



DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

Well of the Worm

#76.5: A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE
BY HARLEY STROH

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A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

The Well of the Worm is designed for four to six 1st level characters. Characters can be of any class, although a well-rounded party will have the best odds of survival. Clerics will find their special abilities in high demand when faced with Solom Quor's wicked army. Parties lacking clerics or strong warriors in their place will be at a disadvantage.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The plains of Barrowdown have always known war. Every spring and summer, armies of the barons converge on the long fields, clashing in battle, destroying the fields of crops, and soaking the earth in blood. Farmers tending the land have learned to survive in lean times by looting the bodies of the dead and selling the arms and armor to young adventurers. Now, bits of broken, rusted weapons and old bones wash to the surface with the spring rains, and no field can be plowed without uncovering dead warriors from long-vanquished armies.

Twenty years ago, the wizard Solom Quor came to these blood-soaked fields on a quest for knowledge. Solom discovered a curious worm with the twisted, tormented face of a human. The plains, drenched in blood and the anguished souls of the dead, had given rise to a new horror: the war-worm.

SOLOM QUOR

Once tall, young, and bright-eyed, Solom Quor was driven insane by answering the call of the Mother of Worms. In the years since, that madness has crept into every part of his being.

Solom Quor has spent the last twenty years hidden underground, raising broods of war-worms. He has become twisted and shrunken from the fell magic of the Mother of Worms, and appears now more like a dwarf than a man. His skin is black from soot, grease and oil, and his eyes seem to burn with an unnatural light. His dark beard is matted and tangled into soiled knots, but his scalp is shaved clean. Solom mumbles to himself aloud in a constant stream of incoherent thoughts. While the wizard is plagued by insanity, it does not make him any less cunning or dangerous. Solom Quor will take pains to engage intruders on his own terms, fleeing to fight another day.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Use the following plot hooks to get the characters directly into the dungeon.

- Village elders call for volunteers from the surrounding dales – brave souls are needed to battle a plague of worms. Late at night the hideous monsters rise from the earth, draining the blood of peasants as they sleep. Worse, their victims rise as

un-dead shortly after, host to large worms with the faces of tormented men. The village wise-woman has determined the source of the monsters: an abandoned well outside of town.

- Sleeping in an inn, the PCs are awakened by shouts! A prominent family has been found murdered in their beds. All are drained of blood. The sole survivor is a terrified young girl who claims that her family was killed by worms that fled towards an abandoned well outside of town.
- Returning to their childhood home, the PCs discover that their village is a ghost town. The sole remaining occupant is an aging warrior, too bitter to leave his home. He tells the PCs that their families were driven out by a horde of man-worms that rise from the earth late at night. The warrior is too weak to fight the worms himself, but he has tracked them back to their source: an abandoned well outside of town.

JUDGE'S NOTES

ADVENTURE SUMMARY



At the request of a village elder, or on their own initiative, the characters find themselves before an abandoned well. Once the plains were home to fertile farms, but years of succeeding wars have poisoned the well and reduced the surrounding fields to a barren wasteland. Giant worms, with the tortured faces of fallen warriors, have been emerging from the well to terrorize the nearby villages.

The PCs descend into the well, discovering the lair of Solom Quor, a wizard whose magics have left him dwarfish and twisted in service to the Mother of Worms. Solom has been raising war-worms and using them to build un-dead minions. The characters must defeat the war-worm zombies, face down Solom Quor's horrors, and finally drive the mad wizard to ground.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Area	Type	Encounter
1-1	T	Falling war-worms
1-2	C	3 war-worm zombies
1-3	T	Camouflaged pit trap
1-4	C/T	War-worm zombie, hero Portcullis trap
1-5	C	2 war-worm zombies 30 war-worms
1-6A	C/T	Solom Quor 2 war-worm zombies, human Collapsing tunnel trap
1-7	C	6 feral villagers
1-7A	C	Cave snake
1-8	C	Mother
1-8A	C	War-worm zombie ogre

PLAYER START

Desolate fields stretch as far as the eye can see. Once fertile and green, nothing grows here now. The soil itself is dead, salted by the blood of the dead. Torn standards, broken lances and spears, rusting bits of armor, and the pale skeletons of warriors litter the plain.

A cold wind picks up, stirring the banners and kicking up the evil soil. If ever the ghosts of the dead rose to stalk the living, this would be such a place. Ahead you lies your goal: the foul well rumored to be the source of the terror that haunts these forsaken plains.

