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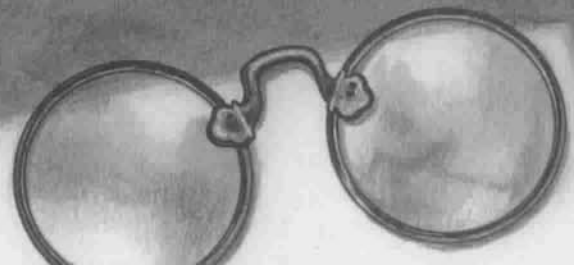
# BUGBEARS



Sam Witt



Malick Derwishire  
Duke of Swindon



Callum  
2001

The  
Slayer's Guide  
To  
Bugbears

Sam Witt

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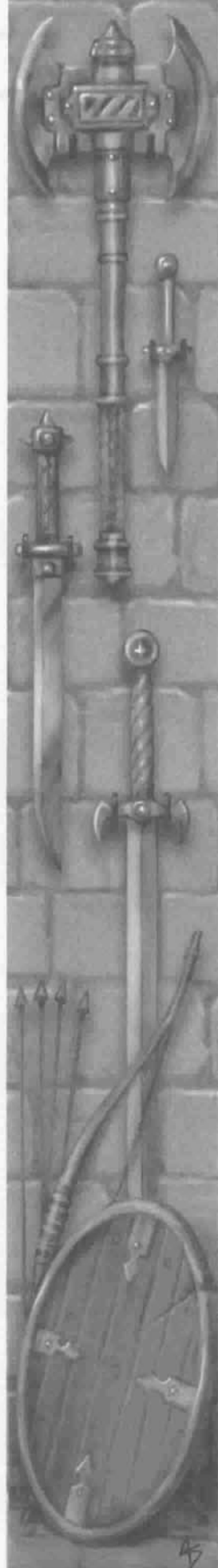
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# INTRODUCTION

**P**ound for pound, muscle for muscle, bugbears are stronger, sneakier and far more unpredictable than their other goblinoid cousins. They are brutal guerrillas who strike fast and fade away, bursting onto the scene to wreak terrible havoc before vanishing. If they could ever unite under a single banner, or maintain the military discipline of the hobgoblins, they would shake the heavens with their rage. Fortunately for the rest of the world, bugbears are as fractious as they are violent, driven by chaotic urges and consuming greed that prevent them from developing the social structure of more advanced races.

Bugbears are cunning adversaries, creatures that rarely fight to the death, preferring to flee from a lost battle in order to nurse their vengeance for another day. Adventurers who believe they can simply wade into a horde of bugbears and slay them in glorious combat are in for a rude shock and are certain to fall prey to the myriad traps and ambushes the bugbears use in their own style of warfare. Even when it appears the heroes have won the day, there is always a chance one of the foul creatures has escaped and will lead others of its kind to exact revenge upon the adventurers.

In this book, Games Masters will find the information they need to portray the bugbears as dangerous and elusive enemies. Players may learn enough to survive a bugbear ambush, or discover the tactics they may face should they choose to assault a dungeon held by bugbears. Most importantly, both sides of the Games Master's screen can enjoy the fun of seeing an old foe in a new light.

## THE SLAYER'S GUIDES

This series of supplements, designed for use in all fantasy-based D20 games systems, takes an exhaustive look at specific monster races, detailing their beliefs, society and methods of warfare. Typically, these are the races all but ignored by Games Masters and players alike who pay little heed as countless thousands get slaughtered during the acquisition of new levels and magic items.

## BUGBEARS — EVIL CUNNING

Every Slayer's Guide features a single race, in this case the bugbear. Herein you will find extensive information on bugbear physiology, habitat, religion and society. This encyclopaedia of bugbear lore gives Games Masters plenty of hooks to hang their stories and scenarios upon, as well as tips on how to inject a healthy dose of humanoid mayhem into their existing campaigns. Players will learn what they can expect if they choose to tangle with these goblinoid guerrillas, and what their fate will be should defeat raise its ugly head.

Last but not least, a detailed look at a bugbear warren and its occupants wraps up the book. This lair can be used as a straight-ahead dungeon crawl or as a source of ongoing trouble in a campaign, providing players with an enemy that just keeps coming back for more.



The twin fires crackled intimately as the group of adventurers resting around them tended their wounds and wolfed down a cold meal. It had been one of those days. It shouldn't have been. The ponderous silence told much. Normally they would have been laughing and joking, teasing each other about the little nicks they had sustained, whilst idly arguing about how to split up the treasure they had picked up. Not today though.

Wardell could not even begin to study his magic tome, even though he knew that study was the cornerstone of his art. He just felt too deflated. He looked across at Andria, who was binding a rough piece of cloth about a sword cut on her forearm. Normally he'd take the opportunity to admire her legs, but right now he wasn't interested in that sort of thing either. Not that the pretty elf ever took much notice of him anyway. He began to mope, annoyed that he was able to still do that with monotonous regularity.

'Can't quite work out what happened,' said Eldreg, at length. The dwarf fighter had been left standing bemused when the bugbears had fled. Just when they were being sucked into the party's little trap. How had the devils known?

Andria looked up from her running repairs. 'The pigs just fled!' she announced, stating the obvious.

Several of the others nodded, none in the mood to tease her. They were a large party, to be sure – close to double figures, but there had seemingly been many more bugbears. Having fought plenty of goblins before, it left them confused. Weren't these just bigger versions of the same thing?

'I tried to slow them down...' Wardell let his words tail off. He knew they were feeble, and he was certain that everybody blamed his poor concentration.

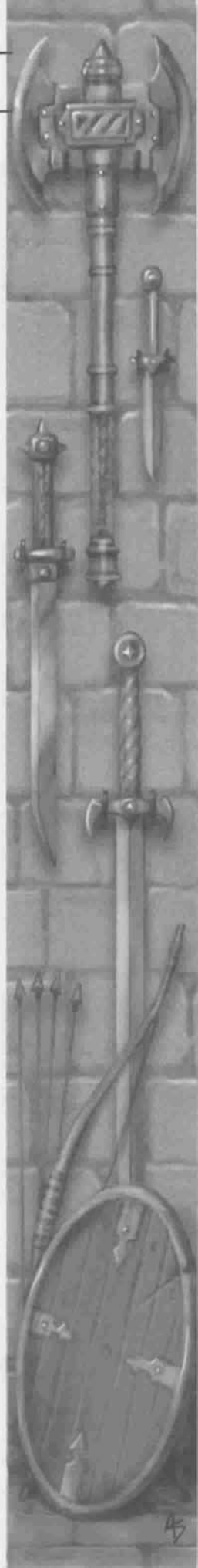
'Not your fault, old boy,' replied Tothac gently. The cleric was older than the rest, and far wiser, yet more often than not kept his counsel private. The others assumed he was just the dark, silent type. Lucky they didn't know the truth, he thought.

Wardell smiled at the kindness. He noticed that the fighters had kept quiet though. Magic wasn't a popular pastime in this group, unfortunately, and Wardell bemoaned the absence of another mage to share some time with. Considering the size of the group, his existence was a moderately lonely one.

Off guard as they were, the object thrown into the camp, landing in one fire before rolling out onto the turf, caught their attention in a flash. It would have caused a shock, even if it had not been the head of Nelis, who was supposed to be guarding the horses and patrolling the perimeter of the makeshift encampment.

Then a howling went up, seemingly from all around them. In a second they were on their feet, weapons drawn. What in the names of hell could it be?

Then the first of the bugbears erupted out of the undergrowth into the firelight. It was not alone.



# BUGBEAR PHYSIOLOGY

Taller than all but the most extraordinary of men, bugbears cut an imposing figure in the light of day. When glimpsed dashing through the shadows, their bulging muscles and towering frames are enough to give any adventurer a moment's pause. In the heat of battle, drenched in the blood of their foes and the foam of their own fury, the morningstar-wielding maniacs are intimidating indeed and may convince even the most foolhardy that today may *not* be a good day to die.

From the tips of their wedge-shaped ears down to their bear-like feet, bugbears have thick patches of wiry hair that varies in colour from dingy brown to brick red. Under this coarse hair, bugbears have a thick hide that, when not stained with blood or daubed with camouflage paints, ranges in hue between light and brownish yellow. This thick hide provides more protection than the leather armour bugbears use to augment their defences and can be used to fashion durable clothing and armour in its own right.

## Bugbear Hide Armor

Any leather, hide, or studded leather armour made from the hide of a bugbear receives a +1 natural enhancement bonus. A single bugbear can be skinned to provide two small suits of armour, one medium-size suit, or half of a large suit. Costs for each type of armour are listed below, and weights are as for standard armour of each type.

*Leather Cost:* 450 gp    *Hide Cost:* 475 gp  
*Studded Leather Cost:* 550 gp

Male bugbears are gifted with a more defined musculature than females, who tend towards obesity. Female body and facial hair is finer and less prominent than that of the males, giving the mature female bugbear a surprisingly doughty appearance. Both sexes reach maturity around ten years of age. Bugbear children are rugged and begin life with the tough skin characteristic of their parents. Within the first year or so of life they sprout hair across their bodies, and by their fifth year of life they are

miniature replicas of adults. Young females do not develop the layers of fat to fuel their breeding years until they reach maturity, making it difficult for outsiders to tell young males from young females.

One of the most distinctive feature of the bugbears are their noses, which led to their popular name. Like a bear's, the nose of a bugbear is wide and somewhat flexible, allowing the creature to detect a wide variety of scents with a great deal of accuracy. Coupled with their excellent darkvision, this sense of smell allows bugbears to navigate their subterranean lairs and detect intruders with ease. Though bugbears have claws on their hands and feet, these are not often used in combat as this race long ago learned the advantages of metal weapons. Still, their natural weaponry is often a point of pride for the bugbears, and it is not unusual to see claws painted with bloody pigments or carved with crude glyphs.

## The Smell of Blood

Bugbears have sensitive noses, which provide them with the Awareness feat. If strong smells are introduced into the bugbear's environment, the creatures suffer a -2 penalty to all Spot checks. Stronger odours other races find merely unpleasant can be nauseating to bugbears and force them, at the Games Master's discretion, to make a successful Fortitude save (starting at DC 15) or suffer the effects of a *stinking cloud* spell. When confronted with such tactics, bugbears will retreat and wait for their enemies to leave the affected area – and then pounce on them later.

## Stinkpot

The stinkpot is a small clay vial broken on the floor to unleash an unpleasant odour in a 30-foot radius from the point of impact. This gives those with keen noses (such as bugbears and most natural animals) a -2 circumstance penalty to all Spot checks, and a Fortitude save (DC 15) must be made or the creature will become nauseated, as with the *stinking cloud* spell. The Alchemy skill (DC 15) can be used to craft a stinkpot for 15 gp.

*Market Price:* 30gp    *Weight:* ½ lb.

## THE HUNGER

Bugbears have frightening appetites and are almost always hungry. Meat, of any kind, is the preferred

meal of the bugbear and the creatures can eat two to four pounds of it at a single sitting. Bugbears char their meat over an open flame if available but have no problem digesting raw meat torn from a screaming victim if necessity arises. When on the move, bugbears sometimes take slaves with them to avoid carrying their own food. When the slaves tire or slow their pace too often, they are skewered on cooking spits.

Because of their extreme dietary needs, bugbears only settle in areas with an abundance of game animals. If they cannot find a suitable habitat, they adopt a semi-nomadic lifestyle, stopping in an area only so long as the food lasts, then moving on. This can have disastrous consequences in areas of the wild already threatened with ecological imbalance, earning bugbears the hatred of rangers, druids and other protectors of the wild. This enmity is mutual and bugbears will often track down such opponents intentionally.

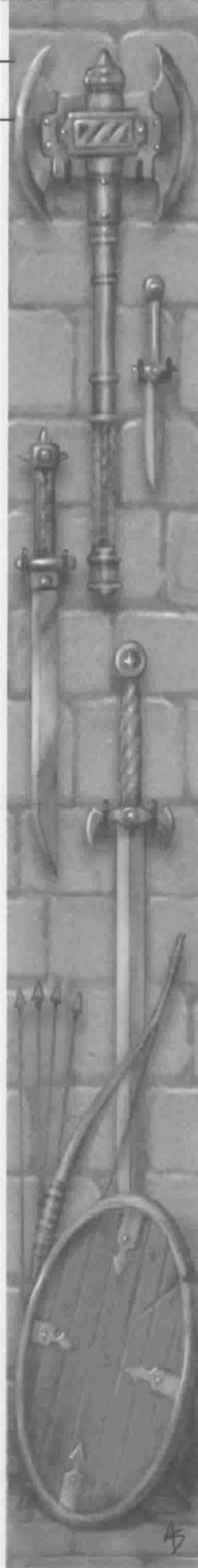
In dire straits, bugbears can indeed eat fruits or vegetables but doing so leads to digestive discomfort and lowered energy levels. Bugbears deprived of a steady diet of red meat for more than five days will become fierce and careless in their hunger. In this state, they will attack any living creature they come across in an attempt to fill their stomachs. Until they have gorged themselves on red meat, the hungry bugbears will receive a +1 morale bonus to damage rolls, but suffer a -1 morale penalty to all other checks. When this hungry, even females and the young will attack, as each bugbear attempts to stuff its gullet with flesh.



## CRADLE TO GRAVE

In preparation for pregnancy, female bugbears begin gorging themselves on fresh meat with high fat content. When carrying a child, a bugbear mother doubles her food intake to increase the stores of fat that are burnt off while nursing a pup. Bugbears give birth to single, live young, with the rare set of twins being born in times of warren prosperity. If food is scarce, females are unable to carry their young to term and the warren finds itself forced to relocate to a more fertile hunting ground or face extinction.

Bugbear mothers nurse their pups for the first few weeks following delivery and the pup's voracious appetite for milk quickly reduces the fat content of its mother. By their third month, pups have their first set of teeth and begin eating whatever meat they can snatch. With their first year behind them, pups are active children that compete ferociously for food. Maturing by their tenth year, bugbears join the adults of the community when they can begin hunting. Pups unable, for whatever reason, to hunt by their eleventh year often become the victim of 'accidents' that end with their own flesh roasting over the cete's fire.



Whilst it is possible for a bugbear to survive into his forties, their violent lifestyle and frequent clashes with other races mean most males will be cut down before their twenty-fifth year. Females, being the more sedentary and less combative of the species, often live well into their thirties, but complications from childbirth and illness are a common cause of death.

### THE MIND OF THE BUGBEAR

The prime motivations for most bugbears are hunger and greed. As noted above, bugbears have ravenous appetites that lead them to acts of violence in the name of physiological need. They are also victims of an inborn greed that tempts them to attack targets merely to acquire more plunder.

