

GRIMTOOTH'S LAIR



Grimtooth's Lair: A Lost piece of RPG History



By SS Crompton

There were some blank pages in the old booklet, so in its place we are adding this little perspective on what **Grimtooth's Lair** is and what little we know of its origins.

First off, it was not sanctioned or approved by Flying Buffalo (Grimtooth's publisher.) It was made to be used for tournament play at **Origins Game Fair** in 1983.

The first time any of us at Buffalo saw it, was after the convention. I think Mike Stackpole had been given a copy and we all got a look at it. We were flattered that Grimtooth fans had created a tournament book, but weren't too impressed with it overall. We never saw it again after that. Still it is a unique piece of rpg gaming history.

One thing we **don't** know is who created this book. There are no names anywhere in it, so that remains a mystery.

How we found it: Joseph Goodman had heard about this booklet and we all began a search to find a copy of it with no luck at all. Most Grimtooth fans we contacted didn't even know it existed, and Flying Buffalo had no copies of it either. Joseph contacted Bill Meinhardt, who has been collecting and archiving fantasy RPG materials for decades and Bill was kind enough to allow us to scan his copy. (See elsewhere in this booklet to read more about Bill's efforts to preserve RPG history.)

We hope you enjoy this lost piece of Grimtooth history and who knows after 35 yeears, maybe one of you will use this to run a Grimtooth Tournament once again!

This tournament is designed to be run with ANY role playing system, by any devious GM who wants his players to think, instead of just hacking through.

The traps of this game are either fully explained, or a picture has been drawn, so the GM and the player can understand what happened. Please make sure that you don't show the players the trick of the trap, before its been sprung.

Please read everything in the boxes to the players.

SET UP

You and your friend were easily captured by the most horrible master troll, Grimtooth.

As you are most aware of his reputation for traps, you realize that you have only to wait for a most horrible lingering death in some twisted mechanical bit.

Grimtooth strolls up to you, his entire manner suggesting to you that he is incredibly bored.

"I like you," he says.

"Just our luck." your friend whispers to you.

"And because I like you, I'm going to give you a chance to live. All you have to do is cross that room, open a door, pass down a corridor, and out to freedom. Easy," he smiles, a terrible thing to behold. "Of course, you could always stay for dinner...."

With that he turns and leaves.

You now become aware of your surroundings. You are in a 30 foot semi circle. On one side is a tall cliff with an opening in the center. On the other side is a loosely woven stick and wire fence, with a door that does not appear to be locked.

Fence

Anyone examining the fence will learn the following:

It appears to be made of odd sticks and branches, wound with many pieces of wire. The door has a latch on it, and there is no lock.

Anyone touching the fence will be caught by the wire, which is wire of strangulation. Roll a twenty sided and score your dex-5 or less in order to break free. If the character can not break free, the wire will strangle him in D4 melee rounds. (A terrible lingering death, hee hee.)

Anyone touching the doorway will also be firmly caught, and the door will NOT swing open!! Roll a twenty sided and score your Dex-10 or less to break free (good luck).

[Oh come on! It's not going to be that easy!!]

A

In front of the doorway, there is a small spring board that will pop the character stepping on it into the room.

Anyone specifically not stating that they are avoiding the front of the door will be popped in when they begin to investigate the doorway or the inside room.

Roll a D4 to determine where the character lands.

1 = 5 2 = 2 3 = 4 4 = 6

ROOM DESCRIPTION

The 30 by 30 foot room is lit by torches in each ten foot section. The floor is a smooth black color broken into 10 foot sections. On the section directly to your right a bullseye is painted in red on the floor. On the 10 foot section to your left is a body with a sword in it. Directly across from you is a closed door.

All squares, unless noted, will appear to be a smooth black color.

TORCHES

The torches are actually hollow, and so if any are removed from the walls, they spill the oil in the pocket (and inside the torch) all over themselves, causing D6 damage. they totally burn away after this.

SQUARE 1

This ten foot section has a bullseye painted on the floor in a bright red.

See illustration.

If you step on the side nearest the door, KABOOM!! But if you step on the side away from the door, your safe. If they step in the center of the bullseye, roll a D6 1-3 the floor tilts the deadly way; 4 the character

remains balanced (roll again when they move next); 5-6 stepped on the right side (darn!)

The dynamite will cause 4D6 damage.

SQUARE 2

See illustration.

Make the characters stepping in the square to roll their Int or less on a twenty sided dice. If this roll is made, they notice that the entire square has sunk an inch.

The way to thwart this trap is to leave all your clothes on the square, thus weighing it down, and causing the cork in the bottle not to be pulled.

If the cork is pulled it releases a hungry mini-wraith from a soul bottle. The mini-wraith will attempt to eat 4 levels.

Mini-wraith 8 life points

characters need a 13 to hit *He needs a 13 to hit them. D4 damage/hit*
you don't need magic or silver to hit this thing! This is to encourage the players to think, not to assume.

