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Dungeon Crawl Classics #11

The Dragonfiend Pact

by Chris Doyle
FOR 2ND LEVEL CHARACTERS

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Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

The small town of Welwyn has been beset by a string of robberies. The heroes are led to the natural cave system located at the bottom of the town well, which they must explore to find the burglars. But once they're in the cave system, things get much more difficult! The "burglars" turn out to be mere pawns in a much darker game. To get to the source of the crimes, the heroes must shrink themselves with *potions of improved reduce person* and explore a series of dangerous rat warrens where their prey is larger than they are!

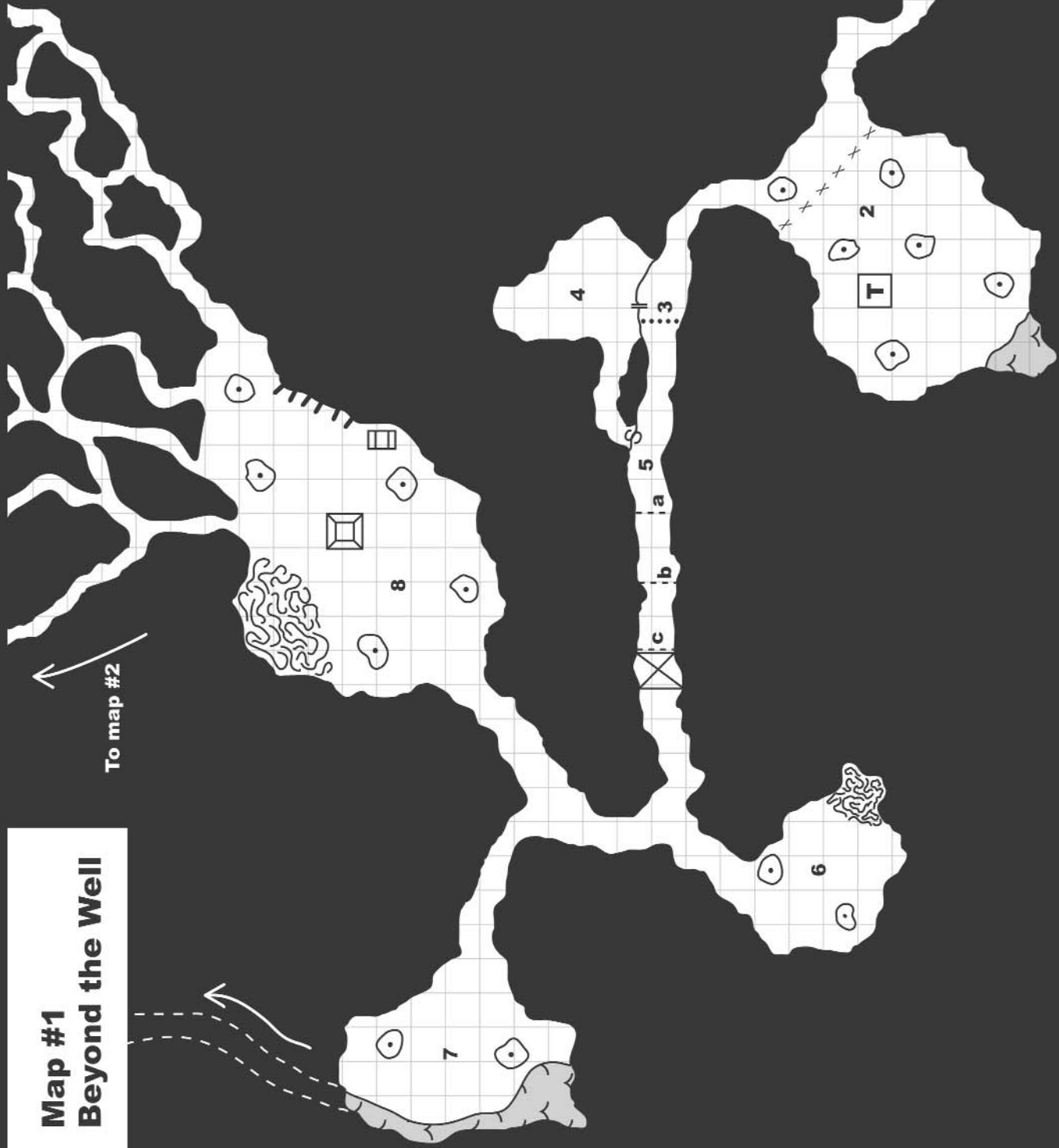
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Map #1 Beyond the Well

To map #2



Key

□ = 5 ft.



- Stalagmite
- Trip wire
- Portcullis
- Nest
- Concealed pit
- Fire pit
- Arrow slit
- Pegs
- Chest
- Trapdoor

Well shaft

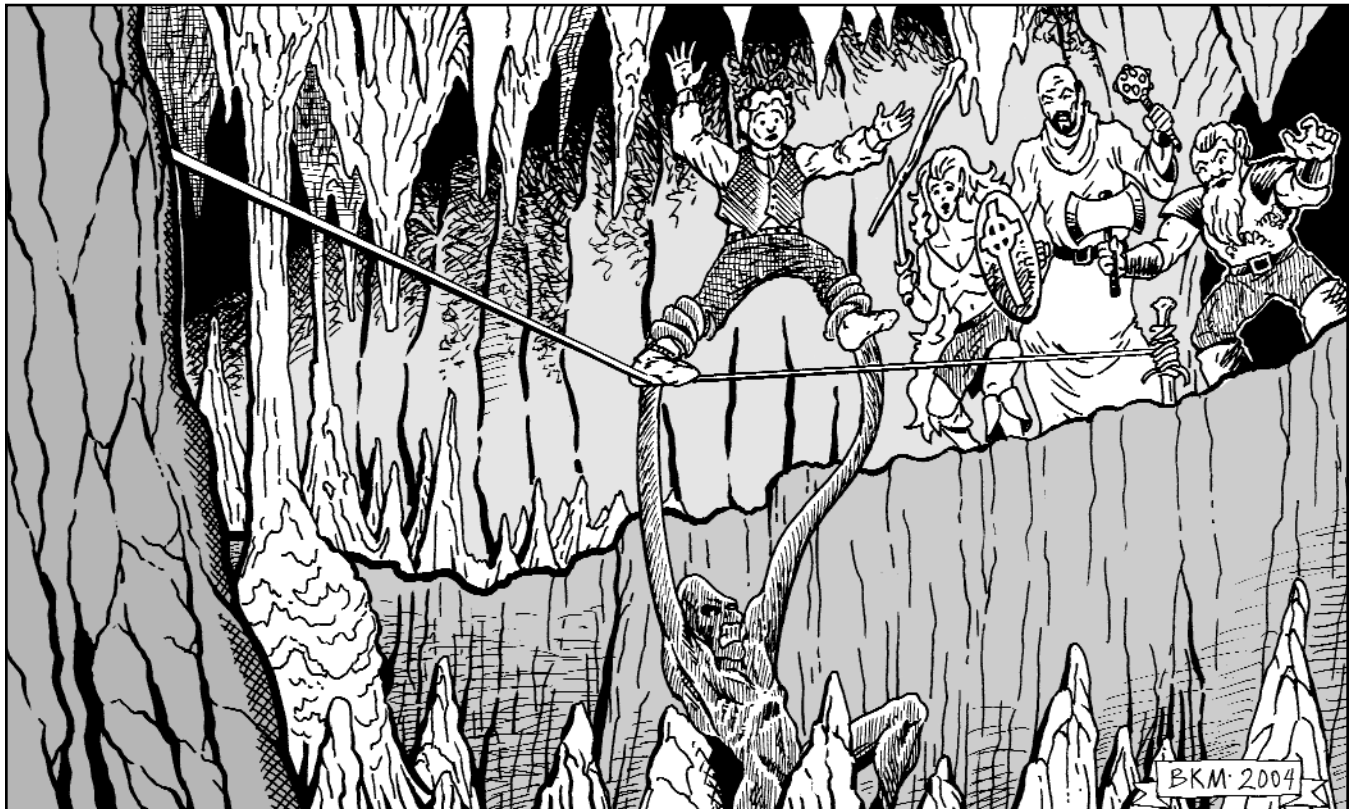


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AN ADVENTURE FOR 2nd LEVEL CHARACTERS



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If you like this adventure, be sure to look for the rest of the Dungeon Crawl Classics series at your local game store.

Log on to www.goodman-games.com for a free web enhancement describing the town of Welwyn, plus other freebies, news, special offers, and more!

