

DUNGEONS
DRAGONS

AN ADVENTURE FOR 1ST-LEVEL CHARACTERS

SCOURGE OF THE HOWLING HORDE™



Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel



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A 1ST-LEVEL ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game provides a rich rules framework for Dungeon Masters (DMs) to work with. This adventure presents a new format designed to make it easier to run each encounter. Combat encounters feature aids such as tactical maps showing starting monster locations, sidebars detailing important rules, clearly marked treasure and experience awards, and easy-to-reference monster statistics.

With this new format, *Scourge of the Howling Horde* is especially suited for use by new DMs. While any DM will find a fun and exciting 1st-level adventure to run within these pages, the format and advice make it a good tool for helping new DMs get a feel for running the game.

PREPARATION

As Dungeon Master, you need three books to run this adventure: the *D&D Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*. We also encourage the use of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS miniatures and D&D Dungeon Tiles to add a visual element to combat encounters.

Before you run, you should review the adventure to familiarize yourself with the basic storyline. Then go back and read the opening encounters in more detail; you'll probably only need to prepare three or four encounters for your first game session. Feel free to take notes, underline details that are important, or write reminders in the margins or on sticky pads.

CHECKLIST

- Your players have created and equipped characters
- You've reviewed and approved the characters (keep a copy of each player's character as a backup or in case a player misses a game session)
- You've reviewed the entire adventure
- You've carefully read the first series of encounters
- You have a *Player's Handbook*
- You have a *Dungeon Master's Guide*
- You have a *Monster Manual*
- You have at least one set of dice
- Initiative Tracker (Optional, see sidebar)
- D&D Miniatures (Optional)
- D&D Dungeon Tiles (Optional)
- Battle Grid (Optional)
- Battle Grid Markers (Optional)

ENCOUNTERS

A D&D adventure consists of three types of encounters: combat encounters, challenge encounters, and roleplaying encounters. Sometimes these encounters are combined, often one type of encounter leads to another. The majority of encounters are combat, where player characters (PCs) battle monsters or other opponents. Challenge encounters feature hazards or traps that require skill checks to overcome. Roleplaying encounters involve interaction and some skill use.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This is secret information just for the DM.

Four months ago, the black dragon wyrmling Noak secretly established a lair in the Howling Cave, in the wilderness outside the peaceful hamlet of Barrow's Edge. She demanded the worship and servitude of a local tribe of goblins and hobgoblins, ordering the tribe to help her acquire a treasure hoard to fill her lair.

Thus, the goblinoid tribe that once minded its own business suddenly became a threat to the people of Barrow's Edge. The Howling Horde goblins (as Noak named them) attacked outlying farms, harassed travelers, and even made raids into the hamlet in an effort to collect treasure to add to the dragon's growing hoard. The increasingly frequent goblin raids were more than the people of Barrow's Edge could deal with on their own, so they sent out a call far and wide for adventurers to come to their aid.

The adventure begins as the player characters arrive to answer that call....

MANAGING INITIATIVE

"Roll for initiative!"

These words herald the start of a combat encounter. Excitement builds as dice clatter to the table. Once the battle begins, however, things can get confusing. Here are three ways you can keep track of who goes next in a round.

Simple List: Some DMs jot down the initiative order on a piece of paper and update it and modify it with every new encounter. A typical list might look like this:

Lidda 18
Monsters 16
Mialee 12
Reglar 8
Joan 5

Initiative Cards: Make an initiative card for each player character, using common index cards or sticky notes. Put the character's name, Armor Class, hit points, and modifiers for key skills (such as Listen, Spot, and Sense Motive) on the card.

Make a DM card for monsters. Don't put any information on this card; it's just used to keep track of when the monsters get to act in a round.

At the start of a combat encounter, put the cards in initiative order and use them to track each character's turn.

White Board/Battle Grid: Have a player write down the order of initiative on a white board or on the side of your battle grid. Displaying this information publicly encourages players to prepare for their turns ahead of time.

PART 1: BARROW'S EDGE

ENCOUNTER: TO THE RESCUE!

The adventure assumes the player characters know each other when the session begins. If this isn't true, create a scene in which the player characters meet and receive the request for help from Barrow's Edge before running this encounter.

SETUP

The adventure begins as the player characters approach the hamlet of Barrow's Edge. As 1st-level characters, the PCs have no mounts; they must rely on their own two feet to get from place to place. The first encounter takes place on the road leading to the hamlet. Use the map on the inside front cover. Have the players establish a marching order for their characters. The road is wide enough for two people to walk side by side. Once you know how the PCs are positioned, go to the read aloud.

READ ALOUD

To start, read this out loud to the players:

The frontier hamlet of Barrow's Edge has called for adventurers, requesting help and promising reward. The request did not include any specifics.

The dirt road you travel shows signs of regular use. There are few weeds and fresh grooves show the frequent passage of wagons. The road winds through moderately forested land. Somewhere up ahead, you hear the sound of battle.

Terrain: Medium forest terrain lies on either side of the road (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 87).

ATTACK ALONG THE ROAD

This combat encounter kicks off the adventure.

A band of goblins attacked a merchant's wagon shortly before the PCs arrived. Four elf guards and eight goblins fought fiercely, and many are dead. The PCs arrive while the battle still rages. Read:

As you crest a rise in the road, you see a fight raging ahead. A merchant's wagon lies on its side, its horses dead or scattered. Several elves and goblins lay dead, while a few of each continue to battle.

Roll for initiative. You should roll an initiative check for the goblins and for the guard. The PCs start 80 feet from the overturned wagon. The road between them is straight and suitable for running (see *Player's Handbook* page 144). It should take them at least one full round to reach the fight.

Three goblins remain standing, and the last guard falls just as the PCs reach the battle. Merchant Sten Goodseller hides among the crates and barrels that haven't spilled from the wagon. She remains hiding until the goblins are defeated or driven away.

GOBLIN RAIDERS (3)

CR 1

Monster Manual, page 133

6 HP:

4 HP:

4 HP:

Notes: _____

Notes: _____

Notes: _____

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +2, **Spot** +2

Languages Goblin, 50% speak Common as well

AC 15, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 14

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee morningstar +3 (1d6)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d4)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** -3

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6

Feats Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Skills Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2

Possessions leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, 3 javelins each

Goblin Tactics

The goblins use "shoot and scoot" tactics against the PCs, throwing javelins and moving 30 feet away. They spread out and surround their opponents, keeping a distance until they run out of javelins to throw. Then they resort to melee, using their morningstars to fight. When they eventually turn to melee, the goblins team up to attack a single PC. Thanks to their victory over the merchant's guards, the goblins are feeling particularly brave by time the PCs join the fray. They feel they can fight off the newcomers without too much trouble. This opinion persists until the goblins are reduced to a single combatant; then the last goblin standing loses his courage and tries to withdraw (see *Player's Handbook* page 143).

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

If the PCs rescue the merchant and defeat the goblins, they get experience points (XP). The number of XP each character receives depends on the total number of characters in the party, as shown below. (See *Dungeon Master's Guide*, pages 36-39, for more details on awarding experience.)

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 4 | 75 |
| 2 | 150 | 5 | 60 |
| 3 | 100 | 6 | 50 |

AFTER THE BATTLE

When the PCs defeat or drive off the goblin raiders, go to the next encounter, "Meeting Merchant Goodseller," on page 4.

ENCOUNTER: MERCHANT GOODSSELLER

The D&D game provides a rich framework for many different types of encounters. "To the Rescue!" started the adventure with a combat encounter. After a combat encounter, characters usually take time to tend to the wounded and search for treasure. This encounter starts there and leads to a roleplaying opportunity.

TREASURE

The goblins participating in this raid carried little of value. Each of the eight had a suit of leather armor, a light wooden shield, a morningstar, and three javelins, all sized for use by Small characters.

The four elf guards each wore studded leather armor and carried a light wooden shield, longsword, and longbow, all sized for use by Medium characters. They each carry a pouch containing 1d6 sp. Two are dead, and two are unconscious and badly wounded.

MEETING STEN GOODSSELLER

This encounter gives the player characters the opportunity to interact with a nonplayer character, the merchant Sten Goodseller. This is a roleplaying encounter. While the player characters examine the dead bodies, read this aloud.

As you check the bodies of the goblins and the fallen elves, you notice a frightened halfling peering at you from behind a barrel in the overturned wagon.

"Is it—is it safe to come out?" she asks. "I'm Sten, Sten Goodseller, a merchant from Barrow's Edge. Are you the fine folk who saved me?"

What the Characters Can Learn from Sten

Sten had been returning home to Barrow's Edge from a trip to a halfling market where she bought and traded for goods to restock her store.

Before she left on her trip a couple of months ago, goblins in the area rarely attacked travelers. She doesn't know anything about recent attacks or a call for help.

Barrow's Edge is a growing hamlet with a current population of about one hundred adults. A frontier settlement, it has limited resources (items costing 100 gp or less are available; see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 137).

Sten's Goals

Sten first wants to check on the elf warriors that guarded her wagon. Two are dead, but the other two might be saved. The player characters have three rounds to try to save them. Stabilizing a dying character requires a DC 15 Heal check.

Next, Sten wants to get her wagon tipped back up on its wheels. This requires a DC 22 Strength check. Characters can use the Aid Another action (see *Player's Handbook*, page 65) or can simply Take 20. With enough time and some help, even those of average Strength can succeed. Once righted, Sten directs the PCs to help her rearrange the wagon's contents to transport the wounded or dead.

Sten fears another attack. She wants the player characters to act as guards and escort the wagon back to Barrow's Edge. If they hurry, they should be able to arrive before dark.

Sten's Reward

As a reward to the player characters, Sten offers each character 100 gp worth of credit at her store.

AFTER THE NEGOTIATIONS

After Sten and the player characters talk for a bit, she appeals to them to help her get her goods and the wounded guards to Barrow's Edge. "There, I'll introduce you to the hamlet's leaders and we can both find out about this call for help that seems to have gone out while I was away," Sten says. "I'm particularly eager to learn why the goblins have turned so violent. This road used to be safe, let me tell you."

When the wagon is righted, the remaining horses hitched up, and everyone is ready to resume the journey to Barrow's Edge, go to "Ambush" on page 5.

ROLEPLAYING STEN GOODSSELLER

"Anything worth saying is worth saying twice—more than once, anyway."

Sten is just a simple merchant from a tiny hamlet. She has no notable combat skills; rather, she specializes in commerce and negotiation. When she talks, Sten tends to repeat herself. It happens more frequently when she's nervous or ill-at-ease. The goblin attack disturbed Sten. She had never before been personally involved in a fight and this event truly scared her.

Once convinced the danger has passed, she emerges from her hiding spot in the overturned wagon. She first checks on the wounded and the dead, then turns her attention to getting her wagon and goods to her shop in Barrow's Edge.

The player characters can make DC 15 Knowledge (local) checks to see if they've heard of the merchant. A success reveals that a character knows that Sten runs a reputable business in Barrow's Edge.

Sten truly lives the life of a good person. She's honest and fair in her dealings. If she has a fault, it is that she is too trusting and assumes that others are also good and honest folk.

ENCOUNTER: AMBUSH

Several hours of travel lie between the site where the PCs came across Sten's wagon and the hamlet of Barrow's Edge. This travel passes uneventfully until they reach this location.

SETUP

It's twilight when the party arrives at this point. A goblin druid waits to ambush anyone who survived the earlier raiding party and is trying to reach the hamlet.

A wild-looking goblin breaks from the dense woods and charges toward you. He holds a spear in one hand, while the other burns with bright flame. A mangy wolf runs at his side.

GLARR, GOBLIN DRUID

CR 1

12 HP:

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +6

Languages Common, Druidic, Goblin

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares) with *longstrider*

Melee *produce flame* +2 touch (1d6+1 fire) or

Melee spear +3 (1d6+2)

Ranged spear +3 (1d6+2)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -2

Combat Gear wand of cure light wounds, scroll of charm animal

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 1st):

1st— *entangle*, *produce flame*

0— *create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *flare*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 8

SQ animal companion, link with companion, nature sense, share spells, wild empathy +0 (-4 magical beasts)

Feats Toughness

Skills Handle Animal +3, Knowledge (nature) +1,

Spellcraft +3, Spot +6, Survival +4

Possessions combat gear plus hide armor, spear, wand of *longstrider*, 10 pp, 10 gp

Glarr's Tactics

Glarr has already cast his *produce flame* spell. It's a touch attack, which means it hits more frequently. For more details on touch AC, see *Player's Handbook*, page 136.

Glarr and Bloodfang work together to set up flanks. If Bloodfang trips a foe, Glarr attacks the prone character.

BLOODFANG, WOLF

CR —

Monster Manual, page 283

13 HP:

N Medium animal (female wolf)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +3, Spot +3

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee bite +3 (1d6+1)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Special Actions trip

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Track[®], Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1 (+5 when using scent)

Trip (Ex) A wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. Make a Strength check (1d20+1). The bit character opposes this roll with 1d20 + either Dexterity or Strength modifier (whichever is better). Dwarves get a +4 bonus because they're very stable.

If the wolf gets a higher result than the character, the character falls prone. A prone character takes a -4 penalty when making a melee attack and a -4 penalty to Armor Class against melee (+4 bonus against ranged attacks).

For complete rules on Trip, see *Player's Handbook*, page 158.

Bloodfang's Tactics

Glarr's wolf fights fiercely for his master, working to set up flanks. If Glarr dies, though, Bloodfang runs away.

TREASURE

If the PCs defeat Glarr, they find the following items: scroll of *charm animal*, wand of *cure light wounds* (20 charges), wand of *longstrider* (25 charges), 10 pp, 10 gp

If a spellcaster uses a *detect magic* spell, the wands and scroll radiate magic. The characters need to cast an *identify* spell on each wand to determine the precise spell it contains, the command word, and the number of charges. For complete details on Spellcraft DCs, see *Player's Handbook*, page 82.

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

Characters get experience for defeating the goblin druid and his animal companion, as shown below.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

BARROW'S EDGE

The information on these pages provides you with an overview of the hamlet of Barrow's Edge. It has a population of approximately 100 adults, which has grown steadily up until the onset of the goblin raids.