SQUARE 3

You see a body of a human, a sword thrust firmly through his back, seemingly all the way through. A pool of dried blood surround the body.

Touching the body contracts an awful disease, but that won't get the players till later.

Searching the pockets will reveal a mousetrap - D4 damage.

Drawing the sword, harshly moving the body, or any of a thousand sudden movements will cause the sword to cut the rope suspending the ceiling. 3D6 damage (as it's a light porous stone, otherwise the thin rope wouldn't hold it!) [Of course you could beef it up...]

SQUARE 4

You hear something go CLICK. (Count to 3 slowly.) The ceiling drops out and lands with a startling wham! A yellow power is sprayed all over the room.

If the player says that he is getting out of that 10 foot square, then he will not have the block fall on him. If he says nothing, 3D6 damage.

Any player not crushed under the block, will breath this powder in. (It takes a long time to settle, and they can't hold their breath that long! D4 damage. The powder is powdered magnesium, and it will ignite, and cause the entire room to flash for 3D6 damage. There is one place that the player will not take damage, and that is if he falls down the pit in square 5.

SQUARE 5

Pit trap. Anyone putting any significant weight in this square will trip the top open. There's a fall 20 feet doing 2D6 damage to the character.

At the bottom of the pit there are three coils of rope.

Rope 1: is really a snake. A rope snake. It is sleeping, if it is touched, it will wake up and attack. Snake, 7 points, characters need a 12 to hit. He needs a 11 to hit them.

Rope 2: half elastic, as characters get half way up, it springs them up and into another square. Depending on what direction they were climbing determines the square they were catapulted onto. D4 damage from the toss.

Rope 3: A rope with a thin core of woven needles. As weight is put on the rope, the needles twist out, causing 1 point of damage with every hand hold they take to get up (Roll 3 dice at this point, but only give them D4 damage total).

SQUARE 6

As you step into the square, you notice a flash of movement on the floor. What do you do?

If he elects to jump out, Roll Dex-3 or less, if they make it, sigh, noting will happen to them. If they don't make it 2D6 damage from slicing blades.

You see that sheets of metal have sprung up from the floor, enclosing that 10 foot section in a 6 foot high cube. You hear running water, and realize that the cube is filling with liquid.

Anyone caught in the cube will hopefully panic, and try and climb their way out. The top of the walls are razor sharp, D6 damage trying to climb out. Roll Dex or less on a twenty sided to see if they succeed in

escaping. They can try as long as they like.

The water is a easy flow that will fill the bin half way in 8 melees. If the characters are still in the room, they will hear a hissing sound as the liquid reacts with the sides of the wall, coated with another chemical, this mixing will produce a sleeping gas. If they are caught by the gas, they will wake up just in time for 'dinner'.

SQUARE 7

Once this 10 foot square is stepped into, the sides of the adjoining corner walls will snap together, causing 3D6 damage.

This trap will automatically reset itself, taking the next melee to open back into the harmless looking corner.

SQUARE 8

As the character steps into the square, a slurping squishy noise. The characters (if they bother to look) will discover their boots (or feet) two inches in a black much.

If they pull their feet out of the "muck" they will let air into the phosphorous liquid underneath. 2D4 damage.

To counteract this trap, all they need to do is leave their shoes behind, or carefully scrap the black goo off your feet and back into the square.

SQUARE 9

There is a thin layer of black balsa over a layer of quicksand. If they step onto this 10 foot square, they have three chances to get out. To make things worse, the quicksand is acidic! (Nasty troll!) D4 damage per Melee

The first melee Roll Dex-2 or less on a 20 sided. then Dex-5, then Dex-7

DOOR

If the door is let go of, it is counter weighted and will swing wide and burst open a panel at the end of the corridor. The broken panel will release a poisonous gas that will do 2D4 damage.

SQUARE 10

The opening of the door has started a small ball rolling down a long circular track. It is a small blue ball that is rolling down the corkscrew track, towards the end where it will fall abruptly toward the ground a short 3 feet beyond the end of the track. The blue ball falls, and hits the ground with an explosion.

If you can read all of this square to your players then it's too late. Do D8 damage.

If they players interrupt you, with instructions to capture the ball, or close the door, then they will not take the damage.

The corridor is 40 feet long with the sky showing at the end. In the ceiling you notice running down the exact center of the corridor is a series of slots each about 2 and a little feet away.

If the players state that they are using every other hand hold, they will be fine. Any other combination should take care of them.

SQUARE 11

There is another pit here with a 20 foot drop onto the hard ground. There is a spider in the bottom of the pit.

Do 2D6 damage for falling into the pit.

Spider 7 points. bite D4, and the spider needs a 10 to hit the characters. The characters need a 10 to hit the spider.

