.

From this point, the duergar will begin to use their innate enlarge/shrink and invisibility abilities to win the battle. The fighter/priest will attempt to shrink himself so small that the nearby PCs will not be able to sense him (the size of most bugs). He will then attempt to position himself near a party member and begin to enlarge (add 1 to his initiative roll as he is growing or shrinking). As he is growing back to his full height, he will throw his *dwarven thrower* up at the character. The fighter/thief will also use his enlarge/shrink ability, his power to turn invisible, *short sword of quickness*, and his *cloak of displacement* to make sneak attacks and then attempt to retreat before anybody can hit him. (While this may seem like a good ploy, the duergar stand a 15% chance of getting stepped on (an automatic hit) during any melee round that they are this small, taking an inordinate amount of damage (3d8 points) in the process. The DM should also bear in mind that being this small makes it hard to determine just where one is; it also takes a lot longer to move from place to place. These thoughts will help the DM deal with the tiny duergar and their effect on the combat more equitably.)

Eventually, the fighter/priest will try to get back on the ledge again. Once there, he will shout a warning to the drow wizard in the next section of the caves, just in case Dusk hasn't heard the battle's clamor before now. The duergar fighter/priest will then stay at the ledge and throw his *dwarven thrower* at the characters or cast spells.

The battle will continue until the PCs are victorious or are routed, defeated and captured, or killed. The duergar will fight fiercely and to the death. Many years ago, Dusk spared the lives of these two duergar when they were captured by a drow patrol. Since then, they have served Dusk as his personal body guards, staying with the drow when he left the drow underworld and joined up with the Dragon Cult. Dusk has always been fair to them, and he has rewarded them well for their loyalty. They will not betray him and will fight to the death to protect him.

Of course, Dusk doesn't really care about the two duergar, and he will gladly sacrifice them so that he has enough time to prepare an ambush and/or escape of his own. Unknown to the duergar, and the party, Dusk's imp has been invisibly observing the duergar most of the time. The Imp will leave the battle and go warn his master as soon as it looks like the duergar will lose the battle. The duergar carry their meager treasure on their persons.

Duergar Fighter/Priest 9th/9th level: S 15, I 12, W 16, D12, C 18, Ch 10; AC 0; MV 6; HD 9; hp 90; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d4+1;

THACO 12; SA spells; SD: only surprised on a 1 on 1d10, +4 on saving throws versus magical attacks, immune to paralysis and illusion/phantasm spells, immune to poison, enlargement, invisibility; AL LE.

Spells: *protection from good*, *command* (x2), *cause fear*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *charm person or mammal*, *heat metal*, *hold person*, *wyvern watch*, *obscurement*, *silence 15'-radius*, *glyph of warding*, *snare*, *dispel magic*, *cloak of bravery* (reversed *cloak of fear*), *produce fire*, *flame strike*.

Magic Items: *plate mail* +3, *hammer* +3 (*dwarven thrower*), *rope of entanglement*.

Treasure: 8 g.p., 4 gems (worth a total of 500 g.p.)

Duergar Fighter/Thief 9th/11th level: S 12, I 14, W 13, D 18, C 14, CH 13; AC 1 (-3 with Dex bonus); MV 9; HD 9/11; hp 76; #AT 3/2; Dmg (1d6 +2); THACO 12; SA backstab for quadruple damage (x4); SD only surprised on a 1 on 1d10, +4 on saving throws versus magical attacks, immune to paralysis and illusion/phantasm spells, immune to poison, enlargement, invisibility, thieving abilities; AL LE.

Thieving Abilities: Pick Pockets 25%, Open Locks 40%, Find/Remove Traps 95%, Move Silently 95%, Hide in Shadows 95%, Detect Noise 70%, Climb Wall 70%, Read Languages 10%

Magic Items: *ring of blinking*, *cloak of displacement*, *short sword of quickness* +2, *leather armor* +5.

Treasure: 8 g.p., 4 gems (300 g.p. total)

Steeders (2): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THACO 17; SA cling to opponent with sticky secretion and bite automatically; SD climb walls, leap 240 feet in any direction; AL N.

Dusk Falls

After defeating the duergar in their cavern guard post, the party can then move through the opening on the ledge above the cave floor. The cave enters into a winding tunnel that is a hundred feet long and slopes gently upward. At the end of this tunnel is a small cave that has been used as living quarters and lab by the drow wizard, Dusk.

Dusk is accompanied by his evil familiar, an imp.

More than likely, Dusk will know that the players are heading his way, and he will be well prepared to receive them. As the players begin to move down the long tunnel that connects the duergars' guard post ledge with the drow's cave, Dusk will begin playing his *pipes of haunting*. Anyone hearing the pipes, and missing their saving throw versus spells, will be at a -1 penalty on their surprise rolls. Once the adventurers have had enough time to be affected by the magical instrument and have moved about twenty feet down the tunnel, Dusk will begin his attack.

Before beginning the attack, since he has been warned of the players' approach, he has cast a *protection from good* and *mirror image* on himself. He and his images will step into the mouth of the tunnel (roll for surprise), and he will cast a *fireball* spell down the tunnel. He may also will cast his *cone of cold* and *lightning bolt* spells down the tunnel too, but only if the party has been surprised and hurt by the previous spell.

Having initiated his attack, Dusk will jump back away from the tunnel mouth and cast *darkness* and *Evard's Black Tentacles* about 10' inside the tunnel's mouth at his end. He will then cast a *web* spell on the tunnel mouth itself, so that anyone evading the magical tentacles and darkness will run right into the webs. He will also cast a *minor globe of invulnerability* on himself, for protection. If possible, he will cast *feeblemind* on any spell-casters caught in the web and *magic missile* at anyone else caught in the web. If anyone is able to get past all the obstacles at the mouth of the tunnel, he will not hesitate to cast any damage-causing spells he has left. When he is out of attack spells, he will cast his *chaos* and *charm person* spells.

Drow Magic-User and Dracolich

During the battle, the imp will not actively enter combat. It will just sit on the large stone in the center of the room and watch things, giggling madly when any of the characters is hurt. If anyone is foolish enough to actually attack the imp personally, the creature will retaliate viciously until killed or the offender is dead.

If the imp is killed, or if the battle begins to go badly for Dusk, the weakened drow will *immediately* retreat into a crack in the wall of the rear of the cave. The DM should allow a free rear attack against Dusk by the PCs if they are within striking range. The large crack actually opens into a narrow shaft leading upwards (called a *chimney* by spelunkers). The chimney is only 2' wide and goes up for about two hundred feet, opening at the floor of the dracolich's lair. Dusk will use his levitation spell to move up the chimney so that he can warn the dracolich, Twilight, of the party's approach. (If Dusk's imp has not been killed, he will quickly scamper over to Dusk and sit on his shoulder when the drow levitates up the shaft.)

After Dusk has been defeated, or after he has fled up the shaft, the characters will have a chance to better explore his cave. It is a 20' square cave in the center of which is a large, flat-topped stone, two feet in height and ten feet wide. The stone has a number of small portable alchemical devices laying on it. Some devices have been wrapped in thick cloth and put in a large backpack; Dusk was apparently preparing to leave. In one corner of the room are three sleeping rolls, two of which are made for a small humanoid. Near the bedrolls is the crack in the wall through which Dusk escaped. Only one person at a time can slip through this rough crack. (A description of this chimney and how to climb it are given in the next section.)

In another corner of the room is a wooden chest with a shorter-than-average ape-like creature casually lounging on it. It has observed the fight between Dusk, imp and characters without interfering. However, if any character attempts to approach the chest to open it, the lesser guardian daemon will attack without mercy. If the PCs desist in their attempts to approach the chest, the daemon will cease his attacks. His only chore, it seems, is to protect the chest until Dusk tells him otherwise.

Note: if Dusk is killed in the conflict with the PCs, the guardian daemon will immediately attack the dead drow's body, ripping it gruesomely to shreds (PCs must all make a successful Constitution check or lapse into vomiting for one round at the sight). The daemon will then disappear, returning to the plane of existence from which he was summoned.

The chest the guardian daemon is protecting belongs to Dusk and contains his books and certain magic items the drow prefers to keep in the chest. The chest is locked with a very complex lock (-15% on chance to pick open), and the lock itself has been enchanted with a *firetrap* spell cast on it (1d4+11 explosive damage). The chest contains the following items: *carpet of flying*, *potion of evil dragon control*, *potion of invulnerability*, *scroll of protection from undead*, *crystal ball*, two of *Boccob's Blessed Spellbooks*, 5 pieces of jewelry (13,000 g.p. total) and 3 gems (5,000 g.p. total).

The *Boccob's Blessed Spellbooks* contain all of Dusk's spells plus the spell that creates darkenbeasts. A separate small journal, written in the tongue of the drow elves, describes how to turn a dragon into a dracolich.

Dusk, Male Drow 10th (11th)* level Wizard: S 12, I 18, W15, D 18, C 12, Ch 15; AC 2 (-2); MV 12; HD 10 (11)*; hp 35 (40)*; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type/spell; THAC0 11 (10)*; SA spells; SD infravision, intuitive underground senses like a dwarf, only surprised on a 1 in a 1d10, able to cast *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *levitate*, *know alignment*, and *detect magic* once per day, +2 on saving throws versus magic attacks; MR 70% (72%)*; AL LE.

Magic Items: *ring of fire resistance*, *amulet of life protection*, *boots and cloak of elvenkind* (Drow type, see Drow entry in *Monstrous Compendium*), *bracers of defense* (AC 2), *pipes of haunting*, *dagger of venom*.

Treasure: Necklace (12,000 g.p.), 20 g.p., 10 s.p.

Spells: *charm person* (x2), *protection from good*, *magic missile*, *improved phantasmal force*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *web*, *hold person*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, (*vampiric touch*)*, *Evard's Black Tentacles*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, (*polymorph other*)*, *chaos*, *cone of cold*, (*feeblemind*)*.

Imp: AC 2; MV 6, FL 18 (A); HD 2+2; hp 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4+poison; THAC0:19; SA suggestion once per day; SD polymorph into giant rat, large spider, raven or goat, detect good and magic, become invisible at will, immune to cold, fire and electricity, resist spells as a 7HD monster, only hit by magical or silver weapons, regenerate 1 hp per round; MR 25%; AL LE).

Treasure: 10 c.p., 10 s.p.

While the Imp is within one mile of Dusk, he will provide Dusk with the following special abilities:

Telepathic Link with the Imp; Regenerate 1 hp per round; a magic resistance of 97%.

*Dusk, while in contact with his imp, acts as if he is one experience level higher than he actually is (this is indicated by the number or spell in parentheses in Dusk's listed statistics above).

If the Imp is killed, Dusk's experience level will drop by *four levels* (down to 6th level).

Lesser Guardian Daemon: AC 1; MV 9; HD 8; hp 60; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-12/1-12; THAC0 12; SA breathe fire 3 times per day doing 5d6 damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage); SD immune to charm, sleep, hold, polymorph and fear spells, immune to non-magical weapons and magical weapons of only +1, invulnerable to swords and fire-based attacks; AL NE

The Chimney Shaft

The narrow shaft climbs upward to the cavern that the dracolich currently uses as his lair. If the players have had an easy time of it so far, the referee can add one, or both, of the following monster encounters.

A meazel has constructed a number of small tunnels throughout the cave systems that exist in Hooknose Crag. Using this secret system, the meazel has preyed on numerous victims over the years. A number of years ago, the meazel made a deal with the black dragon, Twilight. The meazel agreed to the deal and thereafter was allowed to prey on anyone moving through the rear entrance shaft that led to Twilight's lair. In return, Twilight doesn't spit acid down the shaft on the meazel.

The meazel uses a secret door that opens into the chimney shaft, about twenty-five feet from the bottom.

While the members of the Dragon Cult were working on Twilight, the meazel was ordered to stay away. That time has finally passed and the meazel has decided to check his secret entrance into the shaft—just as the PCs begin to move up the shaft.

If the climbing character is surprised, the meazel will pop out and wrap a cord around the PCs neck, pull the victim into the narrow crawl space behind the door, and try to strangle the character to death (death will result in 2 rounds). If the meazel is surprised, he will pop out and come face-to-face with the character. The character will then have one free round to act before the meazel pops back into his hole. If neither are surprised, the meazel will open the secret door when the character is several feet below it. The meazel will then quickly pop back in and close the door behind him. The secret door cannot be opened from the shaft side. The meazel owns no treasure, and his narrow crawl spaces will really not lead to anywhere interesting.

Another nasty little creature that has recently taken up residence in the chimney shaft is a memory web. Unfortunately,

Drow Magic-User and Dracolich

the drow levitated so quickly up the shaft that the memory web didn't have time to attack him. Of course, when it leaps on someone and starts constricting, the climber will start falling. Everybody underneath the character must make a Strength check, to avoid being hit and falling down too. A character may also attempt a Strength check at a -2 penalty and try to catch the falling player character.

If the memory web is killed, everyone in the party must make an Intelligence check to be able to withstand the telepathic shockwave. Any climber who fails the check will lose his grip and start falling (1d6 damage per 10' fallen).

If the referee decides not to use the two optional encounters above, the characters shouldn't have too many problems climbing the chimney shaft. The referee should consult the rules on climbing in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pp. 14-16 (the shaft is considered to be "rough with ledges" according to the climbing classifications listed).

If Dusk was able to escape and levitate up the shaft, the dragon will be warned of the party's presence and will not be happy. The drow and the dracolich will then combine their efforts to dispose of the PCs while they are in the shaft.

Twilight will wait until most of the party is climbing and spew acid down the shaft. Anyone failing their save versus breath weapon will take full damage from the acid shower as well as lose their grip and start falling (unless the characters are roped together as per the climbing rules in the *DSG*). After the dracolich's attack, Dusk will harass the characters with his *improved phantasmal force*, creating an illusion of the dracolich spitting acid down the chimney again in hopes that someone will lose their grip and fall.

If Dusk was stopped from reaching the shaft and warning Twilight, the characters will be able to climb up the chimney and into the dracolich's lair with relative stealth. Of course, a lot of loud noises while engaging one or both of the optional encounters in the chimney might alert the dracolich to the party's approach.

Meazel (1): AC 8; MV 12; HD 4; hp 30; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; THAC0 1; SA strangle a victim dead in two rounds if they are surprised; SD thieving abilities; AL CE.

Thieving Abilities: Pick Pockets 45%, Open Locks 37%, Find/Remove Traps 35%, Move Silently 33%, Hide in Shadows 25%, Hear Noise 15%, Climb Walls 88%, Read Languages 20%

Memory Web (1): AC 2; MV 3, 18 leap; HD 6; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD leap attack, damage is automatic after first hit, takes half damage from non-magical weapons and fire, if killed it emits a telepathic shockwave with a range of 200' (the shockwave consists of the memories of those it has killed and drained); AL N.

Lair of the Dracolich

Twilight is very strange, even for a dracolich who was formerly a black dragon. Born in the Vast Swamp, Twilight made it his home for many years. But, as he grew older he realized that he hated mud, water and slime. One day he noticed a very clean and dry cave on the southern face of Hooknose Crag, overlooking the Vast Swamp. He decided to move out of his dismal lair and move into the dry cave. He has been living in the cave ever since.

His lair is a huge circular cave with a 500 foot diameter. The huge exit from the cave leads onto a wide ledge that rests on a sheer cliff face on the southern side of Hooknose Crag. Twilight's treasure is spread out in the middle of the cave, where he usually rests or sleeps.

Several possibilities now exist as the PCs reach the dracolich's lair:

- If Dusk was able to levitate up the shaft and warn the dracolich, or if the players ran into any difficulty in the shaft, the party will have a rough fight ahead of them. The chimney shaft comes up into the very rear of the dracolich's huge cave, where

Mindflayers (2)

Terrain:	Surface caves
Total Party Levels:	40 (Average 6th)
Total Magic X.P.:	None
Total g.p. X.P.:	1500 per character

Set-up

- The Badger-friends are a clan of gnomes who dwell under the woods just two days' travel to the south, leading into the foothills of a large mountain range. Besides selling the tin they mine themselves, the gnomes act as middlemen in transactions between the surface and the deep cavern homes of the pech.

The pech, mysterious humanoids who may or may not be native to the Prime Material Plane, live in solitude in the middle levels of the Underdark. They possess the power of *stone shape* and *stone tell*, four times each per day. Four of them working in concert can cast a *wall of stone* and eight can cast *stone to flesh* or its reverse, once per group per day. The surface world can offer them rare stones and minerals, such as black marble, while the pech send the humans and elves the ornamental gemstones they find in their excavations. The gnomes, standing between the two worlds, coordinate the transactions.

Janner is a female gnome illusionist, employed for the last thirty years as the Badger-friends' representative to the surface world.

Janner approaches the player characters with a business proposition. She says that a recent gnome diplomatic expedition into the pech caves has not returned. She is not sure why: perhaps they are simply lost, or perhaps they were waylaid by monsters on the way there. Or perhaps the pech, with a long history of isolation from the surface, have finally become offended by the gnomes and have sent them away, captured them, or killed them.

Janner says she will hire the party at 1500 gold pieces apiece to discover what has happened to the gnome party and report back. If the entourage is captured somewhere, there's a bonus for rescue. She is insistent that the PCs begin their search at once.

The gnome expedition was five heads strong, led by Falcanar, a legendary gnome commander from the wars a hundred years ago.

Janner, Gnome Illusionist: AC 7, MV 6, HD 8d4, hp 25; S 9, D 18, C 15, I 17, W 15, Ch 14; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; AL LN.

Spells: *change self*, *phantasmal force*, *shocking grasp* (x2), *spook*, *ESP*, *fool's gold*, *invisibility* x2, *monster summoning I*, *phantom steed*, *spectral force*, *wraithform*, *emotion* (x2), *shadow monsters*.

Janner is a middle-aged gnome who wears nothing but greens and blues. She arms herself with two daggers, but considers her spells and her wits to be much more effective weapons. In long-term negotiations, she can usually guess her opponent's true motivations and position and, so, is very good at getting the best deal for her clients. The single magic item she possesses, a *ring of detect charm* (which functions precisely as the priest spell), has proven invaluable in some negotiations.

- Gnomes are particularly proud of their ancestry, and a PC gnome could easily be associated with the Badger-friends. If so, one of the vanished party could be his "cousin;" he or she has a personal stake in the investigation of the disappearance of a recent gnome expedition to negotiate with the mysterious pech.

- A local gem-cutter complains that the supply of gemstones, usually supplied by the gnomes from some strange underground race ("Peaches, or something like that. Sound like dwarves to me.") has suddenly dried up. He'd like to hire the PCs at 1500 apiece to find out why the supply of gems has stopped coming. The party is also authorized to purchase 5 ornamental gems between the prices of 25gp and 75gp, for a piece of jewelry that's due to be completed within a week.



The Lair

The First Attacks

When the party arrives at the Badger-friends' lair, they find the place quiet, with pleasant music floating on the breeze, but no gnomes are visible. There are no amusing tricks played on the party; the gnomes must be in mourning. Nothnage, one of the gnome elders, meets the party (and Janner, if they accompany her into the woods) upon their arrival. He has a glorious white beard, and is accompanied by a giant badger. He introduces himself, thanks the PCs for coming, and asks them to wait on the surface for a bit. He promises to have food brought out, but he explains that there are private matters to be seen to in the burrow, and that the PCs would probably feel uncomfortable and "in the way." Nothnage promises that the wait will not be long. The giant badger, Buster, keeps the PCs company, playing with them but not letting them into the lair.