A variety of races inhabit the town. Slightly more than half of the population is human, and the rest is made up of the other core races: dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, half-orcs, and halflings.

You don't need the statistics for the vast majority of nonplayer characters in your game. Don't worry about the statistics for the town blacksmith or the cobbler. The population consists of 1st- and 2nd-level commoners and experts. As a general rule, if a person demonstrates expertise or devotion to a calling, give them up to a +5 modifier on any relevant skill check. For all other checks, assume a +0 modifier. For instance, the stablehand knows horses and other animals. If it comes up, he might have a +4 modifier to Handle Animal checks. There's no reason why he should be good at Diplomacy, so just assign a +0 modifier.

Use this hamlet as a base of operations for the player characters for the rest of the adventure, and perhaps beyond. This section describes its major features. Feel free to add details or personalize it to suit your campaign. If you use it for characters above 1st level, you may want to emphasize its growth and increase its size to match the player characters' advancement. Higher-level PCs need larger settlements to buy and sell equipment and treasure.

As a hamlet, Barrow's Edge only offers items for sale of up to 100 gp in value. In addition, when the characters sell treasure, the town can only afford to purchase 500 gp worth of things from them at one time and has only about 500 gp value of items to sell. Because the settlement sees a lot of travelers and trade, allow this to recharge on a weekly basis.

STEN GOODSPELLER'S EMPORIUM

A sign above the door reads "Sten Goodseller's Emporium." Little of the original cabin can still be seen, as numerous additions jut off all sides and up one level. What had been a front porch now serves as a glassed-in display area. Equipment of all descriptions fills the many shelves and cases visible through the display windows, including lanterns, torches, bolts of cotton, bags of seed, and more.

Sten manages the shop with the help of her partner, Garret. The two display deep friendship and affection for one another. Sten trusts Garret to run the shop when she travels for new stock. Garret doesn't have the same love of the business that Sten displays, but he cares for Sten and wants the shop to succeed. Unlike Sten, who is talkative and outgoing, Garret is quiet and shy.

The shop sells general equipment and supplies, special items, armor, and weapons with values of 100 gp or less.

TEMPLE

This large building's unpainted exterior clearly shows it to be recent construction. Outside, the carved wooden symbols of many gods await their first coat of paint and identify it as a place of worship.

The townsfolk worship a wide variety of gods. This temple provides a place for them to worship. A worshiper of Pelor might pray here alongside a devotee of Wee Jas. The few residents drawn to evil deities offer their prayers in private.

If the characters enter the temple, read the following.

Inside, one large room features shrines honoring different gods spaced evenly along the walls. Rows of benches fill the open space, and brightly colored carpets adorn the floor.

Listra, a 1st-level cleric, maintains the temple. She worships the same deity as one of the characters, preferably a cleric or paladin. If none of your PCs have religious inclinations, have the cleric likewise be uncommitted to a deity. She should be nonevil, and able to spontaneously cast *cure* spells. She lives on the second floor, above the worship hall.

Deity Worshipped: _____
Domains Chosen: _____ and _____

What Listra Will do for the Player Characters

Listra loves the settlement of Barrow's Edge and willingly helps anyone seeking to serve or protect the hamlet.

If the characters commit to helping the town, the cleric casts spells for free. If a spell has a costly material component, such as the 25 gp required for *bleed water*, she expects the PCs to cover those costs.

If the characters don't agree to aid the town or if they keep their efforts secret, Listra charges them standard rates for casting spells. As a 1st-level cleric, she casts 0-level spells for 5 gp and 1st-level spells for 10 gp.

If asked, she politely refuses requests to go adventuring. Listra is devoted to maintaining the temple and serving as spiritual leader in Barrow's Edge.

Listra typically prays for these spells. If a special need arises, or if the PCs request it, Listra prays for different spells for the next day.

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st):

1st— *bleed water*, *comprehend languages*,
 domain spell: _____
0— *create water*, *detect magic*, *read magic*

Since Listra can spontaneously cast *cure* spells, she can turn any of her 0-level spells into *cure minor wounds* and either of her nondomain 1st-level spells into *cure light wounds*.

BARROW'S EDGE INN

A large building sprawls at the center of the settlement. Light spills from its windows. A broad sign above the door reads: "Barrow's Edge Inn—Welcome to All."

When the player characters enter the inn, read:

The interior of the inn feels as warm and hospitable as it seemed from outside. The warm smells of stew and fresh baked bread waft from the kitchen. A portly woman bustles about, pouring drinks and serving food.

"Travelers? Welcome. We've food and drink and rooms. All warm and clean." She turns to a pair of farmhands lounging by the hearth. "Dorf, Dissy move— give these newcomers space to settle in by the fire." The two farmers nod amiably and shift to another table.

"Now, what can I get for you?"

Mallie Marchess owns the inn. She acts as the manager, bartender, and host, and generally does whatever needs to be done to keep the place running. Everyone in the hamlet knows and respects her. Although Barrow's Edge doesn't have a formal government, Mallie's word is close to law. Eminently capable and extremely organized, Mallie possesses many leadership qualities.

With the onset of the recent goblin raids, she started to gather the resources needed to build a wooden wall around Barrow's Edge. The town has been making slow, steady progress on this project. If the work stays on schedule, the wall will be finished in about a year. Mallie knows that a wall provides better security for the future, but something needs to be done about the goblin threat now. So, in addition to spearheading the wall project, she pushed for the settlement to send out a call for help.

Mallie has a personal stake in eliminating the goblin threat. About two months ago, her husband led a group of townsfolk to try to make peace with the goblins. Mallie's husband and several of his companions never returned. She wants to see the goblin threat eliminated, while still working toward ensuring the continued safety of the hamlet.

What Mallie Will do for the Player Characters

Mallie welcomes all patrons to her establishment, and the player characters are no exception. If they don't agree to help the hamlet, or if they keep their involvement a secret, then Mallie charges them her normal rates for lodging, food, and drink. As an inn of Good quality, Mallie charges 2 gp per person per day for lodging, 5 sp per day for meals, and 4 cp per mug of ale. It is reasonable for the player characters to use the inn as a base of operations while they adventure in and around the hamlet. Mallie has no problem with this, and isn't afraid to ask them how the adventuring is going and offering them advice and opinions as she thinks of them.



BARROW'S EDGE (CONT.)

Other places of interest around the hamlet are described below.

MYSTICALITY

You can't help but notice this small, one-story building. Painted bright purple with gold stars spangling the exterior, this shop demands to be looked at. A sign above the door reads "Mysticality." Heavy purple drapes cover the windows.

The characters can ask anyone in town about the purple building. Everyone knows that the elf wizard Thamior owns the place. He tells fortunes and sells potions and scrolls. If the PCs enter the magic shop, read:

A soft chime sounds as the door opens. Shadowy illumination provided by a few candles softly lights the inside of the shop. The scent of lilac incense hangs heavy in the air.

The front room holds only a small table and three chairs. Most of Thamior's clients come for one-on-one consultations, though occasionally a customer brings a friend. Fitting more than three people in the place makes it somewhat crowded.

A door leads from this consulting room to the elf's living quarters in the back room. Once he hears the door chime, Thamior passes through the beaded archway between the consulting room and his home. The wizard is very pretentious and talks in a deep voice, making every word he speaks sound mysterious and full of meaning.

*A male elf, wearing brightly colored clothes and bedecked with numerous scarves, charms, and trinkets, looks at you through half-closed eyes and smiles knowingly.
"You come with questions. I, Thamior, search for answers. One silver piece gives you a glimpse of the future."*

Thamior enjoys a temporary monopoly as the only arcane spellcaster in Barrow's Edge. He earns a living by telling fortunes. He reads palms and cards, or looks into a murky ball of quartz crystal to provide very general advice. His skill in fortune telling doesn't rely on magic, but on Sense Motive with a +6 modifier.

Thamior, however, really is a 1st-level wizard.

What Thamior Will Do for the Player Characters

Thamior wants to build his reputation as a great wizard and fortune teller. He likes Barrow's Edge, but doesn't feel civic-minded enough to give away his services, as Listra might. He also has no interest in going on adventures or otherwise putting himself in harm's way.

Thamior charges standard rates for casting spells. As a 1st-level wizard, he casts 0-level spells for 5 gp and 1st-level spells for 10 gp, plus costs for expensive components.

Player characters might want Thamior to cast the *identify* spell. This spell requires a 100 gp pearl, so Thamior charges 110 gp to cast it.

If given a week's time, Thamior can produce any arcane scroll or potion with a sale price of 100 gp or less. (Thamior's mentor visits him about once a week, but the elf never mentions his mentor or the help the older wizard provides him with.) Thamior charges the standard prices for these items (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 230 for potions and oils, page 239 for arcane scrolls).

When the characters first arrive and on any typical day, Thamior prepares these spells. If requested, or a special need arises, he prepares different spells the following morning.

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 1st):

1st— *silent image*, *ventriloquism*
0— *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*,
 read magic

Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*endure elements*, *identify*, *mount*, *unseen servant*

If asked, Thamior is willing to exchange spells with a fellow wizard. He allows a character to copy a spell out of his spellbook in exchange for learning a spell of equal level. If the PC has no new spell to offer, Thamior charges a minimal fee of 5 gp for a 0-level spell or 10 gp for a 1st-level spell.

The player character wizard still needs to pay for the materials required to copy the spell into his or her spellbook (see *Arcane Magical Writing*, *Player's Handbook*, page 178).

OTHER BUILDINGS

Houses, a blacksmith and stable, a tinker, a grocer, a moneylender, and outlying farms, make up the rest of the hamlet and the environs around it. Everyone who lives here is nervous about the recent goblin activity, and most of the hamlet's inhabitants greet the player characters warmly if they identify themselves as coming in answer to the call for help that was sent out.

In addition to Mallie Marchess the innkeeper and Listra the cleric, the other most prominent member of the community is Arvel Durgedown, the moneylender. Arvel is a powerful but ancient dwarf who brought his fortune to Barrow's Edge and set up a moneylending business to assist the community and expand his holdings and influence. He often comes down on the opposite side of arguments and issues from Mallie, but on the question of what to do about the goblins, the two are in total agreement. Arvel, who many believe was an adventurer in his younger days, never has anything good to say about those who live by the sword or spell. He agrees that they are a necessarily tool in the effort to keep Barrow's Edge safe, but he neither likes nor trusts anyone who wears the mantle of adventurer.

ENCOUNTER: TAKING THE JOB

This roleplaying encounter sets up the rest of the adventure. When the player characters accompany Sten into the hamlet of Barrow's Edge, read:

As you continue along the road, the scenery slowly changes. Thick forest gives way to farmland, and soon the hamlet of Barrow's Edge comes into view. "Welcome to Barrow's Edge, adventurers," Sten proclaims. "I suggest you head for Mallie's inn. If she isn't behind the call for help, she'll know who is."

The information provided on pages 6–8 offers details about key locations in Barrow's Edge. Refer to that information as necessary when running this encounter.

THE REQUEST FOR HELP

Once the player characters enter the inn and Mallie finishes with her normal amount of greeting and welcoming, she gets down to business. Read:

"You helped Sten," Mallie says, pulling up a chair. "You're obviously adventurers and you're obviously capable. Have you come about our call for help?"

Let the players answer for their characters. While they tell Mallie about themselves, Arvel Durgedown enters the inn and moves to stand beside Mallie.

The powerfully built dwarf wears expensive clothing and appears to be healthy but very old. He sniffs indignantly as he looks you over, then says, "I imagine these will have to do."

Mallie introduces the moneylender, indicating that the two of them have agreed to put up a reward for the elimination of the goblin threat to Barrow's Edge.

"We have no militia, no guards," Mallie explains, "and we've already lost too many good men and women to the goblins. We sent out a call for help, for adventurers like yourselves to find out why the goblins have suddenly turned violent and put an end to the threat. We shall pay you 500 gp once we have proof that the goblins won't attack again."

Negotiations

The player characters might immediately accept Mallie's offer, or they might try to negotiate for a better deal. This requires a bit of roleplaying and a Diplomacy check. Have the player character with the best Diplomacy skill make the attempt.

A Diplomacy check of 14 or lower indicates that Mallie won't budge. 500 gp is fair compensation for the aid the player characters can provide. If the player characters aren't willing to accept a fair wage, then the hamlet will wait for others who are.

A Diplomacy check of 15 or higher indicates that the player character has convinced Mallie that a bit more compensation is warranted. She reluctantly agrees to increase the reward to 600 gp, payable upon proof that the goblin

threat has been eliminated or one month passes without a new attack.

Motivations

If the player characters can't be enticed by money alone, use additional hooks to motivate them to action.

Honor: Barrow's Edge thrives as a frontier settlement where good people do their best to eke out a living, and helping the hamlet is the honorable thing to do. The hamlet and its inhabitants haven't done anything to warrant the attacks by the goblins. The townsfolk would even welcome peaceful trade with the goblins if the goblins were so inclined. In the overall conflict between good and evil, the town clearly represents good and the tribe of goblins personifies evil.

Prestige: Barrow's Edge needs heroes, and the townsfolk heap prestige on any that step forward to help them. The townsfolk welcome the player characters as potential saviors. Everyone addresses the PCs with respect, using honorifics such as "Sir" and "M'am" as appropriate.

Curiosity: The player characters fought the goblins twice along the road. Why did the goblins attack? Why have they suddenly turned violent? What does the hamlet of Barrow's Edge have that the goblins want? If the players want to figure out what's going on and satisfy their curiosity, the characters must participate in the adventure.

BATTLE PLAN

Once the matter of the reward is settled, Arvel Durgedown fixes his iron-gray eyes on the PCs. Read:

"You must take the fight to the goblins," the dwarf says. "I am wondering, however, how you plan to find their lair."

None of the townsfolk know where the goblins are hiding. The PCs must decide on a course of action, and Arvel wants to know what that course of action is. Here are some options the players might try to pursue.

Prisoners

If the PCs took any goblin prisoners, they can discover the location of the lair. The goblins all know how to find the Howling Cave. There is a 50% chance that any particular goblin speaks Common, and even so a goblin refuses to cooperate unless intimidated into doing so.

An Intimidate check of 9 or lower entices the goblin to lie and misdirect the PCs away from the cave, sending them to an ambush (as per the encounter on page 5).

