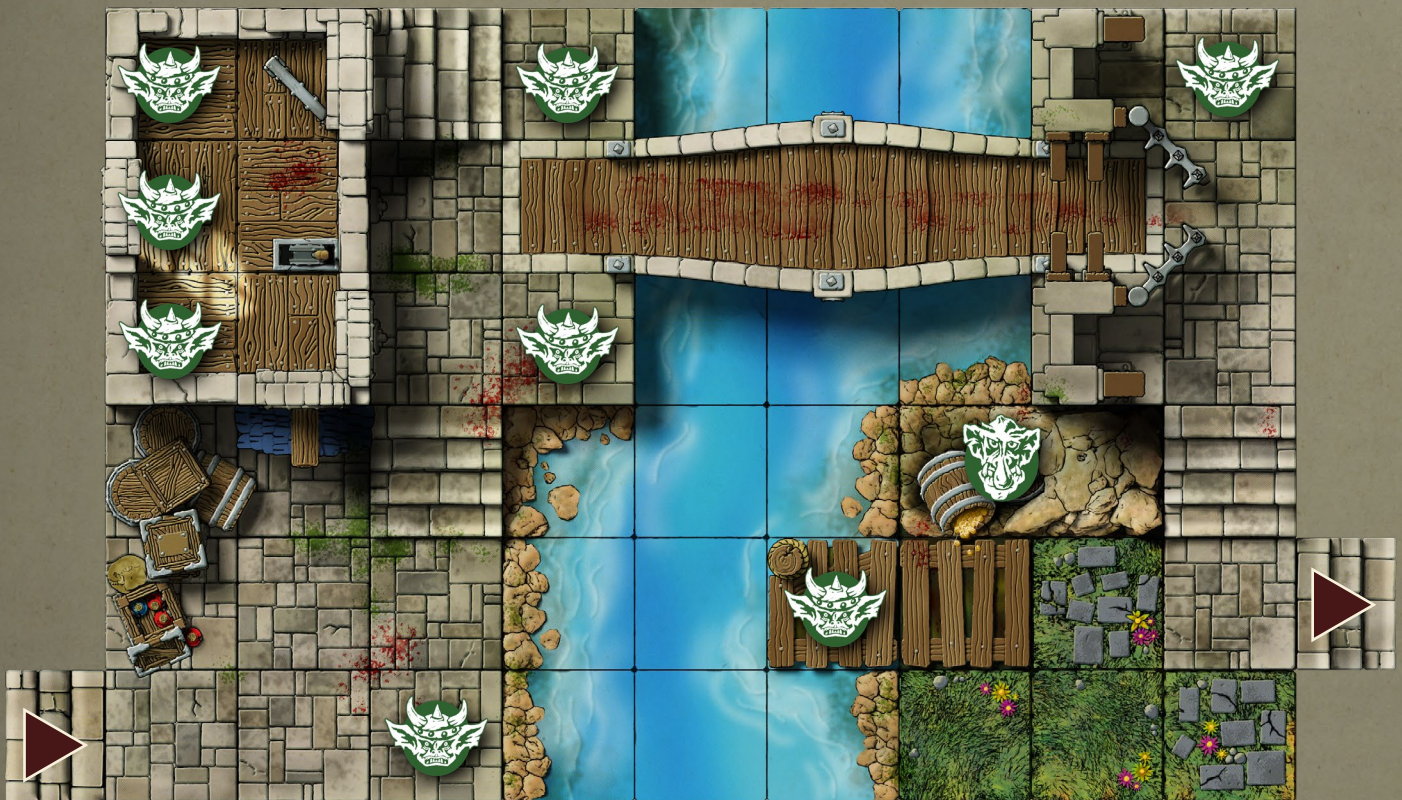


# THE GOBLIN'S GOLDEN DECEIT

This adventure includes several skirmishes with goblins in strong defensive positions and potentially a troll. DM's may choose to increase the difficulty level by switching out goblins for hobgoblins or bandits and adding additional adversaries emerging from the cave hosting the troll.

## Adventure Overview

In the area of Wyrmscale Brae while staying at the Dragon's Rest Inn, your party are hired to investigate claims from the local community of guardsmen overcharging for the use of a vital toll bridge. Unbeknownst to the party, the toll bridge has been attacked and a hostile party has set up a clever scheme to embezzle gold from unsuspecting travelers. The adventurers must investigate the site, overcome or drive out the hostiles, and recover the stolen gold!



