

INFINITE CAVES OF THE SHROOM GOBLINS

a strange environment by Dyson Logos

The Infinite Caves was originally thrown out as a challenge for people to stock a tesseract-style dungeon map that JD Jarvis had built while making a selection of very cool hexagonal dungeon geomorphs (along with a bunch of other unorthodox shapes that still link together perfectly with my own dungeon geomorphs.)

The inspiration for this version of the Infinite Caves is distinctly based on the Froud Goblins of the movie Labyrinth. If you can picture these goblins dancing around to “dance magic, dance!” then you’ve got the right idea. These are pretty much comedic relief goblins, not wanna-be Tucker’s Kobolds.

The Infinite Caves exist on their own little sub-plane (thus explaining the horrible mapping confusion that will occur when the characters start exploring). Access is by a magic portal, and for all we know there may be nearly infinite numbers of these portals on the prime material plane, but they all enter the caves in the same manner, dumping the party out in between the mirrors in area 10 of the caves.

The goblins of these caves are a unique species, having more in common with mushrooms than they have with the other goblinoid species. In fact, the population of the caves replenishes spontaneously when it starts to shrink due to excessive violence (seriously, how else to shroom-goblins die? old age? not likely!) with new shroom-goblins emerging full formed from the walls and floors, first appearing to be ugly warty mushrooms, but that’s actually the nose, ear, toes or forehead of the goblin emerging from the earth and stone walls.

There are a variety of subspecies of shroom-goblins in the caves. When it becomes important regarding what kind of shroom-goblin we are dealing with, roll on the shroom-goblin table below – typically roll once on this table for a special goblin in any group – if feeling particularly nasty have half or even all of the group exhibit these traits. Don’t actually roll for every individual goblin. Seriously. Don’t do it. I warned you!

SHROOM GOBLIN SPECIES & POWERS (roll 1d12)

1. Violet Goblin – has scary-looking antlers.
2. White Goblin – typical goblin but very, very pale.
3. Lumpy Goblin – goblin is misshapen with massive nose, ears or other body parts.
4. Explosive Goblin – this goblin explodes in a pressurized blast of harmless spores when slain. Frightening but harmless.
5. Shrieking Goblin – screams very loudly when alarmed. Attracts other goblins to the scene of the action.
6. Ascomoid Goblin – tucks himself into his heavy armour (+2 AC) and rolls down the caves, charging into his opponents at double normal speed. However, he must make a save versus paralysis after charging an opponent or spend the next round stunned.
7. Basidironid Goblin – when killed, this goblin erupts into a 15’ radius cloud of spores that last for 1 round and cause confusion (save versus poison to resist) for 1 turn for anyone who contacts or breathes them during that round.
8. Contagious Goblin – anyone wounded by this goblin must save versus poison or become infected with a horrible fungal infection that deals 1d30 damage per day that cannot be healed until the infection is removed (via cure disease). If the disease kills the victim, 1d4 shroom-goblins erupt from the corpse.
9. Spotted Goblin – massive warts cover the goblin. Anyone touching the goblin (such as attacking with natural weapons) must save versus poison or grow similar nasty warts.
10. Cubic Goblin – roll 1d6 twice on this table.
11. Absurd Goblin – roll 1d8 twice on this table.
12. The Nuclear Option – treat as a cubic goblin, but explodes as contagious, spotted basidironid goblin.

THE GOBLIN FACTIONS

There are two factions of shroom-goblins in the caves. The first is based around the Goblin King in areas 24-26. The opposing or “rebel” faction of goblins are based in 1, 4, 15-17. The rebels have no “leader” as such, they just rebel. When goblins with no faction are encountered, roll 1d4 on the Faction Table. Wandering monster goblins are rolled for, even if in the turf of the opposing faction, because they get confused like that.