Introduction

Remember the golden days of role playing, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat, intriguing dungeons, and no NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

The Dragonfiend Pact is designed for 4-6 2nd-level PCs. While the PCs can be of any class, a good mixture including at least one cleric, fighter, and wizard is recommended. A magic or silver weapon would be useful, but is not necessary. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's size, level, and unique style of play.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are in the wilderness town of Welwyn (or a similar town in your campaign). The town has been beset by a recent rash of robberies. The PCs are brought in to investigate, and in doing so they explore the natural cave system located at the bottom of the town's well, which the locals believe was used by the perpetrator of the robberies. The PCs discover a werewolf is responsible for the pilfering, but the unfortunate lycanthrope is but a pawn in a darker conspiracy. Using custom-designed leather harnesses, the stolen goods are smuggled out of town on normal rats, through their warrens. The warrens meander for miles until exiting outside the town in a secret cave. Using several *potions of improved reduce person*, the PCs traverse these warrens to discover who is behind the operation and why.



Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

To aid the game master, we have included a quick reference table so you can see all of the encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter, listed as level and room number. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	5	C	Water snake	1
1-2	5	C	Monstrous spider	1
1-3	6	T	Portcullis trap	1
1-4	6	C/P	4 dwarven zombies	3
1-5	7	T	Poison arrow trap Greataxe trap Pit trap	3
1-6	7	C	Dire badger	2
1-8	8	C	<i>Tarn Tetherknot</i> , werewolf Rgr2/Rog1	5
2-1	10	C	2 normal badgers	1
2-2	10	C	9-16 normal rats	1-2
2-3	10	C	Small cave trout	1
2-4	12	C	2 giant worker ants	3
2-5	12	C/P	Choker Rog1	3
2-6	12	C	<i>Blackspine</i> , fiendish pseudodragon Sor1	3
2-7	13	C/P	5 human skeletons	2
2-8	14	C/T	<i>Malchor</i> , human Clr5 <i>Goren Bloodshaft</i> , goblin Ftr2/Rog2 Poison needle trap	6

Scaling Information

This adventure is designed for 4-6 characters of 2nd level, but can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

Weaker Parties (1st level and/or 3 or fewer PCs): Remove two character levels from Malchor and Goren (the latter becomes Ftr1/Rog1). Remove one ranger level from Tarn. Reduce Blackspine to 2 HD and remove the rogue level from the choker.

Stronger Parties (3rd level and/or more than 6 PCs): Add another character level to each NPC. Convert the Medium monstrous spider to Large and add another dire badger. Convert the normal rats to dire rats, add another cave trout to the river crossing, and double the number of giant ants encountered.

Getting the Players Involved

The following hooks can be used to get the players involved in the adventure:

- While the PCs are traveling, they spend the night in Welwyn. They are approached by Lady Arabella and hired to investigate the well located in the center of town. She informs the PCs of the robberies and claims the town guards have deduced that the perpetrator utilizes the well. She offers each PC 100 gp to determine the identity of the perpetrator. Alternately, since the PCs are 2nd-level, their patron could be an NPC that they met in their first adventure.
- The PCs are already in Welwyn and get into trouble with the local law. Perhaps they are involved in a bar fight, or damage public property in some way. In exchange for Lady Arabella “looking the other way,” the PCs are asked to pick up the investigation of the robberies. They are led to the well and “convinced” to explore it in return for dropping the charges.
- The PCs stop over for the night in Welwyn and awaken to find some of their possessions stolen! Of course they investigate...

Treasure

Treasure listed in the adventure labeled with an asterisk (*) represents items stolen from Welwyn. As such, these items should be returned to the town at the end of the adventure – unless, of course, unscrupulous PCs try to hide these items. If the PCs are honest, award them bonus experience points (as described on page 15). Additionally, Welwyn gives 20% of these stolen goods back to the PCs as a reward. This represents items not claimed by the townsfolk.

The rat lairs (area 2-2) contain an assorted mixture of coins: 3d8 cp, 2d6 sp, and 1d6 gp. There is also a 10% chance of finding a small piece of jewelry (a ring or earring) or gem worth 3d4x10 gp.

Speaking with Animals

It's possible a druid or ranger (or a spell caster with access to *speak with animals*) will speak with some of the animals in this adventure. Below are a few notes on how to handle this situation, including starting attitudes of the animals. If a small amount of appropriate food is offered during the exchange, grant a +2 circumstance bonus to the check.

Dire Badger (Hostile): The dire badger is loyal to Tarn, and is trained not to trust others. Only by swaying this beast to friendly will it give any useful information: it will reveal Tarn's nature, and the general layout of areas 1-7 and 1-8.

Normal Rats (Indifferent): If a friendly result is obtained, the rats gladly inform the PCs of the courier duties they perform for Tarn. They can provide sketchy details on the warrens, but have trouble communicating distances, directions, and dimensions. They deliver the goods to a smelly short humanoid (Goren), who rewards them with tasty cheese.

Normal Badgers (Unfriendly): The badger family is loyal to Tarn, and knows he is a lycanthrope. The adults are concerned for their juveniles, and have been trained not to attack any rats. They lack knowledge of the warrens, save the passages to area 1-8.

Cave Trout (Unfriendly): The trout is just hungry. It lacks any knowledge of the warrens (save its river), or Tarn. It has noticed an increase in rat river crossings, and considers them plump juicy morsels.

Background Story

Tarn's History

The wilderness town of Welwyn is located near a deep temperate forest. This wild tangle of vegetation is well stocked with numerous animals with valuable hides, such as fox, badger, bear, and wolves. Of course, the dark woods boast dangerous creatures and roving bands of goblinoids as well. Despite these dangers, a select few hardy humans eke out an existence in several permanent camps situated on the fringes of the forest. In these camps, trappers and tanners cull hides from the forest, eventually trading or selling them to merchants in Welwyn to turn a tidy profit.

One of these trappers was a simple man named Tarn Tetherknot. About a year and a half ago, Tarn was checking his snares when he discovered a particularly large badger still alive in one of his traps. Confused that the snare didn't function properly, he moved in to skewer the beast with his spear. The point bit deeply into the badger's flank, but after removing the spear, Tarn witnessed the lethal wound close before his eyes. The badger flew into an insane rage and

attacked Tarn with a flurry of claws before breaking its bonds and fleeing

Staggered by his wounds, Tarn returned to his camp for attention. However, his injuries were deeper than merely superficial flesh wounds. For days he suffered from a fever and debilitating hallucinations before slipping into unconsciousness. He awoke days later, covered in dried blood, but none of it was his own. He left his tent feeling full of vigor and to his horror discovered that the entire camp was sacked. All nine of the other trappers were slain, their broken bodies strewn about the camp. All the bodies were killed by deep claw wounds. As he fled into the forest, his shattered mind came to grips with his new lycanthrope form.

Before Tarn slipped completely into evil, he summoned the resolve to attempt to get help. The closest settlement was the walled town of Welwyn. When he arrived at the gate looking feral and disheveled, he begged to be let in. He foolishly explained his malady and begged to be tended by the town's cleric. The mayor was summoned to address the situation, but the town guard refused to let the self-proclaimed

lycanthrope into the city. In a fit of rage, Tarn transformed into hybrid form. In defense, the town guard pelted him with crossbow bolts. Although the bolts could not harm Tarn, the wounds stung and he fled in an insane range.

But a hand of darkness would soon be extended to offer Tarn a false hope of aid...

Welwyn

Welwyn is ruled by Lady Arabella, a 20-year-old naïve daughter of the late mayor. She ascended to her position last year when her father was slain by a crimson-feathered poisoned arrow. Embraced by the populace due to her natural charisma, Lady Arabella has the political savvy of an otyugh! She is easily manipulated by the town's local cleric and magistrate, Malchor. Malchor, although wise and a competent leader, lacks charisma and the admiration of the town's populace. This in turn infuriates the magistrate, a devout and dedicated public servant. When Lord Garrick only had a single daughter, Malchor was confident he would be Welwyn's next mayor. But a few years ago, he realized Lord Garrick was grooming his daughter for that role.

The brooding magistrate became withdrawn and shunned his faith. He retreated to a secret cave outside of town where he discovered a strange black altar. Hidden in the altar were prayer books dedicated to the god of secrets, Crypticus. Malchor studied these books for days until he received a revelation. In a whispering voice, Crypticus addressed Malchor, and in exchange for wealth the voice promised power and secret knowledge. Malchor left several gold trinkets on the altar, and when he returned the next day, they were gone! After several more "conversations" (and a good deal of coin), the seduction was complete. Malchor was now devoted to the god of secrets. Little did Malchor know, the whispers of a god were a simple *ventriloquism* spell from a fiendish pseudodragon named Blackspine that laired nearby.

The religion poisoned his mind and Malchor concocted a plan to take control of Welwyn. He hired a goblin assassin named Goren Bloodshaft to kill Lord Garrick. With the lord out of the way, Malchor believed he was the obvious choice for the next mayor. However, the people of Welwyn selected Lady Arabella, only 19 years old, as the new mayor. Malchor was furious, but his religion taught him to conceal his hatred and continue to plot.

For more information on Welwyn, download appendix 2 of this adventure, which is available in the Free Materials section of www.goodman-games.com.

