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Dungeon Crawl Classics #1

Idylls of the Rat King

by Jeffrey Quinn

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-3



Remember the golden days of role playing, when adventures were underground. NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat, intriguing dungeons, and no NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

In Idylls of the Rat King, goblin bandits are once again attacking the silver caravans, killing innocent miners and stealing cargo. The goblins have taken up residence in an abandoned mine northwest of Silverton. Someone must get rid of them. But this is no ordinary abandoned mine. It was deliberately barricaded generations ago when the Gannu family, founders of Silverton, discovered an unspeakable evil on its lowest levels. And these are no ordinary goblins, for the curse of the Gannu family courses through their veins...

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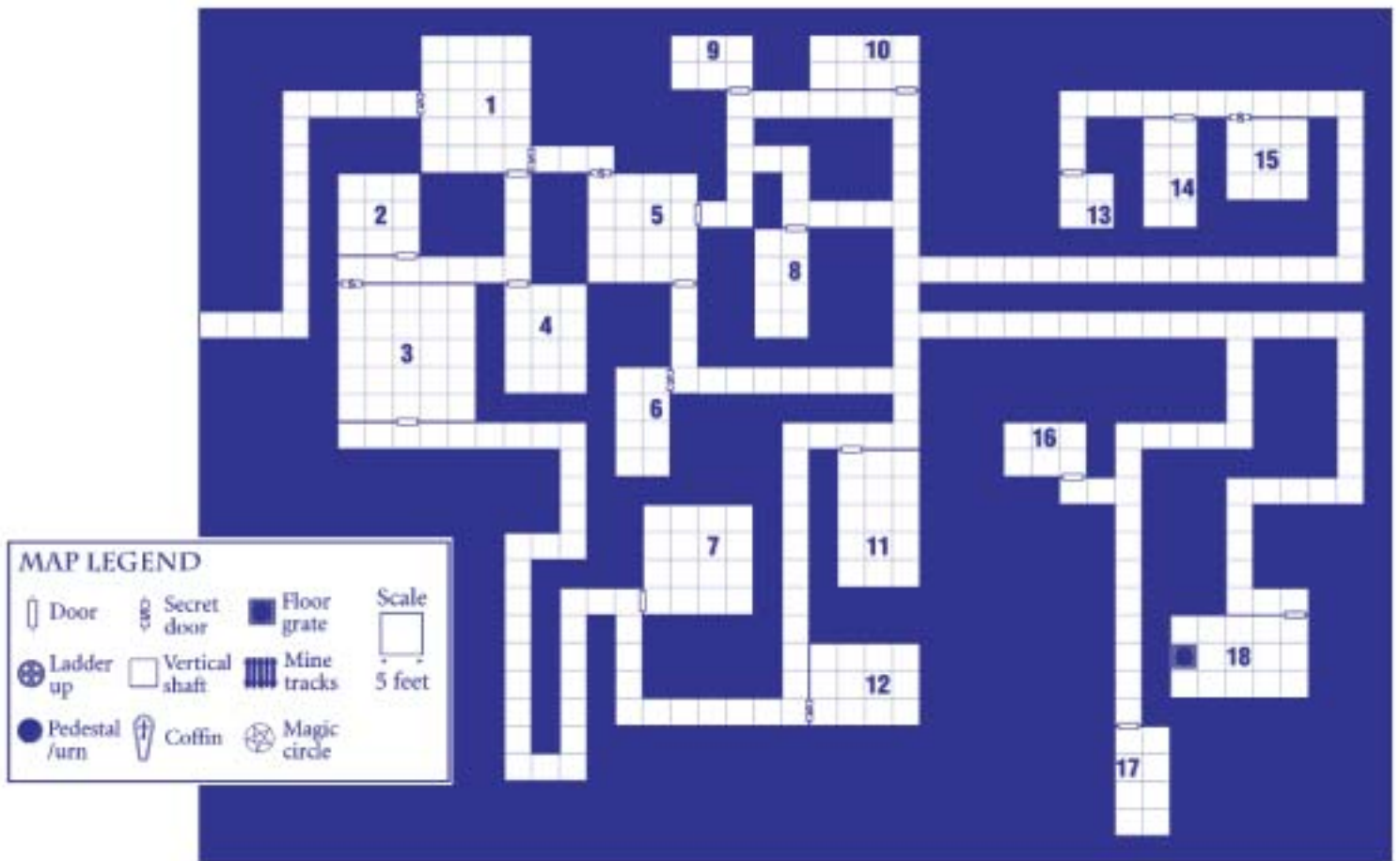
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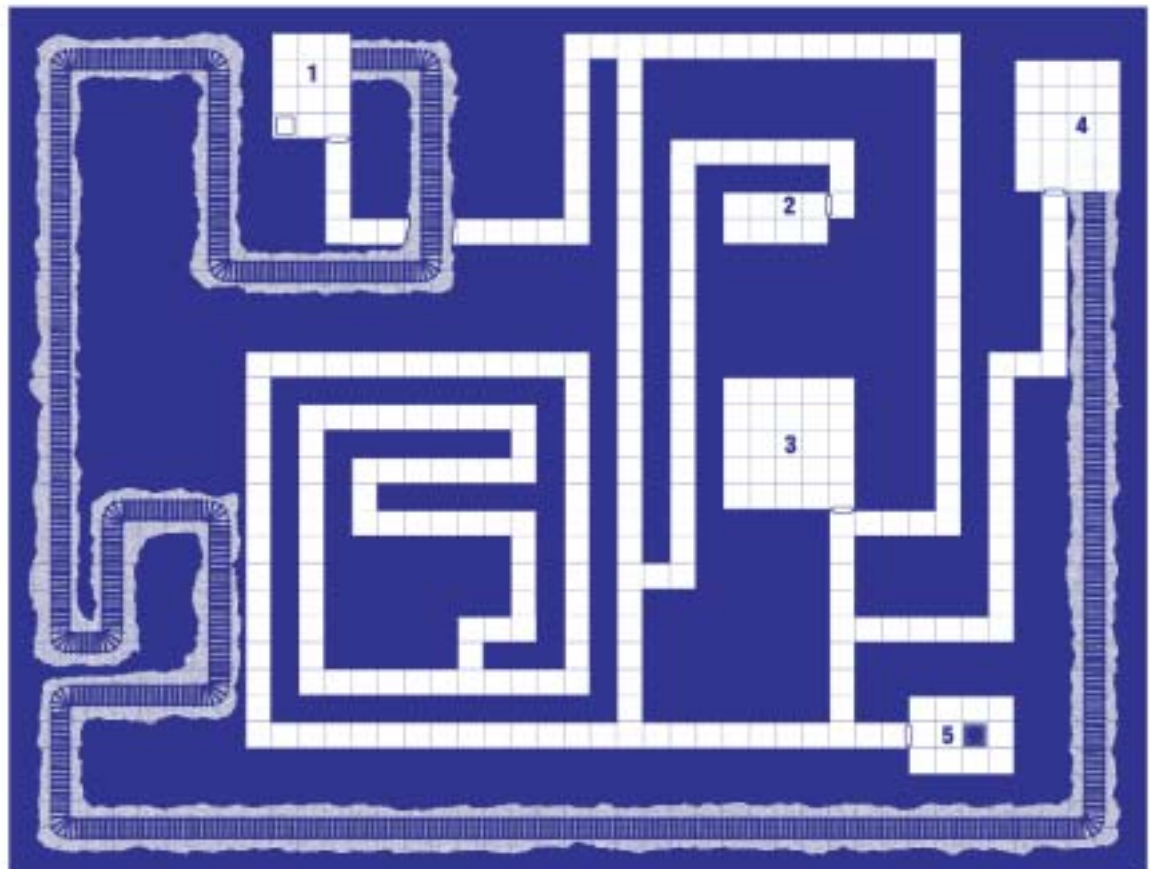