RANDOM GOBLIN FACTIONS

(roll 1d4)

1. Goblin King Loyalists
2. Rebels
3. Unaware of the factions
4. Arguing over their faction alignment (if only one goblin is encountered, he is actually arguing out loud with himself)

WANDERING MONSTERS

(1 in 4, roll every turn, roll 1d12 for type)

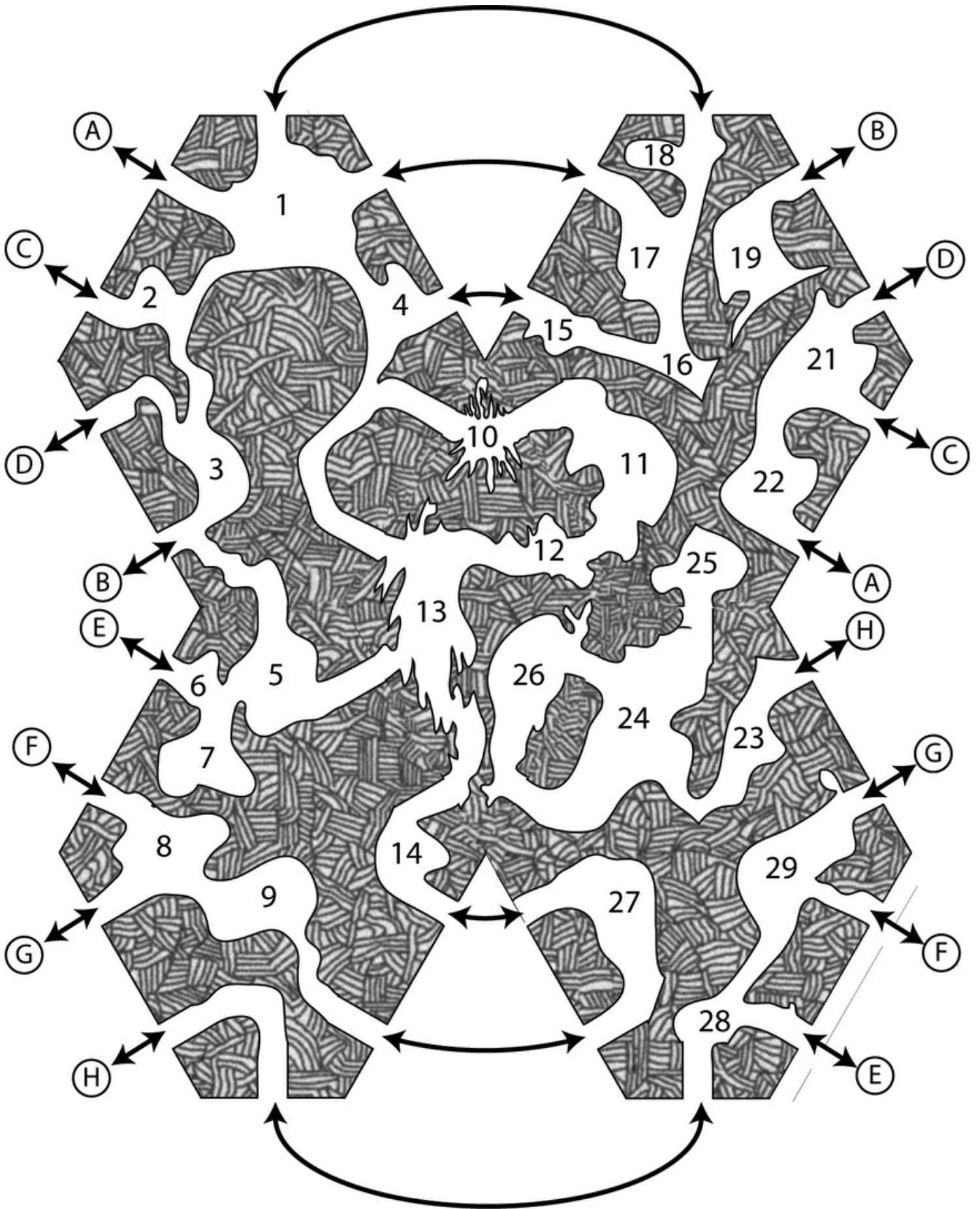
1. 2d4 Goblins
2. 1d6+1 Goblins
3. 3d3 Goblins
4. 1d8 Goblins
5. 2d3+1 Goblins
6. 1d10 Goblins
7. 1d3+1d6 Goblins
8. 3d4-2 Goblins
9. 1d3+2 Goblins
10. 1d4+1 Goblins
11. 2d4-1 Goblins
12. 3d3-1 Goblins

