

Ironwood Gorge

by Eric Jones



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Introduction

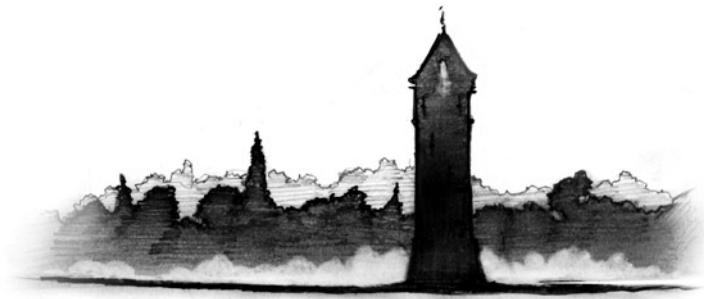
Along the Old North Road lies the lonely Margravate of Blackmarch. Vile orcs, once a memory in the region, have returned in strength, bringing an end to decades of relative calm. The humble garrison of the Bleak Tower, an outpost on the march, is likely to be overwhelmed. Who will deliver them? If you intend to adventure in Blackmarch *stop reading here!* The following material is intended for the game master's eyes only.

Notes for the Game Master (GM): The Blackmarch sequence of adventures, continuing with this module, is designed to fit easily into any campaign. *Ironwood Gorge* also works as a standalone adventure. The central location, *the Bleak Tower*, is situated along the *Old North Road*, a wide dirt track that serves as a hinterland trade route. The surrounding area constitutes generally *the Margravate of Blackmarch*.

Ironwood Gorge is a fairly difficult adventure and includes a few scattered challenges that the party may not be equal to, particularly if they are low level or few in number. It is important that the players have a common sense notion of when to run away. The module is ideally suited to experienced players who enjoy an uphill challenge, offering countless opportunities for their characters to prove themselves.

Preparation for the use of this module: To play this module requires that you own an original edition or retro-clone fantasy role-playing game such as *Labyrinth Lord™* or *OSRIC™*. Appendix A offers several pre-generated characters for quick play, potential hirelings, and/or replacements for lost PCs. For your convenience, NPC and monster statistics are noted as follows: **Name** (AC, HD, hp, #AT, D, MV, Save, ML) representing Name (armor class, hit dice,

hit points, attacks per round, damage, movement, save class and level, and morale). Descriptions of the monsters referenced in this module can be found in the above mentioned games and most other popular class and level fantasy role playing games. New monsters specific to this module are detailed in Appendix B. This module includes a few new magic items and spells as well; new magic items are described in full in Appendix C, new spells in Appendix D.



Background

The Bleak Tower rises before the approaches of the Old North Road, a monument to the bygone days of empire. There are but whispers of its long and storied history: a colorful succession of tenants both celebrated and infamous. It was the corrupt sorcerer, *Stigiswart*, who last possessed it, led to the province of Blackmarch by rumors of subterranean roads: paths to the deep, forgotten parts of the world, where one might commune with dark powers.

Stigiswart thrived for several years, until the arrival of the famed adventurer, *Umathes*, and his confederates. They wrested the Bleak Tower from the sorcerer and drove out his vile servants. Umathes was made *Margrave of Blackmarch*, and took up residence in the legended spire. The newly landed Margrave marshaled a garrison of able bodied men-at-arms, and secured a hundred-mile stretch of the Old North Road, reopening the long forgotten route to commerce.

For a time all was well in the mark, but as the years wore on revenues from tolls grew thin, and the need for military strength diminished. The tower garrison was wholly unprepared when savage orcs returned

to the region: many of the remaining men-at-arms were slain or deserted. A desperate call for adventurers has gone out. Who will follow in the footsteps of the heroes of old and deliver Blackmarch from the brink of doom?

Prelude

The adventurers have come to the inn at the foot of the Bleak Tower, weary from an arduous trek. Yet before the travelers can doff their heavy armor, a low and baleful sound arrests their ears: a horn calling a long, chilling note from the edge of the wood. The tower bell rings the alarm, the gate is pried open by a pair of **guards** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT1, D d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) who shout for those at the inn to take refuge in the stout walls of the tower. Just then a pack of 8 **war dogs** charge out of the forest (AC 6, HD 2+2, hp 10 each, #AT1, D 2d4, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 11) and come frothing mad at anyone they can catch in the open. The inn-folk have only two rounds before the dogs are upon them. The player characters can stand and fight if they like but may be over-matched as 16 **orcs** are not far behind (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). They come howling out of the wood, arriving in the fourth round to hurl torches upon the thatch of the inn. The guards loose missiles from the tower windows, but to small effect. The orcs linger for a round or two, until they are sure of the inn burning, then disappear back into the dark of the wood.

Of course, the party just might be sufficiently powerful, ingenious, or lucky enough to turn back the raid. If they do, or if the player characters in any way flout the threat of orcs, by camping visibly outside the tower for instance, the orcs will return in a few days in greater numbers (roughly double that of the first raid). In the unlikely event that this attack is repelled, the orcs will have been put on their heels. They will remain holed up in their caves until they can return in strength. In the meantime the adventurers have earned the right to do as they like.

The Bleak Tower

The Seneschal

The tower interior is dank and cramped, the air a stew of livestock, roasting meat, and the whiff of chamber pots. Once the immediate threat of orcs has passed the adventurers meet **Onomaclus**, the tower seneschal, (AC 3, HD 5, hp 38, #AT 1, D d8+5, MV 120'(40'), Save F5, ML 10) a grim man of middle age, girded in a chain hauberk, a *shield* +1 emblazoned with the image of a hippogriff, and a *long sword* +2 sheathed in an embossed leather scabbard.



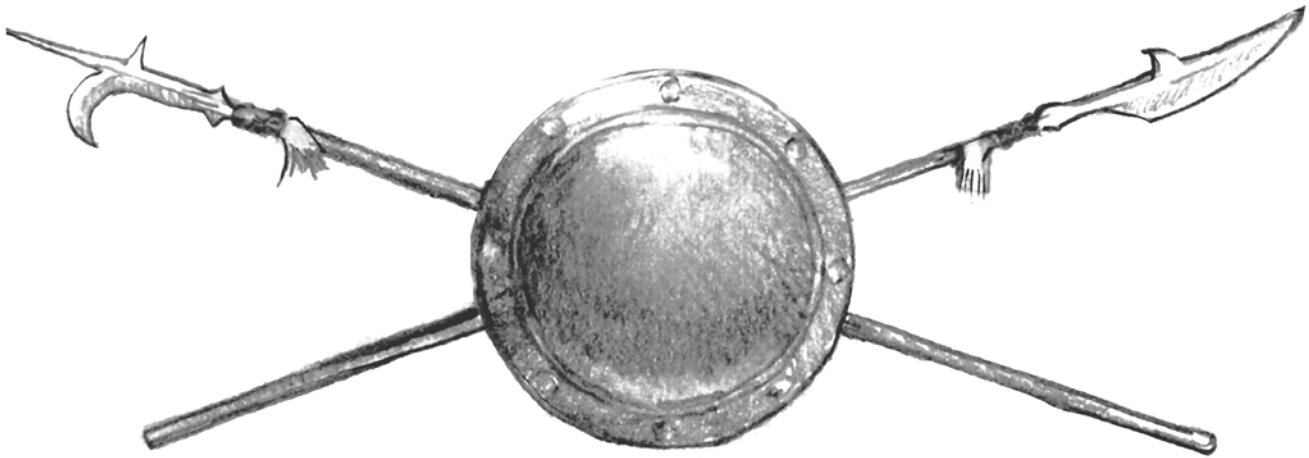
The seneschal commands a dozen weary men—barely enough to defend the tower. He is certain the orcs are holed up in the caverns of *Ironwood Gorge* to the north and can promise half of the Margrave's treasure to any who can drive them out. If the party asks to see the Margrave in person, Onomaclus answers brusquely that the lord is not well, and no longer comes down from his chambers (not explicitly a lie, if lies are detected for); they can be assured that, as seneschal, he represents the Margrave in all things. There are enough adventurers arriving weekly to the Bleak Tower that Onomaclus is unwilling to offer a substantial advance or any additional concessions, but should he have sufficient reason to trust the party, he will fetch the warden and show them down to the tower coffers to whet their appetite for the Margrave's treasure (see Dungeon, room 3).

Room and Board

Adventurers who swear to oppose the orcs are invited to stay as guests of the seneschal; lodging is otherwise 5 silver pieces per person, per night. In either case visitors are quartered in the dining hall and the courtyard, along with the dispossessed innkeeper, his wife, and any other adventurers the game master chooses to have lodging there (see Appendix A – Pre-Generated Characters). The game master might consider granting the main hall to the most promising party of adventurers and relegating the 'less productive' parties to the courtyard. The tower guards will not abide anyone on the upper floors, unless they are in the company of one of the tower's permanent residents, or have a substantial bribe in hand.

Provisions

Proven adventurers are welcome to the tower's limited stock of arms and equipment, but anything else must be sent for. The tower is without a provisioner and, unless prior arrangements have been made, orders are taken by the warden to be paid in advance. A pack mule has been brought into the courtyard and will be sent in a few days time with the sergeant-at-arms and a contingent of hirelings (the party may volunteer; pay is 10 gold pieces each). Provisions got this way will cost double the normal value and take several days to return. Unfortunately, a detachment of 12 **orcs** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) watches the Old North Road for anyone trying to leave Blackmarch. The orcs are armed with spears, short bows and short swords, and each carries 2d6 electrum pieces (or d6 gold pieces). If the player characters do not accompany the mule cart then assume the orcs succeed in seizing it. They will take the provisions and ransom the sergeant-at-arms back to the tower for 50 gold pieces.



Rumors

Information of potential use to the party can be discovered by speaking with the various personages of the tower. However, the game master may be called upon to produce more general information. The following rumors can be learned by speaking to the tower guards, or any other denizens of the tower:

- The famed gnomish stonecutter, *Dunwhortle Hogstruckle*, once resided in Ironwood Gorge and came to the tower once a year to auction his wares to visiting traders.
- The catwalk on the fourth floor is haunted by footsteps in the night. Some say it's the old conjurer Stigiswart. If you hear his approaching footsteps you must hold your breath lest he pry out your soul.
- The Margrave has not been seen for months. Most suspect that he is dead, and that the Seneschal is concealing the fact until the present threat is passed.
- A trio of adventurers set out for Ironwood Gorge before the news of orcs. They have not returned.
- Something has come between the Seneschal and his wife, the Lady Anwen, of late. She has secluded herself in her chamber.

Besieged

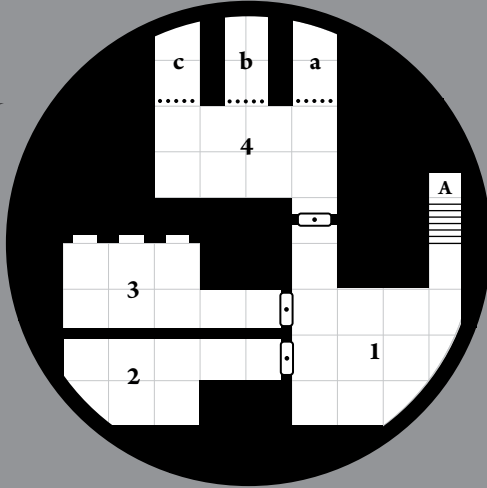
A contingent of orcs continues to harass the tower each night, screaming taunts, beating drums and sounding horns from the dark wood, sneaking out to cut the throats of any living thing left out in the cold. However, there are only a dozen **orcs** watching the tower at any given time (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) and they will generally allow adventurers to come and go, unless they look like easy pickings.

As time passes the vile creatures get more and more daring and aggressive, running up crude hook ladders and throwing burning oil through the arrow loops, or leaving impaled captives to be discovered at first light. At full confidence, a crew of orcs will rope together a petrified log and attempt to batter the door down. They will drop the log and flee after a few tries, but close inspection reveals that the door is close to giving in.

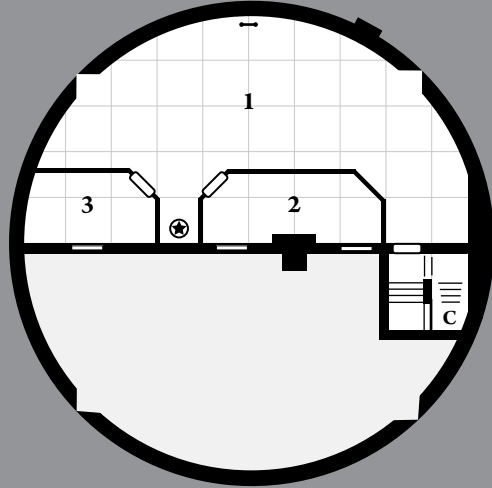
It is important that these attacks are in some way responsive to the forays of adventurers into Ironwood Gorge. If the player characters are registering an effect, then the harrying of the tower should let up somewhat. On the other hand, if the players are completely ineffectual for what the game master deems a fair period, then the orcs will come in force, batter the down the door at last and storm the interior. The game master may wish to adjudicate a mass combat with miniatures, or merely have the party taken captive, but the adventure is lost.

The Bleak Tower

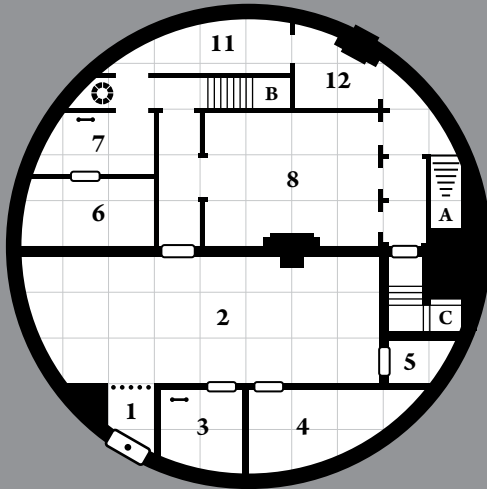
1 Square = 5'



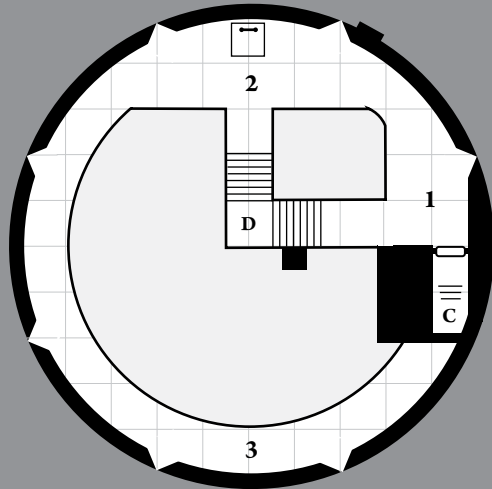
Dungeon



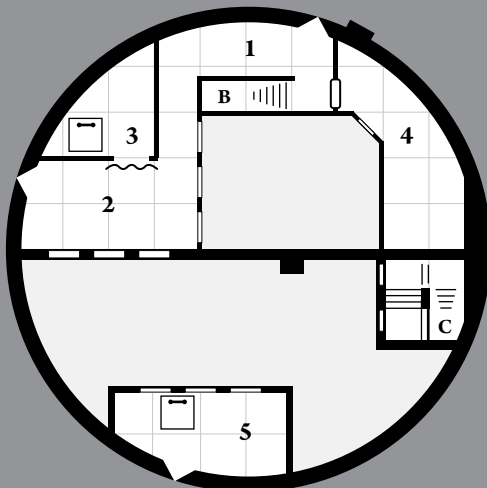
Third Floor



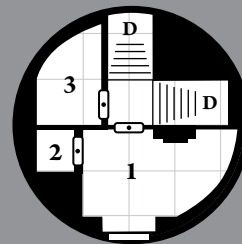
Ground Floor



Fourth Floor



Second Floor



Fifth Floor

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| | Stairs Down | | Door | | Well | | Iron Gate | | Ladder |
| | Stairs Up | | Locked Door | | Fireplace | | Curtain | | Trap Door |

Map Key

Stairwells

The various connections between tower floors are marked on the map as follows:

- A. A stair cut from the bedrock that leads down to the dungeon. Torches hang in sconces on the rough-hewn walls.
- B. A flagstone stair that runs from the ground floor to the second floor gallery.
- C. A stone stairwell that runs from the ground floor all the way to the fourth floor. There is a lit torch at each landing.
- D. A pair of creaking wooden stairs that lead to the solar suite on the fifth floor, each stairway is lit by an iron lantern that hangs by a chain.

