

ADVANCED ADVENTURES MODULE #31

The Lost Lair of Drecallis

by Rick Maffei

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 4-7



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THE LOST LAIR OF DRECALLIS

Drecallis. The very name stills brings a chill to even the hardened greybeards of the Nettlemist Valley. The great wyrm Drecallis has continually demanded yearly tribute from the people of Longridge, and the frightened townspeople have reluctantly obeyed. Any show of defiance, or failure to turn over suitable valuables, always resulted in great loss of life at the claws of the dragon. So the pact was kept. For four decades the red dragon Drecallis dwelled in her remote abode, satisfied that when she flew forth to the nearby town her yearly tribute would be waiting.

The arrangement with Drecallis was the result of a once-desperate parley, but after so many years the townspeople grew tired of giving up much of their income to the huge reptile within the hillside caves. Three times the local townspeople had tried, in one fashion or another, to put an end to the agreement via arms, and three times they failed. The last attempt, a sortie by well-armed party of twenty veteran warriors bolstered by two wizards of no small repute, was a dismal failure—not one of the men ever returned. Some weeks later, Drecallis arrived for her annual tribute as usual, bearing a few new scars but little else worse for the wear. The lives she took that day in retribution made the townspeople think long and hard about any further attempts to slay her.

But now something has changed. For a second year in a row, Drecallis has not appeared on the appointed day to collect her tribute. Is the terrible beast dead? Or has the great reptile departed for greener pastures? The elders are desperate to discover the truth, and if the dragon is indeed dead, a priceless hoard may be sitting in the dragon's lair, unguarded. A call has been put out for brave souls willing to seek out the remote lair of Drecallis and investigate!

Notes for the Game Master: This module is intended for use in any campaign. The encounters are designed to be challenging for a party of 4-8 adventurers of levels 4 to 7 (for a total party level of 28-32). It is not essential for the party to have a cleric, but some sort of access to healing magic (i.e., via healing potions, herbs, etc.) would be useful.

STOP! The information that follows is for the eyes of the gamemaster only. Knowledge of the contents will only ruin your enjoyment of the game.

Background: The first arrival of the great dragon Drecallis was a grim surprise. A score of lives were lost that dark day, and livestock regularly were carried off afterward. Desperate to stop the attacks, but unwilling to leave the fertile valley, the townspeople approached the high hills where it was thought the dragon laired. After several days, the dragon spotted the group and a parley was held. The arrangement was not an easy one for the townspeople, but they really had little choice but to obey.

The grim pattern of appeasement came to an end two years ago, however. The day of the offering arrived, and the townspeople had everything in readiness, but the dragon never arrived. Unsure of what to do and unwilling to risk an expedition to the hills, the townspeople waited. Months passed, and the dragon still was not seen. Eventually the offering day rolled around again, and again the townspeople made ready. That was two weeks ago and of the dragon there was again no sign.

The elders debated what this meant. Was the beast truly dead? Had Drecallis relocated elsewhere, seeking more profitable pastures? Approximately two and a half years ago Drecallis was spotted in flight with another red dragon, and so it's possible she took a mate; if that is indeed the case, it would explain the change in her behavior. But it is all conjecture, and the elders now seek a brave group to venture into Drecallis' lair to ascertain the wyrm's whereabouts and condition.

The town elders are closer to the truth than they think. Drecallis did indeed take a mate nearly three years previous, a younger and brasher red dragon named Torrenzalax. Envious of his mate's

hoard, Torrenzalax was overcome by greed and struck by surprise, desiring the treasure for himself. Drecallis was slain, but not before grievously wounding Torrenzalax. The wounded dragon flew away under cover of a moonless night, much of the hoard in tow. Some of Drecallis' treasure eluded him, however, for it was stored in a hidden cache that only Drecallis knew of.

The caverns of Drecallis do not lie empty, however. While the great beast lived, she accepted the presence of a group of troglodytes living in a series of caves below her own. That trog clan has only flourished since her death. A year ago, a group of gnolls and their leader, a lamia, arrived at the caves intending to only stay the night, but they found the caves to be an excellent base of operations. It didn't take long for the gnoll and troglodyte groups to discover each other and come to hostilities, but the smarter gnolls and their cunning leader fended off the attacks of the more numerous trogs and their allies, establishing a stalemate of sorts. Recently, however, the balance of power has shifted yet again, for a behir has entered the caves through the same near-vertical access channel originally used by Drecallis. The behir, one Dzrudd, has claimed a large underground gallery for its own and seeks to ally with one of the factions (currently it leans toward the troglodytes). Into this complex situation enter the player characters!

Yet there is a last secret left behind by Drecallis. The dragon, cautious to the point of paranoia, always feared for safety of its hoard. Through the use of a captured dwarven smith, the dragon oversaw the construction of a special vault. Into this magically locked, closet-sized recess Drecallis placed her most valued treasures, and they remain there still for those cunning enough to claim them. A magic key, assembled from two parts before its use, is required to open the vault. While alive, Drecallis slept on one part and hid the other in a nearby cave, but since the dragon's death the key halves have become more widely separated. The troglodyte chieftain discovered one half near the corpse of Drecallis, and (unaware of its true nature) he carries it as a lucky talisman and spare weapon. The other half remains secreted in its cave—a cave close to Dzrudd's lair.

Beginning the module: Signs posted about the area advertise for brave souls to report to the elders of Longridge, a large town in the nearby valley. The elders of Longridge seek a group of adventurers willing to travel to the likely hillside location of Drecallis' lair. Any group undertaking this quest may claim a 75% share of any spoils found in the lair, provided they report back what they have found. The elders agree to supply any standard, nonmagical equipment (within reason) that the party might require, including riding horses and mules if requested.

The tall hills of the Drachens are approximately 12 miles from the Nettlemist Valley. The area here is lightly wooded and very uneven underfoot. Small holes created by snakes or burrowing animals threaten to trip the unwary, and thorn bushes grow throughout the region. The arid hills are home to wyverns, griffons, and wild dogs, and goblins and gnolls are legion there.

THE LAIR

The tallest of the Drachens is really a small mountain, long called The Tooth and more recently referred to as The Dragon's Tooth by the locals.

The lair may be entered via several routes: two entries on the south side (the most likely means of entry for the player characters), a wide vertical passage, and a tertiary access passage accessible from deeper underground (see AREA 21).

The first southern side entrance (see AREA 5) is hidden behind some brush and discovered as is a concealed door. Approximately 80 feet above, reachable via climbing, is a ledge (AREA 1) that also provides entry from this side. Lastly, a wide vertical shaft begins near the top of the mountain, some 900 feet above ground level, and following a near vertical course downward to eventually

terminate in AREA 20. This wide, near-vertical shaft was Drecallis's means of entry and egress but the steep angle and length may make it a challenge for the PCs to navigate, should they somehow discover it.

The caves are a minor ecosystem of their own, replete with fish, insects of all sizes, fire beetles, bats, rats, and similar vermin. Inhabitants of the caves feed regularly, but most are hungry as larger game is scarce. Note that the gnolls and behir supplement their diets with outside food and the trogs occasionally venture lower into the underground (see AREA 21) in search of prey.

