

WINTER-SPRING 2010

# ELDER TUNNELS



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THE SORCERER'S CHIMNEY, BY STEPHEN BUTKA  
WITHERING DEPTHS, BY TOM K. LONEY





# ELDER TUNNELS

## WINTER-SPRING 2010

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF ELDER

Trollgod wandered the deeper tunnels of Trollhalla before sunset, hours before most of the trolls awakened for their nightly revels. These tunnels were said to reach to all corners of time and space—if the mind could imagine it, the tunnels could take you there. He came to the tunnel that led to the world of Elder. It was a world that he had never visited, but that his champions Perrryton and Kopfy had mentioned from time to time—it was a world that they called home.

Trollgod pondered what he knew of Elder. It had been created by the Demiurges Tom K. Loney and Christina Lea — strange names of outlander gods — and was patterned not after Trollworld, but more like unto the mythical world of Earth—a place influenced by savannas and jungles of Africa, desert civilizations of the Middle East and even stranger places. It was meant to be a place of Legend and Mystery.

As he wandered down the tunnel to Elder, Trollgod came to two doors. Each led to a different time and place. The first door said: The Sorcerer's Chimney, created by Stephen Butka. Beneath that were words painted in ink as red as blood: Warning, Satire, Abandon all Gravity Ye Who Enter Here. The second door said: Wuthering Depths, created by Tom Loney — ah the Demiurge was at work again. Trollgod scratched his rocky pate. What could a wuthering be? The

bloody subtitle read: Gothic Romance and Fantasy Spelunking.

Then the dinner bell rang, and Trollgod headed back up to the Feasting Hall of Trollhalla. He had made two new resolutions on this trip. He vowed that he would enter those doors and explore the world of Elder in the near future. He also vowed to get a dictionary. If words like wuthering, gothic, and spelunking lay in his future, he would definitely need one.

KEN ST. ANDRE  
MARCH 5, 2010



# The Sorcerer's Chimney

by Stephen Butka

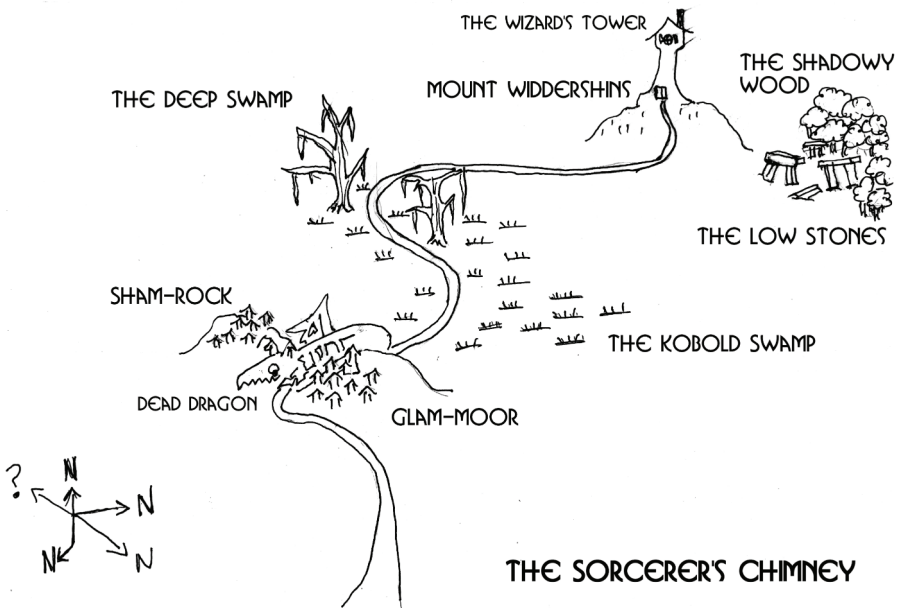




**Introduction**

While traveling toward Vast Barbaria on the road to Pazh, a city on the borderlands of Isun, the PCs come to a fork where they must decide to whether to veer left or right. Though they do not know it, the choice is irrelevant, because they have been "invited" by a small community of leprechauns to their little abodes, spread out over two hills in the sister villages known as Glam-Moor and Sham-Rock. No matter which fork is chosen, the party comes across the settlement, which at first glance looks like any other. However, upon closer inspection, some marked differences become evident: the buildings are much smaller even than those in a hobb's village, and, though there are many windows, there are no front doors.

Upon the party's arrival, massive numbers of locals run up or "pop" in (suddenly appear out of nowhere through the use of their Wink-Wing spells), cheering and welcoming the characters with declarations such as "You've finally come!" and "We've been expecting you."



Of course, the PCs can be forgiven if they are a bit confused by all of this or even a bit taken aback. If a PC states that the group had not planned to visit the village, a sudden hush descends, and the town elder, a Mr. Papachaun, steps forward.

"Of course you weren't expecting us," Papachaun winks. "We have been expecting you, however." As Papachaun guides the PCs around the corner, the reason for the party's summoning becomes obvious: a massive dragon corpse lies in the saddle of the two hills. It is more than a few days old, and various carrion-eaters have been at work on the softer parts.

Papachaun explains that the two towns don't know how to dispose of the giant reptilian cadaver. Attempts to cremate it have been unsuccessful, as the body, for the most part, is immune to fire. Papachaun offers to forfeit one pot of gold (2d x 100 coins of solid gold, remember DARO) in exchange for the removal of the body.

Characters who investigate the dragon's remains will find various loose scales. (A dragon scale easily can be fabricated into a dragon-scale shield that deflects only 4 points of damage but is impervious to fire and heat. A suit of dragon-scale armor can be constructed by one of the local artisans, but the crafty leprechauns will demand that the price of any such suit be deducted from the pot of gold that they have offered for successful corpse-removal.)

If the characters refuse to help and decide to leave, all of the leprechauns head back to their hovels, disappointed. However, the party will find that every road they take out of the area leads them back to the spot where they first saw the two villages. And every time the party shows up all the leprechauns will appear again, cheering and joyful that their "heroes have arrived to save the day." If, for some reason, the players absolutely refuse to complete the adventure, the characters will keep returning to Glam-Moor and Sham-Rock until another party of delvers arrives from the road to Pazh; this will occur in 3d weeks (remember TARO).

If the PCs agree to take on the herculean task before them, Papachaun thanks them. "Let me tell you about our countryside," he continues. "You may need to travel about it as



you complete your task." (Even if the party ventured off the roads previously, they will not have seen the places the old leprechaun is describing—it's one of those fairy-land things.) He tells them about six places: (1) the Kobold Swamp, where a pack of red-headed kobolds hang out, hunting wildlife and any hapless travelers who venture by; (2) the Deep Swamp, where a vicious swamp troll hunts game, including the occasional unfortunate kobold or, from time to time, lost delver; (3) the Wizard's Tower, where the creepy sorcerer Weth-Jode, pronounced "Yo Dah," dwells; (4) Mount Widdershins, where the sun is always setting; (5) the Low Stones, a slope just beyond the mountain, where a variety of stone monoliths have been cropping up, for unknown reasons, over the past eon or so; and (6) the Shadowy Wood, where...Papachaun only says cryptically, "It's best to avoid it."

### The Kobold Swamp

Two 2d encounter rolls to get through (remember DARO)

- 3–6 2d Kobolds, MR 30, Loot A
- 7 Brown Bear, MR 120
- 8–10 Mule Deer, MR 25, Sp 45
- 11 Swamp Hag, MR 100, 1st lvl Spells, Treasure B
- 12 d3 Hissers, MR 70, 3 pt thick hide, Loot A
- 13+ Swamp Troll, MR 140, 8 pt thick hide, Treasure A

### The Deep Swamp

Three d6 encounter rolls to get through

- 1–2 Alligator, MR 110, Sp 29, 3 pt thick hide
- 3–4 Mule Deer, MR 25, Sp 45
- 5 Swamp Troll, MR 140, 8 pt thick hide, Treasure A
- 6 d6 Hissers, MR 70, 3 pt thick hide, Loot A

### Mount Widdershins

One 2d encounter roll to reach the summit

- 3–4 Nothing
- 5 Fire Giant, MR 200, 3 pt skin (impervious to fire), Treasure A





- 6 Pride of Feral Cats (2d), MR 20, Sp 22
- 7-12 Rat Pack (2d, remember DARO), MR 15, Sp 22
- 13+ The Wise Hawk, MR 45, Sp 50

### The Low Stones

*Two d6 encounter rolls to get through to the bottom*

- 1-4 d6 Kobolds, MR 30, Loot A
- 5 Nothing
- 6 d3 Ghouls, MR 60, Wiz 22, automatic bad smell (2nd lvl Con SR), 1st and 2nd lvl Spells

