

Summary

The party learns that their homeland of Thunder Rift has been razed by a great red dragon, Scorch. Worried that the dragon may soon turn its attention to Nordriki, Rolf Drekiisson sends the party to destroy the beast.



PC Briefing

The following should be read to the party to start the adventure:

Returning victorious from the lair of Rimelberg, you are celebrated during a day of rest in Ritharkr before setting out to meet with Rolf Drekiisson back in Krossvegr. It is a damp, overcast day but otherwise it is a

pleasant journey, with a light cool breeze blowing in from the west.

When you arrive in Krossvegr, you are greeted by a pair of royal guards who escort you towards the great mead hall in the center of the town, all the while being cheered and lauded by commoners along the way.

Rolf greets you as you enter the hall, “Back again with tales of victory, I see! Tell me, how was your quest against the giants?”

Allow the party a chance to regale any tails if they wish. Rolf will listen with pleasure, interjecting comments of praise and awe when appropriate. He then continues:

“Well, as long as you’ve not permanently quenched your thirst for adventure with what sounds to have been a most interesting journey...” Rolf pauses in obvious thought for a moment, then continues in a more somber tone, “We have some troubling news from the south.”

“While you were taking care of our giant problem, we sent a message to our men at Fljotgurd, to the south, inquiring if there had been any news out of Thunder Rift recently. I thought it would be a kind gesture... I was hoping to give you happy news on your return from Ritharkr. Alas, I have only despairing tidings to report. It seems that only a few months ago, a great red dragon was seen, who would fly high above the mountain valley of Thunder Rift, and swoop back down with its breath blazing with

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unbridled fury. This apparently continued for weeks on end. Terrible clouds of the blackest smoke billowed out of the mountains for many days thereafter, and the dragon was seen no more.”

“A small company of men went to investigate, after having waited for at least a week to see if there was any sign of the evil wyrm. As they descended into the valley they saw nothing but destruction. The entire land was burnt and broken as far as the eye could see.”

Allow the party a chance to ask a few questions. Rolf will answer as best he can, but his information will be fairly vague, as the men who reported didn't trek very far into Thunder Rift.

After any questions are answered, Rolf continues:

“Again, I am sorry for the loss of your home. I cannot imagine how it must feel... I don't mean to make light of your grief, but something needs to be done about this dragon, and done soon. The gothar at Bokthrek have learned not only this wyrm's name, 'Scorch,' but have gleaned his whereabouts.”

