Dungeon

Tales Volume 2



Dungeon Tales Volume 2

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Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of **Dungeon Tales**!

I'd like to thank everyone who picked up a copy of the first issue. It continues to sell well, and I'm pretty confident it will eventually notch up that coveted gold medal. That's great news for our contributing authors, most of whom also saw a bump in individual product sales. So there were wins all around!

That's not to say we got everything right, and we've tweaked a few things for this issue in response to your feedback. For example, we are now laying out all of the adventure details on the Guild product page, just like a regular table of contents. We are also releasing the adventures in a single compendium rather than as a series of individual files. Finally, we've trimmed the page count and included a "standard paper" option for print on demand, to keep costs under control for the hardcover version.

I am very excited about the adventures we have included in this issue! High-quality products are added to the Guild on an almost daily basis, and we had many options from which to choose. I'm especially pleased that most of these authors have multiple titles on the DMs Guild, and have shown their commitment to the platform.

It is hard to believe, but when Wizards of the Coast launched the DMs Guild back in 2016, they were worried there would not be enough content published on it. Others were skeptical that those who published on the Guild would be taken seriously. I remember several commentators expressing doubts as to whether Guild authors could graduate into "real" designers.

I think it is now clear to everyone that Wizards of the Coast are actively monitoring the DMs Guild to find new writing talent. Writers who made their publishing debut on the Guild have gone on to become Guild Adepts, write for Adventurers League, and even contribute to official hardcovers! I confidently predict that authors in this volume will do some or all of these things over the coming years.

Enjoy these adventures, and please take the time to look at other material by the same authors. I know you will be impressed!

M.T. Black

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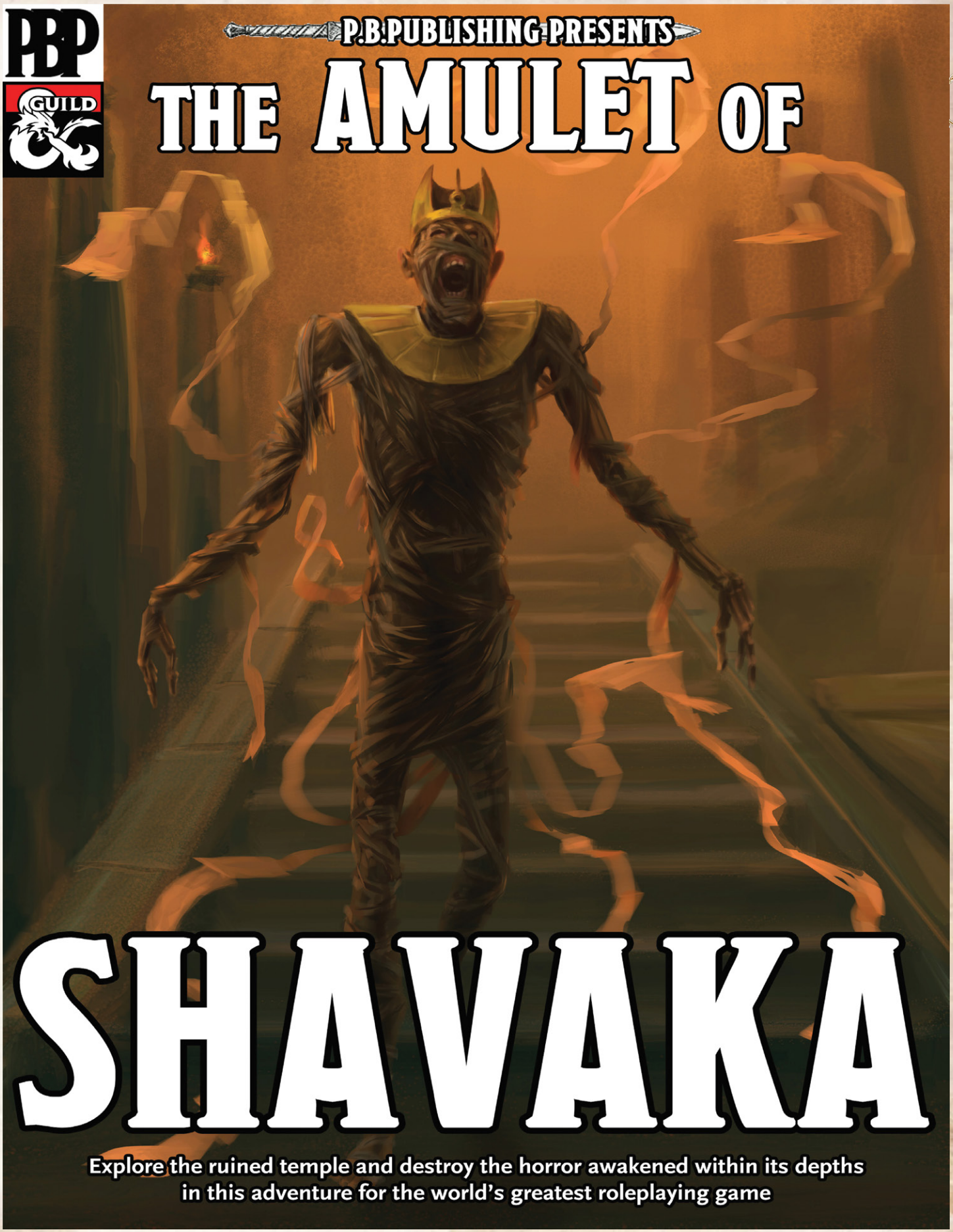
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Adventures Wanted!

We are always looking for new adventures, and we are keen to include stories from a diverse range of voices. We prefer short adventures over long ones, and adventures with scaling information over those written for a single level. A neat layout and sound editing are essential. We welcome city, wilderness, and planar adventures alongside dungeon crawls. Note that your adventure must already be published on the DMs Guild before we will look at it. If you would like to be considered for inclusion in an upcoming issue, please email a complimentary copy of your product to newdungeonadventures@gmail.com.

P.B. PUBLISHING PRESENTS

THE AMULET OF SHAVAKA



Explore the ruined temple and destroy the horror awakened within its depths in this adventure for the world's greatest roleplaying game

THE AMULET OF SHAVAKA

Credits

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Amulet of Shavaka is a Dungeons & Dragons 5e adventure designed to be completed in about 4–6 hours of play.

The combat encounters have been calculated to present a tough challenge to four characters of 2nd level, that is, APL (average party level) is 2. Information is supplied in the text explaining how to scale the encounters to APL 1 or APL 3.

Not every loose end is tied up in the following text, nor every possible reaction accounted for. Be ready to improvise, and do so with confidence! Unless stated otherwise, assume NPCs have the stats of a **Commoner (MM, p345)**.

Running this Adventure

This adventure is a location based adventure. The map in Appendix B will help you, the Dungeon Master, to drive the scenes as our heroes explore different rooms accessible to them within the Temple and then the Tomb of Shavaka.

Character Advancement

This adventure is designed to utilize the Milestone leveling system, by which it is expected that the characters start at level 2 at the beginning of the adventure. Upon defeating King Shavaka and delivering the Amulet of Shavaka to Elel the heroes should advance by one level automatically.

This is only a suggestion, however, and you, as the DM, are in no way forced to use this method. This adventure runs perfectly fine with Experience Points based leveling, and you are encouraged to use XP if it is a better fit for you and your playing group.

Boxed Text

This adventure includes boxed text to assist those Dungeon Masters who like to have a description of a scene or location. The use of boxed text is by no means required; many great Dungeon Masters avoid the use of boxed text and instead feel more comfortable describing the action in their own words. You should consider what works best for you and your group. If you choose not to read aloud any of the text provided, you should at least paraphrase the information to keep the players aware of their environment.

Setting & Location

The Amulet of Shavaka is designed to be used in any setting. With some tweaks in the lore of the King Shavaka, a savvy Dungeon Master can drop and play this adventure into any setting and any campaign.

Hook: The Expedition

The heroes are approached by a finely dressed human apprentice wizard named 'Elel'. He advises that he has been searching for the group for some time, having heard of their bravery in recently overheard bard's tales. Elel offers the party a mission; enter the *Tomb of Shavaka* at the edge of the desert to the east/west (dependent on the party's current location), and retrieve the lost Amulet of Shavaka. Their reward, 500 gp, and any loot collected during the expedition.

If the heroes question Elel about the Amulet, he will prefer not to divulge anything. If pushed, he'll relate that it was last to be seen, many years ago, going into an ancient tomb deep within the desert, around the neck of a daring adventurer searching for the wealth of a long-dead king. It and its owner were never seen again, and no one has yet to enter the tomb on rumors that the undead now walks its passages.

Elel requires the amulet to be retrieved, but won't advise what the amulet is worth or what power it might hold. In fact, he doesn't know himself, and has been tasked by his master to simply *'find it'*. On failing the courage to enter the tomb himself, Elel has now turned to hired help, and thus he searched for the heroes that he had heard sung of by a bard within a local tavern.

Elel provides the party with a map showing the *Tomb of Shavaka's* rough location in the desert and offers to act as a guide as far as the entrance to the temple that lays in ruins above the submerged tomb.

Locating of the Tomb of Shavaka. As this adventure is designed to drop into any setting or campaign, the exact location of the tomb, geographically, has intentionally been left undetermined. This is to allow you as the DM to be able to place it in any location you wish. The only real prerequisites for the tomb's location is to place it close to, or within the borders of a dry and desolate desert. Once the characters have departed their current location, Elel, acting as a guide, leads the party on a 2-day journey into the desert and shows them only as far as the entrance of the half-buried and ruined temple. Elel does not join the party on entry but elects to stay outside, eager for the party's return.



Chapter 2: The Temple of Shavaka

The Temple of Shavaka was once a place of worship to the self proclaimed God-King Shavaka. When the King rose in power, thanks to the magic of the amulet, he began to fancy himself a god and had temples built in his name. Here his worshipers could congregate and offer fealty to their god-king in return for his blessings. Now, thousands of years later, the last remnant of a ruined temple is barely visible to anyone not specifically seeking it out. It lays half buried and hidden amongst the desert dunes with only the grand double door entry revealed for those adventurers courageous enough to enter.

1. Temple Entrance

As the heroes approach the temple, read or paraphrase the following:

> The sand blows sharply against you in the outskirts of the desert. This is the area that the tomb is supposed to be. Visibility is low; however, you manage to make out the structure of a half-buried building close by.

Once the heroes get to the structure, read or paraphrase the following:

> You reach the building, and the only part of it not covered by yellow sand is the great double doors made from yellow tinged solid stone. The script above the arch reads: "The Temple of Shavaka".

It takes more than one hero to open the great double entry doors. **No skill checks** are required, but the vast weight of the doors and the sand that stops them from the outside make it too difficult for a single hero to open.

2. Hall of the Disciples

As the heroes enter this room, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you enter the temple you notice that the air is musty with the smell of death and decay. You see carvings of six demonic faces along the walls of the narrow passage leading west and the feeling of impending doom itches at the edge of your subconscious.

If the players decide to investigate the demonic face carvings, a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (History)** or **DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check** deduces that these carvings depict King Shavaka's 6 disciples, pledged to protect his godhood from powerful enemies in times of war, as well as spread the word of the King's religion far and wide. A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices that the eyes of each carved face have open holes with green residue staining their edges.

It's A Trap! As an adventurer reaches the dashed line on the map, a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** senses a faint gaseous smell.

A successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** on the sandy floor finds a slightly raised pressure plate (**as noted on the map**). If any hero walks over the pressure plate, on leaving that 5ft square, a green gas begins to stream out of the eye holes in each of the 6 carved faces. Any hero within the corridor must succeed a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**; failure results in a roll on the **Gas Effect Table** below to determine what effect the gas has on that hero.

Gas Effect Table

1d6	*Effect*
1	Character suffers from disorientation for 1 hour, and has disadvantage on any ability or attack roll.
2,3,4,5	Character suffers from hallucinations. On entrance to any new room on the 1st floor, they must succeed a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure read or paraphrase 'The King's Story (Hallucinations) sidebar' below to describe the hallucinations that the character witnesses for any of the respective rooms listed.
6	For 10 minutes the character believes that they are a mule that can talk in the characters primary language, and wield one weapon. The character walks on hands and knees for the period of effect, during which time their movement speed is halved.

The King's Story (Hallucinations)

If a character has been affected with hallucinations from the gas in **Area 2**, then upon entering each of the following rooms for the first time, read or paraphrase the respective hallucination description. Only those affected by the gas can see the hallucinations:



Area 3:

> A young dwarf lays on the black altar, his eyes emotionless, yet he still breathes steadily. Three priests and a young boy enter the room. The boy wears a crown whilst the priests wear black robes. One carries a thurible suspended from a chain; strong incense stream from it. The other two hold a razor-sharp athame on a golden serving plate between them. The victim is held down whilst the athame wielding priest proceeds to remove the top of the dwarf's skull. **"Yes, our Lord Shavaka will like them fresh and exotic."** He grins as he removes the brain, placing it on a golden serving plate. The dwarf shudders and falls limp, never a blink of pain from those unemotional eyes. As you notice a small black shadow looming over the boy, the child-king at first refuses, tears roll down from his cheeks. The priest scolds the young Shavaka who proceeds, reluctantly, to cut a sliver of the organ and begins to devour it. The apparition fades from existence.

Area 4:

> A room in disarray seems empty at first, then comes to life with the ruined benches now back in their original place. Hundreds of spectators, made up mostly of humans, except for small groups of snake-people and cat-people, fill the seats as six men in black robes watch silently over them. They all hum in prayer as a man in bronze colored robes addresses them, reading aloud passages from a tome in a foreign language. Then you notice him, the apparition of a grown man, the king, mighty and powerful, sitting with command on the throne as a large black shadow caresses him from above. Adorning the King's neck is an amulet. It glows green as small motes of soul begin to drift from his audience to his body. He grins with evil pleasure, as his followers begin to deteriorate before your eyes. Then the vision fades, and the room is once again empty.

Area 5:

> The dusty and forlorn antechamber slowly comes to life, as the aspect of a once mighty king materializes in the center of the room, along with 4 figures dressed in various adventuring gear. The king raises his empty hand with the motion of holding a throat. Across the room, one adventurer gasps and drops to the floor as his neck is telepathically crushed. The second and third adversaries have their souls dragged from their living bodies. The King grins feverishly as the green energy flows into the green amulet adorning his neck. Suddenly his eyes widen as a sword of flame thrusts out from his abdomen; black blood trickles to the floor. A small hand reaches from behind the dying king, clasps the amulet and tears it from his neck. As her evil victim falls to his knees, the halfling quickly looks about at her fallen comrades and says **"You've died for a righteous cause. I will take this to be destroyed by the high mages. Your deaths will not be in vain"**. The scene disappears as quickly as it had begun.

Area 6:

> As you stand before the gates, the room once again springs to life with events long past. **"The King must be mummified and kept fresh for a time when the amulet has returned. It has been foreseen you see. We must hurry, the walking dead are upon us..."**. The High Priest's words are cut short as an undead creature appears from the shadows to bite and tear at the priest's neck. The two pallbearers carrying the mummy sarcophagus rush to lock the gates behind them with fear in their eyes. You notice a dark shadowy form forever looming over the sarcophagus as they descend from sight into the darkness below. The twitching body of the High Priest remains and fades from existence.

Note: The evil magic embedded within the temple induces the memories of its past on to those effected by the gas.

3. Sacrificial Chamber

In the center of this dark and musty room sits a single black altar. Lying on the altar is the small skeleton of a humanoid. Three larger ***skeletons*** lay in piles of black robes about the altar.

A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Medicine) check** deduces that the skeleton is that of a small male humanoid, likely a dwarf. It is missing the top of its skull which seems to have been cleanly sawn off.

A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check** notices symbols carved into the altar's polished black marble surface, with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** further revealing them to be Abyssal sigils, likely used in sacrificial rituals.

Once the characters have finished their initial actions within the room, the three black-robed skeletons begin to animate and attack any nearby hero.

Creatures

3 x **skeletons (MM, p272)**

Tactics

The skeletons attack immediately and fight to the death.

Loot

The heroes will find, after defeating the skeletons, 20 cp of indistinguishable origin.



Adjusting this Encounter

APL 1: Remove 1x Skeleton

APL 3: Add 3x Skeletons

4. Prayer Hall

This is the room where the devout followers of King Shavaka would pray to him. During prayer, the King would activate the magic of the amulet which adorned his neck to feed on motes of his follower's souls, increasing his power and ensuring his follower's belief was not lost.

Read or paraphrase the following:

> A large hall opens before you with many long benches arranged randomly about the place, obviously not their original positions. In the north-western area, one heavy looking bench blocks the only other exit from the hall. A large obsidian throne sits front and center facing an empty audience, a stone pulpit to its left. Large and partly broken stained glass windows stretch high towards the domed ceiling. A hot draft enters through the broken windows and blows the ever-present yellow sand about the circular room. The smell of decay lingers.

As the heroes advance into the room, 6 x ancient and dormant ***zombies*** smell their first scent of living flesh in centuries. They raise from their prone positions behind the benches and attack the party. On entering the hall, any character with a **passive Perception of 13** or higher notices the dormant bodies lying on the floor behind the benches but cannot tell that they are zombies until they stand up.

On inspection of the pulpit, the adventurers find an ancient tome. It is very delicate and requires a successful **DC 18 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to handle it; failure results in the tome crumbling to dust. It is covered with yellow sand, dust, and cobwebs, though any hero may successfully clear it by simply blowing on it. If the heroes wish to read the page once the sand, dust, and cobwebs have been blown away, read or paraphrase the following:

> As the dust clears from the surface of the tome, you find that it is written in a strange language, with most of the passage faded with time. There are sketches on the ancient paper showing a mighty being descending from the heavens. Its worshipers below hold out women as offerings to the "god" they serve. On the opposite page, another piece of art depicts the "god", this time with large sharp teeth. It's not until you see what is in its grasp that horrifies you; a person with a feverish grin on his face, the crown of its skull removed and the "god" devouring the victim's brain.

A passage, damaged through time, is written in Abyssal. Read or paraphrase the following:

> "... as the lord Shavaka descends from the heavens to rule and conquer those less worthy... the mind of a sacrifice and the offering a one's soul to return the king-god to his rightful power and glory..."

Creatures

6 x **zombies (MM, p316)**

Tactics

The zombies attack immediately and fight to the death.

Loot

The heroes will find, after defeating the zombies, 6 sets of rotting ragged black robes, 2 small skulls (the tops sawn off).

Adjusting this Encounter

APL 1: Remove 3x Zombies

APL 3: Do nothing

5. High Priest's Antechamber

This room was the private antechamber of the King's High Priest. Unfortunately, he still resides here, dormant and undead biding his time, waiting for bodies of living flesh to enter. As soon as the heroes open the door to this antechamber, read or paraphrase the following:

> As soon as you open the door a rotting arm, wielding a morning-star, swings at you from the darkness beyond and a zombie dressed in rotting priestly robes rushes forward, hunger in its dead milky white eyes. He holds a skull lantern with a continual green flame within in his right hand. The skull has been sawn off.

Creatures

1 x **zombie priest (Appendix A: Monsters)**

Tactics

Characters must succeed a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** or be considered surprised for the first round.

The zombie priest attacks immediately and fights to the death. Where possible, it attempts to target the most religiously aligned hero first.

Loot

The heroes will find in the High Priest's antechamber, 38 gp, 1 sets of rotting bronze robes (worth 1 cp), 1 potion of healing, 1 golden key (worth 10 gp), and a **skull lantern** which provides an eerie green light of upto 30 feet.

Adjusting this Encounter

APL 1: Add 1x Zombie, and Reduce Zombie Priest HP to 32

APL 3: Add 2x Zombies

6. The Gates of Shavaka's Tomb

Once the heroes defeat the zombies, or simply move into this room for the first time, read or paraphrase the following:

> You enter the small, dark and windowless room. Sand covers the floor and the walls are made of hard stone. On the northern wall are two large gates; a keyhole in their center binding the two shut. Beyond the gates, a stairwell descends into darkness.

The **golden key** found on the Zombie Priest in **Area 5** effortlessly opens the lock. A successful **DC 18 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check** will also unlock the gates. Alternatively, a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** bends the bars enough for a creature of medium size or below to squeeze through. Lastly, any character can try to smash through the gates using brute force. The gates have an **AC of 19**, with **30 HP**.



Chapter 3: Shavaka's Tomb

Shavaka's Tomb was built beneath the Temple with the purpose of burying the King's family members, mistresses, disciples, and priests.

Now within the tomb, King Shavaka has been awakened in mummy form. The amulet has been returned to the tomb, and feeds the king motes of souls stolen from nearby living creatures. The Soul Locusts and necrotic energies that plague the tomb's halls transport these bits of stolen souls directly into the king himself, thereby slowly regenerating Shavaka into the powerful being he once was.

If King Shavaka succeeds in his return to power, he aims to claim his kingdom back from those who now possess it.

7. Enter the Tomb

When the heroes step inside the tomb gates and begin their descent, read or paraphrase the following:

> The stairs before you descend 20 feet and end at two large stone double doors.

The doors require a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** to pull open. Allow any other character with a **Strength ability score of 10**+ to provide ***Help***.

> You enter a foyer where, on the eastern wall, is a closed wooden door. On the western wall is an entrance to a corridor. From the western corridor, an eerie green glow pulses from its depths. A long and dark corridor stretches before you. Even down here, the yellow sand covers the floor.

Any character with darkvision can see that the end of the northern 40-foot corridor has piles of rubble blocking further progress.

8. The Ritual Room

As the heroes approach this room, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you come to the end of the corridor, the green hue spills over everything. You notice the shimmer of a mystical aura through the air just before the entrance to the room beyond. Within the room is an altar with an unknown animal lying dead and rotting upon it. On the floor, near the entrance, is the decomposing body of some long dead adventurer, their skeletal fist grips a golden amulet. Green energy spews from the amulet and feeds into the green shimmering aura before you. An open book lies just beyond the sickly green glow, its pages clear to read.

If the heroes attempt to read the book, they will discover the following points from a page that is entitled "The Ritual of Shavaka":

- Activating the Ritual of Shavaka "returns a kings wealth".
- King Shavaka considered his rulership and godhood his wealth.
- The shield will break when the king is either returned to power, or he is destroyed.

A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** will notice a moth fluttering towards the green shimmering transparent wall. Read or paraphrase the following:

> You notice a small moth fluttering about the corridor. As it gets to within 5 feet of the green, shimmering, and transparent wall, a greenish stem of energy shoots out and strikes the moth, which immediately crumples to dust. The green stem returns with a tiny white and shining mote of energy which is then absorbed by the shimmer.

This 'shimmer' is the magical necrotic shield developed by the Ritual of Shavaka (see The Ritual of Shavaka sidebar).

Plague of Soul Locusts

During their time within the confines of the tomb, each time the players move into a new room, or corridor, roll a d20. ***On a roll of 10 or above.*** the party will be attacked by 1d4 **Soul Locusts (Appendix A)**, who will each attack 1 hero with their **Life Steal** action (as shown in their stat block). On a successful hit, the targeted hero reduces their maximum HP by 1, as the Soul Locust then attempts to escape to **transfer that 1HP into King Shavaka's maximum HP**. Provide the heroes with a chance for an Attack of Opportunity as the Soul Locust attempts its escape. If a hero is successful in killing the Soul Locust, that hero will regain the 1 Maximum HP. The Soul Locusts will move at maximum flying speed in their getaway.

The Ritual of Shavaka

The ritual of Shavaka was set into motion by the dead adventurer (**Area 8**). He used the Amulet of Shavaka to awaken the Mummy of King Shavaka (**Area 12**). The dead adventurer had misinterpreted the ancient texts, found in the open ritual book lying near the shield, relating to the origin of the amulet. He read the text as "... to return a king's wealth ..." thinking this would supply him with the king's lost treasure. The text had, in fact, been referring to King Shavaka's self-imposed godhood and rulership as his wealth. Once the ritual was activated, King Shavaka awoke to reclaim his desert kingdom and his dark throne. The amulet fed on the lifeforce of the adventurer, killing him in the process, and pouring the necrotic energy into the mummy. The ritual also created a green necrotic energy shield to protect the amulet and King Shavaka's plans of return. To break the shield and retrieve the amulet the heroes must first defeat King Shavaka (**Area 12**), thereby ending the Ritual of Shavaka, and rendering the amulet powerless.

If a hero comes within 5 feet of the shield, they must succeed a **DC 11 Constitution saving throw**. On failure, the creature suffers 1d4 necrotic damage, and their maximum Hit Points will decrease by 1. Any maximum Hit Points lost restore after long rest. On a successful save, a hero still takes 1d4 necrotic damage but does not suffer a reduction in maximum HP. No creature can pass through the shield, and it will act as a wall until the ritual is broken.

Note: take note of how many maximum Hit Points are 'stolen' by the shield, as these are to be transferred into the mummy of King Shavaka. For every Hit Point stolen, add that to the total maximum Hit Points of King Shavaka in when encountered (**Area 12**).

9. The Mortician

The wooden door on the easternmost wall of the entrance hall is slightly open. Beyond is a short hallway ending in steps that descend into darkness. The room below has the musty dank smell of mildew. This is the Shavaka royal morgue, and it is swamped with darkness. For those heroes who have a light source, or darkvision, read or paraphrase the following:

> Within the dark room, you see six closed wooden caskets on wooden tables, three to each side. Small round stool tables sit beside each casket. On them lie many small operating tools such as scalpels, needles and stitching thread. Along the southern wall of the room is a large 20-foot-long stone bench where a skeleton rests lifelessly on its surface. Slumped in a wooden chair beside the stone bench is another skeleton; this one with a head-strap that holds a large magnifying glass over its face. A key dangles from a chain around its neck. Writing on a long 10-foot wooden plaque hanging on the wall over the stone bench reads:
> **"MY LIFE IS YOUR PRIVILEGE, AND YOUR DEATH IS MY RIGHT".**

If the heroes check the caskets, they find that none of them are nailed shut. If they proceed to open any of them, they find a skeleton in each, whose eye sockets begin to suddenly glow green. They all hold longswords, once ready to be honorably buried with their weapons.

Combat Triggers

The following triggers will start combat in this encounter, awakening all 8 of the skeletons (6 in the caskets, 1 on the stone bench and the Mortician's skeleton slumped in the chair):

- As soon as a PC opens a casket.
- Failure of a **DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check**, or normal non-stealthy movement past the trigger line, provided on the map.
- Failure of a **DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** when attempting to remove the key from the Mortician skeleton's neck prior to its awakening.

Creatures

6 x **Skeletons (MM, p272)**

Tactics

The skeletons attack immediately and fight to the death.

Loot

The heroes will find, after defeating the skeletons, 6 longswords, 9 scalpels, stitch thread and needles, and 1 **silver key**.

Adjusting this Encounter

APL 1: Decrease creatures by 2 skeletons

APL 3: Change the skeleton on the stone bench to a **Minotaur Skeleton (MM, p273)**

10. Rubble Trouble

This corridor is blocked by fallen rubble. Long ago the roof fell to the weight of the desert sand above and the corridor now ends in rubble and yellow sand. An iron door can be seen half buried in the western wall. A **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** can kick open the door inwards though it only leaves a gap at the top of the door frame big enough for a small-sized creature to enter. This door leads into King Shavaka's tomb, where he waits, gaining strength from the amulet that slowly feeds him stolen life (**Area 6**).

11. Death's Door

As the heroes approach the end of the corridor, they come upon two large golden double doors. Carved on each is humanoid people. One with a snake head and another with a cat's head, they stand with spears in hand, almost as if they are standing guard of the room beyond.

A successful **DC 11 Intelligence (History) check** will discern that these are carvings of yuan-ti and tabaxi warriors, both races having colonies in this area serving under the rulership of King Shavaka thousands of years ago.

Locked! The door is locked. There is a keyhole that the silver key from **Area 3** can be used to open. A successful **DC 17 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** successfully picks the lock.

As the door unlocks, read or paraphrase the following:

> As the lock clicks open, suddenly you notice the carved guards on each of the doors start to move. Their two-dimensional images warp in ways that make their heads turn to face you. The guard with the cat-like features says, **"Speak your pledge truly and you shall enter"**.

If the heroes attempt to converse with the guards of the tomb, read or paraphrase the following:

> The second of the guards now looks down upon you with cold snake-like eyes and speaks in a hissing voice **"ssspeak the oathssss of ssssssshavaka or sss turn from thisssss place-sss"**.

If the heroes decide they want to try to force the door open, a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check** will budge the door slightly open, enough for one party member at a time to fit through whilst being held open. If the door is let go, it will slam shut. Anything caught in its way will be shoved back 5 feet and dealt 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

The Oath of Shavaka. This of course, is written on the walls of the morgue (**Area 9**). If the players simply say the words **"MY LIFE IS YOUR PRIVILEGE, AND YOUR DEATH IS MY RIGHT"** the guards say nothing more, and return to their original poses as the double golden doors swing silently open.



12. The Tomb of King Shavaka

As the doors open, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you consider the room before you, it takes a moment for your eyes to adjust to the bright green light, feeding energy through the walls and into the upstanding open golden sarcophagus. A few glowing green locusts also flutter about the standing sarcophagus. Within that sarcophagus rests a body, wrapped in heavy, and dirty bandages. You then notice a second sarcophagus lying along the western wall of the room. Brilliant maroon tapestries, laced with gold trimming and encrusted with emeralds, adorn the northern wall.

As soon as any hero moves past sarcophagus along the western wall, read or paraphrase the following:

> You suddenly notice that the figure in bandages begins to move, and moans as its long unused limbs creak and crack with stiffness. The mummy of King Shavaka walks again!

Have the players roll for **initiative**.

Secret Door. On a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check** for secret doors, the characters notice small cracks in the north-western wall, outlining a section that seems to be a façade. Pushing on the wall swings it open on a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check**.

Creatures

1 x **Mummy (MM, p228)**

Tactics

The mummy of King Shavaka will fight to the death to protect his final chance at regaining his rulership once more.

Loot

The heroes will find that the 3 x tapestries hanging from the northern walls are worth 150gp each.

Adjusting this Encounter

APL 1: Reduce the Mummy of King Shavaka's Hit Points to 38 HP

APL 3: Add a zombie which rises from the sarcophagus along the western wall

13. Antechamber West

This antechamber holds 3 unopened mummy sarcophagi. If the heroes enter the room, two of the three sarcophagi will open revealing two mummies beginning to animate. These are the sarcophagi of the three mistresses of King Shavaka who were mummified alive upon the King's burial.

Creatures

2 x **Mummies (MM, p228)** with 32 total Hit Points (the third mistress mummy does not awaken for a level 2 APL but stays dormant unless attacked).

Tactics

The mummies will attack the heroes to defend their King's tomb.

Loot

The heroes will find 3x jeweled necklaces, gifts to the 3 mistresses from the King during their days among the living, worth 100 gp each.

Adjusting this Encounter

APL 1: Remove 1x Mummy (32 total HP)

APL 3: Add 1x Mummy (32 total HP)



14. Antechamber East

This thick wooden door is locked, the silver key found in **Area 9** opens the door with no required check. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** picks the lock on the door, and a successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check** kicks the door open. The door has an **AC of 15** and **20 HP** should the heroes wish to break the door open with attacks.

A single treasure chest can be found here. It is locked. a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check** can open the lock, or a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check** can break it open.

It's A Trap! A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check** determines that there are two traps attached to this chest, and a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** only discovers **one** of them (DMs discretion).

The first trap is a pressure plate under the chest. If the chest is removed from the plate, the release will trigger a block of stone to release and fall from the ceiling. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** is required for any hero standing adjacent to the chest to dodge the block. On failure, the character takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

The second trap is the lock itself, which contains a poison needle that will prick any hero who attempts to open the lock without first disarming it. A successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check** disarms the locked trap.

Loot

The chest contains 55 gp, 4 x gemstones (worth 10 gp each), 2x Potions of Healing, and 2 x Potions of Climbing.

Development:

Retrieving the Amulet

Once King Shavaka has been defeated, the players hear a loud shattering sound coming from the direction of the tomb entrance. The green energy feeding into the room regresses back through the wall and seeps back towards the direction of The Ritual Room (**Area 8**).

Once the heroes circle back to the entrance, they notice that the green glowing shield has been shattered, and they can now enter the room and retrieve the **Amulet of Shavaka**, along with the **Ritual Book of Shavaka**. 12 gp can be found on the decaying body of the dead adventurer.

Note: *The Amulet is now powerless, having lost its power with the destruction of the mummy of Shavaka.*

Rewards

On successfully handing over of the **Amulet of Shavaka** to Elel, who patiently waits outside at a short distance from the entrance of the temple, he hands over a pouch containing 500 gp.

Character Advancement Options

Choose one of the following:

- If you are using the ***Milestone Leveling System***, then each character should progress by 1 level on successful completion of this adventure.
- If you are using the ***Experience Point System***, then the party should gain 2000 XP split between them on successful completion of this adventure.

Appendix A: Monsters



Soul Locust

Tiny undead, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 8
Languages -
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Life Steal. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft. (touch), one creature. *Hit:* 1 Maximum HP reduction to the target. The Soul Locust enters any creature's area without penalty. After a successful hit it will then attempt to flee to transport the mote of soul to King Shavaka to assist with his rejuvenation.

Zombie Priest

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8
Hit Points 66 (7d10 + 28)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 8
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 +the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

King Shavaka (Mummy)

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18) + *HP from Soul Locusts*
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +2
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The mummy can use its Dreadful Glare and makes one attack with its rotting fist.

Rotting Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turn s to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the remove curse spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare. The mummy targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the mummy, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of the mummy's next turn . If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration . Atarget that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of all mummies (but not mummy lords) for the next 24 hours.

Appendix B: Map



20

Did you and your group of courageous adventurers enjoy the delve to recover the amulet of SHAVAKA?

