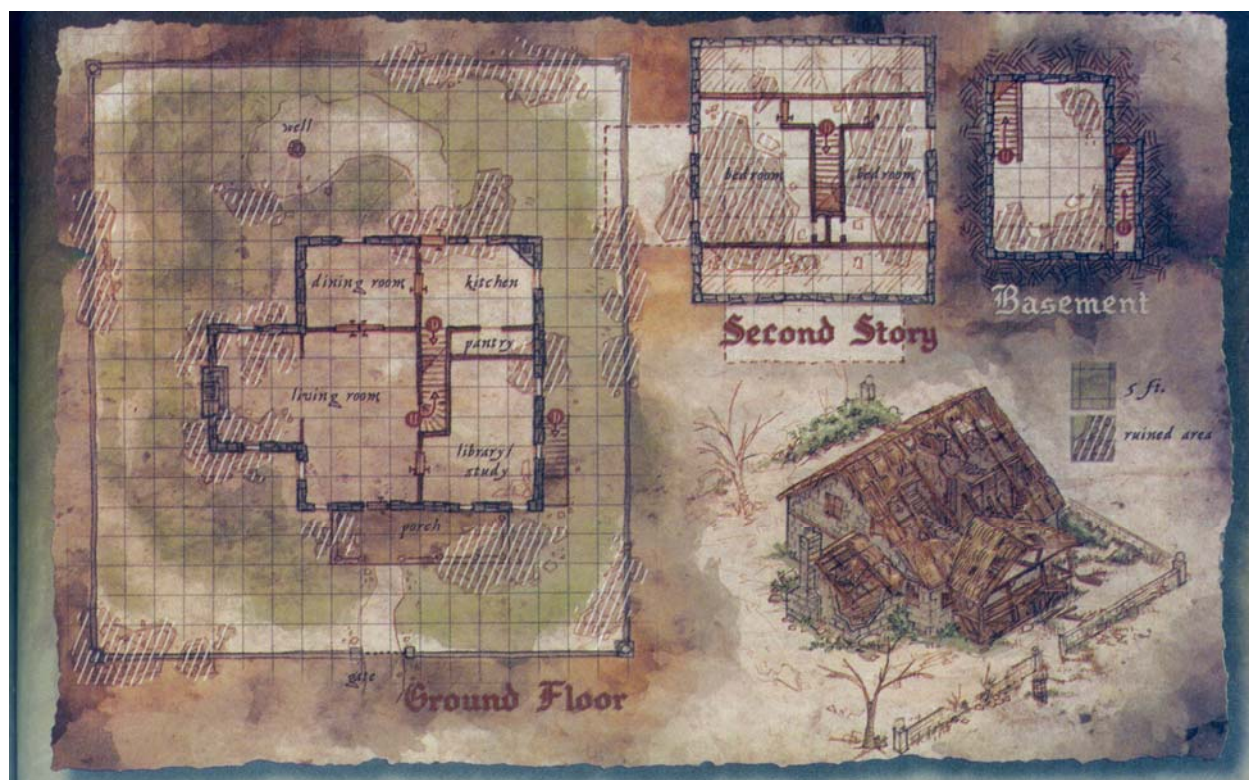


Age of Worms- Introductory Mine Office Adventure

Located on the outskirts of the Diamond Lake community, a ruined mine office and dwelling sits unoccupied, without an owner. This crumbling office is the site of the PCs' first meeting in "The Whispering Cairn". The previous owner of the building, the mining manager Ulgo Fant, abandoned the place more than fifty years ago when his mine ran dry. When he died over a decade ago, the property was left without an owner. Few have bothered to visit this wreck since its abandonment. Young children from the town often come up to the building on a dare and a few years back an inexperienced thief took up residence here before moving onto more lucrative trade routes.



The Yard (EL 2)

A modest dwelling squats upon the crown of a small hill. Although the rough stone walls of the first floor look mostly intact, the second floor has completely collapsed. A half height wall rings the house, but it too is in a state of severe disrepair. Rubble and dense weeds choke the yard.