The Deal

When Tarn showed up at Welwyn, begging for help, Malchor saw an opportunity to gain a powerful henchman. That night, Malchor searched for Tarn to offer his assistance. When he located the babbling unfortunate, it was easy to convince him that his only chance of salvation lay with Malchor. Malchor promised to obtain a scroll of *remove curse* to cure Tarn's affliction. But first, he needed help. Malchor smuggled the lycanthrope into town and secluded him in a natural cave system located in the town's well. In return for stealing valuable objects from the town, Malchor promised to use the scroll on him. The lycanthrope had no one else to turn to, so he agreed and received rogue training from Malchor's goblin assassin. The stolen items are smuggled out of town on rats wearing custom-made leather harnesses. The rats travel an extensive system of rat warrens that exit into a hidden cave outside of Welwyn. Malchor's agents receive the stolen goods and sell them in faraway markets. Despite the town guard searching all travelers who come and go, the stolen items are never located.

Malchor's Dark Designs – GM's Eyes Only

Malchor still desires to rule Welwyn, and the stolen goods figure prominently in his plans. Using the ill-gotten gains from the sale of these valuables, Malchor plans to hire Goren's entire tribe of goblins to attack Welwyn. During the attack, Lady Arabella will fall victim to a poisoned arrow from Goren. However, Malchor will muster the troops and push the goblins back (actually, they are paid extra to flee). With Lady Arabella out of the way, Welwyn's populace would be forced to turn to Malchor as the next mayor.

Of course, Malchor has no intention of ever curing Tarn of his affliction. He knows he's not powerful enough to cast a *remove curse* to cure lycanthropy, but every few months he attempts the process to ensure Tarn's loyalty. After the attempt "fails," he informs Tarn he needs to obtain another scroll, from a more powerful spellcaster, and then tries again.

Player Beginning

You are in the wilderness town of Welwyn, which has been beset by a recent rash of robberies. You've been asked to investigate the crimes. The locals believe the perpetrator of these crimes has used the town's well to escape.

A local guard leads your band to the town square. Situated in the center of the square is a 10-foot-diameter stone well with a wooden canopy. A metal bar with a crank handle is affixed to the canopy. A thick hemp rope is coiled about this metal bar, one end attached to a wooden bucket. The stone lip of the well is about four feet high and shows obvious wear. The canopy was once painted red but most of the paint has peeled off.

It's your job to descend the well and discover where it leads.

Part 1: Beyond The Well

The well shaft is considered a masonry wall, while the natural caves are considered unworked stone. The ceiling heights are between 7 and 12 feet unless noted otherwise in the text. The cave system is extremely damp, hence the increased DC to climb the walls. Additionally, all Balance and Tumble checks have a +5 penalty to the DC to reflect the slick surfaces.

Well Shaft, Masonry Wall: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 15.

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick (at least); hardness 8; hp 900 (per 5 ft. thickness); Break DC 65; Climb DC 20.

Wandering Monsters

There is only a 5% chance (1 on d20) per half hour that the PCs explore the caves of encountering a wandering monster. This chance increases to 15% (1-3 on d20) if the PCs make excessive noise. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 and consult the following table. The spiders are offspring from the Medium monstrous spider in area 1-2.

1d6	Encounter
1-3	2 Small monstrous spiders (EL 1)
4-5	4 Small monstrous centipedes (EL 1)
6	1 normal badger (EL 1/2)

The following statistics blocks are provided for easy reference for the GM.

Small Monstrous Spider (2): CR 1/2; Small vermin; HD 1d8; hp 6 each; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; BAB +0; Grp -6; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d4-2 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA poison (Fort DC 10, 1d3 Str/1d3 Str); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremor sense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 7, Dex 17, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +8, Spot +12.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Small Monstrous Centipede (4): CR 1/4; Small vermin; HD 1/2d8; hp 2 each; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; BAB +0; Grp -7; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d4-3 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA poison (Fort DC 10, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 5, Dex 15, Con 10, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +14, Spot +4.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Badger (1): CR 1/2; Small animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; BAB +0; Grp -5; Atk +4 melee (1d2-1, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d2-1, 2 claws) and -1 melee (1d3-1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Rage (+4 Str, +4 Con, -2 AC); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Escape Artist +7, Listen +3, Spot +3.

Feats: Track, Weapon Finesse.

Areas of the Map

Area 1-1 – Well Shaft (EL 1): The well shaft descends 80 feet before it reaches cool water. The water is about 20 feet deep and although it softens a fall, anyone entering needs to contend with drowning – and, naturally, the creature that inhabits the well. Climbing down the shaft requires a successful Climb check (DC 15). Missing the roll by 5 or more indicates a fall. When characters examine the shaft, read or paraphrase the following:

The 10-foot-diameter well shaft is constructed of fitted masonry stones. These stones are choked with moss and small weeds, but there appear to be numerous handholds along the shaft.

Located 60 feet down the shaft is a secret door, on the western side. It has been left slightly ajar for the rats to pass through, so it is fairly easy to find (Search DC 10). The door is stone, and requires quite a bit of strength and balance to open fully: opening it requires a successful Strength check (DC 13), and a failure requires another Climb check (DC 15) to maintain balance. The secret door leads to the rest of the cave system.

Secret Stone Door: 4 inches thick; hardness 8; hp 60; Open DC 13; Search DC 10 (20 when closed).

Falling damage depends on the distance of the fall. Since there is water at the bottom of the well, the first 20 feet causes no damage, the next 20 feet cause non-lethal damage, and any falling distance over 40 feet causes real damage.

A six foot long water snake lairs in a small hole located about two feet above the water's surface. It ignores PCs in the well shaft but attacks any PCs that enter the water, perceiving its lair to be threatened. It slides into the water the round after a PC falls in. Noticing the snake requires a Spot check opposed by its Hide skill; if it goes unnoticed, it gets a surprise attack. The snake fights to the death but doesn't pursue targets that ascend the shaft.

Water Snake (Medium Viper): CR 1; Medium animal; HD 2d8; hp 10; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; BAB +1; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d4-1 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA poison (Fort DC 11, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con); SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +7.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-2 – Hunting Grounds (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor spills into a large cavern at least 20 feet wide. It extends to the southwest another 40 feet or so. The air is damp and you hear the constant patter of dripping water. The uneven floor

slopes gently to the south, covered by several large stalagmites, debris, rotting timbers, and rubble.

This unlit chamber has a treacherous floor. Moving across the floor faster than half speed requires a successful Balance check (DC 10). There are six stalagmites ranging in height from five feet to almost 10 feet. The ceiling is about 15 feet overhead and is covered with dripping stalactites. There is one exit, in the north edge of the room, but a successful Spot check (DC 10) is required to locate it behind a large stalagmite. A small pool of two-foot-deep water is to the southwest.

This cavern is the lair of a robust monstrous trapdoor spider. The spider ignores PCs who travel along the northern 10 feet of the chamber to the exit (as depicted by the X'd line on the map). However, any PCs that move into the chamber are subject to its ambush. Scattered about its lair are numerous cave lizard bodies wrapped in spidersilk casings and some random coins (Spot DC 10): 52 sp and 11 gp.

Tactics: Located among the refuse between the three middle stalagmites is a discarded masterwork silver dagger with an opal set on its hilt (worth 400 gp). The dagger is easily noticed with a Spot check (DC 5) but the trapdoor situated beside it (a mass of wood and fabric affixed to the spider's webs) is not so easy to locate, requiring a successful Spot check (DC 20). The spider uses its tremorsense to detect prey; when they approach, it bursts through the trapdoor and attacks with surprise. After the initial attack, it attempts to maneuver around the stalagmites, using them as cover. If reduced to 5 hp or less, it retreats to its lair, a 10-foot-deep hollow under the trapdoor.

Advanced Medium Monstrous Trapdoor Spider: Medium vermin; CR 1; HD 3d8+6; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; BAB +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1 plus poison, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA poison (Fort DC 13, 1d4 Str/1d4 Str); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits, web; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +7, Jump +10, Spot +12.

Feats: Improved Natural Armor, Weapon Finesse.

Area 1-3 – Trapped Portcullis (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

The five-foot-wide corridor turns gradually to the west and appears to continue for another 40 feet. However, the rusted bars of a portcullis anchored to the walls block the corridor.

The portcullis is locked in the down position. A successful Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 15) reveals that the portcullis is relatively new construction, perhaps only a year old. A small murder hole is located on the northern wall, just before the portcullis. Locating this cunningly disguised arrow slit requires a successful Spot check (DC 20) or Search check (DC 15). Another five feet west of the portcullis, along the north wall, is a hidden stone lever that requires a successful Search check (DC 18) to locate. It operates the portcullis.

Iron Portcullis: 2 inches thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 25; Lift DC 25.

Attempting to lift or bend the bars of the portcullis triggers a *glyph of warding* that releases a *hold person* spell. Each round following, a spear is thrust through the murder hole at the victim of the trap. The spear is wielded by one of the zombie dwarves in area 1-4. The zombie suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to attack through the murder hole.

