



d12 Monthly

HILLS & MOUNTAINS
ISSUE

Issue 21
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MUSCLE & ENDURANCE

ADVENTURING IN THE
HILLS & MOUNTAINS

A NEW LOOK AT GIANTS

MOUNTAINOUS FOES

BEASTS OF ROCK &
STONE

The Lost Mines of Aktar: A new adventure location

***d12 Monthly* is a helpful resource for fantasy roleplayers.**

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The Hills & Mountains

Issue

Continuing the terrain mini-series, we wander over hills and climb over mountains in this issue.

You will discover just how difficult it can be to adventure in mountains, find out what's inside caves, learn the truth behind giants, face new monsters, and enter an old, long-lost dwarven mine.

I truly hope this issue will spark your imagination, give you ideas, and help you develop your own fantasy campaign world.

And that in doing so, you take your players on a fantastic journey filled with great adventures and much treasure!

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM

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About Me

I have been roleplaying for over 30 years and DMing for most of those. I have played over 50 different roleplaying games, but my first love is fantasy - it's like coming home.

Other TTRPGs I like: WEG D6 Star Wars, Feng Shui RPG, & Warhammer FRP.

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... for making this zine as good as it is.

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Peaks & Valleys

Hills & Mountains in Your Campaign

Mountains and hills make up a large part of fantasy worlds and it can be helpful to understand how they form and what dwells in them.

Mountains



A mountain is an elevated portion of the Earth's crust, generally with steep sides that show significant exposed bedrock. They are defined by having a limited summit area, and are higher than a hill, typically rising at least 1,000 feet above the surrounding land.

Earth's highest mountain is Mount Everest in the Himalayas of Asia, whose summit is 29,035 ft above sea level.

While some isolated mountains can exist (although usually lower in height), most mountains exist within a mountain range (a bunch of mountains strung together).

In our world mountains are formed by tectonic forces or volcanic action and are

then eroded by climatic conditions or by rivers over time.

Mountains are full of life and have varying types of flora and fauna at different levels due to the climate change as you ascend the mountain.

The higher a mountain rises, the colder the climate is.

Calculating Temperature

A quick way to calculate this drop in temperature, is to decrease the average temperature by 4 degrees Fahrenheit per 1,000-ft you ascend.

For example, if you have climbed up 5,000-ft, then the average temperature would be approximately 20 degrees (4×5) lower than the surrounding climate.

Above approximately 8,000 feet, snow can be expected any time of year in temperate climates.

Volcanoes

Volcanoes are formed when a plate is pushed below another plate, causing magma to rise to the surface.

Active volcanoes can spew hot lava, volcanic ash, and gases from a magma chamber below the surface.

Climate

In addition to having various bands of climate on the mountain, they can cause great diversity in the surrounding lands, as well.

Mountains typically have a wetter, windward side, and a drier, leeward side. This is caused by clouds hitting the high peaks and depositing their rain on just one side of the mountain, leaving the other side much drier.

This causes the lower lands on the windward side of the mountain to have a much more lush environment than the lower lands on the leeward side.

This, in turn, impacts the wildlife found on each side of the mountain range.

Flora & Fauna

The variety of plants and animals that live in the mountains is truly staggering. So much so that trying to place them all would be overly ambitious.

Instead, there are some general truisms you can follow to make your mountain ranges a little more realistic.

Vegetation on the lower slopes tends to be similar to whatever the climate is in the surrounding land. Those higher up tend to be more adapted to the colder weather.

For example, you will find needleleaf trees (spruce and pines, for example). Forests thin out at ever higher levels, leaving shrubs and grasses. Eventually, at the summits you usually find just rock and snow.

Animals (and monsters) found on mountains will vary greatly, depending on which climate band they are in. Use various

monster tables based on climate to populate your mountains.

Magical Mountains

Of course, mountains in your world need not be created or shaped by natural forces.

Deities could have created them (a home built for giants or dwarves perhaps), or they could have been created via powerful magic gone awry.

In my own campaign world, the mountains were formed by Mountain Giants, who turn into mountains once they die. Mountain ranges are the remnant of long battles past.

Hills

A hill is considered to be a landform not as tall, or as steep as a mountain, but still rises above the surrounding land.

Hills form through geomorphic faulting, erosion of larger landforms such as mountains, or by movement and deposition of sediment by glaciers.

Hills can take many forms, from the more grass-covered rolling hills, to more jagged, rock-based hills.

Each will have its own unique feel and dangers, and I would suggest reinforcing this to create tension and mood. A rolling grassy, sunlit hill will feel very different to a craggy, jagged series of rocky hills filled with misty rain.

The various types of hills are listed below.

Drumlin – an elongated whale-shaped hill formed by glacial action.

Butte – an isolated hill with steep sides and a small flat top, formed by weathering.