After two hours, the party is called into the lair and made welcome. The tunnels that are in the lair are designed for gnomes, and are only five foot high. Humans and elves may find that they have to stoop to get around.

The architecture is novel: many corridors are painted or lit in such a way that they appear to curve or stretch on for a greater length than is actually the case. Eventually, the party comes to a meeting room. By sitting cross-legged on the floor, the party can get themselves some headroom. This amuses the gnomes to no end. Even in such dire circumstances, the gnomes can appreciate the humor of absurdity. With the party are Nothnage, Janner, and two other gnomes whom the party has not met.

Nothnage explains that the gnome burrow is indeed in mourning. He apologizes for making the party wait, but the gnomes were simply not prepared to receive guests immediately. He indicates that the burrow's security is at stake and the gnomes need the party's help.

On that very morning, six pech, armed heavily with mining tools, had broken into the gnome temple and attacked and killed the priests, all the while swearing vengeance against the gnomes.

Throughout this preliminary explanation, Janner is visibly upset, hanging her head, sighing, and suddenly leaving. Nothnage explains that the gnomes recently lost another group from their

Mindflayers (2)

burrow to the pech, a group led by the gnome-hero and legendary trickster, Falcanar. Falcanar also happens to be Janner's husband.

The rest of the meeting is taken up with a strategic briefing. The gnomes are capable in battle against kobolds, hobgoblins, and other enemies, but the pech are different, special. The pech are capable of making the very stones to do their bidding. As such, the pech can breach a wall, attack, and escape through sealing the same hole again. They seem to be on a first-name basis with the rocks, finding out from them just how many people are on the other side of a wall just by asking it.

The pech live only a three-hour journey away, but that journey is through catacombs that would spell doom for the gnomes if the pech are, indeed, now hostile. But gnomes live with too many illusions to accept the conflict on face value, particularly since the gnomes can perceive no motive on the part of the pech. Nothnage would like the PCs to find out what the situation really is and put a stop to the pech attacks if possible.

Janner is familiar with the pech and with the route to their lair. She is willing to guide the PCs there the next morning, but she would like the night to mourn for her allegedly deceased husband.

Fearful Discoveries

The morning comes and the party starts down through a cave into an underground system. The caves are wide and comfortable, and by the time the party gets to a sloping passage that has stepping platforms and guide-rails, it becomes obvious that these passages were crafted, even molded, out of the stone for the benefit of efficient, speedy travel, presumably by the pech. During the trip, Janner tries to vent some of her grief by telling the party of her lost husband, Falcanar. If the PCs question her, they will learn that he was a gnomish warrior of grace, style, endearing charm (for a gnome), and endless good humor; a perfect gnome trickster.

After two hours, Janner calls the party to a halt. Just ahead, a decorative set of panels can be seen hanging on the tunnel walls. According to Janner, the panels weren't there last month.

Janner has no clue as to the meaning of the carvings on the panels and is confused by their appearance here. The pech themselves rarely use these tunnels; since the subterranean creatures hate sunlight, they have no use for a passage to the surface. What is the meaning of the decoration?

Upon further examination, a PC bard has at least a 5% chance *per level* of recognizing them as "Martyrs' Stones," a pech monument to those who have died protecting a pech community (deep gnomes have a similar ceremony). The DM should allow any PC bard his or her normal chance to read the Martyrs' Stones (if that chance is higher than the one stipulated above). Also, a PC thief with the "Read Languages" skill will have a chance of discerning the meaning of the carved panels.

With this discovery, the party should suspect that a major and possibly violent misunderstanding has occurred that somehow affects the relationship between the gnomes and the pech (allow a successful Wisdom check if necessary to aid the PCs with this conclusion). The next step might well be to see the pech and find an explanation or return to the surface. While the party decides, they will be approached after three rounds of deliberation by the original gnome diplomatic mission—four gnomes, being led by the redoubtable, and supposedly dead, Falcanar.

Falcanar is an experienced battle-hero, and he radiates confidence. His *leather armor +1* is beautifully decorated with relief scenes of woodlands. At his side hangs Tallen, a *short sword +1, +3 backstabber*. But something is wrong. His style, his grace, his charm, are all gone, replaced by a murderous seething. Indeed, all the gnomes in the party appear to be angry, anxious to kill. Their hands twitch near the hilts of their weapons.

Falcanar glares malevolently at Janner and accuses her of "joining with—aliens" (a word he spits out with the utmost loathing and vehemence). He declares that she has betrayed her people and it is up to him and his men to "cut her and her stinking companions down as the traitors they are." So saying, he draws Tallen with a practiced flourish and advances upon her. The rest of the gnomes draw steel and attack the nearest party members.

The attack is completely unprovoked, quick, and may catch the party somewhat by surprise. Janner is completely surprised and must suffer the consequences. The DM should have each PC roll to be "caught off-guard" (roll for surprise, applying a -2 modifier to the PC's die roll). If the PC is caught off-guard, he cannot attack this round; otherwise, the PC can return combat. Whatever the case, the gnomes will have the initiative this round and attack as if berserk.

It should be noted that Janner's *ring of detect charm* is glowing brightly, indicating the gnomes have been powerfully *charm-ed*. This will certainly affect the female gnome's attacks against Falcanar and his companions. She will either fight to parry all attacks against or use only non-lethal combat, fighting to subdue her charmed compatriots. While the PCs are not obligated to do the same, the DM may consider awarding bonus experience points to any PCs who follow Janner's lead and successfully subdue one or more of the gnomes. There should be no experience point penalty if a PC fights to kill.

During this fight, unbeknownst to the PCs (who are busy with the battle) and by the hand of some unseen perpetrator, the pech "Martyrs' Stones" are dashed from the wall and broken.

After three rounds of combat, a group of six armed pech come running to see the fight. Just as they arrive, a stabbing, sibilant hiss resounds in the PCs' ears, briefly overshadowing the battle's clamor; it is a sound like bacon frying wrapped around frequent consonants. Apparently, the gnomes hear it too. Surviving or non-subdued gnomes will pause, break off their attack, and flee (allow the PCs one free attack at the fleeing gnomes' backs).

Before the party can pursue, the newly arrived pech, with drawn weapons, will intervene and call for the party to halt. There are six of them and they are in no mood to allow the PCs to escape. They are more likely to call for reinforcements (which will arrive in 2 rounds) and enter into lethal combat. Their Martyrs' Stones have been broken, desecrated, and the pech hold the gnomes (and, by association, the PCs) responsible.

Falcanar, Gnome Fighter/Thief: AC 3; MV 6; HD 6, hp 45; S 14, D 18, C 17, I 10, W 15, Ch 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6+1; AL N; THAC0 15.

Thieving skills: PP 45, OL 77, F/RT 73, MS 60, HS 51, DN 30, CW 57, RL 50.

Gnome fighters (4): AC 3; MV 6; HD 3+3, hp 18 apiece; #AT 1, Dmg 1-6 (short sword); AL N; THAC0 17.

Pech: AC 3; MV 9; HD 4, hp 15 apiece; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+3; SA: stone magic; SD 25% magic resistance; AL N(G); THAC0 17.

Negotiations

Before another fight can begin, a large party of pech, accompanied by several elder and one noble pech, arrive on the scene, appearing from numerous side tunnels. The party is clearly outnumbered and Janner, stunned though she is by the appearance of Falcanar, cautions the PCs not to fight. This may be the ideal moment, she says, to resolve the misunderstanding.

The pech noble and his elder council begin something of a tribunal, demanding that the Badger-friends' representative offer an explanation of her tribe's actions against the pech.

Janner will try to defend her tribe by explaining that Falcanar and his gnomes are charmed by a creature who is enemy to all thinking creatures. She declares that the strange, sibilant hiss

Mindflayers (2)

heard during the battle was uttered by the mind of a mindflayer; indeed, mindflayers are the real enemy in this situation. She will then lapse into silence, stunned by the implications of the situation and the obvious danger to her beloved husband.

Janner's testimony to the pech is considered suspect; she is not only one of the gnomes, but she is married to the leader of the gnome "assassins." And, while they have heard of mindflayers in the Underdark, they do not believe such creatures would ever come so close to the surface world.

For their part, the pech explain that a band of gnome brigands, led by their old acquaintance Falcanar, attacked and killed a pech cleric and his two acolytes, claiming the raid in the name of the Badger's-friends tribe. A retributive pech raid was carried out against the gnome temple. But now the gnomes have defaced the pechs' most sacred religious monument, the Martyrs' Stones.

The pech will then turn to the PCs and try to implicate them in the affair. The PCs must now try to offer some more objective testimony about what they have seen. In particular, they might cite that Janner's *ring of detect charm* was shining like a beacon during the fight with Falcanar.

Despite the party's testimony, some of the pech elders demand that something of value to the gnomes must be destroyed. There is some disagreement as to what this might be; the gnomes don't have any sacred monuments, venerate only their badgers, and pech do not make war on animals.

The PCs can role-play this situation further by attempting to convince the pech that retaliation against the gnomes is not a good course of action. (In the face of a such powerful creatures as the mindflayers, the pech and gnomes need to combine their forces.)

It is finally decided, by the noble pech, that charmed or not, Falcanar and his fellows acted on their own, and not in accord with the wishes of the Badger-friends tribes. As such, it is on Falcanar that the punishment must fall. And, in the spirit of the "eye-for-an-eye" mindset of the tribunal, Janner, Falcanar's wife, must be destroyed to make the gnome hero pay for his crimes against the pech.

The party may object to this judgement. Allow the PCs to continue their arguments with the pech. If the PCs decide to defend Janner against the pech, a sizeable and unbalanced fight could ensue. Or they may just leave Janner to her own devices. The DM should note the actions of the PCs (further argument, defense of Janner, or leaving her to the pech, etc.) for use in determining bonus experience point distribution in the future.

Whatever the PCs decide to do, before they can finish their arguments, start a fight, or leave altogether, a messenger comes into the hall with an urgent message for the pech leaders. After a whispered conference, the pech council looks back at the party and then at Janner. They declare that disturbing and gruesome new evidence has been found to corroborate Janner's theory. The gnome warriors who fought with Falcanar have been found.

All were dead, their brains removed.

The Last Stand?

Talking to the pech, Janner and the party can now definitely convince them that the gnome expedition was mind-controlled by the mindflayers, presumably to start a war with the pech. The pech will pledge to stop any retaliatory strikes and act only defensively. However, one of the antagonistic pech elders announces that he has already sent a six-pech war party to the Badger-friends meeting chambers, to kill the leaders of the tribe. Janner is horrified; six pech will have no trouble doing what they intend. The gnomes must be warned.

With the aid of a pech escort, who are using their powers to do nothing more than get to the gnome lair as quickly as possible, as well as their own talents, the party can, in fact, beat the pech warriors back to the gnome lair. But after the suitable war-

nings and preparations have been made, the pech war party does not appear. Indeed, two hours will pass and there will be no sign of the pech war party.

At this point, the PCs may deduce that the pech may also have become mindflayer victims. (If the party does not come to this conclusion, Janner will suggest it.) If the pech are truly new victims of the mindflayers must be destroyed, not only for the good of the gnomes and pech, but also for the sake of all the surface dwellers (human, demihuman, and humanoid alike) in the vicinity.

The player characters are now faced with a difficult choice. Will they join Janner as she tries to track down the mindflayers (a decidedly dangerous undertaking)? Or will they leave the gnomes and pech to deal with the threat on their own? The party should be allowed to make this choice without any pressure from the DM. The mindflayers are extremely deadly and should be terminated. But ignoring the mindflayer problem could (should) return to "bite the players in the behind" at some future date, under even more disadvantageous circumstances. (The PCs' decisions will tell the DM a lot about the players and their alignments.)

If the party decides to leave the pech and gnomes to their problem, the humanoids will let the PCs leave unmolested. This may be the last time the PCs see Janner alive. If the party decides to face the mindflayer threat, they will leave their pech escort with the gnome leaders and the Badger-friends tribe and plunge back into the tunnels with Janner immediately.

Consulting her ring to try to trace vestiges of *charm* energy, Janner will guide the party to a point halfway down the same pech-made tunnel as they travelled before. She will then take a sharp right into a minor passageway, cautiously leading the party to an unfinished room. This room contains a dark, startling secret.

Contained in this room is a large (5' diameter) ceramic bowl with ornate decorations, inside of which are a number of stringy yellow lumps of animal tissue strung together. This is the elder-brain of a small illithid community.

As the party enters the room, they are interrupted by the arrival of the pech war party, led by Falcanar. Uttering an anguished, insane shriek, Falcanar draws his weapon and attacks one of the player characters, while the pech concentrate their attacks on Janner. (Within a round, they will have transformed her into stone.)

The PCs will not be able to come to her aid. They are confronted by the *charm* ability of not one, but two mindflayers.

The mindflayers will attempt to *charm* members of the party to surrender. Should the PCs threaten the elder-brain, the illithids will immediately surrender, relinquish control of their current slaves, whatever it takes to ensure the safety of the elder-brain. If the PCs destroy the elder-brain (AC 8, 14 hp, automatically destroyed if subjected to any fire or electricity attack), the mindflayers will go berserk, attacking the party directly, first with mind blasts and then with their tentacles.

Assuming the PCs live through the battle, the *charmed* gnomes and pech recover, and Janner is restored to flesh-and-blood. The characters are treated well by both races, and long-term cooperation is pledged between the pech and the gnomes.

Mindflayers (2): AC 5; MV 12; HD 8+4, hp 50, 30; #AT 4; Dmg. special; SA: mind blast; SD: 90% magic resistance; AL LE; THAC0 11.

Goblins (110)

Terrain:	City
Total Party Levels:	20 (Average 3rd)
Total Magic X.P.:	2,200
Total g.p. X.P.:	3,000-5,000

Set Up

• The party of adventurers is resting in a moderately-sized town shortly after an expedition. With no warning at all, the town is shaken by a serious earthquake, lasting perhaps three minutes. Damage is not as severe as it might have been (no buildings have collapsed, for example, although some are weakened), and there are no casualties, but the local priests are surprised, particularly the druids, as the earthquake came without warning. A PC priest's temple has asked their deity for an explanation of the earthquake and an answer has actually been given.

Revelation received by the high priests indicates that the quake was no omen nor was it the Deity's will. But it has brought evil to the city. If the evil is not found and cast back to its dark home, the temple will be attacked in six days. Clearly, the temple priests are concerned, but there are hundreds of injured people in the city that must be attended to, and the priests cannot devote any time to resolving this celestial missive. The priests would be indebted to the PCs if they could investigate. They are willing to owe the party a favor, or reward them with a lump sum of 3,000 g.p. They may be willing to give (or sell, 300 g.p. apiece) two vials of *potions of healing* to the party to assist in the adventure.

• Scant hours after the earthquake, Tithon, a powerful mage living in the center of the city, sends out a public announcement. He is offering payment of 5,000 pieces of gold to anyone who can recapture and return certain items of his property that were stolen from his Tower of Enchantment during the tremors. These items are a small ebony chest with silver bands, and a brass wand that measures one foot in length.

If the PC's try, they can gain an audience with the mage after a day's wait. Tithon stands 6'3", is well-built, and handsome for his 50 years. He wears browns and reds, and bears a matching circlet, amulet, and ring of bronze and ruby. (Should the party have means to find out, the circlet and ring are simply well-fashioned ornaments, worth 200 and 340 g.p. respectively. The amulet offers *invulnerability* to non-magical weapons of all sorts.)

Tithon's manner is assertive but polite. He says that minutes after the earth quake, his sanctum was invaded by small humanoids. He doesn't recall ever seeing this race before. They were efficient and well-armed, and capable of ripping a gaping hole in the reinforced rock of his cellars. They came in two colors. Some of them were red as brick clay, others were the color of gold. But there were no other distinguishing features: they were all certainly of the same race. He managed to kill a small pack of the red ones, but not before they had breached some of his private defenses. While some of them set a small fire in his library, others stole some of his property, specifically two magical devices, which could be dangerous in the wrong hands. He will not offer further information as to the nature of the magic items.

The humanoids are available for inspection if the party thinks to ask. Tithon killed ten of them with a *shadow monster* of a giant beetle. They are common goblins, but the party has never heard of any golden-skinned ones. Rangers who have chosen goblins as their enemy, or other characters with some lore on the creatures, would know that it is rare for goblins of different coloration (and hence different tribes) to cooperate on a raid. And no goblins of any sort have been reported inside the city's walls.



• A day after the earthquake, the PC's hear rumors of shops that have been robbed and of citizens who were attacked, beaten or killed, and robbed of all valuables by red- or yellow-skinned creatures in the night. The local Thieves' Guild, if such exists, demands that everything be done to stop these non-sanctioned attacks. Any PC thief who may be a guild member will feel obligated to respond to the Guild's demand and will ask other party members to help.

The Lair

Oddly enough, this whole affair was precipitated several miles away from the city. A band of elves was exploring a cavern complex when they were attacked by resident goblins and bugbears. In desperation, the elven mage cast an extremely powerful *lightning bolt* spell. By a freak subterranean chain reaction, the spell caused the collapse of one part of the cave system, weakening the integrity of the entire complex and killing most of the inhabitants thereof. It was the settling and shifting of this extensive cavern complex that caused the earthquake in the nearby city.

The goblins residing in the caverns were guarding their territory so strenuously because they were hosting a delegation of the yellow-hided Neckbiter (or "Torgog" in Goblin) tribe for negotiations. The locals, the Marrowsuckers ("Lurock"), were proposing that the two tribes join together: Marrowsuckers would help the Neckbiters pay certain tributes to some gnolls and the Neckbiters would join on Marrowsucker raids into the near-by mountains.

Then, when the elves entered the caverns and battle was joined, the earth heaved, the caves collapsed, and the goblin chieftains (and some of their followers) found themselves cut off from the vast majority of the complex. The trapped goblin chieftains rounded up as many followers as they could muster and set out along a new tunnel that had opened up as a result of the collapse. Within a few minutes, they had broken through into the underground sewer catacombs of the PCs' city, next to a newly formed breach (the earthquake handiwork) in the cellars of Tithon's Tower of Enchantment. The goblins sent a band into the tower, some of whom escaped with their fortune, while others were killed by Tithon's *shadow monster*.

The goblins are now temporarily laired in the eastern section of the sewer system, that area closest to their original caves. They have decided to dig tunnels back to their home.

Goblins (110)

Hsool, the Marrowsucker's Chief: AC 4; MV 6; HD 2; hp 14, #AT 2, Dmg 1d6/1d 4+2; AL LE; THAC0 19.

Hsool is a proud goblin, charismatic and wise, as his race goes. It was Hsool who persuaded the Neckbiters to gather for a conference. He has decorated his armor with goblin sigils formed in copper, his totem metal. He wields two weapons in battle: a hand-axe and a silver *warhammer +1*, both retrieved off the bodies of fallen foes. The hammer gives its owner the saving throw bonus against poison (but not against magic) and detection capabilities enjoyed by dwarves. (See *PH*, page 20). For purposes of the bonus, Hsool is considered to have a 12 Constitution.

