

The Saga of the Boot

A Seldom Spring Adventure

Introduction: In the caves below a deserted orc lair, the party may intervene in a standoff between rival forces: a small clan of mad derro, with an unhealthy boot obsession, faces a new threat in the form of grimlock slavers.

An adventure for 3rd level characters

by Barry Dore



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Eberron, the dragon ampersand, Ravnica and all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. This work contains material that is copyright Wizards of the Coast and/or other authors. Such material is used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild. All other original material in this work is copyright 2019 by Barry Dore and published under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild.

The Saga of the Boot

When you swear vengeance in the name of all that you hold sacred and dear, no matter what the cost, it's only right that you accept the consequences.

—Brunthor Kettlegrip

Introduction

This adventure is designed for a party of 3rd level characters. It is set in the Forgotten Realms.

In the caves below a deserted orc lair, the party may intervene in a standoff between rival forces: a small clan of mad derro, with an unhealthy boot obsession, faces a new threat in the form of grimlock slavers.

Background

The Ripped Beard

Even before War Chief Hartusk led the orcs of Many-Arrows into outright war, orcish aggression threatened the lives of civilized folk throughout the North.

The Ripped Beard were an especially nasty tribe, led by a daring and brutal chieftain named Shurkan. He led his forces on numerous raids, striking small outposts deep within settled lands.

One such assault was on a small dwarven monastery dedicated to the goddess Berronar Truesilver. The dwarves put up a brave fight, but were greatly outnumbered and unprepared. They were butchered without mercy.

The atrocity was discovered by Brunthor Kettlegrip, a devout paladin who had undergone his religious indoctrination on that very site. Outraged by what he found, he swore an oath of vengeance upon Shurkan and his people.

With the aid of his adventuring companions, Brunthor discovered the lair of the Ripped Beard and led a brutal attack of his own, culminating in single combat with the orc chieftain.

The battle was quick and bloody. Brunthor lost much of his left leg to a vicious slice of Shurkan's greataxe, yet still emerged victorious.

The mighty orc fell with a shattered skull, even as the dwarf collapsed in agony and his severed limb tumbled into the orcs' garbage chute.

Brunthor and his companions withdrew, vengeance taken, and the lair was soon abandoned by the remnants of the tribe...

The Lost Boot

When Brunthor's lower leg and booted foot dropped down the orcs' garbage chute, it soon came into the possession of a derro savant called Diinit. Captivated by this oddity, Diinit weaved it into the mad ramblings of his clan narrative.

Selecting one of his people, he made a big spectacle of empowering this chosen one with *spider climb* and sending them on a quest up the chute in search of another boot.

The derro soon returned triumphantly to the rapturous cheers of his kin. So began a joyous time, this new ritual becoming a regular feature of their deranged existence, and the gathered boots becoming cherished relics.

Throughout the clan's time in the region, the derro have been at peace with a local myconid colony. The caverns in which these plant-folk dwell are also home to numerous non-sentient fungi, which they are happy for their neighbors to eat.

The Orc Slave

Recent events were set in motion even before the arrival of Brunthor and his companions.

An orc explorer by the name of Thrakk ventured down the chute to see where it might lead. When he failed to return, the other orcs assumed him dead and made him the subject of ridicule.

As it happens, Thrakk outlived most of his kin, albeit as a mind flayer's slave. Recently however, this cruel master gave Thrakk to an intellect devourer, tasking the vile creature with locating his tribe and enslaving as many orcs as possible.

To this end, it devoured Thrakk's mind, learning the paths that he took as he explored the Underdark all those years ago. With Thrakk as its host, the intellect devourer led a band of grimlocks toward the surface.

This mission hit a snag as the grimlocks approached the myconid colony. The all-pervasive fungal spores saturating the area overwhelmed their keen nasal senses, driving them into a crazed frenzy. The grimlocks soon drew the nearby derro into their battle, but both parties were subdued by the myconids and forced to withdraw.

With the grimlocks back under control, Thrakk went on ahead to scout the orc lair. However, all he found was an ogre, which he was careful to avoid.

Tired from his climb and wary of the ogre, Thrakk left the orc caves and set up camp outside, and that is where the party will encounter him.

Overview

The derro and grimlocks are now in a standoff, awaiting a change of fortunes to tip the balance.

