

Fire Mountain

By John Dutton

Artwork by John Fredericks

A Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game Adventure

Release 8

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Introduction

The last adventure was exhausting; all of you are sore and tired, and need to replenish some of your supplies. Your map indicates the next town up the road to be Drakeshaven, a very large port city that would be easy to get lost in. If your calculations are right the party should arrive in town in time for supper. You plan on finding a comfortable but cheap inn and having a good meal, and a bed to sleep. The next day you can sell some loot and refill your supplies.

About mid afternoon you see five men with leather armor and poorly-kept weapons. They don't seem to look too healthy either. They stop your party when you get to shouting distance. The man that seems to be the leader of this group tells you not to go any further. He tells you that there is a plague in the city and that to avoid contaminating yourselves you should stay back.

They say that if you have any friends or family in the city you should leave a note on the message tree; they will look at it after you leave and then take your message to them.

You notice alongside the road is a large oak tree with several scraps of paper nailed to it. You approach the tree and read some of the notes. You find several like this one:

Anyone going to Farmsdale, please tell the Farnsworth family that all their family in Drakeshaven have died. The house was burned to help stop the plague. There is nothing of value for your family that would be worth your lives!

There is one note that is different than the rest, it simply reads:

If you would like to help me stop this plague say my name three times: Leofric!!!

If the party tries to say the name three times a frail old man suddenly appears before them in a cloud of smoke. The guards scream, drop their weapons, and run.

*If you might be a player in this adventure, **stop reading now!** Beyond this point lies information meant only for the Game Master's eyes!*



Leofric's Offer

Leofric the Venerable believes that a spell he has discovered in an ancient grimoire will destroy the disease. Unfortunately the enchantment requires an ingredient he does not possess: a black diamond from a dragon's brain. Some dragons have a black diamond in the centre of their brains. These jewels are extremely magical and consequently, priceless. Leofric believes that one may be found at Fire Mountain.

Fire Mountain, which lies five days to the north of Drakeshaven, is a dormant volcano and is known to contain a dragons' graveyard, that is to say, a place dragons go to die. It is certain to contain the remains of many dragons and so, hopefully, it will also contain few black diamonds.

Unfortunately, the graveyard is guarded by a fierce red dragon named Sycorax. Moreover, the entrance to the mountain is protected by a tribe of Lizard men who worship Sycorax and the spirits of the dead dragons. These Lizard men regularly provide Sycorax with food in the form of captured humans and other humanoids.

Leofric has asked you to undertake this perilous quest... If the party accepts his petition he will be truly happy.

If the party opts to refuse, Leofric will implore for their help telling that as they saw, most people here are afraid of him refusing to help; not only that, if the plague is not stopped then the town will remain inaccessible and the plague will extend to nearby places, sooner or later affecting the PCs. If the need arises Leofric will offer to create several potent magical potions as a reward for their quest.

Leofric is too old and frail to accompany the party, however he is able to provide the party with an assortment of magical potions. If the party give him a day he can use his last magical ingredients to create a number of potions, equal to the number of characters. Leofric will ask each character which of the available potions will he like. The potions available are:

- **Healing:** Restores the taker to full hit points.
- **Knowledge:** Enables the taker to know the answer to any single question.
- **Fire Resistance:** Protects the taker from all fire/heat damage for 1 turn.
- **Spirit Form:** Enables the taker to become a spirit for 1 turn. The spirit is not invisible, but may walk through walls etc. The spirit is also immune to all non-magical damage, but may not inflict damage on anyone else.

The Little Old Man

It is the fifth day of your journey. You are passing through a forest when you step into a clearing containing a tiny caravan, no bigger than a chest of drawers. Tethered to the caravan is a pony, no larger than a dog. A little old man, no taller than a toddler, is sitting on a stool in front of the caravan. He turns towards you, doffs his hat and says, "Good afternoon?"

The little old man is a magical spirit. He knows all about the characters and challenges them to solve a riddle. If they answer correctly, he will tell them something that will help to complete their quest, but if they get it wrong, he will take a magical item from one of them. If the characters reject his challenge he will say, "Please yourself," and disappear. If they accept he will ask this riddle:

There was once a baby born in the woods who always wore a cup on her head. One blustery autumn day her mother dropped her. She fell to the ground and landed by her mother's feet, but naturally her mother didn't stoop to pick her up again. Suddenly, a furry monster with a bushy tail snatched her up, carried her away and put her in his larder. He said to himself, "I will come back when I am hungry and gobble her up." Fortunately for the baby, the furry monster was eaten by an owl and never returned. By and by, the baby grew, and grew, and grew, and grew

until she became a giant with a hundred arms, green shaggy hair and a thousand babies of her own. What was the baby's name? (You may have three guesses).

The answer is acorn, but the little old man will also accept seed or oak tree. If they answer correctly he will give them this advice:

The main entrance to the mountain lies on its southern side, but it is heavily guarded. However there is another, secret, entrance on the northern side which is only ever lightly guarded. A stream flows from the northern side of the mountain into a shallow lake. If you find the lake, you can find the stream, and if you walk up the stream, following it to its source, it will lead you through a narrow ravine straight to the secret entrance.

If the characters attack the little old man, he will disappear along with his horse and caravan. Also, each character must SAVE vs Spells or lose one magical item.

The Northern Lake

If the characters take the little old man's advice they will circle the mountain and reach the lake that lies to its north.

The lake appears to be hot; indeed the water is gently steaming. A lizard man is standing in the middle of the lake with his back to you. He seems to be fishing, for he is holding a trident and staring intently at the water. A large basket lies on the bank not far from where you are standing.

1. Lake: The water is scalding hot, any character rash enough to enter it without first taking precautions must immediately take 1d4 heat damage. If a character does take precautions, the GM may reduce the damage at his or her discretion.

2. Basket: If the characters pause to examine the basket, the lizard man will notice them, throw his trident at the nearest character and then attempt to flee up the ravine to the iron door.

The basket contains three large fish with golden scales. The scales are actually made of gold and consequently each fish is worth 1d4 x 10gp. However, their flesh is toxic to humans and anyone tasting one will be violently sick. SAVE vs Poison or take 1d4 damage.

3. Lizard Man:

1 Lizard Man (AC 15, HD 2, #At 1 trident or hand axe, Dam 1d6+1, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F2, MI 11)

HP 12 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□

He will attempt to reach the secret entrance at every opportunity, but if cornered will fight to the death.

Possessions: trident, hand axe, large iron key which opens the iron door, and red dragon's scale pendant (opens the secret door leading to the hidden staircase).

4. Ravine: The cliffs on either side of the ravine look unstable and the floor of the ravine is littered with fallen rubble. If the characters attempt to move quietly they will pass up the ravine without incident. However, if no precautions are taken, each character in the ravine must roll less than or equal to DEX or cause a landslide. Anyone in the ravine during a landslide must SAVE vs Dragon's Breath or suffer 1d4-1 damage. There will be only one such landslide.

5. Iron Door: The stream ends (or rather begins) at a spring that bubbles up from the floor of the ravine. Just beyond the spring is a solid looking iron door with a large key hole in it. The door is locked and can be opened with the Lizard man's key. The door is too strong to be forced open; however, the lock can be smashed with a rock or a weapon by rolling 16 (+/- STR Bonus) on 1d20. Each attempt to do so will cause an **additional** landslide. Moreover, any weapon used in the attempt will be rendered useless.

Secret Entrance

The iron door creaks opens to reveal a natural rock passage that snakes its way into the dormant volcano. It is very warm and in places the rock seems to glow.

If anyone touches a glowing rock without taking precautions, they must SAVE vs Poison or take 1d4 heat damage.

6. Sharp Turn:

You have not walked far when the passage turns sharply to the left. Peeking around the corner you see that the way ahead is blocked by a heavy leather curtain. The sound of scraping metal can be heard coming from the other side.

7. Guard Room: On the other side of the curtain is a small cave that is used as a guard room. The guard room contains two lizard men who are sharpening their hand axes. If the characters make a distinct noise before they enter the guard room, one of the lizard men will call, "Back already? How many did you catch?" If the characters attack straight away, the lizard men will be surprised on a roll of 1-4. However, if they procrastinate, the lizard men will grow suspicious, prepare their weapons and not be surprised.

2 Lizard Men (AC 15, HD 2, #At 1 hand axe, Dam 1d6+1, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F2, MI 11) (If their moral fails they will attempt to flee to the hidden staircase, but will be unable to open it without the red pendant).

HP 12 □□□□ □□□□ □□
16 □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □

Possessions: Hand axe, green dragon scale pendant, white dragon scale pendant.

The guard room contains three stools, a table, a stone jar and a bottle. Another passage leaves through the south eastern corner.

Bottle: Contains a thick green liquid which smells extremely alcoholic. If drunk, SAVE vs Poison or be violently sick, but suffer no further ill effects. If the

saving throw is successful, the character becomes drunk and suffers -1 penalty on all attack rolls until they have a full night's sleep, have a cure spell cast on them, or meet Sycorax (the sight of whom would sober anyone).

Jar: Contains live cockroaches, a favourite snack of the lizard men.

8. Hidden Door: The passage widens into small cave. If someone examines the western wall they will discover three small slots which are painted red, green and white. These holes form the lock of a secret door that leads to the hidden staircase. The door can be opened by inserting the lizard man's dragon scale pendants in the appropriate slots.

9. Magma Chamber: The passage opens 20ft up the side of a large cavern, the floor of which is filled with magma. A narrow, stone bridge crosses the magma chamber; unfortunately it is broken in the middle leaving a 9ft gap between each half.

- To jump the gap: roll 11 or higher on 1d20 (+/- DEX bonus).
- If they fail, they manage to grab onto the ledge.
- To haul themselves up: roll 11 or higher on 1d20 (+/- STR bonus).
- If another character helps, success is automatic.
- If they fail again they fall onto a rock jutting out of the magma (pew) taking 2d6 falling damage.

10. Rust Monster:

A short passage leads into another large cave. The floor of the cave is covered by a thick layer of coarse powder which you realize is actually rust. You notice a strange looking creature standing at the far side of the cave. It is the size of a large pig, has brown skin, a long whip-like tail and two feathery antennae on its head. It appears to be eating the rust, but as you enter it turns in your direction and its antennae begin to quiver...

The cave contains a rust monster which will attack immediately.

1 Rust Monster (AC 18, HD 5*, #At 1 antenna, Dam special, Mv 40', Sv F5, MI 7) (If morale fails it will flee into its maze of tunnels at the far end of the cave).

HP 30 □□□□ □□□□ □□□□
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11. Fire Elemental: If the characters pursue the rust monster, they will quickly become disorientated and find their way into another magma chamber. This magma chamber is the home of an unfriendly fire elemental who will order them to leave. If they do so, they will easily find their way back to the rust filled cave. If however they decide to fight...

1 Fire Elemental (AC 22, HD 16+12, #At 1, Dam 3d6, Mv 40' Fly 30', Sv F16, MI 10)

HP 80 □□□□ □□□□ □□□□
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The Hidden Staircase

8. Staircase:

When you place the dragon scales in the slots, there is a small click and suddenly a section of the cave wall swings back to reveal a hidden staircase that climbs steeply through the rock.

9. Trap:

The staircase climbs west for 90ft, the passage then turns sharply south and continues on the level. At the very top of the staircase there is a shelf-like alcove carved into the rock. Lying on this shelf is a beautiful jeweled sword that glows with a magical light.

If the sword is examined carefully it will be noticed that it is covered in a thick layer of dust.

The sword is trapped. The bottom of the hilt is attached by a wire to the trap's mechanism. If it is picked up there is loud explosion and the characters are engulfed in a cloud of dazzling light. At the same moment the top section (10ft) of the staircase sinks into the ground forming a slide.

Every character on this part of staircase must SAVE vs Dragon's Breath or fall down the staircase taking 4d6 damage.

If the wire is cut, the sword can be removed safely; however the mechanism is extremely sensitive and so it will require a thief to do so. If there is no thief in the party, the sword may be removed on a roll of 17 or higher (+/- DEX Bonus).

The sword is magical +1 trap detection – it will glow with magical light whenever it is within 10ft of a trap.

10. Prison:

The doorway leads into another cave which contains a large wooden cage. The cage is suspended from the ceiling by a thick rope which passes through a loop and is secured to a hook just to the right of where you are standing. The cage contains a woman cradling a child who begs you to release them. Below the cage lies an extremely large lizard.

If the characters approach the cage the lizard will hiss threateningly. If they continue to approach it will attack.

1 Giant Tuatara Lizard (AC 12, HD 6, #At 2 claws/1 bite, Dam 1d4/1d6/1d6, Mv 40'(10'), Sv F5, MI 6)

HP 40 □□□□ □□□□ □□□□
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The young woman is called Hilda and the baby is her son Oswy. Her father is Lord Oswald who is one of Earl Jandric's most trusted lieutenants. Hilda is certain that her father will reward them for rescuing her. They were captured by lizard men about a week ago. When they were first put in the cage it held several other prisoners, but they have taken away one by one and fed to Sycorax.

Hilda does not want to be left behind, however she is incapable of aiding them; furthermore, there is a chance (GM's discretion) Oswy will cry at an inopportune moment.

11. Secret Door: The passage ends in solid rock wall which conceals another secret door. If two attempts to find the door's latch fail, the door will be opened by a small lizard man who is the gaoler. He will be utterly surprised by their presence.

1 Lizard Man (AC 15, HD 2, #At 1 trident or hand axe, Dam 1d6+1, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F2, MI 11) (If he survives the first round he will attempt to flee to the temple).

HP 6 □□□□□□

12. The Main Corridor:

The secret door opens into a broad and lofty corridor. To the west, it disappears into echoing darkness. To the east, the corridor ends in a pair of huge silver doors decorated with images of writhing dragons.

13. Temple:

The doors open into a large semi-circular chamber. In the centre of the chamber, stands a stone altar, on top of which rest five unlit candles and a gong. In the centre of the far wall, is another pair of doors, but made of gold. A tall figure wearing long robes undulates towards you and hisses, "Who dares to enter the temple of Sycorax unbidden?"

This is the temple priest and is a snake man. If the characters can't think of a good reason for their presence (Roll 20 +/- CHA bonus) he will cast off his robes and attack.

1 Snake man Priest (AC 18, HD 4, #At 2 daggers/1 bite, Dam 1d4+1/1d4+1/Poison, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F3, MI 12) Poison: SAVE vs Poison or become paralyzed for the remainder of the turn.

HP 24 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□
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Possessions: Plate Armour +1: it is made from red dragon scales and makes the wearer immune to normal fire, and suffer only half damage from magical fire; two daggers +1; amulet in the shape of a dragon's eye that allows the wearer to cast charm person once per day.

Altar: On top of the altar stand a gong and five coloured candles: red, blue, green, white and black. In order to open the door, the candles on the altar must be lit and the gong struck.

14. The Cavern of Sycorax:

The golden doors swing slowly open revealing a vast cavern. The floor of the cavern is literally buried under hills of treasure. On the far side of the cavern you notice the entrance of another smaller cave.

Suddenly you hear a loud flapping sound and looking up you see a large red dragon swooping down from high perch. He lands close to you and eyeing you suspiciously snarls, "You don't look like supper. I know it's uncouth to play with one's food, but pray tell me, before I kill you: who are you and what species of madness brought you to my cave?"

If the characters tell him about their quest he will explain that black diamonds are priceless and ask what they can offer him in return. He is not interested in any amount of treasure or magic items (he has more than all the kingdoms of man combined). At the GM's discretion, he may accept another suitably impressive proposal on a roll of 20 or greater (+/- CHA bonus). However, failing that, his proposal is as follows:

As my lizard men servants have failed to prevent you from entering my cave, I am clearly in need of stronger security; you, for instance. I will therefore permit you to take one black diamond back to Drakeshaven on condition that all of you agree to become my personal body-guard.

If the characters accept his proposal, Sycorax will scratch a strange symbol onto each of their foreheads, give them a black diamond, and tell

them that they are free to leave Fire Mountain. He will not help them leave, as far as he is concerned; getting out will be another test of their worth. Once they have delivered the jewel to Leofric they will be magically compelled to return to Fire Mountain, and spend the rest of their lives as Sycorax's personal body-guard.

If they are reckless enough to attack Sycorax he will fight to the death.

Sycorax (AC 21, HD 12, #At 2 Claws/Bite or Breath/Tail, Dam 1d8/1d8/4d8 or 10d8/1d8, Mv 30' Fly 80' (20'), Sv F10, MI 12)

HP 89 □□□□ □□□□ □□□□
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Treasure: NB: Characters can only take treasure if Sycorax is dead. The treasure in the cave is not just Sycorax's, but is the accumulated hoard of many dragons. Consequently there is more than can be counted or carried. For the sake of simplicity, each character may take 1000gp worth of treasure. In addition each character may take one magical item from the following list:

- Broad Sword +1
- Chainmail +1
- Elven Cloak
- Short Bow +1
- Shield +1
- Horn of Blasting
- Spear +1
- Ring of Protection
- Girdle of Giant Strength

15. Cave of Bones:

A short tunnel leads to a smaller cave, although it is still large enough to accommodate a dragon. The cave is filled with neatly piled dragon bones, including a mound of skulls.

If the characters search through the mound of skulls each has a 20% cumulative chance of finding a black diamond.

Entrance Chamber

16: Entrance Chamber

NB: This section describes the entrance chamber as if it were approached from within the mountain.

The large corridor soon turns south and continues to wend through the heart of the mountain for about a quarter of a mile, eventually ending in a huge cavern.

To the south, the way ahead of is blocked by a pair of huge bronze doors. To your right, in the middle of the eastern wall of the cavern you can see a small archway.

To your left, the entire western wall is riddled with small caves. Narrow paths, staircases and ladders lead from one to another and here and there you can see a lizard man going about his business. No one has yet noticed you.

The cavern is the entrance chamber of the mountain and the large bronze doors open on its southern side. It is also the location of the village (the caves in the western wall) of the 300 lizard men who serve and worship Sycorax.

Safe within their mountain stronghold, the lizard men are understandably complacent. It should therefore be possible for the party to walk straight across the cavern without being spotted, as long as they do so with enough panache (hence the use of the CHARISMA modifier).

If the characters head towards the large bronze doors, or the archway in the eastern wall, they must roll 11 or higher on 1d20 (+/- CHA bonus) or be spotted.

If they approach the caves in the western wall they will be spotted, alarm bells will be rung and dozens of lizard men will swarm out to confront them.

17: Large Bronze Doors:

To your relief, you discover that the large bronze doors are unattended. It appears that each door can be opened by turning a large windlass located to the side of each door.

The doors are extremely heavy; consequently the windlasses can only be turned on a roll of 20 or higher (+/- STR bonus of each character attempting to open it). The characters may attempt to open the door as many times as they wish, however each time they fail there is a 20% cumulative chance of being spotted at which point alarm bells will be rung.

If the characters succeed in turning a windlass, the door to which it is connected will creak open enough to allow them to exit. At this point they will be spotted and would be well advised to scarper.

18: Small Archway: The archway leads into a narrow passage which turns sharply to the left before ending in a barred stone door. Sitting next to the door are two lizard men sentries. They are chatting to each other and haven't yet noticed you.

The lizard men are not expecting to be attacked from behind; therefore, if characters approach them cautiously, they will be surprised on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6. However, if no precautions are taken, the sentries will notice the characters and challenge them.

If the sentries are attacked, they will ring an alarm bell that will summon help, as described in 'Spotted', in 1d4 rounds.

If the characters kill the sentries they will be able to lift the bar, open the door and escape – incidentally, the outside of the door is disguised.

1 Lizard man (AC 15, HD 2, #At 1 hand axe, Dam 1d6+1, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F2, MI 11)

HP 16 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □

Spotted!

If, at any point, the characters are spotted, alarm bells will be rung and dozens of lizard men will swarm out of the caves in the western wall and confront them. Initially the party will be attacked by twice as many lizard men as there are characters in the party.

1 Lizard Man (AC 15, HD 2, #At 1 hand axe, Dam 1d6+1, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F2, MI 11)

HP 16 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □

If they manage to beat off this attack they will then be attacked by three very large lizard men. These are the lizard man king and his two sons.

1 Lizard Man King (AC 18, HD 4, #At 1 great axe, Dam 1d10+1, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F4, MI 12)

HP 32 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□
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2 Lizard Man Princes (AC 16, HD 3, #At 1 battle axe, Dam 1d8+1, Mv 30' Swim 40', Sv F4, MI 12)

HP 25 □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□
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If they manage to kill the king and his sons, the rest of the lizard men will flee in terror back to the caves in the western wall.

19: Lizard Man Village: If the characters decide to explore the caves that form the lizardmen's village, they will find that it consists of 120 very similar caves spread over the entire western wall of the cavern. The caves are connected by narrow, walk-ways, staircases and ladders.

The village contains around 300 lizard men, all of whom will fight with a desperation born of terror. In addition, as the characters move between caves they will be harassed by arrows and other missiles aimed by lizard men higher up the cavern wall.

If the characters somehow reach the highest level of village, they will discover a passage that leads out onto the balcony above the main entrance.

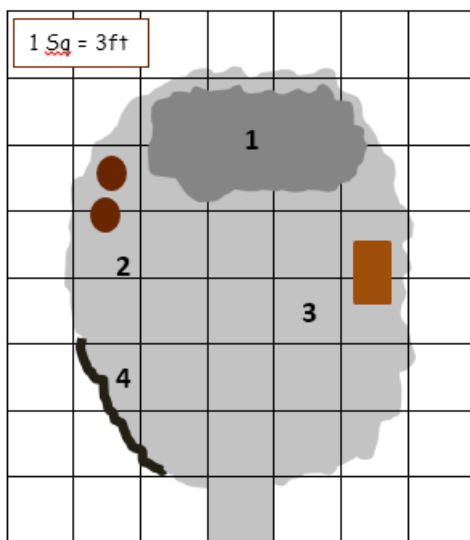
Typical Cave

The cave contains 1d4 lizard men who will fight to the death. Each is armed with a hand axe.

1. Large mound of black sand: This is a lizard man bed. A small key is hidden under the sand.

2. Pottery jars: One jar contains a pungent, bitter tasting yellow liquid. It is another favourite drink of the lizard men and although not magical, it does have healing properties. If drunk SAVE vs Poison or be violently sick. If the saving throw is successful the drink restores 1d4hp.

The other jar contains pickled golden fish, which is poisonous to humans. Anyone tasting it must SAVE vs Poison or take 1d4 damage.



3. Small Chest: The chest is locked but can be opened using the key hidden in the bed. It contains 20cp, 10sp and a small leather bag containing 7 ornamental stones worth 10gp each.

4. Cave Painting: A stylized painting of intertwined dragons.

20: Southern Entrance

NB: This section describes the southern entrance as if it were approached from outside the mountain.

A stone ramp leads to an immense pair of bronze doors, each of which is elaborately decorated with images of intertwined dragons. Above the doors you can see a narrow balcony. As you approach you hear what sounds like an alarm bell ringing and a group of nine lizard men archers file onto the balcony. One of them calls down to you, "What brings humans to this sacred place?"

If the characters explain their purpose he will invite them in, whereupon one of the doors will creak open just enough to allow them to enter.

If the characters choose not to enter, the lizard men on the balcony will begin to shoot arrows at them until they retreat out of short bow range.

If the characters choose to enter, they will find themselves surrounded by dozens of lizard men armed with short bows.

The king of the lizard men will then order the characters to drop their weapons. If the characters do as he commands they will be seized, bound, and thrown into the prison, there to await their sacrifice to Sycorax – unless of course they can escape.

If they refuse, the lizard men will shoot their arrows (roll to hit each character three times). If any of the characters are still alive, the archers will step aside and the party will be attacked as described under 'Spotted'.

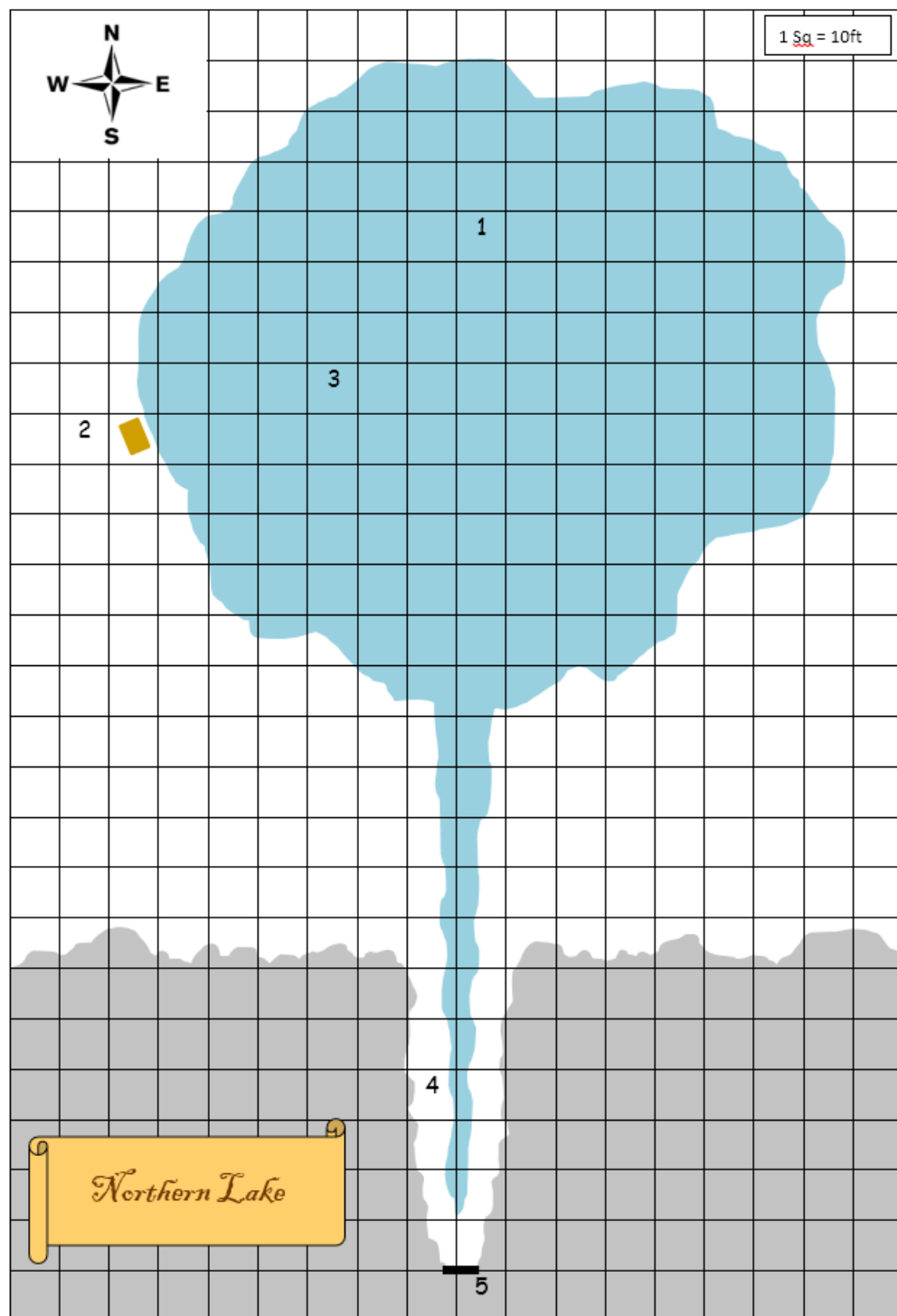
If the characters are killed (and the GM is feeling kind) they will not actually be dead, but will wake up in the prison with 1hp.

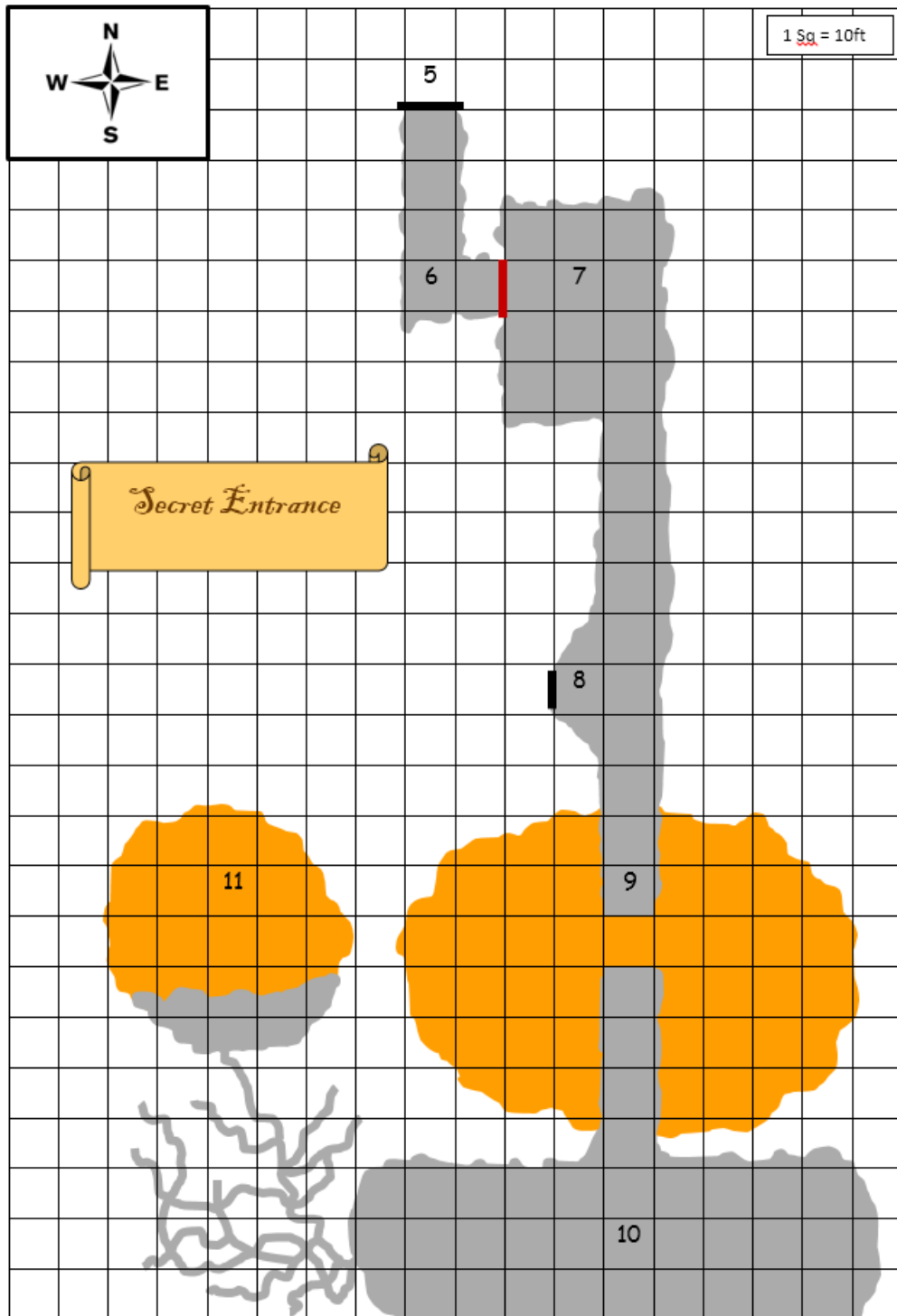
NB: The doors are extremely strong, in addition to which they are magically protected and cannot be forced open.

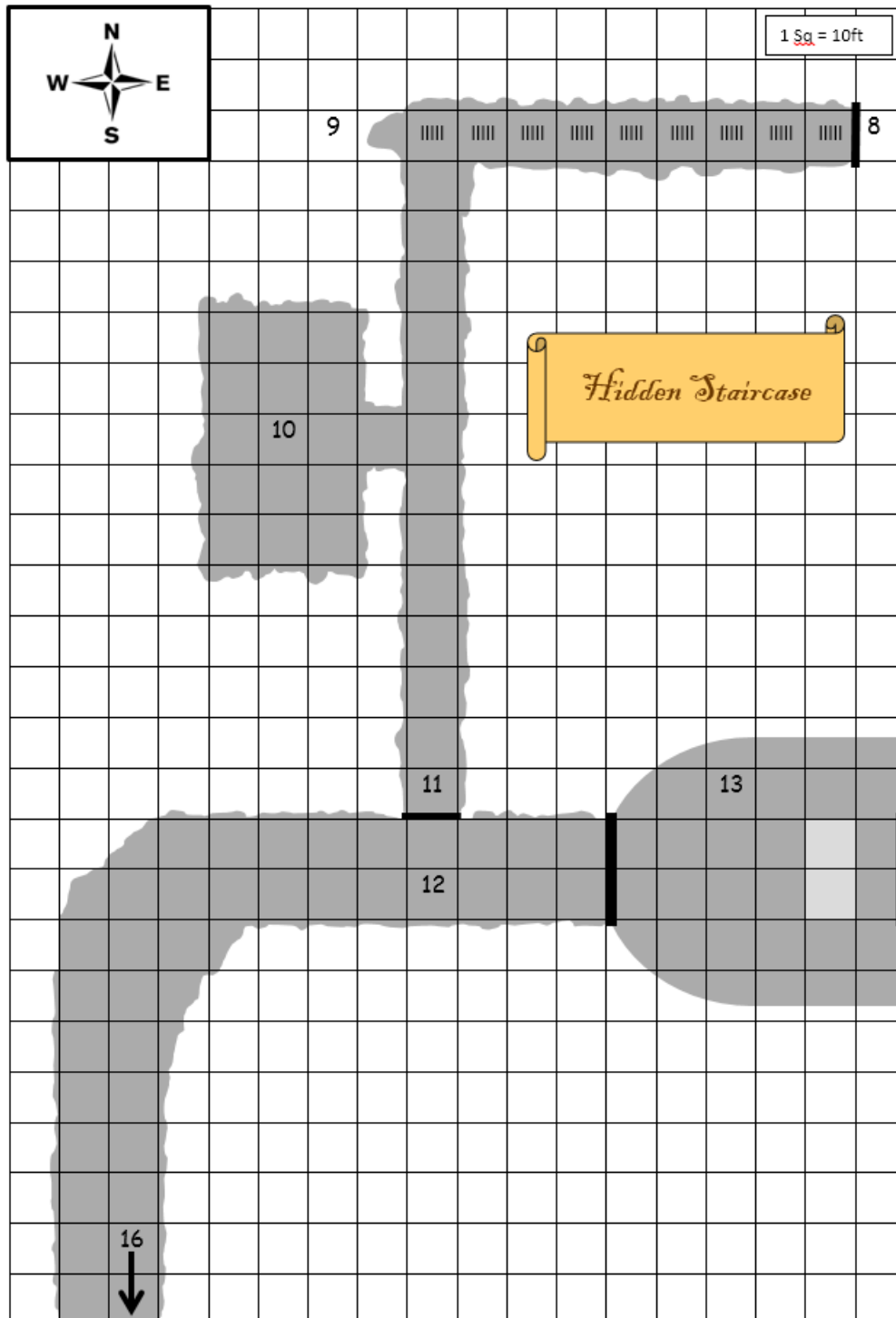
Conclusion

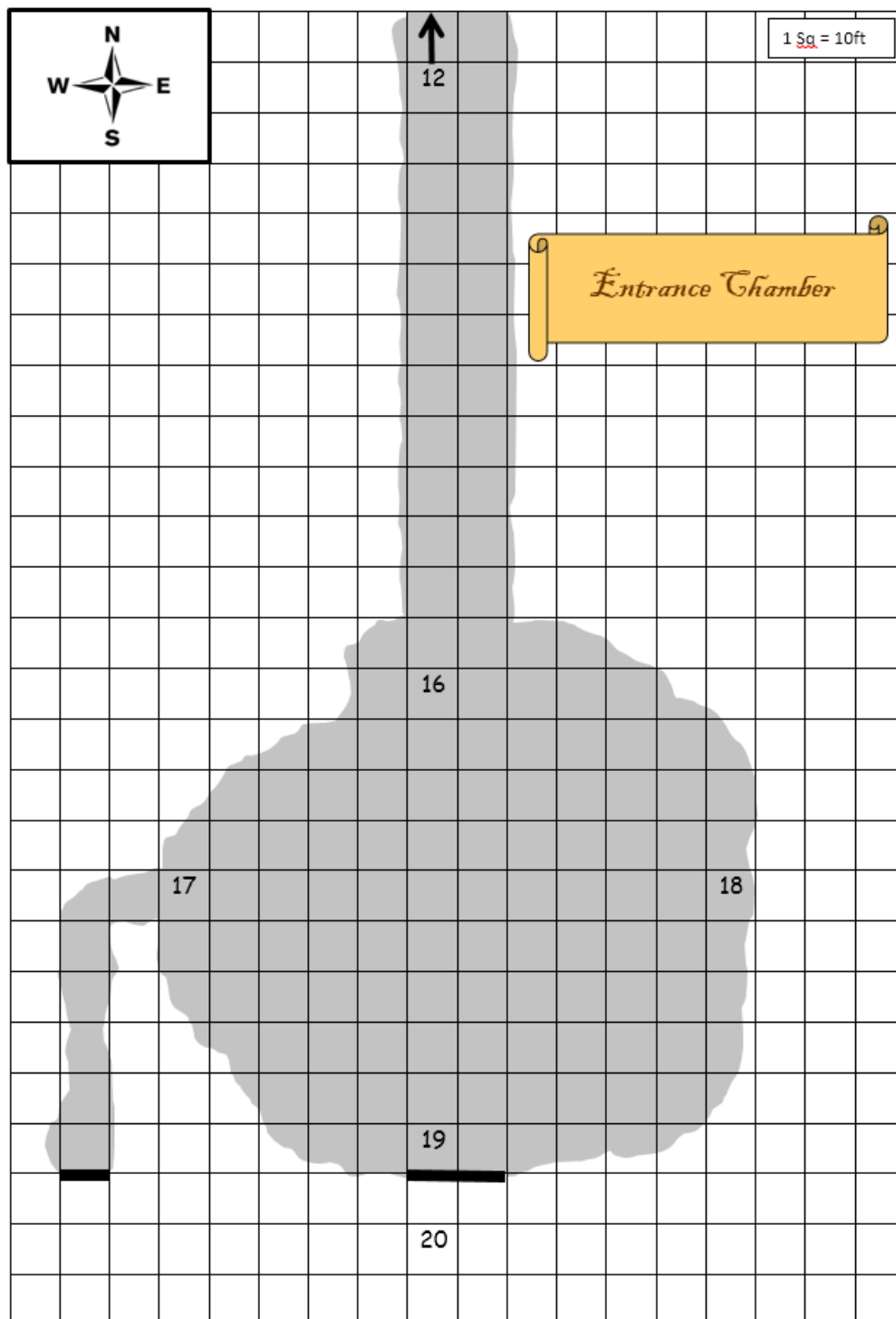
Assuming the characters accepted Sycorax's offer, they will be compelled to return to Fire Mountain. They must also decide what they are going to do with Hilda and Oswy. A kind-hearted GM may allow Leofric to dispel Sycorax's charm.

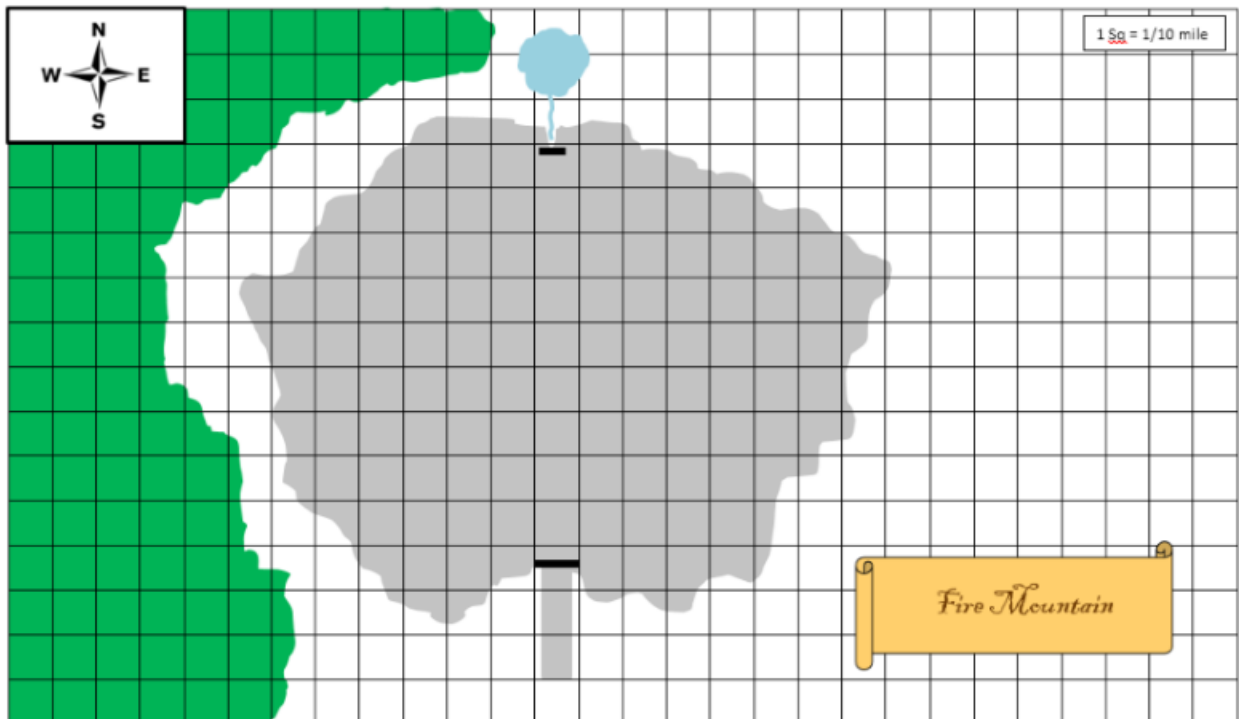
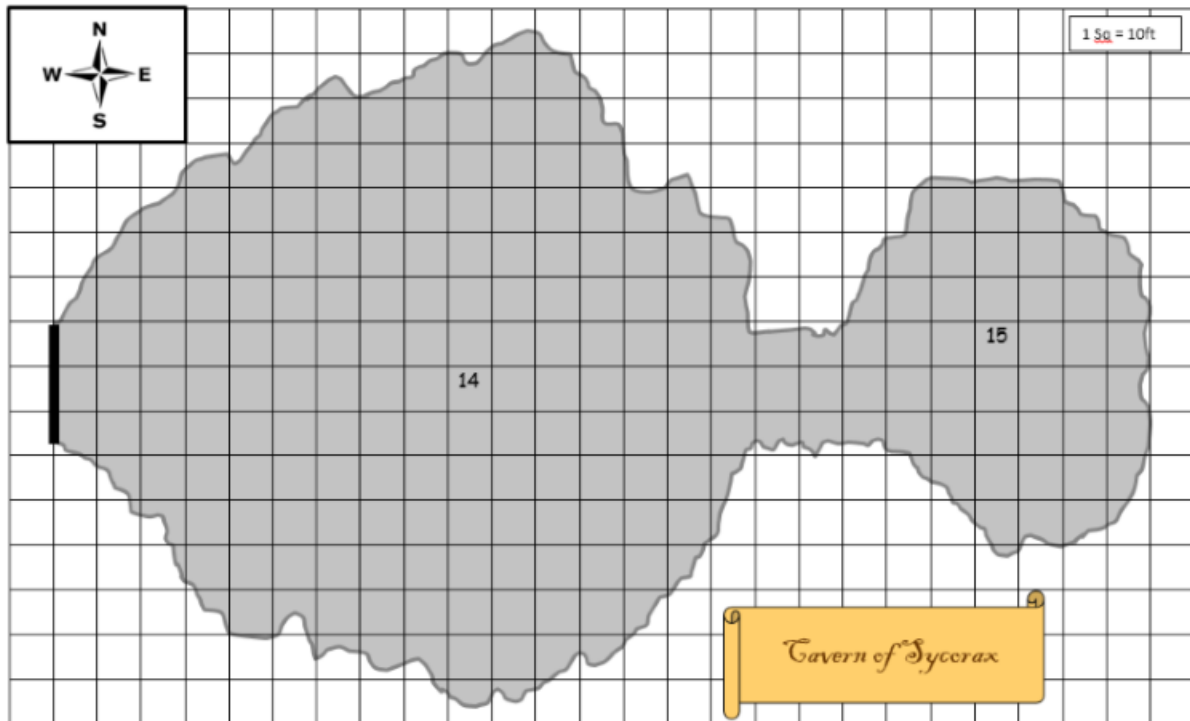
However, working for a red dragon should not be seen as the end of the character's adventures; after all, Sycorax is more than capable of looking after himself. Indeed, it may be that he wishes to send the characters on a quest of his own devising...











The Little Old Man's Riddle

*There was once a baby born in the woods who
always wore a cup on her head. One blustery autumn
day her mother dropped her. She fell to the ground
and landed by her mother's feet but naturally her
mother didn't stoop to pick her up again. Suddenly, a
furry monster with a bushy tail snatched her up,
carried her away and put her in his larder. He said to
himself, "I will come back when I am cold and hungry
and gobble her up." Fortunately for the baby, the
furry monster was eaten by an owl and never returned.
By and by, the baby grew, and grew, and grew until
she became a giant with a hundred arms, green shaggy
hair and a thousand babies of her own.*

What was the baby's name?

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