Kuppe – a rounded hill or low mountain.

Tor – a rock formation found on a hilltop.

Puy – a conical volcanic hill.

Pingo – a mound of earth-covered ice found in Arctic conditions.

Hillock - a small hill.

Hills can be found on their own, as part of a grouping, or as foothills leading into a mountain range.

Many settlements are built on hills to protect against enemies and flooding.

Flora & Fauna

Plants and animals in the hills are usually representative of the surrounding climate. Forests can continue over hills, for example.

Rivers and streams are found in abundance winding their way through hills (helping forming them) and so abundant flora and fauna can be found around these water courses.

See the *Watch Out!* article in this issue for encounters.



Slopes & Ropes

Adventuring in the Mountains

Mountains contain many dangers for the unprepared and unwary. They are not to be explored lightly.

Survival

Surviving in mountains can be difficult. The explorer must tend not only with local denizens, but also with the weather, temperatures, and difficult terrain.

Travel

As mentioned in *Oh, the Places You Will Go* article in *Issue 7* of **d12 Monthly**, the speed of travel through mountains is reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ of normal. And carts and wagons cannot be used unless a path is present.

This is due to the uneven and difficult terrain you will encounter. Whether it is steep cliffs that must be climbed, or winding trails, or going around impassable rockfalls, mountain travel is slow and physically taxing.

Weather

The weather in the mountains can change dramatically. Storms can suddenly appear where clear sky was a moment before, and the wind is much stronger the higher up you travel.

Hazards

Many hazards can occur while travelling in the mountains.

Altitude

At altitudes higher than 6,500 feet, explorers will start to feel the effects of altitude sickness. Endurance and concentration is reduced.

In game terms, characters have a -2 penalty to all CON checks and saves, as well as to any perception or skill checks that require concentration (picking locks, for example).

To eliminate the chance of feeling the effects of altitude sickness (and to negate the penalties) takes D4+1 days of acclimatisation. After this, the traveller will no longer have any penalties.

Rockfalls & Avalanches

Rockfalls are caused by loose rocks and sediments, and can be caused by loud noises or impact, or just through natural occurrence.

Avalanches are caused by large amounts of snow build-up and can be triggered by loud noises.

Keep this in mind if characters use loud spells (such as fireball or lightning) while defending themselves.

Storms & Wind

Winds can reach gale speeds and wind gusts can be 50% greater than the average wind speed, making any travel deadly.

If you want a quick way to generate weather while travelling in the mountains, roll a D12 every 4 hours, and if an 11 or 12 are rolled, a storm (11), or gale-force winds (12) are present. These will last for D3 hours.

If shelter is not found, these can cause damage and fatigue to anyone exposed. For each hour the bad weather is present, each exposed character (and any animals) need to make a moderate CON save (or save vs. Breath Weapon) or gain a level of fatigue and suffer D4 damage.

Visibility

Darkness or storms (rain or snow) can lead to disorientation if travellers are not careful.

The chance of getting lost in mountains if travelling in these conditions is doubled.

Equipment

Having the correct equipment while travelling through mountains is paramount. Some essentials include:

Ropes and pitons for climbing.

Warm weather clothing and sleeping gear to stave off the colder weather.

Adequate food and water.

If travellers don't have the appropriate gear, double penalties above and give them harder checks for climbing.



Of Earth & Wind

The Truth Behind Giantkin



Giants are greatly misunderstood by most of the world.

They see them as nothing more than giant brutes (in the same vein as the battle-hardened ogres), but nothing could be further from the truth.

Giants are truly connected to the land and Nature. They have a strong relationship with the fey (see *Issue 14* of my **d12 Monthly** zine), as well as druids.

Yes, giants are large, imposing, strong, and will defend themselves and their (ever shrinking) homelands with gusto; but they are generally not aggressive unless provoked.

Life & Death

Giants are born in the normal way, but when they die they become the terrain for which they are named. Mountain giants become mountains, hill giants become hills, and fire giants become... Well, more on that later.

This is generally a private event, with the giant walking off alone to settle in a particular area, adding to the landscape. Although, there have been reports of giant couples ending their days together this way.

Several places are considered sacred for this purpose by giants (and fey, who help guard these areas), but giants can lay down anywhere they feel comfortable with or consider home.

Death of Various Giants

Each giant becomes something after they die. This transformation usually takes hours or days and happens so slowly, people observing it will not notice the transformation until it is complete.

Hill Giant - Become hills. Smaller ones, hillocks. Sometimes, very old hill giants become tors or a butte.

Mountain Giant - Become mountains. This explains some mountains that exist in isolation, but more often than not, mountain giants will lay down to die near others, forming mountain ranges.

Fire Giant - Become volcanoes. The older the fire giant, the larger and more violent the volcano.

