

FUR1-05

Parable for the Growers

**A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®
Kingdom of Furyondy Regional Adventure**

Version 1

by Brian P. Hudson

Sometimes, tales are just tales...and sometimes, they carry seeds of truth. As a terrible blight grips the fields of Furyondy, "Cuthbert's Lot" looks to their god for salvation, seeking answers in parables of the past. Can the PCs help? An underground adventure for character levels 1-6. .

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the

players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

- No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
- Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
- Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a Living™ adventure, it is expected that players will bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, a character sheet, and a LIVING GREYHAWK log sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer.

LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4 nd
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6 th
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41	8 th

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

Is it a Full Moon?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

Destitute: You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.

Poor: You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.

Common: You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

High: You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.

Luxury: You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

DM's Background

Twenty years ago, an ankheg moved into the fields surrounding Libernen, capitol of the Gold County. It immediately began terrorizing the townsfolk. While ankhegs sometimes live in the fields of the March and Littleberg, they are almost unheard of in the Gold County. Interpreting its presence as a divine sign, local clerics of St. Cuthbert encouraged some of the peasants to seek out "evil" within their community and drive it out. They did so, and directed their efforts toward a philandering husband, Eggan, and his farm girl mistress, Tinda, driving them out of the area. Coincidentally, the ankheg vanished, which the clerics took as a sign that they had done the right thing.

The truth is less impressive, though the fact remains that the ankheg disappeared. Its tunnels, however, remained below the sprawling fields of dresadoes that the Gold County is famous for. They did not remain vacant for long, however. For a portion of the tunnels, located near where the Gold County meets the Viscounty of the March, was soon claimed by a small tribe of kobolds—a cowardly warband that had fled south a few years before the Greyhawk Wars. The tunnels are deep, and secluded, and the tired, cowardly kobolds found them perfect for their needs.

Soon after they moved in, the kobolds found the ankheg's nesting area, and inside, something unexpected: an angry, hungry baby ankheg, abandoned when its mother had disappeared. The baby ankheg was starving; it had already cannibalized the other young ankheg, and it had not eaten in a long while. It lashed out at the kobolds that discovered it, and the nerveless creatures fled in terror.

Kobolds are cowardly, but tenacious, and the tribe was not about to give up its new home so easily. One of the tribe's bravest, a cleric of Kurtulmak, was sent (i.e., "forced") to handle the problem. The cleric, cowering, made his way into the ankheg's nest where he found the baby ankheg already dead from hunger. Not one to pass up an opportunity, the cleric cut the dead ankheg a few times with his dagger, then returned to his tribe victorious. He was given the name Mek Me'geggin—"Mek the Worm-Killer"—and made leader of the tribe. He still holds the position today.

The kobolds have spent the last twenty years relatively undisturbed, exploring the warrens left by the ankheg and keeping to themselves. Despite their evil natures they have remained relatively innocuous, their burrow being a good quarter-mile from the nearest major road, and several from the nearest town. The recent blight, however, has changed all that.

The Blight

There is a plague destroying Furyondy's crops. Hints of the blight began appearing the previous autumn, when harvest yields were low, but it was not until the 591 CY, during the planting season, that the problem became evident. Most of the wheat fields in the March are withering and dying. What little does grow is flavorless, and is quick to turn rotten. Other plants are affected as well; fruits and vegetables are bitter, while newly planted seedlings are refusing to grow at all. Food reserves are growing thin, and if something is not done soon, there could be famine come winter.

The kobolds are victims of the blight as well. While these kobolds have no real knowledge of farming (they were trained to fight, not farm), they did know how to grow and harvest an edible mushroom they call grabbit. Grabbit is bitter and tough, almost unpalatable to other humanoids, but the kobolds enjoy the dun-colored fungi and grow it in large amounts. Mek Me'geggin's tribe

grows the grabbit, and their crops have been seized by the blight. So the kobolds have been roaming far from their homes in search of food.

Only three nights ago, some of the kobolds were digging beneath the fields, looking for edible roots or pockets of grubs they might eat. One of the kobolds dislodged a large rock, and with it a particularly dry patch of earth. The ceiling collapsed in a rush of dirt and stone, creating a large sinkhole in the middle of a field of dresadoes, the valuable sunflowers of the Gold County. Curious and hungry, the kobolds climbed out of the new opening, determined to find something to eat.

The Gold County

Of all the provinces in Furyondy, the Gold County represents the greatest contradiction; it is home to both the richest, and the poorest, citizens in all of Furyondy. The land itself is gently rolling grassland, much of it either converted to farmland or covered in dresadoes, the unique golden sunflowers that lend the County its name. Small farming villages dot the landscape, but the only real populous center in the County is the city of Libernen.

For the peasantry of the Gold County, life does not offer much. The nobles go about their manipulative and self-serving routines and pay little attention to the commoners who toil for them; in fact, the nobles are often so self-serving they neglect the populace altogether. In the post-War years, worship of St. Cuthbert of the Cudgel gained popularity throughout Furyondy. In the Gold County, not only was that growth unusually large, but faith in the God of zeal and forthrightness has become deep and long lasting, even when the temporary surge in the rest of the Kingdom has died down. Faith in St. Cuthbert has become so ingrained in the common populace here that the nobles have begun referring to the peasants as "Cuthbert's Lot."

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs, traveling through the blight-stricken Gold County toward Pantarn, discover a crowd of local farmers, along with a zealous priest of St. Cuthbert. If they investigate, they find a sinkhole dropping some 15 feet into the ground. The rumor is that demons live within the hole, demons who are spreading the blight amongst the dresadoes. After talking to the farmers, and listening to the preacher, they should decide to investigate things.

The climb down the hole is relatively easy, and at the bottom, the PCs discover evidence of kobolds. They also find a large passage with two possible directions. If they go right, they discover the long-dead remnants of an ankheg, the creature who originally dug the tunnel. A group of *witherstench*—nasty little skink-like creatures

always on the lookout for food—live within its rotting shell.

Should the PCs go left, they find more evidence of kobolds, including some feathers and a chicken carcass (near some hungry centipedes). Eventually, they discover a small hole, through which they come into more natural underground warrens. Within these warrens, they may fight some darkmantles, or discover the ankheg's ancient nest. Eventually, however, they will come upon the kobolds, the "demons" the farmers feared.

The kobolds live in a large underground cave, lorded over by their chieftain, Mek Me'geggin. There are truly too many kobolds for the PCs to simply fight, so they must figure out a way, through force, subterfuge, or parlay, to get the kobolds out of the cavern.

Players' Introduction

As the adventure opens, the PCs are not in any particular town. They are all travelling a small trader road that leads toward Libernen. The PCs do not necessarily need to be together at this point; they will come together soon enough.

The day is gloomy. Gray clouds that hang low in the sky obscure the sun above, and a chill breeze tinges the air even as Wealsun approaches. You are traveling east into the Gold County after having followed the Att River Road south from adventures in the north. Fields of dresadoes, the famous golden sunflowers that have given the county its name, surround the road. Today, the dresadoes match the somber sky above, their brilliant golden petals obscured by a fine white powder, clouds of ill omen that scatter when the wind blows.

Things are the same all across the land. What had began as rumor during the harvest last autumn is now a known fact across the Kingdom—the white powder is a disease, and its victim is Furyondy. The crops that feed the Kingdom are dying. Those that do not die are flavorless, and quickly rot away. Food—good food—is getting rare. Grains imported from other places seem unaffected by the disease, but Furyondy is a large Kingdom, and the surpluses of other nations can only feed so many. So far, fields in the March and Littleberg have been affected, along with many of the dresadoes fields in the Gold County. In the wake of this, prices are rising, and there are rumors that out-of-the-way villages have already begun rationing their stores.

It is blight, a curse the likes of which Furyondy has never seen, and its origins are mysterious. Some scholars are sure it is just a natural phenomenon. Priests of Rao in Pantarn declared it of magical origin, though from where they could not say. Many are convinced it is the work of Old Wicked, Iuz the Evil; "He'll starve us

out," folk say, in taverns and over fences, "Starve us out, then take us over." Whatever its origin, it is a crisis, for if something is not done soon the winter will run rife with famine.