Wandering Monsters: A wandering monster check should be made once every three turns. The chance of encountering a wandering monster is 1 in 6. If an encounter takes place, roll 1d8:

1. 3-12 Fire Beetles (SZ S; AC 4; MV 120 ft.; HD 1+2; HP 6 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL N). These beetles are feeling about for food and ignore the player characters provided they keep some distance. PCs coming within 10 feet of the beetles are fair game.
2. Grey Ooze (SZ M; AC 8; MV 10 ft.; HD 3+3; HP 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA corrosive touch; SD immune to cold and heat magic; AL N). This creature moves slowly until prey is in range, then it lunges. If it is slain, remove the weakest ooze from Area 17. (If the party has already entered that area and eliminated the oozes, or this encounter is rolled twice, treat this as no encounter.)
3. Bat (SZ S; MV 10 ft., 240 ft. flying; AC 8; HD 1d2 hp; HP 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA: swarm; AL N). flapping overhead. This lone normal bat does not attack the player characters, but its presence may unnerve them.
4. Odd Echo. Per the GM's whim, this could be distant voices, a sound that might be a distant scream, or merely an echo of the party's own footsteps. Use it to keep the players unsettled and on their toes.
5. Gnoll Patrol (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 5; HD 2; HP 12(x2); #AT 1; Dmg 2-4 or 1-8 with greatbow or 1-10 with halberd; AL CE). These gnolls are scouting the area and looking for trouble. They are not acting under orders, and they won't be missed for some hours if they are slain. If this encounter is rolled in a cave area with a number higher than 13, treat as number 6 instead.
6. A lone troglodyte (SZ M; AC 5 MV 10 ft.; HD 2; HP 10; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5 or 1-6 with stone axe; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE) scout snooping about for food. If this encounter is rolled in a cave area with a number lower than 12, treat as number 5 instead.
- 7-8. Vestige of Drecallis The fury of Drecallis at her mate's betrayal and her connection to the cave system has kept some portion of the dragon's spirit bound to this place as a vestige (see Appendix B). When this encounter is rolled, roll 1d4 on the subtable below.
 1. One or more characters near the rear of the party suddenly feel hot breath behind them, as if an enormous beast was breathing down their necks.
 2. One or more party members hear loud footfalls in the vicinity, as if an enormous creature were walking nearby. (This can take place even in narrow corridors or areas that wouldn't normally admit a dragon-size monster.)
 3. A huge shadow appears across the floor or wall. It appears to be that of a large monster with a long snout and outstretched wings. Just as quickly, the shadow fades from view.
 4. One character sees a semi-translucent claw come into view, holding an unusual axe-like weapon. The reddish hand seems to twist the device, rotating it, before disappearing. If that same character has seen either half of the Key of Drecallis (see AREAS 19, 20, and 27 for more information), her or she has a 50% chance to recognize it as part of the weapon seen in the vision. If the whole Key has been seen or claimed, the chance to recognize it is automatic.

ENCOUNTER KEY

1. UPPER LEDGE: This natural ledge stands approximately 80 feet above the ground. The ledge may be reached via flight or a long climb up the rough rock wall. At the northern edge of the ledge is anchored a forgotten grappling hook with a rope that extends down to the ground below; the brown rope blends in well with the surrounding hillside and is discovered as a concealed door.

The rough stone here is stained with bird droppings and there is much evidence of small, abandoned nests. This area is currently the lair of five **harpies**. The foul creatures immediately begin singing if they detect intruders. Assume any character climbing up the ledge has a 20% to draw the eye of a harpy, but the GM should modify this up or down as needed if the PCs are either unduly loud or taking precautions to remain undetected.

The harpies' lair reeks of excrement and filth. Near the center of the cave are four foul nests made of sticks and mud in which the harpies occasionally sleep. Two skeletons are cast to the north: one wears the remnants of a surcoat over scale armor and the second, smaller figure (a dwarf) wears rusted chainmail armor. The first corpse still wears a **periapt of proof against poison** on one bony arm. Beneath the dwarf skeleton is a broken wooden shield and a dirty but functional **axe of hurling**. The two skeletons are members of an ill-fated adventuring band called the *Night Wanderers* that heard rumors of Drecallis's death, came to investigate, and found only their ruin. Under a flat stone to the south is the harpies' collective treasure: a sack holding 340 sp and 42 gp, a bronze bracelet (worth 40 gp), and a silver necklace set with small amethysts and a central diamond (worth 750 gp).

Harpies (5): (SZ M; MV 60 ft., 150 ft. flying; AC 7; HD 3; HP 12, 14, 16 (x2), 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 1-6; SA: singing and charm; AL CE).

2. HIGH CAVE: The ceiling of this cave is nearly 40 feet high at the central point. Numerous stalactites hang from above like jagged teeth, and many stalagmites are also in evidence. A swarm of hungry **stirges** also lurk overhead amid the sharp hanging points. These bloodsuckers fly out of the caves nightly to feed but hunting has been poor and the harpies easily drive them away—as a result they are ravenous and swoop down on anything entering the area. If half their number are slain, the rest retreat into the ceiling crannies and don't emerge for 1-3 hours. The stirges have no treasure.

Stirges (16): (SZ S; MV 30 ft., 180 ft. flying; AC 8; HD 1+1; HP 5 (x8), 6 (x6), 7, 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA: drain blood; AL N).

3. BAT CAVE: This cave contains a number of natural formations, including large stone draperies that are beautiful to behold. There is a 30% chance any character entering notices a somewhat unpleasant ammonia-like smell. Eighty normal bats roost along the ceiling (unless the characters arrive after dark, in which case most are outside the caves seeking food). The smell is caused by the layers of old bat guano here.

If any sounds louder than low conversation are made here or more than one character enters brandishing a torch or other light source, the bats above swarm into a flurry of activity, with the following effects:

- A 10% cumulative chance per round that a torch is snuffed or lantern dropped.
- A random character each round is subject to a bat attack.
- Any attempts to strike a bat wherein a natural "1" or "2" result is rolled means that the nearest fellow character is struck for damage instead.

If the characters cease the offending activity (making an effort to be silent and covering or dousing any light sources) the bats return to an inactive state 1-3 rounds later. There is nothing here of any worth.

Bats (80): (SZ S; MV 10 ft., 240 ft. flying; AC 8; HD 1d2 hp; HP 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA: swarm; AL N).

4. **SPIDER SHAFT:** This cave is unremarkable except for one feature: an easily accessed, pitch-black natural shaft runs down to the next level at a nearly vertical angle to emerge into Area 16. Astute characters proceeding into the shaft more than 10 feet from either entrance have a 40% to notice bits of old webbing attached to the stone. The passage varies in width from 4 to 6 feet in diameter, but halfway down the 70-foot shaft is a niche approximately 10 feet deep. A **huge spider** has made its home in the niche, and it scrambles forth to attack anything moving in the shaft proper. The tight confines of the shaft make combat with missile weapons, thrown weapons, or polearms impossible.

The spider has no treasure as such, but tightly bound in webs in the niche is desiccated corpse of a magic-user and one-time member of the ill-fated *Night Wanderers*. On the corpse, found if a full turn is spent cutting away webs, are a wand of magic missiles (22 charges remaining), a **dagger +1, +3 versus flying creatures**, and belt pouch holding 12 gp, 18 sp, and brilliant yellow topaz worth 450 gp.

Huge spider: (SZ M; MV 180 ft.; AC 6; HD 2+2; HP 16 #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA: leap, poison (save +3); AL CE).

5. **LOWER ENTRY:** The ceiling of this cave is a mere 8 feet high, and the place smells strongly of old animal spoor. This place has been the lair of various woodland animals over the years, but lately four **gnolls** are always posted here, ostensibly to watch for intruders. They have become fairly lax in their duty, being generally lazy to a fault. The guards are all involved in a fierce game of knucklebones when met and they are easily surprised (double the normal chances).

The gnolls' treasure is heaped in small piles on the floor around a pair of crude bone dice: a total of 302 sp and 22 gp.

