



The Black Maw

Level One

**The Last Delve of Avid
Gruesome**

Level 1-2 Characters:

by Craig Pike

The Black Maw - Level One

Built on the site of where dawn's light first touched the world, and occupied time and again by civilizations both ancient and recent. Any number of stories are true, from dwarves, to elves, to mages to empires to private manor; all have been true at one point or another back to the literal dawn of time. But none survive for long, and wanderers keep coming to see what others have left behind. All pass through the Black Maw.

Creatures

Dwarves - *Eager, apologetic, brilliant white robes, now grimy, neutral*

The dwarves are eager to share their (heretical) faith but also don't want to push themselves on folk. Friendly to the civilized races (especially elves) they will share their overly detailed creation myth over eighteen hours, including but not calling attention to their heretical beliefs. (That the elf god told the dwarf god "Nice job!" after creating the dwarves.) They arrived two days ago to find traces of the arch-heretic/priest Avid and his heretical works. They are appreciative of help (rooms/relics with a bolded **) and jealous, to the point of treachery, of his relics. Dwaifin, Bwaifin, Jwaifen, Nwelfin, Kwaiglin. Owenfin fell in an acid pool yesterday and died.

Goblins - *Mannered, focused, belligerent*

Rounded humanoids, short, pale green, in tattered waistcoats and top hats. The fine manners of goblinkind extend to the goblins here, who've been tracking a group of dwarves to continue their genocidal warring. Wary, to the point of hostility, of civilized folk, they are appreciative of information on the dwarves. Mr. Archibold, Mr. Henryiac, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Lucas, and The Youngling.

Grimlocks - *Skittish, scouting, warlike*

No pigment, grimy, open scabs. Scouting for food and loot from the lower levels, they are unlikely to make peaceful contact, but may warily accept offers of dubious food (bodies) and worthless trinkets. Almost ape-like in their appearance and actions.

Troglodytes - *Inhospitable, watchful, alien*

Sleestacks, tall, thick built, glimmering. Locked in eternal struggle with their ancient Grimlock cousins, they tend to have a laissez-faire attitude toward most dungeon

creatures. Reliable, but inscrutable allies against their ancient foes, if that can somehow be arranged. Easily insulted over their odors, they also have no qualms of attacking and dragging an outsider home to be dinner. Life is hard underground.

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Entrance

Up a cold stone cart path in a bitter bleak mountain pass lies a desolate still lake. The far end has cyclopean limestone blocks jutting from the water, ending near a sheer cliff face with a gaping black maw, crumbling stairs leading down. Someone has been here recently ...

A painfully shy giant pike with social anxiety disorder, Craig, lives in the water and eats unattended boats left tied up outside the entrance, for roughage.

Level 1 - The Last Delve of Avid the Gruesome

1. Towering Buttresses lost in shadowy light, Shallow & still floor-basins of acid (1d6/rnd), Scorched jumble of giant bulbous mushrooms in center ... with some still living. A pitted dwarf shield lies half out of the NE acid pool. **3 Shriekers**
2. Serpentine iron maiden flanked by tarnished & crusted silver manacles (250gp.) Inside a partially formed psychotic dwarf, melted face and dripping goo, dozes till awakened. Behind him, a secret door. **1 Homunculus**
3. * Fountain inlaid with two dozen living faces, yowling and pleading silently for food, in a corridor of badly pitted stone. The covered pit contains shallow acid. Feeding them all, they pronounce "Sip the font & prostrate the stones" before sleeping for 100 days.
4. **A:** Empty, with thin string running from "B", under the door to room #5. **B:** A camouflaged ceiling net trap, with glass bottles pendulous, alerting the goblins in room #5.
5. **5 goblins**, camped, preparing a net with glass vials. They have a few coppers and a valid letter of tax abatement from civilized lands, pawned it's worth 500gp.
6. **5 dwarf** pilgrims, cleaning intricate eggshell & bone inlaid hex patterns on floor while patchouli burns in a bronze censer (250gp). Scouted & seen bug signs in #7 through #11, & feel like they are continually watched (#7) Chest with 4000gp.
7. * Craven & desperate, emaciated primitives with open wounds, spying on dwarves in #6. Looted trog-skin bag of funerary coins (500gp.) Takes advantage of good opportunities to score some loot/grub/body, living or dead ... **7 Grimlocks**