Shiny, valuable items are lusted after by bugbears with the same intensity as fresh, red meat and they are as likely to put themselves at risk to loot a pack of coins as they are a bloody meal. Even well

defended caravans fear attack for once a bugbear catches sight of a rich target, it will not relent in its attacks until the mark has fallen. Bugbears fear their own weakness above all else, or at least, the appearance of such weakness. This fear can lead young bugbears to acts of reckless abandon and adult bugbears to commit cruel atrocities as a way to display their own power and influence. If in the company of his tribe, a bugbear is simply too terrified of appearing weak to do anything but put on a brave face. Khans and priests are mostly immune to this fear, as they are regarded as the strongest amongst bugbears and have nothing more to prove.

These drives are what give the bugbears their chaotic nature, as the creatures are constantly at the mercy of their baser instincts. If they could suppress these traits, it is likely that bugbears would become a frightening force for evil in the world, rather than the scattered pockets of savage violence typical of their existence.

*In the time before the sun, Render and Stalker fashioned the goblins and hobgoblins and set them loose upon the earth. The goblins were cunning and the hobgoblins were disciplined, but they were ultimately weak and, when the sun rose, they were driven before the other races and harried from their lands.*

*In the hidden places below the earth, these weaklings cried to the gods who birthed them, begging for champions to save them from their enemies. Disgusted, Render and Stalker withdrew from their disappointing creations and set about creating beings worthy to serve them. From the goblins they took cunning and from the hobgoblins they took strength; these were mixed together in the cauldron of Render's blood, and Stalker watched over them through the cold of winter. And so did the bugbears come into being, stumbling from the blood of their god into the cold light of the moon.*

*For ages they warred with the weaklings, hiding from the sun and striking from the dark of night, and Render and Stalker were proud of their creations. The elves fled from Render's children and hid themselves away in boughs of forests; the dwarves turned their caverns into fortresses, barring their passages to keep out the horror of the bugbear war machine. Even men, whose cities sprouted from the black earth like stony weeds, feared the creeping doom of the bugbear war march. But the goblins and hobgoblins grew jealous of their cousins' success and they were spurned in the eyes of Render and Stalker. The gods of war and murder wanted nothing to do with their first creations, and they were abandoned to their own devices.*

*Sadly, these pathetic creatures could not accept their fate, and on the eve of a great war, the goblins crept forth to betray the bugbears to the elves. Even as the goblins revealed what they knew of the bugbear forces and their hidden homes, the cursed hobgoblins were massing on the flank of the bugbear war host, waiting like vultures. In the end, the treachery of their cousins doomed the bugbears to defeat, and they were sorely wounded by the elven bows and hobgoblin lances.*

*Still, the bugbears survive, and they grow in the dark and secret places, stirring their hatred and husbanding their strength, for the day of vengeance is coming . . .*



# HABITAT

**B**ugbears are capable of surviving in most environments and are equally at home in the wilderness or hidden within the cities of more civilised races. The important factor for bugbears is that they have a steady supply of food and a subterranean lair to call their own. They have been known, on occasion, to hole up in houses or other buildings but are much more comfortable beneath the earth.

## THE WILDERNESS

In the wild, bugbears look for untamed environments with large populations of native fauna that are not protected by druids or roving rangers. Just as important as the availability of food is the proximity to a source of loot, as bugbears cannot rest easy unless there is the possibility of pillaging in the near future. Isolated stretches of caravan trails are particular favourites and bugbears delight in finding poorly defended lengths of road between major towns and cities.

In the wild, bugbears move their lair as often as necessary to stay ahead of their enemies and keep their stomachs full. Clever tribes have a steady stream of scouts heading out to find the next suitable spot for a lair and when solitary bugbears are encountered they are most often on such a mission. When the time comes to move, bugbears pack up as much of their plunder as they can carry and trudge off to the next spot chosen by their scouts. When on the move like this, bugbears are exceptionally dangerous and prone to attacking anything that comes near. Goblins will sometimes follow bugbear tribes, at a safe distance, and settle near them in order to swoop in and snatch up any plunder left behind when the bugbears move on. The goblins must move quickly, however, as bugbears have been known to return for their property and cart it back to the new lair.

## THE CITY

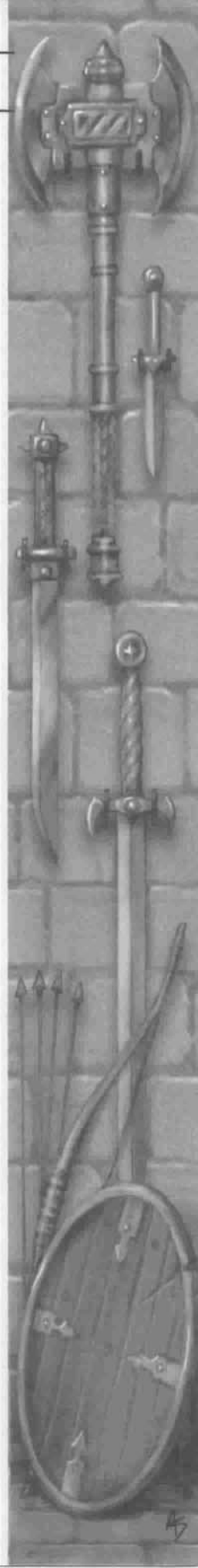
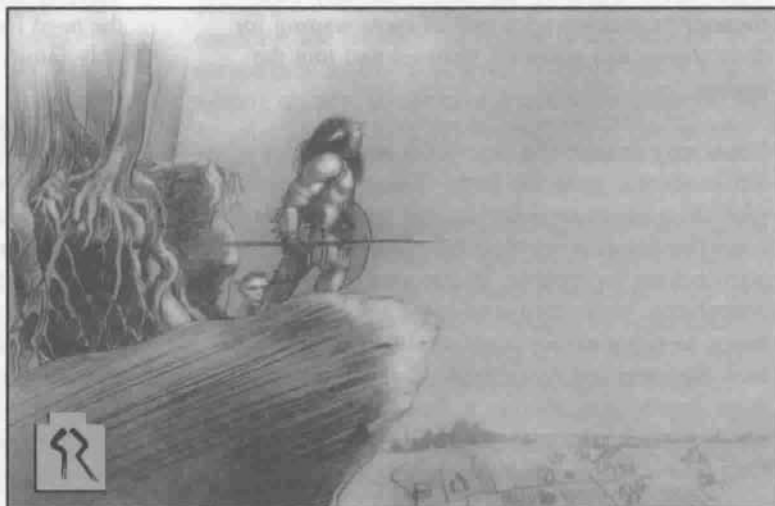
Caves near towns are a favourite location for bugbears, as are old and unused sewer systems common in larger cities. These lairs provide bugbears with a steady source of food and ample opportunities for burglary but the danger of discovery and subsequent

extermination is much greater than for a wilderness lair. Bugbears choosing to lair in a city must be very clever to avoid being slain in short order.

When lairing in the countryside near a city, bugbears will attempt to establish secret means of entering the settlement. Short tunnels are a favourite means of getting beneath the walls of a city and the enormous strength of bugbears allows them to claw out such passages with ease. Cities that do not bother with walls are no challenge for bugbears, who make use of their natural stealth to slip unseen amongst the residents. When a city sinks its walls deep enough to prevent simple tunnelling, the bugbears protect their sensitive noses and swim up the sewer outlets to gain access to their targets. More cunning bugbears do not bother with such trivialities, preferring instead to move their lair below the city itself. This works best in cities with an extensive, permanent sewer system, in the abandoned sections of which bugbears are more than content to lair. From these subterranean boltholes the bugbears venture forth to hunt and steal, creating well-fed and prosperous warrens that grow dangerously large in a few years. Fortunately for the citizens of the cities they lair in, bugbears are most often unable to hide their location for this long and become the target for the local guard or hired adventurers.

## LAIRING BASICS

Bugbears will lair in any reasonably secure location, but prefer subterranean homes. Cavern complexes are their favourite hideouts, whilst underground ruins and abandoned sewers are also commonly used. A bugbear clan will take up residence above ground only in the most extreme circumstances, and will usually relocate as soon as possible.



# BUGBEAR SOCIETY

**B**ugbears are most often encountered in routs, small groups of two to four, generally up to no good. Rout members are usually roaming members of a cete, looking for food, loot, or both. Such groups have little interest in conversation or negotiation, and attack if the odds are in their favour. When outnumbered, though, routs shy away from contact, preferring instead to watch anyone in their territory from a careful distance.

Cetes are the largest bugbear communities and are composed of anything up to twenty males, as many as thirty females and about as many children as the total number of adults. While bugbear females and children fight if cornered, they are never in the forefront of a combat and are often the first to make use of the escape tunnels when their home is invaded.

## ROUTS

The constant hunger and maddening greed experienced by bugbears from their earliest years drives them to make frequent searches for fresh meat and valuable, shiny items. Young males venture forth from their homes often, patrolling the territory of their cete by night. Known as routs, these groups are always spoiling for a fight, though it is sometimes possible to pay off bugbears at the cost of everything their victims may be carrying. Adventurers are regarded as dangerous but worthwhile targets by bugbears, who may find themselves picking up a trail of routs waiting for their chance to kill powerful enemies and loot the bodies.

Routs may consist of a few males and females who left a cete that grew too large. Known as a colonial rout, these bugbears want nothing more than to find a suitable location for their lair, settle in, and then start looking for trouble. If encountered by adventurers, these displaced creatures are more than happy to negotiate for passage, doing their best to look harmless and downtrodden. If a fight erupts, these family units attempt to flee the situation and survivors will remember their enemies for a long, long time. When encountering a rout, adventurers

are advised to deal with the creatures quickly and use every means at their disposal to prevent any survivors from escaping. While not every bugbear rout has a cete nearby, enough do that the prudent traveller will not permit an injured bugbear to gather reinforcements. This assumes, of course, that the bugbears are spotted – all too often the cunning creatures simply ambush their targets, ending the fight as quickly as it began.

## CETES

Unlike the more mobile routs, a cete of bugbears settles in an area and moves only when it has exhausted the local food supply or is driven away by enemy forces. For this reason cetes are almost always encountered in their lairs where they are at their most dangerous.

The core of a cete consists of ten to twenty mature males, all ready and able to do battle at the command of their khan. A successful cete will have one or more mature females for every male, but it is more typical to find cetes with only half as many females as males. This is due, in large part, to the fact that females have a much harder life than males, and pregnant bugbears have a high mortality rate if the warren is invaded. It is common to find a bugbear child in the warren for every adult male and female, and many more just after the birthing season. There are no true family units within a cete and children have no idea who either of their parents are. After birth, children are cared for by whichever female happens to be closest to them at the time, and are disciplined by any bugbear large enough to do the job. By nature, bugbears are incapable of forming any real bonds with other creatures, even those of their own race. Their loyalty is based on the need for survival, and the cete as a whole is the only family a bugbear will ever need.

Khans are careful to keep an eye on the other males in their cete in order to protect their own position. When two dozen or so males are in one location, the battles for dominance can tear a warren apart, and a clever khan will use troublesome rivals as the basis for a colonial rout. The khan sends a small number of males and females out into the world under the leadership of his rival, charging them with creating a cete of their own. Colonists are expected to travel far from the territory of their original cete, and failure to do so leads to deadly conflict between the colonists and their former family.

## DARK RANGERS

A crucial element of bugbear society, the dark rangers are the only members of a cete directly concerned with the future. While most bugbears remain near the warren with their cousins, the dark rangers range far and wide, searching for new homes and hunting territories for their cete. These far-ranging wanderers are chosen for their natural stealth and receive gifts from Stalker to better fulfil their role.

Dark rangers are charged with the dual purpose of finding new warrens for their cete and removing dangers in the cete's territory. They are both rangers and assassins, travelling through the night in search of likely lairs or ripe targets, as ready to hide as they are to slit the throats of sleeping travellers.

Because they spend so much time far from home, dark rangers are quite devout, spending their lives in service to Stalker. This gives them the strength of will to endure the hardships and isolation that is their lot in life, and makes them fanatically loyal to their race. These skilled bugbears view adventurers or other armed forces as immediate threats and will do their utmost to either force them away from the cete's territory or simply kill them. Skilled in ambushes and the use of poison, dark rangers are dangerous foes, even for adventurers.

A stealthy survivalist and ruthless foe, the dark ranger is well-trained and seasoned by years spent roaming the land alone. Members of this prestige class spend their time searching for new homes for their cete and slaying those careless or foolhardy enough to wander into 'bugbear country.'

**Hit Die:** d8

### Requirements

To become a dark ranger, a bugbear must fulfil these conditions:

**Race:** Bugbear

**Move Silently:** 6 Ranks

**Hide:** 4 Ranks

**Special:** Only those bugbears that have proven themselves to the other dark rangers or a priest of Stalker will be trained in the secrets of this prestige class.

### Class Skills

Climb (Str), Craft (trapmaking) (Int), Disguise (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump, Knowledge (Nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Wis), Spot (Str), Swim, Use Rope (Dex), Wilderness Lore (Wis).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 3 + Int Modifier.

Krug scratched his backside, idly sniffing the results as he squatted down, watching the orcs. He didn't worry that they might see him. They were too busy with their loot, that and throwing the head of some poor adventurer between them, laughing in that throaty way of theirs when any of them dropped it. He did briefly twitch though when their leader shouted out a guttural warning, although as it transpired he seemed to merely be annoyed at the trivial game which was playing havoc with his counting.

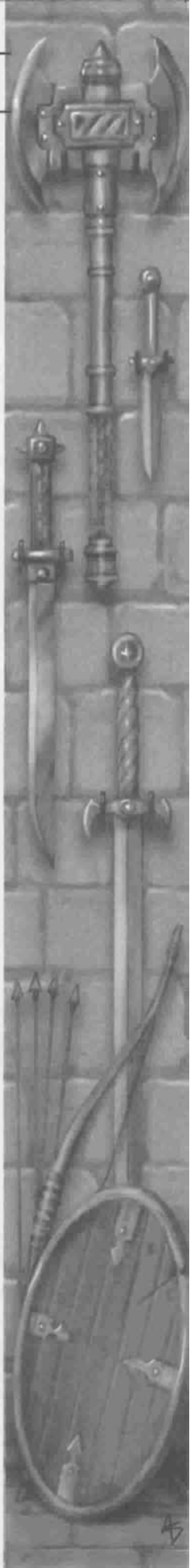
Time for business, thought Krug, and his eyes glittered menacingly. Then he stood up and half staggered into the orc camp, a huge wineskin dangling carelessly over his shoulder. 'Hail, brothers!' he shouted cheerfully, flopping down next to the surprised orcs who were so taken aback by this unarmed, drunken bugbear that the thought of drawing a weapon seemed pointless.