Gnolls (4): (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 5; HD 2; HP 8, 10, 12(x2); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or 2-8 with morningstar; AL CE).

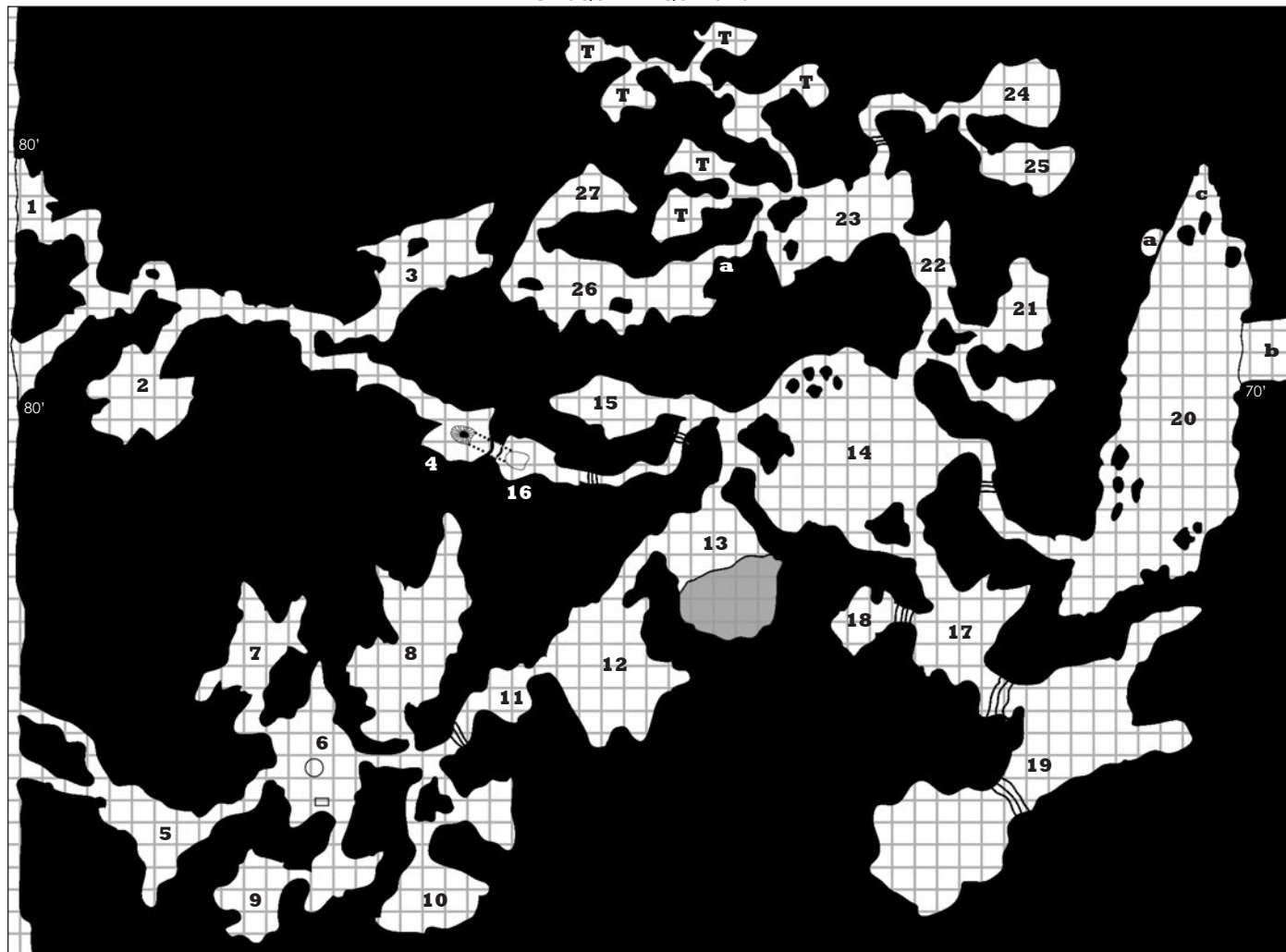
6. **COMMON AREA:** There are always 2-8 **gnolls** here; the rest are elsewhere in the caves or hunting game outside.

This large cave is normally used as a mess hall and sleeping area for most of the gnoll band. In the cave's center is a fire pit, lined with warm embers for cooking. An empty spit is suspended about a two feet over the coals. Nearby is a large, square slab of stone that seems to have seen use as a butcher block. Close to the walls are heaps of leaves and torn clothing that serve as beds. Ventilation here is poor, so the cavern always has a smoky, oppressive smell and the ceiling above is black with thick soot.

The gnolls attempt to surround any intruders and back them against the fire pit. If a gnoll here rolls a natural "20" against

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EACH SQUARE EQUALS 10 FEET



any target within 5 feet of the pit, the target is knocked into the pit and takes 1-4 damage per round from the fiery coals until they can climb out. Pulling oneself out of the pit takes a round and requires a successful Strength check, modified by +2 for every character outside the pit lending assistance (up to two characters may assist).

The area within 10 feet of the butcher block is slippery from constant splashes and drips of blood; any character moving through this area quickly must save vs. petrification or fall to the ground.

Gnolls (2-8): (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 5; HD 2; HP 8, 10, 12(x2); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or 2-8 with morningstar; AL CE).

7. **REFUSE CAVE:** Characters approaching this area immediately become aware of a strong stench of filth. The northern side of this cavern is dominated by a large rubbish heap some 12 feet high. The heap contains all manner of garbage and castoffs, including food scraps, torn bits of clothing and armor, bones (animal, human, and troglodyte), hide bits, tufts of fur, and worse items.

Characters searching the heap have a 20% chance per turn searching to discover a long-lost potion of extra healing amid the detritus, but they also must save versus poison after each turn of searching or become nauseated (suffering a temporary loss of 2 points Strength for the next 1-3 turns). Strict GMs may add the threat of disease as well. Worse yet, the heap is occupied by something far more dangerous than insects: an **otyugh** calls the heap home. Some months ago the otyugh unintentionally consumed a ring of regeneration, and as a side effect it can now regenerate 1 hp per round. The otyugh has come to recognize the gnolls and lamia as "food bringers" and it does not attack them. It has no treasure as such and is content to dwell here, awaiting its next meal.

Otyugh: (SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AC 3; HD 6; HP 38; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8, 1-8, 2-5; SA disease; SD never surprised, regeneration (ring); AL N).

8. **TARGET PRACTICE:** Eight **gnoll** warriors are here, practicing with their greatbows. Arrayed against the far northern walls are a number of crude, human-shaped targets constructed from straw-stuffed clothing, scraps of leather armor, skulls, and old helmets. The skulls used are human (4), goblin (2), and, oddly enough, a gnoll skull (the remains of a gnoll deemed insubordinate by his lamia mistress). Each gnoll carries a greatbow (treat as longbow requiring a STR of 16+ to use and dealing 1-8 damage) and 20 arrows, and each also keeps a morning star within easy reach if the need arises. In the western corner, three **hyenas** fight over a scrap of bloody hide.

The inhabitants here viciously attack any intruders and give no quarter until slain.

There is no treasure here, but the gnoll band uses the area as an armory of sorts. In addition to four additional greatbows and a like number of spare strings, there are five morning stars here, two battleaxes, a barrel holding twelve spears and two halberds, and a second barrel holding four quivers of 20 arrows each. Against the west wall are extra supplies: two tuns filled with rainwater, a barrel of salted fish, a box of assorted tubers, and a large sack that holds dried strips of dwarf jerky. If sorely pressed, the gnolls retreat behind the containers and use them as cover while they pepper the party with arrows.