ROOM CONTENTS

1. Headquarters of the Rebel Faction – contains 4d4 goblins and two massive mutant goblins (hobgoblins). They like to sit around campfires and sing songs about being merry men and valiant robbers, but they often forget what they are singing about and start singing pro-goblin king songs... “Dance magic dance!”
2. Guardpost – two stone goblins faces leer out of the wall. If they react badly to the party they begin to scream “hostile THINGS at the screaming bloody chamber, you idiot fungi!” and similar. If they react well, they will tell the party about the local politics, how to make a decent goblin soufflé, and will try to sell their spit as “magic spit” for 30 gp a vial (they swallow the gold if paid, and the party has to provide the vials).
3. The Angry Rug – a scouting party of 6 loyalist goblins are currently having their cover blown by the rug they were walking across. Fed up with dirty goblin feet, the rug is trying to convince the goblins that they are jerks, and that they should at least clean off their feet. If treated with respect (and at least a little over-the-top groveling, as well as clean feet), the rug can be a source of information about the comings and goings of goblins. Really good convincing will have it also give the location of the secret panel in room 26, where the carpet used to be before he got all faded.
4. Hardcore Goblins – this cave has a single campfire, separated from the ones in area 1 because the goblins here are just too “hardcore” for the ones back there. These six goblins are confirmed rebel anarchists and wield home-made explosive flaming acid vials as well as their usual home-made melee

weapons. Each has two vials of explosive flaming acid – when thrown they deal 2d6 damage to the primary target, and 1d6 damage to everyone within 10 feet. Those failing a saving throw against dragon breath are covered in the flaming acid, dealing a further 1d4 damage per round for 1d4 rounds. Anarchy!

5. The Screaming Cave – this cave contains a collection of wild shriekers and one old goblin that the shriekers are so used to that they ignore him now. Unfortunately for him, he’s stone deaf from years of shrieking and won’t hear them if they do start to shriek because there is an intruder in the cave. He’s so old and grizzled that he’s got 11 hit points – mostly gristle and sheer hardheadedness. He also has a Cheese Knife +1, +3 versus Slimes, Molds and Oozes (1d2 damage).
6. The Lurking Stones – when someone walks into this cave the ceiling begins to creak and make noises like it is about to collapse, accompanied by dust and small stones falling to the floor. If ignored, portions of it will indeed fall – anyone in the room must save versus petrification or take 1d12+1 damage. However, just telling the ceiling to stop with the theatrics (or any similar demand) will shut it up – it just wants attention. Particularly unpleasant comments will be rewarded with a sprinkling of dust and sand on the speaker as they cross the room, but it will remain safe.
7. Oubliette – the entrance to this cave is partially concealed by spider webs and no goblin obviously goes here, even though there are a few jeweled doodads on the floor. The floor in this room stretches like a very old and abused trampoline, until anyone in the room finds themselves in a sheer-sided space sunken almost 20 feet below the proper floor level of the cave. The jeweled doodads are costume jewelry from a goblin masquerade ball, and are worth 20 gp, or the eternal gratitude of any of a number of young goblin girls who desperately wished they had gorgeous doodads for the masquerade balls.
8. Tropical Hideaway – 8 goblins make this cave their home, and have some pretty decent furniture. They are quite welcoming to any visitors. In the alcove in the northeast corner, a tapestry covers most of the wall. The tapestry is of a huge fireplace in a grand hall of some kind. The fireplace in the tapestry produces heat almost as if the fire were in the room – keeping the room toasty and warm (although the fire isn’t hot enough to really cook with, it does keep cooked food warm and can be used for slow-cooked meals like soups).
9. Drooling Shrooms – this cave has been given over to a mushroom garden / forest – a food source for the local populace. However, the Giant Chartreuse Toadstools have just matured, and anyone getting too close will trigger their defensive response of emitting a foul semi-intelligent slime mold treated in all ways as a bright pink ochre jelly.
10. Entry Chamber – yeah, you start in room 10. Nice and easy for the DM to figure it out when he pulls this out for a one-night game and then has to dig through the whole thing just trying to hunt down the “starting point” when there are