Marrowsucker Guards (5): AC 4; MV 6; HD 2, hp 10 each; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; AL LE; THAC0 19.

These are Hsool's personal guard. They rarely speak to each other, never to other Marrowsuckers, and certainly not to anyone else. They walk into battle with two clubs apiece.

Trahal, Marrowsucker shaman (5th level): AC 6; MV 6, HD 1+4; hp 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL LE; THAC0 19.

Spells: *detect magic*, *darkness*, *protection from good*, *augury*, *know alignment*, *barkskin*, *dispel magic*. Trahal endures a 15% chance of spell failure due to her Wisdom score of 10.

Trahal is the religious leader of the Marrowsuckers. She reminds the tribe of their alignment protocol, and she recites tales of the tribe's most vicious heroes. She has seen thirty years, making her very old and wise as goblins go. She fights with her axe.

Trahal is very concerned about this entire affair. She saw the human whose cellars the goblins pilfered conjure up a giant beetle and recognized it as magic well beyond anything she had seen. It is at her insistence that the goblins have decided to dig their way home, as opposed to plundering the hated humans above. But it's only a matter of time before battle is joined, so she made sure that the goblins set traps and alarms in the sewers leading to their temporary quarters.

Marrowsucker Goblins (53): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1, hp 4 apiece; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL LE; THAC0 20. The Marrowsuckers traditionally attack with axes.

Rhogo, the Neckbiter's Chief: AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+2, hp 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8 +6/ 1-6; AL LE; THAC0 19.

Rhogo is a fearsome goblin, who earned his place among the warlike Neckbiters by his brutality rather than by guile. He sees the current misadventure as Hsool's responsibility and intends to see how well the Marrowsuckers function as a tribe before agreeing to support them with troops. If things go poorly, he will order his goblins to fall on their red-skinned fellows, kill them for their treasure, then loot the city. He wears a *ring of shocking grasp* on his right hand, the talisman of his authority over the Neckbiters. He wields the traditional weapon of his people, a wooden club studded with granite spikes.

Neckbiter Guards (7): AC 4; MV 6; HD 2, hp 9 each; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; AL LE; THAC0 19.

Like the Marrowsucker guards, these are the fiercest and most powerful of their tribe. These guards are never out of sight of their chief and will immediately attack anyone who might threaten him.

Lopo, a Neckbiter sub-chief: AC 5; MV 6; HD 1+1, hp 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL LE; THAC0 19.

As goblins go, Lopo is very sly and cunning. He was brought along as the best the Neckbiters could find as a negotiator. His idea of discussion is demands; his version of compromise is a pact where both sides walk away alive. Lopo is petulant and self-serving. It is he who guards the treasure the goblins stole from Tithon: two silver tankards worth 4 g.p. apiece, a *wand of enemy detection*, and a chest containing three perfect pink sapphires (worth 1,100 g.p. each) and a pink silk packet of metallic powder. When the powder is mixed in white wine, it forms a *potion of treasure finding* (none of the goblins even begin to suspect this).

Neckbiter Goblins (41): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1, hp 3 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; AL LE; THAC0 20.

As a matter of pride, all neck-biters wield studded clubs in battle.

The Goblins' Agenda

The first day and evening after the earthquake, both tribes of goblins rob and pillage the city, killing fifteen citizens and coming away with 30 g.p., 185 s.p., 400 c.p., and several pieces of ornamental jewelry worth 30 g.p. total. Appalled by the chaos, and fearful of the humans' retaliation, Hsool and Rhogo rein in their subjects and flee into the sewer system. It is there that Trahal urges the goblins to work together to return to their native lair. Hsool agrees that return is the best course of action, and Rhogo goes along, even though he is occasionally confused by the Marrowsuckers' arguments.

The following timetable outlines the goblins' plans and activities during the next week, provided the Player Characters do not interfere. Should the party take action against the goblin threat, the DM may need to adjust the timetable appropriately.

The Second Day: An enclave of associated wizards, perhaps a Wizards' Guild, closes its doors and refuses all visitors; they are concerned that the attack on the Tower of Enchantment was the first offensive of an attack on all mages. In the late afternoon, the goblins find a patrol of thieves from the Thieves' Guild patrolling the sewers. The goblins kill the thieves without casualty. This victory encourages the goblins to assault the city above. Hsool feels the pressure for an assault, but manages to calm both his tribe and the Neckbiters. By midnight, the Thieves' Guild is looking for adventurers to examine the sewers, offering 50 g.p. apiece.

The Third Day: The goblins set up six ambushes and traps in their section of the sewers (see the "Goblin Foibles and Defenses" section below), and begin their return tunnel excavation. They begin a tunnel 10' wide and 5' high and can clear 30' a day, working around the clock. The dirt and rock tailing is deposited into a nearby sewer drain and from there carried into the river.

Shortly before nightfall, Trahal details a competition between the two tribes that would release the goblins' pent-up raiding urges. The contest will take place only among those goblins who would not be mining. Neither Hsool, nor his guard, nor Trahal will participate, leaving the teams roughly equal in number.

The entire city above is open to the teams, but only one type of treasure will be the prize: copper, Chief Hsool's totem metal. Any team which steals any other item will lose the contest and will accept slavery in the other tribe. Trahal knows how little humans value copper and so hopes to minimize the city's retaliation.

As might be expected, Lopo of the Neckbiters, objects. Torgog are warriors, he claims, and have little taste for thieving. He wants the contest to be won by the tribe that kills the most humans!

The memory of the giant beetle is still fresh in Trahal's mind. But, knowing she has to address his objection, she agrees to two contests: one, the theft of copper, and the other, assault on humans. But, since it takes no great skill to ambush pathetic humans, the goblins agree to compete by trapping the humans on their own ground, snaring them in nets, tying them up, hanging them from the ceilings of their own homes, and generally humiliating them. She challenges the Neckbiters to match the Marrowsuckers, her tribe, in this contest of skill. She indicates that perhaps the Neckbiters are, after all, good for nothing but crude killing.

Now, neither the Marrowsuckers nor the Neckbiters see much wrong with good old "crude killing," but both tribes agree to the contests: stealing copper pieces and attacking townspeople to taunt and humiliate them rather than kill them. That night,

Goblins (110)

goblins are seen around town, but they do little more than frighten passers-by; they are working out plans and scouting territory.

The Fourth Day: In the hours shortly after dusk, dozens of shopkeepers in the eastern section of the shopping bazaar are assaulted by yellow-skinned goblins, bound up, and robbed of their copper pieces. Ten of the Neckbiter goblins are killed in the crime spree.

The red-skinned goblins, however, send thirty of their number into the temple of a Power worshipped by the poor and sack the place. They lose 15 of their number, but they manage to seriously injure the chief priest and spirit away the tithed offerings, which are, by custom, entirely of copper.

The Fifth Day: The City Guard begins patrolling the sewer system, with little effect.

That night, two hours after sunset, four houses of the wealthiest citizens of the city are burglarized. A young woman of fifteen years is badly injured and requires priestly aid to keep her alive. Twenty other members of the city's High Society are attacked by goblins and bound in ropes soaked in the soiled waters of the sewer system. Although the four houses are ransacked, nothing seems to have been taken. Five more goblins are killed.

Trahal is now even more worried than she was when the goblins arrived in the city's sewers. The goblins have lost a third of their number over the past two days. Any more losses and the tunnel excavation would be compromised. But the contest has gotten out of hand. Neither Hsool nor Rhogo can command their tribes to halt the game now. And so Trahal turns her mind to methods of salvaging the excavation mission.

The Sixth Day: Though the goblins have broken a small hole through to one of their home tunnels, most have all but abandoned the tunneling in favor of the contest. In the late morning, a band of five Marrowsuckers ambush one of the City Guard sewer patrols, who are armed and expecting trouble. The goblins die.

This is really too much for Hsool; vengeance demands that the humans pay for these goblins' deaths. Regretfully, Trahal agrees, as does Rhogo. Two hours after midnight, the goblins surface in the temple of a deity worshipped by a PC priest and attack. The force consists of the two chiefs, their twelve guards, Lopo, Trahal, and 59 normal goblin warriors. They are enraged, vengeful, and enjoy a +3 to their morale. Unless the DM has specific information about the defenses of this temple or has reason to believe that the temple might be able to put up effective resistance to the attack (for example, if the PCs are present), it will take five turns for the temple to be desecrated; her priests, killed; and her treasures (bulky but worth 13,000 g.p.) looted. Twenty-five goblins, 18 of them Marrowsuckers, will die. These will include six of Rhogo's guard, all of Hsool's guard, and Lopo. The rest escape back to their hideout in the sewers.

The Seventh Day: The remaining fifty goblins dig their way into their old complex with several thousand gold pieces of treasure. There they reunite with several hundred Marrowsuckers. The adventure is effectively over.

Preventive Measures

There are several opportunities for the PC's to affect this chain of events. They may, for example, attempt to prevent the goblin attacks in town. Certainly, powerful magical divinations could tell the party where to expect the goblins; otherwise, the PC's require a healthy dose of luck to anticipate the goblins' attacks until the Sixth Day. Since the party may have received the divine warning about the attack on the temple (see "Set Up"), they may well be waiting there. If so, the DM should sketch out the temple's lowest level (the ground floor unless it has a cellar) and run the goblins' berserk attack. The temple defenses will consist of five 1st-level and one 2nd-level warriors (AC 6, attacking with

long swords). There will also be a half-dozen or so 2nd-level priests (of Wisdom 14) able to offer healing and other support services, who will also take up arms (AC 9, using maces) when their spells are exhausted.

The party may try to set a trap for the goblins, perhaps disguising themselves as helpless victims for a potential mugging, or leaving a large cache of copper pieces as bait for an ambush. This will probably not work, but if the goblins find out about it, Trahal may try to contact the PC's on the Fifth Day. If she is successful (the DM should bear in mind that Trahal is not omniscient; the PC's must provide some means for her to locate them) Trahal will explain the situation and ask the party for aid in the tunnelling. Her deal: if the party helps the goblins leave the sewer system peacefully, the goblins will never return.

If the party captures goblins earlier in the week, they may attempt to question the goblins. Such prisoners will be tight-lipped, and will only speak Goblin, but spells like *charm person* or *ESP*, or a PC that understands and/or speaks Goblin, can get around these difficulties. The prisoners would reveal their situation (trapped in the city and trying to tunnel free) and the specifics of the wager between the tribes. Yellow-skinned goblins can give vague indications of the location of the goblin lair, while red-skinned goblins can give accurate directions. No goblin will think to mention the traps leading to the lair.

The party may attempt to trail goblins back to the sewers. Hot pursuit or hot trailing (within sight) will probably not work, though PC rogues and rangers have a chance if they can succeed with three consecutive Move Silently rolls (for initial contact, trailing in the city, and trailing in the sewer system). A failed roll requires the PC to Hide in Shadows. Failing this second roll results in the goblin spotting the PC and attacking. Goblins failing Morale checks or affected by *fear* will flee into the sewers, but never to their lair.

A better tactic might be for the party to attempt to track the goblins from the scene of a crime. Tracking through the city streets is difficult due to the many crossing paths, but the sewers offer better chances. The sewers are shallow water (-10 to track) and they are considered to be indoors.

Failing that, the party could try to search the sewer catacombs for the goblins. This is difficult: the system is the size of a large city, and there are hundreds of possible hiding places. Giant rats and perhaps societies of other humanoids live in the sewers, and the Thieves' Guild may have dens in the catacombs. The party has a 1% chance of finding the goblins every 2500' examined (non-cumulative). Each 2500' investigation takes 3 turns at a dungeon Movement rate of 9.

Goblin Foibles and Defenses

The goblins have left a few clues to their location. The shops picked for attack are all on the eastern side of the city; a party taking this into account triples its chance to discover the goblins. The water in the eastern section of the sewers is much dirtier than elsewhere, as the goblins have been dumping their excavation tailings in the waters. A party following the dirty water to its source has ten times the chance to come across the goblins. After the City Guard dispatches the goblins' patrol on the sixth day, the Guard can explain to the party where to search, also providing the ten-fold multiplier to search chances, noncumulative.

Traps: A party approaching the goblin lair will come across 1d6 traps and alarms, each of which can be found by a rogue and easily disarmed (double normal chances).

For one of their traps, the goblins have weakened a 20' section of the sewer bottom; anyone putting more than 175 pounds of weight on the area will collapse the entire section and fall 10'. The pit will, of course, immediately fill with foul water. PCs setting off the trap (probably the first two characters in the party)

Goblins (110)

must make a Dexterity Check to avoid falling. Damage is standard falling damage—1d6 per every 10' fallen.

There is also a tripwire trap set just under the surface of the water at some point near the goblins' lair. When triggered, this trap releases 20 starving rats, which immediately attack the party unless driven off by fire.

Leading characters rounding a corner without searching for traps must succeed in a Dexterity check (at -2 to their die roll) or suffer 1d10 damage from a large, spiked plank of wood which swings down from the ceiling when yet another tripwire under the water's surface is broken.

Rats (20): AC 7; MV 15, HD 1/4, hp 1 apiece; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Disease; SD Nil; AL N; THAC0 20.

Final Confrontation and Conclusion

Once the party finds the goblins, the PCs can certainly attack the monsters. If the goblins were warned by the traps going off, by carried light sources, or by an unusually noisy party, they will be prepared for the visitors (roll for surprise chance against the PCs). Otherwise, the party will automatically surprise the goblins, who will require 3 rounds to drop their mining equipment and return any combat. For assistance in staging the battle, see the information on page 32 of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*.

After five rounds of combat, Trahal (if still alive) will attempt to parley with the party. Speaking in stilted Common, she will argue passionately that the goblins will most likely kill the PCs, while the party will inflict enough damage on the goblins to seriously cripple the excavation effort. And if the party does kill the goblins, including both chieftains, there will be repercussions. "You are not stupid," she reasons, "like the Kobolds who attack their enemies with blind hate. We wish only to leave your high city. If you kill us all, our people will descend upon yours in

vengeance, and the Torgog will come by the, uh, thousands, to war. Is this what you want?" Indeed, is this what the PCs want? Does the party believe that the goblins can muster "thousands" in a war of vengeance?

Trahal will propose that the party help with the excavation (perhaps a mage can *grease* or *reduce* a large stone to dislodge it, and a *knock* spell will save 3 hours' work; a successful Open Locks or Bend Bars roll will save 1 hour of excavation; and there's always manual labor). She will ask the PCs to pledge to allow the goblins to leave without harassment. In exchange, the goblins will leave the city and promise to never return.

The goblins will not permit the party to leave the area (say, to get more powerful NPCs to help) without leaving at least half the party members as hostages. Additionally, they will refuse to give up any of the treasure they have accumulated. Lopo in particular will not part with Tithon's box and wand unless threatened. (If the party is intent upon returning Tithon's magic items, this threat will be essential. However, Lopo will not be supported by his fellows, who just want to get home now, should he decide to fight the PCs for the items. He will quickly relinquish the items when faced with certain defeat).

For their part, the party might insist that the goblins immediately cease attacks on the city, or otherwise promise not to harm the PC's once the excavation is complete. A number of "deals," satisfactory or unsatisfactory, could be reached between the goblins and the player characters, all of which should see the goblins returning to their home caverns and never returning to harass the city. If no agreement is reached, the goblins, including Trahal, will turn on the party as a parting gesture, concentrating their attacks on any dwarves or gnomes in the party.



Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

Terrain:	Mountains, Subterranean
Total Party Levels:	48 (Average 8th)
Total Magic X.P.:	7,050
Total g.p. X.P.:	15,340 (rough stones not included)

Set Up

- The party, while on some other quest or mission in the campaign, get side-tracked by what seems to be a wild-goose chase (or better yet, a mad rush for gold) as they wander through a small, mountain mining town encountered during their adventure. They notice lots of mines about, but very few dwarves.

- The party has previously acquired a partially complete map to some legendary treasure horde of gems, which only leads them as far as a small frontier mining town. From here on, the characters have to do their own investigating. Naturally, this makes the party less likely to ignore the Mad Miner's tale, and more likely to believe everything he has to say, with near disastrous consequences no doubt.

- The royal surveyor's office might hire the party to secretly check on any and all local mining establishments in this area, to see that they are sending their fair share of license fees and taxes to his royal highness's exchequer. Naturally, the party has to worry about losing their job for not sticking to their assigned duties, but who knows? If they make a strike of their own, they might be in a position to give the king first crack at the abandoned mine and earn a hefty finder's fee (and possible knighthood!) in the process.

Background

The trek to this little burg has not been easy. The terrain, mountainsides and forested valleys with little or nothing in the way of roads or trails, has been grueling and the PCs are worn out. When the party reaches the town, they will doubtless look for an inn, tavern, or public house of some kind in which to refresh themselves. The tavern should definitely be a working man's retreat. The clientele are primarily miners who come in here after a hard week's work for some strong drinks and an honest game of poker. The lusty lasses waiting the tables seem to be very well-known by the miners and pass between the tables with amazing agility.

One group of poker players is taking great delight in making fun of a rather slovenly looking dwarf who is sitting alone at a table in the corner, mumbling to himself. He is arranging little piles of sand on the table before him into two separate mounds. Just as he finishes his task, one of the nearby men leans over, takes a deep breath, and blows the sand into the dwarf's face.

The dwarf, startled briefly by the man's action, mumbles something vindictive and stumbles out of the bar, rubbing his eyes and ignoring the cruel laughter behind him.

If any of the party members ask anyone in the bar, or in town generally, about the strange dwarf, they learn (for a couple of drinks, or some other minor remuneration, of course) the following information:

- The general consensus about town is that "the little bum is loopy." For that reason, he is called the "Mad Miner" by the locals.

- The Mad Miner tells stories about lost mines he's discovered; he lies incessantly about a dwarven gem mine lost in the mountains nearby.

- A well-known legend about town says a cursed mine was abandoned centuries ago by the dwarves, but everybody knows that the whole complex was destroyed in an explosion.



- The Mad Miner they feel, is using the legend to wheedle drinks out of unsuspecting adventurers and other gullible newcomers.

The party is free to follow up these leads, but if they do not, keep the Mad Miner wandering about town for a while. Maybe he introduces himself to someone in the party and starts following him around. The DM should try and make talking to the dwarf a good idea. However, if the players are genuinely not interested, for whatever reason, then send them off elsewhere for now. They can always come back another time.

The Mad Miner's Tale

Assuming a party member does decide to talk to the Mad Miner, he will eventually get around to telling his tale, after he has sufficiently "whetted his whistle" at the party's expense. *Role-play* this "interview" to the hilt. (The dwarf is a wizened little fellow with an unpleasant, yellow-toothed smile and a definite taste/tolerance for whiskey.) Make sure the PCs have to draw the necessary information out of the dwarf; don't give it to them! The DM should feel free to paraphrase or improvise along the way, but the following facts should be learned:

- The quest he is about to tell you of is extremely dangerous, so much so that even he, a once-mighty dwarven warrior, is afraid to undertake it.

- His people were great, natural miners, virtually smelling the minerals and gems in the ground in their quest for wealth. They found great cavernous halls of mineral abundance at the very bottom of the mines in the surrounding mountains. These halls were laced with veins of the richest silver while the surrounding walls were literally caked with rough stones worth an unbelievable fortune.

