

TOMB OF THE TROG MUMMIES

An Old School Hack adventure for 5th level characters
By Andrew Shields¹

BACKGROUND

Monsters are being drawn through the formerly quiet countryside towards the Gahlasian Hills. An ancient evil is stirring, and unless it is stopped, wicked things in the earth will wake and things from beyond will again be summoned into the world.

Kafflask is a quiet, pleasant town—except for all the monsters. Built only 200 years ago, it has prospered in the shadow of the shattered husks of the troglodyte temple ruins that fell over a thousand years ago. In fact, adventurers needing a base from which to loot the ruins have made merchants in Kafflask rich.

Even the boldest and dumbest knew there were some areas too deep, too dangerous to enter. A recent landslide revealed stairs down into one of the last remaining tombs of the trog emperors. Shepherds in the area have heard eerie reptilian chanting emerging in the dead of night. Demons have been seen in town. Time may be running out; the dead rulers may be looking to build a new stinky undead empire to match their former nauseating reptilian glory. All that stands in their way is you.

RUMORS (Everybody gets 1d3 rumors! They heard these on the way to town. They can gossip for more.)

1. (T) There is a massive centipede, big enough to bridge a river, out there somewhere. We thought it was a myth, but *something* huge woke up in the hills...
2. (T) People like to tell stories of a small faithful trog cult that got down into the deepest tombs and feeds worship to their dead god-kings over the centuries.
3. (F) I had a dream there was a demon army waiting down there, ranked up and ready to march, awaiting the word from a flaming golden skull on the body of a snake. Others dreamed it too.
4. (T) You won't find the trogs using metal weapons or armor. They go all bone or wood. Maybe it is some religious thing.
5. (F) That tomb out there is next to an underground river. Look out for cold walls. That'll break and drown you, like a cat in a box.
6. (T) Just like in the old stories, when evil wakes it draws demons through to our world, and swells up the vermin. We killed a spider in my barn that was almost as big as my wife—and she's an eater.
7. (F) They have the wrong location. My granddad told me he cleared out the tomb they've "uncovered" back when he was a young man. No mummies down there. It's a hoax to waste your time.
8. (T) About fifty gnomes and a powerful wizard came through here a week ago, claiming they'd recapture the Constellation of Grefnia, whatever the hell that means. The wizard's name was Vici, I think; she was pretty hot.
9. (F) I hear if you kiss the mummy of a trog emperor, you live forever.

¹ Converted from a random donjon dungeon—<http://donjon.bin.sh/>. Level 8 dungeon, no theme.

10. (T) Back when lots of adventurers headed out into the hills, the ones that came back told stories about how rings of standing stones around trog mummies could burst into flame and kill you. True story.
11. (T) In the really old stories, the one my crazy gran told, the viziers of the trog emperors became immortal by trading their physical shapes with their shadows. Immortal, unkillable, and deadly, and if you let them, they'll pull you through to join their shadow army. Spooky stuff.
12. (F) Smugglers are behind it. Got some trog help, rigged it all up; you better believe there's a rich stash of illegal drugs down there, for anybody tough enough to kick some smugglers around.

LORE

Scholars, Questing Knights, Wizards, Nobles, and those who do their homework in a well-stocked library with information on ancient cultures and religions may get 1d3 rolls from this chart as appropriate.

1. The ancient trog empire used rust monsters for pets, guards, meat, milk, and armor.
2. When they mummified their emperors, they put in a "worm of the gods." Modern scholarship has no idea what that means.
3. The necromantic priesthood preserved favored viziers to be entombed as guardians for the emperors in life as well as in death; while they could not leave the tomb, their minions of shadow could.
4. The Western Seat of the trog empire was on Felvahu Isle, now overrun with animated remains and shadowy undead. That island and this site are the only known tombs of emperors.
5. The undead created by the trog process is powerful, but it takes a thousand years or so of the energy seeping in for the undead to rise. Which was several hundred years ago, so they're likely up...
6. The undead created by trog necromancy are like pinholes in reality, and otherworldly energy seeps in around them. This attracts monsters, and sometimes spontaneously summons a demon.
7. There is a poorly understood connection between insects and the ancient trogs; somehow, trog filth was thought to trigger massive growth, if distilled to a paste and fed to bugs.
8. An ancient trog prophecy claims that if the empire dies, then it will hold sway again in death.
9. Ghubruk, the Conquering Worm, was a symbol of royal might, created by trog magics at their height.
10. Troglodytes are suspected to be an inbred strain of shokoro, corrupted from inbreeding because they were a noble caste of priesthood and rulers.
11. Ritual suicide was known to please emperors and viziers, and could buy mercy for their friends.
12. Four desert mystics in different centuries predicted the shadow of the trog empire would presage the end of the rule of humanity.