There is a door at the bottom of the trap. Behind this door, is a water corridor that leads to a outside pool. Anyone who so much as cracks this door, will get a rush of water that will sweep anyone down in the pit across the pit, and through the balsa wood wall and onto the spikes hidden there. 2D6 damage.

The hand holds carved in the ceiling are safe, until the characters come to the ones indicated. These are crumbled through, so that any weight will cause them to break at the exact moment to cause the fall.

SQUARE 12

This square has a false balsa wood top that hides the slant beyond it. The hope is that they will discover the trap, and try and leap over it, thus breaking the balsa, and causing the character to fall back into the trap.

SQUARE 13

This square has a series of invisible blades attached firmly to the sides of the doorway.

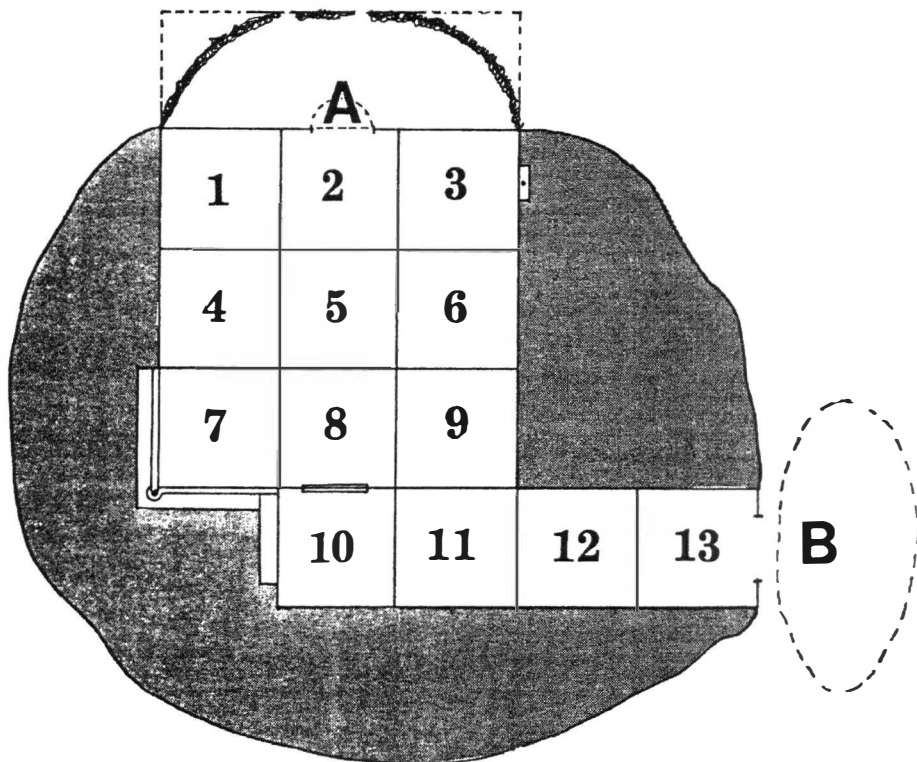
Anyone stating that they are "running" out of the corridor, will be sliced and diced into bite sized squares, and will collapse back into the corridor, and just outside the opening.

Anyone just walking up to the opening, will easily discover the block, which swings inward, like a door. If they swing it inward, they will hear a click (The second row sliding into place from the ceiling.)

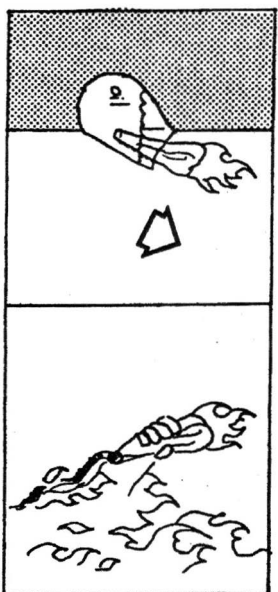
The second row of blades is the same as the first, except that they are coated with acid, D4 damage if touched.

B
The corridor opens up into a green field. Open sky greets you to freedom.

Just beyond the opening is a disguised pond. There is a net weave cover with grass. If the characters walk out into the field, they will be wrapped up in the net, which is weighted with rocks. Roll Dex-5 or less on a D20 to struggle free, otherwise....drown!!!

