

KOBOLDS: LITTLE DRAGONS

Kobolds are often dismissed as cowardly, foolish, and weak, but these little reptilian creatures actually have a strong social structure that stresses devotion to the tribe, are clever with their hands, and viciously work together in order to overcome their physical limitations.

In the kobolds' version of a perfect world, the creatures would be left alone to dig their tunnels and raise the next generation of kobolds, all the while seeking the magic that will free their imprisoned god (see the "Kurtulmak: God of Kobolds" sidebar). In the world they occupy, kobolds are often bullied and enslaved by larger creatures—or, when they live on their own, they are constantly fearful of invasion and oppression. Although individually they are timid and shy away from conflict, kobolds are dangerous if cornered, vicious when defending their eggs, and notorious for the dangerous improvised traps they use to protect their warrens.

EXPERT TUNNELERS

Kobolds are naturally skilled at tunneling. Similar to dwarves, they seem to have a near-instinctive sense of what sections of stone or earth are strong or weak, are bearing a load or are safe to excavate, or are likely to contain minerals or offer access to water. This ability enables them to fashion secure homes in places where other creatures wouldn't feel safe.

Kobolds take advantage of their size by creating small-diameter tunnels that they can easily pass through, but that require larger creatures to hunch over or even crawl to make progress. In places where a tunnel opens into a chasm and continues on the other side, the kobolds might connect the two passages with a rope bridge or some other rickety structure, designed to collapse under the weight of any creature heavier than a kobold. On occasion, the route through a kobold lair runs along a ledge that borders a cavern or a crevasse, and the kobolds might erect a railing or a wall that prevents them from falling off the edge—high enough to protect a kobold but low enough to serve as a tripping hazard for a larger creature.

Those of other humanoid races have little good to say about kobolds, but they do admit that the little reptilians do respectable tunnel work using simple tools. If a band of kobolds is enslaved by more powerful creatures, the kobolds are usually put to work enlarging their masters' living area and protecting vital areas of the lair with traps and other defenses.

Some human communities hire kobolds to dig their sewer tunnels, paying them with food and tools the kobolds wouldn't have access to on their own. If they are treated well and left alone to do the job, the kobolds work industriously and build a network of passages beneath the streets, connecting them to a nearby waterway and greatly improving the town's sanitation. If the kobolds like the area and aren't mistreated by the humans, they might build a warren and make a permanent home there, while continuing to expand the town's sewers as the community grows. These so-called "city kobolds" live underground but might make occasional nighttime forays up to the surface. Roughly one quarter of the

towns and cities in the world have kobold communities living under them, but the kobolds are so good at staying hidden that the surface-dwelling citizens in the area often don't know what lies beneath them.

Because the kobolds make sure they stay out of the way of anyone more dangerous than themselves, grow their own subterranean food, and prefer to sneak about at night, the people of a town might go for weeks or months without noticing evidence that kobolds are in the area, and years between actual sightings.

ABLE SCAVENGERS

Kobolds are adept at identifying broken, misplaced, discarded, or leftover crafted items from other creatures that can still be put to use. They prefer to scavenge objects that have clearly been lost or thrown away, which is easy to do without attracting attention. At the same time, they don't automatically shy away from trying to grab items that are the property of other creatures, because such objects are more likely to be in good condition and thus more useful or valuable.

When they go after items that aren't free for the taking, kobolds try to remain undetected and don't give their targets reason to harm them. For example, a group of city kobolds might sneak into a cobbler's house at night to loot it of knives, leather bits, nails, and other useful items, but if they are at risk of discovery, they run away rather than attack anyone in the house. By fleeing before they can be seen or identified, they avoid getting into a situation where the townsfolk would try to hunt down all kobolds and put the tribe's survival at risk.

Some aggressive individual kobolds and tribes do exist, but in general kobolds don't purposely provoke retaliatory attacks from the creatures they steal from. It's better to be cautious and overlooked than to be considered dangerous and a threat.

In a couple of situations, kobolds might abandon this careful approach. First, because of their hatred of gnomes, city kobolds often go out of their way to target gnomes' houses and shops. Even in such cases, the kobolds' fear of retaliation usually prevents them from trying to directly harm the gnomes, but they might spit in the milk, balance dishes on tables so they're easily knocked over and broken, or scatter sewing needles all over the floor—petty, vengeful acts that humiliate, injure, or anger the gnomes, but not so much that the gnomes want to hunt down and kill the kobolds. Because of the kobolds' animosity, gnomes tend to avoid or abandon settlements that have a severe infestation of kobolds, and conversely kobolds are usually driven out of communities that have a large gnome population.