Forest Giant - Become verdant forests or woods. Like mountain giants, they tend to lay down near others, growing a forest.

Frost Giant - Become an iceberg or part of a glacier.

Storm Giant - Become a raging storm that lasts for generations. These storms are thankfully rare, but they persist, raging through mountains.

Rock Throwing

Giants do enjoy throwing rocks, but they also throw other things, like spears, javelins, tree branches, large icicles, stalactites and anything they can get their large hands on.

There are no penalties for throwing any of these weapons or even make-shift items.

Life & Societies

Giants usually form around clans - several families banding together for protection and efficiency.

Occasionally, these clans band together under a powerful leader, forming villages. But they seldom exist in larger numbers than a small village.

They are similar to humans in that they enjoy a simple life and prefer to be left alone. They hunt and gather, have young, and will fiercely protect their domains.

Giants usually live to around 100 years, but some have been known to live to 150. They

see age and wisdom as great benefits, and look after their wise elders.

Natural Connection

Due to their nature, giants have a close bond with the fey and druids alike.

Druids and fey help keep giants secluded from more civilised races, although this proves to be difficult as civilisation expands more and more.

Dwarves warred with the giants in ages past, but they largely leave them alone now, usually only coming into conflict over territory.

History

Giants were one of the original races, appearing in great numbers towards the end of the Age of Dragons (some sages believe Giants hastened the end for the Dragons). They fought long and bloodied battles with the dragons, forming many of the mountain ranges and hills that exist today.

Their numbers dwindled after the dwarves and elven nations rose, retreating further into the hills and mountains and forests.

Today, they are a shadow of their former glory, but they have no real desire in reclaiming their glory days.



Watch Out!

Hill & Mountain Encounters

Use these encounter charts for inspiration or random encounters.

Numbers encountered are listed in the monster entry, or simply roll a D6.

Table: Temperate Hills Encounters

| D12+D8 | Encounter |
|--------|---|
| 2 | Ki-Rin |
| 3 | Ghost |
| 4 | Trolls |
| 5 | Kenku |
| 6 | Wild Boar |
| 7 | Stag |
| 8 | Pilgrims or Merchants |
| 9 | Dwarves |
| 10 | Wolves |
| 11 | Hill Giant |
| 12 | Brown Bear |
| 13 | Orcs |
| 14 | Ogre |
| 15 | Giant Trapdoor Spider |
| 16 | Ghouls |
| 17 | Giant Toads |
| 18 | Bulette |
| 19 | Phase Spider |
| 20 | Vampire (Night) or Greater Basilisk (Day) |



Table: Temperate Mountain Encounters

| High Altitude (2D6) | Low Altitude (2D6) | Encounter |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 | 2 | Night Hag |
| - | 3 | Fire Lizard |
| 3 | | Gold Dragon |
| 4 | 4 | Mountain Giant |
| 5 | | Manticore |
| - | 5 | Mountain Lions |
| 6 | 6 | Wild Dogs |
| 7 | | Mountain Orcs |
| - | 7 | Bats (Night) or Vultures (Day) |
| 8 | 8 | Mountain Dwarves |
| 9 | 9 | Stone Giant |
| - | 10 | Giant Eagle |
| 10 | | Trolls |
| 11 | 11 | Avalanche or Rock Fall |
| - | 12 | Wraith |
| 12 | | Yeti |

Born of Stone & Fire

Dwarven Special Abilities

Dwarves are a staple of fantasy roleplaying and appear in many different roleplaying games and campaign worlds.

And they are given a wide variety of traits and abilities. Below are some traits and abilities that are dwarven-centric that you can give dwarves in your own campaign world to make them unique.

Hearty Constitution

Dwarves can stomach almost anything and have robust constitutions.

Rules: Dwarves gain a +4 bonus (or equivalent) to any checks or saves involving CON, poisons, or similar.

Scent of Stone

Dwarves long for the treasures built under their mountain homes and this has given them the ability to smell treasure.

Rules: When within 60-ft of any natural mineral deposits or gemstones, dwarves have a 3 in 6 chance of detecting them*.

* This is similar to an elf's detect secret doors mechanic.

Solid Grip

Dwarves have large strong hands and their grip is strong.

Rules: Dwarves gain a +4 bonus (or equivalent) against any disarm attempts, or when they are climbing.

Stable

Dwarves have a low centre of gravity and have powerful muscles in their legs. These combine to make dwarves much more stable than most other races.

Rules: Dwarves gain a +4 bonus (or equivalent) to all attempts at bull-rushes and trip attempts when they are standing on ground.

Stone Skin

Some say dwarves are born of the rock and stone and so their skin is tougher than humans, giving them resistance to physical damage.

Rules: They gain damage reduction (DR) of 1* against physical attacks.