That is why you are in the Gold County now. There's work to be had in times of crisis, whether guarding a caravan of foodstuffs or simply lending a hand to the local farmers as they try to eke some healthy crops from the land. Perhaps you could even find a way to stop the blight, if it is, indeed, unnatural. Whatever the case, you're here, and willing to help.

As you ride, you notice a throng of people in the distance, in the middle of a field of dresadoes. There are at least a dozen of them, milling about and looking down at something. You can also hear a voice, dim but distinct. It seems to be shouting.

Ahead of you, another farmer is crossing the road, trudging through the sunflowers toward the group. He spies you and waves a hand.

"Come quick!" he says, his voice both eager and fearful. "They say there's demons about!"

Encounter 1: A Hole in the Ground

The man crossing the road is a farmer named Joss (male human Com1; Cha 9). If the PCs stop him, they notice that he looks agitated. Joss repeats excitedly that there are demons afoot, pointing toward the group in the field, and insists that the PCs come and see.

He then continues on, waving for the party to follow.

If the PCs ignore Joss, they are stopped a little farther on in their travels by Onas (male human Com1; Cha 10), another farmer headed toward the group. Onas, unlike Joss, notices any weapons or armor the PCs may be wearing (or have strapped to their horses), or the kinds of robes and cloaks that signal a spellcaster, or the holy symbol of a faith, and recognizes that the PCs are adventurers. Onas is smart enough to know that with demons afoot, having a few adventurers nearby might be handy; he repeats what Joss has already told the PCs, and insists that they come have a look.

If the PCs examine any of the dresadoes as they head toward the group of farmers, they will notice that the plants are not dying outright, though their leaves and petals are atrophied, their stems weak. The flowers are covered with a trace of a white film that blows away in the wind if disturbed, and will brush away under the PC's fingers. There doesn't seem to be a single unaffected flower.

Characters attempting to investigate the problem may do so using any number of avenues. The dresadoes neither detect evil nor poison if checked. Characters that are able to cure disease will be able to remove the film from a single

flower, but each breeze blows new powder onto the flower. PCs with either Profession (farming) or Alchemy can gain the most insight. Each player with any of these skills is allowed one check against whichever skill(s) they possess. Use the results below:

- 0-19: The PC can glean no information.
20-24: The substance does not appear to be a natural phenomenon. The sunflowers appear to have been altered in some way to produce the substance.
25+ The powder spreads from plant to plant by touch. If any of the powder touches an unaffected dresadoes, that flower will suffer and produce the powder within 24 hours of contact.

The peasants are gathering around the hole in the ground created by the hungry kobolds. It is about 8 ft. in diameter, and sinks 20 feet into the ground. It is a sinkhole of the type that is commonly created when loose earth falls into a tunnel or cave underground.

There are fifteen farmers and six children milling around the hole. They are all giving it a good 2-foot berth. Most of them are looking down the hole in fearful curiosity, and muttering amongst themselves. As the PCs approach, they see a young girl creeping to the edge of the hole and looking down; her fearful father quickly calls her back.

The farmers do not immediately notice the PCs, as their attention is directed toward the hole, and to the cleric of St. Cuthbert preaching around it ("Preacher Man," below). The farmers are trading opinions about the hole, and the identity of the creatures that disappeared into it. None of them have the courage to go down and check it out.

If the PCs ask the farmers about the hole, they will be told that the hole was discovered the night before, when one of the farmers, Jeran, chased a number of shadowy figures from his farm. The figures disappeared down this hole. The demons, the farmers tell the PCs, are responsible for the blight.

Jeran (male human Com1; Cha 10) is present at the hole, and any of the farmers can point him out. Jeran is a short, stocky man with beefy arms and a tanned, wrinkled face. Jeran speaks with a drawl. He will gladly recount his story.

"I heard something exciting the chickens last night, and so I grabbed my pitchfork and went looking. I thought it might be thieves, looking for food. Instead, I've seen demons! They was unnatural—horned and scaly, with pointy tails and wicked grins. They were covered in the powder, too—the very same powder that's killing the crops. They had a half dozen of my best hens in their claws."

"I think I caught 'em by surprise. They let out a holler and ran away when I opened the door. They made off into the dresadoes, spreading the blight with every step. I followed 'em to this hole, where they disappeared. I ain't gone down after my chickens; it'd take a braver type, with a better weapon than a pitchfork, to head down that hole."

Jeran's farmhouse is nearby, if the PCs wish to examine it; Jeran can lead them there personally. The farmhouse is a small affair set on a dirt track off the road the PCs were following. It consists of a two-room farmhouse, a small barn with a livestock pen and three thin cows, and the chicken coop. PCs looking for clues in the chicken coop can Search, though there is nothing to find. PCs willing to Track/Wilderness Lore may find some small indistinct tracks heading in the direction of the hole (DC15). It is impossible to tell what made the prints; the wind has blown any discriminating features away.

Jeran's tale is true enough, though he is exaggerating some particulars—namely, that the "demons" were spreading the blight. While the 3-foot tall kobolds were covered in the fine white powder, it was only because they were walking through the dresadoes, which grow almost as high as the kobolds are tall. PCs who care to look will notice quickly that the legs of everyone present (and the bodies of smaller PCs) are covered in the same powder. The powder is harmless to living creatures, and brushes off easily.

Curious farmers have trampled the area around the hole, and players attempting to Search or Track/Wilderness Lore the area for evidence of the demons will find nothing. There are some clues to be had only around the hole itself, where loose soil and un-trampled ground have retained some footprints. Succeeding at a Search or Tracking/Wilderness Lore check (DC15) reveals a few scattered footprints on the edges of the hole. The PC can discern little, except that small, bare feet made the prints, possibly goblinoid. If the PC rolls a modified roll of 20 or more he or she discovers a particularly clear print that shows an elongated foot with what appear to be claw marks around the toes. PCs who succeed at a Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) can determine that the print is probably a kobold.

Preacher Man

Also present is a cleric of St. Cuthbert, the vocal, pious Whillom Stronbillet.

Whillom Stronbillet, male human Clc5 (St. Cuthbert): Medium-size Humanoid; HD 5d8; hp 28; Init +5 (Improved Initiative, Dex); Spd 30; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atks +5 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +4 ranged (1d4, sling); AL LN; SV Fort +4. Ref +2, Will +7.

Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills: Concentration +5, Diplomacy +10, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +6, Sense Motive (cc) +4,

Spellcraft +3; Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus: heavy mace.

Spells (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0—cure minor wounds, detect magic, mending, purify food and drink, virtue; 1st—bless, cure light wounds (x2), sanctuary*, shield of faith. 2nd—calm emotions*, gentle repose, shield Other, silence. 3rd—helping hand, prayer, protection from elements*.

* domain spells (Domains: Law—Cast law spells at +1 caster level; Protection—Generate a protective ward.

Whillom is a stern man in his mid-thirties with tanned skin and white hair around the temples. He wears white clerical robes, over which he wears crimson scarves emblazoned with the symbol of St. Cuthbert.

Whillom is the leader of the church of St. Cuthbert in the Gold County, a member of the Billits (those who protect the faithful, though he often acts more like a member of the Stars, those who maintain doctrinal purity). His presence here is spiritual. Whillom favors the newer, stronger, more neutral strain of St. Cuthbert, which emphasizes retribution and discipline alongside wisdom and zeal. Whillom is very critical of the wicked and sinful. He has a slight dislike of adventuring types, as they represent a chaotic element that is not always good; this is especially true of adventuring clerics of other faiths.

Whillom is preaching when the PCs arrive, and will continue to do so, unless the PCs stop him. The gist of his sermon is this: the blight that is now gripping Furyondy is a punishment from St. Cuthbert, against the populace, who has transgressed against him.

Below are three “parables” that Whillom delivers in his sermon. The DM can either deliver these as fit, or can deliver them all, in order, if/when the PCs stop to listen to the sermon.

The Righteous Worm

“You are not the only ones to suffer amongst the dresadoes for your sins. Do you so quickly forget the lessons of your fathers? Remember when St. Cuthbert visited the righteous worm upon the populace! Remember its biting mandibles, its burning breath, and its wicked, faceted eyes. Some of you were there! Some of you saw it!

