

RUUDI'S INS & OUTS



OF UNDERMOUNTAIN

Ruudi's Ins & Outs of Undermountain

A Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage Supplement

A young female dwarf with a raven on her shoulder sits alone at a small table for two at a corner in front of one of the ornate windows of the Yawning Portal. Occasionally a grizzled adventurer joins her, and she takes out a large leather bound journal and begins furiously writing. Mostly she just stares at the pit in the center of the Yawning Portal. Each time a foolhardy soul seeking fortune and glory pays Durnan a gold dragon to be lowered into the depths of Undermountain she shakes her head, rolls her eyes, or snorts derisively.

Ruudi Stonekin knows it's a good coin wasted. The pit at the center of the Yawning Portal may be the most famous entrance to the Dungeon of the Mad Mage, but it's far from the only one.

by PAUL METZGER



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Wagonslide Alley

Level 1, Dungeon Level

Ruudi Says: Multiple stories I've heard, usually from adventurers originating outside of Waterdeep, put "The Slide" in the Dock Ward.

Digging around last winter, I found at least 3 alleyways in the Dock Ward that had children running down their icy paths on makeshift toboggans. My hefty pouch of nibs unloaded as I paid the little urchins to crawl down every sewer grate within a snowball's throw - to no avail.

I slapped my own forehead when I consulted my hand drawn map of the city and noted Wagonslide Alley, off Westwall Street just north of the Gate.

Oddly, I saw no fewer than four creepy old men staring down from their windows at me as I descended the alley. But sure enough, 10 feet to the right once I got down the grate was a secret door to a grim passage down!

Mad Mage Notes: Characters following the winding passageway eventually pass over a secret trapdoor in the floor which falls open under the weight of a medium sized creature. The ceiling of room 25b is 60 feet up, but what is left of a statue there stands over 40' tall. Any creature who touches the statue must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 12 (4d6) lightning damage, or half as much on a successful save.

Adventure Hook: When the party ventures down Wagonslide Alley towards the sewer grate, the clumsiest character in the party (i.e., the one with the lowest Dexterity score) trips over a loose stone and takes 1 piercing damage from an invisible *+1 dagger*.

A character who investigates locates the dagger, the tip of which is covered with a small amount of the injured character's blood, on a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check.

The **illusionist** who recently stashed the weapon is currently sitting on a stoop, invisible. If the characters ask a creepy old man watching from above, he tells the party that he saw someone hide something and then turn invisible. If this interaction occurs, the illusionist becomes visible and flees.

Otherwise, the illusionist follows the party into the secret passageways. When the party is busy fighting off a **swarm of rats**, she attacks.

Milomynt's Fine Potions

Level 2, Arcane Chambers

Ruudi Says: On Leera's Alley in the Dock Ward, not far south of the Yawning Portal, there's a row of dilapidated two story businesses. The sign above one of them reads "Milomynt's Fine Potions".

Prior to them all being driven out of the city, Shar worshipping cultists lead by Vanrak Moonstar used that building as a secret meeting place. There's a dungeon deep below where they would torture kidnapped priests of Selûne.

A sarcophagus teleports itself between that dungeon and the Arcane Chambers of Undermountain. I know this straight from the source! A close acquaintance of mine was hiding from giant spiders in the sarcophagus and then suddenly rolled out of it at the feet of the shocked potion master.

Mad Mage Notes: Gathgaer Milomynt, a priest in the church of Shar, uses the potion shop as a front to trap unwitting Dock Ward residents. He wears a ring which is keyed to a two way portal through which he transports his captives as slaves to be sold in Skullport. One end of the portal opens in the iron maiden in his lair beneath the shop, the other in a sarcophagus located beyond area 19.

Adventure Hook: The characters hear rumors that family members of those who have fallen ill in the Dock Ward have gone out in search of "medicine" and never returned. Their investigation leads to Gathgaer Milomynt's "potion shop".

Visitors entering the shop are directed by a sign down to a trapped room which leads either to the entry of Gathgaer's underground lair or a locked cage inside of it. Gathgaer, a **priest**, is accompanied there by two **wererats** and two **werewolves**.

Published Adventure: *All in a Dray's Work* is an adventure available on DMsGuild.com featuring Gathgaer Milomynt as the villain.

Fiery Flagon Tavern

Level 3, Sargauth Level

Ruudi Says: Imagine the Dock Ward's dingiest dive bar. Now fill it full of pirates dressed in finery and dining on haute seafood cuisine. Put it below a row of tiny shopfronts across from the House of Inspired Hands on Seawatch Street in the Sea Ward and you have the Fiery Flagon Tavern.

I forgot one ingredient — an old retired pirate by the name of Ulscaleer Anbersyr. Now you have a full express trip to Undermountain's Port of Shadow.