Dungeon

1. Storeroom: The basement level of the tower is dark and musty. Crates of dried goods are stored here and firewood is stacked along the southern wall. A powdery black mold grows along the flagstone walls, and rats have made their homes in the nooks.

2. Wine Cellar: This room has a dirt floor and cob-webbed ceiling; the air is suffused with the rich scent of oakwood from casks of middling quality wines and beers that line the wall. A sampling of finer wines lie in a bottle rack against the far wall: two dozen bottles, each worth 5 gold pieces.

3. Vault: The door to this chamber can only be opened with the *warden's key* (see Ground Floor, room 3). There is a row of metal coffers lying open on the floor; taken together they contain 8000 copper pieces, 8000 silver pieces, 8000 gold pieces, and 500 platinum pieces. This is the Margrave's treasure; should the party eliminate the threat of orcs in Blackmarch they will be entitled to half the coin here (though retrieving it might require some additional effort). There is also a small locked chest

containing 16 gems worth a total of 2350 gold pieces. A few personal treasures are stored here as well: a 3' tall, polished statue of a hippogriff, beautifully carved from pale white marble (worth roughly 2000 gold pieces though difficult to move), a cracked stone basin carved with three stylized figures holding it aloft, a trunk of old but finely made clothes (together worth 50 gold pieces though difficult to sell), and an elaborately wrought *spear +2* that leans against the wall. Also, the confiscated equipment of the notorious thief *Culwich the Black* is kept to one corner: a suit of blackened leather armor, a jeweled short sword worth 100 gold pieces, and a *smuggler's chest* (see Appendix C – New Magic Items); the chest is filled with 600 gold pieces; the secret compartment is presently empty. Lastly, there are three nooks along the back wall; each houses an ornate urn, each worth 80 gold pieces. The first two contain the ashes of the Margrave's ancestors; the last awaits the remains of the Margrave himself.

4. Cells: This is the tower dungeon; there is a rough-cut table and stool in the main room. Innumerable candle nubs cover one end of the table. A disused torture rack sits in the corner and various shopworn implements of torture hang from pegs on the wall. There is often a **guard** here (AC 6, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT1, D d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8), but not always; if the prisoner(s) appear to be asleep for the night the guard will return to the barracks.

Two of the dungeon cells are empty to begin the adventure (a and b). The third cell (c) houses the notorious thief **Culwich the Black** (AC 7, HD 5, hp 12, #AT 1, D d2, MV 120'(40'), Save T5, ML 8), a gangly rogue dressed in tatters. The lock to the iron gate that holds him is bewitched and can only be opened with the *warden's key* (see Ground Floor, room 3). If any characters manage to speak with Culwich, they find him difficult at first. However, should any character show a persistent interest, he will begin to confide in them, and as they gain his confidence he will gradually reveal the following information: Culwich was betrayed to the Margrave

by his partner of several years ‘The Hero Erdwain.’ Culwich suspects the Margrave is a vampire, as it was only upon meeting the Margrave’s gaze that his trusted partner of many years turned on him. If someone can secret Culwich a ‘silver or magicked blade’ and help him escape, he pledges to destroy the Margrave. Culwich is a master manipulator, and the game master should be as convincing as possible when pleading his case. If character(s) manage the difficult task of freeing Culwich, he escapes to the wood and begins plotting (see Epilogue).

Ground Floor

1. Gatehouse: There is only one entrance to the tower: a heavy iron door that locks and bars from the inside. An iron gate stands at the other end but is left open except when the tower is threatened. The stink of animals and wood smoke greet all entrants to the tower.

2. Courtyard: The gatehouse leads into a wide indoor courtyard that reaches up four stories. Here and there candlelit arches look down from the various floors. A surly mule is hitched to a post along the western wall, next to a hutch full of tittering chickens. Though they are likely to be butchered by the orcs, animals belonging to guests must be kept outside—unless the tower warden can be convinced otherwise (see below).

3. Warden’s Lodge: The two-story structure along the southern wall of the courtyard is the warden’s lodge. The **warden**, or chief custodian of the tower, resides here (AC 7, HD 1, hp 7, #AT 1, D d8, MV 120’(40’), Save F1, ML 8). He is charged with managing the tower’s staff and provisions. If guests of the tower raise any concerns they are directed to the visit the warden. He is a haggard man of middle age, accommodating out of a sense of duty, but wary of guests. Should he receive any reports of mischief he will admonish those suspected that they will be turned out at the first sign of trouble; he is more than willing act on the threat.

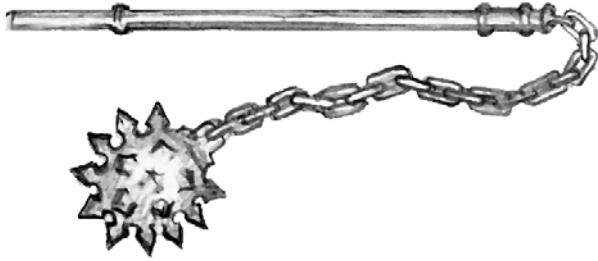
The warden carries an enchanted *warden’s key* always in his off hand; should he ever drop it the key will be lost to him forever (see Appendix C – New Spells). To that end he tightens a leather belt around his hand, particularly when he sets down to bed. The key is the only means of opening several rooms in the tower, including the dungeon cells (Dungeon, rooms 4a, 4b, and 4c), as well as the vault where the Margrave’s treasure is kept (Dungeon, room 3), and finally the doors to the solar suite (Fifth Floor, rooms 1 - 3).

4. Chapel: This space serves as the tower’s chapel. Beneath the wood-vaulted ceiling sits a single bench, and a small altar arrayed with candles and burning incense. A lovely fresco decorates the curved back wall; it depicts a stone sanctuary in a lush, green forest. The tower curate, **Osbert**, is usually found here (AC 9, HD 5, hp 18, #AT 1, D d2, MV 120’(40’), Save C5, ML 8, spells: *cure light wounds*, *purify food and drink*, *protection from evil*, *bles*, *know alignment*, and *cure disease*). A locked wooden cabinet stands in the eastern corner; it contains scrolls for the cleric spells: *cure light wounds*, *dispel magic*, *neutralize poison*, *remove curse*, and *restoration*. Osbert is only too happy to bestow blessings on adventurers who brave the perils of the wood, but has been instructed to keep some of his powers in reserve in the event that the tower is stormed by orcs. If a conversation is struck Osbert will likely explain that when he first arrived at the tower the wall fresco was painted over in black tar, and that he personally undertook the project of meticulously clearing the tar away and restoring the elaborate image underneath. Osbert knows little of its origins, but supposes that it depicts a sanctuary devoted to a god of Law.

5. Armory: The garrison’s weapons are kept here, chiefly longbows, pole arms, long swords, and a great store of arrows.

6. Servant’s Quarters: The **cook** and the **butler** are quartered here (AC 9, HD 1, hp 2 each, #AT 1, D d2, MV 120’(40’), Save NH, ML 6). Each has a straw bed and a few personal effects.

7. Pantry: Precarious piles of serving dishes and other effects are stored here. There is a ladder against the north wall which the servants use to access the buttery, room 3 on the second floor. Just behind the north wall is a clean water well.



8. Dining Hall: The dining hall features a two-story vault of old timbers, from which hangs an iron chandelier. The minstrel's gallery and the bower window look down on it from the second floor. A large fireplace stands against the southern wall, carved with stone features. An expansive tapestry hangs on the north wall, depicting a hero casting a sorcerer from a high tower window. This is of course meant to depict the Margrave evicting the fiendish sorcerer Stigiswart from the premises, though this is not an entirely precise record of what transpired. Adventurers, and refugees from the inn, are quartered in the hall, for which musty bedrolls have been laid out on the wood floor. The Margrave's two **wolfhounds** sleep by the hearth (AC 7, HD 2+2, hp 12 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 180' (60'), Save F1, ML 8). Any visitors attempting a late night excursion will rouse the dogs unless a *move silently* check is made. Late at night, one might glimpse a melancholy lady in an elegant dress, standing in the bower window, ominously lit by the faint glow of a hearth (see Second Floor, room 4).

11. Larder: Perishable foods and a few bottles of diluted wine are kept here. The humorless cook knows what is in stock and will report any shortages immediately to the tower warden. A wary old black cat keeps vigil.

12. Kitchen: All the tower's meals are cooked here, in this hot, unforgiving room. The flue from the hearth runs up the northeast wall of the tower.

Second Floor

1. Corridor: A line of hunting trophies hang on the wall: three dry, leathery boars' heads, packed with sawdust and mounted on plaques.

2. Minstrel's Gallery: This room is framed by arcades that afford views of both the dining hall to the east and the courtyard to the south (see Ground Floor, rooms 8 and 2). From here, **Geave**, the halfling minstrel, (AC 7, HD 1, hp 2, #AT 1, D d2, MV 90' (30'), Save H1, ML 7) can ease the minds of servants and guardsmen alike with his balladry. This room also once served a drawing room for the Margrave to receive honored guests.

The minstrel is a clownish sort, and wears a black leather mask with a longish nose. He is well favored by the guards, as much for his antics as his singing, for the halfling is given to pranks; his favorite victim is the stuffy cook. Most nights the minstrel can be induced to play a song, particularly if plied with drink or a few silver pieces. Roll to see what song the minstrel plays, and what can be gleaned from it (d4):

1. A traditional song of no particular interest.
2. A ballad that speaks of Ironwood Gorge, and its winding paths to the deep. It makes mention of a great gnomish artisan who once resided there, who carved "many a marble masterwork."
3. A ribald song about the villain, Culwich the Black, who according to the song, came to Blackmarch seeking the 'Master's Magic Bottle' but now rots away in the dungeon.
4. The halfling's signature ballad: recounting the Margrave's wresting of the Bleak Tower from the wicked sorcerer Stigiswart. It also mentions the Margrave's boon companions, though Geave has rudely appended their names to: "Mord the (Once) Magnificent," and "(Formerly) Honored Odend."

3. Buttery: A small supply of the fine wine and beer is kept here, brought up from the cellar; a wine log sits on a small table. In better days drinks were served from this room to the drawing room through a curtained archway. There is also a small hammock here where, *Geave*, the tower minstrel sleeps.

4. Bower: This is the private bedchamber of the **Lady Anwen** (AC 9, HD 1, hp 2, #AT 1, D d2, MV 120' (40'), Save NH, ML 6), daughter of the Margrave and wife of the Seneschal, Onomaclus. Her room features a small hearth, a four poster bed with the curtains drawn, and a peaked window, with panes of leaded glass, that offers a view of the dining hall below. A wide bookshelf stands against one wall, filled with codices containing religious texts, folk histories, and the private journals of tower magistrates from the bygone days of empire. A dusty spell book is hidden among the tomes, containing the spells: *ventriloquism*, *arcane lock*, *detect invisible*, *locate object*, *clairvoyance*, and *dispel magic*. There is a wardrobe in the corner that contains two fine linen dresses, two tooled leather girdles, a veil and several crimson silk scarves, worth a total of 80 gold pieces. A half-made silk dress hangs on the wall.

Anwen has lived here in virtual seclusion since her father withdrew from sight. Her husband, Onomaclus, knows the cause of the Margrave's disappearance, but refuses to speak of it (see Epilogue). Anwen is fascinated by regional lore: particularly the history of Blackmarch, and what she refers to as *the Dwarf Roads*, ancient subterranean highways said to extend miles beneath the earth. She believes one can gain access to the roads via the caves at Ironwood Gorge, and that this is what drew the previous tenant, the sorcerer Stigiswart, to the province.

5. Upper Warden's Lodge: The second floor of the warden's lodge is little more than a loft with a straw bed and a footlocker containing a few modest personal effects. There are three arched windows that look down on the courtyard, and an arrow slit from which the warden can observe the area just in

front of the tower door and conduct business with less savory visitors. One of the floorboards on the west end of the room can be pried up, allowing one to rain missiles on enemies trapped in the narrow gatehouse below.

Third Floor

1. Barracks: This rather large room serves as the tower barracks. There are several rows of creaking wooden bunks, two dozen beds in all. From the foot of each hangs burlap sack containing each guard's personal possessions. Longbows hang on pegs on the wall, and leather quivers full of arrows hang by the arrow loops. A ladder leans against the northern wall allowing the guardsmen easy access to the fourth floor gallery via a trap door (see Fourth Floor, room 2). A chamber pot stews in the far corner. At any given time there are at least four guards here, sleeping, eating, or just whiling away the hours. There are twelve surviving **guardsmen** in all (AC 6, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT1, D d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). The rest were either killed or deserted. The guards who have stayed wear a certain stubborn pride, and are fiercely loyal to the Seneschal, if not the Margrave.

An old, decorative suit of armor stands in a nook in the southern wall. Unknown to the residents of the tower the armor is cursed. It appears to be a functional suit of plate mail, if a little too ornate. It is harmless enough, unless someone makes a concerted effort to remove it from its base, which causes the whole suit to suddenly collapse to the floor. Upon examination there appears to be no visible means by which the armor was standing to begin with. Whoever caused the armor to collapse is now cursed: doomed to trigger the next malicious trap that crosses their path. Whatever the trap may be, their companions pass it safely but they do not. If the trap requires a saving throw they are permitted to attempt it but with a penalty of -2. Once the offending character has triggered a trap of any kind, anywhere, the curse is lifted and the suit of armor reassembles of its own volition and resets.

2. Steward's Quarters: This is the seneschal, Onomaclus', chamber. There is a modest bed with a trunk at the foot, a writing desk, and a fireplace against the far wall, flanked by windows that look down at the courtyard. The desk is locked and contains a record of wages, maps of Blackmarch, and an accounting of treasure and tolls. The trunk contains a set of clothes, fresh boots, a gold locket (worth 20 gold pieces), and a silver dagger.

3. Sergeant-at-Arms: This is the **sergeant-at-arms'** quarters (AC 6, HD 2, hp 10, #AT1, D d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 9). There is a straw bed, a footlocker, and a window with a view of the courtyard. The sergeant-at-arms is a gruff but capable soldier, respected by the men.

Fourth Floor

1. Landing: At least three **guards** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT1, D d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) maintain the watch on this floor at all times, surveying the tower environs from the arrow slits. There is a set of stairs in the western wall that lead to the fifth floor.

2. Gallery: This part of the tower is drafty and cold. Lanterns hang between the arrow loops, but are usually kept dark so as not to limit the view of the acreage that separates the tower from the forest to the north. There is a set of stairs to the fifth floor set into the southern wall, and a trap door to the barracks on the third floor below. A large iron bell hangs from the rafters, used to ring the alarm when the tower is under attack.

3. Catwalk: A narrow walk lit by dim lanterns circumscribes the remainder of the fourth floor. A wood balustrade permits one to look down at the courtyard far below. A vault of wide beams supports the fifth floor above. The guardsmen whisper of a ghost that haunts the walk, and occasionally something like creaking footsteps can be heard, but this is likely an effect of the wind.

Fifth Floor

1. Solar: The door to this room is heavy oak and has been placed under a geis: only the *warden's key* can open it (see Ground Floor, room 3). This is the Margrave's chamber and is presently vacant. The ceiling follows the angle of the spire and is braced by oak timbers. A tall casement window stands opposite the door, offering a view of the road to the south and the wide heath beyond. A large black raven likes to perch just outside the window.

The chamber is appointed with a disused bed that features an elaborately carved oaken headpiece. The Margrave's coat of arms hangs above the bed, painted with a red cockatrice against a field of gray. A large, locked trunk stands at the foot. It contains the Margrave's clothes, including a velvet cap, a silk dress robe with long, gold embroidered bands at the sleeves and a fine gold brooch, a long crimson dress cloak, a weathered travel cloak, and two pairs of fine leather shoes. Taken together the finery is worth roughly 200 gold pieces, the brooch being worth an additional 100 gold pieces. A small desk squats in the corner, it contains quills, a dried ink well, and a manuscript entitled *The Hymns of Arasuthra*, a series of beautifully written devotional poems that address some vague power. There is also a small concealed drawer in the bottom of the desk; it contains the keys to the two chests kept in the closet (room 2).

