

The Black Maw

Sublevels

3a: Ruins of the Reptilians

3b: Empire of the Ants



The Black Maw - Sublevels 3a & 3b

The Reptilians (Troggs) dwell in the ruins of a forgotten people, caring only for their next feast. The ants do what ants do, tirelessly working to harvest biomatter and let it rot, eating the fungus and waiting for the new births from their queen.

Creatures

Goblins - *Mannered, focused, belligerent*

Rounded humanoids, stunted, pale green, usually in tattered waistcoats and top hats. The fine manners of goblinkind extend to these, who've managed to get themselves captured scouting for new mercantile operations. Wary to the point of hostility of civilized folk, they also don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Troglodytes - *Inhospitable, watchful, alien*

Sleestaks, towering, thick built, glimmering. Locked in eternal struggle with their ancient Grimlock cousins, they tend to have a laissez-faire attitude toward most dungeon creatures. Easily insulted over their odors, they also have no qualms of attacking and dragging an outsider home to be dinner. Life is hard underground. These Reptilians have just eaten a large meal and, like a tiger, are much friendlier when not hungry ... if you can stomach them. +3 to reaction rolls.

Alarms!

When riled both the Troggs & Ants will release scent trails when they see the party. Troggs nearby usually investigate (66%). Ants don't investigate or often (33%) and will only mobilize the entire colony if three groups are triggered. The colony will 100% be summoned if the Queen is riled. Both creatures are scent based and obvious when they release "Anger Pheromones." The "*" notation on the map represents creatures which may react to nearby noise.

Power Crystals

In various colours, 5 perfect sides, about 8" long and 2" thick with sharp edges. They explode for 1 d6 when thrown, but are much more useful powering various ancient devices like the observatory on Level 3a/#4.

Weak Walls

The dividing walls on the Reptilians levels are brittle with age. They can be busted through, Kool-Aid Man style. This does 1 damage and forces a save to avoid 1d6 more. The Reptilians love to do this when riled.

Ant Colony Description

The ceilings are low everywhere and the ground full of hard round pebbles, compressed sandstone balls formed from their formic acid. The tunnels are narrow with many protrusions limiting vision and smoke from light sources hanging around just under the ceiling. It's humid everywhere, more so in the fungus rooms. Intruders are likely to be ignored, unless they start messing up the scenery, like collecting nuggets and digging up the fungus gardens.

Shrinking

The magic waters on level 3 only last for 12 hours. Returning to size will start slowly in the last hour and then rapidly increase in the last 5 minutes. An enclosed space will mean instant death, no save. Digging out the ant colony,, while full size, can recover 90% of the loot but it will only be worth 1/10th as much.

Gold Ore/Nuggets

These take up twice as much space as coins. If a bag holds 500gp in coins then it only holds 250gp in gold ore/nuggets.

Ant-Man the Ant-Wizard - *Distracted, Ants are the solution to Everything!*

Cheddar - *Resigned, Desperate, Bitter*

Our strengths are our weaknesses. Ant-Man shrank himself and his loyal man-at-arms Cheddar, to do better ant research, but can't seem to figure out how to return to normal size. Not that he cares. But Cheddar does. He's desperate, almost to the point of mania. Ant-Man can control ants and cast formic acid sprays, at will. 1d8 damage & save or lose 1pt of CHR. They are both familiar with the entire colony layout.

Annie the Ant - *Naive, Confused, Open*

She always knew she was different, and then the ant god ANT spoke to her. She was aware enough to ask for free will. Her ant comrades have held suspicions for some time that she was ill. Now it's time to cure the illness. With extreme prejudice. She's a Virgo who likes long walks to the picnic is ready for a new life, in which everything will be new to her. She's familiar with the entire colony layout.

Writing by Craig Pike, Art by TPG

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Sublevel 3a - Ruins of the Reptilians

1. Painted & feathered Reptilian warband preening up for a hunting expedition. Chute to level 4 with grate stinking of super-slippery grimlock lard, with a tub of it nearby. **8 Trogs**
2. Thin grey & beige stalks crowding up to the ceiling in this mushroom orchard. 2' White glow-lamp in leather-face (grimlock) harness provides continual light. The transport crystal for level 3 (#4) is buried in back corner in disturbed compost. **5 shriekers**.
3. Damaged grime covered frescoes. The people in the frescoes are impossibly thin, inky black, and featureless. Intense cleaning (Wanderer checks!) reveals half of enough information to operate controls in #4 & #10. (See #7)
4. Hints of ozone and a floor 4" deep in teeth & fangs. Twelve pillars made of solid coal, at various heights. Mounting a pillar and activating it will shove it up or down through the solid rock at tremendous velocity to a random room (but always the same room) on a dungeon level for 1 minute, with the person being ethereal. The pillars for levels 1 & 2 have power crystals embedded in a hole in their tops and work. Inscrutable to operate without studying rooms #3 & #7.
5. 3' tall trough of bone & leather full of feces, blood & intestine. Closer examination of the inside reveals the word "Eclavdra", the command word. It's a portable boat that will always reek, as will those that sail on her.
6. Primitive stockade of giant ribs, stinking of burnt & gangrene flesh. **6 goblins**, all with various limbs missing and cauterized, await their next trip to the kitchens. All would fight, but only Mr. Ainsworth & Mr. Paxton can, missing an arm each.
7. Wind whips through here with no origin point, a moaning and buzzing coming from the walls covered in grime and bloody reptilian handprints (talonprints??) Underneath is enough fresco to figure out how to operate rooms #4 & #10 when put together with the ones in room #3.
8. Fleshly, stout humanoid blobs, green-grey, continually oozing but maintaining their form. Behind them, a throbbing portal to the Abyss is ringed by fire & displays a barren & broken landscape. Their mission is to scout the dungeon for possible invasion but they transported to the wrong level. They only speak Gutter Chaotic and frustrate easily. **9 Manes**
9. Smelling of gangrene and death, full of vomit and blood and crude stone cutting tools and scrapers. Prisoners are amputated here to keep the food fresh.
10. Throne of unclean grimlock skulls with leering grimlock-face leather carpeting. Formal audiences held here, in front of their god: a bejeweled pedestal that obviously has other uses if only its power crystals were restored (lower levels.) The 30 Flawless bloodstones (100gp each) on the pedestal are purely ornamental. Under the throne is a pile of 4000ep and 7000gp.
11. Reptilians, post-feast, lounge about in the remains of massive platters full of arms, legs, fingers, etc. The king wears a necklace *thick* with gold teeth (3000gp) **12 Trogs, 1 King Trog**
12. An obviously empty chest pokes out of the rubble in the SW corner, everything there covered in yellow mold. Messing with it will disturb a giant beetle lairing under it, which will in turn kick up a massive cloud of the mold. **1 Y Mold, 1 G Beetle**
13. Reptilians gnawing bones for marrow and tossing a dwarf head about lazily. **9 Trogs**
14. Reptilians outfitted in ill-fitting overworlder armor, playacting their defeat. Krabnatz is the soul of the overdramatic in his death scene. The leather armor he (mis)wears is gilded in gold & silver and always causes the first attack on its wearer to fail in any fight. **8 Trogs**
15. Empty.
16. Leather skin-work cover the floor, providing traction up the tunnel here to Level 3/#44. The slime emanates from tiny crystals, unnoticed without significant effort.
17. Empty, but signs of inhabitation by Reptilians recently, with bone spears and sleeping filth-nests.
18. Electrum engraved pentagram on the floor, broken, with a breathless moaning emanating. 2250 in ep if looted, incredibly sharp inlay edges do 1d6/ruin equipment in the removal process.
19. Rendering cauldron, smoking with bodies boiling down for the lard. A great iron stir-rod has a blackened and broke power crystal wrapped on the handle as a perfect heat shield.
20. Blackened & charred mushrooms, all umami smelling, cover the floor. One was missed. **Shrieker**.
21. The eastern side slopes down steeply and a chalk outline of a hole on the floor contains a pristine

metal ladder 30' long leading to level 4. The 2-dimensional hole (with ladder!) can be picked up, folded, and moved around if anyone tries.

22. A giant Komodo dragon, painted and decorated with feathers, drinks from a trough of blood. Well trained, but very skittish around non-Reptilians. **1 Giant Lizard.**
23. Old feces/filth nests scattered around this now disused Reptilian lair.
24. Bone & daub corral stuffed full of burnt and shredded overworlder clothing. 3000gp scattered throughout it, as are sharpened wood stakes (1d6) for those too exuberant in their searching
25. Corridor, lined with cracked black marble running downward to level 4.

Sublevel 3b - Empire of the Ants

1. A **colossal worm**, front raised, sways rhythmically. Acrid air blows and dust rains as it bashes itself against the ceiling in a trance. *Pissed* if disturbed.
2. Gold nuggets (2525gp) spill from the back wall in to a small depression in the ground. The sinkhole hints that the floor is weak there (20'/2d6 pit) waiting to collapse with 50 more pounds.
3. Humidity & Stank! Biomatter of various sorts, mostly vegetation, decays here with fungus growing on all surfaces, awaiting harvesting. Double wandering monster checks in this room.
4. Ant swarm pulling apart a Reptilian finger. Always on the lookout for more biomatter for the biomatter decay god! **9 Ants**
5. Titanic granite columns flank a crude wooden ant statue bedazzled with fungus chia-pet style. 10% chance, per character, that a dancing red flame appears telepathically bellowing "State your wish my formicidae brethren!" Ants get a wish. Non-ants get their wish reversed.
6. **Ant-man the Ant-Wizard** having a one-sided discussion about ant divinity concerns with his minion **Cheddar**, who's repairing their crumbling house made of out ant carapaces. He has three hollowed-out ant-head helmets that magically disguise one to appear to be an ant and understand/speak ant. Cheddar has socked-away 10,000 gp in gold ore on the "roof."
7. Crowd of ants closing in on another ant to Stamp Out Differences. Her back to the wall, she pleads in common "No, no I'm one of you! You've got to

listen to me! I'm one of you!" **8 Ants/Annie the Ant**

8. Humid & musty, a paltry pile of fresh leaves shows that the ants are building a new fungus room. Double wandering monster chances here.
9. A bulbous misshapen ant queen is swarmed by others picking her & the eggs clean as she lays translucent eggs Alien-queen style. Mixed in with the hundreds of eggs is an obviously whopping amount of gold ore (8000gp). Even in disguise, messing with the eggs or staying too long will agitate the occupants & eventually agro the entire colony. The eggs serve as delicious rations, going bad in four days when they lead to near *continual* vomiting & diarrhea for 48 hours. **15 Ants, 1 Queen**
10. Ants pulling apart a hand, mandibles work tirelessly ripping through the fingers to carry off. Blood pools & sprays but there's a glowing ring 10' high on one finger. On the command "Hold fast Varlet!" (inscribed inside in Angelic) the ring will fly off a finger and attempted the capture of a man sized target, as per Hold Person. **9 Ants**
11. Smoke drifts down from a steeply sloping tunnel up to level 2/#19. Moving up/down it will, unnoticed, shrink/grow things. Which would be bad if the magic water on level 3 wears off.
12. Stink, Stank, Stunk! Rotting vegetation mounds as high as a man with fungus growing on all surfaces thickly. Double wandering monster checks in this room.
13. There's a path of dead ants leading in to the room and scattered about the room, in various states of decay. The back wall has an obvious gold vein (7000gp) that will take some work, and wandering monster checks, to get out. Also, it's covered in yellow mold. So, you know, roll a save. **1 Y Mold**
14. The air is heavy with spores of yellow mold kept constantly in flight by the strong upgradft from a sloping tunnel down to a sloping tunnel upward. -1 to Saves. Tunnel to levels 4 & 3/#22. **1 Y Mold.** Note ants marching 2 by 2, to/from room #15.
15. A column of ants is marching, two by two, back and forth ferrying water from a small pool to #14. There is a golden glint from under the water, gold ore (2000gp) **8 Ants**
16. A broad sizzling pool of formic acid (2d6/rnd) bubbles and froths with an acrid smell. Behind it is a pile of gold nuggets. (4000gp)

ENDOFLINE

Bag Capacity

Backpack	300 coins	Sack, Small	100 coins
Purse	25 coins	Saddlebag, Large	300 Coins
Sack, Large	400 coins	Saddlebag, Small	100 Coins

Saving Throws: Characters save as appropriate against dungeon/monster effects.

Traps: Trigger on a 1 on a d6, checked per passing character, etc.

Wanderers - 1 on a d6, check every 2 turns/20 minutes, or when loud noise, combat, etc.

Level 3a - Trogs

- 1d8 **Trogs**, jovial, with "snacks"
- 1 **G. Lizard**, loose, frightened, feathered & painted
- 1d2 **G Beetles**, digging in dirt
- 8 **Trogs**, looking for more fresh "food"
- 1d2 **Goblins** amputees, escaped, scared, desperate
- 1d4 **Trogs**, Looking for escaped "food"

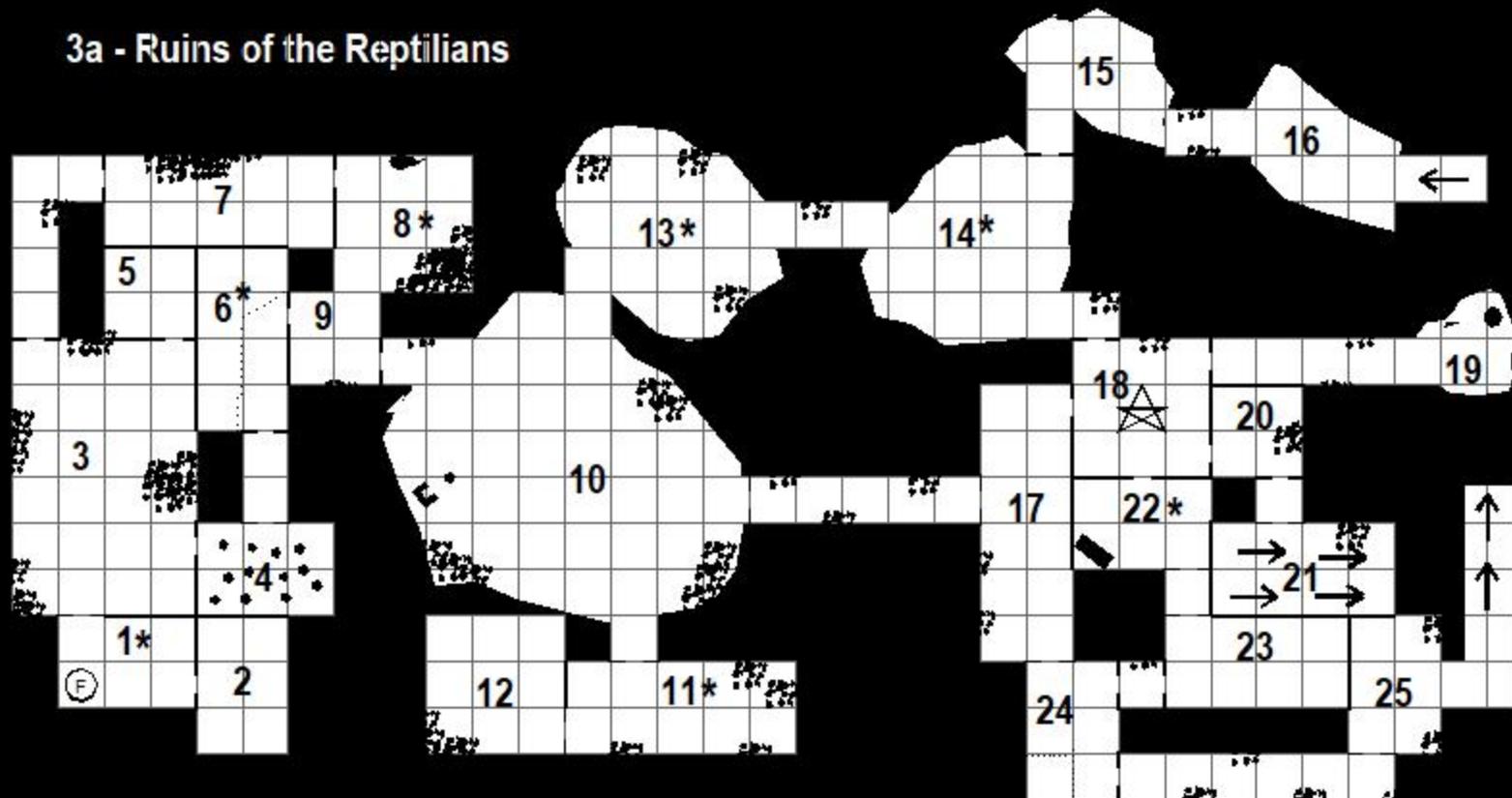
Level 3b - Ants

- 2d4 **Ants** carrying leaves to rot farm
- 1 **G Worm**, resting in the tunnel
- 2d4 **Ants**, patrolling for foreigners. Init!
- 1 **Yellow Mold** patch blocking tunnel
- 2d4 **Ants** carrying gold ore to queens chamber
- 1 **Ant**, having existential crisis after talking to Annie

Creatures

	Mv	AC	HD	HP	Atk	Dmg	Mrl	Special
Ant	60	3	2	7	Mandibles	2d6	7	
Ant Queen	10	6	5	18	Formic Acid	2d6	10	
G Beetle	50	3	3+	12	Mandibles	2d6	9	
G Lizard	40	2	5	18	Bite/Horn	2d4/d6	7	Tail bash can knock down opponents
G Worm	20	6	15	55	Bite	2d8	10	Swallow if >4 ToHit, then 3d6/rnd
Goblin	20	6	1-	2	By Weapon	-	7	
Manes	30	7	1	3	Clw/Clw/Bte	d2/d2/d4	8	Only hit by magic
Shrieker	3	7	3	11	-	-	12	50%/rnd a wanderer in 2d6 rnds
Troglodyte	40	5	2	7	Clw/Clw/Bte	d4/d4/d4	9	Stench -2 atk
Trog King	40	4	4	12	Clw/Clw/Bte	d6/d6/d6	9	Stench -2 atk
Yellow Mold	0	99	2	7	Acidic	d6	99	Spores kill in 6rnds. Fire does d4 to it
Annie	60	3	2	7	Mandibles	2d6	7	
Ant-Man	30	8	3	10	Acid Spray	2d6	8	Control Ants or Acid Spray Spell
Cheddar	30	7	2	7	"Sword"	1d6	6	Fights w/sharpened ant mandible

3a - Ruins of the Reptilians



3b - Empire of the Ants