'What does you want?' asked the chief, a twinge of suspicion in his voice.

'Not a lot,' answered Krug, remaining casual and praying to Stalker that he could pull this one off. 'Just a warm fire in exchange for some of this booze what I got off of a dwarf what happened to die with it.'

The orcs began to chuckle. Typical bugbear, they thought. Well, why not? It couldn't do any harm, and from the smell of the bugbear he had indulged heavily already.

Krug smiled. That would be the last trouble this bunch caused in his khan's territory.



## TUNNELS AND LAIRS

## The Dark Ranger

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+2	+1d6 Sneak Attack
2	+2	+0	+3	+3	Poison Expertise
3	+3	+1	+3	+3	+2d6 Sneak Attack, Track
4	+4	+1	+4	+4	Survival
5	+5	+1	+4	+4	+3d6 Sneak Attack, Unfailing Senses

## Class Features

**Weapons and Armour Proficiencies:** Dark rangers are proficient with bows (long and short, normal and composite), dagger, javelin, morningstar, net, scimitar and whip. Dark rangers are proficient with light armour and shields; note that armour and load penalties apply to balance, climb, escape artist, hide, jump, move silently, pick pocket and tumble.

**Sneak Attack:** If a dark ranger's target is denied their Dexterity bonus to AC, the dark ranger's attack will deal an additional 1d6 damage. This damage increases by +1d6 every other level, but is not multiplied on a successful critical hit. Ranged attacks can only be sneak attacks if the target is within 30 feet. Note that the target must have a discernible anatomy, and must be alive and clearly visible to the dark ranger – any creature that has concealment cannot be the target of a sneak attack. Any creature that is unaffected by critical hits is also immune to sneak attacks.

**Poison Expertise:** At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the dark ranger masters the use of poison and will never inadvertently poison himself when applying poison or fighting with a poisoned weapon. The dark ranger can be poisoned normally, and has no special resistance to poisons.

**Track:** Dark rangers gain Track as a bonus feat at 3<sup>rd</sup> level.

**Survival:** To keep starvation and dehydration at bay, the dark ranger is adept at scrounging up enough food and water (even stagnant water and grubs) to survive. As long as the dark ranger is in natural surroundings (including naturally formed subterranean complexes), he will not starve or suffer dehydration. This ability is gained at 4<sup>th</sup> level.

**Unfailing Senses:** At the highest levels of their training, dark rangers become impossible to surprise and have honed their senses so that they are never caught flat-footed.

## LAIRS

While bugbears will choose any reasonably secure area as a basic lair, they inevitably begin modifying their home as soon as they take up residence. The first order of business is to excavate extensive escape tunnels, a process undertaken as a matter of survival. Established lairs have several of these tunnels leading away from the warren, making it difficult to lay siege to these creatures. The escape tunnels are supplemented with additional corridors constructed to form passages between rooms. This gives the bugbears a great deal of mobility within their lair, and makes it confusing for invaders to navigate. Small tunnels, barely wide enough for a bugbear to crawl through, cross over and under the main passages, allowing them to circle around intruders.

Traps make up another crucial element of bugbear defence, and they make good use of the primitive technology available to them. Escape tunnels are rigged with deadfalls to collapse behind fleeing bugbears, and many passages hold pits to snare the unwary. The surface area surrounding a bugbear warren may also be trapped, but these defences are found only in isolated areas where other humanoids are the main enemies. Surface traps are never found when the bugbears are lairing below civilised areas, where they pose a great danger of exposing the warren to hostile forces.

Bugbears often use dire rats as pets and free-roaming guard animals. The rats are kept well fed and are given the run of the bugbear warrens, though the females do their best to keep the creatures away from the vulnerable infants. The dire rats are not normally trained but know enough to not bite bugbears and to attack any invaders they find in the warren. In exchange for scraps from bugbear meals, the rats roam the rooms and corridors of the lair, making a racket if they discover intruders.

## WINTER

Bugbears do not hibernate, but are more sedentary during the winter months. Males spend their time sleeping and avoiding the females, who spend the colder months suffering through their pregnancies. Hunting is no less important during winter than any other time, but the more successful tribes learn to stock away salted meat to gnaw on during the lean weeks. Immature bugbears are as rowdy and combative as ever, but when the winter winds howl they may end up in the bellies of their cete if food runs low. The quest for loot is at its lowest during this time and bugbears do not venture out above the surface except to hunt. Adventurers have the best chance of catching the bugbears unawares during this part of the year, when the creatures seem to care less about defending their warren or staying vigilant than they do about catching sleep or snaring a good meal.

Religious cetes are kept active during the winter by priests who insist on observing the sacred ceremonies. When the days are short, bugbears believe Render walks the land and the priests lead their people in ancient rites meant to please and pacify their savage god.

## SPRING

Bugbear young are born in the spring, after their mothers have suffered through difficult pregnancies during the fall and winter months. The mature males stir from their winter torpor and head out with renewed vigour to hunt down raw meat and loot. Females, weak and starving from feeding their hungry children, spend their days filling their bellies and keeping the males from biting the heads off noisy infants. Travellers should avoid known bugbear warrens during the days of spring, as the bugbears are active and aggressive during this part of the year. With the pressing need to feed their young and females, roaming routs will waste no time attempting to bring down any prey—including your average party of well-armed and armoured treasure hunters.

Dark rangers are dispatched from the cete during this time of year and may spend over a month searching out a suitable back-up lair for the cete. Though bugbears generally have crude cartographic skills, dark rangers are able to create average-quality maps and use these to mark possible future warrens for their leaders.

## SUMMER

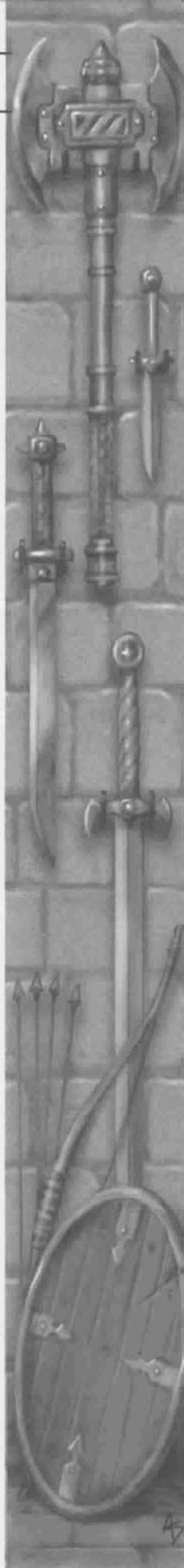
Bugbear hunting reaches its peak during this season, when the warriors do their best to bring in plenty of fresh meat for the females to salt away for the winter. The bugbear version of courtship also takes place during this time, with aggressive males pursuing females. Children born during the spring are now large enough to attain some small independence and spend most of their time crawling around looking for scraps of food. The shift in focus from loot to food means that bugbears are unlikely to be found near civilised areas as their pursuit of game animals carries them further into the wilderness. Druids and rangers dread this time of year, and many hire adventurers to patrol the bounds of their territory to head off bugbear predations.

Cetes led by a priest spend the summer weeks involved in religious consecration of food that bears a suspicious resemblance to salting meat. Being wiser than most other bugbears, however, priests push their followers to more extremes of food gathering, stocking enough away to see them all through the winter.

## AUTUMN

With the heat of summer past, bugbears continue their hunt for food but also accelerate their quest for plunder. With winter closing in, civilised merchants attempt to do as much over-road business as possible before the snows, and bugbears delight in attacking overburdened caravans and dragging the loot back to their warrens. This is the time of year that bugbears are most aggressive toward traders, and merchants pay well for adventurers to guide their caravans through 'bugbear country'.

Bugbear females gorge themselves on fatty hunks of meat, packing on weight to carry them through their winter pregnancies and the early weeks of feeding their children. Males do their best to keep the females supplied with fresh meat, but with most animals migrating during the autumn, hunting is not as rich as attacking trade caravans, leaving many bugbears hungry. By this time, the children born the past spring can walk and have learned enough to stay away from their hungry mothers and the cete's hunters. Dark rangers usually return home in early fall, marking a surge in the number of religious observances by bugbears. Priests begin chanting the tales of Stalker in addition to the cruel parables about Render. These stories are meant to bring luck



The old druid was bleeding from a blow to the head, and even now was held up only by the presence of the two burly bugbears beside him. Through smoke-burned and teary eyes, he looked upon the desecration of his holy grove. His followers must all be dead by now, he reasoned, and he himself was drained of power, unable to cope with the appalling violence he had faced.

This was not how it was written in the Way of Peace.

He heard screaming, and realised to his horror that the beasts were unspeakably violating his women. The horror made him howl in anguish, and the creatures laughed. Better that they *had* all been killed as he had at first thought.

Through burning eyes the druid could make out a bulky figure stalking towards him. He blinked hard. Once, twice, then after two more tortuous efforts he focussed upon the bugbear priest. In his hands was a massive morning star, from which dripped the blood of the druid's people.

The creature smiled, hefting the weapon easily, and licked a thick strand of blood mixed with some other substance from the head of the weapon.

The Way of Peace had turned out to be the wrong way after all.

to the dark rangers that are still roaming, so they may bring back news of rich hunting grounds and a new lair.

## RELIGION

Bugbear religion is an informal affair centred on the violent worship of the twin gods Render and Stalker. Render is the more popular of the two, and altars to this bloody god will be found in any established bugbear lair. Stalker is venerated by dark rangers, who call on his stealth and guile to see them through their dangerous missions in the outside world. Primitive shrines to Stalker are often found in the wilderness and may contain simple supplies for use by bugbears lucky enough to discover them.

Though bugbear clerics are uncommon, there are times when one or the other of the two gods will bestow their gifts upon an aggressive and clever bugbear. Such priests use their new-found power to establish their place in the bugbear community, often becoming leaders or fearsome khans.

## STALKER, THE CUNNING

Bugbears are stronger, but less numerous, than their goblinoid cousins. Because of this, they have learnt to be cunning about survival, and Stalker is the patron of those who take these lessons to heart. Priests of Stalker are drawn from proven survivors who have all undergone a traumatic experience that laid low those around them. Bugbears sometimes receive the touch of Stalker after a harrowing encounter with a druid or band of rangers, and

Stalker likewise favours the sole survivors of destroyed cetes. Priests of Stalker are not leaders, but use their powers to advise their khans and defend their warrens. These priests are often dark rangers, ranging far and wide in search of new warrens for their cete, or rich targets to attack. Vengeful and secretive, the priests of Stalker make fierce enemies and long-term foes for any group of adventurers that carelessly leave them alive when attempting to clean out a bugbear warren.

The worship of Stalker is not a group affair, and priests do not proselytise. Cetes with a priest of Stalker among their number will have a small shrine in an isolated portion of their warren, at which any bugbear may pray for guidance from the Cunning God. A black cloak blocks the entrance to these shrines, which contain simple wooden altars stained with charcoal. Stalker's symbol, a pair of white eyes on a field of black, is painted around the altar, or constructed from chips of quartz and coal on the altar itself.

Stalker does not demand offerings from his followers, but is said to bestow favour when the eyes of an enemy, natural poisons and any dark or bloodstained cloth are left on his altar. These items may be transformed into the powerful blood poison if the bugbear's cete is headed into a time of trouble, but most often simply disappear.

Clerics of Stalker are granted the domains of Evil and Trickery. The favoured weapon of Stalker is the scimitar.

**Blood Poison**

This poison appears on shrines to Stalker in vials of black clay and is the god's gift to his faithful. Each vial contains 1d3 applications of the poison. Bugbear rogues can apply this blade venom to their weapons or traps without fear of poisoning themselves, but non-bugbears will *always* poison themselves if attempting it. Other bugbears have the standard 5% chance of infecting themselves when applying this poison to their blades. This poison is never offered for sale by bugbears, and is useless to other races.

**Type:** Injury DC 15

**Initial Damage:** 1d2 Str

**Secondary Damage:** 1d4 Str

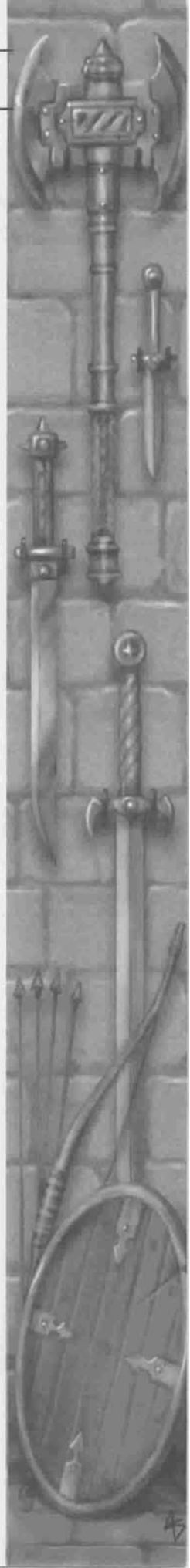
## RENDER, THE HEADSMAN

As befits a bugbear god, Render is a violent god with a penchant for cruelty. He incites his people to commit atrocities, and gives his blessing to those capable of executing cruelty and mayhem on a grand scale. His clerics are always khans, most of whom receive his blessing following a notably bloody conflict. Battles against druids or rangers are certain to draw Render's attention, and khans who lead their cetes against such enemies will almost certainly become clerics – if they are not killed first.

Priests of Render are not as wanton as other khans, because they are provided with a very direct message from their god when they are inducted into the priesthood. These khans are given a goal to accomplish, often one that will require the entirety of their lives to fulfil. Recovery of artifacts, destruction of an opposing god's temple, the desecration of druidic groves, or the conquest of a prosperous city are some examples, but anything that contributes to the spread of misery and violence may become a goal. Khans who follow Render often seek the counsel of the Stalker's followers, incorporating their stealthy doctrine into their own plans. In all ways the priests of

Stalker are subservient to those of Render, but the followers of the two gods can work well together when needed. To minimise any potential strife, khans often assign the priests of Stalker missions that keep them in the field, and away from the cete as a whole.

Render demands regular worship from his priests and they, in turn, demand the same from their followers. As noted above, this worship reaches a fever pitch during the winter months, when services are held each day and cetes are subjected to the rantings of their priest for hours on end. During the months in which bugbears are more productive, worship sessions occur once or twice each week and are of a much shorter duration. All services take place before an altar to Render, and sacrifices are heaped at its base. Render has a fondness for skulls,



and the heads of the cete's enemies are stacked in a crude pyramid to form his altars. These rotting masses are the centrepiece of a warren, and are viciously defended against invaders.