Lastly, there is an ornately carved fireplace beside the door; a fine mirror hangs above the mantle, one that has the peculiar effect of reflecting only the room and not those within it. Upon closer examination one begins to doubt if it is in fact the same room, as there are subtle differences: for instance, the trunk and coat of arms appear to be newer in the other room, and an eerie mist hangs in the air. The mirror is fixed, and indestructible by normal means; it radiates strong magic if detected for. In fact the mirror provides a view of another plane, one accessible via the magic bottle that is presently locked away in the closet (room 2).

2. Closet: The closet door can only be opened with the *warden's key* (see Ground Floor, room 3). The closet is thick with cobwebs and dust. This room was meant to store the lord's finery, but the Margrave, like his predecessors, used it to secret away his most valuable possessions. There are two chests here; each is locked and fairly difficult to open (-10% penalty to pick the lock), and both are equipped with poison dart traps (+2 to save, characters failing a *save vs. poison* die in 2d4+1 rounds). One contains 500 platinum pieces and ten exquisite rubies worth 1000 gold pieces each; the other chest holds several magic-user scrolls containing the spells *confusion*, *wall of fire*, *contact other plane*, *disintegration*, and *stone to flesh*; as well as a *potion of levitation*, and a neatly folded *displacer cloak*. There is also an iron lock box embedded in the wall. The front of it has been cast to resemble the stylized face of an old man. The box is protected by a glyph of warding: anyone touching any part of the box receives 12 points of electrical damage (*save vs. spell* for half damage). The lock is exceptionally difficult to pick (-20% chance). Inside one finds a meticulously detailed brass bottle, similar in appearance to an *efreeti bottle*. Any character removing the bottle's stopper is instantly transported to an isolated demiplane (detailed in *Blackmarch Module 3: The Bleak Tower*—of course the game master can substitute any number of uses for the bottle as suits their campaign).

3. Study: This door is under a spell similar to the others on this floor: it can only be opened with the *warden's key*. This room was once the study of the wicked sorcerer, Stigiswart, as evinced by a bookcase full of empty bottles, animal bones, alchemical apparatus, and the like, that have been set to one side. Buried among the miscellanea are notes on the spell *warden's key*, and scrolls for the spells *detect magic*, *locate object*, *dispel magic*, *arcane eye*, and *Stigiswart's striking darkness* (see Appendix D – New Spells). The only other effects of the room are a pair of brass candelabras, and 6' long wooden box filled with earth.



The Ironwood



There is no direct path to *Ironwood Gorge* but it is found easily enough: one travels northwest from the tower, roughly five miles on the Old North Road, then turns north into the looming forest, which the locals call the *Ironwood*. The seneschal is willing to draw a simple map, and give advice about negotiating the ancient weald; he admonishes the adventurers to be wary of cockatrices and 'faery lights'. The *Ironwood* is a foreboding place, marked by towering petrified trees hung with leafy lichen.

The narrower trunks can be toppled on a successful *bend bars* roll, dealing 2d6 damage to any creature caught in the path that fails a *saving throw vs. death*. [Note: If bending bars is not included in your rules set, simply roll a strength check (d20) with a penalty of 12 added to the roll.] The forest terrain is uneven, marked by gullies and outcrops of stone, but undergrowth is sparse and the ground is otherwise easy to traverse. Young birch trees grow here and there, as do clusters of wildflowers—*black hellebore* among them. Characters presumed to have a fair knowledge of woodcraft may make a Wisdom check to identify the hellebore; a potent ingested poison can be derived from it: in sufficient doses causing confusion for 24 hours and, failing a *saving throw vs. poison*, death in d4 turns.

Proceeding north through the *Ironwood* roughly 40 miles as the crow flies, one comes to a river; the banks which are steep and thick with ferns. Following the course of the river north and west leads one at last to the mouth of *Ironwood Gorge*...

Random Encounters

The game master should check for a random encounter every two hours (12 turns) spent marching in the Ironwood—every four hours if the party is encamped and careful not to attract attention. A roll of 1 on a 1d6 indicates an encounter.

Creature(s) encountered (roll 2d6):

1. **Will-o'-the-Wisp** (AC -8, HD 9, hp 36 each, #AT 1, D 2d8, MV 180'(60'), Save F9, ML 7). Encountered at night only, Will-o'-the-Wisp will attempt to lead the character(s) to one of the more dangerous creatures listed below, or else into a hunting pit or the path of a toppling tree.
2. d4 **Ironwood Dryads** (AC 2, HD 3, hp 12 each, #AT petrify, D nil, MV 120'(40'), Save F5, ML 8) see Appendix B for a full description.
3. d2 **Ettercaps** (AC 6, HD 5+1, hp 21, #AT 3, D d4/d4/d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F5, ML 7) Ettercaps will set numerous spider web-like snares and traps; these are likely be encountered well before the ettercaps themselves appear. On a roll of 1-3 on a d6 the ettercaps are accompanied by d3 **giant spiders** (see below)
4. d3 **Giant Spiders** (AC 6, HD 3, hp 12, #AT 1, D 2d6, poison, MV 60'(20'), Save F2, ML 8) Giant spiders will be accompanied by d4 x 10 normal spiders.
5. d4 **Giant Toads** (AC 7, HD 2+2, hp 10 each, #AT 1, D d4+1, MV 90' (30'), Save F1, ML 6)
6. **Wild Boar** (AC 7, HD 3, hp 12, #AT 1, D 2d4, MV 150'(50'), Save F2, ML 9)
7. **Orc Scout** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) The scout will do what he can to avoid detection, and will flee if spotted. In 2d6 turns he will return with a war party (see below); if possible they will set up in ambush.
8. 2d4 **Orcs** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) led by an **Orc Captain** (AC 6, HD 1+1, hp 8, #AT 1 (+1 to hit), D d6+1, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). Each orc carries 2d6 electrum pieces; the captain will have an additional 3d6 gold pieces. The captain also carries d3 measures of *blood unguent* (see Appendix C – New Magic Items)
9. 2d6 **Goblin Refugees** (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 3 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 60'(20'), Save NH, ML 7). These goblins have recently been driven from their home by adventurers, orcs or both. They have little taste for combat and will be eager to negotiate. They have no coin but are willing to share potentially valuable information (see Rumors below).
10. d4 **Cockatrices** (AC 6, HD 5, hp 20 each, #AT 2, D d6, petrify, MV 90'(30'), Save F5, ML 7)
11. d4 **Harpies** (AC 7, HD 3, hp 12, #AT 1, D d4/d4/d6, MV 60'(20') fly 150'(50'), Save F3, ML 7)

Encounter Rumors: If the party is able to extract information from any of the intelligent creatures in the Ironwood, either by parlay, coercion or interrogation, consult the following table to see what is learned (roll 2d4):

2. Bizarre creatures are to be found in the lowest caverns at Ironwood Gorge.
3. The orcs are not alone: a score of dwarves have come to gorge as well.
- 4 - 6. The creature shares what it knows about the terrain ahead, enabling the party to avoid random encounters for the next four hours (24 turns).
5. There are well over a hundred orcs holed up in the gorge.
6. There is a vampire abroad in Blackmarch, though it has not been seen of late.

Ironwood Gorge

Roughly fifteen leagues north of the tower runs a river, swift and cold. As one follows its meandering line ten or so miles northwest, the earth begins to heave up on either side in formations of weathered rock. Thick marsh grasses conceal footpaths of hardened mud that run along both banks—each shows signs of frequent passage: footprints, spear divots, and the like. The cleft widens as the walls of the gorge grow higher. Roughly eight miles upriver, the paths on either side mount ledges that follow a gradual ascent along opposite faces of the gorge. Progressing along either of the ledges for another two miles brings one to the eastern edge of the adventure map (see Upper Gorge, areas 1 and 2).

Rock Slides

While traversing the ledges there is a danger of rock slides. They can be stirred by any loud noise or even spells that evoke tangible environmental effects such as *fireball*. In the event that something occurs that might trigger a rock fall, roll a d6 and consult the table below, adding +1 for an especially loud noise and +2 if the disturbance includes any kind of concussive force.

- 1 - 2. Nothing happens.
3. A few pebbles dance down the cliff, warning of what might have been.
4. d6 large rocks fall 4d6 feet behind the party.
5. d6 large rocks fall 4d6 feet ahead of the party.
6. d6 large rocks fall on the party!
- 7+. Full rock-slide (see below)

Each large rock is resolved separately with a normal attack roll; each one that connects deals d10 damage.

The game master should randomly determine who is struck. In the event of a full-blown rock slide: all characters within 20' of the initial disturbance must *save vs. breath weapon* or suffer 4d8 points of damage, and likely be swept from the ledge or buried.

The Gorge Floor

The bottom of the gorge gently slopes from the base of the cliff walls down to the snaking river. The river banks are muddy and thick with rushes, reducing a character's movement by half. There are **pike** swimming in the icy waters (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT1, D d4, MV 240'(80'), Save F1, ML 6). At the westernmost end of the gorge, a waterfall spills over 200' to the base. The water is deepest here and is home to a **giant pike** (AC 5, HD 4, hp 16, #AT1, D 3d6, MV 240'(80'), Save F4, ML 8), ready to greet anyone who suspects a concealed passage behind every waterfall. The game master should note of the cave entrance to the lower caverns (see Lower Gorge, area 8) in the event that the party carefully searches that area.

Atop the Bluffs

A character making a successful climb walls check can climb the face of the gorge at any point. The tops of the bluffs stand roughly 200' above the base, and offer an excellent vantage of the entire gorge. However, the ground here is difficult going: rocky and thick with low trees, brambles and entangling vines—characters move at $\frac{1}{4}$ their normal movement rate. The orcs have generally avoided the sunlit bluffs, but are capable making the ascent and will do so if they are suffering a tactical disadvantage. Note that there is an open hole in the roof of area 25, marked on the upper gorge map by a dotted line. The hole is difficult to locate from above, and characters struggling through the rough terrain in that area must take care not to stumble in.

Wandering Monsters

Once the party has stepped into the caverns of Ironwood Gorge the game master should check for a random encounter every other turn. A roll of 1 on a d6 indicates an encounter; consult the following table to determine what is encountered.

Creature(s) encountered (roll 2d6):

2. 2d4 **Adventurers**: A party of adventurers comprised of NPCs. The game master should create their own or draw from Appendix A. How this encounter is handled is left to the discretion of the game master. It is possible that the two parties recognize one another from the Bleak Tower. A bit of role-playing (or a simple reaction roll) is in order as another band of adventurers might be perceived as anything from allies to rivals, or even outright enemies.
3. 2d4 **Zombies** (AC 8, HD 2, hp 8 each, #AT 1, D d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 12). The orc high priest has been animating the corpses of dead orcs (see Lower Gorge, area 22b). Any zombies met in random encounters are feral and are just as likely to attack orcs and other monsters as they are adventurers.
4. d4 **Cavern Rock Mantises** (AC 2, HD 3, hp 15 each, #AT 2, D 2d4, MV 30'(10'), Save F3, ML 6) See Appendix B - New Monsters for a full description.
5. d6 **Dwarves** (AC 4, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT 1, D d8, MV 60'(20'), Save D1, ML 8). These dwarves are scouts from *the Náinhold* (see Upper Gorge, area 35). If they react positively to the party they may be able to correct details in the party's map, or in exceptional circumstances even lead them to the relative safety of their refuge.
6. d100 **Normal Bats** (AC 6, HD 1 hp, #AT 1, D confuse, MV 120'(40'), Save NH, ML 6) Bats are quite numerous in Ironwood Gorge. They are first heard as a rising chorus of squeaks and beating wings that echo down the passage,

moments before they come rushing by. The game master might consider having a hoard of bats interrupt another encounter: causing a delightful state of bedlam at an inopportune (or timely) moment for the party.

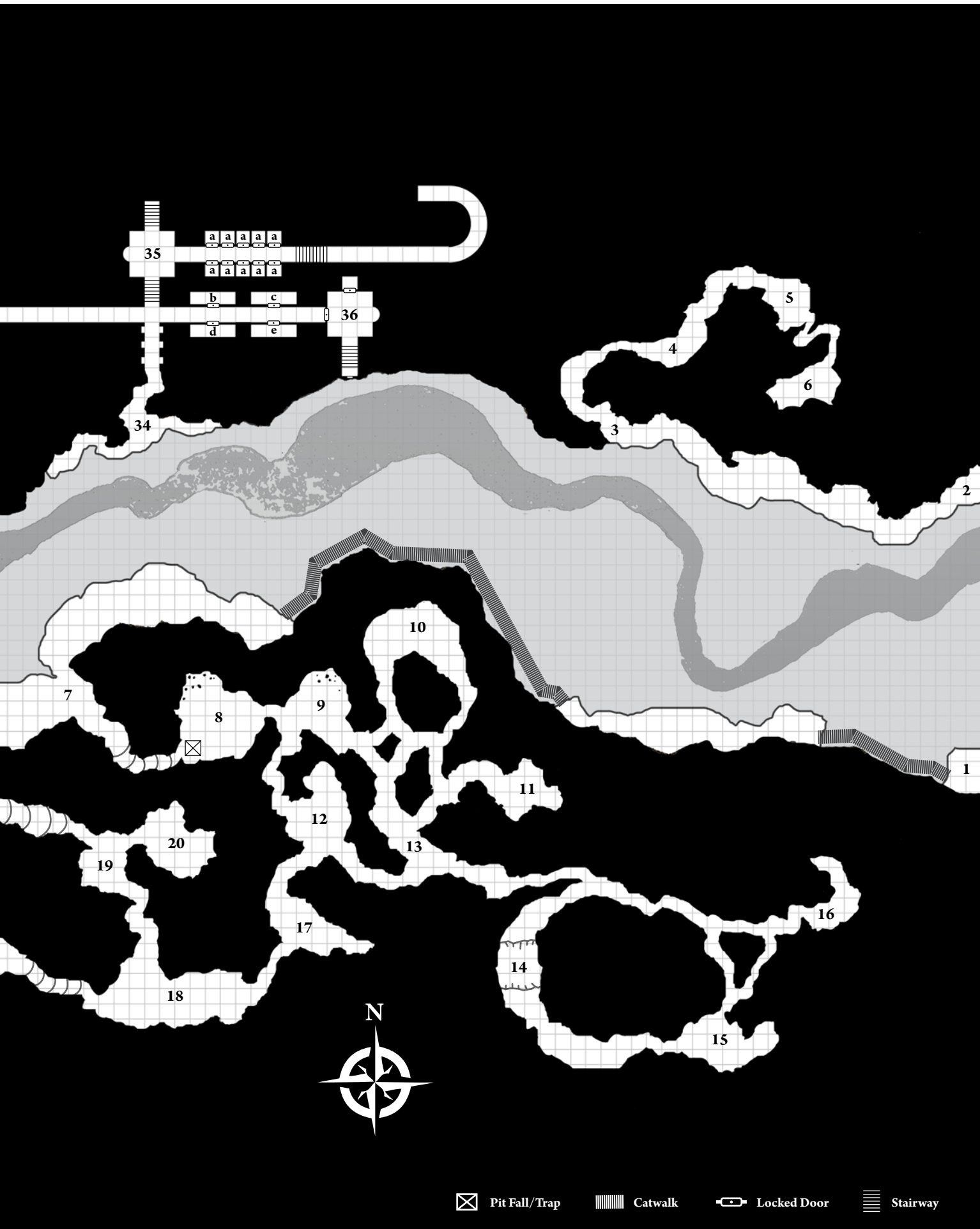
7. 2d4 **Orcs** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) Each orc carries 2d6 electrum pieces. There is a 50% chance that fleeing orcs will return with another group of 2d4 orcs in d4 turns. The orcs are instructed to take prisoners if possible, and bring them to area 26 in the lower gorge caves.
8. 2d4 **War Dogs** (AC 6, HD 2+2, hp 10 each, #AT 1, D 2d4, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 11) Every round there is a cumulative 1 in 6 chance that the dogs' barking will alert 2d4 orcs (see above). The orcs arrive in d4 turns.
9. d8 **Spitting Beetles** (AC 4, HD 1+2, hp 6 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8)
10. d4 **Nematoads** (AC 7, HD 2+2, hp 10 each, #AT 1, D d4+1, MV 90' (30'), Save F1, ML 6) See Appendix B - New Monsters for a full description.
11. d3 **Carcass Scavengers** (AC 7, HD 3+1, hp 13 each, #AT 8, D paralysis, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 8)
12. **Gray Worm** (AC 6, HD 6, hp 24, #AT 1, D d8, MV 60'(20'), Save F2, ML 11)



Upper Gorge

1 Square = 10'





The Split-Tongue Tribe

The orcs at Ironwood Gorge refer to themselves as *the Split-Tongue Tribe* after the fact that members must ritualistically split the ends of their tongue with a knife. There are scores of orc warriors in the tribe: initially 60 *in addition to those mentioned in area descriptions*. The game master should keep a record of losses to the tribe from random encounters. Once 60 orcs have been slain, captured or otherwise accounted for in random encounters, then orcs are no longer met in the wilds of the Ironwood, and the harassment of the Bleak Tower abates.