Map by JDJarvis of Aeon & Auguries (<http://aeonsnauguries.blogspot.com/>)

no obvious entries on the map. This cave looks like it was blasted into existence somehow – with jagged points of stone jutting in towards the centre of the room. In the centre of the room are three ten foot tall mirrors set into a triangle (or a vertical prism). When outsiders arrive in the tesseract caves, they appear in the triangular space between these mirrors, and one of the three mirrors slides aside to let them out. However, leaving requires the consent of the goblin king. There are rarely goblins in this room (except passing through), because it freaks them out. The goblin king always posts a watch here to track newcomers to his domain, but no goblin actually serves the watch – instead they hide somewhere else until their duty time is over and report back that no one came through.

11. Bartertown! this whole cave contains the illusion of a thriving village with peoples of many races shopping and discussing the weather, the price of tea, and so on. Amongst the illusionary buildings the goblins have set up their actual trading booths and homes, enjoying the sense of business that comes with the location. There are at least a dozen goblins here at any time, ready to sell to any real customers among the illusion (and they'll recognize real customers as they've seen the illusions day after day), and another score or more who live here but spend most of their time out in the caves. Specialties of Bartertown include slime mold curd cheese, chewing dung, wooden weapons and armour, and a variety of strange spices and dried fungus to make other fungus more appetizing.
12. Lost Goblins – in both alcoves in this room are terrified looking goblins, frozen immobile, one actually in mid-air. The entries to these alcoves seem to be blocked by a magical field that can be pushed through with some effort. Anyone entering an alcove (which can't be done accidentally) will be frozen in time in there until released. To release someone from an alcove, someone else must take his place, which immediately ejects the previous tenant. The two current goblin tenants were forced in to get someone else out (one was actually physically thrown in by a group of angry rebels who were busting one of their pals out of the "clink" as it were).
13. Big Nose's Lair – fifteen goblins live here with Big Nose, a goblin with a particularly normal nose, heck it might even be a bit on the small side. They live life as goblins tend to – eating, belching, farting, playing crude tricks on one another and groveling in the presence of the goblin king. It turns out that Big Nose is a title, and anyone who kills or defeats Big Nose will get the title for the remainder of their stay in the caves – and somehow every goblin they meet will know that he or she is the new Big Nose. The southern rough exit from this cave is a steep natural staircase of black stone that is somehow intimidating by its very nature. In fact, very few goblins ever use said stairs, getting to area 14 the long way (via 5, 6, 28, 29, 8, 9, 27). Anyone wanting to use the stairs feels sudden vertigo when looking up or down them, and must make a save versus spells or be unable to climb them.
14. Emergency Access System – the alcove here, practically at the bottom of the frightening stairs of area 13, contains three statues of elves, each pointing a finger forward – two at around face level, one much lower. If the statues are rotated the right way (turned to face each other so one elf is poking the other in the eye, that elf is poking the third in the ear, and the third is poking the first in the butt), anyone standing in the centre of the three elven statues is teleported to room 26, the Goblin King's audience chamber. If someone activates the emergency exit system from room 26, the three statues will rotate into the same positions. Once activated and the teleport has occurred, the three statues rotate to random facings. This area is guarded by four goblin loyalists who have no clue what they are guarding, and thus don't do much of a guard job and will actually work along with any characters trying to figure out how the elven statues work – doubly so if one of the characters is an elf (and laughing quite loudly when it is discovered that one elf statue is meant to be poking the other in the butt – "what do you expect from that kind of fairie anyways?")
15. Fungus 44. The rebel faction uses this small widening in the cave as cold storage. While the rest of the caves are pretty uniform in temperature, a mutant strain of brown mold has made this area particularly chilly without being too dangerously so. The goblins keep desert mushrooms in wooden boxes here that are half covered by the harmless mold. Deeper within the mold are the bodies of three young adventurers who came here at least a decade ago, preserved by the cold. Among their belongings are a few things the goblins couldn't use and left with them – a pair of Boots of Elvenkind, Durbblade – a two-handed sword +1 that deals +1d6 magical damage on command for 1d4 rounds once per day, and a scroll of mirror image and bless... yes, on the same scroll. One half clerical, one half arcane. There are also a pair of goblins on guard here "protecting" (read: snacking upon) the food supply.
16. Infinite Coin. The great coup of the rebels has been the theft of the local mint. The official coin of the caves is an iron pyrite coin (fool's gold) made by a strange magical device designed in the form of a slightly larger-than-life bust of the Goblin King. If you ask nicely, the bust of the king opens its mouth and there is a "gold" coin on its tongue. It won't do it again for 1d6 hours. Of course, the bust has been disfigured by the rebel faction now that they are in possession of it – it now sports a jaunty chapeau of dung, and has a large mustache drawn on it. The mint is always kept under guard, with d4+5 goblins in position around it – nervous, belligerent, and well-armed.
17. Smoov. This cave has been worn down to very smooth walls and floor, and is home to 8 rebel faction goblins. In the centre of the cave is a seven-foot tall stone column, and from the centre of the column clean clear water pours out, trickling down the sides to a hand-carved basin in the floor around it.
18. Dropsies. The alcove here is covered in warnings in goblin to watch your step. The biggest one is on the floor, warning potential explorers "don't step here!". The floor covers a 20 foot deep pit. Along the sides of the pit wall are four