Glyph of Warding Trap: CR 1; releases a *hold person* spell; Will save (DC 16) to avoid; Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 18 (disrupt lines of warding sigil).

Area 1-4 – Hidden Chamber (EL 3): A concealed stone door located on the north wall hides the entrance to this room. Locating it requires a successful Search check (DC 15).

The corridor ends in an irregular chamber perhaps 15 feet by 20 feet. The room reeks of decay and is occupied by four dwarves wearing rusty chainmail and carrying spears. Slowly the quartet turns to face your band – then you see that their faces are pale and dried flesh sags off their bones. With lifeless eyes, they shamle forward to attack!

This small chamber was used by these four dwarven sappers to construct the portcullis and several traps for Malchor. Located along the east wall are several iron bars, rotting planks, rope, and stonemason tools. In the north corner is a small fire pit and four unused bedrolls.

After the dwarves completed their tasks, Malchor and his goblin henchman Goren easily overpowered them. Malchor had them slain to ensure their silence and avoid payment, and then animated them to use as guards. In his glee, he tore up the contract for their services and discarded it in the room. The contract is players' handout A and all the pieces can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20). Make a copy of it and cut it into 10-12 random pieces. For every 3 points by which the Search roll is missed, remove one piece. Have the players put them together on their own.

The contract is written in a code used by the clergy of Crypticus, the god of secrets. A Decipher Script check (DC 10) reveals that there *is* a code; a DC 25 check reveals the actual details of the code itself. Each letter actually represents another letter according to a shift. The number of shifts is equal to the date. Since this contract was written on May 10, the shift is 10 letters of the alphabet (and it wraps around to the beginning). Thus an A is represented by a K, Y is represented by an I, and so on. Note that the contract is signed by Chloram which is simply Malchor's name re-arranged. Consult the sidebar for what the contract says.

Tactics: The zombies mindlessly attack. One of them (determined randomly) wields a +1 *spear* but since it does not glow, it needs to be detected with a *detect magic* spell. Malchor removed all the dwarves' wealth after animating them.

Dwarven Zombie (4): CR 1/2; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 18 each; Init -1; Spd 15 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; BAB +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam) or +2 melee (1d8/x3, spear); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: Spear, chainmail, metal cap, one zombie has a +1 spear.

Area 1-5 – Trapped Corridor (EL 3): Malchor decided to trap this corridor in case anyone discovered Tarn and followed him back to his lair. If the PCs found and deciphered the contract in area 1-4, they receive a +2 circumstance bonus to all Search rolls to locate these traps. Tarn assumes badger form to cross the pit and is aware of the tripwires so he can avoid them.

Area A: At this location is a thin tripwire. Setting off the trap fires an envenomed arrow.

Poison Arrow Trap: CR 1; Atk +5 ranged (1d6/x3 plus poison, arrow); black adder venom (injury, Fort DC 11, initial 1d6 Con, secondary 1d6 Con); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 15 (jam bow mechanism so arrow won't launch).

Area B: At this location is another tripwire. Setting off this trap causes a greataxe to swing down from the ceiling. A successful Spot check (DC 25) is required to spot the hidden greataxe on the ceiling.

Greataxe Trap: CR 1; Atk +4 melee (1d12/x3, greataxe); Reflex save negates (DC 16); Search DC 14; Disable Device DC 15 (jam hinge so greataxe won't swing).

Area C: At this location is an obvious tripwire trap that is easily detected (DC 10 Search check). The tripwire is not attached to anything but located on the opposite side is a hidden pit, activated if 50 lbs. or more of weight is placed on it.

Pit Trap: CR 1; no attack roll necessary (1d6 falling damage); Reflex save avoids (DC 20); Search DC 14; Disable Device DC 15 (reinforce pit cover so it won't collapse).

Area 1-6 – Dire Badger Lair (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This musty chamber smells like an animal pen. The walls glisten with moisture and the floor looks smooth in this roughly 20-foot-diameter cavern. A pair of stalagmite formations almost reach the ceiling.

This chamber is nondescript save for a pile of straw intermixed with pieces of burlap. The pile is a nest for a dire badger that can usually be found sleeping here. The dire badger is loyal to Tarn and was his only friend before Malchor.

Tactics: If the dire badger makes a successful Listen check versus the PCs Move Silently check, it detects the PCs and bursts out of the nest, gaining surprise. It attacks with claws and bite. If damaged, it flies into a rage. If the dire badger rages, have Tarn in area 1-8 make a Listen roll (DC 15) to hear the battle and prepare for the PCs. The dire badger fights to the death and has no treasure.

Dire Badger (1): CR 2; Medium animal; HD 3d8+15; hp 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; BAB +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and -1 melee (1d6+1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Rage (+4 Str, +4 Con, -2 AC); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

Feats: Alertness, Toughness, Track.

Area 1-7 – The Glittering Cave: Read or paraphrase the following:

This natural chamber is perhaps 35 feet long but only 20 feet wide. A pair of stalagmites has fused with stalactites to create natural columns. The south wall is a milky white flowstone formation that appears like a stone waterfall. At its base is a clear pool of water trickling into a small stream that flows to the north. The north wall glints from numerous minerals infused in the stone.

This stone chamber is breathtaking when exposed to soft illumination. The pool is about 10 feet deep but the river is only about two feet deep. Located at the bottom of the pool is a small leather pouch holding 12 silver

The Contract Deciphered

May 10

Work Agreement

This contract is between Stoneshaper Masons (contractor) and Chloram (hirer). In return for the sum of 450 gp, the contractor agrees to provide the following services: Construction of an iron portcullis with a hidden lever, a ten foot deep covered pit, and a pair of simple traps. These services are to be performed at an undisclosed location and shall be completed within 30 days of the start date. The contractors agree to keep this agreement secret and shall not disclose the location to any other persons.

Payment terms: 25% advance with the remainder due upon completion of the services. Contractor provides all raw materials needed.



sling bullets. Tarn discovered these when robbing Shoddy's residence and placed them here lest they be used against him. Locating the pouch requires a successful Spot check (DC 22).

The quartz formations in the north wall are valuable, but require careful skill to remove. A successful Craft (stonemason) or Profession (miner) check (DC 10) is needed to remove a piece of quartz. Up to 20 pieces can be removed, and each piece is worth 1d4 gp. The same skill checks at DC 10, or an Appraise check, will reveal the nature of the formations (e.g., they're quartz) and their value.

It takes one full minute to remove each piece of quartz. This process is noisy and may attract the attention of Tarn (see area 1-8) or a wandering monster.

Area 1-8 – Werebadger Lair (EL 5): Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor ends at a very large chamber about 40 feet wide and reaching about 50 feet long. The cavern is dimly lit from flickering embers in a fire pit situated in the room's center. Five large stalagmites are scattered about the room, two flanking the entrance, another along the east wall, and a final pair in the northeast corner. Along the east wall is a large wooden chest adorned with a massive padlock. Along the northwest wall is a pile of furs. To the north are several exits, but they appear to be two-foot-diameter rough-hewn corridors too small for humans to traverse.

This chamber serves as the lair for Tarn Tetherknot, the unfortunate hunter turned werebadger and the unwilling

accomplice of Malchor. He spends most of his time here, enjoying the company of his badger allies and the rats lured by his pipes.

The pile of furs serves as Tarn's bed. It stinks and is thoroughly flea-infested. The fire pit is about three feet deep and contains a pot of stew. The stalagmites are large enough to provide cover. Along the east wall are several wooden pegs crudely hammered into the wall. Several custom-designed leather harnesses hang on the pegs. These harnesses, sized for normal rats, are used to transport stolen goods through the warrens to the cave outside of town. Any PC with Handle Animal, Ride, Craft (leatherworking), or a similar skill can make a check (DC 10) to determine that these are harnesses designed for some sort of small animal.

The northern passages are only two feet in diameter. They lead to a meandering maze of rat warrens described in Part 2: The Rat Warrens. If the PCs use the potions in the chest, they can traverse the warrens.

The chest is locked but not trapped. Opening it requires a successful Open Lock check (DC 20). Alternately, it can be bashed open with a DC 20 Str check, but doing so runs a 10% noncumulative risk of shattering each potion vial. The chest contains:

- A map identifying a route through the warrens (see players' handout B).
- An ivory scroll tube (worth 200 gp) with an intricate sliding lock mechanism opened only with a successful Open Lock check (DC 22). Tarn has not discovered how to open it, but it contains three arcane spells of *bull's strength* (CL 5).

- A rack holding six labeled potions of *improved reduce person* (CL 10) used by Malchor to scout out the warrens (see sidebar on page 11).
- An arcane scroll of *improved reduce person* (CL 10).
- A sack containing 27 pp*, 212 gp*, 6 gems* (worth 3x50 gp, 2x100 gp, and 1x250 gp), a gold necklace* (worth 125 gp), and a jade statuette* of a tiger (worth 55 gp).