The derro have stripped the old orc lair clean of boots, resulting in the disappointing failure of recent rituals. Worse still, the latest champion to ascend the chute did not return at all, having been eaten by an ogre.

Meanwhile, the grimlocks have suffered unexpected losses of their own while awaiting the return of the intellect devourer, whose mission seems doomed to failure.

Both groups have need of the player characters, but with very different goals in mind.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure is intended to follow an introduction from Brunthor Kettlegrip at Seldom Spring, but the following are just a few alternative options.

- ◆ Characters seeking access to the Underdark may discover information predating the orc presence, indicating that these caves offer such access.
- ◆ The party encounter Thrakk by chance during their travels. His tale of grimlock slavers should rouse heroic characters into action.
- ◆ The characters encounter a traveler who claims that undead stole his boots while he slept. He will gladly give directions to the location of this atrocity.

Seldom Spring Adventures

This is the third in a series of loosely connected scenarios, to which the party may be introduced in Seldom Spring.

Seldom Spring is free to download at <https://www.dmsguild.com/product/251013/Seldom-Spring>.

However, each scenario can be played independently of the others and without the use of that document.

If you plan to incorporate *Seldom Spring* into your campaign, I recommend allowing your players to read its contents at their leisure, prior to running this adventure.

The following player introduction is a continuation of the Dwarven Boot entry found in *Seldom Spring*.

Player Introduction

Brunthor rests his tray on your table and passes a bowl of hot stew to each of you. Then rather unexpectedly, he takes a seat.

“Here's your bread,” Jambiya chirps as she places a bowl of fresh rolls where each of you can reach it.

“Thanks my dear,” replies Brunthor quietly, watching her depart before turning to face you.

“You eat, I'll talk,” he says, waiting for you to start your meal before he begins.

“Dirk suggested I come talk to you. It's about my boot.”

“I lost *it* in battle with an orc chief some years ago, and the blasted thing fell down a hole.”

“We couldn't retrieve it at the time, and I've never been back, but something in my gut tells me it's still down there somewhere.”

“Now Dirk thinks you might like to go find it,” he says, his gaze turning to the boot above the fire, “to reunite the pair.”

“If he's right, and you can retrieve that which I lost, you'll be welcome to have its partner too,” he concludes, turning back to face you.

Though it felt like he was talking about his foot as much as his boot for a moment there, you're pretty sure that it's just his lost boot that he wants you to find.

“Think about it,” he says, rising from the chair, his metal joints grinding as he stands upright.

“You'll know where to find me if you're interested,” he says, turning towards the kitchen and walking awkwardly away.

Preparations

If the characters are interested, Brunthor will provide directions to the old orc lair. He will encourage them to take plenty of rope and appropriate light sources.

He'll prepare a suitably hearty meal to help them on the first leg of their journey.

Thrakk

The intellect devourer's goal is now to lure the party back to its grimlock allies in Area 10 and enslave as many of the characters as possible.

If questioned, the intellect devourer will endeavor to mask its deception in a shroud of truth.

Thrakk will relate how he was enslaved by a mind flayer and eventually forced to reveal the whereabouts of his tribe. He will even tell the party about the grimlocks that he led through the Underdark. However, he will claim to have escaped from them just before arrival, in order to warn his tribe of their approach. Now that the orcs are gone, he speculates that the grimlocks will surely look further afield, posing a threat to this whole region.

If Thrakk is attacked, he will attempt to surrender, unless close to his allies, in which case he will try to flee and join them.

If Thrakk is killed, the intellect devourer will attempt to flee. It is not built for climbing, so if unable to reach its allies, it will try to stay at a safe distance using Detect Sentience and wait for an opportunity to attack the party while it's vulnerable.

In addition to his weapon and shield, Thrakk carries a hempen rope, a climber's kit, 3 days rations, a half-full waterskin, a tinderbox, and a vial of antitoxin.

Thrakk, Intellect Devourer Host

Medium humanoid (orc), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Deep Speech, Orc, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Detect Sentience. The intellect devourer can sense the presence and location of any creature within 300 feet of it that has an Intelligence of 3 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a *mind blank* spell.

Actions

War Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Intellect Devourer

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 21 (6d4 + 6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages understands Deep Speech but can't speak, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Detect Sentience. See above.