8. Vigorous bright green moss patch concealing rotten door. Floral moss buds give +1Hp, permanently, once. 6 Doses.
9. Faint skittering sounds from western wall holes, 100, with 5 containing spider fangs suspended in purple mist in fragile glass flask. Centipedes in #11 summoned automatically by big disturbances, and on 2/d6 for small ones. Fangs autohit for 2d6/hour paralysis the nearest living creature, when flask broken.
10. G centipede husks on the floor; close inspection provides perfect ambush opportunity from webs high up in ceiling ... an inky black puss sack with glowing red eyes. Ancient husk of a dwarf has a bag of gold coins(220gp.) **1 G Spider**
11. Gnawed upon abandoned camp with lapis bead necklace (200gp) hidden in goose down bedroll. Faint skittering sounds from secret door, containing a dart trap (paralysis 2d6 hours from fang-darts) with five charges (#8.) Piles of vibrant green segmented things with too many hot pink legs squeeze in between cracks of the decrepit secret door to attack if hands gets too close. **7 G Centipedes**
12. * Rotten mundane knapsacks abandoned before floor with endless alabaster spiral design. Examining, you fall in to it, forever lost.
13. Empty
14. * Primitive savage war masks of dubious skin cover the south wall gazing down on floor littered with dwarf skulls. Masks conceal door and give +1 reaction to Grimlocks. 300 masks, 1gp each to collectors.
15. Empty
16. Crude graffiti in dried blood "I Phat L0oT behind east wall!" North & east walls crumble near floor, betraying concealed pit underneath. More time searching and more people standing mean a high chance of the pit cover dropping ...
17. Gang of hunchbacks with weeping puss sores mount decaying hands on sticks to floor as if to say STOP while MASSIVE pendulum swings over chasm. One wears a ruby inlaid dwarven mithril crown (700gp), important tribal religious regalia. Bricks from collapsed stair betray the secret door 10' off the floor. **7 Grimlocks**
18. Bottomless pit with narrow stone ramp leading from #2 to #17. Impossibly fragile pink crystal

- stalactites hang from ceiling. The pit never ends, or leads to lower dungeon level.
19. Chasm created from massive irregularly swinging/height blade pendulum (1d6). 80' down has seething rat pile, ravenous with extra-long talons, in a nest with sundered helm of dwarf, feather fall token mounted to crest. (And entrance to another level, if so inclined.) **5 G Rats**
 20. * Floor ankle-deep in bone fragments has rotten waterlogged journal of Abit on top, as bait for a primitive chain trap dragging victim over chasm edge. It alludes to workings of all [*], but takes 3 turns to look anything up. It's worth 300gp to heretic dwarves or 800gp from mainstream dwarf temple. [Hallway to #22 clogged with rubble.]
 21. Hundreds of decayed hands mounted on sticks on scorched floor as if to say STOP. Disturbing them triggers burst of flame from all (1d6.) Careful walking avoids this ...
 22. Broken rubble partially fills hallway between #20 & #22. It can be crawled over on bellies, but vibrant green things with hot pink legs and painful mandibles lurk within. **2 G Centipedes**
 23. Under rubble on western wall is full suit of plate armor with wolf helmet, now inhabited by mangy yellow-eyed furballs. Hallway dead-ends, or leads to lower dungeon level. **4 G Rats**
 24. * Putrid odor permeates his room. Blue mosaic labyrinth design set in to floor; staring at it too long reveals the secret door.
 25. An iron sarcophagus lies mute, with a wide inky black swirling mosaic on the north wall & permeating putrid odor. Staring at the mosaic allows scrying the dungeon, virtually walking it one room/rnd, with 33%/rnd 1hp of despair damage. Fresh scintillating reptilian humanoid lies in the sarcophagus, in avian kingly regalia on pile of amber beads (400gp), strangling those who remove his lid (30 STR points required.) **1 Trog Zombie**
 26. 3 curious tall reptiloids, bedazzled in feathers, investigating concealed tripwire crossbow trap. Sunray-motif crossbow magically luminates bolts only while they are in flight. **3 Troglodytes.**
 27. 2 yellowish knuckle-walking pot-bellied humans, pallid yellow, one has an arrow freshly stuck in his side from arrow trapped southern doors. Massive bronze doors with demonic black-on-black maw motifs, arrow trap (1d6) has three more arrows.
 - One ghoul wears simple battered diamond ring (200gp), glowing with its own faint light. **2 Ghouls**
 28. * Iron chandelier hangs from ceiling, low to ground, covered with bloody clothing, still fresh. Massive, locked, cold iron doors to south inlaid with demonic mouths. Raising chandelier unlocks doors, while wearing bloody rags allows one through invisible force field once doors are opened. And is gross.
 29. * Surfaces plastered in grimy mosaic showing heretical dwarf creation myth (naked elves did it!) Cracks under grime, near hallway doors. Reopening hallway doors from inside triggers slick sloping floor, 45' long, ending in wall of spikes. (1d6+2) [And maybe Level 2 of dungeon.] Examination of door to #30 reveals a peephole ...
 30. Snobbish, elegant elf with light tan, Lady Denudo, in gold & silver Art Deco gown (200gp undamaged) making hermitage to a spider-goddess shrine, the duel statues peering down from their ceiling perches with bright ruby eyes (200gpx4). Defiling curses a -1 to attack rolls for 1d6 days, while little biting spiders are attracted. **1 Dark Elf**
 31. Alabaster fountain with golden waters pouring from four water dragon heads. Heads have sapphire eyes (100gp each); looting disenchants the fountain. Drinking allows ESP of other visible creatures for 1d6 hours.
 32. Slender primitive sandstone standing stones (7) in a tight circle, large enough for one person to stand inside. If under effects of the waters from #31, and standing in the circle, then the statue in #33 cannot lie to you for 1 day. A moonstone (1500gp) is buried under the circle; removing it disenchants the circle.
 33. Animated statue of a ghoulish human feasting on entrails, while south, SE, and SW walls are covered in tapestry showing a gory & opulent banquet of ghouls feasting on entrails, concealing doorway to stairs. Statue must answer any question, but with insults and threats (and sloppy eating sounds) unless #31/#33 ritual is carried out. Then it must answer truthfully. Regardless, it ties answers to #32 treasure when possible. Some questions answered with "Piss off wankers, the rest of the dungeon hasn't been written yet."