“And what happened, those twenty long years ago? Your fathers sought out evil and wickedness, and drove it from their midst. And lo, the worm vanished! If you want this plague to vanish, too, seek out the evil amongst you, and punish it!”

If any of the PCs ask questions amongst the peasants, they can get details about this story, as presented in the DM’s Introduction. The truth of the story is not that impressive. The number of “righteous peasants” amounted to a lynch mob of about a dozen men and women, led by Whillom’s

father, Edwaden. And the ankheg, while definitely an oddity in the area, was nothing divinely sent; it had simply roamed from farmlands in the Viscounty of the March in search of food. Its disappearance, too, was less than divine, as the PCs may find out if they venture into the hole.

The version of events the PCs hear from the farmers, however, will be less than faithful, tending more toward Whollom’s religious hyperbole. The “Righteous Worm” was a killer, 50 ft. long with glowing eyes; Eggen was an evil man who beat his wife and had a dozen mistresses; and Tinda was nothing short of a whore who had tempted half the men in the community.

The Town of Blackwell

“Remember, too, the town of Blackwell! It was your own who fell in that diseased town. They say a stranger came to that cursed hamlet, his pockets full of gold. He was evil, they say, and his coins cursed. But he was not evil, and his coins, if they were cursed, were cursed only for the faithless. That man was St. Cuthbert! Blackwell was a town of the unfaithful, who had allowed bad deeds to go unpunished! And when St. Cuthbert visited the plague upon their town, it was in righteous retribution for the evil and wickedness that had gone unpunished there.”

PCs wishing to learn more about Blackwell may do so from the farmers. Blackwell is a real town that still stands, though it is considered a cursed place, and no one ventures there. In 579 CY the entire village was wiped out by a mysterious plague, brought, they say, when a mysterious dark-robed man arrived in town. In the years since, encroaching waters have turned the land around Blackwell into a swamp inhabited by monsters, and the town itself is said to be both haunted, and still teeming with the plague. Then, there is the black-cloaked man, who was never accounted for.

Blackwell is many miles from the hole in the ground, and few of the farmers there know exactly where it is. The few that do are reluctant to give directions, insisting that such things should be left alone.

The Gremlins of Retribution

“And now, the plague has come amongst us again. These shadows in the night, these gremlins of retribution, they visit the plague upon our fields by divine writ!

“Only it is not WE who have been wicked. It is our leaders, our nobles, fat in pride and gluttony. They have been wicked! And by not speaking out for your own good, you are letting evil and corruption thrive amongst you! Do not chase the gremlins of retribution from your fields. Welcome them, and embrace the just punishment they bring!”

“St. Cuthbert has not visited the plague of Blackwell upon you. Nor has he sent the righteous worm to terrorize you. He has given you a chance! Speak out against the sinfulness of your lords and ladies. Let those who will, repent! Drive out those who will not! Reject the wicked ways of your lords, and St. Cuthbert shall tend your crops for you, and assure you a bountiful harvest before winter comes.”

The “wickedness” Whillom is attributing to the nobles of the Gold County is partly an accusation of political motivation. Whillom is a staunch advocate of “Cuthbert’s Lot,” the downtrodden peasants of the Gold County. He has been to other provinces in Furyondy, and he sees how wide the divide is between peasant and lord here. He wants to encourage the peasants to demand better lives and lower taxes.

That does not mean Whillom does not believe that the plague is divinely sent. He sees it as a warning and a call to action for Cuthbert’s Lot. And he aims to see it through.

Once Whillom has finished his sermon, he will be willing to talk to most PCs, though he will not approach them. He will not speak with followers of Pholtus, and will be cold (at best) to followers of evil-tinged gods such as Wee Jas. Whillom believes strongly in what he has said, and will accept no other explanation for the hole without some proof, i.e., without someone going into the hole and finding out exactly what the “gremlins of retribution” happen to be.

If the PCs challenge the notion, Whillom suggests that the PCs go down the hole and prove him wrong. This could be delivered either in suggestive tones or as a challenge, depending upon the tone of the conversation up to that point. Should a cleric or paladin of St. Cuthbert be present in the party, Whillom might even impose upon them to help him prove the truth of St. Cuthbert’s wrath. In any instance, Whillom is so convinced of the truth of his statements that he even offers to *bless* the PCs prior to going down, for he is sure that the dangers below are divinely sent. The gesture is relatively empty, since the spell will wear off in five minutes (about the time it will take the PCs to get down the hole).

Once the PCs draw any notice to themselves, either by talking to Whillom or any of the farmers, or (say, in the case of a greataxe-wielding half-orc barbarian) simply by being seen, the farmers will begin to eye them—not suspiciously, but thoughtfully. While most of the farmers are faithful followers of St. Cuthbert, none of them really likes the idea of the “gremlins of retribution,” and they wonder in any case, what does stealing chickens have to do with a blight? Perhaps if someone were to go down that hole, maybe they could find out what was *really* going on.

If Whillom has already asked (or challenged) the PCs to investigate the hole, the farmers will

take up the idea, and try to prod the PCs into it. Some PCs will volunteer to venture down simply out of curiosity, or perhaps their “duty” as a good adventurer; others will need more encouragement. If the PCs seem reluctant to go down the hole, have the assembled farmers prod them into exploring the hole.

The farmers begin to mutter comments about how

“we’d like to see what’s down that hole,”

and

“someone who was inclined to might just crawl down there an’ be the hero.”

They even begin to nod toward the bigger, stronger PCs, or any PC wearing spellcaster’s robes, and simply ask “are you curious? I sure am.” The children quickly get caught up in the act, saying how brave they would be if they were bigger, how they would “head right down that hole, and stop the blight me’self.”

If the PCs walk away from the hole, refusing to explore it, the farmers mutter under their breath but do little else. Let the PCs travel to Libernen, where they hear stories about the hole, including the rumor (unfounded) that a farmer was abducted by the “demons.”

Encounter 2: Like Alice, Down the Rabbit Hole

Getting down the hole is tricky. While there are roots and rocks sticking out at intervals, the soil is loose and dry; PCs must succeed at Climb checks (DC 20) to avoid slipping down in a spill of loose sand and dirt. The fall is 15 feet, but sand and dirt pad the landing, and falling damage (1d6) is temporary, subdual damage. Use of ropes can add up to a +5 bonus, provided the PCs can find a place to anchor them. Despite the lack of any real damage, the PCs may not take 10 on this action.

At the bottom of the hole is a pile of dirt and stone nearly five feet tall at its peak, and trampled by both the PC’s own feet, and those of several other beings. The remnants of several dresadoes are scattered about. The dirt at the bottom of the hole is loose enough that several footprints are easily visible, and a Wilderness Lore check, (DC 14), will identify them as kobold tracks.

Heading east (right) and west (left) from the hole is a large tunnel, roughly 10-12 ft. wide and nearly as tall. Far from being a natural cave, the tunnel looks as though some burrowing creature created it. A Track/Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) discovers footprints on the harder cave floor. The prints seem to lead off in either direction. It will take a PC with Tracking, however, to follow the path beyond a foot or so. If the PC rolls a 20+ on

the check, he or she is able to determine that the tracks leading left are fresher and more numerous than those leading right are.

Curious PCs who begin poking around in the pile of fallen dirt will find, on a Search check (DC 18), a dead body buried beneath the collapsed soil. The corpse is a small, scaly creature with rusty brown skin and two dull horns protruding from its head. It wears a simple loincloth, and clasps a 4 ft. long stick, on the end of which is tied a bone dagger. It is fairly fresh (PCs with Heal easily note that it has only been dead for a day or two), though it smells a bit when uncovered.

This is one of the actual culprits, the cause of the sinkhole. The kobolds were digging around the tunnel ceiling with the sticks, looking for roots or tubers, when they dislodged a tangle of roots and started the collapse that formed the sinkhole. There were five kobolds present, but only this one was trapped when the dirt began to fall.

Encounter 3: Right

The tunnel heads relatively straight, never veering, never forking. The atmosphere is heavy and cold, and the your torches burn dull in the damp air. In the shadows around you, you catch glimpses of insects and vermin, scattering at your footfalls and disappearing into the earth.

