

THE DIG SITE

WORDS AND ART BY CHERYN RAPP FOR GOBLINS AND GROWLERS
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A trio of grumpy dwarves approaches the party in a tavern. They're seeking a group of adventurers to find their sister, who is known to go wandering for weeks in the rocky hills and outcroppings about a day's ride outside of town. She went on another one of her "expeditions" a few weeks ago and no one has seen her since — it's rare for her to be gone this long. The dwarves would like to hire the party to bring their sister, Vickora, back home to their family mine, where she belongs. ("Er, she usually goes by Vicki," one of the dwarves adds with a frown.)

FACTS ABOUT VICKI

- Her family thinks she's strange and has bizarre, useless hobbies.
- She spends a lot of her time somewhere in the hills called the Gnashing Rocks.
- Vicki is short and round, she wears glasses, has a very respectable beard, and she eats lots of potatoes.
- The Gnashing Rocks are not recommended. They contain nothing of note, there's no main thoroughfare, and there's nothing really on the other side — it's a no man's land of sorts, and it's rumored to be haunted. An abandoned area with absolutely nothing useful to mine, yet Vicki is obsessed with it.

THE GNASHING ROCKS

As they travel down a long-forgotten road, four tall, scraggly rock hills come into view, jutting fanglike into the air. They're not really 'hills' — more like thick mesas that tower a few thousand feet high. At a glance, they appear to be jumbled together from a variety of rock layers set atop one another in jagged patterns. It is clear that long ago this area underwent several geological upheavals to create such an odd-looking landscape. Two of the hills are closer together than the others, and the party sees what appears to be a small campsite nestled in an alcove between them.

THE TERRAIN

Once the party leaves the "road" and begins the climb to the campsite, the terrain becomes rocky and unstable. Every few minutes as they hike, and definitely during any risky encounters on the hillsides, they will need to roll a Dex check. Rockslides and weak cliff ledges are common. (In case of a trip or stumble, or just if they're particularly perceptive — a party member might find a large fossilized tooth or an ammonite.) Shadows may dance in the corners of the party's eyes and they may occasionally feel like someone is watching them...

THE BASECAMP (1)

This is a simple canvas tent set up in the crook of a rocky outcropping between two of the hills. The dent in the cliff wall is not quite a cave, but provides enough shelter to store tools, food, and some other necessities. Some bins on the ground are filled with lumpy brown shapes. The party may notice that half are potatoes, half are lumps of rock with fossils embedded in them. There is no sign of Vicki, just evidence of a (mostly) well-organized

basecamp.

Several tidily labeled fish fossils along with a hand-drawn topographic map of the Gnashing Rocks lie inside the tent, clearly showing the four hills among which the party now stands. Two other sites are marked in addition to the current campsite; they are both labeled "dig."

THE ZIPLINES

From the basecamp, the party can squint to see far out enough to the dig sites marked on the map. They're high atop two of the other hills. They also can see the means by which Vicki travels from peak to peak. Ziplines are set up between the four hillsides. A short climb up some rock-hewn steps and a minute or so of whizzing through the air saves at least an hour or more of climbing back down an unstable rock face and up another. Plus, it's *fun*. (Vicki carries a special wheel with handles and a crank in order to go back up a rope line, but the angles of the lines from hill to hill aren't too steep, and there are many options for how the party might want to traverse the lines.)