KAFFLASK

The local demeanor in this town tends to be supportive and ready to be helpful. They make their living as a stop on the Kafflask Trade Road, and also equipping adventurers who head up to the ancient trog ruins and keep the monster population in check, spending much of their loot in town afterwards.

Related industry is a massive prison at the end of a short trail out of town to the north, and a healing temple in the center of town. **Valurin** is a kindly but inflexible old man who rules the town council from the old Keep, now converted to siege time storage.

- **The Kafflask Wall.** It is 3 meters high and 2 meters thick, surrounding the town except the farms and dairies outside the walls. The Keep is built on the west side, its back to the water of the pond. There is a gatehouse to the north, and another to the south.
 - *Gate Tax.* To enter the town costs 1 silver per leg for people and animals. Weapons must be peace-knotted in town (focus action to free the weapon) and no armor heavier than light may be worn. Visitors get one warning, then are fined 1 gold per infraction.
 - The Wall garrisons about 200 troops. They patrol for half a day's ride in both directions on the road, assisting travelers and discouraging banditry.
 - The Wall Guard patrol as town guard in groups of 4. They wear red and gray, light armor, and reach weapons. They are minions. There are five captains.
- **The Kafflask Prison** is built into the ruin of a former trog prison that is over a thousand years old; the stone and iron both new and old make it a tough place to escape, and there are plenty of guards and vicious monsters to keep prisoners in and track those who try to escape.
 - **Head Warden Turmiska** rules the prison with an iron fist.
 - There are about 500 prisoners and about 50 guards, and about 30 monsters at any given time.
 - The prisoners dig in the foundations of the temple, to keep them occupied and provide stone for Kafflask and for further fortification of the prison.
 - Most of the guards are devout worshipers of Boomaxle, who helps keep them grounded and sane in an unpleasant occupation. This also increases the dignity with which the prisoners are treated, as they are people who should be in touch with their own worth.
- **Boomaxle's House of Healing** is a temple over a thousand years old, dedicated to making people whole, whatever may be wrong with them. Dedicated to development and generosity, they consider contracts to be far too binding for the freedom required by healing. They are entirely supported by donations, but they have many powerful patrons in the town and beyond it. A massive statue in the courtyard depicts Boomaxle as a smiling man with his eyes closed and his hands out.
 - **Liana** is a beautiful woman who leads the temple, and she organizes people to do their work. The command structure is very simple.
 - There is no magical healing, but there are "listeners" who will let you talk your problems out, and there are skilled doctors and artists in residence—about 50 staff in all.
 - They are open about their message of the superiority of fully realized self—it is a very simple message. Be who you are, and that will be enough.
 - Other factions of Boomaxle are encouraged to go elsewhere, strongly if necessary. The House of Healing is far more open to other faiths, however.
 - The House of Healing is popular with the people and with adventurers, but it is wearying for the town council; the House of Healing doesn't really care about the rest of the

community, and that's a problem, no matter how much of an asset they are. Still, they get tax breaks, and they have standing in the community.

- They feel magic corrupts the soul and the self, colluding with dragons and giving up the warm blood that is so key to self-realization. They are friendly to visiting wizards, then kill them when they are helpless. The local townspeople know this, and will warn wizards that befriend them. (Arcane jerks are graciously instructed to seek healing.)

For those who cannot afford to enter town and find lodging, or who want to be a little more rowdy, the Busty Alewench is just off the north road, in easy range of half a day's walk to the trog tombs. It's cheap, the food is edible, and the tavern has a long history of boasting of exploits.

