

SAPPERS OF THE DEEP MOUNTAINS

Recommended Level: 1	Scalable for Levels 2-3
Expected Play Time: 3-5 hours	Player Count: 3-4 players

Adventure Summary

On a cold, foggy night in the mining village of Sterrville, a loud rumble echoes down from the mountain just before a billowing cloud erupts from the mine. A cave-in has occurred, and the village bells begin to ring as runners call for aid.

During a routine mining operation, the workers broke into a tunnel that was not dug by the miners, but by goblins attempting to flank the village from the mountainside. A tense and brief struggle followed, ending when the goblins ignited their blasting powder and brought sections of the mine crashing down around them.

Now, able hands are needed to clear the rubble, rescue the wounded, and venture deeper into the mine to make certain the goblins are driven off. Once an opening is made, the village needs volunteers to enter the mine, clear out the remaining goblins, and seal the sapper tunnel.

The objective is clear: find survivors, repel or kill the goblins, and seal the goblin sapper tunnel to prevent future attacks.

Contents

Adventure Summary	1
Background	3
Adventure Hook	3
Important NPCs	3
Running the Adventure	5
Key Locations	6
Encounters	8
Enemy Roster	12
Scaling the Adventure	12
Treasure and Rewards	14
Conclusion	15
Appendix	16

Appendix material includes the original stat blocks and maps.

Background

Sterrville is a robust mining town responsible for much of the iron and coal used throughout Thera. For generations, miners have expanded the large mining network above the town in the Dracadorian mountain steeps, ever digging deeper and reinforcing Sterrville as a powerhouse of resources. But the mine is the lifeblood of the town; if it falls, so does the longevity of the area.

Unknown to the villagers, a band of goblins had been tunneling through the mountain from the far side. Their goal was to create a hidden sapper tunnel that would allow them to raid Sterrville from above, bypassing the village roads and defenses. The goblins did not know the active mine tunnels were so close to their own passage.

During a routine mining operation, the miners broke through into the goblin tunnel. A brief and frantic struggle followed, and several miners managed to flee back toward the surface, warning the village that goblins were inside the mine.

Moments later, the goblins ignited their blasting powder, either in panic or in an attempt to collapse the breach. The explosion caused a major cave-in, trapping miners, killing or injuring several goblins, and leaving the sapper tunnel only partially blocked.

The villagers know the goblins caused the disaster, and they understand that the sapper tunnel must eventually be sealed. However, their immediate concern is saving the trapped miners before the unstable mine claims more lives. Once survivors are pulled free and a path deeper into the mine is opened, the village must deal with the remaining goblins and close the tunnel before Sterrville is attacked again.

Adventure Hook

1. The Alehouse Alarm

The party is resting in Sterrville's local alehouse when a deep rumble shakes the building hard enough to rattle mugs, knock bottles from shelves, and silence the room. Moments later, the mine bells begin ringing from up the mountain, and a runner bursts through the door covered in dust, shouting that the mine has collapsed and people are trapped inside.

The villagers immediately look to the party, seeing armed and capable strangers in a moment of panic. They are asked to help clear the rubble, rescue survivors, and protect the miners if whatever caused the collapse is still inside.

2. Hired Mine Guards

The party has been hired by Sterrville's mine foreman to provide extra protection after weeks of strange sounds, missing tools, and unexplained damage in the deeper tunnels. During their watch, the miners break into an unknown passage, revealing goblins preparing a sapper tunnel beneath the mountainside.

The goblins panic and ignite their blasting powder, triggering a cave-in. Now the party must rescue trapped workers, push through the damaged mine, and stop the goblins before they regroup or finish their attack on the village.

3. Trouble on the Mountain Road

The party is traveling through the mountains near Sterrville when they hear a violent explosion echo from above. A cloud of dust rises from the mine entrance, followed by the sound of village bells ringing below.

As they approach, they find miners, villagers, and guards scrambling in confusion. The party is asked to help stabilize the situation, recover survivors, and investigate the newly exposed goblin tunnel before the creatures can escape deeper into the mountain or strike the village again.

Important NPCs

The following NPCs may be used by the GM to guide the party, provide information, or represent the people of Sterrville during the crisis.

Foreman Ban Gillman

Role: Mine foreman and emergency organizer.

Location: Collapsed Mine entrance.

Use: Ban Gillman can explain the importance of the mine, organize rescue efforts, and ask the party to help clear the collapse.

Ban Gillman is a broad-shouldered, soot-stained man with a heavy coat, a dented lantern, and a voice made rough from years of shouting over picks and carts. He is practical, exhausted, and visibly frightened for the miners still trapped inside, though he tries to hide it behind orders and work.

Ban does not care about speeches or glory. He wants hands on shovels, beams braced, and people pulled out alive. He knows the mine better than anyone in Sterrville and can point the party toward likely trapped miners, unstable passages, and the section where the goblin breach occurred.

Shift Captain Hallmark

Role: Senior miner and witness to the breach.

Location: Mine entrance, wounded camp, or trapped deeper inside.

Use: Hallmark can provide firsthand information about the goblin tunnel, the collapse, and the condition of the mine before the explosion.

Hallmark is a grizzled shift captain with dust-caked hair, blood on his collar, and hands that shake only when he thinks no one is watching. He is stubborn, blunt, and ashamed that he made it out while others did not.

He saw the goblin tunnel moments before the explosion and can describe the rough, low passage beyond the breach. If found wounded or trapped, he may still try to give orders from the ground, insisting the party save the others before worrying about him.

Bartender Freya Hail

Role: Local civilian contact.

Location: Sterrville alehouse.

Use: Freya can introduce the characters to the situation if the adventure begins in town. She knows the villagers, the miners, and who may still be trapped.

Freya Hail is the owner of Sterrville's alehouse, a sharp-eyed woman with rolled sleeves, a steady voice, and no patience for panic. She knows nearly everyone in the village by name and is often the first person strangers meet when passing through.

Freya is warm when people need comfort and hard when people need direction. If the party begins in the alehouse, she can push them toward the crisis without making it feel forced. She knows which miners were on shift, which families were waiting outside, and who among the villagers could provide tools, rope, or medical supplies.

Guard Captain Haily Geertz

Role: Leader of Sterrville's local defense.

Location: Village square or mine entrance.

Use: Haily Geertz can coordinate guards, secure the village, and ask the party to enter the mine while her people protect Sterrville from further attack.

Haily Geertz is a disciplined village guard captain with a weathered cloak, a practical blade, and the tired focus of someone trying to hold a frightened town together. She speaks directly, wastes little time, and expects capable people to act when lives are at risk.

Haily understands the larger danger better than most villagers. The miners need saving, but if the goblin tunnel remains open, Sterrville may face a full raid. Because her guards are needed to protect the village and control the panic, she may ask the party to enter the mine in their place.

Running the Adventure

This adventure is written for a single game session and is structured as a rescue-and-clear mission inside the damaged Sterrville mine. The characters are responding to an active disaster, not exploring a forgotten dungeon. The mine is unstable, miners are trapped, and surviving goblins may still be somewhere in the tunnels.

The adventure should maintain a sense of urgency from the beginning. The villagers know goblins caused the collapse, but their immediate concern is rescuing those still trapped inside. Once the wounded and trapped miners are dealt with, attention shifts toward driving off the remaining goblins and sealing the sapper tunnel before it can be used in a future raid.

Adventure Structure

Part 1: The Mine Collapse

The adventure begins shortly after the collapse occurs. The village bells are ringing, injured miners are being carried from the mountain, and those who escaped report that goblins were seen in the mine before the explosion.