### The Shadowy Wood

*Six 2d encounter rolls to get through*

- 3-6 d6 Kobolds, MR 30, Loot A
- 7-9 d3 Dyrads, MR 60, Sp 40, Wiz 30, 4 pt bark skin, Tree-Hugging\*, 1st lvl Spells, Treasure A
- 10 The Wise Hawk, MR 45, Sp 50
- 11 d3 Ratlings, MR 40, Loot B
- 12 d6 Kobolds, MR 30, Loot A
- 13 4+d6 Dark Elves, MR 75, bows then swords, 4 pt armor, treasure is their equipment
- 14 d3 Dyrads, MR 60, Sp 40, Wiz 30, 4 pt bark skin, Tree-Hugging\*, 1st lvl Spells, Treasure A
- 15 Wood Giant, MR 200, 10 pt skin, Tree-Hugging\*, Treasure A
- 16+ 4d Goat-Heads, MR 40, 2 pt hides, Loot A

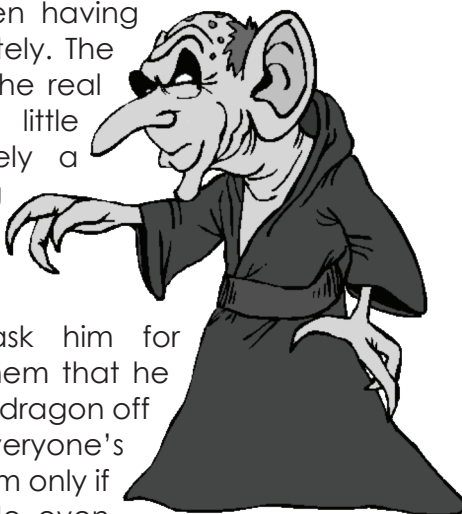
\* *Tree Hugging* (Ch+6): The dryad or wood giant is able to blend completely into the surrounding trees in color, smell, and ambient temperature.

### The Wizard's Tower

Weth-Jode is a 3rd level goblin paragon who keeps his own counsel, for the most part. Due to problems elsewhere he appreciates the solitude of the area around Glam-Moor and Sham-Rock. And leprechauns wish to leave him well enough



alone. However, he has been having trouble with his "chimney" lately. The chimney is his link between the real world and the leprechauns' little piece of Never-Never. Lately a whole slew of troublemaking interdimensional travelers have started lodging in the chimney.



If the adventurers ask him for assistance, Weth-Jode tells them that he has a potion that will "get the dragon off the ground and out of everyone's hair," which he will give to them only if they "scrub" the chimney. He even provides each character with a broom for this project.

When the characters walk into his spacious fireplace, they disappear from sight.

### Room 1

d3 Wotsy, MR 70, Wiz 40, treasure is ten of their cards

The Wotsy were human at one time, but they dabbled into magics so corrupt that they have been horribly warped into slouching gray-skinned drooling things. Each Wotsy carries several thick cards, each labeled with the name of a spell or creature. Upon reading aloud the name on a card and spending 10 Wiz points, the spell will be activated or the creature summoned.

### Roll card (2d)

- 3 Gorgon, MR 90, Wiz 45, TTYF 30, Hold That Pose 2nd lvl
- 4 Quick Sand, 3rd lvl SR Sp for all to avoid entanglement
- 5 Blizzard, 3rd lvl SR Dx for all to be able to fight that round
- 6 Born Again Spell, for d6 people
- 7 Minotaur, MR 140, 2 pt thick hide
- 8 Born Again Spell, for d6 people





- 9 Sun Flare, 3rd lvl SR Con to avoid losing 3 Hits
- 10 d3 Square-Eared Swamp Hobbs, MR 45, 1 pt skin
- 11 Zap It, disintegrates any summoned monster with 3rd lvl SR Lk by holder
- 12 Born Again Spell, for d6 people
- 13+ Roll twice

### Room 2

d3 Living Statues, MR 200, Int 7, armor 1 pt per MR, 90 crossbow shots (2d per missile combat round). Each chip off a statue can be used as an MR 5 Pet Monster with a 3rd lvl SR on Ch.

### Room 3

2d Citizens, MR d6 x 10 for each, Loot B

The Citizens think that they are vampires, but actually aren't. They will demand that the characters cut their own



throats for the Citizens to drink from, threatening that if the characters do not, they will die a much more horrible death.

**Secret Door: Lair of the White Werewolf**

White Werewolf, MR 150, 4 pt hide, Treasure A

The white-furred werewolf has a Befuddling Spell available every round: 3rd lvl SR on Lk for anyone injured by the beast to avoid turning into a Citizen with all stats of 12 within d6 days of the injury. The afflicted will think that they have become vampires, though this will not actually be the case.

**Room 4**

An avatar, Seker, of Egyptian mythology, has come to investigate what has been causing so much turbulence in the interdimensional doorways of this area lately. He has heard that a dragon even crashed nearby a couple of weeks ago. He will not seek an active fight, since he has noticed that the problem seems to have dissipated without his intervention. He would like a souvenir, as he hasn't been to this part of Never-Never before. If a character still has a broom and gives it to the godling, it will boost one of the character's stats by 3d (remember TARO).

**Roll stat (2d)**

- 3 Strength
- 4-5 Constitution
- 6 Speed
- 7 Dexterity
- 8-9 Intelligence
- 10 Wizardry
- 11 Luck
- 12 Charisma
- 13+ Roll twice

Note that Seker will accept only one souvenir.

After investigating all of the rooms and dealing with the Egyptian deity, the group appears back in Weth-Jode's



chimney. Suddenly a big rush of soot cascades down upon them. As soon as things clear up, the warrior-wizard is happy to see them. He offers them hot baths in the spacious spa area of his tower. (A 2nd lvl SR on Int allows any short kin character to find peepholes in the bathing areas, should they choose to clean up there—the guy's a peeping tom for the wee folk.)

As promised, the goblin awards the potion to the party. For a fee he will heal any wounds (100 gold pieces per hit point) and cure any afflictions (1,000 gold pieces to cast a Healing Feeling) that they have suffered during the course of their delving. He also will give the party an extra potion, marked "Hell-Bomb Burst," as a bonus for their good work.

### **Back in the saddle again...**

...Between Glam-Moor and Sham-Rock, that is. The leprechauns from both villages greet the heroes with even more accolades than upon their arrival(s). Papachaun wants to arrange for a day of feasting, parades, and speeches, to begin immediately after the big event, and he won't let the party do anything until bleachers and tents have been set up. Then all gather in a large semicircle around the corpse, allowing a fairly safe distance for the PCs to work.

If the party decides to throw the Hell-Bomb Burst vial at the corpse, everyone within a half mile must make a 3rd lvl SR on Lk to avoid getting clobbered by a piece of rotten dragon gunk (d3 damage, armor not applicable). Only one large chunk is missing from the corpse, and the rest of it remains exactly as it was—except for a bunch of startled birds, raccoons, rats, and whatnot, who presumably are unhappy about their exploding feast. The townsfolk are not overly impressed and start to mill back to their homes. Papachaun smiles, says something like "Nice try," and leaves as well. The players may try to rally the audience as they try their next trick, the other vial. Extra AP should be awarded for any good role playing performed here.

If the party applies the first potion to the corpse, a blinding light sweeps over the area, followed by a large cloud of billowing dust. Those present gasp with awe and confusion. As things



begin to clear up, the PCs and assembled leprechauns see the dragon standing before them in full health and glory. And it doesn't look very happy, what with steam bellowing out of its nostrils and its large tongue licking the air.

If the characters have not yet used the Hell-Bomb Burst, one may indeed throw it at the threatening, monstrous beast before them. It will require a 4th lvl SR on Sp to throw it before the dragon realizes what is happening. Should this roll fail, combat with the beast will begin. Dragon, MR 2000, armor 24, 60 yards of flame (9d damage to each caught in it) each projectile round, no treasure. If the roll is successful, the vial strikes the head of the dragon, and everyone in the area must make a 3rd lvl SR on Lk to avoid flying bits of healthy dragon skull, brains, and whatnot (2d damage to any who fail). The headless titan reels backwards and to the side, thrashing, rolling about, and smashing 2d x d3 leprechauns in its wake before the body settles back onto the ground again. The leprechaun survivors are stunned only for a few moments before they turn into a bloodthirsty mob seeking revenge on the party members. Leprechauns (d6 x 100 of them), MR 60, Wiz 40, 1st through 3rd lvl Spells. A 7th lvl SR on Ch by one of the PCs will stave them off, as will appeals to allow the party to leave in peace—after giving them everything on their persons, including clothes, as recompense for the suffering that the adventurers have wrought without solving the original problem.