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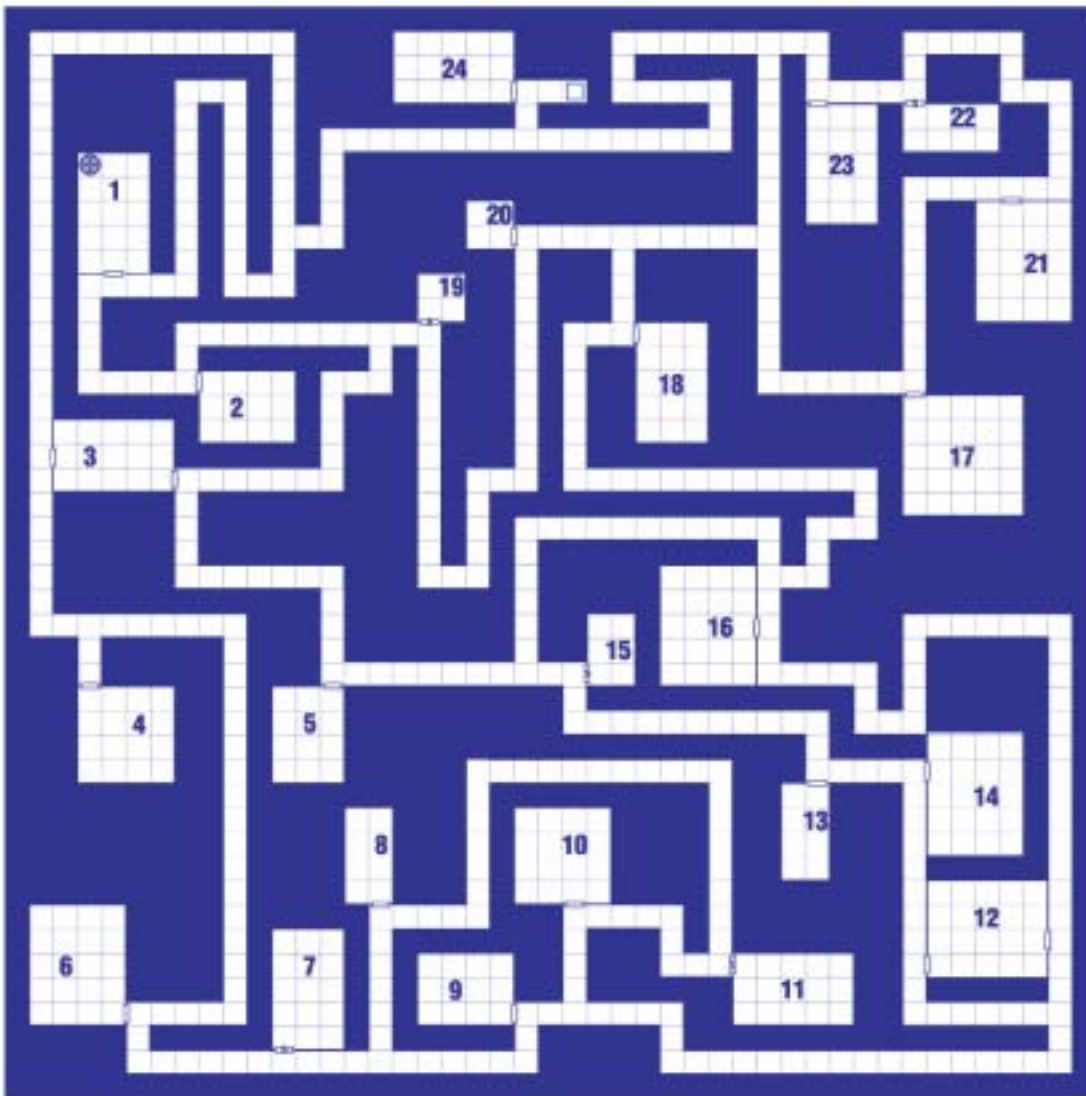
