

The Portal Worm's Barrow

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This lair is suitable for four 4th level characters and can be inserted or adopted as a burial or religious site within a campaign. This location is a tomb belonging to a pair of gnomish tinkers and inventors which has been desecrated by a portal worm that burrowed into it and consumed its contents.

AREA 1 - ENTRANCE

Read the following when the characters approach the tomb's mountain entrance:

A switchback road ascends to a flattop ridge alongside the mountain. Cut into the rock wall is a bas-relief sculpture resembling a gnomish face; the entirety of it is an impressive 30' tall. Within the mouth of the immaculate carving is a cogwheel door made of iron.

There is no obvious way to open the crypt doors. A character succeeding a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will find two valves hidden within the ears of the sculpture that can be turned counterclockwise simultaneously to open the doors. Forcing entry is also a possibility using a crowbar or other implement and succeeding a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, though using force will cause the gnomish lancers inside to activate and attack.

AREA 2 - VESTIBULE

When the characters enter the structure, read the following text:

The trapped air of this enclosure emits a strong smell of old damp stone. Evidence of severe damage to this vestibule is apparent with one of the four support pillars in the northwestern side of the chamber cracked and starting to buckle. The northern wall has a gaping fracture 20-feet wide that exits the chamber through a dark tunnel. In front of it, a small metallic sphere is using its appendages to pick up chunks of stone from the shattered wall and is using an assortment of instruments that extend off of its body to assist it as it attempts to mortar the stone back into place.

The **gnomish fixer** is repairing the damage incurred by a portal worm that burrowed up into it from below. Its original purpose for being placed in this chamber was to perform regular maintenance upkeeping the resting place of its former masters. It ignores the characters unless they interfere with its ability to repair the wall. A character speaking gnomish succeeding a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check may be able to convince it to stop its work momentarily while they enter the tunnel. Otherwise, it raises an alarm in response to any attempt to move past it.

Stone Pillars. Each of the four pillars contains a secret door that a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal. Behind each door in the pillars is a **gnomish lancer, mark II** (four total) placed within the tomb to deter grave robbers. They activate and attack if alerted by the gnomish fixer or if a creature attempts to enter either of the tombs.

Collapsing Ceiling. Area of effect spells such as thunderwave or fireball within the vestibule can cause the fractured stone pillar to fail and collapse the chamber. Any creature standing within 20-feet of the pillar must succeed a DC 13 Dexterity Saving Throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning

damage and become restrained. On a success, the character takes half damage and is not restrained. The area then is filled with rubble and becomes difficult terrain.

Tombs. The two tombs are completely empty with divots in the stonework at their centers. The sarcophagi were consumed by the portal worm when it entered the crypt.

AREA 3 – PORTAL WORM'S BARROW

Read the following when the characters navigate and descend the tunnels into the portal worm's lair:

The stone tunnels lead down from the crypt deeper into the mountain. The meandering passageways look as if they had been precisely chiseled uniformly and do not reflect any deviation in circumference. Occasionally the tunnel branches off into other directions that lead to dead ends.

Once the characters reach the end of the main tunnel to enter the barrow, continue to read the following:

The tunnel leads into an underground grotto with ceilings that reach up 20-feet. The sound of water trickling down can be heard in the distance. As you enter, you feel the ground tremble underneath your boots as the earth gives way to a tremendous monstrosity with elongated fangs and a rusty colored hide that devours up the floor to aggressively advance in your direction!

The **portal worm** using its tremorsense becomes aware of the characters and burrows its way up from another tunnel it was in the process of creating. It attacks relentlessly to attempt to devour the intruders; any creature that falls victim to its extradimensional swallow ability is deposited into Area 4.

Fey Pool. This pool within the cavern is fed by a natural spring which deposits water into its basin from the walls. This pool is a doorway into the realm of Fairy which is only accessible by ringing a silver bell during a Full Moon. The portal worm has been drinking from these waters and it has influenced the makeup of its demiplane.

AREA 4 – DEMIPLANE OF THE PORTAL WORM

If any character is swallowed by the portal worm, read the following:

Dropping down onto an earthen floor littered with stone and debris, you stand on an island roughly 60-feet in diameter that is surrounded by waters that lap at its edges. The horizon is an expanse of inky blackness that sends down a vague luminescence of a violet hue. Through hazy mists you see what appears to be two sarcophagi that just up from the debris, both covered in fungal growth.

An **eyeless hulk** lurks in the haze and becomes aware of the characters arrival as soon as they drop onto the island after the portal worm successfully uses its extradimensional swallow ability to consume a character. It will race to the center of the island to try and bash the characters with its spiked greatclub, though due to its inconstant vision trait it will not immediately be able to see them. Characters may think to duck for cover behind the sarcophagi to evade its gaze, though doing so will put them in danger of becoming victims of the **two swarms of banecap mushrooms** which cover the sarcophagi and use their spores to attack anyone who comes in range.

Treasure. Inside the first sarcophagus is a gold ring set with aquamarines (worth 250 gp), a puzzle box carved from exotic wood inlaid with ivory (worth 350 gp), and a *driftglobe*. The second sarcophagi containing a small gold idol of a gnomish god of innovation (worth 250 gp), a leatherbound tome of gnomish schematics (worth 400 gp), and *eyes of the eagle*.