An Intimidate check of 10 or higher does the job; the goblin provides directions to the Howling Cave.

Tracking

A character with the Track feat can pick up the trail (DC 10) at either Glarr's ambush or the site of the original wagon attack. See the *Player's Handbook*, pages 83 and 101, for more information on tracking and the Survival skill.

NEXT

If the PCs successfully used skills to negotiate, intimidate, or track, give them XP as per the table on page 5. When they reach the caves, turn to page 10.

PART 2: THE HOWLING HORDE

PART 2
HOWLING
HORDE

In this part of the adventure, the player characters track the goblin raiders to their lair and try to discover the secret of the Howling Caves. **Refer to the map on the inside back cover when running this part of the adventure.** The tactical maps for each encounter area are specific areas from the full lair map.

BACKGROUND

The black dragon Noak renamed the goblin tribe "the Howling Horde" when she demanded their allegiance. The name is derived from the caverns they inhabit (and which the dragon has selected a portion to use as its lair). Narrow cracks and fissures honeycomb the hillside around the caverns. When the wind blows through these openings, strange sounds are produced; on windy days the hillside seems to moan and howl.

It takes three hours to walk from Barrow's Edge to the caverns. Townsfolk avoid the place because of the noises that fill the hillside; most believe that the area is haunted (the sounds remind them of ghostly moans).

The tribe claimed the caverns ten years ago, settling into existing rooms and corridors shaped by unknown masons from an ancient age. The once-peaceful goblins have been whipped into a frenzy by the black dragon Noak. She demands that they fill her lair with treasure, for a dragon's hoard reflects its prestige and power—Noak is determined to have a mighty hoard well before she reaches the age of very young (see *Monster Manual*, page 68, for more about the age categories of dragons).

Why did the goblins agree to help Noak? In truth, they had little choice. A wyrmling might be young, but it's still a dragon, and no sane goblin would ever try to oppose a dragon. The greedy goblins saw an opportunity when Noak arrived. Darax, a hobgoblin with a taste for power, saw Noak as a sign that his own reign was at hand. He killed the former chief, took command of the tribe, and agreed to follow Noak. Rutven, the tribe's shaman and a loyal supporter of the former chief, left in shame and anguish. He plans to return after much meditation and soul-searching, hoping to win back his tribe.

A LIVING LAIR

The goblin lair is a dynamic place. Like any habitat, activity levels vary by time of day. The Howling Horde tribe sleeps at night; the caverns are most active during the day. While goblins can see in the dark as well as daylight, their dark-vision only extends to a range of 60 feet. They just see and work better during the day.

The goblin tribe includes males and females; goblins of both genders serve as guards and sentries. There is also a scattering of goblin children in the complex, but they won't fight and they run at the first sign of trouble.

The settlement isn't static. Guards rotate shifts. People move around. They don't just sit in their rooms waiting for the adventurers to arrive. Consider the presentation of the goblin lair as the outline of where the goblins are likely to be when the PCs arrive. On any given day, goblins from the Common Room (Encounter 7) regularly rotate to the Guard Room (Encounter 2). The goblins occasionally gather in the Shrine (Encounter 4) for religious services or in the Common Room for briefings from Darax. And some goblins are regularly out participating in raids or scouting for future raids.

Make changes to the encounter descriptions in response to the actions of the player characters. For instance, let's say that the PCs defeat the sentries (Encounter 1) and retreat back to Barrow's Edge to rest and regain spells. The entrance to the lair won't remain unguarded for long. Perhaps guards from the Guard Room now act as sentries, or Big Bronk (Encounter 3) takes up guard duty.

In addition to changing where the creatures are stationed, the goblins may change physical aspects of the lair: bolting doors, positioning tables and boxes to provide cover, or even putting in a warning gong to alert those deeper in the cavern system.

PACING

The task of clearing the Howling Caves complex takes place over several days of game time. Most of the encounters are equal to the party's level. Big Bronk and Darax are CR 2. Noak is CR 3. On average, four encounters of the party's level can be handled before the PCs need a break to recover hit points and spells.

When breaks occur usually depends upon the players. However, as DM you have the ultimate control of the adventure's pacing. In a typical day, the PCs should have several encounters before being allowed to rest. The adventure builds to a couple of very natural break points. After having two fights, "To the Rescue!" and "Ambush," the PCs arrive in town and can rest and get situated. Another break point occurs before the encounter with Noak. Since she's a tough CR 3 monster, the party should be at full strength before facing her.

The PCs may need more breaks than this, but how and when these occur depends entirely upon how well or how poorly individual encounters go. The characters may choose to return to town, camp in the wilderness, or try to find a relatively safe spot in the goblin complex when the need to recover comes upon them. There are a few isolated and unvisited places in the caverns, such as the Shaman's Room (Encounter 5) or the secret passage between Big Bronk's room and the Common Room.



CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In a group of four characters, if no one dies, sometime during the adventure the characters should gain enough experience points to advance to 2nd level. Decide when to award experience points. Each encounter shows how many XP each character receives, so it's very easy to apportion out after each fight. Should you?

Players enjoy getting XP awards, but advancing a character takes time: Rolling hit points, choosing new spells, and learning about new class features are all fun-but-time-consuming aspects of leveling a character. You don't want to have the game grind to a halt in the middle of the play session.

To prevent this stop-and-start-and-stop-again situation, many DMs award experience points only at the end of a session, or at the beginning of the next session. When you award XP is entirely up to you.

Even those DMs who choose to give out XP after every encounter find it useful to put a restriction on how and when a character can level. One rule of thumb is to allow leveling only when the PCs are in a safe location, such as a town. Decide on how you want to treat XP and leveling before you start play, and share your decision with the players so that they know what to expect and can plan accordingly.

CUSTOMIZATION

You can alter the adventure as you run it. Perhaps the PCs are having a tough time with the encounters, so you decide to have a few of the guards or Big Bronk out on patrol during a visit to the lair. If the PCs are having too easy a time of it, have a goblin (or even hobgoblin) hunting party return with a big elk, some captured treasure, and a nasty attitude.

IMPROVISATION

Any adventure, no matter how detailed, can't take into account every possibility. That's where the paper-based game dramatically outshines computer games. Much of this rests squarely on the DM's shoulders. You're the power behind all of the action in the adventure. Be reasonable and fair, be consistent in your rulings, and trust your instincts. And be as creative as you like.

If the PCs sneak up and listen at the door to the Guard Room, what do they hear? Since the goblins are playing dice, you could say, "You hear some goblins playing dice." If a PC understands goblin or you have the urge, you could mimic a goblin voice and say, "I throw now," use another voice to say, "no, my turn," and a third to say, "You must be lucky or cheating."

When a fight goes badly, you get to do some quick mental gymnastics to decide what to stick with and what to fudge. If the PCs run away, how vigorously do the goblins pursue? If a fight goes badly for the goblins, do they flee? If so, where do they go? Will they run to the Common Room? To the Shrine?

Dungeon Masters make a lot of decisions on the fly, based on what they know of the scenario and the characters. Don't be afraid to wing it when you need to.

PLAYER INNOVATION

Most players come up with ideas not covered in the adventure. That's the fun of the D&D game! Award clever ideas and good teamwork by letting such efforts pay off.

Perhaps the PCs defeat Big Bronk and now want to hide out in the bugbear's room, bar the doors, and bluff that the bugbear's in a grumpy mood and wants to be left alone. This qualifies as a good idea. How do you use it? Well, the goblins aren't terribly perceptive. Have one goblin come to check on Big Bronk or bring him food. With the door closed, how can the goblin know that it's not the bugbear moving around in the room? Let a character make a Bluff check opposed by goblin's Sense Motive, perhaps awarding the PC a +2 bonus because it's a clever idea (the goblins tend to avoid Bronk anyway).

SENTRY CAVE

The first encounter once the PCs reach the Howling Caves occurs at the entrance to the cavern complex, where goblin sentries watch for intruders. The lighting conditions depend upon what time of day the PCs arrive. The sentries use no light sources, relying on their darkvision at night.

A well-worn path leads up to a cave in the hillside. The opening is about 90 feet away, and the closer you get, the more intense the feeling you have of being watched.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

Start by having the players tell you what their characters are doing from the moment the cave in the hillside appears on the path ahead.

First Impressions

The PCs get a chance to notice the two goblins and their guard dog standing in the shadows within the cave opening. If a PC makes a DC 20 Spot check, he or she sees the goblins just inside the cave ahead. The PCs can take 20 on the check, if they choose to carefully observe the path and cave entrance for twenty rounds (see *Player's Handbook*, page 65). A failed check indicates that the PCs don't notice anything beyond what was in the read-aloud text.

Guard Dog's Tactics

The dog is well trained to spot intruders (any humanoids that aren't goblins), barking a warning when anything unusual gets close to the caves. It fights alongside the goblin sentries, standing its ground and fighting to the death.

Sentry Tactics

These goblins are dedicated to protecting the cavern lair from intruders and making sure that the rest of the complex is warned when intruders appear. If at all possible, one sentry heads deeper into the cave to issue the warning, while the other sentry makes a stand at the entrance with the guard dog.

If the sentries are somehow surprised, they fight alongside the guard dog while making as much noise as possible to try to alert the guards in the next area (see page 14).

If the sentries have the opportunity, they seek higher ground deeper in this section of the cave from which to attack the PCs. See the call-out boxes on the next page for details.

GUARD DOG

CR 1/3

Monster Manual, page 271

6 HP:

N Small animal (male dog)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +5, Spot +5

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee bite +2 (1d4+1)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -3

Abilities Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Alertness, Track⁸

Skills Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +1 (+5 when using scent)

GOBLIN SENTRIES (2)

CR 2/3

Monster Manual, page 133

6 HP:

Notes: _____

4 HP:

Notes: _____

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Goblin, 50% speak Common as well

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee morningstar +2 (1d6)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d4)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** -3

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6

Feats Alertness

Skills Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +4

Possessions leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, 3 javelins each

SNEAKY PLAYER CHARACTERS

Do the PCs try to sneak up on the cave? Have them make Hide checks as they creep toward the cave, one every 30 feet. The goblin sentries make Spot checks to notice the intruders. (So, the PCs make three Hide checks to cover the distance to the cave, and the goblins get to respond with three Spot checks.)

Roll a Spot check for each goblin and the dog. Compare results to PC Hide checks, applying a penalty for distance (-1 per 10 feet of distance, see *Player's Handbook*, page 83). If the PCs make no effort to be stealthy, the goblin guards notice them easily as they approach the cave.

If the dog notices anyone who isn't a goblin, it starts barking. In this case, one guard and the dog remain at the entrance while the other goblin goes to the Guard Room for help (page 14). The sentry and two goblin guards from Encounter 2 return in 4 rounds.

INVOLVING THE GUARDS

The goblin guards from Encounter 2 can easily become involved in any fight that breaks out in the Sentry Cave.

Spotted: If the goblin sentries spot the player characters while they are still more than 30 feet from the cave entrance, one sentry runs off to alert the guards. In this case, the sentry and two guards return in four rounds.

Reaching the Door: If the player characters reach the cave entrance without being noticed, one of the goblin sentries uses its turn each round to try to reach the door to the Guard Room. Once the sentry reaches the door and uses a move action to open it, the guards become instantly alert and move to join the battle. (In this case, three of the guards rush into the Sentry Cave while the fourth guard moves toward Big Bronk's Room, Encounter 3, to call on the bugbear for help.)

Making Noise: Fighting a battle is noisy work. If the PCs contain the goblin sentries, there's still a chance that the goblin guards in the next chamber will hear the noise generated by the fight.

At the end of each round, make a Listen check for the goblin guards (Listen +2). If the fight is confined to the cave entrance, the Listen DC is 15. Once the fight moves into the largest portion of the Sentry Cave, the Listen DC drops to 10. If the fight actually gets to the area right outside the door, the Listen DC drops to 5.

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

If the PCs defeat the goblin sentries and the guard dog, they get experience points (XP). The number of XP each character receives depends on the total number of characters in the party, as shown below. If the encounter expands to include the Guard Room, award that XP as well—provided the PCs survive!

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 4 | 75 |
| 2 | 150 | 5 | 60 |
| 3 | 100 | 6 | 50 |

AFTER THE BATTLE

If the PCs defeat the goblin sentries without alerting the rest of the lair, they next get to deal with the guards in Encounter 2 (page 14).

If the goblin guards were alerted, then the PCs must deal with the extra goblin forces—including, quite possibly, Big Bronk from Encounter 3 (page 15).

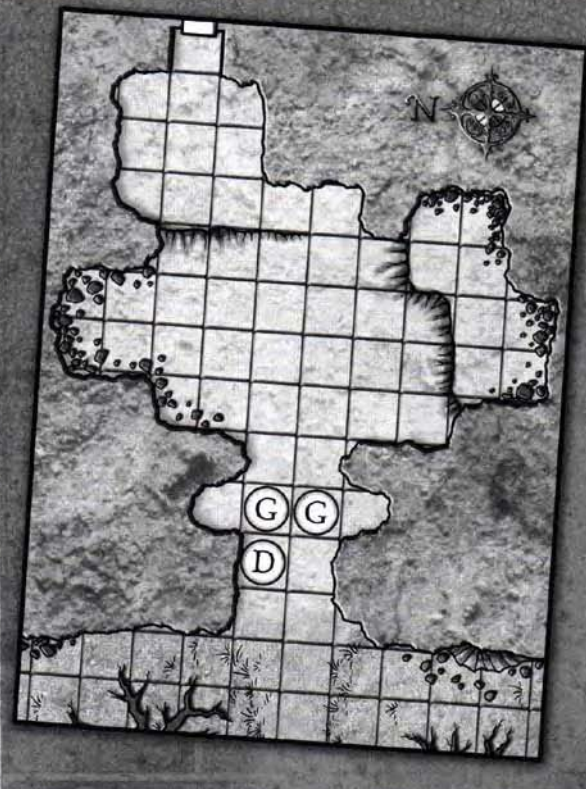
TERRAIN FEATURES

"G" indicates where the two goblin sentries start this encounter. "D" indicates where the guard dog stands as the action begins.