Pockets of dirt and shadow to your left and right hint at old cross-tunnels, long since collapsed and buried. At several points in the main tunnel you find half-collapsed walls or piles of shoved-aside dirt where the loamy earth threatens to block the path before you, but each time you are able to squeeze through and continue on.

The PCs can search each side tunnel individually if they wish. None of them continue on for more than 10 feet before ending in collapsed dirt and stone, where either tunnels had collapsed or mounds of dirt had been shoved aside, blocking further progress. After approximately 500 yards, read or paraphrase the following:

You begin to smell something in the air, hanging off the dampness. It is a foul odor, acrid and sour. Even as you begin to notice the stench, you see something in the distance—a structure? An archway? Whatever it is, it is fairly large, and appears to be sitting squarely in your path.

The thing in the distance is the chitin shell of a dead ankheg. It has been dead some thirty years, and scavengers have eaten what has not rotted away. PCs with Wilderness Lore can identify the remains on a Skill check (DC 18). The shell stands about six feet tall, so taller PCs will need to duck to walk beneath it. If PCs want to crawl on top of the shell they may do so, though there is only about a foot of clearance between the shell and the tunnel ceiling. There is nothing on top of the

shell to find, and no way past the shell from above.

While the PCs may mistake the stench in the air as the smell of the dead ankheg, the culprit is far more alive. Housed beneath the shell is a family of witherstench, small, skunk-like creatures who emit a rancid odor to incapacitate potential prey. The witherstench lair is 10 feet beneath the shell. If any PC approaches within 15 feet they must make a Fortitude Save (DC13) or become nauseated (below). The witherstench attacks if the PCs step under the shell, or if a PC collapses from the stench outside of the shell.

Tier 1 (EL 2)

Witherstench (3): CR 1/2 Tiny Animal (1' long); HD 2d6+2; hp 6 each; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 15 ft., Climb 15 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Small size, +4 Dex); Atks +0 melee (2 claws, 1d3-4); SA Stench; SQ Darkvision 60' low-light vision, smell immunity, skills; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1.

Str 3, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Weapon Finesse (claws).

SA: Stench (Ex)—The purplish spots of the witherstench's skin emit a foul odor that may (Fortitude, DC 11), wrack those within 10 with nausea. Those who fail their save suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all attacks, save, and skill checks for 1d6+4 minutes.

SQ: Smell Immunity (Ex)—The witherstench is not only immune to its own stench, but it is also immune to other attacks (magical or nonmagical) that assault by stench, such as the stinking cloud spell, or a ghast's stench.

Witherstench look like large, hairless, skunks, with sickly yellow skin covered in nasty purple blotches and spots.

Tier 2 (EL 4)

Witherstench (5): use stats above.

Tier 3 (EL 5)

Witherstench (9): use stats above.

The whitherstench are small and quick, and attack with cunning. If a single PC steps under the shell and succumbs to their smell, they will attack. They are less likely to attack a group of PCs who step under the shell, though they will protect their territory, and ultimately the PCs will have to either kill the witherstench, or drive them off to continue past them and to explore the ankheg shell in detail.

Once the PCs have either killed or driven off the witherstench, they may wish to search the ankheg shell. The witherstench's nest can be located in a rock alcove beneath the shell, amidst a pile of small, rotting bones. There is no treasure here. Observant PCs (Spot, DC 15) will notice some larger bones amongst the refuse, roughly halfling or gnome-sized. A short Search (DC 15)

finds a skull, covered with dirt, further in. This is the remnant of an unlucky kobold that wandered into the witherstench's lair, and succumbed to its harsh stench. Any PC will be able to recognize the vague, humanoid nature of the skull, and if the PCs found the dead kobold in Encounter 2 they will be able to determine that the skull belonged to a similar creature. Otherwise it will take a Wilderness Lore check at DC 15 to guess that the skull belongs to a kobold.

Some PCs may want to salvage the ankheg shell for armor. Unfortunately, the shell has softened and rotted, a process accelerated by the harsh chemical of the witherstench's smell. There is no recoverable shell.

Beyond, the PCs make an interesting discovery. Where the ankheg's head would be, there is nothing but collapsed earth and one very heavy rock. This is the "righteous worm" that figured into one of Whillom's tales, the ankheg that St. Cuthbert supposedly sent to punish the peasants of the Gold County. The ankheg's head was crushed as it burrowed beneath the rock, when loose earth gave way—the not-so divine end to Whillom Stonbillet's parable. The collapsed tunnel is completely blocked, barring the PCs from venturing further. Indeed, there is no tunnel beyond the rock.

Encounter 4: Left

The tunnel winds both north and west. Occasionally it seems to fork, but you quickly find that the two forks reconnect with one another after a short distance. The air is cold and damp, and the your torches burn dull. Around you, insects and vermin scatter in the shadows and occasionally scurry in front of you.

Pockets of dirt and shadow hint at old cross-tunnels, though most of them look long since collapsed and buried. The main path is open and clear.

Like the tunnel to the right, there are various side branches that the PCs may wish to explore, but all of them end within 10 feet of the main tunnel.

PCs who continue to Track/Wilderness Lore along the tunnel (DC15) can confirm that the footprints continue down the main tunnel. 50 ft. from the sinkhole, PCs who are tracking find two white feathers on the ground (they can also be found on a Search roll, DC15 if actively searching, or Spot roll, DC20). They are obviously chicken feathers.

If the PCs Search the immediate area (DC15), they discover a discarded chicken corpse tossed into a collapsed side tunnel. Unfortunately for them, the side tunnel happens to be a nest for some monstrous centipedes.

Tier 1 (EL 1)

Monstrous centipede (6): CR 1/8; Small Vermin; HD 1/2d8; hp 2; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +3 melee (1d4-3, bite); SA Poison; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0.

Str 5, Dex 15, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +11, Spot +7; **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA: Poison (Ex)—DC 11; Initial none; Secondary 1d2 Dex.

Tier 2 (EL 2)

Monstrous centipedes (8): CR 1/4; Medium-size Vermin; HD 1d8; HP 4; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Natural); Atks +2 melee (1d6-1, bite); SA Poison; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0.

Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +7, Spot +7; **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA: Poison (Ex)—DC 11; Initial none; Secondary 1d2 Dex.

Tier 3 (EL 4)

Monstrous centipede (5): CR 1/2; Large Vermin (7 ft, long); CR1/2; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); Atks +1 melee (1d8+1, bite); SA Poison; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0.

Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +9, Hide +1, Spot +7; **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA: Poison (Ex)—DC 12; Initial none; Secondary 1d3 Dex.

One centipede will be curled up in the rocks near the chicken carcass when the PCs approach it (opposed Hide check vs. Spot check to notice the creature); it will attack the first thing that moves. The rest are in the dirt walls, and will be drawn out by the possibility of food if a PC disturbs the bones. The bird has been mostly eaten, both by the kobolds who took it, and then the centipedes that devoured the remains. Only a few scraps of flesh remain.

A quarter-mile from the sinkhole, the PCs reach a fork in the tunnel. The main path they have been following continues to the left. If the PCs wish to follow it, it continues on for another 100 feet and ends abruptly in a collapse.

The right path is a smaller tunnel, and PCs tracking the footprints will see that they lead this way. The path ends at about 30 feet, where the PCs find a small hole. The hole is about 2 1/2 feet in diameter, taller than it is wide, about a foot off the ground. While once apparently part of the larger tunnel, rock falls have blocked off all but this small opening. PCs who Search or Track/Wilderness Lore around the hole (DC12) find evidence that something has crawled through the hole on several occasions.

The hole is large enough that size Small PCs (gnomes, halflings) can fit through, as a full-round action. Bigger PCs will have a trickier time. Thinner PCs, such as elves and half-elves, can worm their way through the hole as a full round action if they strip off any constricting armor, bulky backpacks, and weapons, and if they make a successful Climb check at DC15. Larger PCs, however—muscle-bound fighters, broad-shouldered dwarves, half-orcs—have no other choice but to dig. It will take approximately 10 minutes to enlarge the hole enough that any PC can Climb through, DC15, or 20 minutes to enlarge the hole enough to fit through easily. Unless the PCs take pains to be quiet about it, their digging will alert the dire rats in the room beyond.

