

THE CAVE OF THE UNKNOWN

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INTRODUCTION

The Cave of the Unknown is the lair of a coven of witches (Conjurers) and assorted allied creatures. On nights when the moon is visible dark figures may be seen flying to the area for a black mass. Occasionally men or children are taken by the witches, to be consumed for dinner; and sometimes young women search the place out for a love potion or two. For more extravagant services, the witches fly to the Shrine of Evil hidden in the nearby hills.

The place has been carved out of black rock by unknown, alien hands; the main entrance is to the south. This is an appropriate adventuring site for 3rd-level PCs.

ENCOUNTER AREAS

1. TRAPPED CAVE. This cave has a skeleton, sprawled in the direction of a large, iron trunk. If the lid is opened, a mass of crawling, poisoned spiders scurries forth. Treat the swarm as three normal spiders, but only hit by weapons such as a torch, burning oil, spell, etc.

Spider Swarm - (3) HP: 6, 4, 2; AT: 1; AC 7; ST/F 1; SA: Poison.

2. EMPTY CAVE. This cave has nothing except obvious passages north and east.

3. TOAD CAVE. This cave is the lair of eight giant toads (possibly shape-changed victims of the witches?). They will attack any who intrude.

Giant Toads - (8) HP: varies; AT: 1; AC 6; ST/F 2; SA: None.

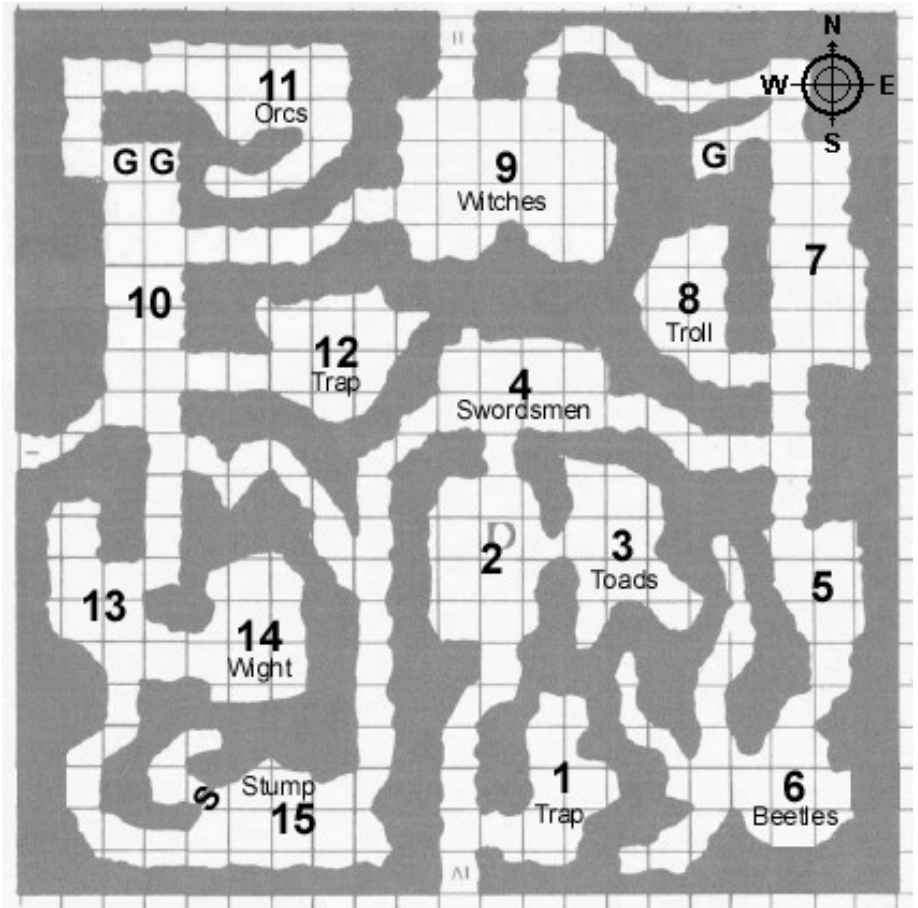
4. GUARDED CAVE. This cave is guarded by a pair of swordsmen, sergeants from a nearby castle kept under a *charm* by the witches. If they see a party fighting the giant toads in #3, one will run to give an alarm, returning with one witch and the troll (#8) in 2 turns. A red candle burns dimly near both the east and west exits.

Swordsmen - (2) HP: 14, 10; AT: 1; AC 4; ST/F 3; SA: None (no magic).

5. GLOWING CAVE. This cave is empty, but a flickering red glow can be seen from the cave to the south (as if from a great fire).

6. BEETLE CAVE. This cave, and the crevices to the west, are inhabited by giant, hungry fire beetles. Other cave inhabitants throw their refuse in here. The witches use the beetles' ichor to create demonic red candles that burn for a month at a time.

Beetles, Fire - (5) HP: 2x6, 4, 2x1; AT: 1; AC 4; ST/F 1; SA: None.