THE WELL OF THE WORM



The well was dug centuries ago, when humans first settled the fertile plains. Submerged caves provided a constant source of water, and the settlers came to rely upon the well. It took centuries of drought to lower the aquifer, draining the reservoir caves.

The caves are natural, smoothed by the flow of water. A sticky, wet slime covers much of the walls, ceiling, and floor – mucus excreted by the war-worms. The slime glistens in torch and lamplight, casting deceptive reflections. PCs examining the slime will see their own faces reflected in the surface, as if they were trapped in the walls. In certain areas (1-2 and 1-4) this is actually the case.

The tunnels are cramped, and creatures over 5 1/2 ft. tall will be forced to crouch or bend over as they explore the caves. Adventurers are accustomed to fighting in adverse conditions, so the tight confines have no affect on armor class or initiative, but large slashing and bludgeoning weapons are -1d to attack and -1d to damage, due to the lack of room needed to properly swing the weapons.

The tone of the module depends on the judge's ability to make the PCs feel threatened by their environment at all times. The confining, mucus-laden walls should always seem ready to either greedily consume the characters, or disgorge armies of worm-infested zombies. The Well is home to secrets both alien and ancient, and the forces of good have no place here.

WANDERING MONSTERS

Check for wandering monsters once every half hour, or whenever the characters make a significant amount of sustained noise. Roll d12; an encounter occurs on a 1. If an encounter is called for, roll 1d7 to determine the encounter.

d7	Result
1	1d2 war-worm zombies
2-3	1d3 grave rats
4-5	1d4 fist-sized spiders
6	Charnel viper
7	1-4 war-worms

War-worm zombie: Init -1; Atk slam +1 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 10; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, acid gout; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; AL C.

These appear as bloated, mucus-covered corpses. Bubbles of slime gurgles from their mouths, the slime steaming as it strikes the floor. Each zombie's distended belly undulates and rolls, as if filled with snakes or worse... Three times per day a war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target (Reflex save DC 10 negates). When war-worm zombies are defeated in combat they "bleed" harmless war-worm larvae. Unless these larvae are introduced into another host, they expire after 1d3 rounds.

Grave rats: Init +3; Atk bite +2 melee (1d4 plus disease); AC 12; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP disease (DC 7 Fort save or 1d3 Strength or Stamina damage per day for 1d5 days; this damage heals normally after disease passes); SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; AL N.

Fist-sized spider: Init +3; Atk bite +3 melee (1 plus poison); AC 15; HD 1d3; hp 2; MV 20' or climb 10'; Act 1d20; SP poison, sense vibrations 40'; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.

These spiders hunt by sensing vibrations, and are unaffected by invisibility or darkness. They do not notice a thief moving silently. Their poison has a DC 12 Fort save, causing 1 point of temporary Strength damage if successful, but 1d4 points of permanent Strength damage if the save is failed.

Charnel viper: Init +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1d3 plus poison); AC 13; HD 2d6; hp 6; MV 20' or climb 20' or swim 20'; Act 1d20; SP poison, scent; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; AL N.

These serpents have a strong sense of smell that allows them to locate prey even in complete darkness.

A charnel viper has a poisonous bite that requires a DC 10 Fort save. On a successful save, the victim takes 1d4 points of Stamina damage, but on a failed save the victim is immediately stricken, and dies in 1d5 rounds.

War-worm: Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 13; HD 1d5; hp 3; MV 20' or burrow 10'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain, infest; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

These creatures appear like two-foot long chitinous maggots with the heads of fanged human warriors, which hiss and snarl. They stink of the grave, and leave a smear of blood and mucus as they move. This slime is slightly acidic, and over the years the war-worm warrens have slowly grown larger as the slime eats away at rock and soil. Rising from the blood-soaked earth of battlefields to stalk the living, war-worms are the souls of warriors trapped in the bodies of tormented aberrations. They hunger for one thing: the blood of the living. They hunt exclusively at night, rising from the earth, swarming sleeping victims.