Second, kobolds are always on the lookout for magic that might help them free their imprisoned god, Kurtulmak. Typical kobolds don't know how to use a wand, a spellbook, or anything with more magical power than a potion, but they all believe that the tribal sorcerer can figure out how to use any such item they come across. When kobolds sense an opportunity to separate a magic item from its owner, they are often willing to take the chance of revealing themselves because the potential reward is worth the risk.



DRAGON SERVITORS

Kobolds believe that they were created by Tiamat from the blood of dragons—a view supported by their reptilian (they would say draconic) appearance. In every kobold tribe, the legend of the creatures' origin is passed down from elder to hatchling, giving each individual and every generation a reason to feel pride and self-respect. The kobolds prefer to run away than fight, to live off the scraps of others, and they are often dominated by larger humanoids, but they know that there is greatness within them and they are proud that they were chosen to be the blood-kin of dragons.

Kobolds willingly serve chromatic dragons and worship them as if they were demigods—mighty beings of divine descent. This isn't a casual sort of worship or lip service; kobolds are awed in the presence of a dragon, as if an actual avatar of a deity were in their presence. Kobolds fall all over themselves to obey orders from a dragon, even if they are dangerous orders. Although kobolds usually don't worship Tiamat directly, they recognize her as the dragon-goddess of all chromatic dragons, and as the master of their racial god, Kurtulmak.

KURTULMAK: GOD OF KOBOLDS

The god of kobolds was a vassal of Tiamat. When the gnome god Garl Glittergold stole a treasure from Tiamat's hoard, she sent Kurtulmak to retrieve it. Garl lured his pursuer into a maze-like cavern, then collapsed the exits behind him, trapping Kurtulmak for all eternity.

Kurtulmak is a hateful deity, one who despises all life except for kobolds. He especially hates Garl Glittergold, gnomes, and fey creatures that enjoy playing pranks. He taught the first kobolds how to mine, tunnel, hide, and ambush. He is dominated by his emotions—intelligent, but not wise. Arrogant and prone to gloating, he carries grudges, has a huge chip on his shoulder, and spends a lot of time fashioning elaborate revenge scenarios against those who have disrespected him.

ARCANE MAGIC USERS

Unlike some other humanoids, kobolds don't fear or shun arcane magic. They see magic as part of their connection to dragons, and are proud to be blessed with the ability to wield such power. Young kobold sorcerers are trained by elders, and the training has an almost religious significance. Most kobold sorcerers are of the draconic bloodline origin and specialize in either damaging magic (which can also be used in mining), augmentation (of materials or allies), or divination (to find raw materials and foresee threats to the tribe).

The main reason why kobolds depend on arcane magic rather than divine is Kurtulmak's imprisonment, which makes it difficult for him to grant spells to mortals and for those mortals to receive his favor. Furthermore, kobolds are so frail that a single hit from a human's weapon can kill one of them, so a tribe has little use for healing magic, and a sorcerer can meet most of the tribe's other magic-related needs. Kobold shamans are very rare; priests of Kurtulmak, when they reveal themselves, are easily recognized by orange garb (usually just a roughly torn sash or cloak) decorated with an image of a gnome's skull.

LIFE AND OUTLOOK

Kobolds have a tribal society in which they all take on specialized roles that protect and sustain the tribe. The strongest kobolds are trained to be hunters and warriors, the most clever are crafters and strategists, the toughest are miners and beast-wranglers, and so on. Even a stupid or physically weak kobold is given a role in the tribe, whether something as simple as picking mushrooms for food or watching over hatchlings, and they all understand that their actions contribute to the survival of the group. The tribe practices for the eventuality of defending the lair against intruders, and their plans always include knowing the best escape

routes and who is responsible for blocking tunnels to deter pursuit.

Kobolds feel a cool affinity or something like kinship for other members of their tribe, but they are rarely affectionate with each other. Two kobolds who've known each other for over a decade might consider each other friends or enemies, but the strength of this sentiment is much fainter than any comparable human emotion. Since most of their waking time is spent working, adversarial kobolds rarely have opportunities to exchange insults, let alone come to blows over their differences.

