

DUNGEON DELVE SPECIAL #2

LABYRINTH OF THE DWELLER

by R. Nelson Bailey

A FIRST EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 5-7 CHARACTERS LEVELS 6-8



Wise seers and learned sages believe the Caverns of Azek-Vhool hold a great and powerful treasure. They say the Gate of the Gods—created at the dawn of time and hidden from the eyes of mortals for eons—lies within its deepest pit. Finding it is no simple matter, as hordes of giants, ogres, and worse dwell in these benighted caves. The labyrinth yields its dark secrets and fabulous treasures only to those bold and lucky enough to survive its terrors.

This challenging module includes two dungeon levels, two maps, and nine new monsters. It also provides detailed notes, encounter descriptions, player handouts, and optional game rules for the Game Master.

DUNGEON DELVE SPECIAL adventures by Dungeoneers Guild Games are classic-style modules designed to fit into any campaign for the Advanced 1st edition game. With little effort they can easily be adapted to most fantasy role-playing games, including the Advanced 2nd edition game, the Original game, the B/X and BECM! ("Basic") games, and most old-school renaissance (OSR) role-playing systems.

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LABYRINTH OF THE DWELLER

Labyrinth of the Dweller is an adventure designed for 5 to 7 characters, levels 6 to 8 (about 40 levels in total). The characters will explore the **Caverns of Azek-Vhool**—a vast cave system home to a tribe of hill giants and their allies. The **player characters' (PCs)** ultimate goal, however, is to locate a fabled artifact called the **Gate of the Gods**. Before commencing play, the **Game Master (GM)** should read the entirety of the module to familiarize themselves with the caves' denizens, traps and tricks, and the adventure's basic plot and structure. At least two fighter-type characters are essential, ideally one ranger or paladin and one or two clerics, to ensure the players have a chance to survive. Additionally, the party must include at least one magic-user to overcome the **Gate's** magical wards.

Introduction

Long ago, in that golden age when the footsteps of the gods still shook the land, the exultant ones rested and surveyed the newly formed world. Delighting in their handiwork, they conceived a gift to bestow on their most favored creation—humankind. They believed this gift would be of inestimable benefit to the humans who populated its lands. Drawing on their divine knowledge, the great immortals forged a magic portal of unparalleled potency—known to some as the **"Gate of the Gods."** The artifact allowed mortals to summon beings from other planes or to travel the multiverse. Humanity, however, soon proved it lacked the wisdom to use this gift for the greater good. Instead, they exploited its powers only for selfish purposes, using it to dominate and clash with their own kind and other races. In their insensate rage, the gods smote the ground beneath which their creation rested. The earth swiftly swallowed the gate, hiding it from those who would misuse its power. The secreted portal came to rest in the bowels of a lightless cave system—the **Caverns of Azek-Vhool**. With it, the gods placed formidable wards to thwart those foolish enough to seek out the Wondrous Gate.

In the intervening millennia, the tales of the **Gate of the Gods** endured, though much knowledge concerning its powers was lost. Kings and rogues, sorcerers and adventurers, all sought this legendary artifact. Sages spent decades poring over tomes of forgotten lore for a passing mention that might shed light on its whereabouts. Countless fortunes were gambled, and lives were risked in these fruitless pursuits for power and glory. None, however, were successful in their efforts to find the gate.

In recent years, a number of enterprising individuals and parties have sought the Wondrous Gate in earnest. Enough clues have been pieced together to offer those bold enough a starting point for their search. It is believed that the **Gate's** hiding place lies somewhere within a range of inhospitable hills beyond the civilized lands of humankind. These forlorn crags have a reputation for harboring fell monsters—humanoids, giants, dragons, and more. Yet few who have ventured into these desolate hills have ever returned to tell their tales.

BACKGROUND & NOTES FOR THE GAME MASTER

Innumerable creatures and races have inhabited the **caverns of Azek-Vhool** for many years since the gate first appeared there. The most recent residents are a tribe of hill giants. These fearsome monsters dominate the UPPER CAVERNS (**MAP I**, inside cover), along with their ogre and troglodyte allies.