Gnolls (10): (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 5; HD 2; HP 8 (x2), 10 (x2), 12 (x3), 13, 15 (x2); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or 1-8 with greatbow or 1-10 with halberd; AL CE).

Hyenas (3): (SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AC 6; HD 3; HP 15 (x3); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL N).

9. **LONGJAWS' QUARTERS:** The former gnoll band leader lurks here with his faithful assistants, drinking sour ale and ruminating about the future. The gnoll, called **Longjaws**, gave up leadership to the lamia some months ago but still commands much respect from his peers due to his fighting prowess. Outwardly he is obedient to his new master and organizes raids on her behalf, but he also longs for the day he can feast on her pale flesh and again assume the mantle of leadership. Recently the band has lost a few members to the dangers of the lower caves, and Longjaws is patiently waiting for the discontent to grow.

Longjaws is an intimidating specimen: heavily muscled and scarred from numerous conflicts, mane-like hair strung with braids and bits of bone, and piercing yellow eyes that betray his feral nature. A stripe of reddish scar tissue, bereft of hair, runs down his jaw and around his chin. He always wears leather armor decorated with metal studs and capped with human skulls (sans jaws) on the shoulders. His loyal companion, an immense hyena named **Lungetooth**, rests beneath the table.

In the eastern portion of the cave is a wooden table and chairs. Bloody scraps from Longjaws' last meal decorate the tabletop. Beneath the table is a wooden box holding a few wrinkled pieces of fruit and (unused) pieces of a silver serving set worth 120 gp for the lot. Elsewhere in the cave is a cask of ale, a small bottle (good brandy, worth 100 gp), a trunk filled with soiled clothing and armor bits, a horned helm hanging on a wall peg (worn by Longjaws on raiding excursions), a cloak stuffed into a barrel with other rags, a locked chest, and a rude, bug-infested pallet. The cloak, rarely touched by Longjaws, is a **cloak of elvenkind**. In addition to odd items of little value, the chest holds a dagger with mother-of-pearl grip inlay (worth 250 gp), 14 bloodstones (worth 50 gp each), a potion of climbing, a tiny, compartmented leather pouch that holds three applications of **dust of tracelessness**, a small bag of salt, 340 sp, and 122 gp.

If confronted, Longjaws happily engages in melee. His **gnoll bodyguards** loyally throw down their lives to defend him (knowing full well they'll be slain later for cowardice if they don't) and they attempt to interpose themselves between any intruders and their leader. Lungetooth is utterly loyal to his master and swiftly attacks any intruders. The beast has a particularly acute sense of smell and has a 75% chance to detect invisible or camouflaged creatures. If the tide of battle turns against Longjaws he snatches up a silver serving tray from beneath the table and bangs it loudly, bringing additional gnolls from Area 8 in 2-4 melee rounds time.

Longjaws: (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 3; HD 4; HP 22; #AT 1; Dmg 2-9 or 2-9 with great flail; AL CE).

Lungetooth, giant hyena: (SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AC 7; HD 5; HP 26; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; AL N).

Gnoll bodyguards (3): (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 4; HD 3; HP 20 (x3); #AT 1; Dmg 2-9 or 2-9 with morning star; AL CE).

10. **OPULENT CHAMBER:** This stone chamber is lavishly furnished with an ornate rosewood table and chairs, throw rugs, tapestries (depicting dragons, flying beasts, and scenic vistas), a comfortable divan with cushions, and a sideboard. Atop the sideboard are a silver coffer and an oval tray holding sweetmeats. Smoking braziers on tripods fill the chamber with heady but fragrant incense. Discerning characters may note that the furniture, although of very good quality, is mismatched—the items here were all seized by the gnolls in raids for their mistress.

This lavishly decorated cave is the lair of the gnoll band's current leader: a lamia. They defer to her, and have laboriously outfitted this cave to her specifications. She greets all intruders under illusion, appearing to be a young, pretty but haggard

human female in worn robes, a wand tucked in her belt, who wears a look of rugged determination. She acts the part of a wounded, wearied magic-user that has fooled the gnoll captors into believing she is more powerful than she is; claiming they fear her magic after she discharged her wand of lightening a few times (which is now empty of charges). The gnolls in turn have tried to please her by furnishing this cave in such fashion, but they also forbid her to leave. She pleads with the PCs to assist her escape and happily embraces those agreeing to help her (draining their wisdom in the process). If an obvious fighter is in the party, she leads that character to a locked trunk (she has the key) that contains a cursed sword of the berserker+2. If necessary, she uses her suggestion on that character to convince him that only he is worthy of the powerful weapon and able to wield it properly. If all else fails, she carries a dagger coated with giant centipede venom (save versus poison at +4 bonus or take 4-16 damage). She is quite clever, and will not act rashly.

The "wand" carried by the lamia is a mere carved stick treated with a permanent magic aura spell, but she wears an ornate brooch around her neck that is actually a brooch of shielding. The sideboard holds a silver serving set (which fills a large sack and is worth 400 gp for the whole 12-piece set). Elsewhere in the sideboard is a secret compartment (found at the same chances as a secret door) in which is secreted a pouch holding 98 gp. The silver coffer holds a scarab of protection, a silver bracer studded with garnets (600 gp or 400 for the garnets alone), a gilded comb (worth 40 gp), a hand mirror with an ivory handle (worth 80 gp), and a gold necklace with a star-shaped pendant (worth 125 gp).

Lamia: (SZ M; MV 240 ft.; AC 3; HD 9; HP 54; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA: spell use, wisdom draining touch; CE).

11. GUARD POST: Five **gnolls** are here standing guard duty. They are bored but watchful, and if intruders are spotted they engage with their greatbows followed by halberds once their targets draw close enough. If faced with overwhelming numbers, one flees to the west wall to strike a small brass gong hung there, alerting the gnolls in Areas 6 and 8 to the presence of intruders. It takes a gnoll two melee rounds to reach and sound the gong. Reinforcements arrive 4-7 melee rounds later, expecting to encounter hostile troglodytes.

One of these gnolls, unbeknownst to the tribe, was replaced by a **doppelganger** some weeks ago. The doppelganger has remained with the gnoll band because of the profitable raids, but he grows restless in the company of the suspicious, "inferior" creatures. If intruders kill one of the other gnolls, he will strike once more and retreat to the northern cave area in an attempt to lure a character into the pillared area, where he will then seek to kill and replace that character. (The GM should run any such one-on-one combat with the doppelganger with the player on the side, lest the other players get clued in to what has happened. If the doppelganger succeeds, the player should be encouraged to play the role of doppelganger in disguise.) The doppelganger is also not above retaining his gnoll guise and surrendering to the party, offering his services as their guide (he only has knowledge of AREAS 5 through 12) in exchange for his freedom.

Whatever occurs, the doppelganger has grown tired of his irksome gnoll companions and attempts to abandon them in the inevitable conflict with the PCs. If able, he accompanies the party in one guise or another until they are at a severe disadvantage (a chaotic melee or similar situation), in which case he strikes to kill his nearest "companion" and hastily exits the caves with whatever treasure he can grab.

Gnolls (5): (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 5; HD 2; HP 12 (x2), 13, 14; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or 1-8 with greatbow or 1-10 with halberd; AL CE). Each gnoll carries 2d6 ep apiece.

