

The Secrets of Goblin Gorge

by M. A. Cutter



A Shark Bytes Special Supplement

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Far from civilized lands, nestled amid the jagged foothills of a lonely mountain range, lies Goblin Gorge. True to its name the high, rugged valley is home to tribes of goblins and their larger, meaner cousins—hobgoblins. These tribes aren't prone to murderous raids or banditry. On the contrary—the goblins of the gorge are gold miners, bartering their wares with merchants who travel a nearby route.

Goblin Gorge is designed to fit into any campaign setting. It is best placed in a remote mountain range, not terribly far from a minor trade route. With few adjustments it could be placed almost anywhere.

You'll need a copy of *Savage Worlds*, the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*, the *Fantasy World Builder Toolkit*, and the *Fantasy Gear Toolkit* to run this adventure.

History of the Gorge

The story of Goblin Gorge goes back a lot further than its current residents, from whom it gets its name. In fact, it's been known by several monikers over the years.

Prehistory

Originally the area was called the Valley of Three Gods. According to legend, the gorge was formed when a trio of gods—all lords of wizardry—were cast down from their castles in the heavens during some forgotten conflict. Three pillars of flame descended from the sky and smashed into the earth, and when the dust cleared a strange new vale lay revealed amid the peaks.

For a long time the area was shunned by reasonable folk, for it was said to be haunted by odd spirits and fearsome creatures. A deep, unnaturally thick forest grew to guard the entrance, and all who took lumber from its verges suffered the same fate without fail. Exactly three days after a woodsman took trees from the gorge, he vanished from his bed in the night and was never seen again.

Oakenvale

A wizard known only as Oakenstaff arrived about 300 years ago, and after his first trip to the gorge he claimed to have slain the vengeful spirit of the forest. Over the next few years Oakenstaff—who proved beneficent, if a little unpredictable—drove out or imprisoned the terrifying abominations that roamed the valley. A few he

annihilated with dazzling displays of sorcery. Finally he raised a stone tower in the valley's southernmost arm, and with the finality of a notary's stamp he declared that the valley would ever after be known as Oakenvale.

Oakenstaff used his powers to help townsfolk in neighboring regions, so they quickly took a shine to him. Few questioned what Oakenstaff was up to, and those who did were quickly shushed by their fellows. For most, it was enough that the wizard had their best interests in mind.

How wrong they were! Oakenstaff was building his vale into a magical fortress, specifically designed to repel a hated enemy and former rival. With strange incantations he twisted the forest into a sentient, self-aware guardian that lived to repel intruders. He raised an invisible orb of force over the entire gorge to proof it against flying things. Finally, he created secret caches all over the vale to house items of magic and restorative salves, should he ever need them.

One of the last evil creatures Oakenstaff drove out of his vale was a horrible hag called Acrizog. After years of wandering she had the last laugh. The hag met a wanderer called Keric, who said he searched for a wizard who lived among the oaks. Acrizog told him where to find that wizard and followed him back to Oakenvale, where she watched the conflict play out.

Keric was Oakenstaff's hated enemy and rival, and he pierced the vale's defenses with ease only to find that Oakenstaff has amassed a veritable army of hobgoblins in his hidden domain. Titanic spells and great summonings rocked the vale for five days and five nights while vicious storms lashed the foothills. Dead hobgoblins and other servitors littered the earth. When the conflagration ended, both wizards were gone. The guardian forest was no longer sentient, and Oakenstaff's tower was silent and empty.

The ragged remains of hobgoblin and goblin tribes took up residence in the vale, with the cunning hag Acrigog leading them.

The Lord of Death

No one knows whether the entity that calls itself "Lord of Death" dwelled in the vale before Oakenstaff's arrival, or was summoned during his final battle with Keric, or

stumbled upon the place later. A hundred years after the wizards' disappearance, a shapeshifting reaper roamed the entire region unchecked. It would appear as a woman, a stray animal, a strong ox, or a child, in order to gain sympathy and be taken home with unwitting victims. In the night it became a venomous snake, or a large scorpion, and stung everyone to death. Then it wandered off in search of more victims.

Several years passed before a cabal of holy priests divined the true nature of the Lord of Death and tracked it to its lair in the vale. They imprisoned it in Oakenstaff's former tower, and with their fervent prayers called up the only sort of being able to contain a shapeshifter—another shapeshifter. Knowing that the cunning and honeyed words of the Lord of Death could lead almost any jailer astray, they summoned a bestial and unthinking beast that disregards all attempts at conversation.

The Gorge Today

These days outsiders call the valley Goblin Gorge, and the inhabitants just call it "home." In the northeast arm of the gorge, a large tribe of hobgoblins—the *Stonehammer Rex* tribe—lives in two separate villages, led by Poxygog, daughter-hag of the late ruler. She rules the hobgoblins with an iron fist (and the aid of a loyal cadre of dragon men!), so pure fear of her wrath is what's driving their frantic mining efforts. The hobgoblins have claimed their portion of the gorge, and guard it against intruders by means of a large palisade wall and towers, with a gate at the center.

In the gorge's middle, western arm live the goblins—the *Legbreaker* tribe—led by their ogre queen Jurmok. Compared to the hobgoblins they live in relative squalor. They once were miners as well, but a horde of creatures awakened deep in the mine and brought operations to a screeching halt. Since then they are abducted for slave labor by the hobgoblins, and fighting off great swarms of mine-creatures every month or so. They would welcome the aid of outsiders in dealing with any of their myriad problems.

In the southernmost arm of Goblin Gorge stands the ruin of Oakenstaff's tower, though none alive remember its original name. Few of the vale's other residents go anywhere near the ruined tower these days, fearful of the terrible "Guardian" that roams nearby. Inside the tower the Lord of Death remains imprisoned, waiting for someone it can trick into undoing the rituals that bind it.

Into this relatively stable milieu walk to heroes, and it all goes to hell.

The Heroes Arrive

There's plenty of reasons a party of heroes might want to visit Goblin Gorge. Here's a few suggestions to get you started:

Banditry: Neither the hobgoblins nor their smaller kin engage in raids, preferring to trade gold nuggets for those goods they can't produce on their own. Some local merchant or political leader doesn't believe such an outlandish tale, and hires the PCs to find out the truth of the matter.

Revenge: While the local tribes don't typically conduct raids they are hardly innocent, having killed their fair share of foes over the years. A character might come seeking revenge upon the hobgoblins, the goblins, or even the Lord of Death for a past wrong.

Exploration: Goblin Gorge was once the secret domain of a powerful wizard. Who knows what secrets, precious items of magic, and riches he left behind? Seekers of arcane knowledge, delvers into the unknown, and treasure hunters all have an interest in the place once called "Oakenvale."

Reconnaissance: Merchants who have traded with the hobgoblins for their ore note that it is pure. But they also note that the hobgoblins all wear odd amulets on strings around their necks. Curious folk, the merchants would pay to know more about the amulets and their purpose.

Mercenaries: If the heroes are of a more mercenary bent, the goblins might hire them to help take down the hobgoblins from their high and mighty perch. Or the hobgoblins might wish to contract swordarms to eradicate those pesky goblins once and for all.

Against the Goblins: This scenario can be used as a sequel to "Last Goblin Standing" (see *Shark Bytes* volume 2, issue 2). Once the heroes have dealt with Boss Blacktongue they discover that the Obliterati leader receives his orders from Jurmok, queen of the Legbreaker tribe. An arduous and perilous journey brings the party to Goblin Gorge.

Goblin Gorge

The various locations and inhabitants of the gorge are described below. The situation is presented in static form, for your players to interact with as you (and more importantly, they) see fit. Following the list of keyed locations is a full accounting of Oakenstaff's secret caches.

Treasure: Use the Treasure Table in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit* to determine what riches are held by the various inhabitants of the gorge. Always add +10% to the chance

of discovering a relic due to the presence of powerful wizards in this region in ages past.

Wandering Patrols: Use the encounter table provided when heroes pass through the Dead Man's Trees. In the northeastern region, hobgoblin patrols numbering 12 are common. In the far west of the gorge, goblin patrols numbering 2d12 are common at night. In the arm of the gorge containing the ruined tower (#4), a being called the Guardian is often encountered.

Locales of Note

Refer to the Goblin Gorge map for the following numbered locations:

1. The Trading Post

This lonely outpost stands alongside the trade route, on the banks of the Pikesden River, about two miles from the mouth of Goblin Gorge. A broad front porch holds several comfortable chairs and a rain barrel alongside a rickety swing. Old men sit smoking and telling tales until late at night. Behind the moss-covered building a well-heeled footpath heads toward grayish-purple mountains in the near distance.

Pheltimus Rime owns the establishment, as he has ever since his dear old Da passed on. He considers it a peaceful oasis in a chaotic world, one he's fortunate enough to own. Though the lack of wife or family makes his days a little long sometimes, the recent trade with goblinkind has brought a welcome edge of danger to Rime's typically humdrum business.

Characters who speak with the locals and succeed on a Persuasion or Streetwise roll can learn a bit about the gorge. The locals know that both goblins and hobgoblins inhabit the gorge, that they don't typically raid human lands, and various slightly-inaccurate versions of the gorge's history. If any character succeeds on her Persuasion or Streetwise roll, one of the grizzled old men recites an old children's rhyme:

*The wizard of oaks is long gone and dead
In his tower remain scores of books to be read
And rooms whose locks need no keys—
Their doorstep lies by the Methuselah tree*

Whatever goods and gear the GM chooses to make available to players is currently for sale at the Trading Post.

Roll a d6 when the characters arrive; on a 1 or 2, hobgoblins are trading their gold and silver ore with transient merchants. The creatures number 10, as they always do outside the gorge.

A Notice roll allows one to discern that every hobgoblin wears an odd bronze amulet—stamped with an oak leaf—around his neck. Use of *detect arcana* confirms a lingering dweomer upon these strange talismans (see sidebar).

The hobgoblins aren't looking for trouble—their "lady" Poxygog has expressly forbidden it—but they don't hesitate to defend themselves against violent foes.

Hobgoblins (10): One is a Wild Card. Use stats in *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Merchants (6): Use Citizen stats in *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Pheltimus Rime: Use Citizen stats in *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*. Add a crossbow, 8 bolts, and the Marksman Edge.

Local Tale-Tellers (4): Use Citizen stats in *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Oak Leaf Amulets

An oak leaf amulet is a small bronze pendant, stamped with an oak leaf and usually worn on a leather thong around the neck.