This threshold is not fixed however, as the orc leadership is able to attract an additional 3d6 orcs to the tribe every week or so. These might also include other chaotic humanoids, such as kobolds and gnolls, even human brigands, willing to ingratiate themselves to the growing power in the region. These new inductees also have their tongues forked. Their numbers are added to the threshold of 60 required to put the tribe on its heels. The game master should use their best discretion here, as this is an easy way to adjust the relative difficulty of the adventure as the party progresses.

Should adventurers continue to thin the tribe to something less than is required to maintain their presence in the gorge, the remaining members will retreat to the deeper passages (Lower Gorge, areas 15 - 29) and hunker down. However, only with the defeat of both the *orc high priest* and the *orc warlord*, in areas 28 and 22 of the Lower Gorge respectively, can the adventurers truly drive the malevolent humanoids out of Ironwood Gorge.

Troubling Nightmares

Ironwood Gorge is often under the effect of a *disseminate nightmare* spell, cast by the orc high priest from the depths of the lower gorge caves (see Lower Gorge, area 22). Refer to Appendix D for a description of the spell. The spell's range covers roughly the entire adventure map, but not beyond it.



A note about mapping: Ironwood Gorge is a complex system of caverns. The game master should strongly urge the players to maintain a map as they explore. Since most of the complex consists of natural caves and rough-hewn passages it would be difficult for the players to do this from verbal descriptions alone. The simplest method is for the players to maintain a basic flow-chart, using simple shapes to represent the wider chambers, and lines to represent connecting passages. If a more complete map is desired, an alternative method is for the game master to start with a few clean sheets of paper and then trace the outline of the passages as the party progresses—of course, this is appropriate only in situations where the adventuring characters have sufficient time to attend to their map.

Upper Gorge Key

1. Southern Ledge: The southern ledge consists mainly of weather-worn shale. Beds of dirt have accumulated here and there, overgrown with brambles and brakes of stinking iris (a lead-colored flower with inedible berries). The ledge is roughly 90' above the base of the gorge.

2. Northern Ledge: The northern ledge is a shelf of loose shale. Attempts to move silently along the loose rock suffer a penalty of -10%. A keen dwarf will notice that the broken rock appears to have been well trod by something heavy. This ledge is roughly 100' above the gorge floor.

3. Ogre Cave: The mouth of this cave is roughly 16' high. There is a stink about the place, as it is home to 5 **ogres** (AC 5, HD 4+1, hp 21 each, #AT1, D d10, MV 90'(30'), Save F4, ML 10). The ogres mostly keep to themselves, though late in the adventure the orcs may consider hiring them as mercenaries: to deal with difficult adventurers, or to make a final push against the Bleak Tower. The ogres have made sport of attempting to toss smaller creatures (halflings, goblins, and the like), across the gorge to the southern ledge. The feat is completely beyond their means and their attempts are doomed to come up woefully short. A character facing this misfortune suffers 10d6 points of falling damage as they plummet to the bottom of the gorge.

4. Fire Pit: This passage serves as a kind of common room for the ogres. There is a poorly tended fire pit here, petrified logs for sitting, and a collection of discarded bones and offal.

All five ogres are typically here in the late evening, eating, making merry, and brawling. At least one ogre keeps watch here at all other times, though they are not above dozing off now and again.

5. Sleeping Pile: This fetid chamber is piled with dry leaves and animal skins. The ogres sleep here, though never more than two or three at a time.

6. Loot Pile: The ogres keep their treasure here: a prodigious pile of coins on the floor, along with a crude wooden box, also filled with coins. All together there are 5000 copper pieces, 3000 electrum pieces, and 1000 gold pieces. All of it lays heaped upon a boar's hide. If more than three-fourths of the caves at Ironwood Gorge have been cleared of monsters, the ogres are likely to read the writing on the wall, pick up the boar's hide by the corners and emigrate.

7. Cave Mouth: There is a cave opening here, 30' across and 20' high, dressed in clinging vines. The passage slopes sharply downward.

8. Pitfall: The irregular ceiling of this chamber bristles with stalactites of varying sizes, reaching all the way to the floor in the northern alcove. The orcs have cut a relatively shallow but insidious pitfall in the southwest corner: it consists of a layer of thin, broad stones lain over a 10'x10' lattice of stout branches. The stones cover a pit, 10' deep and lined with sharpened rocks; victims falling in are struck by falling rocks as the lattice collapses over them, suffering a combined 3d4 points of damage; victims may *save vs. petrification* for half damage.

9. Empty Chamber: Naturally forming columns of variegated dripstone line the back wall. There is a twinge of sulphur on the air.

10. Bat Roost: The passage slopes down to a high-walled chamber. The air is heavy with the stink of guano, which has accumulated on the cavern floor to a depth of a foot or more. The waste is peppered with fungus and infested with small darkling beetles. In the daytime the vault of the ceiling is blanketed by sleeping bats. Any moderately loud noise disturbs them, causing a mass of confusion that is likely to alert nearby wandering monsters. Characters must make a *save vs. poison* for every turn they spend trundling around in the muck or be afflicted by a disease that saps the victim of 2 Strength points, until cured by magic or allowed a week of uninterrupted bed rest.

11. Scavenger Lair: There is an awful stench in this chamber as it is home to 2 **carcass scavengers** (AC 7, HD 3+1, hp 13 each, #AT 8 D paralysis, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 8). They are rarely found in their lair; in fact, there is only a 25% chance that they are here, a figure the game master may adjust based on the general number of carcasses that are being left about. The carcass scavengers use their paralyzing tentacles to stun the *knockweed* in area 13 if they pass that way, which disables the plant for 2d4 turns. Poking through the muck in this chamber one finds: a broken spear, a handful of copper pieces, and a dirt-crusted *shield* +1.

12. Empty Chamber: A few dozen millipedes, some up to a foot long, scour the uneven floor of this damp chamber. Mineral deposits have formed brittle stone curtains along the farthest wall. A moldering gnome skeleton has been wedged behind the formation; it wears a *ring of protection* +1, which was apparently insufficient.

13. Knockweed: A bed of black, spindly vegetation covers the floor of this juncture. Any kind of pressure on the living plant causes a release of spores; characters nearby must *save vs. poison* or fall unconscious for d4 turns. In that time they experience one of the following visions (d4):

1. A lovely garden courtyard with burbling fountains, curling vegetation, and lifelike marble statues.
2. A harrowing nightmare sent by the orc high priest, (see Lower Gorge, area 21).
3. A pale, disembodied hand grasping at their soul. The character must *save vs. death* or fall into a coma for d6 days.
4. The character does not know he is unconscious, but imagines that a member of his party has suddenly turned on him, spoiling for a fight to the death. If the unconscious character is 'killed' or 'kills' their companion they will suffer a -1 penalty to attacks upon waking, as they are haunted by the episode for the next

12 hours. If they can avoid either outcome for as long as they are unconscious they suffer no penalty upon waking.

The game master should roll for random encounters as normal while characters are unconscious. However, anything attempting to disturb the character(s) bodies will end up releasing more spores, and most probably fall unconscious as well. If the *carcass scavengers* are in their lair at area 11 (25% chance), they will scent fallen prey and come to claim it in d4 turns. The plant can be safely burned away in 2 turns (1 if oil is judiciously applied); the smoke does not carry the live spore, though it will drift to areas 7 through 12 and has a 50% chance of attracting wandering monsters.

14. Cleft: The passage is split by a rift 30' across and at least 40' deep. A sturdy rope, long enough to swing across the rift, hangs from the ceiling, and is tied to an iron spike on the near side. The rope is looped on a hook in the ceiling so that it feels strong if tested; however, should anyone try to swing across, the loop will slip off midway and they will fall to the bottom of the rift, taking 4d6 damage.

15. Abandoned: This room is cold and covered in a thin layer of dust. The remains of a burnt log rest in a shallow depression in the back of the chamber.

16. Dead Explorers: Upon entering this chamber one is met with the corpses of three hapless dungeoneers, teeming with maggots and vermin. A pair of **carcass scavengers** from area 11, have scented the meal and will arrive shortly (AC 7, HD 3+1, hp 13 each, #AT 8 D paralysis, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 8). The bodies have been looted, but if one is willing to fish through the remains they have a chance of finding a rusty knife, a gold ring worth 5 gold pieces, and a tattered scroll with the spell *mislay object* (see Appendix D – New Spells). Curiously, another instance of this spell was in fact cast on a *decanter of endless water* presently wedged in a nook in the back of the chamber; the spell will wear off in seven days, at which point the decanter will turn up in any careful search of the area.

17. Dry Bed: The floor here is recessed a few feet from the connecting passages, and is covered in smooth rocks and swathes of subterranean clover. Touching the clover with bare skin causes one to become extremely irritable for d4 turns. The chamber seems to have been an underground riverbed at one time. The eastern end narrows where the cavern appears to have collapsed.

18. Petrified Orcs: This long chamber The figures of three petrified orcs stand out in this long chamber. The game master should withhold revealing that they are petrified until the adventurers are able to get close.

19. Damp Passage: Moisture hangs heavy in the air; the ground here is damp flowstone. Purple and violet mushrooms spill out of the chamber to the northeast. Note that the approach of torches, lanterns, and the like is sure to disturb the fungi there (see below).



20. Subterranean Fungi: This chamber is lined with mushrooms of varying shades, from indigo to pale violet. Five of the palest violet mushrooms are quite large: these are *adult shriekers* (AC 7, HD 3, hp 12 each, #AT nil, D nil, MV 9'(3'), Save F1, ML 12). Upon entering the chamber the fungi emit a high pitched wail for d3 rounds. If there is still a presence in the room the fungi shriek for another d3 rounds and so on. For each round of shrieking there is a 50% chance of alerting wandering monster(s) (roll on the wandering monsters table); the monster(s) arrive in 2d6 rounds and cannot be surprised. The smaller mushrooms emit a faint squeaking but the sound lasts for a round only and does not travel far; these are quite fragile and can be kicked over with little effort.

21. Open Cave: The ledge has broken off here, though it appears to continue 30' ahead if one wishes to scale the gorge wall or cross by some other means. But there is also an opening to an airy cave here, 4' high and 12' across. Perceptive characters might notice a few carrion birds watching intently from a ledge on the north wall, as just inside the cave the ceiling raises to 12' and the orcs have rigged a trap. They have lain a flat stone on the floor that, when stepped on, causes a net above to loose a rain of heavy rocks, dealing 2d6 damage to all those caught below it. Characters who succeed in a *saving throw vs. breath attack* take half damage.

22. Overgrown: This part of the ledge is overgrown with thick brambles that conceal a low cave mouth. The shrubs are dense and the thorns sharp, effectively blocking passage. A halfling, or smaller creature, can scramble through to the other side in d3 rounds, but will suffer 1 point of damage if wearing armor, 2 if wearing normal clothes—which will end up quite tattered by the end. The shrubs are alive and so do not burn well, but can be hacked through with appropriate edged weapons. Roll damage for the weapon used (no attack roll necessary); the result is the number of feet the character is able to clear that turn. It is only 10' to the other side however characters cannot work together at clearing the same path.

23. Incomplete Trap: The first time the party enters this chamber they encounter 6 **orcs** in the process of resetting a trap (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). One of them is keeping watch; if he is unable to warn the others in time they are automatically surprised. Four of the remaining orcs are holding up a heavy log of petrified wood above their heads while the last orc secures it by looping a length of rope through pitons in the ceiling. If just one of the orcs holding up the log is disrupted: by sustaining a wound or succumbing to a spell, for instance, the other three orcs must immediately all make *saving throws vs. death* or lose their grip. If just one of the orcs fails

their saving throw, or if two or more orcs are disrupted, the log swings free, dealing 2d4 damage to everyone involved.

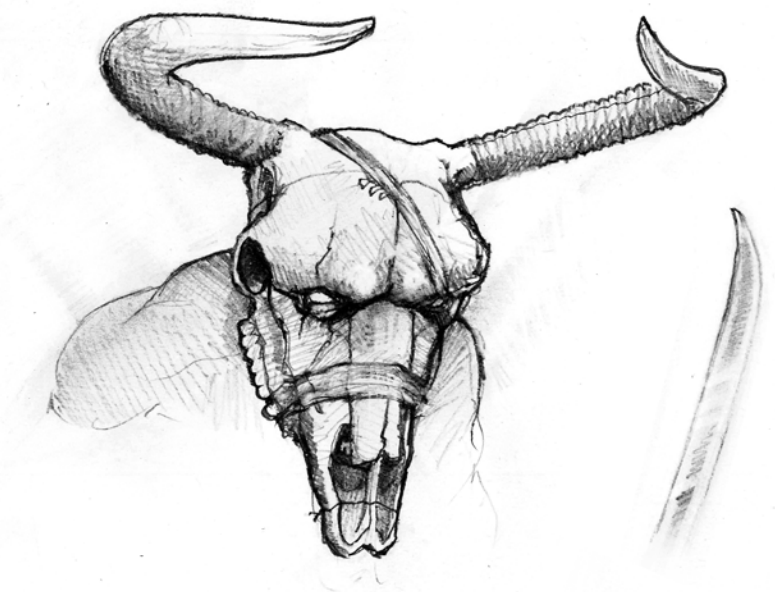
24. Covered Hole: The orcs have concealed a large hole in the floor of this chamber with thin pieces of shale laid across a rope net. Anyone stumbling into the trap falls 25' into the otyugh pit (see Lower Gorge, area 4). Victims suffer only d6 points of damage as their fall is somewhat cushioned by thick muck.

25. Moss Garden: The air is heavy with the smell of vegetation as one approaches this chamber. Upon entering one finds a lush underground garden, lit by a gaping hole in the cavern ceiling, 130' above. Much of the rocky ground is blanketed by thick green moss. Rotten tree trunks studded with light-colored toadstools lie by puddles of rainwater surrounded by beds of clover. While the party is exploring the chamber there is a 50% chance they will encounter a **harpy** (AC 7, HD 3, hp 12, #AT 1, D d4/d4/d6, MV 60'(20') fly 150'(50'), Save F3, ML 7), who comes upon the chamber from the hole above. Unless the party can somehow stop her she will return with her kin the following day, and make of it a lair; their mere presence will cause the garden to spoil in less than a week.

26. Descent: A sloping passage curves downward to the lower gorge caves. The incline is steep and the air gets noticeably colder as one descends.

27. Foot Trap: There is a trap here: a thin, brittle stone, 1' in diameter that covers a narrow hole. When any character larger than a dwarf steps on the stone it gives way and the victim's leg falls in; the action drives a lever that plunges a crude iron spike into the leg, dealing d3 damage and effectively pinning the character's leg in the hole. A clever thief can extricate the leg with a successful *disarm traps* roll (each attempt requiring one turn), though the adventurers must take care not to make excessive noise, as there are over a dozen orcs in area 28 below.

28. Bullhead: This wide, high-arched passage is dotted here and there with waist-high, angular rocks. A contingent of 12 **orc raiders** are mustering here (AC 6, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8), ostensibly for a foray out of Ironwood Gorge. They are commanded by an intimidating **orc lieutenant** (AC 5, HD 2, hp 14, #AT1, D d8+1, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 9) who wears a mask made from the cracked skull of a minotaur. He carries a slightly curved *scimitar* +1 of blackened steel, and two measures of *blood unguent* (see Appendix C – New Magic Items). The orc is dangerously clever and a ferocious fighter, groomed by the orc high priest to eventually take the place of the tribal warlord. If a fight is going poorly for him, the game master may wish to have him retreat, to return as a recurring foe later in the game.



29. Burned Out: There has been a fire here in recent weeks; judging by the intricate pattern left by the soot, it appears that a vine-like plant once covered the floor of this immense chamber. The place was in fact once overrun by *knockweed*—which can be found intact in area 13. Countless orc footprints crisscross the room from the passages to the east and west, and from the long passage in the southern wall that descends to the lower gorge caves.