If the characters do not use the Hell-Bomb Burst at all, or used it before applying the other potion, they find themselves faced with the horrible beast. He sniffs the air and roars, rearing his front legs and stretching out his wings. He announces that his name is Sagamuritzidril and demands the return of any scales taken from his body, as he can smell who has them. If characters who have taken scales return them, or point out to the dragon that they have just raised him from the dead and that the teensy things are a fair wage for that, he grumbles but agrees to be on his way. Then he leaps off the ground and flaps his wings. The tents all go flying, along with all but the heaviest leprechauns, and after ten seconds the dragon recedes into the distance. A ragged cheer arises among the leprechauns, who still want to

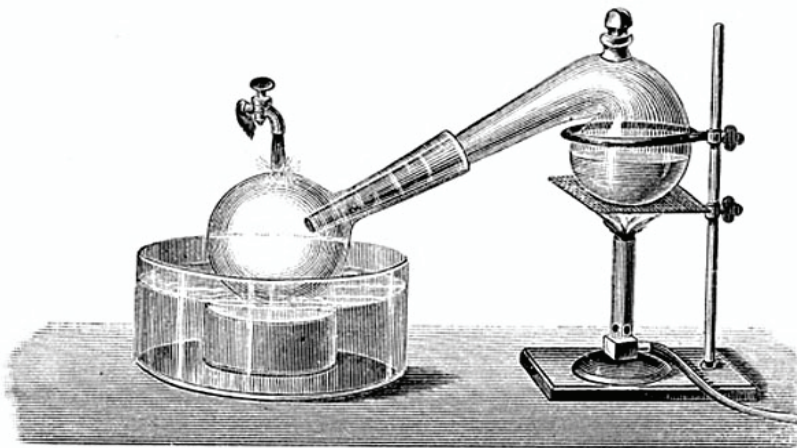


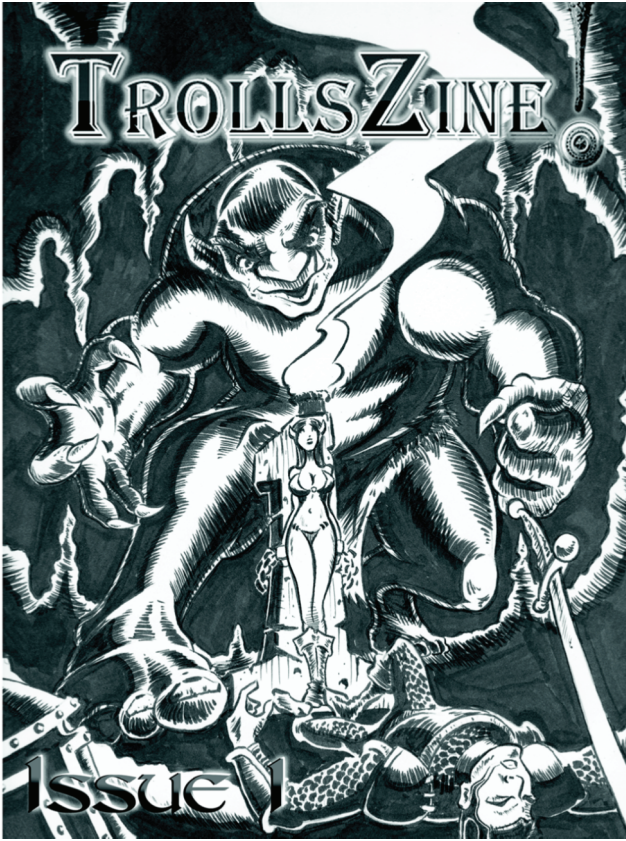
party. Papachaun presents the characters with their pot of gold and grants each of them a rabbit's foot that raises the wearer's Luck by 2d points.

As the dragon is completely gone, the leprechauns of Glam-Moor and Sham-Rock will hold three days of feasting and celebration in the party's honor. The GM should award 900 Adventure Points each to those who have survived the adventure, in addition to individuals' totals from successful Saving Rolls and whatnot.

### ***Dice notation key***

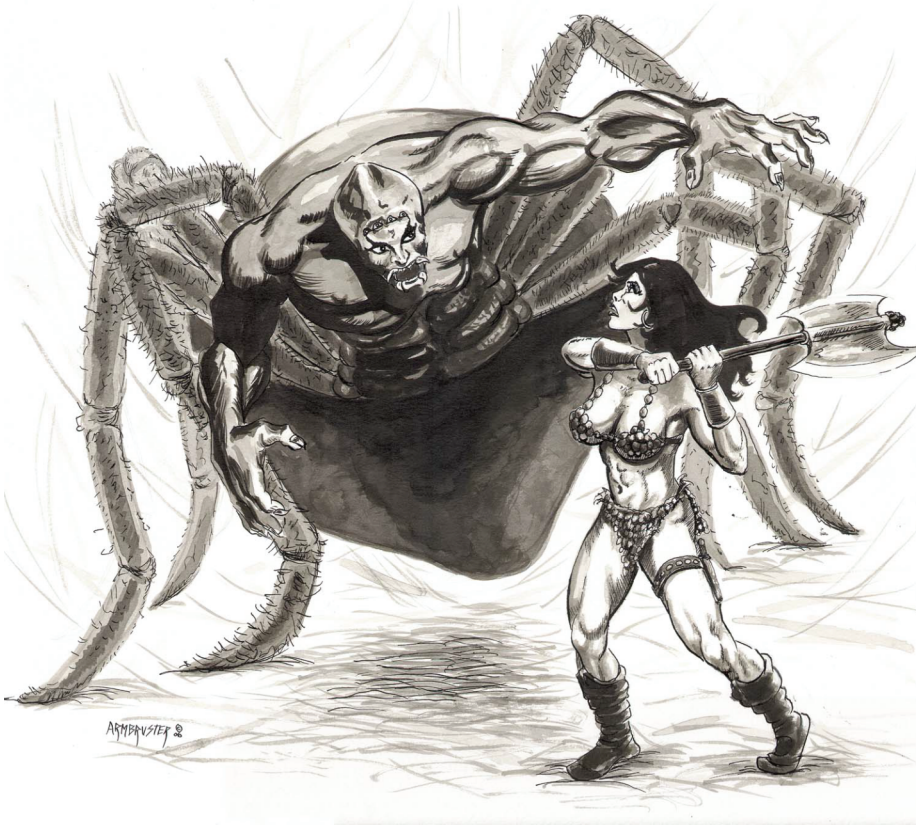
d2	Odd = 1, even = 2
d3	1-2 = 1, 3-4 = 2, 5-6 = 3
d6	One six-sided die
2d, 3d, 4d, etc.	Multiple numbers of six-sided dice





TrollsZine is a free magazine by and for fans of *Tunnels and Trolls*. The first issue features adventures, monsters, magic items and some articles about playing the game, including a contribution from Ken St Andre. Go to [http://www.rpgnow.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=79185](http://www.rpgnow.com/product_info.php?products_id=79185) to download a free copy.

**The Big Dark, Part 1:  
The Wuthering Depths  
by Tom K. Loney**



**A bit of gothic romance and  
a whole lot of delving for T&T 7-Plus**

**Dedicated to Mandy Butka**



## Introduction

While innumerable caverns and underground systems riddle the planet's crust, only a very few can get an adventurer from the Little Depths to the subterranean realms known as the Big Dark. At various points across the globe—the foothills of Ode Antor, Elder's greatest mountain, and the vale of Claag Haraagk in Athebes, to name a couple of spots—these passages are unmarked and fraught with danger. Some of the dangers you'll recognize from various other FRPG settings with the same belowground theme, but here they are expressed in rather unconventional and, hopefully, rather exciting ways.

The Big Dark is a campaign of adventures designed to bring a group of T&T players from 1st level to 10th while delving into the vast underworld of the planet Elder. I use the 7th edition of the game myself, but other versions of the game should not be too hard for the enterprising GM to employ for this scenario. Beware: this campaign has some rather lethal elements; players should not get overly attached to their characters, nor especially to that favorite torch-bearing NPC.

## Getting Things Started

In Isun, spilling down the ridges and cliffs atop which the city-state of Estvol looks down on the lowlands of the Graptak Expanse, are the mining complexes of the Deep-Dig dwarf clan. Any dwarf PC can be assumed to be a relative of the family and may even share the same name if the player wishes. Even better for a certain sub-plot here would be a PC who is both a dwarf and a woman. If none of the players wants to play a female dwarf, for whatever reasons, here is an NPC who can be used as the “lead,” to give them a reason for climbing around a dwarven hold to begin with.

### **Brunhilda “Pinkie” Deep-Dig**

#### ***1st level dwarf paragon***

In 19

Lk 15

Ch 19



Wiz 19

St 16

Con 74

Dx 16

Sp 13

*Combat Adds:* +12

*Special Abilities:* Knows 1st lvl Spells and gets Warrior's armor bonus

*Weapons and Armor:* War hammer, full pink-tinted plate armor

*Talent:* Bowl-Em-Over (Sp+4), a Bull Rush variation, in which Pinkie tucks and rolls into an enemy, effectively knocking over the single opponent for that round of combat; note that she cannot fight that turn either

*Description:* This hotty braids her hair and beard so that one can't really tell that she even has a beard, and definitely no mustache allowed. She's the mixture of brains and body that has kept many a dwarven sculptor awake at night and eager to get busy in the morn on that special masterpiece.