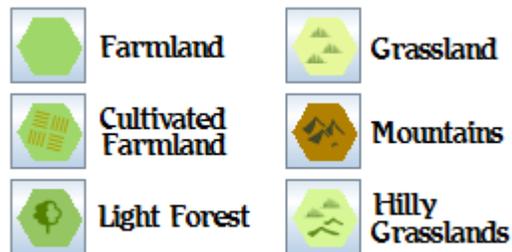
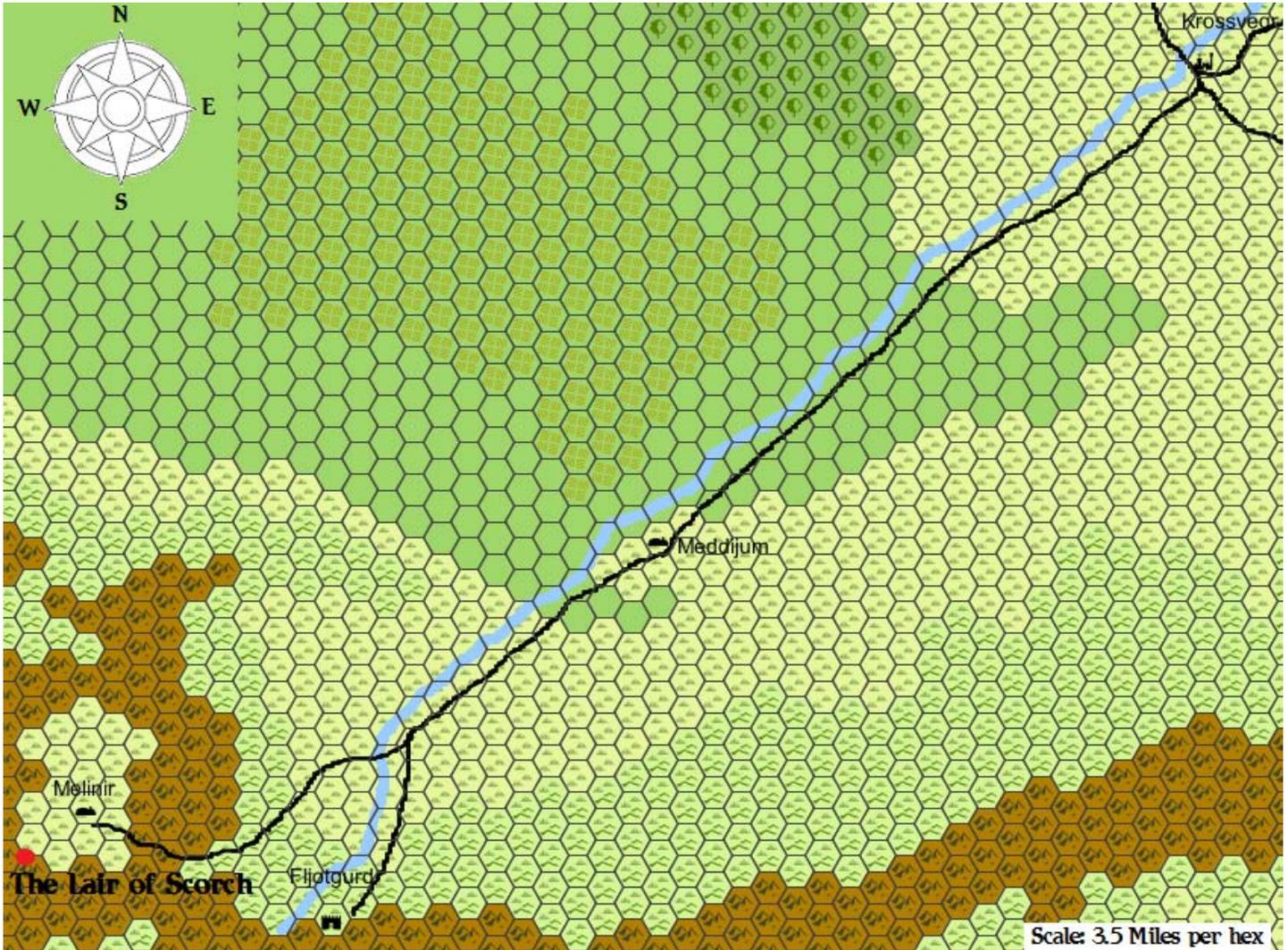
“In the far southwestern reaches of a place known as 'The Bone Hills,' some fifteen miles west from where the road leading in ends, is an old dwarven ruin that is believed to be Scorch's lair. I task you, heroes, to travel back to your homeland and rid my kingdom of this beast. If he was capable of destroying the entirety of your homeland, then he's capable of wreaking a good amount of destruction on mine. And know, my friends, that if you bring me the head of the Mighty Scorch, you will be awarded the title of Ridder of Nordriki. What say you?”

Starting the Adventure

The travel from Krossvegr to the entrance of Scorch's lair is roughly 175 miles. Assuming the party travels on through Meddijum and camps at night along the road, they will arrive at the lair early evening on the 5th day.

A roll for a random encounters should be made twice for each day the party travels; once for daytime, and once for nighttime. A random encounter will occur on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6.





Daytime Encounters (1d6)

1. Travelling merchant with basic goods for sale at a 25% markup from prices in the Rules Cylopedia.
2. Random wilderness animal (deer, hare, etc.). Any PC with a hunting skill can use this opportunity to try and secure a meal for the party.
3. **Black Bear (4):** AC 6; HD 4 (L); hp 30 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 2 claws/ 1 bite +special; THAC0 16; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6 (2d8); Save as F2; ML 7; AL N; XP 75 each.

Attracted by the smell of the party's rations/cooking, they are attacked by a group of bears.

4. **Bandits (30):** AC 6 (leather with shield); HD 1 (M); hp 5 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as F1; ML 8; AL C; XP 15 each.

If encountered, the bandits will have the road blocked, and will demand a toll of 50GP per person. If the party refuses to pay, the bandits will attack.

5. **Grizzly Bear (3):** AC 8; HD 5 (L); hp 40 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 2 claws/ 1 bite +special; THAC0 15; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d10 (2d8); Save as F4; ML 10; AL N; XP 175 each.

Angered that the party has entered their territory, a group of bears attack.

6. A group of roughly ten travelling peasants on their way to Krossvegr looking for work. Two of them would be willing to join the party as first level fighters, if the party is willing to accept them, and give them a fair share of any treasure earned.