During this section, the characters may:

- Help clear rubble from the mine entrance.
- Treat wounded miners.
- Question survivors about what happened.
- Gather tools, rope, lanterns, timber, or other supplies.
- Prepare to enter the damaged mines

Part 2: The Rescue

Once the characters enter the mine, the adventure becomes a tense rescue mission. The tunnels are dark, dusty, and unstable, filled with broken supports, loose stone, and piles of shattered rock and bent mine ties. The shouts and groans of those buried behind the stone are only as horrifying as the silence of those who can no longer make a sound.

During this section, the characters may:

- Search for trapped miners.
- Clear rubble from blocked passages.
- Stabilize weakened tunnel supports.
- Avoid or survive further collapses.
- Decide whether to push deeper or return survivors to safety

Part 3: The Sapper Breach Tunnel

After the characters rescue the trapped miners and open a deeper path through the mine, they discover the goblin sapper tunnel. This tunnel was dug to allow the goblins to raid Sterrville from the mountainside, bypassing the village's normal defenses.

During this section, the characters must:

- Confront the surviving goblins.
- Stop any attempt to ignite more blasting powder.
- Prevent the goblins from escaping or regrouping.
- Seal, collapse, or otherwise secure the sapper tunnel

Tone and Pacing

This adventure should feel cramped, urgent, and dangerous. The mine is an active disaster zone filled with dust, darkness, shouting voices, creaking supports, and unstable stone.

The GM should keep the players focused by presenting immediate problems clearly. Someone is trapped. A support beam is failing. A wounded miner is losing strength. Goblins are moving deeper in the dark. The sapper tunnel remains open.

The players should always understand the next danger, even if they have several ways to deal with it.

Player Choice

The characters do not need to solve every problem in a fixed order. They may focus on rescuing miners first, chasing goblins, reinforcing tunnels, scouting ahead, gathering supplies, or questioning survivors.

Reward practical problem-solving. Rope, lanterns, mining tools, timber, healing magic, clever spell use, teamwork, and cautious planning should all help the party succeed.

Ending the Adventure

The adventure ends when the characters have addressed the two central problems: the trapped miners and the goblin sapper tunnel.

A complete success means the miners are rescued, the surviving goblins are defeated or driven off, and the sapper tunnel is sealed. A partial success may mean some miners are lost, goblins escape, or the tunnel is only temporarily blocked. A failure may leave Sterrville weakened and vulnerable to another goblin raid.

The GM should close the session by showing the village's response to the characters' actions. Depending on the outcome, the people of Sterrville may offer gratitude, payment, mourning, fear, or a desperate request for further help.

Key Locations

1. Collapsed Mine

Read-Aloud Text

The mouth of the mine yawns open against the mountainside, half-swallowed by dust and fog. Lantern light flickers across broken beams, scattered tools, and miners coughing in the cold night air. Deeper inside, the tunnel is choked with fallen stone, splintered timber, and the muffled sounds of trapped voices calling from beyond the collapse.

GM Description

The Collapsed Mine is a damaged mining tunnel filled with rubble, dust, wounded workers, and unstable supports. The mine was active only moments before the cave-in, so tools, lanterns, rope, ore carts, and broken crates are scattered throughout the area.

This location serves as the mine's main staging area. In better times, miners would gather their tools here, eat a quick meal, and receive their work assignments for the day. A small food store and cook fire sit in an offset room, while the main hallway contains stone piles and ore deposits ready for transport.

Cots and bedrolls have been laid out near the entrance to carry the wounded, and treatment has already begun for the few miners who have been pulled free.

Descriptive Details

- The air is thick with stone dust and difficult to breathe.
- Wooden supports groan under the weight of the damaged ceiling.
- Lanterns swing from bent hooks, casting uneven shadows.
- Miners outside the tunnel shout names into the dark, hoping for answers.
- The deeper collapse blocks the original work tunnel. Only darkness can be seen through the cracks.

2. Sapper Breach Tunnel

Read-Aloud Text

Beyond the worst of the collapse, the mine wall has been torn open into a jagged gap. On one side, the tunnel still bears the shape of human work: cut stone, timber supports, and iron rails. On the other, the passage narrows into a rough, low tunnel clawed through the mountain, its walls blackened by smoke and marked with crude tool cuts.

GM Description

The Sapper Breach Tunnel is where the miners accidentally broke into the goblins' hidden passage. This area marks the transition from the village mine into enemy territory. It is dangerous, narrow, and recently damaged.

Rubble from the explosion partially blocks both sides of the breach, and the floor is covered in loose stone, splintered wood, and dropped tools.

On the miners' side lie injured workers and large piles of stone rubble. Beyond the breach, more stone must be cleared before the characters can venture into the goblin passage. Through the rubble, a barely lit hall can be seen, with a few goblins moving about and preparing to repel an attack. The breach forms a narrow chokepoint, tight enough for only one creature to slip through at a time.

Descriptive Details

- The breach is rough and scattered, clearly cut recently without planning or support.
- The stone around the opening is cracked and blackened.
- A crude goblin barricade partially blocks the narrow passage.
- Broken pickaxes, goblin blades, and shattered lantern glass litter the floor.
- The smell of smoke, blood, and blasting powder hangs in the air.
- The goblin tunnel beyond is too low and uneven to feel safe.

3. Sapper Living Tunnels

Read-Aloud Text

Behind one door lies a large, low-ceilinged room with multiple cook fires and scattered tables. Judging by the many bedrolls laid about, this chamber serves as both a mess hall and barracks. An offset granary holds salted meat, hard cheeses, sacks of grain, and cracked barrels, far more than a passing raiding party would need.

Further into the tunnel is a flat chamber split into two sections. One half contains a cage filled with bones and many Hoblins, while the other holds crates of tools, torches, and mining supplies.

GM Description

The Sapper Living Tunnels are the goblins' barracks and domestic space. This area is filthy, crowded, and hostile. It is not an abandoned cave; it is the rough camp of a raiding force that has been living underground for a while.

The tunnels branch into several chambers. Some are used for sleeping, while others are used for cooking or storing goods. Herrma Jall can be found in the area with the Hoblin cage, while Buk Buk is found with the supplies in the same room.

This area is built for close-quarters combat. The low ceilings make vertical movement impossible, and any fight in these sections is contested by fierce resistance from foes smaller and quicker than most parties. The goblins use barricades to make forward progress difficult and send in Hoblins to harass the party and push them back.

Descriptive Details

- The ceilings are low, forcing taller characters to duck in places.
- Crude sleeping spots line the floors in crowded clusters.
- Smoke from small cookfires makes the air stale and bitter.
- Refuse piles, bones, broken bowls, and scraps of cloth are scattered everywhere.
- Hoblin cages show deep claw marks and the scent of old blood.

4. Sapper Junction

Read-Aloud Text

A cramped tunnel splits in two. Torches are few here, allowing darkness to seep in and dust to linger heavily in the air. One side leads to a crudely cut dead end, while the other turns deeper into the tunnel.

GM Description

This junction is a false corridor used to prevent a counterattack after a raid. The “dead end” contains a hidden door that can be spotted with a bit of searching, requiring a Perception check DC 12.

The hidden door is a stone and clay slab constructed to fit into slots carved into the walls. It can be lifted and moved aside by prying it up with a tool, such as a knife.

The other tunnel, which appears open, contains a primed tripwire. If a creature moves through it, spears held under tension spring out from the wall, dealing 1d8 Piercing damage to the creature that triggered it unless they evade the trap with a Dexterity Save DC 12.

Once triggered, the spears block the tunnel unless time is taken to break or remove them.