As the scenario begins, the group is en route to the entrance of the Deep-Dig complex, the Anvil Manor, which is on a well traveled path leading from the Graptak Expanse into the highlands that make up most of Isun. They are transporting a wagon full of coke, used in the forges for the crafting of the finest of metalwork. A successful 1st lvl SR Lk by the PC with the highest score in that attribute will allow the party to avoid problems, such as a broken cart wheel or spooked donkey, along the way. The GM can determine how to handle a failed roll; a critical failure will involve the cart falling into a crevice or gully more than a few hundred paces deep. If the payload is lost in transit, the dwarven PC or the Pinkie NPC will insist that the group continue on to the mines, as it is the honorable thing to do. Upon the party's arrival, they are greeted by the lord of the keep, Geoffery "Hammer Thumb" Deep-Dig.

If the group has successfully delivered the wagon of material, Hammer Thumb pays them four hundred silver pieces, or "Slivers," in Athebes parlance, for them to divide among themselves. Even if they arrive empty-handed, the man insists that they stay for





some “legendary dwarven hospitality”—one of his relative’s kids is in the group, after all.

A feast is set out for the adventurers after they get a chance to bathe and rest. It is quite the spread, as long as one likes dwarven cuisine. Roasted boar goes without saying, and without too much disapproval. But the PCs may cringe at the algae slaw and roach porridge—good traditional dishes from the homeland—as well as far too many mushrooms of all shapes and sizes. Of course it is unlikely that anyone will object to the ample supply of liquid beverages, which dwarves are famous for.

During the dinner, Hammer Thumb quietly confides to the appropriate player character, or to Pinkie and a prominent PC of the group, some things that have been troubling him.

### The Scoop

The Deep-Dig mines are probably onto the richest streams of minerals and resources that Hammer Thumb has ever seen. The experienced underworld delver has stumbled across vast caverns where the metals of the walls reflect his torch’s light onto rivers of fresh, pure water. The caverns even boast manageable little lava flows, “great for quick heating and steam-making,” and have not experienced an earthquake for decades on end. The problem, however, is the natives.

Now, the natives are the usual: goblins, mushroom-heads, and whatnot. But these critters aren’t your run of the mill hammer-hash (sword-fodder). They are organized. By “organized,” Hammer Thumb doesn’t mean that they have a chief and some throne made of bone and stones that they claim is the center of the universe. He means that they have massive armies of primitive goblins, with different uniforms and flags, marching around claiming to be residents of “the lands made by the Gods.” And, while most natives don’t want the surface world encroaching on their lands, dwarven might accompanied by the more potent magicks and technologies of the surface keep them at bay, as long as the miners don’t overdo it.

After a few years (meaning a couple centuries in dwarven terms) working this claim, it’s become apparent that something





more is going on. An unseen and almost invisible hand is, if not controlling things, then leading the natives in matters they should know nothing about. The Baron (Hammer Thumb's title, as he will remind his listeners), cannot yet get his mind around the mystery. But once he has, he is sure that the Deep-Dig stead will be the most profitable in all of dwarfdom.

What really is weighing on Hammer Thumb's mind is one of his outposts. It has not fallen silent, nor has production dropped off by any significant means. However, the delivery of correspondence has become erratic as well as rather incoherent in its content. The teamsters who bring the outpost's materials to his manor are usually a collection of goblins and landless dwarves, which has him more than a bit concerned about his (and Pinkie's or the appropriate PC's) cousins who are managing the work down there.

Given that the party is interested, he'd appreciate the group's checking out what exactly is going on down at the mining station. Geoffery Deep-Dig is more than willing to make it worth the player-characters' while, and he'd see that their efforts for him would benefit them in the long run.

If the party or its spokesperson wants more specific terms, the dwarf-lord will offer them one thousand gobs ("gold pieces," to the world outside Athebes) upon their return and his receipt of their report with any supporting evidence. All booty from the expedition will be theirs to share, but raw materials and the equipment of any expired miners will remain the property of the Deep-Dig clan and its principals.

### **On with the Show**

Not long after the terms are explained (and presumably agreed upon), the evening's festivities start to die down. The PCs are shown to spacious rooms, complete with whatever their hearts desire. And a night's rest appears to be just around the corner.

Ah, but does it ever turn out that way? As soon as the PCs have fallen into a deep sleep, an alarm clarion sounds out. As the characters stumble out of their resting places, they are



informed that a large group of goblins (or something!) is attacking the halls just inside the Deep-Dig entrance. Anyone who can help, the dwarves exclaim, would be much appreciated.

Stepping onto the field of battle, the group witnesses a rather wondrous view. Though in a cavern, the structure around them appears as almost a meadow—a meadow of sand and stones in a starless and stygian sky. Beyond the reach of the illuminating forces is a deep dark, one that consumes what it envelops. Around the party, teams of dwarves and other miners are at the ready with their weapons drawn. The only noise is the fluttering of the flames of the defenders' torches. Then, almost like a whisper, the twangs of bowstrings sound and a low whistle penetrates the air. The whistle changes and becomes high-pitched, singing the song of arrows stabbing through the air toward the unlucky.

All PCs must make a 1st lvl SR Lk to avoid being struck (2d Hit Points damage). Any who think to throw their shields before them find that at least one crude arrow tip punctures their defenses, as a reminder of their own mortality. From behind the arrow assault a throbbing sound arises. A repeated “clip”-then-“clop” rhythm reverberates ever so slightly off the stalagmites and stalactites of the underground space that surrounds them.

The throbbing soon becomes crunching. The sound of gravel and pebbles gives way to that of many sandaled feet walking in step with one another. Marching. And at the edges of the dwarven stead's torchlights appear the bobbing heads of well-dressed—as in “armed and armored”—goblins moving in formation toward the defenders. Banners, which are attached to flagsticks set into notches on their armor, flutter above the goblins' heads. The goblins in the front draw straight-edged swords from their scabbards, and those behind them level spears on the shoulders of the foremost. In the back, archers ready their bows and release. Again, PCs must make a 1st lvl SR Lk to avoid being struck (2d Hit Points damage).

Once the arrow shots have been resolved, the sword-wielding goblins charge forward as the spear-men and archers

hold a defensive formation just behind them. And the battle is afoot.

### **The Fisticuffs**

The GM should handle each of the party members separately here, not as in the usual T&T mass combat. This isn't easy, but understand that this is the players' first combat in this campaign. They'll want a bit of spotlighting, which will help them develop their characters more fully.

### **Sword-wielding goblins**

MR 40 (5d+20)

Cuirboille armor (7 pts)

No special abilities needed; these guys are a bunch of farmers handed a variation on the scimitar. But PCs will have to make a 1st lvl SR Lk or Sp each turn to avoid being struck by an arrow or spear-tip (only 2d damage, either weapon).

Each PC will have to fight d3 goblins before getting to the spear-men and archers. Once a PC gets to the backing troops, the random arrow or spear-tip saving roll will stop and he will have to face d2 support goblins.

### **Support goblins**

MR 20 (3d+12)

Cuirboille armor (7 pts)

As the battle wraps up, the GM should allow the players to find their personal booty. The occasional arrow will fling from the dark, but the Baron's dwarven scouts soon will dispatch the inept sniper to the afterlife. Loot for the combat follows:

### **1-2 Kills, roll d6**

1-5 Dried termites and bees' honey

6 Dried termites, bees' honey, and d3 Coppers



**3–6 Kills, roll d6**

- 1–2 Dried termites, bees' honey, and d3 Slivers
- 3–5 2d Slivers
- 6 A map leading to Dread Head. This map is annotated in a warped Elven language that only goblins, orks, demons, and dark elves understand. It rambles on about stew and silk in a rather incoherent fashion.

**A Romantic Sub-Plot**

During the battle, one of the attacking goblins, called Maagop, sees the female dwarf PC, or the "Pinkie" NPC, and falls madly in love with her. He retreats as the delvers win their fights against his fellows, but follows the delvers and repeatedly tries to sneak up to the woman every time she falls asleep. With a 2nd lvl SR In or Lk, she will be able to sense his presence just as she relaxes. Even if she successfully notices him, the goblin still will try to draw near her to gaze upon her resting face.

**Maagop "Heathcliff" Third-Hatched Lovestruck, sword-wielding goblin**

MR 40 (5d+20)

Lk 16

Cuirboille armor (7 pts)

*Talent:* Always in the Dark (Lk+6). With a successful SR, Maagop is able to confirm or refute theories that the PCs develop about activities in the Big Dark.