Nighttime Encounters (1d4)

Any encounter that happens at night will occur while the party is camped, in the middle of the night. Any monsters encountered are roving bands from the hills to the south. The orcs, bugbears, and gnolls will run once half of their numbers have been defeated. The giants, however, will not as the PCs are now known as giant slayers.

1. **Orcs (30):** AC 6; HD 1 (M); hp 5 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as F1; ML 8; AL C; XP 10 each.
2. **Bugbears (10):** AC 5; HD 3+1 (L); hp 20 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THAC0 17; Dmg 1d8 (sword); Save as F3; ML 9; AL C; XP 50 each.
3. **Gnolls (15):** AC 5; HD 2 (L); hp 15 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d8 (sword); Save as F2; ML 8; AL C; XP 20 each.
4. **Hill Giants (4):** 4; HD 8 (L); hp 40 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THAC0 12; Dmg 2d8 (club); Save as F8; ML 8; AL C; XP 650 each.

If the party decides to stop at Fljotgurd before heading into Thunder Rift, they will be able to track down the men who were in the scouting party, but will be unable to get any more information from them than they got from Rolf.

When the party descends into Thunder Rift, read the following:

The road winds down into Thunder Rift through what you used to know as The Horned Hills – a pleasant, lightly wooded region of rolling hills. It is completely charred, with burnt trees jutting about here and there like blackened bones.

As you come to Lake Ganif, across its waters you can see what is left of Mage Island in complete ruin, along with Melinir further behind it. To the south, where once you adventured in the dankness of The Black Swamp, nothing is left but scorched vegetation and dried patches of mud.

Assuming the party continues on into The Bone Hills, continue:

As you approach the sheer mountain face, you can see that a few hundred feet up is a grand archway that opens into the side of the mountains. When you arrive at the base, you can see that there used to be stone steps carved into the rock, which wound their way up to the entrance. However, time has not been kind to them and they now are completely impassable.

About fifty yards or so to your right, you see what looks to be a natural cavern that leads into the rocky underground.

If the party is somehow able to make it up to the dwarven entrance, they will enter the dungeon on Level 4. A thief could possibly climb up, but for all intents and purposes, it should be effectively impossible to reach it.

Dungeon Master's Notes

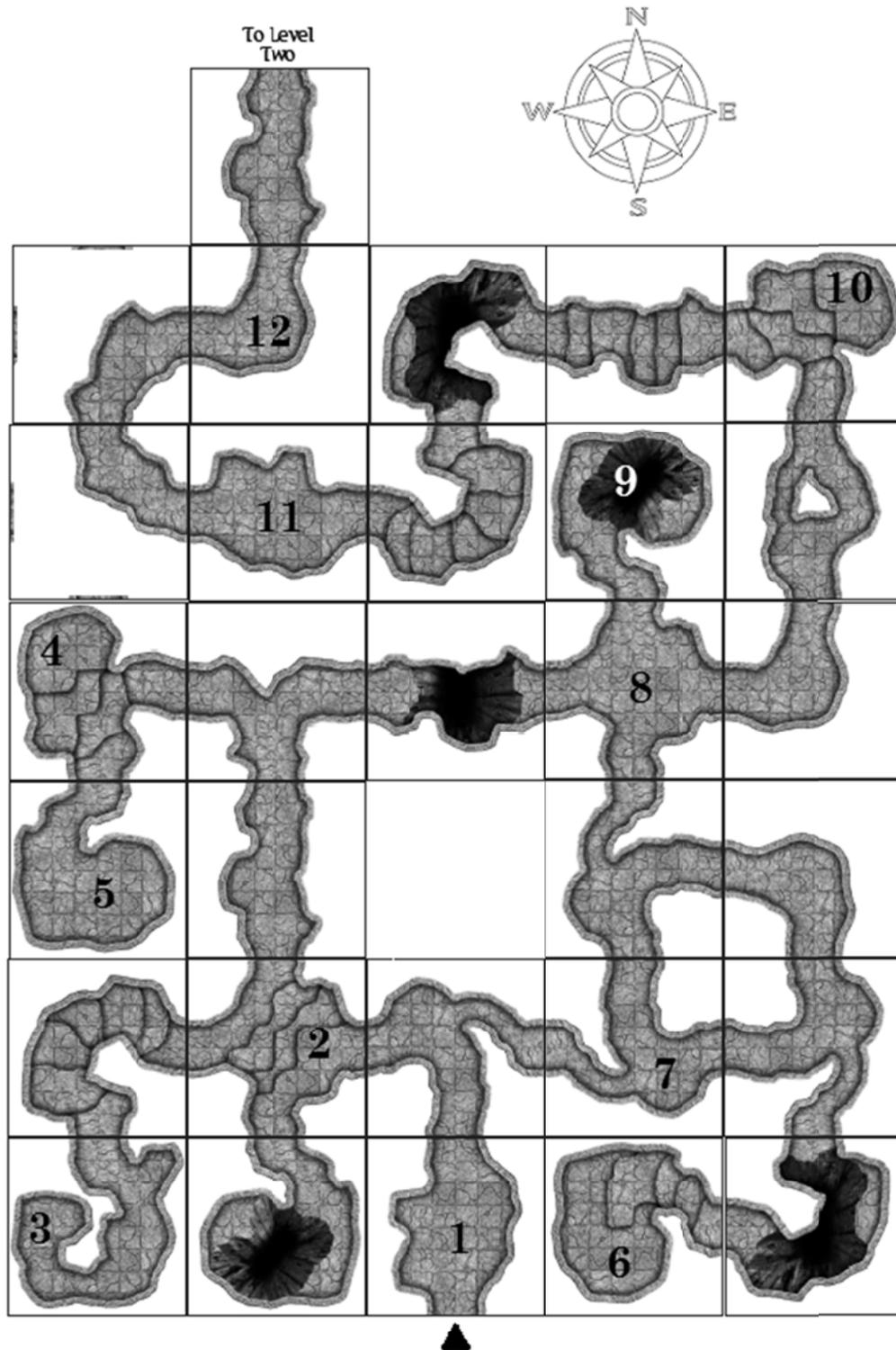
Other than the first two levels of natural caverns, this dungeon was originally one of the countless dwarven outposts scattered throughout Mithgarthr. The stonework is all impeccably masoned, with tight seams and unparalleled craftsmanship. Doors are all made of steel, surprisingly un-rusted and full functional.