A war-worm that hits a living victim hangs on and drains blood with its fangs, inflicting 1d4 points of temporary Stamina damage each round. It can be detached with a DC 6 Strength check, but this requires using an Action Die. A creature slain by a war-worm's blood drain rises as a war-worm zombie (see above) 1d4 days after death. The zombie is a host to 2d12 larval war-worms that slowly consume the corpse. After 3d20 days the zombie collapses, devoured from the inside, and the mature war-worms go in search of living prey. War-worms can be turned, as unholy, by lawful or neutral clerics.

AREAS OF THE MAP

Area 1-1 – Well of the Worm: *A sour, rotting stench wafts up from below, stinging your lungs. The dark well and its crude rock wall are both stained a vile shade of olive green. You have heard tales of armies poisoning wells with corpses and worse. Peering down into the silent darkness, those tales seem very real.*

The well is 90 ft. deep, the last 20 ft. submerged in water. On the wall, 10 feet above the water line, is a narrow fissure. This muddy hole can be enlarged to permit passage by pulling free loose stones and mortar; three rounds of digging and a DC 10 Strength check makes the hole large enough for man-sized creatures to pass.

Descending into the well alerts a nest of war-worms burrowed into the mortar near the top of the well. On the third round after the PCs enter the well, the worms break free of the wall and drop down onto the PCs.

Each PC in the well is attacked by 1d4 worms. As it drops, each worm makes a +5 ranged attack inflicting 1 point of damage. Any PC struck by a worm must succeed in a DC 10 Reflex save or be knocked off the rope.

If PCs fall, the water-filled well is forgiving. The first 20 ft. of falling do no damage; the next 20 ft. do only 1d3 damage per 10-foot increment; beyond 40 ft., falling does the standard 1d6 per 10-foot increment. (See Falling, under Other Combat Rules in the core rulebook for additional information.)

PCs falling into the water may attempt to dive to avoid taking any falling damage (DC 15 Agility check as the narrow confines of the well do not make this easy).

Falling worms that strike PCs or hit the water die instantly. Anyone investigating the nest discovers a simple, muddy hole filled with the bones of dead soldiers and 13 loose silver pieces.

The water in the well is mildly poisonous. Ingesting the foul-smelling liquid immediately causes 1d4 points of temporary Stamina damage, and another 1d4 points of temporary Stamina damage 30 minutes later.

Buried deep in the mud at the base of the well is the source of the pollution, *Vermys*, the venomous dagger of Qa'zin. Its serrated blade is marked with the dagger's name. This dagger, which once belonged to the feared assassin Qa'zin, is responsible for the death of at least three matriarchs. When its name is whispered, it can drip poison equal to viper poison (see Appendix P: Poison in the core rulebook) three times per day. Even when not dripping poison, it exudes a mild coating of venomous slime that does +1 damage per strike. It is this slime which is poisoning the well.

Natural animals will not willingly enter the well. If an animal, such as a dog, is forced into it, it will whine and cringe the entire time it is within the well, and must be pulled along unwillingly on a leash. The noise made by the protesting animal doubles the chance of wandering monsters.

War-Worm: Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 13; HD 1d5; hp 3; MV 20' or burrow 10'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain, infest; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

(See Wandering Monsters, above, for special properties.)

Area 1-2 – Holding Chamber: *The narrow corridor opens into a wide, muddy cave notched with small alcoves. The walls of the cave glisten wetly in the dim light, and the smell of rotting meat is very strong here. A pair of rusty hook-beaked pikes rest on the muddy floor.*

Close inspection of the walls reveals that they are covered in a wet film of sticky mucus. Trapped in the muddy walls, covered in mucus, are the corpses of seven villagers, their faces frozen in screams of terror. Once the players discover this, show them handout A. The villagers were kidnapped, hurled into the well, then fished from the water with the pikes before they were plastered into the walls with war-worm mucus.

Three of these corpses are war-worm zombies. The zombies wait until two or more PCs enter the chamber, then burst from the walls. The zombies seek to overwhelm a single opponent, and press the target face-first into the walls to suffocate and die (DC 15 Strength check to resist or escape). PCs trapped in the mucus walls begin to suffocate. (A normal character can hold his breath for 1 round per point of Stamina.)

The trap door exit to area 1-3 is concealed by a thick film of mucus (DC 15 Intelligence check to find). It can be discovered by accident by PCs searching the alcoves; those accidentally falling through to area 1-3 vanish with a sucking sound, taking 1d4-1 points of falling damage. They can avoid falling with a DC 15 Reflex save.