These devices date from the old days of Oakenstaff's residency in the gorge, and have a few effects. First, anyone wearing an oak leaf amulet is not attacked by creatures of Animal intelligence in the Dead Man's Trees. Second, the gates linking Oakenstaff's hidden caches do not function properly unless the user wears an amulet (the hobgoblins know nothing about this). The amulets were once fairly common among Oakenstaff's servants. A great many were hoarded by the hag Acrizog and passed down to her daughter Poxygog. Now about 25 of them remain in hobgoblin hands, some worn by parties that travel to the Trading Post and the rest adorning the hag and her trusted dragon men.

Others might turn up in various creatures' treasures, at the GM's discretion. Be stingy, though—the characters should have to take their amulets from the Stonehammer Rex tribe if they want enough for the whole party.

2. The Fork

During Oakenstaff's days (when Goblin Gorge was called Oakenvale) the deep, dark, twisted forest that fills the mouth of the gorge was called the Barrier Wood. Today it's commonly called the Dead Man's Trees, given all the death that has befallen travelers under its boughs. It is a mystery to local folk why the goblinkind are able to come and go as they please, while they consider the Dead Man's

Trees a fey and ominous place not trod lightly by any wise person.

At the center of the relatively small forest (it measures about four square miles) there is a fork in the Pikesden River where a stout stone bridge spans the water. To one side of the path stands an ancient statue covered in mossy growths and creeping vines. If the growths are cleared away, the worn stone likeness of a smiling man in ornate robes is revealed, his arms open and welcoming.

From this vantage point characters can see the Lookout (#3) on the high cliffs overlooking the gorge, as well as trails leading north (toward the hobgoblins' lands) and west (toward the goblins' domain).

3. The Lookout

This small stone tower is perched upon the high cliffs above the gorge. It is plainly visible from the the Forks (#2). A "ladder" is carved into the cliffs beneath the tower, allowing characters to scale the heights with a successful Climbing roll (at +2). (See also hidden cache B.)

The tower is a squat, unimpressive affair whose once-stout door is now missing. The interior is filled with debris—various bones (mostly goblin and hobgoblin, with a few human and demihuman specimens), scattered hay, grass, piles of tangled cord, broken branches, and logs. A narrow staircase winds along one wall to the upper story.

The upper level opens onto a stone balcony that affords a clear view of the entire gorge. The hobgoblins' fortifications and towns are visible to the north, the goblins' domain can be seen to the west, and another tower stands in the south. Most of the upper level, though, is occupied by what appears to be a very large nest.

This is the lair of a peryton. The nest contains three shiny black eggs (possibly worth money to a collector, at the GM's discretion). Roll a d6 when the party arrives at the lookout tower—on a result of 1 or 2, the peryton is out hunting. On a result of 3-6, the creature guards its nest and attempts to slay all intruders.

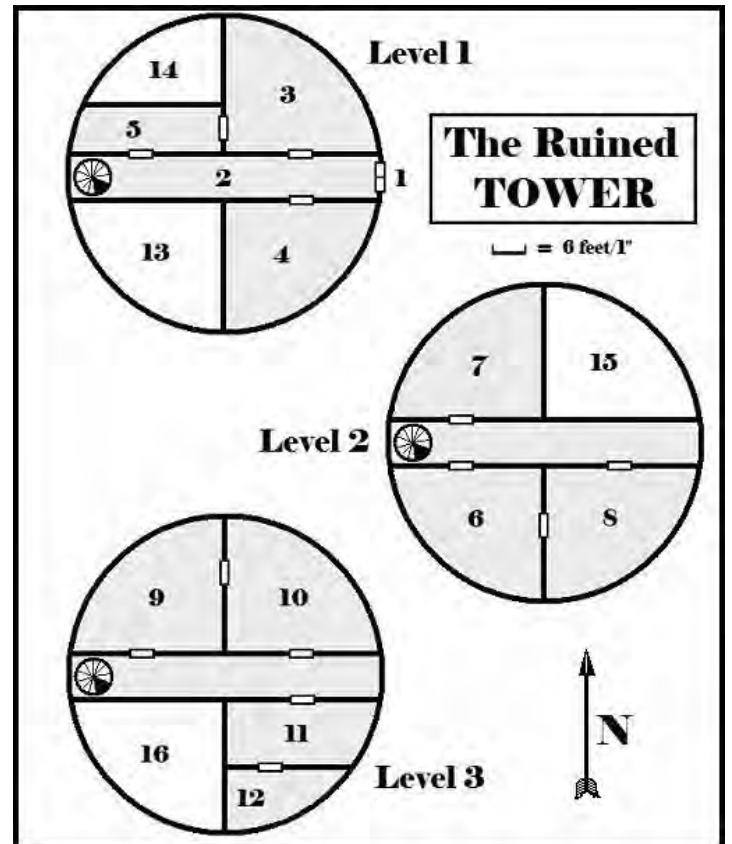
Peryton (1): Wild Card. Use stats in *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

4. The Ruined Tower

To the eyes of most visitors this tower doesn't appear to be all that ruined. Its walls are intact and its front doors are securely fastened shut. Only a few of the once-proud battlements have crumbled under the weight of ages. It stands just over 50 feet in height, with no windows or

other apparent portals besides the stout front door. A small well (see hidden cache C) stands beside the tower.

This place was built by the wizard Oakenstaff and used as his home and laboratory. Most of its interior was ransacked long before the arrival of its current denizen. A deadly shapeshifter is imprisoned in the tower now, roaming freely among those rooms it can access (shown in gray on the nearby map).



The goal of the Lord of Death is to escape its imprisonment by any means necessary. Given a chance it flees first, returning later under cover of darkness to murder the heroes one by one. If the party gets in its way it attacks with naked savagery, trying to fight past and make a getaway.

The Lord of Death (WC)

The following stats apply when the Lord of Death is in its natural form—a nearly invisible floating vapor. It almost never assumes this form, preferring to use its *shapeshifting* ability to assume other more deadly guises. Once it is free the Lord of Death soon takes up its favorite pastime—stalking Goblin Gorge in search of victims to slay. Since it can assume literally any shape, from a tiny fly to a great and terrible jabberwock, the Lord of Death is extremely difficult to track once it escapes.

Abilities: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Goblin Gorge) d12, Notice d12, Persuasion d10, Stealth d12, Taunt d10

Pace: 0; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- **Ethereal Claws:** Str+d6. The Lord of Death attacks with vaporous talons that ignore all non-magical armor.
- **Flight:** Pace 12.
- **Invisibility:** The Lord of Death's vaporous form is nearly *invisible*, per the power (no raise).
- **Invulnerability:** In its natural form the Lord of Death is impervious to all damage except for magical attacks.
- **Shapeshifter:** As an action, the Lord of Death can assume the shape of any person, creature, or animal it has seen (see *shape change*). The change takes one full round to complete. When shifted into another form, the Lord of Death uses all the stats of the new form, but retains its own Smarts, Spirit, and linked skills (though it might not be able to use them).
- **Weakness (Magic):** Magical attacks affect the Lord of Death normally.

When the holy priests who imprisoned the Lord of Death departed, they left a Guardian behind to ensure the murderous shapeshifter never breaks his bonds. To this end, the Guardian roams the arm of the gorge holding the ruined tower. It chases off any wildlife, goblins, hobgoblins, or other creatures who come here. Those who refuse to be chased away are killed.

It's likely the heroes won't realize the Guardian's purpose, as it simply assumes some terrifying form (the jabberwock is a favorite) and swoops in to frighten them away. Persistent explorers are attacked with everything the Guardian's got.

The Guardian (WC)

The following stats apply when the Guardian is in its natural form—a glowing, greenish vapor. It is of the same species as the Lord of Death, but has taken on the far more noble cause of ensuring that the evil one stays imprisoned. If the Guardian still lives when the Lord of Death is released, they engage each other in a fight to the death.

Abilities: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Goblin Gorge) d12, Notice d12, Stealth d12

Pace: 0; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- **Ethereal Claws:** Str+d6. The Guardian attacks with vaporous talons that ignore all non-magical armor.
- **Flight:** Pace 12.
- **Invulnerability:** In its natural form the Guardian is impervious to all damage except for magical attacks.
- **Shapeshifter:** As an action, the Guardian can assume the shape of any person, creature, or animal it has seen (see *shape change*). The change takes one full round to complete. When shifted into another form, the Guardian uses all the stats of the new form, but retains its own Smarts, Spirit, and linked skills (though it might not be able to use them).
- **Weakness (Magic):** Magical attacks affect the Guardian normally.

When the Guardian has been defeated or contained in some way, the heroes are free to examine the tower's stout oak gates unmolested. Refer to the nearby Ruined Tower map for the following numbered locations:

T1. The Front Gates

The tower is sealed by a pair of oak doors bound with steel bands, still locked after all these years. Close inspection (and a successful Notice roll) reveals a thin layer of beeswax smeared over the entire surface of the doors. This layer of wax creates an airtight seal in the door's cracks and beneath it. A character who scores a raise on the Notice roll finds the symbol of a major god of good and/or light stamped into the wax at one corner of the door. There is no obvious indication what purpose is served by the wax seal.

The wax radiates strong protective magic to eyes graced with *detect arcana*. The Lord of Death is unable to break this seal by any physical means. If the heroes are hesitant to disturb it, the Lord of Death might call for help from within the tower (after assuming the shape of a damsel or small child).

The doors are strong enough to offer real resistance to those who attempt to break them down. The lock offers a similar challenge to nimble-fingered thieves.

Oak Gates: Toughness 14. The high-quality lock imposes a −4 penalty to Lockpicking attempts.

T2. Interior Halls

Halls and rooms inside the tower are typically blanketed in a thick layer of dust. Ceilings are approximately 12 feet high, and doorway arches about 10 feet in height. The

central hall on each floor is fairly narrow—only six feet (1”) in width.

The windowless tower has numerous sconces on the walls for torches, and the rooms were all equipped with lanterns (now absent or smashed). Arcane lighting effects illuminated areas frequented by Oakenstaff. Heroes exploring the tower must provide their own light source—without one the halls are Pitch Dark.

Encounters: Dead Man’s Trees

Deal out one encounter card every 15 minutes the heroes spend in the Dead Man’s Trees. On a face card, roll on the table below. On a Joker, roll twice and combine the results.

Battles are noisy, bloody, and tend to attract unwanted attention in the Dead Man’s Trees. If any battle lasts more than 3 rounds, deal another encounter card on the fourth round and every round thereafter. If another encounter is indicated, roll on the table below as usual. If this combat also lasts longer than 3 rounds, repeat the process.