Unless otherwise noted, all rooms are pitch-black; PCs will need their own sources of light.

There are no wandering monsters in this dungeon. However, in the first two levels (the caverns), make a normal wandering monster roll (encounter indicated on a roll of 1 on 1d6) every other turn. On a positive roll, a small rock fall occurs, causing 2d6 damage to any PC who fails a save vs. Dragon's Breath.

Any open chasms on the map are 1d10x10 feet deep, unless otherwise noted.

Natural steps in the caverns are roughly two feet tall.



The Lair Of Scorch
Level One

Level One

Room 1

A small amount of light from outside dimly illuminates this cavern. In the small alcove along the western wall is a small stone obelisk, roughly four feet tall and engraved with dwarven runes.

The runes on the obelisk read, “BEWARE: SPIDERS!”

Room 2

Steps lead down to another tunnel, with a musty smell from that direction. A slight whistling sound can be heard faintly coming from the southern passage.

The second step down is covered in yellow mold. Unless the party specifies that they are slow and careful in descending the steps, they will land on the mold and it will release spores.

Yellow Mold: AC can always be hit; HD 2* (L); hp 12; MV 0; #AT Spores; THAC0 NA; Dmg 1d6 + special; Save as F2; ML NA; AL N; XP 25

The whistling sound is coming from a small (roughly 6” diameter) shaft that leads from the bottom of the chasm to the south that runs out and up to the surface, about 15 yards away from the side of the mountains. The bottom of this chasm is 25’ down, and is swarming with normal rats. Any PC who

spends more than 6 rounds (one minute) in the chasm will have a 10% chance of being bitten and contracting disease. There is nothing of value to be found.

Room 3

The steps leading upwards are covered in rocks and debris, and look to have not been travelled in many years.

The steps are so littered with broken rocks and loose dirt and gravel that they are treacherous to maneuver. Each PC will need to make two DEX checks as pass this section. Any failed roll indicated the PC slips and twists their ankle. Movement rate will be halved until they have either spent three days resting, or are magically healed.

In the small cave at the end of this tunnel the party will find the remains of a long dead adventurer, half crushed under a rock fall. His gear has long since rusted and decayed, but his coin purse contains 27gp.

Room 4

As you first come to the entrance of this cavern, you see what appears to be firelight coming from the south, and can hear high pitched gibbering echoing from that direction. Two piles of fur sit atop the ledge to the north, from which you suddenly hear a solid “thunk” as two crossbow bolts from flying out from under them!