Doppelganger: (SZ M; MV 90 ft.; AC 3 (5 without ring, see items possessed); HD 4; HP 28; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12 or 1-8 with battleaxe (when in gnoll guise); SA: surprise on 1-4; SD immune to sleep and charm, save as 10th-level fighter; AL N). Items possessed: **ring of protection +2**, a **scroll of bless**, **detect magic**, and **sanctuary**, 80 gp, 38 sp, and 6 red spinels (worth 75 gp each).

12. STANDOFF CAVERN: This cavern is largely unremarkable and uninhabited. Water feeds into the cavern from above, trickling down a stone drapery into a shallow pool, and exiting from the far side to continue into AREA 13. The water swirls loudly in the pool here, and any Hear Noise checks take a -10% penalty in this area.

This cavern currently serves as part of the "neutral ground" found between the gnoll territory and troglodyte territory starting in AREA 22. Both groups occasionally venture into this cavern for water, but neither crosses beyond it into enemy territory. An initial approach by the gnolls into the behir's lair went poorly (two gnolls were eaten and the third barely escaped), so the gnolls no longer venture in that direction even if the frogs are absent.

13. CAVERN OF THE POOL: This large cavern is riddled with stalactites, stalagmites, and columns. The floor slopes down subtly to the east (a dwarf may possibly detect this) and is slippery in places. From the southwest, water flows down into a pool (about 18 feet deep at its deepest point) and exits from a smaller opening to the east. Blind albino fish dart around the many stalagmites jutting up from the water, and shelfstone is in evidence. Anyone studying the pool closely has a 25% chance to notice a jumble of bones beneath the water amid the whitish stone formations.

The fish are not the only inhabitant of the pool, for a particularly enormous **giant crayfish** makes its lair here. This horror happily adds gnoll, trog, or adventurer to its normal menu of fish. If any creature comes within 10 feet of the pool, the crayfish lunges out and attacks, aiming to drag its target into deeper water. The trogs are aware of the crayfish but still like to use this area as a source of drinkable water and fresh fish, so they arm themselves with long spears (see AREA 14) before coming close to the pool.

The crayfish has no treasure per se, but if the crayfish is slain and the pool carefully searched (1-4 turns) a long-lost **amulet of health** is discovered. The water in this room is icy cold, clear, and palatable, though a strong mineral taste is immediately noticed by those taking even a small sip.

Giant crayfish: (SZ L; AC 4; MV 60 ft., 120 ft. swimming; HD 4+4; HP 32; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12, 2-12; AL N).

14. THE GARDEN: This high-ceilinged cavern is a wonder to behold, for unusual and giant growths fill much of this area: enormous mushrooms with caps several feet across; giant, ghostly white morels; slender toadstools as tall as a man; and bizarre fungi of all sorts. Some of the growths are vivid scarlet, purple, olive, and stark white, giving the place an unearthly beauty. Leaning against the southwest wall, unnoticeable except by the very observant (25% chance) are five long wooden spears with stone tips (treat as pikes). The trogs arm themselves with these primitive polearms when they venture in AREA 13 for water or to catch fish.

The troglodytes purposely spread offal and dung here to encourage the growths, and the floor is covered with a thick layer of dark, rich earth. The smell of the animal dung combined with a strong odor of guano makes this place rather odoriferous, to say the least. The fungi here are not sentient, but if any are sampled there is a 1 in 6 chance the sample eaten is either poisonous (save or die) or causes hallucinations

and confusion (treat as the magic user **confusion** spell), 50% chance of either.

The trogs have buried a **stone of good luck** approximately two feet beneath the loam in the center of the cavern (marked "x" on the map) in the hopes of securing a good "harvest" of fungi. Characters carefully inspecting the floor have a 50% chance to notice the disturbed earth (rangers gain a +30% chance to notice these recent signs of digging).

There is a 10% cumulative chance per turn that 1-4 trogs from AREA 22 arrive to gather fungus.

15. SILENT CAVE: This cave is deathly quiet; footfalls echo off the walls here and even minor sounds are eerily magnified. Long stalactites overhead cast long, finger-like shadows across the floor. Near the center of the cavern are the corpses of two trogs, both several weeks old. This place is now shunned by the troglodyte tribe, and with good reason—it is home to an angry spirit. GM Note: No wandering monster checks should be made within 50 feet of this cave.

Adremiana Shorei was once an elven noblewoman turned archer and leader of the *Night Wanderers* adventuring company. Separated from her companions during an initial harpy attack, she fell down the spider shaft (see Area 4) soon thereafter and painfully made her way to this cave, seeking shelter. Hobbled with a badly broken leg and her rations lost, she waited here in vain for her companions to arrive and rescue her. They never arrived. As the proud elf died slowly of thirst, her fright turned to grief and then finally to rage, and after death she arose as a banshee. She now attacks any that enter this area, especially humans and dwarves. The **banshee** does not leave this cave to pursue prey, however.

In a rear nook of the cave (marked "A" on map) is her skeleton, still in a sitting position and dressed in leather armor. Nearby the

body is a **longbow +2**, a quiver of 12 arrows, and a **+1 dagger** in a scabbard decorated with mother-of-pearl inlay (worth 350 gp). There is nothing of value near the trog corpses save a club and a primitive hand axe with a stone blade. If Shorei's skull or her whole skeleton is carried outside the caves or is the subject of a remove curse spell, Adremiana's spirit is put to rest and her banshee form dissipates, and the PCs should be awarded 500 XP.

Banshee: (SZ M; MV 150 ft.; AC 0; HD 7; HP 40; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA: fear, wail; SD struck only by +1 weapon or better, immune to cold, electricity, sleep, charm, hold; AL CE).

16. SHAFT TERMINUS: The spider shaft leads down from Area 4 above and opens into the ceiling of this cave some 20 feet above. In the northern corner is what appears to be a fire beetle, but it is actually only the desiccated carcass of a beetle (and as such it gives off no glow) caught and killed by the spider above some time ago. The cave itself is otherwise unremarkable.

17. CAVE OF THE SINGING POOL: The center of this cave is dominated by a pool of grayish water, fed by mineral-heavy droplets of water from above. The water is drinkable without after-effects, but tastes strongly of minerals. As the water drops into the pool, the sound is accentuated by the natural echo here and produces a musical sound. The pool is five feet deep near its center.

Lurking in this cave are two **grey oozes**; one is at the edge of the pool (there is only a 10% chance to distinguish it from the grey water and stone, and this only if characters are carefully inspecting the area surrounding the pool) and the other rests in the cave's northeastern spur. They roam the entire cave system but return here after feeding. Unfortunately for any intruders, they always mindlessly attempt to feed again if prey presents itself. Dzurdd is aware of them and uses them as a first line of defense. There is nothing here of value.



Grey oozes (2): (SZ M; AC 8; MV 10 ft.; HD 3+3; HP 18, 22; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA corrosive touch; SD immune to cold and heat magic; AL N).

18. **LOW-CEILINGED CAVE:** This cave is reached via a series of smooth stone terraces. The ceiling here is a mere eight feet overhead, and the presence of several columns makes this cave tight in spots. Just inside the entrance are a few small bones (possibly those of a bat). Just west of the entrance are several unusual rock formations; on closer inspection, these are revealed (65% chance for each observer) to be three sections of a toppled statue of a troglodyte brandishing a club. The statue is a perfect likeness of a trog and with good reason—this unfortunate is the victim of the caves current inhabitants, a mated pair of **basilisks**. The basilisks are extremely territorial and quickly engage any intruders.

Near the rear of the cave is a jumble of larger bones and a **scroll of bless**, **cure light wounds**, and **augury** in an intricate ivory scrollcase. There is only a 25% chance of distinguishing the white scrollcase from the bones unless 1-3 full rounds are spent sifting through the bones. The scrollcase itself is worth 150 gp.