Descriptive Details

- The torches are old, weak, and spaced too far apart, leaving heavy shadows between them.
- Dust hangs in the air and stings the eyes when disturbed.
- The false dead end looks rough and unfinished, but the stonework around it is slightly too neat.
- Scrape marks can be seen on the floor near the hidden slab.
- The open tunnel is cleaner than the dead end, as if it was meant to draw intruders forward.

- A thin tripwire stretches low across the open passage, nearly hidden by shadow and dust.
- Small holes in the tunnel wall conceal the spear trap.
- The spears are crude but sharp, made from rough wood and jagged metal tips.
- Once triggered, the spears jut across the passage like a sudden wall of stakes

5. Sapper Track Tunnels

Read-Aloud Text

Iron tracks run through this wide, rough-cut room, disappearing into twin dark tunnels ahead. Small carts sit along the rails, some loaded with stone, others stacked with tools, timber, sacks, and sealed powder kegs. Unlike the rest of the goblin tunnels, this area has a strange sense of order, as though every crate and pickaxe has been counted, watched, and made ready to be sent farther in.

GM Description

The Sapper Track Tunnels are the supply and work passages of the goblin operation. These tunnels are used to move stone, tools, goods, and blasting powder through the mountain to the work site, as well as to haul overburden out of the tunnel.

This is the planning area for the entire operation and serves as the base camp where Jerruuk Tunnel-Makr devises his grand raid. He can be found near the far side of the room in a storage alcove, with maps strewn across barrels and crates.

The room is wide and open, with only a few pillars blocking line of sight. Many barrels of blasting powder are piled throughout the area. One wrong move could turn the battle into a fatal burial.

Descriptive Details

- Iron rails cut through the room, half-buried under dust, gravel, and dropped tools.
- Loaded mine carts creak slightly when touched or pushed.
- Some carts are filled with stone, while others carry timber, rope, tools, sacks, and sealed powder kegs.
- The smell of dust, sweat, oil, and blasting powder hangs heavily in the air.
- Crates and barrels are stacked with unusual care, as though someone has been keeping strict count.
- Rough maps are spread across barrels and weighted down with stones, tools, and empty mugs.
- Pickaxes, wedges, and hammers are arranged near the work alcove for easy reach.
- The support pillars are thick, rough-cut, and scarred by old tool marks.
- The twin tunnels ahead vanish into darkness, with the rails continuing into both passages.
- Powder barrels sit too close to the fighting space, making open flame, sparks, and missed attacks dangerous.

Encounters

The following encounters are written to match the major locations in the adventure. The Collapsed Mine is treated as a roleplay and rescue section, while each sapper location receives one major encounter.

Collapsed Mine Rescue Events

The Collapsed Mine section is meant to introduce the disaster, give the party immediate heroic work, and teach basic problem-solving before the adventure turns into a goblin tunnel incursion.

The GM may use the following rescue events as needed. Choose two for a shorter session, or use all three of them if the party spends more time helping at the mine entrance.

Rescue Event: Voices Beneath the Stone

Location: Collapsed Mine
 Encounter Type: Rescue / skill challenge
 Purpose: Establishes the trapped miners as an immediate concern.

Setup

The party hears muffled voices from beyond a wall of fallen stone and broken beams. Several miners are trapped in an air pocket on the far side of the collapse. They are alive, but the passage between them and the entrance is blocked.

Challenge

The characters must find a way to reach the trapped miners without causing another collapse. They may dig by hand, use mining tools, brace the ceiling, crawl through a narrow gap, or coordinate villagers to clear debris.

Possible Complications

- A support beam begins to crack.
- Loose stone shifts under careless movement.
- A miner on the far side begins coughing and weakening.
- A frightened villager tries to dig too quickly and must be stopped.

Success

The party opens a safe path or narrow crawlspace and rescues the miners. The rescued miners can confirm that goblins were seen just before the explosion and point to the area of the breach as well as a idea of how many goblins they may face.

Failure

The miners are not immediately lost, but the rescue becomes harder. The GM may introduce falling stone, an injured miner, or a delay that worsens the mine's condition.

Rescue Event: Pinned Under Timber

Location: Collapsed Mine
 Encounter Type: Rescue / medical emergency
 Purpose: Gives the party a personal, urgent rescue moment.

Setup

A miner is trapped beneath a fallen support beam. They are conscious but badly hurt, and two villagers are trying to lift the beam without success.

Challenge

The party must lift, lever, cut, or brace the beam while preventing the ceiling above from shifting. Once the miner is freed, they must be stabilized with a Medicine Check DC 10 or carried to safety.

Possible Complications

- Pulling the beam carelessly causes stone to fall.
- The trapped miner panics and struggles.
- Another villager is injured while trying to help.
- The beam is still supporting part of the ceiling.

Success

The miner is freed and stabilized. They can tell the party they heard goblin voices deeper in the mine after the collapse.

Failure

The miner survives but suffers worse injuries, or the party must choose between freeing them quickly and keeping the tunnel stable.

Rescue Event: Dust and Bad Air

Location: Collapsed Mine
 Encounter Type: Environmental hazard
 Purpose: Teaches the Moodles System

Setup

A section of the tunnel is filled with thick stone dust and stale air. Miners may be trapped beyond it, but staying too long risks suffocation and gaining Exhaustion Moodles.

Challenge

The party must move carefully through the dust, cover their mouths, create airflow, or find another route. Characters carrying miners may have greater difficulty. For each minute spent without fresh air is a minute suffocating. If carrying a miner while unable to breath with gain a Exhaustion muddle for each minute. Only dissipating if the effected sits and breathes for the length of a break.

Possible Complications

- A lantern flame flickers low.
- A character hears a miner calling but cannot see them.
- Dust hides a gap, broken rail, or unstable floor.
- A loud action shakes loose more debris.

Success

The party crosses the area safely and reaches another trapped miner.

Failure

The party loses time, suffers exhaustion or injury at the GM's discretion, or attracts attention from goblins beyond the breach.

Major Encounter 1: Goblin Forward Sapper Squad

Location: Sapper Breach Tunnel
 Encounter Type: Combat / chokepoint / discovery
 Suggested Enemies: 2-3 Goblin Scouts, 1-2 Goblin Rangers
 Primary Threat: Goblins defending the breach and trying to delay pursuit.
 Encounter Goal: Push through the breach and enter the sapper tunnels.

Setup

The Sapper Breach Tunnel is the first point where the party fully enters goblin-controlled territory. A small group of surviving goblin sappers has taken cover behind rubble, broken beams, and crude barricades. They are shaken by the explosion but still alert enough to know that anyone coming through the breach is a threat.

The goblins are not trying to win a glorious fight. They are trying to delay the party, keep the breach contested, and warn the rest of the tunnel if possible.

Read-Aloud Text

The jagged breach narrows into a low, smoke-stained tunnel. Broken beams and loose stone have been dragged into a crude barricade across the passage. Behind it, small green figures shift in the dim light, their blades and tools catching the lantern glow as one of them hisses a warning down the tunnel. The small chamber beyond has been crudely fortified, and any attempt to enter the breach will be met with arrow and steel.

Encounter Features

- Crude Barricade: Provides cover for the goblins.
- Low Ceiling: Taller characters may feel cramped, especially near the goblin side.
- Smoke and Dust: Visibility is poor unless the party brings strong light.

Goblin Tactics

The goblins fight defensively. They use the barricade, narrow tunnel, and rubble to limit how many characters can engage them at once. With heavy attempt to keep the party at a distance.

They may

- Attack from behind the barricade.
- Retreat only if badly hurt.
- Use Targeted hits to attempt to Daze or Slow the attack.