The morningstar is the Headsman's symbol and cetes often leave their weapons leaning against the altar in the hope of receiving a divine blessing. Sacrifices are left as well, including jewellery, weaponry, body parts and armour. When Render is pleased, temporary blessings are bestowed on the weapons left at the altar, and some khans have been blessed with *Render's Star* for their continued faith and obedience.

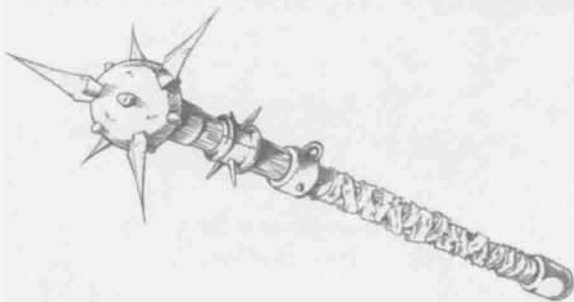
Clerics of Render are granted the domains of Chaos and War. The favoured weapon of Render is the morningstar.

### Render's Star

If an altar to Render is built in a bugbear lair, there is always a chance the Headsman will take pleasure in the carnage he sees and bless a morningstar consecrated upon that altar. Known as *Render's Star*, such weapons are prized by bugbears and powerful priests wield them in defence of the lair. In the hands of a bugbear, the weapon functions as detailed below, but in the hands of a non-bugbear the weapon becomes a  $-3$  morningstar that emits a high-pitched keening when within 100 feet of bugbears.

When wielded by a bugbear, *Render's Star* functions as a  $+2$  morningstar. In addition, bugbears within 30 feet of this item also receive a  $+1$  morale bonus on their attack and damage rolls so long as the wielder is also in combat.

Note that this item has no effective market value as it is of use only to bugbears who will never buy it, but will kill to get it back. Bugbears also lack the skill to actually create these items, which appear only as a gift from their god.



## THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT

Bugbears are not renowned burglars or confidence tricksters, but they have a definite place in the underground hierarchy of cities they may lair beneath. Their stealth and hardy constitution also allow them to survive for long periods of time in the wilderness, which makes them ideal bandits. Bugbear cetes have devastated trade routes running through their territory and no merchant wants the risk and expense of dealing with such a problem. Because bugbears have no qualms about stockpiling far more loot than they can hope to move or use, they will not leave a rich area unless driven out.

When arriving in a city, bugbears will first establish themselves in sewers and tunnels, then making contact with local criminals. Cunning and arrogant, bugbears do not care much for what other races think or feel, but they are aware of the need to cultivate possible allies near their home when lairing beneath cities. For their part, criminals are often willing to provide advice about the city in exchange for the great muscle provided by the bugbears. This relationship works well for both sides and the bugbears will not intentionally rock the boat unless they find themselves in a position of obvious superiority. Wise criminal organisations sell the bugbears out when the opportunity presents itself – before the bugbears can make their own bid to wipe out their 'partners.' In most cases the uneasy truce lasts for a few months at best, before one side or the other starts an all-out bid to do away with the others. Bugbears just do not make for good business partners.

In some rare cases, bugbears led by Stalker clerics have established longstanding criminal empires within cities. These criminal regimes are brutal and effective, dealing with threats in a straightforward and vicious manner. In the end, though, they always disintegrate as a combination of greed and impatience leads the bugbears to commit more and more daring crimes. Eventually, city guards and adventurers are called in and the bugbears must fight for their lives.

## OTHER RACES

Bugbears have little patience when dealing with outsiders. They feel only contempt for races weaker than themselves and a resentful fear for those that are stronger. The former are potential prey or tools for the bugbears to exploit and they rarely bother to hide their feelings on this matter. Though bugbears



are capable of being stealthy enough to mount an ambush, they are blunt and straightforward in their dealings with strangers. Those able to present a show of force to bugbears may convince them to form a temporary alliance, but it will never last. Bugbear mercenaries are best when used for extremely short assignments of a very violent nature, after which they should be paid and left to their own devices. Attempting to harness the violent might of bugbears never ends well, and the wise will remember this.

When presented with a foe that is obviously capable of crushing an entire group of bugbears, the humanoids do not waste time getting out of sight. They may plan an ambush for later, but bugbears will not stand their ground in a confrontation they are clearly not going to win. Temporarily fleeing from real danger is not considered cowardice among bugbears, but a strategic means of insuring their survival. Only fools throw themselves into a battle that cannot be won. As always, adventurers should be cautious about letting bugbears retreat.



Ylend rode at a slow pace through the forest, aware that, with dusk falling, she could have been in a better place. It was still many leagues though before she would arrive at the monastery, and it was important that Master Ymir's despatches were delivered with the utmost urgency. She twitched involuntarily, feeling his reed discipline cane on her back. She understood the need for it, but that didn't mean she had to like it.

It was not that she was inexperienced, but rather the uncomfortably long hours in the saddle which allowed Ylend to become dangerously distracted. In fact, her horse saw the group of bugbears before she did. Suddenly, they were just there, snarling menacingly.

Becoming more alert, Ylend studied the situation as she had been trained to do. Certainly she could dismount and with luck could best what appeared to be a group of four of the ugly brutes. All males, she noticed, grateful that she wasn't a female bugbear. This would likely be one of the 'routs' that Master Ymir had spoken of.

She knew at once what to do. Reaching behind her horse for the saddle bags, she said in the Common tongue, 'Go on, take it. I have nothing else.'

'You've got a horse, girlie,' snarled the largest of the four, his Common a disgrace to the word 'language'.

She sighed. 'Would you leave me to walk?'

'Lucky we leaves you at all,' said the bugbear who, despite appearances, wasn't as stupid as he looked. Better to get the goodies without a scrap. These monks all knew how to handle themselves, girlie or not.

As she began the long walk to the monastery, Ylend considered the wisdom of her master, although the letters did chafe against her skin.

# METHODS OF WARFARE

**B**ugbears are thrilled at the prospect of a good fight and do not shy away from battle. Physically powerful and smart enough to formulate tactics, the bugbear is a dangerous foe on any battlefield. In skirmishes, where individual strength is a deciding factor, bugbears have a distinct advantage over the members of most other races. In large battles, however, the lack of real organisation or a strong grasp of military strategy puts the bugbears at a distinct disadvantage to the more disciplined races and the more organised humanoids, such as hogoblins.

## TOOLS OF WAR

The combination of bone-crunching power and flesh-tearing spikes make the morningstar the favourite weapon of bugbears everywhere – it is also Render's holy symbol. Javelins are also popular, and bugbears will often hurl them at their foes during an ambush. Young bugbears begin their

training with javelins from the rear of bugbear forces, throwing weapons over the heads of charging warriors to soften up the enemy before engagement. Bugbears will use shields when they are available, adorning them with war trophies such as severed hands and teeth strung on copper wire. Bugbears view these grisly mementoes of past battles as badges of honour and display them proudly to cow foes and impress allies. Following a great conflict, bugbears can be found prowling through the carnage to collect prizes.

Because bugbears do not have the patience to learn crafting skills, they acquire their weapons and armour through trade or thievery. This gives their gear a patchwork appearance, with each bugbear equipped with whatever gear they have managed to pry from the cold, dead fingers of their enemies. More organised cetes will conceal these differences with liberal applications from a coal pot to blacken their equipment into a semblance of uniformity. Leather armour is used most often, as it can be adjusted to fit the bugbear's large frame without much effort.

Dark rangers and priests often arm themselves with smaller arms and more accurate missile weapons. Those who follow Stalker make extensive use of

scimitars and short bows, slathering both blades and arrows with poison whenever possible. Because Stalker rewards the faithful with vials of potent venom, encounters with these bugbears can come as a nasty surprise to adventurers.

Nets often find their way into bugbear ambushes due to their ease of use and ability to slow down opponents that might otherwise escape slaughter. Because nets also ignore the protection offered by heavier armour,



The elf, Herlyn, looked up from the corpse of the dark ranger. He had felt no guilt after finally cutting the creature's evil throat. After what it's like had done to his people, only revenge and victory mattered now. He wiped the blood from his dagger on the oily clothing of its victim.

'He did not tell us much more than we already knew,' stated Lathandrel, the commander of the infantry.

'True, although at least we know that they will fight today,' replied Herlyn.

'That in itself is not like the bugbears,' opined Jirdan, the high priest.

Herlyn nodded. 'And what do your ministrations tell you, Wise One?' he asked reverently, but with the tone of an old friend.

'The gods say that you have planned well, and that through your actions this day our people will be saved.'

Herlyn nodded once more, satisfied with the divination. It was just as well. This campaign against the bugbears had been the worst his people had known in living memory. For one thing *never* happened. Not as a rule, anyway. It had been common knowledge that the creatures could not organise properly, although he admitted that in hindsight greater credence should have been given to the stories of a great warlord who had forced the cetes to his will by force of arms and strength of will. Gods willing, this mistake would never be allowed to happen again.

All at once the air filled with the sound of thundering horns and booming drums. The heartbeat of the savage, Herlyn thought to himself. It was terrifying, and he must be strong for his people.

'To your places, friends,' he said, smiling a smile that failed to reach his eyes, mercifully shaded by his helmet.

'Let them come,' added Lathandrel, his warrior blood alight.

'I see we have little choice,' replied Jirdan, motioning towards the skyline.

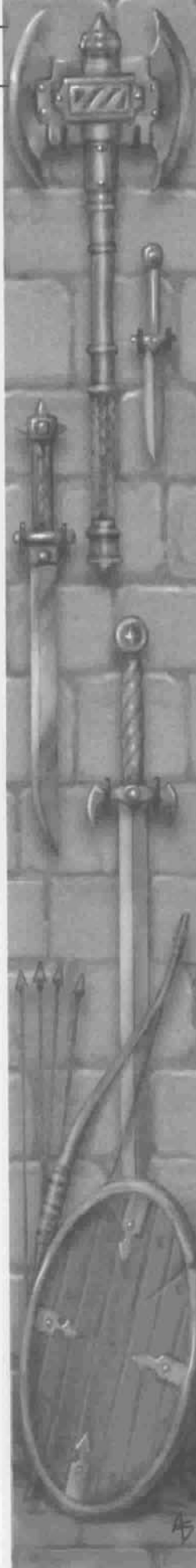
bugbears always bring them when hunting powerful prey. Nets are only used as the bugbears close for combat, as the time it would take to refold the cumbersome weapons is put to better use by swinging a morning star. Well supplied bugbear cetes may display enchanted weapons or metal armour but these will be used by leaders who will have equipment appropriate to their character class.

## THE BUGBEAR RUSH

Though chaotic by nature, bugbears are capable of focusing their fighting ability when directed by a leader. When a bugbear group initiates a combat, the leader will charge towards the target he deems to be the strongest. The rest of his rout will follow his lead and each of them will concentrate their attacks on this target. Large routs will often have two or three leaders, each with a small group of bugbears assigned to them so no bugbear goes wasted. Bugbears go in fast and furious, focusing their damage-dealing capacity to eliminate foes before they can react.

After the initial rush, bugbears will press their attack if they are winning. If there is any doubt about the direction the battle is taking, the leader will call a retreat and the bugbears will disengage and head back to a pre-arranged meeting point. Their path of withdrawal is often studded with traps prepared ahead of time and they will turn on any pursuers that fall victim to their snares and pits. If they are not pursued, the bugbears will regroup and set out after their foes again, hoping to catch them unawares with another rush. The cycle is repeated until the bugbears are reduced to one quarter of their original number or their enemies are dead. Defeated bugbears will go for help, if it is available, leading a larger war party back to take revenge on the bold adventurers.

This tactic is the cornerstone of bugbear combat, and is maddening to face when properly executed. To defend themselves, the bugbears' targets must use some method to either slow or stop the rapid retreat of the bugbears. Spells such as *animate rope*, *control plants*, *entangle*, *Evvard's Black Tentacles*,



*grease, hold person, order's wrath, plant growth, slow, soften earth and stone, spike growth, spike stones, and web* all work well to slow down the movement of opponents. Due to the way that bugbears scatter themselves through the ranks of their enemies and then hare off in different directions during their retreat, it is difficult to bring spells of mass destruction into play. A *fireball* is a superb spell to use when your foes are distinct from your allies, but when both are standing side by side, it is not so useful.

Wise characters will also use the same tricks the bugbears employ - throwing nets over charging bugbears can disrupt their attack and prevent them from retreating. Whips and tanglefoot bags can also be used to deprive bugbears of their mobility and tripping foes works well to slow them down. Ranged weapons are a must, allowing defenders to fire on the bugbears as they charge forward *and* retreat. Strategically tossed flasks of burning oil can also create flaming blockades that reduce the area the bugbears have to manoeuvre, forcing them into positions chosen by their opponents.

All of these defensive options assume, of course, the bugbears do not succeed in their initial goal - striking so fast and hard that their targets are completely unable to fight back.

## THE AMBUSH

Where the bugbear rush is a common tactic used in many situations, ambushes are carefully co-ordinated and rely on preparation and planning as much as a powerful initial attack. Ambushes are often used along well-travelled overland trade routes, and in defence of their lairs. No cete worth its salt will neglect such plans for its own lair, and most invent a scheme to pin down and ambush invaders.

When launching an attack against travellers, bugbears will build crude pit traps to trip horses and large net traps to entangle those on foot. Once a trap has been triggered, the bugbears follow up with a hail of javelins and the standard bugbear rush. Those that are not slain in the initial charge will be harried toward additional traps set up by the bugbears, with pit and crushing traps being particular favourites. The woods around a bugbear ambush site are littered with crude but effective traps prepared ahead of time. Bugbears mark these traps with urine sprays to avoid stumbling into the devices themselves.

### Precision Ambush (Bugbear only Feat)

Skilled dark rangers can ambush targets that would otherwise be protected by concealment.

**Prerequisite:** Dark Ranger.

**Benefit:** Bugbears with this feat can sneak attack targets that have up to three-quarters concealment.

Like the standard bugbear rush, a bugbear ambush is designed to deal crippling damage in the opening seconds of combat. The ambush gives them the opportunity to tilt the odds further in their favour through surprise and the use of traps. After the first few rounds of the ambush, the bugbears will revert to the bugbear rush, using alternating waves of attack and retreat to wear down their foes. The best defence against a bugbear ambush is vigilance. Travellers using trained scouts to watch for surprise attacks give themselves at least a fighting chance against the bugbears, while those who skimp on such protection will often find themselves cut down before they have a chance to react.