In the northeast finger of the cave, on a shelf some five feet high, is a burlap sack that Drzudd has failed to notice. Inside the sack is the handle half of the **Key of Drecallis**. This half of the Key appears to be a short, rod-like device with a circular recess at one end (this is where the top half of the Key is inserted). It radiates magic if detected for.

Basilisks (2): (SZ M; AC 4; MV 60 ft.; HD 6+1; HP 27, 32; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA petrifying gaze; AL N).

19. **THE LAIR OF DZRUDD:** The young **behir** Dzrudd is a relative newcomer to this cave complex, but he has already assumed the top position of the food chain, easily defeating all challengers. Dzrudd has truly exceptional hearing and an exceptional sense of smell: a lucky break for he was born blind, his eyes milky white. Both the gnoll band and troglodyte tribe have suffered losses at his claws, and he electrocuted a mighty ogre ally of the gnolls when it came too close. He now accepts the occasional tribute from the trogs and leaves them largely unharmed in response, and the lamia fears his power enough to have ordered the gnolls to give this cave a wide berth (at least until she decides the best way to destroy him). For his part Dzrudd is only dimly aware of the lamia, having smelled her once while she was in an illusional troglodyte guise.

Dzrudd attacks intruders by first discharging a bolt of lightning and then following up with attempts to constrict targets. He has no real treasure as such, but lodged in his gut (from a former swallowed victim) is a ring of spell turning.

Behir: (SZ L; AC 4; MV 150 ft.; HD 12; HP 65; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8, 2-5 or 2-4, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6; SA lightning bolt, swallow whole; SD immunity to electricity and poison, cannot be surprised because of exceptional senses; AL NE).

20. **OLD LAIR:** This vast cavern is home to a profusion of natural columns, stalagmites, and odd rock formations. Sharp stalactites hang from the ceiling some 120 feet above. Sounds here tend to echo and even small noises are magnified. Bats flutter about overhead. Scattered about here are broken chests, a crushed silver chalice (now worth only 50 sp), and some loose copper and silver coins (46 cp, 13 sp).

Dominating the northern half of the cavern is an enormous dragon skeleton with yellowed ribs easily as thick as a man's leg. The bones are disturbed in a few places but the skeleton is largely intact. (If some magical means is used to determine, it may be identified as an old red dragon skeleton; otherwise any character that has previously encountered dragons has a 70% chance to identify it as a dragon and a further 20% to identify the species if the first check is successful). The skeleton is harmless, if frightening, but lurking beneath the ribcage are seven fire beetles. The hungry beetles scuttle forth if they detect nearby prey. The beetles have no treasure, but characters searching the cavern have a 1 in 6 chance per turn of finding something of value amid the debris; roll on the following table to see what is found (each item may only be discovered once, reroll duplicates until all items are allocated):

Roll (d8)	Items Found
1	1-4 platinum pieces
2	1-10 gold pieces
3	a battered brass coffer that still holds 1-6 50 gp pearls
4	potion of delusion in a metal flask
5	potion of healing in a crystal vial
6	potion of sweet water in a wax-sealed, ceramic flask
7	a gem of seeing
8	a single bead from a necklace of fireballs (3d6 strength)

Fire beetles (7): (SZ S; AC 4; MV 120 ft.; HD 1+2; HP 6 (x2), 7 (x3), 8 (x2); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL N).

A: This is the location of Drecallis' vault. When closed, as it is now, the Vault appears to be no more than a chiseled hole in the cave wall (discovered at the same odds as a concealed door). Below the hole, near the floor, is a line of barely noticeable runic characters (searching characters have a 25% chance to notice these). Readable to characters that speak dwarvish or via a comprehend languages spell, the runes read as follows: SHOULD I FAIL, SEIZE THE TWO-PART AXE AND AVENGE ME. THE WEAPON IS YOUR KEY.



Destructive magics do not have any effect on the vault door, but passwall or wish spells may be used to gain access. Otherwise the joined Key of Drecallis is needed to open the vault door. If the whole Key is inserted into the hole and turned twice clockwise, the vault door sinks to the ground. (The vault door rises automatically after 3 turns and the Key may not be used from inside the Vault, so the GM must keep careful track of time spent in the vault!)

If the Vault is opened, the last vestige of Drecallis responds angrily. Drecallis possesses the behir (AREA 19), if it yet lives, and proceeds at full speed to this cavern, seeking to kill all the characters. When it arrives, the behir's white, rheumy eyes have an odd red glow and at times its ultramarine blue scales glisten with a reddish sheen—a side effect of the possession. Regardless of how the fight proceeds, after 2-12 rounds of combat the spirit of Drecallis is forced to relinquish the behir's form; the reddish eyes and scale effects end, and Dzurdd will spend one melee round standing confused. (Casting an exorcism spell on the behir at any time also immediately casts out Drecallis' enraged spirit.) Once the behir regains his wits, he again attacks, as he assumes the characters had something to do with his being brought to the cavern. If quick-thinking characters can communicate with the behir in a language it understands and treasure or service is offered, there is a slim chance of parley—otherwise the behir continues the fight until he or the party is slain.

Tucked inside the vault is a copper coffer, a black coffer with jade inlay, a long wooden case, a small chest, and a longish item wrapped in grey cloth. The various containers are described below.

Coffer #1: This copper coffer (itself worth 80 gp) is needle-trapped (save vs. poison at -1 or die; if save is made the struck limb is still rendered numb and unusable for 24 hours) and holds a ring of fire resistance.

Coffer #2: Constructed of ebony with inset triangles of jade, this coffer is worth 300 gp due to the masterful craftsmanship. Inside is a pink pillow of satin, upon which lies a magical **wind fan** with an ivory handle. Set into the fan's handle is a small emerald worth 500 gp, but if it is removed the fan forever becomes nonmagical.

Chest: This chest is locked and banded, and close observation has a 20% chance of spotting a thin layer of wax sealing the lid closed. The lock is picked at the normal chances, but if the chest is opened (automatically breaking the translucent wax seal) a gas is released that swiftly fills the entire vault for 2-8 rounds. Those exposed to the gas must save vs. poison or fall into an uncontrollable bout of coughing and be weakened (-4 Strength penalty) for 1-6 turns. The coughing has a cumulative 10% chance of attracting nearby monsters for each person affected. The chest otherwise holds only 40 lead bars painted silver.

Wooden Case: This teakwood case is held closed by a simple brass clasp. Opening the case triggers a trap, firing six long darts from inside the case—two forward, two backward, and one to either side. The darts strike random characters within 10 feet as 7 HD creatures. Inside, wrapped in purple cloth, is a **rod of striking** with 30 charges remaining. The rod is decorated with horizontal bands but bears no magical runes or sigils that betray its magical nature.

Wrapped Item: Under a winding of protective grey cloth is a **flaming +1 longsword**. The blade of the sword bears odd ruins intertwined with serpents, lizards, and wyverns. The sword's handle is wrapped in giant lizard skin.

B: About 70 feet up this eastern wall is an opening that gives access to a carved channel approximately 30 feet in diameter. The shaft runs some 900 feet, at perhaps a 15% grade, and continues until it exits the top of the hill on the far side.

C: This niche shows evidence that ironsmith work was once conducted here. The walls show signs of soot and a used anvil is here, collecting webs and dust. A work hammer and a pail are nearby, as well as a mound of dirt. Close inspection reveals (50% chance) tiny scraps of metal on the floor around the anvil. The Key was forged here. Digging in the loose dirt reveals a filled in fire pit approximately four feet in diameter.