The LOWER CAVERNS of the complex (**MAP II**, p. 33) are a vast labyrinth of twisting passages and gloomy caves. A yg'nalath

demon named Asumu rules this maze. Hordes of undead and minor demons that dwell in this black pit serve as its legions. Herein also lies the **Gate of the Gods**, protected by the **Three Veils** (AREA 49), which prevent access to the chamber of the **Tetrahedron Monolith** in AREA 50.

The hill giants revere Asumu—whom they call the **"Dweller in the Pit"**—as their clan's protective spirit. They supply this demon with the victims it desires and keep interlopers from finding its sanctuary. Periodically, the giants descend from their hilly redoubt to raid human settlements in the lowlands. When they do, they always return with a prize of human and demi-human captives to present to the Dweller as an offering.

Getting Started

This work provides no predetermined scenario to involve the PCs in the expedition to the caverns. Instead, the GM should design one that best fits their own campaign needs. A few starting possibilities include:

- 1) A benefactor hires the PCs to locate the **Gate of the Gods**.
- 2) The PCs hear rumors that the giants are attacking human settlements and head out to battle them.
- 3) The party stumbles across the caverns whilst traveling to another locale.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear throughout this module:

AC = Armor Class; **MV** = Move; **MC** = Maneuverability Class; **HD** = Hit Dice; **hp** = hit points; **#AT** = Number of Attacks; **Dmg** = Damage; **SA** = special attack; **SD** = special defense; **MR** = magic resistance; **INT** = monster's intelligence rating; **AL** = alignment; **L** = large size; **M** = medium size; **S** = small size; **xp** = experience point value; **THACO** = the number to hit AC 0; **PsA** = Psionic ability; **C** = Chaotic; **L** = Lawful; **E** = Evil; **G** = Good; **N** = Neutral; **F** = Fighter; **MU** = Magic-User; **C** = Cleric; **T** = Thief; **S** = Strength, **I** = Intelligence, **W** = Wisdom, **D** = Dexterity, **Con** = Constitution, **CH** = Charisma; **d** = type of die; **rd/rds** = round/rounds; **cp** = copper piece; **sp** = silver piece; **ep** = electrum piece; **gp** = gold piece; **pp** = platinum piece

RESIDENTS OF THE CAVERNS

Giants & Their Allies: The current tribe's chief, an ambitious hill giant named Mjemmorg, seeks to expand the influence of his folk beyond the caves of Azek-Vhool. Many ogre and mogruan allies greatly increase the hill giants' numbers—the latter are hybrids of ogre and hill giant parentage (see the **"New Monsters"** section, p. 26). Furthermore, the chief has a tribe of troglodytes under his vassalage. Bolstered by these additional forces, Mjemmorg plans to eliminate all neighboring groups of giants and humanoids who compete with his clan for treasure and food. He also believes that additional sacrifices to Asumu will help the giants overcome their enemies in battle.

When humans or demi-humans are encountered, the hill giants and their allies attempt to capture as many as possible. They do so by pummeling the PCs unconscious or grappling and overbearing them with their greater strength. However, being thick-headed brutes, these monsters attempt this in only 50% of all encounters with the party.

Adult combatant giants, mogruans, and ogres who reside in the caverns carry a variety of weapons. Roll 1d20 and consult the table below to determine what type of arms each individual wields in combat. Optional rules in this work scale the damage of specific weapon types to a monster's size. See **APPENDIX: SCALED WEAPON DAMAGE**, p. 28, for these rules.

1d20	Result
1–3	Axe, battle
4	Axe, great*
5–6	Axe, hand
7–11	Club
12	Flail, footman's
13	Mace, footman's
14–17	Morning star
18–20	Spear

* Treat as a *halberd*.