The PCs may get the idea to collapse the tunnel here, thereby sealing off whatever lies on the other side and prematurely ending the adventure. Should they do so, the kobolds will dig the hole out within a day, and once again begin terrorizing the local farmers.

Encounter 5: Underground Warrens

These are more natural caverns, underground warrens that the long-dead ankheg had used as its nest. The walls are more solid than the dirt tunnels behind the PCs. There is no real path through these caves; the PCs may pretty much wander them at will, until they come to the kobold cave (Encounter 6).

A. Short room. This natural cave is about 30 feet by 30 feet, but the ceiling is only 4 feet high. A taller area (about 8 feet high) runs directly through the center of the room, where the ankheg tunneled through the natural cavern long ago. The taller area leads from the far exit directly to the hole the PCs entered through.

At the far end of this room are some sleeping dire rats, trained “pets” of the kobolds that live nearby. These rats are left to wander the tunnels freely, and are only sleeping here by coincidence when the PCs arrive. If the PCs cause any large amount of noise as they dig out the hole in Encounter 4, each rat gets a Listen check, if the PCs are taking extra pains to be quiet. One awake, a rat will awake the rest. If they awaken, they rise to check out the noise.

Tier 1 (EL 1)

Dire Rats (2): CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 15 (+1 Size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +3 melee (1d4, bite); SA Disease; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3.

Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6, Listen +6, Spot +6; **Feats:** Weapon finesse (bite).

SA: Disease (Ex)—Any PC bitten by the rat must make a Fortitude save at DC 12 or be infected by a disease that does 1d3 temporary points of Dexterity and Constitution. The disease incubates for 1d3 days.

Tier 2 (EL 3)

Dire Rats (4): CR 1/2; Medium-size Animal; HD 2d8+2; hp 10 each; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +3 melee (1d4, bite); SA disease; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3.

Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6; **Feats:** Weapon finesse (bite).

SA: Disease (Ex)—Any PC bitten by the rat must make a Fortitude save at DC 12 or be infected by a disease that does 1d3 temporary points of Dexterity and Constitution. The disease incubates for 1d3 days.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Dire Rats (6): hp 12 each, uses Tier 2 stats.

B. Darkmantle hunting grounds. If any PC attempts a Tracking/Wilderness Lore check at either juncture to this tunnel (DC 25), they discover that it is not often used. The kobolds have quickly learned to avoid it, because the tunnel is the hunting ground for some hungry darkmantle.

The darkmantle are pressed against the ceiling to the south (see map), looking like simple lumps of rock. As the kobolds have learned not to use this tunnel, the darkmantle have not eaten well recently, and they will be particularly swift to attack. If a single PC comes down the tunnel, he or she is definite prey for the hungry creatures, though only a single darkmantle will grab a single PC. If several PCs come down the corridor, the darkmantle aims for the tallest adventurers first.

Each attacking darkmantle should receive a surprise round, unless PCs were specifically looking above their heads. Even in such a case, each darkmantle receives Hide check, opposed to a PC Spot check.

Tier 1 (EL 1)

Darkmantle (1): CR 1; Small Magical Beast; HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); AC 17 (+1 Size, +6 natural); Atks +4 melee (1d4+4, slam); SA darkness, improved grab, constrict; SQ blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0.

Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +5; **Feats:** Improved Initiative.

SA: Darkness (Su)—Once a day, a darkmantle can cast darkness as a 5th-level sorcerer; **Improved Grab (Ex)**—If the darkmantle hits with its slam attack, it can use its Improved Grab. When it

grabs, it may constrict; *Constrict* (Ex)—A darkmantle deals 1d4+4 damage with a successful grapple check.

SQ: *Blindsight*—Darkmantles can “see” up to 90 ft by emitting and receiving a high-pitched frequency. A *silence* spell effectively blinds a darkmantle.

Tier 2 (EL 4)

Darkmantle, Advanced (2): CR 2; Small Magical Beast; HD 2d10+2; hp 12; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); AC 17 (+1 Size, +6 natural); Atks +5 melee (1d4+4, slam); SA darkness, improved grab, constrict; SQ *blindsight*; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0.

Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +5; Feats: Improved Initiative.

SA: *Darkness* (Su)—Once a day, a darkmantle can cast *darkness* as a 5th-level sorcerer; *Improved Grab* (Ex)—If the darkmantle hits with its slam attack, it can use its Improved Grab. When it grabs, it may constrict; *Constrict* (Ex)—A darkmantle deals 1d4+4 damage with a successful grapple check.

SQ: *Blindsight*—Darkmantles can “see” up to 90 ft by emitting and receiving a high-pitched frequency. A *silence* spell effectively blinds a darkmantle.

Tier 3 (EL 6)

Darkmantle, advanced (4): CR 2; Small Magical Beast; HD 3d10+3; hp 18; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); AC 17 (+1 Size, +6 natural); Atks +5 melee (1d4+4, slam); SA darkness, improved grab, constrict; SQ *blindsight*; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1.

Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +5; Feats: Improved Initiative.

SA: *Darkness* (Su)—Once a day, a darkmantle can cast *darkness* as a 5th-level sorcerer; *Improved Grab* (Ex)—If the darkmantle hits with its slam attack, it can use its Improved Grab. When it grabs, it may constrict; *Constrict* (Ex)—A darkmantle deals 1d4+4 damage with a successful grapple check.

SQ: *Blindsight*—Darkmantles can “see” up to 90 ft by emitting and receiving a high-pitched frequency. A *silence* spell effectively blinds a darkmantle.

C. Ankheg nest. This area once served as the ankheg's nest. Roughly 25 feet in diameter, this area has a low floor that drops steeply 2 feet from either entrance. The ceiling is 10-foot high.

In the center of the cavern is a small clutch of dried, globular balls, each roughly 1-foot around. They are dry and paper thin, and somewhat cold and slimy to the touch. All of them are broken open. These are the remnants of the ankheg's eggs. Around the nest are the remnants of two

dead baby ankhegs. Each baby was barely out of its larval stage, and had a barely developed shell. These shells, as well as the harder remnants of their heads, are all that remains near the nest. The shells are cracked and gnawed on. Due to the poor shape of the remnants and their juvenile, undeveloped shapes, it will take a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 25) to recognize them, if the PCs have not previously found and identified the parent ankheg in Encounter 3.

Beneath the dried eggs is a small patch of slimy residue, still damp even after 20 years. If any PC searches through the slime, they discover a handful of coins (20 wheatsheaf total).

PCs Tracking/Wilderness Lore in this room will discover (DC 15) that it is often used, and full of footprints.

D. Entrance. The cave opens up to the outside world in a sinkhole similar to the one the PCs originally entered. PCs with Wilderness Lore (DC 20) can identify these holes as manufactured holes, probably made by the ankheg. The PCs come out upon a field of diseased dresadoes, from a hole nestled within a small, hilly patch of land. A small pond sits nearby. There is nothing of interest for the PCs here, though the DM may point out that the surrounding land looks uninhabited.

Encounter 6: Kobold Lair

1. Western approach. This corridor leads to a small cavern, 30-foot by 30-foot, and filled with a foul odor, which the PCs will smell as they approach it. The room itself has a high ceiling, and is filled with the refuse of the kobold tribe.

Whenever the PCs approach this area, roll a Listen check (DC12) for the kobolds within. These kobolds are guardians, making sure no wandering creatures happen into the kobold's cavern, attracted by the smell of the garbage. If they hear the PCs, they will gather themselves and attack.

Twenty feet down this first corridor, the kobolds have laid a trap, intended to keep wandering monsters at bay. It is a rather nasty form of pit trap, in that the pit itself—which is covered by a spread of leaves easily spotted (DC10) by approaching PCs—is only part of the trick. Two three-foot dirt walkways have been left to either side of the pit, but only one is real; the other is a loose bar of sandy dirt that will collapse whenever anything weighing more than 25 pounds walks over it. When the sand gives way, it spills the person walking on top into the pit below, a 10-foot drop to a hard, rocky bottom (1d6 points of falling damage). The right-hand sidebar is the trapped, collapsing one; the left-hand sidebar is solid.