21. GROTTO: The floor of this place is a maze of uneven rock and stalagmites. Far to the east, a skull can be seen. Numerous stalactites also decorate the ceiling here, helping to camouflage the predators here: a number of hungry piercers that silently drop down on any target below that presents itself. They have no treasure. The skull is that of an unlucky gnoll that wandered into this area.

In the northern part of this cave is a large, sloped sinkhole. It is easily noticeable and there is little chance of characters falling into it unless they are blinded or completely careless. The main shaft has a diameter of approximately eight feet; it runs some 50 feet straight down, tilts off at a 30-degree angle for another 70 feet, and then straightens again for another 60 feet before opening above a fast-moving underground stream. Years ago the trogs climbed up from this sinkhole to make their home in these upper caves; the GM is encouraged to use the sinkhole to expand this adventure if desired.

Piercers (8): (SZ M; AC 3; MV 10 ft.; HD 2; HP 8 (x2), 10 (x4), 11, 12; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA 95% to surprise; AL N).

Piercers (4): (SZ M; AC 3; MV 10 ft.; HD 3; HP 17, 20 (x2), 24; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SA 95% to surprise; AL N).

The Troglodyte Caves

22. THE SPIKED BARRICADE: After frequent gnoll incursions, this cave area is maintained by the trog tribe as a guard post. To the tribe, it is a line in the sand that the gnolls must never cross. To the northwest a crude but effective barricade of rocks has been erected, and is further fortified with jagged humanoid bone spurs (any attempt to physically push against the barrier bodily automatically results in 1-4 damage). Climbing over the barrier takes one round, and a failed Dexterity check results in 1-4 damage from the sharp bone protrusions. On the floor directly in front of the barricade are a number of primitive caltrops constructed from rock crystal.

Characters entering the caltrop area must slow to one-quarter normal speed, or risk taking damage. In addition, PCs moving slowly through the caltrop area lose all dexterity bonuses to AC. If characters choose to move through the area at regular speed, they must save vs. petrification each time they enter the caltrop field or take 1-4 damage. Characters taking more than 4 points of caltrop damage are additionally hobbled for 2-4 days and can only achieve a maximum speed equal to 3/4th normal movement unless magically healed.

Four **trogslodytes** stand watch on the safe side of the barricade. They carry shields constructed from fire beetle carapaces and carry both javelins and stone axes. The waist-high barrier also gives them some protection (missile attacks against them are made at a -2 penalty) and they've been instructed to seek aid if one of their number is slain by intruders. Their inherent bloodlust makes this directive difficult to follow—realistically

two must fall before the survivors attempt to run for aid. When engaging an enemy, they throw all their javelins (each carries three), if possible, before closing.

Troglodytes (4): (SZ M; AC 4 (with carapace shield); MV 10 ft.; HD 2; HP 10 (x2), 14, 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5 or 2-8 with javelin or 1-6 with stone axe; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

23. COMMUNAL CAVERN: This large, high-ceilinged (80 feet at its highest) cavern serves as a gathering place for the troglodyte tribe. Glowing lichens and fungus along the walls provide some dim illumination. Here the tribe members eat communal meals, fashion weapons, and communicate with one another in their hissing, guttural native tongue. The uneven floor here is littered with bones of all sizes, hide scraps, stone chips, and excrement. The cavern has taken on a sour odor as a result on the constant trog meetings here (those entering are affected as if by trog revulsion odor, except the duration of strength loss is a mere 1-3 rounds.

Eight **troglodyte** warriors and seven troglodyte females will be here when the party enters, and a furthermore 20% cumulative chance per round that one of the family units from a "T" cave area will arrive. Any noisy combat here brings the warriors and subchiefs from AREAS 24 and 27 in 2-8 rounds. Each individual trog warrior carries 2-12 ep in a belt pouch.

Troglodytes (8): (SZ M; AC 5 MV 10 ft.; HD 2; HP 7, 8 (x2), 10 (x2), 12 (x2), 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5 or 1-6 with stone axe; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

Troglodyte females (7): (SZ M; AC 5 MV 10 ft.; HD 1+1; HP 4 (x4), 5 (x3); #AT 3; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

T: These small caves are each home to a "family" of trogs: 1-2 warriors and a like number of females, and a 25% chance of 2-8 unhatched eggs. The warriors attack any non-trogs that enter. The females fight to protect their eggs, otherwise they flee to the common area if at all possible. Each egg, if kept warm, has a 50% to hatch and yield a baby (treat as a small-sized, mean-spirited but Neutrally aligned trog with a 1/2 hit die that does 1-3 points damage with a bite). Hatchlings develop into full-grown troglodytes in 6 months, gradually growing stronger and ever more cruel as they age regardless of their treatment—after 6 months they behave as regular trogs in all respects.

The caves show signs of primitive habitation—small bones, stone spearheads, very primitive wall drawings of prey, and heaps of sticks and plant matter that serve as beds—but are otherwise unremarkable. Each trog family has 4-24 ep or 2-12 sp (50% chance of either) secreted somewhere in their cave, such as under a pile of rocks, stuffed inside a wall hollow, or in a small sack wedged between two stalactites.

Troglodytes: (SZ M; AC 5 MV 10 ft.; HD 2; HP 10 each; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5 or 1-6 with stone axe; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

Troglodyte females: (SZ M; AC 5 MV 10 ft.; HD 1+1; HP 6 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

24. CAVE OF THE HUNTERS: Six elite **troglodyte** warriors are here, happily poking with their primitive spears at a rather bedraggled **gnoll** prisoner strung from the ceiling. The prisoner is bloody and obviously wounded and the trog are enjoying the sport. The trogs swiftly engage any intruders and fight to the death. Their swollen pride keeps them from seeking assistance even if they are outnumbered).

The gnoll, driven by greed, embarked on a lone quest seeking gemstones in the depths of the caverns and was easily taken

captive by a trog patrol. He is now securely tied with rope and hangs by his ankles from a stalactite some 12 feet overhead. The trogs have kept him strung up here for three days and have delighted in torturing him; as a result, the gnoll has become somewhat unbalanced. He assists any would-be rescuers until he reaches the safety of AREA 12. Once there, he bolts, howling loudly, the moment an opportunity presents itself.

The gnoll has no treasure, but each trog warrior carries 2-16 ep and the strongest wears a necklace fashioned from twine, quartz chips, and several flawed bloodstones worth 150 gp.

Troglodytes (6): (SZ M; AC 5 MV 10 ft.; HD 3; HP 13, 14 (x2), 15 (x2), 18; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5 or 1-6 with stone-tipped spear; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

Gnoll: (SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AC 5; HD 2; HP 5 (of 12); #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL CE).

25. LARDER: This cave is heaped with trog "supplies": a pile of fire beetle carapaces (easily mistaken for actual beetles), a stack of 12 javelins, a broken and empty chest, a stone hand chopper, long sticks used for weapon hafts, salted piercer meat (which tastes disgusting but is human-edible), half-eaten fish, a broken hand axe, and assorted odd skulls and bones. Searching the refuse takes a full turn and yields little but the rude javelins.

26. TROPHY ROOM: A strong stench of death and decay lingers here. This ghastly cave greets all visitors with the sight of skulls on stakes, skeletons pinned to the walls, and the remnants of armor and similarly grim mementoes. In plain view are numerous whole demihuman-sized skeletons, at least twenty skulls, a broken shield, a dented helm, a crossbow, a staff of some kind, a longbow, and a sword with a broken blade (the blade has been sheared off about 3 inches past the pommel); all chaotically arrayed about the walls in what must have struck someone as a pleasing fashion.