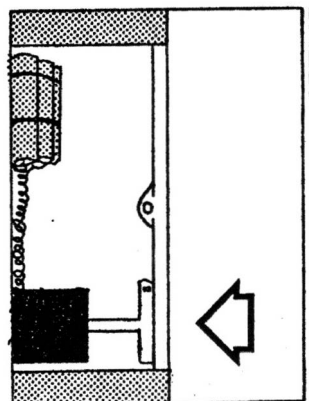


TORCHES



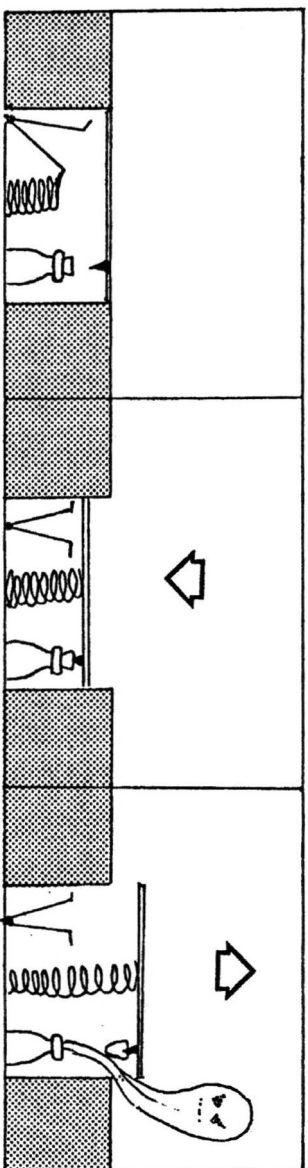
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SQUARE 1



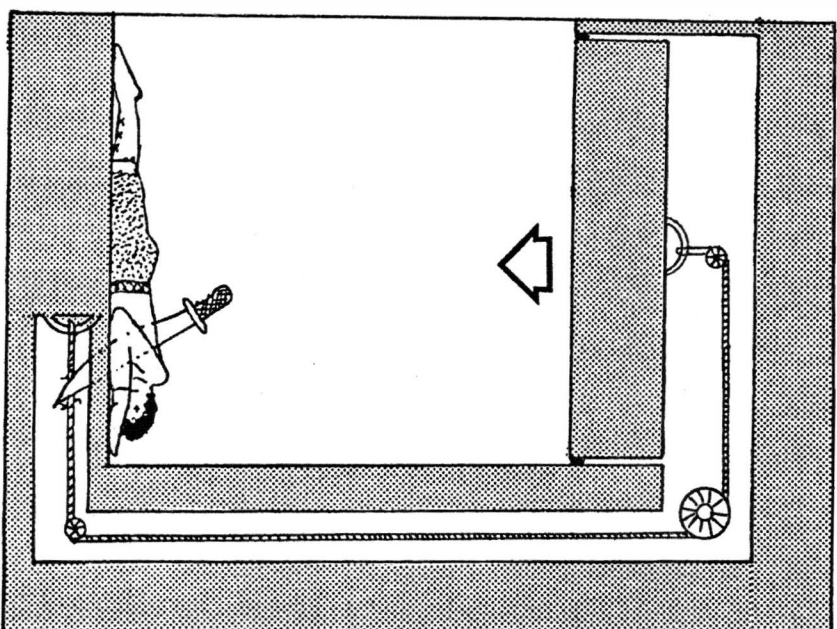
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3