### Camouflage Paint

Bugbear dark rangers have created sticky pigments used to camouflage their armour and bodies, providing them with a +2 natural enhancement bonus to any Hide checks they make whilst wearing the paint. One pot of the paint can be used to coat one medium-sized, two small, or half a large user.

*Cost:* 60 gp (not normally sold) *Weight:* ½ lb.

## THE BATTLEFIELD

Bugbears shy away from open warfare because they generally lack the numbers and organisational skills to hold together a large army. Only clerics of *Render* have the strength of will to bring together a true bugbear army. The priest leads his cete to the lairs of his bugbear neighbours to convince these cetes to join with his own. Such endeavours are always goal-oriented, and the priest will stress how important his quest is to *Render*. Bugbears may not be the most reverent creatures, but they are superstitious and unwilling to offend their gods if it can be avoided. Should a cete refuse to join with the priest and his growing army, skirmishes may

erupt, but it is rare for a cete to be wiped out by a gathering of their cousins.

This manner of putting together an army can be conspicuous, which is another reason bugbears do not enjoy going to war. As they travel about gathering numbers and momentum they must also be careful not to engage their enemies too early. Dark rangers will often travel ahead and around the army as it snakes its way through the countryside, acting as a crude early warning system. If an organised force assaults a growing bugbear army before they are confident of their numbers, the humanoids almost always scatter, preferring to return to their homes rather than face a losing battle. On the other hand, once a few hundred bugbears have been gathered, all hell will break loose. Whatever the goal of the army is, the priest sets about accomplishing it with a vengeance. Villages burn in their wake and entire woodlands are put to the torch. Rivers are poisoned with whatever filth the bugbears can put their hands on and fields are razed to the bare earth. Where the bugbears go, fear follows in their footsteps. Terrorism is a favourite activity of warring bugbears and they will often perform atrocities just to terrify their foes.

The typical goals of a bugbear army may be;

† Defilement of a temple of a 'good' aligned god. Because bugbears do not have a clear concept of what exactly a good god is, they are likely to launch indiscriminate attacks against any non-bugbear temples.

† Recovery of an artifact Render covets. Unable to create true artifacts of their own, clerics of Render may instead point their followers to the location of potent magical items.

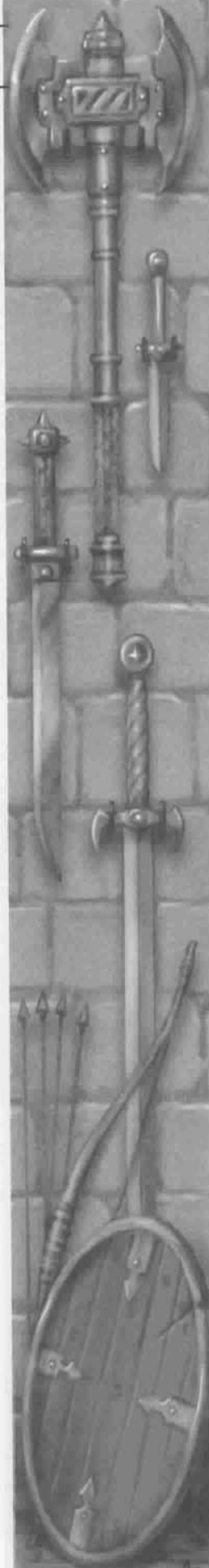
† Annihilation of enemy cities on 'bugbear land.' Territorial wars are uncommon, but horrifying when they occur. Bugbears have been known to salt the earth, set fire to forests and otherwise despoil land their enemies occupy, having no qualms about wiping out anything necessary to drive others away.

† Disrupting the forces of other evil gods. Render likes to keep his hands in the

affairs of more powerful gods and he uses his followers to strike against the servants of other dark gods. An army of bugbears marching through the corridors of the underdeep is enough to send many creatures fleeing.

† Bloodlust. There are times when a charismatic and insane bugbear priest will raise up an army of his kindred for no other purpose than to sate his own thirst for violence. These armies do not last long, however, as they are unable to maintain their focus without a clear goal in mind.

In general, bugbear armies will form slowly, strike once at full power, and then fade away. Conquest is not something most bugbears are able to manage, and no bugbear would have the patience to rule over a large area even if they could take control of it. Bugbear hordes are raiders, not an occupying force bent on building an empire.



# ROLE-PLAYING WITH BUGBEARS

**B**ugbears are great for Games Masters who enjoy throwing nasty, evil villains at their adventurers. Cunning, ruthless and utterly without virtue, bugbears just cannot get any more evil. But they are more than mere cannon fodder destined to die by the score. Bugbears can also make excellent non-combat encounters, providing unscrupulous characters with powerful but dangerous allies. It is the intention of this chapter to shed some light on new ways to roleplay this race.

Lone bugbears are cautious, but curious, about travellers they encounter. A bugbear dark ranger will make an attempt at neutral contact with any adventurers he stumbles across, if only to gather information about them and spread a little misinformation of his own. If attacked, a lone bugbear will flee without hesitation, attempting to hide or go for help, depending on the circumstance.

Routs of bugbears will attack groups that appear weaker than themselves. It is a natural part of bugbear life to prey on the weak and with their constant hunger and greed, no rout is going to pass up a target that can fill their packs or their bellies. When encountering a strong group, though, the rout will attempt to either trail them at a safe distance (using their Move Silently and Hide skills to stay out of sight) or approach them openly with an offer of truce. Though bugbears are habitual liars, they may provide useful information to the characters during a peaceful meeting. Bugbears are more than willing to point adventurers toward their own enemies, and a wise group of travellers may even cultivate bugbear contacts within the underdeep to keep them apprised of the locations and activities of forces below the surface of the world. Of course, turning your back on a rout is almost always an invitation for a morningstar against your skull, so caution is always advised.

Stumbling blind into a bugbear lair may prove lethal. Those who immediately attempt to mollify the creatures with offers of treasure and servile

praise for the bugbears' obvious superiority may be allowed to flee, but death is often the only outcome in these situations. Bugbears value their privacy and since they cannot imagine keeping a bargain with outsiders themselves, they have little reason to believe anyone else will either. City bugbears are more amenable to contact with other races, as they often need information or supplies they cannot easily find for themselves. These bugbears will seek out unscrupulous characters with offers of gold in exchange for fresh meat or information about the latest guard patrols. Money up front should always be the rule for dealing with bugbears, as they have no qualms about cheating their partners.

Clerics of Stalker will contact other races if they have no choice, but avoid them whenever possible. The doctrines of Stalker make it clear that bugbears survive by staying away from their enemies, striking only when at a distinct advantage. A powerful priest might attack a weaker group by himself, but only if they are a very tempting target. Wounded or sick parties are at the most risk from such attacks, as are those returning from adventure loaded down with treasure and weary from their efforts.

Render's clerics are difficult to deal with, and any group of bugbears led by a priest will share his god's views. Render calls for the blood of other races and does not believe in turning the other cheek or giving quarter. Because of this attitude, priests of this god are practically obligated to engage in wanton violence when running into members of another race.

Overall, it is important to remember that bugbears are victims of insatiable hunger and maddening greed. Appealing to either of these instinctual drives can help in surviving a bugbear encounter, as the humanoids are often willing to forego an immediate feast or ransacking if they have a reasonable chance of getting a better meal or more loot by letting their victims live. Characters that can lead bugbears to more tempting targets can convince the monsters to follow them, but they will need to be quick about it or the bugbears will get bored and hungry, effectively ending the truce.

# SCENARIO HOOKS AND IDEAS

**B**ugbears can make effective opposition for parties of 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level and the addition of a bugbear cleric can make such an encounter challenging for even higher level characters. The following are some story seeds that can be used to display the unique strengths and characteristics of bugbears, adding spice to what might otherwise be just another mundane combat with goblinoids.

## CREEPING DEATH

Local religious figures are vanishing during the nights of the new moon, never to be seen again. A young acolyte claims to have seen a mysterious mist near the door to the priest's cottage on the night of his disappearance. Rumours abound of a vampire in the vicinity, but there have been no bodies found, much less any drained of blood.

In truth, a bugbear cleric of Stalker has moved into the area just outside of town and set himself up in a small cave hidden in the nearby forest. The priest sneaks into town under the cover of darkness and uses the *obscuring mist* spell to cloak his attacks and retreats. He is holding the clergy in his cave for a grand sacrifice to Stalker, which will occur in three months and after three more attacks. Adventurers can be brought in on the case by the local church (if there are clerics or paladins in the group) or may respond to the reward of 500 gold pieces being offered for either the return of the priests or the death of their kidnapper.

If confronted by strong opposition, the bugbear will waste no time unleashing any spells at his disposal and then do his best to escape.

## AREN'T THEY CUTE?

Small items have begun to go missing from a renowned candy shop in the city. While the monetary loss is slight (most thefts have involved nothing more than sweets), the shop's owner is incensed over the matter. Because the city guard has better things to do than track down candy

thieves, the shop owner has contacted the characters as a last resort. He offers 20 gold pieces reward to the characters if they can capture or kill the thieves, a lot of money to him.

Bugbear children are the culprits and they sneak up through the sewer grates every few nights to steal more candy for their stash. Their enormous bugbear appetites keep them coming back for more, and characters will only have to wait a night or two before the youngsters make their move. Whatever the characters are expecting, they most likely will not be prepared for a pack of mangy young humanoids looking to score a quick belly-full of treats.

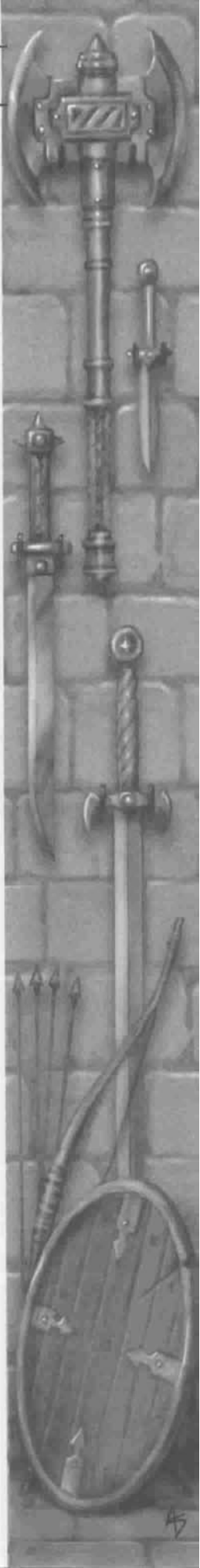
Regardless of how harmless the bugbears may appear, though, their presence hints at even more bugbears below the city – many of which want blood and gold rather than a few handfuls of candy. Characters who avoid detection and follow the young bugbears back to their lair find a large cete of the creatures gearing up for raids to the surface. Those who attack the young humanoids and let any escape become the targets of a bugbear vendetta that will not stop until either they, or the bugbears, are dead.

## DARK TRADE

A new trade route is experiencing bandit problems, and heroes are needed to clear the raiders away from the road. Upon arrival, the characters find a cete of bugbears harassing those travelling the trade road. The bugbears are thorough in their raiding, however, and have gone to the unusual lengths of burning the carts and wagons of merchants they encounter.

If the characters attack the bugbears, they are going to be in for a protracted guerrilla battle. The bugbears know the area well, are ready to lead pursuers through traps and treacherous terrain and relish the chance to test their mettle against something other than hired guards. During the fighting the characters will discover these bugbears are very well armed and many wear suits of chainmail tailored to their bulky, oversized bodies.

Cornered bugbears will offer up information about where their gear comes from – a merchant house with a vested interest in closing this trade route to their competitors. What the characters decide to do at that point is an adventure for another day. . .



## TIDES OF WAR

A powerful leader has risen among the ranks of the bugbears, a cleric of the dark god Render. Under his guidance, an army of bugbears is forming in the dark recesses of the underdeep. Characters may catch wind of this from other subterranean creatures that have been displaced to the surface by the growing numbers of bugbears, they may stumble across evidence during their own travels beneath the earth, or may even receive a vision from one of their patron gods alerting them to the danger below their feet.

What the characters do about the problem can be the seed for an adventure series, or even the focus for a whole campaign. It can take a long time for the bugbears to get themselves to full force, and the actions of a few brave men and women may turn the tide of the war before it even starts. Heroes may undertake a war of shadows with the bugbears, striking at their leadership and attempting to reduce their numbers through strategic attacks at weak points. More mercenary characters may actually decide to work *for* the bugbears in an attempt to keep their location and activities secret from the surface world. Which ever side the characters take, dealing with the treacherous bugbears for an extended period of time will be a nerve-wracking prospect.

## THE BLACK FINGERS

A bugbear khan named Graal has learned from his priests of an ancient bugbear artifact known as the *fist of blood*. In the prehistory of the world, bugbears were led to dominance over large swathes of land by a great leader whose name is lost to history. What is known about this leader is that his fist was passed down as a totem from khan to khan, insuring their continued victory in battle and prosperity in raiding. But a sneak attack by loathsome elves ended with the *fist of blood* being destroyed and its fingers scattered across the earth by fleeing cetes of bugbears. From that day forward, the bugbears have lived in relative isolation, eking out their survival among the realms of more numerous races.

During a raid on a svirfneblin colony, Graal discovered a locked chest containing many magic items – one of which was the core of the *fist of blood*. Inspired by this find, Graal has dispatched dark rangers to find information about the *black*

*fingers* that must be found to restore the bugbears to their former glory. When the adventurers get wind of this, it becomes a race to track down the few bugbear scholars in the world and find out what they know before the dark rangers find them, interrogate them, and then kill them.

This can lead to an extended series of adventures during which the adventurers must compete with a horde of cunning, evil monsters that will do anything to beat them to the punch. Only quick wits and strong sword arms will see the heroes through, and even then they'll need a healthy dose of luck to turn back the chaotic might of a bugbear khan and his minions.

### Fist of Blood

#### Major Artifact

This artifact comes from the first days of the bugbear race and is actually a body part of their most famed khan. An elven mage shattered the item into six pieces, a core and five fingers, that were scattered by fleeing cetes of bugbears. If the pieces can ever be gathered together, the bugbears will have a potent item to rally around.

The *fist of blood* is a +5 *unholy chaotic morningstar* that provides a +3 morale bonus to all bugbears fighting under its owner's leadership. In addition, the *fist of blood* is able to cast the following spells three times a day: *animate dead*, *augury*, and *chaos hammer*. Once per day the *fist of blood* can also cast the following: *circle of death*, *earthquake*, and *finger of death*. All spells are cast at the 15<sup>th</sup> level of ability.