Tactics: Unless the PCs have not alerted Tarn while exploring the caves, he is hiding behind the northeast stalagmite. A successful Spot check opposed by his Hide check reveals him. He shoots at any PCs who investigate the chest. After a few volleys, he drops the bow and uses the pipes to summon a rat swarm, which arrives in one round. With a successful Perform check (DC 10), the swarm attacks the PCs. Tarn continues to maneuver around the stalagmites, attempting to hide again and use sneak attacks. If the PCs have the upper hand, he quaffs his potion and attempts to assume hybrid form to gain more attacks. If reduced to 7 hp or less, he assumes badger form and retreats to area 2-1 to make his last stand.

Rat Swarm (1): CR 2; Tiny animal (swarm); HD 4d8; hp 19; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; BAB +3; Grp –; Atk/Full Atk Swarm (1d6 plus disease, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Disease (Filth Fever, Fort DC 12, incubation 1d3 days, 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con), distraction (Fort DC 12); SQ Half damage from slashing and piercing weapons, low-light vision, scent, swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +4, Listen +6, Spot +7, Swim +10.

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

Tarn Tetherknot, Male Werebadger Rgr2/Rog1: CR 5; Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger); HD 3d8+1d6+16; hp 28; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; BAB +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork shortsword) or +7 ranged (1d6+1/x3, +1 *shortbow*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA

avored enemy (animal) +2, sneak attack (+1d6); SQ Wild empathy, trap-finding, alternate form, lycanthropic empathy, low-light vision, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven.

Skills: Climb +4, Control Shape +7, Craft (leatherworking) +6, Escape Artist +10, Handle Animal +5, Hide +8, Knowledge (nature) +5, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +8, Perform (wind instruments) +10, Survival +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Perform [wind instruments]), Track.

Possessions: +1 *shortbow*, 30 arrows, masterwork shortsword, *pipes of the sewers*, studded leather armor, potion of *magic fang*.

Tarn Tetherknot, Male Werebadger (Hybrid Form): CR 5; Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger); HD 3d8+1d6+16; hp 28; Init +10; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 12; BAB +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork shortsword) or +7 ranged (1d6+1/x3, +1 *shortbow*) or +8 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d6+1, bite) or +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork shortsword) and -1 melee (1d6+1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA favored enemy (animal) +2, sneak attack (+1d6); SQ Wild empathy, trap-finding, alternate form, DR 5/silver, lycanthropic empathy, low-light vision, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 23, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Tarn Tetherknot, Male Werebadger (Badger Form): CR 5; Small humanoid (human, shapechanger); HD 3d8+1d6+16; hp 28; Init +10; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 12; BAB +3; Grp -1; Atk +9 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and -1 melee (1d6+1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA rage (+4 Str, +4 Con, -2 AC); SQ Alternate form, DR 5/silver, lycanthropic empathy, low-light vision, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 23, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +4, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +3.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Track, Weapon Finesse.

Part 2: The Rat Warrens

The rat warrens are natural unworked corridors that meander aimlessly for miles. Malchor used several potions of *improved reduce person* to investigate the warrens and eventually located a path to the caves outside of town (as depicted on players' handout B).

Most passages are only about two feet in diameter. To easily traverse these corridors, a subject needs to be Tiny or smaller. A Small subject could maneuver most passages, but it counts as rough terrain. Ceiling heights in the larger caverns vary according to description. Corridors that leave the map continue for at least several hundred feet. If the GM would like to expand the adventure, these can lead to additional encounters.

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick (at least); hardness 8; hp 900 (per 5 ft. thickness); Break DC 65; Climb DC 20.

Wandering Monsters

Wandering monsters are more common in the rat warrens than in the caverns beyond the well. There is a 15% chance (1-3 on d20) per half hour that the PCs encounter a wandering monster while exploring this area. This chance increases to 20% (1-4 on d20) if the PCs make excessive noise. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 and consult the table below.

1d6 Encounter

- 1-4 1d4+7 normal rats (EL 1)
- 5 3 giant fire beetles (EL 1)
- 6 1 giant worker ant (EL 1)

The following stat blocks are provided for easy reference:

Rat, Normal (1d4+7): CR 1/8; Tiny animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; BAB +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d3-4, bite); Space/Reach 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Giant Fire Beetle (3): CR 1/3; Small vermin; HD 1d8; hp 5 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; BAB +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (2d4, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Giant Worker Ant (1): CR 1; Medium vermin; HD 2d8; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 50 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; BAB +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved grab; SQ Scent, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +8, Survival +4 (to track).

Feats: Track.

Areas of the Map

Area 2-1 – Badger Lair (EL 1): This cavern is the lair of a family of normal badgers, allies of Tarn. There are two adults present. The four juveniles (1 hp each) have been ushered out the east corridor. If Tarn fled here from area 1-8, adjust the boxed text to reflect a third badger. Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is perhaps 10 feet in diameter and contains a strong animal smell. Along the north wall is a large pile of straw. A pair of three-foot-long squat furry beasts in the center of the room growl at your approach. Each has brown fur standing on end in an aggressive manner.

Hidden along the south wall is a secret compartment that requires a successful Search check (DC 22) to locate. Tarn hides here a few choice items stolen from Welwyn, hoping Malchor won't discover his treachery. The hole contains an ivory masterwork flute* (worth 300 gp), a silver bracelet* (worth 110 gp), a silver ring set with a pearl* (actually a +2 *ring of protection*), and a pair of emeralds* (each worth 200 gp).

Tactics: The badgers fight to the death defending their lair. If they fail their Listen check against the PCs' Move Silently check, the four juveniles are still being ushered out the east corridor as the PCs enter. If any harm comes to a juvenile, the adults rage and fight to the death. If a PC uses wild empathy, the badgers begin at Unfriendly, but offering food grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the roll. If their attitude is adjusted to Friendly,

the PCs can safely pass to the north. If Tarn is present and the PCs are aggressive, he leads the badgers in a fight to the death.

Badger (2): CR 1/2; Small animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; BAB +0; Grp -5; Atk +4 melee (1d2-1, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d2-1, 2 claws) and -1 melee (1d3-1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Rage (+4 Str, +4 Con, -2 AC); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Escape Artist +7, Listen +3, Spot +3.

Feats: Track, Weapon Finesse.

Area 2-2 – Rat Lairs (EL 1-2): There are eight of these locations depicted on the map, but there could be many more. Each is a 5 to 10-foot diameter cavern that contains a rotting mass of straw, debris, cloth, and vegetation. Each location is the lair of 9-16 (1d8+8) normal rats.

Tactics: The rats are not normally aggressive, unless they outnumber the PCs 4 to 1 or the PCs show aggression first. Since most of the lairs lack more than one entrance, the cornered rats fight to the death.

Rat, Normal (1d8+8): CR 1/8; Tiny animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; BAB +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d3-4, bite); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Area 2-3 – The River Crossing (EL 1): Read or paraphrase the following:

This 20-foot-wide chamber is dimly lit by pockets of phosphorescent lichen, which cling to the walls and the 15-foot-high ceiling. A slow-moving river bisects the room into north and south areas. The water is clear and appears to be at least several feet deep. Three moss-covered stepping stones are situated in the middle of the river.

In an effort to aid the rats in crossing the river, Malchor used a *stone shape* spell to create the stepping stones. The river is 7 feet wide. It is five feet deep at the stepping stones, increasing to eight feet deep as one moves to the east or west.

PCs can use many methods to cross the river. Swimming it requires a successful Swim check (DC 10), but this gains the attention of a hungry predator (see below). The river can be jumped with a successful Jump check (DC 7) but don't forget to adjust the roll for armor check penalty, jump penalty due to reduced speed (see below), and the PCs' reduced Strength.

Jump Check Modifiers Due to Speed

Speed	Jump Check Modifier
30	none
20	-6
15	-9
10	-12
5	-18

The PCs can also use the stepping stones to cross. The first jump is only DC 3 since a PC can get a running start. The remaining Jump DCs (three more needed) are adjusted to DC 6 since a running start is not possible. Each stone is moss-covered; landing on one requires a successful Balance check (DC 10) or the PC slips and falls into the water. If the PCs cross this way, one of them is randomly attacked by a cave trout. Scattered on the bottom of the river are a few items lost as rats were devoured by the cave trout. There are 11 gp*, a small amethyst* (worth 75 gp), and a thin gold chain* (worth 50 gp).

Monster: A two-foot-long cave trout lairs in the river, snacking on the abundant small fish and the occasional clumsy rat. The trout attacks any PCs smaller than it that enter the water or even that fall in jumping from stone to stone. Due to the trout's dark coloration, a successful Spot check (DC 15) is required to notice the predator; otherwise it gets a surprise attack. A submerged creature is granted improved cover if attacked from the surface.

Cave Trout: CR 1; Small animal (aquatic); HD 2d8-2; hp 8; Init +3; Spd Swim 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB +1; Grp -3; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d4-1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Animal traits, tremor sense 30 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Spot +3, Swim +10.