30. Holes: The edges of this passage are dotted with holes of varying sizes and depths. The three widest are just large enough for a halfling or an unarmored dwarf to shimmy down. Each is roughly 30' deep, and ends in a plug of wet, liver-colored organic material. The surface of it is unresponsive unless punctured by a blade or other sharp object, in which case it bleeds a noxious black liquid. The sticky material is a potent toxin, touching it with bare skin or through fabric causes paralysis in d4 rounds, for a duration of 2d6 rounds, unless the victim succeeds in a *saving throw vs. paralysis*. The substance clings to weapons well, though it must be handled with extreme care.

31. Floor Trap: A large, flat stone lays across the floor of this passage. Even if one suspects it is a trap they find it solid when they test their weight on the near side. However, the far side of the stone balances over a square pit, 10' across and 20' deep, cut from the bedrock below. When the greater weight moves to the far side of the stone, the whole slab tips forward, dumping everyone into the pit, then slamming back into place. The withered husk of some sort of giant worm-toad lays at the bottom (see *nematoad* in Appendix B – New Monsters).

32. Hideaway: The ceiling to this chamber is nearly 40' high, marked by thin stalactites on which grow patches of a faintly luminous moss. Small white mushrooms grow haphazardly on the jagged walls. Anything but the loudest shouts will be masked by the din of wind and falling water from the cave mouth to the north (see below). The orcs avoid this chamber because of the trap in the adjacent room, which should also deter, or even capture, other wandering monsters.

33. Whistling Maw: There is an enormous cave mouth here, over 50' wide and 40' high. It echoes with the roar of the waterfall to the west. The shelf is torrent of wind-driven mist. Just inside the entrance the passage splits in two. As the wind passes the divide it creates a low moaning sound. The orcs have concealed a crude pitfall in the right-hand passage,

20' deep and imbued with sharp rocks; tumbling in causes 3d6 damage, unless the victim makes a *save vs. paralysis*, in which case they only take 2d6.

34. Ledge: This ledge in the north wall is higher than the others at 120' above the gorge floor, an excellent spot for carrion birds to scout for a meal. There is an opening to a small cave here, dug by dwarves that live in this part of the gorge. The passage has been blocked by three portcullises. They are left closed unless the dwarves raise them from the inside. However, each can be forced open, one at a time, with a successful lift gates roll [Note: If lifting gates is not included in your rules set, simply roll a strength check (d20) with a penalty of 12 added to the roll.] Anyone caught by a falling portcullis suffers 3d6 damage. The dwarves have left a long rope coiled on the ledge, which they use to come and go via the floor of the gorge.

35. The Náinhold: A total of 20 **dwarves** (AC 4, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT 1, D d8, MV 60'(20'), Save D1, ML 8) reside in this part of the dungeon, which they have dubbed *the Náinhold*. To date, the humble warren consists of a shared room and a few unfinished passages. In the common room one finds a low, stone table, crates of firewood, and two golden boars that, when rubbed, confer a blessing on lawful creatures—effectively the same as a *bless* spell (each is worth 2000 gold pieces). An alcove in the western wall holds a makeshift forge with a narrow flue that runs roughly 70' to the surface. The eastern passage leads to a row of sleeping cells, followed by a set of stairs that proceed down to a long, unfinished passage.

The dwarves of the Náinhold were once part of an expedition into *the Dwarf Roads*, long forgotten subterranean highways constructed by their ancestors deep in the bones of the earth. The expedition was going well enough, until the dwarves came upon the orcs of the Split-Tongue Tribe. The dwarves were vastly outnumbered and eventually forced to take flight, up into the caverns of Ironwood Gorge. The

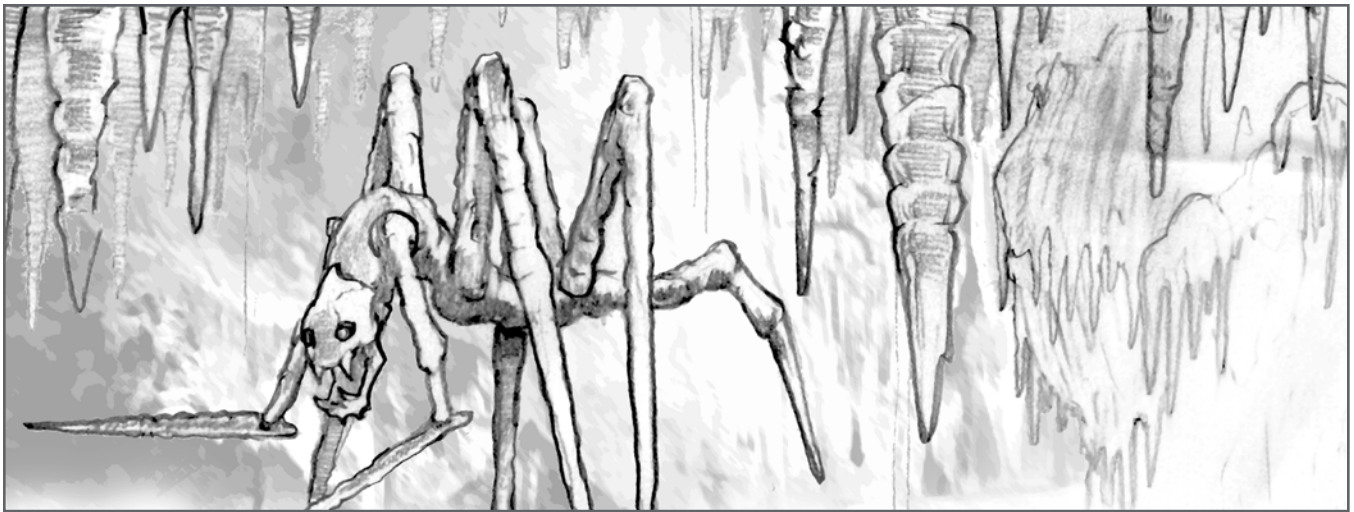
blood-thirsty orcs hounded them there and, cornered, the dwarves had no choice but to collapse key tunnels and seal themselves in. Slowly, they have dug their way out, reconnected passages and begun to carve out a new home in the bedrock. Note that the dwarves of the Náinhold, are visited on most nights by a *disseminate nightmare* spell, cast by the *orc high priest* in area 22 the lower gorge caves. Refer to Appendix D for a description of the spell. The dwarves are wary of all adventurers, but are not blind to the value of capable allies. If the party can impress the dwarves, with loud boasts of orc-slaying, for instance, they might be granted an audience with the dwarves' chief, *Odenfrith* (see area 36 below). The smaller chambers of the Náinhold are described below:

- a. **Cells:** These small rooms are the dwarves' sleeping cells. Each room is shared by two dwarves who sleep in shifts on 'beds' hewn from solid rock. Each room has two rucksacks containing each dwarf's personal possessions, typically various and sundry personal tools, 3d6 gold pieces, and d6 gems worth 2d6x10 gold pieces each.
- b. **Mining Tools:** This room contains a bevy of well-worn picks, shovels, buckets and the like.
- c. **Larder:** This room contains boxes of hardtack, iron rations, salted meats, barrels of diluted wine and pickled fish, a box of candles, a clay jar full of salt, and another full of honey.
- d. **Arms:** This room contains a fair assortment of arms: primarily axes, war hammers, and crossbows, but also a few larger weapons not particular to dwarves.
- e. **Treasure:** This room contains the dwarves' treasure: a heavy, locked chest full of 3000 gold pieces and a sack containing 300 platinum pieces and 6 gems worth 75 gold pieces each. The chest is equipped with a poison dart trap that is difficult (-10%) both to locate and deactivate. Anyone triggering the trap and failing a *save vs. poison* will die in d3 rounds. A stack

of 12 silver bowls (10 gp each), a porcelain vase (40 gp), and four barrels of mead (10 gp each) are also stacked here.

36. The Dwarven Chief: This chamber belongs to the dwarven chief, *Odenfrith* (AC 3, HD 7, hp 34, #AT1, D d6+3, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). The old dwarf walks with a distinct limp, and smells strongly of wood smoke; a small black asp lives in his beard. He wears a marvelous but battle-weathered suit of *banded mail +1*, a *ring of fire resistance*, and carries a *war hammer +2*, *dwarven thrower*. Odenfrith also carries the only key to the thick oak door in the north wall, which is otherwise difficult (-10%) to pick. Inside is a fine suit of *chain mail +1* (man-sized), an ornate *mace +1*, and an iron box containing 300 platinum pieces, two gems worth 500 gold pieces each, and a scroll case. The scroll case contains a *chime of opening* with 10 remaining uses, and two cleric scrolls: one with the spells *cure disease* and *create food and water*, and the other with the spell *earthquake*. There is a set of stairs to the south that lead up to a small landing, where the dwarves have cut a narrow window that offers a commanding view of the southern wall and base of the gorge.

All of Odenfrith's thoughts are bent toward preserving the score of dwarves left in his charge. To that end, his immediate goal is to seal the passage that connects the cave system of Ironwood Gorge to *the Dwarf Roads* (Sub-Level, area 4). If he has ample reason to trust the party (and if they have an able cleric among them capable of reading it) he will bestow upon them his scroll of *earthquake*, to aid in collapsing the passage. Further, if the party asks for sword-arms, the chief can offer the services of **Chatto** and **Windus** (AC 4, HD 1, hp 9 each, #AT 1, D d6+2, MV 60'(20'), Save D1, ML 9), young dwarves eager for orc blood, and too undisciplined to be much help in the Náinhold. So long as the party preserves Odenfrith's trust, they are welcome to use the Náinhold as a place to rest. If they do indeed seal the passage to the Dwarf Roads he will reward them with 50 platinum pieces each. If the party is also able to oust the orcs, he will hand



over half the coin and gems in their treasure hold (room 35e) and hold a feast in their honor, dubbing them forever honored guests of the Náinhold.

37. Bulwark: The dwarves have reconnected the Náinhold to the larger network of caves here. They have cut a 15' high crenellated wall that overlooks the bottle-necked passage west, effectively a killing floor for any orcs foolish enough to venture there. A knotted rope lies coiled in the corner of the rampart, to cast over the wall if needed. There are 3 **dwarves** armed with crossbows here at all times (AC 4, HD 1, hp 5 each, #AT 1, D d8, MV 60'(20'), Save D1, ML 8). They will shout for aid if attacked. In the event that they are overwhelmed there are three portcullises poised to seal the eastern passage. Creatures attempting to go that way when the gates are triggered must make a Dexterity check or suffer 3d6 damage. In either case the passage is then blocked, and they are most likely trapped. A set of ascending stairs lies beyond the gates, then a straight 100' corridor to the heart of the Náinhold.

38. Quiet: This small network of passages remains empty and eerily quiet. A few small white spiders silently walk the corridors. It is effectively a no-man's land between the orcs of the Split-Tongue Tribe and the dwarves of the Náinhold. The narrow passage to the east appears to have been recently opened: the last hunks of stone to be knocked out still lie strewn about on the cavern floor.

39. Mantis Lair: The ceiling here is lined with stalactites. This chamber is home to 6 **cavern rock mantises** (AC 2, HD 3, hp 15 each, #AT 2, D 2d4, MV 30'(10'), Save F3, ML 6, see Appendix B for a full description). Clean-picked bones cover the floor. The remains are likely to raise suspicions and so reduce the monsters' ability to surprise to a roll of 1-4 on a d6.

40. Stalactites: This convoluted chamber is rife with stalactites. 4 **cavern rock mantises** lie in ambush here (AC 2, HD 3, hp 15 each, #AT 2, D 2d4, MV 30'(10'), Save F3, ML 6, see Appendix B for a full description).

41. Column: This tall chamber is divided by a large column of flowstone. The ceiling is 40' high at its highest point. A small pile of damp ash lies behind the column, and a *thieves lantern* sits half buried in it (see Appendix C for a description of the device).

42. Bent Branches: A large flat rock lies loose across the eastern entrance to this chamber; anything larger than a halfling stepping on it triggers a trap: flexible lengths of yew, impregnated with metal shards, snap from around the corner, dealing d4 points of damage to whoever stepped on the stone. The shards are poisoned, and the victim, failing a *save vs. poison*, takes an additional 2d4 points of damage in d4 rounds. Characters entering the chamber from the west are twice as likely to notice the trap in time.

43. Drip Pool: A cluster of variegated stalactites in the eastern side of this chamber extend almost to the surface of a shallow pool. An echoing drip of condensation falls every few seconds.

44. Weak Passage: The ground here is exceptionally weak. If more than 200lbs. crosses the pitfall marked on the map, the floor collapses and all characters in a 15'x10' area plummet 15' to the north-eastern corner of area 16 of the lower gorge map, (in the area marked by an 'x') suffering d6 points of damage from the fall.

45. Orc Sappers: Approaching this chamber, one hears a loud tapping. There are 12 **orcs** here (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) as well as an **orc captain** (AC 6, HD 1+1, hp 8, #AT1 (+1 to hit), D d6+1, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). Each orc carries 2d6 electrum pieces; the captain will have an additional 3d6 gold pieces and also carries 3 measures of *blood unguent* (see Appendix C – New Magic Items). Half of the orcs are engaged in fashioning a pair of crude ladders, each approximately 20' long. A collection of 6 clay jugs of

oil, with rag wicks, stands in one corner; they are intended to function like hurled flasks of oil but deal 2d8 damage because of their size. These orcs are preparing to storm the dwarves of the Náinhold in area 35. If the party does not deal with these orcs when first encountered or if the party cannot at least send warning to the dwarves of the Náinhold, then the orcs' plan may indeed work. The orcs will conclude their work in the next two turns, at which point 6 of them will head off in different directions, mustering as many orcs as they can over the next few turns, while the rest wait. At the end of 10 turns they will return; the group will now be 40 strong and whipped into a frenzy, and, wasting no time, they will storm the bulwark at area 37. If the party is nowhere to be seen, the game master may forgo adjudicating a large combat and assume that the orcs succeed in penetrating the dwarves home. The dwarven chief's mighty hammer should be enough to turn back the orcs in the end, but not before the dwarves sustain overwhelming losses. The few who survive will be forced to abandon the Náinhold, at least until the orcs are run out of Ironwood Gorge.



46. Doppelgänger: A gang of 12 **orcs** guard this juncture (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). Each orc carries 2d6 electrum pieces. A **doppelgänger** is among them (AC 5, HD 4, hp 16, #AT1, D d12, MV 90'(30'), Save F10, ML 10). Ever since the orcs had the misfortune of encountering it in the depths, the doppelgänger has been posing as various members of the tribe. However it would much prefer to assume the identity of an adventurer. It will do everything it can to isolate and slay one, and assume their identity. In fact, should any member of the party be cut down in this part of the dungeon (rooms 38 through 51) the doppelgänger will secret the body away and rejoin the adventurers as soon as it is able, pretending to have barely survived. If it was a *player character* the game master should inform that player that the abandoned character has been taken over.

Experienced game masters might even consider conspiring with the player to play as the doppelgänger for a while. A still more devious option is to neglect to inform a player when their character has died, and allow them to continue playing unwittingly as the doppelgänger, then take control at the first opportunity to wreak havoc. Game masters must take care with this ploy as not all players will be receptive to it. In either case the game master should resume control of the doppelgänger as soon as the player can rejoin the game with a proper character. The doppelgänger has hidden its accumulated treasure in the box buried in area 47 (see below).

47. Treasure Nook: The passage slopes down to an irregular shaped chamber that cuts around a column of rock. Tiny white mushrooms grow in bunches here and there. The doppelgänger in room 46 (see above) has buried a large crate here in the gravel behind the column. It contains: 4000 silver pieces, 2000 gold pieces, a suit of *banded mail* +1, a *sword of locate objects* +1, a *potion of gaseous form*, and a scroll with the spells: *charm person*, *web*, and *transmute rock to mud*.

50. The Puking Orc: There is an enormous, **bloated orc** here, in a chamber that reeks of flatulence (AC 9, HD 1, hp 8, #AT vomit, D see below, MV 9'(3'), Save F1, ML 6). The unfortunate creature has contracted an insidious disease, particular to orcs, that has caused him to swell up to more than twice his normal size. His fellows have abandoned him here to die. He is not hostile; in fact, he is inclined to beg for mercy, however, any kind of stress, including the appearance of adventurers, causes the unfortunate creature to vomit a noxious acid. The vomit projects in a cone, 10' long and 5' wide at its end. Anyone caught in the area of effect sustains 2d4 points of acid damage; characters who succeed in a *save vs. breath attack* take half damage. Anyone struck by the acid, who does not immediately doff their gear, sustains an additional d4 points of damage the following round. There is a 50% chance that non-magical armor has been rendered ineffective. The orc continues to vomit for up to 3 rounds as long as any agitating influences are present. Stepping in the resultant pool of vomit does one point of acid damage per round and does a number on one's boots.