Actions

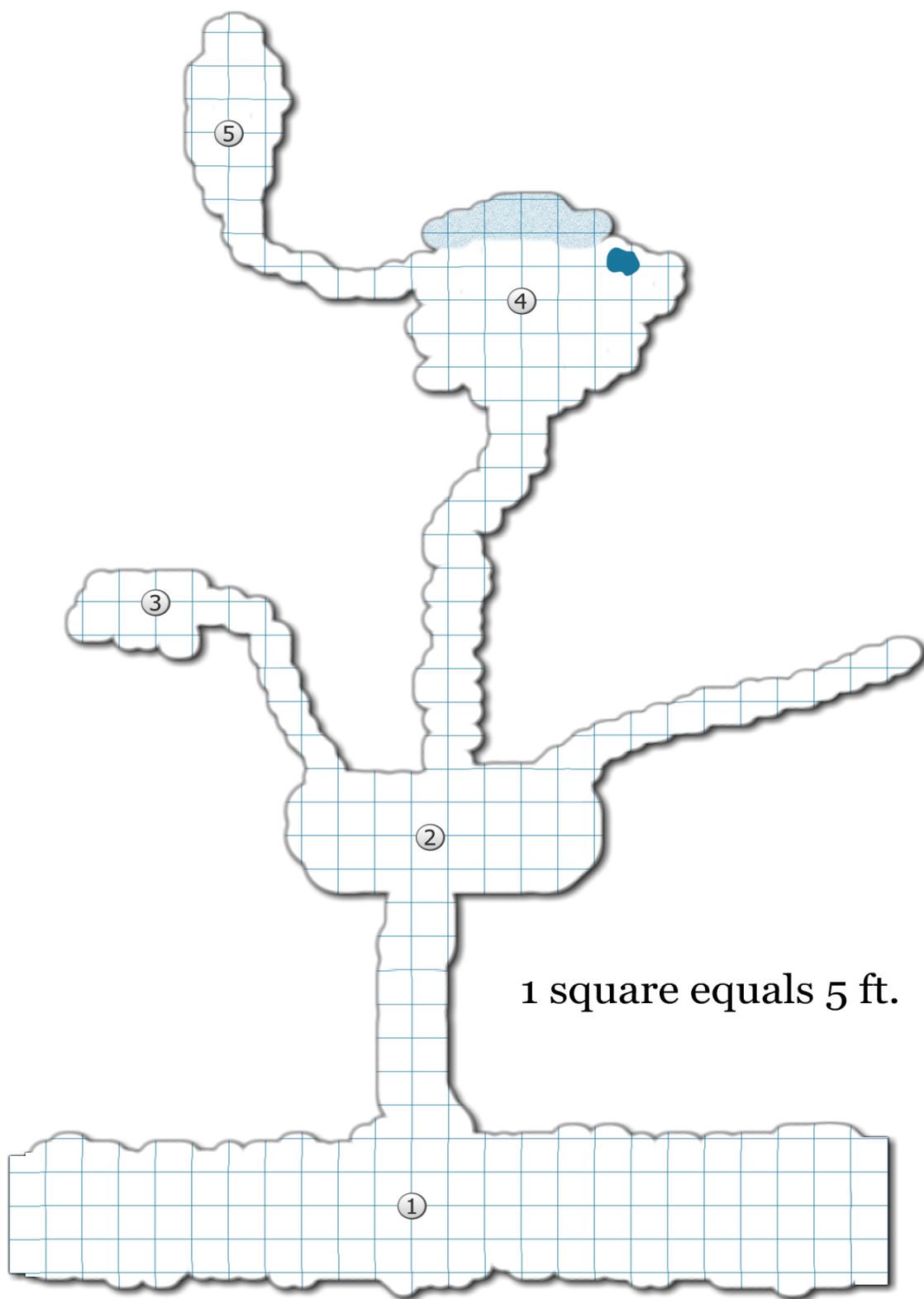
Multiattack. The intellect devourer makes one attack with its claws and uses Devour Intellect.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Devour Intellect. The intellect devourer targets one creature it can see within 10 feet of it that has a brain. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw against this magic or take 2d10 psychic damage. Also on a failure, roll 3d6: If the total equals or exceeds the target's Intelligence score, that score is reduced to 0. The target is stunned until it regains at least one point of Intelligence