The town was generated using this method: <http://intwischa.com/2012/03/the-explorers-sovereign-cityscape-spawner/>. The Boomaxle House of Healing was generated using the religious faction creator in "Fictive's Portable Pantheon."

SUPPORT

Valurin, the head of the town elders, has sent messengers to find all of you and gather you here. You get 100 gold just for showing up, and another 300 if you go on the adventure; they can look after it here until you return. You get a guide up to the staircase uncovered by the landslide.

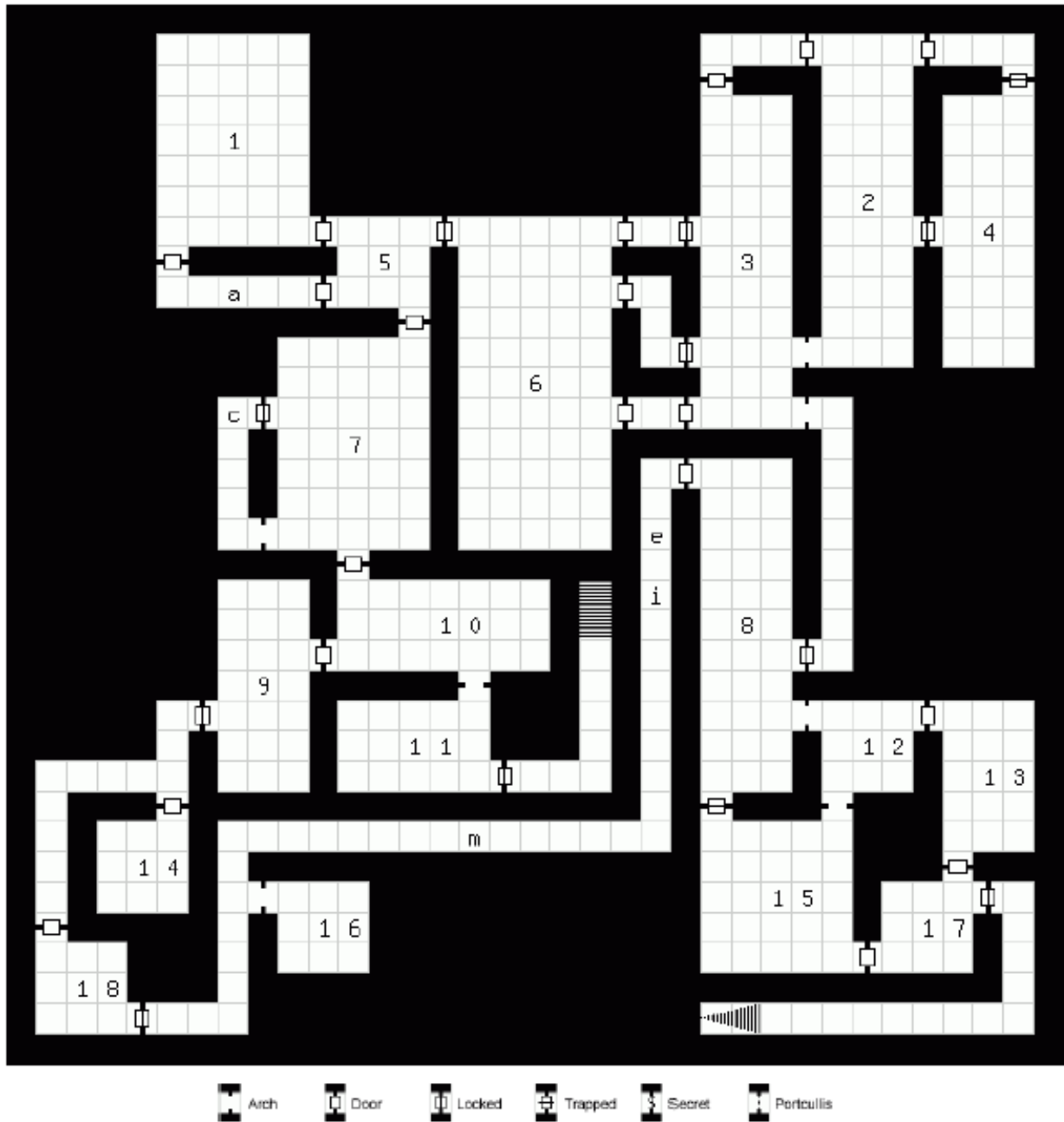
At the bottom of the stairs, one shepherd tried to explore and didn't come back. His friend went after him and is now incurably insane, babbling on about monsters and fangs and kisses. Something guards the way in. The town elders suggest taking bombs. They made up 10, that's all they could get.