* Damage reduction means they reduce all physical damage taken by 1.

Tremor Sense

Dwarves are one with the earth and it, in turn, communicates with dwarves, even when they are too busy to listen.

Rules: Dwarves have the ability to feel tremors in the ground and so can "see" anyone touching the ground, even in complete darkness, up to 60-ft.

The dwarf can tell the size, number, and type of creature within range.

Dark & Gloomy

What's in the Cave?



Below are a series of tables to figure out what is in a cave.

Caves for our purposes are one-chamber natural holes in the sides of mountains and hills.

Being of just one-chamber doesn't make them small however, as these chambers could be huge, filled with natural pillars, stalactites and stalagmites, crevices, twists and turns, and other features that block line of sight and cause this one chamber to appear as many smaller ones.

Caves can be found throughout mountainous regions, from large labyrinths to small lairs, caves can contain any number of strange and dangerous experiences.

Simply roll on the Dangers in Caves table using a D6, and then on the accompanying table based on your result. Number of creatures appearing can be as per monster manual or simply roll a D6.

You can also roll on the features table for added details.

Table: Dangers in Caves

| D6 | Result |
|----|------------------|
| 1 | Nothing |
| 2 | Animal |
| 3 | Monster |
| 4 | Campsite |
| 5 | Natural Danger |
| 6 | Magical/Mystical |

Features

You may want to also roll for features that appear in a particular cave. Roll a D12 on the Cave Features Table D3 times.

Table: Cave Features

| D12 | Monster Encountered |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Alcove |
| 2 | Crevasse (50% in wall or ground) |
| 3 | Collapsed Section |
| 4 | Fallen Stones |
| 5 | Stalagmites and Stalactites |
| 6 | (1-4) Small Hole or (5-6) Deep Pit |
| 7 | Ledge |
| 8 | Natural Pillars |
| 9 | Dripping Water |
| 10 | (1-3) Pool or (4-6) Small Stream |
| 11 | Fungus |
| 12 | Entrance to deeper caverns |

Monster



Roll on an appropriate table to see what monster lies within.

This may be the monster’s lair, or a simple stop over or camp for the monster. If it is their lair (most likely), they will defend it vigorously.

The caves may have signs just outside (tracks) or just inside (bones, odours, sounds) of what lives there.

Use these clues as needed to forewarn smart players as to what may lair in the cave, if anything.

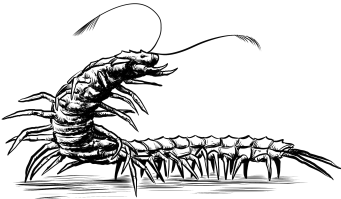
This would be a good chance for characters to use their skills or proficiencies, if any, or for players to exercise their smarts.

Use these clues to build the atmosphere, even if there turns out to be nothing in the cave.

Table: Monsters in Caves

| D20 | Monster Encountered |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Salamander |
| 2 | Goblins |
| 3 | Manticore |
| 4 | Olitiau* |
| 5 | Stone Giant |
| 6 | Ahool* |
| 7 | Green Slime |
| 8 | Black Pudding |
| 9 | Ogre |
| 10 | Ogre Mage |
| 11 | Carrion Crawler |
| 12 | Naga, Guardian or Spirit |
| 13 | Medusa |
| 14 | Xorn |
| 15 | Night Hag |
| 16 | Lycanthrope - Werewolf or Werebear |
| 17 | Cockatrice |
| 18 | Basilisk |
| 19 | Vargouille |
| 20 | Dragon - Brass, Bronze, Gold or Red |

* See new monsters in this issue.



Animal

Many animals use caves as lairs. You can use the giant or dire variety of these results or, for a more mundane encounter, use the ordinary versions.

Regardless of type, animals will fiercely defend their lair, especially if they have young in them. This may mean ignoring any morale checks as the animal fights to the death.

Campsite

Caves are used often by travellers for protection from the elements as they traverse the mountains.

Table: Campsites in Caves

| D6 | Campsite |
|----|---|
| 1 | Very old campsite, littered with old bones |
| 2 | Old campsite, not used for a season or two |
| 3 | A recently used campsite |
| 4 | The embers are still warm |
| 5 | Fellow travellers are using this cave currently* |
| 6 | A monster has taken refuge here - roll on the Monster Table |

* Use the charts in *Building a Quick NPC* article in *Issue 1 of d12 Monthly* to create a band of travellers



Table: Dangerous Animals in Caves

| D20 | Animal Encountered |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Giant Crayfish |
| 2 | Giant Lizard |
| 3 | Giant Spider |
| 4 | Giant Centipede |
| 5 | Piranhas |
| 6 | Giant Cave Worm* |
| 7 | Giant Centipede |
| 8 | Bat Swarm |
| 9 | Giant Bat |
| 10 | Goats |
| 11 | Wolves - Ordinary or Dire |
| 12 | Bear - Black, Brown or Dire |
| 13 | Giant Beetle - Boring or Fire |
| 14 | Rat Swarm |
| 15 | Giant Rats |
| 16 | Giant Toad |
| 17 | Giant Wasp |
| 18 | Giant Snake - Constrictor or Spitting |
| 19 | Mountain Lion |
| 20 | Throat Leech |

* See new monsters in this issue.