The goblin sentries use the terrain features of this location to good advantage. They prefer to fight from inside the cave whenever possible. Once they spot the player characters, they fall back to the alcoves to get out of sight and use cover against any ranged attacks the PCs might make. Then they use their own ranged weapons (javelins) from the alcoves once the PCs get close (within 30 feet).

If the PCs enter the cave, the goblins retreat to the larger chamber to take advantage of the **elevated terrain**, as shown on the map. The elevated terrain is 5 feet higher than the cave floor. Melee attacks made by anyone standing on higher terrain against those on the cave floor gain a +1 bonus. (Bonus for higher ground, see *Player's Handbook*, page 151.)

Crossing the **slope** of a section of elevated terrain (from low ground to high ground) requires a DC 10 Climb check (see *Player's Handbook*, page 69) or a 5-foot long jump (DC 20 with a running jump; see *Player's Handbook*, page 77).



GUARD ROOM

This chamber serves as the Guard Room for the goblin lair, protecting the entrance and serving as a staging ground should the caverns need to be defended.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

See Encounter 1 for details on how the guards might join a fight in the Sentry Cave.

Even if none of the sentries reached this room to alert the guards or if the guards failed to hear any of the sounds of battle from the Sentry Cave, there is still a chance that the guards will hear the PCs when they reach the door.

When the PCs reach the door to this area, roll Listen checks for the goblin guards (the DC is the lowest Move Silently check result of the player characters; the PCs get a +5 bonus for the closed door). The PCs can also make Listen checks to try to hear anything beyond the closed door. The Listen DC is 15.

THE ROOM

Simple wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 10, see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 61) block the two entrances to the Guard Room. The doors have no locks. Torches on the walls provide light.

'G' indicates where the four goblin guards start this encounter. If the guards aren't on alert, then they are sitting around a table playing a betting game. Throwing dice and small piles of copper and silver coins are scattered in the middle of the table.



GOBLIN GUARDS (4)

CR 1

Monster Manual, page 133

6 HP:

Notes: _____

5 HP:

Notes: _____

5 HP:

Notes: _____

4 HP:

Notes: _____

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Goblin, 50% speak Common as well

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee morningstar +3 (1d6)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d4)

Base Atk +1; Grp -3

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6

Feats Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Skills Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2

Possessions leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, javelin

Guard Tactics

If alerted by a sentry or because they heard the sounds of battle, the goblin guards leap to join the fight. Three of them head for the Sentry Cave while the fourth rushes to alert Big Bronk (Encounter 3).

If the guards aren't aware of the PCs, then the PCs get a surprise round to take a standard action before the guards can react. After the surprise round, the guards get to act in initiative order. (See *Player's Handbook*, page 137 for details on surprise.) In this case, one guard tries to reach the door that leads deeper into the caves so that he can warn Big Bronk, while the remaining three try to hold off or defeat the PCs.

TREASURE

The money on the table totals 10 gp, 5 sp, and 40 cp.

Searching the rest of the room turns up another 40 sp worth of coins. A matched pair of pewter dishes (worth 20 gp each) serves as food and water bowls for the guard dog (Encounter 1).

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

If the PCs defeat the goblin guards, award them the XP shown below according to the number in the party.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

AFTER THE BATTLE

If the PCs defeat the goblin guards without alerting the rest of the lair, they can move farther into the caves. Refer to the map on the inside front cover as the PCs move deeper into the caves.

BIG BRONK

Big Bronk is a bugbear, a goblinoid related to goblins and hobgoblins. He's substantially bigger and tougher than ordinary goblins and much more of a threat to the PCs. As such, he should be encountered on his own. If he is alerted to the presence of intruders, have him arrive just after the PCs finish with the goblin sentries and guards (Encounters 1 and 2). Otherwise, the PCs don't meet Big Bronk until they reach this area.

Big Bronk usually stays in his room with the door locked when he's not out participating in a raid. He's very violent. He most enjoys relaxing or killing things. If some goblin or hobgoblin comes to bother him, the intruder had better either have information about a fight or a gift such as food or gold. If the PCs have made two or more raids on the lair, Darax assigns Bronk to guard the cave entrance (Encounter 1).

Big Bronk's Tactics

Bronk loves to fight. He also loves to bully, torment, and insult those that he feels are inferior to him—and that's just about everybody! He can be convinced to accept a bribe from the PCs (Diplomacy DC 25 to move his attitude from Hostile to Indifferent), but otherwise he sees the PCs as a challenge he just can't ignore. He wants to fight, starting with the strongest member of the party.

This corridor ends in a set of double doors. A crude representation of a hairy-faced monster is drawn on the doors, along with the phrase, "Big Bronk's Room" in poorly written Common and Goblin letters. A series of marks score the frame to the right of the door.

Bronk can read and write a little Common and Goblin. He has scrawled his name on the doors, on every piece of equipment he owns, and on the walls and furniture inside his room. The marks on the doorframe, simple slashes cut with a blade or claw, indicate the number of creatures Bronk has killed. A careful count reveals 36 of these marks. If the PCs open the door:

You see a neat and relatively tidy room. A large bugbear sits on a large bed, carefully writing something on his shield. He looks up, stands, and smiles, strapping his shield onto his arm. "Big Bronk" is freshly written on the shield in crude Common letters. "Time to fight!" the bugbear shouts happily.

TREASURE

Bronk wears masterwork leather armor, carries a magic +1 light wooden shield, and wields an ordinary weapon. He has a pouch with 16 sp.

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 600 | 3 | 200 | 5 | 120 |
| 2 | 300 | 4 | 150 | 6 | 100 |

BIG BRONK THE BUGBEAR

CR 2

Monster Manual, page 29

16 HP:

Notes:

CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Goblin, Common

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17

Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee morningstar +5 (1d8+2)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d6+2)

Base Atk +2; Grp +4

Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9

Feats Alertness, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Skills Climb +3, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4

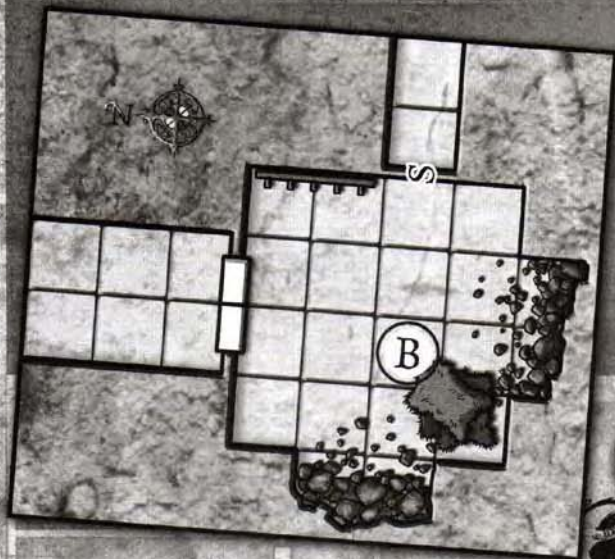
Possessions masterwork leather armor, +1 light wooden shield, morningstar, javelin

THE ROOM

Simple wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 10, see *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 61) block the entrance. The doors are locked (DC 20 Open Lock check or DC 15 Strength check). Torches on the walls provide light.

"B" indicates where Bronk starts this encounter.

A secret door connects this room to the Common Room (Encounter 7). None of the goblins know about the secret door. To find the secret door, a PC must make a DC 20 Search check in that area. Elf characters get to make a check even if they are not actively looking.



SHRINE TO MAGLUBIYET

This is a challenge encounter. This chamber features a shrine that was once a holy place dedicated to Moradin, the god of the dwarves. The goblins have desecrated the shrine by adding symbols and icons to the wall, turning it into an altar for Maglubiyet, their vile god.

The shrine features two items of interest: An altar and a magic fountain.

DOORS

Heavy stone doors block access from the corridor to this chamber. These doors are not locked.

The doors provide a sturdy defense (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 61): hardness 8 (subtract 8 from all weapon damage), 60 hit points. The doors can be locked from the inside; a DC 28 Strength check is required to break open the locked doors.

Opening the Doors

When the player characters open the doors, read:

Well-shaped stone benches face a large altar. Along each wall, rubble-filled alcoves provide sheltered recesses. Crude drawings decorate the walls and mar the altar.

APPROACHING THE ALTAR

When the player characters move toward the altar, read the following out loud:

The large altar fills much of the western portion of the chamber. It appears that the once-grand altar of fine granite has been overlaid with patches of rough plaster. Crude pictures and symbols have been carved into the plaster.

Examining the Altar

Any close examination of the altar reveals that the plaster can be cleared from the granite with relative ease, using any sharp tool or weapon. If the characters choose to do so, read the following.

Cracking the plaster reveals the full beauty of the granite altar. The intricate carvings beneath the plaster show dwarves at work, crafting weapons, mining, and sculpting.

After the plaster is cleared away, a Knowledge (religion) DC 10 check reveals that the holy symbol of Moradin, the god of the dwarves, features prominently in the original altar carvings.

Characters who can read Dwarven notice that the phrase "Moradin is Mighty" appears several times on the altar.

If noticed earlier, the secret compartment can be accessed now. If the characters hadn't noticed it before, with the plaster removed the secret compartment is easier to find (DC 10

Search check). From the seams defining the opening, the compartment must measure at least 2 feet by 3 feet.

A magic trap protects the secret compartment.

Finding the Magic Trap

If the characters open the compartment, they find the trap the hard way, by activating it. Otherwise, they might decide to check out that part of the altar before diving in.

- A *detect magic* spell shows a magical aura.
- A DC 16 Spellcraft check reveals that the aura radiates evocation magic.
- A rogue or other character with the trapfinding class feature can attempt a DC 26 Search check to notice the trap.

Avoiding the Magic Trap

If the trap is spotted, the characters can try to disarm it.

- The creator of the trap installed a bypass. If the person opening the compartment says the phrase "Moradin is Mighty" in Dwarven just before touching the door, the trap does not activate.
- A DC 26 Disable Device check disarms the trap.
- Characters might choose to just bash open the compartment. The altar has hardness 8 (subtract 8 from all weapon damage) and 40 hit points. If the PCs use brute force to open the compartment, the trap goes off and there is a 50% chance that the potions inside break.

Activating the Magic Trap

Opening the door to the compartment without disabling or bypassing the trap causes the trap to activate. When activated, a *shocking grasp* spell is released, dealing 1d6 points of electricity damage to the character opening the compartment. Once activated, the trap has no further power. It does not reset and the magic aura fades.

TREASURE

The hidden compartment inside the altar contains some ancient scrolls. The scrolls detail the dwarf enclave that was once positioned here to guard the path to the Underdark. The text presents this duty ambiguously. It's unclear whether the dwarves were protecting what lies below from interlopers from the surface world or protecting the surface world from some danger from below.

Excerpt: This passage through the singing stones must be safeguarded at all costs. Our state of vigilance must not waiver. That which lies beyond must forever remain separate and apart.

The compartment also contains a mithral holy symbol of Moradin (worth 250 gp), a fine Medium dwarven waraxe, an ornate Medium suit of half-plate armor, and a well-crafted Medium heavy steel shield. None of these are magic, but all of them are masterwork and have the quality and appearance of dwarf crafting. A masterwork weapon provides a +1

enhancement bonus on attack rolls. Masterwork armor and shields reduce the armor check penalty by -1.

At the bottom of the compartment is a small case with 3 potion vials.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 600 | 4 | 150 |
| 2 | 300 | 5 | 120 |
| 3 | 200 | 6 | 100 |

Potions

If a spellcaster uses a *detect magic* spell, the potions radiate magic. A DC 25 Spellcraft check reveals them as a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of bull's strength*, and an *oil of magic weapon* (+1). For complete information on Spellcraft DCs, see *Player's Handbook*, page 82.

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

As in combat encounters, defeating traps or other challenge encounters merits an experience point award.

AFTER THE CHALLENGE

The player characters can use this chamber as a resting place and staging area, but the desecrated shrine is used by many of the goblins for worship and meditation. 1d4 goblin guards (use the statistics on page 14) wander by every four hours. Since the doors can be locked, the chamber can be secured. If goblins come by and find the doors locked, they think nothing of it the first time. The second time, the goblins try to force the doors open and sound the alarm.

ALTAR: SEARCH CHECKS

Player characters can try to glean information about the altar using Search checks.

Search DC 5: The plaster appears to be a recent addition and can be easily removed without damaging the granite underneath.

Search DC 15: A few seams in the granite indicate that there may be a secret compartment in the altar. Plaster covers much of it and would have to be removed to access the opening.

ALTAR: KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

Player characters can try to glean information about the altar using Knowledge checks.

Knowledge (architecture and engineering) DC 10: The granite altar appears to be hundreds of years old and is of dwarven design. The plaster is a much more recent addition.

Knowledge (religion) DC 10: The pictures carved in the plaster depict runes holy to Maglubiyet, the goblin deity.

Knowledge (religion) DC 15: Goblins honor Maglubiyet by increasing the size and strength of their tribes. The religion values chaos, evil, and trickery.

ALCOVES

The alcoves once housed statues of dwarves. All that remains of the statues are unrecognizable bits of smashed rubble.

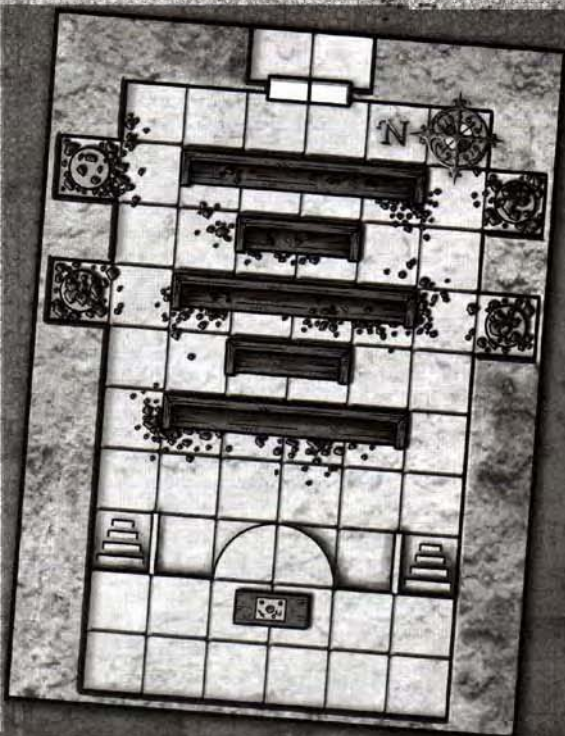
NORTHWEST ALCOVE (MAGIC FOUNTAIN)

A statue of Brundorr, a legendary dwarf cleric, once filled this alcove. One hand held a pitcher that continually poured water into a stone bowl. Visitors would cup their hands and sip some of the water for its health benefits. Now the remains of the statue and other bits of rubble clog the space.