One of the corpses was once the village moneylender. In his belt pouch are 23 cp, 11 sp, and a single small sapphire worth 15 gp. The pikes are normal, rusty ranseurs.

War-worm zombie (3): Init -1; Atk slam +1 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 10; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, acid gout; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; AL C.

(See Wandering Monsters, above, for special properties.)

Area 1-3 – Hall of the Fallen: *A trickle of muddy water runs down the center of the narrow cave. Rusted weapons and bits of armor are buried in the walls, casting wicked shadows down the corridor. Their jagged, sharpened edges claw and scratch at you as you pass, snagging on armor and tearing at cloaks and robes.*

The weapons and armor are plastered into the wall with mucus, and are too dull and rusted to pose any serious threat to PCs. These armor and weapons were scavenged from the fallen on the Barrowdown fields.

Forty feet down the corridor, the cave passes over a war-worm breeding pit (see area 1-5). The war-worms have weakened the floor of the cave to the point where it will collapse with the slightest weight. Those passing over and failing a DC 15 Reflex save crash through the floor, falling 10' into the worm pits (area 1-5).

Area 1-4 – Storeroom: *The muddy chamber is filled with rotting crates, barrels and open casks. Dark mold covers nearly all the wood in the room, making the chamber seem much darker than it should. A slow stream of mucus drips from the ceiling, pooling on the floor.*

This room is used to store Solom's supplies. The crates hold 3 months worth of trail rations, though mold has rendered the rations nearly inedible. The casks contain water collected from area 1-7, and the barrels hold wine that has spoiled into vinegar.

On a successful Luck check (DC 10) a character searching the walls or room interior discovers a weapon worth salvaging. Roll 1d5: (1) short sword; (2) spear; (3) dagger; (4) polearm; (5) longsword.

A crude portcullis trap is hidden in the ceiling of the doorway. Entering the room without first pulling on a hidden lever drops the portcullis. When the portcullis drops, the chain mechanism releases the shackles trapping a war-worm zombie in the wall. The zombie bursts into the room, lumbering after anyone trapped inside the chamber. Any character immediately below the portcullis when it drops must succeed in a DC 10 Reflex save or take 1d5 damage and be pinned. Alternatively, a quick-thinking character may attempt to hold the portcullis aloft with a DC 14 Strength check, but a character cannot attempt both the Strength check and the save.

The bars to the portcullis are rusted, and can be bent enough to allow the PCs to pass through with a DC 18 Strength check.

War-worm zombie, hero: Init +0; Atk slam +4 melee (1d6+3); AC 12; HD 4d10; hp 20; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead, acid gout; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; AL C.



This zombie was a hero in life, and is consequently stronger than the average war-worm zombie. Three times per day this war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target (DC 10 Reflex save negates). When this war-worm zombie is defeated in combat it “bleeds” harmless war-worm larvae. Unless these larvae are introduced into another host, they expire after 1-3 rounds.

Area 1-5 – Worm Pits: *A moldy, wooden ladder descends to a narrow stone catwalk that skirts three dark pits. The air is thick with the stink of stale blood and a droning chatter.*

A pair of war-worm zombies walks the catwalks above the pits, stirring the worms with 10 ft. long poles. As soon as the zombies notice the PCs they close to attack, trying to knock the PCs into the pits, pinning them down with the poles.

Anyone struck by a melee attack must succeed on a DC 10 Reflex save or be knocked into the worm pits. Ranged weapons don’t have enough mass to knock targets into the pits.

The pits are 10 ft. deep and filled 3 ft. high with war-worms. The worms are feeding on corpses; the chattering drone is the sound of their tiny maws ripping off chunks of rotten flesh.

The worms swarm anyone falling into the pit. Victims falling into the pits are attacked by 1d6 worms each round. Each pit holds 10 worms. The worms won’t attack the zombies.

War-worm zombies (2): Init -1; Atk slam +1 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 10; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, acid gout; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; AL C.

War-Worms (30): Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3); AC 13; HD 1d5; hp 3; MV 20' or burrow 10'; Act 1d20; SP blood drain, infest; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.

(See Wandering Monsters, above, for special properties.)

Area 1-6 – Shrine of the Mother: *A horrifying bas-relief dominates this room, nearly covering the eastern wall. The image depicts a horned, demonic visage, frozen in a scream, its curling tongue thrust out into the room. The mouth is an open hole, the tongue a chute. As you watch a tiny worm falls from the devil-maw and wriggles its way down the chute. The chute feeds into a pool of thick, congealing liquid the color of rust.*

You know immediately the pool is filled with blood. Dozens of tiny worms float drunkenly in the pool.