- An occasional blistering steam vent and a few million tons of magma were the only dangers in this great subterranean hall (minor problems to dwarves who had learned the ancient lessons of living within the Earth on her terms).

- Men and dwarves argued over ownership of the mines, but soon came to terms, mining the subterranean richness side-by-side. But, the men wanted more faster and opened a new mine without adequate preparation. Gas was released and the miners paid with their lives. The gas raced down the new tunnel, killing all there. Some of the dwarven miners, like Grungi, smelled the approaching gas before it was too late and made their escape.

Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

Others who stayed to gather one more gem or to grab their meager possessions, were not so lucky. When the gas struck the great heat in the magma-filled gem halls, where most of the dwarven and human miners were working, it exploded in a fiery blast, obliterating everyone in the hall. A column of fire forced its way high into the sky, and burned for a dozen days.

The party members must agree to take the Mad Miner with them if they decide they want to go find the mines. Otherwise, he will tell them no more of his sad tale. In fact, he will not tell them the general direction to and outer appearance of the mines until he is satisfied the characters are sincere about taking him. When that occurs, he will tell the PCs that the mine caverns are to the northwest and are called "The Dragon's Maw." They were so named because the mines are located between the two most prominent peaks of the Dragon's Horn Mountains.

The "Mad Miner's" real name is Grungi (pronounced GROON-GHEE, not 'grungy'). He was born a poor miner's son and built up his strength in the mines. Though he didn't excel in mining, he did turn out to be quite a good warrior and won more than his fair share of high festival challenges and contests. Soon he was hired as a dwarven guard; he was promoted to the human equivalent of captain before the disaster struck.

Grungi has always felt that he should have died with the others in the catastrophe and feels very guilty to have survived. This self-recrimination and the loss of so many of his friends have made him just a bit psychotic. He often hears the voices of his lost comrades calling him, and he has violent nightmares every night. If the party returns with Grungi to the Dragon's Maw mines, and he survives the ordeal, his troubles will be gone forever, his personal demons put to rest. If he dies in the attempt, at least his soul will be put to rest.

The DM is encouraged to role-play Grungi as slightly wacky, but harmless. He really is a fine warrior, is familiar with the mines (though he will have a little trouble finding his way through parts of the tunnels), and knows a lot about stone construction. These talents should help the party immensely during the adventure.

Grungi, the Mad Miner: male dwarf fighter, 6th-level; S 17, I 9, W 10, C 18, D 15, Ch 8; AC 0 (chain +1, shield +2, DX bonus); MV 12; HD 6; hp 80; #AT 3/2 (specialized); Dmg 1-8 +3 (axe +2, Strength bonus); SA none; SD innate dwarven abilities; AL LN; THAC0 11 (axe, ST bonus, specialization).

The Lair

Getting There

The trip to the Dragon's Maw should be rather short (no more than a day) but not entirely uneventful. The abandoned mines are just out of the way enough so that men rarely visit them, but not so far away as to become an epic quest across an unknown continent. The terrain will be more of the same traveled by the PCs when they reached the mining town in the first place. It is difficult and unforgiving, which is why no one bothers to make the trip any more. The party will again experience steep, rocky or forested mountainsides and valleys with few clear paths or trails to travel on.

Due to the length of the journey to the mine and the forbidding mountain terrain that will be traversed, the use of pack animals or horses will be unnecessary and unwise. If any PC insists on bringing a pack animal or favorite mount, penalize the party's general movement rate by 50%. The mount must also make a saving throw vs. death—every 6 hours of travel—as if moving at triple the normal overland movement rate, with the -3 modifier automatically applied to the die roll (see page 123 of the DMG). If the mount fails the saving throw, it is severely lamed and must be left or killed.

A fairly narrow ledge traversing a sheer cliff face will also be encountered. This will require the PCs to make Dexterity checks

while crossing the ledge (with a generous +3 modifier—the ledge is not *that* narrow) or take damage from a 100-foot fall (10d6 damage—1d6 for every 10 feet fallen). Dexterity checks should be made at +5 and damage from any fall reduced 90% if the PCs rope themselves together as they cross the ledge. (For further rules on "Belays" and "Roping Together," see pp. 18-19 of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*.)

A few random forest and hill/mountain encounters should suffice to make the trip more "memorable." A random wilderness encounter will occur on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d10. Check every 6 hours of travel, every 4 hours if the journey lasts into the night.

Random Encounters for the Journey to the Mines (Roll 1d10)

1-3) Bombardier Beetles(3-12): AC 4; MV 9; HD 2+2; hp 14 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA Acid cloud; SD Firing cloud; AL Nil; THAC0 19.

If the party encounters any of these monsters, the beetles are dining on the rotting remains of some huge forest beast, most likely a bear. The characters have one melee round to either attack or flee. If they stay where they are, the beetles notice the intrusion and attack with their vapor clouds. Note that the combination of many of these attacks going off simultaneously can be very devastating on the party.

If brought to below half their former numbers, the beetles flee into the brush. The creatures head off in random directions, so the chance of successfully hunting down and slaying all of the defeated beetles is slim.

The beetles have no treasure except the dead bear (which they prize very highly).

4-6) Wild Wolf Pack (2d10): AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 10 each on average; #AT 1 (bite); Dmg 2-5; SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N; THAC0 19.

Roaming packs of wolves are typical for these vast ranges of untamed wilderness. They are 75% likely to follow the party during the day, if they successfully surprise and thereby remain unseen. Then at night the pack strikes, tearing at the throats of sleeping characters and mauling anyone who stands against them.

Significant displays of fire or lightning have a 25% chance of demoralizing the wolves, causing them to cower in fear and retreat back into the forest.

The wolves have no treasure. However, the DM may choose to place the lair of the wolves nearby, especially if a character in the party has the tracking non-weapon proficiency. If the lair is found, the treasure should be guarded by a suitable number of females and cubs for the size of the pack (see *Monstrous Compendium, Wolf*).

7-8) Bugbears (7): AC 5 (10); MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 20 each; #AT 1 (weapon); Dmg 1-8 +2 (ST bonus); SA Surprise; SD Nil; AL CE; THAC0 17.

These bugbears are out hunting for food, and have laid a trap for any unsuspecting wild boars wandering the forest.

The bugbears have placed three nets on the ground. The nets are covered with leaves and attached to a series of tightly stretched vines. The bugbears themselves are hiding in a tree which lies at the center of the three netted areas. The bugbears are armed with old long swords and have a hefty supply of boulders at their disposal. Note that each boulder does 2d4 points of damage when dropped on someone.

The trap is not automatically sprung, but must be set off by the one bugbear who has the last vine in hand. As soon as a majority of the characters are on the nets, the lead bugbear gives the order to attack. The single bugbear with the vine springs the trap, while the remaining six bugbears attack any untrapped

Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

characters with boulders and drop down onto their unsuspecting heads.

While the trap is ingenious, it is a little too ingenious for the bugbears to get perfectly right. There is only a 33% chance of each net being sprung correctly. Any that aren't sprung must be checked every round after the first, just to see if the combat going on nearby triggers the mechanism. It is therefore certainly possible that some of the bugbears themselves get caught in their own nets.

The bugbears, if defeated, have about 100 g.p. each on their persons. These are wandering hunters from across the mountains and have not yet established a lair.

9) **Giant Skunk (1):** AC 7; MV 9; HD 5; hp 30; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Squirt musk; SD Squirt musk; AL N; THAC0 15.

This poor fellow is trapped in a pit dug by the bugbears (above). The bugbears discovered the skunk in here a few days ago and decided quite wisely to abandon this method of catching food.

The skunk is hungry, but not in any immediate danger of starving. He has plenty of bugs and plants to eat for now, and will eventually dig himself out of his predicament in a few more days.

It is impossible for the skunk to surprise the party as he involuntarily released a musk cloud when he fell into the pit and the smell is still everywhere. While not very strong by now, it is quite pervasive and distinct.

If the adventurers rescue the giant skunk, he starts following them about whether they like it or not. While the skunk is certainly a powerful ally, the DM should take careful note of where the skunk is whenever combat takes place; any time the skunk is startled or surprised, he emits his stink cloud. The results can be most amusing, especially in the middle of a big melee.

The skunk has no treasure and will only accompany the party (if he chooses to do so) until they reach the mines.

10) **Wyverns (3):** AC 3; MV 6, Fl 24 (E); HD 7+7; hp 60, 50, 40; #AT 2 (bite, tail stinger); Dmg 2-16/1-6; SA Poison; SD Nil; AL N(E); THAC0 13.

These lumbering winged monstrosities will only attack the party at night, but may be seen flying about high overhead during the day. They are aggressive, greedy and very interested in killing off an entire party of adventurers, rather than just picking up a few snacks.

When they attack (apply a -2 surprise modifier), the largest wyvern (the father) will try to snatch whoever is on watch, while the smaller wyverns (mother and son) grab up any sleeping characters they can find (roll randomly among remaining party members). The PCs will be snatched in this manner if one wyvern talon hits for damage. Horses/pack animals must be hit by both talons to be snatched.

The wyverns will try to flee high into the sky, all the while biting and stinging (+4 to hit) any captured PCs with their sharp teeth and tails. Captured PCs may fight back if they can make a successful Dexterity check (to grab a weapon before the wyverns capture them; -2 modifier) and a successful *open gates/bend bars* roll (to free their arms from the wyverns' grasp and wield a weapon).

After two rounds of flight away from the camp (and 240' into the air), the wyverns will drop their victims to the ground, hoping to kill them in the process (falling damage is 1d6 for every 10 feet fallen, 20d6 max.). Then, after another round spent diving back toward the camp, the wyverns will attempt the same maneuver on any remaining characters, attacking with no surprise modifier this time. If the wyverns take significant damage (25% of their hit points) in this second attack, they fly off and recover their previous victims.

After the wyverns retrieve their prey, they will feast and rest for a 4-hour period. Then, they will return and attack the rest of the party in the same fashion as before. This time, however, their first attack will be made with only a -1 surprise modifier. Subsequent attacks will have no modifiers at all.

This process continues until dawn or until the party succeeds in destroying the ruthless beasts.

The wyvern lair is far from the PC campsite, and only by flying after the creatures when they flee could the party hope to locate their lair. If the characters do manage to defeat the wyverns and locate the lair, the DM should prepare a suitable reward for their heroic endeavors (Treasure type E).

The ambitious DM might add a tribe of hobgoblins or orcs who add more challenges to the adventure by appearing a number of times throughout. Perhaps they have just discovered the mines themselves or manage to follow the party there unseen and become interested in the mines' contents. They can wait outside in ambush or, if they feel bold and adventurous themselves, the tribe might launch its own expedition into the mines.

The Dragon's Maw

After traveling up a particularly difficult ravine, the party reaches the mine site. They will see the twin peaks that mark the beginning of the range known as the Dragon's Horns Mountains standing on either side of them. The crooked path they've been following through the ravine now ends at the mouth of a blackened, crumbling cave located at the base of one of the mountains that rise before them. Although large amounts of lush growth choke the opening, the square, man-made shape of a mine entrance leading straight into the mountain is still visible.

Hopefully, the party members have prepared themselves for some rather treacherous cave exploration. If they haven't, Grungi provides a rather subtle hint to that effect by taking a coil of rope, with a grappling hook attached, out of his backpack and slinging it over his shoulder. If the characters don't do likewise, the dwarf gives them the "once-over" and shrugs.

The brush can be cleared easily in about one half-hour.

Note that while Grungi appears anxious to enter while the mine entrance is being cleared, he steps back and lets the PCs go in first. *Under no circumstances* does the frightened dwarf lead the band. If someone has befriended him or offers to protect him personally, the dwarf can be persuaded to travel alongside the party's leader or second in line.

The first tunnels encountered (the upper level) are mostly abandoned mining tunnels. (All tunnels and shafts in this mine, on either level, are all 10' wide, unless otherwise noted.) For the most part, they are structurally safe as dwarves are meticulous craftsmen and build such structures to last for centuries (unlike human miners). However, the DM should refer to the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* (pp. 38-40) for rules on Cave-Ins should combat break out in these mines (see random encounters below).

As an added inconvenience, Grungi has forgotten his way through this rather extensive series of upper level tunnels; he doesn't quite remember where the central shaft is located. The party may have to spend some time exploring to find the main shaft.

The mine's upper level is flat (no sloping or vertical shafts, except for the main shaft) and is laid out in five roughly concentric circles. The main shaft is located in the centermost circle, which is really a large, amphitheater-like chamber (see "Chamber of Sorrows" below). Straight tunnels radiate from this central chamber, very much like the spokes of a wagon wheel, at each of the eight compass points, and cut across the tunnels that form the circles of the upper level. The whole affair resembles a round spider web. The party enters the main entrance at the southernmost point of the outer circle, heading north.

Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

The central chamber and main shaft are very easy to find. All the party has to do is go straight into the mine entrance and proceed down the tunnel directly in front of them (1d4 thousand feet). Unfortunately, Grungi's faulty memory will greatly complicate things. In fact, there is a 75% chance that the dwarf will direct the party the go either left (1-3 on 1d6) or right (4-6 on 1d6) on the outer circle *instead of straight into the mine*. If the party follows his suggestions, they will do a lot of wandering around the upper levels, until any dwarf in the party or anyone with the mining proficiency realizes (after 1d6 turns of wandering) what the general layout of the upper level seems to be. At that point, begin to allow the PC with mining skills (dwarf or otherwise) to make Wisdom ability checks to get the party reoriented. A successful check means the PC understands that the tunnels crossing the circles lead to the center chamber. Getting there is a simple matter after that.

Of course, if the party initially decides to ignore Grungi's advice and go straight down the entrance tunnel, they may very quickly arrive at the central mine shaft. They could get disoriented as they cross the inner circles of the upper level. Allow them to wander if they so choose, but eventually, using the Wisdom check mentioned above, they will arrive at the central chamber.

However, somewhere along the way (either round-about or straight in), the party is going to encounter a few of the new residents of these mines. Consult the table below for random encounters on this level. None of the monsters encountered have any idea of what lies below this level of the mine, and none are likely to accompany the party to the lower levels unless magically "persuaded" by a druid or ranger.

Random upper-level mine encounters (Roll 1d10)

1-3) **Boring Beetles** (3d6) AC 3; MV 6; HD 5; hp 30 each; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; SA Nil; SD Nil; AL N; THACO 15.

These creatures have just tunneled into the mine and are searching for the usual necessities, food and treasure. Since the upper level of the mine has been very disappointing for them so far, they are very likely to attack any living thing that enters the lair, especially the party. This does not apply to the bear (see encounter 9), as the beetles are deathly afraid of anything that even looks like their arch-nemesis.

Their treasure is scattered throughout network of tunnels. Should the party find any of it, it will be minimal (treasure type R only). Note: there are many, many beetles burrowing into these tunnels, so this encounter can take place more than once while the party explores the mines.

4-5) **Huge Spiders** (1d12): AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA poison and surprise leap; SD Nil; AL N; THACO 19.

There is only one band of a dozen of these spiders, but they often split up to search for prey. If any of the group are not present during the first encounter with these spiders (i.e., the random die roll is less than 12), the next time this encounter is indicated, it will be with the remainder of the group.

The spiders are very aggressive and dangerous. They always lair in camouflaged tunnels, and wait for unsuspecting victims to pass by. So far, they have failed in their attempts to capture the bear (encounter 9), who is quite capable of mangling three spiders in a single melee round. However, they have developed a taste for giant rat (encounter 6-8), and continue to be a major drain on the rat population in the mines. The spiders always pursue fleeing prey.

The spiders have normal chances for treasure (types J, K, L, M, N, and Q). Any treasure gleaned from the spiders by the party will have been recovered from these mines (no *elven chain mail* or the like here).

6-8) **Giant rats** (5d10): AC 7; MV 12, Sw 6; HD 1-4 hit point s; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Disease; SD Nil; AL N(E); THACO 20.

There are literally hundreds of these beasts scavenging throughout the mines. For many years they bred completely unchecked, with only natural disasters and a lack of food to curb their growth. Now, however, the spiders and the lurker above (encounter 10) regularly dine on the rats and their numbers are controlled. The mines are therefore littered with tiny piles of rat bones, the result of spider/lurker dining.

The rats themselves have little to eat in the mines and spend most of their time hunting through the near-infinite tunnels left behind by the boring beetles. They attack *en masse* anything that moves in the mines.

The rats have no significant treasure.

9) **Cave Bear** (1): AC 6; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 50; #AT 3 (claw, claw, bite); Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-12; SA Hug; SD Nil; AL N; THACO 15.

This rather large specimen sleeps here in the wintertime and at night. If encountered during the day, he is most certainly dining on some fish caught in a nearby stream outside the mines or hungrily looking around for some boring beetles (50% chance for either). If dining, the bear does not want to be disturbed, and the adventurers would have to seriously taunt or molest the gentle giant to arouse his anger. Otherwise, the bear is hungry enough to attack and eat first, and ask questions later.

If befriended, the bear can only warn the party (in the most rudimentary fashion) about "those tasty little shell-things" (i.e. the beetles) and to beware of the "living ceiling" (i.e., the lurker above, encounter 10).

The bear has no treasure.

10) **Lurker Above** (1): AC 6; MV 1, Fl 9 (B); HD 10; hp 70; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Suffocation, Surprise; SD Nil; AL N; THACO 10.

The last cycle in this little food chain is a rather large lurker above. It moves about the mines, trying to drop on the obviously tasty bear it has encountered once before. Unfortunately for the lurker above, the bear can smell it very easily and keeps away from any tunnel that smells of lurker. Hence, the lurker generally dines on rats or beetles. It will welcome a meal of adventurer.

The lurker above has no gathered no treasure.

The Chambers of Sorrow

This area is located deep at the center of the upper complex.

The tunnel the party is travelling in opens into a huge, shallow subterranean basin, much like an amphitheater. The domed ceiling of this chamber is over 30' high, the room itself at least 200' in diameter. There are eight major tunnels (one at each compass point) and many minor tunnels branching off from here.

Scattered throughout the chamber, in its base and up the shallow slopes toward the major tunnel mouths, are piles of rotten belongings and hundreds of charred, decomposing dwarven corpses. The remains of entire families lie suffocated and scorched next to their personal pets and meager possessions.

In the very center of the room are the remains of a small band of warriors, who obviously died helping to organize the ill-fated exodus. Their bony fingers point north towards a gaping hole in the slope of the chamber below and between the north and northeast tunnel openings.

There is no treasure on any of these victims; the beetles and the spiders have collected everything of value. As the party members wander throughout this chamber, however, they are attacked by 30 giant rats (who are scavenging among the bodies).

Note that Grungi is visibly shaken in here and must make a saving throw vs. fear to go on through the mines. If he fails this saving throw, he will stay in this chamber searching the bodies

Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

for any tokens of remembrance he might find. The players cannot force him to go farther without the use of a *remove fear* or *charm* spell, to which Grungi has the standard dwarven resistance.

The dead dwarven warriors are pointing north, towards the gaping hole which is, in reality, the main mine shaft (detailed further in the next section).