As a reward for braving the dangers ahead, you can keep everything you get in there tax free. Also, they will name a feast day after you, and celebrate for up to a week upon your return. And, if you want to stay, you can have a seat on the town council and a permit to start a business of some kind.

- Grenade. Cost: 15 gold. Detonation: 10 second fuse (2 rounds) detonates on the part of the round where it was lit.
 - Everything next to it takes 6 wounds, everything within half an arena takes 3. A Daring test cuts the damage in half.
 - Lighting it is a free action if a torch or candle is nearby, or a focus action. Usually it is thrown as a shooting action.

This adventure focuses on the dungeon. Feel free to add local color, develop the town, attack them with spiders on their way out, let them shop for a cart to haul loot back, hire porters and torch bearers, etc. Or, start them out at the gaping pit down to stairs that lead into darkness.

TOMB OF THE TROG MUMMIES



Stairs down from outside on SE corner of map.

SCALE

Each square represents 3 meters.

DOORS AND LOCKS. Unless the description says otherwise, doors are unlocked, unstuck, and wooden.

An attempt to break down a door costs each person trying it 1 wound. If more than one helps, one rolls and the others all add their Brawn bonuses to the roll.

- Wood door. Unstick: Brawn difficulty 10. Break down: Brawn difficulty 15. 5 wounds.
- Stone door. Unstick: Brawn difficulty 12. Break down: Brawn difficulty 18. 10 wounds.
- Iron door. Unstick: Brawn difficulty 12. Break down: Brawn difficulty 20. 15 wounds.
- Locks. Difficulty 3.
 - Each focus action spent with the “Locksmith” talent reduces difficulty by 1.
 - Each difficulty not overcome adds 3 difficulty to the cunning test.
 - Cunning test base difficulty: 3 with quality tools, 6 with normal tools, 9 improvised tools.

WANDERING MONSTERS (1-2 on 1d12 every 10 minutes or if they make a lot of noise.)

1. Ghubruk, Colossal Monstrous Centipede. (Maybe they just feel it stirring in the depths.) If it does attack, it crashes through a wall, the ceiling, or the floor; it can dig through stone etc. easily. Its tunnel immediately collapses after it. If it bursts in, the area around it becomes hazardous with the rubble and dirt and so on. It never fights to the death.
2. 4 Medium Monstrous Spiders, a gang that will follow them from the outside.
3. 1 Destrachan, teleported in, tracking by sound.
4. 2 Otyughs, looking for a new lair.
5. 10 Troglodytes and 5 monitor lizards, patrolling the tombs. (The leader has a ring of keys.)

CORRIDOR KEY

- a. An unexplained breeze.
- c. An iron chandelier hangs from the ceiling.
- e. A narrow shaft (1/3 meter) to the surface above.
- i. Built-to-collapse wall. Spot with Awareness difficulty 10. Triggers 1-4 on 1d10. Affects entire section; those within make Daring tests difficulty 10 or suffer 4 wounds from falling rocks, and need Brawn difficulty 15 tests to shift clear of the heavy rock.
- m. A narrow shaft (1/3 meter) down to the endless dark below.

ROOM KEY

Room One. Empty.

- Normal east door. Stuck south door.

Room Two. A tile mosaic of ancient mythology covers the floor. A ring of keys in the NW corner.

- Stuck west 1. Arch west 2. Stuck east 1. Locked iron east 2.

Room Three. A crater in the floor on the west side of the room. Trog nest.