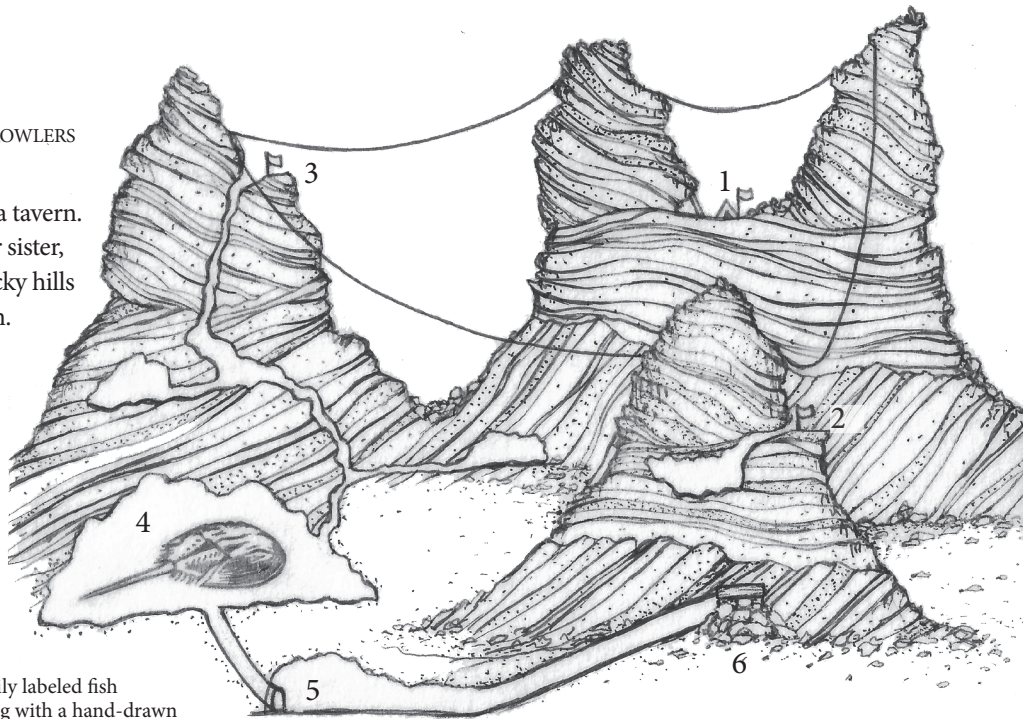
DIG SITES AND TUNNELS (2, 3)

Both dig sites are very similar; just make sure that they are only able to access the underground tunnel to the cavern *after* they've already been to the other site. The party may encounter flying **bone pterosaurs** as they make their way across the ziplines. If they are spelunking in the caves and tunnels at the dig sites, they may encounter other **bone dinos**. Bone dinos may also be roaming the hillsides if they take that route, adding to the constant danger of the treacherous landscape. (Don't forget those Dex checks!)

At the second dig site the party visits, the tunnel leads far, far deeper into the ground, down between the rock layers and splitting off into a few side tunnels and wider spaces. The party can see where Vicki has been excavating partial dinosaur skeletons in several spots along the way. Are they just imagining a shadowy figure just out of sight?

CAVERN (4)

Eventually the tunnel opens wide into a huge cavern, part of which seems to have formed naturally, and the other part which seems to have been carefully and meticulously hewn with a pickaxe. As the party explores the wide dark space, they stumble upon the **Great Undead Xiphosurida**. Roll for initiative.



WELCOME HOME

After the fight concludes, you hear a voice crying out "NO — No no no! Horace!" a short, bespeckled dwarf runs out from the dark and throws herself onto the unmoving carapace. "He was just scared! He's never met strangers before!" Vicki bemoans. As Vicki weeps, a tall, shadowy figure looms up behind her. "It's okay," says the figure, "I can bring him back. His essence is still here, in the rock." It seems that the creature was actually a very beloved family member.

If the party is suitably apologetic, Vicki will perk up considerably when she hears that Horace isn't dead for good. She and the necromancer invite the party through another tunnel in the back of the cavern, which leads to what is actually a very cozy lair (5) at the end of an abandoned mineshaft dug out of one of the other hillsides. (The outside entrance of this abandoned mineshaft magically appears as decades-old cave-in (6); so the only way for the party — or anyone — to know to get in is from the tunnel at the dig site.)

Vicki settles the party at a large, rock-hewn table, where they learn the name of the necromancer, Dae ("It's spelled D-a-e but it's pronounced like *die*!" Vicki helpfully throws out there), and a little bit more about their hosts.

VICKI (SHE/HER)

A short, round dwarf with thick, round spectacles; two hefty braided pigtails hang over her shoulders, and she has a bushy but well-kept beard. She has a bright, bubbly personality and loves showing her fossils off to anyone nearby. Her happy demeanor is instantly dimmed if her family or their mine is mentioned.

DAE (THEY/THEM)

Dae is a tall, awkward goth kid; very quiet and solemn, especially in contrast to Vicki's enthusiastic nature. They are nonbinary and dress in long dark robes. Dae doesn't practice traditional necromancy, but instead reanimates fossilized creatures based off of their life essence in the imprint they left behind. They have lived in the Gnashing Rocks for several years after running away from home, where their traditional necromancer family didn't understand them or their necromantic choices.