Kobolds choose mates primarily for convenience. Their lack of emotional bonding means they have no concept of marriage or permanent family relationships. Their eggs are placed in a common tribal hatchery with no effort to keep track of who each one's mother is. This practice and the communal raising of the hatchlings mean that the tribe operates like a group of cousins.

Because they lay eggs, and the eggs don't require much tending, kobold females aren't exempted from war or work. Furthermore, kobolds can slowly change sex. If most males or females of a tribe are killed, some survivors change over several months until the tribe is balanced again. In this way, the tribe can quickly repopulate with just a few survivors. Because of these factors, kobolds don't have assigned gender roles for young or adults. A leader, sorcerer, miner, or crafter is as likely to be female as male.

GROW FAST, DIE EARLY

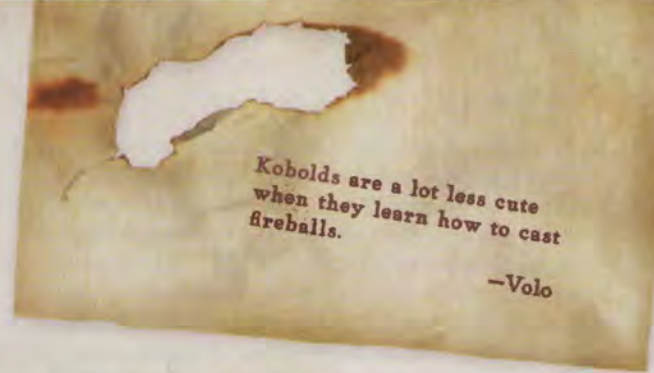
Kobolds grow and mature much more swiftly than members of other humanoid races. At 6 years old a kobold is considered an adult. Most succumb to violence, accidents, or disease by age 20, but a kobold can live for up to 120 years—a longevity they attribute to being distantly related to dragons. A female can lay up to six eggs per year, and an egg matures for two to three months before it hatches.

Kobolds don't engage in funeral ceremonies; a dead kobold's body is burned or disposed of in some other convenient way (or, in a cannibalistic tribe, eaten). Kobolds believe that if they die in service to their tribe, Kurtulmak immediately sends each of them back to life as the next egg laid in the hatchery. If a particularly important or respected member of a tribe dies, the hatchery is closely monitored. The next egg laid is immediately separated from the rest and carefully protected. Once it hatches, the resultant young kobold is groomed to fill a position of importance.

FOOD AND CANNIBALISM

Although their sharp teeth would suggest they are carnivores, kobolds are actually omnivores, and can eat just about anything, including meat, fruit, tree bark, bone, leather, and eggshells (a newly hatched kobold's first meal is usually its own shell). A hungry tribe leaves nothing behind from a kill, eating everything that's edible and using the rest to make tools or adornments.

Kobolds shed teeth as they wear out and grow new ones their entire lives. Many wear their own shed teeth as jewelry, with more teeth indicating an older—and wiser—kobold. Some unscrupulous individuals wear



teeth stolen or harvested from others in an attempt to make them seem older and more respectable.

Most kobold tribes avoid eating what they call “talking meat”—intelligent creatures—because such behavior prompts retaliation. The fear of starvation can make them flexible about this principle, however, and if their options are either attacking such creatures or going hungry, kobolds are practical. A few tribes, particularly those in lightly populated areas, practice cannibalism, believing it is foolish to waste good meat.

In any case, kobolds that eat humanoids don't simply start consuming corpses or prisoners right after a battle; they're more inclined to tie their victims to saplings and slowly roast them over a fire, or put them in a giant cook pot to make stew. Fortunately for the prisoners, the kobolds' almost comedic preparations sometimes give rescuers time to locate and free the captives before the kobolds settle down for the main course.

HATRED

Because the gnome god Garl Glittergold trapped the kobold god Kurtulmak in an inescapable maze, kobolds are bitterly hateful toward gnomes. Although they usually don't seek out gnomes to do them violence, if hostile kobolds encounter a mixed group of gnomes and other humanoids, the kobolds instinctively attack the gnomes. Kobolds in battle with gnomes are much less likely to run away because their hatred overrules their sense of self-preservation.

A kobold's cautious nature doesn't mean it can't get angry. The blood of dragons flows in its veins, and like a raging drake, a kobold that is pushed too far or has its back against the wall can become a miniature storm of fangs and claws as it desperately tries to defend its life. Likewise, kinship to their own tribe can prompt kobolds to battle another kobold tribe for resources or territory. Such conflicts aren't common, because two tribes will always prefer to expand in different directions if they come into contact, but they do happen.