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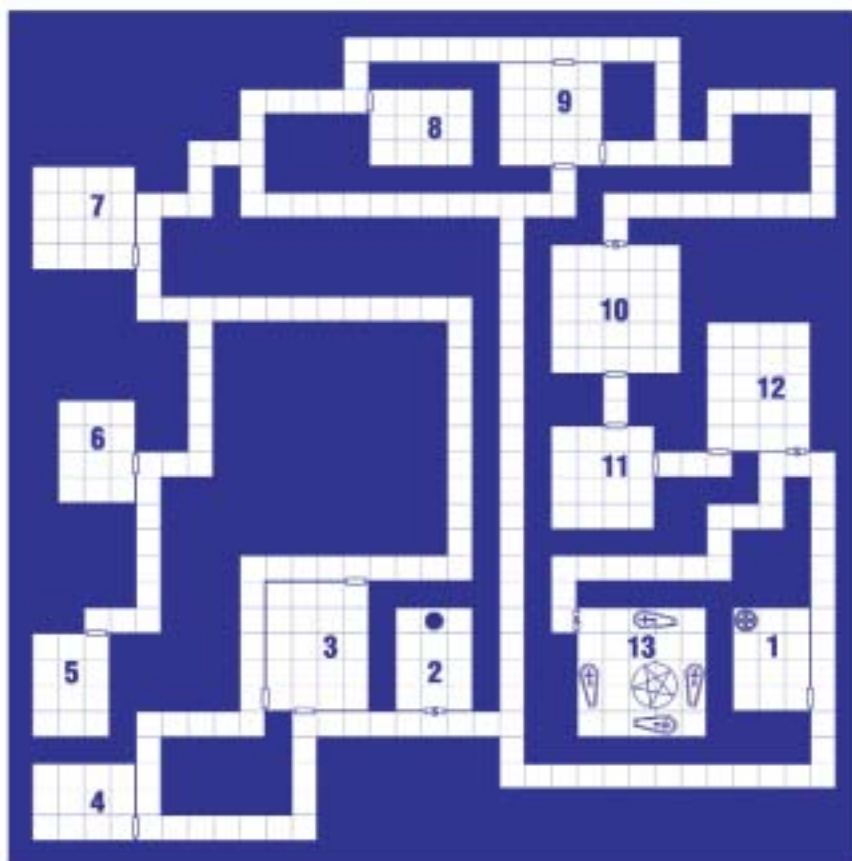
Abandoned Silver Mine – Level 3