7. BONE CAVE. This long cave is barren except for a pile of bones and skulls on the floor. Note that the "G" to the north is a single orc guard at a post with a large gong to warn the witches of intruders.

8. TROLL CAVE. A terrible troll makes its residence here, a powerful ally of the witches. It keeps its treasure in an ancient pottery jar, hidden in a hole under a great stone at the north end of the cave (find as a secret door, then open doors roll at -2; 1200 ep).

Troll - (1) HP: 25; AT: 3; AC 6; ST/F 7; SA: Will regenerate 3 HP/round beginning at the 3rd round after being hit.

9. WITCH'S GROTTTO. Here is the deepest lair of the witches, five old women Conjurers, each one evil and disfigured. The place is lit with dozens of steadily-burning red candles. In the center is a large cauldron, to the north side a granite altar stone with a carved pentagram (and behind that a black curtain, concealing a secret escape tunnel outside... or possibly to the shrine of evil nearby). Beds made of sticks line the west wall, and skinned rabbits and chickens hang on the south. Set in the east wall is an obvious iron hatch, sealed with a *wizard lock* spell (holds fine jewelry worth 260 and 500 gp, and the witches' worn spellbook - contains all 1st & 2nd level spells from Vol. 1, plus *shield*, *magic missile*, *gust of wind*, and *fly-by-night*).

Generally the witches prefer to be left alone to their magic, so even if an alarm is raised, only one will leave the grotto to deal with intruders. Their favorite tactic is to open with a *gust of wind* spell (dousing lights), and then let their monstrous allies deal with intruders in the pitch darkness; they will also use *phantasmal forces* to apparently conjure dimly glowing spirits (wraiths or spectres?) from the cauldron. They are not above attacking personally with the long, sharp knives they carry; any human men taken captive will be held for a day and then cooked in the cauldron. If approached carefully, they might bargain to brew magic potions.

Conjurers - (5) HP: 2x10, 6, 5, 4; AT: 1; AC 9; ST/M 3; SA: Spells, 3-L1, 1-L2 (dice L1: *1-charm person*, *2-sleep*, *3-shield*, *4-magic missile*; L2: *1-gust of wind*, *2-invisibility*, *3-phantasmal forces*); one has a permanent *ring of invisibility*.

Gust of Wind: 2nd level spell, range 12". Blows out any torches, lanterns, and candles in range (including magic candles), scatters papers, etc.

Fly-By-Night: 2nd level spell, duration 6 hours. Empowers a broom or stick to carry the caster through the open air at 24" movement, as long as the moon is visible in the sky. (DM may wish to modify move rate by phase of the moon.)

10. LONG CAVE. The floor of this cave is very smooth. At the north end of the cave are two orc guards, watching south, armed with crossbows and a single poisoned quarrel each. They will fire at intruders and call for their mates from #11.

11. ORC CAVE. The orc servants of the witches camp here. Each one is deeply green-skinned and disfigured or diseased in some way. The numbers below include the three guards posted elsewhere. At the end of the southern spur they keep a large chest containing 2500 sp; when opened, a large stone block is poised to crash down on any thief (save vs. stone or take 3d6 damage).

Orcs - (12) HP: varies; AT: 1; AC 7; ST/F 1; SA: 2 with crossbows.

12. AUDITORIUM CAVE. This cave has a series of natural terraces rising to the east, creating a natural stage area. Atop this riser is an elaborate chair or throne of some sort, made out of bones. If anyone sits in the chair, they will be surprised to find that a huge trapdoor spider lairs in a hole above, and is trained to drop into the lap of anyone seated there. If the spider is dealt with, an adventurer can climb its web up into the hole and find its treasure, a sack tied in net of webbing (2500 sp).

Giant Spider - (1) HP: 12; AT: 1; AC 6; ST/F 2; SA: Poison.

13. CORPSE CAVE. This cave is empty except for a half-dozen corpses, reduced to dried-out husks littering the floor.

14. WIGHT CAVE. Another terrible ally of the witches, an undead wight makes its lair here. It is generally avoided by all the other inhabitants of the caves. What appear to be more gruesome dried-husks are actually sacks made from human skin, holding its treasure (2800 sp).

Wight - (1) HP: 15; AT: 1; AC 5; ST/F 3; SA: Drain 1 level per hit; can only be hit by silver and magical weapons.

15. STUMP CAVE. A strange sight, a black stump from a once-great tree has its roots sunk in the north corner of this cave. If touched, it will start by singing (in a deep basso profundo) the first bar-and-a-half of a song about lumberjacking, then ask "Wait, who goes there?". If attacked, it will call out for help (likely from the wight in #14 or orcs in #10 if it goes on long enough). If engaged, it will offer to sing a song or tell a riddle; singing the song pleases it, but brings enemies as above; the riddle is "What number am I thinking of?". Give the correct answer (247; its number of rings) and it offers a gift, either information about one monster or location, or (if treasure is asked for), opening the secret door which reveals a locked iron trunk with 550 gp (not discoverable otherwise).

HERE ENDS THE CAVE OF THE UNKNOWN