For example, two neighboring tribes that want exclusive claim to a flock of mountain goats might skirmish with each other every few days. Eventually the leader of one warring tribe realizes it is losing due to attrition and moves its tribe to another area, ceding the contested territory to its more successful neighbors.

As demonstrated by their hatred of gnomes, kobolds have a persecution complex and easily take offense at the actions or deeds of other races. They aren't forgiving of other races, and they enjoy nursing their hatred until they get a chance to wreak revenge on a creature or a race that has wronged them.

ENVIRONMENT

Kobolds are cold-blooded and thus prefer temperate and tropical climates. Kobold tribes in colder regions tend to be smaller in population and more aggressive in their hunting, since food is relatively scarce in such areas.

Partly out of fear and partly because their eyes are sensitive to sunlight, kobolds prefer the security of a cave to living in the open air, and can be found in any sort of terrain that can support tunneling. In a swamp or along a coastline where digging into the soft ground is problematic, kobolds entrench themselves in dense woods, hills, or large rock outcroppings, creating warrens above the water line.

Kobolds reside most commonly in hilly or mountainous terrain. Such locations usually have natural caves suitable for living space, plenty of room to dig, and ready sources of food. Although lairing in these locations puts kobolds in competition with surface-dwelling humanoids, their ability to avoid detection often means their warrens go unnoticed by their larger rivals. If it's lucky, a tribe of kobolds that is discovered by a group of larger humanoids might form a mutually beneficial arrangement, relying on the humanoids for protection from invaders and in return providing services such as excavating new living spaces and disposing of trash. If it's unlucky, the tribe is enslaved by the other humanoids, and the kobolds serve similar roles but under threat of death.

ROLEPLAYING A KOBOLD

A kobold acknowledges its weakness in the face of a hostile world. It knows it is puny, bigger creatures will exploit it, it will probably die at a young age, and its life will be full of toil. Although this outlook seems bleak, a kobold finds satisfaction in its work, the survival of its tribe, and the knowledge that it shares a heritage with the mightiest of dragons.

A kobold isn't clever, but it isn't as stupid as an orc. Someone can fool a kobold with smooth words or a quick wit, but when the kobold figures out it has been tricked, it remembers the affront. If it gets an opportunity to do so, it will retaliate against that person somehow, even if in merely a petty way.

A kobold doesn't like being cornered or alone. It wants to know it has a safe path for escape, or at least an ally nearby to improve its chances. A kobold without either of these options will be nervous, its behavior alternating between meek silence and hysteria.

URDS: WINGED KOBOLDS

Winged kobolds, known as urds, hatch seemingly at random from kobold eggs, even in a tribe that has no adult urds. Although being able to fly is an incredible gift, and it would be expected for kobolds to interpret the wings as a blessing from Tiamat, ordinary kobolds resent urds and don't get along with them. Fragments of kobold legends speak of Kuraulyek, a winged godling servant of Kurtulmak, who betrayed his master in some way. Kobolds see urds as Kuraulyek's favorites, and they project their resentment of this traitor onto their winged kin.

KOBOLD NAMES

Kobold names are derived from the Draconic tongue and usually relate to a characteristic of the owner, such as scale color, distinctive body parts, or typical behavior. For example, "Red Foot," "White Claw," and "Scurry" are Common translations of often-used names. A kobold might change its name when it becomes an adult, or add additional word-syllables after important events such as completing its first hunt, laying its first egg, or surviving its first battle. The Kobold Names table presents kobold names suitable for any campaign.

KOBOLD NAMES

d20	Name	d20	Name
1	Arix	11	Molo
2	Eks	12	Ohsoss
3	Ett	13	Rotom
4	Galax	14	Sagin
5	Garu	15	Sik
6	Hagnar	16	Sniv
7	Hox	17	Taklak
8	Irtos	18	Tes
9	Kashak	19	Urak
10	Meepo	20	Varn

PHYSICAL VARIATIONS

Kobolds vary widely in how their scales are colored and patterned. Although a human might have difficulty telling two similar-looking kobolds apart, the kobolds themselves can easily recognize each other.