The orc has no treasure, however if *cure disease* is cast the orc will visibly begin to respond, and fully recover in 2d12 hours. Once healed, the orc will do whatever he can to assist the party, even joining up as a loyal henchman with the following modified statistics: (AC 9, HD 1, hp 8, #AT 1, D by weapon, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). If it suits the campaign, the game master may even allow a player who has lost his or her character to play as the hapless orc.

51. Landing: Four narrow passages branch off from this chamber. The passage to the west descends down to the caves of the lower gorge. The stone floor of the southern passage is weak. If more than 250lbs. crosses the area marked on the map, the floor collapses and all characters in a roughly 10' square area fall into northwest corner of area 16 of the lower gorge, suffering d6 points of damage, and likely to suffer more in the coming rounds...

Lower Gorge

1 Square = 10'



-S- Secret Door Ⓢ Statue ☒ Pit Fall/Trap

Lower Gorge Key

1. Grotto: The ceiling here is concave, toothed with thin stalactites and decked with hanging mosses. A terrible stench wafts from the western passage.

2. Snails: This small tangle of passages has little to distinguish it except for numerous patches of tiny white mushrooms and a few dozen fist-sized cave snails. The area shudders with a slight tremor every 10 minutes.

3. Geyser: The walls here are damp and eroded, the air heavy with moisture. There is an inviting pool of cool, clean water here. However, once every turn (10 minutes), like clockwork, there is a sudden tremor and the pool erupts with scalding water and steam from deep below the surface. The game master should announce the sudden tremor, and allow any players whose characters are in or near the pool a few seconds to declare an intention to get away; these characters are allowed a *saving throw vs. breath weapon*, and if they succeed are able to get clear in time. Any characters still wallowing in the pool are dashed upon the ceiling with incredible force and killed instantly. Those caught near the erupting geyser are scalded by boiling water and blistering steam for 2d4 points of damage and may lose a point of Charisma at the game master's discretion.

4. Otyugh Pit: This large, deep chamber is piled with muck and reeks of feces. Characters wading through the room must *save vs. poison* each round or spend it retching. The pit is home to a pair of **lesser otyughs** (AC 3, HD 6, hp 24, #AT3, D d8/d8/d4+1, MV 60'(20'), Save F6, ML 10). There is a small tunnel to the west, large enough for a human-sized creature to crawl through but too low for the otyughs; it appears to be a dead end but is in fact merely blocked by a large stone. Two characters with a combined strength of 25 or more can move the stone. Note that creatures falling through the concealed pit in area 24 of the upper gorge land in the muck in this chamber at the position marked by an 'x'.

5. Concealed Opening: A heavy stone conceals the entrance to a low passage to area 4 above. The stone is difficult to distinguish from its niche, though a character shouting on the other side is likely to be heard with a *hear noise* check. Two characters with a combined strength of 25 or more can move the stone.



6. Room of Pots: This room is filled with dozens of ancient clay jars and pots of varying shapes and sizes. A few of the pots are quite large. The seven largest are 4 feet in diameter and rest on short legs; they have been fashioned with wide spouts at the bottom shaped like gaping mouths. Four **giant snakes** live in this chamber (AC 5, HD 4+2, hp 18, #AT1, D d4 + poison, MV 150'(50'), Save F4, ML 8); they are adept at weaving in and around the pots, using them for surprise and retreat. Searching through the pots one finds snake droppings and shed skin. A few of the lidded jars contain desiccated grain. Finally, one of the larger pots contains what is left of a digested halfling skeleton; among its remains are a corroded gold bracelet worth 15 gold pieces, a ruby worth 500 gold pieces, and a *short sword +1* in a tattered leather sheath.

7. Lower Gorge Entrance: The passage here opens to the outside: the floor of Ironwood Gorge. The entrance is a thick door frame of rotten wood, and is concealed by tall vegetation, though a narrow path to the river has been beat through the brush.

8. Fishing Nook: There is a fire pit in a recessed corner here that the orcs use to smoke fish; the ashes are still warm, kept alive by a draft of fresh air that runs through the passage. Spears lean in one corner and a fishing net has been hung up to dry on the rock wall.

9. Dead End: This low chamber is empty save for a few large white spiders that resemble disembodied hands as they slowly creep across the walls.

10. The Forgotten Prisoner: This short passage ends abruptly at a large flat stone; there is clearly something shuffling in a space behind it. If any two members of the party can apply a total of 25 strength they can move the stone. Behind lies **Maclun the Strong**, starving, sick and cold (Lawful Level 4 Male Fighter; S17 D14 C16 I13 W10 CH13; AC 8; hp 32, currently 2). Maclun is dressed in rags and has no equipment. He and his adventuring companions came to Ironwood Gorge seeking the treasures of famed gnome carver, *Dunwhortle Hogstruckle*. They had heard no rumor of orcs in the region and were caught by surprise when they encountered them deep in the caves. His companions were slaughtered and he was sealed in this chamber and promptly forgotten. Countless days have passed and he has subsisted on spiders, moss and condensation. Maclun is wounded and has a severe infection, requiring either *cure disease* or a successful *save vs. poison* and two weeks of bed rest. He has been hounded by terrible nightmares.

11. The Six-Faced Orb: Upon entering this small pocket one immediately notices a curious stone sphere resting on the floor. The sphere is cut and polished from fine white marble, and has been carved with six faces in evenly distributed square recesses. This is a **six-faced orb** (AC 5, HD 6+1, hp 40, #AT 1, D 2d4, MV 180' (60'), Save F6, ML 2, see Appendix B for a full description). The faces all appear to depict the same old man, though each expresses a different emotion. This construct was in fact the work of the gnomish sculptor, *Dunwhortle Hogstruckle*, whose

disused workshop is on the Sub-Level (area 2). Each time the orb is chased from a room the game master should record its new position on the map.



12. Old Statue: Patches of dull yellow moss grow more and more dense as one approaches this chamber. Rounding the corner one finds the figure of what appears to be a man, entirely covered in moss. This was an adventurer, long ago petrified by the *six-faced orb* in area 11 above. If *stone to flesh* is cast the game master may either select an unused character from Appendix A, or create a new one.

13. Slugs: This chamber is empty except for a handful of pale gray slugs climbing on a few sparse tufts of dull yellow moss.

14. Ascending Passage: Two split passages converge here and ascend to the upper gorge caves. The muffled sound of a waterfall can be heard through the rock.

15. Half-Built Forge: The orcs intend to use this chamber as a crude forge. A narrow crack in the northwest wall runs all the way to the surface and they are hoping it will serve as an adequate flue. Firewood has been piled against the far wall and stone scrap and various tools are scattered about

the floor. An **orc smith** (AC 6, HD 1+1, hp 8, #AT1, D d6+1, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) is building a stone furnace around the crack. He is powerfully built and has a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. He carries 3d6 electrum pieces and a gem worth 10 gold pieces. He is assisted by two **goblin slaves** (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 2 each, #AT 1, D nil or d4 tool, MV 60'(20'), Save NH, ML 6) who would be only too happy to see the smith killed or run off. They have collected a crate of blunted sword blades, spearheads, and other scrap iron for smelting.

16. Great Hall: There is a large grotto recessed into the far wall of this expansive chamber; in it sits an enormous stone statue depicting a hulking orc with a single bright red eye. The statue is flanked by smoldering braziers that paint the large room in dim, flickering light. 20 **orcs** are gathered about a broad rough-hewn table sitting on benches of split logs (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) They are armed with spears and short swords and each carries 2d6 electrum pieces. The orcs are quaffing a noxious fermented drink, eating roasted boar, throwing dice, and being generally loud by the firelight. They are surprised on a roll of 1 to 5 on a d6. The orcs are somewhat drunk and make attacks with a penalty of -1. Additionally, any orc that rolls a 1 on their attack roll has mistakenly attacked a comrade. Re-roll the attack—if they connect for damage the two orcs turn on each other until one is dead. The *orc shamans* in area 19 and the *war dogs* in area 17 will ignore the sound of a melee at first, but the persistent noise of clashing weapons will eventually draw them out, each in 2d6 rounds. If a sizable force has arrived, for instance if the party is somehow able to goad the dwarves of the Náinhold into joining them in an all out attack, then a handful of orcs will have the presence of mind to run for reinforcements, and alert the *orc warlord*, *orc high priest*, and their retainers, in areas 22 and 28.

The imposing orcish statue in the back of the chamber is crudely carved and not yet finished; mallets, chisels and debris lay about the base. A large bronze

bowl sits before it (20gp), crusted with a veneer of dry blood. The statue's sleepless eye is a enormous deep red carnelian. The stone is cursed, perhaps by the god of orcs himself. If it is prized out, the thief is doomed to suffer a bizarre accident in 2d6 days. What form the accident takes is left to the game master's discretion, but it should be deadly or nearly so. However, the stone appears to be worth upwards of 1,000 gold pieces and if the current owner can hawk it, or give it away to a willing recipient before the time expires, the curse falls on the new owner, who likewise has 2d6 days to rid themselves of it, and so on.

Note that this chamber has been enlarged with pick-axes. The orcs are not precise engineers and have cut too close to the upper caverns in some places. The two marks of 'x' on the map indicate where characters might possibly break through from areas 44 and 51 of the upper gorge.

17. Canine Den: This network of low tunnels is home to the orcs' **war dogs** (AC 6, HD 2+2, hp 10 each, #AT 1, D 2d4, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 11). The tunnels are roughly 3' high, strewn with half gnawed bones and garbage. There are typically 10 war dogs here at any given hour, while the rest are out scouring the caves.

18. Back Tunnel: This narrow serpentine passage is damp and cold. Parts of it are slicked with slimy green algae. There is no evidence that the orcs use the tunnel at all, though one of their dogs might wander down it occasionally.

19. Orc Shamans: This chamber is used by the 3 **orc shamans** of the tribe (AC 6, HD 2, hp 8 each, #AT1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save C2, ML 8, spells: *cause light wounds*, *protection from good*). They are equipped with studded leather armor, shields, and spears. The chamber is decorated with countless candles that illuminate sigils on the walls painted in red ochre. Cones of 'incense' smoulder in the corners, filling the room with a reek like burning hair. A lyre, strung with sinews on a animal skull, sits to one corner.

20. Preparation Room: Crude alchemical equipment crowds this candlelit room: a stone mortar and pestle, clay jars, an iron pot with a stirring rod, and so on. A bucket of fresh blood sits beside two empty buckets. Sacks of unusual mosses and fungi lie beside a box of quivering troll flesh. It is here where the orc shamans prepare the *blood unguent*, a healing salve given to orcs of preferred rank (see Appendix C – New Magic Items). Five applications of the substance are laid out on soiled rags, however if a character compares these to a measure of *blood unguent* got elsewhere, they will see that these are a darker color. This is because these five doses require more time to cure. If used prematurely they cause 6 points of damage instead of 1; this damage is lessened by 1 every hour after they are first located. Thus in 5 hours the unguent will work as normal.

21. Anteroom: A pair of especially large **dire wolves** are kept here (AC 6, HD 4+1, hp 25 each, #AT 1, D 2d4, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 11). They are disciplined but will attack *war dogs* on sight; thus, the orcs' dogs have learned to avoid the passage altogether. There are usually 3 **goblin slaves** here as well (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 2 each, #AT 1, D d3, MV 60'(20'), Save NH, ML 6). They will only fight in self defense, arming themselves with rocks and bones.

22. The High Priest Chambers: Upon entering this chamber one is greeted with a pungent whiff of decay. The room is lit by candles, but their light seems choked by a dense haze that permeates the air. The candles sit on a small table with a clay brazier and a plate of dark eggs. This is the chamber of the **orc high priest** (AC 5, HD 5, hp 22, #AT1, D d4, MV 120'(40'), Save C5, ML 8, spells: *protection from good, cause fear, darkness, curse, hold person, animate dead*). The high priest casts *disseminate nightmare* (described in Appendix D) every day that he does not require *animate dead*. The orc wears chain mail beneath his blood-dyed vestments, and is armed with a bone talisman that can be used like a club. He carries a *potion of clairvoyance* and two gems worth 500 and 100 gold pieces respectively. The orc high

priest will begin any melee by first summoning the *zombies* from area 22b below. Note that both the high priest, and the orc warlord in area 28 must be captured or slain before the remaining orcs can be driven out of Ironwood Gorge.

Several small chambers connect to this one and are described below:

- a. **Slave Nook:** This pocket is home to the handful of *goblin slaves* in the orcs' employ. The chamber is empty save for a few small trinkets the goblins have been able to secret away. The goblins are rarely allowed sleep and are never here for more than a few hours at a time. The orc high priest gets much of his information from the slaves, and clever parties might be able to use this to their advantage.
- b. **Zombies:** The orc high priest has been creating his own retinue of vile **zombies** (AC 8, HD 2, hp 8 each, #AT 1, D d8, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 12) and continues to create them as the game progresses. To that end the rank and file orcs have been instructed to retrieve any corpses left behind in the gorge. Assum-



ing he has corpses to work with, he may create up to two zombies per day (and subsequently does not cast *disseminate nightmare* that day). He is able to control up to 20 zombies, and will only exceed this number to replace orcs with humans or demi-humans—the resulting feral zombies are stranded in previously cleared passages in the upper gorge caves.

c. Corpses: There is a powerful odor of death emanating from this chamber. Corpses that await animation are stored here. Dead beasts are also kept here but these are cast into chamber 22d below, to appease the *giant slug* there.

d. Blood Pool: When one rounds the corner to this chamber they are confronted with a **giant slug**, soaking in a 3 foot deep pool of blood (AC 8, HD 12, hp 48, #AT 1, D d12, MV 60'(20'), Save F12, ML 10). The blood is kept for the preparation of *blood unguent*, a healing salve crafted by the orcs. The slug secretes anti-coagulating agents that keep the blood from congealing. A 10' iron pole leans against the wall just outside the chamber. Once a day one of the *orc shamans* from area 19 comes and uses the pole to retrieve a bucket-full of blood.

23. Passage Down: A lone **orc sentry** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8) stands guard at this juncture, muttering to himself. The passage to the south descends to the sub-level.

24. Chute: There is a trap door in the floor here that has been covered over by dirt and gravel. Anyone stepping on it is deposited in a narrow chute that drops them directly into the giant tumbler in the marble workshop below (see Sub-Level, area 2b).

25. Pitfalls: A pair of pitfalls has been set in this tangle of passages. Each pit is 20' deep, dealing 2d6 damage to any who fall in. The pits are also lined with sharp rocks, which deal an additional d4 points of damage unless the victim can make a successful *saving throw vs. paralyzation*.

26. Prisoners Pit: The orcs have recently dug a relatively sheer-walled pit here, as a place to keep temporary prisoners. The pit is 20' deep and guarded by three **orcs** (AC 6, HD 1, hp 4 each, #AT 1, D d6, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). Each orc carries 2d6 electrum pieces and one measure of *blood unguent* (see Appendix C – New Magic Items). If any kind of disturbance appears to be getting out of hand, one of the orcs runs and fetches a *troll* from area 27, returning in d4+2 rounds.

Prisoners brought here are stripped of their gear and let down by a rope tied to the ledge (unless they look like they can take a fall in which case they are simply booted in, suffering 2d6 points of damage). Magic items are brought to the *orc warlord* in area 28, and kept upon his person if they are of immediate use, or carelessly cast upon his horde in area 29 if not. Normal equipment is distributed to the orc captains. Adventurers should later find the best of their lost equipment being used against them (thus giving them a fair chance to recover it). The walls close to the ledge have been cut fairly smooth, but a skilled thief can still climb them—though they will still have to reckon with the guards at the top.

