



DARK HOLD

Goblins All About!

Fantasy games are filled with the magnificent exploits of mighty wizards, powerful warriors and knights in shining armor.

This game isn't...

Dark Hold Goblins is dedicated to the small grovelling races which scratch out an existence in the dark catacombs through which other heroes stride like unto gods. Can you survive as one of a lost culture of Goblins living in the abandoned tombs of a long forgotten empire?

Dark Hold: Goblins is a Savage Worlds compatible sourcebook allowing players and game masters to run a campaign revolving around low level goblin characters. Inside you will find:

- A detailed history of the Dark Hold campaign setting.
- New character classes and templates to use Goblins as player characters.
- A short adventure to get the players started on their way.





DARK HOLD

Goblin Adventures

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Introduction

"We must not look at goblin men,

We must not buy their fruits:

Who knows upon what soil they fed

Their hungry thirsty roots?"

Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*

Dark Hold is the first of a new line of role-playing games from Rebel Minis. Our intention with this line is to provide a framework of campaign settings and adventures that will also tie into our other lines. This specific book is easily supplemented with our line of Dark Hold miniatures, providing a one-shop gaming experience. You should be able to find as much or a little as you need to begin a campaign in this setting.

Dark Hold contains the well-organized structure you need to build an enjoyable campaign, as well as a fun, introductory adventure for quicker play. Where you go with the campaign from this starting point is up to you.

Buzulg's Dilemma

Buzulg screeched as he darted down the tunnel, grimy robe flapping in the musty air. The ancient dwarven hall might have cramped a human or shambling bugbear, but the goblin had no trouble racing along, terror driving his stubby legs. His toe talons scratched across crumbling stone and his wheezing filled the low archways. As he rounded the corner into another cobwebbed hall, a flock of bloodwings exploded from their nesting overhead. Several soft, hairy bodies struck Buzulg's head as the creatures flapped past, screeching at the disturbance.

Despite the noise of his flight, Buzulg had no trouble hearing his pursuer. The click-clack of its many legs echoed behind him as the beast scuttled along. A bloodwing's squeal indicated one of the creatures had been caught by a pincer claw and devoured. Such a tiny meal wouldn't sate the tunnel cracker's hunger. The crunch-and-munch of juicy goblin flesh and bones, though, offered it a rare feast. The click-clacking grew louder.

Whimpering, Buzulg picked up speed. He held nothing but a small wooden club while a leather pouch flapped on his belt. It contained the various treasures Buzulg had been gathering before he'd disturbed the tunnel cracker—a rat's skull, dwarf knucklebones, a few rusty nails, and a single copper coin embossed with the visage of one of Dark Hold's lost dwarven lords.

For a moment, his frantic thoughts turned to desperate measures. Should he pray to TaDrak the Overlord for help? While not one of the faithful, if Buzulg promised to don a collar and serve the divine taskmaster, perhaps he'd be spared. Of course, if he survived, he wouldn't necessarily have to keep that promise—

Perhaps responding to such treacherous thoughts, the tunnel shook around him. Buzulg wailed and hunched as stone cracked and dust filled the area. He covered his head with oversized hands. Pebbles plinked down, several striking his pointed ears and prodigious nose, but otherwise doing no harm. However, after he hacked a wad of phlegm from his throat and blinked his vision clear, Buzulg knew he was doomed.

Ahead of him, the floor had given way in the little quake. Now a black hole gaped four feet across, which might as well have been a chasm for Buzulg as he was no jumper. He edged over and peered down into the hole, wondering if he could climb down into a lower tunnel and continue his scamper for safety. He saw nothing but a bottomless drop lined with craggy stone. If he wanted to discover what waited at the bottom, he'd have to take the fast-and-screaming route.

A monstrous chittering made him spin about as the tunnel cracker skittered into view. Unfortunately for Buzulg, while he held no lantern or torch, his goblin sight still let him pick out the details of the predator in the gloom. The beast filled the tunnel with its carapace bulk, broad at the front while tapering down to a spiny tail at the rear—a strong, flexible tail it could easily thrust over its armored back to skewer soft flesh. Eight spindly legs thrust it forward, while two larger claws wove above six pairs of eyes. Beneath these was a clacking set of grasping mandibles that Buzulg knew thirsted for his tender guts.