Abandoned Silver Mine – Level 2



Abandoned Silver Mine – Level 4



MAP LEGEND

			5 feet

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The art in this book is dedicated to the memory of Dale A. Fox.

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If you like this adventure, be sure to look for the rest of the Dungeon Crawl Classics series at your local game store.

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Introduction

Remember the golden days of role playing, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat, intriguing dungeons, and no NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

Idylls of the Rat King is designed for four to six players of 1st through 3rd level. While the characters can be of any basic character class, a rogue and a good-aligned cleric are recommended for the party's ultimate survival. At least one strong fighter with a silvered weapon would also be helpful, but is not necessary. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your group's unique style of play.

Adventure Summary

The characters have arrived in the small mining town of Silverton two days after a group of wererat goblin bandits attacked a caravan carrying silver to the city of Archbridge, to the north. The goblin tribe has taken up residence in an abandoned silver mine to the northwest of town and has been conducting these daring raids against the caravans for several months, crippling Silverton's silver trade. These wererat goblins are under the leadership of a powerful human wererat bard named Lawrence Gannu, who is exacting his family's revenge on the town of Silverton for killing his grandfather and cursing his then-infant father and grandmother before exiling them to the southern city of Soulgrave many years ago. With help from the desperate townsfolk, the characters have found their way to the entrance of the abandoned Gannu family silver mine.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter, listed as level and room number. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-1	5	C	4 goblins	1
1-2	6	C	2 dire rats	1
1-3	6	C	7 goblins	2
1-5	7	C	4 goblins	1
1-6	7	T	Poison needle trap	2
1-10	8	C	5 dire rats	2
1-11	8	C	2 dire rats	1
1-12	9	T	Portcullis trap	2
1-13	9	C	2 dire rats	1
1-15	9	T	5 arrow traps	5
1-18	10	C	<i>Rez-zomar</i> 2 goblin bodyguards	4
2-1	12	C	7 goblins	2
2-2	12	C	8 goblins	2
2-3	13	C	4 goblins	1
2-4	13	P	8 female goblins 5 young goblins	0
2-5	13	C	2 wererat goblins	4
2-6	14	C	3 goblins Wererat goblin	3
2-7	14	T	Spear trap	2
2-9	15	P	Female goblin 9 young goblins	0
2-10	15	P	6 female goblins	0
2-12	15	C	<i>The Torturer</i> 3 goblins	4
2-14	16	C	<i>The Jailer</i>	4
2-15	16	C	8 skeletons	2
2-16	16	C	2 goblin priests	5
2-17	17	C	2 goblins	1
2-18	17	C	2 wererat goblins 3 dire rats	5
2-20	18	C	4 zombies	2
2-21	18	C	<i>G'zogah</i>	2
2-22	19	T	Pit trap	3
3-1	20	C	6 zombies	3
3-3	21	C	6 zombies	3
3-4	21	C	<i>Narzy Hilspek</i> 5 zombies	6
4-1	23	C	2 wererat goblins	4
4-2	23	C	<i>Serrenna Valuois</i>	7
4-4	24	C	Wererat goblin	2
4-5	25	C	<i>Wererat goblin fighter</i>	3
4-6	25	C	Wererat goblin	2
4-7	26	C	<i>Hogah</i>	5
4-8	26	C	2 wererat goblins	4
4-9	26	C	4 dire rats	1
4-10	27	C	<i>Lawrence Gannu</i> 2 fiendish dire rats	6
4-12	28	T	Arrow trap Spear trap Hail of needles trap Scything blade trap	5

Scaling Information

Idylls of the Rat King is designed for 4-6 characters of 1st-3rd levels, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

3 or fewer characters: Encounters 1-3, 2-1, 2-2, 2-6, 2-12, and 2-18 can have the number of regular goblins either halved or entirely eliminated (GM's discretion).

4th level and/or more than 6 characters: Add an additional 2 goblins to each goblin and wererat goblin encounter, and change all dire rats to fiendish dire rats.

Getting the Players Involved

The following hooks can be used to get the players involved in the plot:

- While washing the road-dust from their throats at the Silver Cup Inn in Silverton, the characters overhear a young man telling the tale of an abandoned silver mine to the northeast of town that is the base location for goblins who have been attacking silver caravans traveling north. If the characters inquire about these events, he will offer them 200 gold pieces if they can eliminate the threat.
- A severely wounded young nobleman stumbles through the door of Renna the Midwife in Silverton. He says that he was guarding a caravan carrying silver north when it was ambushed by goblins. He was the lone survivor of the attack, left for dead, and witnessed the goblins heading east through the forest. Renna can tell the characters that there is an abandoned mine to the northeast of town that could be their lair. The young nobleman has taken to fever and may not live long. Renna would be most grateful to the characters if they could root out the cause of this terrible event.
- Upon entering the small mining town of Silverton, the characters are approached by an old man who identifies himself as the leader of the Miner's Guild in town. His operations have been sabotaged and caravans are being raided by goblins hailing from the northeast of town. He believes that they are aided by whatever ancient evil caused the mining operations northeast of town to be abandoned. He will reward those characters that can eliminate this threat.

Player Death

If the party is knocked unconscious (or if a character is knocked below 0 hit points and the rest of the party flees), they are not left to die by the goblins and wererats in the mine. Instead, the characters are stripped of their equipment and are thrown into the *Holding Cell* (Room 13 on Level 2). Their equipment will be kept in the *Jailer's Room* (Room 14 on Level 2). Characters will awaken in the *Holding Cell* with one-half their total hit points and no equipment. They will discover that their wounds have been bound by the goblins. The reason the characters are being saved is that Lawrence Gannu (see Level 4, Room 10 – *Lawrence's Audience Chamber*) wishes to create other wererats to serve his dark rat gods.