They noticed Vicki several months ago on one of her many camping trips in the hills to dig. They got used to her presence — as did their reanimated fossil friends — and when Vicki stumbled across one of the bone dinos for the first time, it was love at first sight. Eventually, Dae introduced themselves to Vicki and the two became inseparable. Together, they find new fossil friends to reanimate and add to their family (always with the fossil's permission, of course). Why would Vicki want to live anywhere else? She packed up her things and headed into the hills for the last time. Dae has been watching the party all this time; worried that they would make Vicki leave the Gnashing Rocks forever.

NOW WHAT?

Vicki hates the idea of returning to her family and mining; she utterly rejects it if it's brought up by the party. Other than supply trips out once or twice a year, she has no need to leave. Dae is clearly happy that she is staying with them.

Perhaps Vicki gives the party a letter for her siblings explaining her new life, or maybe she's convinced to make one last visit to say farewell? It's clear that the party will need to rethink their mission, so resolve this however you see fit.

Bone Dinos

Large Undead, Any Neutral Alignment

Several species of undead dinosaurs and other fossilized creatures roam the air and landscape of the Gnashing Rocks. Over millions of years after their deaths, water in the nearby sedimentary rocks surrounded the bones, and minerals in the water eventually entirely replaced the bone, leaving a solid rock skeleton of the creature. These fossilized bones have been reanimated; leaving the terrifying spectacle of monstrous, sightless skulls on shambling skeletons made of dense rock.

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Poisoned, Petrified, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 90 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Primordial, Terran, can understand Common but cannot speak it

Rock Solid Made of solid rock, bone dinos are capable of withstanding tremendous damage; more so than if they were made of actual bone.

Bone Pterosaur

Armor Class 15	STR	12 (+1)
Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)	DEX	17 (+3)
Speed 20ft., Flying 60ft.	CON	16 (+3)
Challenge Rating 3 (700XP)	INT	8 (-1)
	WIS	12 (+1)
	CHA	9 (-1)

Unholy Flight The necromantic energies that animate this creature also enable it to fly.

Multiattack Bone Pterosaur may make one Stabby Beak attack, and one Flappy Bones attack.

Stabby Beak *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) Piercing damage.

Flappy Wing Thwack *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) Bludgeoning damage.

Swoop Reach 5ft., one target. As an Action, Bone Pterosaur attempts to grab a creature within range, target must succeed on a DC14 Dexterity Saving Throw or be grappled Escape DC12.

Bone Triceratops

Armor Class 16	STR	16 (+3)
Hit Points 104 (11d10 + 44)	DEX	12 (+1)
Speed 30ft.	CON	18 (+4)
Challenge Rating 4 (1,100XP)	INT	9 (-1)
	WIS	12 (+1)
	CHA	8 (-1)

Bulky Bone Triceratops is at disadvantage for Dexterity Saving Throws.

Multiattack Bone Triceratops may make one Stomp attack, and one Beak Chomp attack.

Stomp *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) Bludgeoning damage.

Beak Chomp *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) Piercing damage.

Stab You With My Face (Recharge 2R) As an Action, Bone Triceratops may charge a target 10+ ft. away, moving up to twice their normal movement speed. After moving 10ft., Bone Triceratops no longer takes attacks of opportunity. Target creature, and any creature within 5ft. of target creature, must make Dexterity Saving Throws DC16 or be trampled. On failure, the primary target takes 12 (2d8+3) Piercing damage, other targets take 7 (1d8+3) Bludgeoning Damage. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) Piercing damage.

Frill Thrill (Recharge 2R) As a Bonus Action, Bone Triceratops shakes their bone frill. Creatures with line of sight to Bone Triceratops must make a DC12 Wisdom Saving Throw, or be Frightened.

For use with "The Dig Site"

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After meeting Vicki and Dae:

The party may learn that the lead pterosaur's name is Flappy. His essence asked if he could please be reanimated so that he could fly again. In life, he had never been a great flier - a tear in his wing from an early age kept him from really being able to take to the skies, and he died when he was still quite young. Since joining Dae and Vicki's family, he's never been happier, and would do anything to protect his new home.