Natural Danger

Caves are filled with natural dangers that explorers must deal with.

Table: Natural Dangers in Caves

| D6 | Natural Danger |
|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Falling rocks |
| 2 | Cave-ins |
| 3 | Uneven ground |
| 4 | Slippery ground |
| 5 | Deep pits |
| 6 | Poisonous air |

Falling Rocks

The cave is subject to rocks falling from the ceiling and possibly from the walls as well. For each hour the PCs stay in the cave, there is a 1 in 6 chance of this happening. If this is indicated, roll a D10 for a party in the cave (leaving any blank as near misses). Anyone subject to a falling rock, must make a DEX save (or vs. Breath Weapon) or be hit. Sleeping characters get no save.

Cave-in

This has a 1 in 20 chance of occurring each hour. All must make a DEX save (or vs. Breath Weapon) or take 6D8 damage.

Uneven or Slippery Ground

This simply makes movement in the cave difficult, halving movement rates or risk damaging falls.

Deep Pits

If care is not taken, a character exploring the cave may fall into a pit, taking

appropriate damage (pit depth will be D6 x 10).

Poisonous Air

The air in the cave is poisonous to all who stay there for long periods. This could be caused by spores, fungus, or any other natural cause. And effects could range from hallucinations, ability damage, or feeling sleepy.

Magical/Mystical

The cave is magical or mystical in some way - it could be something in it, or simply the cave itself.

Table: Magic in Caves

| D8 | Magic |
|----|---|
| 1 | Crystal Cave* |
| 2 | A magical item is located here |
| 3 | Residual magic can be detected** |
| 4 | A gate to a deeper realm or another plane is located here |
| 5 | An other-planar being is located here |
| 6 | The cave itself is a magical hub |
| 7 | The cave is a sacred place for a deity |
| 8 | A holy relic rests here |

* See *Some Kind of Magic* article in *Issue 8 of d12 Monthly* for inspiration on this

** See *Linger Effects* article in *Issue 15 of d12 Monthly* for more information



Horrors Abound

New Monsters

Listed below are three new monsters you can throw into your campaign.

Dark Howler

Dark Howlers are bear-sized hunters who have a face more like that of a sabre-toothed tiger. They are covered in bluish-black shaggy fur and prowl the plains, hills, and mountains looking for prey.

The Dark Howler generally stalks its prey in the dark and then gets close enough to use its howl, charging paralysed targets.

Dark Howler

Large Magical Beast

Climate/Terrain: Any temperate land

Frequency: Rare

Organisation: Singular, Pair, or Sleuth (d4+2)

Activity Cycle: Night

Diet: Carnivore

Alignment: Chaotic

Advancement: By size (increase HD)

Languages: None known

—

Armour Class: 13 (Natural armour)

Hit Dice (HP): 8 (56)

Move: 30-ft (12"), Climb: 30-ft (12")

Abilities: S 20 C 16 D 10 I 4 W 8 Ch 8

Attacks: 1 x Bite, 2 Claws

Damage: D8+4 (Bite), D6+2 (Claws)

Morale: High

Special Abilities:

Howl: Dark Howlers emit an eerie howl that will cause paralysing fright in all within 60-ft who hear it for D8 rounds, unless they make a successful moderate WIS save (or vs. paralysation).

Darksight: Dark Howlers see exceptionally well in darkness up to 120-ft.

Fesuul

Fesuul are a race of slavers. They see every being as either a master or a slave - there is no in between.

The lower half of their body is that of a giant snake, while the upper half is that of a scorpion, with a long neck covered in chitinous plates, ending with a gaping maw, filled with needle-like teeth.

They tend to be deep reds, browns, and tans in colour and have natural spots that cover their lower snake half.

Their society is built on slavery. Few Fesuul survive the birth process as they are born in a litter of 6-8, but the stronger quickly eat the weaker. The one or two survivors separate and find a lair to start enslaving other races.

They only unite to breed.

While Fesuuls understand the value of traditional treasure, real value to them is how many slaves they have. It shows other

Fesuuls (and, in their mind at least, to everyone else) how powerful they are.