oversized stone faces that will talk to anyone inside the pit (and all they say to anyone holding the pit cover open is that they'll only talk to someone in the "dropsie".) They love gossip and will ask questions about what's going on and who the adventurers are and why they haven't gone home yet. Once bored they will offer to send whoever is in the pit to "see the boss". Those agreeing, and anyone who looks like they will manage to get out of the pit, will be teleported to room 19.

19. El Humongo. This cave is home to El Humongo, a garbage-eating goblin of immense size (nine feet tall, and 12 wide). If roused to anger, he's probably the single most dangerous inhabitant of these caves, and is treated as a Hill Giant but with a movement rate of 30' (10'). Fortunately he is easily distracted from chasing or fighting enemies by real food (since he mostly eats garbage). The goblins are generally in awe of him, and also take him for granted, dumping all their refuse in this room. If you have the characters here trying to find a magic item or some other "plot coupon", then this is the perfect room to hide it in.

20. Lies. Damn Dirty Lies. This room is the key to the entire complex. Persons in this room can teleport to any other room in the complex by merely stating the number of the room they wish to teleport to (using the numbering system from the map). Hanging from a set of chains in the middle of the room is a Holy Avenger and a Staff of Wizardry. Beneath these two items is a chest bolted to the floor containing 24,000 gp (real gold, not the fool's gold of the so-called goblin economy). This room is so well-hidden that even the Goblin King has never found it.

21. Get Felt! A family of 7 goblins have set up a felt manufacturing and distribution centre here. They spend their days procuring and pressing goblin hair into a variety of felts used in the manufacture of goblin clothing. One of the senior members of the clan is an accomplished vexillologist who spends his time making flags. He loves the existence of the rebel movement just because it means there's reason for everyone to show off their support, and what better way than through custom flags? If someone should become hostile to the residents, a surprise combatant will join in the fray. Ages ago, one member of the clan got so lazy that he slowly transformed into a large shelf fungus which now is used to hold finished stock. He'll begin throwing bolts of felt at hostile interlopers, defending his kin. (A bolt of felt may be somewhat soft, but it is quite heavy, and deals 1d6 damage to the target).