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Improved Reduce Person

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One humanoid creature

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell is similar to *reduce person* but it causes an extended diminution of the affected humanoid creature, quartering its height, length, and width and dividing its weight by 12. This decrease makes the target two sizes smaller, so Medium creatures become Tiny and Small creatures become Diminutive. The affected creature obtains all the drawbacks and advantages of its new size, such as reach, attack bonus, skill modifiers, and AC adjustment. This improved version of *reduce person* also has a much longer duration.

All equipment worn or carried by the target is similarly reduced in size. Melee and projectile weapons deal less damage (see below), but other magical properties are unaffected. Any item that leaves the possession of the subject (including thrown weapons) returns to its normal size and deals normal damage. Projectiles (like arrows) deal damage based on the weapon that fired them.

Multiple magic effects that reduce size do not stack. *Improved reduce person* counters and dispels *improved enlarge person* (also a Sor/Wiz 3 spell). *Improved reduce person* can be made permanent with a *permanency* spell.

Material component: A handful of iron filings.

Shrinkage

Reducing PCs and their equipment in size alters many game mechanics such as weapon damage, attack bonus, and skill modifiers. Consult the table below to adjust these variable statistics.

The GM may also consider distorting perception of distance and dimensions due to shrinkage. A room described as "20 feet by 20 feet" will look like it is 80x80 to a creature under the influence of *improved reduce person*. The perceived dimensions should be approximately 4x the actual dimensions. This is at the discretion of the GM.

Weapon Damage: Medium weapons now do Tiny damage, and Small weapons now do Diminutive damage, as shown below.

Medium →	Tiny	Small →	Diminutive
1d2	—	1d2	—
1d3	1	1d3	—
1d4	1d2	1d4	1
1d6	1d3	1d6	1d2
1d8	1d4	1d8	1d3
1d10	1d6	1d10	1d4
1d12	1d8	1d12	1d6
2d4	1d4	2d4	1d3
2d6	1d8	2d6	1d6

Ability Adjustments: Adjust the creature's abilities based on the new size, as follows:

Old size	Medium	Small
New size	Tiny	Diminutive
Str	-8	-6
Dex	+4	+4
AC/Atk	+2	+3
Grapple	-8	-8
Hide	+8	+8
Space	2-1/2 ft.	1 ft.
Reach	0 ft.	0 ft.
Base speed	20 ft.	15 ft.

Area 2-4 – Giant Ant Lair Entrance (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is perhaps 15 feet in diameter. Three exits to the west appear slightly larger than most corridors in the warrens. A three-foot-tall pile of rocks occupies most of the chamber.

This chamber is the entrance to a giant ant lair, to the west. The rocks were pushed here by the ants during routine tunnel clearing. Malchor attempted to block the west corridors with the rocks, but the persistent vermin cleared the entrances.

Due to the rocks, passing through this room is considered rough terrain. A Balance check (DC 7) is also required, or else the victim stumbles, falls prone, and suffers 1 hp of nonlethal damage. Two rounds after the PCs enter here, a successful Listen check (DC 10) reveals a clicking sound approaching from the west. The following round, a pair of giant five-foot-long worker ants enter the room and attack.

Tactics: The ants mindlessly fight to the death. During the fight, they continue to “click,” warning the rest of the ants. If the PCs linger here, more giant ants arrive – but be careful not to overwhelm the PCs. If the GM desires, he can flesh out the giant ant lair to expand the adventure. If the PCs begin heading west, arrange for them to encounter a mass of ants that sends them scurrying back eastward. If necessary, use the ants to direct the PCs to the north.

Giant Worker Ant (2+): CR 1; Medium vermin; HD 2d8; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 50 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; BAB +1; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved grab; SQ Scent, vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +8, Survival +4 (to track).

Feats: Track.

Area 2-5 – The Chasm Crossing (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This huge area is at least 40 feet wide with a ceiling about 10 feet high. A 15 foot wide chasm bisects the room, running from the east to west walls. The only exit is on the opposite side.

A metal spike is hammered into the floor on the near side. A rope has been knotted to the spike and runs across the chasm where it is fixed to another spike on the opposite side.

When Malchor discovered this chamber, he added the rope “bridge” to assist the rats in crossing the chasm. The chasm is 30 feet deep and a fall results in 3d6 points of damage. The chasm is nearly 15 feet across and a Jump check (DC 15) is required to cross. The rope can be used to cross the chasm with a successful Climb check (DC 15) or Balance check (DC 20). The PCs can also take the tedious approach and climb down into the chasm then scale the opposite face (Climb DC 5), or they can climb along the walls to the east and

west (Climb DC 15).

About 10 feet down the chasm on the near side is a shallow niche. A crafty choker resides here, fattening up on an endless supply of plump rats. The choker’s niche requires a successful Spot check (DC 20) to notice. The niche contains a myriad of small bones, half-eaten lizards, and the following treasure: 88 gp*, a crystal perfume bottle* (worth 25 gp), an obsidian game piece* (worth 15 gp), a mother-of-pearl snuffbox* (worth 75 gp), and four gems* (worth 75 gp, 150 gp, 200 gp, and 500 gp).

Tactics: The choker attacks the second or third PC to cross the chasm. Since the target lacks a Dexterity bonus while climbing or balancing, the choker gets to make sneak attacks. It attempts to grapple a target and pull him off the rope. The following round it constricts, but if it meets suitable resistance, the choker simply lets go of the target. The target needs to make a successful Reflex save (DC 15) to prevent crashing to the rocks below. If reduced to 5 hp or less, the cowardly creature flees to the bottom of the chasm and attempts to hide.

Choker Rog1: CR 3; Small aberration; HD 3d8+3 + 1d6+1; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; BAB +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d3+3, tentacle); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+3, 2 tentacles); Space/Reach 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, constrict (1d3+3), sneak attack (+1d6); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., quickness, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +13, Hide +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +7.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy.

Area 2-6 – Blackspine’s Lair (EL 3): Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is about 15 feet in diameter with a 10-foot-high ceiling. The floor is dusty, covered with fine rock debris. The west wall glints soft hues as your light source reflects off numerous crystals embedded into the wall.

This chamber appears empty but is actually the lair of a fiendish pseudodragon named Blackspine. Blackspine was the familiar of a wizard/cleric, a devout follower of Crypticus, the god of secrets. This hermit lived in areas 2-7 and 2-8, and worshiped his dark god in solitude. Years ago, he never returned from a supply run into Welwyn. Blackspine always blamed the town for his master’s death, but as the years slipped by, lacked the ambition to move on.

A year and a half ago, Malchor discovered the shrine, and the prayer books. Blackspine overheard his ranting hollow threats against Lady Arabella and Welwyn. Blackspine used his *ventriloquism* spell to tempt Malchor, and seduce him into worshipping Crypticus. He duped Malchor into leaving “offerings,” which were piled into his own hoard. After several months, Blackspine orchestrated a phony “ceremony” and presented himself to Malchor as a gift from Crypticus.

Since then, he has pretended to be Malchor's familiar, but it is actually Blackspine that manipulates the cleric into taking out his vengeance on Welwyn.

The crystals in the wall are worthless, but Blackspine enjoys looking at them. Located along the east wall is a natural chimney about three feet wide. After about 60 feet of ascent, it opens to the surface. Blackspine uses this exit to hunt. Along the south wall is a natural ledge situated six feet above the floor.

Unlike most pseudodragons, Blackspine is evil and capricious. Like most dragons, he is lazy, arrogant, and loves to wallow in his hoard. His jumbled hoard includes 1,112 cp, 457 sp, 188 gp, 17 gems (worth 12x50 gp, 3x100 gp, 2x250 gp), a gold signet ring* (worth 50 gp), a silver brooch set with emeralds* (worth 400 gp), a pair of *bracers of armor +1*, and a potion of *cure moderate wounds* (CL 10).

Tactics: Blackspine rests on his pile of treasure on the ledge. A successful Spot check vs. his Hide check is required to notice him. If not detected, he attacks with surprise using his tail (and 5 ft. reach). If he casts *burning hands*, it affects all PCs in the room. He attempts to remain on the ledge, using the height to his advantage, and reserves his *smite good* ability for a fighter-type. If a PC reaches his ledge with a successful Climb check (DC 15 due to the dampness), he takes to the air and attacks while swooping, retreating to the ceiling.

If reduced to 10 hp or less, he contacts one of the PCs via telepathy and begs for his life. In exchange for the *bracers*, he leaves the PCs alone and even warns them of Malchor and his undead in the nearby caves.