Characters can also return to *Renna's House* in Silverton for healing or to the *Silver Cup Inn* for rest. The midwife, Renna (see Appendix 1: Silverton), will charge the party one-half of her usual fee if the characters mention that they were wounded during their foray into the abandoned mine.

If a character is brought to –10 hit points or lower, the character's dead body will be brought to Narzy Hilspek (see Level 3, Room 4 – *Office and Quarters of Narzy Hilspek*) for animation as a zombie miner. The equipment of the dead character will find its way to the *Treasure Room of the Rat King* (Level 4, Room 12).

Treasure

Creatures listed as having "misc. coins" for treasure carry 1d6 copper pieces for normal goblins, and 1d6 copper pieces + 1d4 gold pieces for everything else (excluding the undead, which have nothing). This amount is multiplied by the dungeon level or the CR, whichever is greater. For example, a normal goblin on Level 2 would have 2d6 copper pieces, while a wererat goblin on Level 1 would have 2d6 cp + 2d4 gp.



Background Story

History of Silverton

Silverton is a small village located two weeks north of the city of Soulgrave and three weeks south of the capitol city of Archbridge. It is a mining village that grew from the hard work of one merchant family, the Gannu family of Soulgrave.

Jasper Gannu, prospector and patriarch of the Gannu family, discovered silver during a prospecting tour of the area over 100 years ago. He immediately spent his entire life's savings on funding a small mining operation and opening the silver mine on a rich vein of ore. Miners and the poor, looking for work, flocked to the Gannu Silver Mine, creating a small boomtown less than half a day's travel from the mine.

Within a few months, the mining shafts broke through large underground chambers that were littered with bones and huge nuggets of silver ore. The miners found this to be strange and priests were brought in from both Soulgrave and Archbridge to cleanse the area of evil spirits. All the while, Jasper was growing very rich and powerful from the silver that was transported to the Miner's Guild in Archbridge.

Two years after the mine opened, Silverton, as the boomtown was called, began to erect permanent structures for the miners. The silver ore was plentiful and other mines began to open to the west of the town under the banner of Archbridge's Miner's Guild. This is when disaster struck the Gannu Silver Mine.

Two years and six months to the day from when Jasper found the first silver vein, miners broke into a deep pocket under the earth. This pocket contained a hideously evil spirit that killed more than 20 miners before it was finally forced back into its lair by the priests and wizards who were called in to cast a mighty spell and lock the evil away.

The miners turned on Jasper Gannu, now with wife and child, blaming him for the catastrophic events. He was lynched and hung from a hastily made gallows in the center of Silverton. His wife and child were run out of town and cursed, "May no child of Jasper Gannu's seed be able to touch the horrid silver that has brought such evil to this town!" The Gannu family home was burned to the ground and the site was sown with thorny vines so that no one would ever be able to build on the spot again.

At the rising of the next full moon, Jasper's wife and infant son awoke to find that they were wererats, forever cursed to that form and its allergy to silver.

History of the Gannu Family

Jasper's wife, Elizabeth, and her infant son, Aaron, fled from Silverton to Soulgrave. It was while they were there that they succumbed to the *Curse of Lycanthropy* that changed them into wererats. Elizabeth threw her hands up to the glowing orb of the moon and howled when she looked down at her innocent son's fur-covered form.

As Aaron grew, Elizabeth told him of the terrible curse his father's former employees wrought upon him and all those that were to come after him. Aaron came to hate the people of Silverton and swore that he would one day return to the town and have his revenge.

The years passed into decades and Aaron sired his own children. He became a powerful force in the dark underworld of Soulgrave, leading a small group of wererats that lived in the sewers of the city. He never forgot what was done to his family and prepared his own son, Lawrence, to return to Silverton, now a permanent town.

The GM's Eyes Only

A little more than a year ago, Lawrence Gannu began making his way north towards Silverton. Now an accomplished bard and a full-blooded wererat, he was set upon by a small band of goblins while he was on the road. He was captured and brought to the goblins' tribe. He patiently waited until the goblins had turned their backs on him. He sprang on the goblin leader and bit him, infecting the goblin with his wererat curse. The shaman of the goblin tribe found this to be a great omen for their tribe and declared Lawrence their leader.