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There are two goblins hiding under the furs, both with crossbows. One of them has a *light crossbow* +1. They are on lookout duty for the group of goblins in room 5. With the PCs essentially prone targets, these first two shots automatically hit two different PCs. After those shots, the party will need to roll for surprise at a -1. If the party is surprised, these two goblins will get another set of attacks, while screaming for their comrades to the south. If the party is not surprised, roll initiative normally, with the goblins alerting the others when it is their turn to act.

Goblins (2): AC 6; HD 1-1 (S); hp 5 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (crossbow); Save as NM; ML 7; AL C; XP 5 each

The goblins from room 5 will join combat on the next round, moving up from their positions in the south.

Goblins (8): AC 6; HD 1-1 (S); hp 5 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as NM; ML 7; AL C; XP 5 each

Room 5

A small campfire burns in the center of this room, with a large chunk of spider roasting on a spit above it. The rest of the halfway butchered spider lies along the western wall.

The goblins left behind a small sack filled with their loot: 30gp and 75sp.

Room 6

A stone chest rests along the southern wall of this room. A smaller stone box sits on top of the larger one. Both of them are carved with dwarven decorations. A large keyhole is visible on the front of the larger of the two.

The smaller box is neither locked nor trapped. Inside are a key, and a parchment that says the following:

“Property of Jimmy Rustledbeard. If you’re reading this note, you’ve found my hiding spot! Take what you will, if you want, but don’t think that it’s this obvious!”

The key in the small box will fit the keyhole on the chest, and will open it. However, if the chest is opened this way, a hidden portcullis will slam down just before the first step that leads down to this room, and 6” steel spikes will dart up from the floor across the entire lower level. Any PC standing in this section will take 1d10 points of damage and will have their movement rate cut in half until magically healed. In addition to this, the spikes are poisoned. PCs hit with them will take 2d10+10 points of damage, but can save for half. Thieves can successfully check for this trap (they will be able to tell that there is some sort of trap in place, but not its specifics), but will be unable to disarm it.

There is a hidden panel on the back of the chest (find as a secret door) with a second keyhole. If this is used to open the chest, the trap will not trigger. If the trap has been

triggered, turning the key in this keyhole will raise the portcullis.

The chest contains Jimmy's treasure. 5,000pp, 5,000gp, a *potion of diminution*, a *potion of growth*, a *wand of magic detection* with 15 charges, a *cape of horns*, a *helm of alignment changing*, and *short sword +2 of secret door detection*.

Room 7

As you travel down the narrow eastern tunnel, you find that the floor and the walls become covered with spider webs, albeit relatively lightly. You come to a small area where tunnels lead off to the north and the east, both of them covered with the same light webbing.

Suddenly, you heard some scuttling coming from the north, and as you turn your attention to the noise, a stream of sticky web shoots in from the east!

Allow the party to make a surprise roll. If they are surprised, the web of a giant shroud spider hits one of the PCs. If they aren't surprised, the web misses. Combat begins normally after this, with two spiders coming at the party from the north, and two coming at them from the east.

Giant Shroud Spiders (4): AC 4; HD 5*** (M); hp 40, 35, 35, 30; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 bite or 1 web squirt; THAC0 15; Dmg 1d10 + paralysis or paralyzing web; Save as F5; ML 9; AL C; XP 550 each.

If bit by a spider, a PC has to save vs. poison or be paralyzed for 2d4 turns. If hit by the spider's web, a PC has to save vs. poison at a +1 or be paralyzed for 2d4 turns.

In the northeast portion of this circular tunnel, the party will find the spiders' food store which consists of four freshly captured goblins. If set free, once the goblins come to, they dart out of the caverns as soon as possible.

Goblins (4): AC 6; HD 1-1 (S); hp 5 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4 (fist); Save as NM; ML 7; AL C; XP 5 each

Room 8

As you enter this room, you find that it too is covered in spider webs; however they are much thicker in this cavern than in the previous tunnels.

Three aranea lie in wait in the small cave to the east, watching the party. They are the size of a small pony, and are greenish-brown in color with finger-like appendages on their front limbs.

Once a group of PCs reaches the center of the room, the spiders will all cast *phantasmal force* in an attempt to get the PCs to believe that a massive swarm of small spiders bursts out of their chest, swarming them and covering them in thousands of deadly bites. With all three of the spiders attempted the same spell, PCs will have to make three saves vs. spell, at a -2 penalty, to avoid this illusion. PCs that make their saves

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will then need to make a surprise roll at a -3. The aranea start off combat with *magic missiles*, each of them has two. After using these they resort to melee combat.