The goblins are holding the line from what they know to be a attempt to dismantle their hard work. They are angry and ready for a battle.

Development

If the party captures or intimidates a goblin, it may reveal one or more of the following:

- The goblins were digging a raid tunnel toward Sterrville.
- The mine was not supposed to be this close.
- "Tunnel-Makr" is deeper inside.
- "The wrangler" keeps the Hoblins in the living tunnels.
- The orc quartermaster keeps the powder and tools near the tracks.

If a goblin escapes, later encounters may be more fortified.

Success

The party clears the breach they gain access to the sapper tunnels.

Failure or Delay

The goblins retreat and warn the deeper tunnels. The GM may increase the readiness of the next encounter or have goblins prepare traps and barricades.

Major Encounter 2: Herrma's Hoblin Pens

Location: Sapper Living Tunnels
 Encounter Type: Combat
 Suggested Enemies: Herrma Jall, Buk Buk 1 Goblin Ranger, 1-2 Hoblins
 Primary Threat: Herrma unleashing Hoblins in cramped tunnels.
 Encounter Goal: Survive the Hoblins.

Setup

The Sapper Living Tunnels are filthy, crowded, and unstable. Herrma Jall has gathered several goblins near the Hoblin pens and is trying to restore order after the blast. If the party has made noise or allowed a goblin to escape from the breach, Herrma is ready for them.

If Herrma has been alerted, 1-3 Hobblins will attempt to ambush the party in the Barracks or outer hallway leading to the Caged room and Quartermaster Supply area.

Read-Aloud Text

The passage opens into a cramped den of smoke, scraps, and low stone alcoves. Crude cages and chained posts line one wall, each marked by claw grooves and old blood. A sharp-eyed goblin woman stands near the pens with a shepherd's hook in her hand, while hunched and hungry figures snarl in the dark behind her.

Encounter Features

- Hoblin Pens: Crude cages holding feral Hobblins.
- Buk Buk and his assistant.

Herrma's Tactics

Herrma does not fight like a soldier. She is a handler controlling dangerous animals.

She may:

- Use the Hobblins as her main weapon letting them attempt to flood over the party
- Order Buk Buk to engage in close combat, Using his orc bulk.
- Sling spells from afar and move to avoid capture.

Herrma is cruel, clever, and practical. She values the Hobblins as weapons, not companions.

Success

The party defeats or drives off Herrma, If Herrma is captured, she may bargain with information about Jerruuk

Failure or Delay

Herrma escapes deeper into the tunnels or releases more Hobblins behind her.

Major Encounter 3: Jerruuk's Last Stand

Location: Sapper Track Tunnels.

Encounter Type: Final combat / objective encounter

Suggested Enemies: Jerruuk Tunnel-Makr, 1-2 Goblin Ranger, 1 Goblin War Caster, 1-2 Goblin Scout.

Primary Threat: Jerruuk attempting to preserve or collapse the sapper tunnel.

Encounter Goal: Defeat or drive off the goblin leaders and seal the tunnel.

Setup

The Sapper Track Tunnels is the heart of the goblin operation. By the time the party reaches it, Jerruuk Tunnel-Makr knows the raid has failed or is close to failure. He is furious, embarrassed, and desperate to keep control of what remains of his force.

The room contains tunnel plans, powder barrels, crates, tools, stolen goods, and the main route deeper into the sapper network. Jerruuk may be preparing to flee, rallying his goblins, or setting powder to collapse the breach behind him.

Read-Aloud Text

The tunnel opens into a broad, rough chamber lit by smoky lanterns and guttering flames. Crates, tools, rope, and powder barrels line the walls, while a crude table at the center is covered in scratched maps of Sterrville and the mine. A squat, grey-skinned goblin with deep age lines across his face turns from the table, his expression twisting from outrage into command.

Encounter Features

- Command Table: Holds maps, tunnel plans, and raid notes.
- Powder Barrels: Can become a major hazard if ignited.
- Crates and Supplies: Provide cover and obstacles.
- Multiple Tunnel Exits: Allow movement, retreat, or reinforcements.
- Support Beams: Can be damaged, braced, or used as part of sealing the tunnel.
- Jerruuk's Space: Better furs, trophies, stolen valuables, or signs of rank.

Jerruuk's Tactics

Jerruuk wants to survive, preserve his pride, and deny the party an easy victory.

He may:

- Order goblins to hold chokepoints.
- Use crates and powder barrels as threats.
- Try to collapse part of the tunnel if cornered.
- Flee if his followers fall and the tunnel remains open.

Jerruuk is arrogant but not stupid. If he believes he can win, he fights. If he believes the raid is lost, he tries to escape or destroy evidence of failure.

Final Objective: Seal the Tunnel

The fight should not end the moment the last enemy falls. The party must still make the sapper tunnel unusable.

They may seal the tunnel by:

- Collapsing a controlled section.
- Bracing and blocking the passage-with timber and stone.
- Using recovered tools to cave in a narrow section.
- Igniting or safely using powder under controlled conditions.
- Coordinating miners to help after the area is secured.
- Reporting the tunnel route so Sterrville can permanently close it.

The GM should allow practical solutions. The key is that the party must address the tunnel itself, not just kill enemies.

Complication: Powder Threat

If the party has been reckless, the powder barrels may be ignited.

Each barrel has a blast radius of 15 feet, originating from the barrel itself. Any creature caught within the blast radius must make a DC 13 Dexterity Save or take $1d8 + 3$ Blast Damage, taking half damage on a success. If a barrel is within the blast radius of another exploding barrel, it also explodes. This chain continues until no more barrels are within range. For ease of use, handle each barrel separately. Once a barrel is lit, it explodes at the end of the next turn.

Success

The party defeats or drives off Jerruuk, secures the Main Room, and seals the sapper tunnel. Sterrville is safe from the immediate raid threat.

Failure

Jerruuk escapes, ignites powder, or leaves the tunnel usable. Sterrville remains vulnerable, and the adventure may lead into a follow-up goblin raid or deeper mountain pursuit.

Enemy Roster

Goblin Sapper Boss - Jerruuk Tunnel-Makr

Role: Sapper commander and main enemy leader.
Location: Sapper Track Tunnels.
Use: Jerruuk serves as the final organized threat of the adventure. He commands surviving goblins, tries to maintain control after the failed raid, and may attempt to use blasting powder or collapsing tunnels if cornered.

Rotund and squat, Jerruuk is a grey-skinned goblin with deep age lines crossing his face. He carries himself like a goblin of great importance, proudly leading the first sapper raiders of his tribe. He is ruthless toward those outside goblinoid lineage, believing green and grey skin to be the best under the sun. He sees Hillmin as soft-skinned traitors and humans as marks waiting to be looted. Even among his own people, Jerruuk treats most goblins as little more than labor, tools, or entertainment.

Hoblin Wrangler - Herrma Jall

Role: Beast-handler and controller of the Hoblins.
Location: Sapper Living Tunnels.
Use: Herrma manages the unstable Hoblin pack and may unleash them if the party pushes too far into the sapper tunnels. She works best as a mid-adventure threat who turns a cramped tunnel fight into a chaotic encounter.

Herrma Jall is the master of keeping the feral, cannibalistic Hoblins of the raiding group stable and ready to be unleashed. She is treated with reverence by the other goblins, and she acts like she deserves it. Herrma knows she alone keeps the horde from tearing itself apart in the tunnels. She is sharp, cruel, and very good at her work. To her, the Hoblins are not pets or allies, but weapons that must be fed, frightened, and aimed at the right enemy.