Over the course of several months, Lawrence slowly infected goblins that were loyal to him with the curse of lycanthropy and taught them of their new gift. He also gave the tribe a new purpose: to destroy Silverton.

Two months ago, Lawrence stepped into the Silver Cup Inn, disguised as a wandering bard looking for work. He was hired on, even as he began to move his tainted goblin tribe into his grandfather's abandoned mine. The goblins reopened the numerous levels of the mine and began to set up new defenses, as Lawrence sent word of caravans and where the other mines were located.

While opening the mine's lower levels, the goblins discovered that an evil gnome necromancer and his zombies already inhabited these levels. The gnome, Narzy Hilspek, struck a bargain with Lawrence and began mining the leftover deposits of ore.

One month ago, the silver caravans, traveling north to Archbridge from the Miner's Guild mines to the west of Silverton, began to be attacked. The western mines

were sabotaged and equipment was stolen. The dead were brought back to Narzy and reanimated as zombies and skeletons to mine silver ore for Narzy's own dark projects.

Now the characters have come into town.

Narzy and Lawrence export the silver ore they steal and mine to Narzy's black market contacts in Archbridge, and they are well funded from it. Neither Narzy nor Lawrence knows of the ancient evil located on Level 4 of the abandoned mine, nor that Lawrence's goblins have discovered scraps of documentation from the time

of his grandfather that give vital clues to what this ancient evil actually is: a vampire. Lawrence is the last of the Gannu family and has recently moved his family's bodies, upon his father's deathbed request, to the mine.

Player Beginning

Through the dense underbrush and tangled trees you have followed the beaten trail of the goblins that have been plaguing the town of Silverton. Before you is the open mouth of the abandoned Gannu family silver mine. The time has come to be heroes.

Abandoned Silver Mine, Level 1: The Goblin Lair

All halls are 10 feet wide and 7 feet high, made of rough stone. Rooms on this level are 7 feet high where the ceiling meets the walls, and 10 to 11 feet high in the center of the room. Each wall on this level is considered to be unworked stone and all doors are considered to be simple wooden doors with the following game statistics, unless otherwise noted in the room text:

Unworked Stone Wall: 5 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 900; Break DC 65; Climb DC 20.

Simple Wooden Door: 1" thick; hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 13 (stuck), 15 (locked).

Wandering Monsters

There is a 15% chance (1-3 on a d20) per half hour that the characters will come across a random encounter while in a corridor or in an empty room. This chance is increased by +5% if the characters are not being cautious or are making noise, and +10% if they are yelling and causing loud noises (examples – knocking over tables, breaking down a door, etc.). If an encounter is called for, roll 1d6 and consult the following table. Roll hit points for each encounter separately.

1d6	Encounter
1-3	4 normal goblins (EL 1)
4-5	2 dire rats (EL 1)
6	4 zombies (EL 2)

The following statistics blocks are provided for easy reference for the Game Master.

Goblins (4): Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); CR 1/4; HD 1d8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk hand axe +1 melee (1d6-1, 20/x3 crit), dagger +3 ranged (1d4-1, 19-20/x2 crit); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0. Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4,

Spot +3; Alertness.

Equipment: Hand axe, dagger, small wooden shield, studded leather armor, and misc. coins.

Dire Rats (2): Small Animal; CR 1/3; HD 1d8+1; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15; Att bite +4 melee (1d4 and disease); SA Disease (Fort DC 12, filth fever); SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Hide +9, Move Silently +6; Weapon Finesse (bite).

Zombies, Medium (4): Medium Undead; CR 1/2; HD 2d12+3; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11; Atks slam +2 (1d6+1); SQ Undead, partial actions only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Areas of the Map

Room 1 – The Hidden Entrance (EL 1): Before entering Room 1 by the corridor from the surface, the party must find the hidden door at the "collapsed" end of the tunnel. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters turn the last corner:

Before you are the collapsed remnants of the tunnel you have been following. Small footprints can be seen entering the wreckage, as if it weren't there. There must be a secret door!