Kobold Pit Trap: Collapsing walkway, 1d6 points of subdual damage; Reflex Save DC 15 to avoid;

Search DC15. **Note:** no Disable Device; the trap is avoided by walking on the opposite side.

If the kobolds hear a PC falling into the trap, they will immediately gather themselves and attack.

Tier 1 (EL 1)

Kobolds (6): CR 1/6; Small Humanoid; HD 1/2d8; hp 2 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather); Atks –1 melee (1d6-2, halfspear) or +2 ranged (1d4, sling); AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2.

Str 6 Dex 13 Con 11 Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +8, Move Silently +4; **Feats:** Alertness

Equipment: Each kobold carries a halfspear and a sling, along with a dozen or so sling rocks. Each also has a pouch full of polished rocks and bits of metal—worthless to the PCs, this is the kobold community's version of coinage.

Tier 2 (EL 3)

Kobolds (11): CR 1/6; Small Humanoid; HD 1/2d8; hp 2 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather); Atks –1 melee (1d6-2, halfspear) or +2 ranged (1d4, sling); AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2.

Str 6 Dex 13 Con 11 Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +8, Move Silently +4

Feats: Alertness

Equipment: Each kobold carries a halfspear and a sling, along with a dozen or so sling rocks. Each also has a pouch-full of polished rocks and bits of metal—worthless to the PCs, this is the kobold community's version of coinage.

Tier 3 (EL 4)

Kobolds (15): CR 1/6; Small Humanoid; HD 1/2d8; hp 2 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather); Atks –1 melee (1d6-2, halfspear) or +2 ranged (1d4, sling); AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2.

Str 6 Dex 13 Con 11 Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +8, Move Silently +4

Feats: Alertness

Equipment: Each kobold carries a halfspear and a sling, along with a dozen or so sling rocks. Each also has a pouch-full of polished rocks and bits of metal—worthless to the PCs, this is the kobold community's version of coinage.

Kobolds are, in general, cowardly creatures. When they discover the PCs' presence they will try to scare them off with bold threats in rough common, and banging their halfspears on the ground between attacks. They know their duty, however, and will not flee from a fight until more than half of them have fallen. If any of these kobolds get away, they go running into the main kobold cavern, shouting an alarm that alerts the tribe, as well as the chieftain Mek Me'geggin, to the PC's presence.

2. Tribal Cavern

This mostly natural underground cave has been claimed by the tribe of Mek Me'geggin as their home amongst the dresadoes. It is a wide cavern, with sloped sides and a flat ceiling. The floor to the cavern slopes down in two tiers, stopping ten feet below the cavern entrance. The far end of the cavern opens out onto the shore of a small pond, where the kobolds have built a crude dam to stop floodwaters that used to fill this cavern during the rainy seasons.

There are about a dozen huts scattered along the sloped cavern walls, all of them between 5 feet and 10 feet around. If the PCs look into any of these cabins, they find at least one female kobold, and one or more children. All of the kobolds look hungry. Neither the women nor the children will call out in alarm if a PC simply looks in; their instincts are to freeze fearfully, in hopes that the PC threat will soon leave. If any PC moves toward a woman or child, or even reaches for them, any resident of a given hut will begin to shout, drawing the attentions of the tribe.

The darkest, wettest corner of the cavern is filled with organized rows of grabbit mushrooms, growing in a haphazard mix of refuse, animal parts, and soil. Two elderly kobolds tend to the mushrooms; they will look fearfully up at the PCs, but they will not call out an alarm if the PCs make no threatening gestures. If any PC wishes to examine the grabbit, and they look as though they want to help, the kobolds (who do not speak common) will let them. The grabbit has the mysterious powder on it, and PCs who examine the grabbit immediately recognize that the mushrooms are suffering from the same fate as the dresadoes. If the PCs did not stop to examine the dresadoes, allow PCs with either Profession (farming) or Alchemy a roll against whichever skill(s) they possess. Use the results below:

0-19: The PC can glean no information.

20-25: The substance does not appear to be a natural phenomenon. The sunflowers appear to have been altered in some way to produce the substance.

25+ The powder spreads from plant to plant by touch. If any of the powder touches an unaffected mushroom, that flower will suffer and produce the powder within 24 hours of contact.

Some distance away, though also on the outer rim of the cavern, is a crude wooden pen. It is untended. Inside the pen are a number of filthy, furry forms—dire rats, the trained attack dogs of the kobold tribe. While kobolds prefer the company of dire weasels, this tribe's weasels died long ago, and the rats, which lived in the underground warrens, seemed an adequate replacement. There are 4, 6, or 8 rats in the pen, depending on the tier (use the statistics in Encounter Five above if needed). There is also a

small pile of refuse, mainly rotting dresadoes, grabbit mushrooms, and the bones of small animals. If the PCs watch a short while, they see one of the rats begin to nibble on the garbage.

In the center of the cavern is a tall pile of stone and dirt, on the eastern edge of a large, clear patch of ground. A number of pelts have been draped over the top of the pile, which has been shaped into a crude seat.

Mek Me'geggin sits atop the throne. Mek is an old kobold, his skin is dry and his hair is gray around the edges. He is adorned in bits of metal and a dirty wolf pelt, and wears the exoskeleton of the baby ankheg's head as a crown. A single, unpolished amethyst (worth 35 gp) has been jammed into one of the ankheg's eye sockets. He has a large belly, as he eats well despite his hungry tribe (Mek is far from a gracious ruler).

Before the throne, like a macabre altar, is the body of the baby ankheg—a string of chitin shell about 8 ft. long, stuck up on posts like a Chinese dragon. PCs who examine the baby ankheg shell note that, unlike the shell of the adult, this shell is still good, and could be collected for use.

The PCs stand a good chance of being spotted by a kobold soldier per minute they spend in the cavern. Although the kobolds do not have the *Spot* skill, there is very little cover enforcing a -4 penalty to any opposed *Hide* checks. Unlike the women and children, or the elderly crop keepers, soldier kobolds are trained to perceive all other humanoids as a threat. The minute the PC's presence is discovered in the cavern, the kobolds will let out a shrill hoot that draws every healthy male in the tribe. There are fewer kobolds than would normally be found in a full tribe, because many of them are hungry, and too weak to fight; these males (roughly a dozen) stay inside their huts when the call goes out, to protect the women and children.

The assembled kobolds will surround the PCs and attempt to look menacing, but they will not attack unless the PCs do. Instead, they try to herd the PCs toward the altar and throne in the center of the cavern. As they do so, they begin to chant "Mek! Mek! Mek!" Several of the braver kobolds, who speak a crude form of common, will tell the PCs to "move along! Move along!"

Mek Me'geggin has ideas about royalty, and leadership, and where he fits in the social scale of his tribe. If the PCs allow themselves to be brought before his throne, Mek will force them to observe a crude form of ceremony. First, he will say a prayer to Kurtulmak, and insist that the PCs be silent while he delivers it. Then, each PC must kneel before him before they may speak, and kiss the trophy carcass of his victory kill (the dead baby ankheg). While smart PCs may kowtow to Mek's wishes, thinking it will open him up to more rational negotiations, the reverse is actually true. If any PC kneels and kisses the dead baby ankheg, then Mek feels smugly superior to them, and they suffer a -2 on all Charisma-based skill checks while speaking to him.

Mek, like all of his kind, hates gnomes. All gnomes who face Mek Me'geggin receive a -2 Charisma check penalty, regardless of whether or not they kowtow to the chieftain. Gnomes who kowtow and kiss the dead ankheg drop to -6 Charisma penalty.

If the PCs try to parlay with Mek Me'geggin, the chieftain will listen. This is truly the preferred outcome for the PCs, as the kobold tribe could very well pose a serious threat to them. Mek can speak common better than the rest of his tribe, though still a tad crudely. Since he fancies himself a powerful king, he will relish to opportunity to "negotiate with the outsiders," though his "negotiations" will amount to blustering smugness in the face of any threats and an insistence that the PCs leave his tribe be, "or there will be consequences."