The Mine Shaft

The mine shaft is scorched greatly and drops some 150' down, farther into the bowels of the mountain. The wooden scaffolding and rope that comprised the "elevator" mechanism used to transport miners up and down the shaft was, for the most part, destroyed in the explosion. Only a few burned stumps stuck in the ground and the rusty winch at the bottom of the shaft are all that remain of the mechanism.

The walls of the shaft are broken, but strong and can be considered "rough" for climbing purposes (see *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pages 14-16). Because of the length of the climb, the Mad Miner suggests that the characters tie four 50' lengths of rope together and leave it in place. A structurally sound support (one of the remaining scaffolding stumps) is nearby; but the other three stumps look just like the first and are not safe. If the characters have any dwarven construction skills (or they ask the Mad Miner to check), they will avoid picking the wrong one. Otherwise, there is a 75% chance they pick the wrong one.

The safe stump will support the PCs all the way to the bottom of the shaft. There is a 10% chance that any weak support gives way for every 100 pounds of weight put on the attached rope. Assume a rate of descent of 25' per round and check every round—once at the top of the shaft, at 100', at the 75' mark, at the 50' mark, and at the 25' mark. Falling damage is 1d6 per every 10' fallen.

The Misty Trail

At the bottom of the shaft lies another tunnel that has been carved by a swiftly flowing underground river, which is approximately 40' wide. The river water is heated by nearby geothermal activity and is very hot (1d6 damage per round to unprotected characters immersed in it). The steamy river causes the air in this tunnel to be hot, humid, and thick with misty fog. While unpleasantly flavored with many raw minerals, the water in the river is safe to drink in moderation—once cooled, of course.

The tunnel itself runs north, against the flow of the river, and south, with the flow and can be traversed via a wide ledge that runs alongside the river. The ledge, though wet with humidity, is easy to travel. (The DM may add Dexterity checks for walking the ledge if added excitement is necessary. Check once every turn and add a +3 modifier to the PCs' die rolls.)

At this point, Grungi's memory may cause problems for the PCs. Once again the party should travel north, up the river, where they will find the Miners' Hall (see below). If asked, however, the dwarf will suggest (albeit dubiously) that the party go south; he really doesn't remember which way to go, but won't admit it.

If the characters go south through the tunnel, after three turns they come to the point where the river disappears beneath the rock and dives down into the earth. Here, Grungi will remember his error and quickly try to apologize and back-pedal—all at once.

His warning comes too late! The party is scorched by a blast of super-heated steam from a hole just above where the river disappears. Everyone within 50' of the vent takes 6d6 of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage allowed). The blast occurs frequently, and the DM should roll 1d4+1 after every steam blast to determine how many rounds go by before the next blast occurs.

If anyone searches the area for secret doors, they automatically find a dirt-covered tablet. The tablet, when cleaned, reads "Beware of steam vent ahead!" The sign is carved in dwarven runes and was mounted a few hundred feet down the tunnel. When the mine exploded, the sign was thrown down here by the force of the blast. Note that Grungi has no recollection whatsoever of this steam vent. Despite the ancient sign, he violently insists the natural hazard "must have broken through only recently."

The Miners' Hall

If the party travels north instead of south, in five turns they will arrive at a place of incredible beauty and horror.

The tunnel opens into a mammoth cavern that is several hundred yards across and 100' high. High above the party, at the north end of the cavern, a magnificent steaming waterfall cascades down a rough rocky cliff, creating a shallow river that runs through the middle of the chamber. Rows of glistening red stalactites in the ceiling drip iron-rich water down onto the blackened stalagmites below. The rusty fluid from the stalactites, plus an inch-deep overflow from the river, runs like thin blood over the fog-enshrouded bones of a hundred dead miners.

The blackened bones of men and dwarves alike are scattered throughout this chamber and are coated in a thick, glistening coating of red minerals, like the stalagmites around them. Some, with outstretched arms, seem to embrace each other in fiery death while others died alone as they all scrambled to escape the raging inferno that swept through this cavern so many years ago.

A fair amount of personal treasure remains on the victims if the party undertakes to exhume hundreds of skeletal remains from their encrusted mineral coatings (a process that will certainly take several hours). Five useful magical items can be found that survived the inferno—a *lens of detection*, two scrolls, *protection from fire* and *protection from gas*, both encased in an ivory tube, a *sword +2*, and a *warhammer +3*. The PCs can also find a total of 2,000 pieces of gold. Most of rest of the belongings were either destroyed in the fire, have rotted away over time, or were washed away down the river.

Grungi is noticeably saddened here—mostly because he cannot identify even one of his former friends—and will oppose (not violently) any wholesale pilfering of the place for fear of disturbing their rest.

After taking whatever time they wish in examining the miners' remains, the PCs will notice the only other exit from this cavern—a dark tunnel mouth just to the west of the foot of the waterfall.

The New Mines

The tunnel by the waterfall is of newer construction. It slopes gently downward into the mountain's bowels, descending some 200' over a length of almost a mile. At its end, the party finds a small, octagonal chamber about 35' across that is the nexus of seven other similar tunnels. There are a total of eight 10-foot wide tunnels, and each is oriented along one of the standard compass directions.

The PCs must now decide which of the tunnels will let them continue their journey. The correct tunnel goes to the northwest, the tell-tale sign being the amount of scorching and soot along the walls. While all of the tunnels here are scorched to some extent, a PC with mining skills (or any character making a successful Intelligence ability check) discovers that the walls of the northwest tunnel have about three times as much soot on them as any of the others. Allow one check per player.

If the player characters don't figure this out, they must explore each of the tunnels to discover the right one. This will again take time and could prove to be deadly.

Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

- The north and northeast tunnels end in steam vents, which behave in the same fashion and do the same damage as the vent found in "The Misty Trail" section.

- The tunnel that goes east slopes rapidly downward and ends at the edge of a river of magma. The slope is not so steep as to cause slippage, but the heat rising from the magma river will cause each PC to make a successful Constitution check or be forced to retreat from the tunnel because of the extreme heat.

- The tunnel to the southeast proceeds about 500' and is blocked by a cave-in, which occurred during the explosion. The rubble is too thick and heavy to be moved, rendering the tunnel impassable.

- The tunnel to the south only leads back to the Miners' Hall.
- The tunnels to the southwest and west are about 300' long and lead to slow-seeping gas vents. The gas is quite noxious and very malodorous, allowing the PCs to make an odor detection (Wisdom) check with a modifier of +2 for the first 150' and +4 for the last 150'. If they fail this check, the PCs must then make a successful Constitution checks every round they are down these tunnels or have their ability scores (all six of them) reduced by three. When any PC's ability scores reach 0, he must stop moving and be dragged along (backwards or forwards) by his companions. The PC is not killed, but can only restore his ability scores by breathing clean air in the tunnel nexus. Ability scores are restored by 3 points per turn. (Pages 37-38 of the *DSG* cover this procedure completely.

The gas escapes very slowly, is very heavy, and is not moved about by any breeze. Therefore, it stays pretty much in its tunnel and is absent from the air in the tunnel nexus chamber.

The Last Shaft

Following the northwest tunnel leads the party about 1000' to the site of the great mine disaster. The thickly charred tunnel ends in a massive pile of rubble, the result of the enormous explosion. Some of this rubble has fallen into a vertical mine shaft that stands open at the PCs' feet. A few beams of strangely flickering light seep through the cracks in the rubble at the bottom of the shaft.

The fragmented bones of a dozen men are scattered about this area; some of the bones are actually imbedded in the walls. It is obvious the miners were immediately obliterated in the explosion. Grungi shakes his head sadly and kicks the skull of one of these unfortunates down the shaft. He mutters something about "foolish, greedy men" and "realizing the error of their haste now" as the skull smashes onto the broken stones below.

The light coming from beneath (or beyond) the rubble at the bottom of the shaft is sometimes bright, sometimes dim, but very intriguing. In fact, Grungi will break from his morose reverie and become uncharacteristically insistent that the party's goal is near. As before, the mine shaft needs to be scaled, by rope or by climbing (treat as "rough with ledges"). Fortunately, the shaft is only 50' deep; unfortunately, the bottom of the shaft is filled with rubble. Assuming the characters only move smaller rocks and chunks of debris around, it takes approximately 10 hours to clear a man-sized crawlway through the rubble. If the party attempts to haul the boulders up out of the shaft, it will take nearly 100 man hours to remove the rubble from the shaft.

When the party gets through the rubble, they discover a man-sized, natural opening near the bottom and in the side of the shaft. This leads to yet another chamber and the source of the strange, mystical light.

Through the Cavern of Flames . . .

The PCs crawl into a 120' long, 20' wide natural cavern with a sandy floor. The ceiling is about 15' above the party. The smell of burning sulfur floats in the air here because this cavern was the source of all the gas that escaped, exploded, and burned for days on end, causing the mine disaster. Those immense quan-



tities of gas have long since burned out, but there are numerous tiny fissures (12 to be exact, one about every 10'), located high and low along the walls, that still emit small amounts of flammable gas into this long, narrow chamber.

Once a round, one of these 12 fissures (roll randomly) will spout gas. If the party is carrying any open-flamed light sources (torches, lanterns, etc.), the gas ignites and exposes all within 20' of the hole to 4d6 of fire damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage allowed).

There is also a 50% chance that the gas ignites of its own accord, sparked by one of the many magma rivulets honeycombing this area of the mines. These spontaneous eruptions will certainly ignite any unburned gas that has seeped into the chamber, causing an additional 4d6 of fire damage to anyone within 40' of the fiery eruption. (It is these spontaneous eruptions and gas ignitions that cause the flickering light in this area.)

Navigating this 120' foot long "cavern of flames" will be lively and dangerous. The PCs will doubtless see a few rounds of gas and flame activity before trying to pass through the cavern and should be able to figure out that the gas seepage is causing the goutts of flame. Of course, much of the potential for fire damage can be eliminated by using light sources that do not require open flames, such as *light* or *continual light* spells cast on certain objects. Allow the PCs to make Intelligence checks to figure this out. Then they will only have to worry about the 50% chance that one of the fissures will spout flame instead of just gas. Another means of avoiding fire damage is by casting fire protection spells on members of the party.

It will take any PC (short or tall) at least 2 rounds to run down this cavern (maybe more depending upon the PC's encumbrance; reduce all movement rates 50% because of the sandy floor). So, most of the party will be exposed to 2 chances of acquiring fire damage here.

At the far end of this chamber, through the goutts of spewing flame, the PCs can see another larger opening, and glittering faintly beyond, the reason for successfully negotiating this fiery gauntlet. (The DM should check to see if Grungi's enthusiasm to continue on to the next cavern overcomes his caution. He could become the first party member to get "fried" in here, thus providing a fine example to the rest of their possible fate.)

Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

. . . To the Hall of Gems

After any party member has navigated the "cavern of flames" successfully, he can peer through the opening into the next cavern. (This PC will be far enough way from the last gas/flame gout to avoid damage.)

This is the fabled Hall of Gems. Rough stones of all shapes and sized glitter magnificently and quite completely cover the walls of this 200' long and 100' wide chamber. While most of the stones are obviously caked in soot, enough sparkle through to reveal more than a dozen kings' ransoms. There are even piles of these stones scattered about the gem-embedded floor of this place.

The air in this cavern is filled with acrid, but not debilitating, fumes and significant heat. These, and the faint, fiery glow which helps illuminate this chamber, emanate from a tunnel opening at the distant end of the chamber. A slow rumbling, bubbling sound also comes from the tunnel opening, indicating that molten lava could lie somewhere beyond.

If the first character arriving at the opening between the cavern of flames and the Hall of Gems waits for the rest of the party to arrive, he may have a chance of surviving. Otherwise, as soon as anyone moves forward into the Hall of Gems, they are attacked by the hall's primary resident. (The DM should handle this combat as he would all others, but allow the monster a surprise bonus against the party or PC.)

A pile of red gems, which at first appeared to be rough, uncut rubies, begins to uncoil itself again and again. Two, four, six, eight snake-like heads writhe upward and outward from a great, red, reptilian body. With a dull gurgle rolling in its throat, the pyrohydra unleashes wave after wave of fiery breath weapons.

The pyrohydra splits its attacks evenly amongst those who are actually in the Hall of Gems, so the more adventurers in here at the start, the better it is for the party. However, if anyone enters alone, they get all of the attacks, and will very likely die whether they make their saving throws or not. (If it is any consolation, they are taking up breath weapon attacks that might have harmed someone else.)

The pyrohydra is immune to fire, having dwelled in and around molten magma since birth, and is very, very powerful. The monster normally feeds on small creatures that tunnel into his domain or drop through the cracks in the rubble that blocked the mine shaft used by the PCs to enter the flaming cavern. But today, it's going to get some real meat!

The monster's initial attack (against whomever) is visible to any party members still in the cavern of flames and may inspire their next reactions—heroic or cowardly. The DM should make note of these reactions and award extra experience points for self-sacrificing actions. The physical condition and alignments of cowardly characters that try to escape up the mine shaft must be of primary importance here.

If the pyrohydra wins any initial encounters, it ignores its first victim(s) and charges into the fiery cavern looking for anyone else to attack. Since the monster is immune to fire, any ignited gas spewing from the cavern walls will do the beast no harm and it shambles through in only 1 round. And, though the opening between the mine shaft and the cavern of flames is only man-sized, the pyrohydra can still stick two of its remaining heads through. How fast self-preserving characters can climb and fly should be scrutinized closely here, for they may find themselves in a 50-' shaft with a few fiery breath weapons (8 points of fire damage) at their heels. Also, any ropes being used for climbing must save vs. magical fire or be burned through. Burned ropes cause climbing characters to fall down the shaft (taking falling damage) and land right in front of the pyrohydra. (In this circumstance, the monster gets one free attack on any fallen PCs).

Charging the hydra as a group and killing all of its heads may be the best strategy for defeating this monster.

Pyrohydra (1): AC 5; MV 9; HD 8, plus 8 hp per head (8); #AT 8; Dmg 1-8 or 8 points of fire damage per head; SA Fire; SD Immune to all fire; AL N; THACO 12.

The Perilous Prize

If the characters defeat the pyrohydra, they might want to acquire the real treasure that lies beyond the tunnel entrance at the far end of the Hall of Gems. Of course, they may just want to start digging up raw gem stones. Raw stones can be dug from the walls at a rate of 3 per turn of effort *provided the right mining tools are available*. If the PCs have not brought the right tools, they will not be able to extract any rough stones from the walls here. A close substitute for the right tools would be a warhammer of some sort and spikes, but knocking the gems from the walls with these "tools" will reduce the value of the uncut stones from 10% of their polished value to only 5% of their polished value. With the proper tools, however, players will be able to successfully remove and carry out up to 500 g.p. in weight (approx. 50 pounds) of rough stones. The DM should remember to add this additional weight to any encumbrance considerations for individual PCs.

If they do decide to explore the distant tunnel mouth, they will find a long, narrow tunnel that slopes steeply upwards and opens onto a wide ledge (about 30' wide and 20' deep) that overlooks a vast chamber, the floor of which is a bubbling pool of lava. A narrow but sturdy stone outcropping some 4' wide and 100' feet long leads out from the ledge into the middle of the chamber, hanging precariously some 50' above the lava pool. The pool is not active and will not shoot spouts of molten rock into the air.

At the end of the outcropping is another 8' diameter ledge; in the middle of the ledge is an amazing pile of large gems...surely the finest stones ever recovered from the mines. It seems as though these were the pyrohydra's great treasure.

(Note: aside from the encounter that is about to occur, the heat in this chamber is intense and represents a real danger to the PCs. If any party member fails a Constitution check, made every turn while in this area, 4 points must be deducted from all his ability scores for heat exhaustion. This is not direct hit point damage and will not kill the PC. It will, however, incapacitate any PC when his ability scores—all six of them—are reduced to 0. That PC then falls unconscious to the ground and can only be revived in the Hall of Gems. Ability score "revival" occurs at a rate of four points for every two turns of rest and liquid refreshment.)

The first hint of trouble here should be the rather dangerous situation any party member would find himself in if he went out to collect the gems on the small ledge at the end of the outcropping. The second hint requires a little deductive reasoning. The pyrohydra could not possibly fit down the tunnel the PCs used to get to this point, nor could it navigate the outcropping or fit out on the ledge where the priceless gems are stashed. So how did they get there? Unfortunately, nothing but a *true seeing* spell will reveal the nature of the real dangers lurking in this chamber.

The real rulers of the ancient mines are a mated pair of xorn, who travel throughout this complex collecting rare gems and dining on the many remaining veins of ore throughout the massive complex.

The xorn kept the rather stupid pyrohydra alive as a first defense against intruders. After the great mine explosion and up until now, they haven't needed to take a personal interest in defending their treasure. Now, depending upon what the party does, the xorn will act according to several contingencies to protect their treasure and territory. The female xorn awaits in the walls on the wide ledge right next to the party, while the male xorn is hiding within the 8' ledge at the end of the outcropping.

- If the party sends a thief out onto the outcropping to retrieve the gems, the male xorn won't attack until the PC reaches the 8' ledge. The xorn will then rise through the stone, using his round

Pyrohydra (1) & Xorn (2)

of surprise to appear and attack. Since the xorn is unaffected by the lava, it will try grabbing the thief and jumping off the ledge. The male xorn has an effective strength of 19 for purposes of grabbing and holding a victim, but must hit the PC with two of its three arm attacks (1-3/1-3 points damage) or make a successful biting attack (6-24 points damage) in order to hold the victim. For the PCs part, he can dodge this grapple attempt by making a successful Dexterity check. If he does so, he escapes the xorn's clutches and will not be dragged off the ledge into the lava. He does not, however, negate the damage done by the xorn's attack(s).

During this combat, the female xorn waits to see what happens. If her mate is successful, she will try the same thing, attacking with surprise and from the rear the nearest PC.

- If the party sends someone flying out towards the pile of gems to try to pick them off the ledge, the female xorn will attack, with surprise and from the rear, the PCs nearest her, trying to grapple and drag a victim off the wider ledge and into the lava. She will utter some sort of verbal warning to her mate, who will quickly appear on the 8' ledge and try to grab the flying, pilfering party member. The same chances to hit, grapple, and escape the xorn's hold apply in this case as in the situation above.

- If the party as a whole moves along the outcropping, the female xorn waits until the majority of the group has left the wide ledge by the chamber wall, then emerges from hiding and cuts away the rock where the outcropping meets the wide ledge. Party members on the outcropping will drop into the lava (see damage potential below) unless those PCs not on the outcropping can stop the female xorn from chewing away the rock. Meanwhile the male xorn uses his action round to rise and snag as many of the gems as his hands and mouth can hold. If engaged in melee (by safely flying characters or whatever), the male xorn will flee, disgorge his treasures in the Hall of Gems, and wait for his mate to join him. Further actions of the xorn are detailed in "The Great Escape."

Of course, things won't go entirely the xorns' way. The players may get quite innovative when faced with the xorns' double-pronged attack and numerous actions are possible. If the platform is collapsing, for example, the players on it have three segments of action before it hits the lava. Wizards can cast *feather fall* or *flying* spells in that amount of time. Any floating PC will be able to ride the thermal currents generated by the heat of the lava pool for as long as he is affected by the such spells.