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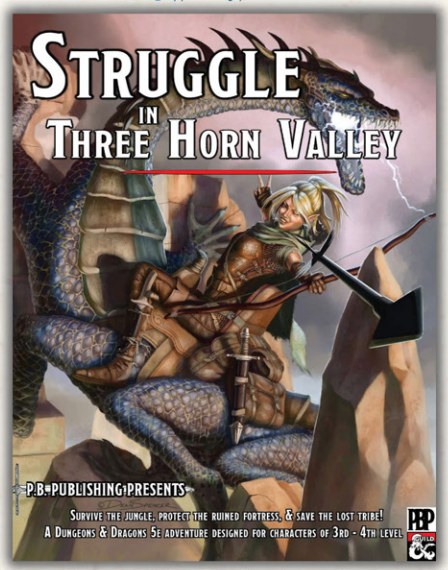


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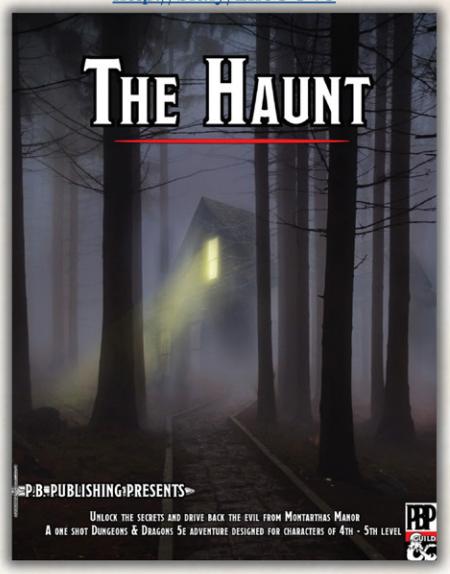
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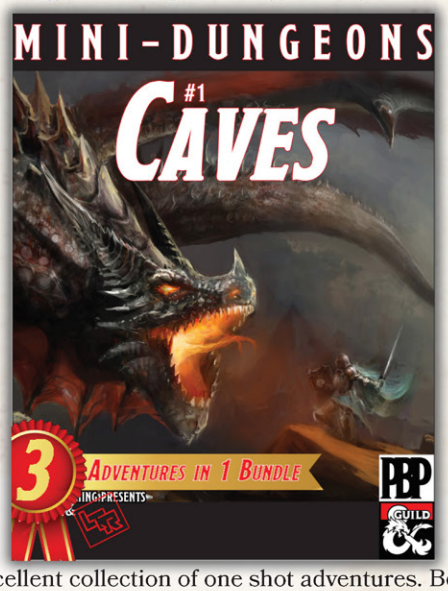
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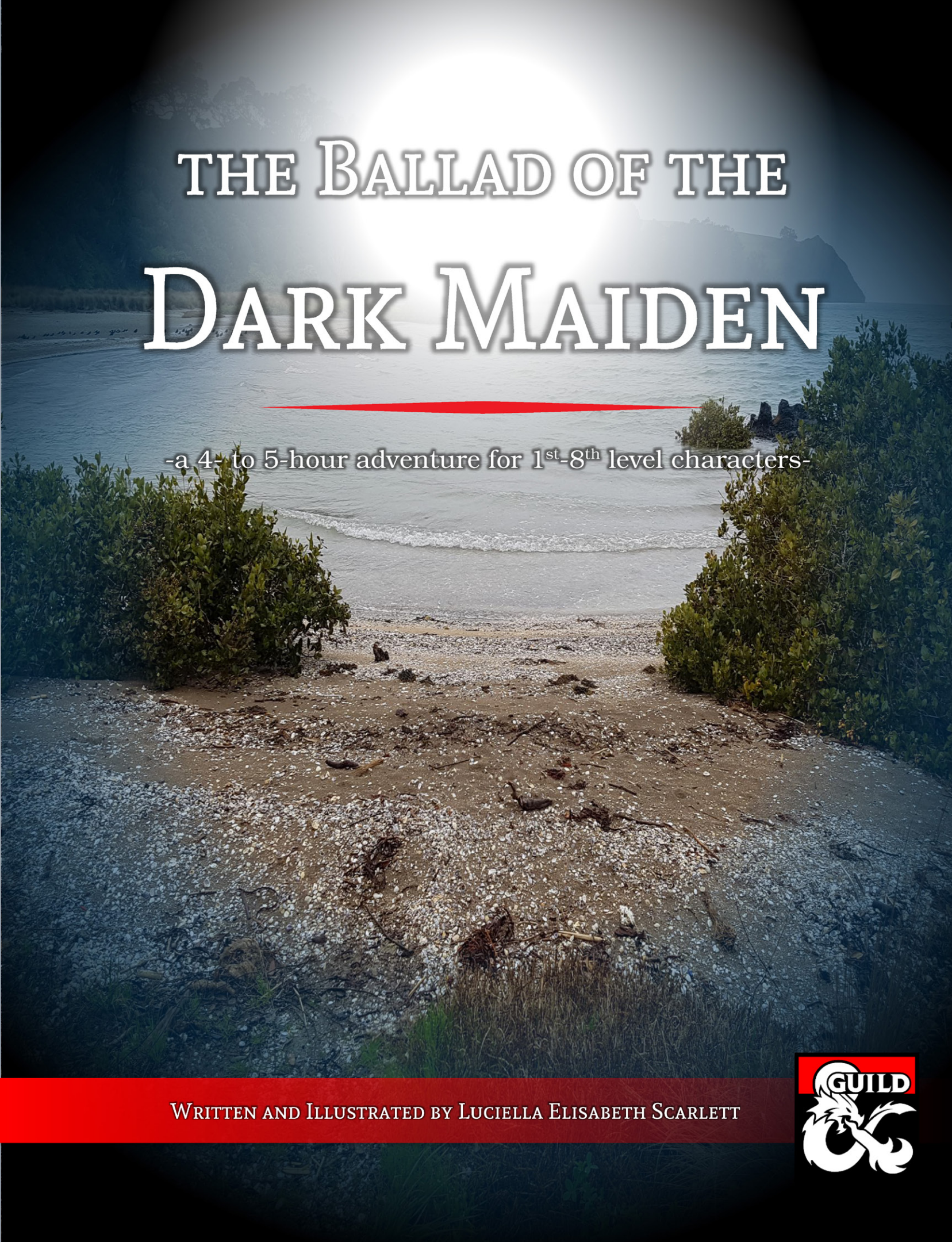


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The Ballad of the Dark Maiden

-a 4- to 5-hour adventure for 1st-8th level characters-

Written and Illustrated by Luciella Elisabeth Scarlett

GUILD



The Ballad of the Dark Maiden

A beautiful maiden stands between you and the high priestess, with long silver hair shining like a halo around her form. Her dark dress is dotted with jewels that shimmer like the night sky.

"L-lady Eilistraee," Izalia breathes.

Written and Illustrated by Luciella Elisabeth Scarlett, 2018



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Welcome to El'tara...

A ship sets sail from Waterdeep, bound for the mysterious island known as El'tara. Aboard are sixty-five sailors, one bookish captain and a brave band of adventurers. As disaster strikes, a beautiful and strange voice calls them safely to shore to meet with a people desperately in need of their aid.



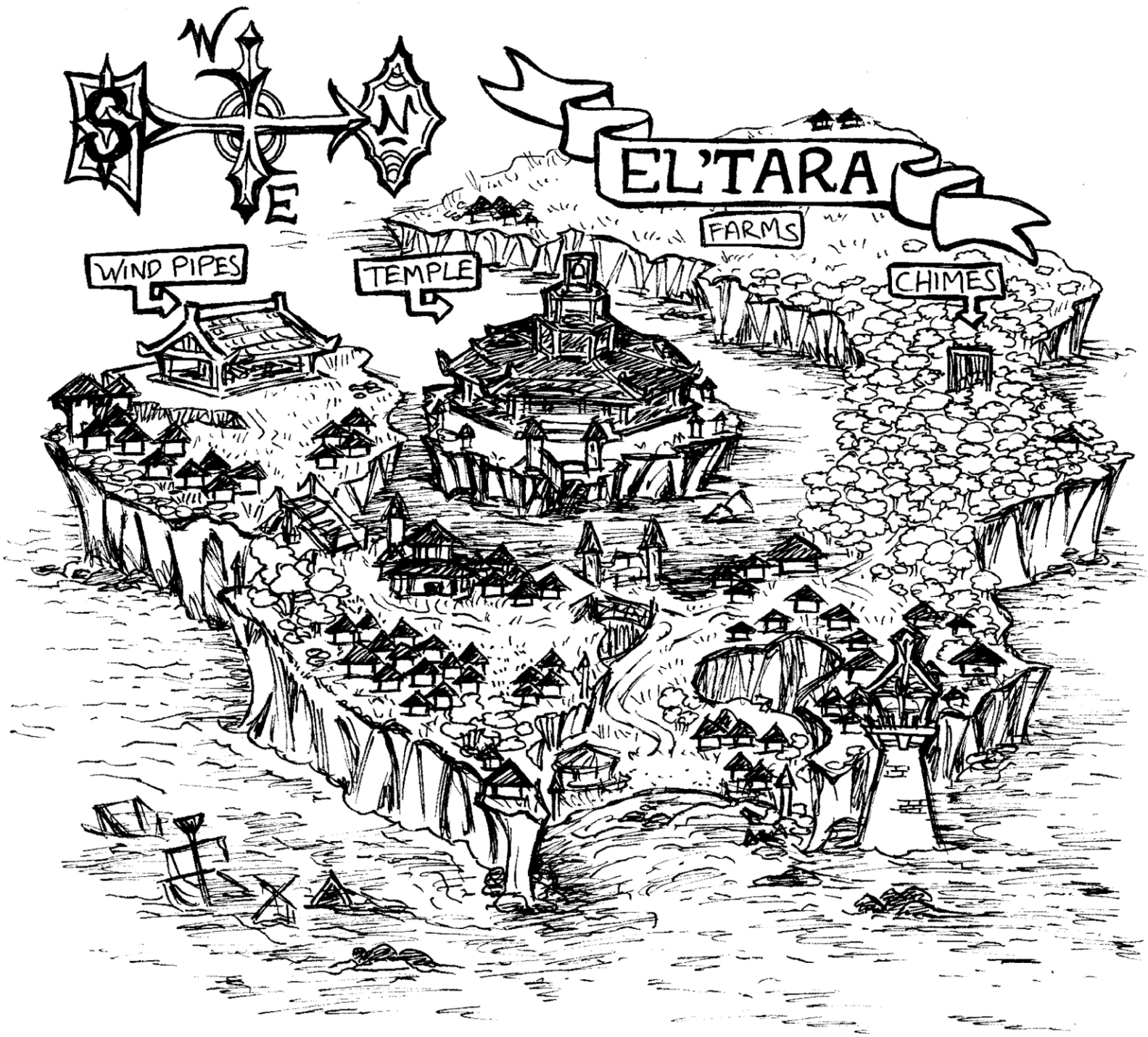
Reading the Adventure:

Sections nestled in boxes are intended to be read aloud or paraphrased. Sections marked with [square brackets] may require customization. Names of monsters marked in **bold** can be found in the *Monster Manual* while stat blocks unique to this adventure can be found in Appendix 1.

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Introduction

Over a millennium ago, a clan of dark elves broke away from their evil kin and fled from the city of Menzoberranzan. Though many lives were lost in the initial exodus, the large numbers of the renegade band ensured that they were more successful than any could have hoped – and yet the drow that finally arrived into the surface world found themselves shunned at every turn by those unable to see past their appearances. Just as hope was beginning to wane, a song rang out through the night, beckoning the way to the sea and to a silver ship waiting amidst the dark waves.

Many years have passed and little knowledge remains of the strange island that the dark elves came to call home, but the wicked Lolth forgets nothing. Whether through fate, mere coincidence or perhaps divine intervention, a small band of adventurers find themselves standing at the shores of this land in the time of its greatest need.

This adventure should run for approximately four hours (or up to five hours for larger or higher-level groups) and may be played either as a one-shot or as part of an ongoing campaign. It contains guidelines for running the adventure at any level from 1st to 8th and for a variety of group sizes.

Lolth and Eilistraee

The goddess Lolth was once consort to the head of the elven pantheon, Corellon Larethian. Out of this pairing were born the twins Eilistraee and Vhaeraun. Where pure Eilistraee reflected the kindness and virtue of her father, Vhaeraun was better matched to the darkness, arrogance and selfishness of his mother.

The day soon came when Lolth grew dissatisfied with her position in Corellon's shadow. She conspired to bring about his death and to frame her daughter for the act. As Eilistraee attempted to defend her father against the assault of Lolth's allies, she found, to her horror, that her arrows were veering for his heart instead. Though Eilistraee was later cleared of all guilt, she vowed never to wield a bow again.

For her betrayal, Lolth was stripped of her divinity and flung into the pits of the Abyss, along with Vhaeraun and the other deities that had aided her in her mission. Eilistraee chose to share in this punishment, explaining that the followers of Lolth would need someone to lead them out of the darkness. Despite the great hardships of her undeserved punishment, and despite her own powerlessness in the face of her wicked mother, Eilistraee never surrendered to evil, and continued to sing out to those who would open their ears to her voice.

Lolth is known as the Demon Queen of Spiders. She revels in chaos and destruction, and in the wickedness of her followers. Spiders are sacred to her. Eilistraee is the goddess of the moon, and of song and dance. Within El'tara are three instruments that amplify her power and protect the island: the bell, the chimes and the wind pipes.

Average Party Level (APL)

Each combat encounter in this adventure, excluding the battle at sea, includes custom options based on the Average Party Level (APL) – calculated by adding up the levels of each character and dividing by party size. It can be run for characters from 1st level to 8th level assuming a party of 3-5.

For larger groups, increase the APL by one for every two players above four. For smaller groups, divide by the number of players below four. For example:

- 1 x level 4 character = APL 1
- 2 x level 4 character = APL 2
- 3-5 x level 4 characters = APL 4
- 6-7 x level 4 characters = APL 5

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Be aware also that the nature of the gameplay, e.g. terrain-based limitations and difficulty of non-combat challenges, will change as players unlock powerful new abilities at higher levels. Here are a few of the abilities DM's may want to keep in mind with Tier 2 players:

- **Levels 5-6:** clerics gain access to the ability Destroy Undead. Spellcasters gain access to spells such as *fly*, *Leomund's tiny hut*, *water breathing* and *water walk*. Fighting-focused classes gain multi-attack.
- **Levels 7-8:** spellcasters gain access to *dimension door*, *polymorph* and *banishment*.
- **Levels 9-10:** wizards gain access to *teleportation circle* (if they have the material components). Druids of the Moon Circle can Wild Shape into **killer whales** or other CR3 beasts.

Setting and Style Notes

Locations and deities of the Forgotten Realms are referenced within the adventure, but the DM may choose to replace these as necessary to better fit their chosen setting – for example, the text suggests that the party are departing from Waterdeep, but this can be traded for any other port city. El'tara can also be moved as necessary, though it should remain far enough away from shore that it may only be reached by ship or by powerful magic.

El'tara shows many signs of elven architecture, though their housing is constructed in a strange way: it seems designed to prevent sunlight from entering. At the time of the adventure, it is early autumn, and though some warmth remains during the day it becomes quite chill at night.

Pacing

This is intended to be a tense adventure at times, such as during the battle on the seas and the final conflict at the temple. Maintain a swift pace by quickly and urgently describing the scene and actions of NPCs and monsters, using tone and colorful descriptions of destruction to press the urgency, and by pressing indecisive players to state their actions. If desired, implement the 5 second rule: if a character does not immediately announce their action, count down from 5. If they do not choose during this time, they miss their turn.

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Beginning the Adventure

This story has three possible entry points: the meeting with Telther, the departure from Waterdeep (or an alternate port of the DM's choosing) or upon arrival into El'tara.

If the adventure is running as a one-shot or as the beginning to a new campaign, the simplest and most effective place to begin is aboard *Mitha's Radiance*. Provide the following background, either before or at the beginning of the session:

- Recently, you saw an advertisement from/were approached by a gnome archaeologist named Telther, who was offering a generous reward for assistance with an expedition into an island three days' sail from Waterdeep. Determine the pay as follows:
    - Level 1-2: 30 GP each
    - Level 3-4: 75 GP each
    - Level 5-6: 150 GP each
    - Level 7+: 250 GP each
- Telther explained that he read about this island in an ancient text: apparently it is home to a community of drow who fled from the Underdark roughly a thousand years ago. From what Telther has read, he does not believe this is a dangerous mission, but he knows it is better to be safe than sorry; drow have an evil reputation after all.

Alternatively, the DM may choose to roleplay the encounter with Telther. If the party have already begun to gather some fame as of the time of the adventure, he may approach them or issue a letter of invitation. If not, the DM may use the following introduction or similar:



It has been weeks since your arrival into Waterdeep, famed jewel of the Sword Coast, and yet during that time little work has come your way save for the odd mundane errand – a life spent chasing rats and finding missing pets is hardly the one you envisioned for yourselves!

One fine night sees you staking out the table nearest to the noticeboard at the dingy seaside tavern known as the Singing Salmon, where you spot a well-dressed if weedy gnome standing on his tiptoes as he attempts to pin up a new advertisement: "Adventurers sought for voyage out to sea! Excellent views and excellent pay!"

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Assuming at least one player approaches Telther, he introduces himself with a bright smile, and enthusiastically explains his mission. Provide the details from the above dot points, and feel free to expand on this using the information from later parts of the adventure (see "Captain Telther" below).

Telther asks the adventurers to meet him the day after tomorrow at the ship called *Mitha's Radiance*. He will not linger long and even encouraging him to have a single drink will require a successful DC13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, as his alcohol tolerance is very low. As soon as he has the chance to escape, he will head back to his quarters in the Sea Ward to complete preparations for the voyage. Players may then spend the rest of their time as they wish, such as playing music or tavern games. Feel free to replace the tavern name as desired and to theme the place accordingly.

The Singing Salmon

This dingy bar in the Docks Ward is surprisingly popular, despite its surly half-orc barkeep and constant stench of fish. It seems a place where a fight is constantly waiting to break out, but the regulars know better than to cause too much trouble: the deceptively gentle-looking half-elf Cynthia Scullershand (a **gladiator**) eats for free so long as she breaks up any fights before the crockery is too badly damaged.

The clientele consists of roughly 70% local residents and 30% travelers. Ale can be purchased for 4 CP, and a meal (fish, bread and beans) costs 1 SP. A room at the inn upstairs costs 3 SP per night.

If desired, give the party an opportunity to complete any tasks within the city, including any shopping or other preparations, before Telther's ship sets sail for El'tara.

Mitha's Radiance

Narrate the departure as follows:

> As the sun rises on a cool autumn day in the city of Waterdeep, the three-mastered carrack named *Mitha's Radiance* sets sail for the open sea. A crew of at least sixty hustles about, adjusting sails and shouting orders, and you find yourself somewhat lost amid the efficient and practiced motion. As you scan the deck for the captain, a scornful first mate points you to the small pale gnome already retching over the railing. The captain's preoccupation seems to have no noticeable effect on the competent crew, and the ship makes good time across the waves.
>
> Eventually, the activity aboard seems to subside as the ship settles into a comfortable wind, each of its sails filled to bursting. A few sailors still man the pulleys and crow's nests, but most find a comfortable spot to loiter and watch the City of Splendors disappear behind them.

Ask the players what they would like spend their time doing.

Captain Telther

The captain of Mitha's Radiance is an intelligent but somewhat weedy **noble** (INT+3, STR-1, History +5). Telther has plenty of experience running around the countryside and researching the history of the Realms – though in all cases he made sure to hire adventurers to hide behind in case of trouble. He will proudly speak of these sorties if given the opportunity, and will be sure to embellish the truth just enough to make the tale interesting. Despite his obvious wealth, however, he is friendly enough and treats the sailors with respect. He is treated with somewhat begrudging respect in return. Telther is a bookish sort, and knows nothing of nautical life, or even of the basic chores

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that others on board are expected to complete, though he does pay the sailors exceptionally well to fill his slack.

Telther is badly seasick for the first day but can chat so long as the party can handle speaking with him while he is vomiting over the railing. He can provide the following information:

- Their destination, El'tara, is the fabled home of the followers of Eilistraee, drow goddess of the moon and patron of good-hearted drow.
- One thousand years ago, a group of dark elves fled together from the Underdark. After failing to find acceptance among the surface-folk, they fled for the sea on a ship gifted to them by their goddess.
- Old records along the shore suggest trading once occurred between the dark elves and a community of fisherfolk further south from Waterdeep – a community that disappeared hundreds of years ago. Telther has not been able to find any other record of the island.
- Telther did pay for a scrying spell, which confirmed the existence of the island, however little detail could be obtained; there seems to be some sort of barrier which prevents divination magic.

Players can improve their standing with Telther with either a successful DC10 Charisma (Persuasion) check or Wisdom (Medicine) check if they wish to help him with his seasickness (roleplay this as suggesting a herbal remedy or by use of a simple spell; a particularly bad failure makes him even sicker).

Though the sailors are openly scornful of Telther's seasickness, they are quick to defend him if any violence breaks out.

The Sailors

The core crew of *Mitha's Radiance* consists of 30 non-combatants (**commoners**) and 35 trained fighters (use the stats for **bandits**). They are a combination of humans, dwarves and a few halflings.

The party can learn the following information by speaking with the crew:

- They are headed to an island named El'tara. Telther learned about this island while investigating a set of ruins further inland.
- Apparently there may be drow living on the island. Despite Telther's suggestion that the dark elves are different to those wicked creatures told of in myths, none of the sailors are particularly pleased about the idea of meeting them.
- Telther is a little pathetic, though not entirely worthless. If nothing else, he pays well.

The sailors are a hard-bitten bunch, but most retain a sense of humour. Players that choose to interact with the crew may be invited to participate in gambling, drinking games, wrestling matches or even music and dancing.

Key NPCs

The first mate, who acts as the ship's captain in Telther's stead, is a human named Ravel (**bandit captain**). Ravel speaks in a gruff and abrasive tone, and frequently curses and spits. Secretly, he enjoys embroidery and crocheting in the evenings (after forbidding all to enter his chambers). He has a young niece back in Waterdeep named Mitha, and he treasures her greatly.

A sour and pessimistic halfling named Sheldon Greensteppe (a **druid**) manages the ship's infirmary. He rarely leaves this area,

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instead spending his free time diligently studying his collection of herb and flower encyclopedias. He will promptly treat any serious injuries, but seasickness garners little sympathy beyond a barked order to chew on some ginger, and a thrown book if they continue to complain. The ship's cook alone is worthy of his affection; he treats her as a daughter despite the fact that she is more than a century older than him.

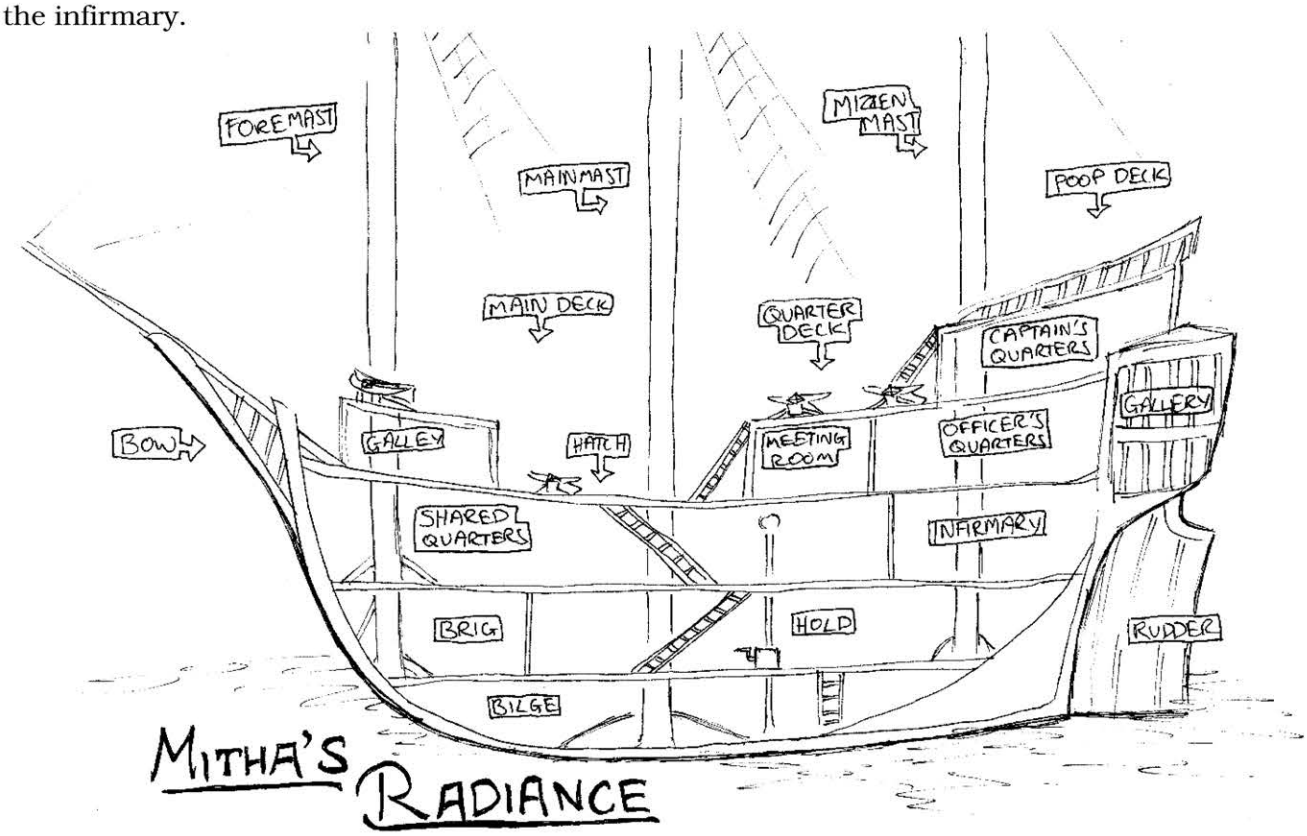
The ship's cook is a rather fussy and meticulous elf named Liviel (a **commoner**). It is well known that Liviel's sharp ears can pick up the sound of a growling stomach from anywhere on the ship, at which point she is sure to mysteriously appear with a plate of pastries in hand. She has little patience for timewasters, but has a surprising soft spot for the antisocial doctor, Sheldon. The two are old friends despite their contrasting personalities. Liviel knows the cantrip *produce flame* as a druid spell taught to her by Sheldon. Whenever Liviel is not in the kitchen, she can be spotted socialising with the sailors or visiting Sheldon in his hideaway at the infirmary.

The Ship

Mitha's Radiance is a mid-sized carrack – larger than a caravel but smaller than a galleon. It is a fairly large ship for such an unremarkable goal, which acts as testament again to the wealth and folly of its captain.

Quarters. The ship offers a set of comfortable quarters for Telther, a slightly smaller room for Ravel (the first mate), and set of small but cosy cabins for each of the adventurers and for Liviel (the cook). The ship's doctor (Sheldon) sleeps in the small infirmary. The rest of the crew sleeps in mats and hammocks, either in the shared sleeping quarters or on the deck if the weather is pleasant. At all times, there are at least four sailors on deck or in the crow's nests, looking out for any sign of trouble.

Galley. The ship contains a fairly advanced kitchen of gleaming, perfectly maintained surfaces and meticulously arranged utensils. Liviel spends much of her time preparing meals in here. If anything is moved in her



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absence, her shriek can be heard throughout the ship.

Infirmary. Sheldon can be found within the infirmary at most times of day, and he will chase out anyone who is not needed there. Other than Sheldon's study and bedroom, the infirmary contains three beds, separable by curtains, and a chest of medical supplies which is enchanted to be waterproof and resistant to physical damage (aura of abjuration magic).

The Hold and the Brig. Supplies are stored either in the galley or in the larger hold at the base of the ship. This area includes a smaller room that can be locked from the outside to form a makeshift brig if any passengers cause trouble.

Ballistae. There are a total of eight ballistae along the sides of the vessel: three on the port side, three on the starboard side and two near the bow. A ballista takes either one action to fire if there are at least two people operating it, or two actions if a single person is operating it. They have a range of 120/480 feet and deal 26 (4d12) piercing damage on a hit. Treat any character who tries to fire a ballista as having proficiency in using it, and grant advantage if at least one other character (including NPC) is helping. The ballistae cannot be turned more than 90 degrees from their starting positions perpendicular to the ship.

Battle on Board!

The first day passes without incident. Allow players to describe any actions they take and narrate how it affects their relationships with the crew members.

On the second night, the party are roused from their sleep by the sounds of shouting and running. They can hear the words: "All hands on deck! Call Ravel!" As soon as anyone peers outside their cabin they see terrified sailors running about, who stammer about a monster out at sea. If the party remains in their cabin, the next thing they will hear is the ballistae, and eventually the battle above. Otherwise, as soon as at least one character is on deck, describe the scene as follows:

> You see sailors milling about with all previous discipline seemingly lost. The first mate, is shouting loud and harshly in an attempt to regain order, but before you can even grasp his words your attention is caught by something massive moving in the waves ahead.
>
> At first you mistake it for another ship, but as you continue to gaze you see the moonlight glinting off humongous eyes and see eight spindly legs shifting through the water, propelling the enormous creature slowly but inevitably towards you.

Refer to Appendix 1 for stats of the **wave spider** (use the same stats regardless of Average Party Level). Pause to allow players to react, and then continue as follows:

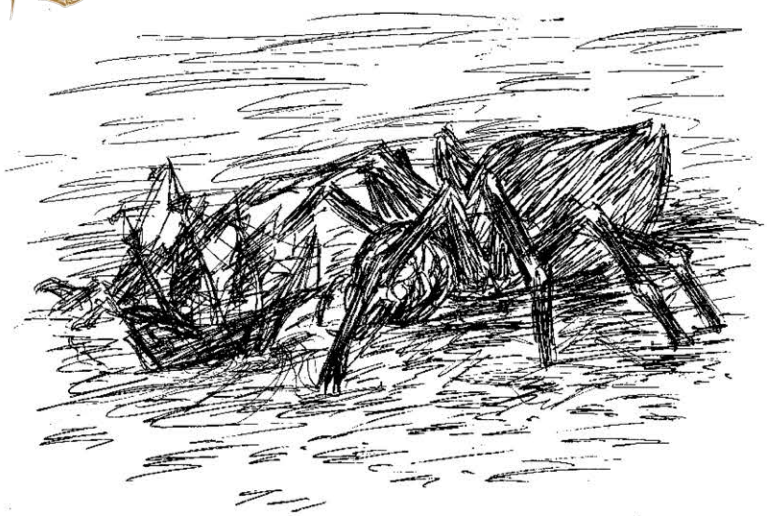
> As you look back you see that Ravel is beginning to regain some control. Sailors are hauling up the anchor and rushing to brace the sails and turn the rudder, and a smaller group are headed to the ballistae along the starboard side of the ship. Yet even as you watch, the monstrous creature is gaining on you.

Roll initiative once for the wave spider, once for the sailors and once for each of the players (or use "Side Initiative" rules if preferred, per page 270 of the DMG).

At the beginning of combat, the wave spider is 240 feet away; keep track of the distance between the spider and the ship as it changes each turn – if desired, use the optional action

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tracking tools provided in Appendix 2. Terrain actions, if any, take place on initiative count 20, losing initiative ties. The battle at sea should have a swift pace and a sense of a disaster unfolding around the players, but it is important that the DM avoids allowing chaos and confusion to reign.



The Wave Spider

The full stat block of the wave spider is located in Appendix 1. Including its legs, this creature is roughly 400 feet in diameter and 90 feet tall, dwarfing even the carrack.

The wave spider's movement speed is 60 ft, and it can dash up to twice this distance if it takes no other action. As soon as it is close enough, it uses its web to try to ensnare the ship, and then begins to attack the vessel. Avoid attacking the players directly, though describe its claws hitting the sailors and tossing them overboard like dolls as it tears through wood and fabric.

The spider is not intelligent and cannot be reasoned with. Any attempts to probe its mind return only unnatural screeching. It can however be chased away if it takes at least 300 points of damage.

Optional Rule: Stagger

If the wave spider takes more than 50 HP of damage in a single round, it moves at half speed for its next turn. If desired, apply the same rule to the ship.

The Sailors

There are 65 sailors. At the beginning of the battle, 28 of these are capably moving to stations on the ship – 8 to the ballistae and 20 to the sails. Each turn, another 5 recover from their shock and fear and move to assist with the sails. Subtract from the total based on the ability checks under "terrain" or damage dealt by the wave spider.

On their turn, the sailors try to move the ship out of range of the wave spider. Roll 1d20 for every ten sailors manoeuvring the ship, plus an extra d20 for any players that assist (see "the Player Characters"). Select the highest result, and add +2 for the sailor's proficiency, plus any bonuses from spells or effects created by the players (e.g. Bardic Inspiration). Treat the spell *gust of wind* as adding +5 to this total. The results are as follows:

- <10: the ship does not move.
- 10-15: the ship moves 40 ft.
- 15-20: the ship moves 80 ft.
- 20-25: the ship moves 120 ft.
- 25-30: the ship moves 160 ft.

Once the ship takes at least half of its HP in damage, the situation becomes dire: half of the sailors abandon their regular posts and attempt to bail out water and hold together the sails. Its speed is capped at 120 feet per turn. Once the ship is at less than 100 HP, its maximum movement reduces to 80 feet per turn.

If the ship manages to achieve a distance of at least 500 feet away from the spider and is

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not subject to any effects that slow its movement, treat it as having escaped (see "The Aftermath").

The Player Characters

If players do not take their actions quickly, press them for a decision and use the 5 second rule (see "Pacing" under the Introduction) if they dawdle. Along with any other ideas they can come up with, players can take the following actions:

- **Fire the ballistae.** As the ship is turning away, the three ballistae on the starboard side and one of the ballistae near the bow can be fired at the spider. Eight sailors (two on each ballista) are already fumbling to load the siege weapons, but do not fire the ballistae until the second turn. The ballistae have a range of 120/480 feet and deal 26 (4d12) piercing damage on a hit.
- **Manoeuvre the ship.** If a player wishes to help the sailors to move the ship, have them roll a DC12 Strength (Athletics) check; on a success, roll the sailors' check with advantage.
- **Call orders:** Ravel is currently leading the ship and will be quietly furious if anyone interrupts him, but he knows better than to argue in such dire circumstances. With a successful DC13 Charisma (Persuasion, Deception or Intimidation), players can command the sailors.

Terrain

The ship has an AC of 16, HP of 500 and damage threshold of 15. If it takes significant damage, it begins to pitch from side to side. Have all players roll a DC10 Dexterity saving throw; anyone who fails falls prone, and anyone who fails by more than 5 falls over the side of the ship, managing to catch a rope or a porthole just in time (Optionally, this requires a second Dexterity save). On their turn, they can roll a DC10 Strength (Athletics) check to climb up; on a failure, they remain clinging to the side. Roll once for the sailors and treat each point of failure as a single sailor failing their check.

Treat standard methods of mending the ship as largely ineffective except as flavour; any mending work completed in the space of six seconds is unlikely to change the fate of the ship. Use discretion if players come up with more creative methods of mending the ship.

Encounter Summary

The wave spider (Appendix 1) is aiming to destroy the ship. The sailors are trying to escape. The players may take any action of their choosing, including assisting sailors or firing the ballistae (range 120/480 ft, 26/4d12 damage).