# LUURG'S WARREN

Long ago, a group of formians established a small outpost based around a natural cave complex and extended the area with tunnels of their own, creating a maze of twisting passages and irregular rooms from which they launched scouting missions into the surrounding countryside. When one of their tunnels breached the course of a subterranean river and sent water rushing into their home, the formians abandoned the outpost and returned to their home plane.

Over the years the water level dropped and the flooded tunnels ran dry. A large cete of bugbears discovered the cave and its attached tunnels and took it as their home. The bugbears have been in this home for two years and will not move unless forced to due to their contacts in the area.

Their khan, Luurg, has worked out a deal with a local guild of thieves based in a city a few leagues distant. The thieves provide Luurg with news about trade caravans in exchange for occasional bugbear muscle, thus benefiting both groups. Luurg relies on the thieves and it is a relationship that may last some time as the bugbears benefit on both ends of the deal. The caravan information lets them pick and choose their targets for maximum gain without 'hunting out' the region, while loaning their more inexperienced members to the local thieves gives the younger bugbears a chance to practice their skills for the benefit of the cete.

## WARREN NOTES

This warren is portrayed during the summer months, when bugbear activity is at a normal pace and dark rangers are in the field. If used during the winter, add five dark rangers to the number of bugbears present and reduce the chance of a guard being at his post (in areas 2 and 3) to 10%, day or night. The spring brings heightened activity to the lair and the chance of a guard being on duty rises to 75%, day or night.

## DIRE RATS AND EQUIPMENT

The bugbears keep dire rats as semi-domesticated pets and a dozen of the creatures have taken up

residence here, scavenging from the bugbears' refuse. These creatures know enough to only attack outsiders and are allowed to wander freely throughout the lair. Games Masters should spring these creatures on adventurers at any inconvenient time. For their abilities and characteristics, refer to *Core Rulebook III*.

Unless otherwise noted, all bugbear warriors are equipped with morningstars, small shields, and leather armour. Female bugbears carry cleavers, but will fight only if forced.

## ENCOUNTER LEVELS

The Encounter Levels noted for each area are accurate only if the creatures and tactics listed are used. Games Masters will need to adjust these levels if there are deviations from the lair as designed. Note that the treasure for this lair was based on the encounter level of the final battle with Luurg, as seen in area 6. Games Masters should feel free to adjust this as they see fit.

## TRAPS

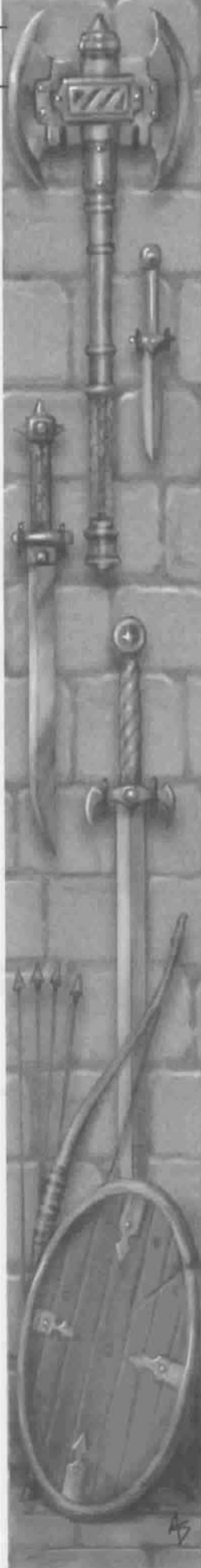
There are four types of trap in this lair, described below:

**Pit Trap (10 ft. Deep):** CR ½; no attack roll necessary, 1d6 damage; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 20).

**Spinning Star Trap:** When tripped, five morningstars spin down on the end of a twisted cord, creating a flailing circle in the area noted on the map. CR 2, +10 melee (2d6/x2 critical); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25). This trap must be manually reset, requiring 10 rounds and 3 bugbears to do so.

**Deadfall Trap:** When triggered, the ceiling gives way, releasing large stones and other debris on intruders. This effectively blocks passage through the trap's area of effect. The trap must be manually reset, taking 1d4 hours and three bugbears. CR 5; +10 melee (5d6/x2 critical); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

**Weighted Net Trap:** CR 1; +10 melee; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25). Characters within a 10 ft. square area are grappled by the net (Str 20) if they fail a reflex save (DC 15).



## TUNNELS AND WANDERERS

The entrances to the lair's tunnels are concealed with thin, dirty boards (for lower tunnels, Spot DC 15) or ratty blankets and cobwebs (for the upper tunnels, Spot DC 20). The tunnels themselves have seven-foot ceilings, were carved by formians and later expanded by the bugbears.

The following table can be used to handle wandering monsters for those Games Masters who desire to use them.

### D20 Wandering Monster

1-5	1d2 dire rats (note that there are 12 rats total in this lair, deduct those killed from this number)
6-7	1 bugbear warrior (from area 9)
8-12	1d3 bugbear females (from area 5)
13-15	1d6 bugbear children (from area 7)
16-17	1d4 bugbear warriors (from area 6)
18	Gulgu
19	Murgul
20	Luurg

## AREA DESCRIPTIONS

### 1. Entryway and Cooking Pit (EL 2)

The bugbears use this low-ceilinged room for their cooking, as the natural ventilation carries the smoke and other fumes up through the cavern's chimneys, dissipating them through the porous limestone.

Cooking is done during the early evening, and three females from area 5 tend the fire and turn a spit of meat over the flames. There is a 50% chance that a warrior from area 6 is here to oversee the operation. Children are never allowed in this area, for fear they will wander off and get lost or reveal the cete's presence.

**Tactics:** The females flee from intruders if at all possible, heading into the lair whilst shouting at the top of their lungs. Females continue their headlong flight deeper into the cavern to warn the rest of the females in area 5 and gather the children at area 7. The parade of females and young then hurry to the treasure room (area 11) to wait out the invasion.

If a warrior is present, he pushes the females back into the lair and attacks invaders only if he has no choice. By preference, he runs back into the lair and hides by the pull rope for the trap in area 4 (A

on the map) in the hopes of catching the intruders unawares. If forced into combat, he does his best to delay the intruders and make enough noise to warn the lair at the same time. Guards in area 2 have no trouble hearing a battle in this area, and react according to the tactics section of those areas, below.

**Creatures:** 3 bugbear females from area 5 and 1 warrior (see reference list for stats) from area 6.

### 2. Guard Post (EL 2)

The bugbears post a guard here every day, but it is rare for the guard to stay here for a full shift. During the day, there is a 25% chance of a guard from area 6 being at his post here; at night, the chance rises to 60%. If tensions are high (such as following a raid against the lair or an expected assault by their enemies) a guard is here at all hours, alert and ready for any trouble.

**Tactics:** If a guard spies intruders making their way into the lair, he immediately runs to alert the bugbears in areas 5, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 12. If there is a battle in area 1, the bugbear rushes to his comrades' defense, hoping to turn the invaders back. Otherwise, the bugbear takes note of any enemies in the cavern and then rendezvous with the other bugbears in area 6.

**Creatures:** Bugbear warrior (see reference list for stats).

### 3. The Larder (EL 1)

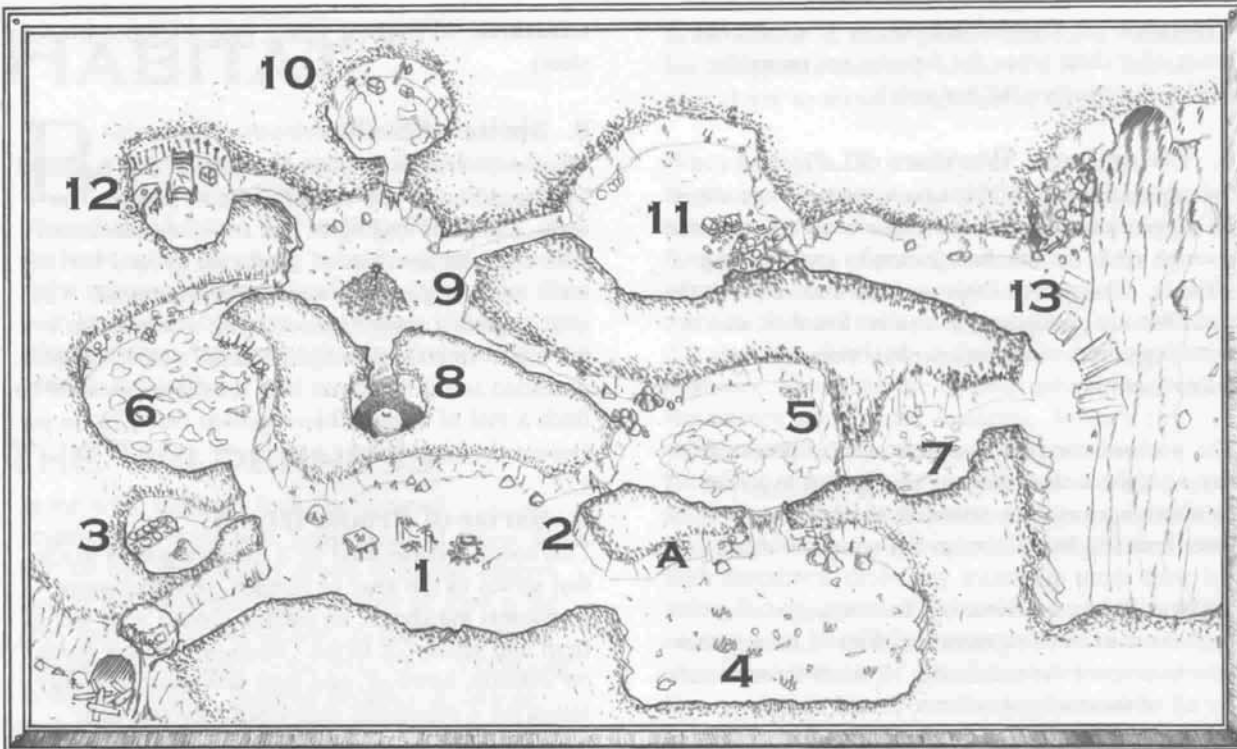
The bugbears use this area to store their food. Mounds of salt litter the floor along with crude racks for holding raw and salted meat. If an alarm has not been sounded, there is a 50% chance of finding four bugbear females here salting meat.

**Tactics:** When the alarm for invaders is sounded, the females flee this area by clambering up into the tunnel and running to the warriors' room. From there, they make their way through area 13 and on to area 5 where they warn the other females and head down to retrieve the children in area 7.

**Creatures:** 4 Bugbear females (see reference list for stats).

### 4. The Dining Hall (EL 7)

The bugbears take their meals in this room, ripping hunks of meat off whatever creature has been most recently cooked by the females. There are no



furnishings here and the only decorations are bloody pictograms on the walls. Uneaten scraps are heaped along the walls and dragged down to area 13 to be dumped in the river once they start to stink.

The only meal that is 'served' to the bugbears occurs two hours after dusk, when the females drag in the carcasses cooked that evening. During this meal, all bugbears gather here to squabble over the more tender portions with warriors getting first choice, the females and children waiting their turn. Meal times are raucous affairs and the bugbears will be subject to an automatic surprise if they are attacked during this time.

At other times of the day, there is a 25% chance of 1d4 bugbear warriors from area 6 being present, nibbling on the scraps left over from the last meal. There is a 50% chance of 1d3 females from area 5 and 1d6 children from area 7 being present at any time as they struggle to filch food to survive. Two dire rats are always found here, gnawing on bones.

**Tactics:** If this room is breached during mealtime, the bugbears suffer one round of surprise as their attention is focused on eating. Bugbear women and children attempt to flee from intruders if they have not been warned and are caught in this room. Warriors retreat, but one remains behind to trigger the trap by pulling the cord at A. Either a warrior or a female, depending on who is present, rushes to

area 5, then sounds the alarm. The remaining warriors rendezvous with their comrades at area 6.

If a warning has been sounded, a single bugbear from area 6 will be hiding near a to trip the Spinning Star trap on the invaders.

**Creatures:** 4 bugbears warriors, 3 female bugbears and 6 young bugbears (see reference list for stats); 2 dire rats (hp 7 and 5).

### 5. Living Area, Females (EL 3)

This room is littered with thick wool blankets that the females use for bedding. Unlike the males, the females cluster together in the center of the room, creating a communal nest. If the alarm has not been sounded, the females are resting or nibbling on scraps they managed to wrest from the males and talking quietly. If the cete is in a state of alarm, the females are not here but instead follow the tactics listed below.

**Tactics:** When an alarm is heard, the females leave this area and head for the nursery at area 9. Once there, they round up the children and make their way to area 11 where they await word from Luurg and the warriors. If surprised in this room, they attempt to get to their children in area 9 to get to area 13 and flee the cete's lair altogether. They will return in 4d4 hours to see if there is anything left of their home.

**Creatures:** 20 female bugbears, or 17 during the 2 hours after dusk when the females are preparing food (see reference list for stats).

### 6. Living Area, Warriors (EL 7)

Twenty warriors call this cavern home. They sleep on ragged piles of cloth that have been accumulated through raids on merchant caravans and outlying villages. The walls of this area are covered with the same bloody pictograms as can be found in area 4, with depictions of monstrous bugbears and their fallen victims.

The warriors can be found here at most times of the day or night, unless they are taking part in a raid. If an alarm has not been sounded, the bugbears will be here throwing knucklebones for scraps of meat.

**Tactics:** When an alarm has been sounded, the bugbear warriors, sergeants and Khan Luurg gather here to prepare their defenses. It takes three rounds for all of these to gather here. On the rounds following the arrival of the final stragglers, Luurg dispatches one half of the warriors, under the leadership of Gulgu through one tunnel to swing round behind the invaders. The other half, led by Luurg himself, will face the enemy and slowly draw them back into area 9 where they will seek to make a stand. See the Tactics section of area 9 for more information on their plans.

**Creatures:** 20 bugbear warriors (see reference list for stats).

**Treasure:** Luurg does not allow the rank and file warriors to keep any treasure in their living area, as all of this is transported to area 11 following a raid.

### 7. Nursery

Over forty bugbear young make their home here amidst the clutter of tattered rags and cast-off clothing they use as beds. The young stay here, out of the way of the warriors and females, except for meal times when they scramble for food in area 4 along with the rest of the bugbears.

**Tactics:** The bugbear children have no tactics to speak of. If surprised by invaders they will do their best to flee, heading toward area 5 and the protection of their mothers. If that is not possible, they will do their best to scatter through whatever exits are available to them. Bugbear young will not attack invaders unless directed to do so by their parents.

