

LAVA LAIR

AN INTRODUCTION

THE AIR IN THE LABYRINTH OF TUNNELS HAS BEEN steadily heating up as you make your way further into the mountain. Beads of sweat run down your face and sting your eyes, you have all stripped off any easily removable clothing but still you suffer in the sweltering temperatures. The very walls radiate heat, first just warm to the touch but now so hot they glow in places. Once in a while the ground shakes ominously.

The tunnel ahead begins to open up into a huge chamber, its walls glowing and rippling with heat. In places they are almost viscous, soft and moving ever so slightly. The entire chamber is filled with a low constant crackling sound. Plumes of noxious black smoke drift from vents, covering every surface with a layer of fine soot. Bricks and pillars protrude from the glowing walls, slowly being consumed. Ancient cracked tiles cover the floor while at the back of the chamber steps lead into smoky darkness.

As you move further into the chamber you notice bones, black and charred, strewn across the floor and piled up against one wall. From the darkness at the end of the chamber you see movement, a glint of red light, smoke swirling as something large shifts position. A single gold coin rolls out of the smoke and darkness, down the steps and across the floor, coming to rest at your feet. Instinctively you pick it up, it's warm to the touch. From the darkness a deep, cruel voice booms "You dare touch my horde adventurer?". Two glowing eyes spark to life, yellow lanterns flickering in the darkness. You drop the coin and draw your weapons. You hear a great intake of breath and a spark illuminates the darkness for a moment before fire engulfs your world.

NOTES AND TIPS

- 30x30 grid map
- Obviously this is ideal for a Red Dragon's Lair, but honestly you could go with a few other creatures like Fire Elementals, a Fire Giant, Fire Mephit, Fire Snakes and Lava Worms. The Dragon could be long gone by the time the PCs enter the location.
- Theme other creatures and monsters for the location. Cloakers could have fire resistance and added fire damage. Having them hang on the glowing ceiling and drop onto players would be horrifying!
- Ropers could pull players towards the super heated parts of the walls!
- The walls are very hot! Getting close to them for any length of time could be damaging to a player's health.
- The left side of the map can be walked on, but the further 'up' the wall a PC gets the hotter it gets and the more damage they may/will take. You could simply have an ascending scale of damage each round or go with a con save to see if they can withstand the heat. (I'm not sure if there are specific rules, I've had trouble finding some).
- These kinds of places are always on the verge of collapsing, often just after the encounter is over. This can help to explain why the players can't collect a full dragon horde, but make sure you reward your players, they just killed a dragon after all!

- The horde is melted together! Use strength checks to rip pieces from it.

VARIANTS

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