The triceratops is named Margaret. In life, she was mother to many clutches of eggs. Vicki and Flappy actually found her fossilized bones together, and it was clear to Margaret that Flappy was in need of motherly guidance. She consented to joining the family and spends much of her time patrolling the hillsides and tunnels, finding fossils and making sure those that are at rest stay that way and bringing any others to the attention of Vicki and Dae so that they might have a second chance at life.

Great Undead Xiphosurida

Huge Undead, Any Neutral Alignment

From the depths of the cavern, you hear a strange noise - a slight scuttling sound, and what sounds like something dragging. But whatever it is, it sounds... big. Out of the darkness looms a huge tank - no, it's a rock - a giant, curved, rock wall? Then you notice the two huge, sightless eyeholes. Spiky, pincer-like appendages are barely distinguishable under the edge of what you now recognize as a massive shell. The huge stone chelicerate rears up and slams its massive body down nearly directly on to the party, its pincers waving, a long, stiff tail balancing its massive shell as it throws itself down. ...An actual living fossil? A giant, undead horseshoe crab?

Skills Perception

Damage Immunities Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Poisoned, Petrified, Unconscious

Senses Truesight 60ft., Tremorsense 60ft., Passive Perception 16

Languages Primordial, Terran, can understand Common but cannot speak it

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

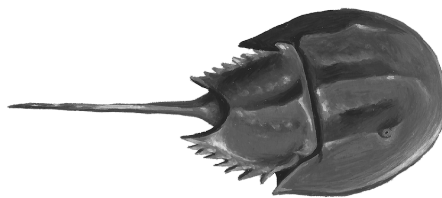
Rock Solid Made of solid rock, the Great Undead Xiphosurida is capable of withstanding tremendous damage; moreso than they could have in life.

Earth Glide The huge chelicerate can burrow through layers of nonmagical, unworked earth and stone as though it was traveling along the seafloor. While doing so, it doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Careening Carapace (Recharge 2R) As an action, the Great Undead Xiphosurida may spend 25ft. of movement to plough through and knock aside anyone unfortunate enough to be in the way. Creatures in the path of the Great Undead Xiphosurida must succeed on a DC14 Strength Saving Throw. On a success, the creature is able to dodge away. On a failure, the creature is knocked back 15ft. prone and takes 10 (1d10+5) Bludgeoning damage.

Tail Sweep "The Full Telson" (Recharge 2R) As a Bonus Action the Great Undead Xiphosurida scuttles madly around in a circle, its telson extending from the back of its shell and affecting a half-circle with a radius of 20 feet, extending from a point on the edge of the GUX's carapace in any direction, creatures within the swept area must succeed on a DC13 Dexterity Saving Throw or be knocked prone and take 7 (1d4+5) Slashing damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

So. Much. Pinching. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (3d4+5) Piercing damage. Also, the target is Grappled (Escape DC15). Great Undead Xiphosurida may have 2 targets Grappled at one time.



Who's The Living Fossil, Now? (Recharge 1/Long Rest)

Once the Great Undead Xiphosurida is below 50% health, it may perform the following. The Great Undead Xiphosurida may take a creature it has Grappled and use its Earth Glide ability to burrow into the nearest solid rock or earth, taking the creature with it. If the Great Undead Xiphosurida is grappling two creatures, it may only take one. The Great Undead Xiphosurida lets go of the creature while moving through the stone. Target may make a DC15 Dexterity saving throw to hold onto the Great Undead Xiphosurida as it leaves the layer of stone, or else take 21 (6d6) points of Bludgeoning damage and be expelled from the earth.

Armor Class 17 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 126 (11d12+55)

Speed 30ft., Burrow 60ft.

STR 20 (+5)

DEX 12 (+1)

CON 23 (+6)

INT 10 (+0)

WIS 15 (+2)

CHA 9 (-1)

For use with "The Dig Site"

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Original One Page Dungeon

After meeting Vicki and Dae:

Horace is a very quiet and shy fellow. He spent most of his time in life crawling around the Cretaceous seafloor, minding his own business. It was only after he passed that he realized he'd actually been rather lonely.

While he's still getting used to the company of his new family, he's been enjoying their companionship and is slowly, err, coming out of his shell. He particularly enjoys traveling beneath the layers of the Gnashing Rocks to help Vicki find new dig sites, and he can frequently be found playing chess with Dae.