- *13 Troglodytes.*
- *Treasure nest.* 250 gold. 2 black pearls worth 500 gold each. Golden yellow topaz (400 gold). Obsidian (5 gold). Rich Purple Corundum (1100 gold). Star Ruby (1200 gold).
- *Heleg's Defender.* Heavy steel shield, enchanted, provides +1 AC.
- *Healing potion.* Focus action to drink, focus action to work. Restores 1d5 wounds, or takes someone from 0-3.
- *Potion of Growth.* Focus action to drink, focus action to work. Grow x4 in size, gain +3 wounds to all attacks, gain x4 wounds (that disappear when you shrink again in an hour.) Does not affect clothes and gear. Hand to hand attacks count as a light weapon (with bonus to wounds.)

- North. Locked west 1. Locked west 2. Stuck west 3. Arch east 1. Arch east 2.

Room Four. An altar of evil dominates the center of the room, with a shaft into depthless dark below.

- *Mohrg.* An ancient mummified troglodyte with a questing worm tongue lays on the altar...
- Locked north. Locked metal west.

Room Five. Empty.

- Unlocked west 1. Stuck west 2. Locked iron east. Stuck south.

Room Six. A tile mosaic of vile troglodyte rituals covers the floor. Scrawl: “Vici fell here” on south wall.

- *5 Rust Monsters.*
- Locked iron west. Stuck east 1. Stuck iron east 2. Stuck east 3.

Room Seven. Empty.

- *14 Shriekers.*
- Stuck north. Locked west 1. Arch west 2. Stuck south.

Room Eight. Empty.

- Unlocked west. Locked stone east 1. Arch east 2. Locked south.

Room Nine. An iron chandelier hangs in the NE corner. Scrawled on south wall: “This paladin is dead”

- *1 Greater Shadow.*
- Locked iron west. Stuck east.

Room Ten. Several alcoves are cut into the east and west walls. A circle of tall stones in the NW corner.

- *Mohrg.* An ancient mummified troglodyte lays in the circle of stones.
- *Trap!* The first person to pass between the standing stones triggers the glyphs down the sides of each, and takes 3 wounds of fire damage (1 wound if passing a Daring difficulty 10 test.) The trap automatically resets as a focus action.
- Stuck north. Stuck west. Arch south.

Room Eleven. Empty.

- Arch north. Locked east.

Room Twelve. Balcony on the S wall with a rope hanging down. A number of discarded torches.

- Arch west. Unlocked east. Stuck south.

Room Thirteen. Torch sconces line east and west walls. Strong metallic odor.

- *12 gnome warriors.*
- Unlocked west. Stuck south.

Room Fourteen. Pile of rotten fruit to the south. Scrawled on west wall, “They ate Thordi”

- *2 cloaklers.*
- *Iron chest, coffin size.* 10,000 silver. Deep green spinel (100 gold). Obsidian (8 gold).

Room Fifteen. Scrawled on north wall, “Run Away!” Acrid odor in SW corner.

- *5 rust monsters.*
- Locked north 1. Arch north 2. Unlocked east.

Room Sixteen. Empty.

- Arch west.

Room Seventeen. Totally insane inter-dimensional breaching.

- *5 gibbering mothers.*
- *Trap!* Over the E doorway, Awareness difficulty 12 to spot, triggers 1-4 on 1d10. Blocks fall. 4 wounds, Daring attempt reduces to 2, success difficulty 10 is 0 wounds.
- Stuck north. Unlocked west. Locked stone east.

Room Eighteen. Empty-ish.

- *1 greater shadow.*
- Stuck north. Locked east.

MONSTER LIST

Centipede, Colossal Monstrous. Ghubruk. Um... 10 meters across, 40 meters long, 5 meters tall...

AC: 13. Wounds: 48. Weapon type: Very Heavy, +2 wounds. Enormous +8.

- **Poison.** It drools acid. You get hit, you take an extra 1d5 wounds.
- **Immoveable.** You can't push it, or throw it, or manipulate its movement in any way.

Cloaker.

AC: 12. Wounds: 9. Weapon Type: Reach. Lurker +4.

