

The Laughing Giant's Secret

The western hills of Vlarkenden are some of the most beautiful untamed lands in all the realms. If you plan to head out this way to adventure, be sure to look for *The Inn of the Laughing Giant*, the last bastion of civilization before the wildlands begin. As far as I'm concerned, no trip to Vlarkenden is complete without a quick stop to say hello to Hogarth, the innkeeper—a friendly rucksack of a man who loves to hear adventurers' tales, and often spins a few of his own. The savvy traveler will stock up on last minute provisions and grab a night or two of rest before heading out on the untrampled trail. Be sure to order a pint of his special Adventurer's Amber Ale, brewed and aged on the premises! Of course, you might have trouble finding the inn, as this regional treasure is a secret the locals would love to keep to themselves. But persistent inquisitors will be richly rewarded with a visit they won't soon forget!

—Stik Reeve's *Guide to Vlarkenden*

About the Inn

No one knows or remembers when *The Inn of the Laughing Giant* first appeared or how long it has existed in the valley. The Inn is tainted by powerful residual magic (detect magic spells & magic items make everything, including PCs, faintly glow) which affects every living thing that stays too long, until the point that escape is futile and the characters must remain in the inn forever or risk dying upon setting foot off the property. The magic blanketing the inn is so powerful that PCs will permanently lose 5% of accumulated XP for each night spent at the inn if they do not settle their tab before dawn of each day. **Hogarth**, the halfing-giant proprietor, cannot leave the inn's property, else he will immediately turn to dust. Other other NPCs—including **Sarae** & **Bükan**, serving wenches, **Sir Norris**, the bouncer, **Gwark Nithal**, a petty thief, **Tenk Eklarc**, a wizened ranger, and **Bob**, the tavern drunk—suffer from the same malady. **Hogarth**, driven mad by knowledge of his fate, often kills his guests, using their blood to brew his ale, and serving their flesh to unsuspecting patrons. None of the other NPCs know this.

RTT = roll on [Djery's Random Treasure Table](#)

Ground Level

- Tavern main. Bob, Sir Norris, Gwark Nithal, Tenk Eklarc, & Bob lounge around the room, playing various tavern games.
- Bar. Hogarth & the wenches; Hogarth has a *Club* +6 hidden under the bar.
 - Pass-through. Empty.
 - Taproom. The keg has a false bottom, and holds a *Flask of Never-ending Ale*.
- Kitchen. Various kitchen implements. 18 iron rations in a cabinet. The fireplace holds a *Laughing Kettle*.
- Pantry. [RTT](#).
- The Doublet. Empty.
- Stairs to Cellar Level.
- Mudroom. Empty.
- The Wren. Sir Norris' room; 200gp under bed.
- The Swallow. Bob's room; [RTT](#).
- The Nuthatch. Gwark Nithal's room; [RTT](#).
- The Bluejay. Bükan's room; assorted knickknacks, plus a golden katana +1.
- The Catbird. Sarae's room; assorted knickknacks and 17sp.
- Indoor outhouse. An Orc reading an upside down book.
- The Starling. Empty.
- The Finch. Tenk Eklarc's room; [RTT](#).
- The Redwing. A friendly Gnome invites the PC to play Dragon Chess.
- Yard. 6 goats, 400sp, 200gp at bottom of well.
- Stable. 2 elderly Centaurs, 3 Griffins, 2 Warbeasts, a War Pig, & 2 Wyld Stallions.
- Hitching Posts. 2 Mules, a Zedonk, and a Quarter Horse. 35sp, 75gp, and 2 trivels (could be a trident, could be shovel) distributed among the packs.

Upper Level

- Hogarth's Bedroom. 1,600gp hidden in a false bottom drawer of the dresser, plus two long swords hanging on the wall above the bed.
- Hogarth's private storage. Two suits of *Leather Armor* +3, a *Dagger of Double Stabbing* +2, and a set of thieves tools missing its pouch.
- The Badger. [RTT](#).
- The Black Bear. [RTT](#).
- The Marmoset. [RTT](#).
- Dormitory. [RTT](#).
- The Fox. Empty.
- The Hound. Empty.
- The Wolf. A drunken Hobgoblin snoring loudly, passed out on the bed.
- The Jackal. An Orc polishing his sword.