Most of the weapons and armor here are junk (any salvageable metal weapons would have been appropriated by the trog warriors long ago), but the crossbow is actually a crossbow of speed, though it appears quite average to the naked eye.

A: The entrance to AREA 26 has been carved to resemble a huge reptilian beast with jaws agape, rather like a crocodile or long-snouted, toothy troglodyte. The eyes of the beast glitter red (thanks to huge quartz slice insets worth 100 gp each). Entering the cave gives the impression that one is deliberately offering oneself up to be swallowed. The stonework is a surprisingly artistic creation by some of the more intelligent trogs.

27. CHIEF'S CHAMBER: This cave serves as quarters for Tarkress, chieftan of the troglodyte tribe. Tarkress rules through sheer strength and fear, and he commands the absolute loyalty of all the trogs. Accompanying him are his two subchiefs, themselves trogs of great strength and cunning. All three swiftly attack intruders, though Tarkress observes for a round—he has encountered troublesome spellcasters in the past and targets individuals obviously casting spells first, if given the opportunity.

Tarkress is taller than most trogs, standing nearly seven feet tall, and most of his bulk is muscle. The females typically decorate his arms and torso with swirls of dark clay, giving his body a somewhat runic appearance, but his face usually commands the most attention. His large fangs jut from his mouth, crocodile style, and he has inserted a large peridot into his left eye socket to replace an eye lost to combat years before. The gem catches the light as Tarkress turns his head and almost appears to glow in the dim light cast by the odd lichens that infest this cave. Tarkress wields a two-handed sword in combat, but

tucked in his belt is an axelike blade (actually the top half of the **Key of Drecallis**) that he uses as a hand axe if pressed.

Near the entrance is an enormous stone seat, rather throne-like in nature and carved to depict enemies (mainly humans and humanoids but also various underground creatures) being crushed by powerful troglodyte warriors. The chair's headrest and armrests are padded with many bat wings haphazardly sewn together. Elsewhere is a crude table and sitting stones. The cavern is divided by a hanging curtain made from long vertical strings of sewn hair and sinew decorated with small bones and bits of hide. Beyond the curtain is the chieftain's bed: a heap of mosses and smelly hides of no great worth.

The peridot worn by Tarkress in his eye socket is dark green and nearly flawless, and as such worth 500 gp. Crammed in a wall niche plugged by a stone (found as a concealed door) is his treasure cache: a small sack holding 40 pp and 225 gp, a golden bracelet adorned with elven writing (which translates as A gift for she highest in my eyes) worth 350 gp, and a **necklace of fireballs** (type II); Tarkress is unaware it is magical). The subchiefs each carry 3-18 ep on their person and the strongest wears a necklace made from braided twine and quartz chips worth 15 gp.

Tarkress, troglodyte chief: (SZ M; AC 5 MV 10 ft.; HD 6; HP 46; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-4, 1-4, 2-5 or 1-10+1 with **two-handed sword +1**; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

Troglodyte subchiefs (2): (SZ M; AC 4 (with carapace shield); MV 10 ft.; HD 3; HP 18, 20; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-3, 1-3, 2-5 or 2-8 with javelin or 1-6 with stone axe; SA Repulsive odor; AL CE).

APPENDIX A: THE KEY OF DRECALLIS

The Key of Drecallis

Always obsessed with the safety of her hoard, Drecallis decided that a secure area within her lair that she alone could access was needed. After months of careful waiting and plotting, Drecallis managed to catch a mighty dwarven smith and transport him back to her cave. Unhurt except for a broken leg, the smith was threatened with death unless he could fashion a secure, keyed vault within the dragon's cave. This was to be no simple vault, however; the vault itself had to be indistinguishable from the surrounding rock and the key had to be something large enough for Drecallis to wield herself, yet not obviously a key in appearance. Having little choice, the smith soon set to work, carving out a small but secure vault and fashioning a corresponding magical key. The key itself, although fashioned from stone and wood, resembled a great axe, albeit with an unusually large grip—the better to camouflage its true nature, the smith explained. The weapon/key was also made to disassemble into two halves that could be easily rejoined if touched together, so Drecallis could more easily hide it.

The dwarven smith, knowing full well that only death or future enslavement awaited him at the completion of his appointed task, very purposefully chose the key's shape. Although the weapon functioned as a key to open the hidden vault, he also added layers of additional magic into the shaping that gave the weapon's wielder great advantage when facing any reptilian creatures. Once the key was finished, he would assemble it for Drecallis and then use it to slay her. It was a desperate gamble, but it was his only viable option. Unfortunately for the smith, the key's shape immediately made the wyrm wary, and she decided to slay the smith the moment the key was finished. The smith landed a single, telling blow before being rent limb from limb. The dragon then studied the weapon/key, successfully disassembled it, and secreted the pieces—one beneath her bulk and the other in a nearby cave (AREA 19). When needed, she would retrieve and combine the pieces just long enough to open her vault before hiding them once again.

The Key, in addition to opening the Vault of Drecallis, is a **battleaxe +1, +3 vs reptiles**. When assembled, the Key resembles a dwarven battle axe with a stone blade and a wooden grip. Carved runes adorn the blade, and the wooden grip is tightly wrapped with troglodyte skin. The weapon is somewhat unusual in that in addition to the main blade, there are also two smaller projecting blades perpendicular to the main and a short, spear-like point at the end. The weapon may be tossed as a spear at a -2 attack penalty for 1-6 damage, if desired. The side blades appear ornamental—they actually allow the item to be used as a key in the Vault lock—and thus provide no attack or damage benefit. Carved on the pommel is a single word: Thurl. When uttered, the command word causes the weapon to separate into two halves: the stone blade portion and the wooden half. The pieces immediately rejoin into one whole weapon if touched together.

APPENDIX B: NEW MONSTERS

MONSTER VESTIGE

SIZE: Variable

MOVE: 220 ft.

ARMOR CLASS: 0 / as possessed creature

HIT DICE: as possessed creature

ATTACKS: 1 / as possessed creature

DAMAGE: (n/a)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Possession

SPECIAL DEFENSES: None

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%

RARITY: Very rare

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

LAIR PROBABILITY: 100%

TREASURE: Nil

INTELLIGENCE: Variable; usually Semi

ALIGNMENT: Neutral or any Evil

LEVEL/X.P.: 5 / 900

General information: Monsters, unlike humans, rarely continue into undeath as ghosts or similar undead. Instead, in very rare instances, a portion of their essence remains bound to their lair, held by their strong connection to the area or a strong emotion associated with their means of death. The process by which a vestige is formed typically takes months, so a monster slain cannot immediately confront its slayers in vestige form. Moreover, a vestige retains only a small degree of its originator's intelligence—many vestiges are barely sentient as a result. Most often vestiges serve only to frighten, but their possession ability does present a danger.

Once per month a vestige may possess a creature for 2-20 melee rounds, provided the target is both similar to their original form and of equal or lesser intelligence than their original form. The creature possessed may be of any alignment. During this time, the vestige may control all actions by the target creature as if a charm monster had been cast, but no saving throw is possible.

Vestiges have some resistance to magic, but an exorcism spell dissipates their essence forever. A remove curse spell banishes a vestige for 1-4 days. They are turned by clerics as a wraith.

Languages: Vestiges understand the same languages, if any, the originator monster understood in life. They rarely if ever speak.

Physical description: Vestiges typically manifest as a translucent version of the creature in question, but they can only take other shapes and appear in more minor ways: as a voice or sound, as a shadow, as a disembodied head or appendage, etc. Often several minor manifestations will precede a full appearance by the vestige.

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