To move the ship, roll 1d20 per 10 sailors plus an extra d20 for player assistance. The ship moves 40 ft. for every five feet above a result of 10, capped at 160 ft. or lower based on the ship condition. Track the distance and HP of the wave spider, condition of the ship and number of sailors on deck.

The Aftermath

There are three possible ends to the battle: either the ship manages to outrun the spider, the crew manage to deal enough damage to chase the spider away or the spider manages to destroy the ship. Take note also of the level of damage which the ship sustained during the fight: for narrative purposes, this will determine both the difficulty of arriving to El'tara and the condition of the ship upon arrival.

If the party manages to either defeat or chase off the spider without the ship being destroyed (a very challenging task), split 33,000 among the party, but increase the party size by 3 for the purpose of this calculation. For the other possible outcomes,

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use the "XP Thresholds by Character Level" table in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 82) to determine level-based XP awards treating "shipwreck" as a hard encounter and "escape" as a deadly encounter. For example, a 3rd level character that escapes from the spider gains 400 XP from the encounter. Note: if the party contains characters of differing levels, use the average level.

Option 1: Escape

Use this option if the ship escapes from the spider (i.e. makes it at least 500 feet away without taking substantial damage):

> With a last burst of desperation, the sailors heave at the ropes, and somehow, gloriously, the sails catch a strong wind and begin to carry the ship free from danger. The gigantic monstrosity thrashes amidst the waves, letting out a garbled roar of protest, but the ship is already moving too quickly for it to follow. For a moment everyone aboard seems to sag with relief, before the equally giddy Ravel snaps for them to keep the ship in motion. The spider continues to pursue, but as frantic hands continue to manoeuvre the sails, the distance grows by the second.
>
> No rest is to be had for the rest of the night; every hand is necessary and you are quickly ordered into place. The activity subsides only with the coming of dawn, when the indomitable chef emerges from the galley with huge platters of pastries and several stern words for the overzealous captain who failed to call a breakfast break.
>
> Shortly before midday, a shadow appears upon the horizon – a barely visible break in an otherwise endless ocean. The sun is already well on its way towards the opposite horizon by the time you approach the shore of what a relieved captain announces to be El'tara. The weary crew lay down the anchor and lower a rowing boat, allowing the crew to slowly make their way to shore.

Continue onto "Arrival into El'tara". There is approximately an hour left before sundown. All characters and sailors are tired, however assume that they have gotten enough snatched rest to avoid gaining a level of exhaustion.

Option 2: Victory

Use this option if the spider takes enough damage to chase it away. Describe the final attack, and then continue as follows:

> With one final screech of pain and confusion, the spider seems to decide that it has had enough. Its powerful limbs swipe through the water, churning the waves one last time before it dips beneath the waves. You can faintly see it swimming for the depths, leaving behind a trail of inky blood.

If any players wish to pursue the wave spider, have them describe how (e.g. use of particular spells or abilities). They can likely get in one last attack as the wave spider disappears if desired. Once the wave spider is out of range, continue as follows:

> For a moment, the crew visibly sags with relief, before Ravel's sharp voice cuts through the air: "Move on, you worthless seadogs: this ship's not going to bail itself out."

Ravel is secretly giddy with relief himself, but he quickly moves to have the water pumped out from the bilge, the urgent repair work completed and to move the ship away from the wave spider in case it returns. Treat this as a largely cosmetic exercise, but if players choose to assist, allow them to perform minor repairs up to 5 HP each for mundane works (on a successful DC10 Dexterity check), or 20 if they use *mending*. Use personal judgement to determine an appropriate level of success for more creative methods of mending or stabilising the ship.

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If the ship did not take any significant damage, it arrives at El'tara in the late afternoon as per Option 1: Escape. If it did take damage, use the following description instead, adjusting based on the level of damage:

Throughout the night and into the dismal dawn, the embattled vessel creaks along the waves, beaten but not quite broken. Sailors rush around madly, patching leaks and bailing water while the shrill voice of the chef lamenting the state of the kitchen battles with the shouts of a frustrated ship doctor attempting to explain triage to the disorganized crew.

At last, as the sun is beginning to dip towards the west once more, an ecstatic cry from the damaged crows' nest announces that land has been sighted ahead. With one final burst of enthusiasm, the exhausted crew rush to their stations to catch the sudden wind as it graces the sails.

The ship is almost to the island when an ominous *crack* sounds above the cheers of the sailors. The deck tips and tilts with a groan, and with a speed that shocks you, the brave vessel begins to sink.

The players have a single round to act before they are plunged into the water. Ask them what they wish to do. Anyone who tries to swim to shore must make a DC10 Strength (Athletics) check, made with advantage if they use their brief warning to prepare. Assume any rowboats are broken or missing, but characters can use spells or grab onto pieces of wood. Anyone who fails badly begins to drown, though they can be rescued by either the party members or the other crew members. Once the party makes it to shore, continue with "Arrival into El'tara".

Option 3: Shipwreck

Use this option if the ship is destroyed:

With a last furious *crack*, the proud ship is torn apart and you are flung into the roiling sea. You open your mouth to scream, only for it to fill with salt water. The waves toss you back and forth like a leaf amidst a hurricane.

In a brief moment of clarity, you emerge from the water to see rows of dark, jagged teeth, before you are blinded by a flash of light and deafened by an unearthly roar of pain.

When the sound fades, another takes its place: the pure notes of a voice raised in song. You do not recognize the singer, but somehow the sound seems as familiar and comforting as a mother's lullaby. You slip into the darkness with no fear at all.

You open your eyes to find yourself lying on the coarse sand of an unknown shore. All around, you see the sprawled figures of your companions and of the sailors, some of which are already moving around, calling to one another in shocked tones as if hardly believing the strange fortune of their survival. Even the weedy Captain Telther seems to be well; you see his small form leaning over a semi-conscious Ravel.

At least eight crew members are missing (or more, depending on the duration of the battle), but remarkably, most have survived the ordeal. However, all characters gain a level of exhaustion.

Arrival into El'tara

Depending on how the players have arrived at the island, give them a moment to gain their bearings and decide their approach, then provide a description of the island as follows:

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You stand at the foot of a natural harbour, overshadowed by steep cliffs that rise up beyond. A stony path leads uphill, starting at the point where the coarse sand transitions into wild grasses and shrubs. You can see small dwellings clustered on the hills and at the edges of the small beach, each bearing the same strange characteristic: long roofs overhang the walls, seemingly designed to keep all traces of sunlight from entering. Aside from you and your companions, there is not a soul to be seen.

Unless the adventurers were able to defeat the spider without taking damage (highly unlikely), Telther and most of the surviving sailors are deeply demoralized at this point, though they are glad to be alive.

Use the following points to respond to player questions and actions:

- The beach stretches for about two hundred feet in either direction. There are scattered remnants of toys and hammocks, all of which are old and rotted, along with a few old fire pits. A steep incline rises from the beach towards the center of the island.
- The dwellings on the beach are empty and abandoned. If players search, they can find various personal belongings, including text written in an old form of Undercommon. A successful DC12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that this place was most likely abandoned about half a year ago, and most likely in a hurry.
- There are a few scattered skeletons along the way, but not nearly enough to match the number of dwellings.

It is a 500-foot climb to the top of the hill. On arrival, characters can see the following:

To the left and right, you spot more of the odd dwellings. The largest cluster is atop the hills to the left, where you can see what looks to be the town center, though with no movement on its streets. As you reach the top of the hill, you see that El'tara bears the rough shape of a crescent moon, curved around a smaller island at the center. The distance between mainland and the smaller island is at least 90 feet, and both sides consist of sheer cliffs rising from the deep and unforgiving waves. Upon that island is a large and grand structure, perhaps a temple, with a magnificent bell tower rising from the center, surrounded by overhanging roofs.

Down below, and closer to the temple, characters can see traces of a bridge that perhaps once spanned the gap now lying in rubble. The high priestess of the temple (see "Izalia" below) is capable of creating a bridge to span this gap, but she is resting at the time of the characters' arrival. The way will either become clear at night, or earlier if players take one of the following actions:

- **Make enough noise to be noticed.** DM's discretion on whether the action causes sufficient noise. Upon hearing, it will take 5 minutes for Izalia to be roused and briefed. She will then create a bridge and send out a party of 5 **drow** to investigate.
- **Flight/teleportation spells.** Higher level characters have access to spells such as *fly* and *dimension door* which will allow them to cross the 90-foot gap.
- **Climb.** This option is dangerous; make sure that players are aware that both cliffs are 100 feet high and that they will need to swim across unless they use magic. Players will need to succeed on three checks: two DC15 Strength (Athletics) checks to see if they can safely climb up and down the cliffs, taking 35 (10d6) falling damage on each failure, along with a DC10 Strength (Athletics) check to see if they can swim across – on a failure, they begin to drown

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and will need help from the other players if they are to survive. The DC of the swimming check increases by 5 for characters wearing medium armor, or 10 for characters wearing heavy armor.

If characters turn left (heading south), they can reach the village center.

> Little houses with overhanging roofs are clustered along the way in an imperfect grid shooting off the single central street. At the center you find a well etched with familiar runes of magical preservation, next to larger hall that perhaps acted as some form of meeting area.

The well is filled with fresh pure spring water; it has been spelled with an effect similar to *purify food and drink* (transmutation aura if tested with *detect magic*). The meeting area holds trading records dated six months ago (written in Undercommon); the denizens of El'tara did not use coins, but some of the larger commercial deals were recorded. The hall also contains a gallery with fine elven sculptures and artworks worth a total of:

- 300 GP for APL 1-2
- 500 GP for APL 3-4
- 750 GP for APL 4-6
- 1,500 GP for APL 7+

Finally, there is a locked room to one side of the gallery, which can be opened with a DC12 Dexterity or Strength check. It contains a box filled with painted silks, which illustrates scenes from the island's history, including the exodus from the Underdark and the journey across the seas – this was a gift from those who traded with El'tara long ago. The silks are worth up to 600 GP if sold to an appropriate buyer.

If characters search the houses for clues, a DC12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that although all houses are seemingly abandoned, there is a difference in how long since each has been disturbed. The longest time period is six months, but some others appear to have held guests very recently – perhaps within the past week. Most of the valuable items have been removed, but along with any common items or personal affects, characters can find the following:

- 10 lbs. of preserved food (jerky, meat confit, pickled vegetables etc.)
- Books and notepads written in Undercommon, most of which are handwritten. If players read them, they do not find much of interest; these are cookbooks, gardening books and a few novels, some of higher quality than others. There are a few diaries as well, but none give any hints about the fate that befell the island, except that the final entry is dated six months ago.
- A pair of sapphire earrings worth 100 GP.

If characters wish, they can investigate the rest of the island (using sections further down in the adventure), however the DM should remind them that the sun is setting and they are all quite tired from their earlier ordeal. The sailors are not particularly interested in exploring at this point, and despite Telther's earlier enthusiasm for the expedition he is deeply demoralized at this stage – it is a DC15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince him to join the party.

The First Night

It is close to sunset. If players have been able to enter the temple, skip directly to "Temple of Eilistraee" – if any characters, including NPCs, remain outside of the temple, the below events still take place. If players have been unable to enter the temple, they will likely seek to either rest in the abandoned houses or set up camp somewhere on the island.

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Making Camp

If the ship has been destroyed, then all food and water was destroyed with it. Characters can use spells such as *goodberry, create food and water* and *create or destroy water*, can find food and water by checking the homes or can forage. El'tara is strangely empty of any animal larger than a gull, but with a DC15 Wisdom (Survival) check they can discover a small spring of clear fresh water, along with various mushrooms, fruits and vegetables. Roll 1d6+WIS to determine the quantity of food they find (in pounds). If characters fail their foraging check by more than 5 points, they bring back a few handfuls of unpleasant herbs and poisonous mushrooms (DC 10 Constitution save or be poisoned for 1d4 hours). Characters may make the foraging check with advantage if they work together.

Characters can easily find a good place to make camp; no checks are necessary. Find out if they want to set a watch, and in what order.

Strange Music

Whoever takes the first watch notices the following (if no one takes watch, jump straight to "Zombie Attack"; none of the sailors think to wake the adventurers until this point):

> As the colors of the sunset fully fade and are replaced by starlight, the air grows chill. Time passes as you shiver beneath the night sky, until a sound reaches you on the wind: at the center of the island, a bell is beginning to ring. It is joined by the ring of chimes to the north and the whistle of wind pipes to the south. Each instrument on its own has a beautiful, clear tone, but as they call out together there is an unpleasant dissonant edge which grates on your ears.

If they are within view of the temple, they can see that the bell has begun to ring.

Characters with Divine Sense or similar abilities or spells can learn that the ground they are standing on is desecrated. If they are within range, they sense that the area within 60 ft. of the temple is consecrated. Both auras are faint where they meet, though the aura of desecration grows stronger closer to the shore and the one of consecration grows stronger near the temple.

Zombie Attack!

About ten minutes after the music begins to play, undead creatures begin to emerge from the waves. They soon shamble up the hill and make for the largest group of living creatures. Depending on where the group have made camp, narrate as follows:

> As the strange music continues to echo through the cold night, movement in the water catches your eye. Something silvery rises up from the waves with a burst of bubbles. Water streams down from the humanoid form until you recognize the pale hair and dark skin of a drow elf. It lifts its head to reveal sunken, dead eyes set into rotting flesh, and lets out a hoarse cry as it stumbles towards you.

At this point, waves of undead are beginning to emerge from the sea. The DM can decide how many appear at once, and when/if a second wave appears. Here is an indication of a fair encounter by APL (refer to the Introduction for this term):

APL	Encounter
1	2 **zombies** (MM pg. 316)
2	4 **zombies** (MM pg. 316)
3	6 **zombies** (MM pg. 316)
4-5	8 **zombies** (MM pg. 316) -OR- a **wight** (MM pg. 300) and 2 zombies
6-7	6 **zombies** and a **wight**
8	2 **wights** and 10 **zombies**

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For the purpose of this encounter, treat all undead as unintelligent monsters incapable of understanding language, even if stated otherwise in their stat blocks. The exception is that the more powerful undead still move with the grace of trained warriors. All are immune to charm and sleep.



When rolling initiative, roll for the sailors as well, and use their turn to describe separate fights occurring outside of the adventurers' range. After a few turns of confusion, Telther and the sailors all begin to flee towards the center of the island; the undead are rising from the shore.

Once the immediate battle subsides, even more zombies start to appear, climbing mindlessly up the cliffs and out from the beach – far more than the party can handle. However, at this point a glowing beam of light shoots upwards from the temple, beckoning them forward. Any characters (including NPCs) that have made it to the top of the hill see a bridge of moonlight extending across to the temple; the noise and light of the battle has attracted the attention of those within.

Characters can cross safely over the bridge, and as they cross, a strange calmness washes over them. The undead attempt to chase them up until the point that they arrive on the bridge. They do not attempt to cross, but instead simply wait, furious, at the cliff edge.

Temple of Eilistraee

The temple at the center of El'tara is the sole remaining sanctuary for the drow who have been driven away from their island. If the drow are alert to the characters' presence, the party are greeted near the entrance by four **drow**. Otherwise, they are eventually spotted as they move closer in, and a pair of acolytes invite them to come and meet with the high priestess. If the three instruments are playing at this time, the sound dims as they enter.

The temple is a grand and sweeping structure of fine elven architecture. Once a place of quiet contemplation, it has now been mostly converted into living areas for the villagers who escaped from the worst of the cataclysm.

The inhabitants consist of 340 non-combatants (**commoners**), 30 trained fighters/hunters (**drow**), 2 priestesses (**priest**), 10 junior acolytes (**acolyte**) and the high priestess, Izalia (see Appendix 1). All inhabitants have the **Fey Ancestry, Innate Spellcasting** and **Sunlight Sensitivity** characteristics from the **drow** stat block.

The youngest drow is 5 years old and the oldest is 741. None are old enough to remember the original escape from

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Menzoberranzan, though this story is taught to all young drow on the island. The El'taran society is peaceful and generous, and though the drow know the stories of their evil kin and of how they are seen by the denizens of the mainland, most will still be surprised and hurt if treated with hostility.

Izalia

If players arrive during the day, Izalia is brought to join them in the main banquet hall. She is surprised to see them, but will readily offer sanctuary. Izalia can provide prior warning of the undead that appear during the night and can create the bridge to allow others to cross.

If they arrive during the night, the party are lead towards the center of the temple where Izalia is kneeling in prayer to the goddess Eilistraee.



Your guides lead you up a long set of stairs, which open up to a wide dais beneath the night sky. The bell sings from directly above, carried on tall and deceptively slender pillars anchored into the temple. In between the pillars is a large statue of a female drow dancing with a silver sword. Her pearlescent white hair gleams and glimmers against obsidian skin.

Beneath the statue is the smaller figure of a living drow: a priestess clad in a simple white dress. As you approach, she steps gracefully to her feet and turns to face you. She raises her hand, and the sound of the bell fades away into a muted chime.

"I am Izalia, the high priestess," she says in clear and unaccented Common. "I welcome you to the Temple of the Dark Maiden."

Izalia is a powerful priestess of more than five hundred years' experience. She is calm, wise and slow to anger, though she bears a great deal of sorrow for the death of her beloved Phyrra and for the suffering that has befallen her people. She explains the following:

- El'tara was once home to a community of drow that worshipped the goddess Eilistraee. They rejected the ways of their evil kin and lived remotely, far from the judgmental eyes of the surface races.
- Above the temple and to the north and south of the island are a set of instruments which were created by the first high priestess in order to protect their island from the servants of evil Lolth.
- As time went on and the original spell weakened, the island was discovered. A wicked priestess named Chessala seized two of the instruments and corrupted them: on her command, the dead began to rise and devour the living, infecting them with the same curse.
- Some drow attempted to flee the island, only to find an immense spider lurking in

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the waves – perhaps even a manifestation of Lolth herself.

- Izalia and her closest aids – including her partner, the former high priestess Phyrra – were able to defeat the wicked priestess, but her curse proved too strong to break. Phyrra was slain, and Izalia took the remaining drow and fled to the temple.
- The undead are unable to enter the temple, and as such, Izalia can offer sanctuary for the night – though little in the way of material comforts. However, her power is diminished and she mourns that she is unable to send her people to a true death.
- The instruments are guarded by shadow creatures. If these are slain, the instruments can be purified. If this task is completed, then Izalia can cast a ritual using the power of the full moon, which will cleanse the island and its surrounding areas of evil. This is the same ritual that was once cast a thousand years ago. The full moon takes place the next day.
- If the adventures assist her, Izalia will do her best to reward them: there is some treasure left to them and she can also arrange repairs on their ship (or provide a new ship as required).

Players can safely take a long rest in the temple. They are given comfortable rooms and pleasant food and wine – the greatest hospitality that these folk can spare. A few of the drow will also seek conversation as they know little of the world beyond their island.

The Instruments

The chimes are to the north of the island and the wind pipes are to the south. Refer to the map for details, and feel free to provide a print-out to players as well. Izalia can create the bridge on request; she gives the PCs a **sending stone** (DMG pg. 199) allowing them to contact her.

Chimes

The chimes are placed in a forest to the north of the island. Allow players to describe their approach. After an hour of walking, they begin to see signs of spiderwebs, though a DC10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that these are unnatural. The chimes are found in a clearing, as follows:

> As you continue onwards, the sparse webbing on the trees grows thicker and thicker, choking out the sun and plunging the area into an early dusk. Ahead, in a rounded clearing, something metallic glimmers: you can just make out the long pillars of the chimes, moving soundlessly in the breeze.

The creature that the players will encounter is hiding in the shadows of the chimes. Have the character in the lead roll a Wisdom (Perception) check opposed by a Dexterity (Stealth) check for the creature. Choose from the below:

APL	Encounter
1	1 **giant spider*** (MM pg. 328). Increase the spider's hit points to 52 but reduce its damage to 6 (1d6 +3) piercing damage and 4 (2d4) poison damage (half on a successful save).
2	2 **giant spiders*** with the same adjustments as above.
3	2 **giant spiders*** per above and a **swarm of spiders** (MM pg. 338). The swarms dissipate if the giant spiders are defeated.
4	Demon spider: use the stat block of a **shadow demon** (MM pg. 64) with the *spider climb, web sense* and *web walker* characteristics of a **giant spider**.
5	A demon spider per above plus 2 **swarms of spiders** under its control. The swarms dissipate if the demon spider is defeated.
6	1 **drider*** (MM pg. 120) and 2 **giant wolf spiders*** (MM pg. 330).
7	1 **drider*** and 2 **giant spiders***.
8	1 **drow priestess of Lolth** (MM pg. 129) and 2 **giant wolf spiders** (MM pg. 330).

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All of these creatures are reskinned as shadowy abominations. They are immune to charm and other mind-affecting abilities, though the drider and priestess speak with some programmed intelligence; treat them as remnants of the dark priestess (Chessala) which, although non-living, bear a few traces of her wicked personality. Apply the following adjustments to any of the above creatures marked with an asterisk:

Shadow Creature Template

Add the following characteristics:

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the shadow creature has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow creature can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

The curse on the chimes is tied to the shadow creatures' life force; once they are defeated, silvery light shines out from the chimes and purifies them. They ring softly for a moment and then fade to silence, waiting for the moon to rise.

Wind Pipes

The wind pipes lie on a smaller island to the south of the temple. A bridge spans the gap, however the spell that once preserved and reinforced it has frayed over time. Have everyone roll DC10 Dexterity saving throws on their way through. On a failure, they slip over the edge but catch the rope at the last minute. They can make two more checks to save themselves, or will fall into the water on a failure, taking 35 (10d6) falling damage.

The wind pipes are housed in a large structure at the top of the hill. The structure is built of stone and mud and fully blocks out the sun. The creatures inside have a similar sensitivity to light and will not follow anyone outside; players can use this to their advantage with ranged attacks.

Regardless of the chosen stat block, the creature within takes the form of a writhing mass of darkness which grows teeth, claws or other appendages as necessary.

APL	Encounter
1	2 **shadows** (MM pg. 269)
2	3 **shadows** (MM pg. 269)
3	A **water weird*** (MM pg. 299) without fire resistance
4	A **black pudding*** (MM pg. 241)
5	Three **mimics*** (MM pg. 220)
6	An **invisible stalker*** (MM pg. 192)
7	A **young black dragon*** (MM pg. 88). Reduce AC by 2 but add resistance to slashing, piercing and bludgeoning damage and immunity to necrotic damage. Its breath weapon and bite are necrotic rather than acidic.
8	A **young black dragon***, adjusted as per above, and 2 **shadows**.

Apply the shadow creature template defined previously to any creatures marked with an asterisk. Once they too are defeated, the wind pipes shine and sing for a moment before fading to silence. They will sound again at dusk.

Moonlight Ritual

Izalia greets the party graciously and enquires as to their success. She is nearly overwhelmed with relief when she learns that the two instruments have been purified. Izalia explains that her goddess is strongest on the night of the full moon – which is tonight. At midnight, she will attempt to restore the ancient protective magic of El'tara. She asks the party one last favor: during the ritual she must devote herself entirely to her prayers and cannot maintain her protective barrier. She asks that they defend her until the ritual is complete. If all goes well, she should not

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require more than twenty minutes. The ritual will take place in the dais that opens to the moonlight.

Protecting the temple is less about battle prowess and more about allowing players to exercise their creativity. The ritual occurs at midnight, and so players will have until then to prepare traps or other defenses. Ask players what they would like to do. The temple contains wooden furniture, fuel and a small armory of hunting equipment and swords dedicated to Eilistraee. The party can also convince the residents of the temple to assist them with their preparations, or with the battle itself.

The Dance of the Sword Maiden

The instruments begin to play again at night, and this time in perfect harmony: the strange dissonance of the previous night is gone. At midnight, Izalia approaches the party and lets them know that she is ready to begin. The party can choose where they wish to stand at this point. If they choose to stand with Izalia, they see the following:

> Izalia leads the way to the dais at the top of the temple. You are greeted with a view of the lustrous full moon, which seems huge amidst the clear, starry sky. Izalia kneels before the altar and takes in a deep breath. She raises her hands and begins to chant. Light glimmers around her fingers and collects into the shape of a longsword. She rises and begins to dance. Her movements are hypnotic, interwoven with the delicate song of the bell, the chimes and the wind pipes, and for some time it is difficult to take your eyes away. Soon enough, however, you spot movement below.

Zombies or other undead begin to climb up the cliffs. Allow players to decide what their immediate actions are as the zombies climb (e.g. setting off any traps). Describe the attacking foes using the encounter table under "The First Night" earlier in the adventure, but double or triple the number of foes.

Rather than tracking hit points, treat any successful attack as knocking back one or more of the undead. They will either rise again or be replaced by another, but the player character has at least won some time. Use either personal judgement to determine the success of the party in holding back the hordes, or track the "pursuit level" as follows:

- On the first turn, the pursuit level is 0.
- If at least half of the party are successful in their actions (attacking zombies, triggering traps etc.), the pursuit level does not increase. If not, it increases by 1.
- If the whole party is successful in their tasks, or if at least one is wildly successful, the pursuit level decreases by 1.
- If the pursuit level hits 3, the waves of undead are close enough to attack.

Return of the Spider

Unless the wave spider was fully destroyed at the beginning of the adventure, it begins to approach during the battle. Any character with a passive Perception score of at least 14, or who makes an active check, spots it slowly making its way towards El'tara. Izalia is well into the ritual at this point and notices nothing. Her eyes are closed as she sings softly and dances with her glimmering sword. She is moving so swiftly at this stage that it is dangerous to approach her (DC15 Dexterity save or take 1d8 slashing and 2d8 radiant damage).

The Final Push

Each turn, make sure to describe each of the following events on their initiative count:

- Results of each of the PC's actions.
- The actions of any NPCs assisting the party.

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- The progress that the undead have made up the cliff.
- The progress of the ritual.
- The approach of the wave spider.



Conclusion

The DM may either chose a dramatic moment for the ritual to conclude or can have this occur after 10 rounds of activity. The result is as follows:

> Light bursts out from the center of the dais, momentarily blinding you. The undead that had begun to make their way into the temple all scatter and fall limply back into the waves.
>
> The light continues to flow outwards, reaching for the arachnid monstrosity already reaching its gigantic arms out for El'tara. With one final glorious tone of the bell, the light strikes the creature, which lets out an earthshattering shriek and then dissipates into black smoke.
>
> At that altar, Izalia still stands with gleaming sword held high. She lowers the blade as she turns to face you, and then promptly drops it and falls to her knees.
>
> A beautiful maiden stands between you and the high priestess, with long silver hair shining like a halo around her form. Her dark dress is dotted with jewels that shimmer like the night sky.
>
> "L-lady Eilistraee," Izalia breathes.

Give the players time to react, and to speak if they wish. Continue as follows:

> The avatar smiles at each of you in turn, and then speaks in a melodic tone. "You have done well this day, my children. The followers of Lolth have ever burned with hatred, but even the deepest darkness cannot extinguish the light of hope. May it ever illuminate your path."
>
> Eilistraee's avatar bows, sweeping her dark skirts all around, and in a flash of moonlight, she is gone. All that remains is a gleaming silver boat, waiting at the harbor to take you home.

If the adventure is running as a one-shot, conclude the adventure there, though the DM may ask if the players have any concluding actions for their characters (e.g. whether they return home or stay on the island, and if there are any NPCs they want to interact with).

If the adventure is continuing on from this point, award bonus XP based on the Encounter Budget table from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, treating this as a deadly encounter for the purpose of XP. Telther will pay out his promised reward, and the drow on the island will also offer up any treasures that the party have not already taken. Finally, Eilistraee has blessed the PCs with a ship. The DM may decide whether this is gifted permanently or if it fades upon reaching land. Telther will also happily buy it, as although he was initially demoralized by the danger, as soon as it has passed he sees the events as a jolly adventure he would happily repeat. He is sure to call on the adventures again in time.

When it at last comes time to leave the island, the PCs do so with Eilistraee's blessing, and with the music of the island ringing gladly behind them.

-The End-

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Appendix 1: Monster Stats

Refer to the *Monster Manual* for monsters marked in **bold** within the adventure text.

Wave Spider

Gargantuan monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 419 (27d20 + 135)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +15, Dex +9, Con +12, Int +3, Wis +11
Skills Athletics +15, Perception +11
Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages –
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Amphibious. The wave spider can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the wave spider fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Siege Monster. The wave spider deals double damage to objects and structures.

Reel. The wave spider can use its move action to pull a webbed object or creature 20 ft. closer to itself.

Actions

Multiattack. The wave spider makes four claw attacks, each of which it can replace with one use of Fling.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (3d12 + 8) piercing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d8 + 8) piercing damage plus 8 (2d8) poison damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature grappled by the wave spider, that creature is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the wave spider and it takes 42 (12d6) acid damage at the start of each of the wave spider's turns. If the wave spider takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, it must succeed on a DC23 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the wave spider. If the wave spider dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Fling. One Large or smaller object held or creature grappled by the wave spider is thrown up to 60 feet and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes a solid surface, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC18 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one Huge or smaller object or creature. *Hit:* The object or creature is restrained by webbing. As an action, a restrained creature can make a DC15 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC15; HP 40, vulnerability to acid damage, immune to bludgeoning, fire, poison and psychic damage).

Legendary Actions

The wave spider can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The wave spider regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw or **Fling.** The wave spider makes one claw attack or uses Fling.

Move. The wave spider moves up to half its movement speed (or reels a webbed creature in 10 ft.).

Thrash (3 actions). The wave spider thrashes at the water, creating a 40 ft. tall wave which travels for 300 ft. before crashing down. Roll a saving throw for each vehicle in its path, adding 5 per 100 hit points of the vessel, and then determine the result as follows:

0-5: the vessel breaks apart or capsizes immediately. Any on board are flung into the sea.

5-10: the vessel has a 25% chance of capsizing. If it does not capsize, use the next tier to determine the result. In addition, it loses its next move action.

10-25: the vessel rocks violently and takes 5 (1d10) force damage for every five points below 25. Anyone on board must make a Dexterity saving throw, falling overboard on a failure: the DC is 30 minus the result.

25-35: anyone on board must succeed on a DC10 Dexterity save or fall prone.

35+: no effect.

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High Priestess Izalia

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +7, Cha +6
Skills Insight +7, Medicine +7, Perception +7, Performance +6, Religion +6
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Elvish, Undercommon
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Izalia has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. Izalia's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC14). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*
1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire, levitate* (self only)

Spellcasting. Izalia is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance, sacred flame, spare the dying*
1st Level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds*
2nd Level (3 slots): *augury, calm emotions, gentle repose, lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*
3rd Level (3 slots): *create food and water, dispel magic, mass healing word*
4th Level (3 slots): *divination, locate creature*
5th Level (2 slots): *dispel evil and good, hallow*

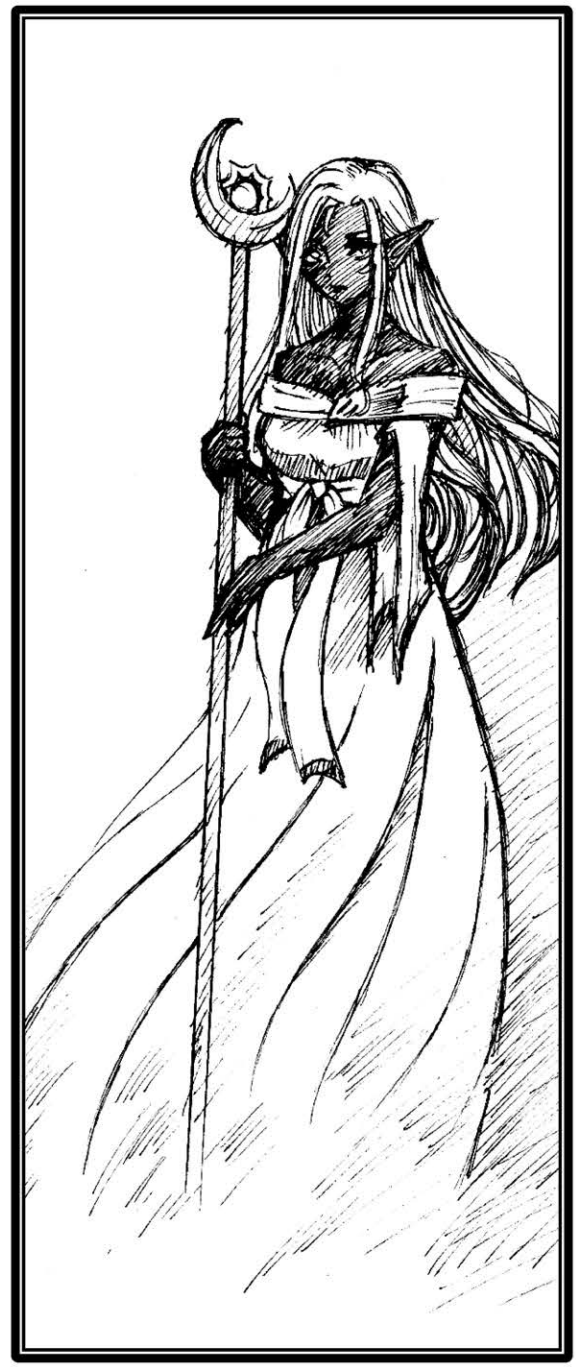
Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Izalia has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Dancer's Grace. Izalia has advantage on all Dexterity saves against effects she can see.

Sword Dancer. If Izalia casts *spiritual weapon*, she can use her bonus action to strike twice instead of once and deals an extra 8 (2d8) radiant damage on a hit.

Actions

Staff of the Moon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.



Reactions

Warding Flare (4/Day). When Izalia or another creature is attacked by a creature within 30 ft. of her that she can see, she can use her reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll, causing light to flare before the attacker before it hits or misses. An attacker that can't be blinded is immune to this feature.

Dodge. When an attacker that Izalia can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage.

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Appendix 2: DM Tools

This section contains the following optional tools for Dungeon Masters to print out and use:

1. Lists of names for NPCs – to be stuck to the inside of a DM screen as an improvisation assist.
2. Full size diagram of *Mitha's Radiance* – to be provided to players.
3. Ship condition and distance trackers – to be used either by the players or DM to track progress of the ship battle.