PCs who drop into the lava take 4d6 falling damage and 20 points of damage per round they are in contact with the lava. This contact could be instantly terminal. If the PC survives the fall, he must also make a successful Constitution check to remain conscious through the intense pain of being burned alive. Additionally, a character who falls into the lava pool "floats" easily on the surface of the thick lava, so anyone can swim/crawl/run to the pool's edge. As long as the PC can remain conscious (successful Constitution check each round), he can try to climb the chamber wall ("rough with ledges," see *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pages 14-16). It only takes an additional round to reach the safety of the pool's edge (add 20 more points of lava damage and make another Constitution check, of course).

Saving throws for all PC magical items should be made immediately. All other possessions that would normally be incinerated by the extreme heat of the lava are destroyed, and the character is assumed to be in excruciating pain until major medical attention is received. This pain will affect all PC actions by adding a minus four (-4) to all ability checks and climbing attempts.

The xorn, of course, take no interest in any of the dunked characters, as the xorn assume (quite wrongly) that instant death results from such a dunking. Therefore, characters that live through this ordeal can climb/flee to safety if they are stealthy and intelligent (see below).

Heroes who survive a fall into the lava pool and then return to battle the xorn should be rewarded bonus experience for their gallant heroism.

Xorn (2): AC -2; MV 9, Br 9; HD 7+7; hp 60 (male), 55 (female); #AT 4 (three claws, bite); Dmg 1-3(x3)/6-24; SA Surprise; SD immune to fire and cold, take half or no damage from electrical attacks depending on success of saving throw; AL N; THACO 13.

Treasure: 25 gems (four 10-g.p. gems, four 50-g.p. gems, six 100-g.p. gems, five 500-g.p. gems, five 1,000-g.p. gems, and one 5,000-g.p. gem).

The Great Escape

If the party retrieves the gems without fighting the xorn (using a *limited wish* or something), or the party escapes from combat, any remaining xorn will hound the intruders throughout the mines.

At least once a turn, a xorn will appear to sabotage a rope used for climbing, collapse a ceiling support above the party, eat away a section of the floor which lies over a boiling river or swirling magma pool, or just physically attack the party if things get really desperate.

The trip out of the mines is likely to be the best chance for the party to defeat the xorn once and for all, as the monsters will be more reckless and desperate at this stage of the adventure. If their treasure has been stolen, they want it back. If the treasure is still safe, the party members who know its location (and about the xorn) must not live to tell other adventurers about the mines. The xorn want this prize lair to be theirs forever, or at least until they've had a chance to strip it of all its wealth.

The DM should not forget other monster encounters on the way out of the mines. The party will most likely have a random encounter as they attempt to flee the lair. The xorn might join in such an encounter to make the odds even less fair, or to work some devilish sabotage while the party is otherwise engaged.

The xorn are intelligent and ruthless, and are the major monsters in these mines. When encountered on their turf, the xorn are a dangerous lot to be sure.

Aboleth (2) and Cloakers (10)

Terrain:	Dark Sea and small caves
Total Party Levels:	50 (Average 9th)
Total Magic X.P.:	8,800
Total g.p. X.P.:	692

Set-up

• At the beginning of an adventure, the Player Characters are given a scroll of *mass recall*, intended to return the PCs to their patron or home base after the completion of their mission. The scroll, however, turns out to be flawed in some small way, and the destination will be altered by the casual will of certain powerful beings. A struggle in the Underdark has drawn the brief attention of a PC priest's deity, and because of this, the party is accidentally misrouted to the scene of the struggle.

NOTE: This adventure is designed for a party of characters who have just completed an easy mission; they still have most of their hit points, memorized spells, and perishable magic items. They expect the adventure to be over, but instead find themselves lost and imperiled. The DM should make sure that the party has not been weakened too much by their original adventure and that the *players* are up to this series of encounters. They should still be "up" for adventure, ready for more play. If the players are looking to put away their dice and quit, they *will not* have much fun in this adventure. In this case, the DM can rule that the *mass recall* scroll worked normally; hold onto this adventure until the time is right. Also, the DM should realize that this adventure will almost certainly weaken the party. Poor play may prove fatal. The party's magic items will be expended or lost, and the treasure is not abundant.

Editor's Note: The DM should pay strict heed to the above warning. This is a very challenging (almost "killer") adventure.

The Lair

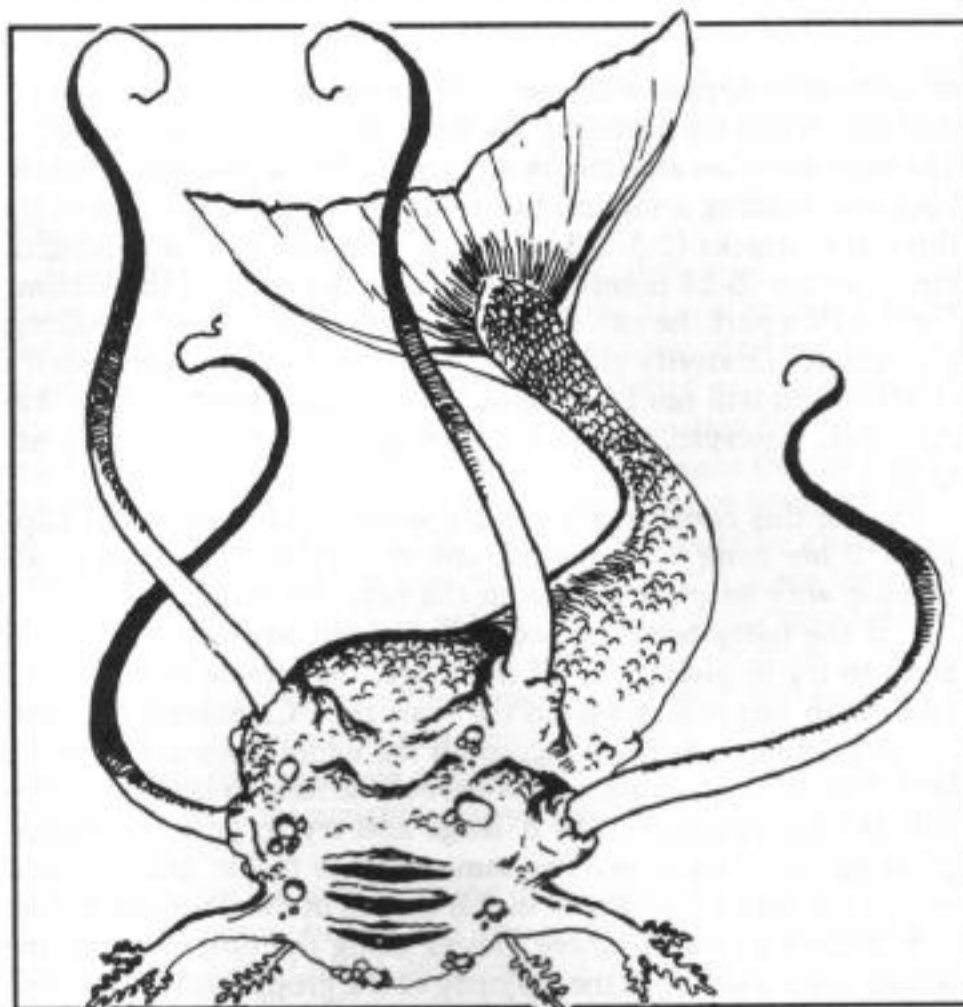
The Darksea, A Cold, Wet Place

After invoking the *mass recall* spell, the party finds itself falling swiftly through darkness instead of returning to the familiar sights of home. After a drop of 100', the PCs splash down in some water. The water cushions the fall so that characters only take $2d6 + 1$ damage from the impact. However, all equipment must make a saving throw against falls (see *DMG*, page 39) with a -3 modifier. A *feather fall* spell negates both effects, but does not keep the characters from getting wet. The water will ruin any unprotected papers or spilled potions.

The water is only 15' deep, the sea floor firm and rocky. Heavily-encumbered characters will not sink far nor get stuck in a silty sea floor. A sunken character can shed a suit of armor one round faster than normal if there is one other character assisting (refer to the *DMG*, page 122, and the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, page 13, for more information).

The water is 50 degrees Fahrenheit, which is uncomfortably chilly. Characters without protection (such as a *ring of warmth* or the *endure cold* spell) will suffer the effects of hypothermia (see the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, page 42) at double the rate of onset and hit point loss. Once an affected character is removed from the water, he is still subject to the hit point loss until brought near a heat source, but the rate of loss returns to normal.

The water is still, and tastes strongly of salt and other minerals. The surface of the water is covered with a very light film of some foul-smelling oily substance. There is no movement within sight. In fact, there seems to be nothing within sight. The sky above is completely dark, neither stars nor a discernable ceiling. In one direction (towards the southeast), there is a palpable presence of some sort, weighty and malevolent, and the PCs will have the eerie sense that something there is watching them from that direc-



tion, waiting. From the opposite direction (northwest) comes the sounds of a struggle or disturbance of some sort in the water.

In fact, the party has landed close to the shore of a very large sea in the Underdark. They are currently floating/swimming about 750 yards due south of the shore. Close-by (150 yards to the northwest), a battle between two aboleths is raging; this battle is the source of the sounds of struggle. The ceiling of the cavern is 200' up, well beyond the range of most light sources or infravision.

The "presence" felt to the southeast is that of an underwater aboleth city, some two miles away. For every full hour the characters spend in or near this sea, they must make a Wisdom check. After the first check is failed, a character will spend a round staring in the direction of the city, enrapt. After the second failure, the PC will walk and/or swim towards the city for 1d6 rounds, unless restrained and shaken back to his senses. The third failure will find the character absolutely compelled to swim to the city; this urge will not die away, under any circumstances, until the character is removed from the environs of this sea. Should the PCs begin a journey to the city, the DM should remind them of the malevolence they sense there. If they continue, the PCs are asking for trouble, and the DM should feel free to throw them into an encounter underneath the waves of the Dark Sea from which they would be lucky to escape.

The oily scum on the surface of the sea is the mucus of the aboleth race, which they use to enable their slaves to breathe water. It is too dilute here to have any effect on the party, but a bard can correctly identify the stuff with a legend lore roll.

Given the circumstances, the party's first order of business would seem to be determining where they are and finding the shore. There are several spells and abilities which the party might use to determine where they are. Dwarves and gnomes may attempt to detect approximate depth underground (three and a half miles) without penalty, but any gnome's ability to determine direction underground is weakened. A gnome can correctly judge which direction is north on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6; if the roll fails, the gnome will likely (1-9 on 1d10) believe that north lies in the direction of the aboleth city. Likewise, a character using the non-weapon proficiency Direction Sense has a -3 penalty to that skill check. Again, if the check fails, it is 90% likely that the character will think that southeast is north. The Navigation

Aboleth (2) and Cloakers (10)

skill will tell the character that the sea is enormous and that the party is near shore. Divination spells are likely to provide more information. *Find the path* and such items as *arrows of direction*, if asked to indicate a path to an exit, will point to the northwest and the north/northeast. Flying spells and the like will help the characters determine where the closest shore might be.

It should take the PCs 1d10 rounds to figure out (if they do) where they are and which direction they want to swim/fly, etc. to get to shore (rules for swimming characters can be found on pp. 120-122 of the *DMG*, and pp. 12-14 of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*) The fear of drowning or succumbing to hypothermia should motivate the characters to move along. The battle to the northwest is another source of motivation. If the party is still in the water after 2d10 rounds, or if they head northwest to find an exit or the shore, they will surely get caught up in the aboleth fight (detailed in the following section). If they have made it to the north shore within 2d10 rounds, there is a 25% chance that they will successfully avoid being dragged into the aboleth battle altogether.

The Aboleth Battle

A hundred fifty yards northwest, two aboleth and their charmed slaves are locked in combat. One of the monsters has enslaved a stone giant; the other has decided to initiate a challenge for the powerful slave.

Each aboleth is attacking the other with two of its four tentacles. Each is immune to the tentacles' special powers; any other character struck by the tentacles must save vs. spell or the victim's skin will change into a clear, slimy membrane in 2-5 rounds. The change can be cancelled by a *cure disease* or reversed after the fact by a *cure serious wounds*. The membrane must be kept damp of the victim will take 1-12 points of damage each turn. The aboleths are vastly intelligent and are aware of the party, but can not devote the full concentration necessary to cast their audible/visual illusions at any party members. Neither are the PCs within 30', the range required by an aboleth to attempt to *charm* a creature.

One aboleth (the one with more injuries) has enslaved a stone giant and three drow elf warriors. The other aboleth has enslaved fifteen drow warriors. All the slaves have had their skin transformed into membrane, and the elf slaves have been covered in aboleth mucus, a substance which enables them to breathe water, but not air, for 1-3 hours. Because of this, the dueling aboleths have stirred up the water into a frothy mass of bubbles around them, keeping the water-breathing slaves from participating in the battle. This froth is the sound the PCs hear coming from this direction. The giant stands with his head above water, and so he is not covered in the mucus. He has been attempting to attack his master's opponent, but now he is sent to bring the PCs into the battle.

This stone giant has an oily, transparent membrane skin, through which the PCs can see the giant's muscles and organs (rather than its usual stone-like skin), reducing his Armor Class from 0 to 5. He can travel faster than the party can swim and will attempt to splash flying characters within 50' of him. A splashed character takes no damage, but must make a successful Dexterity Check at -3 penalty to avoid falling into the sea. The stone giant will attempt to close with one character after another, grab them, and throw them up to 300 yards towards the aboleths' conflict. He will not return attacks, except to grab and hurl the attacker. Note: all attacks made by characters or creatures not bred to the water—including this giant—occur at a -4 penalty to the attack roll.

A thrown character must now succeed in a Dexterity check or crash into the second aboleth, the one that challenged the stone giant's master. Such a crash will cause both the character and the aboleth 1d10 points of damage. A successful Dex check will

allow the character to land in the water nearby, taking only 1d6 damage. Air-breathing characters can breathe in the frothing water, much as if an *airy water* spell had been cast. At the location of the aboleths, the water is only 12' deep.

Once a character attacks either of the aboleths, both monsters devote some of their attention to the PC, attacking with one or two tentacles. Each tentacle causes 1d6 damage and requires a save versus spell for the character's skin to avoid transforming into transparent membrane. However, it will always be the case that each aboleth will devote no less than two of its four attacks to the other monster, no matter how many PCs are attacking.

If a character causes at least ten points of deliberate damage to one of the aboleths and is within 30' of the offended monster, it will attempt to use one of its three *charms* upon the PC. An enslaved PC will not fight for the aboleth, but will obey all other telepathic instructions. If an enslaved creature or character is separated from the aboleth by at least a mile, a new saving throw may be made each day. In addition, the charm can be broken by remove curse or *dispel magic* spells or by the death of the master aboleth.

Once one or the other aboleth is killed, its slaves will be freed. If one of the freed slaves is the stone giant, the surviving aboleth will direct its *charm attempts to the great monster*. The surviving aboleth will also cease the frothing the sea into foam and devote its full attentions to the party. It will try to charm the most powerful player characters, under the restriction that it may employ the power but the three times per day. The enslaved drow warriors (either three or 15 of them, depending upon which aboleth wins the conflict) will also attempt to restrain the party, grappling them and attempting to hold them underwater until the aboleth can charm the PCs or finish them off.

These drow are all male and are all recent captures within the last month or so, the last remnants of a large drow expedition into this darkening sea. Their master will command them to overbear the PCs and drag them underwater (see *DMG*, page 60). The giant will return to the combat as well (if still controlled by one or the other aboleth) and assist in the suppression of the characters.

Sooner or later, the PCs should defeat the second aboleth. All its slaves are freed and attempt to flee. If the PCs attempt to delay the drow, the dark elves will return the attack with their spears and with all their magic. If the stone giant is not allowed to escape, he will attack the delaying character(s) with his club. His bellowing curses (something to the effect of "Let me go!") indicate that all he wants to do is get away.

Aboleth (2): AC 4; MV 3, Sw 18; HD 8, hp 25, 29; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6/1d6; SA: charm, suffocation, illusions, alteration; AL LE; THAC0 13.

Stone giant slave (1): AC 7; MV 12 (slowed to 8); HD 14+2, hp 74; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+8; SA: Throw things; AL N; THAC0 7.

Drow elves (3-15): AC 5; MV 12, Sw 4; HD 5, hp 26 apiece; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA: *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *detect magic*, *know alignment*, *levitate*; SD: 60% magic resistance, +2 saving throws; AL CE; THAC0 15.

Dry Ground at Last

Five hundred yards to the northwest beyond the battlesite is the shore of the Dark Sea. This shore is about a hundred feet deep and extends until it reaches the cave wall, which rises up 40' and arches back towards the sea. The shore is foul-smelling and covered in blackened aboleth slime, but is otherwise barren. The party can rest here to dry off and warm up, but there are no means for starting or maintaining a fire; besides, a party that stays here too long is still subject to the psychic lure of the aboleth city to the southeast. This summoning will continue even if the PCs decide to sleep for a few hours. A sleeping character makes a Wisdom check at a -1 penalty, and if he fails, will im-

Aboleth (2) and Cloakers (10)

mediately awaken and either stare out to sea in confusion or proceed immediately into the water. Characters failing the same hourly check will awaken within five minutes of one another. It would be for the best if the party moved on.

Find the path, an arrow of direction, or some other means of determining the best direction, will lead the party northeast. Following the beach southwest will only lead the party onto a narrow expanse of beach, slimed even more heavily with the oily, black slime. After a mile, the party will begin to find humanoid bones along the beach, and within another quarter mile will run headlong into a sealed tunnel entrance.

The seal, a vast stone disk, extends for some twenty feet into the sea and is a very secure plug on the tunnel (requiring at least a 23 Strength to even loosen and possessing 50% magic resistance). It was here that the drow entered the Dark Sea cavern, and it was here that dozens of them met their deaths. The tunnel was sealed some weeks ago and leads back to the realms of the drow. The party is not welcome to disrupt the seal, and large numbers of drow will forcibly return the party to the Dark Sea if the PCs are foolish enough to try and escape through this tunnel. It would be best to turn back and try the other direction.

If they travel northeast from the spot on the beach where they come ashore, the party will find that evidence of aboleths begins to disappear. After a half-mile, the black slime on the beach clears away, revealing sand and small rocks. A mile-and-a-half farther, the beach turns a little rockier, until, a half-mile later, it is quite irregular. The bank becomes steeper, inclining at about 15 degrees towards the sea, and shrinks a bit, so that at times the party is required to either return to the water and wade knee-deep for 30 feet or so, or climb the cavern wall next to the shore.

Five miles farther along the beach, the party will see in the distance what looks like another aboleth. In fact, it is a beached aboleth corpse, dead perhaps a month. Its three eyes, one on top of the other, have glazed over and turned a dull gray color. Its tentacles have grown black and brittle. Unnervingly, though, it is still breathing.

The Cloaker Caves

After another 200 yards, the beach opens up, and a small rivulet of metallic-tasting water flows out of a tunnel into the sea. The tunnel is 12' wide at its widest, narrowing sometimes to 5' wide, and fluctuates between six and nine feet high. It slopes upwards and angles to the northeast. Divination spells indicate the tunnel as the best way up or out.

The tunnel certainly extends for quite a distance. A dwarf or gnome has standard chances to discern that the tunnel is, in fact, gradually going up, which might also be discovered by noting the water that is trickling down from up ahead. (After a mile or so, the characters also notice a decrease in the pull of the aboleth city in the Dark Sea.)