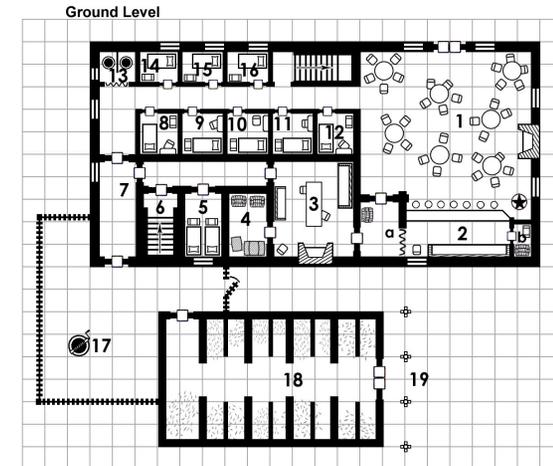
- The Ferret. An Orc cutting his toenails.
- The Raccoon. An Orc eating a mincemeat pie.
- The Rabbit. An Orc reading a book entitled *The War on Art*.
- The Mouse. A Dwarf polishing his axe.
- The Rat. An Orc stacking 1,000gp worth of coins by size.
- The Owl. A random Harlot, sleeping.
- The Raven. A random Harlot and a Halfling thief.
- The Crow. Empty.
- The Vulture. [RTT](#).

Cellar/Dungeon Level

- Storeroom. The floor is covered with straw, and scattered about are goat bones, humanoid bones, and odd articles of clothing. The room is blood-splattered, and smells strongly of dung and urine. Each of the tables contains 2d6 cheeses and 1d6 sausages of various size.
- Mathilda's Lair. **Mathilda** is Hogarth's daughter, polymorphed into a **Piassa Bird** by **The 3 Weirds**. Killing Mathilda will immediately throw Hogarth into a blind rage, and he will rally all of the inn's patrons to attack the adventurers. The floor is littered with straw & bones, and the bales of straw throughout the room contain 1d20sp and 1d30gp worth of jewelry & trinkets.
- The 3 Weirds. The door to this room is protected with a *Glyph of Warding*. Inside are 3 1,000 year-old blind albino 15th-level witches. Upon being discovered, the Weirds will immediately cast *Symbol of Pain*, *Waves of Fatigue*, and *Inflect Critical Wounds*. Killing the witches will break the spell on the inn (turning all NPCs to dust) & the spell on Mathilda. Upon the witches' deaths, the PCs will find themselves standing in an empty field with the un-polymorphed Mathilda, a thirtyish quarter-halfling/quarter-giant/half-elf maiden, and a two-horned unicorn.
- The Cistern. Filled with blood; throwing in a gold piece removes the *Glyph of Warding* on #3. There are 3,000 gold pieces at the bottom of the cistern.
- Cask Room. Each of these casks holds the bodies of two adventurers fermenting in Hogarth's Adventurer's Amber Ale.
- Cold Storage Room. The naked bodies of sixteen adventurers (mostly dwarves, gnomes, and goblins) in various states of dressing & processing dangle from giant hooks embedded in the ceiling and walls; [RTT](#).
- Cold Storage Room. This area is packed floor to ceiling with bales of straw. A wooly mammoth skeleton lies buried under the straw in the far end of the area, a *Spear of Piercing* +3 under one of its tusks.
- Cold Storage Room. the naked bodies of twenty human adventurers in various states of dressing & processing hang from giant hooks embedded in the ceiling and walls; [RTT](#).

Tavern maps by [Tim Hartin](#), used under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 2.5 Canada License](#)

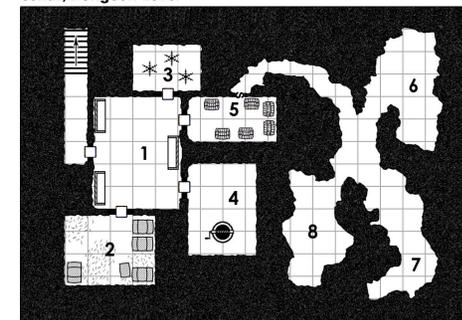
THE INN OF THE LAUGHING GIANT



Upper Level



Cellar/Dungeon Level



Created for the OPD 2011 Contest by Matthew W. Schmeier @ <http://rendedpress.blogspot.com>
Released under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#)