Travelers wearing the bronze amulets stamped with oak leaves are ignored by all forest denizens of Animal Intelligence.

d20	Encounter
1	Giant Centipede
2-3	Bear
4-5	2d12 Hobgoblins (Stonehammer Rex tribe)
6-7	1d4 Boars
8-9	2d12 Giant Bees
10-11	Giant Toad
12-13	Siren Bush
14-15	2d20 Jabber Birds
16-17	2d12 Goblins (Legbreaker tribe)
18-19	2d6 Moss Men
20	Jabberwock

Areas marked in gray on the map are accessible from the tower. The four white rooms can only be accessed by means of Oakenstaff’s hidden caches, and have lain undisturbed for over 250 years.

T3. Dining Room

The smashed remains of a table and furniture litter this room, along with bright shards of glassware and bent utensils. It looks like a large child had a violent tantrum.

The tatters of a ruined tapestry hang on one wall. It once depicted a large green oak leaf on a field of gold. A successful Notice roll in this room turns up a few undamaged pieces of silverware (worth 3 gold coins each, with 6 of them to be found) among the scattered detritus.

T4. Sitting Room

Here the wizard once entertained visitors. Now most of the chairs and side-tables are smashed. A large mirror on the southeast wall has suffered the same treatment. In the southernmost corner of the room sits a single intact club chair, upholstered in leather and bronze tacks, coated with a thick layer of dust.

As soon as someone sits in—or otherwise disturbs—the club chair its true nature becomes clear. If disturbed the chair shouts, “Watch where you’re going, you oaf!” If someone is bold enough to sit down on the intelligent (and extremely petulant) piece of furniture, it emits a groan dripping with sarcasm: “O! Joy! How *long* it’s been since a posterior *graced* my cushions. I’m *sooo* glad I could be of service. If only I had the ability to summon beverages and light hors d’oeuvres, I could achieve greater heights of *contentment* in service to you, *Oh Bold One.*”

The chair has been trapped in here with the Lord of Death for almost 150 years, so one might excuse its bad attitude. It is quite intelligent, once serving as the wizard’s favorite piece of furniture. Given its current predicament the chair’s feelings are understandable. It continues to berate, insult, needle, goad, jeer, and otherwise insult the heroes as long as they remain here. If threatened with destruction, the chair lashes out wildly.

The Club Chair (WC)

Abilities: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (The wizard Oakenstaff) d8, Notice d6, Taunt d10

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** The chair is sturdy and exceptionally well-constructed.
- **Armrests:** Str+d4. The chair batters enemies with its cushioned arms. This is nonlethal damage.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Ignores Wound penalties. Immune to disease and poison.
- **Size +1:** The chair weighs over 200 pounds.

If the club chair is somehow persuaded to calm down and listen to reason (a promise to take the chair to a cleaner and more oft-used home gains a +2 to Persuasion attempts), it can be a valuable source of knowledge about the wizard Oakenstaff. It knows most of the information in the section entitled “History of the Gorge.” The chair knows about the hidden caches, but doesn’t know their exact locations. “Perhaps the wizard’s library contains that

knowledge,” it suggests. Roll the chair’s Knowledge skill to determine whether it knows accurate answers to the heroes’ questions, or use your discretion to determine what it knows.

T5. Kitchen, Pantry

This narrow chamber once served as kitchen, scullery, and pantry for the tower. The “staff” as it were consisted almost entirely of summoned beings and fanciful creatures compelled to serve by the wizard’s arcane will.

Iron pots and pans hang about the walls, and a few wooden shelves hold hundreds of corked jars filled with a variety of spices common and unique. The hearth has been cold for long years, and a thick layer of dust covers everything.

One of the jars on the shelf (a Notice roll at –2 catches sight of it) has a fiery orange twinkling within. This is actually a jinn called Khal’ak who has been trapped here since the wizard’s occupancy. Understandably, it is eager to be free of servitude. If the jar is opened the jinn emerges in a gout of black smoke, embers, and soot, and offers whoever freed it one service in return.

When the task is complete the jinn departs. If the opener demands a service that would basically result in further servitude for the jinn (e.g., “You shall guard my person for 100 years!”) the creature flies into a rage and attacks.

Khal’ak: Wild Card. Use Jinni stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

T6.–T8. Bedrooms

These rooms are similar in appearance—utterly wrecked. During its long imprisonment the Lord of Death vented most of its anger and frustration in these three chambers, as it was frequently wracked with nightmares and lashed out at its surroundings. All the furniture is broken to bits, cloth shredded, tapestries torn down and befouled, and glass knick-knacks smashed.

T9. False Library/Study

At first glance seekers of knowledge believe they’ve hit paydirt—the wizard’s library. One large bookshelf is overturned, its tomes spilling out all over the bearskin rug. An old map of Oakenvale hangs on one wall, and against the other sits a writing desk with dried-out inkpots and quills. A few dusty chairs remain, along with another two bookshelves, each filled with hundreds of volumes.

Random Potions

Roll on this table to determine a potion’s effects. If it becomes important, roll a d6 to determine if the power is conferred with a raise. On a result of 5 or 6, the potion confers its power with a raise.

d100	Potion
01-03	Analyze Foe
04-06	Armor
07-09	Bellow
10-12	Berserker
13-15	Bless
16-18	Boost/Lower Trait
19-21	Burrow
22-24	Concentrate
25-27	Dampen Backlash
28-30	Darksight
31-33	Decipher
34-36	Deflection
37-39	Detect Arcana
40-42	Dispel
43-45	Environmental Protection
46-48	Farsight
49-51	Fly
52-54	Greater Healing
55-57	Healing
58-60	Intangibility
61-63	Invisibility
64-66	Leaping
67-69	Mirror Self
70-72	Poison Touch
73-75	Precognition
76-78	Quickness
79-81	Shape Change
82-84	Smite
85-87	Speak Language
88-90	Speed
91-93	Telekinesis
94-96	Teleport
97-99	Transparency
00	Spoiled Potion! (Roll again on this table to determine what the potion is supposed to be, then roll on the Spoiled Potion Table to determine the actual effect.)

After an hour of searching this room, any character with an Arcane Background or specialized arcane Knowledge can make a Common Knowledge roll. Success means the occultist realizes that no “real” arcane knowledge resides here. While this room constitutes what may be the finest reference library of real-world knowledge in this part of the world, there are no rituals, incantations, or other

magic techniques to be learned here. The Investigation skill can be used normally here, with a +2 bonus to rolls.

If the heroes devise some means of transporting the entire library to a major city, it is worth at least 5000 gold coins to a collector, sage, or wealthy bibliophile.

T10. Laboratory

As the heroes' lights fall upon this chamber's contents, they thrill momentarily to the sight of glittering, sparkling, shiny objects hidden under the everpresent layer of dust. Most are disappointed to find only the complex artifice of glassware, tubes, clamps, and long-dead burners that comprise a wizard's alchemical laboratory. Those with arcane knowledge and interests find a fully-stocked workspace that, while antique, is equipped with every sort of hardware the aspiring alchemist needs. All the furniture is made of unfinished oak.

There is a thick, acrid stench in the air. The Lord of Death finds the odor repellent in the extreme, and therefore never voluntarily enters this room.

The glassware set-up covers a 6'x12' table against the northeast wall, which is curved to fit snugly against the stone wall. A massive set of wooden shelves stands in the northernmost corner of the room, which are crammed with jars, beakers, decanters, a mortar & pestle, vials, various clamps and tongs for handling hot glassware, two pairs of thick leather gloves that cover the hand and entire forearm (Armor +1), several glass oil lamps (with 14 hours' worth of lamp oil), candles, pots, pans, and the grinning white skulls of five specimens displayed with small placards reading HUMAN, GOBLIN, HOBGOBLIN, MOSS MAN, and TROLL. Beside the shelves is a wooden stool to aid in reaching the top—they stand nearly 12 feet tall.

In the easternmost corner of the room is a writing desk, fully stocked with parchment that crumbles to dust when handled, dried-out inkwells, brittle and crumbling quills, and a blotter so old that deep cracks have appeared in its shriveled pad. A comfortable chair stands before it.

In the western wall an unlocked door provides access to the adjoining study.

Depending on the party's skills—and at the GM's discretion—characters may use this space to create potions, salves, philters, and so on as they wish. Between the false library (#9) and this room, no information on *how* to brew magical elixirs is provided. Until heroes locate the true library (#16), they are on their own.

Spoiled Potion Results

d20 Result

- 1 **Power Surge!** *If the drinker has an Arcane Background, all his Power Points are instantly restored. If all Power Points were already recharged, the drinker gains 1d8 "temporary" Power Points that remain until they are used, after which time they do not return. If the drinker has no Arcane Background, she turns invisible (per the power, no raise) for 1d8 hours.*
- 2-10 **No Effect.** *Except for a vile aftertaste.*
- 11 **Blub-blub-blub!** *Whenever the drinker opens his mouth he emits a thick stream of soap bubbles. This makes speech impossible and lasts for 1d6 hours.*
- 12 **True Sight.** *Drinker gains the ability to detect arcana (per the power) for 1d4 hours. Roll Smarts if the drinker has no arcane skill.*
- 13 **Total Disclosure.** *Enemy Wild Cards gain the ability to analyze foe (per the power) on the drinker by making a Smarts roll. This effect lasts for 1d6 days.*
- 14 **Fortune's Favored.** *The drinker is blessed (per the power, no raise) for 1d6 hours.*
- 15 **Damn Your Eyes!** *The drinker is struck blind (per the power) for 1d6 hours.*
- 16 **Spider's Gait.** *The drinker gains the wall walker power for 1d4 hours.*
- 17 **Confusion.** *The drinker is befuddled, per the confuse the mind power (no raise), for 1d6 hours.*
- 18 **Future Vision!** *The drinker gains precognition (per the power, no raise) for 1d4 hours.*
- 19 **Power Drain!** *If the drinker has an Arcane Background, 1d12 of his Power Points are instantly siphoned away. If the drinker has no Arcane Background, he takes 2d6 damage from internal trauma instead.*
- 20 **New Effect.** *Roll twice on this table, ignoring results of 2-10, and apply both results.*

The terrible stench rises from a dark blue liquid in a large beaker on the table. It appears to have distilled from some process of long ago, and has sat here for about 250 years. If anyone is so impetuous as to sip it, roll on the nearby table to determine the effects. The beaker holds 20 bitter, disgusting sips.