I've been to Skullport twice, once by sea to the river Sargauth, and the other via the tunnel deep in Ulscaleer's sub-cellar. I highly recommend the latter.

Mad Mage Notes: Ulscaleer's tunnel opens into a cavern located to the south of area 12. The three pirate ghosts in area 12 are former associates of Ulscaleer's.

The three pirates had used a combination of whisky and a *potion of suggestion* to ply from Ulscaleer the location of treasure he had buried in Undermountain (500 gp in various gems remains buried in a chest in a cavern beyond area 10g).

Unfortunately for pirates, Ulscaleer is protected by the Sea Ghost (use the statics for **wraith**), the spirit of a man Ulscaleer once saved at sea. When Ulscaleer has been crossed, the Sea Ghost is innately aware and immediately seeks out those who have betrayed his master.

Adventure Hook: Ulscaleer Anbersyr doesn't let just anyone use his smuggling tunnel, and outright denies that it even exists. If adventurers persist, he assigns them a task to prove their mettle. A ship docked in naval harbor is stocked with black powder. In addition to a crew of 12 **guards** on board, two representatives (**mages**) of the Watchful Order of Magistrates and Protectors stand guard on the dock in rotating shifts. If the characters can obtain a single barrel of black powder from the shipment, Anbersyr will take delivery of it to Garryth at the Overflowing Urn in Skullport as payment for using the tunnel.

Old Monster Shop

Level 4, Twisted Caverns

Ruudi Says: The Jar is an alleyway in the Southern Ward, south of Tilman's Lane between Caravan Street and Wall Street, surrounded by nondescript stone warehouses. On one warehouse door there's a sign reading, "Beware: Guardian Monsters Within".

This is the Old Monster Shop, run by an unpleasant man by the name of Feldyn Goadolfyn. Although officially a seller of monster parts to the kitchens of Waterdhavian nobles, I have it on good authority that Feldyn's real trade is in the buying and selling of live monsters which he keeps crated in his cellars.

Most monsters are obtained by contracted adventurers dispatched to exotic locations across Faerun, from the jungles of Chult to the sands of Tethyr, via two way gates hidden behind closet doors in the cellar. I've verified from multiple sources that one of those gates connects to the Twisted Caverns in Undermountain in an area north of a cave crawling with **hook horrors**.

Mad Mage Notes: The door to Undermountain appears to open directly into a stone wall in the caverns to the northwest of area 22. Characters passing through the door find themselves coated in a layer of fine dust. The only evidence from the other side is a perfectly flat and irregularly shaped section of the cave wall big enough to fit the door. Locating it without knowing its location in advance requires a successful DC 23 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Adventure Hook: Feldyn Goadolfyn is even more unpleasant than Ruudi let on. He at first denies having any cellars, much less live monsters or gates to strange places in them. At that moment, an older noble gentleman arrives to take delivery of a crated **owlbear** for sport hunt. Feldyn grudgingly allows the adventurers to help him load the crate on the noble's wagon before making an offer. He is willing to grant a one time passage to Undermountain upon the delivery, alive and not badly injured, of a **roc** which has recently been sighted circling high over Mount Waterdeep. He is very rude in denying any assistance or advice as to capturing the beast.

The Glow-Gate

Level 5, Wyllowwood

Ruudi Says: I once had a colleague who ventured into Undermountain and didn't return for more than a year. I had taken her for dead! It turned out that most of that time was spent trekking across central central Faerun.

My friend had gotten lost in the forest of Wyllowwood - an odd thing to exist so deep underground, to be sure - and stumbled upon a tree stump that looked as though it had been felled by a broad saw. Among the growth rings, glowing a bright red, were inscriptions in a script she had never before encountered.

Upon touching them, the forest around her shifted and the tree stump disappeared! She wandered the forest until she came to a road, which led to another, which eventually led to Cormyr's capital city, Suzail.

I later had the opportunity to relate this tale to Jeryth Phaulkon, and she confirmed that a two way portal exists between Wyllowwood and the King's Forest. However, the Druid Council of the Dalelands endeavors to keep it hidden and inactive!

Mad Mage Notes: The matching portal runes in the King's Forest are to the southwest of Knightswood, near the Starwater river. They can only be located by a Druid of 8th level or higher. The tree stump is in Wyllowwood area 2d.

Adventure Hook: The Raven Queen has dispatched her Shadar-Kai minions to the Feywild to wage war against the Eladrin. Fala Lefaliir (see chapter 2 of *Dragon Heist*) has felt the pleas of the Eladrin and seeks adventurers to travel with them to the Feywild to hopefully turn the tide. Fala is able to open a Feywild Crossroads in the Heroes Garden in Waterdeep's Sea Ward.