While Buzulg never would've made the attempt in normal circumstances, terror proved a powerful taskmaster of its own. He raised his club over his head and cried, "Die, beastie!" Then he stepped forward and flung the weapon so it spiraled end-over-end at the tunnel cracker. It struck the beast straight above the eyes, but bounced off its carapace, clattering to the side. With a furious hiss, the tunnel cracker scuttled toward him all the faster.

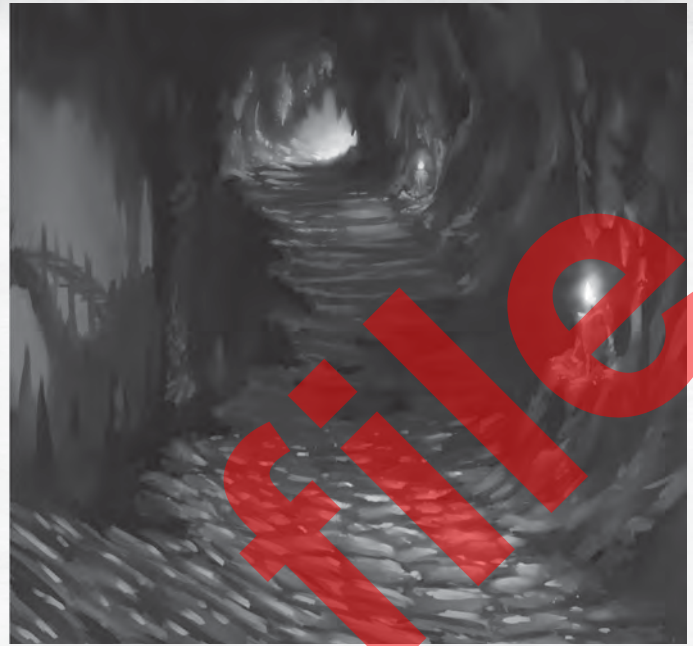
Buzulg flicked a tooth in a rude gesture and then turned to sprint at the hole. Kicking off the edge, he flailed for the opposite side, fear and desperation giving him the strength to make the jump—almost. He struck the opposite edge hard and barely managed to grab hold while bruising his nose against the stone. Groaning, he heaved himself up and over, even as more rocks crumbled around him and toppled into the pit. Panting, he got solid floor under his feet again, legs and arms shaking from the effort.

Scampering a bit further, Buzulg turned and, emboldened by his narrow escape, taunted the creature at having missed its meal. The tunnel cracker didn't even pause at the hole's edge. Jamming legs into the sides of the walls, it used gaps and chinks in the stone to clamber up until it clung to the ceiling. Then it simply made its way over the hole until it dropped down on the other side.

Buzulg stamped a foot. "Not fair!" Then, realizing he should be running rather than arguing with the beast about to eat him, he whirled and resumed fleeing. The beast now clicked along close to his heels, and he expected a claw to decapitate him at any second. He'd never see his home again. Never hold his precious Hildrag again and feel the tickle of her beautiful nose hairs as they cuddled for warmth. Never enjoy a warm belly full of beetle slop again.

These thoughts spurred him onward. Craving even a glimpse of home gave him strength to continue his mad dash. He kicked up dust and ran, surprising even himself each moment he remained alive. A glance back even showed he'd gained a little distance on the tunnel cracker, though Buzulg knew he'd tire long before the beast ever did. He had to do something.

Ahead, he recognized the portion of tunnel he was fleeing through. Goblin markings scrawled across the walls, indicating this territory belonged to the Snubsticks, Buzulg's clan! His fatigue-heavy legs lightened as he realized he'd almost made it.



A single torch burned far down the way, illuminating an archway in its guttering light. Several wooden, metal, and stone barricades were constructed in front of this to slow down intruders—but the usual goblin guards who should've been watching were nowhere to be seen.

"Help!" he cried. "It's coming! Save me!"

As he raced by, he snatched the torch from the iron ring it had been set in. Then he darted between the barricades and out into a larger chamber. His torch revealed the familiar sight of the clan's main gathering hall, where they met for communal meals or communal brawls.

Dozens of pillars circled the hall, supporting the domed ceiling far overhead. Tiered stone blocks formed strange, seemingly random stacks throughout the area, further cluttered by piles of rubble and detritus built up over the ages since the place had been abandoned. Piles of gnawed bones surrounded ashen fire pits, remnants of past meals. All the walls and pillars were engraved with cold dwarven faces, chiseled with the names of Dark Hold's ancient lords, and carved with long-forgotten glyphs as well as chains, instruments of torture, and countless beasts.