Quartermaster - Buk Buk

Role: Supply keeper and physical enforcer.
Location: Sapper Living Tunnels.
Use: Buk Buk guards tools, weapons, ore carts, blasting supplies, and goods. He serves best as a tough enforcer for Herrma in the living chambers.

Buk Buk is a tall, strong, and fiercely loyal orc who manages the raiding group's supplies. He loves his lists, his stock, and the order of a properly counted armory. He knows every pickaxe, dagger, sack of blasting powder, and tool handed out to the raiders. If something fails to return by the end of the day, Buk Buk knows who had it and makes them pay for it or bring it back. He enjoys the thrill of raids and is always willing to throw hands with any goblin foolish enough to slight him.

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure is written for 3-4 Level 1 characters, but the GM can adjust the difficulty depending on party size, player experience, and how dangerous they want the mine to feel.

Because this is an onboarding adventure, scaling should focus on changing the number of enemies, how quickly hazards escalate, and how much support the party receives from the villagers.

For 3 Players

For a smaller party, reduce the number of enemies in each combat encounter and give the characters more time to react to environmental dangers.

Use the following adjustments:

- Remove 1 goblin from most combat encounters.
- Keep Hoblins chained, caged, or delayed for the first round before they can attack.
- Allow wounded miners or village guards to provide information, tools, or limited help outside combat.
- Reduce the number of simultaneous hazards in the Collapsed Mine.
- Give the party clear warnings before a tunnel collapse, powder ignition, or other major danger.

This version should still feel dangerous, but the party should not be overwhelmed by action economy.

For 4 Players

For four Level 1 characters, run the adventure as written.

This is the expected party size. The party should have enough actions to handle rescue work, tunnel hazards, and goblin encounters without requiring major adjustment.

For 5 Players

For a larger party, increase enemy numbers slightly and make hazards more active.

Use the following adjustments:

- Add 1 goblin to each major combat encounter.
- Add 1 extra goblin guard near the Sapper Breach Tunnel or Sapper Track Tunnels.
- Give Jerruuk Tunnel-Makr one additional bodyguard in the final encounter.
- Add one additional environmental complication during the rescue section, such as a weakening support beam, blocked passage, or trapped miner in immediate danger.

Do not simply double enemy numbers. The goal is to keep pressure on the party without slowing the one-shot down.

For Level 2-3 Characters

For higher-level characters, increase the danger of the goblin operation rather than only adding more enemies.

Use the following adjustments:

- Add more goblins to patrols and defensive positions.
- Allow Herrma Jall to release Hoblins earlier in the dungeon.
- Give Buk Buk better armor, a stronger weapon, or additional goblin assistants.
- Add a second wave of goblins during the final confrontation if the party is handling the fight too easily.

At this level, the goblins should feel more organized and prepared, even if they are still recovering from the explosion.

For Brand-New Players

If this adventure is being used to teach Armor & Arcana, introduce rules one step at a time.

Use the following approach:

- Start with simple rescue checks before combat begins.
- Use the first goblin fight to teach contested attack and defense rolls.
- Introduce cover through rubble, crates, mine carts, or broken beams.
- Introduce conditions only when they matter directly.
- Use environmental hazards after the players understand basic actions.
- Let NPCs clearly state immediate goals, such as "clear the rubble," "find the trapped miners," or "seal the tunnel."

The adventure should teach the system through play rather than stopping the session for long explanations.

Adjusting the Final Encounter

The final encounter should test whether the party can stop the goblins and secure the sapper tunnel, not simply whether they can kill every enemy.

For an easier final encounter:

- Use fewer goblin allies.
- Keep powder barrels away from open flame.
- Have Jerruuk focus on escape rather than collapsing the tunnel.
- Allow the party to seal the tunnel after combat without further checks.

For a harder final encounter:

- Add goblin reinforcements from a side tunnel.
- Place blasting powder near the center of the room.
- Have Jerruuk threaten to ignite the powder if cornered.

- Require the party to secure the tunnel while under pressure.
- Let surviving goblins attempt to protect supplies and block exits.

The best version of the final encounter should give the party two goals at once: survive the goblins and prevent the tunnel from remaining usable.

Treasure and Rewards

The Sapper Tunnels are full of loot and goods the adventurers may find and take. The following tables may be used by the GM to determine what the party discovers while searching goblin stores, supply carts, bodies, or stolen stockpiles.

Equipment Loot

1d10	Armor Loot	Weapon Loot
1	Fine Padded Armor - Light armor.	Fine Dagger - 1d4 Piercing, Dexterity-based, One-Handed, Common, Throwable 30 ft.
2	Fine Leather Armor - Light armor. Strength 2+ required	Fine Hand Axe - 1d6 Slicing, Strength-based, One-Handed, Common, Throwable 30 ft.
3	Fine Quilted Armor - Light armor. Strength 2+ required.	Fine Short Sword - 1d6 Slicing, Strength-based, One-Handed, Common,
4	Buckler - Shield.	Fine Mace - 1d8 Bludgeoning, Strength-based, One-Handed, Common,
5	Fine Brigandine Armor - Medium armor; Strength 8+ required.	Fine Longbow - 1D8 Piercing Damage, Dexterity based, Two handed, Military Weapon Range (150ft)
6	Fine Chain Mail Armor - Medium armor; Strength 8+ required.	Fine Longsword - 1d8/1d10, Hand-and-a-Half, Military weapon.
7	Good Brigandine Armor - Medium armor; Strength 8+ required.	Fine Heavy Crossbow - 1d10 Piercing, Dexterity-based, Two-Handed, Reloading, Range 120 ft.
8	Good Chain Mail Armor - Medium armor; Strength 8+ required.	Good Hand Axe - 1d6 Slicing, Strength-based, One-Handed, Common, Throwable 30 ft
9 -10	Fine Heavy Armor - Heavy armor; Strength 15+ required.	Good Halberd - 1d12 Slicing, Strength-based, Two-Handed, Military, Pole-Reach.

Supply Loot

1d10	Loot
1	Torch - 1 hour of light; 30 ft bright light and 10 ft dim light.
2	Waterskin - Holds 4 pints of clean water.
3	Lesser Health Tonic X2.
4	20 ft Hemp Rope
5	Adventure Kit - Torch, food rations x4, and 20 ft hemp rope.
6	First Aid Kit - Allows non-magical stabilization of a dying creature.
7	Whetstone and Oil - +1 to hit for 8 hours after maintenance; 3 uses.
8	Blacksmith's Repair Kit - Repairs broken or dulled metal gear back to Fine quality; 3 uses.
9	Rations X4
10	Navigator's Kit - Map case, compass, charcoal stick, and parchment scraps; grants Advantage on Navigation/Survival checks during travel.

Conclusion

The adventure concludes once the party has dealt with the immediate disaster in the Sterrville mine and resolved the threat of the goblin sapper tunnel. By the end of the session, the characters should have discovered the cause of the collapse, rescued as many trapped miners as possible, and either sealed the goblin tunnel or left it as an unresolved danger.

Complete Success

If the characters rescue the trapped miners, defeat or drive off the surviving goblins, and seal the sapper tunnel, Sterrville is saved from both the cave-in and the planned raid. The villagers gather at the mine entrance to thank the party, mourn the dead, and begin the hard work of repairing the damage.

The party receives the promised reward, along with the respect of Sterrville's people. Word of their actions may spread to nearby settlements, earning them future work, favors, or a useful reputation among miners, merchants, and local authorities.

Partial Success

If the characters rescue some miners but fail to fully seal the sapper tunnel, Sterrville survives the night but remains in danger. The villagers are grateful for the lives saved, but fear that the goblins may return once they recover.