Body Thief. The intellect devourer initiates an Intelligence contest with an incapacitated humanoid within 5 feet of it that isn't protected by *protection from evil and good*. If it wins the contest, the intellect devourer magically consumes the target's brain, teleports into the skull, and takes control of the body. While there, the intellect devourer has total cover against attacks and other effects originating outside its host. The intellect devourer retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as its understanding of Deep Speech, its telepathy, and its traits. It otherwise adopts the target's statistics. It knows everything the creature knew, including spells and languages. If the host body dies, the intellect devourer must leave it. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the body drives the intellect devourer out. The intellect devourer is also forced out if the target regains its devoured brain by means of a *wish*. By spending 5 feet of its movement, the intellect devourer can voluntarily leave the body, teleporting to the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The body then dies, unless its brain is restored within 1 round.

Orc Lair



1. Ravine

You have entered a wide shallow ravine flanked by the derelict shells of primitive wooden structures. Skeletal humanoid remains in ragged clothing litter the ground. The rusted blades and warped shafts of their weapons still lay among them.

Further along the ravine, a lone hooded figure sits hunched beside a smoldering fire. Seemingly sensing your approach, it raises its head to glance in your direction. Having acknowledged your presence, the figure returns its attention to the fire.

A dark cave mouth forms an opening in the ravine wall, a short distance behind this hooded stranger.

Characters examining the remains in detail should have little trouble identifying them as orcish, even if they didn't already know they were walking into an old orc camp. The bodies have been stripped of all valuables, and footwear.

The hunched figure is that of Thrakk, the orc now serving as host to an intellect devourer. He will show no further interest in the characters unless they engage him in conversation, in which case he will respond with an impassive tone.

2. Common Chamber

After descending a short distance, the tunnel levels out and opens into a broad cavern with three exits on the far wall. There are more skeletons here, and filth everywhere, but nothing of obvious value or interest.

If anyone checks for tracks, they will identify large footprints crossing the area in all directions, plus a single set of bootprints leading towards the surface.

While the bootprints clearly belong to Thrakk, success at a DC 8 Wisdom (Survival) check indicates that the footprints were laid by a single Large creature over the preceding tenday, and a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check indicates that they were made by an ogre.

Note that **avored enemy: giants** grants advantage on both of these checks.

The right-hand tunnel leads to a secondary surface exit.

3. Kitchen

The tunnel ends in a high-ceilinged cave. A large cooking pot stands crookedly over a central fire pit, while refuse covers much of the remaining floor and a yellowish mold grows up the far wall.

The cooking pot shows signs of recent use, with a few unidentifiable chunks of bone and gristle left floating in a foul-smelling stew. This is all that remains of the last derro to undertake their sacred ritual. There is nothing of value here. The mold is harmless, unless eaten.

4. Audience Chamber

The tunnel opens into a spacious cavern, on the far side of which a raised ledge supports a crude stone chair. A large hole descends into the cavern floor on its right-hand side, just before the ledge, while an opening on the left wall leads into another dark passage. The area is strewn with a repugnant blend of skeletal remains, refuse and excrement.

The raised ledge is about two feet above the level of the cavern floor. The stone chair once served as the orc chief's throne, but it is really little more than a pile of rocks.

If anyone checks for tracks here, success on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check will reveal the passage of the ogre to and from Area 5.

The hole forms a shaft approximately 100 feet deep, the sides of which are coated with all manner of filth. Climbers will find numerous handholds, but also many things they'd rather not touch. Characters can safely traverse this shaft at one third of their normal speed, or half their normal speed if using a rope. However, should a character attempt to Dash while climbing, or take any action requiring a free hand, they must first make a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to avoid falling, or DC 5 if using a rope. Fortunately, a large heap of refuse awaits at the bottom of the shaft, reducing damage to 1d6 bludgeoning per 20 feet fallen, to a maximum of 3d6.

Complications

If the party begins its descent before encountering the ogre from Area 5, it will turn up and attack once approximately half the party has begun to climb.

5. Chief's Chamber

The tunnel widens before you, forming a long narrow cave strewn with old soiled rugs and patches of garbage.

A single ogre resides within this cave. It will attack intruders on sight.

The ogre carries 2 javelins in addition to its greatclub.

It wears a backpack, strapped to its head like a leather helm, with 13gp, 8sp, 56cp, and 2 chunks of blue quartz (worth 10gp each) tucked inside.