T11. Apprentice's Chamber

This small closet contains a humble bed, a writing desk, and a chair for the apprentice Oakenstaff always intended

to acquire but never did. The chamber has never been lived in.

T12. Storage

This small room contains various non-perishable supplies used around the tower, all of it piled and heaped in no recognizable order. A few bolts of fabric for clothing and re-upholstering furniture, spare glassware for those pieces that tend to break or crack from extreme heat most often, several sacks of (long spoiled) grain for kitchen use, rope, an inexplicable gong, and any other supplies or gear the GM wishes are found here with a successful Notice roll.

T13. The Doorstep

Access: By means of hidden cache A, beside the Methuselah Tree.

This area is not accessible from within the tower, nor are the three that follow. There are no doors, windows, or secret portals accessing them. The walls are lined with lead, and mortared with other more exotic magical substances of your campaign world, so as to make them impervious to *teleportation*, *burrowing*, passage by ethereal or otherwise insubstantial beings, and so on. To protect them from physical damage, the walls, floors, and ceilings surrounding these areas are magically hardened to a Toughness of 25. In short, it is very nearly impossible to break in.

Areas 13-16 are accessed by means of four of Oakenstaff's hidden caches (see below). The first of these is known as "The Doorstep," since it is most likely to be discovered by explorers seeking to unlock the tower's mysteries. In the hope that his fame would outlive him, the vain wizard spread a child's rhyme among the local peoples that would lead to his so-called Doorstep (which can be heard at the Trading Post, Legbreaker Downs, or Stonehammer Town). Not wanting his secrets to be won without some effort, the crafty wizard filled them with tricks and riddles to waylay the foolish and incautious. (See area #1, the Trading Post, for the rhyme.)

Visitors materialize on a round dais at the center of the southwest wall. This chamber's ceiling is held aloft by a pair of massive stone pillars carved to resemble mighty oaks. Four glassy orbs hovering near the ceiling bathe the room in cool, bluish light. By some wizardry the room is clean of dust, vermin, and the other debris of ages. At the chamber's exact center is a pedestal, and plainly carved into the far wall in large letters is an inscription.

The inscription is carved into stone in 4" high letters, and written in an ancient language of the GM's choice. Only

heroes with the proper skills (or access to applicable powers) can read the message:

*Every greeting of the oaks is upon you
What remains of my wisdom is yours
Three doors remain to be walked through
To each of my tower's three floors*

*To reach the storehouse of vials enchanted
Inspect the waters of the well decanted*

*To enter the chamber of peaceful slumber
Brave the wise wolf that tears men asunder
To find the vault of knowledge and evil
Walk beyond water that batters the anvil*

*The wise and the strong shall win Oakenstaff's wealth
The rest shall be lucky to escape with their health
Do safeguard the learning of Oakenstaff's reign
Lest ye end up like he—all thy efforts in vain!*

On the pedestal is a small wooden chest that holds 6 corked, wax-sealed, glass vials containing syrupy pink liquid. The concoction tastes strongly of black licorice. A character who drinks one of these potions is cured of 1 Wound (per the *healing* power). A character who drinks three of these potions within 1 hour gains the ability *detect arcana* for 30 minutes.

Any character who steps onto the dais is instantly teleported back to hidden cache A, the chamber beneath the Methuselah tree.

T14. The Potion Room

Access: By means of hidden cache C, the wizard's well.

The heroes appear on a stone platform in the northernmost corner of this chamber, which is Pitch Dark unless someone has already ignited a light source. Once the room is illuminated, the party finds a wondrous treasure trove displayed upon three long oaken shelves—several hundred potions, elixirs, salves, philters, tonics, and various other liquids arcane. All the colors of the rainbow we know, and others yet to be imagined, are trapped within cork-sealed bottles and beakers and vials, awaiting eager mouths to drink them down and gain their enchantment. The shelves are so large as to nearly fill the room.

At first it seems the heroes have far more magic than they can handle. Soon they discover that this is literally true. All the potions here have labels, but they are marked with bits of a complicated code denoting their contents. Someone who doesn't know the code has no way of knowing what effects drinking each one will have.

A successful *detect arcana* spell determines the effects of a single potion.

The code can be cracked through careful study and diligent work. A successful Investigation or Smarts roll (at –6) allows a character to identify all the potions in the storeroom. Each attempt takes 24 hours of study and requires use of the false library (#9).

Whenever a potion is picked from the shelf, use the nearby table to determine its effects. The GM should always know what a potion does, whether the players do or not! When drunk, a potion confers its effects upon the drinker per the power in question.

Characters who step back onto the platform are transported to hidden cache C, the wizard's well.

T15. Master Bedroom

Access: By means of hidden cache E, under Wolf's Vale.

Upon arrival, heroes find themselves standing in a circular, 6"-deep depression at the exact center of the room.

This well-appointed chamber contains an enormous canopied bed, dressers and wardrobes filled with various robes, wizardly outfits, and other clothing, and some foodstuffs (long spoiled). The old food gives this place a flat, stale odor.

This room served no other purpose than to give the paranoid wizard a relatively safe place to sleep. Likewise, heroes may find it a valuable sanctuary—especially if they are able to convince a certain wolf to guard the entrance!

A hero who steps back onto the depression at the center of the room is teleported to hidden cache E, under Wolf's Vale.

T16. True Library/Summoning Room

Access: By means of hidden cache F, behind Steelhammer Falls.

Visitors arrive upon a wooden platform at the northeast corner of this chamber.

The musty odor of wormeaten tomes washes over the party as they arrive here. Massive oak shelves line this chamber, filled with all the arcane knowledge Oakenstaff amassed over his career. A single table and chair sit against one wall for reading, and a large open space contains an ornately carved pentagram in the floor.

Asleep within the pentagram is a beautiful woman named Azeralith, who has black hair and bright green eyes. She is actually a succubus who has been trapped here for over 250 years. Oakenstaff summoned her, but when he

couldn't find a use for her he decided to keep her until he had one. Then the final battle swept him away, and the demoness was left here to languish...until now.

The succubus cannot physically leave the circle unless it is broken. Any physical item, limb, or even foot laid upon the circle counts as "breaking" it, and frees the evil creature. Though she can't cross the line, she can use her *puppet* power and all her other wiles to convince heroes to do it for her.

Azeralith: Wild Card. Use Succubus stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

When the demon is destroyed, banished, or otherwise dealt with, the heroes find themselves stewards to an awesome collection of arcane knowledge. There may be magic scrolls hidden among the tomes at the GM's discretion (use the Random Potion Table to determine which spells they hold). Surely the library provides a means for characters to create their own potions, scrolls, and enchanted items, as well as enriching the breadth of their own arcane knowledge. How exactly this is done is left to the GM and players.

Stepping onto the wooden platform in the northeast corner teleports heroes back to hidden cache F, behind Steelhammer Falls.

5. Legbreaker Downs

To human eyes this "village" doesn't look like anything of the sort. Outsiders see a vast green field covering about three-quarters of a square mile, crowded with grass-covered mounds of earth. The steep, rocky walls of the gorge hem in the field on three sides, and a great waterfall plummets from the mountains into a nearby lake.

At the center of the field stands a great lodge, made of tree limbs draped with various animal skins and brush to keep out the elements. Since goblins are primarily nocturnal, subterranean creatures they live in warrens dug beneath the many mounds that cover Legbreaker Downs. In the central lodge lives their ogre queen, Jurmok.

If the characters visit this area during daylight hours, they aren't challenged unless they attempt to enter Jurmok's lodge. At night, the area swarms with packs of 2d12 goblins. Characters can reach the central lodge with successful Stealth rolls, but the subsequent din of battle from that revered location brings the rapid attention of every fighting goblin in the village—some 120 of the little buggers.

Queen Jurmok has instructed her legions not to kill intruders on sight. Goblins first surround the heroes, then

demand that the characters come with them to see their queen. If that doesn't work, they fight in an attempt to capture the heroes.

The queen seeks a way to destroy Poxygog and her hobgoblins, and if she thinks the heroes are powerful enough to help her achieve that she offers whatever they desire in return. Mostly that amounts to promises of vast wealth in return for breaking the back of the Stonehammer Rex tribe.

If the heroes refuse to work with goblins, they have a heck of a fight on their hands. The queen is always surrounded by eight of her orc cousins, who act as her loyal bodyguards. The rest of the village is only a call for help away.

Killing Queen Jurmok only doubles the fury of the goblins. After she is killed, the goblins gain +1 to their Fighting damage rolls for the rest of the battle (as the Fervor Edge).

Goblins (Roaming packs of 2d12): Use stats in *Savage Worlds*.

Queen Jurmok: Wild Card. Use Ogre stats in *Savage Worlds*, with the following additions: Jurmok has Smarts d8, the Command, Hold the Line!, and Inspire Edges, and the Improved Sweep Edge.

Jurmok's Bodyguards (8): One Wild Card. Use the Orc stats in *Savage Worlds*.

The goblins used to mine the north wall of the gorge, but then an infestation of what they call "braineaters" put an end to their operations. They cannot wipe out the creatures, so they cower in their burrows night and day, awaiting the occasional visits from hobgoblin troops who conscript the goblins into service (with promises of rich pay—however, conscripted goblins never come back!). If the goblins dared to resist, a war would certainly break out—one the Legbreaker Tribe would not win on their own.

6. The Shunned Mine

This eerie, lonely mine is inhabited by swarms of knowledge eaters. At night the things creep from the mines to hunt the nearby areas of the gorge, and every month or so great swarms of them issue forth to hunt down all thinking beings. The mine is entirely shunned by the goblins who once worked its dark catacombs.

Heroes who enter the mine find themselves wandering in a labyrinth of tunnels. Without some kind of string, trail of breadcrumbs, or other lifeline, it requires a Smarts roll (–4) to get out of these mines once one has gone more than 25 yards in.

Every 10 minutes the party spends in the mines, deal out a card. On a face card, the heroes attract the attention of a small pack of knowledge eaters. On a Joker, double the amount of creatures!

Knowledge Eaters (2d8): Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

7. Wolf's Vale

This high, narrow valley rises to a stone platform (about the size of a Large Burst Template), made of large paving stones. Affixed to the center of the platform by a long chain, and unable to move farther than its edges, is a massive, terrible wolf standing six feet tall at the shoulder. As the heroes approach, the golden-eyed wolf gazes at them and speaks in a deep growl.