Most adult hill giants possess some form of personal treasure. Juveniles and young never have any. Roll 1d12 on the table below to determine the type and amount each individual carries on their person, typically in a large sack:

1d12	Result
1–4	None
5–6	1d6 × 100 sp, 1d3 × 100 ep
7–9	1d4 × 100 gp
10	1d4 × 100 gp, 1d4 × 100 ep
11	1d4 × 100 gp, 1d4 base 10 gp gems
12	1d4 × 100 gp, 1d3 pieces of 50 gp jewelry

Adult ogres typically carry 2d12 gp each on their persons, while each mogruan carries 5d12 gp. In addition to coinage, there is a 20% chance that each mogruan also carries 1d6 base 10 gp gems.

If the giants and their allies have not yet raised an alarm, these dim-witted monsters might mistake the PCs for guests or visitors. The chief is currently hosting guests in AREA 28 (q.v.), which lends credence to this assumption. Giants have a 30% chance to misidentify the party as guests, while ogres, mogruans, or trolls have a 50% chance to do so. Reduce these chances by 20% if dwarves are present in the party. Monsters who believe the PCs are guests refrain from attacking them. However, they might still bully, harass, or intimidate the party for food, treasure, and/or fun. This ruse no longer succeeds once the giants are aware of intruders in their home.

Troglodytes: The troglodyte clan that resides in the caverns serves as vassals to the hill giants. They provide military assistance by fighting the giants' enemies when needed. They also perform menial tasks for their masters and pay tribute in food and treasure. However, resentment has grown among the troglodytes because of the unequal conditions of their servitude. In battles, they bear the brunt of attacks and suffer heavy losses. Furthermore, they must surrender 70% of any treasure and food they find to the hill giants. Enterprising characters could exploit this resentment by recruiting the troglodytes to help battle the giants. Characters have a 3% chance per point of Charisma to persuade a group of troglodytes to join them. Subtract 2% for each troglodyte the party has slain. Add 1% for each 100 gold pieces' worth of tribute given to the humanoids, to a maximum of 10%. If the party convinces Yuruz, the troglodyte chieftain (see AREA 3), to switch sides, he brings 50% to 80% ((1d4 + 4) × 10%) of the tribe with him. If the chieftain is not involved in the negotiations, a single group of no more than 2d4 troglodytes at a time will defect.



Roll on the table below to determine the weapon type a troglodyte warrior carries:

1d20	Result
1–6	No weapon carried
7–8	Axe, battle (stone)†
9–10	Club
11–15	Javelin-darts* (2)
16–17	Morning star (stone)†
18–19	Spear (stone)†
20	Sword**

† **Optional Rule:** Stone weapons are less durable than those made of metal. As such, they shatter whenever a *natural* “1” is rolled on a d20 in melee. Broken weapons are useless for any further attacks.

* These weapons inflict 2d4 damage. Troglodytes gain a +3 “to hit” bonus when throwing them.

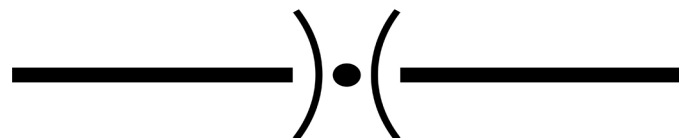
** Roll 1d6 to determine the type of sword used: 1) bastard; 2–3) broad; 4–5) long; 6) two-handed.

Returning to the Caverns: If the party assaults the complex and then withdraws, the giants set an ambush in AREA 1. A large 20' × 30' weighted net is strung from the ceiling in the tunnel just east of this area; it is stored in AREA 33. A mixed group of 1d8+8 hill giants, ogres, mogruans, and/or troglodytes waits on the hidden shelf (“A”), in the side cave (“B”), and in the main passageway west of this area. The GM should determine the exact composition of the group based on how many of these monsters remain. The party has a base 25% chance to spot the net, plus 5% per individual present. If not discovered, the net is dropped on them as they walk under it. Each PC must save vs. Breath Weapon or be pinned under the net. Trapped characters can extricate themselves or other PCs by cutting their way out. A total of 12 points of damage to the net with a small-sized slashing weapon, such as a dagger, will free a single PC. Once the trap is sprung, the ambush party attacks, beginning with hurling boulders. Attacks on pinned PCs are +4 to hit.