Characters may roll a Search or Spot skill check (DC 13) to discover a hidden latch that causes the end of the tunnel to rise. If the characters begin breaking their way through the wreckage, the goblin guards in Room 1 beyond the door will hear them and will send a goblin to summon reinforcements from Rooms 3 and 5, while another locks the secret door. The secret door has these statistics:

Strong Wooden Door: 4" thick; hardness 5; hp 40; Break DC 23 (stuck), 25 (locked).

Once the party breaches the secret door, read or paraphrase the following as they enter Room 1:

The hidden entrance opens into a low, rough-walled room that is forty-feet by fifty-feet. Four small humanoids turn to glare with evil red eyes. "E'rathra," screams a burly goblin as he and his companions reach for their naked weapons lying near them.

For characters who speak Goblinoid, the large goblin screamed "Intruders!" The goblins in this room are not surprised by the party's sudden appearance through the secret entrance to their lair. They are ready for combat and will fight to the death. Other than their worn equipment, the goblins have nothing else of value.

In the eastern wall of the southeast corner of the room is a secret door that leads down a short tunnel that is only four feet high. This tunnel leads to another secret door to Room 5. Both of these secret doors require a Search or Spot skill check (DC 15) to find.

Tactics: During the first round of combat, the goblins will throw their daggers at whoever enters the room first. They will then pull their hand axes and attack in melee on the next round. The goblins will hold their ground and will not flee from combat, even if faring badly against the party (they are frightened more of their wererat masters than they are of the party).

Goblins (4): Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); CR 1/4; HD 1d8; hp 1, 2 (x2), 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Att hand axe +1 melee (1d6-1, 20/x3 crit), dagger +3 ranged (1d4-1, 19-20/x2 crit); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Equipment: Hand axe, dagger, small wooden shield, studded leather armor, and misc. coins.

Room 2 – Outer Barracks (EL 1):

The squat wooden door to this thirty-foot square room opens into a mess of refuse and a solidly built table with six small chairs that look to be made from the bed of a wagon. The four corners of the room contain piles of soiled clothes and blankets. Six unrolled bedrolls lie on the floor in the northern half of the room.

Characters who succeed at a Listen skill check (DC 12) will notice that there is rustling sound coming

from the pile of soiled clothes in the northwestern corner of the room. The two dire rats eating the garbage under the clothes are making these sounds. If the pile is disturbed, the dire rats will leap out of the pile to attack.

Dire Rats (2): Small Animal; CR 1/3; HD 1d8+1; hp 4, 8; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15; Att bite +4 melee (1d4 and disease); SA Disease (Fort DC 12, filth fever); SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Hide +9, Move Silently +6; Weapon Finesse (bite).

Room 3 – Main Barracks (EL 2):

Upon opening the door to this fifty-foot square room, the pungent stench of urine and unwashed bodies assaults your senses. A series of small, cloth pillows dominates the southwestern corner of the room; while the rest of the floor is covered with numerous dirty straw mats and bedrolls. Seven green humanoids stand as you enter, grinning from ear to pointing ear as they draw small, wicked-looking swords from their scabbards.

There are two ways to enter this room. The first is by the secret door (Search or Spot, DC 14) in the center of the north wall. The other is by the wooden door in the southern wall. The south door is locked, from the inside, by a simple lock (Open Locks, DC 20).

The seven humanoids are goblins. They were warned that there are intruders by the goblins in Room 1 and will not be caught unaware unless the party took great pains to keep their movements quiet (GM's discretion). Other than the equipment that the goblins carry, there is nothing else of value in this room.

Tactics: These goblins are more frightened of the wererat goblins and Lawrence than they are of the characters. They fight viciously and will give no quarter. None of these goblins speak Common and they will all fight to the death.

Goblins (7): Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); CR 1/4; HD 1d8; hp 2 (x3), 3, 5, 7 (x2); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15; Att short sword +1 melee (1d6-1, 19-20/x2 crit), dagger +3 ranged (1d4-1, 19-20/x2 crit); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3; Alertness.

Equipment: Short sword, dagger, studded leather armor, and misc. coins.