**Creatures:** 43 bugbear young (see reference list for stats).

### 8. Shrine of Stalker

This small altar is dedicated to Stalker and is tended by Murgul under the watchful eye of Luurg. The walls, floor and ceiling of this room are blackened with charcoal, and bits of quartz are ground into the walls to form glittering white eyes all around. The altar itself is a simple boulder with a depression in the top to receive offerings. Murgul's faith has been rewarded and if he comes here during an invasion he finds a vial of bugbear blood poison (see p13) to use against the intruders.

### 9. Shrine of Render (EL 15)

This room is dominated by a massive pile of skulls that serves as the altar to Render; a morningstar surmounts the shrine, its surface clotted with bits of flesh and smears of blood. Bugbears are not much on worship, however, and their services occur only following a successful raid when they add their trophies to the stack and bellow their praises to Render. Luurg is here each midnight, praying over the altar and consecrating it to Render with gifts of bone and blood.

The altar itself is a focus for the bugbear community, and any bugbear doing battle with invaders in this area benefits from a +1 morale bonus to all actions and damage rolls. The morningstar atop the altar is a *Render's Star* when used to defend against intruders in this area. If the morning star is ever removed from this area by a non-bugbear, it transforms immediately into a -3 *cursed morningstar* that is recognizable to any bugbear who sees it as a stolen relic.

**Tactics:** The altar gives the bugbears strength and courage, making it a logical place to make a stand against intruders. As noted above, once Luurg's cete is aware of the intruders in their midst, half the warriors use the tunnels to circle around behind the trespassers and trail them to this area, where the other half are waiting.

Luurg and his warriors stand in a loose circle around the room, blocking access to areas 8, 10, 11 and 12. Luurg will be positioned near the control for the *weighted net trap* here (found at the base of the Shrine) and drops the net on any invaders that pass through the trap's area of effect. The noise of the trap triggering alerts the bugbears led by Gulgu to launch their rear attack. With the trap sprung and the rear-guard attacking, the invaders find

themselves assaulted on two fronts. Those in the net are spared from the initial attack, but are questioned at the close of combat if the bugbears are victorious.

The bugbears use the tactics noted in the Methods of Warfare chapter, with groups of four engaging a single target and unleashing their full fury. Luurg uses *blindness* to incapacitate apparent spell casters (primarily unarmoured foes) followed by *doom* to weaken the nearest front-line fighter. The khan then casts *silence* on enemy spell casters and *bull's strength* on himself. *Bane* and *bestow curse* are used to further weaken opponents and *cause fear* is used to chase powerful melee fighters from the battle. Gulgu's warriors are trained to spot spell casters and pounce on any in the rear ranks of the invaders if they see spells being prepared. Both Luurg and Gulgu have mastered the Focus Attack feat, and use it to good effect here.

Clerics are the bugbears' prime targets in the initial rush and any invader with a visible holy symbol takes the brunt of the first attacks. Wizards and sorcerers are the next targets, followed by bards with melee fighters left for last. Murgul circles the battle with an eye toward engaging any rogues that manage to tumble through the encircling action, taking any available sneak attack opportunity. If more than three bugbears fall in the defense of the lair, Murgul retreats to the Shrine of Stalker (area 8) and poison his weapons with the vial of bugbear blood poison found there. He then returns to the fray in an attempt to poison as many of the enemy as possible.

If the invaders attempt to withdraw from this area before engaging Luurg and his warriors, Gulgu will engage immediately and begin shouting for reinforcements. Fighting the adventurers in another area of the lair does not afford the bugbears the same advantages as battling near their shrine, but they will enjoy numerical superiority in most cases.

Should the invaders defeat six or more of the bugbears while suffering losses below half of their own strength, Luurg calls a retreat. Bugbears rush away to launch the rafts found in area 13

and take to the subterranean river. The females bundle up as much treasure as they can carry and join the warriors in their flight. The bugbears plan to meet again at a lair chosen a few months ago, and begin building up their power base once more.

**Treasure:** There is no treasure here other than the morning star on the shrine which becomes cursed if removed from this area.

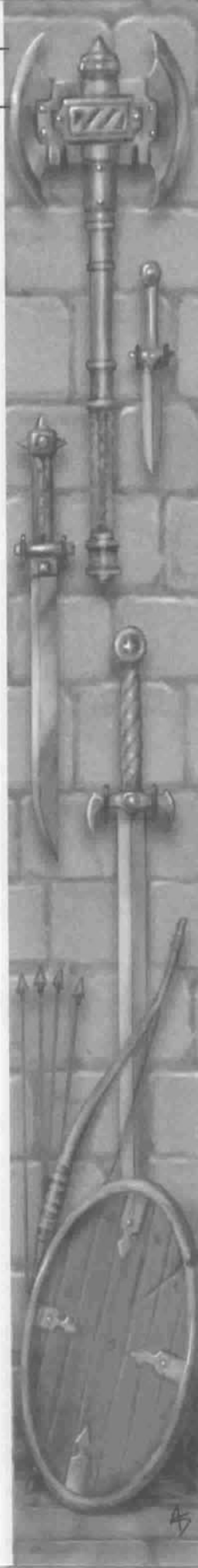
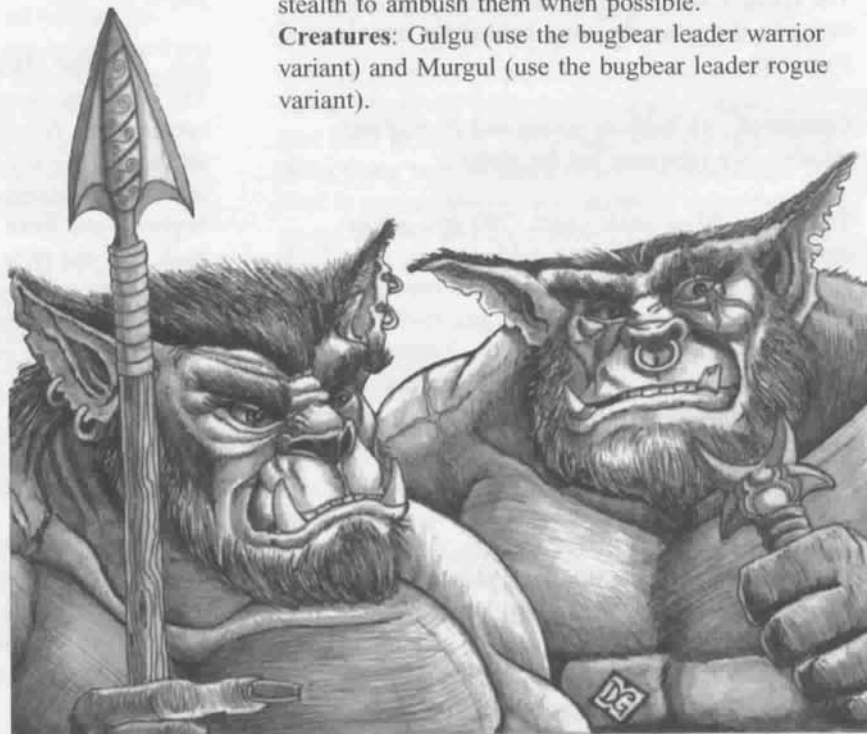
**Creatures:** Luurg; Murgul; Gulgu; 20 bugbear warriors. Note that any bugbears previously killed by invaders should be removed from this final encounter.

### 10. Sergeants' Chamber (EL 6)

Gulgu and Murgul, Luurg's sergeants, occupy this room as their reward for faithful service and each received a pile of furs and a small chest to store their personal treasures. Both sergeants are here if it isn't mealtime or a warning has not been sounded. If the cete is aware of invaders, they hide their chests in a shallow depression and move to area 6 to follow the tactics outlined there.

**Tactics:** Gulgu is a powerful warrior, who he won't hesitate to fight if cornered in his room. Murgul attempts to flee if an attack occurs, doing his best to warn others. He heads first to area 6 to warn the warriors, and then tries to reach area 2 and sound the alarm. Murgul then stalks the intruders using stealth to ambush them when possible.

**Creatures:** Gulgu (use the bugbear leader warrior variant) and Murgul (use the bugbear leader rogue variant).



**Treasure:** Gulgu's: Flawed emerald (12 gp), crown of silver (50 gp), black amber (20 gp), ruby (700 gp).

**Murgul's:** Pink opal (850 gp), 60 pp.

### 11. Treasure Room

This is where the bugbears store their loot, which Luurg counts at least once every other day to insure no one is pilfering from the cete's stash. The room is unadorned stone, with the treasure stacked in a pile in the southeast corner to conceal the lower escape tunnel.

In the event of an invasion, the females gather the young here and begin loading the cete's treasure into burlap sacks for easy transport. When the retreat is called the females take the children down the lower tunnel and head south into the underdeep in an attempt to get to the back-up lair chosen by Luurg a few months ago. If the invaders have breached this tunnel, the females load the young onto the crude rafts at area 13 and will try to float away down the river to their new home. If cornered, the women fight with their crude meat cleavers and try to break through the invaders to get their young to safety. In this case, they drop the treasure they are carrying to make better time and keep from being encumbered in combat.

The females take the gems and items when they evacuate and leave the coins behind for intruders to pick over.

**Creatures:** 43 bugbear young and 20 bugbear females (see reference list for stats).

**Treasure:** Silver ankle chain (700 gp), golden crown with ruby (2200 gp), golden music box (2050 gp), ivory scroll tube (90 gp), mithril brooch (1000 gp), ornate silver arrowhead (70 gp), mithril pirate's hook (900 gp), 300 platinum coins, 2 emeralds (400 and 550 gp), quartz ring (30 gp), blue topaz (550 gp), small diamond (100 gp), obsidian (10 gp), opal (40 gp), mottled jasper (60 gp), aquamarine (100 gp), ruby (75 gp), star rose quartz (25 gp).

### 12. Luurg's Chamber (EL 7)

The leader of this cete, Luurg is an accomplished khan and priest of Render (see p29). The walls of his chamber are etched with images of morningstars, leaving no surface spared. Unlike the other bugbears, who have pelts or blankets to sleep on, Luurg has a large bed complete with sheets (albeit

stained) and pillows. He also has a small writing desk that he uses to write to the rogues allied with his cete, and a chest of his personal treasure. Luurg has kept most of the cete's best loot for himself, and has a substantial hoard of his own.

**Tactics:** Luurg spends most of his time here, either alone in private devotion to Render, or enjoying the company of a female companion. During the daily meal he joins the others in the dining area, and can be found in area 4. If an alarm has been sounded, Luurg makes his way to area 6 to await the arrival of his warriors and sergeants. If his troops do not arrive within five rounds of the alarm being sounded, Luurg knows something is wrong and sends the women and children away, then searches for the other bugbears himself. He makes heavy use of the various tunnels worming their way through the lair, and uses his abilities to gain surprise on the intruders whenever possible. If the invaders are a serious threat, Luurg retreats with his women and children to their back-up lair deeper below the earth and starts life in this new location. He never forgets, however, and the invaders will see him again.

**Creature:** Luurg (use the Bugbear Khan in the reference list).

**Treasure:** 572 gp, white opal (1300 gp), flawless jasper (50 gp).

### 13. Refuse Dump

The bugbears dump their refuse into the subterranean river that flows through this area and let the rushing waters carry it away. This area also serves as an emergency evacuation point for the bugbears and there are a dozen crude rafts on the bank near the river. Each raft can hold up to five adult bugbears (two children count as one adult for purposes of determining how many fit on a raft), and an additional one or two could cling to the side of a raft allowing them all to escape via this route. There is nothing of value here and the bugbears keep the area clean enough to avoid attracting scavengers such as carrion crawlers.

**Tactics:** If encountered here, the bugbears are on their way out of the lair and have no intention of making a desperate last stand. The females and young board the rafts, which the warriors then shove into the river, letting the water carry them away to safety.

# BUGBEAR REFERENCE LIST

This chapter provides Games Masters with a ready-to-use list of typical bugbears. These creatures can be dropped directly into a game as wandering monsters, or may form the basis of unique adversaries within the Games Master's own scenarios.

## Bugbear Khan

**Medium-Size Humanoid (Goblinoid)**

**5th Level Cleric of Render**

**Hit Dice:** 8d8 + 8 (43 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft.

**AC:** 22 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +1 small shield, +7 chainmail +2)

**Attacks:** Morningstar +7 melee or javelin +6 ranged

**Damage:** Morningstar 1d8 + 2; or javelin 1d6 + 2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +10

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb -2, Concentration +10, Hide -1, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Spot +6

**Feats:** Alertness, Combat Casting, Iron Will

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Chainmail +2

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil

**Spells:** 0 Level: *Detect magic, guidance, light, resistance x2*; 1st level: *bane, cause fear, divine favor, doom, render's wrath*; 2nd level: *bull's strength, shatter, silence, spiritual weapon*; 3rd level: *bestow curse, blindness, magic vestment*.

## Khan's Advisor

**Medium-Size Humanoid (Goblinoid)**

**2nd Level Cleric of Stalker**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8 + 5 (27 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 17 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +1 small shield, +2 leather)

**Attacks:** Scimitar +5 melee or short bow +4 ranged

**Damage:** Scimitar 1d8 + 2; or short bow 1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +2, Concentration +2, Hide +3, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +5



**Feats:** Alertness, Point Blank Shot

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Short bow +1

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil

**Spells:** 0 Level: *Detect magic, detect poison, guidance, purify food and drink*; 1st Level: *Cause fear, magic weapon obscuring mist, protection from good*.

## Bugbear Leader

**Medium-Size Humanoid (Goblinoid)**

**2nd Level Rogue**

**Hit Dice:** 3d8 + 2d6 + 5 (25 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 18 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +3 leather armour +1)

**Attacks:** Shortspear, +5 melee; short bow +5 ranged

**Damage:** Shortspear 1d8 + 2; short bow 1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., Evasion, Sneak Attack +1d6

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +10

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 9

**Skills:** Climb +3, Hide +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +6

**Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** *Leather armour +1, spider climb potion, cure light wounds potion, hiding potion, sneaking potion, blur potion*

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil

**Bugbear Leader****Medium-Size Humanoid (Goblinoid)****2<sup>nd</sup> Level Warrior****Hit Dice:** 3d8 + 2d10 + 5 (27 hp)**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**AC:** 17 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +1 small shield, +2 leather)**Attacks:** Morningstar +7 melee or javelin +4 ranged**Damage:** Morningstar 1d8 + 4; javelin 1d6 + 3**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9**Skills:** Climb +3, Hide +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3**Feats:** Alertness, Power Attack**Challenge Rating:** 3**Treasure:** *Morningstar +1***Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil**Dark Ranger****Medium-Size Humanoid (Goblinoid)****2<sup>nd</sup> Level Rogue / 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Dark Ranger****Hit Dice:** 6d8 + 2d6 + 24 (57 hp)**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**AC:** 19 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +3 *shadow leather +1*)**Attacks:** Scimitar, +8/+3 Melee ; short bow +9/+4 Ranged**Damage:** Scimitar 1d6 + 2; short bow 1d6**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., Evasion, Poison Expertise, Sneak Attack +3d6**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +12, Will +4**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9**Skills:** Climb +3, Hide +20, Listen +6, Move Silently +13, Spot +6**Feats:** Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Track**Challenge Rating:** 7**Treasure:** *Shadow leather armor +1, cure light wounds potion, sneaking potion, blur potion, fire breath potion, ghoul touch potion, water breathing potion***Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil**BUGBEAR SPELLS**

There are many reports from adventurers telling of bugbear clerics wielding divine powers previously unknown in their experience. Even the clerics of other gods are often at a loss to explain the remarkable powers of their bugbear counterparts. Such spells are few in nature but are relatively common amongst the devoted followers of Render and Stalker. The two spells listed below may only be used by bugbear clerics who worship Stalker or Render respectively. Spellcasters of other races and faiths may not use them under any circumstances.