They also lose any Dexterity-based Armor Class bonuses and cannot use shields. Spells with somatic components fail 100% of the time. If possible, the giants attempt to capture the party members. Any PC who surrenders or is seized is stripped of gear and taken to the stockade pen in AREA 33. Additional ambushes elsewhere in the caves, as devised by the GM, are encouraged. Incautious players who think they can stroll back in after wreaking havoc are in for a rude awakening!

Physical Properties of the Caverns: The caves that make up Azek-Vhool are composed of limestone. As a result, flowstones, cave curtains, stalactites, and stalagmites are common throughout most areas. Loose boulders and scree often cover the floors. Fifty percent (50%) of individual caves have uneven floors. This makes hasty movement difficult, reducing a PC’s Movement Rate by one-third (33%) for safe movement. Ceiling height in passages ranges from 11' to 16' (1d6+10). Caves have ceilings from 12' to 22' (2d6+10), with some larger caves having ceilings up to 25' or higher.

Entrance: A well-worn track climbs a rocky slope to the cave opening, the entrance to the caverns. A vertical cliff face rises 60' above the opening. Thick brush and a few large shrubs flank the 30'-high, 20'-wide opening. The passage inside extends 50' to AREA 1. Tracks of giants, humanoids, and other monsters lead into and out of the entrance and are plentiful.



DUNGEON LEVEL I — THE UPPER CAVERNS

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE UPPER CAVERNS

A variety of monsters roam the UPPER CAVERN complex. They typically fall into one of two categories: vermin/scavengers (i.e., slimes, giant rats, giant beetles, etc.) or giants and their minions (i.e., ogres, mogruans, troglodytes, and trolls). The former category includes a nearly unlimited number of each type the party can encounter. The latter category includes a finite number of individuals that can appear randomly. No exact number of these monsters has been given in this text. However, as the party clears out areas, those types of monsters become less common, with fewer encountered. For instance, if the party has depopulated all or most of the troglodytes in the numbered areas, the GM can reduce their numbers by 50% or choose to ignore that encounter altogether. Use your best judgment to determine whether an encounter makes sense for the situation.

Check for random encounters once every three turns; encounters occur on a roll of 1 on a d6. If the die indicates an encounter, roll a d20 and consult the table below to determine the creature type and the number.

1d20	Encounter	# Appearing
1–2	Troglodyte	2d4
3–4	Ogre/mogruan	1d6
5–6	Giant rat	4d4
7–8	Giant bat	2d4
9–10	Hill giant	1d3
11–12	Giant lizard	1d3
13	Giant boring beetle	1d3
14–15	Green slime	1d4
16	Troll	1d2
17–18	Stirge	1d6+1
19	Leucrotta	1d2
20	Boggart	1

1–2. TROGLODYTE

There is a 70% chance this is a group of males either transiting to a numbered area, patrolling the complex, or returning from a hunting expedition outside the complex. If the encounter consists of females (30% chance), they are either transiting to a numbered area or heading out to gather food elsewhere in the caves.

Troglodyte: AC 5; MV 12"; HD 2 (females: 1 + 1); hp 10 each (females: 5 each); #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d3/1d3 claws, 1d4+1 bite, or by weapon type; SA **revulsion odor** (humans & demi-humans must save vs. Poison or lose 1 point of STR per rd. for 1d6 rds., lasts 10 rds.); SD surprise on 1–4 on a d6 when camouflaged; INT low (5–7); AL CE; Size M; xp 56 each (females: 38 each); THACO 16 (females: 18); MM 97.

3–4. OGRE/MOGRUAN

Of the 1d6 ogres encountered, there is a 50% chance that 1d2 of their number are actually mogruans. These monsters are most likely scavenging for food or seeking trouble to relieve their boredom. Sixty percent (60%) of these monsters are male, and 40% are female. See “**Giants & Their Allies**”, p. 3, to determine any personal treasure they might carry.

Ogre: AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4 + 1; hp 20 each (females: 16 hp each); #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 or by weapon type +2 (females: 2d4); INT low (5–7); AL CE; Size L (9'+ tall); xp 190 each (females: 170 each); THACO 15; MM 75.