If the goblins are defeated but too many miners die, the village is safe but grieving. The party may still receive payment, though the victory feels costly.

If the tunnel is sealed but some goblins escape, the village is protected for now, but the surviving goblins may become future enemies.

Failure

If the characters fail to rescue the miners or leave the sapper tunnel open, Sterrville is left wounded and vulnerable. The mine may be damaged beyond immediate repair, families mourn those lost beneath the stone, and the surviving goblins may use the tunnel again or dig a new route.

A failed outcome does not need to end the story. It can lead into a follow-up adventure involving a goblin raid, a deeper expedition into the mountain, or a desperate attempt to recover bodies and supplies from the ruined mine.

Rewards

At the GM's discretion, the characters may receive one or more of the following rewards:

- Coin promised by the village, mine foreman, or local authority.
- Salvaged mining tools, ore, gems, or trade goods.
- Free lodging and meals in Sterrville.
- Discounts from local craftsmen or merchants.
- The gratitude of rescued miners and their families.
- Future work from Sterrville or nearby settlements.

Continuing the Story

This one-shot can stand alone, but it may also lead into a larger campaign. Surviving goblins might retreat to a larger warband, the sapper tunnel may connect to older ruins beneath the mountain, or the blasting powder may have exposed something deeper than either the miners or goblins expected.

Appendix

Goblin Ranger

Goblinoid

Short Greenskinned creatures with beady yellow eyes and sloped foreheads. Known for thier violent culture and raiding nature.

Combat Statistics

HP: 13

Mana: 0

Movement: 25

To Hit: -1

Defense: +1

EXP Worth: 20

Size: Small

Languages: can speak Goblin and understand Merchant

STR: 10 (+1)

DEX: 13 (+2)

CON: 8 (+1)

WIS: 4 (-3)

INT: 4 (-3)

CHA: 4 (-3)

Abilities

Goblin Pack: If another goblin is within this goblin's Contested Space it gets one extra attack.

Goblin Bow (Dull): a Dexterity based attack using the DexterityModifier as a Bonus to the 1D6 Piercing for Damage, Range (80ft).

Loot Inventory

Dull Shortbow, 1D6 Piercing Damage, Dexterity based, Two handed, Common Weapon Range(80ft)

1D10 Cp.

Goblin Scout

Goblinoid

Short Greenskinned creatures with beady yellow eyes and sloped foreheads. Known for thier violent culture and raiding nature.

Combat Statistics

HP: 16

Mana: 0

Movement: 25

To Hit: -1

Defense: +2

EXP Worth: 20

Size: Small

Languages: can speak Goblin and understand Merchant

STR: 10 (+1)

DEX: 13 (+2)

CON: 8 (+1)

WIS: 4 (-3)

INT: 4 (-3)

CHA: 4 (-3)

Abilities

Smash: Three times per combat the goblin may use its full body weight to hit an opponent adding +3 to Damage.

Goblin Pack: If another goblin is within this goblin's Contested Space it gets one extra attack.

Goblin Cudgel (Dull): a Strength based attack using the Strength Modifier as a Bonus to the 1D8 Bludgeoning for Damage.

Loot Inventory

Dull Club, 1D8 Bludgeoning Damage, Strength based, Two handed, Military Weapon

1D10 Cp.

Hoblin

Goblinoid

Lanky leather-skinned Goblinoids with bulbous heads, Sharp teeth and glowing yellow eyes. Known for being feral and cannibalistic, Often used as shock troops by goblin raders.

Combat Statistics

HP: 8

Mana: 0

Movement: 30

To Hit: +1

Defense: +2

EXP Worth: 15

Size: Middling

Languages: can speak Goblin

STR: 10 (+1)

DEX: 8 (+1)

CON: 5 (-3)

WIS: 2 (-4)

INT: 2 (-4)

CHA: 2 (-4)

Abilities

Full charge: Twice per combat the if the Hoblin has 10 ft of run up space it may use its Action to charge a creature and ram them. Forcing them to succeed a opposed Strength Check or be launched backwards 10 ft and land Prone.

Fine Shortsword: a Strength based attack using the Strength Modifier as a Bonus to the 1D6 Slicing for Damage.

Loot Inventory

Fine Shortsword, 1D6 Slicing Damage, Strength based, One handed, Common Weapon
1D10 Cp.

Goblin War Caster

Goblinoid

Combat Statistics

HP: 10

Mana: 80

Movement: 35

To Hit: +3

Defense: +3 (Warded)

EXP Worth: 40

Size: Small

Languages: Merchant (understood), Goblin (Spoken)

STR: 10 (+1)

DEX: 10 (+1)

CON: 8 (+1)

WIS: 4 (-3)

INT: 15 (+4)

CHA: 4 (-3)

Abilities

Goblin Pack: if another goblin is within this goblin's contested space it gains one additional attack.

Hex Bolt: can be thrown out to 60 ft, Any caught in the 10 ft cube must make a **Dexterity Save** against **DC 16**, dealing 1D6 Spirit Damage on a failed Save.

Spirit Beam: Costing 35 Mana, a brilliant shining beam that strikes in a straight line out to 30ft before fading away. Any caught in the blast must make a **Dexterity Save** against **DC 16**, or take 3D6 Spirit Damage, half Damage on a success.

Wisp Whip: Costing 30 Mana, out to a range of 30ft. If the attack hits Deal 2D6 Spirit Damage and you may pull the enemy 10 ft nearer to you. The foe will turn ethereal during the pull, passing through other creatures unharmed and becoming solid once reaching their destination in an unoccupied space.

Bind Soul: Costing 25 Mana, the caster choses two creatures it can see and binds them together. Any harm done to one is shared with the other, So is healing. This effect lasts until a minute passes or the caster loses concentration.

Loot Inventory

Fine Staff, 1D6 Bludgeoning Damage, Strength based, Two handed, Common Weapon | Fine: 30Sp |

1D10 + 5Cp

Herrma Jall

Goblinoid

Herrma Jall is the master of keeping the feral, cannibalistic Hobblins of the raiding group stable and ready to be unleashed. She is treated with reverence by the other goblins, and she acts like she deserves it. Herrma knows she alone keeps the horde from tearing itself apart in the tunnels. She is sharp, cruel, and very good at her work. To her, the Hobblins are not pets or allies, but weapons that must be fed, frightened, and aimed at the right enemy.

Combat Statistics

HP: 28

Mana: 0

Movement: 25

To Hit: +1

Defense: +4

EXP Worth: 50

Size: Small

Languages: Merchant , Goblin (Spoken)

STR: 10 (+1)

DEX: 10 (+1)

CON: 8(+1)

WIS: 4 (-3)

INT: 15 (+4)

CHA: 4(-3)

Abilities

Path Of The Ranged-Focused Assailant:

Three times per Combat, as a Quick Action, you may focus your energy while wielding a Ranged Weapon adding +2 to the To-Hit Roll of that Attack.

Spark of Mana spell:

Willow Spark, Costing 0 Mana with a range of 120ft. the caster sends out a ball of energy to a target they have seen once who is still within spell range, the spell will twist around cover to deliver the spell attack. dealing 1D4 Spirit +4 on a hit.

Fine Light Crossbow:

Dexterity based attack out to a range of 120ft. Dealing 1D6 + 1 on a hit.