Once down in the pit prisoners hear a heavy grunt in the darkness: there is a captured **bugbear** interred here as well (AC 5, HD 3+1, hp 19, currently 5, #AT1, D 2d4, MV 90'(30'), Save F3, ML 9). The bugbear is loath to speak, but will let his fellow prisoners alone unless he supposes he can kill them without risk to himself. If a successful escape is engineered the bugbear might be convinced to fight alongside the party, if only until he has taken his revenge upon the hated orcs. Once a day, a contingent of four orcs arrives and lets down the rope, pointing at one of the prisoners to come up—choosing the bugbear first. Any prisoner that refuses is pelted with stones until they relent or die. Once let up, the prisoner is taken to the *orc warlord* in area 28 for questioning. The prisoner's throat is then cut and they are fed to the trolls in area 27.

27. Guard Room: This chamber is kept dark, and is steeped in a terrible reek. Two **trolls** are posted here (AC 4, HD 6+3, hp 30, #AT 3, D d6/d6/d10, MV 120'(40'), Save F6, ML 10). The trolls keep their possessions in a large sack. They have 9 gems worth 25 gold pieces each, an ivory necklace worth 300 gold pieces, and a jade comb worth 400 gold pieces. The sack also contains a few dog pelts and chunks of salt. A narrow passage to the northwest has been concealed by a large stone. Two characters with Strength totaling 30 or more can dislodge it; otherwise the party must seek an alternative means of removing it.

The trolls are the linchpin of the orc warlord's power, their loyalty has been bought with a steady supply of fresh meat and inexpensive jewels. If the party slays the trolls but then vacates this part of the dungeon for any substantial amount of time, the *orc high priest* in area 22 will seize on the opportunity and slay the warlord, if possible installing his protege, the *orc lieutenant* from area 28 of the upper gorge, as the new power.

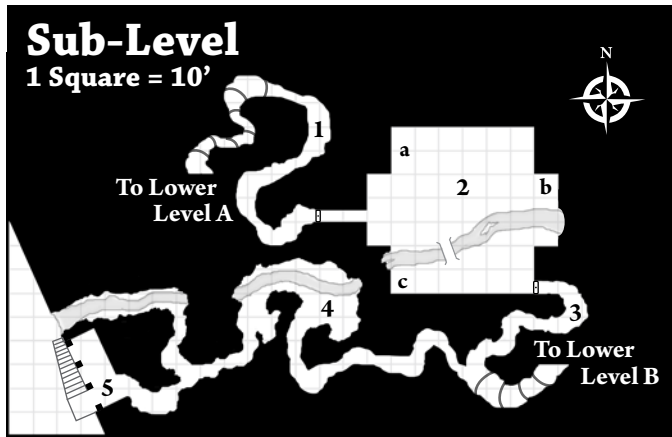
28. Warlord's Chamber: This long, high-vaulted chamber is home to the **orc warlord** (AC 3, HD 4, hp 24, #AT1, D d8+4, MV 120'(40'), Save F4, ML 9). A 12' stone statue in his vague likeness stands behind his throne of wood and bone. The warlord is an imposing figure, perhaps possessing some measure of ogre blood. He wears a large suit of *scale mail* +2, a helmet crowned with the horns of a young black dragon, and carries a shield stretched with the dragon's hide. The orc is armed with a murderous *scimitar* +2 and carries with him a *potion of giant strength*, three measures of *blood unguent* (see Appendix C – New Magic Items) and the key to the workshop on the level below (Sub-Level, area 2). There is a 50% chance that the warlord is conferring with d4 of his **orc captains** (AC 6, HD 1+1, hp 8, #AT 1, D d6+1, MV 120'(40'), Save F1, ML 8). Each carries 3d6 gold pieces and a measure of *blood unguent*. The warlord is attended by 4 **goblin slaves** (AC 6, HD 1-1, hp 2 each, #AT 1, D d3, MV

60'(20'), Save NH, ML 6). One of the slaves speaks the common tongue and provides translation for the warlord when he interrogates prisoners. Finally, 2 large **war dogs** sit on either side of the throne (AC 6, HD 2+2, hp 16 each, #AT 1, D 2d4, MV 120'(40'), Save F2, ML 11). Barrels of food and drink are kept in this chamber, stacked along the walls: including dried fish, salt-cured meats, and a variety of foul-tasting spirits.

The warlord would like to muster his orcs and overwhelm the dwarves in the upper gorge caves. However, the *orc high priest* has counseled that, while such an attack would surely succeed, their losses would be too great and they would be left vulnerable to expeditions from the Bleak Tower. Exceptionally clever characters might be able to play to the tensions, and ultimately cause an open struggle. Note that both the warlord and the high priest in area 22 must be captured or slain before the remaining orcs can be driven out of Ironwood Gorge.



29. Warlord's Horde: The orc warlord's treasure is kept at the end of this long, narrow passage. There are four small chests, decorated in a way that resembles the motifs found in the gnomish workshop in the caverns below (see Sub-Level, area 2). The chests are locked and altogether contain 6000 silver pieces, 4000 gold pieces, and a bag of 14 semi-precious stones worth 25 gold pieces each. Each chest is itself worth 20 gold pieces. Behind the chests is a careless pile of objects of varying worth: a small tapestry (80gp), a ceremonial platter (50gp), a silver amulet (80gp), a fox fur cape (200gp), 5 fox pelts (2gp each), and three silver cups (5gp each). Lastly, there are two beautifully crafted marble sculptures: one depicting a sphinx (worth at least 2000 gold pieces), and another depicting a writhing dragon that has unfortunately been broken (worth, at most, 600 gold pieces); both would be extraordinarily difficult to move.



Sub-Level Key

1. Northwest Passage: This narrow, winding passage ends in a small locked door with a cast-iron doorknocker that resembles a grimacing gnome.

2. Workshop: An underground stream runs swift and cold through the middle of the room, spanned by a little stone-carved footbridge. A series of cob-webbed winches hang from the ceiling, and the floor is littered with tools and debris: the room appears to have been a gnome’s cluttered workshop, and any gnome or a dwarf in the party will recognize it as such; indeed it was once the abode of the gnomish master carver, *Dunwhortle Hogstruckle*. However, the workshop appears to have been abandoned long ago. There are signs that it is infrequently used by the orcs. The major features of the workshop are detailed below:

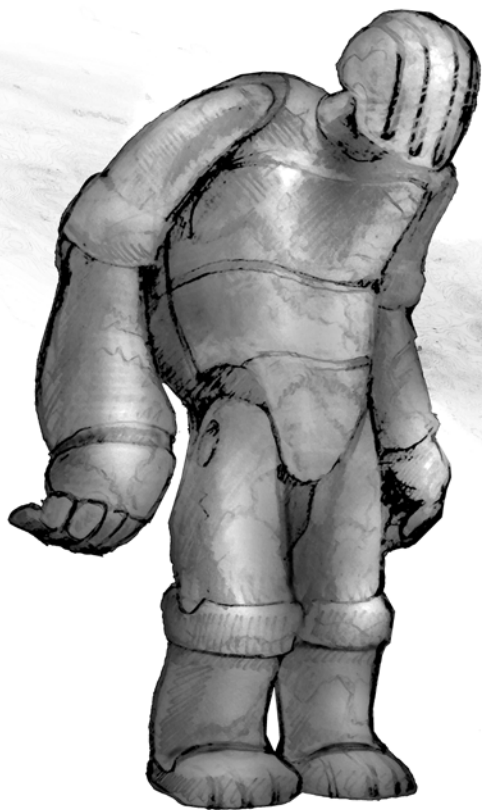
a. Tool Chest: A finely crafted wooden tool chest stands against the northwest wall; it contains a variety of small chisels and mallets, a hand drill, rasps, files, pumice and the like. The best tools were taken by the *orc shamans*, to carve the graven idols in the caverns above, but the remaining tools are well-made and all together worth at least 30 gold pieces. A hidden compartment in the chest contains a tightly rolled scroll with the spells: *floating disc*, *locate object*, and *telekinesis*. If the tool chest is pulled away from the wall one finds that three names have been crudely chiseled into the wall

behind it: “Umathes,” “Mord the Magnificent,” and “Odend,” the last having also carved a holy symbol of Law into the rock.

b. The Tumbler: A large apparatus stands against the easternmost wall, consisting of an immense oak barrel connected to a working waterwheel by a system of large cogs. The barrel has an iron hatch that is presently open and aligned with a stone chute in the ceiling. Should an unfortunate character be deposited in the barrel via the chute from lower gorge area 24, the door slams closed and they are trapped. They find the barrel half full with a mixture of water and fine gravel. The gears are engaged and the barrel begins to slowly turn, polishing its contents. The device was intended to polish stones, however the orcs have grown fond of using it for other things. Any character locked in the barrel must *save vs. petrification* every turn or drown. Additionally, being tossed in the barrel does 1 hp of damage each turn, as the character is slowly winnowed away by churning grit. The barrel can be stopped from turning and the iron door opened by throwing a simple lever on the outside.

c. Marble Golem: An angular, roughly man-shaped block of white marble stands by the door. The creature is a **marble golem** (AC 5, HD 14, hp 60, #AT 1, D 3d8, MV 60’(20’), Save F14, ML 12). A marble golem is similar in most respects to a stone golem; the principal difference is that, instead of *slow*, the marble golem can cast *reverse gravity* once every hour (6 turns). Only weapons of +2 or better can damage the construct, and spells have no direct effect upon it except *stone to flesh*, which makes it susceptible to normal attacks for one round, and *transmute rock to mud* which slows the golem for 2d6 rounds; the spell’s reverse, *transmute mud to rock*, repairs all damage to the golem. The golem is inert and any effort to awaken it fails, though it suffers damage

as normal. Only by uttering the name of its creator: “Hogstruckle” does the golem come alive. Its purpose is to eject intruders from the workshop. If awakened, it will deal with chaotic creatures first and without mercy, it will then forcibly eject any neutral entities and then return to its corner to slumber. Under no circumstances will the golem leave the workshop. If it is somehow removed by force or stratagem the construct will be effectively disenchanting.



3. Southeast Passage: This winding passage ends in a small, locked iron door.

4. Subterranean Stream: A frigid stream runs through this rough chamber, the bed is carpeted with a species of subterranean sponge. This passage is home to 4 **nematoads** (AC 7, HD 2+2, hp 10 each, #AT 1, D d4+1, MV 90' (30'), Save F1, ML 6, refer to Appendix B for a complete description). The dwarves of the Nainhold (see upper gorge, area 35 and 36) are determined to see this passage sealed, to cut off

Ironwood Gorge from the Dwarf Roads and stop more orcs (and worse things) from clambering up from the deep. If the party does not seal the passage the dwarves will initiate a controlled collapse once most of the orcs have been slain or chased out of Ironwood Gorge.

5. The Dwarf Roads: The passage opens to a stone veranda, supported by columns carved to resemble ancient figures. Beyond lies an expansive cavern, so large in fact that its dimensions cannot be made out. The subterranean stream that runs through area 4 above, rushes through a crag in the wall just to the north and falls into the depths. A set of stairs clings to the outer wall, descending roughly 30' before breaking off, washed out by the falling water. A thick rope hangs from iron spikes in the ledge, extending more than 500' to the cavern floor. The party has found the ancient *Dwarf Roads*, a network of massive subterranean tunnels that run for uncounted miles. If the presence of the Dwarf Roads does not suit the campaign the game master might consider designing more dungeon levels that connect here, or simply closing this area altogether.



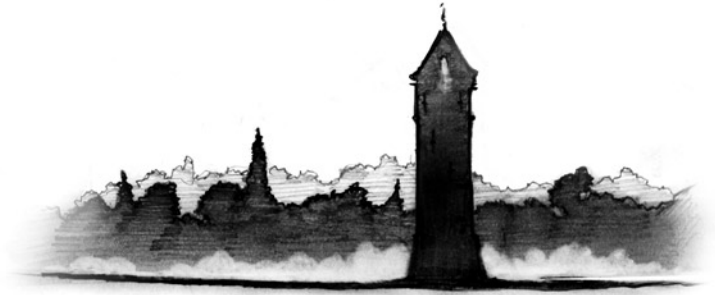
Epilogue



It was not one year ago that *Umathes*, Margrave of Blackmarch, and lord of the Bleak Tower, was indeed turned into a vampire. He feigned to fall ill and confined himself to his suite, coming and going by his chamber window under cover of night, to gather henchmen and slake his thirst on the beasts of the wood. The ruse persisted, until his seneschal, Onomaclus, brought word of orcs in the Ironwood, and saw the Margrave of Blackmarch merely cock an eyebrow at the dire news. The following night the seneschal stole into Umathes' chambers and lay in wait by the casement, and when his lord returned, in the aspect of a monstrous black bat, the seneschal did not hesitate, but imprisoned him, in the lord's own magic bottle.

Thus we come to the present, where the infamous thief, *Culwich the Black*, who has long stewed in the tower dungeon, at last escapes—if not with the help of one of the player characters then by other means (persuading a visiting magic-user to charm the warden, for instance). One night, while the party is making their last foray into Ironwood Gorge, the cutpurse makes his play: gaining entry to the solar suite and defeating the many locks and wards there. At last he takes up the Margrave's magic bottle—the very thing that had drawn him to Blackmarch—but as he removes the stopper the thief promptly vanishes from the material plane, even as the dread vampire is returned to it. The now murderous Margrave wastes no time in seizing the tower, slaughtering his loyal guardsmen and enslaving his once faithful servants. Only *Osbert*, the curate, escapes, striking out into the darkling wood, desperate to

find the band of heroes who have rid Blackmarch of one evil, hoping against hope that they possess the will to confront another more sinister...



Appendix A



Pre-Generated Characters

The following characters are to be used both for quick-start player characters, replacements for lost characters, and as hirelings and even rival adventurers as the game master sees fit. If advanced edition rules are used assume the dwarves and halflings listed below are fighters, the elves fighter/magic-users, and so on.

Athelstan Enbry (Lawful Level 3 Male Cleric; S9 D11 C10 I7 W13 CH9; AC 4; hp 10) wears splinted mail. Weapons: flail. Equipment: backpack, bedroll, candles (10), holy water flask. Spells: *protection from evil*, *purify food and drink*, *speak with animal*. Athelstan has a wooden left hand. It is carved to hold a candle, the holy symbol of his deity. His attempts to turn undead are +1 when the candle is lit and -1 when it is not. He quite enjoys the conversation of birds.

Bogring Falldagger (Chaotic Level 2 Male Halfling; S17 D12 C15 I12 W8 CH10; AC 5; hp 8) wears chain mail. Weapons: dagger, silver dagger. Equipment: crowbar and a small sack full of dry mushrooms on which he is able to subsist for long periods. Bogring is a terror in a melee, stabbing furiously with a dagger in each hand. He hears a running ballad of his exploits perpetually in his head.

Daerdun One-Thumb (Lawful Level 2 Male Dwarf; S14 D9 C17 I8 W12 CH10; AC 3; hp16) wears a well-crafted suit of field plate. Weapons: battle axe, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts. Equipment: backpack, chain, grappling hook, hammer, small steel mirror, 5 days preserved rations, 12 iron spikes, 43 gold pieces. Daerdun has been the smith for the Bleak Tower for many long years, but has now been driven to take up arms in its defense.

Dhu'l-Amon II (Neutral Level 2 Male Magic-User; S11 D9 C14 I15 W9 CH8; AC 4; hp 7) wears a dark green cloak. Weapons: dagger. Equipment: 4 days rations and a small sack with 122 gold pieces. Spells: *sleep*, *ventriloquism*. Dhul-Amon lost his love in a foolhardy deal with a denizen of the pit; he wears a cowl to hide his shame.

Elfael the Inscrutable (Lawful Level 2 Female Elf; S11 D18 C9 I15 W8 CH10; AC 5; hp 7) wears leather armor. Weapons: light crossbow with 20 bolts, two daggers. Equipment: grappling hook, 50' of rope, 3 days of trail rations, a *potion of healing*, and a belt pouch with 43 gold pieces. Spells: *hold portal*, and *read languages*. Others find it difficult to read her quiet moods.

Grimhild (Neutral Level 2 Female Magic-User; S10 D13 C9 I17 W12 CH7; AC 7; hp 5) wears a *cloak of protection +1*. Weapons: 6 darts. Equipment: wineskin, a scroll with the spells *levitate* and *lightning bolt*, and belt pouches full of dried nuts, spell components, and 83 gold pieces. Spells: *sleep*, *read magic*. Grimhild insists that she is a good witch.

Halakbêl the Wary (Neutral Level 2 Male Thief; S10 D12 C11 I16 W15 CH10; AC 9; hp 6) wears a robe. Weapons: quarterstaff. Equipment: 50' of rope, grappling hook, 4 days of trail rations, and a sack with 43 gold pieces. Halakbêl keeps a knife concealed in his head wrap, along with a ruby worth 500 gold pieces. He is paranoid that others covet the gemstone.