- A DC 10 Listen check detects the sound of bubbling water.
- A DC 20 Search check pieces together enough of the statue to determine that it depicted a female dwarf holding a pitcher.

- A *detect magic* spell shows a magical aura.
- A DC 16 Spellcraft check reveals that the aura is conjuration magic.

Clearing away the rubble reveals a small font of bubbling water. The flow is weak, but the water appears clear and clean. A nonevil-aligned character sipping the water immediately experiences the effects of a *cure light wounds* spell (heals 1d8+1 hp). Water removed from the spring loses its magic after one round. A character can benefit from the magic fountain once per day. Subsequent sips on the same day have no effect.



SHAMAN'S ROOM

The tribe's shaman, Rutven, opposed the rise of Darax and the coming of Noak. Rutven did not want to challenge Darax directly, especially after the murder of the old chief, so the shaman decided to leave the tribe. Rutven figured that without his spiritual guidance and helpful spells, the tribe would become unhappy and focus their discontent on Darax and Noak. Rutven plans to return after a time and force Darax out.

Right now, Rutven travels far from the caves. The shaman left traps and two undead creatures to guard his room and protect its contents from falling into Darax's hands. With the patience of mindless undead, the skeleton and zombie stand perfectly still until someone other than the shaman enters the room. Then they attack.

A much-patched curtain of many colors hangs across a doorway in the corridor.

RUNNING THIS ENCOUNTER

All the goblins in the complex know that the shaman is away. No one knows when he will return, but they know better than to disturb his room. Even Darax and Big Bronk stay away from the place, fearing the shaman's magic.

If the PCs decide to check out this area, they must deal with the trap and the undead guardians. After that, the place can become a safe and secure location for the PCs to rest and recover hit points and spells.

THE TRAP

The trap waits just beyond the curtain, in the five-foot hall that connects the Shaman's Room to the main corridor. The first character to step through the curtain activates the trap.

Inflict Light Wounds Trap: CR 2; magic device, touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*inflict light wounds*, 1st-level cleric, 1d8+1, DC 11. Will save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Since the trap automatically resets, every character to pass through the short hall activates the trap. The trap can be avoided by jumping over that five-foot section, or by disabling it.

HOBGOBLIN WARRIOR SKELETON CR 1/3

Monster Manual, page 225

6 HP:

DR 5/bludgeoning

NE Medium undead (goblinoid)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen -1, Spot -1

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

Immune cold; undead immunities: ability damage to physical abilities, ability drain, critical hits, energy drain, death effects, disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting spells and abilities, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning

Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee longsword +1 (1d6+1)

Base Atk +0; Grp +1

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int —, Wis 9, Cha 8

Feats Improved Initiative

Possessions chain shirt, longsword

HOBGOBLIN ZOMBIE CR 1/2

Monster Manual, page 265

16 HP:

DR 5/slashing

NE Medium undead (goblinoid)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen -1, Spot -1

AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11

Immune undead immunities: ability damage to physical abilities, ability drain, critical hits, energy drain, death effects, disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting spells and abilities, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning

Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee slam +3 (1d6+2)

Base Atk +1; Grp +3

Abilities Str 15, Dex 11, Con —, Int —, Wis 9, Cha 8

Special Actions standard actions only

Feats Toughness

THE ROOM

Once the PCs enter the room, read:

The room smells of incense and magic. Fetishes made with hair and bone decorate the walls and hang from the ceiling. The room contains a bed, a table, and a chair. A hobgoblin skeleton and a hobgoblin zombie stand perfectly still to each side of the door.

The Undead

The undead attack anyone (other than the shaman) who enters the room. They do not leave the room. They return to their places on each side of the door if their target exits the room.

BEHIND THE SCENES: FIGHTING UNDEAD

Undead possess many qualities that make them difficult opponents, including:

Damage Reduction: Both of these undead creatures possess damage reduction (DR). This means that they ignore some of the damage they receive with each attack unless that attack is made with a specific kind of weapon. (See *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 291, for complete details on DR.)

Attacks made with slashing weapons ignore the zombie's DR. Attacks made with bludgeoning weapons ignore the skeleton's DR.

During combat, provide descriptions to clue players about what type of weapons to use. For instance, if a cleric swings his mace against a zombie and hits, you might say, "Your mace connects with a meaty thud, but the blow doesn't seem to bother the zombie very much." This provides one flavorful way of indicating that the creature's DR reduced the weapon's damage.

Damage dealt by spells is not subject to DR.

Undead Traits: Undead have many traits (see *Monster Manual*, page 317). For this encounter, remember:

- Characters can't score a critical hit or benefit from sneak attacks against undead.
- Undead are immune to all mind-affecting spells and abilities, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning. This means, for example, that a wizard's *sleep* spell won't work and a monk's stunning fist attack has no effect.
- *Cure* spells hurt undead. A 1st-level cleric casting *cure light wounds* on a skeleton deals $1d8+1$ points of damage. In contrast, *inflict* spells heal undead.

Ask the players to make DC 10 Knowledge (religion) checks for their characters. If they succeed, share the above information with them.

Turning Undead

Most PC clerics turn undead. (See *Player's Handbook*, page 159.) A cleric uses a standard action to present his or her holy symbol. It can effect undead within 60 feet.

The cleric's player rolls a turning check ($1d20 +$ the cleric's Charisma modifier) to determine how powerful an undead might be affected. In this encounter, a modified roll of 10 or better is all that's needed to turn the skeleton, a roll of 13 or higher includes the zombie. If the total is less than 10, there's no effect at all.

If the total is 10 or higher, the player rolls $2d6 +$ cleric level + Charisma modifier for turning damage to determine how many total Hit Dice of undead are turned. In this encoun-

ter a modified roll of 1 or 2 turns the skeleton, a roll of 3 or better gets both the skeleton and the zombie.

Turned undead flee from the cleric for 1 minute (10 rounds). They retreat to the southern end of the room and cower until the effect runs its course.

TREASURE

The shaman left a few things behind when he departed, including various components in jars and pouches. The characters can find three potions among the things on the table: two *potions of cure light wounds* and one *potion of shield of faith*. There are also several parchment sheets upon which Rutven rages against the arrival of Noak. Rutven wrote in the Góblin language.

Excerpt: I hate the day the black dragon arrived. The dragon has led the tribe away from the holy path of Maglubiyet and even eats us whenever she feels like it! I leave now on a holy journey. Maglubiyet guides me and will show me how to return the tribe to the true path.

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

XP for overcoming the trap and defeating the undead:

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 600 | 4 | 150 |
| 2 | 300 | 5 | 120 |
| 3 | 200 | 6 | 100 |

ON THE MAP

"S" indicates where the hobgoblin skeleton starts this encounter. "Z" indicates where the hobgoblin zombie starts this encounter. The trap is just beyond the curtain.



THE HOWLING CAVES

The goblins avoid this portion of the lair. It's dark, it's creepy, and the monstrous spider that hunts within the twists and turns is dangerous. So, the goblins just leave this area alone. This area makes an ideal place for the PCs to rest after they clear out the spider.

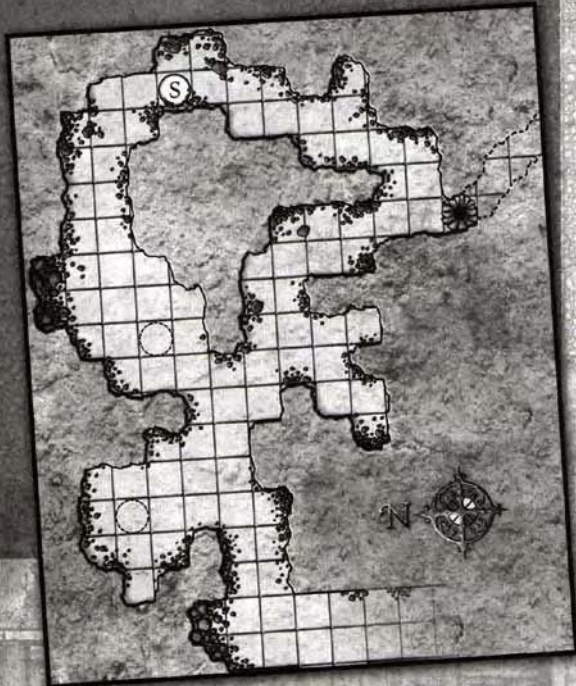
ON THE MAP

"S" indicates where the monstrous hunting spider starts this encounter. It lives in the natural tunnels and eats birds and small animals that wander in through the natural air vents.

TERRAIN FEATURES

The air vents are natural chimneys that allow fresh air to flow into the caves. These vents narrow as they get closer to the surface, connecting to other vents that honeycomb the hillside.

A pit at the southern portion of these tunnels slopes down and becomes a narrow, low-ceilinged passage (Medium characters must crawl to use it) that connects to the Elite Hobgoblin Room (Encounter 10). Because of the spider, the goblins avoid this passage.



THE CAVES

When the PCs enter this area, read:

These natural caverns wind deeper into the hill. A hint of fresh air wafts from somewhere farther ahead in the darkness, carrying a low, weirdly melodious sound through the caves. The sound rises at times to become frightening shrieks, while at other times it rumbles into moans and sobs.

Observant characters (DC 20 Spot check) notice that webbing covers the ceiling and walls in these tunnels. The webbing is thicker around the natural air vents.

MONSTROUS HUNTING SPIDER

CR 1

Monster Manual, page 288

11 HP:

Notes:

N Medium vermin

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense; **Listen** +0, **Spot** +12

AC 14, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 11

Immune mind-affecting spells and abilities

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee bite +4 (1d6 plus poison)

Special Attack poison (DC 12 Fort save, 1d4 Str damage)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1

Abilities Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2

Feats Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Climb +11, Hide +7, Jump +10, Listen +0, Spot +12

Hunting Spider Tactics

The spider immediately becomes aware of the PCs if they touch the webs in these tunnels, or when they get within 60 feet of it (due to tremorsense). At that point, the spider begins to hunt the PCs. It uses the tunnels to best advantage, trying to sneak up and attack the characters from behind. It tries to bite and deliver its poison to one character, then moves on to do the same to the next.

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

If the PCs defeat the monstrous spider, award them the XP shown below according to the number in the party.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

COMMON ROOM

This large room, along with the Kitchen (Encounter 8), serves as the Common Room for the tribe. This is where the bulk of the tribe eats, sleeps, and socializes when not performing duties for Darax. In addition to the goblins marked on the map, about half a dozen goblin children can usually be found here. The goblin children don't fight; the goblin children run in all directions, calling for help as they quickly disappear through doors and small cracks in the walls.

Goblins in this room notice your arrival. Young goblins scream in terror at the sight of you and scatter in all directions. Adult goblins immediately put down crafts they are working on or leap up from resting to grab nearby weapons and confront you. "No one hurts the whelps!" one angry goblin yells as she charges toward you.

GOBLENS, MALE AND FEMALE (4) CR 1

Monster Manual, page 133

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|-------|
| 6 HP: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Notes: | _____ |
| 5 HP: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Notes: | _____ |
| 5 HP: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Notes: | _____ |
| 4 HP: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Notes: | _____ |

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Goblin, 50% speak Common as well

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee morningstar +3 (1d6)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d4)

Base Atk +1; Grp -3

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6

Feats Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Skills Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2

Possessions leather armor, light wooden shield, morningstar, javelin

Goblin Tactics

The moment the goblins realize that there are intruders in the Common Room, they leap to the attack to protect the goblin children. If the PCs threaten the goblin children in any way, these goblins become enraged and gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls for the rest of the encounter (+5 to attack instead of +3).

The goblins rush to fight as close to the door the intruders use as possible to give the goblin children time to escape. The goblins work as a team, with all of them concentrating their attacks on the same foe until that foe falls, and then moving on to the next.

TREASURE

Searching the Common Room turns up 25 gp, 170 sp, and 366 cp worth of coins in footlockers and pockets.

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE

If the PCs defeat the goblins, award them the XP shown below according to the number in the party.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

THE ROOM

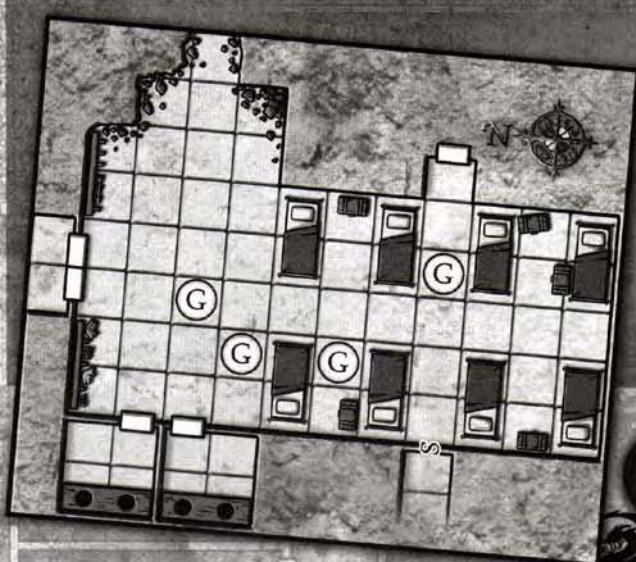
Simple wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 10, see *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 61) block the entrance. The doors are not locked. Torches on the walls provide light.

"G" indicates where the adult goblins start out. The goblin children don't appear on the map.

A secret door connects this room to Big Bronk's Room (Encounter 3). None of the goblins know about the secret door. To find the secret door, a PC must make a DC 20 Search check in that area. Elf characters get to make a check even if they are not actively looking.

Two flimsy doors on the northwest wall lead to small chambers with holes in the floor that serve as latrines. The smell in these chambers is terrible.