Loot Inventory

Studded Leather Armor, Strength prerequisite of 8 or greater, Medium armor | Fine: 60Sp |

Light Crossbow, 1D6 Piercing Damage, Dexterity based, Two handed, Common weapon, Reloading, Range (120ft) | Fine: 30Sp |

Buk Buk

Orc, Humanoid

tall, strong, and fiercely loyal orc who manages the raiding group's supplies. He loves his lists, his stock, and the order of a properly counted armory. He knows every pickaxe, dagger, sack of blasting powder, and tool handed out to the raiders. If something fails to return by the end of the day, Buk Buk knows who had it and makes them pay for it or bring it back. He enjoys the thrill of raids and is always willing to throw hands with any goblin foolish enough to slight him.

Combat Statistics

HP: 29

Mana: 39

Movement: 30

To Hit: +3

Defense: +4

EXP Worth: 50

Size: Middling

Languages: Merchant , Orach, Goblin (Spoken)

STR: 15 (+4)

DEX: 10 (+1)

CON: 14(+3)

WIS: 4 (-3)

INT: 8 (+1)

CHA: 4(-3)

Abilities

Unarmed Experience: If you make a successful strike, your fists do 1D6 Bludgeoning Damage plus your Strength Modifier. +3 to hit.

Improvised Weapon Improvement: When wielding an Uncommon Weapon, you add 1D4 to the Damage Dice.

Martial Artist:

☐ Double Palm Strike

☐ **Mana Cost: 5:** slam both palms into an opponent, they must make an Opposing Strength Roll against you or be sent sprawling straight backward 10 ft. If they make contact with anything that would stop that Movement, they take 1D10 Bludgeoning Damage and stop moving at that point of impact. If what stopped them is a creature, that creature takes half of that Damage as well.

☐ Iron Fist

☐ **Mana Cost: 20:** hitting hard enough to make Armor irrelevant. With this Attack you disregard any Armor Bonus and deal 1D6 Bludgeoning Damage if you succeed in beating the Defensive Roll.

Loot Inventory

Studded Leather Armor, Strength prerequisite of 8 or greater, Medium armor | Fine: 60Sp |

Lesser Health Tonic.

Jerruuk Tunnel-Makr

Goblinoid

Rotund and squat, Jerruuk is a grey-skinned goblin with deep age lines crossing his face. He carries himself like a goblin of great importance, proudly leading the first sapper raiders of his tribe. He is ruthless toward those outside goblinoid lineage, believing green and grey skin to be the best under the sun. He sees Hillmin as soft-skinned traitors and humans as marks waiting to be looted. Even among his own people, Jerruuk treats most goblins as little more than labor, tools, or entertainment.

Combat Statistics

HP: 27

Mana: 0

Movement: 25

To Hit: +1

Defense: +6

EXP Worth: 50

Size: Small

Languages: Merchant , Orach, Goblin (Spoken)

STR: 15 (+4)

DEX: 4 (-3)

CON: 14(+3)

WIS: 4 (-3)

INT: 11(+2)

CHA: 8(+1)

Abilities

Defensive Posture: you may take a Quick Action at the start of your Turn to assume a Defensive Posture, gaining +2 Armor Bonus until the start of your next Turn.

Riposte: Once per Combat Encounter, when a Creature Attacks you and your Defense Roll exceeds their Attack Roll; you may use your Reaction (if available) to immediately strike back, dealing 1D4 Bludgeoning Damage as you slam your weapon's hilt, shield edge, or elbow into them.

Path of the Blade: Gain +2 to all Melee Attack Rolls.

Loot Inventory

Lamellar Armor, Strength prerequisite of 15 or greater, Heavy armor | Fine: 90Sp |

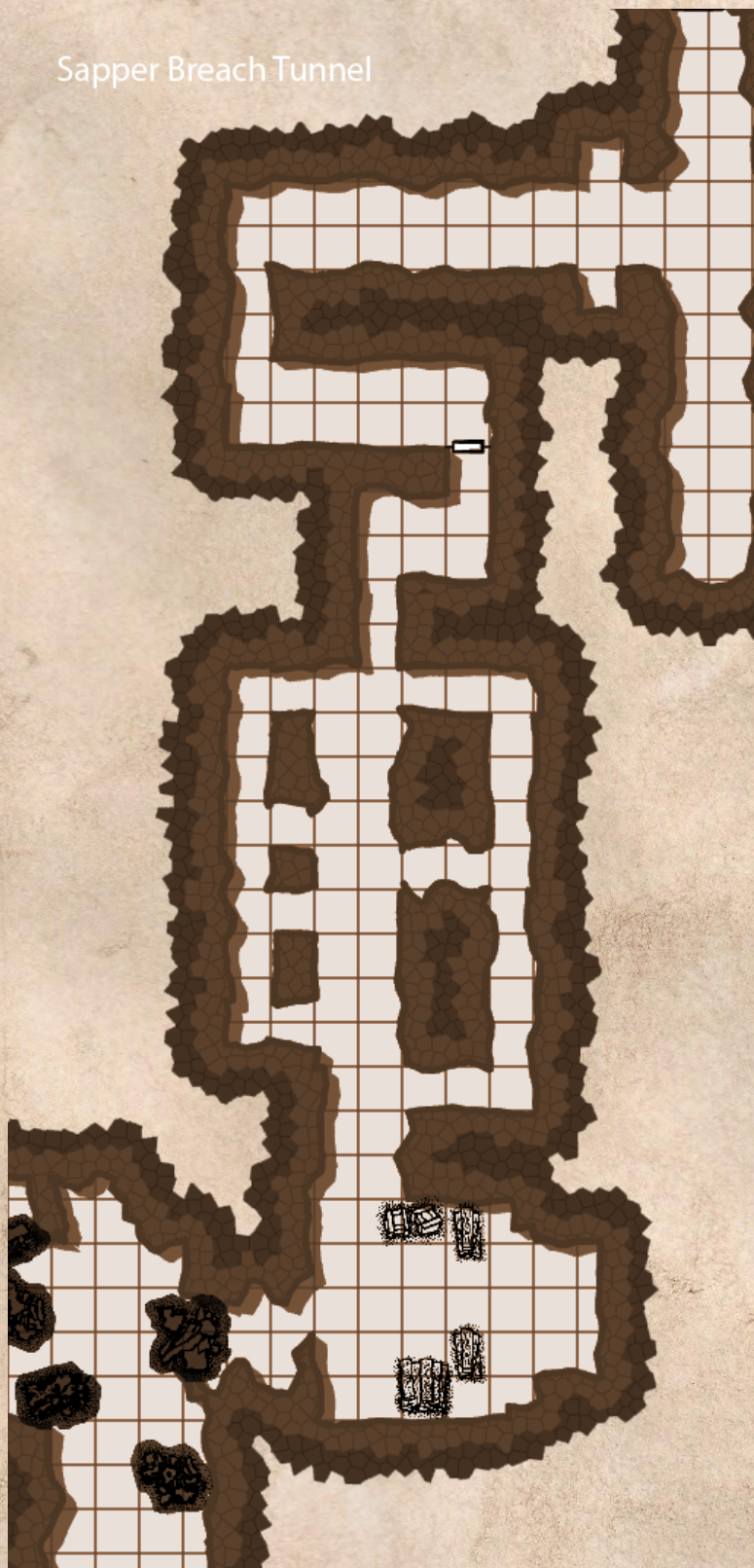
Longsword 1D8/1D10 Slicing Damage, Strength based, Hand and a Half , Military Weapon | Fine: 35Sp |