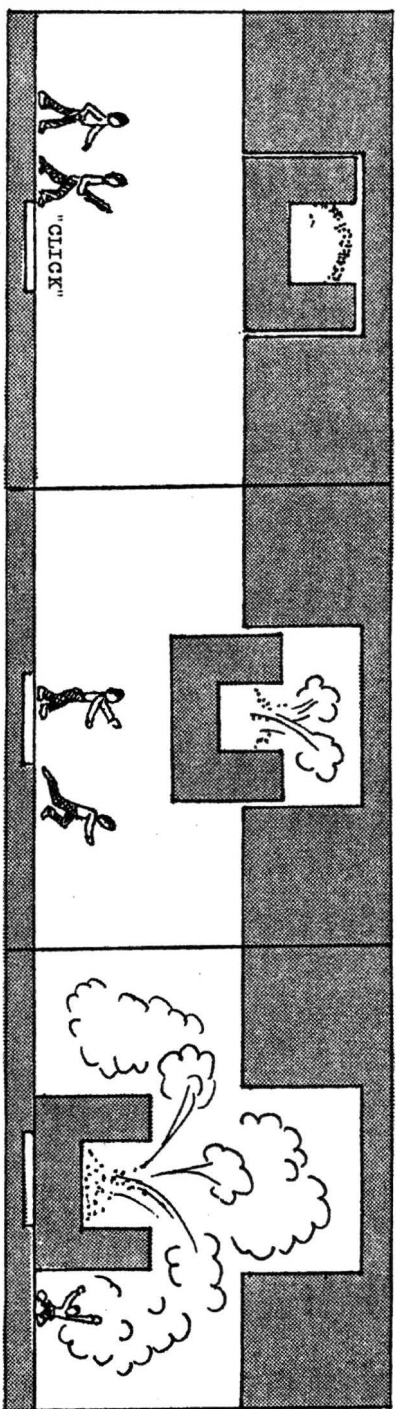
SQUARE 3



Grimtooth's lair

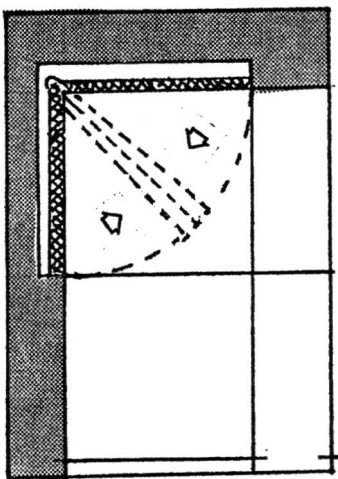
SQUARE 4

4

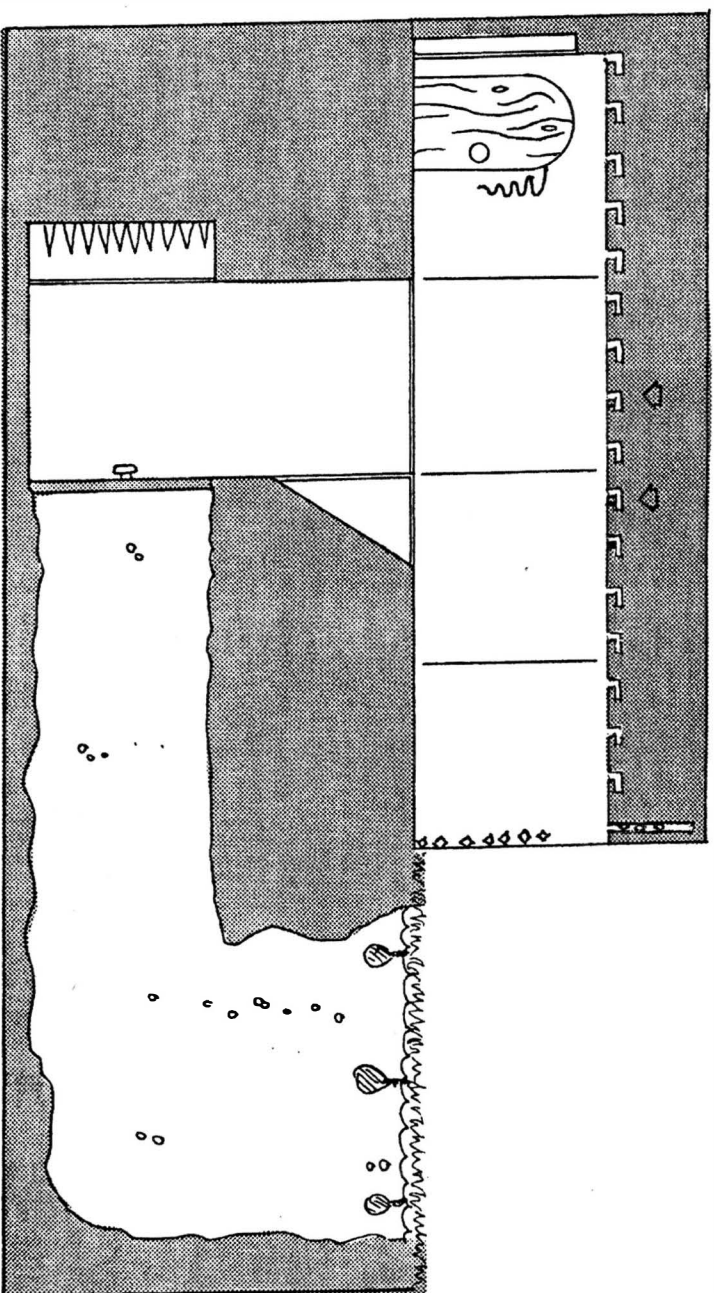


SQUARE 7

7



10, 11, 12, 13, & B



Grimtooth's Lair

SCORE



OUTSIDE THE LAIR:

Investigating the fence, but leaving it alone	+1
Touching the fence	-5
Touching the Door	-7

A Getting sprung into the Lair	-1
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TORCHES

Messing with more than one	-1 each after first
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1 Leaping to far side safely	+1
------------------------------	----

2 Leaving weight on the square	+1
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3 Leaving the body and sword alone after entering the square	+1
--	----

4 Moving while the GM is counting	+1
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5 Tripping the pit without falling in	+1
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6 Looking for a way to shut off liquid (there isn't one, but if they looked)	+1
--	----

7 Tiggering the trap from the safe corner (illo)	+1
--	----

8 Leaving boots, or scraping the stuff back down	+1
--	----

9 Discovering the quicksand before falling in.	+1
--	----

DOOR Preventing door from hitting wall	+1
--	----

10 Catching the ball before it hits using the ball somewhere else in the dungeon	+1
--	----

11 Using the hand holds in the ceiling	+2
Falling in the pit	-1
Opening the door, and being flooded	-1

12 Jumping over the pit (and thus missing)	-1
Letting go of the hand holds too soon	-1

13 Opening first invisible blade door	+1
Opening second blade door	+1
Not getting burned by acid on second door	+1

B Falling in the covered pond	-2
drowning	-1
Finding pool without anyone falling in	+2

Roll Playing Bonus (1 to 10 points)

If Dexter was in character (a womanizer, I'm the greatist type) then indicate 1 to 10 points.
If Mainard was a doom and gloomer, add 1 to 10 points.