Ogre

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (hide armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

6. Garbage Cave

At the base of the shaft, a large pile of refuse attests to its past life as a garbage chute. The surrounding cave is largely featureless, but a narrow passage offers a clear path onward.

See map on following page.

There is nothing of value here. Not even a magic boot!

7. Myconid Lair

The passage descends into a sprawling cavernous area, thick with fungal vegetation and aglow with the light of luminescent spores. A large pool of water fills a dip in the cavern floor, while a host of stalactites loom high overhead.

The spores conceal almost as much as they illuminate, but it appears that some of the larger fungi are moving.

The luminescent spores provide a natural source of **dim light** throughout this area, which is home to a colony of myconids.

The myconids will attempt to greet peaceful visitors and will gladly converse with them. They are happy for travelers to gather food and water, and to rest here.

If the party asks about other creatures in the area, two spore servants will shuffle into view. The first, a derro, will point towards a passage leading to the west, while the other, a grimlock, will point to an eastern exit. These humanoids were clearly killed by weapons akin to those that they carry. They both have bare feet.

A single flumph hides among the stalactites, only revealing itself to strangers if they appear to be friendly. If the PCs are accompanied by Thrakk, and they appear to be peaceful, the flumph will send them a telepathic warning, "Beware, your companion is not what it seems. Its mind is not its own."

The water in the pool is clear, cool, and safe to drink. The non-sentient fungi are edible and mostly harmless, though some may cause mild nausea.

There is nothing else of value here.

Myconid Traits

All myconids have the following traits.

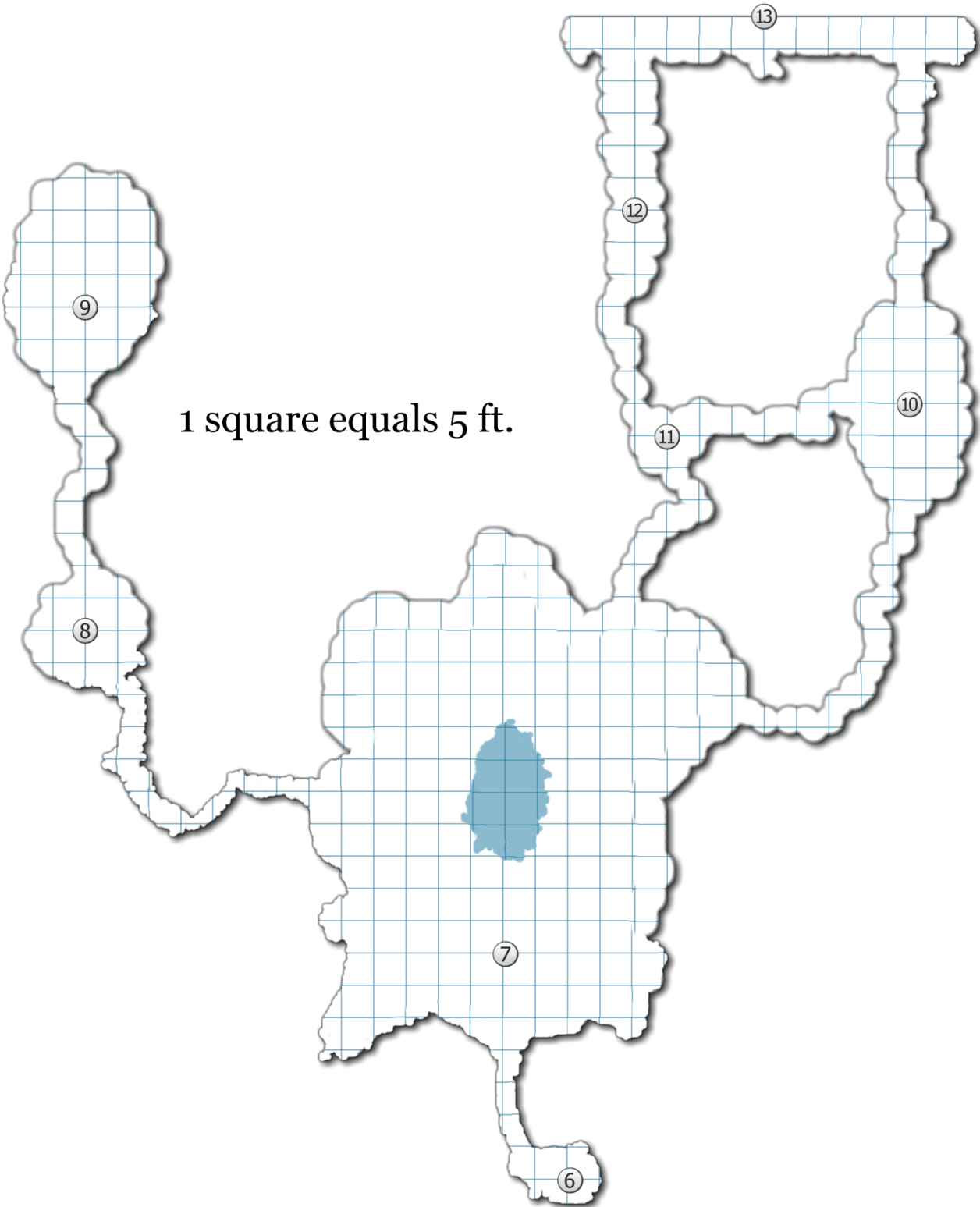
Distress Spores. When the myconid takes damage, all other myconids within 240 feet can sense its pain.