This does not mean that Mek is closed to any suggestions. Despite his lording nature, Mek cares about his people, if only because it is they who keep him elevated to his comfortable position. If the PCs can convince him to move on, or threaten him with a stronger military force if he stays, Mek's survivor's instincts will kick in.

This is not to say he will be easily persuaded; unless the PCs threaten force, all their *Bluff* and *Diplomacy* checks suffer a -2 penalty in the face of Mek's incredulosity. He will also attempt, at first, to make outlandish requests of the PCs, demanding tribute from the "hoo-manns" before his tribe will leave. He will ask mainly for food, then riches, then weapons and armor for his troops. He will also ask for the gnome in the party, if there is one, as a trophy if he has to leave his home. Truly, gnome PCs will not fare well if Mek gets his way.

If Mek Me'geggin is killed, either during the parlay or through combat, the rest of the kobolds react in terror, and immediately scatter, disengaging from combat if they are engaged in it. Far from being outraged, the kobolds will view a party who can kill their powerful leader as a force too strong to reckon with. Some will flee into the cave system, some simply into their huts or into the darker corners of the cavern. They will flee in the night, if allowed, abandoning their homes for places further afield.

Should all of the PCs be captured, they are bound, gagged, and looted. They may try to escape, but they are marked for torture, and then food. Play this scenario out as best you can, but if the PCs have no avenue of escape, they could all end up dying, becoming a feast for the starving kobolds.

NPC Combat Tactics (If Needed)

Kobold tactics are simple: outnumber and overbear. Individual kobolds are dangerously weak, and even in numbers, a PC with *Great Cleave* can dig through them in a matter of rounds. Thus, the following encounter involves

large numbers of NPC combatants. While it looks like a lot of NPCs with which to keep track of, kobold tactics are such that the DM should be able to keep a handle on events, and keep dice rolling to a minimum if/when combat ensues.

Note: The Tier for this Encounter is purposely high. PCs should recognize the potential threat that the kobolds pose, and react accordingly. Also note that, especially in the higher tiers, the threat here is not the power of an individual kobold, but their sheer numbers and ability to overpower. Use this to its best advantage, especially against skilled or powerful parties.

Round One: The kobolds draw their weapons and make menacing gestures toward the PCs, but they do not attack unless the PCs engage. Instead, the only kobolds that make attacks in round one are the kobold sergeants, who shoot the most powerful-looking PCs with their slings, and Mek, who casts *command*, ordering the most powerful-looking PC to “sleep.”

One of the kobold combatants also opens the wooden stockade in the north corner of the cavern, releasing the dire rats. He shouts a command for them to attack, and points toward the PCs.

Round Two: Half the kobolds continue to threaten the PCs or defend themselves if attacked. The other half fall back and begin firing away with their slings. Mek (and in higher tiers Munn) cast spells, taking advantage of the combat situation.

Round Three: The kobolds begin to gang up on any injured or magically incapacitated PCs (see *Ganging Up* in the *Player's Handbook*, page 130, and *Multiple Grapplers*, in the same book, page 138). Kobolds who have been engaged attack. Mek (and Munn in Tiers Two and Three) continue casting, unless engaged. The dire rats enter combat in this round.

Round Four and beyond: The kobolds continue to try and incapacitate the PCs. The kobolds are not attempting to kill the PCs, but to capture them. If the tide seems to turn against them, however, the kobolds—who are very hungry, and cowardly by nature—quickly flee, hiding in the warrens until the PCs leave.

Tier 1 (EL 7)

Mek Me'geggin (“Mek the Worm-killer”), male kobold **Clc3** (**Kurtulmak**): CR 3; Small Humanoid; HD 3d8-3; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Hide armor, +1 Size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA: Rebuke undead; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5.

Str 8, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Alchemy +3, Bluff +4, Concentration +5, Spellcraft +6; Feats: Brew Potion, Scribe Scroll.

Spells (4/3+1/2+1; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0 lvl—*create water*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *guidance*. 1st-lvl—*bane*, *cause fear*, *protection from good**, *shield of faith*. 2nd-lvl—*darkness*, *invisibility**, *summon monster II*.

* Domain Spells (Domains: Evil—evil spells are cast at +1 caster level; Trickery—Bluff, Disguise and Hide are class skills).

Kobolds (15): CR 1/6; Small Humanoid; HD 1/2d8; hp 2 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather); Atks -1 melee (1d6-2/x3, halfspear) or +2 ranged (1d4, sling); AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2.

Str 6 Dex 13 Con 11 Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +8, Move Silently +4; Feats: Alertness

Equipment: Each kobold carries a halfspear and a sling, along with a dozen or so sling rocks. Each also has a pouch full of polished rocks and bits of metal—worthless to the PCs, this is the kobold community's version of coinage.

Kobold sergeant, War1: CR 1/2; Small Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 8 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 leather, +1 small shield, +1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword) or +2 ranged (1d4, sling); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Wis +0.

Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +4, Move Silently +3; Feats: Weapon Focus (short sword)

Equipment: Each kobold carries a shortsword and a small wooden shield, along with a sling and approximately a dozen polished rock bullets. Each also has a pouch full of polished rocks and bits of metal—worthless to the PCs, this is the kobold community's version of coinage.

Dire Rats (4): CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 5 each; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +3 melee (1d4, bite); SA disease; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3.

Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6; Feats: Weapon finesse (bite).

SA: Disease (Ex)—Any PC bitten by a dire rat must make a Fortitude save at DC 12 or be infected by a disease that does 1d3 temporary points of Dexterity and Constitution. The disease incubates for 1d3 days.

Tier 2 (EL 9)

Mek Me'geggin (“Mek the Worm-killer”), male kobold **Clc5** (**Kurtulmak**): CR 5; Small Humanoid; HD 5d8-5; hp 17; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Hide armor, +1 Size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6.

Str 8, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Alchemy +4, Bluff +5, Concentration +6, Scry +3, Spellcraft +7; **Feats:** Brew Potion, Scribe Scroll.

Spells (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0-lvl—*create water, detect magic, ghost sound, guidance, light*. 1st-lvl—*bane, cause fear, command, protection from good*, shield of faith*. 2nd-lvl—*darkness, enthrall, invisibility**, *summon monster II*. 3 – *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, magic circle against good**.

* Domain Spells (Domains: Evil—evil spells are cast at +1 caster level; Trickery—Bluff, Disguise and Hide are class skills).

Munn, male kobold Adp2: CR 1; Small Humanoid; HD 2d6; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 13 (+1 Size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +1 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5.

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 9, Init 12, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Wilderness Lore +7; **Feats:** Dodge.

Spells (3/2; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0-lvl—*guidance, mending, read magic*; 1st-lvl—*cause fear, command*.

Kobolds (30): Use stats above.

Kobold sergeants, War3 (2): CR 2 ;Small Humanoid (3' tall); CR 3; HD 3d8; hp 15 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 leather, +1 small shield, +1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +5 melee (1d6+1/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d4, sling); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2 Wis +1.

Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +5, Move Silently +4; **Feats:** Alertness, Weapon focus (short sword)

Equipment: Each kobold carries a shortsword and a small wooden shield, along with a sling and approximately a dozen rock bullets. Each also has a pouch full of polished rocks and bits of metal—worthless to the PCs, this is the kobold community's version of coinage.

Dire Rats (8): Use stats above.

Tier 3 (EL 12)

Mek Me'geggin ("Mek the Worm-killer"), male kobold Clc7 (Kurtulmak): CR 7; Small Humanoid; HD 7d8-7; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15 (+2 hide armor, +1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +5 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +9.

Str 8, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Alchemy +6, Bluff +6, Concentration +7, Scry +5, Spellcraft +8.

Feats: Brew Potion, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus: Enchantment.

Spells (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1): 0 – *Create water, detect magic, ghost sound, guidance, light, virtue*. 1 – *Bane, cause fear*, command*, inflict light wounds, protection from good, shield of faith*. 2 – *Darkness, invisibility, enthrall, hold person**, *summon monster II*. 3 – *Cure serious wounds,*

dispel magic, magic circle against good, stone shape. 4 – *Confusion, poison*.