The entire yard is considered difficult terrain except for the small path leading up to the building. Behind the building, a stone well rises up out of the weeds. Although the bucket is gone, the water is clean, if a bit brackish. In the back, the remains of a wooden outhouse lie in an unrecognizable heap.

Stirges (4)**CR 1/2**

N Tiny magical beast (Monster Manual 236-37)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Spot** +4, **Listen** +4

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12**hp** 5 (1 HD)**Fort** +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)**Melee** attach +7 touch (attaches)**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** -11 (+1 when attached)

Abilities Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6**Feats** Alertness, Weapon Finesse***Skills** Hide +14, Listen +4, Spot +5

Attack (Ex): If a stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge is effectively grappling its prey. The stirge loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12, but holds on with great tenacity. Stirges have a +12 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above).

An attached stirge can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached stirge through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the stirge.

Blood Drain (Ex): A stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round when it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before the stirge's appetite has been sated, the stirge detaches and seeks a new target.

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The Building

Made of smooth stone blocks, this building stands in shambles. Thick vines creep up the side and most of the windows are broken. The front door hangs open, barely on its hinges, under a sagging and partially collapsed porch.

Part of the front porch has collapsed but it still allows entry to the building. The two exterior doors are damaged but are still sound and easily repaired with an hour's worth of work and a successful DC 15 Craft (carpentry) skill check. The locks on the doors are rusted beyond repair and must be replaced (see page 128 of the *Player's Handbook* for prices). The walls and doors have the following statistics.

Wooden Doors: 1½ in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18.

Stone Walls: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35; Climb DC 20 (15 with vines).

The Interior

Small mounds of debris litter the floor of the building's interior. Loose stones, dead weeds, and grime cover virtually every surface. Paintings must have once adorned the place as indicated by the particular stain patterns marring the walls. The only light comes from thin shafts sneaking in from outside illuminating clouds of dust dancing through the stale air.

The Living Room (EL 3)

The first floor of the manor consists of five chambers. The largest of these is the living room, part of which has completely collapsed. A staircase in the living room is chocked with debris and leads to the remains of the second floor.

Four of Ssyath's lizardfolk troops claim this room as their quarters. Three will fight anyone who enters the manor while the fourth will run to the office to alert Ssyath.

Lizardfolk (4) CR 1

NE Medium Humanoid (Reptilian) (Monster Manual 169)

Init +0; **Senses** Spot +0; Listen +0

Languages Draconic

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15

hp 11(2 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +2 (1d4+1) and bite +0 (1d4)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ hold breath

Feats Multiattack

Skills Balance +4, Jump +5, Swim +2

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The Office (EL 2)

Directly to the right of the living room space is what an office was once. The bookshelves and desk have thoroughly rotted and what few tomes and mine maps remain are ruined and illegible. Now this room serves as the quarters for the lizardfolk scout leader, Ssyath. Ssyath has been tasked by Shukak, at the suggestion of the dragon Ilthane, to spy upon the town of Diamond Lake. Shukak plans on sacking the town after the fall of the Blackwall Keep garrison.

Ssyath CR 2

Male lizardfolk ranger 1

NE Medium Humanoid (Reptilian) (Monster Manual 169)

Init -1; **Senses** Spot +3, Listen +3**Languages** Draconic**AC** 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16**hp** 25 (3 HD)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0**Spd** 30 ft.**Melee** club +7 (1d6+3) and bite +1 (1d4+1) or 2 claws +2 (1d4+1) and bite +0 (1d4)**Base Atk** +2; **Grp** +4**Attack Options** favored enemy humanoid (human) +2**Combat Gear** masterwork club, 3 *potions of cure light wounds* and a *potion of remove paralysis***Abilities** Str 17, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14**SQ** hold breath, wild empathy +3**Feats** Multiattack, Track, Weapon Focus (club)**Skills** Balance +4, Jump +5, Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim +2**Possessions** combat gear, heavy shield made from a large turtle shell, masterwork club

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Treasure: Carefully hidden in the desk are two scrolls in watertight cases (DC 20 search). The first is an arcane scroll containing *detect secret doors*, *grease* and *darkvision*. The second is a divine scroll with *shillelagh*, *cure light wounds*, and *hold person*.