After a dozen paces, Buzulg stumbled to a halt and turned in a circle, dumbfounded. No one was there. The whole chamber stood dark and empty as far as he could see. Even when various families had shuffled off to their private chambers or work holes, someone should've been there...should've been waiting to help....

A roar made him turn back to the tunnel from which he'd emerged. Buzulg almost chuckled to himself as he realized the tunnel cracker's bulk had been stalled by the barricades he'd been able to slip past so easily. Any mirth died in his chest as a clatter and crash sent rocks, metal, and rotting wood spewing into the chamber, followed by the beast itself. A few rusted spikes had lodged in its shell, but it ignored these as it fixed its multi-eyed gaze on Buzulg.

It came forward slowly, cautious now that its prey had stopped running, claws raised, tail twitching. Buzulg backed away, considering his dwindling options. The tunnels had given him a slight advantage with his smaller size, able to maneuver just a tad quicker. He could make a dash for one of the other tunnels leading into further clan holdings but, here in the open, the tunnel cracker would no doubt be on him in a matter of seconds.

Then a rock pinged off the tunnel cracker's side. It paused and chittered angrily, searching for the new attacker. A larger rock sailed down from one of the stone tiers and struck a leg, making the beast lurch. Then another and another.

A raspy voice rang out, and Buzulg recognized it as Pellick, the clan leader.

"Dinner!"

At this shout, a rousing chorus went up, echoing from all around the hall. A dozen lanterns were unshielded and torches blazed, filling the chamber with light. Dazzled by the sudden glare, the tunnel cracker spun in place, unsure where to go. Buzulg had shielded his eyes, and so managed to make out the dozens of goblins who'd sprung from their hiding places.

Pellick, a scraggly goblin wearing patchwork leather and an iron skullcap, pointed down at the tunnel cracker.

"Make it mush!"

A hail of rocks, arrows, and javelins struck the tunnel cracker from all sides. It reared, trying to bat the missiles away, but soon retreated under the assault. A pair of fighters rushed past Buzulg, axe and swords in hand. They hacked at the beast and even managed to lop off one of its larger claws. With several legs crushed and pin-cushioned by spears and arrows, the monster turned and attempted to limp back into the tunnel and safety.

As it did, however, a goblin ran into view from around another pile. Buzulg recognized Abrask, the clan blacksmith. He wore a soot-stained apron and carried a large hammer—the same one he used on the anvil. With a bound, he leapt onto the beast's shelled back. His wiry arms strained as he swung the hammer and cracked it straight down onto the beast's back. After three such pounds, the monster collapsed, shell split wide, yellow ichor leaking from its cracked carapace.

Abrask rolled off the tunnel cracker's body as a dozen other goblins swarmed in. They hacked and pounded and chopped the beast to bits, laughing as they did. Once the tunnel cracker stopped twitching, they began tearing off its carapace and carving up the meat and organs. From one arched tunnel, an enormous pot was dragged into the hall by a mass of goblin women. Children rushed ahead to grab up pieces of the creature and throw them up into the pot.

Buzulg watched the whole thing while trying to calm his breathing and stop his legs from trembling. A slap on the back almost sent him sprawling. Pellick popped up beside him, large, blunt teeth exposed in a jowly grin.

"Close one this time, heh?" The clan leader chortled in satisfaction. "Been years since we caught ourselves a cracker this big. But worth it. Enough here to feed us all for a week. And I know Abrask will be happy to use that shell to make some new armor. Maybe he'll give you some to wear next time you're on bait duty."

Hildrag waved at Buzulg from the crowd now dissecting the catch. The terror of the chase ebbed from him and he managed a weak smile. It had gone well aside from that tunnel quake—oh, and the fact that he almost died a couple times.

"It's Ulfur's turn to bring back food."

Pellick shook his head. "You didn't hear? Ulfur ate some bad mushrooms. Died yesterday. You're our Chief Baiter now! Big, important job." After another slap, he headed off to join the revel.

Buzulg stared after, debating whether he should go back down the tunnel and see what was at the bottom of that dark hole. Chief baiters didn't last long after all....