Ilmir (Chaotic Level 2 Female Fighter; S15 D14 C15 I13 W11 CH7; AC 5; hp 14) wears scale mail. Weapons: *polearm +1*. Equipment: backpack, 4 days of rations, flint and steel, small steel mirror, 50' rope, 12 iron spikes, wineskin. Ilmir has a reputation as a fierce warrior, one she strives to maintain in all things.

Io the Pious (Lawful Level 2 Female Cleric; S15 D12 C13 I12 W14 CH16; AC 4; hp 7) wears chain mail and carries a shield. Weapons: mace. Equipment: a ring inscribed with her holy symbol, scrolls containing the spells *resist fire*, *snake charm*, and *remove curse*. Spells: *detect evil*, *remove fear*. On the day of her birth it was prophesied that Io would die a martyr. She is often visited by a vision of her god and confers with it in whispers.

Rebelins the Flamespitter (Neutral Level 2 Male Fighter; S16 D15 C14 I14 W12 CH9; AC 3; hp18) wears chain mail and carries a shield. Weapons: long sword, dagger. Equipment: 2 small sacks, silk rope (50 ft.), 3 *potions of fire breathing* (allows up to 4 breath attacks within an hour of imbibing, each attack producing a 10' long, 20' wide cone of fire for d10 points of damage - targets can *save vs. breath weapon* for half damage).

Uthrilir the Uncouth (Neutral Level 2 Male Dwarf; S14 D12 C15 I13 W12 CH4; AC 4; hp 14) wears banded mail. Weapons: heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, 2 hand axes. Equipment: backpack, 100' of rope, 7 days of iron rations. Uthrilir is privately fascinated by subterranean fungi. On a successful Wisdom check he can properly identify the genus and general properties of a specimen. He is less comfortable among sentient creatures.



Appendix B



New Monsters



Cavern Rock Mantis (Speleophasmid)

No. Enc.: d4 (2d6)
 Alignment: Neutral
 Movement: 30' (10')
 Armor Class: 2
 Hit Dice: 3
 Attacks: 2
 Damage: 2d4
 Save: F3
 Morale: 6
 Hoard Class: None
 XP: 65

The cavern rock mantis is similar in appearance to a giant walking stick insect, but one disguised as lengths of dripstone instead plant twigs: its long limbs and trunk resemble stalactites. The creature is able to blend into cavern environments quite thoroughly; it surprises on a roll of 1-5 on a d6. The mantis ambles about slowly but attacks with sudden and ferocious speed, striking with its two sharp, puncturing forelimbs; each dealing 2d4 points of damage.



Ironwood Dryad

No. Enc.: 1 (d4)
 Alignment: Neutral
 Movement: 30' (10')
 Armor Class: 2
 Hit Dice: 3
 Attacks: Petrify
 Damage: 0
 Save: F5
 Morale: 8
 Hoard Class: XIX, XIV
 XP: 65

Ironwood dryads are an extraordinarily rare, elder dryad whose host tree has petrified. The creature's appearance resembles that of a regal female elf with an expression that is both lifeless and cold. Their skin is mineral hard and the color and texture of petrified wood. Each dryad is bound to a single petrified tree, which they may merge with at any time to effectively disappear. Should they wander more than 120' from their tree they will die immediately. An Ironwood dryad is not alive in the normal sense; in fact only by absorbing the spirit of living creatures is it able to prolong its existence. Any living creature that touches the trunk of the tree must *save vs. petrification* or be absorbed. The

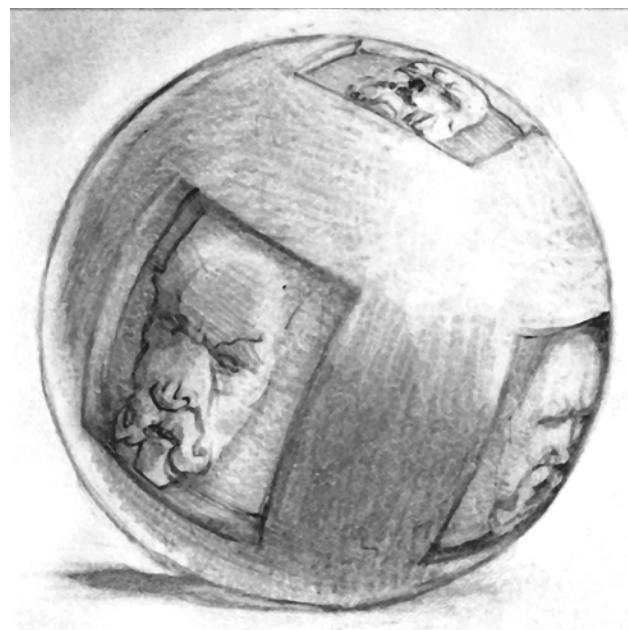
dryad has lost their ability to *charm* or even speak; her only hope is to soundlessly coax intelligent creatures into touching the tree. To that end they can be quite ingenious, their tricks often involving a bit of jewels stuffed in a nook, or showing their faces only for a brief moment, thereby inciting the curious to investigate. If the dryad is slain, the tree loses its power and topples (dealing 2d6 damage to anyone caught beneath it who fails a *save vs. death*). Ironwood dryads accumulate a terrific hoard of treasure from generations of hapless victims, but they store the better part of it beneath their tree's complex of old petrified roots, requiring a tremendous effort to excavate. The base time to dig out the dryad's treasure is 20 days - less 1 day for every 10 points of cumulative strength a group of characters is able to apply to the task (assuming each has an adequate tool with which to dig) to a minimum of 1. Clever use of transmute rock to mud or other spell effects could help significantly. Remember that during the excavation diggers are susceptible to further wilderness encounters



Nematoad

No. Enc.: d4 (2d4)
 Alignment: Neutral
 Movement: 60' (20')
 Armor Class: 7
 Hit Dice: 2+2
 Attacks: 1
 Damage: d4+1
 Save: F1
 Morale: 6
 Hoard Class: None
 XP: 71

The nematoad is a large (300lb.), toad with an elongated, worm-like trunk. The creature, which grows up to 12' long, can launch its sticky, 20' long tongue to catch and retrieve prey, pulling any creature the size of a dwarf or smaller into its maw for a bite attack (an attack roll of 20 indicating the creature has been swallowed). The worm-toad's eyes are milk-white and do not function, instead, it relies heavily on a set of heat sensing organs embedded just beneath its eyes. These allow the toad to detect creatures in total darkness and even through rock walls up to 1 foot thick. Thus the nematoad surprises on a roll of 1-4 on a d6, 1-5 if its opponent(s) are carrying one or more artificial heat sources, such as a torches or lanterns.



Six-Faced Orb

No. Enc.: 1 (0)
 Alignment: Neutral
 Movement: 180' (60')
 Armor Class: 5
 Hit Dice: 6 + 1
 Attacks: 1
 Damage: 2d4
 Save: F6
 Morale: 2
 Hoard Class: None
 XP: 1,280

The six-faced orb is a stone sphere, 1' in diameter, carved with six visages depicting six different emotions, each in a square recess. The orb is a form of golem, designed to react based on which of its expressions happens to be facing out when a creature encounters it. Each time a character meets the orb roll for a reaction, consulting the following table (d6):

1. *Hatred*: The orb attacks with a petrifying gaze. Victims failing a *saving throw vs. petrification* are turned to stone.
2. *Loathing*: The orb casts *curse* on the creature(s) encountered and relocates to an adjacent chamber.
3. *Fear*: The orb flees to an altogether different part of the dungeon.
4. *Indifference*: The orb maintains a safe distance but otherwise ignores living creatures.
5. *Sympathy*: The orb casts *bleed* on the creature(s) encountered, then relocates to an adjacent chamber.
6. *Joy*: The orb attempts to lead the party to what the game master presumes is their preferred destination.

Whatever the reaction, the moment any character comes within 10' of the orb it rolls hastily away to a safe distance under its own power. Attempting to catch the orb instantly shifts its reaction to *Fear*. If the orb is cornered it will attempt to *petrify* or force its way out, bowling into creatures for 2d4 damage. If openly attacked the orb reverts to *Hatred*. The construct may only be damaged by weapons of +1 or better enchantment. Spells have no direct effect on it except *stone to flesh*, which makes it susceptible to normal attacks for one round, and *transmute rock to mud* which slows it for 2d6 rounds; the spell's reverse, *transmute mud to rock*, repairs all damage to it.



Appendix G



New Magic Items

Blood Unguent

This potent healing salve is crafted by orc shamans. When the foul smelling paste is first applied to open wounds, it actually deals 1 point of damage, causing a searing pain—characters with only 1 hit point do not survive it. However, if the character is able to endure the following turn (10 minutes) they are then healed d6+1 points of damage.

Thieves' Lantern

The thieves' lantern is a finely crafted silver lantern. When hoisted by a thief, the lantern lights of its own accord with a pale flame that casts a shimmering silver light, at roughly the same intensity as a normal lantern. Only the thief holding it can see the light it casts; the flame and its light are invisible to all other creatures. It therefore does not affect the thief's efforts to hide in shadows, although detect invisibility will reveal the magic flame. The lantern functions normally for all other creatures.

Smuggler's Chest

This small, unassuming chest appears normal, but a well concealed false bottom opens to a small pocket dimension. The pocket dimension is an additional 2' deep, beyond the outer dimensions of the chest. The environment of the pocket dimension is the same as the rest of the chest.



Appendix D



New Spells

Disseminate Nightmare

Level: 3 (Cleric)

Duration: 12 hours

Range: 100 yards/caster lvl.

When this spell is cast, all sleeping creatures of opposing alignment to the caster are visited by a terrible nightmare. The creatures must fall asleep in range of the caster, even if only for a moment, to experience the nightmare. The nightmare is produced by the character's own psyche, but involves the vague image of the caster in some terrifying aspect. Upon waking victims must make a *save vs. spell* or suffer a penalty of -1 on morale checks and -1 on attack rolls until they are able to sleep again.

Mislay Object

Level: 1 (Magic-user)

Duration: 1 week/caster lvl.

Range: Touch

This spell renders a designated object impossible to find; the object must be no more than three cubic inches per level of the caster and set somewhere reasonably out of sight. The caster instantly forgets where he put the object for the duration of the spell. Further, any attempts to locate the object (including the spell *locate object*) by the caster or anyone else automatically fail, only *dispel magic*, or similar effects, cast on the object's general vicinity allow it to be found again. When the spell's duration has elapsed the caster remembers where he initially placed the object.

Stigiswart's Striking Darkness

Level: 4 (Magic-user)

Duration: 1 round per level

Range: 240'

When *Stigiswart's striking darkness* is cast, an area 30' in diameter is enveloped in a smoky darkness, similar in effect to a *darkness* spell. The caster becomes aware of the positions of any creatures inside of the cloud and may physically strike them simply by motioning the attacks. The caster makes attack rolls as normal with a bonus of +4 to hit. Damage is dealt normally including bonuses from enchanted weapons. Ranged spells and spell effects may be cast into the darkness but with no added benefit; the range of touch spells is not extended. *Light* counters this spell.

Warden's Key

Level: 5 (Cleric)

Duration: Special

Range: Touch

Warden's key is cast while touching any mundane key to a lock that fits it. The caster then turns the lock at which point the key becomes the only thing that can open it again: other keys, lock picking, *knock* spells, and physical force no longer affect the lock. If the lock is built into a physical object, a door or a chest for instance, then the whole object cannot be bypassed without the key. Effects like *gaseous form* and *passwall* can be used to circumvent a door or gate, but not to pass directly through it. The spell may be cast more than once to add more locks to a single skeleton key. Additionally, the spell places a powerful geis upon the key: its owner must keep it in his or her hand for as long as they wish to use it. If the key ever leaves their hand it becomes immaterial to them, as if it no longer exists. The same curse applies to the next one to pick up the key and so on. The key must always be carried in the hand: it cannot be worn on a necklace or kept in one's pocket. *Dispel magic* removes all enchantment from key, but this must be done before the associated lock(s) can be likewise disenchanting.

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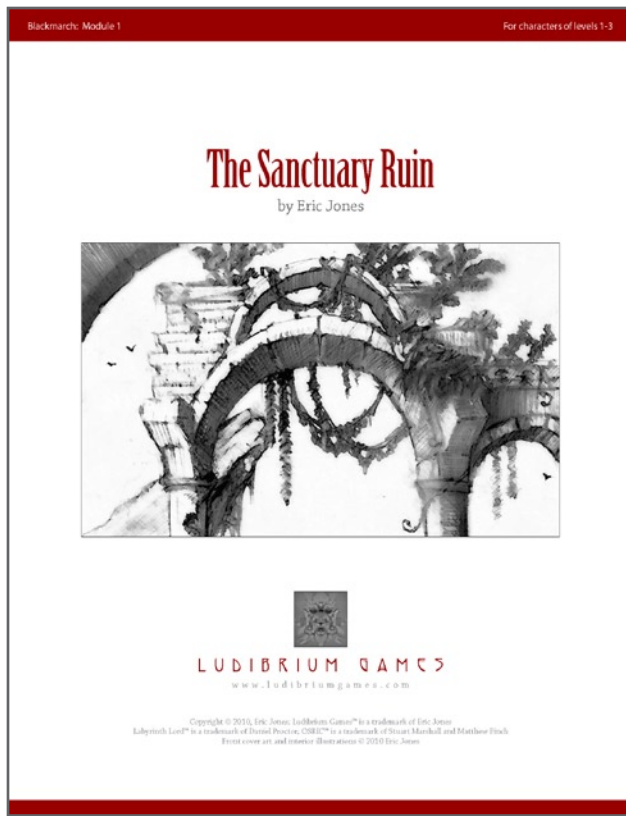
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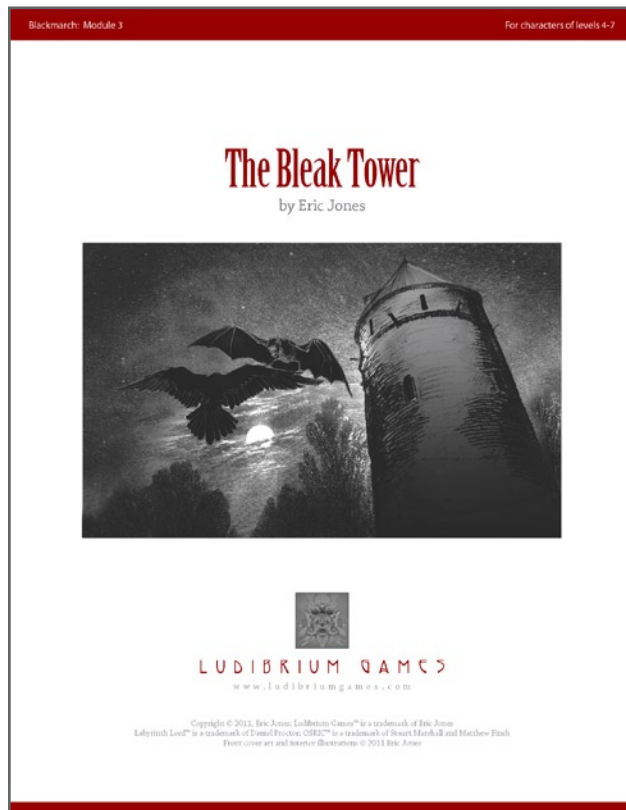


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Blackmarch: Module 3

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Blackmarch has fallen on dark days. A terrible evil has taken up residence in the Bleak Tower. But casting it out may be an even greater challenge than it first appears, for the tower is home to many powerful secrets. *The Bleak Tower* serves both as a standalone adventure or as the third and final chapter in the *Blackmarch* series of adventures—a dyed-in-the-wool old-school experience. *The Bleak Tower* is a fantasy role-playing adventure for 4-8 characters levels 4-7.

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Orcs have returned to the once quiet border province of Blackmarch. The Bleak Tower and its meager garrison are all that stand against the tide. Their only hope lies in a ragtag band of adventurers willing to venture into the perilous maw of *Ironwood Gorge*. Ironwood Gorge serves as both a standalone adventure or as the second chapter in the *Blackmarch* series of adventures—either way the perfect addition to your old-school campaign. Ironwood Gorge is a fantasy role-playing adventure for 4-8 characters of levels 2-5.



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