Who are you then? I am called Fizren. This vale has been my prison for sixty-three and two hundred years. I doubt you have come to free me, and I will not allow you to seek what is hidden here, so you had best go away. Unless, of course, one of you wishes to face me in single combat.

A successful Notice roll (–2) discerns a certain paving stone near the center of the platform that looks slightly discolored and out of place. When removed, a staircase leading down to hidden cache E is revealed.

Oakenstaff himself imprisoned Fizren here, ending the wolf's rampage among the nearby towns. It amused him to think that this fearsome creature would, in effect, guard his bedroom door. Besides being nearly unbreakable, the chain that binds Fizren prohibited the wolf from harming Oakenstaff. The wolf is under no such compunction where other intruders are concerned. It just wants its freedom.

A magical ward placed by Oakenstaff prevents any missile attacks or arcane powers from crossing onto the platform from outside its boundaries. Powers just "fizzle out," while arrows, javelins, thrown daggers, and the like simply stop in midair and fall to the ground. This prevents too-clever parties from peppering the wolf with missile fire until it is dead. Oakenstaff liked his pet, so he sought to level the playing field as it were.

If any hero defeats the wolf in single combat (knocking it unconscious until it regenerates is considered a win), the creature keeps to its word and allows she and her companions to pass as they wish. But the fight is deadly, since besides being held within the space of a Large Burst Template the wolf is unhindered by its chain. Against a single opponent, the wolf tends to attack with Called Shots to the wrists (–2) in an attempt to bite off his foe's hands. This counts as a Disarm attempt, and a net result of

3 Wounds or greater (along with a permanent Injury on the Incapacitation Table) means the hand is bitten clean off.

Against a group of foes Fizren attacks as many as he can, trying to kill them all.



John Bauer - Wikimedia Commons

Fizren the Wolf (WC)

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d12+2, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Goblin Gorge) d8, Notice d12, Taunt d10

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's least-armored location.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Fizren rolls a d10 instead of a d6 when running.
- **Hardy:** Additional Shaken results do not cause a Wound.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Fizren makes an additional Fighting attack each round.
- **Improved Nerves of Steel:** Fizren ignores 2 wound penalties.
- **Low-Light Vision:** The wolf ignores Dim and Dark lighting penalties.
- **Regeneration (Fast):** Fizren makes a Vigor roll each round to heal, and gains +2 on Spirit rolls to recover from Shaken.
- **Size +3:** Fizren is as big as a great ox—nearly 800 pounds.
- **Weakness (Cold Steel, Fire):** Weapons made of cold steel inflict wounds that Fizren cannot regenerate. Fire and fire-based arcane powers also inflict wounds that must be healed normally.

8. The Palisade

These fearsome fortifications are used by Poxygog to control access to her lands. They consist of twelve-foot-tall earth and wood palisades a half-mile in length, at the center of which is a gate flanked by two guard towers.

The palisade gates and towers are always guarded (day and night) by a substantial force of hobgoblin soldiers under the command of a dragon man sorcerer and his warrior minions. They are considered Inactive guards due to general overconfidence, but they challenge any intruders they see approaching their post and fight ferociously if attacked. Defenders on the palisade and within the towers gain Cover -2.

Hobgoblins and dragon men on the palisades and towers are equipped with bows. The guard towers are also equipped with two ballistas each (see the *Fantasy Gear Toolkit*), along with scores of extra arrows and ballista bolts.

Dragon Man Sorcerer: Wild Card. Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Dragon Man Warriors (6): Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Hobgoblin Sentries (18): Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Patrols of 12 hobgoblins range along the length of the palisade. No one spot is left unguarded for more than two or three minutes at a time. If the heroes try to get past a patrol using Stealth, consider the hobgoblins Active guards. At one spot a stream passes under the palisade—heroes swimming through gain +2 to their Stealth attempts.

Hobgoblin Patrol (12): One Wild Card. Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

If the forces at the gate or in a patrol are overwhelmed, a few of the creatures try to get away and warn the hag Poxygog.

9. Stonehammer Town

The appellation of “town” is slightly inaccurate, since this settlement is made up of hundreds of tents and shanties. Scores of hobgoblin miners roam the town, while their families live in filth and rubbish. Though their accommodations are unpleasant, the hobgoblins are actually well-fed and taken care of by Poxygog and her cadre of dragon men. By placing the burden of mining on goblins seized from Legbreaker Downs (#5), even the lowest of the hobgoblins lives a fairly pleasant life.

At the eastern edge of Stonehammer Town is a series of wooden pens built to hold goblin prisoners who are forced to work in the mines. These goblins are promised bags of gold so they put up less of a fight when taken from their home. Once they arrive at Stonehammer Town, they are chained up and work the mines (for no pay at all) until they expire.

Work gangs are constantly hiking along the trail to and from the gold mine.

It is relatively easy to sneak into Stonehammer Town. With an old hooded cloak like those the hobgoblins wear in sunlight, heroes receive +2 to their Stealth rolls to infiltrate the town. If a fight breaks out in the town, heroes quickly find themselves facing up to 50 angry, off-duty hobgoblins.

Hobgoblins (50): Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Imprisoned Goblins (35): Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

10. Gogtown

Gogtown is the main village of the hobgoblins—a hodgepodge of tents, shanties, flimsy buildings, wells, farms, and dirt trails laid out in no particular plan whatsoever. Like Stonehammer Town, it is easy for determined infiltrators to get into Gogtown, but they'll regret it quickly if they are discovered.

The hobgoblins' hag-queen Poxygog dwells in a hall of stone at the center of Gogtown. She is always guarded by two dragon man sorcerors and a gang of warriors. Unlike Queen Jurmok, Poxygog has no use for heroes of any stripe. If she discovers them inside her domain, they are beaten to within an inch of their lives and put to work in the mines. If they continue to resist, Poxygog orders them killed.

Poxygog and her bodyguards all wear bronze oak-leaf amulets, as do any hobgoblins sent out of the gorge to barter ore at the Trading Post. They do not understand the significance of these amulets, but they appreciate that creatures attack them less in the Dead Man's Trees.

This town is also frequented by evil travelers, human and otherwise. Feel free to add encounters with any intelligent monsters you desire.

Hobgoblins (85): Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Poxygog: Wild Card. Use Hag stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Dragon Man Sorcerors (2): Wild Cards. Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Dragon Man Warriors (8): Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

11. The Haunted Village

The name of this village, which was populated during Oakenstaff's reign, is lost to the mists of time. No one knows what became of the people who lived here. Some say they were attacked in the night by creatures that crawled out of Steelhammer Lake, and their bodies dragged under the waters before sunrise. Others say the population was wiped out during the conflict between Oakenstaff and the rival wizard who hunted him down. Still others believe that the town's last few inhabitants were murdered by the Lord of Death in the years after Oakenstaff's disappearance.

Whatever the truth of the situation, it is clear that this town is devoid of human life. The few skeletal buildings still erect are crumbling to pieces, and most of the town's structures are reduced to rubble and foundations, with tall meadow grass growing all through the ruins. A lonely wind whistles through the remains.

Salvagers might find treasures galore in this ghost town if they are persistent and lucky. Whenever heroes search the ruins of a building, roll a d6. On a result of 6, the building contains Worthwhile treasure that is found with a successful Notice roll (–2). Multiple Notice rolls are possible, but each one takes an hour as the heroes pick through the rubble, shift debris out of the way, and dig into foundations.

After dark, the spirits of the long-lost villagers wander the streets seeking living beings to slay. These specters are encountered in groups of 2 or more.

Ghosts (2d6): Use stats in *Savage Worlds*.

Oakenstaff's Hidden Caches

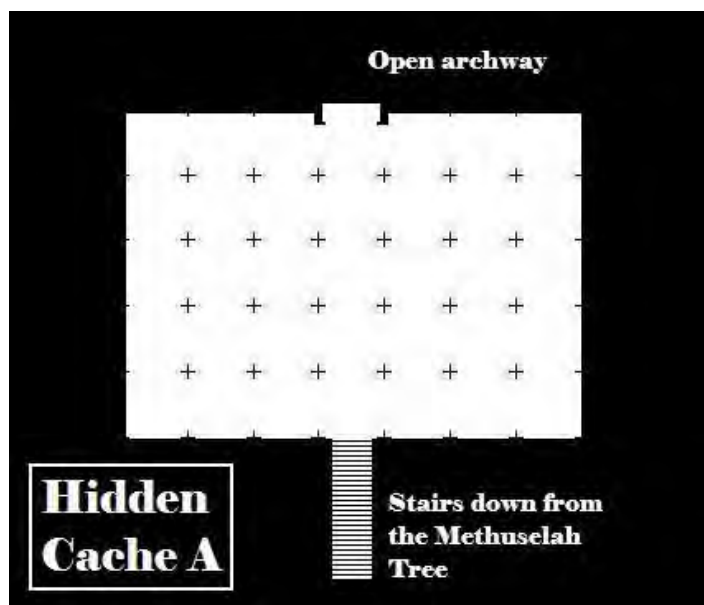
The wizard who once made this vale his home was a paranoid sort, and he collected and created numerous items of magic during his long career. In anticipation of sneak attacks, he constructed eight hidden rooms all over the gorge where he could always find solace and arcane aid. Four of the rooms are linked by magical gates, so Oakenstaff could visit them in sequence if need be, and four grant access to the otherwise inaccessible areas of his tower by means of similar, two-way gates. Since Oakenstaff was unable to reach any of them when the feared assault finally came, most of the rooms remain as they were even now.

Using the Gates: Oakenstaff's gates function correctly only for beings in possession of a bronze oak leaf amulet.

Any being who steps into a gate without first donning a bronze oak leaf amulet is instantly transported to a random location in the gorge—roll 1d10+1 and consult the numbered gorge locations above to find out where the unlucky traveler materializes.

A. Beside the Methuselah Tree

An enormous blue spruce stands alone at the edge of the Dead Man's Trees, plainly visible about a half-mile from the trail leading into Goblin Gorge. It is suspected that this tree guards access to one of the wizard's hidden places, for it is mentioned in the old rhyme common to this area (see area #1, The Trading Post, for the rhyme).



Most of the denizens of the gorge know to avoid this grizzled old pine, for despite its innocent appearance it is extraordinarily dangerous. It is a methuselah tree that attacks any warm-blooded creatures who come too close.

Methuselah Tree (1): Wild Card. Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

A successful Notice roll (–2) in the vicinity of the tree reveals the presence of a round stone “plug” in the earth not 10 feet (2”) from the base of the methuselah tree. The plug weighs some 250 lbs. and has a stylized oak leaf carved into it. Due to its small size, only two characters can cooperate to lift the stone. Use the Encumbrance rules to determine whether characters can lift it.