Fesuul

Large Aberration

Climate/Terrain: Any land, except arctic

Frequency: Rare

Organisation: Singular or Pair

Activity Cycle: Day

Diet: Omnivore

Alignment: Chaotic or Evil

Advancement: By size (increase HD)

Languages: Fesuulish, Deep Trade Tongue

—

Armour Class: 16 (Natural armour + DEX)

Hit Dice (HP): 6 (36)

Move: 30-ft (12"), Climb: 30-ft (12")

Abilities: S 14 C 16 D 12 I 11 W 8 Ch 12

Attacks: 1 x Bite

Damage: D6+2

Morale: High

Special Abilities:

Climbing: Fesuuls can climb up vertical surfaces as easily as they can move along the ground and suffer no penalties when doing so.

Poisonous Bite: Anyone who is bitten by a Fesuul must make a moderate CON save (or vs. Poisons) or lose D4 STR.

Enslave: Once per hour a Fesuul can attempt to charm a creature into becoming its slave. The target must make a moderate WIS save (or vs. Spell) or succumb. This acts as a *Charm Monster* spell but is permanent or until the Fesuul attacks them

(which will trigger another save), or fire is used to burn them (causing D6 damage).

Olitiau

The Olitiau (pronounced Oli-Shau), or Cave Demon, is a man-sized bat creature with a wingspan of 12-ft. Its face is humanoid but twisted and evil with pointed ears and needle-like teeth.

It attacks all who enter its lair and will eat fresh flesh as well as rotting corpses.

Olitiau

Medium Humanoid

Climate/Terrain: Temperate caves and dungeons

Frequency: Rare

Organisation: Singular, Pair, Cloud (D4+4), or Colony (4D4+8)

Activity Cycle: Night

Diet: Carnivore

Alignment: Chaotic

Advancement: By size (increase HD)

Languages: Olitiau

—

Armour Class: 14 (Natural armour + DEX)

Hit Dice (HP): 3 (16)

Move: 30-ft (12"), Fly: 30-ft (12")

Abilities: S 14 C 12 D 11 I 6 W 9 Ch 8

Attacks: 1 x Bite

Damage: D6+2

Morale: Average

Special Abilities:

Sonar: Olitiau, like bats, can "see" via sound. It has perfect vision in complete darkness.

Light Vulnerability: They hate any light and will attack light-bearers first so as to extinguish them. They fight at -2 to hit when in the light.

Grapple: If an Olitiau hits the same target twice in successive rounds, it wraps its leathery wings around it, causing the target to be grappled. Automatic bites occur to that target, but the Olitiau cannot attack another target. The victim can make an opposed STR test to escape each round.

New Template

A new template that can be applied to some monsters.

Mountain

This template can be applied to any humanoid, animal, or beast template.

Creatures born and bred in the mountains are tougher than most and can navigate the treacherous terrain with ease.

Hit Dice: +2HD

AC: +2

Movement: Add Climb 30-ft (12")

Special Traits:

Cold Survival: The creature gains +4 bonus to all survival checks in cold or arctic environments.

Natural Climbers: The creature suffers no penalties to AC or attacks while climbing.



The Lost Mine of Aktar Adventure Location



This adventure location is situated near the town of Dolfar, which features in several early issues of this zine. It can, of course, be located anywhere in your campaign world.

The adventurers will explore an old dusty mine and discover what happened to it, and previous adventurers that went to find it.

History

Aktar of Axebridge was an industrious dwarf, even at a young age. However, raised in the predominantly human town of Axebridge, he always felt an outsider.

One day an adventuring party, which included a dwarf (name unknown) came to town and gave Aktar a sense of belonging and adventure.

After leaving his town for adventure, Aktar managed to earn enough to buy a mine and settle down to raise his own family.

The mine was fairly prosperous, and a small settlement grew up around it. Two years after it started, the Mine of Aktar was overrun by Kobolds.

No-one knew from whence they came, but they swarmed over the mine and into the surrounding settlement too, killing almost everyone.

The Kobolds were eventually driven back and the mine was sealed. The settlement became little more than a graveyard for the dead.

That was two-hundred years ago.

The mine was forgotten and any trace of it lost. That was, until recently.

A merchant by the name of Gavik Wheelwright sold a map to the location of this lost mine to a bard and adventurer, Tuan Sabreblade, for little more than drinking money (probably not believing it or the stories of it to be true).

Tuan's adventuring buddies went in search of this lost mine, but they have not been heard from since.

They left from the town of Dolfar and the owner of the inn there, Guthrie Berryswill, remembers them fondly and worries what happened to them.

For more information on Dolfar, Guthrie, and the inn, *Firststop Inn*, see *Issues 0-2 of d12 Monthly* (available at my website yumdm.com/zines)

Guthrie has a copy of the map the previous adventuring party had as one of them gave him a copy for safekeeping or if something happened to them.