The Dining Room (EL 4)

Adjoining the living room is a sizable dining room. Any furniture that remains in the room is completely soiled and worthless. Ssyath has brought with him two monitor lizards that he uses as guards for this room. The hungry lizards attack any non-lizardfolk who enters.

Lizard, monitor (2)**CR 2**

N medium animal (Monster Manual 275)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Spot** +4, **Listen** +4**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13**hp** 22 (3 HD)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2**Spd** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.**Melee** bite +5 (1d8+4)**Base Atk** +2; **Grp** +5**Abilities** Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2**Feats** Alertness, Great Fortitude**Skills** Climb +7, Hide +6 (+8 forest), Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +5, Swim +11

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Treasure: Ssyath uses the monitor lizards to guard the treasure he has acquired during his campaign. Underneath the debris in this room he has hidden a locked chest (DC 15) containing 477 gp and 345 sp. Also underneath the debris is a suit of banded mail, a longsword, and a heavy steel shield that Ssyath took from a garrison member he ambushed and killed. If the remains are returned to the Diamond Lake garrison, the characters will be rewarded with 25 each and given a small medal worth 5 gp for their service.

The Kitchen

The kitchen contains an actual fire pit, but the chimney is blocked and must be cleared before it can be used. A staircase chocked with debris leads downstairs to a crude cellar.

The Pantry (EL 2)

The pantry, attached to the kitchen, has a number of empty and broken shelves along with two empty barrels.

Ssyath keeps the groups food stores in this location. He keeps the pantry locked at all times, but as an extra measure to discourage his troops from sneaking rations, he keeps three medium vipers as well. The vipers will spring forth and attack when the pantry door is opened.

Snake, medium vipers (3) CR 1

N medium animal (Monster Manual 280)

Init +3; **Senses** scent; **Spot** +5, **Listen** +5

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13

hp 9 (2 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d4-1 plus poison)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +0

Abilities Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +7

Poison (Ex): Injury, DC 11, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con.

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Treasure: The pantry contains 16 days worth of trail rations, and four waterskins. Also cleverly hidden among some refuse is a *potion of resist energy (acid)*.

Second Story

The second story of the manor is in complete ruins. Although there is no roof in its current state, the floor above prevents most of the rainwater from leaking into the first floor.

Cellar (EL 2)

The cellar is partially collapsed, but appears to be stable at the current time. Along one wall, a crumbling wine rack still stands, although others have already plundered it, leaving a pile of empty and broken bottles at its base. Ominous squeaking sounds can be heard coming from the basement with a Listen check (DC 10).

Numerous rats live in the cellar. Most are harmless, but a few dire rats are also present. They will attempt to swarm any characters that disturb the cellar.

Dire rats (6)

CR 1/3

N Small animal (Monster Manual 64)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Spot** +4, **Listen** +4

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d4 plus disease)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -4

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4

Feats Alertness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks. Dire rats have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Dire rats use their Dexterity modifier for Climb and Swim checks.

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Treasure: Hidden away among the refuse are some old mining items that the characters may find useful in the future, including a climber's kit, a hooded lantern, 3 flasks of oil, a miner's pick, 6 torches and 50 feet of hemp rope. Also included are a breathing mask, two miner's helmets and miner's outfits, a pickaxe and a rockhammer (see Wormfood Dragon 334). A careful search also turns up a small wooden chest containing 140 gp, 341 sp, an *elixir of swimming*, a *scroll of burning hands*, and a *potion of reduce person*.