A pile of treasure is collected on a dais before the demon wall, and you realize to your horror that this must be a temple dedicated to the worms.

Show the players handout B. This room is where Solom worships Mother, and where he collects her tiny progeny. Mother is hidden behind the devil facade, in area 1-8. If attacked, she can squirt acid mucus through the devil maw (see area 1-8 for more information). Mother births one worm every five minutes, so long as she is fed a constant staple of bodies. The tiny war-worms are nursed in the pool of blood until they grow large enough to be moved to the pits (area 1-5).

Solom and two war-worm zombies watch over this room from area 1-6A, and launch an ambush as soon as PCs enter Solom's line of sight. (See area 1-6A for more information and Solom's combat statistics.)

A boulder in the southeast conceals a passage to area 1-7. PCs may notice ruts in the muddy floor, signs that the boulder has been moved recently.

Treasure: Solom's madness is so great that he worships Mother as a devil-goddess. A small collection of treasures, stolen from Mother's victims, are collected on the steps before the devil wall: 89 gp, 203 sp, 47 cp, a mithral longsword, and three *potions of healing* that cure 1 Hit Die of damage each.

Area 1-6A – Ambush!: Solom and two war-worm zombies lurk in the shadows atop the ledge. Solom makes a sneak attack with his crossbow from the shadows, then commands the zombies to attack. While the zombies occupy the PCs, Solom flees to area 1-8.

The ceiling of the tunnel between areas 1-6 and 1-8 has been intentionally weakened by Solom; a few simple beams are all that support several tons of mud and rock. Solom knocks the beams loose in his flight. PCs following close on Solom's heels must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid being trapped beneath the rubble. Any character so trapped takes 2d6 damage, and it requires 10 minutes to pull a single character free. Once collapsed, the rubble fills the tunnel, making passage impossible.

Solom Quor, twisted human wizard: Init -1; Atk short sword +1 melee (1d6) or crossbow +0 ranged (1d6) or spell; AC 12 (leather); HD 5d4+8; hp 22; MV 20'; Act 1d20 + 1d14; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +4; AL C. Spells (Spell Check +6): *Charm person* (p. 131; aura of decay [food] mercurial effect), *spider climb* (p. 156; worms of the earth mercurial effect), *knock* (p. 175), and *phantasm* (p. 187).

In addition to his leather armor (which has a 3 in 6 chance of fitting a dwarf), Solom Quor has a short sword, a crossbow, and a case of 6 crossbow bolts.

War-worm zombies (2): Init -1; Atk slam +1 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 3d6; hp 10; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, acid gout; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; AL C.

(See Wandering Monsters, above, for special properties.)

Area 1-7 – Stockade of the Feral: The western entrance to the stockade is concealed by a massive boulder. Ruts in the muddy floor indicate that the boulder has been moved recently; investigation reveals that the boulder conceals a tunnel.

Solom uses a team of war-worm zombies to move the boulder, but PCs can move the boulder with a DC 15 Strength check. Up to 3 PCs can work together at once, 5 if they use ropes or poles.

If PCs succeed in moving the boulder, read or paraphrase the following:

The boulder groans as it shifts aside, revealing a small, dark tunnel. Savage, lupine forms leap from the darkness, snarling with feral fury!

The shaggy beasts are feral villagers, captured by Solom Quor and kept to feed the mother worm. They have been locked in the stockade for several months, and are all utterly insane. The madness has reduced them to feral, animalistic states: their hair is knotted into muddy tangles, their skin is soiled and dirty, their nails are broken and bloody.

The villagers attack with unchecked fury, desperately trying to fight their way to freedom. If driven back, they retreat into the shadows, and bide their time until they can ambush the PCs. If the PCs can subdue the villagers, a lawful cleric can restore their minds with a Lay on Hands check worth 3 dice of healing. If the judge so desires, one of these villagers can then be revealed as a character suitable for use as a replacement PC.