Most kobolds of the same tribe tend to have similar coloration. For example, the Copper Tooth tribe might be mostly gray with red stripes. Two tribes that merge eventually crossbreed enough to create a new look, although occasional outliers and throwbacks are born that bear the appearance of one of the original tribes.

Use the Scale Color table to randomly determine the predominant appearance of kobolds in a tribe. If the roll on the table indicates a patterned appearance, roll on the Scale Pattern table to determine how the two colors are combined.

SCALE COLOR

d100	Scale Color
01–05	Black
06–10	Blue
11–25	Brown
26–30	Gray
31–35	Green
36–40	Orange
41–55	Orange-brown
56–60	Red
61–75	Red-brown
76–85	Tan
86–90	White
91–00	Patterned (roll twice, ignoring duplicate results and results of 91 or higher)

SCALE PATTERN

d20	Scale Pattern
1–4	Mottled
5–8	Reticulated
9–12	Shaded
13–16	Spotted
17–20	Striped

TACTICS

Because they are physically weak individually, kobolds know they have to use superior numbers and cunning to take down powerful foes. In addition to their Pack Tactics trait described in the *Monster Manual*, they use traps, ambushes, terrain, allied monsters, and any other advantage they can squeeze out of their environment. Essentially, the only way kobolds can win is not to play fair.

Kobolds work together to accomplish difficult tasks they couldn't manage alone. They carve intricate tunnel systems that enable them to hold off and discourage enemies several times their size. Without engaging in much verbal communication, each kobold knows what has to be done to succeed. Kobolds' ability to work together is remarkable, especially compared to the behavior of other small humanoids like goblins, which tend to squabble among themselves and cooperate only when threatened by a strong leader.

Kobolds avoid combat on a large scale, instead sticking to hit-and-run raids using smaller groups of warriors. If they have time, they prepare the battlefield with small bolt-holes for them to hide in and simple pit traps to hamper their opponents.

Standard kobold tactics include the following:

- Attacking light sources to extinguish them, so the kobolds can use their darkvision to best advantage.
- Leaving one defender in a room to lure invaders into a trap or an ambush. Often this bait is a sick or weak kobold who is otherwise unable to contribute to the tribe's needs.
- Using hit-and-run maneuvers, fleeing between attacks to better or more secure vantage points. Often their goal is to attract enemies and draw the foes into greater danger, which can be especially effective if the invaders have made camp, are injured, or are otherwise compromised (such as having to move by climbing or swimming).
- Using poison, usually harvested from vermin such as centipedes and spiders. They might extract the poison and use it on their weapons, or leave a chest or a clay pot full of the vermin in obvious places as false "treasure," prompting intruders to open the container and release a swarm.

In a combat involving large numbers of kobolds (such as ten or more), consider spreading out their attacks over the round instead of having them all act on the same initiative count. Doing this gives the kobolds more opportunities to react to what their enemies do, and makes it harder for players to coordinate their characters' attacks because not all the kobolds take their actions at the same time.

TREASURE

Because they live underground, kobolds have access to a remarkable amount of earth-based treasures such as metal ores and unpolished gems. They have the basic skill to extract metals found in their natural state and to polish raw gemstones. Although they don't create their own coinage, nuggets of raw metals used for trade, bribes, or crafting are commonly found in kobold lairs.

Kobolds are talented at crafting, so most tribes have a remarkable amount of treasure in the form of simple jewelry, such as armbands, rings, necklaces, and other items that are small or can be constructed out of small pieces. These adornments are always fashioned so that they don't make noise when the wearer moves, as that would make it difficult for a kobold to sneak anywhere.

Even though the jewelry they make has no functional purpose, kobolds savor these items, perhaps as some echo of a dragon's inclination to collect treasure. Because the tribe's wealth is portable, the kobolds can relocate quickly without needing to transport containers of nuggets and gems, and they can offer these items as bribes or tribute to more powerful creatures, or as religious offerings to a dragon.

ALLIES, MINIONS, AND PETS

Thanks to their lack of physical prowess and their small size, kobolds are rarely in a position to dominate other creatures, so they usually don't have minions. Even when the opportunity presents itself, kobolds would rather not try to enslave or hire any intelligent creatures because they can't trust such creatures to not turn on them.

Kobolds are good, however, at capturing and taming smaller animals and beasts, particularly rats, dire rats, and reptilian creatures like lizards that thrive in a cave or underground environment. The kobolds corral these pets or allow them to roam free, either feeding them scraps or allowing them to forage for insects and other morsels too small for the kobolds to care about. Much in the way that human villagers keep chickens, these animals help the kobolds with pest control and are occasionally used as food. Giant rats and similarly sized lizards are also used as pack animals and guardians.