A fierce battle rages around the party as they and Fala square off with a quartet of **shadow dancers**. If they are victorious, Fala can lead the party to any other Crossroads out of the Feywild, including one that opens out a huge hollow tree in the King's Forest in Cormyr.

Published Adventure: *The Killing Tree, Undermountain Adventures*

The Lost Illusk Arch

Level 6, Lost Level

Ruudi Says: Here's a coincidence for you. About a year ago I began hearing from adventurers returning from Undermountain that there's suddenly a level that didn't used to be there. About the same time, rumors came swirling down from Luskan about a schism in the Arcane Brotherhood fueled by the discovery of a long lost arch into Undermountain. I don't believe in coincidences.

My research had previously turned up mentions of a two way portal located in old Illusk. One ancient text credits Laeral Silverhand herself sealing it more than six hundred years ago. Did you know she was apparently once know as "The Witch Queen of the North?" A tall tale if I ever heard it. Regardless, the existence of the portal itself now seems plausible, if not probable.

Mad Mage Notes: The lost arch is located in an excavated area in the back of an abandoned warehouse in Luskan, near the ruins of Illusk. It connects to a matching arch located west of area 23.

Adventure Hook: Jarlaxle Baenre's sway over the High Captains of Luskan is helped in no small part by his secret alliance with Cashaan the Red, Archmage Arcane and leader of the Arcane Brotherhood.

Although sworn to stay out of the politics of Luskan, the Brotherhood has determined that Jarlaxle's plan to bring the city into the Lord's Alliance aligns with their goals. There are dissenters in their ranks, however. Maccath the Crimson (human **conjurer**) and Vaelish the Brown (gnome **enchanter**) have been accumulating their own base of power. Now that the two have discovered and reopened the Illusk Arch, the Brotherhood now views Maccath and Vaelish as a threat to be eliminated.

Because of the clandestine position Bregan D'aerthe and the Arcane Brotherhood share, Jarlaxle Baenre is seeking outsiders to do away with Maccath, Valelish, and their two apprentices (**cult fanatics**). Jarlaxle can arrange transportation from Waterdeep to Luskan by sea and promises the adventurers exclusive use of the portal to the Twisted Caverns (this part of the deal the Arcane Brotherhood is unaware of, but would doubtless disapprove of).

Sundered Throne

Level 7, Maddgoth's Castle

Ruudi Says: Halastar was known to have kept crazy pets over the years, but the the most frightening one I've heard mention of was a vampire - not a creature for domestication!

Ancient texts tell of Yarogev Kripparian, tormented on a demiplane outside of normal existence. Halastar summoned the **vampire** lord, still sitting on his stone throne, into the material plane from the world made real by his own sins.

Yarogev couldn't be controlled, so Halastar simply left the vampire to rot in the summoning chamber deep in Undermountain. It was a century until Halaster's treacherous apprentice Maddgoth learned of the failed experiment.

Maddgoth was toying with a lone dwarf adventurer by the name of Rorrina Stoneshaft (I've hoped to find a genealogical connection to yours truly, but have thusfar been unsuccessful), who he arranged for the vampire to "meet".

The two strangely fell in love, and Rorrina was turned by the charismatic Yarogev shortly before she drove a wooden stake through his vile heart in hopes of redeeming the vampire's soul.

Maddgoth banished the newly formed vampire Rorrina to her ancestral home, never to return. At the same time, perhaps out of pity or cruelty, he enchanted Yarogev's throne to deliver the fresh blood of Undermountain adventurers to sustain her in exile.

Mad Mage Notes: The giant sized throne in area 3 contains a hidden hatch near the base that can be detected with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. Beyond the hatch is a small room containing a high backed throne that has been split in two large chunks. Sitting upon the throne transports a character to the lair of Rorrina Stoneshaft, which is located high on the mountain peak directly west of Amphail (see chapter 3 of *Storm King's Thunder*).

Adventure Hook: A representative of House Amcathra is seeking adventurers to deal with **hill giants** that have recently been raiding their breeding stables in Amphail. The hill giants have been chased from the mountains above by a giant bat that has been killing giants as it swoops and drains their blood. Adventurers defeating the vampire find the portal to the throne under the throne.

Blue Mermaid

Level 8, Slitherswamp

Ruudi Says: Have you ever been to the Blue Mermaid tavern in the Dock Ward? Ever even heard of it? No? That puts you in the solid majority, friend.

The ale is good, the wine not so much. But what's interesting about that dive is how it got its name.

The proprietress, Jalyth Hlommorath, isn't shy to tell the tale. It seems the tavern's founder, her grandfather Tacael Hlommorath, once fell in love with an actual blue mermaid! Or at least that's what the woman with the faintly scaled and blue tinged skin claimed to be. After 2 years of tending the bar named for her and a marriage proposal, Yoastal was dramatically revealed to be **yuan-ti pureblood** spy.

