

# A Curse at the Old Inn



A Heroic Encounter for Characters Levels 1-3



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# A Curse at the Old Inn

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## Introduction

For seven generations, the Greybear Family has owned and operated The Bear & Ale around these parts. As one of the oldest inns in the area, it has known good times and bad ones, but has always opened its doors to welcome weary travelers.

But something has happened to the Greybear Family and the inn has lost some cheer. The once boisterous owner, the burly Jarwald Greybear, now broods behind the bar... with just a hint of fear in his eyes.



*A Curse at the Old Inn* is a Dungeons & Dragons 4e Encounter for 1st to 3rd Level Characters. To play this encounter, you may need the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* to assist you.

## DM's Background

Long ago, Jarwald Greybear had a twin brother named Kurgen. They were so alike, even their mother could scarcely

tell them apart. As youths, they grew up always in competition, and over time they turned into bitter rivals.

When at last their father had died, and their mother moved away to live with her sister, the boys were left with the family establishment, The Bear & Ale Inn. Both assumed that they were the rightful inheritor of the inn, but none of the locals knew which of the two boys was the first-born and heir.

It is not known where Jarwald found the old midwife who claimed to have delivered the twins, or if she had been bribed to lie, as Kurgen maintains. But in the end, Jarwald was granted the inn by the local magistrates, and Kurgen left with a small share of the family's gold. But he vowed he would have revenge on his brother before their 40th winter.

## Encounter Synopsis

The time has come for Kurgen's revenge, and he did it by hiring a warlock to craft a terrible curse. At the cost of all his gold and his very soul, the vengeful brother of Jarwald made a blasphemous pact that would doom everyone in The Bear & Ale.

A scroll will be delivered by the stable-boy to Jarwald, and the moment the seal is broken, the curse will take hold. All around the room, 13 Curse Shards from the seal will power portals to the Far Realm, releasing horrors into the world. Trapped inside the inn with Jarwald and his guests, the heroes must



battle the horrible aberrations, which have come to feast upon any living thing they can find.

Only by destroying the 13 Curse Shards throughout the inn can the adventurers break the curse and close the portals to the Far Realms. Can they succeed before everyone in The Bear & Ale Inn meets a horrific end?

## Encounter Hooks

**A** *Curse at the Old Inn* can be played in any world setting and at any inn of the DMs choosing.

The Bear & Ale could be an old familiar haunt where the adventurers spend time between quests, and happen to be there on the fateful night that all hell, literally, breaks loose!

Or the adventurers could be the hired by the evil warlock, and are asked to deliver the cursed scroll to The Bear & Ale, unaware of its terrible purpose.

Finally, the Bear & Ale could simply be a place the adventurers stop to rest on their way to a new quest— or returning triumphant from their last mission— and they happen to just be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

## Story Expansion

**T**here are a number of ways that this story can be expanded upon to add adventure to a campaign.

The threat posed by an insane warlock capable opening portals to the

Far Realms is one that can hardly be ignored. Bringing the crazed warlock to justice is a very just cause indeed, and could be worked into a plot involving a larger coven or cult.

Jarwald might feel remorse – assuming he survives - to learn of his brother's demise to bring about the Curse, and may wish to make sure he is at rest. Finding out what happened to Kurgen, and putting both his body and soul at peace could be a major quest for the adventurers.

## Description of The Bear & Ale Inn

**T**he tavern room at the Bear & Ale bustles with activity, and a dozen guests are feasting and drinking at various tables around the room. A couple serving lads and a plump barmaid see to their customers' needs with cheerful smiles.

The place is lit with yellow light from numerous hanging oil lamps and two great fireplaces blaze with warmth, each flanked by stag's skulls hanging from the gray wooden walls.

A sullen, red-haired, and burly human tends the bar, and orders the maid and lads about with a nod here, a gesture there. Despite the cheeriness around the tavern, the owner looks gloomy, and perhaps a bit worried. He watches the room like a man expecting bad news.



## Setup

The eleven guests, two serving lads, and the maid can be placed around the room, as shown on the map, and Jarwald behind the bar.

The adventurers should be informed that they must surrender all hand-held weapons and shields to a lad in a caged storage area in the vestibule of the inn. They were handed a leather chit stamped with a number that they can use to retrieve their items as they leave. They may take with them into the common area a dagger, if they desire, but no larger weapons.

The adventurers can be placed in one area or could be mingling around the room as they desire.