Feral villager (6): Init +1; Atk bite or claw +1 melee (1); AC 10; HD 1d4+1; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

Area 1-7A – Lost Lake: *An ebon pool fills the dark reaches of this cavern. Stalagmites glisten in the dim light, casting long shadows on the still water. The faint rhythm of dripping water can be heard in the distance. The shore is littered with fish bones, and schools of silver flash and dart in the dark waters.*

The lake is home to a school of blind cave fish and a vicious cave snake. The pale cave snake lurks in the water, waiting for PCs to investigate the pool, then lunges out, attempting to drag its victim underwater (DC 15 Strength check resists). A character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Stamina score, but thereafter begins to drown. The victim is also automatically constricted, taking automatic damage each round, whether pulled into the water or not. A DC 12 Strength check ends constriction. An attack against the snake that misses must be rolled again against a constricted target. Finally, each round that a victim struggles, either to attack or to free himself, decreases the number of rounds he can hold his breath by 1.

The water is 15 ft. deep at the pool's deepest, with sharply sloped sides. The water is fresh and clean.

The snake has no treasure, but a wizard, elf, or a PC with an appropriate background occupation will identify the snake as a rare species, highly valued for the magical properties of its skin and glands. In good condition, each of the snake's two special glands can be used to perform a ritual that can undo one major or minor corruption. The skin, if well preserved, can be used to create a magical belt that allows the wearer to speak the tongue of serpents. Sold to a wizard, the snake will fetch between 50 gp and 200 gp, depending on how badly the body was hurt and how far it was allowed to decompose. The Judge may impose other conditions on the ritual or the manufacture of the serpent-skin belt.

Cave Snake: Init +3; Atk bite +5 melee (1d4 plus constriction); AC 13; MV 20' or swim 20'; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Act 1d20; SP constriction (1d6); SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL N.

Area 1-7B – Gate Doors: *A rusty iron gate bars the way. It is bolted into the ceiling and floor. Each bar is as thick as a human's wrist. Despite the rust, the massive lock seems in good repair. Matted, rotting straw is piled in wet mounds on the south side of the bars.*

Close inspection of the gate will reveal that while the gate is strong, the bolts holding it in place are nearly worthless. The gate can be torn free with a DC 10 Strength check. Otherwise the bars can be bent with a DC 15 Strength check, or the lock can be picked with a DC 15 Open Lock check.

Area 1-8 – Lair of the Worm: *This long chamber hides many nooks and crannies, making it difficult to tell the chamber's true size. Shelves are cut into the rocky walls; all are cluttered with cobwebbed skulls, musty scrolls, and dusty jars filled with pale, preserved worms. Ragged tapestries and banners stripped from war standards cover the walls, and a matted bed of woven reeds rests on the floor.*

The southeast corner of the room is home to rusty gate, bolted to the bare rock.

To the southwest is a massive gray shape the size of a great swine, ribbed like a worm, but with a sharp snout, and a pale tongue that flicks and probes at the corpse of a villager hanging from meat hooks. The stench of the creature is overwhelming, like the smell of crushed maggots many times over.

Flickering oil lamps light the room, casting the gate and worm-thing in a macabre red light. Sensing you, the worm turns and moans in hunger. The wet, loathsome sound is as familiar as it is alien, like the mournful calling of the autumn stars.

This cavernous laboratory is where Solom Quor raised Mother. The queen war-worm is unaccustomed to being threatened – she will squeal wetly in confusion and pain before turning herself to attack the PCs with her acid spray.

If the battle goes poorly for Solom Quor and Mother, the dwarf runs to area 1-8A and releases the war-worm zombie ogre. The leg-less worm zombie will fumble through the room, lashing out in blind fury, doing as much damage to the laboratory, Solom and Mother as the PCs. In the chaos that follows, Solom will attempt to flee, taking the coffer of queen eggs with him. (See area 1-8A for information on the tormented war-worm zombie ogre.)

Solom's treasure is scattered about the room, hidden on dusty shelves and in dark corners.

A small, iron coffer holds three oblong eggs, nestled in a bed of straw. If placed in a warm environment, these eggs will hatch larval queen war-worms.

An oiled leather pouch resting on a forgotten shelf contains 71 sp and a gold figurine of a drunken dwarf, worth 50 gp for its material, or 100 gp to a dwarf or collector.

In a barrel, hidden behind one of the banners, stand 15 spears and 33 bolts. The shafts are all moldy and rotten, rendering the weapons useless, but 3 of the spear tips and 7 of the bolt heads are silver.