The story goes that Yoastal fled to the bar's cellar and simply disappeared. A unsatisfying ending. But I was sure I knew that name from somewhere. One adventurer returning from Undermountain had mentioned encountering the ghost of a yuan-ti priest of the same name in the Slitherswamp.

I convinced Jalyth to allow me and an associate to search the tavern's cellar. Things weren't looking promising until Toldar got the bright idea to hop into the dry well. He still hasn't come back, but he did go somewhere!

Mad Mage Notes: The Blue Mermaid is located on the corner of Ship street and Keel Alley in the Dock Ward. The drop from the dry well continues another 30 feet down into the southernmost room of area 9.

Adventure Hook: Jalyth recently dipped her toes into the business of financing expeditions. She is currently anxious to throw good money after bad as a party of three adventures she had outfitted failed to return. Jalyth is willing to grant characters passage through her portal if they agree to recover the *dwarven plate*, *scimitar of speed*, and *staff of fire* (or three very rare major magic items of your choosing) that she had equipped the lost adventurers with. The items can be found in the lair of three **yuan-ti amobinations** east of area 17. If the characters don't return Jalyth's items after a tenday, she sends another adventuring party after them.

Old Xoblob Shop

Level 9, Dweomercore

Ruudi Says: Perhaps the most famous gate between Undermountain and Waterdeep proper was in the attic loft of the Old Xoblob Shop back when it was run by Dandalus “Fire-Eye” Ruell.

Adventurers (and often, monsters!) were known to teleport into that attic to be met with alarm bells and Fire-Eye’s cheerful shout of “C’mon down smiling! No weapons out, please!”.

Dandalus and his wife sold the curiosity shop to its current owner shortly after the Second Sundering. Unfortunately, there there has been no word of teleportations nor of Dandalus’s whereabouts since then.

Mad Mage Notes: Dandalus Ruell retired to Rassalantar (for more information see chapter 3 of *Storm King’s Thunder*), locking the Undermountain gate in a lead lined chest which he buried on his farmstead. If the gate is activated, it opens into a room full of **cloakers** to the east of area 26b.

Adventure Hook: Xoblob, as the gnome who operates the curiosity shop currently goes by, only remembers that Dandalus had mentioned retiring to a small farm on the outskirts of a village to the north. “R-something. Rassely or Ralantar, or something like that”.

If the characters travel to Rassalantar, they learn the location of Dandalus’s farm from Yondral Horn, the proprietor of the Sleeping Dragon Inn.

Nearing the end of his natural life, Dandalus’s adventuring days are well behind him, but the characters’ arrival awakes the thrill of adventure in his heart. Dandalus knows of a **death tyrant** lair high in the mountains above. If the adventurers prove themselves by defeating the beholder, he agrees to teleport them deep into Undermountain.

Dungeon of the Crypt

Level 10, Muiral’s Gauntlet

It’s said that long ago drow elves lived openly in Waterdeep. Truth of that story is open to debate, but I do have on good account that the crypt of house Cassalanter in the City of the Dead has more than one passageway to the Underdark.

The Casslanters deny any elven heritage at all, much less drow, but I was able to get one half-elf cousin, who wishes remain nameless, to speak up about the sordid history of the family.

This unnamed cousin might have taken his freedom to spin tales too liberally, as he lead with devil worship. I steered him back on track, however, and he told me that the basis for his quiet but generous stipend leads back generations to when his drow grandfather joined with a recognized Casslanter bastard of high elf descent.

I wouldn’t bore you with this intriguing bit of Waterdeep history if an adventurer hadn’t crawled out of the Casslanter family crypt a year ago after being pursued by drow warriors in their Undermountain stronghold. It’s only one lead, but I believe it to be a solid one.

Mad Mage Notes: A secret stair deep in the crypt leads to a *ladder of uncountable rungs* shrouded in magical darkness. The magical ladder seems to go on forever to anyone climbing it. Only when a creature legitimately believes that the climb will never end does it suddenly stop at either the crypt or a circular room to the east of area 20.

Adventure Hook: Priestesses of Kelemvor who tend the City of the Dead seek adventures to descend into the Casslanter family crypt, from which they have observed **yochlol** demons appear on the new moon each of the last three cycles.

When characters investigate the crypt, the burial area leads to a twisting labyrinth teeming with undead.

The undead monsters are being summoned by a triad of **Drow Priestesses of Lolth**, whose lair contains a hatch leading to a dark ladder down into Undermountain.

Published Adventure: The *Dungeon of the Crypt* appears as an adventure in *Dungeon Magazine* issue #127. PDF available online.