Background

The dragon Sorcandilax has a problem – vermin have tunneled into his treasure chamber. They are issuing through a crevice too small for the dragon to enter. Breathing fire into the crack seems to have done little to prevent the pests from scuttling out onto his otherwise pristine loot pile. Spying the players as they wander the wilds near his hilltop home, he flies down to them. He lands before them and makes an offer. If they will enter the crevice and exterminate the invading pests, he will part with some of his treasure for them (though it pain him to do so). He will know if they sneak any extra loot from his pile, so they will have to be on their best behavior.

Sorcandilax is a young adult 7–hex dragon. He has scales like burnished copper and brilliant gold eyes. While he can be as fearsome and deadly as any dragon, he also seems to be fussy, even prissy, and is very fastidious about his lair. The infestation has him quite vexed, and that is why he is willing to take the risk of allowing adventurers into his home.

Sorcandilax has a very keen sense of smell and will be able to tell if the players have exterminated all the vermin in the tunnels. Afterwards, like most dragons, he will have trouble parting with any of his treasure. However, he will allow the players to keep any loot that they found in the tunnels during the disinfestation. If the players are smart, they won't show him what they found, as that would just make him want to keep those items too. Sorcandilax will also want to erase the players' memories of where his home is and how much loot he has. He will also offer to erase anything else, such as unwanted skills, for free while he is doing this. Depending on how trustworthy the players are, or how devious the GM decides to make the dragon, this may be a honest arrangement or not. Alternately, the players may refuse and the dragon may either permit them to keep their memories, or he may decide that he is better off killing them in order to maintain his secrets. There's no single "right" way to resolve this situation and it should be roleplayed out.

The tunnels should be considered clean once the players have completely mapped them out and removed all creatures found.

The Vermin

Dhagruen (D) – Giant tunneling worms who made the tunnels housing the infestation. They bore through stone with acidic secretions. When reproducing they form a writhing clew made of many worms. They resemble a landbound version of a palolo worm (*Eunice viridis*), with turquoise segments and black flesh. They have sensory antennae around their mouth and can extend their jaws to catch prey. ST 5, DX 8, IQ 2, MA 8, and can bite for 1d–1 damage. Contact with a dhagruen does 1d damage and is corrosive like the *Acid Touch** spell. The clew (**D**) contains eight worms.

Catrame (C)– Also known as a "tar slime", this relative of the slime family is black and very sticky. It is also exceedingly slow, even by slime standards. It has an effective combat MA of 0, and it takes it 10 turns to move even a single hex. Its advantages are that is it is very hard to distinguish even in good lighting (3/IQ to spot before stepping on one), and it is so sticky that it takes a great deal of effort to extract oneself from it. Oil is effective in loosening its hold. It can be burnt off, but like actual tar it will continue to adhere while burning and the flames can add damage. A catrame only takes half damage from weapons, but double damage from fire. ST 30, DX 1, IQ 1, MA 0. It has the same effects as a *Rope** spell once it takes hold. When it brings its prey down to 2 DX it covers them and the victim experiences the same effects as drowning.

Giant Wandering Spider (S) – A member of the giant spider family, this one has many similarities to the cave-dwelling wandering spiders of Earth, such as the *Califorctenus cacachilensis*. It is well adapted to cave life and is very venomous. Treat as a *Giant Spider** with ST 18 and 2d+2 venom.

Albino Slinker (A) – A variety of *Slinker** adapted to cave life, with white fur and pink eyes. They have poor vision compared to a common slinker, but a better sense of smell. Otherwise they have the same attributes. The nest (**A**) contains five of them.

Carrion Woodlouse – A variety of cave woodlouse that feeds on excrement, fungus, and dead matter. They have a tendency to swarm a heat source, including people. Their bite can draw blood, and worse can expose the bitten to the myriad bacteria in the woodlouse's saliva. They shun bright light and will flee a source brighter than luminous cave fungus, but may seek cover under clothes and armor, where they can bite with impunity. One typically needs to undress to get a woodlouse out from under one's garments. Woodlice are often prey for larger cave arthropods like scolopendra, and are easily caught in the tarry surface of a catrame. One could consider them the krill of this cave ecosystem. ST 1, DX 10, IQ 2, MA 10, bite for 1 point of damage. Nuisance creature, can be combated like *Rats**. After combat, any player who was bitten should roll 3/ST. Failure means an infection, and it is up to the GM how serious it is.

Kantemo Ratsnake – An unusual cave snake. These have a habit of hanging from the cave ceiling and capturing bats in flight. They will also bite anyone who brushes up against them in the dark. ST 4, DX 12, IQ 4, MA 6. Bite does 1 pt damage, but may startle the bitten into a fall doing 1d damage (3/DX to save). Bite is non-venomous.

Stone Beetle* (B) – Large insect as per *In The Labyrinth*.

Fairylamp Mushrooms (F) – Luminous cave mushrooms that give off a blue–green glow as bright as a candle. Not poisonous, but inedible except to insects. Exudes a bitter blue milk when broken. Gives off a hallucinogenic gas if burnt. Will glow for a week after picking, slowly becoming dimmer during that time. There are typically many carrion woodlice (5d worth) around these clumps.

Map

The map uses labyrinth scale hexes, where one map hex equals a megahex. Narrow tunnels represent single hex paths. The light grey hexes are the dragon's lair, with the largest area being the treasure chamber. The triangles mark the lair entrance. The dark grey hexes are the infested tunnels. Creatures are indicated by their letter codes. Numbers indicate the following treasure items.

1 – Jeweled tiara melted by dragon fire. There is $45 worth of gold scrap, two ruined gems, and three scorched gems worth $30 each.

2 – A large ball of cut crystal, apparently having rolled here from the treasure pile. Embedded inside are flecks of opal, making the orb appear to contain glittering rainbow fire. A collector would pay $600 or more for such an unusual item.

3 – This is a very fine broadsword with a jeweled pommel. It does +1 damage and is balanced to give +1 DX. The pommel adds a further $150 to the value. The albino slinkers have been gradually moving this towards their nest over the course of many attempts.

4 – Webbed corpse of a thief. On the body are $326 in coins, a emerald–capped sceptre worth $240, and a silver cameo worth $90.

5 – The loot pile of the albino slinker family. It contains gold and silver coins totaling $487, loose gems worth a total of $300, three silver rings worth $45 each, two gold rings worth $60 each, a topaz necklace worth $120, a gold spoon worth $25, and a silver ring with the *Fireproofing* enchantment.

6 – A nugget of platinum ore has been exposed by the dhagruen burrowing. If you can free it from the stone it is easily worth $800.

Random Encounters

Roll 1d every five minutes, and on a 6 there is an encounter. Roll another 1d to determine the encounter from this table.

1 – **Catrame**, player with worst 3/DX failure has stepped in it

2 – **Kantemo Ratsnake**, pick random player as ambush target

3 – **Scolopendra***, Giant, as per the *In The Labyrinth* book

4 – **Carrion Woodlice**, 3d of them in number

5 – **Dhagruen**, pick random player to place near

6 – **Albino Slinker**, will try to steal item from random player and return to nest

** see **In The Labyrinth** for more information*