*Focused Spells (+2 DC for all saving throws).

Munn, male kobold Adp4: CR 3; Small Humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex+1 natural); Atks +1 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6.

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Init 12, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Alchemy +4, Concentration+5, Heal +5, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Wilderness Lore +8; **Feats:** Brew Potion, Dodge, Scribe Scroll.

Spells (3/3/1; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0-lvl—*guidance, mending, read magic*. 1st-lvl—*cause fear, command, protection from good*. 2nd-lvl—*animal trance*.

Kobolds (40): use stats above.

Kobold sergeants, War5 (4): CR 4; Small Humanoid; HD 5d8; hp 22 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (+2 leather, +1 small shield, +1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +7 melee (1d6+1, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d4, sling); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Wis +1.

Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +5, Move Silently +4; **Feats:** Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon focus: short sword

Equipment: Each kobold carries a shortsword and a small wooden shield, along with a sling and approximately a dozen bullets. Each also has a pouch-full of polished rocks and bits of metal—worthless to the PCs, this is the kobold community's version of coinage.

Dire Rats (10): use stats above.

Conclusion

If the PCs are able to investigate the kobold cavern, they will find little. The kobolds were living in extremely poor conditions (to civilized eyes) even before the blight, and the lack of food has not helped them. Only one hut, standing near the throne area, looks in any way comfortable—Mek Me'geggin's hut. This hut is fitted out to be a temple to Kurtulmak, with a crude shrine and fur wall hangings. Secreted behind a grass and fur pallet that serves as Mek's bed, the PCs find a pair of stoppered vials, as well as a dirty scroll. The two potions are *potions of hiding and cure light wounds*; the scroll contains the arcane spell *mage armor*.

When the PCs return to the surface with their tale, the farmers will be relieved provided the PCs somehow defeated or drove off the kobold tribe. None of the farmers are at all interested in listening to any suggestion that the kobolds be allowed to stay, and only a high Diplomacy check (DC 30 or more) will convince them otherwise. Regardless, the farmers wish to collapse the tunnel, looking toward the powerful

PCs to help them accomplish this. If the PCs refuse, or insist that the kobolds be left alone, the farmers will eventually (1d6 nights afterwards) form the equivalent of a lynch mob, and drive the kobolds from the area themselves.

If the PCs bring any of the baby ankheg shell with them, a local blacksmith, Tyn Pounder, will offer to craft shields from the shells, as a reward for the PC's brave deeds. Regardless of the amount of shell the PCs return with, there will only ever be enough for two shields (see certificates below for details).

Finally, Whillom Stronbillet will offer his begrudging thanks to the PCs. He is not happy with the results of the PC's adventures—after all, they have just discredited his holy word. But Whillom is not one to show such displeasure in the face of his faithful, so he will quickly turn the truth of the kobolds to his advantage, claiming St. Cuthbert sent the PCs to aid the farmers against the kobold menace. If there is a cleric, paladin, or other follower of St. Cuthbert in the party, Whillom gifts them with a valuable Holy Symbol of St. Cuthbert (see cert). Otherwise, Whillom gifts it to a PC who showed interest in his sermon, or who acted selflessly for the benefit of "Cuthbert's Lot." He will not gift it to a follower of another faith. Should no one meet these conditions, or should all the PCs have been hostile toward Whillom and his sermon, he will not give anyone the symbol, removing it from the pool of final certificates.

The End

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 3

Defeating the witherstench	50 xp
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Encounter 5

Defeating the dire rats	50 xp
Defeating the darkmantle	50 xp

Encounter 6

Defeating trap	25 xp
Defeating kobold guards	50 xp
Defeating kobold tribe	225 xp

Total experience for objectives	450 xp
Discretionary roleplaying award	0-50 xp

Total possible experience	500 xp
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Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certed and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certed.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things which it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter 5

- 20 wheatsheaves

Encounter 6

- 1 unpolished amethyst, worth 35 wheatsheaves

- *Potion of cure light wounds* (25 gp; tiny; 1; yes; common; --): Brewed by kobold adepts, this thick blue liquid tastes terrible, and upon imbibing it, the drinker must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 12) or involuntarily spit the concoction out, losing its effects. If stomachached, the imbiber gains

the benefit of a *cure light wounds* spell. There is only a single dose in the bottle.

- *Potion of hiding* (75 gp; tiny; 1; yes; common; --): Brewed by kobold adepts, this murky gray liquid tastes terrible, and upon imbibing it, the drinker must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 12) or involuntarily spit the concoction out, losing its effects. If stomachached, the potion works normally, granting a +10 Hide bonus for 1 hour. There is a single dose in the bottle.
- *Arcane Spell Scroll of Mage Armor* (25 gp; tiny; 1; yes; common; --): This scroll is written on heavy vellum made from the tanned hide of a dire rat. On the scroll the spell mage armor is scribe (1st-lvl spell).

Conclusion

- Small ankheg-shell shield (200 gp; small; --; yes; unusual; 5 lb): Crafted by Tyn Pounder, a blacksmith in the Gold County. This oblong shield is crafted from the carapace of a young ankheg. It is dun-colored with green edges, and is undecorated. In addition to the standard +1 AC provided by a normal small shield, this ankheg-shell shield allows its user a special +1 circumstance bonus to Reflex saves versus acid attacks of any kind. The bonus is non-magical, and is merely a benefit of the shell's natural properties. Tyn can make up to two of these shields.
- Holy Symbol of St. Cuthbert (65 gp; small; --; yes; unusual; 1 lb): This is a well-crafted wooden holy symbol of St. Cuthbert, a starburst inside of a circle. The symbol is painted burgundy and edged in gray, and five real gems (worth 5 gp each if pried loose, but removing 10 gp each from the value of the symbol) have been affixed to the points of the starburst. A sixth, blue gem is affixed in the center of the symbol. This symbol was a gift from Whillom Stronbillet, head of the church of St. Cuthbert in the Gold County. It is a symbol of bravery amongst clerics of St. Cuthbert in Furyondy, and while in the borders of the Kingdom it provides the PC with a +1 bonus to all Charisma-related Skill checks when meeting with clerics of the order.

Appendix A – New Creatures

Witherstench

Tiny Beast

HD: 1/2d10 (6 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Movement: 15 ft., 15 ft. climb

AC: 16 (+2 Small size, +4 Dex)

Attacks: 2 claws, +0 melee

Damage: Claws 1d3-4

Face/Reach: 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 / 0 ft.

Special Attacks: Stench

Special Qualities: Smell Immunity, Skills.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1

Abilities: Str 3, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite)

Climate/Terrain: Any land or underground.

Organization: Solitary (1), pair (2), or swarm (2-10).

Challenge Level: 1/2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement Range: --

Witherstenches are ostensibly relatives of the common skunk, though where and when such an odious, repulsive variety of skunk may have developed is unknown.

A Witherstenche is about the size and shape of a normal skunk. They have pale, jaundiced yellow skin covered in purplish spots and pockmarks. Small patches of scraggly hair sometimes grow along their back and tail. The witherstench is a nocturnal creature who makes its home in caves and crevices, nearby (or sometimes within) places where carrion may be common. It is an ornery and single-minded creature; it eats and survives, and it trusts no other creature.

Combat

Witherstenches are very territorial, and will attack anything they see as invading their lair—after all, anything is a potential meal, and the fact that anything invading the witherstench's lair is likely affected by the witherstench's smell gives the creature a better than even chance of a kill. Witherstenches are not afraid of attacking something larger than it is, especially if it is protecting young or a food source.

Stench (Ex): The purplish spots of the witherstench's skin emit a foul odor that may (Fortitude, DC 11), wrack those within 10 with nausea. Those who fail their save suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all attacks, save, and skill checks for 1d6+4 minutes.

Smell Immunity (Ex): The witherstench is not only immune to its own stench, but it is also immune to other attacks (magical or nonmagical) that assault by stench, such as the *stinking cloud* spell, or a gha'st's stench.

Skills: Their keen ears and sharp eyes also give them a +4 to listen checks.

DM's Map: The Underground Warrens and the Kobold Lair