Sun Sickness. While in sunlight, the myconid has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls and saving throws. The myconid dies if it spends more than 1 hour in direct sunlight.

Myconid Action

Rapport Spores. A radius of spores extends from the myconid. These spores can go around corners and affect only creatures with an intelligence of 2 or higher that aren't undead, constructs, or elementals. Affected creatures can communicate telepathically with one another while they are within 30 feet of each other. The effect lasts for 1 hour.

Caves Below Lair



Complications

The myconids do not tolerate violence in their domain. They will attempt to pacify or subdue all aggressors, even those fighting among themselves. They will not strike to kill unless repeatedly pressed into combat.

Myconid Sovereign

Large plant, lawful neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 60 (8d10 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The myconid uses either its Hallucination Spores or its Pacifying Spores, then makes a fist attack.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (3d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (3d4) poison damage.

Animating Spores (3/day). The myconid targets one corpse of a humanoid or a Large or smaller beast within 5 feet of it and releases spores at the corpse. In 24 hours, the corpse rises as a spore servant. The corpse stays animated for 1d4 + 1 weeks or until destroyed, and it can't be animated again in this way.

Hallucination Spores. The myconid ejects spores at one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one minute. The poisoned target is incapacitated while it hallucinates. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Pacifying Spores. The myconid ejects spores at one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Rapport Spores (30 ft. radius). See sidebar.

Myconid Adult (x12)

Medium plant, lawful neutral

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (2d4) poison damage.

Pacifying Spores (3/Day). The myconid ejects spores at one creature it can see within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Rapport Spores (20 ft. radius). See sidebar.

Myconid Sprout (x8)

Small plant, lawful neutral

Armor Class 10 (natural armor)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) poison damage.

Rapport Spores (3/Day; 10 ft. radius). See sidebar.



Grimlock Spore Servant

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, paralyzed

Senses blindsight 30ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Spiked Bone Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Derro Spore Servant

Small plant, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, paralyzed

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Hooked Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Flumph

Small aberration, lawful good

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +4, History +4, Religion +4

Damage Vulnerabilities psychic

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands Undercommon but can't speak, telepathy 60ft.

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Advanced Telepathy. The flumph can perceive the content of any telepathic communication used within 60 feet of it, and it can't be surprised by creatures with any form of telepathy.

Prone Deficiency. If the flumph is knocked prone, roll a die. On an odd result, the flumph lands upside-down and is incapacitated. At the end of each of its turns, the flumph can make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, righting itself and ending the incapacitated condition if it succeeds.

Telepathic Shroud. The flumph is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as all divination spells.

Actions

Tendrils. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 2 (1d4) acid damage. At the end of each of its turns, the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 2 (1d4) acid damage on a failure or ending the recurring damage on a success. A *lesser restoration* spell cast on the target also ends the recurring acid damage.

Stench Spray (1/Day). Each creature in a 15-foot cone originating from the flumph must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or be coated in a foul-smelling liquid. A coated creature exudes a horrible stench for 1d4 hours. The coated creature is poisoned as long as the stench lasts, and other creatures are poisoned while within 5 feet of the coated creature. A creature can remove the stench on itself by using a short rest to bathe in water, alcohol, or vinegar.