Other Comments:

P₁

P₂

GM

SCORE



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Other Comments:

P₁

P₂

GM

NAME Dexter

Tunnels & Trolls Character

STR 14
INT 13
WIS 12
CON 10
DEX 13
CHR 15

HIT POINTS 28

HISTORY

A bit of a womanizer. Considers himself hot stuff.

GEAR

Rough weave shirt, blue
leather pants, brown
moccasins
Bright red cap.

weapon: fist. D4 points

All other gear taken

NAME Mainard

Tunnels & Trolls Character

STR 12

INT 15

WIS 17

CON 12

DEX 13

CHR 10

HIT POINTS 28

HISTORY

A worrier.

Doom and Gloom

GEAR

cloth vest, with wooden Buttons.
(2 missing)

jeans
with a candybar melted to
the inside of one pocket.

light boots.

weapon: fists 04 points

All other gear taken



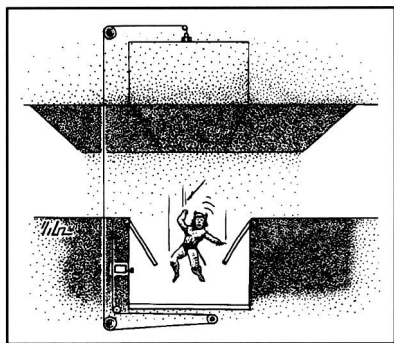
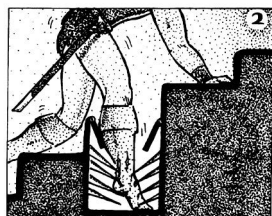
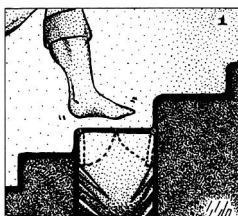
Real Gamers and their Memories of Grimtooth

By Steve Bean

The Vicious, Delicious, Forbidden Horror of Flying Buffalo's "Trap Porn"

Early on in my gaming "career" – 1983 or 1984 (making me about 15) – I lucked into used copies of *Grimtooth's Traps* and *Grimtooth's Traps Too*. I remember such a mix of reactions as I pored over the pages:

The traps were horrible. By which I mean: they *horrified* me. You know how sometimes when people describe injuries, those descriptions evoke in you a physical empathy response, ie they make you *cringe*? Many of Grimtooth's traps evoked that physical response in me. In particular, the traps where something sharp would cut the victim's legs or feet. The keenness of empathy-response to these types of traps may have come from a traumatic experience I'd had as a child: stepping on a hidden piece of broken glass while playing on a beach. **Stair Snare** was the worst (see right) – my jaw still clenches when I imagine that PC pulling his leg back out against those downward-angled spikes. Imagine pulling up against the mass of *all that full plate armor you're wearing...*



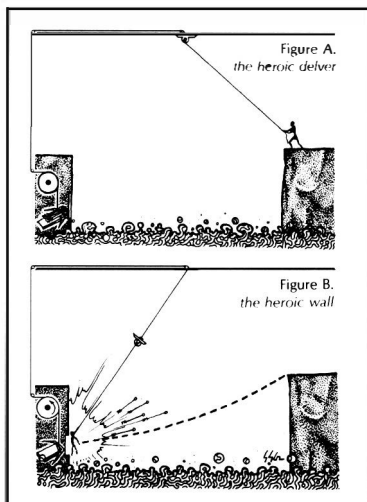
In my day, in my gaming group, most of the traps were considered so horrible that we had an unspoken understanding: if a DM chose to put them in a dungeon it was a clear signal that he was gunning for the PCs. I put ***Between a Rock and a Hard Place*** into a dungeon, because, well, we'd seen a million pit traps already, but the addition of a 2-ton block that looked from the illustration like it'd *exactly fit* the pit it drops into just seemed like a ridiculous case of adding both insult-and-more-injury-to-injury. I still remember my

players trying to decide if they could get the victim out before he suffocated if they cast *Transmute Rock to Mud* on the fallen stone block.

Let's face it: the traps were *vicious*. "Calling in Grimtooth" was something you did as a DM immediately after you'd grown out of your Monty Haul phase and needed to kill off the ridiculously OP PCs you'd created. If you'd foolishly let your PCs leave *White Plume Mountain* without throwing Box and Cox at them, or if you'd fudged the technology rolls in *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* because you secretly wanted to see the PCs armed to the teeth with ray guns - out came Grimtooth.