The tunnel is a natural one, and twists one way and then another. After two and a half miles, it narrows to four feet across and three feet high. Most characters will be required to crawl through this section of the tunnel, restricting them to a movement rate of 30 feet per minute. The small, trickling stream remains constant however. Characters asking specifically about the water should receive an Intelligence check. Those succeeding in this check, notice that the water has left significant mineral and metal deposits over the years. It would take a dwarf or magical means to recognize the deposits as lead.

After a mile of crawlways, the tunnel unexpectedly opens up into a cave 75' long, 40' wide, and over 20' high. In the center of the cave is a pool, 15' in diameter, with a stalagmite made of some dull silver metal jutting out from the pool's center. This is the cloakers' lair, and its residents are approaching to attack the party.



Unless the party is moving without a light source, the cloakers are prepared for the party and attack immediately. If the party has been moving in the darkness, and has been reasonably quiet about doing so, allow the standard chances for surprise. One cloaker will stay back just beyond the pool and moan at its first level of intensity. This subsonic moaning numbs the mind of listeners, causing unease and applying a -2 penalty to the PCs' rolls to hit and damage. (If the PCs allow this moaning to continue for six turns—not rounds as the *Monstrous Compendium* suggests—every character will fall into a temporary stupor, unable to attack or defend himself.) The other five cloakers will close on the party to engulf them, gaining bonuses for surprise and attacking from high ground (+2 total). If there are more than five PCs, then the cloakers will use their shadow-shifting abilities to create shadowy mirror images of themselves (1d4 + 2 images). If there are five or fewer PCs entering the cave, then the cloakers will use the shadow-shifting ability to improve their Armor Class from 3 to 1.

The cloakers here have on past occasions stumbled across a drow elf or a dwarven adventurer. They consider it great sport to subdue a victim, tie it to the stalagmite in the pool, and blast the captive with their *fear*-intensity moaning, until the hapless victim goes mad. Then the cloakers kill their mad prey. In this case, with a large party of well-armed and equipped adventurers, the cloakers have decided to make sure that most of the party is dead or injured before playing with the last survivors.

When the party kills one of the cloakers, the rest of the monsters will disengage and retreat the next round (give the PCs a free attack as the cloakers attack). The cloakers will all produce a *fear*-intensity moan, which requires each member of the party to make a saving throw versus spells at a -5 penalty or flee back into the southern tunnel for two rounds. During this time, the cloakers will flee themselves, into a tunnel in the north wall of the cave. If any of the PCs make their save versus the fear moaning and wish to immediately pursue, the DM should be sure to read the following paragraphs.

The PCs may return to the cave, to find it empty except for the fallen cloaker. PCs examining the stalagmite may identify it as lead with some limestone mixed in. There are chains and clumsily-made shackles set into the soft metal. And there are still

Aboleth (2) and Cloakers (10)

more dangers in the room, dangers kept as pets by the cloakers. On either side of the pool, extending the majority of the distance from the pool to the cave's wall, two young trappers lie in wait. Another lies in front of the northern entrance to the room; an ancient mother-trapper rests beneath this third trapper.

The two trappers on either side of the pool will attack as soon as they feel anyone stepping on them. Once this happens, the cloakers will return, emitting their *hold person*-intensity moaning on any adventurers who would rescue their fellow party members caught in the trapper. Once most of the rescuers are held, the cloakers will again close to attack. And again, they will flee if any of them are killed.

The small trapper that rests before the northern tunnel entrance will also attack if stepped upon. (And the party would have to detect it, perhaps with a *detect life* spell, or take very roundabout precautions to avoid it.) The cloakers will return again, causing *nausea* with their moan this time, staying well away from the party even after many have succumbed to the nausea.

The mother-trapper is large enough that she rests under the northern young trapper and extends far enough to enclose her young, her young's prey, and three others next to the young trapper. She *will not* attack if her young is still alive, but will immediately close herself up and crush those who have killed her children. Once she does so, the cloakers close again for combat with any characters who are left outside the trapper. They will flee once again, this time down the southern tunnel, once one of them is killed.

There is nothing else in this room, save the stalagmite, which is secure to the bottom of the pool, worth 50 gp, and which weighs no less than 2500 pounds.

The tunnel to the north is wide (12' from side to side), but only three to four foot high. It is dry and much steeper than the tunnels below, rising 10' for every 100' traveled. It continues to lead to the north/northeast. There are infrequent sounds from up ahead, of metal crashing against stone. Travel continues like this for a half-mile when the party comes face to face with four more cloakers, the other half of the clutch from the cave to the south.

These four cloakers are braver than their southern companions and will stay and fight until their morale (14) is broken or until they fall dead. One has hidden itself against the left wall and reveals itself to attack the center rank of the party. Two more cloakers rush forward from a small farther up the tunnel to engulf the first row of characters. The fourth stays back and moans the *fear* effect. All of them create 1d4+2 shadow images of themselves to distract the party.

The tunnel gets more comfortable shortly thereafter, narrowing to 5' wide but expanding to 10' to 15' in height. Another half-mile ahead, it grows littered with human and dwarven bones, some very old, some quite recent. All of them bear gnaw-marks. The passage opens into a smaller cavern, about 40' in diameter, with exits on the north and east. If the second set of cloakers fled from broken morale, they will be here. Upon sighting the party, the cloakers will promptly flee, down the eastern tunnel.

There is a large pile of cloaker refuse in this cave, piled against the west wall. It includes a fairly sizable collection of dwarf bones and some light leather armor for dwarves. Also, there is a lot of mining equipment, enough for a dozen or more miners.

The cloakers have found lost dwarven miners in the tunnels and have kidnapped others. The vile creatures would bring their victims to this chamber strip them, take them south to be tortured against the stalagmite, and then bring the gibbering wretches back here to be killed. One such victim was a dwarven adventurer-rogue. His treasure is included in the pile of refuse. It consists of a *ring of protection +2* and a *broad sword +2*. This magic broadsword is named "Jaylon's Lamentation" and has the

following ability: it glows very brightly when held unsheathed, but in the infrared light range, allowing characters with infravision to expand their visual range out to 90' (it also shines like a beacon to those monsters that can see in the infrared spectrum).

There is also a bag made of dark green leather with yellow embossed sigils. This was the dwarven rogue's *bag of holding* and it is trapped; it is spring-loaded to spew its contents all around the room unless a trigger is gripped through the bag when it is opened. Inside the bag are three gold-and-jade rings, each worth 200 gold pieces, a rusted set of thieves' tools, a rusted dagger, a smaller sack containing 90 gp, 20 sp, and 2 cp, and three potions: *diminution*, *ESP*, and one-third of a vial of *healing* potion.

Cloakers (10): AC 3 or 1; MV 1, Fl 15 (D); HD 6, hp 41, 35, 31, 28, 26, 25, 24, 21, 20, 17; #AT 2+special; Dmg 1-6/1-6/special; SA: engulf, moan; SD: manipulate shadows; AL CN; THAC0 13.

Trappers (4): AC 3; MV 3; HD 9, 9, 9, 13, hp 44, 56, 43, 60; #AT 2, 2, 2, 5; Dmg per attack 4+victim's AC; SA crushing; SD: camouflage, pin weapon arms; AL N; THAC0 11, 11, 11, 7.

Conclusion

Divination spells will indicate that the northern passage is the one to travel. There are also sounds of mining heard infrequently coming down this steep, upward-sloping tunnel. The eastern passage, into which the cloakers fled, slopes down after about thirty feet. It eventually curves south, and begins a steep slope downward. It is damp and slippery, and a party traveling down this tunnel will either turn back after a quarter mile or find the tunnel a slick, steep one-way ride back down to the Dark Sea.

A party travelling up the north tunnel will find that the sounds of mining come ever closer. After another ten miles, the party comes into an active dwarven mine. They have reached safety and can shortly find their way back home. They have been travelling at least 22 miles after suffering from hypothermia. They could well use a rest.

Ankheg (14)

Terrain:	Plain-Subterranean
Total Party Levels:	42 (Average 7th)
Total g.p.:	1,700/3,500 g.p.
Total Magic X.P.:	None

Set Up

- The PCs are approached by a group of halfling tobacco farmers. It seems that one prominent farmer, Boffo Cosgrove, has been declared missing. His door was bolted from the inside, his halfling hole found in a shambles, and there were no other exits from the hole. The halflings ask the PCs to check out Cosgrove's domicile and see if they can turn up any clues as to Boffo's whereabouts.

- The PCs are enjoying a picnic (or perhaps just stopping for a rest and some lunch) in a grassy meadow on a warm day. Entertainment is provided by seven children from a farming town very close by. The children, aged from nine to twelve, are playing at being adventurers. The happy scene is shattered when the ground under the children gives way, and they all fall into a hole, disappearing from sight.

Things get even worse when a second hole opens up in an explosion of rocks and dirt. Two ankhegs burst out and attack the PCs. Roll immediately for surprise.

Ankhegs (2): AC 2, Underside 4; MV 12, Br 6; HD 7; hp 30 each; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18 (crush)+1-4 (acid); THACO 13; SA Stream of acid 8-32 points of damage; SD nil; ML 9; AL nil

Background

In the course of their subterranean burrowing, some ankhegs have uncovered a large pocket of poisonous gas. This gas has flooded some of their tunnels, driving a few of the ankhegs up to the surface. The gas drives the things mad, and as the poison makes its way through the maze of tunnels, even more ankhegs will come to the surface and overrun the area.

As far as Boffo Cosgrove is concerned (if that set-up is used), the gas-crazed ankhegs have burrowed through one of the walls in his halfling hole, against which rested his main wardrobe. In essence, Boffo opened his closet and found an ankheg's head poking through the back wall. The halfling became a tasty snack before he could utter a peep. Since Boffo was holding onto the wardrobe door when the incident occurred, the door itself was yanked closed as the poor unfortunate was pulled in, never to be seen again.

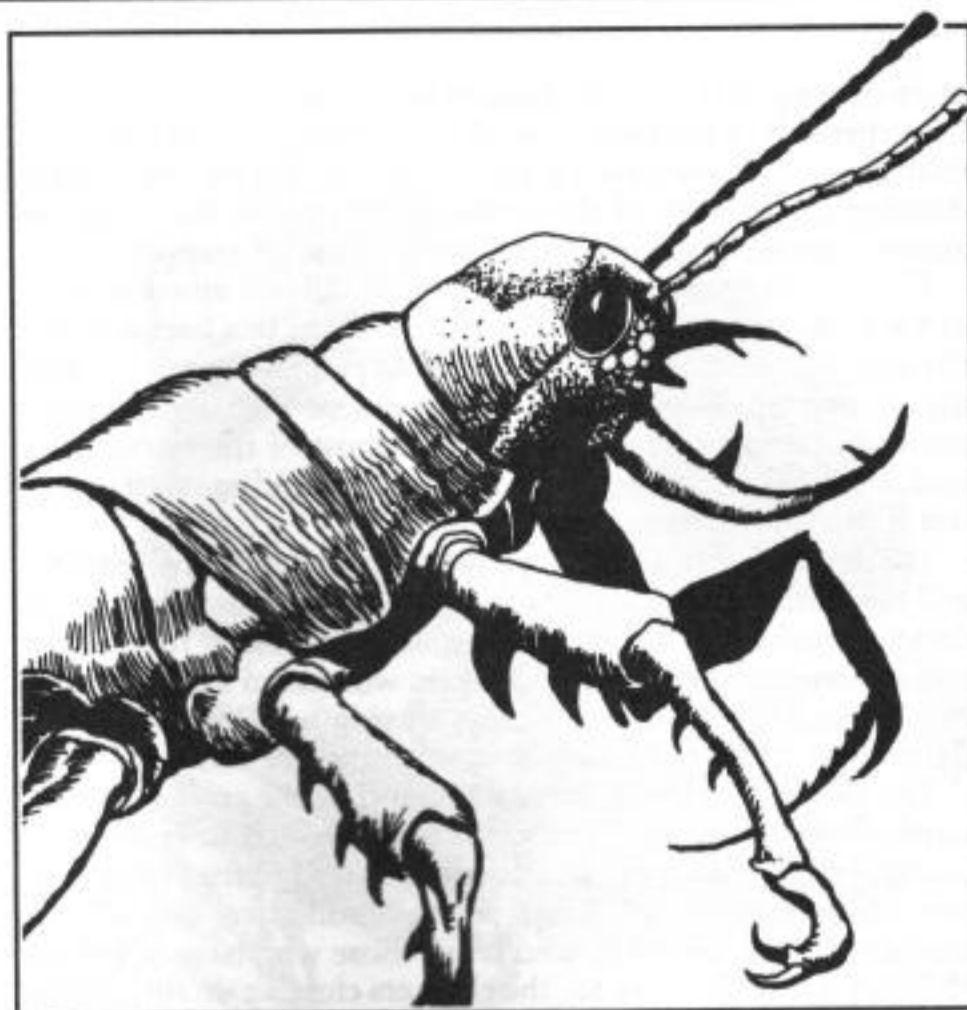
The Lair

Regardless of which set-up is used, the main ankheg lair is built around a vertical shaft. The collapsed area that the children fell through was a patch of ground weakened by the two burrowing ankhegs that erupted from the ground and attacked the party. Both tunnels meet in a 'Y' intersection a scant 15' below the surface.

From the halfling's hole, the ankheg tunnel begins behind the wardrobe, runs horizontally for 20', and then drops down into a vertical shaft.

The vertical shaft is 25 feet wide and 90' deep. The first ten feet of the shaft are dirt walls, which quickly turn to clay for about 30 feet, and become rough granite for the last 50 feet. For climbing purposes, the entire tunnel should be considered "rough with ledges" and in "slightly slippery" condition. The walls have a tendency to be rather crumbly.

At the bottom of the shaft lies a massive heap of slightly rotten vegetation and soft earth, the latter being topsoil that has fallen from above during the ankhegs' frantic burrowing. This means that anyone who falls down the shaft lands on this soft



mass and takes 1d3 points of damage for every 10' fallen. The only exit (besides straight back up) is another shaft, which descends diagonally from the bottom of the first shaft at a 100 degree angle (10 degrees beyond horizontal). If the PCs are out looking for children, anyone who successfully makes his tracking proficiency check sees seven sets of tracks descending into the diagonal shaft. These tracks seem to indicate that the children have slid down the diagonal passage. The passage is shaped like a flattened oval, is 25' wide and 10' high, and heads in an easterly direction.

Ninety feet down the sloping tunnel, the PCs feel some vibrations overhead, which pass in 15 seconds. Thirty feet farther down, another set of vibrations are felt, these from underfoot, which last for 30 seconds. Both sets of vibrations feel as if something were scurrying along a path roughly perpendicular to the PCs, going in both directions.

At the 200 foot mark, the PCs are set upon by four ankhegs, two popping out of the floor, two emerging from the ceiling. If the children set-up is being used, it should be noted that the weight of their passing through the tunnel was insufficient to alert the ankheg, the creatures' senses being dulled due to their current crazed state.

The ankhegs' crazed digging will merit a percentile roll to determine if a cave-in has occurred. (This check should be made after each round of melee as per the "Cave-In" rules in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pp. 38-42.)

At the 250' point, the DM should make secret Wisdom ability checks against all PCs to see if anyone detects the odor of poisonous gas. (Consult the "Odor Detection" rules in the *DSG*, pp. 37-38.) The source of the gas is about 1,000 feet away, so each PC's Wisdom check is given a -4 modifier. The gas is not immediately dangerous to the PCs, but the ankhegs have been breathing it for some time.

The slope of the tunnel has now changed to a mere 95 degrees. When the PCs have descended the tunnel to about the 300' point, the ground gives way beneath them, dropping all of the PCs down 25' into the next level of tunnels. Each PC will take 2d6 points of damage unless a successful Dexterity ability check is made, in which case only half damage is taken.

The tunnels on this level are only eight feet wide. The tunnel in which the party finds itself runs west to east, but has no slope to it. If the PCs head east, the tunnel continues for about 120

Ankheg (14)

feet then ends at a rocky shaft, which stretches upward for 25'. This shaft connects to the diagonally sloping tunnel the players fell from; the PCs would have reached this shaft from above if their tunnel had not collapsed.

In fact, if the "children set-up" is being used, the children are standing at the top of the shaft, wondering how they are going to get down. They are only slightly scraped up after their ordeal and are more scared than hurt.

Now, not only do the PCs have to get to the children, they have to decide how to handle things from this point on. Do the PCs take the children with them as they continue their exploration or do they leave the children in this shaft? Will the PCs head back to the surface with the children, then return to finish off the remaining ankhegs?

While the PCs are deciding this and working to get to the children, two ankhegs (6HD; hp 22, 20) will erupt from the PCs' end of the shaft. At the same time, another ankheg (also 6HD; hp 28) pops in at the top of the shaft, casting a hungry eye at the scared youngsters. The children are unable to defend themselves.

After the ensuing battle with the ravenous giant insects, the PCs must contend with yet another hazard: the children's panic. Consider the children's morale to be "unsteady" (5). Morale checks should be rolled at the beginning and the end of every monster encounter and after a cave-in, rockslide, or fall of 10' or more. (Use the NPC Reactions to Underground Adventures Table, p. 122, *DSG*, for any child who fails his morale check. If the PCs are not being run through the "children set-up", the only thing that changes in this encounter is the presence, they are obviously absent. The ankhegs still appear, however. Use the 8HD ankheg listed at the end of this adventure.)

Heading west in the newly discovered tunnel, the smell in the air grows increasingly foul. At a point 100' from where the PCs "dropped in" on the new level of tunnels, they come upon a 25' wide hole in the floor. There are sounds of clacking and scraping coming from below and a faint glow emanates from the hole.

Glancing into the hole, the PCs see a chamber 60' in diameter. Five dead ankhegs lie strewn about the area, each having 12 odd-looking globes (eggs) embedded in their backs. Scuttling around them are five live ankhegs.

At this point, each PC must a Wisdom ability check at half their Wisdom. Druid PCs can check against their full Wisdom. Any who pass notice that the scurrying ankhegs are acting very much like rats who are thrashing in their death throes after consuming poison.

If anyone attempts to use magic to communicate with the monsters (such as casting *Speak with Monster* or *ESP*, that PC will get the following vague impressions: "...unalive air...air make unalive...air taste not alive...air making unalive us..." It will also be evident to anyone using magic to speak to the ankhegs that the creatures are dying, their thought processes breaking down.

The ankhegs are dying of poison gas that has leaked into their tunnels from an underground fissure. The gas is slightly heavier than air, and the only reason it has gotten as far up the tunnels as it has is that it is being forced up by great underground pressure.

In this area the poison gas will begin to affect the PCs as well. This gas is not as harmful to the party as it is to the ankhegs, but a saving throw vs. poison must be made for each PC. For every turn the characters are in this vicinity (at the top of the egg chamber shaft and inside it), and fail their saving throws, they must remove 2 points from their Constitution ability. If a PC's Constitution is reduced to 0, that character passes out from exposure to the gas. Unconscious party members must be removed from this area within 10 rounds or die. Complete restoration of a poisoned character's Constitution can only be attained above ground at a rate of 1 point per every turn in the open air.