Bunk beds stacked three sleepers high take up much of the room. Footlockers and large sacks that hold personal items are positioned in front of or between the bunks, and cloaks adorn a few of the many pegs hammered into the walls.



KITCHEN AND LARDER

Heavy double doors lead into a kitchen, with a small larder and pantry accessible from the main chamber. Depending on how the player characters approach this area, you can run this as three small encounters (the Kitchen, the Pantry, and the Larder, each in turn) or as a more complex encounter that combines two or all three of the sub-encounters described below.

PART ONE: KITCHEN

The double doors that separate the kitchen from the corridor are locked.

The doors have the following statistics (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 61): hardness 5 (subtract 5 from all weapon damage), 20 hit points. A DC 28 Strength check is required to break open the locked doors, or they can be opened with a DC 20 Open Lock check.

The cook, an old, disagreeable goblin, keeps the double doors locked to discourage the rest of the tribe from eating and disturbing him at all hours of the day and night. When he hears someone try to open the doors, he steps into the pantry to hide and see who has come to his kitchen at this unexpected hour.

Once the player characters open the doors, read:

The room appears to be empty. A beat-up iron cauldron hangs over a fire pit in the northwest corner of the room, and the smell of a slow-simmering stew fills the air. Water drips from a decrepit pipe in the west wall into an ancient stone cistern. A long, crude wooden table and several stools occupy the center of the room. Sacks of grain and piles of fur and leather fill the southeast corner of the room. Doors in the north and east wall might lead deeper into the complex.

Kitchen Encounter

There are two ways to attract the ire of the dire weasel that's sleeping in the kitchen:

1. The PCs rummage through the sacks and furs;
2. The PCs open the door to the pantry, causing the goblin cook to order the dire weasel to attack.

If either of these events occurs, the dire weasel explodes out of the piles of fur to attack the PCs.

Dire Weasel Tactics

The dire weasel stays sleeping and hidden in the furs and sacks of grain until the PCs disturb the area (such as by searching the sacks and furs) or the goblin cook calls for help. Then it explodes from its hiding place to attack the PCs. Aggressive and almost manic with energy, the dire weasel seeks to attach itself to a target and hang on to drain as much blood as possible. Then it leaps around, seeking a new target.

DIRE WEASEL

CR 2

Monster Manual, page 65

13 HP:

Notes: _____

N Medium animal

Init +4; **Senses** Low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +5

AC 16, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 12

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee bite +6 (1d6+3)

Special Actions attach (latches on to target after a successful hit, AC drops to 12), blood drain (1d4 points of Constitution damage for each round it remains attached)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Abilities Str 14, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11

Feats Alertness, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +5

KITCHEN TREASURE

A thorough examination of the pile of furs (DC 15 Search check) uncovers a small pouch containing two potion bottles: a *potion of cure light wounds* and a *potion of resist energy (acid)*.

Kitchen Experience

If the PCs defeat the dire weasel, award them the XP shown below according to the number in the party.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 600 | 3 | 200 | 5 | 120 |
| 2 | 300 | 4 | 150 | 6 | 100 |

PART TWO: PANTRY

The goblin cook ("G" on the map) watches the kitchen through the slightly open door in the north wall. If the PCs spot the cook watching them, or if they open the pantry door, the goblin cook calls for the dire weasel to attack. If the dire weasel attacks on its own, the goblin cook rushes out to help it.

Crude shelves line the walls of this room. Crates, sacks, and a jumble of loose supplies fill many of the shelves, but much of it has very little value (see *Pantry Treasure*, on the next page, for details).

Goblin Cook Tactics

The goblin cook hides and waits, watching to see who has rudely invaded his kitchen. He calls for the dire weasel to attack if the PCs find him. If the PCs rouse the dire weasel, the goblin cook waits for an opportunity to wade into the battle and help his pet.

GOBLIN COOK**CR 1***Monster Manual*, page 13311 HP: **Notes:**

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +2, **Spot** +2**Languages** Goblin, Common**AC** 15, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 14**Fort** +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** handaxe +4 (1d4+1)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** -2**Abilities** Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6**Feats** Weapon Focus (handaxe)**Skills** Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2**Possessions** leather armor, light wooden shield, handaxe**PANTRY TREASURE**

Most of the material has little value. Sacks of grain, bolts of cloth, bits of kindling, and all manner of items get stuffed into this storage area. Sorting out useful items takes talent or time. A DC 20 Search check uncovers the items of most value: A bullseye lantern, 5 flasks of oil, 10 tindertwigs, 2 vials of ink, 2 flasks of acid, a magnifying glass, a masterwork flute, a small pouch containing 22 gp, and a 50-ft. length of silk rope.

Pantry Experience

If the PCs defeat the goblin cook, award them the XP shown below according to the number in the party.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

PART THREE: LARDER

The door in the east wall opens onto a natural cave. Cool and damp, the rocky interior seems to be covered in a glistening sheen. Some of this is water, but one puddle is actually a lesser gray ooze ("O" on the map). Meat, cheese, and animal carcasses are stored in this place. The room smells of mold and mildew.

There's nothing of value in the larder. If the PCs decide to search the room, however, they must venture in and attract the attention of the ooze (or possibly even accidentally stumble into its acidic embrace).

Ooze Tactics

This lesser gray ooze appears to be a slimy puddle of water until it moves and strikes. It has no plan or motivation other than to attack and consume anything that gets close to it.

Larder Experience

If the PCs defeat the lesser gray ooze, award them the XP shown below according to the number in the party.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

LESSER GRAY OOZE**CR 1***Monster Manual*, page 20212 HP: **Notes:**

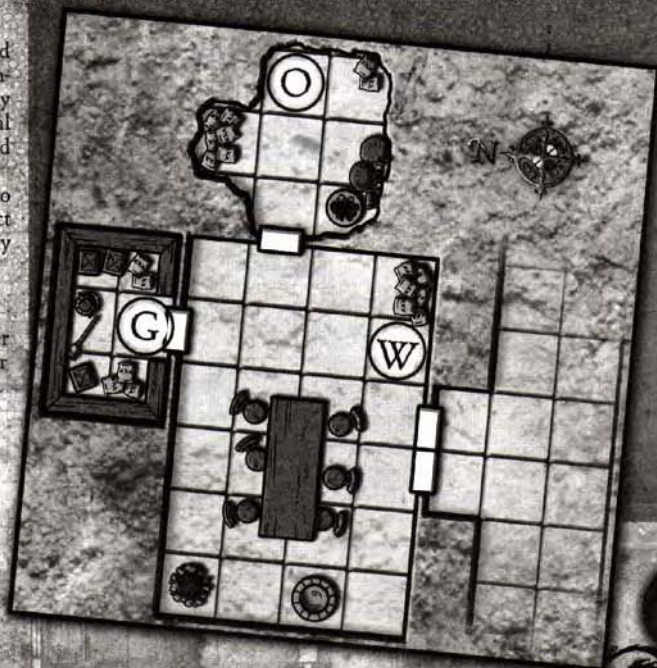
N Medium ooze

Init -5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.**AC** 5, **touch** 5, **flat-footed** 5**Fort** +5, **Ref** -4, **Will** -4**Speed** 10 ft. (2 squares)**Melee** slam +1 (1d6+1 plus 1d4 acid)

Special Actions acid (in addition to damage, a metal or wooden weapon that strikes the ooze dissolves unless it makes a DC 16 Reflex save), transparent (DC 15 Spot check to notice; characters who fail to notice and walk into ooze's square are automatically hit with slam and acid damage)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1**Abilities** Str 12, Dex 1, Con 21, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1**KITCHEN FEATURES**

A foul stew of rancid meat and rotten vegetables bubbles in the cauldron over the burning fire pit. The sacks of grain and piles of fur hide a sleeping dire weasel (the cook's pet, "W" on the map) that becomes very angry once it is disturbed. (DC 15 Listen check to hear snoring coming from the furs.) The door in the north wall leads to the pantry where the goblin cook has gone to hide. He leaves the door slightly ajar so that he can watch the kitchen (DC 20 Spot check to notice). The door in the east wall opens on the larder, which has been invaded by a lesser gray ooze.



WIZARD'S WORKSHOP

The hobgoblin wizard Urrtarr lives and works in this large, divided chamber. Urrtarr loves Darax and aids him in controlling the tribe. She doesn't like Noak or the attention that Darax lavishes on the black dragon, but she is willing to go along with a lot to maintain her relationship with the hobgoblin warlord.

Urrtarr won't overtly aid the PCs against Noak, but she might be convinced to provide subtle aid if the PCs come to her in a friendly, non-threatening manner. If the PCs offer to destroy the dragon while promising to spare Darax, Urrtarr might be convinced to negotiate with them. (See *Treasure* for details.)

Of course, by the time the PCs reach this part of the goblin caves, friendly and non-threatening are probably out of the question.

URRTARR'S ROLE IN THE TRIBE

The wizard provides for the arcane needs of the tribe, much as the shaman provided for the spiritual welfare of the community. Since the coming of Noak, Urrtarr has withdrawn to her private chamber to conduct alchemical experiments, study arcane texts, and fume about the changes that have disrupted her world.

Urrtarr refuses to participate in any of the planning or the actual raids that the goblins have been perpetrating. She strives to find a way to get rid of Noak so that she and Darax can go back to the simpler, happier life they had known before.

ENCOUNTER POSSIBILITIES

How this encounter plays out depends a lot on what the player characters have been up to. If the PCs cause a commotion in the Common Room (Encounter 7) or get into a battle with the elite hobgoblins (Encounter 10), then Urrtarr starts out prepared for combat. As soon as the PCs enter her chamber, she casts *color spray* and prepares to follow it up with *burning hands* (see Urrtarr's Tactics for details).

If the PCs can somehow reach this chamber without a lot of noise and obvious violence, Urrtarr is caught by surprise at one of her worktables when the meeting occurs. She calls out, "Truce! Who are you and why have you come to Urrtarr's chambers?" In this case, the wizard figures that any adventurers coming into the goblin caves have come to stop the raids—which means they've come to stop the dragon. She attempts to negotiate with them in such a situation.

If the PCs and Urrtarr do find a way to talk instead of fight, the wizard explains that the tribe isn't responsible for the raids—at least not directly. "It is the dragon," Urrtarr proclaims, "since it arrived it has poisoned my people ... driven them to do terrible, unforgivable things."

SHRIEKER

CR 1

Monster Manual, page 113

11 HP:

N Medium plant

Init -5; **Senses** low-light vision

AC 8, touch 5, flat-footed 8

Fort +4, **Ref** —, **Will** -4

Speed 0 ft. (can't move)

Melee A shrieker has no means of attack.

Special Actions shriek (this shrieker has been trained to react to movement within 5 feet of it; any such movement elicits a piercing sound for 1d3 rounds; if the elite hobgoblins haven't been alerted yet, this attracts them; if the sound lasts for 2 or more rounds Darax is also alerted)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** -4

Abilities Str —, Dex —, Con 13, Int —, Wis 2, Cha 1

Urrtarr's Deal

If a conversation breaks out and goes well, Urrtarr tells the PCs about the black dragon: How it came to the Howling Caves, where it can be found, how powerful it is. She agrees to help the PCs if they promise to spare Darax's life. "The peace shall return," Urrtarr says, "once the dragon has been destroyed." She doesn't care about anything else except for saving Darax, and is even willing to give up most of her personal treasure if she believes that the PCs can be trusted. As a lawful evil creature, she plans to keep her end of any bargain they strike.

Urrtarr prefers to capture, rather than kill, the PCs if she can safely do so. Her *color spray* and *sleep* spells have a good chance of neutralizing an aggressive party.

ENTERING THE CHAMBER

However you decide to play out this encounter, it begins when the PCs open the door from the Common Room (Encounter 7). If they wind up approaching from the Elite Hobgoblin Barracks (Encounter 10), they wind up alerting the shrieker (see below). Read:

The room ahead smells of strange fumes and heady aromas. Beakers, candles, potion bottles, mortars and pestles, jars, scrolls, and other arcane equipment clutter the tables that crowd the chamber. A shimmering curtain that glints like armor divides the chamber's main area and cuts off the back of the room. Directly across from the door, a huge mushroom fills a hole in the wall that seems to lead deeper into the caves.

URRTARR, HOBGOBLIN WIZARD

CR 1

9 HP:

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee staff +2 (1d6+2)

Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+2)

Base Atk +0; Grp +2

Combat Gear 2 flasks of acid, 1 flask of alchemist's fire, 1 smokestick (see *Player's Handbook*, page 128, for details on this gear), scroll of *magic missile*, wand of *magic missile* (10 charges), *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of resist energy* (acid)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 1st):

(Can cast 3 0-level and 2 1st-level spells per day)

1st— *burning hands* (DC 13), *color spray* (DC 13)0— *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ray of frost***Abilities** Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 12**Feats** Scribe Scroll, Toughness**Skills** Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft +6**Possessions** combat gear plus 100 gp pearl, 50 gp diamond brooch**Spellbook** spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*cause fear*, *magic missile*, *sleep*

At this point, Urrtarr attacks or calls for a truce, depending on what the player characters have been doing prior to entering this chamber.

Shrieker Tactics

Any movement within 5 feet of the shrieker causes it to unleash a piercing sound (see above).

Urrtarr's Tactics

Unless the PCs are remarkably stealthy, Urrtarr hears the commotion in the Common Room and prepares for battle. She hides behind the curtain that separates the two halves of her workshop and gets ready. She casts *color spray* as soon as the intruders enter her room, trying to catch as many of them in the cone effect as possible.

Any sign that the PCs have hurt or killed goblins, or that they threaten Darax, makes Urrtarr go a little crazy—and when Urrtarr goes a little crazy, things tend to explode. She follows up by casting *burning hands* at the intruders, then retreats behind the curtain to pull out her wand of *magic missile* and drink her *potion of cure light wounds* if she needs it.

Urrtarr doesn't like Darax's elite hobgoblins, but if things aren't going well for her against the PCs, she calls for them to aid her.

TREASURE

A thorough examination of the worktables (DC 15 Search check) uncovers the following valuables: a pouch of 250 gp in gems, a scroll of *magic weapon* and a scroll of *mage armor* (which she hasn't yet inscribed into her spellbook). If the PCs strike a deal, Urrtarr prepares two *potions of resist energy* (acid) for them to use.