Aranea (3): AC 7; HD 3** (L); hp 24, 20, 15; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 bite; THAC0 17; Dmg 1d6 + poison (save or die); Save as MU3; ML 7; AL C; XP 65 each.

Note that the chasm to the west is higher by about 6 feet on the eastern side of the chasm.

Room 9

The chasm in this room is covered in spider webs. A crude table rests in on the eastern ledge, covered in papers and what appear to be different small sticks.

This is where the aranea would conduct their magical research. The webs were only created to support one aranea at a time, so if more than 300 pounds of weight is put on them, they will snap, sending anyone on them 50' down to the floor of the chasm.

The papers on the table are all completely unintelligible. However, one of the "stick" is actually a *wand of fireball* that shoots five die fireballs and has 10 charges.

Room 10

A natural stone formation is at the top of this cavern's steps, surrounded with mushrooms that are giving off a pale blue-

green glow. The top of the formation is dished, creating a basin in which water dripping from the ceiling has collected. The water gives off a bright blue glow.

The water in the pool is magic, and will have different effects each time it is drunk. When a PC drinks from the water, roll 1d12 and consult the following:

1. Lose the need to sleep for 2d4 days.
2. Fall into a coma for 30 minutes; awoken with a piece of random knowledge.
3. Laugh uncontrollably for 1d6 turns.
4. Lose the need to eat for 1d4 weeks.
5. PC feels mild euphoria, damage taken reduced by point per die for the next 1d10 turns.
6. Any wounds are fully healed.
7. Infravision gained for 1d4 days.
8. Fall unconscious for 24 hours, enjoying pleasant dreams the entire time.
9. Intense physical euphoria for 10 minutes, after which time their skins turns gray and they are emotionally dead. Remove curse will reverse this.
10. Senses are heightened, +1 bonus to all ability checks for 1d6 turns.
11. PC goes into a battle frenzy, attacking the nearest other PC. Frenzy wears off when PC has suffered 2/3rds of their total hit points in damage.
12. Full blown delirium for 1d4 turn

There is enough water in the basin for each PC to have one drink. If a PC decides to

try and bottle up their share, by the time they drink it, it will have lost any magic.

The basin will eventually refill, but will take roughly one month to do so. No magic is bestowed to the water until the basin is fully filled again.

Room 11

The air in this room is much mustier than the previous caverns. Sitting in the northeastern alcove is a skeleton wearing tattered robes, encrusted in blackish-brown mold, with its knees pulled up to its chest. As you enter, blue light starts flickering in the eye sockets of its skull.

Its bones creak as it turns its head to face you, and with a dry, crackling voice it says, "My, I haven't seen anyone come through here in so many long years. Pray, come here closer to me so I might have a better look at who comes to give me company."

This monster is a dusanu. It will try to lure a PC close enough to it so that it can gain a surprise attack. If unsuccessful, it will initiate combat.

Dusanu: AC 4; HD 9+2** (M); hp 65; MV 120' (40'); #AT 2 claws + special; THAC0 11; Dmg 1d8/1d8 + special; Save as F9; ML 10; AL C; XP 2,500.

If a PC is hit by the dusanu, they must save vs. poison or take an additional 1d8 points of damage, and become infected. There

are no initial outwards signs of infections; however any *cure wounds* spells have no effect on the PC. 1d3+1 days later, mold will erupt from the PC's skin. Starting that day, and each day thereafter, the PC will need to save vs. death. If they fail this save, the mold covers their entire body rapidly and kills them. The PC will rise 1d3 days later as a dusanu. A cure disease spell will kill the spores.

Dusanu take only half damage weapons (magical or non-), and only 1 point of damage from any other non-magical weapons. Magical edged weapons inflict full damage. They are immune to electrical attacks.

Room 12

The tunnel starts to slope gently upwards when you turn the corner, and continues on into the darkness.

The slope of this tunnel is about 30 degrees or so. About 20 feet north of this small cavern is a tripwire. If it is triggered, the party will hear a growing rumble coming from the north, and a few rounds later, a large amount of logs rolls into the party, causing 2d10 points of damage. PCs will have to make a save vs. dragon's breath or take and additional 2d6 points of damage. The logs crash into the southern wall of room 12.

The tunnel runs for an additional 50' or so before the map of level two begins.