8. Circular Cave

The passage enters a small circular cave, occupied by several sizable fungi. Patches of yellow-green ooze cover the floor of the cave and lead down a fresh passage beyond.

These fungi are harmless, as is the ooze. In **bright light**, it should be clear that they are not myconids.

In fact, the ooze was scooped from the innards of the fungi by derro, four of whom now lurk within the hollow remains. They will burst out to attack intruders, gaining advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to surprise the party.

However, these derro are more interested in stealing boots than in causing serious harm. Furthermore, they have developed a special skill, tested primarily on dead orcs, which allows them to quickly remove footwear with the aid of their hooked spears. They shall therefore focus on knocking down intruders and using this Sole Stealer ability to relieve them of their boots. Any derro that makes successful use of this bonus action will attempt to flee to Area 9 with its prize.

Derro (x4)

Small humanoid (derro), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	9 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 7

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Magic Resistance. The derro has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sole Stealer. When the derro hits a creature with a melee attack on its turn, and that creature is prone following the attack, the derro can take a bonus action to attempt to steal an item of footwear from that creature. The creature must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or lose the target item, which the derro immediately stashes on its person.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the derro has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Hooked Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, the derro can choose to deal no damage and knock it prone.

9. Derro Lair

The ooze-splattered passage leads into a large cave unlike any you've ever seen. A band of small, degenerate, dwarf-like creatures dwells here. They are a wild-eyed rabble, led by a wiry elder bearing a staff topped with an upturned skeletal foot.

But what makes this cave so different are the boots. Lining every inch of the base of the wall, countless boots stand proudly, both adorned and filled with all manner of what would best be described as junk. Like hallowed shrines to some unknown deity, each boot stands testament to a zealotry born of madness.

A small derro clan lives in this cave, under the mad leadership of their savant, Diinit.

If any derro made it back from Area 8, add them to the eight indicated below.

If he gets the chance, Diinit will greet the mighty boot-wearer characters and attempt to parley. He is prepared to give them the clan's most sacred relic, Brunthor's lost boot, but first they must prove themselves worthy by vanquishing the grimlocks in Area 10. He sees the arrival of the PCs as a blessed sign, and a chance to complete this chapter of his clan's epic tale.

If language proves to be a barrier, he will attempt to explain through hand gestures. If all else fails, the myconids could facilitate communication with their rapport spores; but Diinit should only suggest this, through hand gestures, as a last resort.

Diinit requests seven grimlock heads as proof of the party's deeds. If the PCs do as he asks, he will declare a blessed victory and conclusion to the saga of the boot, and lead his clan away, leaving all of the boots and their contents behind.

If the party attacks, the derro will retaliate. Diinit will use his most lethal spells, with little regard for his kin. Meanwhile, the remaining derro will pursue their mad obsession with the acquisition of boots. This will limit the threat that they pose to the party, as they focus on knocking characters prone to steal their footwear.

Anyone attempting to identify which boot belonged to Brunthor, without *detect magic*, must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The current state and surroundings of the boot have masked its dwarven features, but other clues may lead a keen mind to the prize. However, if the party interferes with any of the clan's sacred boots, the derro will attack.

Treasure

A magical shortsword (see below) stands upright in Brunthor's boot, itself adorned with other odds and ends, amid a collection of smaller treasures: 4pp, 33gp, 10ep, 4 chunks of obsidian (worth 10gp each), a large moonstone (worth 80gp), a platinum ring bearing the emblem of the Harpers (worth 50gp), 6 silvered sling bullets, and a stick of red chalk.

Collectively, the other boots contain the following treasures, hidden among numerous worthless trinkets: 1pp, 8gp, 6ep, 90sp, 213cp, 3 small pieces of turquoise (worth 5gp each), a chunk of bloodstone (worth 50gp), a pair of silver bracelets (worth 3gp each), a single silvered crossbow bolt, a holy symbol of Myrkul (a silver amulet inset with obsidian; worth 50gp), a *potion of healing* (labeled in Common), and a *potion of animal friendship* (labeled in Elvish).

Tymora's Grace

Weapon (shortsword)

The symbol of Tymora, a face-up coin, is embedded in the pommel of this finely crafted weapon.

When you roll a 1 or a 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with this magic weapon, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2.

Diinit, Derro Savant

Small humanoid (derro), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)

Skills Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 7

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Magic Resistance. The derro has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. The derro savant is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The derro knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *chromatic orb*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *spider climb*

3rd level (2 slots): *lightning bolt*

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the derro has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage.

