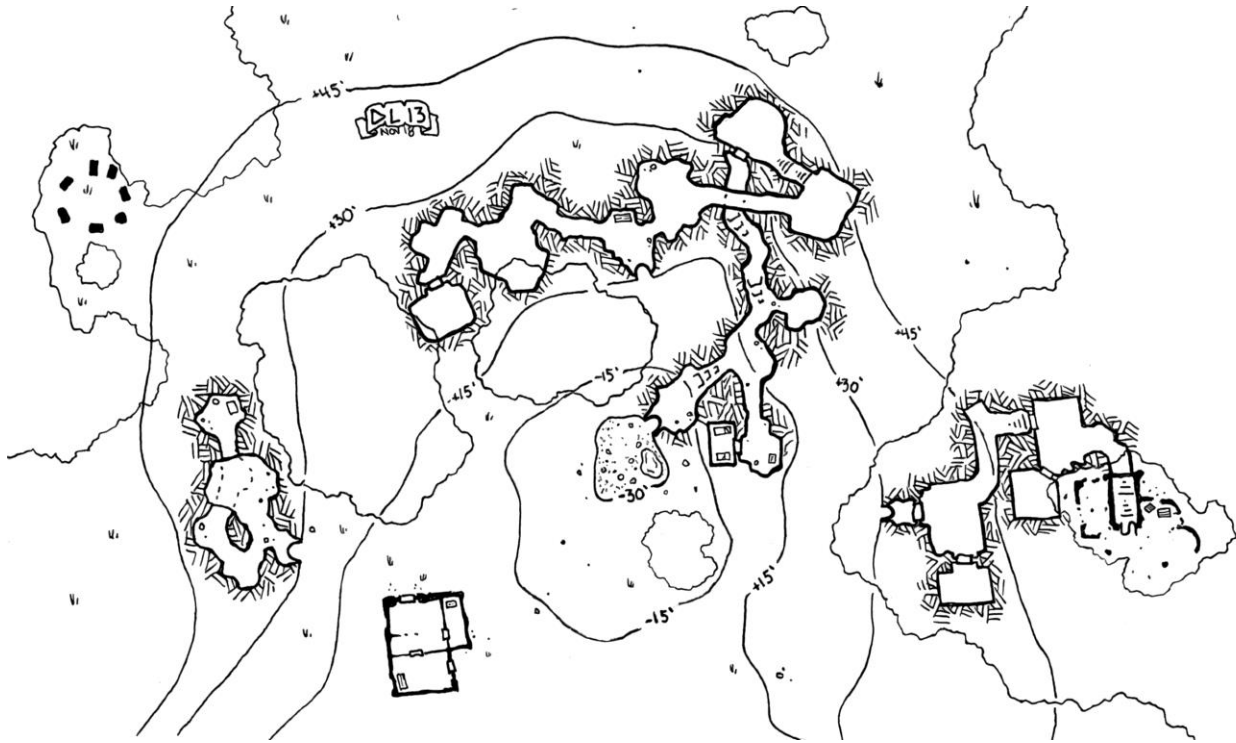


## MALLETH'S CANYON

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**House:** Overlooking the drainage is a surprisingly intact abandoned house. The door opens easily, and although empty, the house does not show the expected depredations. Dust and cobwebs cover the few remaining pieces of furniture, and nothing of value is found. Even the roof seems mostly intact, a luxury. It doesn't appear to have been raided, odd, considering the neighborhood.

Well, except for that pesky ghost. Anyone resting in the house overnight will be harassed with a whispered "story? Story. Story!" It may be turned by a cleric as 4HD undead, but will return in two hours, still demanding a story. Other turn attempts will be unsuccessful. PCs will not be able to rest/recover while it is present. Perceptive PCs will recognize the spirit to be a ghost-child. Telling it a bedtime story (best if player role-plays, heh) on nearly any topic will satisfy the spirit and it will leave the party alone. The spiritual presence dissuades wandering critters.

**West Cave:** The west cave is occupied by a [giant badger](#). The goblins (below), if threatened, will attempt to coerce a party into exploring the cave, claiming that it holds a lightly guarded treasure, or is the storeroom of their tribe valuables. The goblins will offer a hostage/guide to lead the party. The upper/outer cavern is filled with bones and detritus. Entering the lower cavern, the party will likely notice an animal musk. And that the goblin has disappeared. The badger is nocturnal, and will likely be in lair. Any light will awaken the beast. While having poor vision, the badger's hearing and smell is excellent, and it will aggressively defend its lair.

The goblins will hope that the badger will either defeat or dissuade a party from further meddling. They also may wait in ambush for a diminished party.

If the party defeats the badger, they will find the remains of a half-eaten cleric, a victim from the last party in the area (intact chain mail, pouch with 106gp, scroll case with three scrolls (*cure light wounds*, *protection from evil*, *speak with animals*)).

**Goblin caves:** The central cave complex is occupied by an extended goblin family. Unfortunately, the spouses are not talking and have barricaded the door dividing the east/lower and west/upper caves. Apparently she insulted him for having straight teeth, he insulted her back by saying she wasn't knock-kneed enough, and things escalated from there. Although the tribe, as a whole or divided, could be a formidable opponent, any efforts to mediate the rift will be seen as a positive gesture (after all, he misses her 'rat on a stick' dinners, and she would appreciate having someone around to help lance her boils...). Except as noted, the tribe is unexceptional, with combatants armed with club (60%) or short sword (40%).

**West half:** These caves constitute the original caverns, and have been expanded from natural formations. The entrance is along the gully wall, with caverns running east and west from there. The entrance will be watched by one or two goblins (AC6/13, sling and club). The husband (HD1+1, AC5/14, *short sword +1*) controls this portion of the cavern, with a total of nine offspring and other relatives. He has in a leather bag around his neck (7gp, 79sp, and a set of ivory runestones wrapped in cloth (20gp)). He is a cowardly bully, opting to betray the PCs to the badger, or parlay with the mystery of the locked western door (below). If he sees that the party has two or more divine and/or arcane magic users, he may offer to use them to negotiate with his estranged wife (below) because he knows her mother will be impressed by fellow spell-casters.

The farthest westernmost room is *wizard locked*, and has never been accessed by the goblins. The room contains the reliquary of a lost saint of The Church of Anthin. An ebony amphora set with emerald (300gp) is filled with the ashes of the priest, and his gold plated skull (180gp) is placed in a small carved alcove. An alms bowl filled with 204 sp sits in the center of the floor (this pile of coin may distract the goblins, allowing the PCs to gather the two valuable items). Any cleric or PC with similar knowledge has chance to recognize the identity of the remains. Any party returning the relics to a temple of the Church of Anthin will receive a god-boon. Just watch out for heretics...

**East half:** The lower portion of the cavern was excavated a generation ago to follow a small vein of garnet. The vein is played out, but the evidence of mining is seen in the tailings pile by the entrance (six turns of searching the pile will yield 1d6 uncut garnets worth 5gp ea).

The entrance will be watched by one or two goblins (AC6/13, short bow and short sword). The floors are rough, but include hewn steps and chambers, relics of the mining activity. A private chamber, originally used for storage and as a sorting-room by the miners, is now used by the goblin wife (1HD, AC7/12, poisoned dagger (save or addtl 1d4 HP dmg)) as her private chambers (treasure hidden in a small bear skull: 19gp, 27sp, potion of *levitation* [she has no idea of its purpose - she just likes the pretty bottle]). The goblins have dragged in a good bedframe, and for some reason, a clavichord (although none of them know how to play it other than randomly banging on the keys).

She has seven relatives living with her, including her mother, a goblin shaman (2HD, AC7/12, dagger, *cause fear*, *wall of fog*, 27gp, 35sp, rough fire opal necklace (60gp), bag of poisonous mushrooms (save (+2) or die)). If pressed, this group will barricade at the first cavern junction, attempting to keep interlopers at bay with missile fire. The shaman will attempt to *fear* the apparent

strongest combatant, and then create *fog* to allow a couple of bravos to attempt to rush and surprise attack. If parlayed, the goblins will also try to distract the PCs with the badger cave, or, if favorable, may ask the PCs to help negotiate a spousal reconciliation from a position of strength. The shaman may offer to share one of her two spells with a caster as part of the payment, as they have little else.

**Burned house:** The remains of a small manor house overlooks the depression from the east, and is now simply a foundation and tower remnants. The fire was hot, melting metal fixtures and cracking stones. The house was home to an eccentric alchemist and artificer, self-exiled from populated areas of the realm to tinker in peace. However, he met his fate when a poorly-crafted servant-construct (see below) caught fire and burned the house.

The basement to the structure is accessed via a secret door found under ash and debris in the ruins or through a stout door (quality lock -5% to pick, -2 to open by strength) built into the hillside. The eastern basement room holds a typical collection of stored foodstuffs (mostly spoiled), broken furniture, and knick-knacks. Nothing of significant value is here, although there is a 20% chance of finding a jar of unspoiled fruit preserves.

A small door is seen in the southwest corner of the room. The door is trapped with a chymical fire trap (if not found and disarmed: 1d4+1 dmg to any PC caught in a 10' cone.). The room was the hidden office of the alchemist. Stored within a small vault in the floor are coded books in alchemist secret runes, valuable to any alchemist, but highly illegal due to the volatile nature of the works. Books found within cities will be confiscated and burned due to the number of urban conflagrations attributed to such experiments.

The western door leads to a corridor to the alchemist's workshop. This westernmost room is filled with the alchemist's greatest inventions - a platoon of **Toy soldiers** (10), 1HD, AC 5/14, dmg as short sword or spear. They will activate and defend themselves if attacked. The soldiers are phlogiston-powered (if destroyed, will explode for 1d6 damage, 5' radius). Command words for the platoon will be found in a tattered robe pocket in the 'barracks' (the soldiers *en masse* 'save' as 3rd level fighter equivalent, and will follow characters on failed save). The soldiers will be found arrayed in two rows of six. Every night at sundown, two will emerge from lower entrance to 'patrol' around the valley, marching in lockstep to a tinny military reel.

The toy soldiers creep the hell out of the goblins, who avoid them like the plague (If the party approaches the goblins with the soldiers, both factions will barricade their entrances to the best of their abilities. If pressed, they will drop their internal animosity and re-ally in face of the threat). The toy soldiers' creepy-doll appearance and unnerving mechanical singing will cause -1 to any reactions, but they may be used as guards, etc. Like the books, the soldiers have the aura of alchemy about them, and approaching a city in the realm with them in tow will gain a negative reaction, if not outright hostility. Each will have enough fuel left for 1d6 months, although an inactive specimen will be worth 50-75gp to an artificer.

The southernmost room is a store room of parts and failed prototypes. However, there is a vessel of raw phlogiston stored in here. Like the other alchemical artifacts, this element will be valuable to any of the clandestine alchemists in the realm (250gp). However, the substance is highly unstable and breaking the vessel will release a fireball (4d6 damage over a 20' radius). The phlogiston burns hot enough to melt metal, and cannot be extinguished with water, burning an additional 2 turns if no additional fuel is available. Otherwise the fire may spread hot and fast, leveling towns and forests... (certain entities may

also be interested in the substance for warfare, particularly sieges....). Information on the location of the phlogiston will be very valuable, and anyone spotted with the toy soldiers will be of great interest based on their fuel....

**Standing stones:** A ring of seven stones stands to the west of the canyon. Although rune-covered, the carvings have weathered to incomprehensible ridges and depressions. Any cleric stepping within the circle will have significant sense of unease, and will want to vacate the area. If the party is carrying the reliquary and skull, there is a 1d6 chance of a lightning strike (even from a clear sky) against the stones, shattering one, and spraying the party with rock shards (Save or 1d4 dmg). However, if a magic user spends the night within the ring, they will gain an additional 1st level spell per day, and -1 saves applied to mind controlling or illusion spells for the period of one year. Anyone else spending a night within the ring will be haunted by nightmares of gigantic, asymmetric creatures walking the earth.

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Original map may be found at: <https://rpgcharacters.wordpress.com/2013/11/19/tuesday-map-malleths-canyon/>