Searching among the scrolls will discover mostly insane ramblings about the “secrets” Solom Quor hoped to discover under the ground. There are many scrolls of notes on breeding war-worms and caring for the war-worm queen. Examining these scrolls allows the PCs to learn the background information, as well as the following about war-worms:

Unable to capture their own prey, queens rely on worshipers to supply them with a steady diet of humanoid blood. This practice stretches back into time immemorial, and many of mankind’s oldest temples contain hieroglyphics depicting high priests feeding mammoth war-worms. Solom Quor speculates that these temples demonstrate that the human race was created for the sole purpose of feeding the endless hunger of the war-worms.

Given enough time and enough blood, every war-worm has the potential to grow into a queen. At some point in the worm’s growth, the fanged face is absorbed, leaving only vestigial fangs and the queen’s trademark tongue. Raspy and strong, the tongue is perfectly designed to lap at wounds of the worm’s prey.

There is also a scroll, penned by Solom, of the *spider climb* spell. The reader can use this scroll to cast *spider climb*, but must make a spell check with a -4 penalty, for Solom Quor’s writing is tiny and rambling.

Mother, war-worm queen: Init -2; Atk acid spray -2 ranged (1d6); AC 14; HD 2d8+8; hp 18; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP acid spray, infravision 60'; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +3; AL C.

War-worm queens are as terrifying as they are disgusting. Massive, fat and gray, they harken back to another time, when alien powers ruled the races of man.

One per round a worm queen can launch an acid spray with a range of 20 feet. The spray inflicts 1d6 points of acid damage to the target and 1d4 points of splash damage to all creatures within 5 ft. of the target who fail a DC 10 Reflex save.

Area 1-8A – Blind Fury: *Behind the curtain is a massive corpse that looks like a feral, bestial man. It would be at least 10 feet tall were its legs not cut to short stumps. It looks as if the rest of it has been sewn together with cat-gut after having been cut into parts. The corpse is resting against the wall, its arms secured with manacles. Its muscles bunch and tear at each other, but the head lolls weakly to one side, drooling thick mucus that pools on the floor.*

A long lever protrudes from the floor, its handle wrapped in leather.

This corpse is that of an ogre found by Solom Quor and his zombies on one of their hunts. Solom quartered the beast and had it brought into his lair, in order to experiment with the creation of monstrous war-worm zombies.

The experiment was only a partial success. The ogre was too large for Solom to re-assemble, and the rapidly decomposing flesh has proven to be poor fodder for the worms. The result is a blind war-worm zombie of massive proportions, able to crawl and lash out in pain and anger, but little else.

If the beast is released from its bonds, it strikes out at random until slain. Each round roll 1d8 to determine which direction the ogre strikes; 1 = north, 2 = northeast, 3 = east, 4 = southeast, 5 = south, 6 = southwest, 7 = west, 8 = northwest.

These blows are destructive, but extremely slow; any PC succeeding in a DC 10 Intelligence check adds a +4 bonus to her armor class for the round. A warrior gains a bonus equal to his level for this check.

Before the ogre died it ate a female elf. If the ogre is opened up and the contents of its stomach are searched, the PCs discover the chewed, half-decomposed body of the elf and her surviving equipment: a signet ring of twined oak leaves (a +1 *ring of protection*), and a pouch containing 23 gp and 3 emeralds (worth 150 gp each).

Elves will recognize the signet ring as belonging to one of the Seven Elf Lords. (The lord gave it to his doomed mistress before she was eaten by the ogre.) If the ring is returned, the elf lord will grant the PCs a single boon or favor.

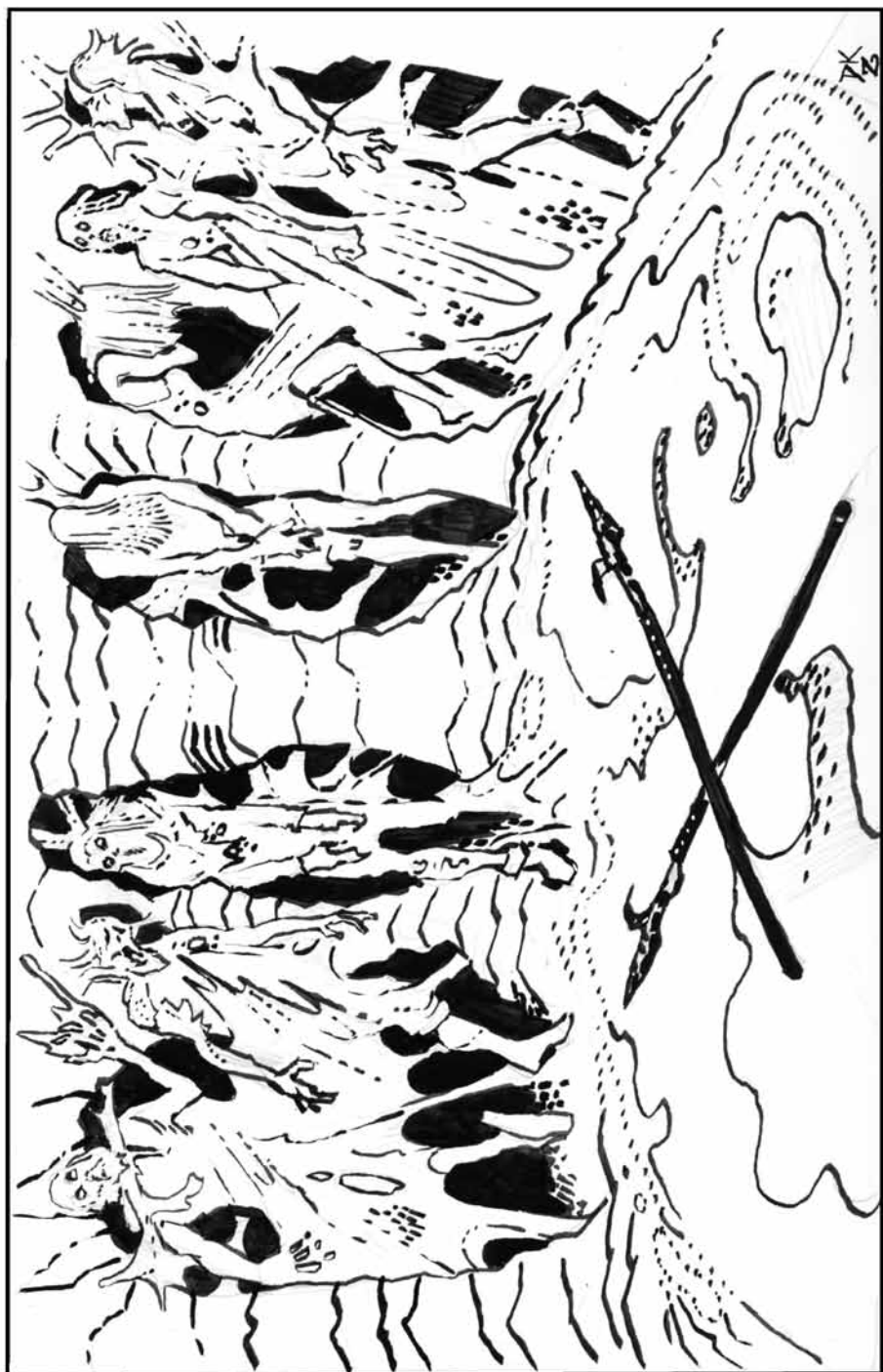
War-worm zombie, ogre: Init -2; Atk slam +5 melee (1d8+5); AC 13; HD 8d10; hp 45; MV 10'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, 10' reach, acid gout, reduced damage against non-slashing, infravision 60'; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +6; AL C.

Three times per day this war-worm zombie can launch a gout of acid with a range of 10 feet, inflicting 1d6 points of acid damage to the target. This zombie reduces damage taken by non-slashing weapons by 5 points. Slashing weapons damage the stitches holding it together, and do full damage. A warrior or dwarf with a slashing weapon can target these stitches with a Mighty Deed, doing twice the normal deed die damage on a hit. If the ogre zombie scores a critical hit, it has an equal chance of using 1d4 on crit table G, or 1d12 on crit table U.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Having vanquished Solom Quor and his host of war-worms, PCs may find themselves uncovering an alien horror from time immemorial. Amid Solom's research, characters can find a map describing an ancient temple dedicated to the war-worms. Discovering the temple will require crossing forbidding mountain ranges and delving into thick jungles. There PCs discover a lost city ruled by war-worms; depending on the judge's ruling, the city's ancient, wicked inhabitants might live...

HANDOUT A



HANDOUT B







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