- **Perception DC 15:** The innkeeper appears worried, and is very sullen.
- **Insight DC 15:** The innkeeper actually looks a little frightened.

If Jarwald is approached by any of the adventurers, or if the serving crew are asked, the questioner will be told that the innkeeper just turned 40 winters, and has been a bit sad lately.

## Beginning of the scenario:

### Character Observation:

- **DC 15 Perception:** One of the serving lads brings Jarwald a scroll with a large green seal.

As soon as the Innkeeper cracks the scroll seal, terrible things start happening:

- Purple streamers of strange smoke pour upwards from the seal.
- All the doors and window shutters close and lock.
- A booming voice is heard to say:

*“You stole my inn, brother! Father left it to me, and you stole it away, and now you will pay!”*

*My share of the inheritance has gone to place this curse, and though it costs me my life... it will cost you yours as well!”*

The seal on the parchment breaks apart, and the glowing shards fly about to various parts of the room, forming evil marks shining with a baleful green radiance. The strange purple smoke-cloud flies to five places around the inn, and form into misty, shadowy rifts in reality (at the designated locations—see DM’s map). Horrible and indescribable things can be seen coming toward the rifts from the “other side”.

Horrors from the Far Realms will begin to clamor through the portals, entering the taproom, and are very, very hungry...

## Rules of Engagement

- **T**he characters may try to fight their way to the vestibule to get their weapons, or may use improvised weapons in the room. The door to the vestibule has the following statistics: AC/ Reflex 5; Fort 10; HP 25.
- **S**hould characters try to batter the outer doors or windows, they find that all damage is instantly repaired. They cannot leave the inn.



- **I**mprovised Weapons can be grabbed with a Minor action and used immediately that Round.
- **T**he commoners and inn staff are considered **Human Rabble** (see the *Monster Manual* for statistics).
- **C**ommoners will act on Initiative 10 and will perform Move Actions get to an area farthest from the monsters. If their way is blocked, the commoners will move to a corner and cower.
- **C**haracters may order commoners to certain actions using a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check as a standard action. Requests for actions that involve attacking the horrors will be ignored by the commoners.
- **M**oving through a commoner occupied square is considered difficult terrain. Fighting in a square adjacent to any commoner occupied square causes a -1 attack penalty due to distractions.
- **M**onsters enter the room in an unoccupied space adjacent to a portal, at the beginning of the round. Roll for the creatures initiative at that time, and it can act the same round it appears.
- **M**onsters entering the inn will move to the nearest commoner within 1 round if not engaged.

## Victory Conditions

**C**haracters must destroy the 13 Seal Fragments to close all portals and end the encounter.

- Characters must end the scenario before all the commoners are slain.
- For every 3 Curse Seal fragments that are destroyed, one of the rift portals fades away. (in reverse order—5, 4, 3, etc). Curse Seal fragments have AC/ Reflex 10; Fort 5; HP 6.

On the round following a rift portal fading, no new creature will enter the inn. However, on the subsequent round, a creature will enter using another functioning portal, regardless of whether one is destroyed that round or not.

**Important:** Never let two rounds pass without a new creature entering the melee, or it will not be a challenge for the heroes.

**Experience:** Award XP for all monsters slain. If more than half the commoners survive, award a Major Quest bonus. Award a Minor Quest bonus if less than half survive, and non if all but the heroes are slain.

## Combat Begins!

**D**uring the First Round, the initial setup of creatures that enters the inn is based upon the level of the party, using the chart below:

- Level 1 Party – Brute, Minion
- Level 2 Party – Brute, Minion, Minion
- Level 3 Party – Brute, Skirmisher, Minion

On subsequent rounds, a new creature enters the inn at the next portal in the sequence (in order—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, repeat).

- Round 2 - Skirmisher
- Round 3 - Minion
- Round 4 - Skirmisher
- Round 5 - Minion
- Round 6 - Minion
- Round 7 - Skirmisher
- Round 8 - Minion
- Round 9 - Minion
- Round 10 - Brute

Per the rules under **Victory Conditions**, destroying three Curse Shards closes a portal and delays the entry of a new creature by one Round.

If the combat lasts longer than ten rounds, start the sequence again at the *Round 2 -Skirmisher* and run through the list again, repeating until all the rifts are closed.



## Monster Descriptions

**Lashing Beast (Brute)** – *A hopping squat toadlike thing with no head lunges at you. Four tentacles are arrayed around a funnel-shaped mouth filled with razor sharp teeth. Between each tentacle is an elongated eye, glaring malevolently.*

<b>Lashing Beast</b>		<b>Level 3 Brute</b>
Medium aberrant beast		XP 150
<b>Initiative</b> +3	<b>Senses</b> Perception +6; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 57; <b>Bloodied</b> 28		
<b>AC</b> 15; <b>Fortitude</b> 16; <b>Reflex</b> 15; <b>Will</b> 14		
<b>Resist</b> 5 acid, 5 psychic; <b>Vulnerable</b> 5 fire		
<b>Speed</b> 6, Climb 4		
⊕ <b>Bite</b> (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs AC; 1d10 + 3 damage		
↵ <b>Tentacle Lash</b> (standard; recharge ☼ ☼)		
Blast 2; +3 vs Reflex; 1d10 + 3 damage; ongoing 3hp acid damage (save ends)		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil	<b>Languages</b> Primordial	
<b>Skills</b> Endurance +9		
<b>Str</b> 17 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+3)	<b>Wis</b> 11 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 17 (+4)	<b>Int</b> 8 (+0)	<b>Cha</b> 8 (+0)

**Tentacled Creeper (Skirmisher)** – *A bloated gray sack propels itself at you, supported by myriad tentacles. Several of these end in a black claw dripping a purplish ichor. Vile siphon-like mouths make wet sickly sounds as they suck the floorboards.*

<b>Tentacled Creeper</b>		<b>Level 2 Skirmisher</b>
Small aberrant beast		XP 125
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +1; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 38; <b>Bloodied</b> 19		
<b>AC</b> 16; <b>Fortitude</b> 13; <b>Reflex</b> 15; <b>Will</b> 12		
<b>Resist</b> 5 psychic		
<b>Speed</b> 6		
⊕ <b>Barbed Tentacle</b> (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs AC; 1d6 + 1 damage		
⊕ <b>Stinging Barb</b> (standard; recharge ☼ ☼) • <b>Poison</b>		
+5 vs Fortitude; 1d6 + 1 damage plus ongoing 4 poison damage		
<b>Aberrant Shift</b> (minor; at-will)		
the tentacled creeper shifts 1 square as a minor action.		
<b>Combat Advantage</b>		
The aberration deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil	<b>Languages</b> Primordial	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +9		
<b>Str</b> 12 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 10 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+2)	<b>Cha</b> 9 (+0)



**Spitting Scuttler (Minion)** – *A pulsating red brain-thing floats inside a crystalline shell of a dark obsidian-like material, prancing on crab-like legs. A slender dark tube hangs under the body, swiveling about like a turret.*

<b>Spitting Scuttler</b>		<b>Level 2 Minion Artillery</b>
Small aberrant beast		XP 31
<b>Initiative</b> +4	<b>Senses</b> Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
<b>AC</b> 14; <b>Fortitude</b> 12; <b>Reflex</b> 14; <b>Will</b> 11		
<b>Resist</b> 5 poison		
<b>Speed</b> 6, Climb 6		
Ⓣ <b>Vile Spit</b> (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 5/10; +9 vs AC; 3 damage		
Ⓢ <b>Crystalline Spines</b> (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs AC; 2 damage		
<b>Crystalline Resonance</b> (standard; encounter)		
A spitting scuttler gains +2 power bonus to all defenses while at least two other scuttlers are within 3 squares of it.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil		<b>Languages</b> Primordial
<b>Str</b> 14 (+3)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 10 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 12 (+2)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+1)	<b>Cha</b> 10 (+1)

## Improvised Weapons

Improvised Weapons are all around the room, if Characters take a moment and look for them. They can be used with Attack powers that require a Weapon, but lack proficiency modifiers. (see *Players Handbook* for details).

To make set up easy, assume that each table has a minimum of:

- 2 Platters (*Platter Discus*)
- 2 Tankards (*Tankard Toss*)
- 2 Bottles (*Booze Missile* or *Bottle Knife*)
- 1 Wooden Tray

Have the character roll a quick d6 to see if a bottle or tankard is full – odd = empty, even = full.

There are more than enough improvised weapons, if the benches and chairs are included, to have a realistic chance of killing the Horrors from the Far Realms.

## Additional Notes - Improvised Weapons

**Tables** – Can be overturned to provide Cover in one square. Moving through a square containing any table counts as Difficult Terrain.

**Chairs & Wooden Trays** – Can be used as a shield in the off-hand, it provides protection as a Light Shield.

**Ale or Wine Cask** – On a Minor action, the cask can be broached before it is used as a weapon to ensure the beverage will burst forth. The Cask causes a Burst 2 puddle of beverage if the cask breaks, which can put out fires.

## Fire Hazards

It is possible to set the inn on fire using area spells that may break an oil-filled lamp, or by using the oil-filled lamps as weapons. Area spells that effect a square containing a lamp can cause it to break and explode (Oil-filled Lamp stats: AC/Reflex 6; Fort 8; HP 5).

The oil lamps explode in a Burst 1 and create a 3x3 zone. At the end of each round that a fire zone exists, roll a saving throw for that zone. If the zone saves, it



dies out without spreading. If the zone fails, it increases in size to a 4x4 area. At the end of the next turn, if the save fails again, it becomes a 5x5 zone. After 3 failed saves, the fire is out of control, and will spread each round until the entire inn is engulfed in flames.

Casks of wine and ale, which are mostly water, can be used to douse the flames. A full cask has a Burst 2 area for purposes of fire control only.

The following basic attack cards can be printed for use by Players as reference during the combat. DMs are invited to use them in other bar fights of their own devising.

Antlered Defense		Any Attack 1
<i>Ripping the deer skull off the wall, you defend yourself while menacing your foe.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>		<b>Melee weapon</b>
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Strength vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Effect:</b> If wielded in two hands, grants +1 AC.		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Melee Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB)		
- Skull breaks if it inflicts more than 4 hp in a hit		

Battering Cask (full)		Any Attack 1
<i>You grab a heavy cask in both hands and smash it upon your foe.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>		<b>Melee weapon</b>
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Strength vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Secondary Target:</b> Burst 1		
<b>Secondary Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. Fortitude		
<b>Hit:</b> Burst1 from target's square; target blinded until beginning of attacker's next turn.		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Melee Weapon (Two-Handed) (PHB)		
- Cask breaks if it inflicts more than 9 hp in a hit - Minor		
<b>Action:</b> Cask can be breached open before attack.		

Battering Cask (empty)		Any Attack 1
<i>You grab a heavy cask in both hands and smash it upon your foe.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>		<b>Melee weapon</b>
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Strength vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Melee Weapon (Two-Handed) (PHB)		
- Cask breaks if it inflicts more than 9 hp in a hit.		

Bench Crush		Any Attack 1
<i>You grab a bench in both hands and crush your foe.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>		<b>Melee weapon</b>
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Strength vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Melee Weapon (Two-Handed) (PHB)		
- Bench breaks if it inflicts more than 9 hp in a hit		

Booze Missile		Any Attack 1
<i>You hurl a bottle of spirits at your enemy, spraying volatile booze everywhere.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>		<b>Melee weapon 5</b>
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Secondary Target:</b> Close Burst 2		
<b>Secondary Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. Reflex		
<b>Hit:</b> Close Burst 2 from target's square; target blinded until the beginning of the attackers next turn; blinded targets can be ignited for 1d6+3 hp fire damage		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Ranged Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB)		
- Bottle breaks upon hit or miss.		

Bottle Knife		Any Attack 1
<i>You quickly break a bottle, and slash your enemy with the razor sharp edge.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>		<b>Melee 1</b>
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Strength vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Melee Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB)		

Chair Smash		Any Attack 1
<i>You grab a chair in both hands and swing it at your foe.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>		<b>Melee weapon</b>
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Strength vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Melee Weapon (Two-Handed) (PHB)		
- Chair breaks if it inflicts more than 9 hp in a hit		



Fiery Cudgel		Any Attack 1
<i>Grabbing a burning log from the fireplace, you threaten your foes with a fiery club.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Fire, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>	<b>Melee weapon</b>	
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Strength vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage + 2 hp fire damage.		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Melee Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB)		

Oil Lamp Bomb		Any Attack 1
<i>Grabbing a nearby oil lamp, you hurl it at your enemy as a fiery bomb.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Fire, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>	<b>Melee weapon</b>	
<b>Target:</b> One creature plus other creatures in blast		
<b>Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage; burning oil on target for 1d6+3 fire damage; ongoing 3 hp fire damage (save ends)		
<b>Miss:</b> Creature affected by Secondary Attack (Burst 1)		
<b>Secondary Target:</b> Burst 1		
<b>Secondary Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. Reflex		
<b>Hit:</b> Burst 1 from target's square; 1d6+3 hp fire damage; ongoing 3 hp fire damage (save ends)		
<b>Miss:</b> Zone of Fire: creature in zone takes 3 hp fire damage.		
<b>Effect:</b> Zone of Fire: creatures that enter the zone or start its turn there takes 3 hp fire damage.		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Ranged Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB) - Lamp breaks upon hit or miss.		

Platter Discus		Any Attack 1
<i>Grabbing a pewter platter from a nearby table, you fling it at your enemy.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>	<b>Ranged 5</b>	
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Ranged Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB)		

Tankard Toss (empty)		Any Attack 1
<i>You hurl a tankard at your enemy, striking in a spray of heavy crockery.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>	<b>Ranged 5</b>	
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Ranged Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB) - Tankard breaks upon hit or miss.		

Tankard Toss (full)		Any Attack 1
<i>You hurl a tankard at your enemy, striking in a spray of crockery and ale.</i>		
<b>At-Will * Martial, Weapon</b>		
<b>Standard Action</b>	<b>Ranged 5</b>	
<b>Target:</b> One creature		
<b>Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. AC		
<b>Hit:</b> 1[W] + Strength modifier damage		
<b>Secondary Target:</b> Close Blast 2		
<b>Secondary Attack:</b> Dexterity vs. Reflex		
<b>Hit:</b> Close Blast 2 from target's square; targets blinded until beginning of attacker's next turn		
<b>Special:</b> Improvised Ranged Weapon (One-Handed) (PHB) - Tankard breaks upon hit or miss.		

## Playtest Notes

Don't let the PCs bring in anything bigger than a dagger into the inn – and if at all possible, try to exclude that from the fight as well. The fight is a lot more fun with Characters smashing tankards and benches into the Tentacled Things from Beyond, instead of using their usual weapons.

Don't let the PCs boss the commoners into doing anything more complicated than fleeing to a safe area, such as the kitchen or behind the bar. Commoners should not be allowed to grant combat advantage regardless of placement – they are non-combatants!

Have fun role-playing the commoners and inn staff. Make them a nuisance and a hindrance by getting in the way of heroes placement, or standing behind a hero and screaming to be saved. Feel free to describe a commoners last look at a Player-Character, filled with pain and



recrimination, before some horror mauls them to death. Make the heroes feel remorse for losing even a single one! (It's probably going to happen though).

**M**otivate the heroes! Remind them that if all the commoners die, they might be blamed for the Curse. They may need living witnesses to prove their innocence!



## Acknowledgements

We hope that You, the Dungeon Master, as well as your Players, have enjoyed *A Curse at the Old Inn* and if you value this product, we hope that you will look for other Adventures and Sourcebooks from **Neuroglyph Games** for your future gaming sessions.

## Feedback

If you have any feedback regarding this product, we hope that you will take the time to share it with us – please email us at [feedback@neuroglyphgames.com](mailto:feedback@neuroglyphgames.com).



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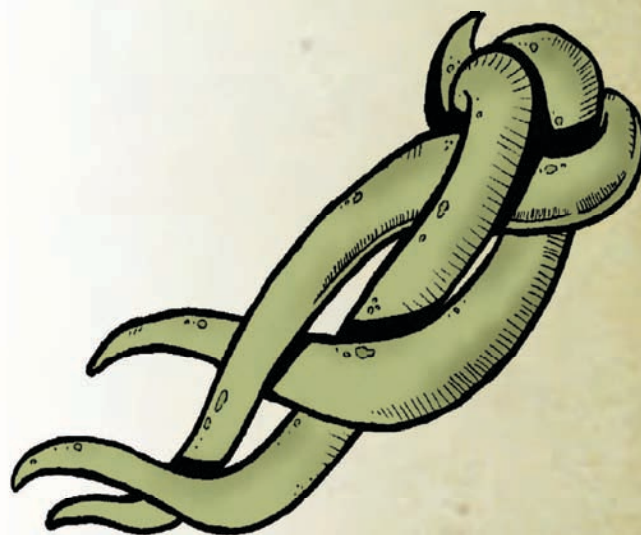
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We check our email daily and will be happy to respond with advice to your problem.