Some tribes train giant weasels to serve as mounts or guardians, relying on their speed, keen senses, and ability to fit in kobold-sized tunnels. Other tribes use giant bats as mounts and guard animals, but the bats require a lot of space in which to move and are found only in lairs that feature large caves or close access to the surface world.

Kobolds are cautious and fearful of bears, since bears often seek to live in caves and the animals might wander into the outermost parts of the lair, particularly when they're about to begin hibernating. Kobolds are likely to panic when they see a bear animal companion in the company of another creature. This aversion extends to owlbears and other bear-like creatures.

KOBOLD LAIRS

The lair of a kobold tribe is usually a maze of twisty little passages, sometimes stretching for hundreds of yards, and frequently guarded by traps. The area has a host of intersections, abrupt dead-ends, tunnels that cross over or under one another, concealed passages, and other features that make the lair difficult for outsiders to navigate.

Creatures larger than a kobold have to squat or crawl in order to fit through the tunnels of a kobold warren, which by itself is enough to deter most hostile humanoid (such as orcs or hobgoblins) from trying to invade the kobolds' territory. Adventurers trying to eradicate a kobold infestation often find themselves stuck in low passages too narrow to turn around in, forcing them to move in single file and putting the burden of combat on the first and last people in line.

The layout of a kobold tribe's lair changes over time. The inhabitants regularly collapse or seal off tunnels and caves as they carve new ones. As such, any information that might be gleaned about the layout or location of areas within the lair becomes increasingly inaccurate as the kobolds "migrate" through the rock to meet the needs and ensure the safety of the community.

Kobolds riddle their lairs with traps, using their gift for tunneling in conjunction with their skill at repurposing found items. Even though these traps are often far more deadly than the kobolds themselves, the kobolds don't feel threatened by having these devices in their home, any more than a human is afraid of its vicious but loyal guard dog.

The most common traps in a lair are deadfalls, which the kobolds set up either to kill intruders or to block off key areas of the warren as invaders approach those places. Since the tribe is continually migrating and expanding its tunnel system, older tunnels are often employed in these traps. A tunnel can be rigged to collapse by pulling a rope connected to a support beam; a fleeing kobold can yank the rope, or the beam might be in a space so tight that a larger creature can't keep from dislodging it as the creature moves through area. Even if a deadfall traps some kobolds in an enclosed space, they and their fellows can usually chisel open an air vent within an hour, and create an opening large enough for the trapped kobolds to squeeze through in a few more.

Any place where a tunnel takes a sharp turn or becomes exceedingly narrow is a natural choke point that forces invaders to fight from a disadvantaged position. Such a location usually includes a small chamber in the ceiling that features murder holes, allowing the kobolds to drop rocks, poisonous vermin, and other annoyances on those below.

ESCAPE TUNNELS

A kobold warren always has at least one escape tunnel that leads to a concealed surface exit, and the residents always know the shortest path to that tunnel. Usually an escape tunnel is rigged with traps to slow pursuers and ends in a narrow opening that requires even kobolds to squeeze through, to keep larger creatures from following them out.

KILN AND CRAFTING AREAS

A chamber that contains a kiln is usually one of the uppermost areas of the warren, because the fire needs to be vented to the surface in order to keep it from depleting the breathable air in the lair. Kobold crafters spend their time in this area, using the kiln to bake mud bricks and harden pottery. The room is also used for other noisy activities.

MINES

Any chamber in the kobolds' underground complex that isn't immediately needed for another purpose is mined and excavated, both to extract usable ore and minerals and to provide room for later expansion of the den.

MUSHROOM FARMS

Kobolds aren't good at agriculture, but they can get sustenance from subterranean mushrooms and hardy plant life that can live underground. A farm area might be completely underground, or a cavern near the surface with holes in the ceiling to let in some sunlight.

ROOT CELLARS

Much as humans do in their dwellings, kobolds set aside rooms with deep pits in which they preserve food for lean times.

SLEEPING AREAS

Every lair has one or more spaces for living and sleeping, each large enough to comfortably hold ten to thirty adult kobolds. Individual kobolds might rest in a shallow pit or a personal-sized alcove, depending on the customs of the tribe. These spaces are used primarily for resting, although some kobolds might quietly work on crafts while others sleep. The creatures' sanitary needs, such as they are, are served by a deep pit near each sleeping area where refuse is deposited.