Human:

	Female	***Male***	***Neutral***	***Surname***
1	Lillia	Rodan	Alix	[None]
2	Sarah	Dilyan	Elden	Morwell
3	Elanor	Wake	Kendall	Smith
4	Cassandra	Derik	Sky	Tindall
5	Ruth	Rain	Lucky	Starbreeze
6	Magdalen	Calim	River	Tailor

Halfling:

	Female	***Male***	***Neutral***	***Surname***
1	Elidrey	Peramin	Valen	Swiftfoot
2	Fenyra	Joder	Ari	Greenbottle
3	Darwyn	Ankin	Brooklyn	Thorngauge
4	Varis	Wilvon	Sydney	Redtree

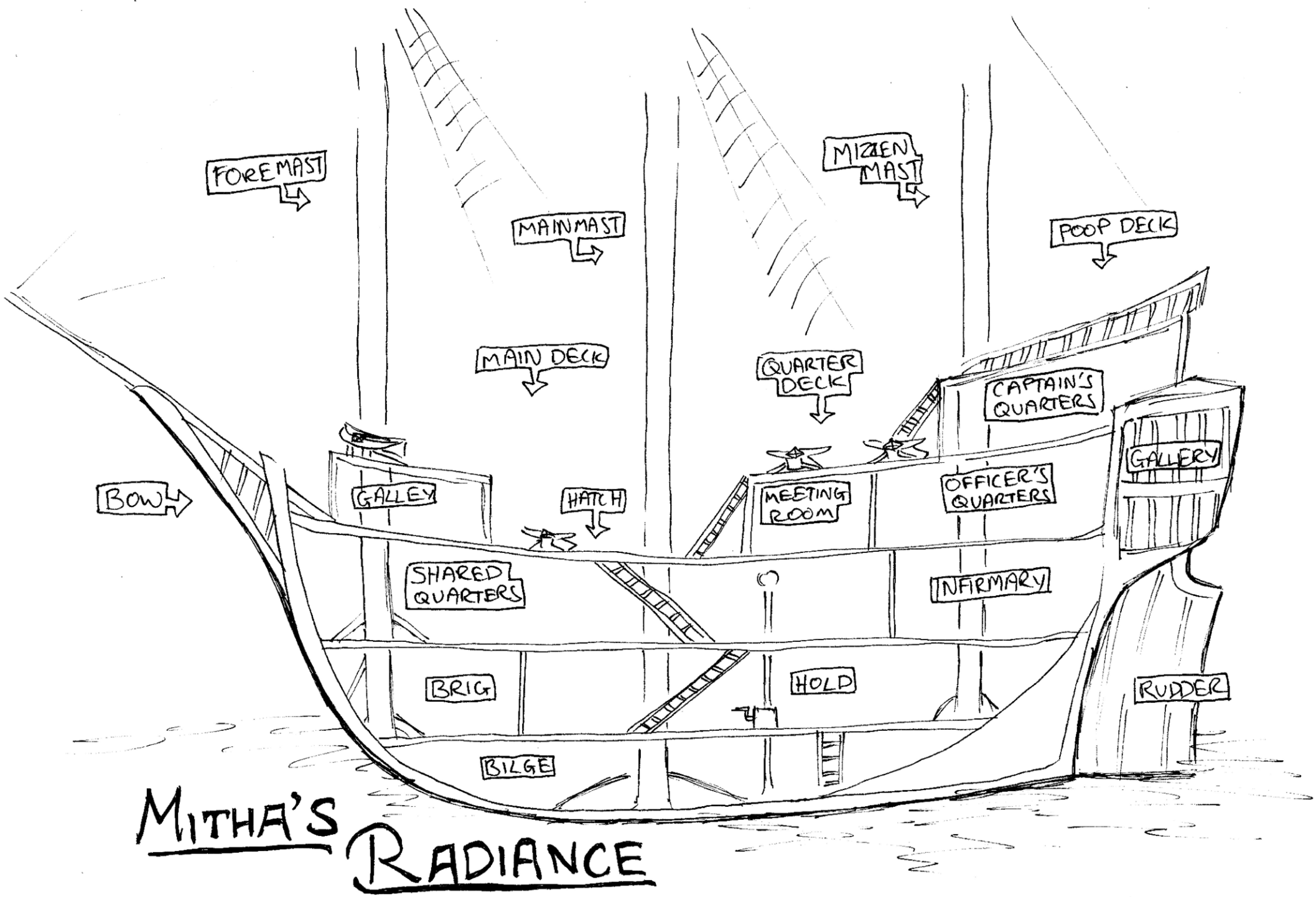
Dwarf:

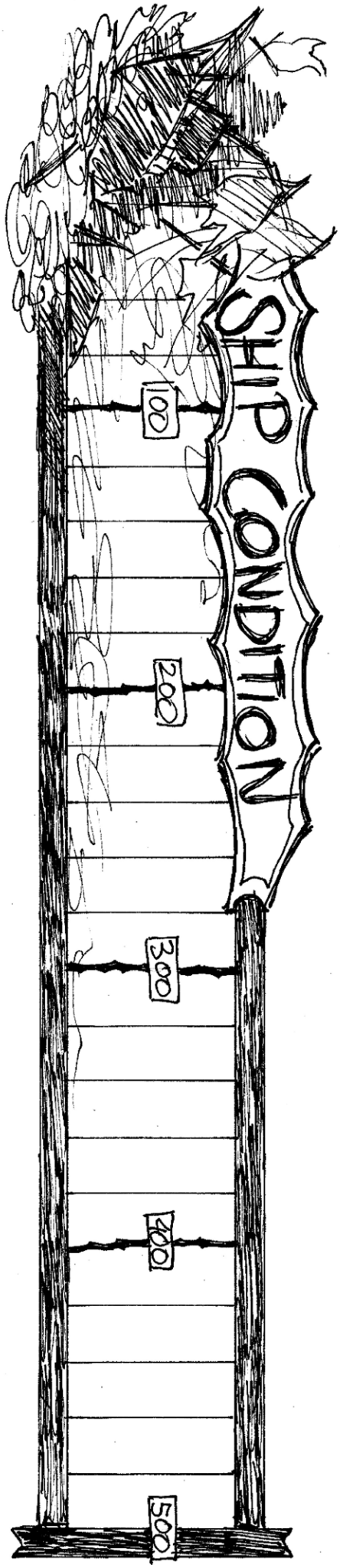
	Female	***Male***	***Neutral***	***Surname***
1	Dalgari	Bulbur	Toren	Stonehelm
2	Herondi	Brundar	Dalgar	Farcalest
3	Olvia	Dwinri	Anber	Marblehold
4	Thgini	Morgrimm	Kilvar	Flamegreaves
5	Bildria	Throng	Minos	Ungart
6	Dalnia	Ulbram	Grion	Frostanvil

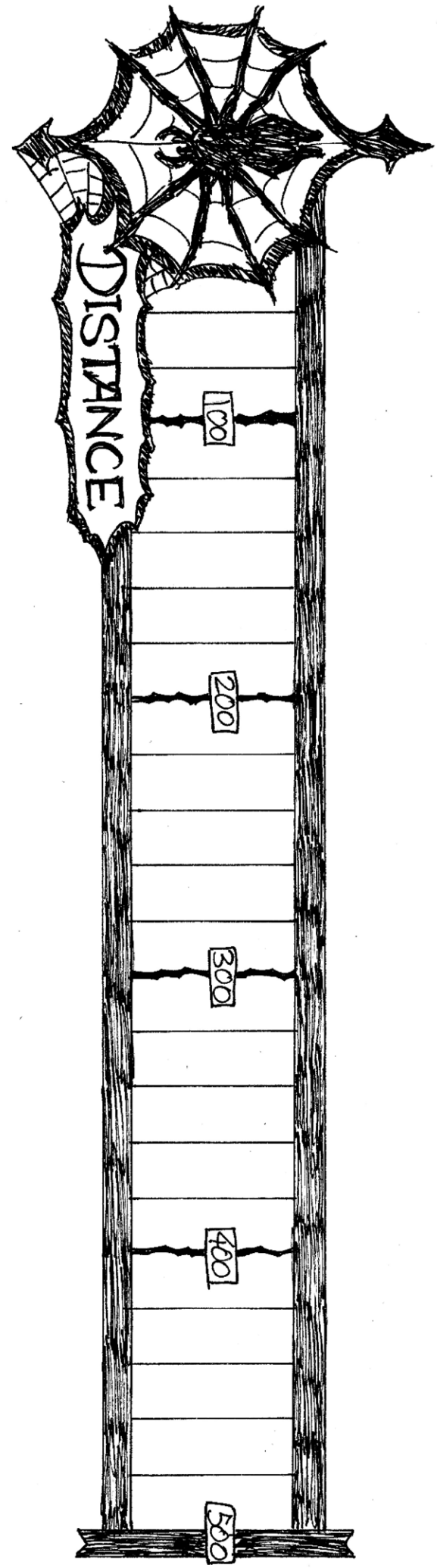
Drow:

	Female	***Male***	***Neutral***	***Surname***
1	Halavin	Relonor	Nylruih	[None]
2	Ilnaren	Ryld	Ajilda	Melarn
3	Akordia	Duagloth	Ril'vir	Mizzrim
4	Sabrae	Gwylyss	Elreth	Xorlarrin
5	Tierva	Quendar	Tebryn	Faen Tlabbar
6	Zaelra	Velkyn	Zesstra	Baenre

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FOREMAST
MAINMAST
MIZZEN MAST
POOP DECK
MAIN DECK
QUARTER DECK
CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS
GALLERY
BOW
GALLEY
HATCH
MEETING ROOM
OFFICER'S QUARTERS
SHARED QUARTERS
INFIRMARY
BRIG
HOLD
RUDDER
BILGE
MITHA'S RADIANCE


SHIP CONDITION
100
200
300
400
500


DISTANCE
100
200
300
400
500

Also by this Author...

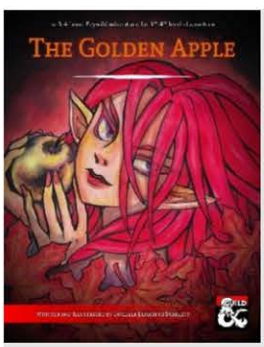


Yeryl's Super Happy Fun Murder Dungeon

A highly obnoxious dungeon crawl for 3rd level characters

The lumpy, mottled purple beholder beams at you cheerfully, each of his eleven eyes twinkling with affection. "Welcome, all of you!" he calls. "Did you like my traps? I made them just for you!"

http://www.dmsguild.com/product/239985/Yeryls-Super-Happy-Fun-Murder-Dungeon

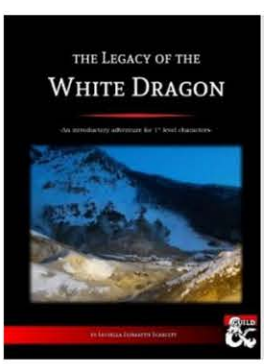


The Golden Apple

A 3-4-hour Feywild adventure for 1st-4th level characters

You can feel grass beneath you and warm sunshine splashing down from above. Even through closed eyelids, you can see its bright, golden glow. There are voices murmuring somewhere nearby: "Quiet!" "No, you be quiet!" "Both of you be quiet!" "Hush! Everyone be quiet; they're waking up!"

http://www.dmsguild.com/product/247312/The-Golden-Apple



The Legacy of the White Dragon

An introductory adventure for 1st level characters

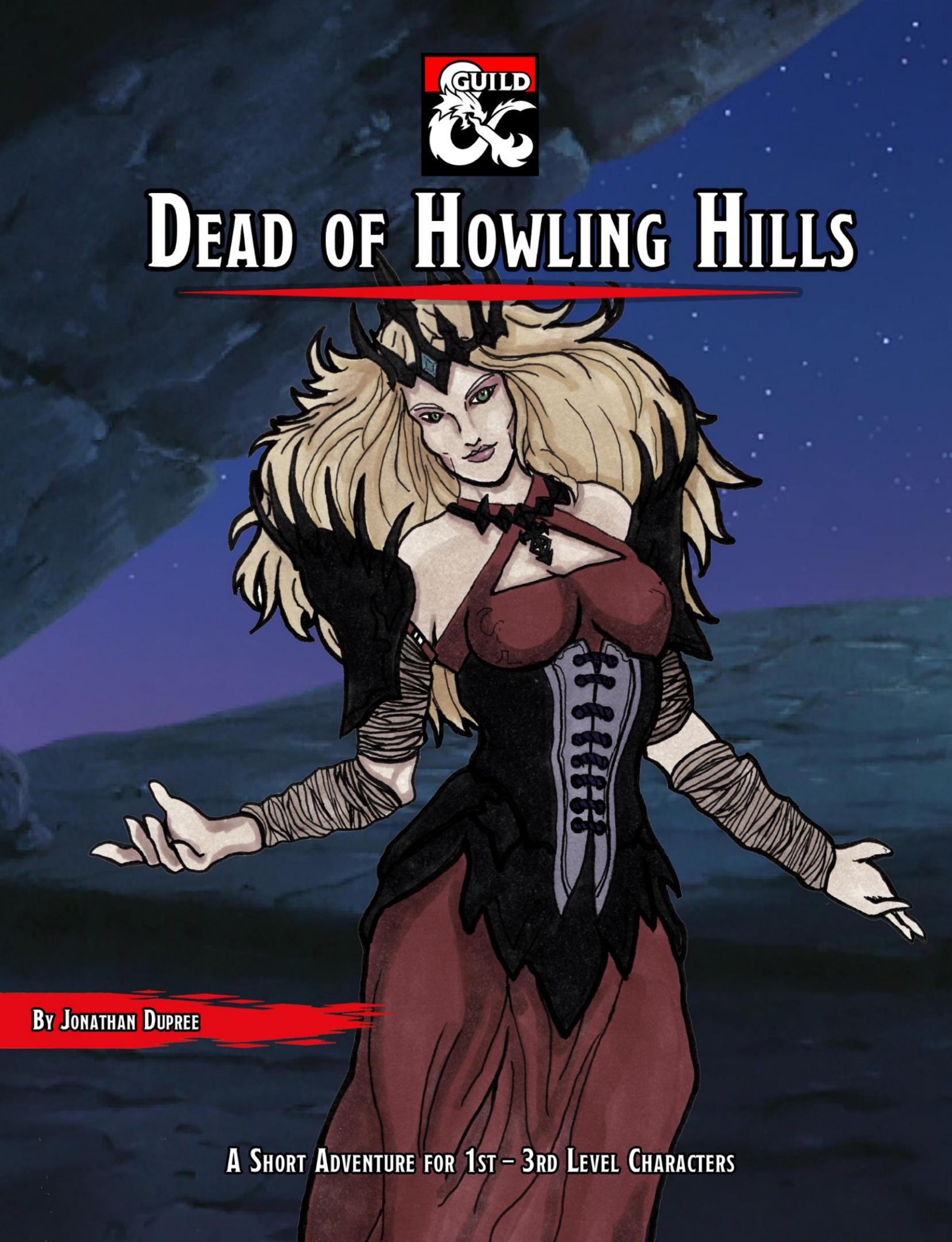
Powerful limbs stretch and shift. An enormous set of dull grey wings unfold and weakly shake away the settled debris, as a pair of pale blue eyes blink opens amid the mountain that is this colossal creature. "Enough of this racket," a booming voice growls. "Won't you leave a dragon to die in peace?"

http://www.dmsguild.com/product/240839/The-Legacy-of-the-White-Dragon

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Dead of Howling Hills

By Jonathan Dupree

A Short Adventure for 1st – 3rd Level Characters

Background

Before many towns and cities sprang up, the civilized lands of today were inhabited by tribes of wandering hunter-gatherer men. Each tribe found a creature in the world to worship as a god and to use as their totem. One such tribe was based in the Howling Hills took up the eagle as its totem. They would be known as the Vilusk. As greater tribes came into power in the region and began the march towards civilization, the great heroes of the Vilusk were buried in hill tombs and their treasures with them. Vilusk himself, the greatest chieftan of the tribe, was given an underground complex built beneath one such hill.

Overview

Dead of Howling Hills is a very simple adventure involving a delve into a small dungeon with undead, puzzles, traps, and a social encounter if the heroes do not rush into a fight. It is site-based, focusing primarily on Chieftan Vilusk's Tomb.

Adventure Hook

You can let players invent their own reasons for traveling out into the Howling Hills to find the lair, or you can use the following adventure hook.

Archaelogical Research. The town elder of Howlerton, Thomas Vess, is something of a historian. If he were a younger man, he might go out into the hills himself. He knows about where it's located and will direct them to it, offering coin for any relics recovered and 50 gold pieces if they can clear out the tomb of any traps or creatures that have laired within.

Honoring the Dead. A group of wandering tribesman claim descent from a powerful chieftan named Vilusk. They say that this chieftan is buried in the Howling Hills near a town called Howlerton and ask you to reclaim the chieftan's ashes. They will pay 200 gold pieces for the return of the remains.

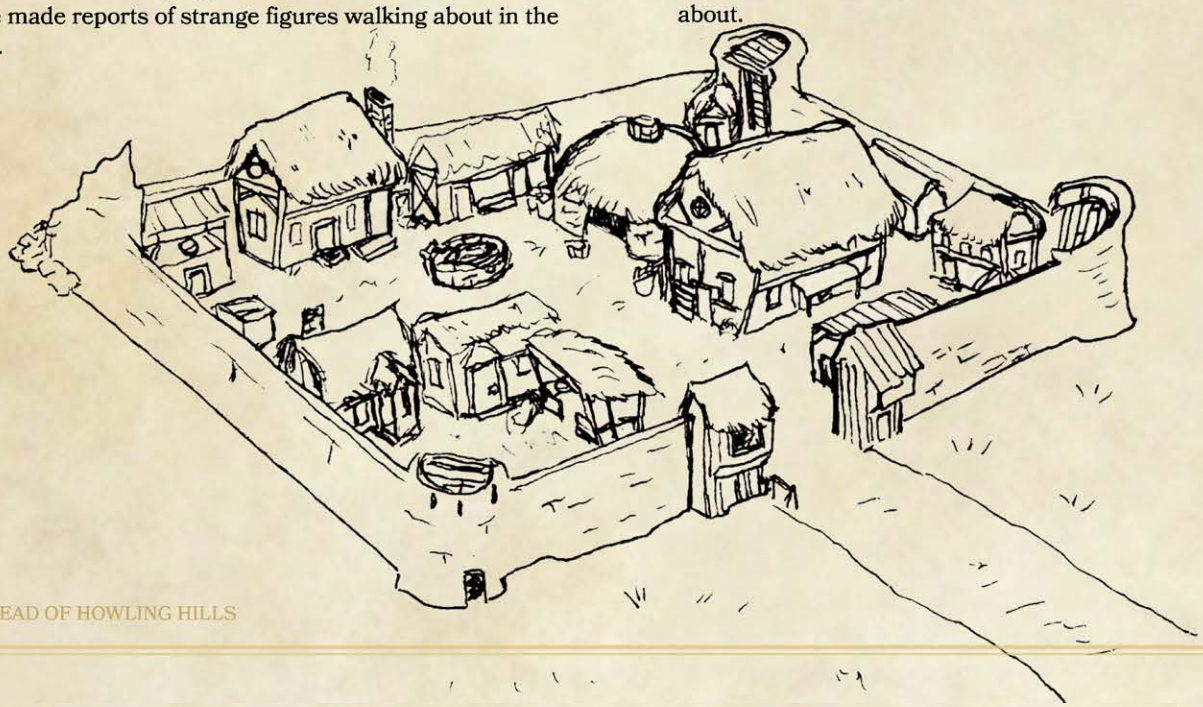
Strange Attacks. Recently, a farmer just outside of town found a body in his field. It seemed to be some adventurer type who was cut apart by sword blows. The farmer also says he saw some strangers attacking a traveler near the hills, but had no means of helping them. Most of the folks in the area have made reports of strange figures walking about in the hills.

Howlerton

This hamlet is out in the middle of nowhere between two other places. It is far afield of anything you could consider civilization and is nearby a large group of hills. The section of those hills the town is closest to is called The Howling Hills because of the way the winds blow through them and the old burial mounds harness the winds like musical instruments. There are just around twelve buildings set inside the old broken up walls of a fortification that fell long ago. Some think the fort Howlerton was built over was a civilized city's attempt to tame the wilds that failed. The old stone walls have held and the rubble within has been repurposed to build most of the town's buildings. Below are the two most notable places in Howlerton.

The Sweet Misery Tavern & Inn. This rest spot is the main attraction of Howlerton. The name of the place is a mystery. The proprietor, a middle-aged human named Berwick Bonluc, is a busy man, acting as bartender, innkeep, and store manager. He also never forgets if someone owes him something, like the 20 gold Thomas Vess still owes him. The establishment acts as a pub, general store, and an inn. The taproom of the establishment has a reputation of its own. The walls of the room are the old stone walls of the fort's main hall and the way the tavern was built around them gives the taproom a focused acoustic quality. There is a stage at one end of the hall and the sound carries perfectly across the entire room. Any creature performing in an auditory manner (singing, playing an instrument, etc.) has advantage on ability checks if performing from the stage. Most items in the *Player's Handbook* can be purchased here, but not in bulk. There are doubtful more than one or two of any one thing in stock other than rations. A room stay costs 2 silver pieces for a room with 6 beds (3 bunk beds).

Thomas Vess's Hut. The town elder lives in a hut built in the frame of an old central tower of the fort. It is little more than a large single room with a few wooden supports holding up the thatch of the roof. He has quite the collection of books in his hut, set in cabinets and chests all along the stone walls. If someone were to need a place to study and research lore, Thomas Vess's hut serves as a library that can get most lore about the surrounding area and the creatures that dwell about.



Chieftan Vilusk's Tomb

The lair is located southeast of a hamlet called Howlerton or from any small town of your choosing. In this area, a small tribe of humans that worshipped an ancient eagle god have left several burial chambers of differing degrees of complexity. Some are just barrow mounds marked with crude cairns. Others are more extensive mounds that have elaborately carved runes and sigils over the entrances, threatening dire woe to any who defile the tombs. Others are simply small cave complexes. In almost all of these cases, the tombs have been looted long ago, well before the party comes to find them. The people of Howlerton claim that shades and corpses of the long dead tribes have risen up and are killing the farm folk's livestock and causing crops to wither. Many of the town's people think the dead have been stirred by goblins and orcs who have been wandering the Howling Hills. The party can seek out the source of these undead nuisances, or if they ask the town elder, Thomas Vesve, then they will be instructed how to arrive at the most likely source: Chieftan Vilusk's Tomb.

General Features

Ceilings. The ceilings are not flat but are vaulted with strong keystones set through the spines. Despite the strength of the structure, some dirt falls from the cracks and the roots of the grass and brush on the hill above has crept through.
Light. The entire complex is completely dark.
Sound. The halls and chambers of this place seem to magnify sound and cause it to echo. Unless the player characters or lurking creatures are specifically moving quietly, it is entirely possible for them to hear things in halls or chambers adjacent to the ones they are in.

1. Exterior

A short travel away from Howlerton will bring the adventurers to the tomb.

Read the following once the group has decided to make its way to the lair.

> You see a hill that stands taller than the other hills nearby. A long path has been cut into the hill, leading to the center of it. The earth of it is held away from the path by large stones that have been stacked seamlessly, forming a hall-like procession up to a large stone portal. On the stones of the walls and the entryway are etchings with eagles and hunting men motifs. Boulders seem to have blocked the opening, but they look as if they had been cleared to the sides of the opening. Beyond the boulders, a set of stone-cut steps lead gently down into the dark beneath the hill.

If a PC inspects the carvings, they'll note that they are worn from weather and appear to have had finer detail and possibly paint upon them in ages past. If a PC inspects the boulders, they would find that they have only been recently disturbed. A Wisdom (Survival) check DC 12 will uncover that it appears the tomb had been opened within the last five days, approximately when the creatures were first sighted harassing the farmers (Strange Attacks adventure hook).

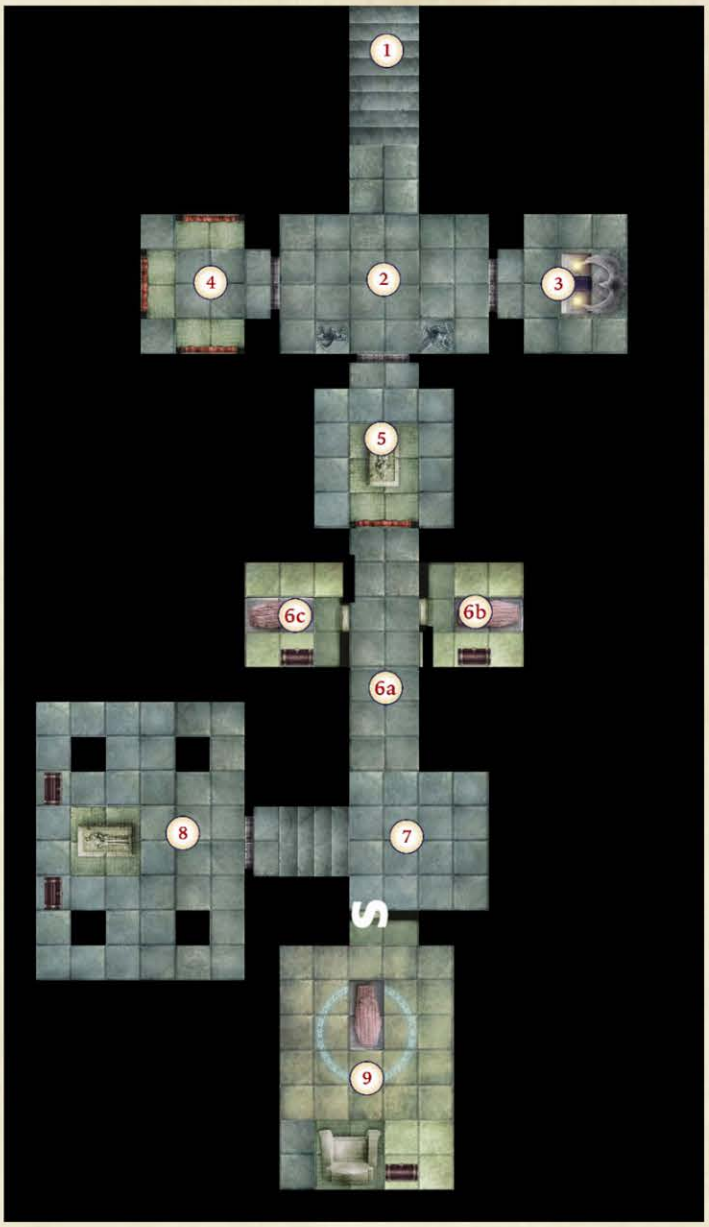
2. Entrance Chamber

Once the adventurer's enter, they will descend down into the complex below.

Read the following upon entry:

> The steps lead down into the earth. The walls are formed of the same stonework as the structures above and are cut with the same common motifs. A bit more detail is preserved in this chamber than the work outside which was left to the elements. The horse-riding hunters of the Vilusk tribe can be seen in stylized poses, hunting fishing, riding forth as if into war, and in similar activities. Each wall of the chamber has a doorway and each metal door is marked with an eagle sigil set in a round shield motif.

If a PC inspects the carvings on the walls, they'll note that words in the Vilusk tribe's script are etched into the motifs, at where the subjects of the pieces are standing, denoting a possibility of labeling of each piece. Additionally, there



appears to be paint on the motifs, which make the pieces look bright and, by most modern standards, primitive. The door to the left, upon entering, leads to section 3. The door directly across from the entrance leads to section 5. The door to the right leads to section 4. The doors themselves are swollen within their iron frames. A Strength ability check DC 13 is required to force the doors open. If a result of greater than 17 is rolled, the door is ripped from the hinges instead of simply forced open.

3. Guard Chamber

The door to the north in the entrance room leads to the guard chamber.

> Past the door is a stone altar in the center of the room with a bronze dagger set atop it resting on a piece of rotted cloth. Two candles in stone cups burn brightly on the altar. A large statue of an eagle resides over top of the altar. There are four alcoves cut into the four corners of the room. Set within these alcoves are the remains of what appear to be tribal warriors. The skeletal corpses are still wearing their yellow-painted boiled hide armor and they have been set in poses holding their rusty swords and old wooden shields. Set above each of the alcoves is a plaque with ancient Vilusk writing.

If the dagger or any of the corpses are disturbed, the skeletons step from their alcoves and immediately attack whoever caused the disturbance, continuing to attack the creature until it is reduced to 0 hit points or the skeletons are. If a skeleton is attacked by a creature, it will immediately turn its attention to that creature and engage it instead. The skeletons will chase a creature that has disturbed them or who has attacked them anywhere they go on the Material Plane. A PC who wants to investigate the room can make an Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check DC 13 to learn that the dagger was taken and returned, the skeletons seem to have moved in recent days and a DC 15 reveals it chased a group of three people out of the tomb complex at that time.

4. Coat Room

The room directly south in the entrance chamber is the coat room.

> Within this chamber are walls lined with hanging cloaks of a bright gray color, hanging from bronze hooks nailed into the stone walls at about eye-height for a man. There are no adornments or etchings in the stone in this room.

Upon closer inspection, the cloaks are found to have inner linings of different colors. The cloaks that hang on the north wall have red interiors, the ones on the west wall have yellow, and the ones on the south wall have green. There are a total of four yellow robes, two green robes, and three red robes. An Intelligence (History) check DC 15 will help determine that the yellow robes are for the warriors of the tribe, the green robes are for the honored members of the tribe, and the red robes are for the royalty. An Intelligence (Religion) check might determine what the purposes of these robes might be. The DC is 15 or 12 if the character has been made aware of the history of the robes.

5. Barrorn's Burial Chamber

The chamber directly across from the entrance chamber's stairs is a burial chamber for Vilusk's shaman Barrorn.

> In the center of this chamber is a stone tomb painted green with a heavy layer of dust resting atop it. It would seem this chamber has not been disturbed since whoever resides within was laid to rest. A plaque is set upon the lid, most probably a description of the buried person written in his native tongue. Besides the tomb and the walls with the motifs found commonly throughout the rest of the tomb, the only other noticeable feature of this room is a large mirror with an ornate bronze frame mounted on the wall opposite the entrance.

If someone specifically focuses their attention on the mirror or if a character has a passive Perception of 15 or higher, they will notice that the color of the tomb in the mirror's reflection is red, not green. Inside of the tomb rests Barrorn's body, which springs to life if anyone attempts to open the tomb. Barron is wearing a robe with green underlining. Barrorn will not attack anyone wearing one of the red robes or anyone that is not within his burial chamber. If no one is in the burial chamber, he goes back to rest. If only creatures wearing red robes are in the burial chamber, he bows to them and makes offering gestures to the tomb. If a red robe is place in the tomb while he is alive, he will return to the tomb and rest and the door on the chamber's south wall will open. If a red robe is placed in the tomb after he has been destroyed, the door on the chamber's south wall will still open.



History of the Robes. When this crypt was built, only Vilusk was dead. In the traditions of the old tribes, those who were a chieftan's most loyal would also commit to join the chieftan in the afterlife. Each one would surrender the robes of their station and be sacrificed by the chieftan's shaman, who would then enter into a stone crypt and seal himself away. Those that are buried are typically the honor guard of the chieftan (yellow robes), the chieftan's most loyal tribesmen (green robes, includes shaman), and the chieftan's close family (red robes).

Barrorn

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 36(8d8)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Vilusk tribe language
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of Barrorn must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to Barrorn's Stench for 24 hours.

Turn Defiance. Barrorn and any undead within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Actions

Sacrificial Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. When Barrorn hits a creature that is not below its hit point maximum, the creature takes an extra 4 (1d8) damage.

6a. Hall of the Dead

When the puzzle of Barrorn's chamber has been solved, read the following:

> The large mirror descends into the floor with a sharp sound of steel grinding against stone. It unveils a passage way into a long hall with walls covered in paintings of eagles grasping serpents and wolves. There are two doors, one on the right and one on the left, and the hall seems to continue on into a larger chamber.

Besides the doors, there is not much to this hallway. The murals are similar to the ones seen so far in the tomb complex, but these ones are in better condition.

6b. Annekan's Burial Chamber

The stone door requires a little effort in opening. Only a creature with a 13 or higher Strength can push the door open. Read the following once the door is open:

> Upon entering, you see a richly carved and sculpted tomb, left slightly open. Standing near the tomb is a masculine form, adorned in ceremonial burial attire.

The language he speaks is that of the Vilusk tribe, like the other denizens of this lair. He asks "Who are you?" If the group become hostile, he draws an ornate silver sword from his tomb and defends himself. Annekan is a ***wight*** with a Constitution score of 10 (27 hp, +0 Con Modifier).
Annekan is Vilusk's husband who was ordered buried with Vilusk as she came to meet her end. Annekan also hates Jettan and wishes he was buried on a roadside instead of across the hall from him. If hostilities are not raised and Annekan is spoken to with reverence, he will tell them he is willing to help them meet with Vilusk if they help him destroy Jettan once and for all.

6c. Jettan's Burial Chamber

The stone door requires a little effort in opening. Only a creature with a 13 or higher Strength can push the door open. Read the following once the door is open:

> Upon entering, you see a richly carved and sculpted tomb, left slightly open. Standing near the tomb is a masculine form, adorned in ceremonial burial attire. His straw-like hair appears as dry as the heart of a desert, but rests neatly upon his shoulders. When he turns to face you, his eyes are a hollow white in color and his face is covered with an ornate silver funeral mask. In his hand, he holds a fine brush made of jade with wire bristles. He asks a question in his strange tongue, his voice raspy and soft, but genuinely curious with a hint of fear.

The language he speaks is that of the Vilusk tribe, like the other denizens of this lair. He asks "Who are you?" If the group become hostile, he draws an ornate silver sword from his tomb and defends himself. Jettan is a ***wight*** with a Constitution score of 10 (27 hp, +0 Con Modifier).
Jettan is Vilusk's kept man. Despite Vilusk's husband Anekkan's protestations, Jettan was ordered buried with Vilusk as she came to meet her end. Jettan also hates Annekan and wishes he was buried on a roadside instead of across the hall from him. If hostilities are not raised and Jettan is spoken to kindly, he will tell them he is willing to help them meet with Vilusk if they help him destroy Annekan once and for all.

Vilusk Tribe's Language

A number of creatures that dwell in this lair speak the old language of their tribe. It sounds very close to the common tongue but strangely off. That is because the Draconic language influenced the way they spoke. As an action, a player character can make an Intelligence (History) check to understand and communicate with a specific creature. If the character speaks Common, the DC is 13. If the character speaks both Common and Draconic, the DC is 8. If the character casts Comprehend Languages, the DC to be able to speak to the creature is 5. Failure might mean a misunderstanding, possibly negative.

7. Most Loyal Guard Chamber

When any creature passes into the larger chamber from the Hall of the Dead, read the following:

> A loud crash comes from the far wall, stone falling away from the wall. As the stone doors fall away, two armored men step forward from two matching alcoves. Each of the guards is little more than dried sinew and bones tucked inside hide armor, but each draws a pair of curved bronze swords and takes a martial stance.