## Resources

Please visit our website at [www.NeuroglyphGames.com](http://www.NeuroglyphGames.com) for access our blogs and links to other RPG resources on the net. You can also subscribe to our weekly newsletter to receive articles regarding Product Reviews, Dungeon Mastering Tips, Rules Discussions, House Rule Variations, New Feats, New Powers, New Monsters, and Much More!

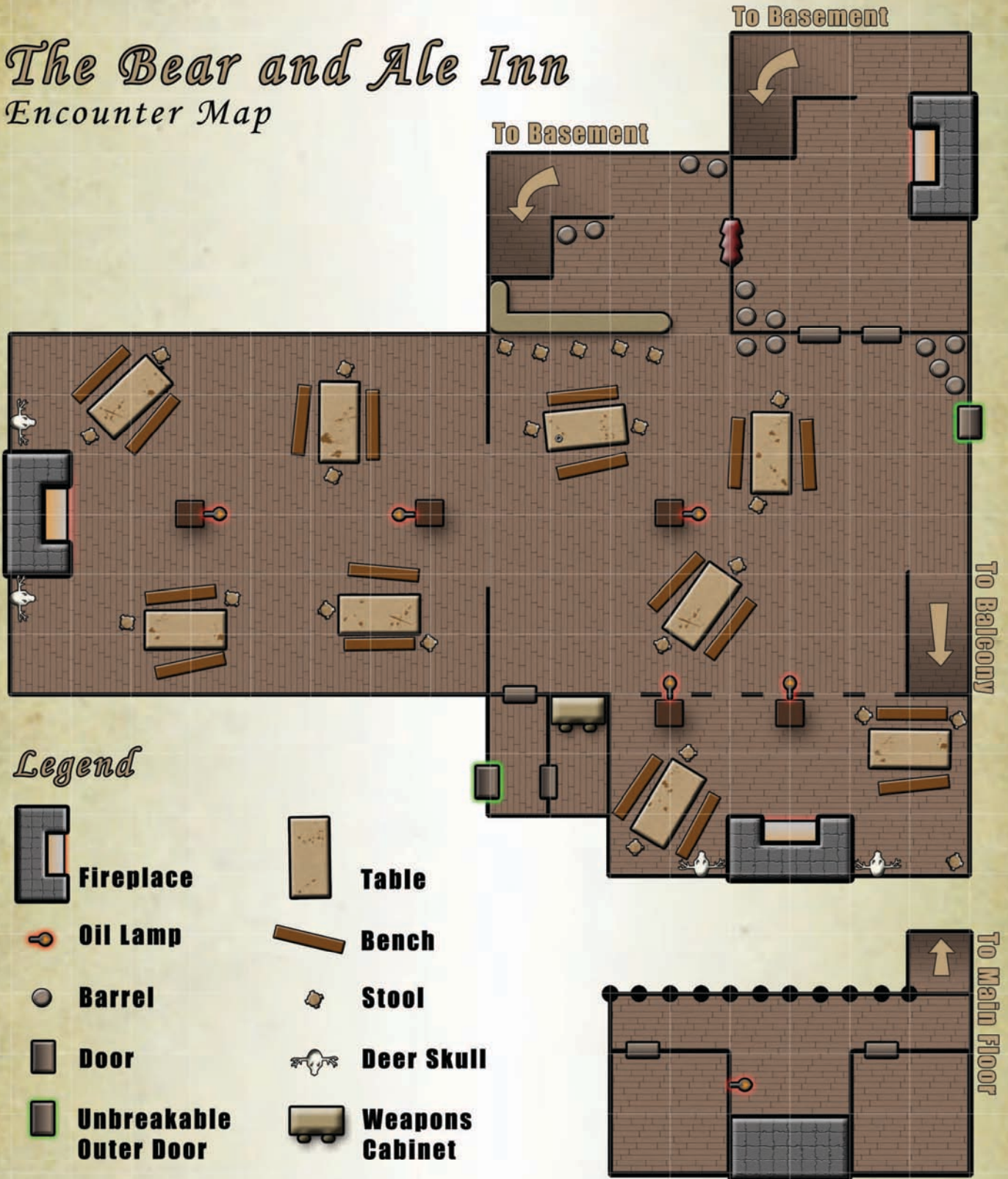
“Grungy Paper” free background texture courtesy of [Naldz Graphics](#).





# The Bear and Ale Inn

## Encounter Map





# The Bear and Ale Inn

Dungeon Master's Map