Most of the sleeping areas in the lair also double as hatcheries. Kobolds tend to their eggs by nesting them in a shallow pit lined with earth and dried grass. Because the eggs are susceptible to cold, they are kept near a slow-burning fire, or are protected by an insulating layer of dung and decomposing matter around the eggs.

THRONE ROOM

A warren's throne room is always protected by traps and features a shrine to Kurtulmak in the form of a carved idol behind the throne. Rather than entering the chamber to pay homage, kobolds offer prayers at its entrance with the belief that their god hears them. The location might include a basin where offerings such as metal nuggets, raw gems, and teeth can be left.

TRAPS

Kobolds are amazingly creative at building traps, especially when adapting natural hazards and salvaged materials. They pound nails or spikes through a sapling and bend it to create a spring-arm, line pits or pools with sharp stones, rig platforms to collapse under anything more than a kobold's weight, and so on. Kobold traps might look flimsy or poorly designed, but a creature that gets hit with a bent sapling adorned with sharpened



KOBOLD LAIR

MUSHROOM FARM

SLEEPING AREA

DEEP PIT TOILETS

THrone ROOM AND SLEEPING AREA

MINE

ROOT CELLARS

TO ESCAPE TUNNEL

MUSHROOM FARM

KIrn AND CRAFTING AREA

TO ESCAPE TUNNEL

COLLAPSE

SLEEPING AREA

DEEP PIT TOILETS

ROOT CELLARS

MUSHROOM FARM

COLLAPSE

SHRINE

MINE

COLLAPSE

GUARDS

TO ESCAPE TUNNEL

KIrn AND CRAFTING AREA

COLLAPSE

SLEEPING AREA

DEEP PIT TOILETS

TO ESCAPE TUNNEL

□ = 5 FEET

DEEP PIT TOILETS

ROOT CELLARS



BLANDO



butter knives is liable to come away with a newfound respect for the little creatures.

The following are examples of common kobold traps:

- Barrels or small pots of oil (to be boiled, spilled, lit, or both)
- Bear traps that fall on tall creatures' heads
- Bells to announce intruders
- Block-and-tackle mine elevators rigged to fall
- Caltrops in shallow mud or soft dirt (light kobolds can walk on them without trouble)
- Collapsing ceilings
- Crates of centipedes
- Falling blocks
- Moats full of pitch or oil, which the kobolds can retreat behind and ignite
- Nets attached to ropes that pull creatures up vertical shafts far away from anyone who can help
- Pipes/shafts that dump boiling water (either from cookpots or from cooling the kiln)
- Pits with disease-covered spikes
- Pots of green slime
- Rolling boulders
- Small-size bridges and ladders rigged to break if there is too much weight on them
- Snares
- Tripwires, either connected to traps or just for tripping creatures
- Volleys of needles

SURVIVAL SKILLS

Nearly every activity in a kobold lair contributes to the tribe's survival. Guarding the lair keeps all of them safe from harm. Setting snares, farming mushrooms, and hunting provide food. Building traps deters intruders. Training guard animals helps protect the lair. Mining provides gems and ore for bribing enemies to leave them alone. Carving tunnels and rooms creates spaces for the next generation to live and improves the opportunity for the tribe to escape an overwhelming force.

The kobolds in a lair sleep in shifts, and all activities in the warren go on around the clock. Kobolds tend to be more active at night than during daylight hours, but unlike in a human settlement, there is no time when most of the inhabitants are resting. Warrens are built so that sleeping areas are somewhat isolated from the noise of work areas, enabling miners and crafters to do their work without awakening the sleepers. Kobolds learn at a young age to fall asleep to the noise of hammering nearby, but they still wake quickly at the sound of unusual activity.

Survival of the tribe is more important than the life of any particular individual. Even a cowardly kobold might sacrifice itself to give its fellows time to collapse a nearby tunnel and prevent invaders from getting to the rest of the tribe. All kobolds know that fleeing from danger, especially against bad odds, is the smart thing to do, but they are smart enough to realize that the strategic death of an individual can buy valuable time for the rest of the tribe, and each individual reluctantly accepts this need for sacrifice when it presents itself. This practice contributes to the reason why most common folk (and