22. Long Term Storage. Things that take up too much room to be comfortably ignored but that the goblins don't want anymore and yet feel they shouldn't (or can't) destroy go into the Long Term Storage (if it can fit through the door). There is a small goblin-sized door on the wall of this cave and opening it exposes a small storage closet overflowing with crap. Old brooms, an iron maiden, trunks full of old felt, urns, slightly broken furniture, bits and bobs of armour (particularly helmets), uncle Scrogs' pipe, the halfling philharmonic orchestra woodwind division, bookshelves, big-ass candles that never seem to burn right, a wheelbarrow, and so on.

There is actually pretty much infinite space in here, but it all gets jumbled together like a badly maintained storage closet. Sometimes (1 in 4), a bunch of stuff pours out when the door is opened. The rest of the time one random piece of junk falls / rolls out and everything else looks like it is about to.

23. Guard Post Four Hundred and Seventy Six and Three Quarters. Two loyalist goblins with great big flowing mustaches sit here on guard duty, discussing the utter lack of weather living underground. "I sure could do with a little rain for my missus' gardenias I tell you!" "Oh my yes, wouldn't hurt to have a bit o sunshine this weekend too for the picnic..." This passage / guard post contains an anti-magic field so the guards are on watch for anyone invisible suddenly becoming invisible ("Ho there, Bob! Comin' to see the King eh? Well, yer invisible here I tell ya. Oh, I know you are never normally invisible, but here not only are you visible, but you are invisible, that's like twice as visible!")

24. Happenstance. Happenstance is the other main town in the caves besides Bartertown. The population of 30 or so goblins (mostly loyalist or undecided) live a fairly typical shroom-goblin existence drinking, smoking, throwing pots and pans at each other, and thinking up (un)funny jokes. Among their kin are two massive guard goblins (treat as hobgoblins) and a small troop of mounted goblin "cavaliers" who ride other goblins into battle. The two exits to area 26 are blocked by massive iron gates that are locked during times of distress, but kept open the rest of the time. Anyone walking through these gates will have their age reduced by 1 year. Thus the Goblin King maintains his youth, but also must avoid leaving his base too often, lest he become a teenager (or younger) again. The northern exit to area 26 is a set of stairs leading down, while the southern exit to area 26 is a set of stairs leading up.

25. The Black Cork Clan. This cave has been converted into the home and training grounds of the black cork clan - a tribe of urban shroom-goblin ninjas. Because really, what's better than shroom goblins going to war mounted on other shroom goblins? That's right, stacks of ninja goblins (thanks to the Portable Hole Full of Beer set of PDFs for introducing the Goblin Ninja Stack). Bonuses may not always stack in D&D, but goblin ninjas do. The black cork clan is made up of a dozen goblin ninjas who operate in four units of three goblins who operate in a "goblin ninja stack", with one goblin on the bottom doing the running around, and the other two exhibiting their superior balancing skills by piling one on the other on his shoulders. They all dress in black, but also darken their skin with the ashes from their magical ninja fireplace. Anyone covering his exposed skin with the soot directly from the fireplace (carrying it around doesn't work) becomes nearly invisible, or at least mystically hard to see (even when stacked three tall) and has a surprise chance of 4 in 6 (or 5 in 6 for those with a better than 2 in 6 chance normally).