Encounter Experience

Whether the characters defeat Urrtarr in combat or strike a deal to overcome the challenge she presents, they receive the following XP.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

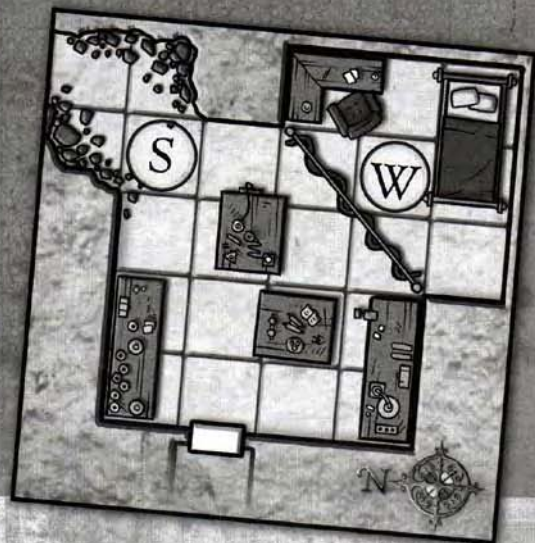
THE ROOM

A simple wooden door (hardness 5, hp 10, see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 61) separates this room from the Common Room. The door is not locked. Torches on the walls provide light, as well as candles on the tables.

"W" indicates where the wizard begins the encounter if she is ready to cast spells at the PCs.

"S" shows the location of the shrieker.

The curtain that divides the room is made of chainmail. It provides Urrtarr with a +4 cover bonus while she casts spells from behind it. The PCs can easily part or pass through the curtain with a move action.



ELITE HOBGOBLINS

Darax holds ordinary goblins in low esteem. He much prefers to rely on his two hobgoblin guards. Thus, he keeps them close and uses them to carry messages and instructions to the rest of the complex. Like Darax, the hobgoblins view themselves as superior to all but Big Bronk. They have a healthy respect for the big bugbear.

FIRST VIEW

If the PCs somehow reach this room without alerting the hobgoblins to their presence, they see the following:

Two huge hobgoblins are engaged in a frantic duel. Steel clatters against steel, sweat flies freely, and insults and compliments are traded as often as sword blows. "Good practice," one growls as a blow glances off his helmet. "Less talk, more fight!" the other responds, amazingly doubling his efforts.

GETTING THE HOBGOBLINS INVOLVED

The hobgoblins are engaged in a fierce but friendly (at least as far as goblinoid society is concerned) sparring match when the PCs arrive at the Common Room (Encounter 7). This means that they are less apt to hear disturbances in other areas and less likely to respond to trouble in either the Common Room or the Wizard's Workshop (Encounter 9).

Every round of a battle in either of the connecting chambers (Common Room and Wizard's Workshop) grants the hobgoblins a DC 15 Listen check to see if they can hear the disturbance over the sounds of their own competition.

If the shrieker in the Wizard's Workshop emits its piercing sound, the hobgoblins hear that immediately.

If the goblin child races in calling for help, the hobgoblins ignore him or her as they continue their practice fight (which gets closer and closer to being a real fight the longer it goes on). Every other round, let the hobgoblins make a DC 10 Spot check to see if they notice the frantic little goblin.

ELITE HOBGOBLIN GUARDS (2)

CR 1
Monster Manual, page 153

 9 HP:

 7 HP:

LE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Goblin, Common

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee masterwork longsword +3 [-+5] (1d8+1) [1d8+3]

Ranged javelin +2 (1d6+1) [1d6+3]

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2 [+4]

Combat Gear potion of bull's strength, potion of cure light wounds

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Feats Alertness

Skills Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2

Possessions studded leather armor, light wooden shield, masterwork longsword, two javelins

HOBGOBLIN REACTIONS

Once the hobgoblins realize that there is trouble in the complex (whether because they heard sounds of battle or the shrieker's call, or because a goblin child alerted them), they immediately end their sparring and move to battle the invaders. In this case, neither thinks to alert Darax to the situation.

If the PCs make it all the way to this location before the hobgoblins notice them, then the fight occurs here. One of the hobgoblins moves to engage the PCs while the other calls for Darax to come help them. In this case, Darax arrives to join the fight in 1d4 rounds.

Elite Hobgoblin Tactics

Once the hobgoblins realize that there are intruders in the caves, they immediately end their sparring session and prepare themselves for a real battle. Each of them drinks a *potion of bull's strength*, which increases their attack and damage rolls for the next 10 rounds (one minute). If they drink the potions, use the enhanced statistics shown above in brackets.

Use the boxes below to keep track of the rounds:

(Mark off one box each round until the effects of bull's strength wears off)

If the hobgoblins are responding to sounds elsewhere in the caves, they head out without alerting Darax to the situation. If the fight comes to them, one of the hobgoblins calls to Darax for help and to warn him of the danger at the first opportunity.

The hobgoblins prefer to throw their javelins from a distance before moving into melee range. They try to get two rounds of ranged attack in before charging in with their longswords.

The hobgoblins attempt to fight in coordination with each other, setting up flanks whenever possible. They are strong, smart fighters who enjoy the challenge of competing against other warriors but realize that spellcasters need to be dealt with as quickly as possible.

The hobgoblins have no qualms about drinking their potions of *cure light wounds* if they take damage during the battle.

THE CHEST

The hobgoblins store their personal wealth inside this large, wooden chest. The chest is trapped. A false panel in the lid unleashes a fusillade of darts if the chest is tampered with (someone attempts to open it) or jostled (such as if someone tries to smash it open). The darts attack anyone standing in the three squares adjacent to the square that contains the chest. One to four darts attack a character occupying any of the three adjacent squares. After this fusillade of darts, the only thing protecting the chest is the lock. One of the hobgoblins has the key for the lock hidden in his belt (DC 20 Search check to find). Without the key, the lock must be picked or broken (see below).

Other statistics relating to this trap are shown in the text that follows.

Fusillade of Darts: CR 1; mechanical trap; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d4+1, dart); multiple targets (fires 1d4 darts at each target in three squares adjacent to the chest); Search DC 14; Disable Device DC 20.

TREASURE

In addition to what the hobgoblins have on them, the chest contains their personal treasure. If the trap is avoided or activated, there is still the matter of the lock that secures the chest.

The padlock securing the chest is a very simple lock that requires a DC 20 Open Lock check to open. The padlock has a hardness of 15 and 15 hp.

Once the chest is opened, the following items can be found: +1 *studded leather armor* (sized for a Medium character), +1 *longsword*, quiver of 20 arrows, quiver of 10 silver arrows, two bedrolls, four bottles of wine, flint and steel, a small steel mirror, 50-foot coil of rope, a cracked hourglass, a pouch of 82 gp, a pouch of 47 sp, a pouch of 312 cp.

Encounter Experience

If the player characters defeat the elite hobgoblins, they receive the following XP.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 1 | 300 | 3 | 100 | 5 | 60 |
| 2 | 150 | 4 | 75 | 6 | 50 |

THE ROOM

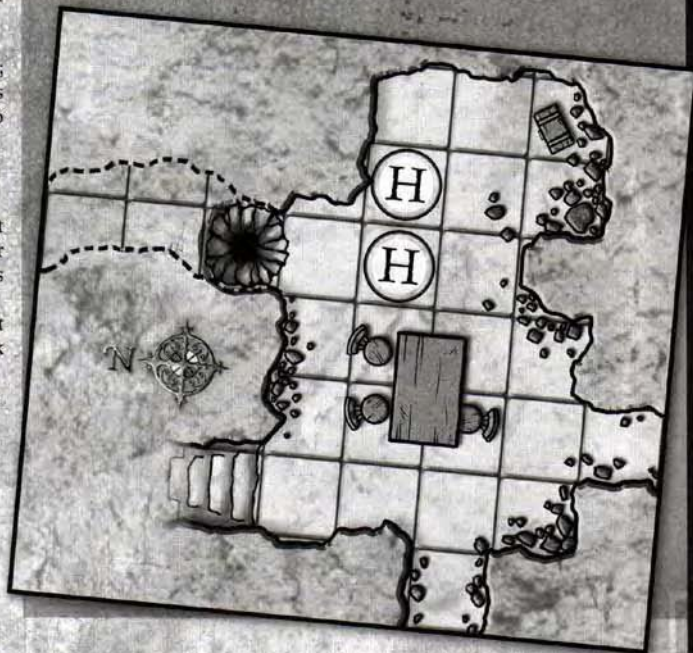
Torches on the walls provide light.

"H" indicates where the hobgoblins begin this encounter, sparring with each other.

The chest on the east side of the room is trapped.

Stairs lead down to Darax's Room. The hobgoblins avoid the passage to the south so as not to disturb the wizard's shrieker (see Encounter 9).

A hole in the floor slopes down. Medium characters (such as the PCs) must bend down or crawl on hands and knees to enter the tunnel. Small characters can enter the tunnel without any trouble. The tunnel connects to the Howling Caves (Encounter 6). It passes under Darax's room and then slopes back up to connect to the caves. The goblins don't use the tunnel, mostly because of the monstrous spider that lives on the other end.



DARAX'S ROOM

Darax used the arrival of the black dragon as an excuse to grab power and take control of the tribe. The alliance he struck with Noak is precarious at best, and Darax spends as much time being afraid of the dragon as he spends reveling in his newfound power as self-proclaimed warlord of the tribe. In exchange for helping to build Noak's treasure hoard, Darax has the nominal support of the dragon—which is good enough to keep the goblins in line but doesn't really assure Darax of a long and healthy relationship with the dragon. Even so, Darax lavishes attention and compliments onto Noak at every opportunity, working hard to cement the partnership so that it might last for a long time.

In addition to killing the previous leader of the tribe and driving off the shaman, Darax uses his own combat prowess, the support of his elite hobgoblins, and the threat of the dragon to maintain order and get the tribe to follow his commands. He also takes advantage of the wizard Urrtarr's feelings for him, keeping her arcane powers in check and making sure she doesn't interfere with his plans or the plans of the dragon by manipulating her emotions. He wants to use her powers in the raids against the human settlements, but he knows he has to proceed cautiously so as not to drive her away.



INVOLVING DARAX

Darax might be alerted to trouble in either the hobgoblin room (Encounter 10) or the wizard's workshop (Encounter 9). The PCs must proceed with extreme caution to catch the hobgoblin warlord unawares.

Alerted by Hobgoblins: If the hobgoblins in Encounter 10 think to call to Darax for help, the warlord grabs his weapons and reaches the hobgoblin room in 1d4 rounds. He wades into the battle, moving to help the hobgoblins and work with them to dispatch the invaders.

The Shrieker: If the shrieker emits its piercing noise, Darax doesn't necessarily leap to action. The hobgoblins sometimes forget and wander too close to the plant. At other times, they like to test the patience of the wizard by purposely setting off the plant. If the sound lasts for only one round, he doesn't even notice it. If it lasts two or more rounds, he does register that the plant has been agitated for some reason. He quietly moves to the top of the stairs to peer into the hobgoblin room. Let the PCs make DC 15 Spot checks to see if they notice him skulking in the shadows. If he remains unnoticed, he examines the situation and then returns to his own chamber to prepare to defend Noak's lair.

Reaching the Door: If the player characters reach the stairs to Darax's room without being noticed, Darax gets a chance to make a Spot check. If he fails the check, the PCs get a surprise round in which to act (see *Player's Handbook*, page 137). If he makes the check, roll for initiative normally and let the battle begin!

Making Noise: Even if the hobgoblins don't call for help, there's a chance that Darax hears the sounds of battle and recognizes it for more than just the usual sparring that the hobgoblins engage in. This requires a DC 20 Listen check, however. Darax can make a check each round that the fight in Encounter 10 goes on. If he makes the check, he prepares himself for battle and waits for the PCs to enter his area before attacking.

BATTLE IN THIS ROOM

If the battle with Darax happens in this room (instead of Darax running to help the elite hobgoblins, for example), the warlord prefers to wait and get the drop on any intruders. He moves as far from the stairs as he can and readies an action (see *Player's Handbook*, page 160) to fire his bow at the first intruder he spots. When ranged combat is no longer a viable option, Darax drops his bow and pulls out his battleaxe.

DARAX, HOBGOBLIN FIGHTER**CR 2***Monster Manual*, page 15318 HP: **Notes:** _____

CE Medium humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1**Languages** Goblin, Common, Draconic**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18**Fort** +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)**Melee** masterwork battleaxe +6 (1d8+2/×3)**Ranged** longbow +4 (1d8+1)**Base Atk** +2; **Grp** +3**Combat Gear** 3 *potions of cure light wounds***Abilities** Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8**Feats** Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)**Skills** Intimidate +6, Listen +1, Spot +1**Possessions** combat gear plus banded mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork battleaxe, longbow, quiver with 20 arrows**BATTLE IN OTHER ROOMS**

Darax might encounter the PCs in the hobgoblin room (Encounter 10) if alerted to their presence in some way. Conversely, the hobgoblin warlord might retreat to Noak's Lair (Encounter 12) if the battle isn't going to his liking or if he feels he needs to warn (or request the aid of) the black dragon.

TREASURE

In addition to the items that Darax carries on his person, a search of his room uncovers a locked chest tucked under his bed. The chest is not trapped, but requires a DC 20 Open Lock check to open. Inside the chest, the PCs find 130 gp, 40 sp, 20 cp, a map of the surrounding area (including the hamlet of Barrow's Edge), and two *potions of cure light wounds*.

Encounter Experience

If the player characters defeat Darax, they receive the following XP.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 600 | 3 | 200 | 5 | 120 |
| 2 | 300 | 4 | 150 | 6 | 100 |

Darax's Tactics

Darax uses his longbow, attacking from a distance, if the opportunity presents itself and he knows that trouble is heading his way. He isn't opposed to close-combat fighting, however, and wields his battleaxe with great enthusiasm. He prefers testing his skills against powerful-looking fighters and other martial types, seeing spellcasters and rogues as beneath his notice and worthy of nothing more than a quick and painful death.