How this plays out is up to the GM and players. In my own group, there was already a samurai goblin with a romantic interest in the dwarf heroine, so a showdown was inevitable. As the GM, I made Maagop's intentions a little less than honorable with regard to the fair maiden's err, um...well-being.



### **The Music More Somber**

At the end of the night's incursion, Hammer Thumb dispatches scouts in force into the tunnels and byways of his family's mines. It is at this point that the group can really get some sleep. Any PCs who died during the battle may be replaced at this time. The teams working in and guarding the Deep-Dig stead are made up of every kin imaginable (except, of course, the omnipotent, indestructible kin); players should be able to find suitable replacements for departed heroes.

The next day, after breakfast and any funerals, the Baron approaches the group and asks if they still are willing to accept his offer. He relates that all of his scouts have returned except for the ones whom he sent to the Dread Head outpost. After the attack of the night before, it is vitally important that he find out what is going on there.

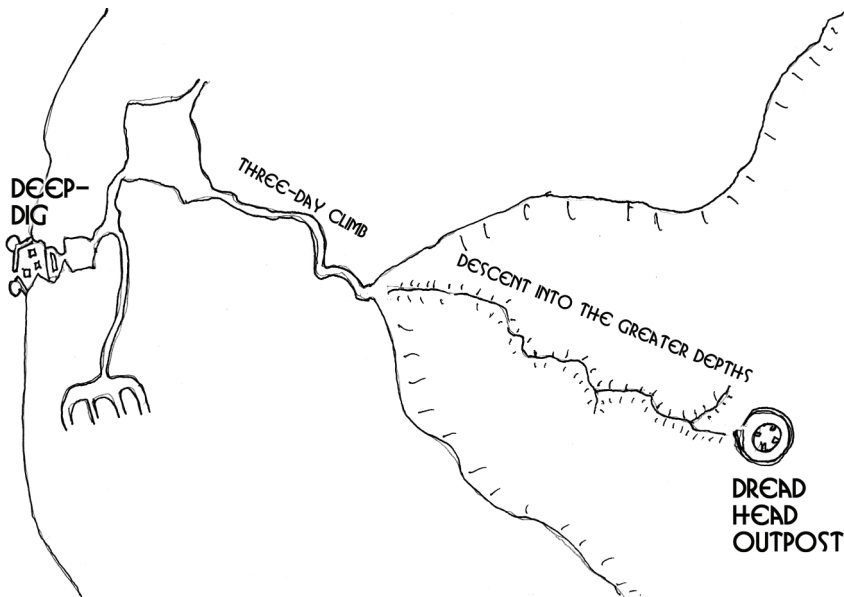
Has the enemy overrun it?

Could the routes simply be blocked off?

Or are both or neither of these possibilities the case? The answer must be determined. And Hammer Thumb needs a group of exceptionally capable delvers to get to the bottom of things before making further decisions concerning his mining operations.

Though he will not offer it, Hammer Thumb will agree to up the payment to five thousand gobs per party member willing to investigate, in addition to any equipment that they see fit to request. They may even keep the equipment after they complete their work for him. Any fallen member's survivors will receive that member's share as he or she dictates before going forward into the great and oppressing darkness. Hammer Thumb also gives the band a map directing them along the right tunnels and whatnot to get to the outpost.





### And into the Greater Depths

This particular passage, rather fraught with hazards and sheer cliffs, gradually makes its way downward to an area marked on the map as “Descent Into the Greater Depths.” Once the group arrives at the ridge, the map’s extensive annotations will guide them to the outpost.

It will take 2d3 days to travel to the marked ridge. For each day during which the group is descending, the GM should make two rolls: the first for Hazards and the second for Encounters.

### Hazards, roll 2d

- 3 Rock slide: 1st lvl SR Sp or Lk to avoid d3 worth of damage from falling rocks. Characters stating that they are wearing head protection are exempt from damage.
- 4–5 Sheer cliff: 1st lvl SR Lk to determine whether the PCs have enough rope to climb the cliff without needing 2d3 rolls on Sp by every party member in order to reach the next plateau. The group must come up with a way to retrieve



- the rope they use, unless they have even more of it available.
- 6 Mud pit: each character must succeed with a 2nd lvl SR Lk to avoid stepping into soft spots along the path. Any PC caught can be assisted out easily, but the event will add half a day of travel (necessitating one more Hazard or Encounter roll by the GM).
- 7 Avalanche chamber: As the PCs enter, they notice that the noises they make cause even more echoing than usual. 3rd lvl SR In to discern that noises can be rather hazardous in this area; if a player figures this out on his own, the GM should award him 300 Adventure Points (AP). Failure to notice the danger necessitates 2d3 1st lvl SRs Lk (DARO applies) by each character in order to avoid triggering an avalanche. In the event of an avalanche, those in the area must make a 2nd lvl SR Sp to avoid taking 3d damage from falling rocks.
- 8-9 No problems except a loose stone here and there
- 10 Pitfall: 2nd lvl SR Sp for the last person in the party to avoid it. Triggering the pitfall results in the loss of d3 Sp points for one week for that PC.
- 11 Insect nest: 2nd lvl SR Dx or Lk to avoid knocking the plaster-covered cocoon-like thing loose and releasing a swarm of icky little beasts into everyone's clothing. In the event the insects are released, each PC must make a 2nd lvl SR In to escape incapacitation, with an eye to an encounter (which the GM rolls at this time, see Encounters, below) coming around the bend.
- 12 Lava stream: characters must somehow overcome a twenty-pace-wide lava flow that has run over the path that they must follow. The GM is free to decide what might work and what the group must do to overcome the obstacle.
- 13+ Two results combined



**Encounters, roll d6**

- 1–3 Nothing
- 4 2d3 Roving mushroom-heads, MR 30 (4d+15), Loot B on the Booty Tables. Because of their plant bodies, it takes two damage points to inflict one Hit Point damage. These creatures are no more susceptible to fire than the average human.
- 5 2d sword-wielding goblins, MR 40 (5d+20), Cuirboille armor (7 pts), Loot A on the Booty Tables
- 6 2d+(d3x2d) sword-wielding goblins, MR 40 (5d+20), Cuirboille armor (7 pts), Loot A on the Booty Tables. Behind them (4th lvl SR In to detect these interlopers) are 2d3 dark elf warriors, MR 70 (8d+35), Cuirboille armor (14 pts, the Warrior's bonus), Loot A on the Booty Tables. This group of dark elves will recede into the darkness before slinking away.

**At the Descending Ridge**

At a rather unimpressive archway the group finds itself at the start of the Descending Ridge. Looking out beyond the arch, the PCs see a vast blackness indicating a cavern that could be many hundreds of paces wide. As for the grounds below, one cannot tell how deep they are. Any stones tossed over the side fall, and roll, and then fall again, until their



sounds are out of the caster's earshot. A wide, raised passage descends precipitously in a long and winding path. Once in a while along the way a volcanic cone brimming with lava illuminates the route, despite the darkness beyond the torches' light. Just past the entrance is a series of stalagmites and stalactites, which form overlooks and crevices on both sides for the length of two bowshots, or one hundred paces. A 2nd lvl SR In will tell a party member that he or she is probably not alone. 200 AP to the character whose player doesn't require any dice to first express this.

Once the group steps out, this premonition proves to be true. Three dark elves appear almost out of nowhere. Their single-edged swords (modified scimitars) are still in their scabbards. From galleries overlooking the passage on both sides, the adventurers hear the sounds of bowstrings being drawn back, indicating that the pointy-ears aren't alone.

### **3d dark elf warriors**

MR 70 (8d+35)

Cuirboille armor (14 pts, the Warrior's bonus)

Loot A on the Booty Tables

If the delvers attack the elves standing in front of them, they will have to avoid a slew of arrows raining down on them. 2nd lvl SR Sp for every dark elf except the three in front of the PCs (2d damage per arrow strike, cumulative against any armor). The combat can evolve as the GM sees fit from there. The GM should keep in mind that at least one PC should survive to get back to the Deep-Dig mining complex.

The preferred situation here is for the group to decide to stay their weapons. Though the dark elves know the Trade language, various Elven dialects, and the local Goblin tongues, they insist that the delvers, or their spokesperson, speak only in the Deep-Dig clan's Dwarven dialect. They refuse to converse with any elf in the party, even a dark elf, instead addressing another PC. If an elven adventurer addresses them and continues to do so even though being ignored, the dark elves will



become more and more aggressive, even to the point of initiating combat. If that happens, it begins with a rain of arrows as above.

What the dark elves do have to say is that the group of delvers is entering the territory of Shining-Star-Stone nation. They are allowed to remain on their current path, the wide Descending Ridge, but any deviation will be construed as a violation of their hunting grounds. They also will add, "We are not responsible for the misfortunes of those violating our native Greater Depths."

And after delivering this message, the three visible dark elves will step back into the darkness and disappear from immediate notice once again.