Most Loyal Guard

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 18(4d8)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Vulnerabilities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Vilusk tribe language
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The most loyal guard makes two scimitar attacks.
Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

The two alcoves hold some of the two most loyal guards' belongings. If the belongings are searched, allow for an Intelligence (Investigation) check DC 15. If this check is successful, the find that one of the alcoves has a false back that opens like a door, leading into area 9.

8. False Chieftain's Burial Chamber

> Within the center of widely open chamber is a splendid stone tomb with the visage of a resting great warrior carved out of the lid stone. The ceiling of the chamber is vaulted and arched, supported by finely carved stone pillars surrounding the tomb.

The four pillars of the room are poorly built and are set to break and cause the loosely constructed ceiling to come down heavily upon would-be grave robbers. If a player character specifically seeks out traps, allow for either a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check DC 17. A success on either reveals that the lid of the tomb and the lids of the chests are set with a wire and trap that goes into the stone which would cause the trap to go off. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables the wire harmlessly. Simply cutting the wire would cause the trap to go off. Anyone who inspects the pillars can easily determine that they are set in place and could easily be toppled. As an action, a character can knock over a column, causing the trap to trigger. The ceiling of the chamber is in bad repair, and anyone who can see it can tell that it's in danger of collapse. When the trap is triggered, the unstable ceiling collapses. Any creature in the area beneath the unstable section must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the trap is triggered, the floor of the area is filled with rubble and becomes difficult terrain and the effect repeats every round for 3 rounds. Any creatures still inside the chamber after the last round are buried under the weight of the hill above.

10. True Chieftain's Burial Chamber

When the player characters enter into the secret door, read the following:

> Beyond the hidden door is a stone tomb on a raised step, simple in structure with no adornment or artwork upon it. Around the raised step is a magical circle that glows a faint blue. Settled atop the tomb is a bronze urn. The lid of the tomb is left slightly open and just behind where it sits in the middle of the room is a dais that leads up to a throne crafted from twisted hunks of wood. On each of the armrests and at the top of the back of the chair is the skull of large eagles. Sitting upon the throne is a woman. She wears fine armor of darkened iron and a bronze-bladed sword sits in her lap. Despite having the appearance of a living woman, her unnatural skin color gives away her true nature. She takes up her sword, points it to you and speaks in her ancient language.

The language she speaks is the Vilusk tribe language, like the other denizens of this lair. She asks "Who are you that has entered my throne room?" It should be presumed by the party that this is Chieftain Vilusk, if they have learned the name of the location or have been able to read any of the words present in the tomb complex. She will attack the party if she feels her nobility is being slighted. A player character can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check to try and stop this attack. This should be the player character that has done the most talking and who has been identified as the leader of the group. The DC is determined based on specific factors. The base DC is 12. Apply the following modifiers to the DC for each of the following conditions:

- +2 If the character addressing Vilusk as party leader is male. Vilusk prefers to speak with strong women.
- +2 If the characters admit to slaying either Annekan or Jettan, +5 for both.
- +5 If the characters grovel or show some form of subserviance to sway her. Vilusk hates grovelers.
- -2 If the characters say they have come only for her ashes to take them back to her people, -5 if they can somehow give direct evidence that this is the case.
- -2 if a character stands up, eyeball to eyeball, and talks like a leader and an equal. Vilusk admires a strong leader like herself.

Conclusion

If the player characters convince Vilusk to allow them to take her remains or if they destroy her undead form, they also can take all that was buried with her. The treasure she keeps is as follows:

- One gold chain neclace worth 250gp
- A pair of darkwood pauldrons with small gem settings worth 100gp
- Two horns of ivory with silver banding worth 75gp a piece
- A ceremonial mace worth 50gp
- A longsword +1
- Chieftan Vilusk's remains

Adjusting for Higher Levels

If you are running this encounter for 2nd- or 3rd-level characters, you can make the adventure a bit more challenging by increasing the number of monsters or by merging two encounters together. For example, in area 3, consider increasing the number of skeletons from 4 to 6. Or consider having Barrorn come out of his burial chamber instead of being bound to it and joining the skeletons for a fight in area 2.

You can have Annekan and Jettan be normal wights with a regular Constitution score so that they are harder to defeat or consider having both fight the players in a fit of maddened rage for any who would dare come to seek out Vilusk's final resting place.

You can have the most loyal guard be in any number you so choose, but they're simply expected to act as a momentary buffer between either the trapped burial chamber or the final encounter with Vilusk.

Vilusk can be given a suit of better medium armor (perhaps scale or half-plate) and a shield to increase her AC, making her more difficult to defeat.

Chieftan Vilusk

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (hide)
Hit Points 44(10d8)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Vilusk tribe language
Challenge 4 (450 XP)

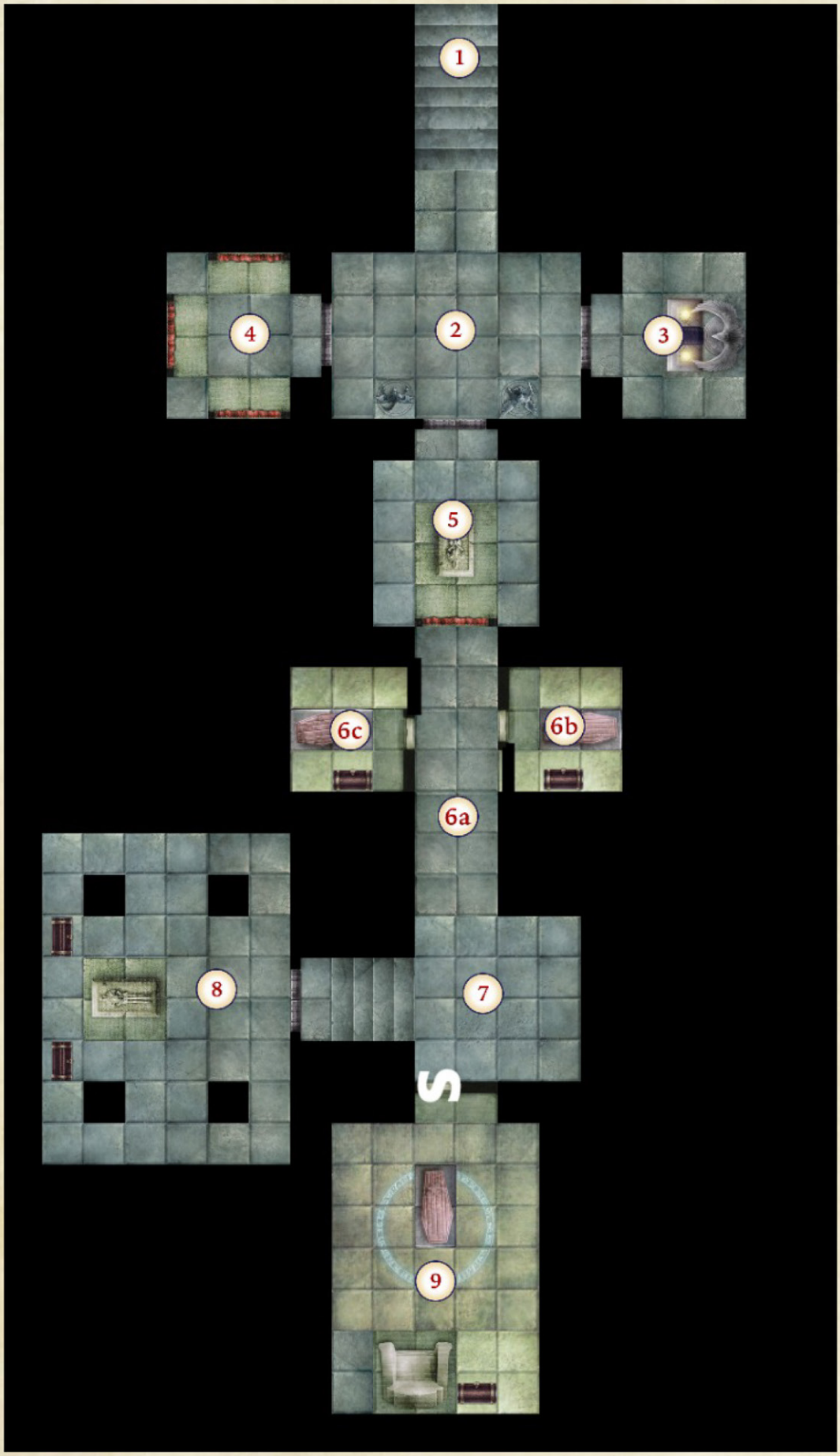
Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Chieftan Vilusk hits with it (included in the attack).

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Chieftan Vilusk has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Multiattack. Chieftan Vilusk makes two longsword attacks.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Vilusk's Tomb Map



Credits

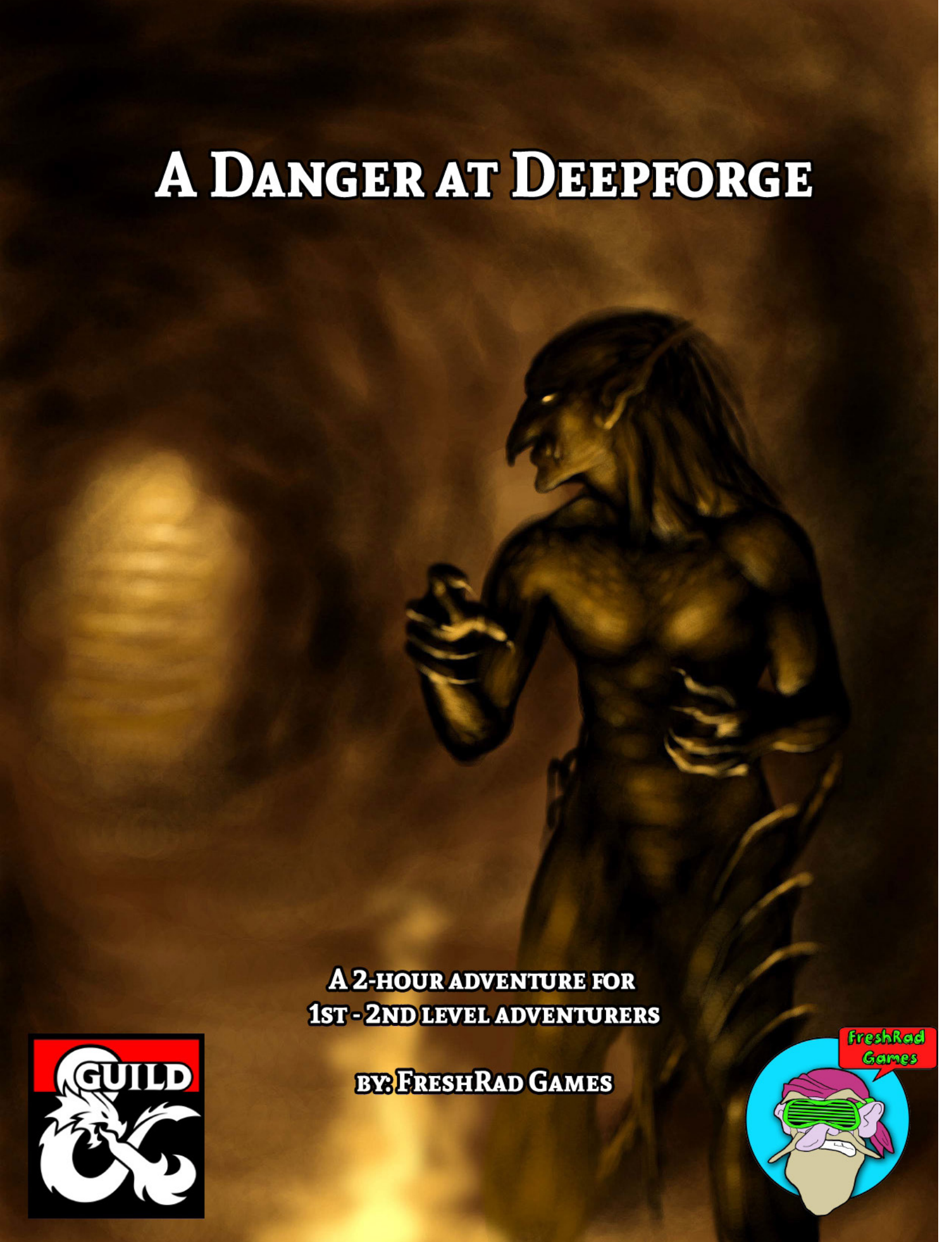
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On the Cover

Chieftan Vilusk in all her splendor with her iron crown.



A Danger at Deepforge



A 2-hour adventure for
1st - 2nd level adventurers

By: FreshRad Games

GUILD

FreshRad Games

A Danger at Deepforge

A dwarven noble tasks the adventurers with recovering a priceless heat pump from Deepforge, a once-prosperous mine that was sacked by a drow-led army.

A 2-Hour Adventure for 1ST - 2ND Level Characters

BY: FreshRad Games

With Special Thanks to: Jerry U, Chris C, Nate C, James W, Jess W, and Zytan





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Introduction

Welcome to *A Danger at Deepforge,* a Dungeons and Dragons adventure. It is designed for three to seven 1st or 2nd level characters, and is optimized for five 1st level characters.

Adjusting the Adventure

Throughout the adventure, sidebars will contain recommendations to adjust encounters to accommodate the size of the party and the characters' levels. Each sidebar references the **party strength**, which is outlined in the following table:

Party Size and Average Level	Party Strength
3-4 PCs, majority are level 1	Weak
3-4 PCs, majority are level 2	Average
5 PCs, majority are level 1	Average
5 PCs, majority are level 2	Strong
6-7 PCs, majority are level 1	Strong
6-7 PCs, majority are level 2	Very Strong

Adventure Background

Deepforge was a small dwarven mine in the Earthspur Mountains, approximately 30 miles south by southeast of the Impilturan town of Laviguer. It was founded as a colony of the dwarven city of Earthfast approximately 100 years ago. The dwarves mined the rich iron and gold deposits in the range, and Deepforge was wholly unremarkable except for one asset; it had a unique heat pump system that used the magma flows from the depths of the mountains to heat its great forge.

50 years ago an expedition from the drow confederation of Undrek'Thoz discovered Deepforge. Gathering their kobold slaves and recruiting local stone giants, the drow assaulted the citadel, slaying all within and sealing the entrance. The dwarves of Earthfast attempted to retake Deepforge but could not breach the entrance. Over the years, Earthfast's attention was turned elsewhere and the memory of Deepforge's heat pump was lost. The region grew wild without the dwarves, and the mountain glens eventually came under the control of the Warpweft clan, a small group of goblins with delusions of grandeur.

A few months ago the dwarf Samnall mac Rand was studying in the Earthfast library and found the journal of the first Ironlord of Deepforge. After reading about the heat pump he became obsessed with finding it. He traveled to Laviguer, the nearest town to the ruins of Deepforge, in an attempt to hire adventurers to find and recover the heat pump.

Adventure Overview

The adventure begins in the Broken Tongs, a tavern in the mining town of Laviguer. There, the adventurers meet Samnall mac Rand, who offers them a job; travel to the ruins of Deepforge and recover the heat pump.

While traveling to the dwarven mine, the adventurers encounter goblins from the Warpweft clan. The goblins bar the way unless the adventurers pay the toll.

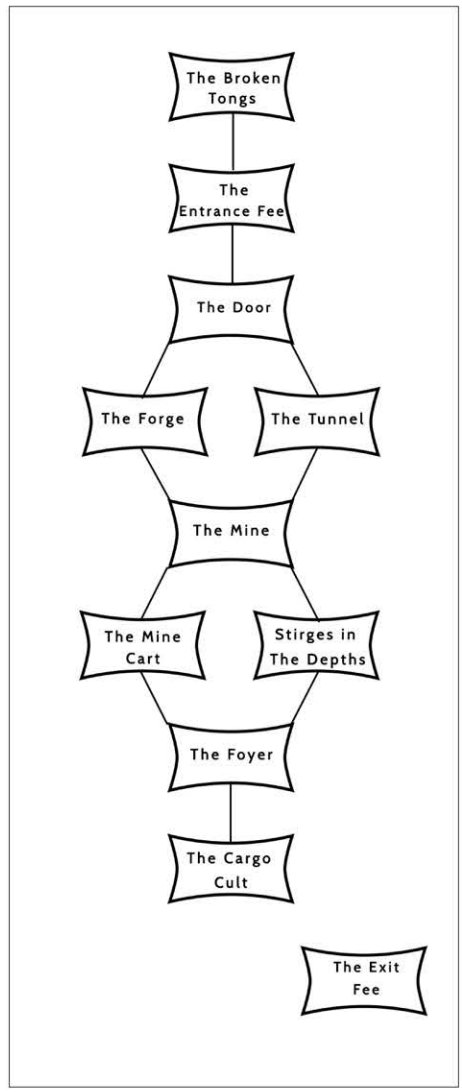
Once the adventurers reach the entrance to Deepforge they must find a way to enter the mine. Navigating the mine, the party eventually finds the heat pump, but it is kept by a group of kobolds who believe they will be granted wealth by the gods simply by recreating a facsimile of the forge.

After recovering the heat pump, the adventurers may be visited by the Warpweft clan chief who plans to extort more from them.

If the adventurers return to Samnall with the lost heat pump, they are welcomed and praised for a job well done.

Adventure Flowchart

The following flowchart provides a guide to how the adventure can unfold depending on the players' choices. Each box lists a section's title, and the lines indicate the resulting section based on the players' choice.



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Adventure Hooks

The adventure begins as the party meets Samnall mac Rand in the Broken Tongs tavern. Samnall seeks adventurers to travel to Deepforge and recover the stolen heat pump.

Noble background. Your family has had many dealings with the dwarves of Earthfast. To strengthen those ties, you are instructed to make your way to Laviguer to assist Samnall mac Rand in recovering the heat pump.

Merchant background. Your guild is always looking for a competitive edge, and you've heard of this secret heat pump system the dwarves used in Deepforge. Perhaps if you recover it you can discover it's inner workings, with or without Samnall's permission?

Hermit background. You were traveling through the lower arms of the Earthspurs when you happened across Samnall mac Rand on his way to the town of Laviguer. The dwarf persuaded you to help recover the heat pump.

Looking for Work. Laviguer has a reputation for being a rough and tumble town on the edge of the wilds, and so you traveled there hoping to find some work. With few leads, you find yourself in a dingy tavern called the Broken Tongs.

The Broken Tongs

Read or paraphrase the following:

The Broken Tongs is in just as bad a shape as its namesake. Threading through the throng of locals you crunch your way across a floor littered with moldering old peanut shells and take a seat at one of the few tables that still has all its legs. The hot, still air stinks of sweat and old beer.

An overweight dwarf in ill-fitting mail walks towards your table, nervously trying, and mostly succeeding, in dodging the drunken louts that crowd the tavern. He smiles at you, and over the din of raucous laughter and slurred conversation you barely hear him say "Haven't seen you around here before. You must be adventurers, then. Looking for a bit of work?"

Role-playing Samnall mac Rand

Samnall is a young dwarf with long, fine black hair and a short beard. He is taller and wider than average, and is bow legged. He is very serious and measured of speech. Despite his calm veneer, Samnall is filled with nervous excitement which makes him fidget.

Samnall offers the party a job. He needs them to travel to Deepforge, enter the mine, find the heat pump, and bring it back to him. In exchange, Samnall will pay the group 100 gp. In addition to the information found in the Adventure Background section, Samnall can offer the following information:

- Samnall recently found the journal of the first Ironlord of Deepforge that detailed the technological marvels of the heat pump. It is not magical, but it could revolutionize forge-work. It's small enough that a strong person could carry it on their back. It looks like a pair of large pistons attached to a barrel-shaped mechanism, and it is made of mithril. The heat pump was a secret closely guarded by the dwarves of Deepforge and there are no records of the internal workings of the mechanisms anywhere.
- Samnall is more a bookworm than a fighter. He attempted to raise an army of his Earthfast brethren to retake Deepforge, but the generals told him he was overstating the importance of the heat pump. He has therefore turned to adventurers for aid in recovering it.
- Samnall assumes the lands around Deepforge have grown wild and dangerous in the years since the dwarves were wiped out.
- Deepforge consisted of a series of low-roofed homes outside a great gate in the side of a mountain. The gate leads into the forge room. A lift in the forge room leads down to the mines. When the drow attacked, their stone giant minions blocked the gate with huge boulders.
- Samnall has precise directions to reach Deepforge which he readily provides. He produces a map, tracing the route through the mountains, past Deepforge's boundary wall, and eventually up to the mine entrance itself. Once the party gets there, they'll have to find their own way inside.

The Entrance Fee

Read or paraphrase the following:

Traveling among the soaring peaks of the Earthspur range, you enter a canyon between two steep mountains. A twenty foot tall curtain wall crosses the canyon up ahead. According to Samnall's map, the wall marks the border of the lands once held by Deepforge. Although the wall is crumbling due to lack of maintenance, the stonework is well-fitted and expertly cut. What remains of the rusty portcullis is bent out and away from the passage through the wall. A low barrier of stones and boulders have been piled in front of the passage.

Furtive voices echo off the mountainsides. The small, sickly-green faces of several goblins peep over the wall's crenelations as you approach. The least emaciated one cracks a toothless smile as he locks eyes with each of you in turn. "I am Herringbone, captain of the great

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Warpweft Clan. You want to cross into our lands? Give me 10! No, 50! No, 100 gold pieces!" The rest of the goblins quickly string their shortbows.

Role-playing Herringbone

Herringbone is middle aged and considered stout for a goblin, with more hair coming from his ears than his scalp. He tries to belittle and cheat anyone he can, as he feels this will increase his status among the Warpwefts. He resents that his sister, Houndstooth, is the chief of the clan, and thinks he should be chief. Despite his narcissism, Herringbone is no smarter or stronger than the average goblin.

5 Goblins guard the wall; 3 atop it with shortbows trained on the adventurers, and 2 attempting to hide in the passage.

The wall is 20-feet tall, with sheer mountainsides on either end. The crenelations along the wall grant half cover to the Goblins atop it. The passage through the wall is 10-feet wide and 10-feet tall. The rocks in front of it vary in size; the largest boulder is 5-feet tall. They count as Difficult Terrain and provide Half Cover to those within the passage. As an action, an adventurer may make a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb the largest boulder and pull himself onto the wall.

The large boulders on the adventurers' side of the canyon provide total cover from both the top of the wall and the passage.

Adjusting the Encounter

- **Weak party:** remove **1 Goblin.**
- **Strong party:** add **2 Goblins** to the group manning the top of the wall.
- **Very Strong party:** add **3 Goblins** to the group manning the top of the wall, and **2 Goblins** to the group in the passage.

Herringbone can be bought off with 100 GP. A successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Deception) check** can reduce this to 20 GP, or 10 GP if the adventurers succeed by 5 or more.

If the adventurers pay for passage through the wall, Herringbone can offer the following information:

- The Warpweft clan is large and powerful (This is false).
- They have no idea how to enter Deepforge. They've tried to get through the wall but couldn't break any of the rocks (This is true).
- The adventurers have safe passage through the Warpweft's realm for a week. The goblins won't bother them if they don't bother the goblins (This is false. As soon as they're out of eyesight, Herringbone will go to tell his sister, Chief Houndstooth, about the adventurers and suggest the goblins attack them).
- If the adventurers succeeded in haggling by 5 or more, Herringbone tells them that there is a tunnel in the ground in one of the ruins near the entrance, but the goblins don't go by it because it smells of death (This is true).

If the adventurers ignore Herringbone or refuse to pay the toll, the goblins immediately attack using their shortbows.

Tactics

The goblins will use their shortbows as much as possible and try to avoid melee combat. If an adventurer gets too close to the goblins in the passage, they'll retreat, climb the ladder to get onto the wall, and pull the ladder up.

Treasure

The goblins carry a total of 30 GP between them. Herringbone has a *Tortured Marionette* strapped to his belt by a little noose.

Developments

If the party let any of the goblins go free, they will tell Chief Houndstooth about the adventurers. The goblins will wait outside Deepforge and attack the adventurers as they exit the mine, as outlined in the section entitled The Exit Fee.

The Door

Read or paraphrase the following:

It's another 10 miles before you finally reach Deepforge's entrance; a wide fissure in the base of a mountain deep in the Earthspurs. Low, crumbling buildings line the weed-choked path leading to the entrance, their shale roofs collapsed and their wooden doors rotten. The brisk mountain air carries the scent of mildew and decay.

A wall of boulders block the fissure. The huge rocks range from the size of a barrel to twice the size of a man. Although they seem inexpertly placed, you see no gaps that would allow you to sneak into the mine.

Although the wall has no gaps, the boulders have settled and there are a few loose ones. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** will identify a few that could be removed without disturbing the integrity of the wall. Removing them requires a successful **DC 14 Strength check**. This will provide a hole that allows medium-sized or smaller creatures to wiggle through single file and enter the Forge.

Alternatively, an adventurer could collapse the wall by identifying a load-bearing boulder with a successful **DC 10 Intelligence check**. The boulder could be shifted with a **DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check**, however any adventurer that

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attempts the check and fails by 5 or more must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity save** or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage as the collapsing wall rains down on them. Once the wall is collapsed, the adventurers can enter the Forge.

If an adventurer succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check**, or if an adventurer actively searches the crumbling buildings, they find a 10 foot wide, smooth-sided tunnel in the floor of the home nearest the entrance to Deepforge. It appears to lead under the mountain, and emits a smell like rotten meat. Entering leads to the Tunnel.

The Forge

If the characters tunnel through or collapse the wall, read or paraphrase the following:

> You find yourself in a soaring octagonal room with rows of anvils and workbenches encircling a forge's wide stone hearth. Metal tubes protrude from the side of the hearth, their ends twisted and bent as if something was ripped from them. Rails lead from the hearth to a wide lift made of moldering wood.
> A wet slurping sound from a corner to your right draws your attention. You see what appears to be a stone giant's corpse in the corner. Oozes drape the corpse, quivering as they slowly digest its remaining flesh.

Two **Gray Ooze** go about their meal. If the adventurers did not collapse the boulder wall at the entrance to Deepforge, allow the adventurers to make Stealth checks if they so choose. If they collapsed the wall, stray boulders struck the Oozes, dealing 7 damage to each. The Gray Oozes, thus distracted from their meal, are aware of the adventurers and move to attack immediately.

Adjusting the Encounter

- **Weak party:** remove **1 Gray Ooze.**
- **Strong party:** add **1 Gray Ooze.**
- **Very Strong party:** add **4 Gray Ooze.**

Tactics

The oozes are very stupid, so they will move to attack the nearest adventurer with no regard for tactics.

Treasure

Chips of obsidian worth 30 gp total can be found in a partially digested leather bag on the giant's belt.

Developments

The only exits from the Forge are the main entrance and the lift. The lift is 10' x 15' and although its boards are soft, it will support the party's weight. It can be lowered to the Mine using the ceiling-mounted hoist's long, rusty chain.

The Tunnel

If the adventurers follow the tunnel, read or paraphrase the following:

> The muddy tunnel gradually spirals deeper below the ground. As you continue down the tunnel the smell of decay grows stronger. You hear a low chittering noise echoing from a branch in the tunnel's wall.

An **Ankheg** nests in the tunnel. It is currently tending to its eggs. The dirt surrounding its clutch of eggs as well as the western side of its lair is wet and cloying. Several kobold and a few drow corpses are partially submerged in the thick layer of mud on the western side of its lair.

Adjusting the Encounter

- **Weak party:** The **Ankheg** can't use it's acid spray and does not grapple. Reduce it's slashing damage to 4.
- **Strong party:** Some of the eggs have hatched. add **1 Swarm of Insects.**
- **Very Strong party:** Some of the eggs have hatched. add **3 Swarms of Insects.**

Tactics

The Ankheg's main goal is to protect its eggs. If the adventurers flee its lair, the Ankheg will not pursue.

Treasure

Ankheg eggs are rare. The clutch of eggs is worth 100 gp to the right buyer.

Developments

The thick mud on the western side of the lair and surrounding the eggs counts as difficult terrain. The main tunnel continues spiraling downward and exits into The Mine.

The Mine

The adventurers can enter the mine either via the lift that leads from the Forge or the Tunnel that leads outside. Cart rails lead from the lift down the length of the main tunnel.

General Features

Ceilings. The ceilings in the mines are rounded and approximately 10 feet in height. Aside from the occasional scratch from an errant mattock strike, they are nearly smooth.

Light. The mines are in complete darkness. There are unlit sconces fastened to the walls at regular intervals.

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Sounds. Occasionally the adventurers will hear the fluttering of wings or light scratching sounds, as the mines are haunted by stirges and rats. As the adventurers near the kobolds' lair, they will hear the sound of muffled voices echo off the walls.

Floor. The floors are straight and even, with a cart track running along their center. Orderly piles of stone and iron ore are stacked along the walls.

Wandering Monsters. Various creatures call the mines home. At the end of each hour that the adventurers spend in the mines, roll a d20 and consult the table below:

Roll	Encounter
1-15	No encounter.
16	A small lizard scrabbles across the floor. **2 Darkmantles** descend from the ceiling, intent on catching the lizard. They spy the party, and divert to attack them.
17	A chittering echoes through the cavern as **3 Swarms of Rats** scrabble through a small crack in the far wall and cascade down to the floor.
18	The webs suspended from a patch of stalactites begin to quiver as **1 Giant Spider** creeps closer to the party.
19	Rats and lizards scramble for cover as **4 Giant Bats** fly into the cavern, screeching as they search for prey.
20	**4 Giant Lizards** lick their eyes and bare their teeth as they silently watch the party from a cleft in the side wall.

After familiarizing yourself with the features of the mine, read or paraphrase the following:

> The main artery of the mine stretches east into the gloom. The rails of a cart track are mere ripples in the thick coating of dust that blankets the arrow-straight corridor. You can just barely make out a mine cart stopped on the track further up ahead.
> A worked side-tunnel branches off to the north, while a smooth-sided, perfectly cylindrical tunnel is bored into the southern wall a few feet off the ground.
> Decaying dwarf and drow corpses, picked clean of any metal they may have carried, are piled along the sides of the tunnel. You notice large clumps of bluecap mushrooms blooming from the remains.

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check** determines that bluecap mushrooms are edible once they're ground into flour.

If an adventurer looks at the mushrooms and passes a **DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they recognize that many of the stalks have been picked.

If an adventurer searches the area and passes a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** (taken with **advantage** if it's attempted after the party recognizes that some of the mushrooms have been picked), they see several kobold footprints in the rock dust. The footprints are all either going to or leading from the side-tunnel in the northern wall, and terminate at the corpses. A subsequent successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check** indicates that some of the tracks are only a few days old.

If the party looks into the side-tunnel, it contains piles of tools that have had their metal heads removed.

There is a track that runs down the middle of the main tunnel, with a large rusty cart stopped a hundred feet from the corpses.

If the adventurers walk down the side-tunnel to the north, proceed to the section entitled Stirges in the Depths. If they investigate the mine cart, proceed to the section entitled The Mine Cart.

The tunnel in the southern wall is 10 feet wide and perfectly cylindrical. The smell of rotten meat wafts from within. This leads to the section entitled The Tunnel.

The Mine Cart

The mine cart is a large, wheeled platform made of rusted iron with a steam-powered engine attached to the back. The machine is not currently working, and must be restored before the adventurers can use it. A lever that controls acceleration projects from the front of the engine. Near the cart is a dwarf corpse sprawled over a bucket of coal, with six pieces of the engine scattered around it.; a Chimney, a Piston, a Steam Pipe, a Boiler, a Throttle Valve, and a Firebox. The dwarf was repairing the cart and had already installed the Water Reservoir when he was ambushed by the invaders.

Next to the pile of parts is a blood-splattered manual. Provide your players with ***Handout 1: The Manual***.

The adventurers must solve this puzzle if they wish to use the mine cart. In order to do so, they must reinstall the six remaining parts in the correct order. The clues to the puzzle are contained in the manual. The correct order is (from left to right): Water Reservoir, Firebox, Boiler, Throttle Valve, Steam Pipe, Piston, Chimney. Note that the dwarf had already installed the Water Reservoir when he was slain.

Once the adventurers install the remaining parts in the proper order, the steam engine sputters to life and is ready to move the cart down the tracks.

If the adventurers drive the mine cart, the tracks lead into a narrow corridor and the cart barely fits. They will encounter a series of Events during their journey on the cart. Several Events are listed below. Each one provides information on what the adventurers encounter, possible effects, and possible solutions. The solutions are by no means the only way to handle the Events; encourage role-play over the roll of the dice. Choose a

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number of Events equal to the number of adventurers, and have them encounter the Events in any order you choose. It's suggested that you include the Reliefs of Dwarven Gods Event early on, but if you don't particularly like your players, then feel free to exclude it altogether.

The cart can move at three speeds; slow, normal, and fast. If an adventurer suggests turning the engine off, the cart can glide to a stop. Have the adventurers determine what speed they're going as this may help or hinder them in each Event.

The adventurers can choose to follow the cart rails on foot. If they do, have them encounter a combination of the following Events: Reliefs of the Dwarven Gods, Trapped Gas, Low Ceiling, Flock of Darkmantles, Gap in the Bridge.

Broken Engine

The cart strains as it trundles up a steep slope. With a crash, one of its flanges bursts, and steam starts leaking out. The cart slows noticeably.

Possible Effects: The cart can no longer accelerate or decelerate, it can only keep its current pace.

Possible Solutions: A *mending* spell will fix the flange, or a successful **DC 12 Intelligence Check** will repair it. Allow **advantage** if the adventurer has Vehicle (land) proficiency.

Trapped Gas

The cart is coming up to a bridge over a deep and wide cavern. A cloud of sickly-green gas stretches from the ceiling and envelops the bridge.

Possible Effects: Any adventurer that breathes in the gas must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution Saving Throw** or is **Poisoned** for the duration of the trip on the mine cart.

Possible Solutions: An adventurer can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to twice their Constitution score. It'll take two minutes (20 rounds) to cross the bridge at a normal pace, four minutes (40 rounds) at a slow pace, and one minute (10 rounds) at a fast pace. If the adventurers are walking, it'll take four minutes (40 rounds) to reach the far side. The adventurers could put wet rags over their mouths to get through the cloud, or a fire-based spell could burn off the gas before they reach it.

Switch and Damaged Rails

A second track splits off from the main course up ahead. Just past the fork, the main track's rails are bent and curled upwards at right angles. A switch lies in the crux of the fork, and you see it's currently set to send the cart down the main track.

Possible Effects: The cart hits the damaged rails and flips. All party members take 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, plus an additional 2 damage if the cart is moving fast. It will take some time to get the cart back on the tracks.