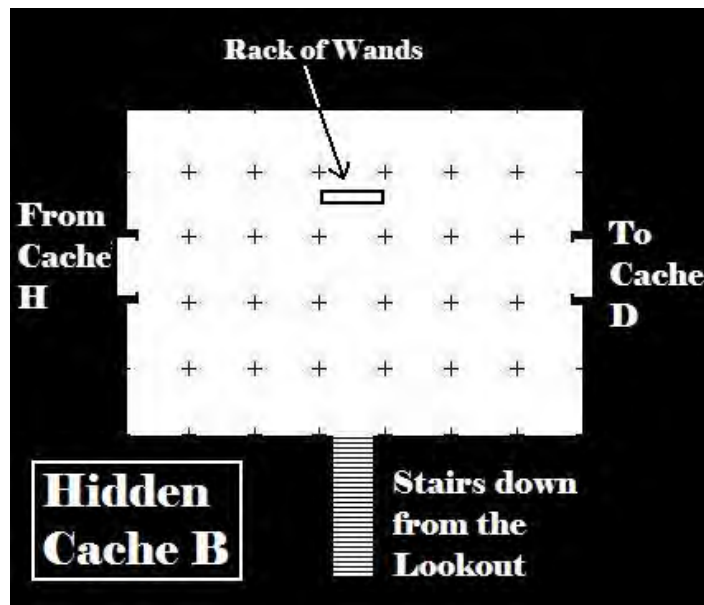
Under the stone is a narrow staircase, crudely carved out of solid rock, that winds downward about 30 feet before ending in a small chamber. The chamber is empty and nearly featureless. Directly across from the stairs is an open archway, and carved above it in an ancient language

(the same one used in area T13) is a single word: WELCOME.

Heroes who step through the gate wearing amulets are transported to the Doorstep (T13). See “Using the Gates,” above, if the heroes have no amulets.

B. Beneath the Lookout

At the foot of the “ladder” carved into the cliffs beneath the Lookout is a secret door, which is found with a successful Notice check (–2). Once the panel of stone swings away, a narrow staircase leading downward is revealed.



This cache contains a rack of spare wands, in case Oakenstaff found himself lacking firepower. On the wooden stand at the room's center are 6 wands—a *blade wand*, a wand of *lightning*, a wand of *mini-fireballs*, a wand of *misfortune*, a wand of *shrinking*, and a wand of *vines* (see the *Fantasy Gear Toolkit* for their functions and use).

There is an open archway in the west wall with the word ENTRY carved above it. In the east wall an open archway has EGRESS carved above it. Both of these arches are actually magical gates.

The western arch does not seem to function at all (characters traveling from hidden cache H appear here). A character who steps into the east arch while wearing an oak leaf amulet is instantly transported to the western arch in hidden cache D.

C. The Wizard's Well

In the grassy field just south of the Ruined Tower stands a humble well surrounded by a small curb of stone. There is

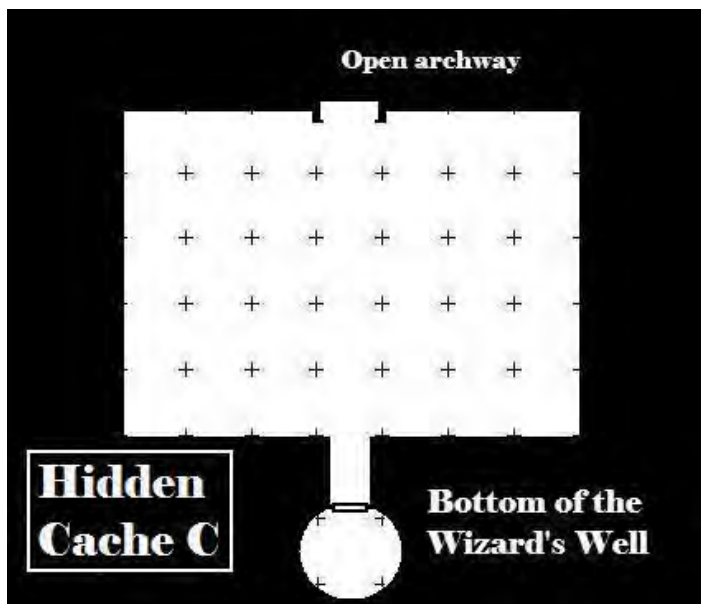
an old wooden bucket and rope that can still be used to draw up water. If this is done, and the water poured out and inspected, a successful Notice roll finds it to contain large amounts of brown rust flakes.

The rust is shed by a steel door near the bottom of the well, approximately 36 feet (6") below the surface. To reach the door one must climb down the well (-2 from the roll for slippery, slimy walls, but add +2 if the climber uses a rope or other aid). The door itself is made of steel (Toughness 18), sealed with a high-quality lock (-2 to Lockpicking attempts), and half-submerged in murky water.

Unfortunately for any hero who climbs down the well alone, the watery pool at the bottom is the home of a corrupt naga who does not take kindly to intruders and attempts to kill them. If seriously threatened, the naga uses her *burrow* power to escape the well (leaving her treasure behind).

Corrupt Naga (1): Wild Card. Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.

Once the steel door is open, the heroes may enter the chamber beyond.



Directly across from the entrance is an open archway, and carved above it in an ancient language (the same one used in area T13) is a single word: SUCCOR. Otherwise the room is silent and empty.

Heroes who step through the gate wearing amulets are transported to the Potion Room (T14).

D. Northeast of Legbreaker Downs

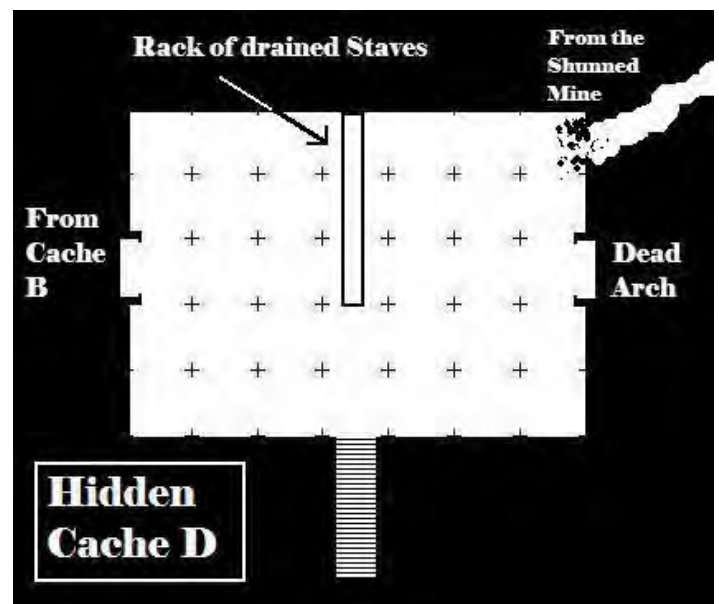
Just northeast of Legbreaker Downs, the secret entrance to this cache is concealed in the rocky wall of the gorge.

Searchers in this area find the secret portal with a successful Notice roll (-2).

This cache has not survived the years since Oakenstaff's disappearance intact. Recently a creature called a mage bane found its way to the surface from lightless depths, emerging deep within the Shunned Mine (#6). Through disused catacombs the thing wandered, until it sensed a strong source of magical energy. Using its powers to blast and burrow its way through the earth, it finally discovered hidden cache D, where it has dwelt ever since.

Characters entering the room see a black, faceless humanoid lurking in the shadows. Then it attacks!

Mage Bane (1): Wild Card. Use stats in the *Fantasy Bestiary Toolkit*.



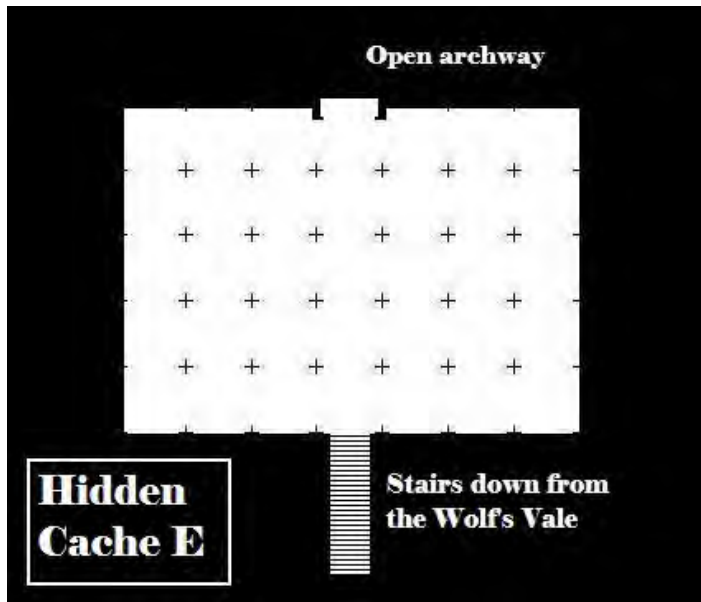
Oakenstaff intended this place to be a repository for useful magical staves, a dozen of which still rest upon a great wooden rack in the center of this chamber. These were drained of their enchantments by the mage bane when it arrived here. Likewise, the creature has drained the magic from the eastern archway. Travelers from cache B still arrive in the western archway as usual, but the eastern archway (which once sent travelers to cache G) no longer functions at all.

E. Under Wolf's Vale

When Fizren the Wolf is defeated (or otherwise convinced to let heroes enter the cache beneath its prison), the discolored stone can be lifted to reveal a narrow staircase beneath.

Directly across from the entrance is an open archway, and carved above it in an ancient language (the same one used in T13) is a single word: SLUMBER. The cache chamber is

otherwise featureless except for a bas relief carved onto the west wall.



The bas relief depicts a human figure stepping through an archway, exactly like the ones found in the wizard's various caches. If the heroes haven't yet figured out that the portals don't work correctly for those not wearing oak leaf amulets, call for a Smarts roll at -2. Characters who succeed realize that the figure in the bas relief is wearing one of the oak tree amulets. With a raise the hero recalls from her studies that objects were sometimes "keyed" to magical gates by wizards of old, just as this bas relief depicts.