Grimtooth's traps were also *fascinating*. Back then I was an aspiring illustrator in what was the era of David Macaulay and I used to pour over Grimtooth with the same intensity that I would investigate the details of *Castle*, *Cathedral* or *City*. The room traps in particular mesmerized me: Where does that block and tackle lead?" "What does that toothed gear do?"

But the fascination came equally from the traps' intricacy and their irony. We all know it: the *dark humor* makes it impossible to look away from Grimtooth, no matter how horrible the trap. That irony is established right in the table of contents with the preview illustration of *The Greystoke Memorial* captioned "A taste of things to come... Yeah, that's right – hurts, don't it?"



Grimtooth was, and still is... "trap porn" – something you felt you *should* hide from your players – and maybe even your parents – under your bed; something that still, to this day, you feel like you should look away from, but... can't.

(Note From SS Crompton: I don't know if I should feel complimented of offended! LOL)

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Grimtooth

On first meeting Grimtooth I *hated* him. In the 80s I was very much into a fantasy RPG aesthetic I would call "mythic." I wanted D&D to feel like *The Lord of the Rings* with its combination of history, majesty and pathos. Grimtooth, in the way he was drawn and the way he was written, was the absolute antithesis of my aesthetic. He was cartoony and irreverent. He was a cross between Marvel Comics' Green Goblin and Wolverine. (He even used the word "Bub.")

Honestly, I also *hated his traps* – the designs of them, I mean. They *bugged* me. They were ridiculous. They *never* would have worked. As I pored over the delicious detail with which they were illustrated, the absurdity of their design offended my standard for internal, fictional logic, even (or maybe *especially*) in a *fantasy* RPG: "Who would build that *there*?" "How would they even *build it at all*?" and "THAT wouldn't work!"

Another question that always came up for me was: "How do the traps *reset*?" They *had* to be resetting because the books never talked about adventurers coming upon them already sprung, despite how obviously difficult they'd be to bypass. In particular I wondered about resets in relation to the traps that involved large

volumes of ball bearings. There never seemed to be a silo or some other storage unit that might to refill these traps' reservoirs. Even if there was a refill and reset mechanism, wouldn't the PCs at least find a few errant ball bearings in the corners of the dungeon's corridors, evidence of the fate of previous delvers? Was there a guild of gremlins janitors in every dungeon who cleaned up after?

I resolved these offenses to my sense internal logic in a way that we've probably all embraced at some point. The answer to the question "How does THAT work?" became: "Magic." These were magical worlds so I decided that *fill in ridiculous mechanical design or method of reset* happened through magic. This just barely satisfied my demand for internal logic and for a while most of the Grimtooth traps I put in dungeons radiated magic.

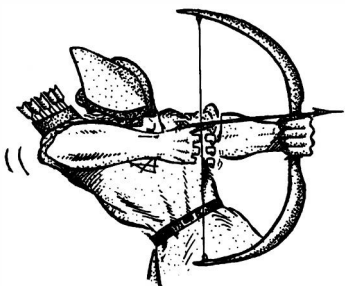
But, unexpectedly, my acceptance of that flimsy logic was a "trigger plate" to expanding my gaming mindset. It sprung open a metaphorical hidden trap door and underneath, instead of a spiked pit, lay *possibility*. *Accepting the illogical* began moving me from a narrow-minded gaming perspective to a more expanded one, one predicated more on inspiration and player experience than on logic. Acceptance of the flimsy logical underpinnings of Grimtooth's traps is one of the things that led me to being far less rigid about the terms on which I would put something in my games and helped me begin to try out all kinds of things I'd previously dismissed as "not cool" or "not mythic and therefore not worthy."

Eventually my gaming-acceptability "litmus tests" largely shifted. The answer to the question: "How does *that* work!?" went from being "It couldn't" to "magic" to "who cares? - it's effing AWESOME!" And in that way, the secret Grimtooth trap #101 was, for me, a tilting, chute ride to fantasy RPGing that was more *imaginative*.

Memories of Grimtooth's Traps: The "Party Killer"

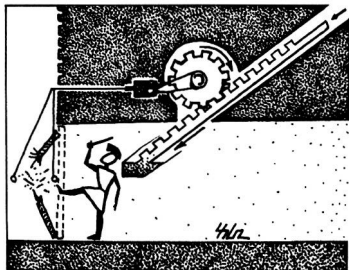
By Bob Brinkman

I first encountered the original Grimtooth's Traps in its second printing. My friend John Keehn and I had both run out and bought copies. We eagerly read through them looking for diabolical ways to dispatch our players. Of course, since I played in John's game and John played in mine, nobody was falling for anything. Granted, my blatant paranoia certainly helped my chances of survival when we played through the *Tomb of Horrors*.