Derro (x8)

Small humanoid (derro), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)	9 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 7

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Magic Resistance. The derro has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sole Stealer. When the derro hits a creature with a melee attack on its turn, and that creature is prone following the attack, the derro can take a bonus action to attempt to steal an item of footwear from that creature. The creature must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or lose the target item, which the derro immediately stashes on its person.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the derro has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Hooked Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, the derro can choose to deal no damage and knock it prone.

10. Grimlock Camp

The passage's high walls open into a wide rock-strewn cave, with two further exits on the far side.

Six grimlocks are here, waiting impatiently for Thrakk to return. They are all that remain of his group, following further losses in his absence.

The keen smell of these grimlocks has been temporarily neutralized by their proximity to the myconid lair, but their hearing remains as sharp as ever. They will attempt to hide from the party if they hear it approach, and ambush the characters once they enter the cave.

These grimlocks have no treasure, being little more than slaves themselves. They do however carry limited water and rations, plus lengths of rope for securing captives. They are armed with primitive clubs and axes.



Complications

If the party has agreed to Diinit's terms, they will come up one head short here. However, they may be able to retrieve another elsewhere.

There is one available in Area 12, or if they ask the myconids for permission, they can remove the head from the grimlock spore servant in Area 7.

Thrakk

If Thrakk is still with the party, he will make enough noise to alert the grimlocks as the party approaches, providing ample time for them to hide.

If he's been discovered, but made it back ahead of the party, he will alert the grimlocks and attempt to hide as well.

If Thrakk is defeated, the intellect devourer will make its last stand here. As long as Thrakk or the intellect devourer survives, PCs reduced to 0 hit points will be knocked out for enslavement; unconscious but stable.

If the entire party is incapacitated, the grimlocks will remove obvious weapons from the characters and secure them with rope. With so few grimlocks left to escort them deeper into the Underdark, it should only be a matter of time before the party escapes.

Grimlock (x6)

Medium humanoid (grimlock), neutral evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3, Stealth +3

Condition Immunities blinded

Senses blindsight 30ft. or 10ft. while deafened (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 13

Languages Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Blind Senses. The grimlock can't use its blindsight while deafened and unable to smell.

Keen Hearing (only). The grimlock has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Stone Camouflage. The grimlock has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

Actions

Spiked Bone Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Stone Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

11. Empty Cave

Three passages converge here to form a small nondescript cave.

There is nothing of interest or value here. Not one thing.

12. Ambush

As you proceed along this broad tunnel, you come upon the partial remains of a mutilated humanoid. A torn arm rests in a pool of blood, and, is that a head?

Before you can examine further, a large creature drops from a hidden cavity in the ceiling, revealing itself to be a vulture-headed beetle with long hooked claws!

This hook horror slew a pair of grimlocks that came to investigate the clacking noises it was making. Only an arm and a head remain.

The monstrosity has used the element of surprise to position itself within reach of the party, so roll for initiative before proceeding with combat.

Hook Horror

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses blindsight 60ft., darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Hook Horror

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Echolocation. The hook horror can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Keen Hearing. The hook horror has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Actions

Multiattack. The hook horror makes two hook attacks.

Hook. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

13. Chasm

The passage leads onto a rough ledge overlooking a vast chasm. A treacherous looking path, hugging the chasm wall, descends out of view. Distant flickers of light hint at signs of life in the distance, but this dark expanse could take days or even weeks to traverse, taking you far into the deeper reaches of the Underdark.

This area provides access to the Underdark, should your party need it, but goes beyond the scope of this adventure.

Aftermath

If the characters were searching for Brunthor's boot and they successfully return it to him in Seldom Spring, everyone at the inn will be eager to hear about their adventure.

Brunthor will reward the party with the reunited pair of boots, plus a fine meal with drinks on the house.

The characters will become minor celebrities in Seldom Spring, at least for a little while, with particular interest being shown in whoever wears the boots.

Brunthor's Boots

Wondrous item (requires attunement)

These masterfully crafted dwarven boots are reinforced with fine chain and steel plates, yet don't impede the wearer's movement.

While you wear these boots, you can use a bonus action to move up to your speed toward a hostile creature that you can see.

While you wear these boots with heavy armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC.