

THE CLIFF-LAIR OF HEETER

BY COREY RYAN WALDEN



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“Where lightning strikes and blue men wander.”

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This work is compatible with most old school fantasy role-playing games and their modern retroclones. The mechanics assume primary compatibility with the original version of the world's most famous role-playing game, authored by David Arneson and Gary Gygax in 1974. This work is for 4-10 characters of 1st to 3rd levels.

THE CLIFF-LAIR OF HEETER

The Cliff-Lair of Heeter can be inserted into any ongoing campaign. It is especially suited to “sandbox” or exploratory games. This brief adventure can be used to break the rhythm of a larger adventure, be run as a one-shot, or provide a key site to be expanded upon later.

Mechanical Note: The provided stat blocks assume the 1974 edition of the game is being used, or something akin to B/X. Alternative ascending armour classes, associated attack bonuses, and movement in feet are offered in parenthesis. When using the presented ascending armour class values, assume an unarmoured value of 11, with a possible maximum of 18. Only use the attack bonus if you are using this alternate system. A conversion document can be downloaded from my blog, entitled “OD&D Conversion”.

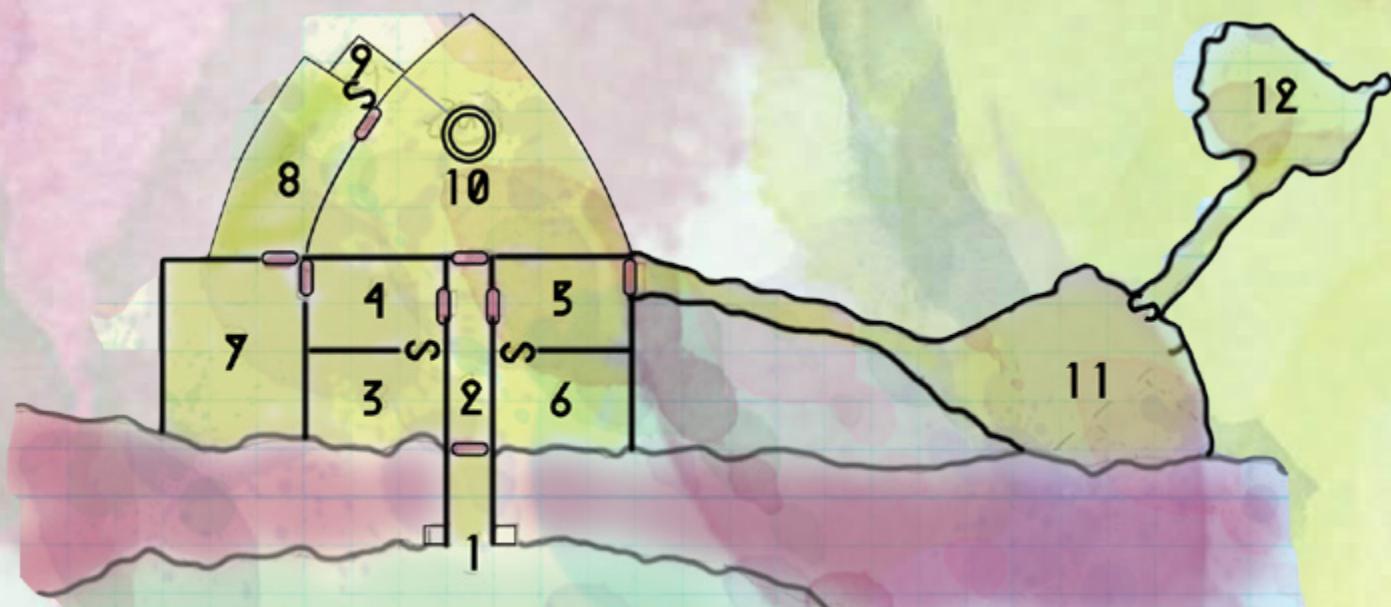
Adventure Background: Heeter is a humanoid creature from an unknown dimension — some say he is from the outer space planet of Zorbax — or he may simply be the remainder of an ancient species (see #10 for further description). He lives with 14 blue-skinned manlings who attend to his every need. They are child-height, bearded, and known among some sages as “Gignoks”. Heeter’s lair is located in a mountainous area — a badlands, or craggy locale. The lair is bored into a cliff-face and is visually unobtrusive. It can be accessed by crossing a cavernous gulch via a stone bridge. The traveller will witness a sturdy bridge, with a pillar on either side (see #1 on the map below). Across the bridge is a large red door carved into the cliff. This is the entry to Heeter’s domain. Reasons for visiting Heeter:

I. Residents of a nearby village tell a tale of regular lightning and thunder echoing from the hills. It has been this way for hundreds of years, though none know why. The back of Heeter’s lair has large window slits, through which his orb-device can be seen flashing across the countryside (#10).

II. A magic-user may have access to a scroll or fragment of parchment detailing a strange encounter with an unknown man-thing. The parchment will have broad directions to the cliff-lair.

III. Heeter has an unusual thirst for horse urine. When he is craving this delicacy he will charge two of his men to gather some from a nearby village, or ambush a mounted traveller. They may take the whole horse, or they may simply “milk” it. This odd practice may have been noted by locals or a merchant. There may even be a bounty to find the perpetrator.

MAP



DENIZEN SCHEDULE

In the interest of adventure verisimilitude, the table below provides guidelines for tracking denizen movements throughout the day.

<u>Creature/s Encountered</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
1 Gignok sentry	#3 Armoury	Constantly
4 Gignok cooks	#4 Kitchen	5am, 12pm, 5pm
10 Gignoks sleeping	#5 Gignok Quarters	8pm-4am
Heeter & 14 Gignoks eating	#7 Banquet Hall	6am, 1pm, 6pm
Heeter Worshipping	#8 Meditation Chamber	5am, 8pm
Harpy	#11 Prison	Constantly
Heeter sleeping	#12 Heeter's Chamber	8pm-4am

1. BRIDGE AND DOOR

Discovering an unsupported stone bridge in the wilderness will surely be interesting to interlopers and wanderers. The bridge is expertly constructed, reminiscent of Dwarven stonework (if your campaign has such creatures). Otherwise, it will simply appear solid, but simple. The red doorway on the opposite end of bridge is obviously suggestive of a dwelling or fortress.

- Observant watchers may notice mostly-camouflaged slits in the cliff-face across the gulch. These are accessible from #3 and #6, and provide a defensive vantage against intruders.
- The left column beside the bridge has a red button and a looking glass embedded to its surface. Pushing the button notifies Heeter that someone is outside. He has majicked the looking glass to observe those outside his lair. He can see them, but they cannot see him. This will only become activated if the red button is pushed.
- The bridge is 20 feet long. As noted above, the door to Heeter's lair is large and red. It is 5 feet wide, and 6 feet high. The door is forged from iron, and although heavy, is weighted to open effortlessly when unlocked. It is locked by default, but if the red button has been pushed, and Heeter determines the party to be inferior to his skills and resources, he will send one of his attendants to unlock it. Forcing the door will attract the attention of those within, but picking the lock or using a spell will not.

2. ENTRY AND HALLWAY

The red door opens into a hallway: 10 feet wide, and 40 feet long. The ceiling is low: just above 6 feet. This may prove claustrophobic for taller party members.

- There are three doors at the end of the hallway: one at the northern end, and two on either side. Nigh indiscernible slits flank the hallway walls of #3 and #6. If the party has alerted the lair denizens of their presence, 4 Gignoks will attack with blow-darts, crossbows, or scream through these slits (see stat block below).
- If the party has gained entry without Heeter's knowledge, there is a 40% chance two blue-skinned attendants will walk past unawares. Otherwise, the hallway will be empty. If the dice suggest their presence, the Gignoks will be exiting #4, to go to #5. Roll 1d6. A result of 1-4 indicates they attack immediately. 5-6 indicates they will be generally hostile, but will inquire as to the party's presence (negotiations and/or reaction rolls can be made).
- A small overhang above the red door allows 2 additional attendants to pour boiling pitch on the head's of intruders (1d6+2 damage). This will only occur if the lair is alerted of interlopers.

Gignoks: AC 6 (14), HD 2, hp 10-13, AT #1 (+3 to hit), D 1-6 or Special (see below), MV 9" (30'). Special: When agitated, Blue-Men can scream hideously. This sonic wave is both deafening and mentally anguishing. No attack roll is necessary; the blast deals 1d8 damage. If the Gignok loses initiative and is struck before screaming, damage will not be dealt due to the interruption.

3. ARMOURY

The armoury is approximately 20x30 feet. Entrance to this room is accessible via a hidden pivoting door in #4. Three of the four walls are worked and dressed, while the southern wall is the rough stone of the cliff-face. There are arrow loops on the southern and hallway walls to defend against intruders.

- Various weapons can be found herein. There are 1d6 each of the following:

Daggers
Hand Axes
Swords
Spears
Bows (with 1d10x4 arrows total)
Shields

- If the party has entered the lair undetected, there will be one Gignok asleep. He is drunk, but is meant to be keeping watch on area #1. He has succumbed to slumber. His daily commute has been taking its toll. Plus, shit's been on his mind.

4. KITCHEN

A wide stone bench dominates the northern end of the kitchen. Atop the bench are various cooking utensils (unwieldy to steal, though worth 40gp if stolen). The southern portion of the room has recessed fire pits for cooking, and two large cauldrons suspended above. There are 3 exits from this room: the western door leads to #7, the eastern door leads to #2, and a hidden pivoting door leads to #3.

- During early morning (5am), midday (12pm), or early evening (5pm) there will be 4 Gignoks preparing food. Outside those times, the kitchen will be vacated and immaculately clean.

5. GIGNOK SLEEPING QUARTERS

This room is filled with 10 bunks, each sleeping 2 Gignoks. 6 beds are spares and will always be empty. Against the eastern wall is a large shelf with freshly cleaned onesies — the service outfits of the Gignoks. This room is largely devoid of value because the Gignoks have no possessions. One deviant Gignok has secreted a piece of unworked gold in his mattress (worth 10gp). There are 3 exits from this room: the western door leads to #2, the eastern door leads to #11, and a hidden pivoting door leads to #6.



6. STORAGE AND BATHROOM

This room acts as a storage area and a bathroom. It is approximately 20x30 feet, and is accessed via a hidden, pivoting door between #5 and #6. Three of the four walls are dressed stonework, while the outside wall is rough stone. There are arrow loops on the southern and western walls to attack intruders situated in the hallway or outside the lair.

- Along the eastern wall are 6 seats with holes. These are long-drops. Waste is funnelled into the ravine. In theory an intruder could climb into the lair through these holes. (Yuck.)
- Besides the practicality of the bathroom, this room is filled with largely worthless miscellany. Digging through the contents of barrels, crates, and shelves will take 1d3 hours and generate noise. Doing a thorough search will locate a horse-brush, an expensive quill (2 gp), and a vial of restorative ointment. The latter is capable of curing disease and healing $1d6+2$ hitpoints.

7 BANQUET HALL

This hall measures 30x40 feet. A long table dominates the room. One throne-like chair sits at the northern end of the table, while smaller chairs flank either side. Two unnerving, and decidedly odd tapestries hang from the walls (worth 40gp each), while familial heraldry adorns the table (5 gp). Silverware, plates, and goblets can be pilfered and sold for 100gp.

- At 6am, 1pm, and 6pm sharp the hall is filled with the lair's occupants. Heeter sits on his throne-like chair. If the adventurers have been polite and appear trustworthy, they may be asked to dine with Heeter.

8. MEDITATION CHAMBER

Approximately 20x40 feet in dimension, though oddly shaped. This room is the meditation chamber. Heeter comes to this room to reflect, muse, and pine. Twice per week, Heeter officiates a worship service dedicated to the godling of mystery. A podium is erected in the wonky northern corner, while pews fill the remainder of the northern portion. Two stone wash basins are at the back of the chamber. A secret door leads to #9.

- A book of symbols rests open on the podium (worth 400gp).
- Religious (occult) artefacts are placed throughout the room — candlesticks, a sceptre, a small idol, and a tiny blade. They are worth 110gp.
- Washing in the basin provides the benefits of a Bless spell if neutrally aligned. Those aligned with law or chaos suffer 1 point of damage.

9. SECRET PASSAGEWAY AND PREPARATORY CHAMBER

A small 10x10 feet chamber allows Heeter to prepare himself for impressive entries into the Great Hall. Leading from this chamber is a 20 foot long passageway. It terminates behind the throne in #10. A small hand-operated pulley system allows him to be winched up to the Great Hall, to appropriately-, and politely-impressed guests. Sometimes Heeter throws a special powder on the ground which billows smoke and sparks, making his entrance even more enigmatic. The preparatory chamber is filled with comfortable cushions and a small table in the centre of the room. Other items of interest include:

- A decanter of wine (worth 20gp).
- A secret niche hides a wand of enemy detection and a coffer of 5 blue stones, valued at 200 gold pieces.
- A partial autobiography of Heeter's life, along with his stories of a city named Styro (the ref can detail this as they wish).

10. GREAT HALL

The Great Hall is vaguely triangular, with rounded corners. Its base is 70 feet wide, while the point is merely 3 feet wide. There are two visible exits: one in the southern end leading to #2, and one in the northwestern wall leading to #8. The northern end of the hall has windows which overlook a valley.

- A large dais dominates the centre of the room, upon which rests a giant throne and a blue orb. When used, the orb swirls with a pulse of white light and sparks. The majick of the orb can open a tear in the atmosphere so Heeter can portend other planets. The history of the stone is unknown. The orb cannot be removed from the dais; it will become useless if successfully pried away. There is a 30% chance a magic-using character can use it. The ref may decide misuse of the orb will transport the character/s elsewhere, or devise some otherwise deleterious effect due to uneducated meddling.
- During audiences, Heeter mounts the throne via the secret tunnel from #9. Thereupon, Heeter holds a creature reminiscent to a horned cat, whose legs are akin to an insect. The cat perpetually sucks on Heeter's fingers in contentment. Heeter has a domed head with fly wings attached. The wings fold tidily into his head. His eyes are obsidian with no pupils. He has a coned chin, not of skin, but of calcified horn (reminiscent of a goat or unicorn). Heeter makes every attempt to appear wise and esoteric, sometimes answering questions in riddle or rhyme.
- Heeter is attended at all times by his 14 "Gignoks"; men of child-height, blue skin, and bearded.

Heeter's Cat: AC 7 (13), HD 1, hp 3, AT #1 (+1 to hit), D 1-4 (claw or bite), MV 12" (40').

Gignoks: AC 6 (14), HD 2, hp 10-13, AT #1 (+3 to hit), D 1-6 or Special (see below), MV 9" (30'). Special: When agitated, Blue-Men can scream hideously. This sonic wave is both deafening and mentally anguish. No attack roll is necessary —the blast deals 1d8 damage. If the Gignok loses initiative and is struck before screaming, the blast and damage will not be dealt due to the interruption.

Heeter: AC 5 (15), HD 6, hp 27, AT #1 (+7 to hit), D 1-8, MV 12" (40'). Special: Heeter is immune to Charm and Fear-based spells. Possessions: Ring of Regeneration, Chain Armour, Scroll of Knock, Magic Sword +1 (AL N, Int/Ego 9 (18), Communicates via Empathy, Powers: Detect Traps (x2), Locate Secret Doors, Locate Objects).

Heeter's Spells:

1st level – Charm Person, Sleep, Magic Missile, Read Magic

2nd level – Invisibility, ESP

3rd level – Lightning Bolt



11. PRISON

Leading away from #5 is a winding cave-like passageway, which opens into a cavernous room. In the northeastern corner of the room is a secret door leading to #12. The secret door is merely a camouflaged cloth. Otherwise the room appears as a dead-end. Half of the cave has been divided into a prison, which in turn has been divided into 3 discrete cells. The middle cell is empty but the outside cells are occupied:

- A human warrior sits glumly on the rush-covered floor. His clothes are tattered and he smells terribly. He has been held prisoner here, but lost his memory due to Heeter's sadistic experiments. He has but a single memory: a lone stone citadel in an untamed wilderness. If he is released he will gladly accompany the party, though he will wish to discover the citadel. He is actually a lordling, and the citadel is his home. He is currently unarmoured, but favours metallic armours and a two-handed weapon (preferably a sword).

Human Warrior: AC 9 (11), HD 3, hp 14, AT #1(+2 to hit), D by weapon, MV 12" (40').

- A harpy occupies the second cell. She has been captured by Heeter as a pet, and has lived in this cell for years. She is furious with her lot in life. She will immediately sing and attempt to lure gullible party members towards her. Heeter is immune to her effects, while his Blue-Men stuff their ears with fabric to prevent her songs from reaching them.

Harpy: AC 7 (13), HD 3, hp 11, AT #1(+5 to hit), D 1-6, MV 6" (20')/15" (50'). Special: Harpies can sing alluring songs, mesmerising any listener. They will approach and once touched make a saving throw vs. magic or become Charmed. Once charmed, the victim will be devoured.

12. THE CHAMBER OF HEETER

Heeter's chamber, though hewn from rough stone, is surprisingly warm. It contains none of the medieval draught prevalent throughout the rest of the lair. A small desk and chair occupy one corner of the room. Rushes cover the flagstone floors, and an organic sleeping sac fills the northernmost portion. The sleeping sac has rejuvenating properties. It appears like a cicada shell, though is gooey and veiny. During restful periods Heeter climbs inside. The sac drapes around his body, and emanates a suctioning sound. Heeter's soft groans of comfort can be discerned if he is sleeping within. Heeter sucks his thumb.

- The desk has a writing quill and inkpot. Not particularly valuable, though certainly useful.
- Scrolls of parchment are stacked on the desk. It is high quality (sold for 10gp).
- A scroll of Read Magic and Locate Object can be discovered in one of the drawers.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

There are multiple outcomes to this adventure, dependent on the adventurer's actions. Sloppy, loud characters may suffer an untimely death as Gignoks descend upon them, and Heeter massacres them with spells. Those demonstrating caution may gain various treasures and leave unobserved. Those who notify Heeter of their presence may be killed, parlayed with, or may form a mutually beneficial alliance. Heeter could prove a useful NPC to hire the party in the future. He perpetually seeks bits of arcane knowledge, and will pay handsomely.