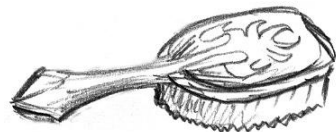
Recent History

Unbeknown to anyone else, a Fesuul (see Monsters article in this issue for more information) has taken over the mine and used its enslavement power to build up a cadre of slaves it uses to mine and defend its domain.

Before the Fesuul moved in, a small group of gnolls had taken up residence in the upper mine area (areas 9-10 on the map), but hadn't explored the rest as they knew it was trapped after one of their own fell victim to one of the pit traps in area 7.

The Fesuul killed the largest of the gnolls and enslaved the rest. He used them to find other slaves to work the mine and to guard his new lair.

The gnolls started kidnapping any being they could find for their Fesuul master to enslave.



Hooks

Use the following hooks to get the PCs to the mine.

1. The PCs are hired by Guthrie, the barman and owner, at the *Firststop Inn* to find the NPC party.
2. The PCs find a copy of the map to the mines during another adventure and decide to follow it.
3. One of the good-aligned factions in your campaign world (who one of the PCs could be a member of) asks the PCs to investigate rumours of people going missing in the area.
4. The Gnolls have kidnapped someone the PCs know.
5. The local Lord wants the PCs to investigate rumours of Gnolls hunting and prowling the night in the local area.
6. The heir to the mine - a dwarf by the name of Hargrim Hammerhand - wants the PCs to clear out any dangers in the mine so he can reopen it after finding mention of it in a lost diary of one of his ancestors.



Map Key

All slaves encountered herein are enslaved by the Fesuul and bear his mark - a pair of fangs - on their neck (burned by a brand). They will defend themselves and the Fesuul unless the charm is broken.

1. Entrance

The entrance to the mine is via an elevator. This is controlled on the lift via a crank handle which controls the descent of the lift. It can carry two medium-sized people at one time.

It takes 5 rounds to descend, and double that to ascend. And it is very noisy, echoing throughout areas 2, 3, 5 and 6 of the mine.

2. Entry Room

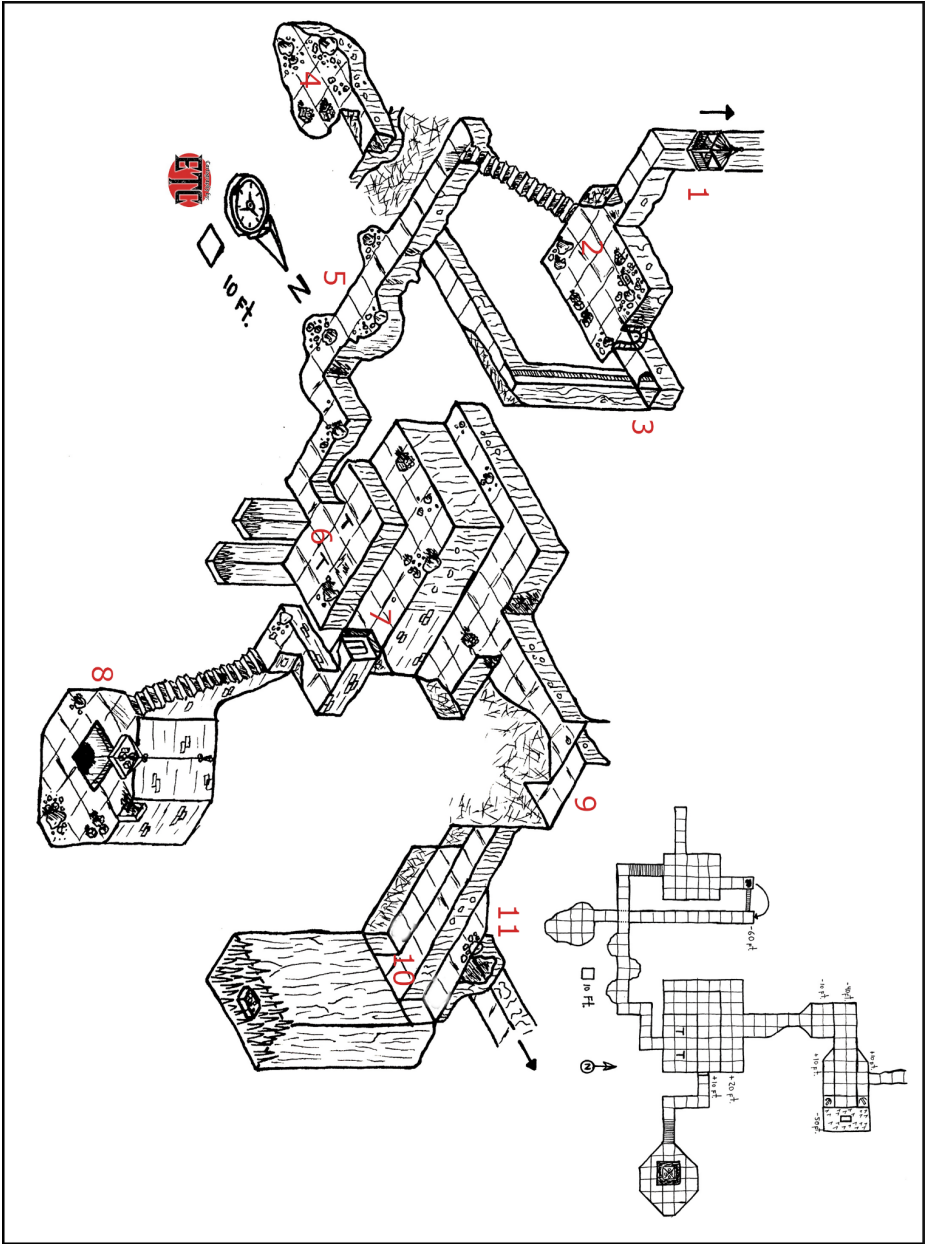
None of the mine's inhabitants use this area as they believe the elevator to be non-functional.