26. Audience Room. Home to the Goblin King and a dozen goblin hangers-on. This cave is well decorated, even if the decorations show their goblin abuses (lots of stains, small tears, the

sofa is missing a leg and sits on a stack of old goblin pornography, etc). Of course, the Goblin King isn't a goblin, but a level 5 elf who runs the show as best he can. The exit stairs to area 24 lead in opposite directions – one leading up and one leading down, even though both areas 24 and 26 are flat and level. If threatened in his audience chamber, the Goblin King will push down on the stone table in the middle of the room (usually by jumping up on it to fight from higher ground). This releases a sleeping gas into the room that knocks out any non-elf that fails a save versus poison. Further, anyone shouting “away” in common while standing on the table is instantly teleported out of here. The teleport is instant on this side (the character(s) disappear immediately) but it takes two rounds for the statues in area 14 to align themselves and for the teleport to complete. If the statues cannot align themselves (they have been destroyed, or something immensely strong is holding them out of position), the teleporteers will reappear on the table in four rounds. The Goblin King has the ability to send people (but not goblins) back to the prime material plane if he really wants to. Anyone killing the Goblin King becomes the new Goblin King and gains this ability, but cannot use it on himself. The Goblin King wields a +2 Rapier of Unfairness (it can only be wielded by elves) and has a wand of illusion with 13 charges.

The nook of little caves on the north side of the audience room is hidden by a secret door built into the back of a wardrobe. In the nook is a metal post with a magic lantern hanging from it (that burns without oil) and the Goblin King's personal treasure stash of 1,750 gp, 800 ep, and a pair of 500 gp gems.

27. Floater's Hall. This passage has no gravity, which is good because areas on the north side has gravity in the opposite direction as the south side. Persons crossing to the other side of the cave and not noting the change in orientation will plummet 15 feet to the floor. There are typically a few young goblins here enjoying the zero-gee antics (1d8-2 goblins). As old pros, they suffer only a -1 to hit and damage fighting in zero gravity, while people new to the environment must make a saving throw versus paralysis every round in order to act at all, and still suffer a -2 penalty on attack and damage rolls.
28. The Sphere. A foot-wide stone pillar is the centerpiece of this otherwise empty room. Exactly half-way up the pillar (5 feet from the floor) is an 18-inch dark marble sphere held in place by the pillar. The sphere rotates smoothly and without much resistance. There is a sign in goblin on one wall that reads “for the love of all that exists, please do not move, rotate or reposition the sphere!” The sphere does absolutely nothing.
29. Mirror Mirror. A cluster of nine single-goblin residences built out of large mushrooms (think smurf houses, but a much tighter fit, more like smurf pup tents) are scattered throughout the room. In the middle of the large curved northwest wall is a large mirror where the frame of the mirror looks like the face of a goblin with his mouth wide open and the mirror being where his mouth should be. The mirror loves to debate, and routinely argues with the goblins about just about everything. “Come on, only goblins with yeast-brain would go to bed at this hour!”

USING THE INFINITE CAVES IN YOUR GAME

The infinite caves will not mesh with all game styles. They are silly, and the goblins and other creatures living within them are also silly (albeit potentially quite deadly... but it would be a silly death). Don't try to crowbar this kind of environment into any campaign - it requires that the players be willing to play along with the silliness at least a bit (although not necessarily having the characters play along, after all, every good gag is enhanced by the straight man to play it upon - like the straight-laced lawful good paladin). If your players (and your campaign) can cope with something like this place, there are two easy ways to incorporate it into a game.

1. The Goblin Curse. The characters get shifted to the Infinite Caves by a curse. A cursed scroll is a classic for something like this, or perhaps a cursed magic mirror (considering where they pop up in the caves). Escape from the Caves becomes essential to them continuing on their pre-existing quest or adventure.
2. Quest for the MacGuffin of MacGuffining. The other option is to send the characters here on purpose in search for an important plot coupon that they can then redeem to save the world or something similar. In this case, the characters can be given a magic trick that sends them to the goblin realm and may arrive already aware that the only way out of the realm is to negotiate an exit strategy with the Goblin King. And who knows, they could find the trick of a quick escape into goblin country to be useful in the future (like when needing to dodge an 88 hit point dragon breath attack), but the Goblin King might have much harder demands to release them next time...