## Act 1: Pre-Encounter

Hearing of problems with a local toll bridge from merchants in **The Dragon's Rest Inn**, the party seek out the mayor and offer their services to investigate the site and convince the stationed guards to stop their unlawful overcharging of merchants and village folk who must regularly use the bridge to trade.

Exiting the **Eldertree Vale** forest and following the banks of the fast moving **Rushing River** at **Wyrmscale Brae** they can see the **Cavekeep Crossing** toll bridge is standing like a bastion at a narrow set of rapids.

As the adventurers approach the bridge, they have the opportunity to stop or ambush **2 goblins**. After defeating or subduing them, they find evidence of a toll-taking scheme, a letter requesting a boat be sent down river to load the stolen gold & goods.

As they approach the toll bridge they can see that on this side of a narrow set of rapids a well-fortified guard house stands next to a bridge, waiting to collect the taxes from travelers. On the other side of the bridge an imposing set of gates block access to the trade paths beyond.

## Act 2: The Guardhouse

The adventurers approach under cover of the trees and spot a single goblin sentry guarding the way.

A **perception check** of the area will also reveal another sentry stands near a small jetty on the other side of the rapids and two others are standing guard by the bridge. The sentry on the jetty seems distracted looking over some barrels collected there. The rapids mask most noises and the distracted sentry will not hear anything unless the other sentry shouts out a warning or cry for help.

Swimming or flying over the rapids is not advised. An **athletics/acrobatics check** is required, otherwise the character returns to the original shore suffering **exhaustion**. Flying over the rapids provokes a ranged attack of opportunity for any sentries that pass a **perception check**.

Upon defeat or capture of the sentry on this side of the river it reveals that the goblins have been skimming gold from tolls using the armor of several guards on scarecrows to trick travelers into paying higher tolls. (if the party has missed the letter sent upstream in the pre-encounter)

If the party choose to investigate the crates by the guard house they will find broken pottery in most crates but a successful investigation check will uncover a false bottom in 1 of the crates and two potions:

- 1 x **potion of healing**
- 1 x **potion of invisibility**

A sign on the wall of the guardhouse reads **T OLL AHEAD**. A successful perception check identifies a curious space in the positioning of the word **T OLL** and a search finds a stenciled letter '**R**' which fits into the space. The updated signage reads '**TROLL AHEAD**' If the party later cause the troll to emerge from its cave then it will not have surprise in the first round of combat.

If the party listens under, or has a way to look in through the first floor window they will hear/see **3 goblins** in the guard house engaged in a rowdy argument over a game of chance.

Across the bridge the party can see the gate is locked via means of a series of gears.

After luring out, or overcoming the goblins, the guardhouse can be searched. A small table holds a **deck of goblin erotica playing cards** and **12 gold pieces** - the cards could be used for some goblin bribery.

A **lever** at the back of the room is discovered and if pulled will open the gate on the other side of the bridge. A **goblin** on the far side of the gate will come to stand between the open doors, scratching his head and wondering why the gate has just been opened.

If the party try to storm the bridge, the goblin will duck back and throw a lever to close the gate. It will also alert the other sentry on the jetty, if it has not been overcome. They will fire bows at the party from behind the walls of the gate and count as in three quarters cover.

The party will have to find a way to keep the gate open, or lure the remaining goblins across the bridge.

## Act 3: Retrieving the Stolen Gold

When a player stands on this square to investigate the barrels by the jetty have them spill gold out onto the ground. If they cause more noises, then replace the barrels with a **troll** that has heard the commotion above and emerges from a sunken cave they may not have seen. If the players did not identify the warning on the sign posted, or do not have a high enough **passive perception**, then they are **surprised** in the first round of combat.

After overcoming, or stopping the troll they can retrieve the barrels where a total of **600 gold pieces** is discovered. Faint cries for help (from some of the missing guardsmen) can be heard coming from deep within the caves.

The party must decide at this point what to do with the gold, they can return it to the traders to receive a smaller reward and earn some notoriety from the local community, or they can abscond with the gold. If they enter the caves to help whoever is trapped below, then what will happen to the gold whilst they continue to explore?

This adventure allows for combat encounters, and moral decisions, providing an engaging and memorable encounter for the adventurers to further explore the lands beyond or below **Cavekeep Crossing**.

