

The Owl Mage's Lair

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Unbeknownst to the world, the wizard responsible for the creation of owlbears is still alive. Brius Obelthork was once a benevolent mage, helping the peasants of the little village through drought, plague, and poverty. So when the king's raiders burned the village to the ground, he swore vengeance upon them.

He used his trapping skills to catch owls and bears. He began to blend them with magic. The first few creatures were abysmal failures, but, after a month of work, he had created the perfect blend of brute and hunter.

Confident in his creation, Brius could barely wait to unleash his new weapon on the king's men, for vengeance. But one night, as he prepared to transform more of the creatures, the king's men raided his cabin, interrupting his delicate work. His spell backfired, partly transforming him into one of his own creations.

Now, years later, Brius still hides in the forest, in an old underground smuggling hold, ambushing the king's soldiers whenever they come by.

Adventure Hooks

There are many ways the characters might find themselves heading to Brius' lair:

- They are enemies of the kingdom, have heard rumors of Brius, and hope to recruit him as an ally.
- They have been hired by the king's army to track down the source of the raids on military caravans.
- The party is set upon by Brius' owlbears while passing through his territory.
- Errant owlbears have been attacking a small village nearby, and the villagers have cobbled up a bit of money to pay the characters to find the source.

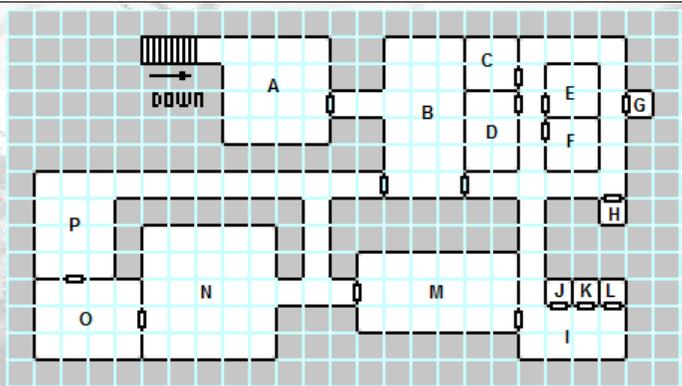
The Smuggling Hold

This smuggling hold could have been used to smuggle slaves, illegal substances, or stolen goods. However it was used, it was long ago abandoned, and now sits about a mile off a road leading to the village Brius had once cared for, deep in the forest.

A ranger can track the owlbear prints that lead between various parts of the road, and the smuggling hold.

Above the hold, is a small glade containing eight owlbear nests. The area also includes 1d8 owlbears. Any owlbears not here, are out hunting, and will return in groups of 1-4 by sundown.

There are bowls of food and water around the nests, as well as booted footprints, making it clear that someone is taking care of the creatures. It is easy to follow the tracks to the entrance to the smuggling hold, about fifty feet from the glade, built into a hill in the forest.



Area A – This small room at the bottom of the stairs is lit by a permanent light spell, cast on a glass orb. It is removable. There are a few barrels of water here, and some spears, but little else.

Area B – Brius' skill at trapping is not limited to catching bears. As he lives alone, he has placed many booby traps around the hold, in paranoid preparation for some unknown intruder. A character entering area B must pull the door open, standing out of the way, to allow an arrow to fire down the hallway. Standing in front of the door while opening it, will likely result in being his by the arrow. The rest of the room is bare.

Area C – This room is Brius' quarters. The room is full of alchemical items of many types, and 500 gold pieces of treasure.

Area D – This room is where Brius keeps owls. There are eight owls in cages here, with bags of feed and barrels of water.

Area E – This room is a larder, filled with fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as salted venison and pork. Some of the crates of food are stamped with the king's seal.

Area F – This room contains a small armory, with many spears, halberds, longswords, and shields, mostly taken from the king's soldiers. It is guarded by a medium air elemental.

Area G – This room is a privy.

Area H – This room is a closet. There is a dire rat inside, as well as some brooms, pitchforks, animal training poles, and scythes.

Area I – This room is guarded by a pair of animated statuettes that Brius enchanted to guard the area.

Area J – A closet full of trapmaking tools, including gears, pulleys, string, rope, steel wire, and various spears and axes.

Area K – This closet contains a pile of bones, about 3 feet high, all from humans. Bits of chainmail and leather armor can also be found among the pile, as well as three intact chainmail shirts.

Area L – This closet contains a partially-assembled golem of some kind, about the size of a human. It is covered in cobwebs, and appears to have been a long-ago-abandoned project of Brius'. It functions, however, and attacks the characters as a medium animated object if touched.

Area M – This room is mostly empty, though blood and feathers covers the floor. The walls are covered with drawings of bears, owls, and various hybrids between them. There is a cauldron in the corner filled an unknown, blackish-red, foul-smelling liquid.

Area N – Brius himself is in this room. He is a 7th level wizard. He appears to be half-owl, half-man, with large claws he uses in melee combat. He may try to talk to the characters, to convert them to his cause. If he is losing in combat, he flees to room O.

Area O – This room is guarded by four animated statuettes. They will fight to the death to protect the room. If Brius flees in here from Area N, they will do their best to protect him.

Area P – This room is full of feathers and small twig nests and appears to have once belonged to Brius' nascent owl-bear hybrids, before he perfected his creation.