Blackspine, Male Advanced Fiendish Pseudo-dragon Sor1: Tiny dragon; CR 3; HD 3d12+1d4; hp 22; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17; BAB +3; Grp -5; Atk +7 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting) and +2 melee (1d2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison (Fort DC 15, sleep for 1 minute/sleep for 1d3 hours), *smite good* (+4); SQ Blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., DR 5/magic, immunity to sleep and paralysis, low-light vision, resistance to cold and fire 5, spell resistance 19, telepathy 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Languages: Common, Infernal (via telepathy)

Skills: Bluff +3, Diplomacy +5, Hide +16, Listen +8, Search +7, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +3 (+5 when tracking).

Feats: Improved Natural Armor, Weapon Finesse.

Spells Known (5/4; DC 12+spell level): 0—*dancing lights, detect magic, mage hand, resistance*; 1st—*burning hands, ventriloquism*.

Area 2-7 – Hidden Shrine (EL 2): Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is huge, at least 30 by 40 feet. The ceiling is perhaps 10 feet high and there don't appear to be any exits. To the north is a smooth black altar about 10 feet wide and four feet high. A large book rests on the altar. Flanking the altar are



a pair of twisted pewter candelabras adorned with black candle stubs, currently lit. Hanging on the wall behind the altar are five human skeletons, arms manacled over their heads. Each wears a rusty chain shirt and carries a longsword at its side.

This chamber is Malchor's hidden shrine to his dark god Crypticus. The exit is hidden by a stone panel that requires a successful Search check to locate (DC 15; +4 insight bonus if the PCs have players' handout B from area 1-8).

The candelabras are each worth 100 gp. Sitting on top of the altar is Malchor's diary (see sidebar on page 14). The altar is polished obsidian and contains a secret compartment that can be located with a successful Search check (DC 15). Inside is a pouch with 25 pp, a few prayer books dedicated to Crypticus, two *potions of cure light wounds* (CL 5), and a ceremonial adamantite dagger set with small rubies (worth 375 gp).

Tactics: If the PCs touch the altar, the skeletons animate. It takes them one round to release themselves from their manacles and draw their swords. The second round, they attack with red glowing eyes using simple tactics to overwhelm the PCs. Each round of combat here allows Malchor in area 2-8 a Listen check (DC 15). If he succeeds, he investigates the commotion on the next round.

Human Skeletons (5): CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12; hp 6 each; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; BAB +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword) or +1

melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ DR 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Possessions: longsword, chain shirt.

Area 2-8 – Secret Cave (EL 6): Note that this is a deadly encounter if the PCs are still shrunk!

This chamber is noticeably dry and slightly warm. It is about 20 feet wide and 35 feet long. Natural sunlight peeks into the cave from a corridor in the east wall. Along the north wall is a crude bed and a wooden writing table, its surface covered with parchment. Along the south wall are 10 small wooden crates and a few bales of straw. Situated near these crates is a straw pallet.

Crypticus

Crypticus, the god of secrets and forbidden lore, is lawful evil. He is known as The Cloaked One and the Keeper of Forbidden Lore. His clergy operate in complete secrecy, often feigning worship of other deities and communicating in secret codes. His domains are Evil, Knowledge, and Trickery. His symbol is a black cowl concealing a wispy visage and a pair of glowing eyes. His favored weapon is a curved dagger.

Malchor's Diary

As a devoted follower of Crypticus, Malchor has encoded his diary with an alphabet shift with the number of letters equal to the date (as in players' handout A). Unless the GM really wants to create several more handouts, this code can be read with a successful Decipher Script check (DC 20) for each piece of information listed below. The amount of time to find and decipher the information is listed before the entry. PCs can take 10 or 20 on this roll, but it takes 5 and ten times as long respectively.

- (1d6 minutes) Confirms Malchor worships Crypticus
- (2d6 minutes) Reveals Malchor's desire to rule Welwyn
- (3d6 minutes) Reveals the alliance with Tarn the werebadger
- (2d4 minutes) Reveals the werebadger's involvement with the robberies
- (2d6 minutes) Reveals the hiring of the dwarven stonemasons, their betrayal, and animation of the corpses
- (4d6 minutes) Details plans of hiring a band of goblins to attack Welwyn and Malchor's plot to save the day after Lady Arabella suffers an "accident"
- (6d6 minutes) Reveals that Malchor hired a goblin assassin to kill Lady Arabella's father with a poisoned arrow

If Malchor is present, continue:

A medium-sized humanoid is seated at the writing table. It wears a voluminous black cloak with the hood drawn to cover its face. Startled, it jumps up and begins incanting magical words!

This cave is located about a half mile north of Welwyn. The rats deliver their cargo here, where Malchor or his goblin henchman Goren pack the ill-gotten gains in crates and transport them to a distant city for resale.

The east passage leads outside but is hidden from casual sight by abundant vegetation and a *stone shape* spell. The crates are all empty and the straw is used as packing material.

The straw pallet is Goren's bed. The other bed is used by Malchor on occasion. Under the bed is a locked, trapped metal strongbox. Opening it requires a successful Open Lock check (DC 20). The iron strongbox contains the following items: 222 gp*, 13 assorted gems* (worth 7x50 gp, 3x100 gp, 2x250 gp, 1x500 gp), a silver pin set with citrines* (worth 150 gp), a coral statuette of a sirine* (worth 75 gp), and a platinum disc studded with tiny emeralds* (worth 350 gp). The papers on the table are blank.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 1; +6 melee (1 plus Medium spider venom); poison (Fort DC 14, initial 1d4 Str, secondary 1d4 Str); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20 (break off needle tip without being injured).

Tactics: If Malchor is here, he casts *disguise self* to appear as a drow wizard when uncloaked. The same round, as a free action, he shouts in Goblin for Goren, who is guarding the cave entrance. Goren arrives in 1d3 rounds (he was napping in the shade). Next Malchor attempts to cast *summon monster II*, conjuring a fiendish wolf to attack the PCs from area 2-7. He follows this up with *shield of faith*, *doom*, and *command*. He waits for an opportunity to cast *death knell* and *blindness* on a spell caster.

When Goren arrives, he remains at the cave mouth and uses Rapid Shot to pepper targets with arrows. A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals that the arrows all have crimson feathers, a clue that Goren killed Lord Garrick. If Malchor is defeated, Goren attempts to flee using a run action.

Magistrate Malchor, Male Human Clr5 (Crypticus): CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d8; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; BAB +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+3, +1 *dagger of spell storing*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Rebuke undead; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 11.

Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic, Infernal, Goblin.

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +3, Heal +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +5, Sense Motive +8.

Feats: Combat Casting, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Focus (dagger).

Possessions: +1 dagger of spell storing (bestow curse: -6 to Dex), +1 breastplate, potion of cure moderate wounds (CL 5).

Spells Prepared (5/4/3/2, save DC 14 + spell level): 0—detect magic (x2), guidance (x3); 1st—command, disguise self*, doom, inflict light wounds, shield of faith; 2nd—death knell, detect thoughts*, spiritual weapon (dagger), summon monster II; 3rd—blindness/deafness, dispel magic, nondetection.

Domains: Knowledge (+1 caster level for divination spells), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills). * Domain spell.

Goren Bloodshaft, Male Goblin Ftr2/Rog2: CR 4; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 2d10+2 +2d6+2; hp 25; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14; BAB

+4; Grp +1; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1/18-20, rapier) or +10 ranged (1d6+1/x3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+1/18-20, rapier) or +8 ranged (1d6+1/x3, 2 arrows); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack (+1d6); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., trapfinding, evasion; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Orc.

Skills: Climb +6, Escape Artist +8, Hide +13, Listen +4, Ride +13.

Feats: Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Masterwork longbow, 20 arrows with crimson fletching, rapier, studded leather armor, oil of bless weapon, 25 gp.

Conclusion

With the discovery of Malchor's dark hidden agenda and your unraveling of the mystery of the Welwyn robberies, the town is once again safe and sound. Uncovering Malchor's involvement in the Lord Mayor's demise last year has gained you a valuable ally in Lady Arabella. She offers her eternal thanks – and a festival for the entire town. In addition to a substantial reward, the town treats your band to a night of merriment at The Dented Coin.

The End

Rewards

Award group experience for this adventure as usual. Feel free to assign a discretionary role-playing experience award (100 to 200 XP) to each PC based on character portrayal and contributions to the game. This award can vary per character. Finally, add up the following objective awards based on tasks completed during each part of the adventure. These objective awards are based on individual characters and are not group rewards. The sum of combat/trap experience, roleplaying awards, and objective awards is the total experience awarded to each character.