End of Line

Saving Throws: Characters save as appropriate against dungeon/monster effects.

Traps: Trigger on a 1 on a d6, checked per passing character, etc.

Wanderers - 1 on a d6, check every 2 turns/20 minutes, or when loud noise, combat, etc.

1. **Green Slime** clings to the ceiling, eating a living Giant Centipede. Not opposed to a new meal.
2. 1d4 **Goblins** in well-mannered, loud, disagreement about finding the dwarves. Pissy. Reduce numbers in rm #5.
3. 1d4 **Dwarves** in welcoming religious procession with patchouli censor. Reduce numbers in room #6.
4. 1d3 **Grimlocks**, dragging back a trog body towards the chasm. Fresh meat is good.
5. **Giant Spider**, creeping down a side corridor *behind* the party, with 15' of corridor in *front* of party full of webs.
6. 2d4 **Giant Centipedes** in a feeding frenzy of horsefly eating.

Creatures

	Mv	AC	HD	HP	Atk	Dmg	Mrl	Special
Dark Elf	40	5	2	9	Dagger	d4	8	Crackle Lightning/2d4
Dwarf	12	4	1	4	Pick	d6	8	-
Ghoul	30	6	2	7	Clw/Clw/Bte	d3/d3/d3	9	Paralyze 2d4 turns
G Centipede	20	9	1/2	2	Bite	Poison	7	Incapacitated 10 days
G Pike	60	0	10+2	37	Bite	2d10	9	>18 hit then Swallow, 2d6/r
G Rat	40	7	1/2	2	Bite	d3	8	5% disease chane per bite
G Spider	20	6	3	11	Bite	2d6	8	Poisen, death in 1/turn, Sticky Webs
Goblin	20	6	1-1	3	Long Knife	d6	7	-
Grimlock	40	8	1	6	Spear	d6	9	-
Homunculus	12	6	2	7	Bite	d3	9	Sleep 2d6 turns on bite
Shrieker	3	7	3	11	-	-	12	50%/rnd wander shows in 2d6 rnds
Troglodyte	40	5	2	7	Clw/Clw/Bte	d4/d4/d4	9	Stench -2 atk
Trog Zombie	20	5	3	11	Clw/Clw/Bte	d4/d4/d4	12	Stench -2 atk, Atk last, undead