Even with wary players preventing their use, I bought each volume as it was released, reveling in the diabolic mayhem. So many great ways to maim and kill players. I had my favorite trap, which I called the "party killer." **The Delvermatic Dicer and Malingerer Trap** certainly painted a picture, but so did the subtlety of **Satan's Bow**. Trap after trap, book after book, my imagination and creativity were stoked to higher levels of fiendishness.

Flash forward thirty years and a table of relatively new players. **The Circular Doorway** presented no mystery to dungeon neophytes, it was obviously some sort of mystical fog. A mystical fog that turned red and made horrid thunka-thunka-thunka sounds when someone walked through it. To this day, several of those players are leery of the mention of “chunky salsa”. Once I realized that I now had players unfamiliar with the machinations of Grimtooth, things got pretty hairy for the party and they learned to greatly respect the potential for traps. They never again walked through a circular doorway, trapped or no.



But they did fall for both the **Delvermatic** and **Satan’s Bow**.

Nostalgia at the Gen Con Booth

By Tim Wadzinski

Grimtooth’s Traps was one of the first system-agnostic RPG supplements I ever bought, at around age 12. It was the first book I ever saw that used a “funny” disclaimer (which of course is a pretty common tactic these days). The presence of Grimtooth himself as host and guide, and the mix of humor and violence – especially in the illustrations – hooked me immediately, as those elements made the book stand out from the official AD&D and D&D materials I was accustomed to using. The funny scrapbook family photos in *Grimtooth’s Traps Ate!* are inspired, too. The “**Spy Glass**” (*Grimtooth’s Traps*, page 39) is my all-time favorite from his repertoire, due to its simple brutality. I’m personally deathly afraid of things happening to my eyes, and merely thinking of this device gives me the heebie-jeebies. Thus, sadly, I could never actually bring myself to use it in a game.

More recently, while working the Goodman Games booth at Gen Con 50 and Gary Con X, it was awesome to see fans flipping through the magnificent tome, *Grimtooth’s Ultimate Traps Collection*. I lost count of how many people became wide-eyed and overcome with nostalgic bliss while perusing the book.

“Oh man, they’re ALL in here?”

“I remember this one!”

“My DM used this one on us – it was BRUTAL!”

It was clear to me that many folks have a soft spot in their heart, if not a gaping wound in their PC’s chest, for Grimtooth!



Bill Meinhardt: FRPG Archivist

Interview by Steve Crompton

Bill Meinhardt provided us with an original copy of Grimtooth's Lair and has agreed to answer a few questions for us about his amazing fantasy rpg archive.

Q: When did you start collecting role playing games?

Bill: 1977 when my sister brought back the Holmes basic D&D box from GenCon. That would have been my first GenCon, but my Mom said I couldn't go to the Playboy Club where it was being held.

Q: When did that turn from a collection into creating an archive?

Bill: In 1987 I made the irrevocable decision to try and get every paper-based FRP item printed in the English language, from Chain-mail forward. I ultimately set a terminus date of the end of 2003 (although I have many items published after that date as well).

Q: How do you define what goes into your archive?

Bill: If it is FRP and paper based (so no PDF's) and in English and was published before 12/31/2003, I want one.

Q: With all the frpg material coming out, how do you get all of it?

Bill: It was a full time job to keep up with everything, believe me! Fortunately now the number of different items I'm looking for is decreasing, but some new things that I had never heard of pop up occasionally.

Q: How much room does your archive take up?

Bill: Almost all of the rooms of our house, but a large number of items are along a 10' high, 30' long wall in our living room. There are pictures of it on the Acaeum.com website (the premier 1st ed AD&D website) click on "Forums", select "Collecting General", and then do a search for "A Visit to Stratochamp's collection".

Q: How many items do you have in the archive?

Bill: Approximately 11,500.

Q: Do you remember how you obtained Grimtooth's Lair?

Bill: I bought it on ebay about 10 years ago.

Q: Do you have a website where people can see your collection?

Bill: I do not have a website, I need to start one, but as I mentioned to you, most gamers have no idea that someone had been systematically preserving our history, so I'm trying to let people know that I have done this.

Q: Can other FRPG historians contact you via e-mail?

Bill: They can e-mail me at Stratochamp1@gmail.com

Q: Any last words you'd like to say?

Bill: My collection/museum is an homage to all of the creative people that have worked in the gaming industry and brought joy to millions. I saw their output as culturally significant and deserving of preservation. It's my way of saying thank you to all of you folks that have labored over the last 45 years to bring us these great games.



This limited-edition booklet
is a reproduction of the original
Grimtooth's Lair first
published for Origins 1983.

It has been produced
especially for the
Grimtooth's Trapsylvania
Kickstarter and is not
available elsewhere.

This reprint has been published
by Goodman Games in collaboration
with Flying Buffalo, Inc.

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