When a PC's original Constitution score is reduced by half or more, he will act as if affected by the 4th-level wizard spell *con-*

fusion. This reflects the effect of the poison gas on the victim's brain. The *confusion* effects continue until the PC passes out or is taken above ground.

The ankhegs in this egg chamber will die in one turn. If a brave PC tries to *neutralize poison*, it will detoxify the gas in *this chamber* and all harmful effects caused by it will end for 1d6 turns. This act will gain the PCs valuable ankheg allies that will show the adventurers where the offending fissure lies.

The fissure lies 800' west of the egg chamber. The air smells very bad at the 400' mark. The exact smell is unidentifiable but there is a hint of rotten eggs to it. Also, the flames of all torches and lanterns burn with a slightly greenish tint.

At the 700 foot mark, the PCs hear a great hissing noise, like a giant snake on the rampage nearby. Finally, the PCs come upon a great rocky chasm, with stalactites hanging above it. The ceiling is 150' high, and the chasm is 200' deep and 100' wide. At the bottom of the chasm lies a fissure 50' long and 15' wide. The whole chamber is filled with a putrid green haze.

Being so close to the source of the poison gas, each PC must now save vs. poison *once per round*, with failure reducing their Constitution ability by 3 points per round. A successful saving throw means no damage is taken for now.

Sealing the fissure can be done either by some sort of spell or by filling up the crack with rocks and debris found at the lip and in the chasm. There is not enough loose rock to accomplish this, so the PCs can create a rockslide (see pp. 38-42 in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*).

Once the fissure is sealed off, the flow of poison gas into the tunnels stops. The grateful ankhegs will reward the party by relocating to somewhere under less civilized terrain.

If the PCs came underground to rescue the children, the adventurers will obviously be hailed as major heroes by the nearby community from whence the children came. Each PC will get a 500 g.p. reward. The parents of one of the children are 14th-level wizards. These wizards will cast *Identify* or any detection spells for the PCs for free. In place of the 500 g.p. reward, the wizards will recharge any PC's magic item. Another child has a father who is a 9th-level cleric, and the man will cast any spells needed to heal or even raise dead PCs. The latter spell will result in that PC losing the 500 g.p. reward, though the trade is more than equitable.

If the PCs were investigating Boffo's disappearance, the other halflings will give each of the PCs who owns a pipe 50 g.p. of the finest halfling tobacco, throw a feast for the heroes, and give them 200 g.p. each.

DMs should give a major experience point bonus to any PC who held back from attacking the dying ankhegs and tried to discern what was wrong. Five hundred experience points is a fair total. Any druids who refused to attack and instead tried to cure the ankhegs should get a 1,000 experience point bonus. All PCs involved in sealing the crevice should receive 500 experience points. Each child rescued gives each PC a 100 experience point award.

Of course, if the PCs just went down the tunnels and wiped out anything that looked like an ankheg, they could always sell the ankheg shells to the local armorer for 200 g.p. per hide. The ankheg acid can be sold to the local alchemist for 10 g.p. per vial. Each ankheg yields 10 vials of acid, though the PCs better have a good idea of how they plan to extract the stuff without getting their fingers burned off!

Ankhegs (3): AC 2, Underside 4; MV 12, Br 6; HD 6; hp 28, 22, 20; THAC0 14; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18 (crush) + 1-4 (acid); SA acid stream 8-32 points; SD nil; ML 14 (due to crazed condition); AL nil.

Ankheg (9): AC 2, Underside 4; MV 12, Br 6; HD 8; hp 35 each; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18 (crush) + 1-4 (acid); SA acid stream 8-32 points; SD nil; ML 14 (due to crazed condition); AL N; THAC0 12.

Jermlaine (50) and Rats (50)

Terrain:	Subterranean
Total Party Levels:	32 (Average 4th)
Total g.p.:	3,275 g.p.
Total Magic X.P.:	4,900

Set Up

- During their exploration of some underground caverns, the PCs have stopped for some much-needed rest. After watches are decided upon, the rest of the party goes to sleep. During the second watch (sometime around three a.m.), a pack of cowardly jermlaine decide to wreak some havoc on the party.

- A pack of jermlaine, which has been watching the wounded party as it tries to limp along, sets up an ambush, hoping to get the upper hand against the weakened PCs. (DM Note: Use this particular set-up if more than half of the PCs have less than half their normal hit points.)

- While resting at an inn in a small village, the PCs are approached by the village elder and asked for a favor. The village has recently experienced a surge in the rat population. So far, no one has been hurt, but the village militia is getting tired out. The rats are coming from a cave complex seven miles due south of the town. The militia has tried to take the fight to the rats' lair, but the men always return with tales that some unknown presence protects the rats. The village elder will give each PC a 250 g.p. reward for successfully wiping out the rats. Each PC will be given any cave exploration equipment needed.

Terror at Night

In the first set up, a group of 30 jermlaine will attempt to sneak into the PCs' resting place during the pre-dawn hours and commit the numerous acts of vandalism: cutting bowstrings, ruining crossbow firing mechanisms, gluing swords and daggers into their scabbards (a successful Open Doors roll necessary in order to free the weapon, the only action the PC can take that round!), fouling holy water, stealing wizard and cleric material components and holy symbols, taking food, cutting the straps of backpacks, puncturing water and wineskins, and blunting arrowheads.

The jermlaine have a good chance of getting away with this vandalism as well as surprising and capturing members of the party. (Jermlaine are 75% undetectable and opponents suffer -5 penalty to their surprise rolls. The DM should allow the jermlaine to continue their vandalism until one of the PC guards successfully rolls to avoid surprise. Even then, the PC must make a successful detection roll—25% or less—to discover the jermlaine and their activities. Only when the PCs detect the jermlaine can they raise the alarm.)

The jermlaine will assign six of their number to attack and subdue each PC guarding the camp. These six are supposed to knock out their assigned guard, gag him, and (hopefully) drag him back to their lair.

If the rest of the PCs remain asleep (sleeping PCs suffer a -6 to their surprise rolls), the jermlaine will finish their dirty work, then attack and tie up each PC. The little horrors will strip each PC, completely shave them, and leave them tied up in the nearby chamber. A few of the jermlaine will scuttle off to find some trolls, troglodytes, or other underground denizen in hopes of having some fun watching the monster deal with the helpless adventurers. To determine their success, increase the frequency of random monster encounter rolls to one roll per turn, with a 1-3 on a 1d10 indicating an encounter.

If the party is awakened and begins to attack the raiding jermlaine, or if the jermlaine cannot get the best of the PC guards, the little creatures will do one of two things (50/50 chance). They



will either scuttle off to their lair (within 40 feet of the campsite, hidden by a small boulder) or will scurry down a nearby tunnel, hoping to lead the party into an ambush (detailed in the next section.)

Jermlaine (30): AC 7; MV 15; HD 1-4 hp; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 or 1-4; THAC0 20; ML 12; AL NE. The jermlaine are armed with blackjacks, darts, and "mini-pikes." (See the *Monstrous Compendium* for further details on the jermlaine.)

The Ambush

The dimensions of the underground complex where the ambush will occur are irrelevant. What matters is that at one point, while the PCs are limping along, searching for the rats' lair (see "Set Up"), or chasing the raiding jermlaine (from the previous section), the jermlaine have set up an ambush. The little horrors have entrenched themselves in a bottleneck area of the tunnels where the passageway is only 3' wide and there are many crags and crevasses in which to hide. This narrow tunnel proceeds for about 70'. The ceiling is 35' high. The jermlaine are entrenched 15' up the sides of the walls, well out of the range of casual glances and light sources.

Regardless of what has happened previously, there will be 30 jermlaine and eight giant rats involved in the ambush. The ambush occurs in several stages:

Stage One: Twelve jermlaine and four rats wait on each side of the passage, and six jermlaine are hiding in some clefts near the ceiling. When the party has walked 60 feet into the bottleneck, the first two PCs may fall into a camouflaged pit with sharpened stalagmites lining the bottom. This pit is so well constructed and camouflaged (the jermlaine are experts at this sort of thing) that thieves' find-and-remove-traps rolls are reduced by 50% when applied to finding this particular pit trap. Any PC falling in the pit will take damage from 1d4 of the sharp rocks, each rock doing 1d8 damage. The pit is 15' deep so falling damage will be an additional 1d6 points. (A successful Dexterity check will reduce damage from the rocks and the fall into the pit by one-half.)

Stage Two: After the first PCs have fallen into the pit, or even if the party finds and avoids the pit, the six jermlaine on the ceiling will drop nets onto the third and fourth PCs in line and on the last PC in the line (an attempt to bottle up all the PCs so that none can escape by running forwards or backwards down

Jermlaine (50) and Rats (50)

the tunnel). The targeted PCs must make a Dexterity ability check or fall to the floor, entangled in the nets. Breaking free of these tough nets requires a successful bend bars/lift gates roll by each PC as well. The six jermlaine on the ceiling will follow up their net attack by dropping their darts on the entangled victims, gaining a +4 bonus on their attack rolls against netted victims.

Stage Three: Three jermlaine from each side of the tunnel rush out and begin bludgeoning any net-entrapped PCs. The rats scurry out and also attack these helpless folk. The goal is to knock out the PCs and drag them through a secret door built into the right wall of the pit, at floor-level.

Stage Four: The remaining PCs (those not entangled or in the pit) are fired upon by jermlaine using vials of flaming oil. The jermlaine have 12 vials on each side of the tunnel. The jermlaine will also toss their darts as well as roll rocks off the crags and onto the PCs' heads. Each boulder hitting a PC causes 5-20 hp of damage, with a 2% chance per point of damage that the injured victim will be knocked unconscious for 20 turns minus one turn per point of character Constitution.

Stage Five: Eight jermlaine (four from each side) jump into the pit and attack the victims, bludgeoning them into unconsciousness if possible.

Meanwhile, the six jermlaine on the ceiling jump onto the backs of any PCs that are still standing, gaining attack and damage bonuses for attacking from behind. The teams of three jermlaine that are attacking the net-ensnared PCs are now joined by all remaining jermlaine except for two, helping their brethren to batter the victims into unconsciousness and drag them back to their lair via a secret tunnel entrance located in the right-hand side of the tunnel, back where the bottleneck began. Assume four jermlaine are required to move one PC. (If it is not possible to drag away any PCs, the jermlaine will cut their losses by stealing any magical items and material wealth that they can get their greedy little hands on.)

Stage Six: The final stage occurs after the other stages have failed, or a third of the jermlaine are killed, or the jermlaine fail their morale check during any round of combat, whichever comes first. The two jermlaine that remained on the tunnel walls will cut the ropes and kick away rocks that hold back a rockslide trap. The resulting slide will create a 20' thick barrier in the tunnel and hopefully (for the jermlaine) will hit the PCs. Each PC must make an ability check at one-half Dexterity (round up) or suffer 4d8 hit points of damage (consult the Cave-In rules in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pp. 38-42).

In the confusion, the jermlaine will make their escape. They do not care about the fate of their rat allies, nor how many of the rodents get hurt.

Jermlaine (same as above): AC 7; MV 15; HD 1-4 hp; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 or 1-4; THACO 20; ML 12; AL NE.

These jermlaine are armed with blackjacks, darts, and "minipikes." They will also throw vials of flaming oil or the small boulders found on the ledges of the tunnel.

Giant Rats (8): AC 7; MV 12, Sw 6; HD 1-4 hp; hp 3; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; SD nil; ML 7; AL NE.

The Lair

Any PCs that are taken prisoner are pulled into a tunnel three feet in diameter. The entrances to these jermlaine tunnels are cleverly concealed by small boulders that are set up in such a way that even the jermlaine can easily push them aside. Consider these entrances to be concealed doors for purposes of detection.

The tunnel winds and turns and slopes downward for about 180'. It eventually opens up into a chamber 10' in diameter. This is the "fun area," where big folk are taken to be stripped, shaven, tortured, and eventually eaten (but not before the following day). This area is decorated with gruesome trophies such as human skulls and thighbones.

Through a two foot diameter hole which is level with the floor of the "fun area" is a tunnel leading to a sizeable rats' nest. These

rats are allies of the jermlaine and often frequent the "fun area" to clean up any refuse left by the dining jermlaine. Only halflings, gnomes, or unarmored elves can crawl into this rat tunnel. Throughout the 120' of the narrow, twisting passageway, numerous smaller tunnels branch out, each tunnel about four inches in diameter. The entire warren is pitch dark; even the commonplace phosphorescent fungus has been eaten away long ago by the rats. This tunnel is stifling, and the entire place smelling like rat waste.

Halfway through the main rat tunnel, the PCs will encounter four giant rats coming towards them.

At the end of the main tunnel lies the main rat lair. There are 25 rats here; they are quite hungry and will attack immediately. Several small passages branch off this lair, and after every round of combat, there is a cumulative 5% chance that reinforcements will arrive to aid the rats. If the additional help does arrive, roll a d6; 1-3 means that 1-4 giant rats arrive, 4-6 means that 1-6 jermlaine arrive. Once reinforcements are successfully rolled for, the DM still rolls for even more reinforcements in subsequent rounds. However, the chance drops back down to the initial 5% probability, increasing by 5% each round.

The rats' treasure is hidden under a three-foot wide pile of black rat hair here in the lair. It consists of 275 g.p., a *periapt of proof versus poison* +2, and a *ring of protection* +1.

The rat chamber has such poor air quality that each PC except for paladins of course, is 5% likely to contract a respiratory disease, though the PC gets a saving throw vs. poison (see the *Monstrous Compendium* entry for the rat).

Halfway up the walls of the jermlaine's "fun area" are the numerous holes and passages that lead to the apartments of the individual jermlaine families, as well as their treasure hoards. These passages are 18 inches high and 6 inches wide. If the PCs really want to get to the jermlaine's treasure, they will have to remove 50' of solid rock in order to get to it. Spells like *dig* could help, or the PCs could go back and try to get some mining and excavating equipment. In any case, it will take someone with the mining or stone masonry proficiency, or a dwarf or gnome, to have a decent chance of getting through to the jermlaine's treasure chamber at all. During the dig, the PCs will be harassed continually by a group of 12 jermlaine and six giant rats.

Should the PCs somehow manage to dig through, they will find the treasure chamber to be a circular room five feet in diameter. It contains 30 gems about the size of a human pinky fingernail. The gems are of exquisite workmanship, and they include diamonds, emeralds, rubies and aquamarines. Each gem is worth 100 g.p.

Other items include a *potion of extra-healing* and a *gem of seeing*.

Any surviving jermlaine will be found here, plus an additional eight of the little bane-midges and another seven giant rats. They will make their last stand, desperately trying to defeat the PCs.

If the PCs accepted the townfolks' proposition to clean out the rats and have succeeded in doing so, they will be rewarded the 250 gold pieces which were promised, as well being allowed to keep anything the found in the lair (it may seem that the townfolk are being kind of pompous about the latter point, but remember that the rats had been stealing from the townfolk for about two weeks).

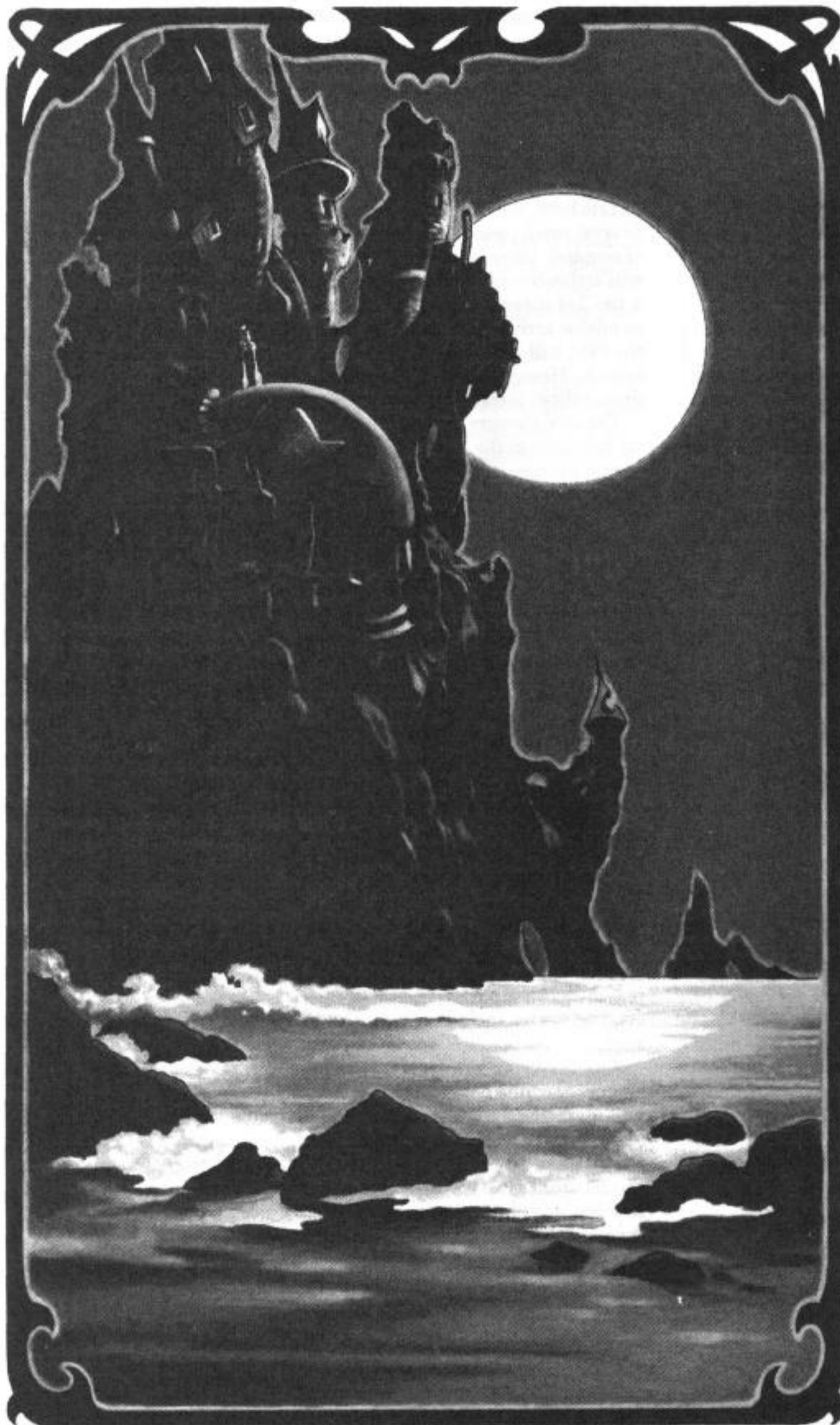
Enterprising DMs can also use the jermlaine lair as a jumping-off point for a campaign. A map of the underworld could be found in the jermlaine's treasure hoard, serving as the catalyst for a subterranean campaign, and the nearby village would make an excellent base of operations.

Jermlaine (20): AC 7; MV 15; HD 1-4 hp; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 or 1-4; THACO 20; ML 12; AL NE.

The jermlaine are armed with blackjacks, darts, and "minipikes."

Giant Rats (36): AC 7; MV 12, Sw 6; HD 1-4 hit points; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; THACO 20; ML 7; AL NE.

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