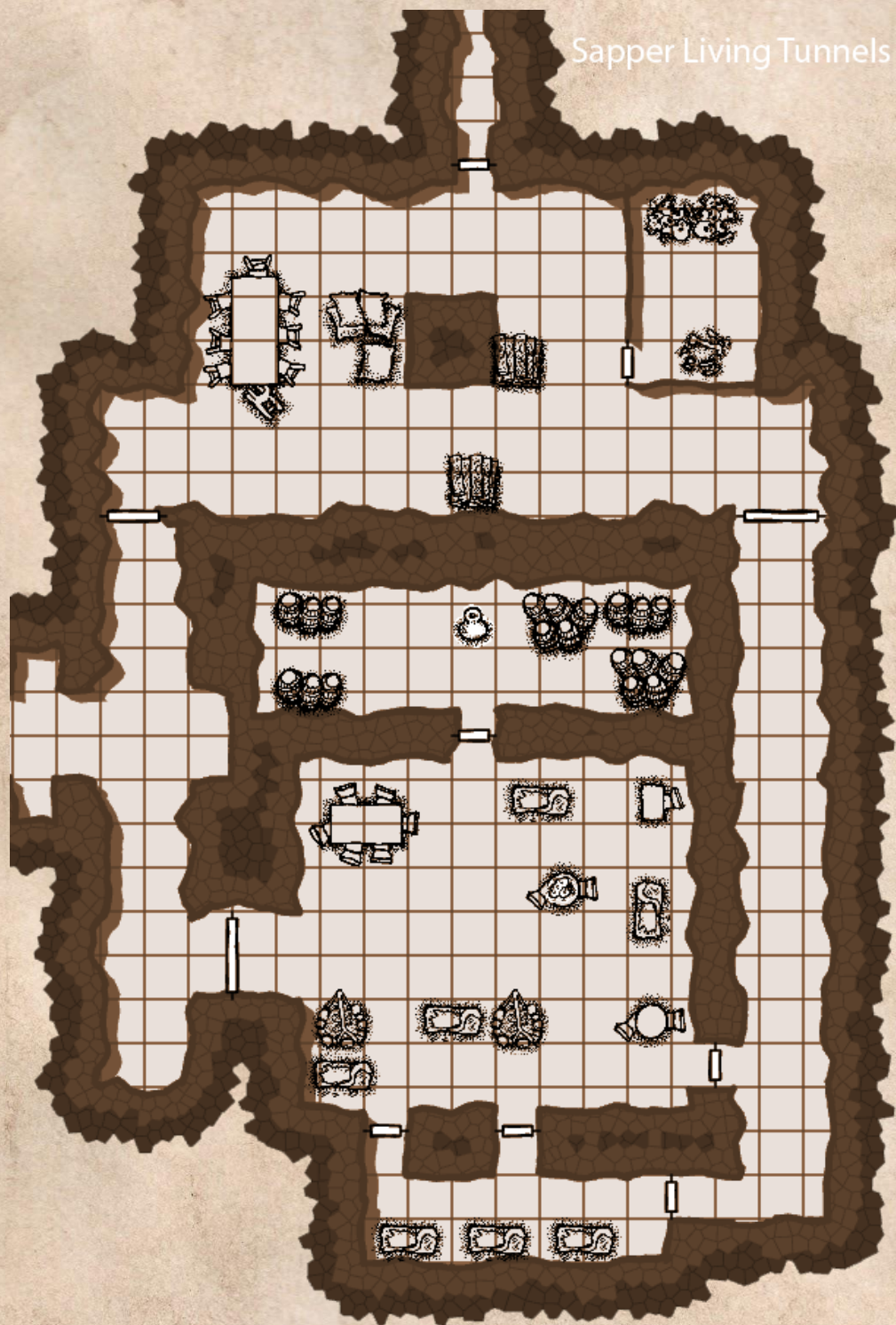
Lesser Health Tonic.

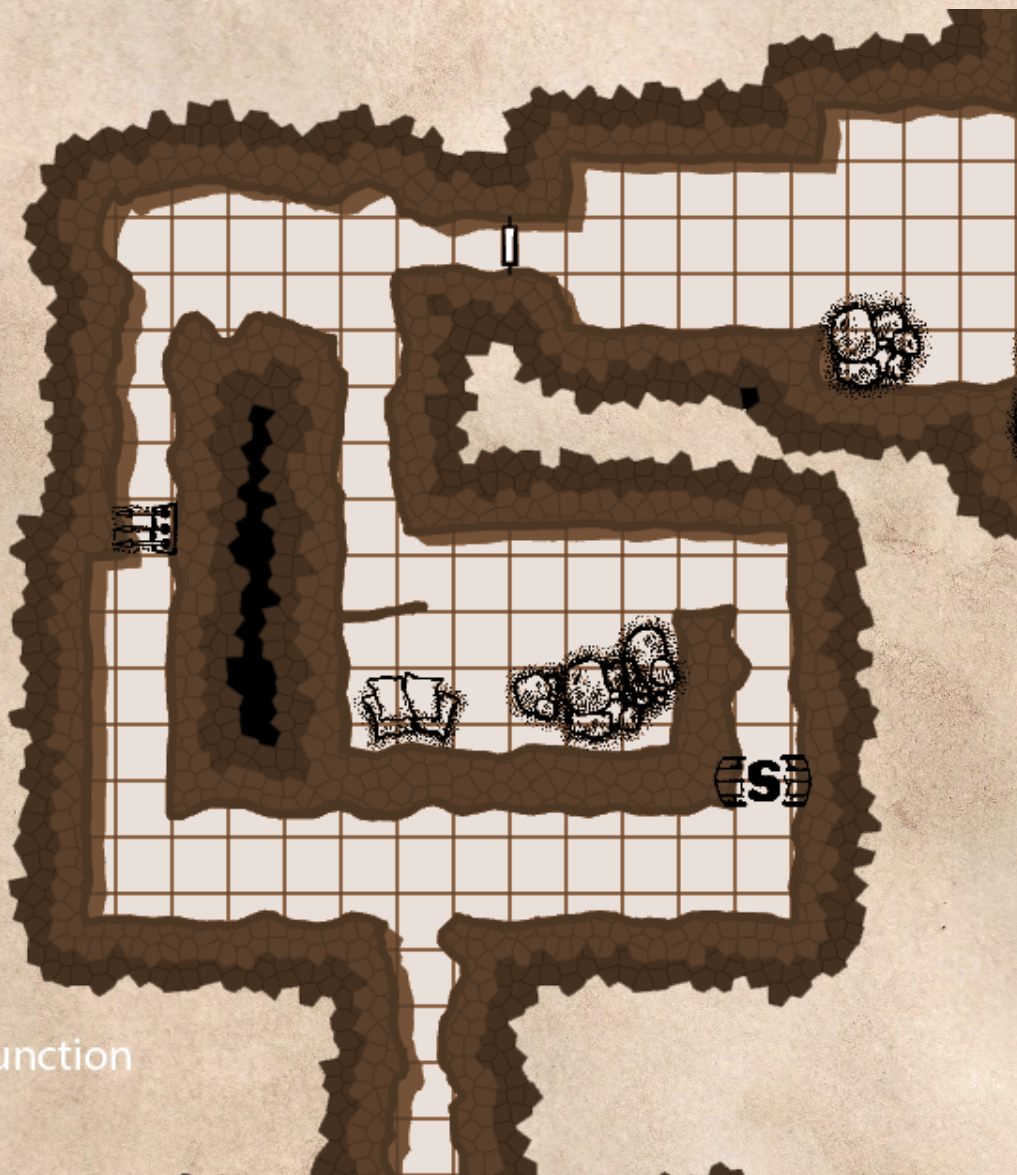
Collapsed Mine



Sapper Breach Tunnel







Sapper Junction

Sapper Track Tunnels