Along the Descending Ridge the going is not too difficult, especially when compared to the delvers' travels to date. In places, the sloping ground descending from either side of the path becomes less steep. In these locations, the heat from the lava pools, together with the abundant waters trickling down from the surface world, give rise to underworld flora and fauna of great fungal knolls and overly large subterranean insects, along with the occasional reptile or mammal adapted to the forever-darkness of the environment. Staying along the ridge, it should take the group only two days to reach a large spur leading to a dwarven-built fortress some five bowshots off in the distance. A Deep-Dig banner marks the spur as the path to the Dread Head outpost.

If the group or any individual delver strays off of the Descending Ridge into the shadowed environs surrounding them, the GM should feel free to make the excursion very dangerous, even before a band of dark elves comes along to address the trespass.

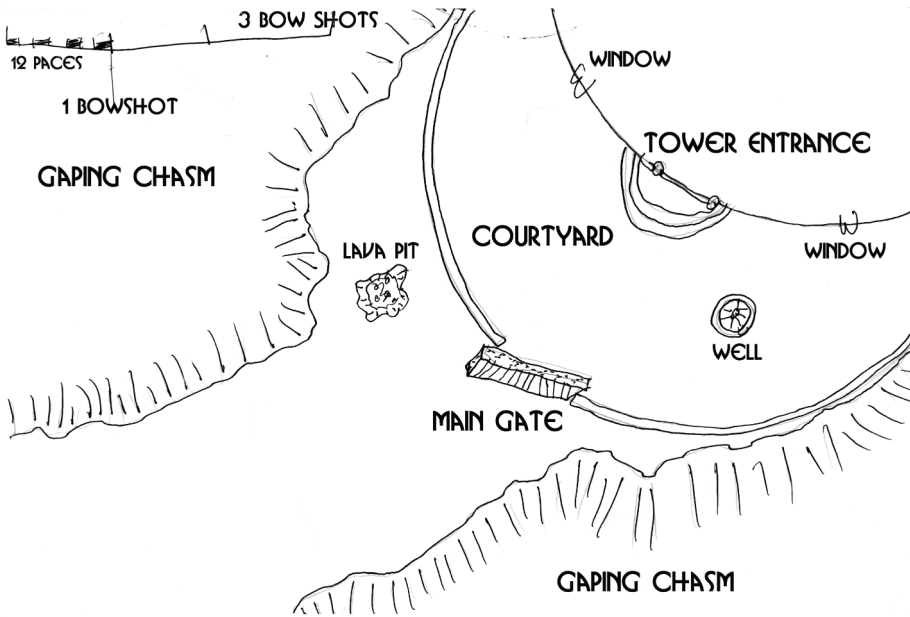
### **Deeper Encounters, roll 2d**

- 3–7 3d (remember DARO) sword-wielding goblins, MR 40 (5d+20), Cuirboille armor (7 pts)
- 8 Über-cockroach, MR 140 (15d+70), 6 pt armor, no treasure



- 9-11 2d3 Roving mushroom-heads, MR 30 (4d+15), Loot B on the Booty Tables. Because of their plant bodies, it takes two damage points to inflict one Hit Point damage. These creatures are no more susceptible to fire than the average human.
- 12 d3 ghouls, MR 70 (8d+35), 1st lvl SR Con for delvers to avoid becoming sickened and incapacitated each turn while encountering them, Loot A on the Booty Tables
- 13+ 3d dark elf warriors, MR 70 (8d+35), Cuirboille armor (14 pts, the Warrior's bonus), Loot A on the Booty Tables

### The Dread Head Outpost



Arising out of the darkness, the smallish fortress looks like a beacon of blazing light and warmth, but as the party gets closer they become able to see that things aren't right. The torches are burning rather low—more red and smoky than yellow and warm. A web is visible here and there along the walls surrounding the three-story structure. When the delvers get close to the gate,

they notice that the massive single door seems slightly jarred, as if one of its hinges were having trouble.

At the top of the tower, the shadowy form of a dwarf waves a hand upon the delvers' approach. No reply will come from the figure if he is hailed, and any attempt to raise others by calling out will be met with skittering sounds and the occasional chirp, followed by a silence.

### 1. The Entrance and Courtyard

The outer gate is arranged as a trap. Any delver who tries to open the door and any standing close to him or her must make a 2nd lvl SR Sp or Lk (the player's choice) to avoid being struck by the door as it falls on top of them, doing 3d damage.

In the courtyard beyond the now-open gate are four to nine (d6+3) spinners. A melding of goblins on top with giant spider torsos as their lower quarters, these are vicious inhumane things that will fight to the death unless confronted by fire.

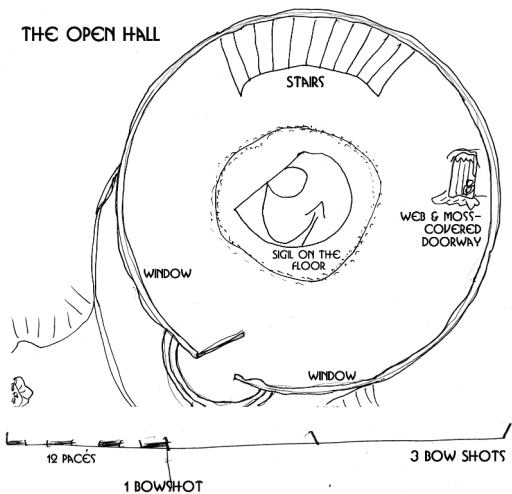
#### Spinner

MR 30 (4d+20)

Loot A on the Booty Tables

### 2. The Open Hall

The fortress's two metal doors have been pulled down and lie on either side of the opening into the structure. No immediate threat is present. The characters see a large open hall with stairs on the far wall leading upward and, on the right wall, what appears to be a doorway covered with a mixture of silken web and a wet





mossy substance. On the floor is the sigil of Drurl, the Stone God (also called Gristlegrim in some parts of the world). A 1st lvl SR In will tell the observer that a circle on the engraving has not been seen before in the god's iconography. Any Wizard using a Detect Magic Spell will see a glow radiating throughout the room, the magic appearing less dense the closer it is to the ceiling. Upon further examination of the circle, such as with a 4th lvl SR In or an appropriate Talent, the observer will discern that it was indeed inscribed much more recently than was the symbol of Drurl.

The trick to this room is that there is a big-ass trapdoor spider hiding beneath the circle.

### ***Big-ass trapdoor spider***

MR 120 (13d+60)

Loot B on the Booty Tables, treasure is found among the bodies in the creature's nest

Any character taking more than ten points damage from the arachnid must make a 2nd lvl SR Con to avoid becoming poisoned by a paralytic agent.



The mega-arachnid is coiled just beneath the sigil, waiting for the entire party to enter the room and turn their backs on it before it strikes. As the delvers move either to the web- and moss-covered door or to the stairs, the creature gets a free strike on them (unless one has stated that he is looking backwards). If the party lifts up the trapdoor, the creature is not deterred from attacking, though its element of surprise will be lost. How they divide the damage is up to the GM.

Once the spider is dispatched into the great beyond, the group notices glowing blue illumination emanating from beneath the beast's webbed nest. Among the dried husks of dwarven bodies, a shard of something known as the Black-Star Crystal radiates an almost tangible evilness. It would be advantageous for any character approaching the pulsating crystal, which happens to be as large as a human's forearm, to check for traps, because a Roguery Talent or a 1st lvl SR In or Lk will indicate that the base beneath is essentially a false floor. Anyone weighing over three stones (approaching forty-five pounds) will fall, along with the crystal, into what appears to be a bottomless void. The chasm is only about six hundred paces deep and four bowshots wide, but it pretty much spells the end of the falling PC. The GM should allow for amazing actions based on Lk and/or Sp, but does not have to be overly coddling of the incautious hero.

Anyone who touches the crystal with bare flesh will immediately receive a Kremm shock (2d points, armor inapplicable), but upon a 1st lvl SR Lk will gain 2d Wiz points, which will take effect once consciousness is regained at least one full turn later. Even if the SR is not made, the PC will gain d3 Wiz points. The character will have purple glowing eyes that are effectively Cat-Eyes, as in the Spell, but will find bright light painful forever, or at least until a Healing Feeling can be cast to remove the trait.

Note that the PC also will acquire a latent Fly-Me (as in the 3rd lvl Spell) ability that he can use only when his In and Dx are both 15 or above and he is in grave danger. Exercising this ability will be akin to casting a Spell, regardless of the PC's Type. During the current adventure, if the character grabs the crystal while falling there is a chance that he will utilize his new special power, but if so he does so mere paces from the cavernous floor after waking up from the blast, which he will see in remarkable detail. The GM should feel free to make this "save" as dramatic as possible.