Part 1 Objectives

Not falling into the well; avoiding the water snake	25 XP
Avoiding the trapdoor spider in area 1-2	25 XP
Discovering the secret door to area 1-4	25 XP
Locating and deciphering players' handout A	75 XP
Discovering the magic spear in area 1-4	25 XP
Avoiding the traps in area 1-5 (per trap avoided)	25 XP
Locating the silver sling bullets in area 1-7	50 XP
Locating players' handout B	25 XP
<hr/> Total possible bonus XP – part 1	<hr/> 325 XP

Part 2 Objectives

Tossing food to or avoiding the badger family	25 XP
Crossing river without attack from the trout	50 XP
Avoiding the giant ant nest	50 XP
Locating the choker's niche	25 XP
Crossing chasm without attack from the choker	50 XP
Not being surprised by Blackspine	25 XP
Bargaining with Blackspine (after wounding him)	50 XP
Discovering the diary in area 2-7	50 XP
Deciphering diary entries to implicate Malchor	100 XP
Not allowing Malchor to cast <i>disguise self</i>	50 XP
Returning all stolen items to Welwyn residents	75 XP
<hr/> Total possible bonus XP – part 2	<hr/> 550 XP



Players' Handout A

DRP 10

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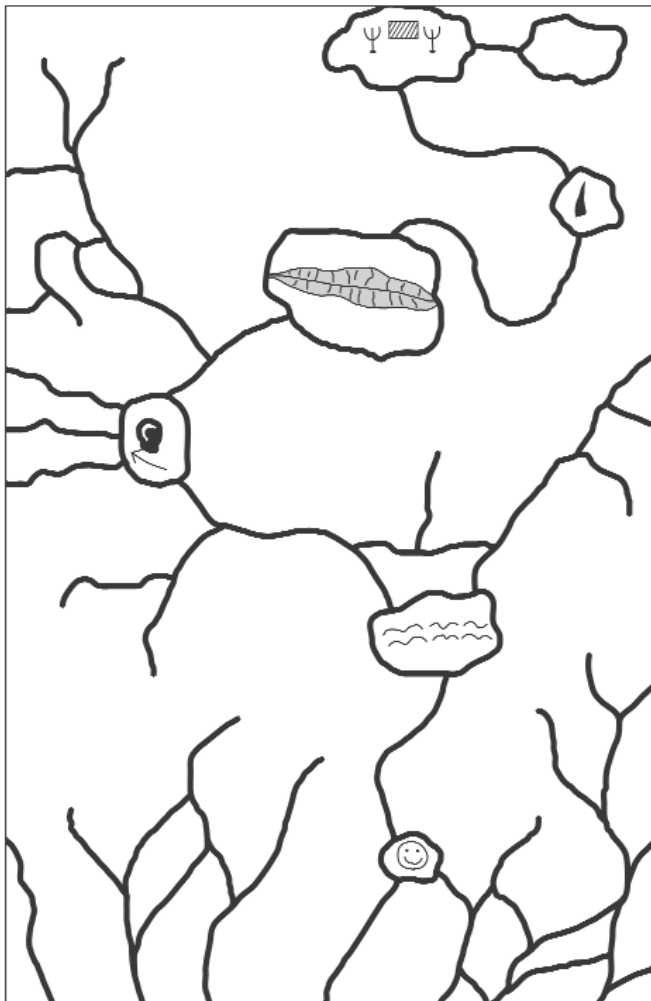
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GRPDVEK KVIDJ: 25% RUMRET'V, NZKY KYV IVDRZEUVI ULV FE TFDGCVKZFE FW KYV JVIMZTVJ. TFEKIRT'KFI GTFMZUVJ RCC IRN' DRKVIZRCJ EVVUVU.

TYCFIRD

DRAGONFEND PACT

Players' Handout B



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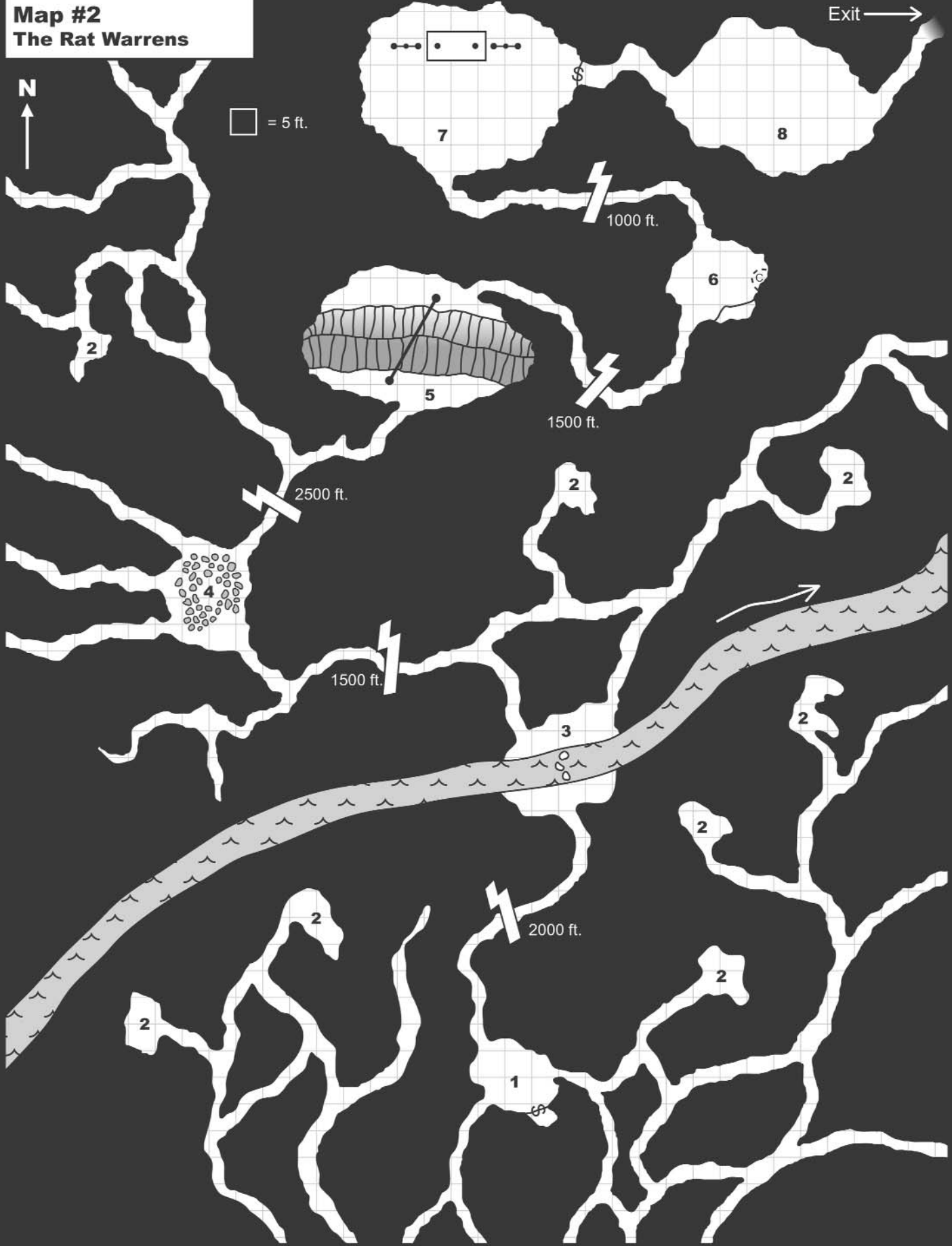
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Map #2
The Rat Warrens



From map #1

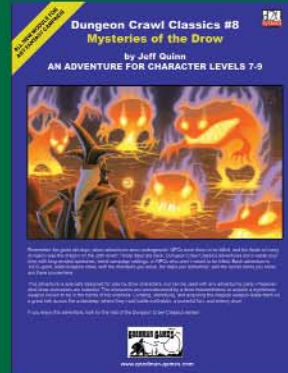
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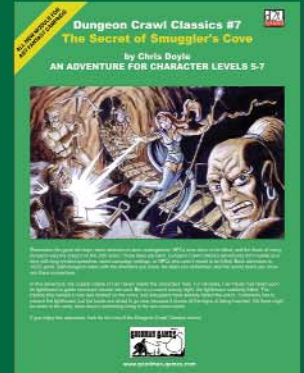
#10: The Sunless Garden Levels 6-8



#9: Dungeon Geomorphs



#8: Mysteries of the Drow Levels 7-9



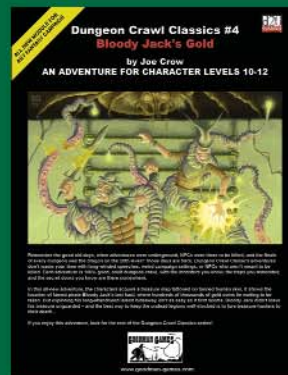
#7: The Secret of Smuggler's Cove Levels 5-7



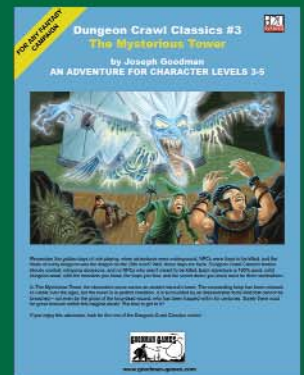
#6: Temple of the Dragon Cult Levels 8-10



#5: Aerie of the Crow God Levels 7-8



#4: Bloody Jack's Gold Levels 10-12



#3: The Mysterious Tower Levels 3-5

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