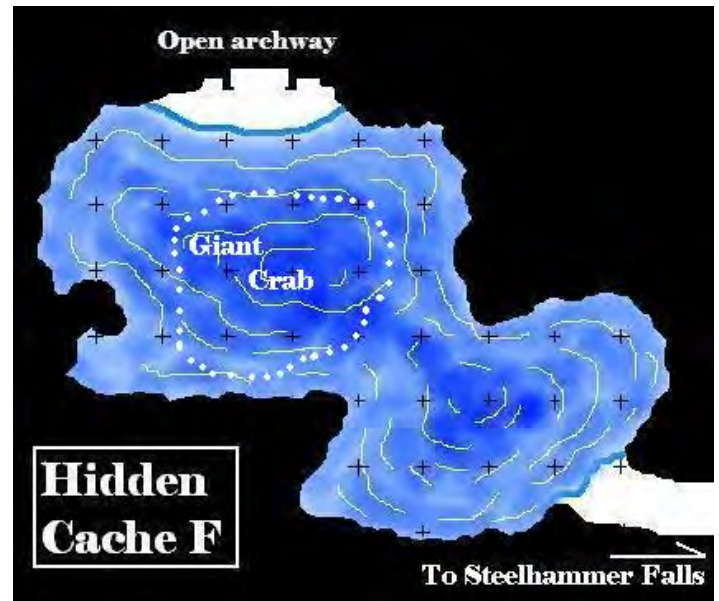
Heroes who step through the gate wearing amulets are transported to the Master Bedroom (T15).

F. Behind Steelhammer Falls

The distinctive sound of these falls is audible across the lake—a steady clanging and clamoring of the water as it slams down onto the rocks. For reasons long forgotten the water falls onto the flat rocks at its base with the force of a hammer. (This is in fact a strange side-effect of some reality-bending magic thrown by Keric or Oakenstaff during their final battle.)

To reach the falls one can either swim, or perhaps locate an old skiff in the ruins of the Haunted Village (#11). Either way, reaching Steelhammer Falls is only the first step. Next the brave heroes must cross thousands of gallons of water pouring from the mountain cliffs. It looks like normal, harmless water—but that loud clanging and banging as it hits the rocks should give cautious heroes pause!

A hollow, cave-like area is visible behind the falls to anyone standing at their base. Any character who steps under the crushing flow of liquid immediately takes 4d10 damage! The roiling, pummeling water feels like an avalanche of hammerblows. Every round a character remains beneath the deadly deluge he takes the same damage. Either characters run under the flow quickly and hope for the best (it takes only a single move action to pass through), or they devise some other means of entry or of diverting the water.



Behind the falls a wet, slimy tunnel leads back into the cliffside and ends at a murky pool. If the party has light sources, an open archway is seen on the beach across the pool. Carved above it in an ancient language (the same one used in T13) is a single word: KNOWLEDGE.

Luckily for anyone trying to wade across, the pool is only about five feet deep at most, though the bottom is very slick with algae and slimy growths. *Unluckily* for heroes wading across the pool, the bottom isn't actually the bottom where indicated on the nearby map—it's the titanic shell of a monstrous crab!

As soon as the second person sets foot on the crab's shell (which fills the dotted area on the map), the crab awakens and lunges upward. Anyone standing on the shell when that happens must immediately succeed on an Agility roll (at -2 due to the slimy growths) or slip off the crab's back and plunge into the pool—which is actually 20 feet deep in the area covered by the crab.

Characters who fall into the pool need to make Swimming rolls to reach a shallow area. Modify rolls as appropriate for armor, gear, etc. Failed rolls result in a level of Fatigue, and an inability to escape the pool, though swimmers may try again as long as they remain able.

Meanwhile, the massive crab rises out of the pool to attack intruders. They look tasty!

Monstrous Crab (WC)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d10, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 22 (6)

Treasure: Treasure Trove, in lair.

Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 12.
- **Armor +6:** The monstrous crab has a nigh-impenetrable shell.
- **Claws:** Str+d8. The crab attacks with two claws every round at no penalty.
- **Large:** Attackers gain a +2 bonus on attacks against the huge crab.
- **Size +7:** This creature weighs over 2400 pounds, with a shell nearly 18 feet across.

The beast's treasure is scattered in the deepest part of the pool beneath it—the remains of scores of heroes, goblins, hobgoblins, and rich adventurers the thing has consumed over the many years it has lived here. Over time the same weird magic that makes the waterfall crush things caused the crab to grow to its current ludicrous size.

Heroes who step through the gate wearing amulets are transported to the True Library/Summoning Room (T16).

G. East of Gogtown

Just east of Gogtown, the secret entrance to this cache is concealed in the rocky wall of the gorge. Searchers in this area will find the secret portal with a successful Notice roll at -2.

Behind the portal a narrow staircase descends into the stone. It ends in a silent chamber, which contains a pair of the now-familiar stone archways and a long table adorned with shining items of steel.

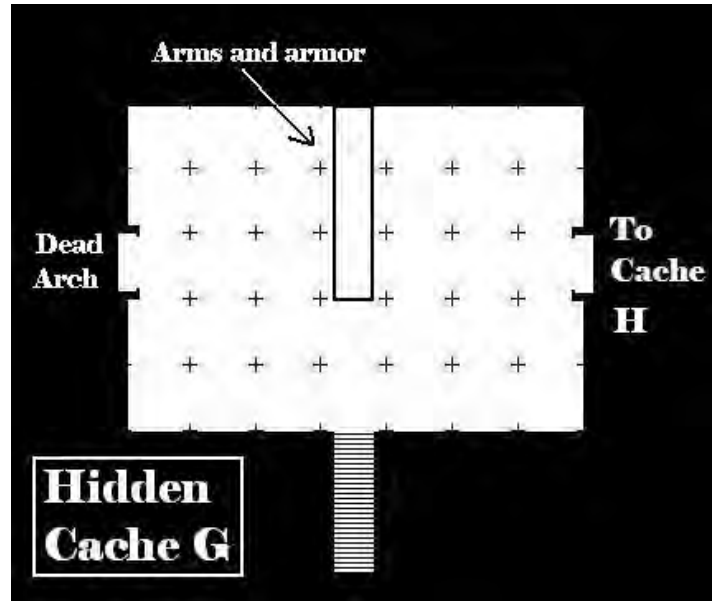
Here Oakenstaff stored arms and armor in case he needed to outfit one of his henchman with the very best magic could offer. As with the other caches, the wizard never quite made it back. The arms and armor remain, lying upon the table in easy reach of anyone brave enough to snatch them up. All are sized for humans, though the armor could be altered by a skilled blacksmith.

Hewer of Oaks: This gleaming steel longsword has a grip of polished oak. The weapon adds +2 to Fighting rolls and +3 to damage rolls.

Dav's Helm: A battered pot helm with narrow eye slits. It adds +2 to Toughness.

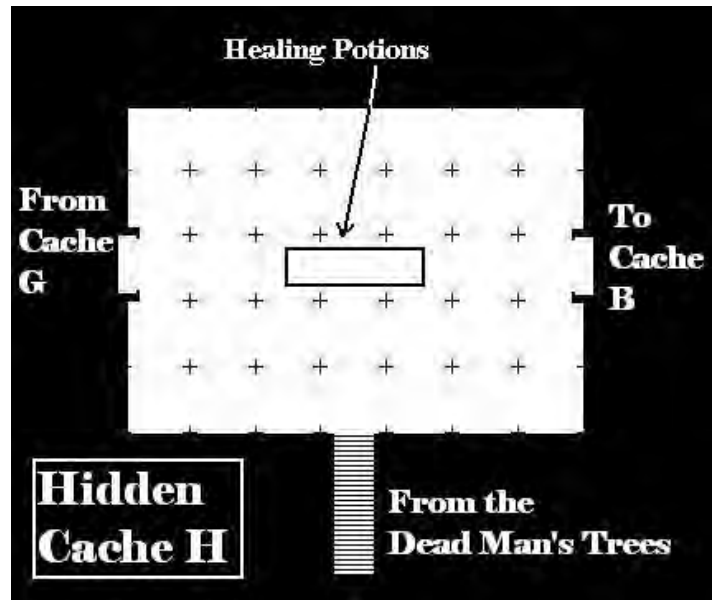
Barkshell: A scaled suit of steel armor. The suit adds +3 to Toughness.

Greenleaf: This oak leaf-shaped medium shield adds +2 to Parry.



The western arch does not function at all (characters traveling from cache D used to appear here, before the mage bane drained that arch of magic). A character who steps into the east arch while wearing an oak leaf amulet is instantly transported to the western arch in hidden cache H.

H. East of Dead Man's Trees



"You can never have too much *healing*." That was a motto Oakenstaff lived by. For his most remote and arguably

most difficult-to-find cache, the wizard opted to store more healing—just in case he needed it. It remains to this day.

On the table in the center of this featureless chamber are a dozen healing philters—all clearly labeled in the same ancient language used elsewhere. The potions are as follows:

Healing x3

Healing (with raise) x3

Greater healing x3

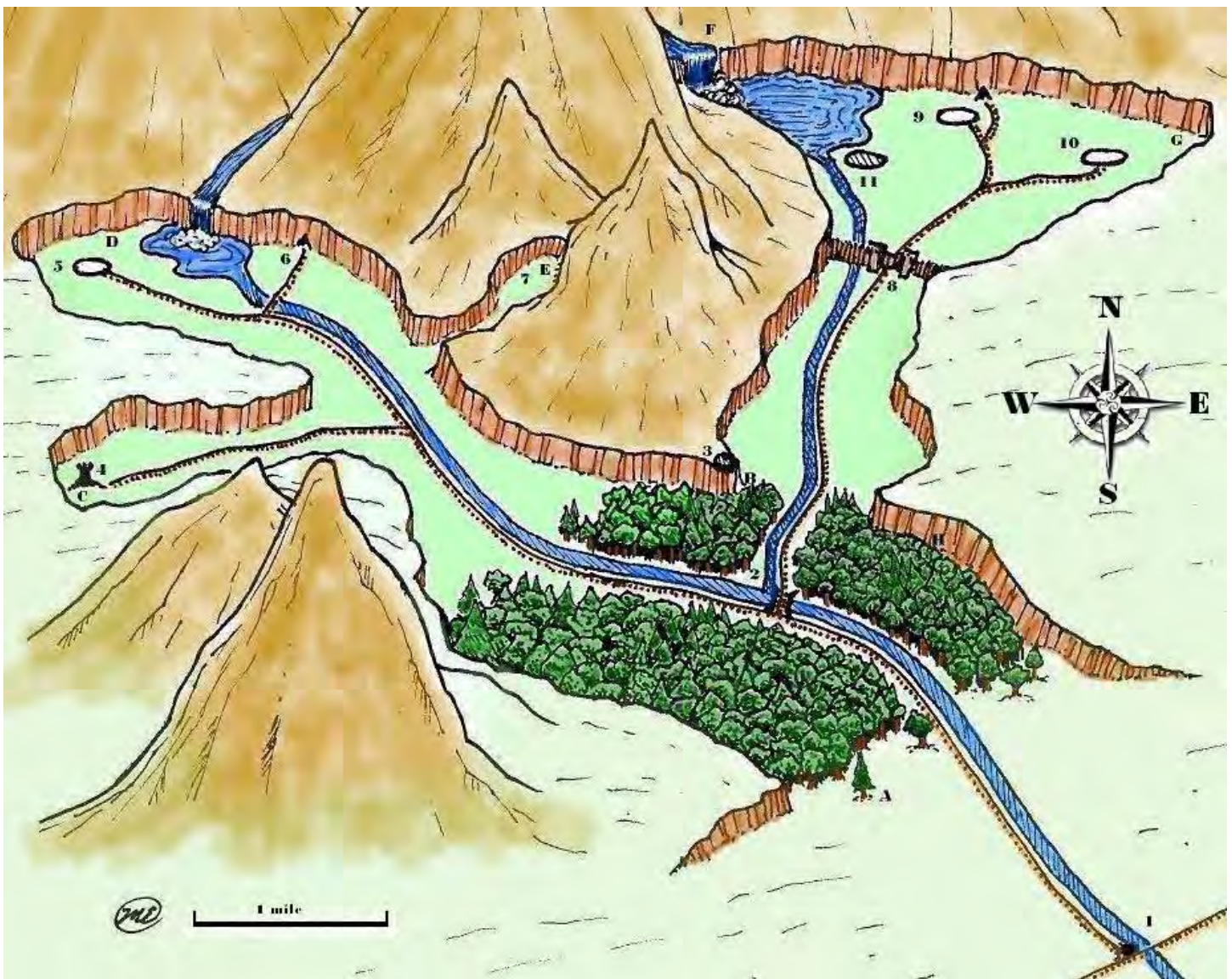
Greater healing (with raise) x3

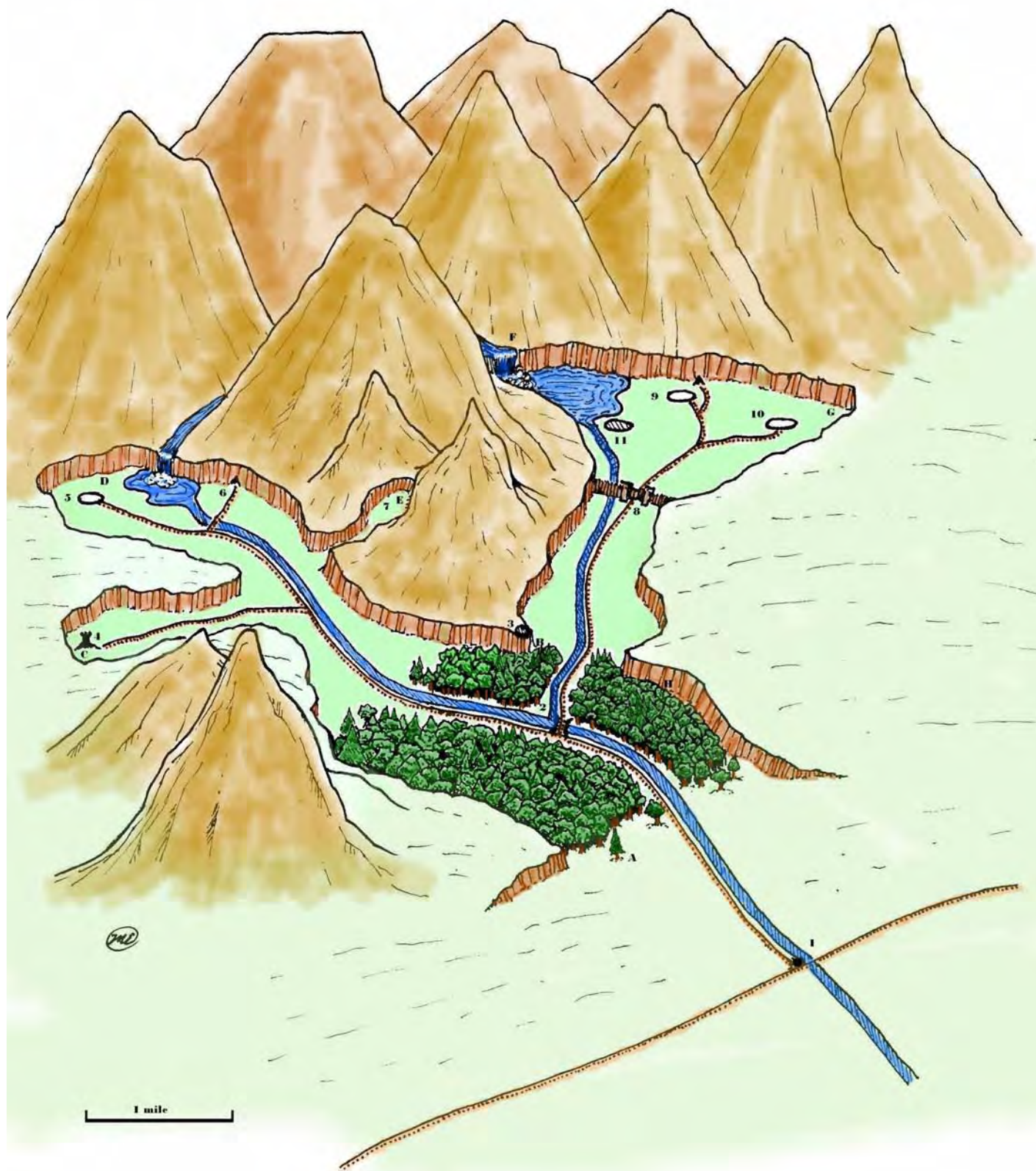
The western arch does not seem to function at all (characters traveling from cache G appear here). A character who steps into the east arch while wearing an

oak leaf amulet is instantly transported to the western arch in hidden cache B.

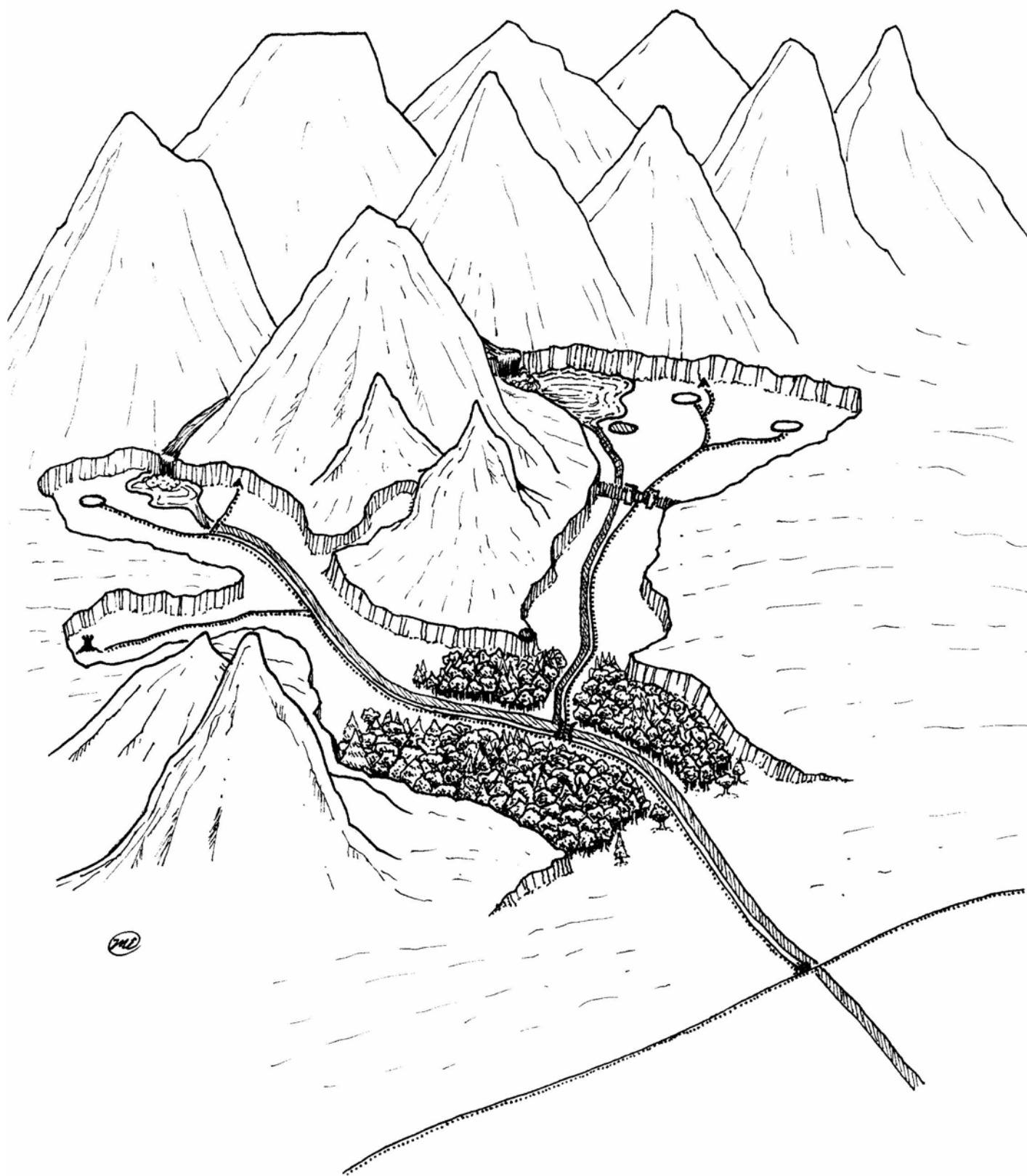
Afterword

The hidden places of Goblin Gorge are stuffed with copious treasure and magic, with a commensurate amount of mortal danger. More valuable than all of that, however, is the utility of Goblin Gorge as a base of operations for enterprising heroes who manage to conquer it. Choose carefully when you place the gorge in your setting, for your players may very well decide they want to stay!





The Secrets of Goblin Gorge – Game Master's Map



The Secrets of Goblin Gorge - Player's Map