Possible Solutions: *Mage Hand* or a similar spell can flip the switch over to the other side, allowing the cart to go down the second track. Alternatively an adventurer can hit the switch with a ranged attack against an AC of 12 to knock it to the other side.

Debris on the Tracks

The tunnel's side wall has collapsed, strewing barrel-sized, glittering rocks across the tracks.

Possible Effects: The cart hits the rocks and flips. All party members take 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, plus an additional 2 damage if the cart is moving fast. The engine is damaged, so it can only propel the cart at a slow pace and can't accelerate.

Possible Solutions: If the adventurers accelerate they can slam through the rocks, but the force of impact may knock them off. Have all the adventurers make a **DC 10 Dexterity Saving Throw**. Any adventurers that fail fall off the cart, taking 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. If the cart isn't going at a fast pace, the party could also glide the cart to a stop and clear the debris by hand. If they do, they discover some of the loose stones contain quartz crystals. They can collect 100 GP worth of the gemstones.

Low Ceiling

The tunnel ceiling seems substantially lower up ahead. As you approach you see that the ceiling is actually ten feet above the rails, but a colony of purple shriekers is suspended from it. Already, the closest ones have begun to scream as you draw near.

Possible Effects: The adventurers are all **Deafened** for the duration of the trip on the mine cart. Any adventurer that doesn't go prone if they aren't cleared away takes 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage as the adventurer's head slams into the mushrooms.

Possible Solutions: If the adventurers go prone, they won't take the damage but will still be Deafened. There are 4 shriekers total, so the party could attack them.

Flock of Darkmantles

The mine cart enters a tall, domed cavern with several stalactites hanging down. Suddenly a pair of the stalactites detach from the ceiling, and too late you realize they are darkmantles dropping towards you. They rotate in midair, revealing slavering beaks at the center of their wide, tentacle-framed membranous wings.

Possible Effects: Combat with two **Darkmantles**

Possible Solutions: Fight them, scare them off with fire or loud noises, or obscure the party with *fog cloud* or a similar spell.

Boiling Magma

The cart speeds into a wide room. The rails crisscross a winding channel of roiling magma. Jets of the molten rock irregularly squirt into the air and occasionally splash onto the tracks.

Possible Effects: If a jet of magma lands on the cart, all adventurers must pass a **DC 14 Dexterity Saving Throw,** taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, and half on a successful one.

Possible Solutions: A **DC 10 Wisdom Check** can deduce a pattern to the jets and allow the cart to avoid it, or a character with a shield could make a **DC 10 Dexterity Check** to get their shield in front of a jet (possibly destroying the shield if it isn't made of metal).

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Impossibly Tight Turn

The track drops steeply. As you speed down the decline you see an incredibly sharp left turn at the bottom of the drop. As you take the turn, you can feel the cart tilting and the left wheels lifting off the rails.

Possible Effects: The cart rolls. Each adventurer must pass a **DC 12 Dexterity Saving Throw** or take 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the cart falling on them, plus an additional 2 damage if the cart is moving fast or at a normal pace.

Possible Solutions: All party members move to the left side of the cart to restore the cart's balance. Since the turn is so sudden, slowing down enough to completely avoid the event is impossible.

Reliefs of Dwarven Gods

Expertly carved reliefs of the dwarven pantheon line the tunnel. The left wall is principally devoted to Dumathoin, the Keeper of Secrets Under the Mountain, while Sharindlar, Lady of Life and Mercy is the primary subject carved into the right.

Possible Effects: Any non-evil dwarf adventurer is under the effect of the *bless* spell for the remainder of the trip in the mine cart.

Possible Solutions: If the party kills the engine, the cart can stop and the adventurers can examine the carvings. If they do, they notice a thick, clear liquid in a large carved cup held by the relief of Sharindlar. The liquid glows softly. It is *Hearthmead*, and there is enough for each adventurer to fill their canteen.

Gap in the Bridge

The tracks arch upwards to form a bridge across a chasm choked with sulfurous smoke. As you approach the bridge, the vibration from your cart shivers up the rails and pops the rivets supporting the center of the bridge. The loose 10 foot section collapses and falls into the chasm.

Possible Effects: The cart is irreparably damaged if it falls to the chasm floor. Adventurers can attempt to jump from the falling cart to grab the far ledge with a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) Check**. The chasm is 20 feet deep, so any that fall take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Possible Solutions: Accelerate to jump the gap. Get out and jump across, walking the remainder of the way. Lash some 10 foot poles across the gap to make temporary rails.

Developments

The rails terminate at a small cavern that has only been briefly mined. Thick veins of iron striate the walls. One wall is breached by a narrow crack. It leads to a dark tunnel, and the adventurers can hear voices echoing from within.

Once the adventurers continue down the tunnel, read or paraphrase the following:

> The tunnel is no more than a jagged triangle. You struggle on, and eventually it widens into a small cavern before narrowing again on the far side. Flickering light and muffled chanting stream from a crack in one wall of the cavern.

The tunnel leads on to the twelve foot high lip in the section entitled Stirges in the Depths, while the crack leads to the section entitled The Foyer.

Stirges in the Depths

Once the adventurers follow the side-tunnel with the kobold tracks, read or paraphrase the following:

> You follow the tunnel for some time. Eventually the tunnel narrows and you notice the excavated walls give way to natural, striated formations. You pass a slight bend and see the floor ahead of you has collapsed. A slope of loose stone and gravel pours into the fallen stretch of tunnel. The collapsed section is canted at an angle. A nearly vertical wall twelve feet in height marks where the tunnel floor sheared when it collapsed. The tunnel continues for a few hundred feet beyond the shearing point before turning sharply. You hear the sound of low chanting coming from beyond the bend.

The source of the chanting is too far away for the adventurers to make out what they're saying.

A flock of **7 stirges** lairs in the nooks and crannies of the loose stone slope that leads down into the collapsed section of tunnel. They wait for all the adventurers to move past their nest before attacking.

Once the party reaches the collapsed section of the tunnel, any adventurers with a **passive Perception of 13 or better** notices the stirges and are not surprised by them. All other adventurers are surprised by the creatures.

Adjusting the Encounter

- **Weak party:** remove **2 stirges.**
- **Strong party:** add **3 stirges.**
- **Very Strong party:** replace the stirges with **7 swarms of bats.**

Tactics

The stirges will initially attempt to focus their attacks on those who do not wear heavy armor. Once a stirge attaches to an adventurer, the others will go into a frenzy; any stirge that isn't already in melee combat with an adventurer will target an adventurer that has a stirge attached.

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Developments

Once the stirges are defeated, the adventurers are free to search the area. Any adventurer that searches the nests will succeed with a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check or a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check**. On a success, they will discover the withered corpse of a kobold. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check** finds that although the corpse is only a few days old, it has been completely drained of its blood. The corpse carries two bluecap mushrooms, a full water skin, and a small onyx statuette of a spider worth 25 gp.

Once the adventurers climb the wall and continue down the tunnel, read or paraphrase the following:

> The corridor bends sharply to the right before widening. It narrows into a cramped triangle on the far side. The glow of firelight and muffled chanting stream from a crack in one wall.

The corridor leads on to the cart tracks' terminus at the small cavern in the section entitled The Mine Cart, while the crack leads to the section entitled The Foyer.

The Foyer

Once the adventurers enter the fissure, read or paraphrase the following:

> The crack leads to a circular cavern, approximately 40 feet in diameter. Water drips off clusters of stalactites hanging from the ceiling to fall on the caps of towering, tree-like mushrooms sprouting from the center of the cavern. Narrow paths lined with various smaller mushrooms hug the circumference of the cavern and lead to a fissure on the far side. Chanting and the glow of firelight emanate from within the fissure, but it has a sharp turn which prevents you from spying their source.

The mushrooms that grow on the left path are poisonous Death Caps and Webcaps. The mushrooms on the right path are *Blue Spidercaps* (see below) and appear almost identical to the Webcaps. The large mushrooms in the center of the cavern are Zurkhwood. When dried, Zurkhwood stalks are used as a wood substitute among the denizens of the Underdark. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check** identifies the poisonous mushrooms and the Zurkhwood. If the adventurer succeeds by 5 or more, or if they succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, they also identify that the Blue Spidercaps aren't Webcaps.

The Kobolds take the left path to reach their lair, knowing that the Death Caps and Webcaps can't hurt them as long as they don't eat them. They keep both paths clear of debris to hide their tracks, however they know not to get too close to the Blue Spidercaps, resulting in a dusting of spores around the mushrooms. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check** will allow an adventurer to recognize there are no footprints in the blanket of spores around the Blue Spidercaps.

The Zurkhwood grow in a dense thicket. Their moist skin easily sloughs away, but they can be climbed with a successful **DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check.** Failing by 5 or more results in 4 (1d6) falling damage.

Blue Spidercaps

Blue Spidercaps grow in the darkest caverns. Their stalks and the tops of their caps are a rusty brown color, however the web-like underside of the caps are an iridescent blue covered in frost. The Spidercaps are attracted to motion. Whenever something moves past the mushroom, it releases a cloud of freezing spores in a 15-foot cube originating from the mushroom. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 6 (1d10) cold damage and suffer one level of exhaustion.

If an adventurer wishes to listen closely to the chanting, they must make a **Wisdom (Perception) check,** and then consult the following table:

Check Result	Information
≤ 8	The adventurer can glean no information about the voices
9-12	The adventurer can tell that the voices are speaking in draconic.
13-19	As 9-12 above, plus the adventurer can tell they are kobolds and believes there are at least 10 individual chanters.
20+	As 13-19 above, plus the adventurer knows there are exactly 15 kobolds that are taking part in the chant.

If an adventurer rolled at least a 9 and speaks draconic, they know the chant translates roughly as "Gods, give us the gold that you once gave the dwarves."

The fissure leads to the section entitled The Cargo Cult.

The Cargo Cult

Any adventurers may attempt to sneak through the fissure by passing a **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check,** taken with Advantage since the kobolds don't expect any outsiders.

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When the adventurers enter the fissure, read or paraphrase the following:

> You shimmy through the narrow fissure and enter a small, irregularly shaped cavern. Piles of old wood and chips of mushroom stems act as communal beds, while a campfire burns beside a stand of fungus of various sizes. Further inside the cavern you see a curious sight; fourteen kobolds, some very young, others very old, kneel prostrate before a crude model of the dwarves' forge carved from mushroom stems. An older kobold, dressed in rusted dwarven chainmail, stands with either foot atop the gleaming mithril pistons of the dwarves' heat pump, using his feet to pump first one piston and then the other in time with the kobolds' chants.

If an adventurer fails the stealth check, or if an adventurer enters without making a stealth check, read or paraphrase the following:

> The old kobold atop the heat pump stops chanting and points at you, his eyes wide and his mouth agape. One by one the other kobolds stop chanting and turn to stare. The leader lets out a loud whoop and begins hopping from piston to piston, his yell in common of "I knew it would work!" barely audible over the cheers of the other kobolds. "You bring gold, yes? Make us dwarf-rich?"

Of the 15 kobolds, **6 kobolds** (including the old leader) are capable of fighting the adventurers. The remainder will cower or run off if it comes to fighting.

Adjusting the Encounter

- **Weak party:** change **1 kobold** from a combatant to a non-combatant.
- **Strong party:** change the combatant kobolds into **Winged Kobolds.**
- **Very Strong party:** Replace all 6 Kobolds with **10 Winged Kobolds**

The kobolds will not initially attack the adventurers. They believe the adventurers were brought to them by the kobold god Kurtulmak to "make them rich, like the dwarves."

The old kobold clan leader is named Hursihz. He and the adult kobolds were slaves to the drow, and took part in the assault on Deepforge. They were supposed to take the heat pump back to the drow of Undrek'Thoz, but they slew their handlers and fled, finding this cavern. Hursihz was convinced that if they made a shrine that looked just like the great forge, or as he calls it the 'dwarf gold-shrine,' the power of the heat pump would bring them riches. He believes the party is the answer to their prayers.

Role-playing Hursihz *(Her-SEEZ)*

Hursihz is very eager to talk to the adventurers. His demeanor is placating, but at the same time adamant the party is supposed to bring them riches.

Hursihz constantly rubs his thumbs across his fingers and his eye twitches.

Developments

If the adventurers tell the kobolds they were not sent by the gods, Hursihz accuses them of coming to steal the dwarf magic for themselves, and the kobolds attack.

The party can attempt to deceive Hursihz, playing along that they were sent by the gods, and attempt to persuade him to give the pump to them. However, the kobold won't even discuss the idea without being given riches first. The kobolds are not interested in copper or silver coins, however 25 gold pieces (or a combination of any weapons or armor worth 25 gold pieces in selling price) will be enough to convince them the party was sent by the gods. Once the riches are given over, an adventurer can persuade Hursihz to give the heat pump to the party by passing a **DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check** using a plausible story explaining why the gods would want it. If the check fails by less than 5, the adventurers may retry with **Disadvantage.** If the check fails by 5 or more, Hursihz sees through the ruse. He exclaims that the adventurers were not sent by Kurtulmak and that they've come to steal the dwarf magic for themselves, and the kobolds attack.

The Exit Fee

If the adventurers let any of the goblins manning the wall go free, Chief Houndstooth will be waiting for them in the ruins outside Deepforge.

Once the adventurers leave Deepforge, read or paraphrase the following:

> You exit Deepforge and are momentarily dazzled as your eyes adjust to the sunlight. Footfalls among the ruined outbuildings announce that you are not alone. You blink as you see several goblins flanking a larger female goblin swathed in several high quality cloth scarves and wearing an ornate bandanna. She points an accusatory finger at you as she shouts "You trespass upon the realm of clan Warpweft! I am Chief Houndstooth, and that dwarf warren is part of my domain. Anything taken from within is mine! Give it to me, now!"

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Role-playing Houndstooth

Chief Houndstooth is middle aged, but strong and lithe. She wears layers of well made clothing in various clashing patterns. She maintains her control of the clan by crushing any dissent among her ranks. When she makes a decision she will not debate it, and cuts down any who disagree.

Houndstooth has heard of the dwarves' wealth. She covets the bounty of their labors, and can only be dissuaded with a successful **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion), Charisma (Intimidation), or Charisma (Deception) check.** If the adventurers fail, her party will attack.

There are **2 Goblins** (one of which may be Herringbone, depending on how the adventurers dealt with him earlier) and **1 Goblin Boss** (Houndstooth). Houndstooth wields a *+1 Scimitar*.

Adjusting the Encounter

- **Weak party:** remove **1 Goblin.**
- **Strong party:** add **2 Goblins.**
- **Very Strong party:** add **4 Goblins.**

Tactics

The goblins are Houndstooth's personal guard; they stay adjacent to her. She will attempt to hide as often as possible, but prefers to use her *+1 Scimitar* over her javelins. The goblins will not fight to the death; if Houndstooth is reduced to less than 10 hit points, she will flee the combat. If she is slain, the remaining goblins will flee the combat.

Treasure

The goblins carry 25 GP total. Houndstooth carries a *+1 Scimitar*.

Conclusion

With the heat pump recovered, the party returns to Samnall. Read or paraphrase the following:

You return to Samnall mac Rand with the heat pump in tow. He laughs and shakes the hand of each of you in turn. "Thank you for this, my friends. I know that with this piece of technology, Earthfast's steel production will be unmatched. Also, I'll be rich, so there's that."

Treasure

Upon receiving the heat pump, Samnall rewards the party with 100 gp, as promised. If the adventurers gave the kobolds 25 gp or equipment worth 25 gp, he reimburses them for those expenses.

Experience

All combat rewards are outlined in the enemies' Monster Manual entries. Reward the players by adding up the XP for each enemy encountered, and then dividing by the number of players, as normal.

In addition, reward each character with an additional 50 XP for each of the following:

- The party successfully negotiated with Herringbone.
- The party found the kobold tracks in the main tunnel.
- The party was able to restore the steam engine on the mine cart.
- The party was able to pass through The Foyer without triggering the Blue Spidercaps.
- The party got the heat pump from the kobolds without fighting them.
- The party successfully negotiated with Chief Houndstooth.

Magic Items

Tortured Puppet

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Once attuned, the Tortured Puppet changes to match your appearance. While the Tortured Puppet is in your possession, it allows you to ignore your first failed Death Saving Throw. Once this occurs roll a d20; on a 1, the Tortured Puppet is destroyed in a puff of oily smoke. The Tortured Puppet's ability may only be used once per Long Rest.

Hearthmead

Potion, uncommon

When you drink this potion during a short rest, you may restore an additional 1d4+2 hit points. The potion lets off a soft, warm glow.

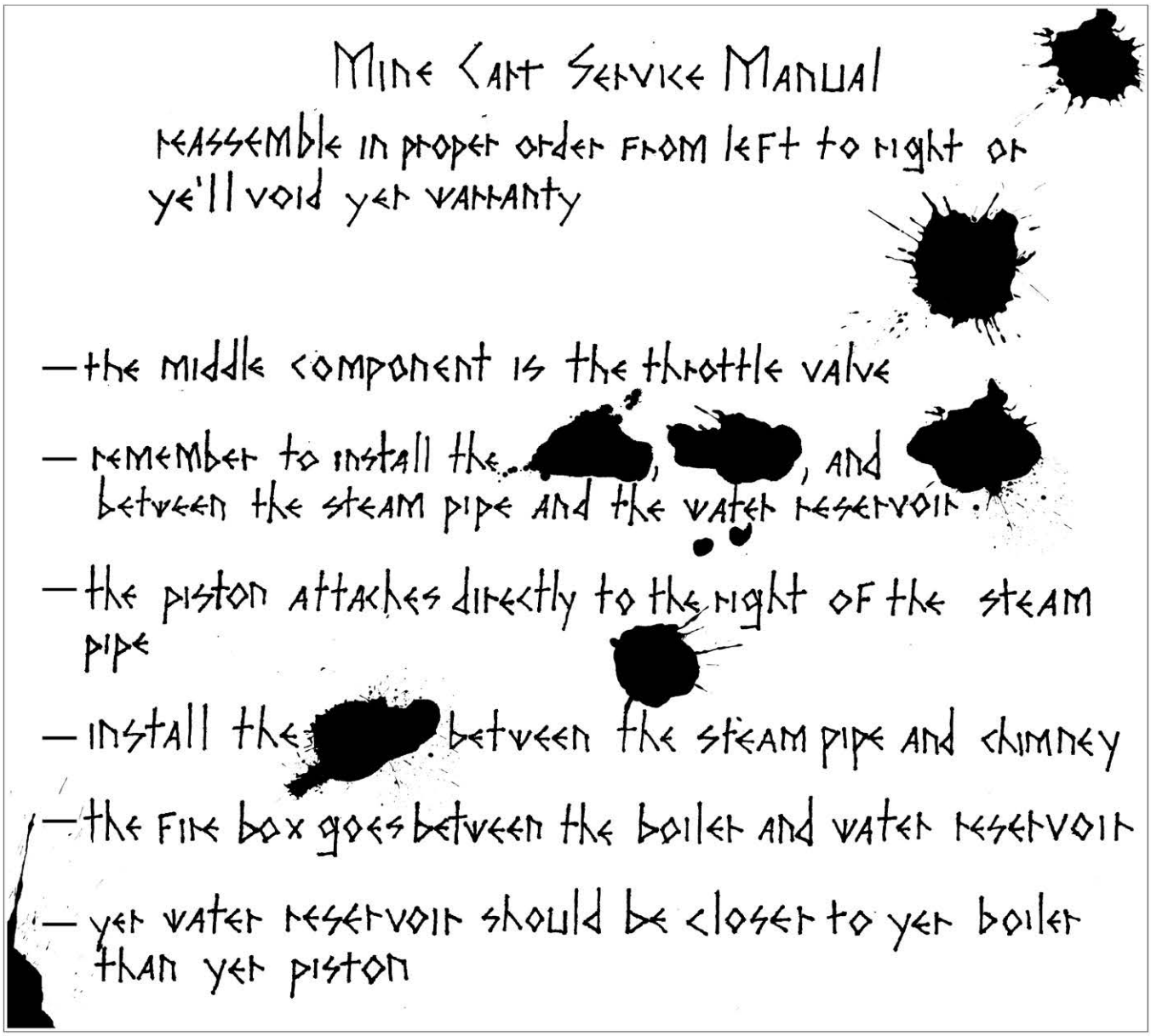
+1 Scimitar

Weapon (scimitar), uncommon

Houndstooth's scimitar is made of bronze. The lower half of its blade is saw-toothed, and it has an owl skull for a pommel. Several streamers of patterned cloth hang from the guard.

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Handout 1: The Manual



Mine Cart Service Manual

reassemble in proper order from left to right or ye'll void yer warranty

— the middle component is the throttle valve

— remember to install the [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted] between the steam pipe and the water reservoir.

— the piston attaches directly to the right of the steam pipe

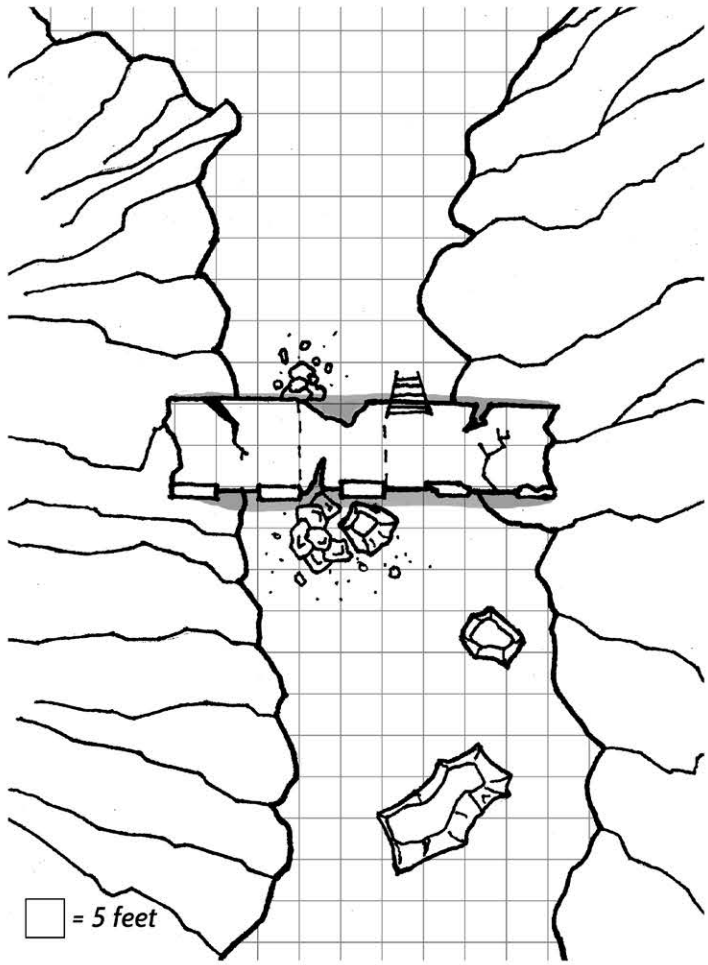
— install the [redacted] between the steam pipe and chimney

— the fire box goes between the boiler and water reservoir

— yer water reservoir should be closer to yer boiler than yer piston

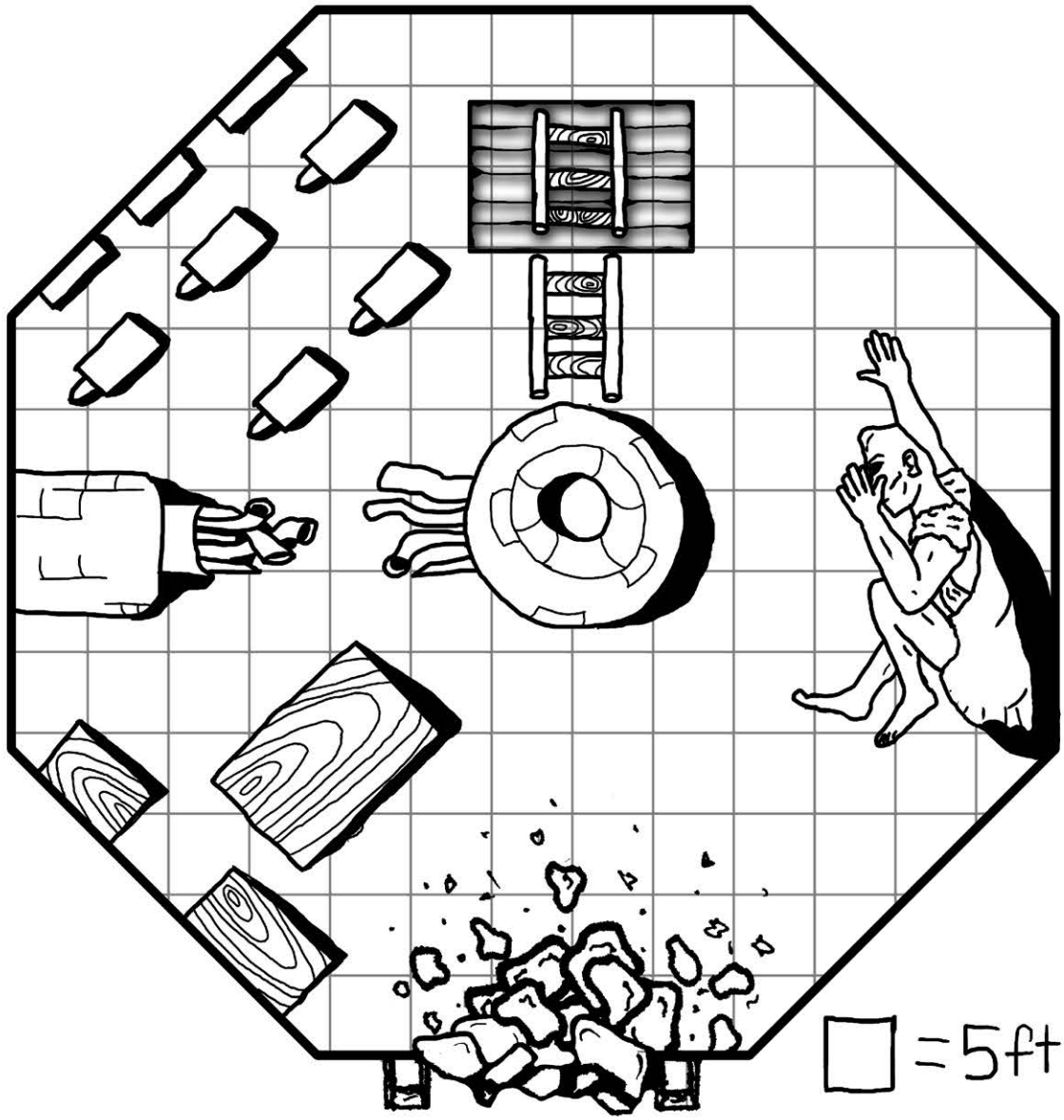
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Map 1: The Entrance Fee



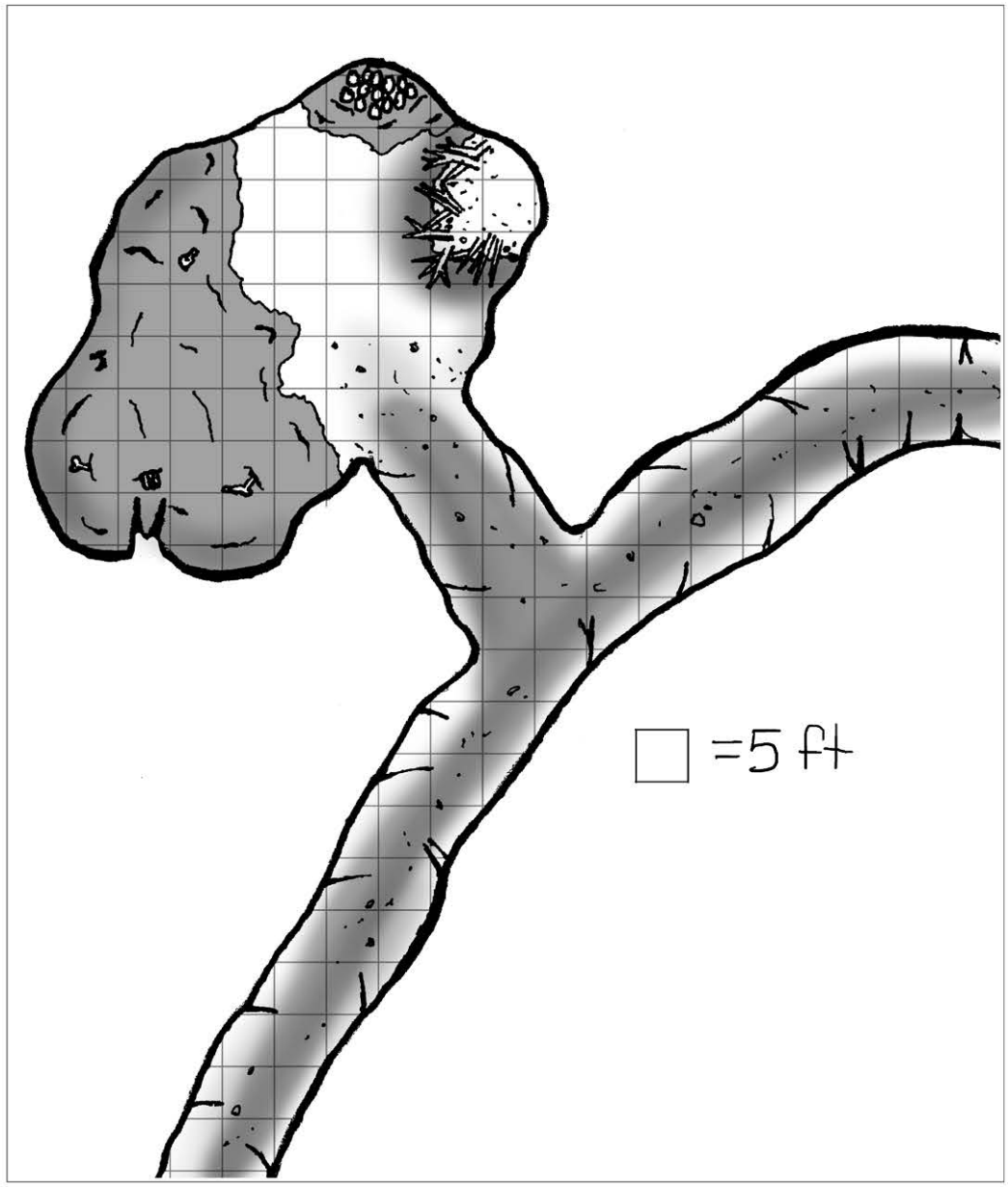
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Map 2: The Forge



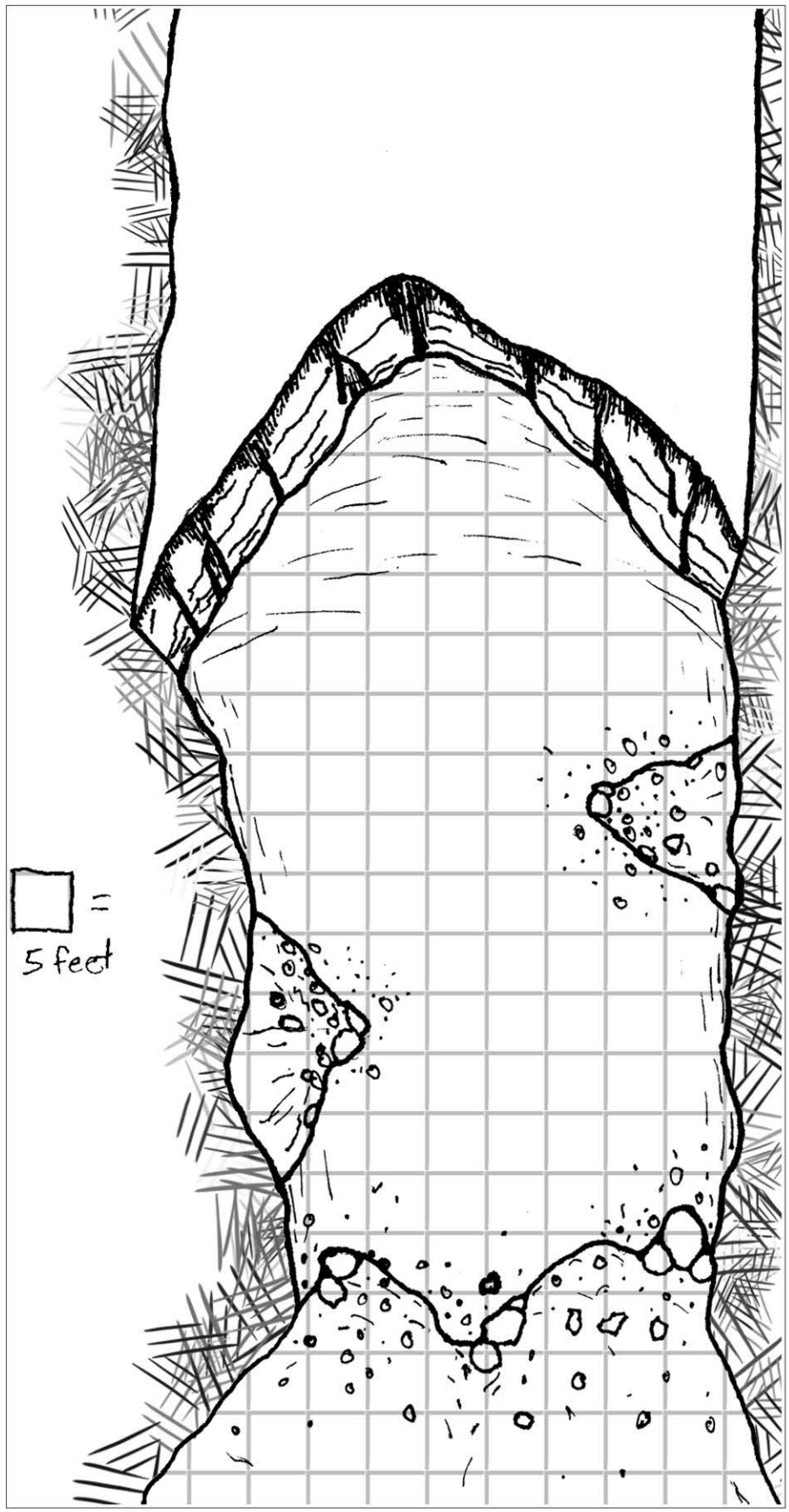
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Map 3: The Tunnel