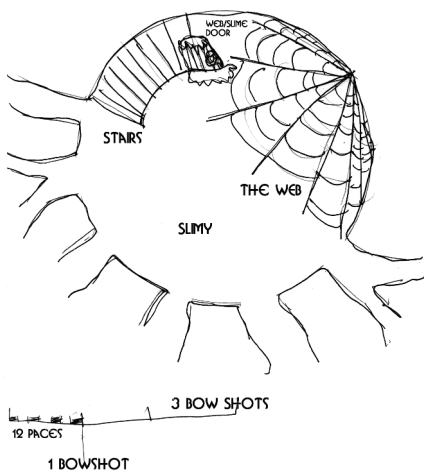


### 3. The Lowest Room

The web- and slime-covered doorway leads to a chamber designed as the "locker room" for the miners of the outpost. How the delvers break through the nonflammable and rather un-cuttable web is up to the players and GM, though manually pulling the strands apart (a time consuming and arduous task) will work. From this room, widening steps descend to an area where eight doorways lead to mining veins and piles of mining equipment. Over to one side glows a lava pit with a pipe of streaming water running above it. The pipe empties into what appears to be communal bathing area. Massive webs are draped throughout the space, including most of the stairwell, and fungus grows upwards from the floor to cover everything in sight. Dried husks of dwarves and other humanoids, frozen in cringing positions, litter the room.

In the chamber are 4d good old fashioned giant spiders and a pack of 2d roving mushroom-heads. These kin live together in peace, as the spiders aren't vegetarians. When the delvers enter the room, the spiders will view them as dinner, and the mushrooms will feel that their newly won territory is being invaded.

THE LOWEST ROOM



#### **Giant spider**

MR 20 (3d+10)

No treasure

Any character taking more than ten points damage from the arachnid must make a 2nd lvl SR Con to escape poisoning by a paralytic agent.

#### **Roving mushroom-head**

MR 30 (4d+15)

Loot B on the Booty Tables

Because of their plant bodies, it takes two damage points to inflict one Hit Point damage.

These creatures are no more susceptible to fire than the average human.

If the group must retreat back upstairs, which is my intention, the downstairs dwellers won't bother them again but will set about the task of resealing the passageway with web and slime.

If the group defeats more than half of the defenders, which is not impossible, the rest will retreat down into the various mine shafts. (The GM may allow the delvers to continue down the shafts, but as of this printing only the tower of Dread Head is defined. Thus, he or she will have to improvise from there.) In the cleared room itself, the party will discover a spiderweb-bound goblin, who is rather nicely dressed and able to speak the Trade language of Isun and Athebes. He will plead, in a civilized manner, to be released and allowed to join the party.

The goblin's name is Gimpy Torch-Bearer. He asserts that he is the slave of Rjenn the Swordswoman, who, with her partner—Confucius Rogue, the Clever—has been tunnel delving for many a year, occupying Gimpy with the task of carrying their torches and spoils. Gimpy recently was separated from the two heroes during their travels into the Big Dark. He would gladly accept employment by the party as their torch-holder and baggage handler, at least until he is reunited with the swordswoman; the characters will notice that the goblin is rather in love with her, despite his insistence that he is merely her property.

### **Gimpy Torch-Bearer**

#### **Goblin rogue, experienced delver**

MR 70 (8d+35)

Lk 26

Sp 21

*Weapons and Armor:* 3 pt leather armor

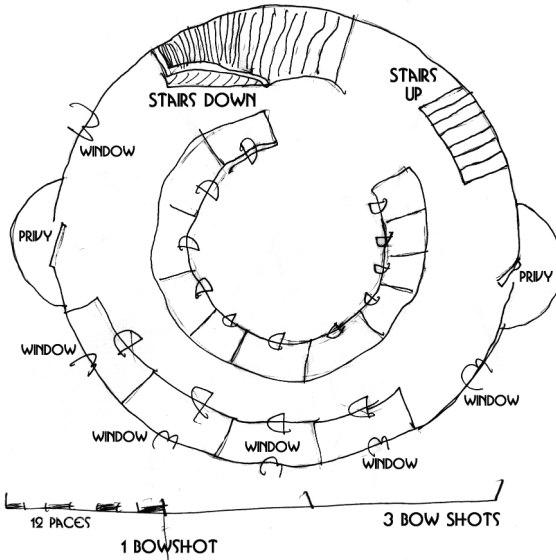
*Talents:*

- Roguery Talent: As per the T&T 7th-plus editions' rules



- When in Athebes (Lk+8): With a good SR, Gimpy can relate tales of Athebes and the world of Elder to the party
- Rough and Tumble (Sp+4): Due to his agility, Gimpy is able to avoid the damage caused by most slips and falls
- Always in the Dark (Lk+6): With a successful SR, Gimpy is able to confirm or refute theories that the PCs develop about activities in the Big Dark

#### 4. The Second Story



The stairs in the open hall lead upward to fourteen rooms—twelve worker rooms and two privies—arranged in a circular fashion around a spiral staircase. All illumination on this floor has long since been extinguished, and the stale, unmoving air has an eerie feel. The rooms generally are empty of contents, with the exception of some of

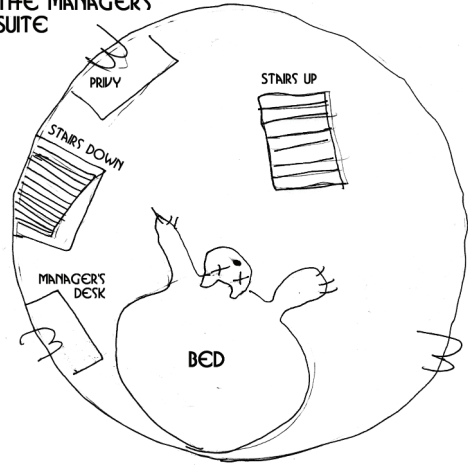
the miners' personal belongings. The GM should roll on Loot A on the Booty Tables to determine what treasure will be found upon a search of all belongings. The privies are simple seats arranged to open over the cavernous darkness below; their floors are made of wood, as they are basically decks to the fortress's stone structure.

#### 5. The Third Story

This is the manager's suite. In it are orbs with very long-lasting Will-o-Wisp Spells cast on them for continual lighting, as

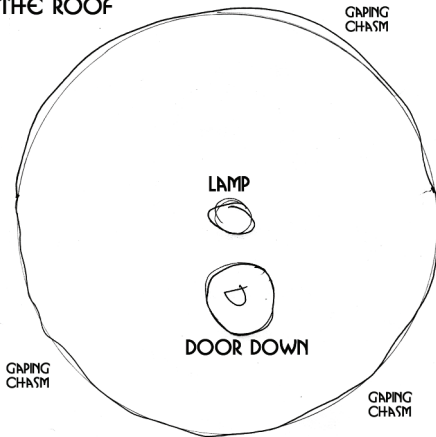
well as a methane-gas fed chandelier, which can be adjusted by a crank on the side wall to become very bright or only faintly lit. Next to a plush and spacious bed is a work desk with maps of the eight mine shafts to which the entrances in the Lowest Room lead (these maps are not available for this writing). At a side of the room is a staircase leading to a door whose lintel is even with the ceiling.

THE MANAGER'S SUITE



## 6. The Roof

THE ROOF



A lamppost with a long-lasting Will-o-Wisp orb on the end of it stands in the center of the roof. It is surrounded by the scattered and mutilated body parts of what appear to be multiple dwarves. A set of armor is propped up like a scarecrow in a cornfield and is rigged with strings that move one of its arms when a wind blows through the space.

Four of the bat-like humanoids known as the Gar (often called mistakenly called "gargoyles") have taken to roosting above the area, as the light attracts various bugs, which attract bats, the Gars' staple diet. At



one time the roof housed a few desperate dwarves who also became their dinner. After observing the delvers as they examine the rooftop, the Gar will decide to try and scoop them up.