Darax readily drinks healing potions as he needs them. If the battle starts to turn against him, he tries to run to Noak's Lair (Encounter 12) to warn the dragon and to enlist its aid in defeating the player characters.

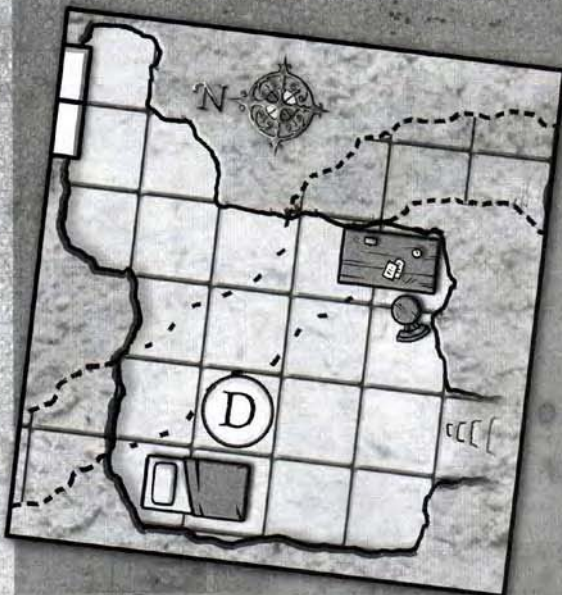
THE ROOM

Torches on the walls provide light.

"D" indicates where the hobgoblin warlord Darax begins this encounter, if the PCs reach this area without previously attracting his attention.

Stairs in the south lead up to the hobgoblin room. Double doors to the north lead to stairs that, in turn, lead to Noak the black dragon's lair. See Encounter 12 for details on this door.

The dotted line shows the path of the tunnel between Encounter Areas 6 and 10.



On rounds when her breath weapon isn't available, Noak resorts to her Flyby Attack ability to move in close, bite, and move away again. During these attacks, she can only use her bite. If Noak is ever surrounded or otherwise grounded for a round, she makes a full attack against her opponents—her bite attack and two claw attacks.

SPECIAL EFFECT

When Noak breathes acid at the PCs the first time, read:

You hear a strange, almost familiar sound—as though some small creature retches in the shadows—and a spurt of sizzling liquid streaks out of the darkness toward you.

TAUNTS AND THREATS

Noak immediately recognizes that the intruders aren't goblins. Outraged that humans would invade her lair, Noak hurls all kinds of taunts and threats as she constantly flies from place to place. Between goutts of acid and swooping claw attacks, Noak alternates between Common and Draconic as she belittles the player characters. Here are some examples of the taunts and threats she likes to use, always referring to herself by her name.

- "You think you are so big? Noak may be small, but Noak is more powerful than you can ever imagine!"
- "Your feeble eyes cannot behold Noak's majesty!"
- "Noak is a shadow, Noak is your death!"
- "Do you enjoy the way Noak's breath makes your skin sizzle and melt? Noak does!"
- "Your puny armor cannot compare to Noak's exquisite scales."
- "Is Noak too fast for you, puny humans?"
- "Give Noak a treasure and perhaps Noak will let you live."
- "Noak will add your bleached bones to her spectacular treasure hoard."
- "Noak is a dragon—a mighty dragon! You cannot hope to stand against Noak—no lesser creature can stand against Noak!"

THE BATTLE'S ENDGAME

Noak imagines herself to be more powerful than she really is, and she refuses to abandon her lair and her treasure hoard unless absolutely necessary. For these reasons, she continues to fight the player characters until she has been reduced to 10 hit points or less. In that round, Noak decides—reluctantly—to flee from the lair. She moves to the tunnel in the floor and uses it to escape from the Howling Caves.

If the PCs can't prevent Noak from escaping, even though they have won the day, Noak can return in the future to once again threaten Barrow's Edge. Conversely, Noak might instead decide to seek out the player characters and get her revenge against them. That's the stuff that future adventures are made out of!

TREASURE

If the PCs search Noak's lair, they uncover a great deal of treasure—most of it in the form of coins. There are 12 pp, 754 gp, 1,021 sp, 2,435 cp, a ring, and a cloak (all of the mundane goods stolen from the people of Barrow's Edge were used by the goblins). Numerous empty potion bottles and torn up scrolls show that Noak had other gifts that she amused herself with by using or destroying.

If a *detect magic* spell is cast, the ring and cloak radiate magic. When using *detect magic*, a DC 17 check determines that both glow with an aura of faint abjuration. An *identify* spell will be needed to determine their precise properties.

The ring is a ring of protection +1, and the cloak is a cloak of resistance +1.

Encounter Experience

If the player characters defeat or drive off Noak, they receive the following XP.

| PCs | XP | PCs | XP | PCs | XP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 900 | 3 | 300 | 5 | 180 |
| 2 | 450 | 4 | 225 | 6 | 150 |

THE LAIR

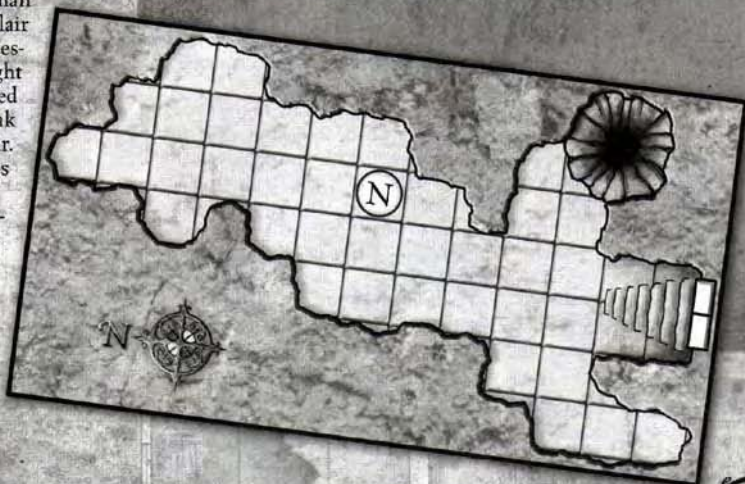
Noak's lair is completely dark. If the PCs need a light source, they will need to provide their own.

"N" indicates where the black dragon Noak begins this encounter.

Stairs in the south lead up to Darax's room. Double doors separate Darax's room from the black dragon's lair. These doors are barred from the other side.

The pit in the southeast alcove leads to an underground tunnel that eventually ends in a concealed cave that opens on the side of hill. This is the way Noak gets into and out of her lair.

Noak's treasure hoard is scattered across the floor of the cave, in the northern section of the area.



To the Rescue!

One square = 5 feet

Start

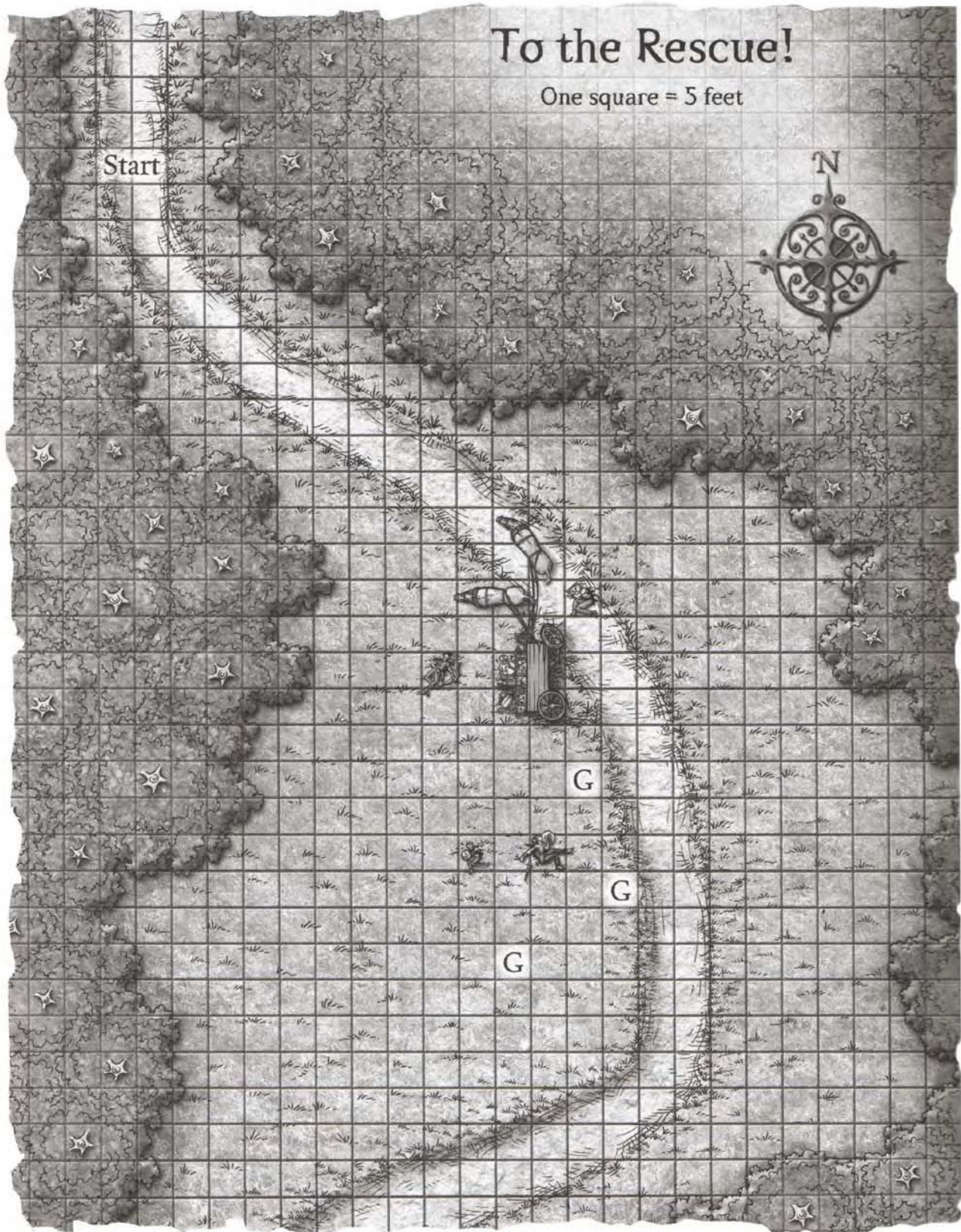
N

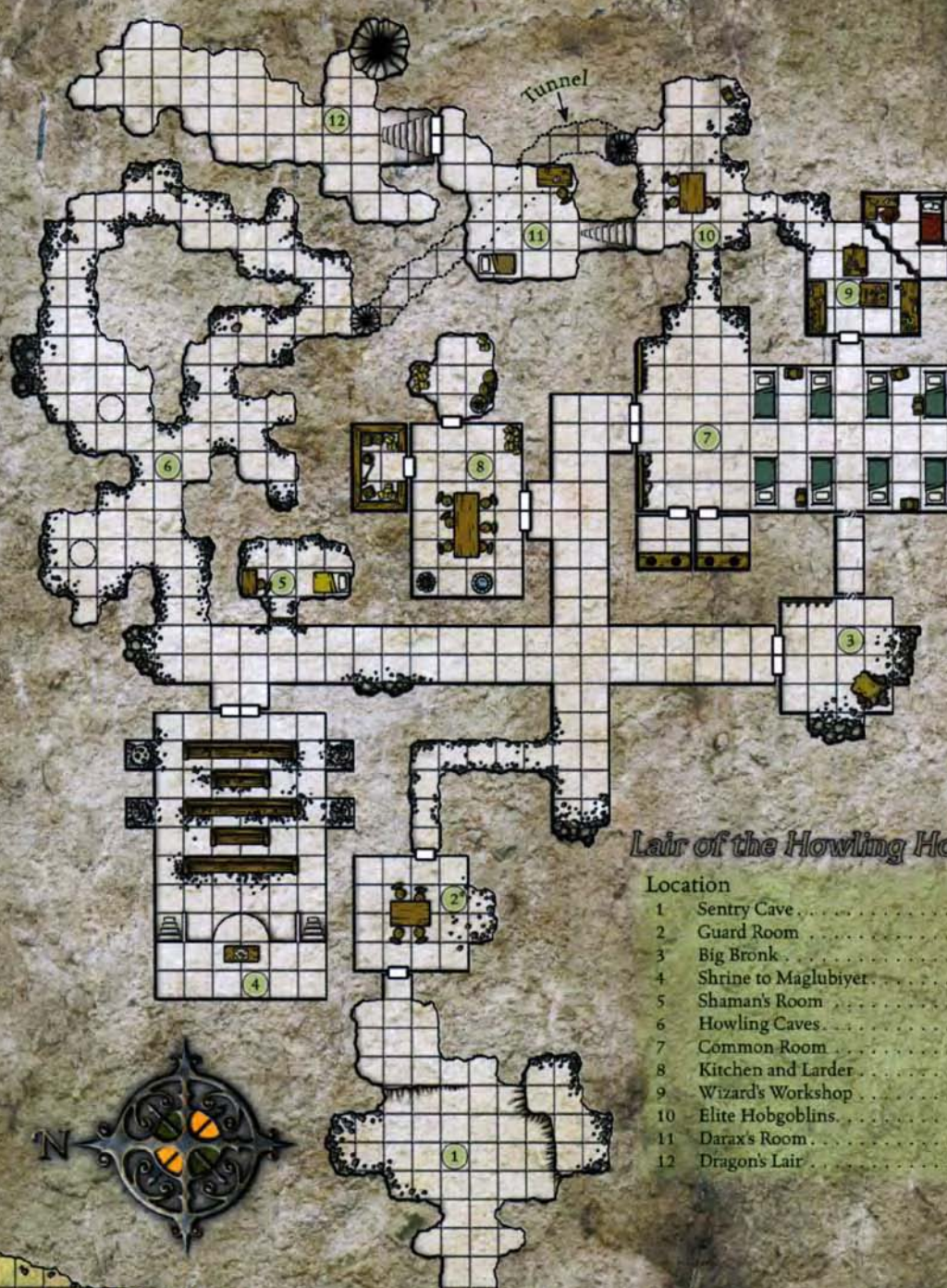


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Lair of the Howling Horde

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SO....
Who Ordered
This Scan From
Trewew?