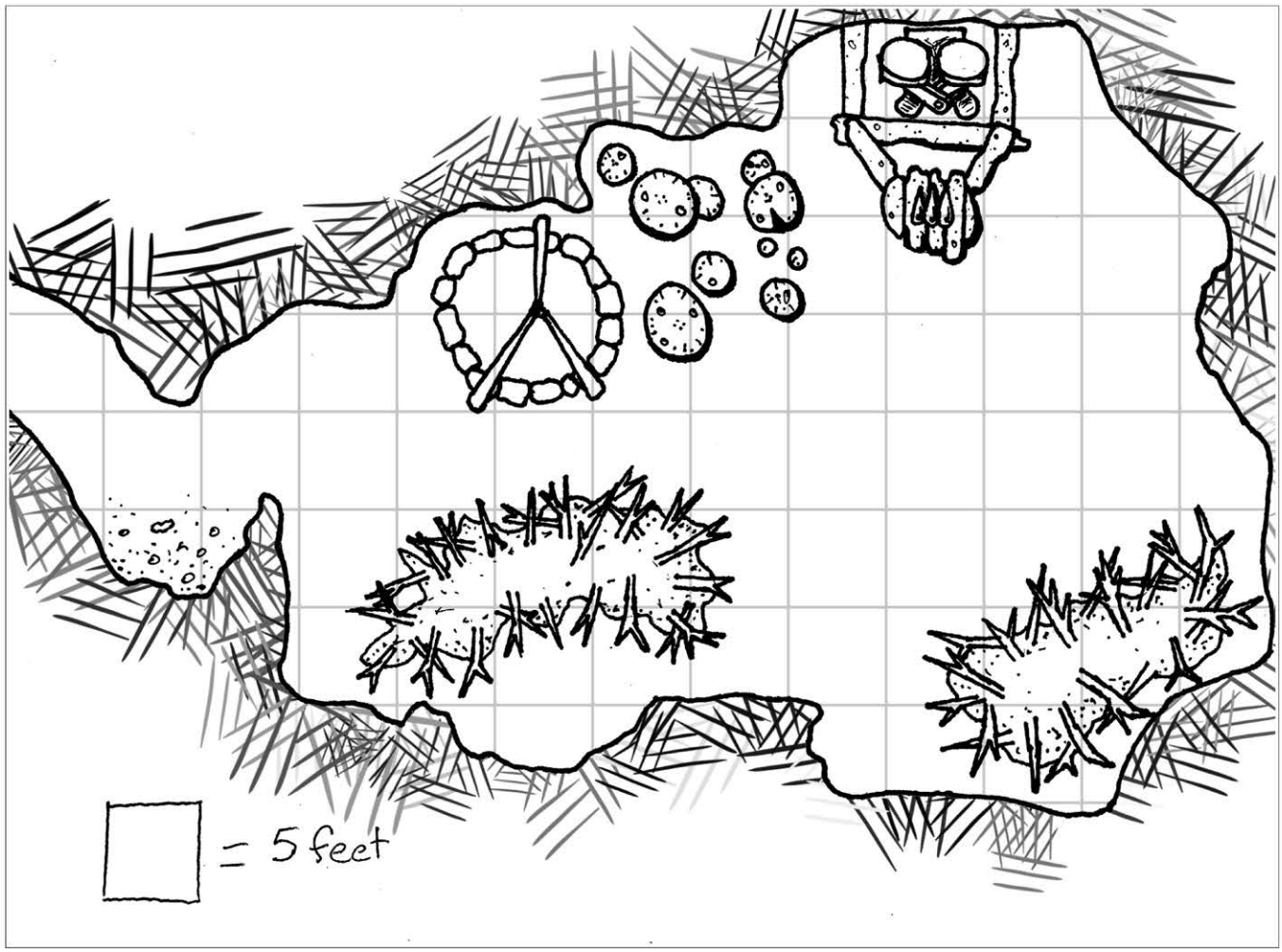
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Map 4: Stirges in the Depths



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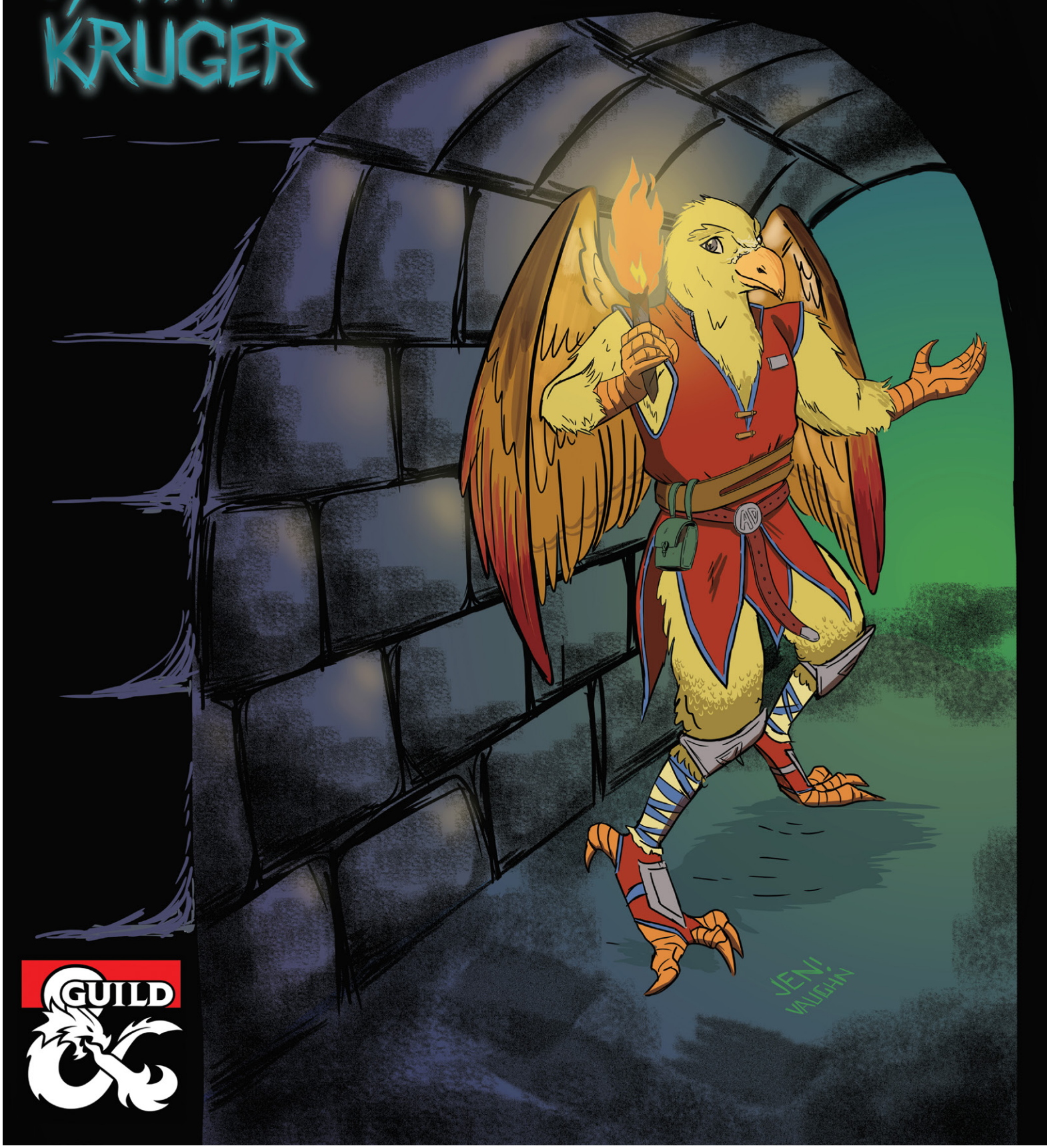
Map 5: The Cargo Cult



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SAFETY GUARANTEED

by KAT KRUGER



GUILD

Safety Guaranteed



Presented by d20 Dames

The adventuring party arrives at Emerald Forest Adventure Con where attendees can get autographs and portraits with celebrity adventurers like Volo, Elminster, and Drizzt, or wander the Merchant Hall for their adventuring needs. However, the big talk of the convention is "Actual Dungeon" — a live dungeon crawl experience with none of the risk. Unfortunately, when the characters decide to venture in, things don't go quite as promised. Originally performed in front of a live audience at Emerald City Comic Con.

A one-hour adventure for 3rd-level characters

By Kat Kruger

Cover and map by Jen Vaughn



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Safety Guaranteed

"'Actual Dungeon' gave me the skills I need to solve puzzles in the middle of combat!!"

—Drizzt Do'Urden cosplayer

Background

This mini-adventure is optimized for 3rd-level characters. Emerald Forest Adventure Con is an annual event that features a wide array of activity and programming. It includes adventuring guests, various discussion panels, celebrity signings and photo opportunities, and best-dressed contests. The convention also features a lively Merchant Hall with exhibitors from around the Forgotten Realms bringing a large inventory of armor, weapons, scrolls, and potions for sale.

Overview

The adventuring party arrives at Emerald Forest Adventure Con to delight in what the annual convention has to offer — whether it be wandering the Merchant Hall for adventuring needs or obtaining autographs and portraits with celebrity figures like Volo, Elminster, and Drizzt.

The newest addition to the convention is an attraction called "Actual Dungeon," a live dungeon crawl experience with none of the risk. Inside the one-hour escape room adventure, characters can test their skills in an environment where all combat is non-lethal.

Unfortunately, the magic that's keeping the dungeon safe has failed and the characters find themselves playing a game of actual "Actual Dungeon." After 45-minutes trapped inside the first room, the proprietor arrives with a cleric and enforcers to extricate the characters. The safety features are re-established and the adventuring party receives refunds and merchandise for their trouble.

Adventure Hook

Safety Guaranteed begins with the characters grouped together as a team for "Actual Dungeon" at Emerald Forest Adventure Con. They are among the first participants to experience the live dungeon crawl with purportedly none of the risk.

Starting the Adventure

The group of adventurers is next in line. An "Actual Dungeon" banner hangs above the entrance with the motto: "Monsters. Magic. Mayhem." The proprietor is a male dwarf by the name of Oskar Burrowfound (**commoner**) who explains the premise:

> "Hail and well met, adventurers!" the dwarf says. "Welcome to 'Actual Dungeon' where you'll experience all the thrill of a dungeon crawl with none of the risk. Safety guaranteed!"

Oskar tells the adventurers that the attraction focuses primarily on riddle and puzzle solving with light combat. Treasure will appear in the form of tokens that can be redeemed for Emerald Forest Adventure Con merchandise such as weapons, armor, potions, and spell scrolls.

If pressed for details about the safety features, Oskar explains that the rooms are enhanced with the most advanced magic spells to ensure non-lethal damage. Any cuts and scrapes can be dealt with afterward by clerics who are on hand for healing.

Before the characters begin the game, another group of adventurers exit and can be overheard speaking enthusiastically about the experience. Have the players roll for initiative. Characters are then given yellow vests with the number corresponding to their roll and the party is sent in with an assigned torchbearer, an aarakocra named Errk (**commoner**). To indicate he's off-limits as a target, he wears a red tunic. Errk is unarmed and has no effective attacks.

Roleplaying Errk

A young male aarakocra from Eagle Peak in the Storm Horns of Cormyr, Errk comes from a long line of torchbearers. He has been training for years and is eager for his moment to finally "shine." As a result, Errk is unreasonably cheerful. Many aarakocra punctuate their speech with chirps, similar to the way humans use facial expressions and gestures for emphasis. Although confinement generally terrifies most aarakocra, Errk does his best to push down his fear as he leads the characters to the small room.

The Escape Room

An unlit hallway leads to an escape room.

> As you follow your assigned torchbearer down a long corridor, the aarakocra lets out several chirps. He holds a torch with great pride.

Errk leads the characters into the room which is only lit by his torch.

> The end of the hallway opens up to a 15-foot square room. Against the eastern wall is a large wooden desk.

Upon entering, a metal door shuts behind the party

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with a definitive thud. On the desk's surface are an ink quill pen with parchment, a set of shears with a lock of hair, a wand, and a shiny stone.

> An incorporeal voice recites a riddle. "From these weapons three, our heroes must choose wisely: the enduring strength of impenetrable stone; the resilience of parchment to transcribe what is known; or the sharpness of shears that cuts to the bone. You have ten seconds to make your weapon known."

An illusion of a sand-filled hourglass appears. On its base the number 10 is inscribed. Once the riddle is recited, the hourglass flips over to begin counting down. If the characters have trouble with the riddle, allow a DC 9 Intelligence to determine that they are in a game of rock, paper, scissors.

Characters have ten seconds to choose their "weapon" by forming one of three shapes with an outstretched hand. These shapes are "stone" (a closed fist), "parchment" (a flat hand), and "shears" (a fist with the index and middle fingers extended to form a V). The DM rolls 1d4 and consults the table below.

ACTUAL DUNGEON RESOLUTION

d4	Name	Defeats	Trap Triggerred
1	Rock	Scissors	Falling rocks
2	Paper	Rock	Cloud of quills
3	Scissors	Paper	Scything blades
4	Wizard	All	Evil mage

If a character is defeated by the DM's roll or time expires before a choice is made, then a magical trap triggers targeting that character. See trap descriptions below.

A tie result in any round neither triggers a trap nor rewards a wooden token. There are three rounds of the game. At the start of each round, the first two lines of the riddle are repeated as a reminder and the hourglass begins counting down again.

After each round, a character who succeeds uncovers an "Actual Dungeon" wooden token. These tokens are meant to be redeemed for Emerald Forest Adventure Con merchandise upon exiting the game. However, since the protective magic has failed in the escape room, the tokens transform into usable items when picked up. Any character who picks up a treasure token rolls 1d12 and it transforms into the item listed in the table below. See "Treasure" for more information on each item. Upon leaving the "Actual Dungeon" premises, any character in possession of a treasure token rolls a d20. A 20 allows the character to keep the item. Otherwise the item returns to wooden token form.

ACTUAL DUNGEON TOKENS

d20	Item
1	Bracers of Cheese
2	The Cheese Knife
3	Chetstone
4	Glasses of Bushy Brows
5	Hat of Many Faces
6	Headband of Health
7	Helm of Transport
8	Lantern of Fireball
9	Startled Cat Carrier
10	Scroll of Phantasmal Tippy Taps
11	Scroll of Trolling
12	Shawl of Friendship

Traps

If a character fails in a round of the game, that character triggers a trap outlined in this section.

1. Falling rocks trap. When the trap is triggered, the ceiling temporarily opens up, causing a number of stones to fall in a five-foot square below. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2d10 damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the trap is triggered, the floor of the area is filled with rubble and becomes difficult terrain

2. Cloud of Quills trap. When the trap is triggered, a spell scroll appears. An incorporeal voice conjures sharpened ink quills in a five-foot square centered on each character who triggered the trap. Any creature in the area takes 4d4 slashing damage and is covered in ink.

3. Scything blades trap. When the trap is triggered, moving blades ascend from the floor in a five-foot square. Each Medium or larger creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The blades withdraw into the floor immediately after damage is dealt.

4. Wizard. When the trap is triggered, a wizard (**evil mage**) appears and begins combat.

Developments

Errk does not participate as he is meant to be an observer. However, since the safety protocols are malfunctioning, he is in grave danger. When the first trap is triggered, Errk is very likely killed or severely injured. Even if the characters survive injury in the first round of combat, his condition should

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be a clear indication that the fail safes in "Actual Dungeon" are not functioning.

The rock, paper, scissors game lasts for a total of three rounds or 45 minutes, whichever occurs first. At the end of the third round, a secret door opens on the opposite side of the room and the characters are able to leave freely. Otherwise, at the 45-minute mark the proprietor of "Actual Dungeon" appears with one cleric (**acolyte**) and two Emerald Forest Adventure Con enforcers (**guards**).

Treasure

Oskar Burrowfound is profusely apologetic and explains that the magical safety protocols temporarily failed. He awards the adventurers with Emerald Forest Adventure Con tunics and free passes to "Actual Dungeon."

Actual Dungeon Treasure

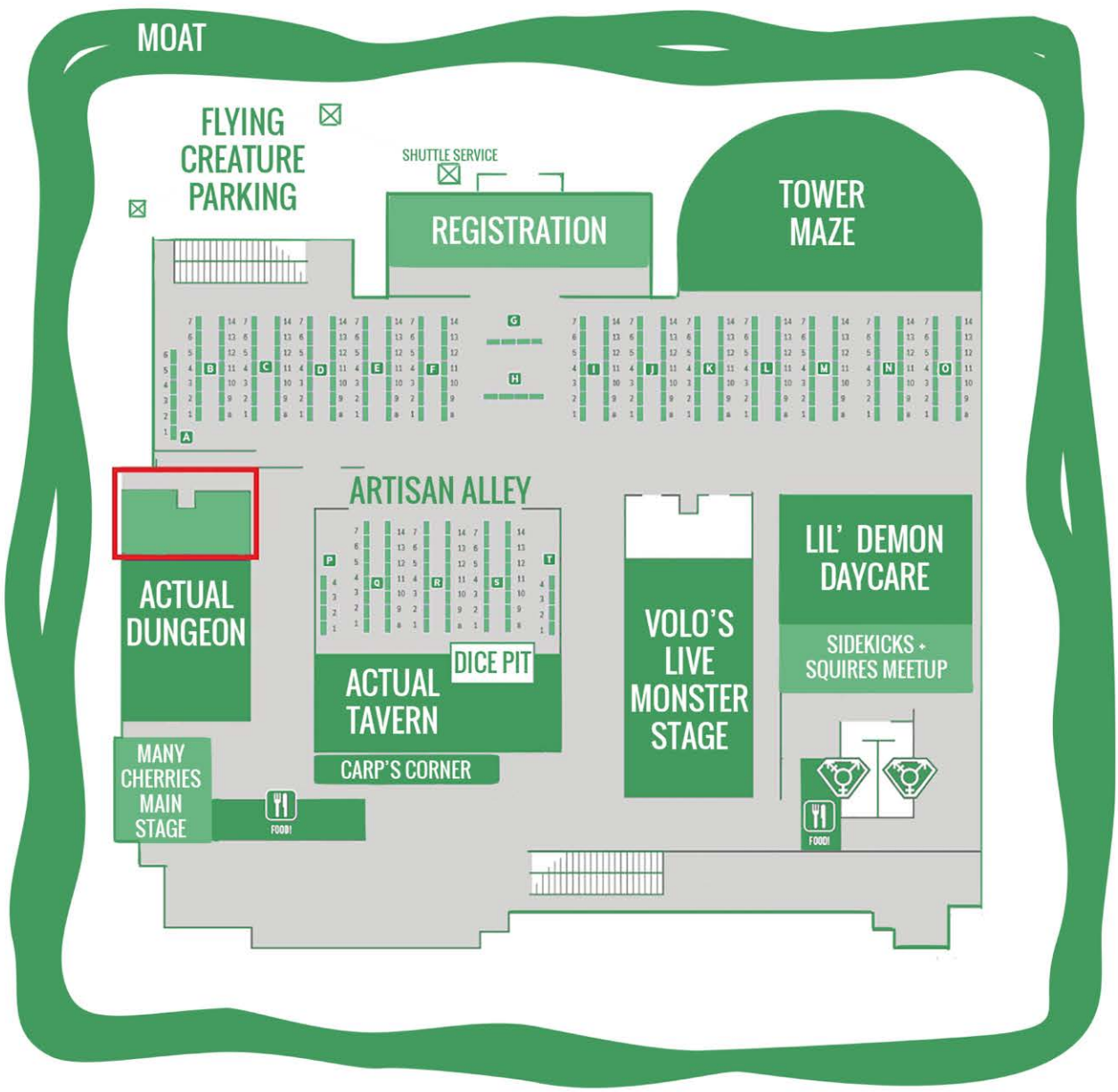
Bracers of Cheese. Summon a small cheese plate on demand. Submitted by @oneredcatmedia on Twitter.

The Cheese Knife. Any creature struck by this dagger must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom save or be overcome by a desire to eat cheese. Any cheese cut by this dagger becomes magically enchanted and never runs out. Submitted by @dedecius on Twitter.

Chetstone. A stone that summons petrified bread at will. Submitted by @wakigrl on Twitter.

Glasses of Bushy Brows. Grants the wearer darkvision and fabulously bushy eyebrows. Submitted by @starryrose94 on Twitter.

Hat of Many Faces. While it is worn, you can take an action to change the appearance of your head to any humanoid face. After five uses it vanishes with a maniacal laugh. Submitted by @DoctorKara on Twitter.



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Headband of Health. Allows the wearer to roll one hit die during an encounter to gain the result in temporary hit points. When worn, this item also grants the wearer a radical mullet. Submitted by @SparkusClark on Twitter.

Helm of Transport. Spend one charge to teleport self to a space you can see within 15 feet. The helm has one charge, which it regains at dawn. Submitted by @Alphastream on Twitter.

Lantern of Fireball. A fireball trapped in a lantern that cannot be dimmed. It casts bright light in a 30-foot radius. As an action it can be smashed. When smashed each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 8d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Submitted by Peter Foote on Facebook.

Startled Cat Carrier. A small carrier containing a magical startled cat. The cat may be released once per day to create a diversion, distract dogs, or cause comedic mayhem. The cat returns to the bag after one hour and the carrier resets at dusk. Submitted by @Pyrokleptomanic on Twitter.

Scroll of Phantasmal Tippy Taps. Using an action to read the scroll, an auditory illusion is produced of 100 dogs running on stone for 1 minute. Submitted by @Teo_Acosta on Twitter.

Scroll of Trolling. Target creature begins to hear troll voices and is stunned. The stunned target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a successful save, this stunning effect ends. Submitted by @sidewalkrunner on Twitter.

Shawl of Friendship. Wearing this shawl grants +1 to Charisma and a proficiency in Persuasion. Submitted by @lordneptune on Twitter.

Experience

For all combat experience add up the total for defeated foes and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. The rewards for non-combat experience are listed per character.

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per character
Participating in the game	25

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per foe
Wizard	200

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Monster/NPC Statistics

The monsters and NPCs in the adventure are presented in this section in alphabetical order.

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

EVIL MAGE

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22(5d8)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +3, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +5, History +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. The mage is a 4th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as its spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). The mage knows the following spells from the wizard's spell list:

Cantrips (at will): light, mage hand, shocking grasp;

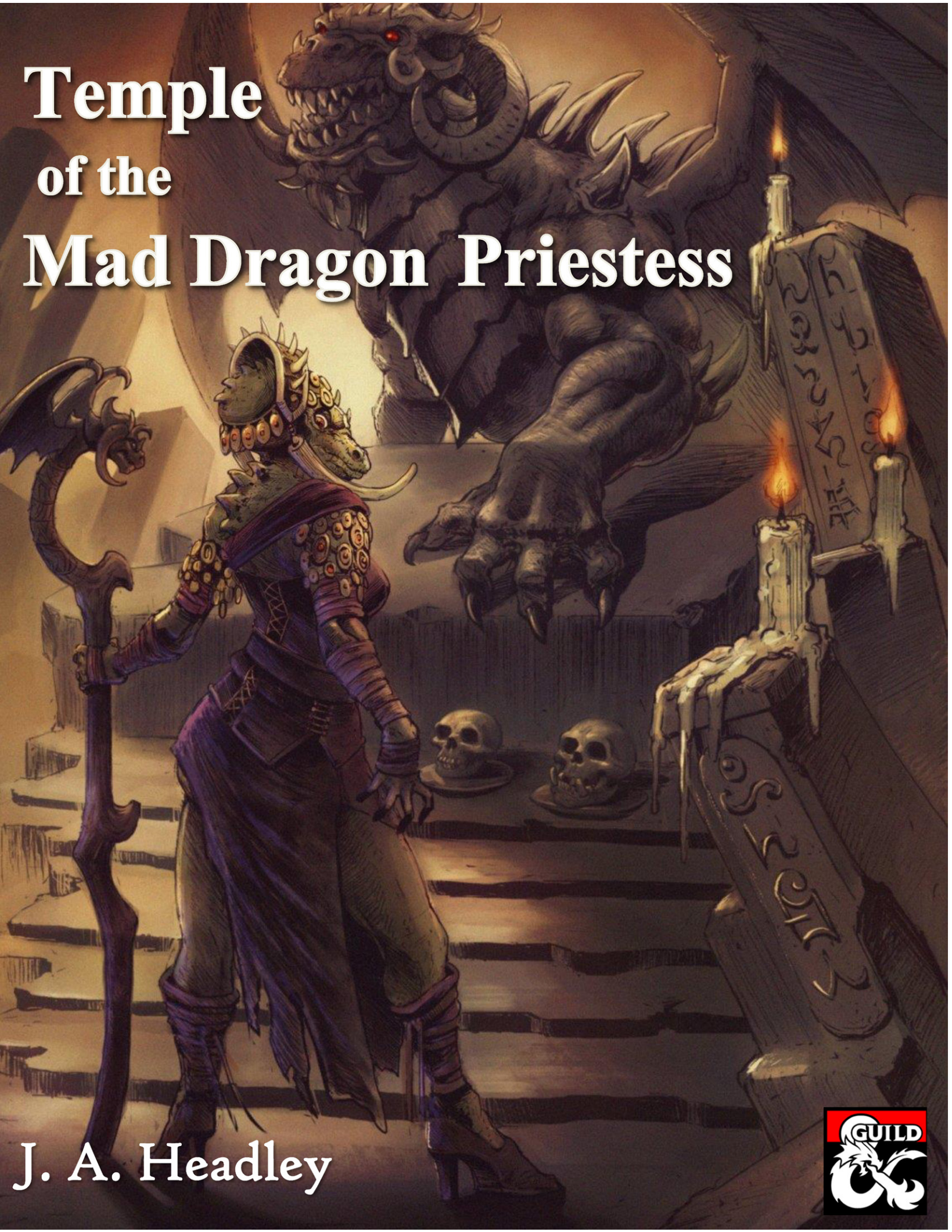
1st Level (4 slots) burning hands, magic missile;

2nd Level (3 slots): hold person, scorching ray.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d8 - 1) bludgeoning damage.

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Temple
of the
Mad Dragon Priestess
J. A. Headley
GUILD

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Temple of the Mad Dragon Priestess

By Jean A. Headley

Introduction:

This is an adventure for 4-6 first level characters. It can be quite short, or run up to six hours, depending on the paths the players choose to take.

The adventure begins when the PC's are asked to investigate strange noises coming from an old cave. Dragon cultists, in the form of kobolds and a dragonborn cleric, have moved into the cave.

If you wish, you can jump straight to the action at **A. The Cave** and give the players **The Job** as part of the backstory.

Using This Module

It is highly recommended that you read the module through and make notes or adjustments where needed before running this module.

In most cases, room dimensions are given from the point of view of a character entering the room. Where there are multiple entrances to a room, dimensions are given East-West first, then North-South.

Text in boxes like this one is meant for the DM only, and contains hints, tips, or important information.

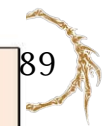
Text in boxes like this one is information meant for the players. Read the text aloud, paraphrase it, or summarize it.

Text in boxes like this one represents speech from NPC's. Again, read the text aloud, paraphrase it, or summarize it. This also represents role-playing opportunities for the players.

Environment and Lighting

The kobolds are making a tremendous amount of noise as they work to repair the lair. Periodically, the lair and surrounding countryside will echo with the ringing of hammers on stone, the thumping of hammers on wood, and the rhythmic wheezing of hand saws. The noise will provide the party with advantage on **Dexterity (Stealth)** checks, and will cover the sounds of combat. If the party seems to be having an easy time of it, have the construction stop during a battle. The sounds of combat alert other kobolds who then either prepare ambushes or come join in the fray.

The kobolds have darkvision, but Narida, the dragonborn, does not. There is light from the hearth in the kitchen/dining hall, and from torches in sconces in the temple. If the lair is dark, and the party is moving with torches, they are easily noticed by the kobolds and can be ambushed.



Playing the Kobolds
Most of the kobolds in the lair are not fighters. Though some will attack any intruders on sight, others will be happy to talk and preach their new religion. They are still chaotic evil in alignment, and will do anything they think needs doing to further their cause. They are fanatically loyal to Narida, who accepted them in spite of their weaknesses and failings.

The lair is carved stone. It's obviously dwarven design, but very little of it is actually dwarven workmanship. To any dwarves in the party, the difference in quality is apparent.

The walls are only 7' tall, but the ceilings are vaulted to 8'. Dragonborn and half-orc characters may find the space cramped. Doorways are only 6', and tall characters may have to duck.

The kobolds have added numerous draconic embellishments, but the artists aren't terribly skilled.

Resting

This is a living community, and the kobolds are constantly wandering about. Once the characters

enter the kitchen/dining room (Room 3), and if any of the kobolds escape the encounter, the rest of the lair will be on alert. The kobolds will search for the characters until they are certain the characters have left. Under these circumstances, the secret tunnel behind rooms 6.a, b, and c, is possibly the best place for the characters to rest. Another option is the secret room 4.a. Though the kobolds know it's there, and they use it, it's not a high-traffic room.

Back Story:

Blackstone Cave used to be a smugglers' lair. They carved out rooms and places to live with the help of a dwarven stone mason. The smugglers became a little too successful, and adventurers were hired to "eliminate" the problem.

The lair has been abandoned and all-but-forgotten – until recently. A group of dragon cultists, led by a dragonborn cleric (Narida), found the lair and claimed it. They have been working to make it habitable again, and their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

The mad priestess, in her zeal, has a black wyrmling in the lair. She believes the wyrmling is an avatar of the goddess Tiamat, and she is raising it accordingly. She has convinced the kobolds who follow her that if they can successfully raise this wyrmling they will be given the task to find and raise another. Once all five avatars are grown, Tiamat will be able to manifest in the world and reunite with Bahamut, healing the rift between them.

The strange sounds coming from the old lair has the local leadership concerned. They are recruiting a small group of adventurers to investigate, discover the source of the noise, and clear out any smugglers or bandits that have reclaimed the cave.

The Job

Prelate Jacoby from the local temple has been given the responsibility of recruiting adventurers for this task. He has paid town criers to advertise. The characters may hear one of the criers, or they may hear about the job in a tavern or at the market.

The Crier

"Hear ye, hear ye! By the order of his Lordship Donovan of the Merchants' Guild, sheep will no longer be allowed unpenned in the market place! Revered Jacoby, Prelate of Torm, is seeking brave men and women, skilled in arms or magic, to investigate a local disturbance! He offers each qualified respondent ten gold pieces as reward! Hear ye, hear ye!"

Speaking to Prelate Jacoby

If the characters ask, Prelate Jacoby can be found in the temple. The crier (or bar maid or merchant) describes a silver-haired man with a scarred face, a pronounced limp, and a black oak cane.

Inside the temple, you see the man that was described to you, leaning on his black cane and speaking with a group of eight young men and women. He is dressed in simple but well-made white trousers and tunic. As you near, you realize he is giving the group instructions and duties to be completed by the next morning. He notices your approach, and dismisses the acolytes.

"Good day, fine folk. You've come about the commission? Good, good. Many years ago, when I was a small boy, a group of bandits and smugglers set up shop in a cave nearby. Over the course of a year or so they became quite skilled at their 'jobs'. Eventually, after all other efforts to stop them failed, adventurers such as yourselves were hired to end them. " He gets a faraway look and sighs. "Ah, I remember the stories. There were seven of them, in oiled leather and shining steel. Alas, only five of them returned, but I heard them telling their tale…."

If he is not interrupted, Jacoby continues to relate the tale, telling the party it was his inspiration for becoming an adventurer. Jacoby often gets lost in the past. You may continue to add details to his story until someone brings him back to the task at hand, or you can tell your players that their characters will have to get the

old man's attention to bring him back to the present.

"Ahem, yes, well… the point is, the place has been abandoned all these years. Most people have forgotten it. Lately, however, hunters and woodsmen have been reporting hearing strange sounds that they are certain come from the cave. We don't want a repeat of last time, so we'd like you to investigate. Find out if bandits have returned and deal with them if you can. And for Torm's sake, find out what's creating the noise so honest folk can sleep at night. I'll pay each of you ten gold and you may keep any coin or valuables you find on the bandits. Erm, unique or identifiable items will be returned to their owners, of course. What say you? Will you accept?"

Preparation

Give the party time to prepare for their adventure. It's likely the party will need a source of light, and they may want a few days' worth of rations. If the party asks where they can buy equipment, Jacoby tells them the temple sells healing kits and potions, and the nearby market should have everything else they need.

If the party asks about Blackstone Cave, Jacoby gladly tells them what he remembers, describing the lair as a combination of natural caves and rooms carved from the rock. He believes one of the smugglers was a dwarf, thrown out of his clan for thieving. Jacoby remembers the lair as massive, but he admits that to a small boy it would have sounded that way. He believes there is plenty of fresh water in or near the cave, and he draws a crude map for them, showing the relative location of the cave from the town. He has no real knowledge of the interior, other than the descriptions he's already given.

A. The Cave

Blackstone Cave is a short distance away, about an hour and a half travel time at a brisk walk. The woods around have grown thick, but there are abundant game trails. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check reveals that there is no new game activity: all animal signs and tracks are at least six months old.

The party begins to hear the strange noises long before they find the cave. The odd banging and eerie wheezing sounds come and go, gradually getting louder as the party approaches the cave. Any party member who makes a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check recognizes the sounds as hammering and sawing. The kobolds are unaware that the sounds of their remodeling are so loud, or carry so far.

The mouth of the cave is a small rocky hole in the hillside, overgrown with shrubs and vines. It's obvious somebody has tried to preserve the abandoned look but there has been too much traffic. Though the vines and shrubs are undisturbed, the ground has been trampled bare.

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check reveals clawed tracks in the soil. With a roll of 15 or better, the character knows the tracks were made by kobolds.

Inside the mouth of the cave is a small oval chamber about six feet deep and ten feet wide. It peaks in the center at about six feet tall. The only light comes from the cave mouth but, in the dim, dust-filled light, you can see a tunnel. It's approximately five feet wide and five to six feet high in the middle, leading northwest into the darkness.

The tunnel is about fifty feet long and opens into a second, larger cave.

The Inner Cave

The tunnel opens into a larger cave, about twenty-five feet wide and forty feet deep. It has a stream running through it, entering through a foot-wide crack in the wall to your left. The stream widens briefly to five feet near the center of the cave, then narrows again and exits through another crack in the wall to your right. Fungus and moss grow in thick profusion near the stream, making it very slippery. The cave smells of damp earth, stone, and mushrooms. It also smells faintly of body wastes and… flowers? You can hear hammers striking stone, even over the burbling of the stream.

The above paragraph assumes the characters can see. If they don't have darkvision and aren't carrying any light then focus your description on what they can hear, smell, and feel.