- **Envelop.** 2 (1 to victim). It attacks the target as though the target was AC 8. If it hits, it does 2 wounds a round to the target, ignoring all others, until the target's ribs snap. The target can escape with a Brawn test as a focus action, difficulty 15. Up to 2 on the outside can help; one character rolls, the others provide their bonus. If it takes more than 2 wounds from one attack, the rest go to the victim inside as a separate attack that automatically hits.

Destrachan.

AC: 10. Wounds: 12. Weapon Type: Light, +1 wound. Blindsight, immune to sound attack. Listener +8.

- **Harmonics.** 3. Focus action. Affects up to 3 arenas. All those in the cone can test Daring difficulty 10 to leap out of the way. If it seeks to slay, they take 2d10 wounds. If it seeks to subdue, they must pass a Commitment test difficulty 10 or pass out; either way, take 3 wounds. Can target wood, or metal, or stone, or glass, and cause all those objects to break and become useless. Magic items have a 50% chance of survival.

Gibbering Mouther.

AC: 13. Wounds: 6. Weapon Type: Any. Never fails a Commitment test. Alert +4.

- **Crazy Talk.** Constant. All those in the same arena must test Commitment every round, difficulty 10. Those who fail either run at least 2 arenas away or take 1 wound. Ear protection doesn't help at all.
- **Munch and Drain.** 1. It gets 5 dice to attack that can be directed against up to 5 targets; each die is like a minion. If it attacks as a focus action, it inflicts an additional 2 wounds of blood loss.
- **Amorphous.** Constant. It ignores the first wound inflicted by any source. Also, those in hand to hand or melee range with it must test Daring difficulty 6 each round during the Defend/Protect phase or lose their footing and be unable to act that round.

Gnome Warrior.

AC: 11. Wounds: 1. Weapon Type: None. Darksight. (All wearing red shirts...)

Greater Shadow.

AC: 8. Wounds: 14. Weapon Type: Light. Stalker +8.

- **Draining Touch.** 1. Constant. Upon touching a foe, drain 1 Brawn and 1 Wound. This attack ignores all damage reduction besides magic and Awesome Points. A target who has negative Brawn after the attack dies. Brawn points return 1 per hour.
- **Shadow Spawn.** 3. Constant. The DM can feed 3 APs to the bowl to animate a drained character's shadow. It rises under the control of the Greater Shadow. It has AC 8 and 2 wounds, attacks the same way but cannot raise its victims.
- **Incorporeal.** Incorporeal undead can only be struck by a blow "to the face" or magic, and can only be injured by magic weapons or spells. They can move through solid objects. They can fly 2 arenas a round if they choose.

Mohrg.

AC: 14. Wounds: 21. Weapon Type: Light, 2 wounds. Darkvision, undead.

- **Paralyzing Touch.** 2 (1 to victim). If hit, the victim must test Brawn difficulty 12 or be paralyzed for 1d5 minutes.
- **Zombified.** Constant. Anyone killed while paralyzed rises as a zombie minion after 1d5 days.

Otyugh.

AC: 13. Wounds: 9. Weapon Type: Reach and Heavy; gets +1 AC, if biting 2 wounds. Scent. Lurker +4.

- **Tentacle Clutch.** Focus action. If the attack hits, the target is yanked up off the ground and torqued between razored tentacle pads over the gaping mouth. Cannot attack while held, Brawn or Cunning difficulty 10 to wriggle free, or damage continues next round. This attack does 3 wounds a round.
- **Diseased.** Anyone wounded by the otyugh must test Brawn difficulty 10 or contract Filth Fever.
 - *Filth Fever.* Incubates for 1d5 days. Incapacitated (-6 to everything) for 1d5 days.

Rust Monster.

AC: 10. Wounds: 5. Weapon Type: None. Agile +2.

- **Rusting Touch.** 2 (1 to victim). Constant. It can attack with a brush of its feathery antennae, ignoring AC bonus from metal armor, touching metal and turning it to a small pile of rust. With a hit, it can reduce armor by -2 (1 level) or render a metal weapon useless. The target can spend 2 Awesome Points to get out of the way instead of acting—if the target has already acted in the round, the target is automatically affected.
- **Frustrated Assault.** Constant. If no metal is nearby to attack, the creature can whip its sharp tail at targets, or tear at their feet, or bounce at them to smack its head/torso in their gut or face. It only rolls 1d12 to hit, but it does 2 wounds from sheer frustrated fury.
- **Distractable.** If it is in a calm, low-metal environment with a level of armor or a handful of rustable metal each round, it is content to eat and leave people alone.