**Stalker's Ambush***Conjuration***Level:** Clr 3**Components:** V,S**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)**Effect:** All bugbears within 100-foot radius**Duration:** 1 round/level**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

When cast, *Stalker's ambush* wraps all bugbears within 100 feet of the caster in shadows, providing them with one-half concealment (20% miss chance) and provides the same bugbears with a +1 circumstance bonus to a single attack.

**Render's Wrath***Necromancy***Level:** Clr 2**Components:** V,S**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Personal**Effect:** 30-foot centered on caster**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** Will negates**Spell Resistance:** Yes

With a mighty roar, the cleric of Render unleashes the wrath of his god on his enemies. All non-bugbears within the area of effect will suffer 1d4 points of sonic damage and have a 75% chance of dropping any held item as the blast of Render's rage strikes them.

**Bugbear Warrior****Medium-Size Humanoid (Goblinoid)****Hit Dice:** 3d8 + 3 (16 hp)**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**AC:** 17 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather, +1 small shield)**Attacks:** Morningstar +4 melee; or javelin +3 ranged**Damage:** Morningstar 1d8+2; or javelin 1d6+2**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.**Saves:** Fort + 2, Ref +4, Will +1**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9**Skills:** Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3**Feats:** Alertness**Challenge Rating:** 2**Treasure:** Standard**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil**Bugbear Female****Medium-Size Humanoid (Goblinoid)****Hit Dice:** 2d8 + 6 (15 hp)**Initiative:** +0**Speed:** 30 ft.**AC:** 13 (+3 natural)**Attacks:** Cleaver +2 melee**Damage:** Cleaver 1d4**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.



**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2  
**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Climb +1, Hide +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +4  
**Feats:** Alertness  
**Challenge Rating:** 1  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil

**Speed:** 20 ft.  
**AC:** 11 (+1 natural)  
**Attacks:** Bite +0 melee  
**Damage:** Bite 1d2  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5ft./ 5ft.  
**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.  
**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0  
**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 4  
**Skills:** Listen +1, Move Silently +4, Spot +1  
**Feats:** Alertness  
**Challenge Rating:** 1/2  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil.

### Bugbear Infant

**Small Humanoid (Goblinoid)**  
**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)  
**Initiative:** +0

'When they come, it will be fast and furious. They'll be in bunches of half a dozen or so, led by a bigger one. He's the one to watch. You get the big one, the rest will bolt.'

'But they are *all* big!' complained one of the pupils.

'Nonsense. Size is relative. Are they as big as an ogre? A troll? A kraken? Of course not.'

'They look big to me,' the pupil continued.

The teacher smiled. 'Nevertheless, they bleed, and bleeding is what counts. Now, where were we? Oh, yes...their attack. Well, let's assume you've seen them off, for if you don't what comes next is an irrelevance. Don't be fooled by their flight. More often than not it is well prepared. Nothing a bugbear likes more than to separate a fellow from his comrades and lead him to his death.'

He waited, expecting another interruption, but none came. The class was riveted now, keen to learn about one of their future enemies.

'Bugbears like traps,' he continued at length, letting the pause tighten his subject's focus. 'Especially the sort that speaks of the wild hunter. Stake pits, snares, rope traps, that sort of thing. Well disguised too. Don't mistake the bugbear for a fool, just because he looks like one.' That raised a gentle, if slightly nervous, laugh.

He waited now.

'Erm...so, how do we actually *beat* bugbears then, sir?'

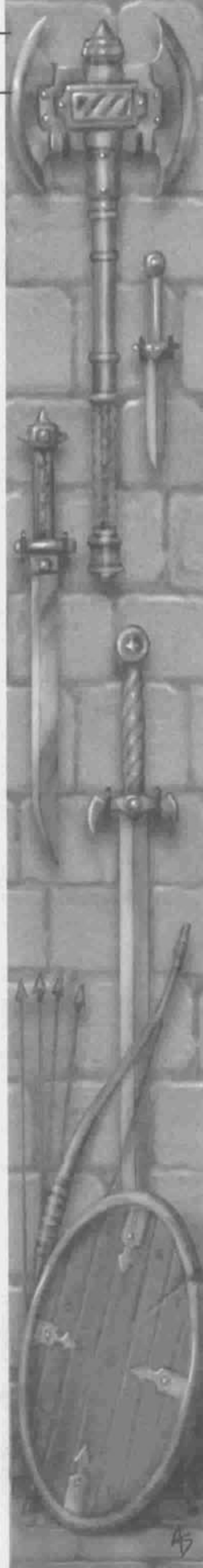
The old man smiled approvingly. It was the right question. 'Quite easy actually, if you stay calm and remember your business. We play them at their own game. Lay out some traps of our own. Have our mages standing by with spells to slow them down. Do you see? You have to think like your enemy to beat him. It's not an original concept by any means.'

He waited for the knowing chuckles to pipe down. At least they were understanding previous lessons. It was a good sign.

'He likes ambushes, does Friend Bugbear,' the old man continued. 'Both attack and defence. If you are in his country, always have a good scout out ahead, and make sure you keep him in sight. No point walking round a bend in the track and wondering where the devil he's got to. Chances are he's already dead and you are short one scout.'

'But how would they know?' protested a youngster.

The teacher sighed, shaking his head gently. 'Have you not been listening boy? I think a visit to the master-at-arms might focus your concentration suitably,' and he made a quick, written note. One young man would be missing his dinner that evening. 'Treat the bugbear with respect. If you don't, it'll be *you* who pays!'



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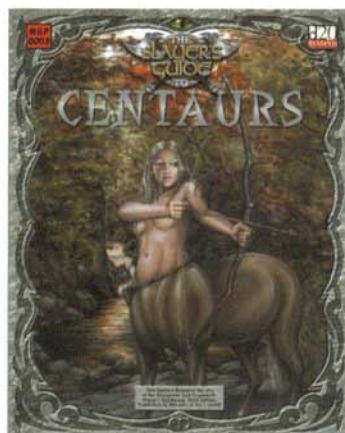
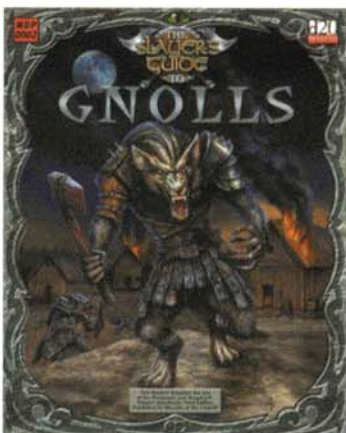
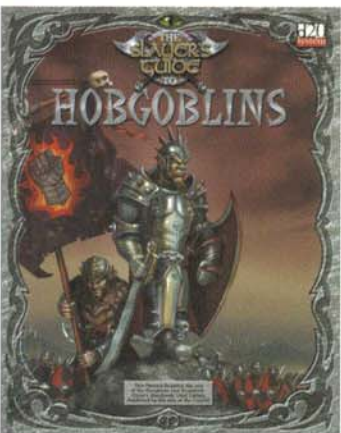
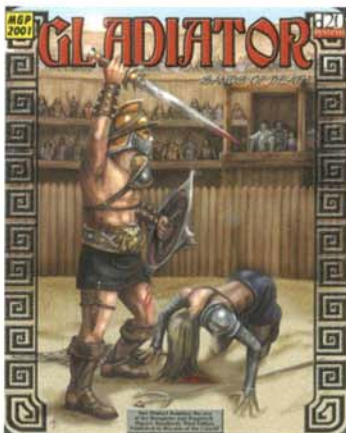
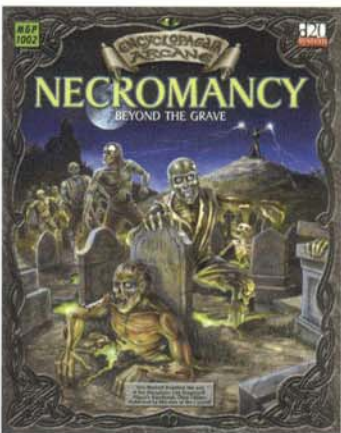
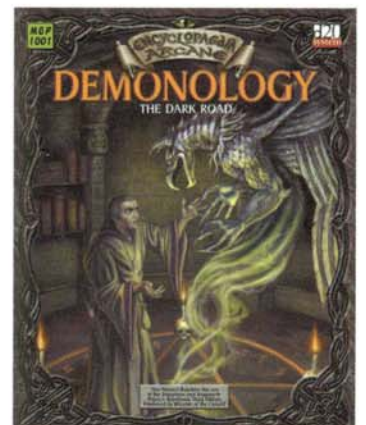
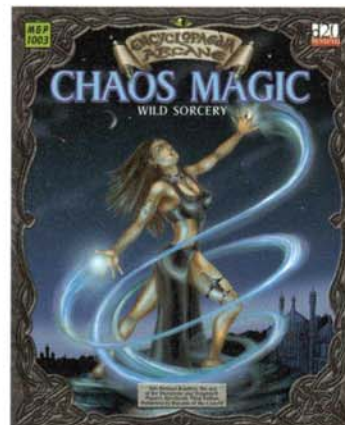
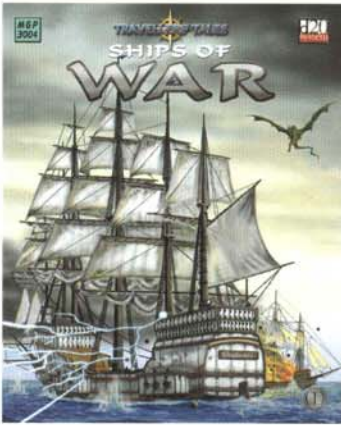
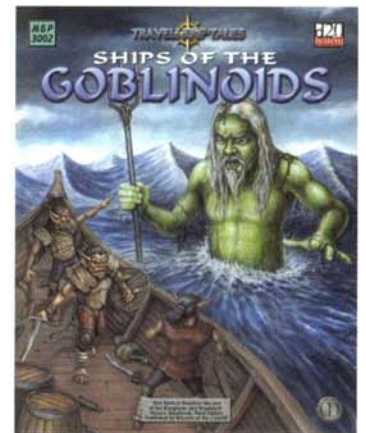
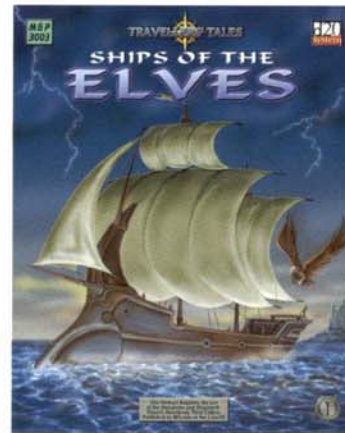
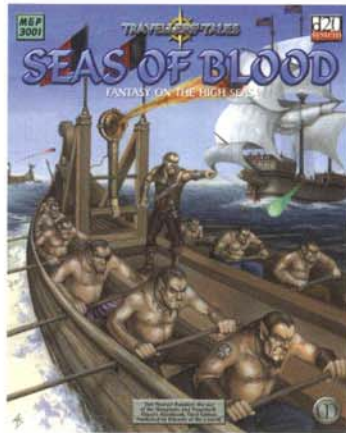
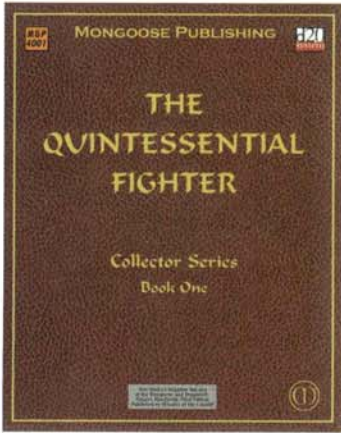
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THE  
SLAYER'S  
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TO

# BUGBEARS

## Evil Cunning

Pound for pound, muscle for muscle, bugbears are stronger, sneakier and far more unpredictable than their other goblinoid cousins. They are brutal guerrillas who strike fast and fade away, bursting onto the scene to wreak terrible havoc before vanishing. If they could ever unite under a single banner, or maintain the military discipline of the hobgoblins, they would shake the heavens with their rage. Fortunately for the rest of the world, bugbears are as fractious as they are violent, driven by chaotic urges and consuming greed that prevent them from developing the social structure of more advanced races.

### Inside You Will Find:

**Bugbear Physiology:** Taller than all but the most extraordinary of men, bugbears cut an imposing figure in the light of day. When glimpsed dashing through the shadows, their bulging muscles and towering frames are enough to give any adventurer a moment's pause.

**Habitat:** Bugbears are capable of surviving in most environments and are equally at home in the wilderness or hidden within the cities of more civilised races.

**Bugbear Society:** Full details on bugbear life including the feared Dark Rangers and the dreaded Render and Stalker.

**Methods of Warfare:** Physically powerful and smart enough to formulate tactics, the bugbear is a dangerous foe on any battlefield. In skirmishes, where individual strength is a deciding factor, bugbears have a distinct

advantage over the members of most other races.

**Role-Playing with Bugbears:** Games Masters are provided with complete information on how to portray bugbears within their campaign, in a way players will never forget.

**Scenario Hooks and Ideas:** A series of jumping points to introduce bugbears into a campaign.

**Luurgs Warren:** A detailed bugbear lair is presented.

**Bugbear Reference List:** A ready to go list of characters and enemies for players to face, should they stumble across the machinations of these evil creatures.

FOR GAMES MASTERS AND PLAYERS ALIKE

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