### **Gar**

MR 60 (7d+30)

2 pt armor skin

Loot B on the Booty Tables

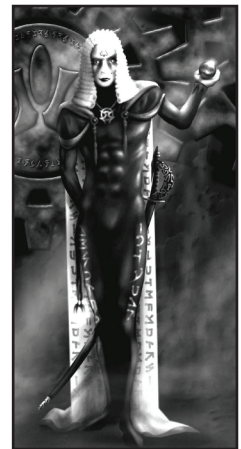
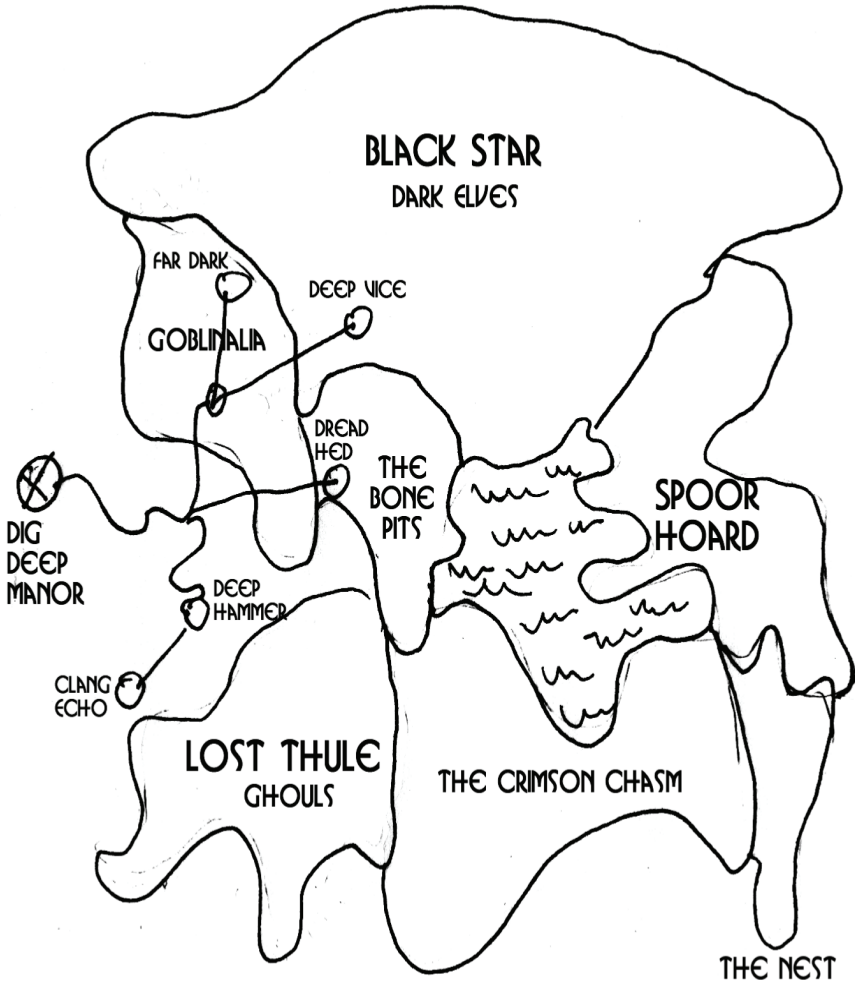
Four of the PCs must make a 2nd lvl SR Sp or Lk to avoid being struck by the swooping Gar for 3d damage, armor applicable. Any thus stricken also will have to make a 2nd lvl SR St to avoid being carried off by the creatures. Those taken will receive 2d further points of damage each turn until they succeed in breaking the grasp of the beast's dreadfully clawed feet. Once an adventurer is free, the GM should determine how far the PC falls and whether he or she lands back on the fortress or in the depths around it.

If a PC is struck by a Gar but is able to avoid being scooped up, it is to be assumed that the Gar topples onto the rooftop next to the character. Regular combat may occur, but the creature will try to fly away as quickly as possible.

### **That's a Wrap**

This concludes the scenario for now. Surviving PCs should be awarded 700 AP, as well as points for the various successful SRs that each character has made during the session. The maps to the eight mine shafts will be the start of the following eight Big Dark adventures. Geoffery Deep-Dig will suggest that the adventurers use the Dread Head outpost as their base of operations, and he will send guards and supplies in support of their mission while they continue to solve the mysteries of this portion of the Big Dark.





## Loot, Treasure and Booty Tables

### Plain Old Pillage, roll d6

- 1–4 1 day's worth foodstuffs and 2d3 silver pieces (DARO)
- 5 d3 gold pieces
- 6 A decent weapon; see rule book for listings

### Booty Table A, roll 2d

- 3–8 3d gold pieces (TARO)
- 9 2d3 (DARO) decent weapons; see rule book for listings
- 10 d3 days' worth foodstuffs and 2d6 gold pieces (DARO)
- 11 A magic item; see charts
- 12 3d gold pieces (TARO) and a magic item; see charts
- 13+ Roll on Booty Table B

### Booty Table B, roll 2d

*1st Level SR In for finder to discover the item's identity*

- 3 **Bleg Horn**, once per day may be used to do 2d damage to all within hearing range
- 4 d3 **Heartstring Arrows**, will ignore target's armor
- 5 **Sword of Goblin-Hacking**, 7d+10; this is multiplied by 2 when used against goblins, hobgoblins, or urooks
- 6 **Dwarven War-Hammer**, 5d+1 or, in dwarven hands, 8d+6
- 7 **Nodding Gem**, holder may cast the Ghostly Going Spell regardless of Type; note spellcasting rules and Wiz costs apply
- 8 **Obby the Snobby Sword**, In 21 (6d+5, but only if the wielder is smarter than he is); tends to adopt a Holier-Than-Thou attitude



- 9 **Gladys the Gladius**, 8d+4, but only if the wielder is male, is a Warrior or Warrior-Wizard, and has a Ch over 18—if not, she is a regular gladius at 3d+2 (she's picky about her men); she can cast a Fly-Me Spell once per day at 1st level
- 10 **Jabberwocky Fur Bag**, looks like a regular sack, but spend 2 Wiz points and the carrier can hold a whole elephant in there, with barely a bulge or a pound of added weight
- 11 **Hellhound Fur Cloak**, 1 point armor; can resist all flame, though not molten substances
- 12 **Bleg Ring**, wearer can cast Imafrawg once per day; note spellcasting rules and Wiz costs apply
- 13+ Roll once more on Booty Table B and once on the Magic Item complex

**Magic Item Creation**

*The GM will decide specific weapons, jewelry, or clothing*

**Form, roll d6**

- 1–2 Weapon, must be in hand
- 3–4 Jewelry, must be worn
- 5 Potion, once drunk the item is gone
- 6 Clothing, must be worn

**Effect, roll d6**

- 1–2 Raise Stat
- 3–4 Elemental Effect
- 5–6 Cast Spell Ability

**Raise Stat, roll 2d**

*Attribute will be raised by d3*

- 3 St
- 4 Con



- 5 Dx
- 6 Sp
- 7 In
- 8 Wiz
- 9 Lk
- 10 Ch
- 11 St and Con
- 12 In and Wiz
- 13+ Lk and two more Attributes

***Elemental Effect, roll d6***

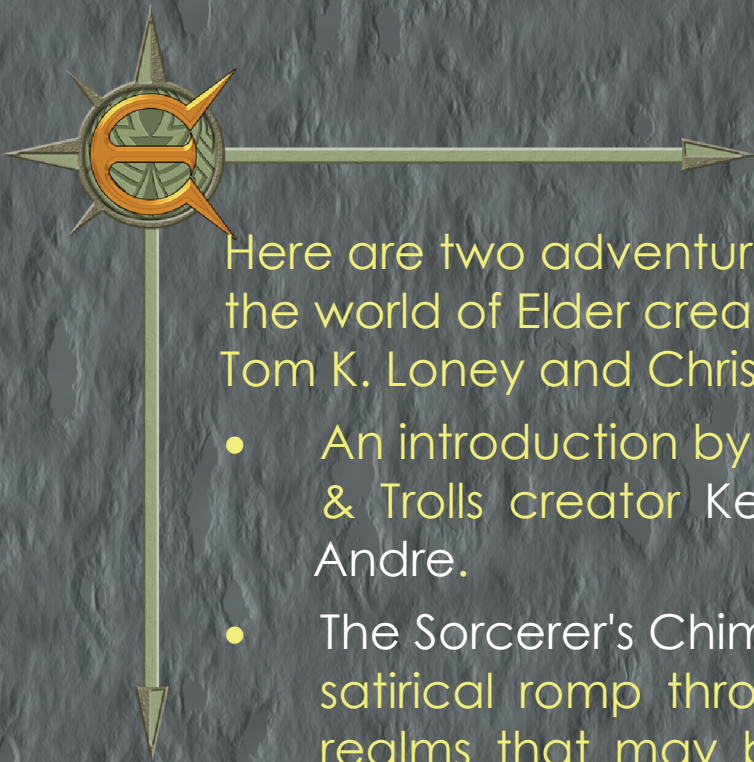
- 1 Fire Immunity (does not apply to molten substances or burning oils)
- 2 Can breathe underwater
- 3 Can hold breath for up to an hour
- 4 2-point stone-skin armor
- 5 Roll twice
- 6 Can cast Summon Water and Summon Fire Spells

***Cast Spell, roll 2d6***

The result is the level of the spell that can be cast. The GM will decide what Spell and what limitations the magic item has.







Here are two adventures set in the world of Elder created by Tom K. Loney and Christina Lea.

- An introduction by Tunnels & Trolls creator Ken St. Andre.
- *The Sorcerer's Chimney*: a satirical romp through realms that may be uncomfortably familiar.
- *The Wuthering Depths*: Monsters, dark elves, deep caves, and just a touch of gothic romance. Who could ask for more?



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