Shrieker.

AC 8. Wounds: 2. Weapon type: None. Plant. Alert +2.

- **Shriek.** When an intruder enters the arena, the shrieker tests Awareness to detect the intruder. As a focus action, the shrieker cuts loose with a brutally loud scream that is audible for 10 arenas in all directions, and inflicts a -4 to all rolls for those without ear protection who are in the same arena, -2 in an adjacent arena. It resets after about a minute. Any nearby monsters will investigate...

Spider, Medium Monstrous.

AC: 8. Wounds: 2. Weapon type: Light. Predator +4.

- **Poison.** 2 (1 to victim). If bit, the victim must test Brawn difficulty 10 or very convincingly fake death for 1d10 hours.
- **Spray Web.** 3. Focus action. Everyone in half an arena must test Daring difficulty 10 to leap out of the way of the spinnerets or be webbed in place; Cunning or Brawn difficulty 15 to get free at the edge of the web. Not a carpet, but hundreds of strands fired out, then sag in place; after the first spray, the half arena is its own hazardous arena.

Troglodyte.

AC: 11. Wounds: 2. Weapon type: reach. Darkvision. Amphibious. Sneaky +2.

- **Stinky.** Constant. They can automatically be smelled from an adjacent arena. Those in hand-to-hand or weapon range are -2 to hit or -1 damage fighting them (player decides after rolling.)
- **Monitor Lizard.**

AC: 8. Wounds: 3. Weapon Type: Light, 2 wounds. Scent.

DUNGEON NARRATIVE

The Entry. Southeast corner.

Stairs that connected to an upper level were revealed when a landslide dropped the upper level into the ravine below. The Sslisk clan that came here to wake ancient evil set guards at the doorway (17) by punching a tiny hole in reality; gibbering mouthers have been sliding in and feeding on the energy from the pinhole. Also, a block trap can fall on the unwary who enter the locked door. (It locks when it shuts.)

To the north (13) a sad little pack of gnomes survived the push to get in, but they lost their champions and the wizard leading them. Now a little crazed, they scout as they can, but huddle fearfully eating their rations trying to figure out how to escape. Their food is running low. They long for leadership, and they're willing to help as best they can. Unless/until they are threatened, then they may snap and go all murderous.

To the west (15) some rust monsters have set up a nest. It doesn't smell great.

12 and 8 are empty, a buffer between the gnomes and the dark beyond.

If the adventurers let the rusties or mouthers out to proliferate in the countryside, they will be vilified.

Sslisk Clan Hideout. Northeast corner.

The clan lost their leaders to the mohrg, but are fine with that. They locked their imperial godling away in the dark temple (4) with a worship antechamber between their living space and their dead god (2). They huddle in a pit they dug in a great hall (3) and spend their days and nights in worship. Here too they guard their treasure; some gems stolen from gnomes, a mighty shield, and concentrated grow-juice they harvested from the glands of the dead leader.

A few of the rusties roam in the great temple chamber (6) that depicts trog ritual suicide.

West Tomb. West side.

The trogs locked off the section that goes deeper; an empty antechamber, and a room to the north now bare. (5 and 1). However, the other emperor and the two viziers lurk in those haunted halls. The trogs planted shriekers (7) so nothing would surprise their dead masters.

South of that, a mohrg reposes in his standing stones, resting in his tomb, waiting his turn. He also guards the way deeper in. He will kill anything that gets into 7, pursuing to 6 but not further. The room to the south (11) is empty, but to the west (9) has a vizier in it that will not hesitate to join the emperor in battle in 7 among the shriekers.

The wicked vizier in the far corner likes to dress up with the one next to the emperor; they have demon cloaks stored in a room between their suites (14). The exit to the entry area is locked, and there is a wall rigged to collapse on the way, so they don't expect visitors.