- The room is strewn with moss-covered rocks and other debris
- Anyone searching through the rubble will disturb fungi growing underneath that will spew a spore cloud. CON save (or vs. paralysation) to avoid. Those who fail become slowed for d10 turns.

3. Shaft

This deep shaft was used to access a small mining room (Area 4).

- The shaft is 60-ft deep
- The wooden ladder has decayed and rusted. Several rungs are



- missing. Anyone trying to use it will need to make a DEX save (or vs breath weapon) or fall.

4. Small Mine

The dwarves who originally mined here started this new room for unknown reasons. There are still piles of rubble and rotted and rusted tools lying about.

- A green slime reside on the ceiling of this chamber
- Among the debris are scattered coins and gems, which can be seen from the entrance to the chamber - they are covered with dirt and rust. Toals: 34GP, 16EP, 120SP and 4 Gems (50GP each)

5. Passage

This passage is used as a makeshift guard room. They are not expecting trouble and so 4 goblin slaves hide among the rubble in the alcoves, hunting rats and waiting for anything to happen.

- As the PCs descend the stairs, they will start hearing the noises of the main mine (Area 6)
- 4 Goblin hide among the rubble in the alcoves
- If the PCs have been totally silent, then the goblins will automatically be surprised



6. Main Mine

This is where most of the mining is happening.

- There is a 3 in 6 chance the Fesuul will be here at any given time
- Overseeing the miners are 4 Gnoll guards. Two are on the third tier shouting from above, and the other two are near the locked door (Area 7)
- A dozen miners (2 dwarves, 3 gnomes, an orc, a half-orc, and 3 humans) toil on the elevated second tier. They are armed with picks and shovels (D4 damage), but will only attack to defend themselves
- One of the humans - Adria - is the only survivor of the NPC party that ventured to this place (the rest have been thrown in the pit (Area 10). She will be happy to join any party as a hireling.

7. Locked Door

A heavy iron-bound wooden door is shut and locked.

- Door is shut and locked - DC: 20 (or -10% penalty) to open

8. Fesuul's Lair

The Fesuul lairs here.

- If the Fesuul hasn't been encountered thus far, this is where it will be located
- The platform is raised and lowered by levers on the north-east wall
- It lowers into a 60-ft deep pit which holds the Fesuul's treasure
- Rusted chains connect to a wooden platform holding the treasure (listed below)

9. New Area

The Fesuul is looking to start mining in this area.

- Currently, there is a gnome prospector who is inspecting the area for new veins

10. The Pit

This is where prisoners who are no longer fit to mine go to die. They are cast into the pit.

- A horrid stench floats up from the bottom of the pit due to the dead bodies and refuse dumped there
- The fall is 50-ft and the bottom is filled with spikes, causing 7D6 damage to anyone thrown in

- The pit also has D6+6 poisonous snakes who feed on anyone thrown down here

11. Exit

This can be an exit or a passage to a deeper part of a larger dungeon.

- If used as an exit, it comes out to the surface ½ mile from this position

Changing the Adventure

You can easily expand or change this encounter location to better fit your campaign world.

- Have the Fesuul a mere pawn of a bigger baddie.
- The "exit" tunnel can lead to another lair or deeper into the Deep Dark.
- There may be an item the PCs seek in the treasure room of the Fesuul. This could lead to another adventure.
- The slaves can be changed to whatever race you want to include, or more added.

Fesuul's Treasure

The treasure contains the following:

- 12 Gems of various types (3 x 25GP, 4 x 50GP, 2 x 100GP, 2 x 250GP, 1 x 1,000GP)
- 354 silver pieces
- A bolt of silk (worth 200GP)
- A gold urn (worth 75GP)

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Hills & Mountains