To cross the stream the characters need to make a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. Without light or Darkvision, the check is made with disadvantage. On a failed check, the PC slips and falls for 1pt of damage. There is a 10% chance that the PC has sprained an ankle – all subsequent **Dexterity** checks are made with disadvantage and speed is reduced by five feet for 1d4 hours, or until healed. There is a 1% chance the PC drops something into the water, losing it forever.

You may wish to omit the skill check for crossing the stream, or remove the damage and other negative consequences. The key here is to make the players feel like they are exploring a dark, dank, slimy cave, and that it's potentially very dangerous.

Once across the stream, you discover that the far wall has been carefully squared off, and shored with thick timbers. There is a door set into the wall to your far right.

There is a trap in front of the door. A character with a passive **Wisdom (Perception)** score of **14** or better will notice that the floor in front of the door is slightly higher than the surrounding cave floor. If they look around, they will notice tiny holes in the ceiling. When the pressure plate in the floor is depressed, it releases a flurry of tiny darts from the ceiling. Each salvo releases **1d6+1 (5)**darts, each dart dealing **1** point of **piercing** damage. The character may make a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check for half damage.

There are 2d10 (12) salvos of darts prepared and stored in the ceiling. Each time the pressure plate is activated a salvo fires. Once the characters have found the pressure plate they should be able to navigate around it easily.

The door is a simple wooden door, with a bright bass handle set fairly low. Both appear to be new. There are small claw marks in the wood around the handle.

The claw marks are from kobolds opening the door.

B. The Lair

1. The Entrance Hall

The door opens onto a corridor, about five feet wide and ten feet long, which then opens into a room. The room stretches ten feet to either side of you, and fifteen feet ahead. There are four doors, one in the middle of the wall to your left; one in the middle of the wall to your right, and two, evenly spaced, on the wall opposite to you. The room is empty, but clean, and it appears the floor and walls have recently been repaired. There are newly-cut flagstones here and there, and fresh wooden beams across the ceiling. Crudely carved dragons decorate the beams. The doors are pale wood, and have that fresh wood smell.

There is a *shocking grasp* spell trap on the handle of the NE door. A character with a passive **Wisdom (Perception)** score of **14** or better notices scorch marks on both the door and the wall near the handle. A successful **Intelligence (Investigation)** roll of **12** or better reveals the nature of the trap. With a successful **Intelligence (Arcana)** roll of **12** or better a character realizes the verbalization "*szzt*" can be used to arm or disarm the trap. Casting d*ispel magic* will permanently remove the trap, providing the caster succeeds on a **DC 14** spellcasting check. The trap is triggered only by grasping and turning the handle, and causes **1d8 (5) lightning** damage.

2. The Barracks

The door opens onto a long hallway, five feet wide and about forty-five feet long. There is a single door to your immediate left, and three doors to your right.

These rooms serve as a barracks for most of the kobold cultists. To the left is an open dormitory-

style room, and to the right are three large bedrooms, each with two higher-ranking kobolds bunking there. There are six kobolds sleeping in the dorm, and 1d4+2 kobolds in the other three rooms.

2.a The Dormitory

You open the door to your left and find a large room, stretching twenty-five feet to your right, and fifteen feet ahead. There are six small bunk beds against the far wall, and four more to your right. Luckily, only six of the beds are occupied.

The kobolds are not light sleepers, having learned to sleep through all the banging and sawing of the reconstruction effort. However, opening the door, and possibly letting in light, will wake them. If the players declare they are trying to be stealthy *before* they open the door, have the character who opens it make a **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. Increase the **DC** to **15** if the party is using a light source.

With the beds and chests, there is very little room to maneuver. The kobolds, being small creatures, can strike from the relative safety of the bunkbeds. Small-sized characters can use this to their advantage as well. If you wish to make this battle more challenging, consider the room as difficult terrain, and the kobolds as having half cover, giving them +2 to AC and Dexterity saving throws.

Kobold Followers (small humanoid) (25xp)

AC: 12 **HP:** 5 **Spd:** 30'
S: -2 **D:** +2 **C:** -1 **I:** -1 **W:** -2 **Ch:** -1
Darkvision: 60'
Sunlight Sensitivity: Disad. On Perception in sunlight
Pack Tactics: Adv. on attack rolls if ally within 5' of target
Dagger: melee, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** piercing
Sling: range 30/120, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** bludgeoning

HP Tracker

Kf 1	Kf 2	Kf 3	Kf 4	Kf 5	Kf 6
5	5	5	5	5	5

If the party enters this room first, they surprise the kobolds and gain initiative unless they fail their stealth check. The two kobolds nearest the door grab daggers and block the party. The other four grab their slings and pelt the party with stones.

If the party is having an easy time of it, have the sounds of battle alert the kobolds in the other rooms. The party will suddenly have up to 6 more kobolds behind them. If the party is struggling, use the ambient sounds of hammers on stones to cover up the sound of the fight.

Kobold Leaders (small humanoid) (35xp)

AC: 13 **HP:** 6 **Spd:** 30'
S: -2 **D:** +3 **C:** -1 **I:** -1 **W:** -2 **Ch:** +0
Darkvision: 60'
Sunlight Sensitivity: Disad. On Perception in sunlight
Pack Tactics: Adv. on attack rolls if ally within 5' of target
Dagger: melee, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** piercing
Sling: range 30/120, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** bludgeoning

HP Tracker

KL 1	KL 2	KL 3	KL 4	KL 5	KL 6
6	6	6	6	6	6

After the fight:

Each of the beds has a chest at its foot, neatly divided in two. The kobolds kept their personal possessions in these chests, including dice, water skins, daggers, oil and whetstones, slings and stones, leather strips for repairing slings and armor, and other similar things. Between them, the kobolds living here also had 60 copper pieces, 12 silver, 2 gold, and 4 pieces of plain jewelry worth 10 gold each.

2. b, c, d Bedroom

Each of these rooms is 10' x 15', reclaimed and made into bedrooms. There are two sturdy but crudely-made beds and chests in each room. Each chest holds various personal items, and 1d4 x 10 copper pieces, 1d6 silver, and 1d4 gold.

2. e.

This is an antechamber.

The corridor opens onto a small room, ten feet deep and fifteen feet wide. There is a door in the middle of the wall in front of you, another in the far corner of the wall to your left, and a third in the far corner of the wall to your right.
There is a ladder propped up in the corner to your right, with a crate of cut stone at its foot and a box of tools. There are chips of stone and spatters of mortar on the floor, and a spot high on the wall where the stone is obviously being repaired.
Someone has tried to carve a… well, you *think* it's supposed to be a dragon but it might be a chicken?
There is also a chest of drawers in the corner to your left.

The chest holds, of all things, fresh towels, wash cloths, and ceramic jars. The jars hold either powdered soap or oil, both smelling of fresh herbs and flowers.



If the party is in need of healing, include a jar of healing salve to the items found in, or on, the chest of drawers. The jar holds 3-6 doses of salve (1d4+2). Each dose acts as a common *potion of healing*, and heals 2d4+2 points of damage. It also smells nice.

The door to the left leads to the bath. The door straight ahead leads to a staircase and the changing room. The door to the right leads to a linen closet.

2. f. The Bath

This L-shaped room is a bath. There is a privy, screened with thin wood slats, to the immediate left of the door. There is a trench of water against the far wall, about five feet wide and twenty feet long. Clear water flows in from the right, and dirty water flows out on the left. The room smells of damp stone, soap, and scented oils. There is a pile of wet towels and dirty clothes in the far right corner. You have surprised 3 kobolds, two of whom are enjoying a bubbly bath, while the third applies lilac-scented oil to his scales. They stare at you a moment and then one of the bathers slowly sinks beneath water.

These guys are washing up before going to the temple below. Their weapons are next to their dirty laundry. Given the opportunity, they will talk with the party, explaining their holy mission to repair the breach between Tiamat and Bahamut. They will happily tell the party all about Narida, the black wyrmling, and the plan to create avatars for Tiamat so she can manifest on the mortal plane. They do not wish to fight, but if they are attacked they will fight viciously until one of them can attempt to break free to warn **Neekos** in *2.g,* the **Changing Room**. They have + 6 to hit, which reflects their desperation. If they do not have the opportunity to retrieve their daggers, their damage is reduced to 2pts. of slashing damage from their claws.

Kobold Follower (small humanoid) (25xp)

AC: 12 **HP:** 5 **Spd:** 30'
S: -2 **D**: +2 **C:** -1 **I:** -1 **W:** -2 **Ch:** -1
Darkvision: 60'
Sunlight Sensitivity: Disad. On Perception in sunlight
Pack Tactics: Adv. on attack rolls if ally within 5' of target
Dagger: melee, **+6** to hit, **1d4+2** piercing
Sling: range 30/120, **+6** to hit, **1d4+2** bludgeoning
Claw: +6 to hit, **2pts** slashing

HP Tracker

Kf 1	**Kf 2**	**Kf 3**
5	5	5

2. g The Changing Room

A short flight of stairs leads down to a square chamber about fifteen feet on each side. There are wooden racks along the walls to your left and right. A couple of dozen white robes hang from the racks, with a handful of black robes scattered through them. All the robes appear to be made for creatures the size of the kobolds, except two much larger black robes hanging apart in one corner. There is a secret door, slightly ajar, in the far left corner. You have surprised several freshly-bathed kobolds in the act of donning robes. One of them is donning black, and his face is hideously scarred.

There are 6 kobolds getting dressed in here. The one who is donning black is an acolyte named Neekos, his face scarred by dragon acid.

The kobolds opened the secret door, preparing to descend to the temple. The three kobolds nearest the party will block the party and attack with daggers. Two more will attack with slings, while Neekos will start by casting *guiding bolt.* He will also use *spare the dying* on his companions when necessary.

Kobold Follower (small humanoid) (25xp)

AC: 12 **HP:** 5 **Spd:** 30'
S: -2 **D:** +2 **C:** -1 **I:** -1 **W:** -2 **Ch:** -1
Darkvision: 60'
Sunlight Sensitivity: Disad. On Perception in sunlight
Pack Tactics: Adv. on attack rolls if ally within 5' of target
Dagger: melee, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** piercing
Sling: range 30/120, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** bludgeoning

Neekos (small humanoid) (50xp)

AC: 13 **HP:** 7 **Spd:** 30'
S: -2 **D:** +2 **C:** -1 **I:** -1 **W:** -2 **Ch:** -1
Darkvision: 60'
Sunlight Sensitivity: Disad. On Perception in sunlight
Pack Tactics: Adv. on attack rolls if ally within 5' of target
Dagger: melee, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** piercing
Sling: range 30/120, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** bludgeoning
Guiding Bolt (1): +4 to hit, 4d6 radiant

You will find Neekos' full stat block on page 17 of this module.

HP Tracker

Neekos	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5
7	5	5	5	5	5

The secret door leads to a small round chamber with a broken ladder. There is a thin but sturdy rope attached to the last unbroken rung. The other end of the rope is attached to the rest of the ladder. Neekos uses the rope to pull up the bottom half of the ladder, then uses the **Mending** cantrip to repair the ladder. When the kobolds are finished in the temple and have ascended to lair, Neekos carefully breaks the ladder again, using the rope to lower the bottom half back down.

Party members may make a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** check to repair the ladder. A character with proficiency in woodworking tools may make this check with advantage.

2. h. The linen closet

This is a small room, only ten feet long by five feet wide, with shelves lining the walls. The shelves hold folded towels and wash cloths, folded bed linens, ceramic jars with soaps and oils, and clean chamber pots.



The jars of scented oils are worth 2 silver each, and there are 1d6 + 4 jars. The kobolds seem to prefer lilac, rosemary, and sandalwood. There is also one jar of healing salve with 3 doses left. Each dose heals 1d4+2 (or 4) hit points of damage when applied directly to a wound. This jar hasn't had the fragrant oils added to it yet, and is odorless.

3. The Dining Hall

Even before the characters open the door they can smell wood smoke, roasting meat, and strong ale. A character who makes a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** check can tell there are a variety of meats being roasted.

This room stretches ten feet to your left, twenty feet to your right, and thirty feet ahead of you. There are three long dining tables with benches occupying the center of the room. There is a large hearth in the middle of the far wall with work tables to either side. There is a fire burning merrily in the hearth and a big iron cauldron hanging over the fire. There are also two kobolds at the work tables preparing food, and six more sitting at the tables, eating. They stare at you for a moment then move to defend their home.

There are 8 kobolds scattered in the dining hall. The four nearest the door attack the party with daggers while the others use slings to pelt the party with stones.

If it's clear the kobolds are going to lose the fight, the kobold nearest the secret door uses the disengage action to try to escape. If he is successful, he runs to warn others. If the kobold is defeated before reaching the door, the party can find the secret door with a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check.

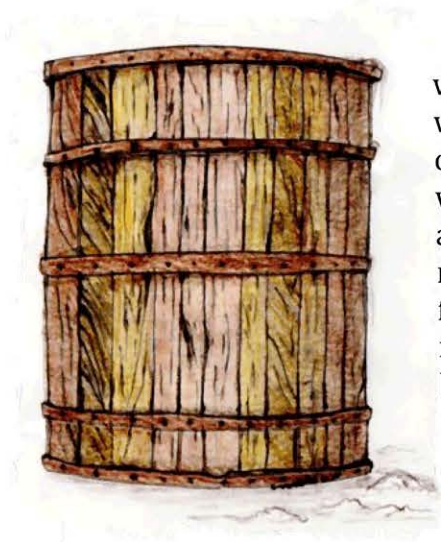
If the kobold at the secret door bolts, the one nearest the store room (area 3.a) dashes through the store room door and attempts to hide in a flour barrel.

If the kobolds are defeated, the party can find a total of 20 copper and 4 silver on their bodies. Each also carries a dagger and a sling with 1d6 stones in a pouch.

3.a. The Store Room

This is a store room, stretching five feet to either side of you, and twenty feet ahead of you. There are shelves along the walls, holding boxes, sacks, jars, pots, pans, and a variety of other kitchen utensils. Crates, barrels, and boxes crowd the floor. Some are old and dust-covered, cracked and falling apart. However, many of the containers are new.

If the party investigates the various containers they will find foodstuffs like flour, sugar, salt, salted fish, and salted meat. There is a large barrel holding fresh water, and a keg of very dark, bitter ale. The only thing worth taking, that is easily transported, is the salt. There are three



well-made wooden boxes full of salt, each worth 1 silver. In addition, they may find a kobold from the dining room hiding in a barrel of flour.

3. b. The Privy

This is a small chamber, only five feet on each side. There are two stone "thrones", with holes in the seats. You can hear the burbling of water, possibly the stream you crossed when you entered this place. The room smells of bodily wastes, but it's not overwhelming as you would expect.

Dwarves in the party will note that this is dwarven workmanship, most likely apprentice-level work.

4. The Office

This small room, fifteen feet long by ten feet wide, appears to have been an office. The remains of a desk and chair clutter one corner. An eight-foot-long lump along the base of the north wall is all that is left of a tapestry. The rod is still attached to the wall. There are many footprints in the dust on the floor, but the current residents are not yet making use of this room.

A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals the secret door that the tapestry once helped to hide.

4.a The Secret Room

This is a 15' x 10' secret room. There are secret doors in the middle of the south and north walls, and in the south corner of the east wall. From in this room, the doors are noticeable to anyone with a passive **Wisdom (Perception)** score of 10 or better.

A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals the pressure plate in the floor. The plate triggers a spear trap hidden in the east corner of the north wall.

When a medium or larger creature steps on the pressure plate, 3 slim spears thrust out of the north wall. The creature must make a **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** save or take **3d4 piercing** damage.

This room is oddly clean. In one corner sits a small, newly-made crate. Next to it is a wooden box with the handle of a wood saw sticking out of it.

The crate holds a dozen slings and small leather pouches. Each pouch holds 6 sling stones. Besides the wood saw, the box holds a hammer, and a set of chisels. The tools are worth 2 gold, and the slings and pouches are worth 24 silver total.

5. The Tavern

This large room looks like an abandoned tavern. There's a collapsed bar along the west wall with an old keg behind it. Scattered about the room are tables and chairs, half black with age, and the other half pale and new. There is a neat pile of lumber along the east wall, and a box full of tools sits nearby.

There are also six kobolds sitting around one of the new tables and playing dice. They stop and stare a moment before going for their weapons. Alternatively, if the party visited the kitchen/dining hall first and one of the kobolds escaped that encounter, the kobolds in here could be ready, gaining advantage on their initiative roll.



Kobold Followers (small humanoid) (25xp)

AC: 12 **HP:** 5 **Spd:** 30'

S: -2 **D:** +2 **C:** -1 **I:** -1 **W:** -2 **Ch:** -1

Darkvision: 60'

Sunlight Sensitivity: Disad. On Perception in sunlight

Pack Tactics: Adv. on attack rolls if ally within 5' of target

Dagger: melee, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** piercing

Sling: range 30/120, **+4** to hit, **1d4+2** bludgeoning

HP Tracker

Kf 1	Kf 2	Kf 3	Kf 4	Kf 5	Kf 6
5	5	5	5	5	5

5.a The Tavern Keeper's Room

This small room, fifteen feet long by ten feet wide, appears to have been a bedroom. The broken remains of a bed clutter one corner. Someone has used a pile of straw to build a nest within the old frame. There is also a broken old desk with the drawers falling out. You can see a leather-bound book in one of the drawers. The rest of the room is relatively clean.

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The book is a ledger, detailing the liquid stock of the tavern. The last entry reads:

> *Order two more kegs of ale. I need to talk with the Captain. The men are going through the ale too fast. They're not going to be worth a bent copper in a fight if they're hungover all the time.*

A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals the two secret doors. One is in the east corner of the south wall and leads to room 4.a. The other is in the west corner of the north wall and leads to a long corridor.

The corridor has three doors, at 10' intervals, along the west wall. These are the rears of the three secret doors in bedrooms: 6a, b, and c. The corridor runs for about 50' before it becomes a narrow, twisting, natural tunnel, sloping up and to the east. At this point it is too narrow for most medium-sized creatures to navigate without squeezing into it. (See "Squeezing into a Smaller Space", PHb pg. 192.) It leads to a small exit

hidden in the forest. The kobolds use this tunnel when they go hunting in the forest. There are blood smears on the walls and drips on the floor, left when the kobolds came back through with fresh kills.

6. The Bedrooms

While the party explores this part of the lair, they will frequently hear the sound of hammers on stone. The sound gets louder as they approach rooms 6.e and f.

6.a

This room is ten feet by fifteen feet, and is fairly clean. There is a small bed in one corner, covered with a thin blanket over straw. The frame is new and crudely-made, but looks sturdy. There is a medium sized chest at the foot of the bed, which also looks newly made.

There are clothes, a blanket, woodworking tools (1g), a full water skin, dried meat [a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Survival)** check reveals it's bear], and a leather pouch with 10 copper, 4 silver, and an uncut emerald worth 10 gold.

6.b

This is another bedroom, ten feet by fifteen feet. The old bed, wardrobe, dresser, and chest are still here though they are beyond repair. There is a pile of wood in one corner. It appears that someone is dismantling the old furniture.

The wood in the corner is weak from dry rot, and crumbles easily if touched. There isn't anything of value left in the room.

6.c

This room is ten feet on each side. The remains of a bed, wardrobe, and chest litter the floor, along with a cracked ceramic pot about a foot in diameter. There appears to be something written or painted on the outside.

Closer inspection of the pot reveals delicate flowers painted on the outside, the paint now faded and chipped. There is a brown crust on the inside. With a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** check, the character would realize the pot is a chamber pot and the brown crust is dried excrement.

Each of these three rooms has a secret door leading to the escape tunnel. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check is required to find them, unless the party enters from the tunnel.

6. d

This small square chamber has been completely cleared out. The floor is damp, and the air smells of stone and soap.

6. e, f

The wall between these two rooms has been collapsed. The debris from this room has been carefully piled near the collapsed wall. A small section of the wall has been cleared allowing movement between the two rooms. The three kobolds working on cleaning these rooms are still here. They stare at you, rubble in their hands.

These kobolds are not fighters, and will happily negotiate with the party. If allowed to flee, they will exit through room 6.c, leaving the secret door open. If they are attacked they will use the rubble in their hands as makeshift weapons, dealing 1pt. of bludgeoning damage on a successful hit.

Kobold Follower (small humanoid) (25xp)

AC: 12 **HP:** 5 **Spd:** 30'

S: -2 **D:** +2 **C:** -1 **I:** -1 **W:** -2 **Ch:** -1

Darkvision: 60'

Sunlight Sensitivity: Disad. On Perception in sunlight

Pack Tactics: Adv. on attack rolls if ally within 5' of target

Rubble: melee, **+4** to hit, **1pt** bludgeoning

HP Tracker

Kf 1	Kf 2	Kf 3
5	5	5

If the kobolds are defeated, they have 1d4x10 copper, and 1d4 silver pieces between them.

7. The Tunnel

The corridor connecting these rooms continues, but becomes a twisting natural tunnel. After about 35', the tunnel forks.

There is a trap built into the wall where the tunnel forks. Tiny openings allow acid to jet into the tunnel whenever a creature steps onto the pressure plate set in the floor. The plate is fairly obvious, as is the stench of acid and the corrosive marks on the walls, ceiling, and floor. The trap blocks both forks of the tunnel. The kobolds regularly milk the wyrmling for acid, refilling the trap's reservoir. The jets are tiny, and the acid does only **2d6 (8) acid** damage on a failed **DC 12 Dexterity** save, or half as much on a successful save. The trap can be neutralized in various ways, including keeping the pressure plate depressed until the reservoir runs dry – which takes about ten minutes. Whatever is placed on the plate will likely be completely destroyed.

The right hand fork quickly narrows, becoming too small to navigate. It eventually closes completely, becoming nothing but a crack in the stone.

The left hand tunnel winds and twists around, eventually opening into the small cave filled with the wyrlmling's dung. (See **E. The Wyrmling Den**)

C. The Pit

The Pit is accessed by a short 15' corridor leading from Room 5 **The Tavern**. When the bandits inhabited this lair, this was an auditorium of sorts, with a fighting pit in the middle. The kobolds have dug out the center of the floor, revealing a cave below. There is a roughly 5' wide ledge around the room, and a steeply sloped "lip" also about 5' wide. Anyone who missteps onto the slope must make a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check, or slide into the chamber below. The chamber floor is 30' down, but there is a pile of bones and debris that reduces the drop to 20'. Any creature that falls into the pit takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall, and lands prone. They must then avoid the **black wyrmling** (MM pg. 88) trapped in the caves below, who expects dinner to fall to him in here.

This chamber is roughly circular, between thirty-five and forty feet across. Broken, rotted benches line the walls in two tiers, standing precariously on a five-foot-wide ledge. Beyond the ledge is a steep slope with a ragged edge, leading to a large hole. The chamber below is pitch black. You can smell rotting meat accompanied by an unpleasant tang.

The unpleasant tang is the odor of draconic acid. Any dragonborn of black dragon heritage will recognize it. Other characters need to make a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** or **Intelligence (Nature)** check.

If the party shines light into the pit they will see the gleam of white, acid-washed bones.

D. The Temple

At the bottom of the ladder, the circular chamber opens onto a short corridor that turns sharply left after 10'. After another 10' the corridor opens on the temple.

The temple is thirty-five feet wide and sixty-five feet long. The sides are ribbed and the ceiling vaulted. Crude carvings of dragons decorate the walls and the supporting ribs. At the far end of the room is a curved dais. Atop the dais is a massive statue of a black dragon, sitting regally, its tail curled around its forelegs, its wings extended slightly. Before the dais is an altar, five feet wide and fifteen feet long, covered in black cloth. Before the altar, facing the statue, is a black dragonborn dressed in black robes. Hearing you enter, she turns her head to peer at you over her shoulder. She hisses, then says, "Who are you, and what are you doing in my temple?"

This is Narida, once a cleric of Bahamut. She took a blow to the head and the injury has not healed properly. She now believes she is hearing the voice of Tiamat, who has tasked her with raising five "avatars" so that Tiamat may emerge into the mundane world and rejoin her beloved Bahamut.

Narida (450xp)

AC: 15 **HP:** 24 **Spd:** 30'

S: +3 D: +1 C: +2 I: +0 W: +2 Ch: +1

Saves: Wis +4, Cha +3

Damage Resistance: acid

Breath: acid, 5'x30', 2d6 dmg, DC12 Dex save for ½

Spells: +4 to hit, Save DC 12

Cantrips: mending, sacred flame, spare the dying

1st level (4 slots): bless, command, cure wounds, divine favor, inflict wounds, shield of faith

2nd level (2 slots): continual flame, magic weapon, prayer of healing, spiritual weapon

You will find a full stat block for Narida on page 16.

Narida is Chaotic Evil, a result of her injury. If the players pause to speak to Narida, her insanity is evident. She will gladly tell them of her glorious divine mission.

100

The characters, if they think of it, can try to persuade Narida to return with them to the temple in town, and spread word of her mission. If the characters can render her unconscious or otherwise trap and neutralize her, the clerics at the temple will attempt to heal her. (A *heal* or *greater restoration* will repair the damage to her brain, but only time will tell if it also repairs the damage to her mind.)

Fighting Narida

The stat block for Narida is for a 3rd level cleric. It assumes the characters will wander about the lair encountering many of the kobolds and traps and reaching level 2 before finding the temple. If the characters find the temple early, and are still level 1, you may need to adjust Narida's stats.

There is also a door in the south east corner of the temple, leading to Narida's rooms.

8.a Narida's Office

This square room has tapestries on the walls and carpets on the floor, depicting dragons in all their might and majesty. In the far left corner is a large oak desk and a chair obviously made to accommodate the bulk of a dragonborn. There are quills, a bottle of ink, a pen knife, and a journal on top of the desk. There is a small chest of drawers against the far wall, a small chair in the corner to your right, and a well-made chest in the corner to your left. There is also a door in the middle of the wall to your right.

The journal is written in draconic. The first half details her life as a cleric of Bahamut and ends with an account of a mission against a necromancer. She writes:

> *"We will be facing Markon and his abominations with the sunrise. Bahamut guide us."*

The next entry appears to have been written by a different person, except many of the flourishes are the same. It talks about recovering from a grievous injury. The voice of Tiamat came to her while she was sleeping, instructing her to create five avatars so Tiamat might manifest, then rejoin her beloved Bahamut.

The rest of the journal describes how she found the kobolds, convinced them to join her mission, and found the first dragon egg.

They discovered this abandoned bandit lair and took it over. The wyrmling hatched a bare six months ago, and since then they have been feeding it pets, livestock, fish, and the occasional kobold who accidentally fell into the pit.

The top drawer of the chest of drawers holds paper, empty ink bottles, and some broken quill pens. The other drawers hold candles, cloth, and a variety of mundane items.

Inside the well-made chest are the following items:

- A censer
- A pouch with 182 silver
- A soft blanket
- 8 candles
- A tinderbox, flint, and steel
- An ornate alms box featuring carvings of Bahamut. It is empty.
- Incense
- An empty water skin
- The torn and bloodied vestments of a cleric of Bahamut

8.b Narida's Bedroom

Inside this square room is a round wooden frame, ten feet in diameter, supporting a mattress of straw and fur. There is a small round table in the corner to your left, and another, smaller, chest of drawers in the far corner.

The chest of drawers holds most of Narida's clothing – all of it plain and simply made.

E. The Wyrmling Den

This is a group of natural caves, the largest of which is below area **C. The Pit**. A black wyrmling lives here, tended lovingly by the kobolds and Narida. The caves are not large enough to comfortably house an adult dragon, and the wyrmling will soon be too big to move through the tunnels and corridors easily. Apparently, Narida failed to consider this aspect of the den.

There is no treasure in the wyrmling's den, only acid-washed bones, rotting corpses, and a chamber full of dragon dung. This area stinks of rotting meat, acid, reptile, and dragon-waste. The stench is nearly overwhelming.

Black Dragon Wyrmling (450xp)

AC: 17 **HP:** 33 **Spd:** 30'
S: +2 D: +2 C: +2 I: +0 W: +0 Ch: +1
Saves: Dex +4, Con +3, Wis +2, Cha +3
Skills: Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Immunity: acid
Senses: blindsight 10', darkvision 60'
Breath: acid, 5'x15' line, 22 dmg, DC11 Dex save for ½
Bite: +4 to hit, 7 piercing + 2 acid dmg

Dealing with the Wyrmling
The little wyrmling is fierce, and hungry. It has never seen the sun, and is not accustomed to light. If the characters have a source of light with them, the little dragon will be at disadvantage to attack.

Conclusion

The original mission was to determine if bandits were occupying the lair again, and identify the source of the noise. The characters will discover quickly that there are kobolds and not bandits, and that the noise is from construction as the kobolds reclaim the lair. The characters do not need to find or confront Narida to complete their mission. If they choose to leave the lair as soon as they have the information, Prelate Jacoby will pay them 10gp each, as agreed. He may then ask them to return to deal with the wyrmling, and to find out what the kobolds are doing and "for the gods' sakes, why?" At this point it will be necessary to confront Narida.

Stat Blocks

Narida, War Priest

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (ring mail)

Hit Points 24 (3d8+6)

Speed 30 ft..

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws: Wis +4, Cha +3

Skills: History +2, Insight +4, Medicine +4, Religion +2

Damage Resistance: acid

Senses: passive Perception 12

Languages: Common, Draconic

Challenge: 2 (450 XP)

Breath Weapon: Acid. Narida can breathe a stream of acid, 5' wide by 30' long. Any creature caught in the path must make a DC 12 Dexterity save. They take 2d6 acid damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful save. After using her breath weapon once, Narida must complete a short or long rest before she can use it again.

Spellcasting. Narida is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Narida has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): mending, sacred flame, spare the dying

1st level (4 slots): bless, command, cure wounds, divine favor, inflict wounds, shield of faith

2nd level (2 slots): continual flame, magic weapon, prayer of healing, spiritual weapon

Actions

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Bonus Action. When Narida takes an attack action, she may make one weapon attack as a bonus action. She may use this feature up to 3 times per long rest.

Channel Divinity, Guided Strike. Narida can use her Channel Divinity feature to strike with supernatural accuracy to gain +10 to an attack roll. She can use this feature only once, then must complete a short or long rest before using it again.

Narida's Equipment:

- 2 potions of healing (2d4+2) she will use these in combat if necessary
- A bone statuette of a dragon; the black paint job is unfinished (10 cp)
- 4 platinum
- A tarnished holy symbol of Bahamut (5gp)

Narida



Neekos

Small humanoid (kobold) , chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (3d6-3)

Speed 30 ft..

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws: Wis +4, Cha +2

Skills: Hide +6, Perception +11, Survival +11

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Elven

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

Pack Tactics. Neekos has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5' of the creature and his ally is not incapacitated.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Neekos has disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Spellcasting Neekos is a 0 level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): mending, spare the dying

1st level (1 slot): *guiding bolt*

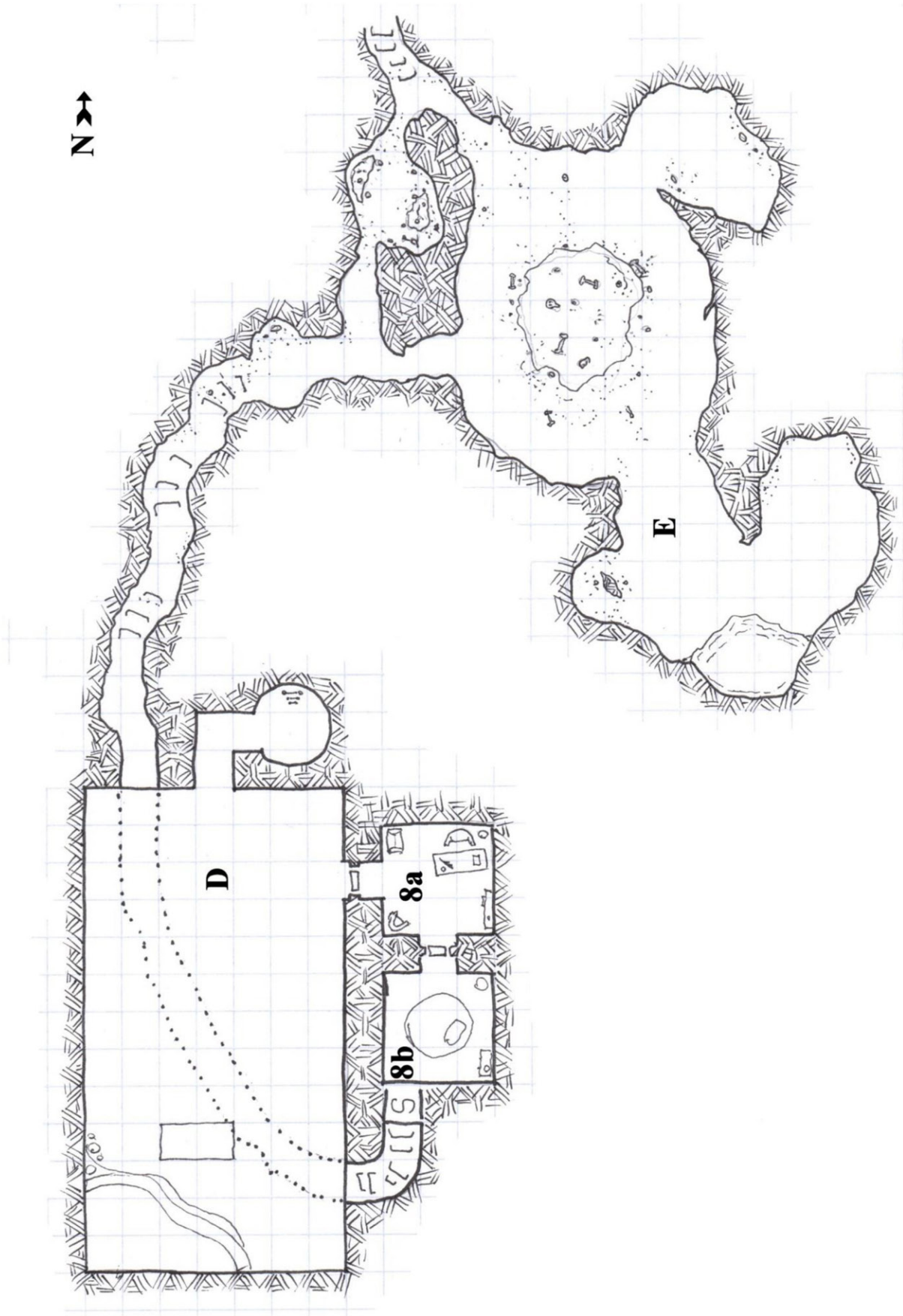
Actions

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.



Neekos has absolute faith in Narida, and follows her blindly. He will fight to the death to protect her and her vision. His power, meager though it is, comes from the strength of his belief in her.


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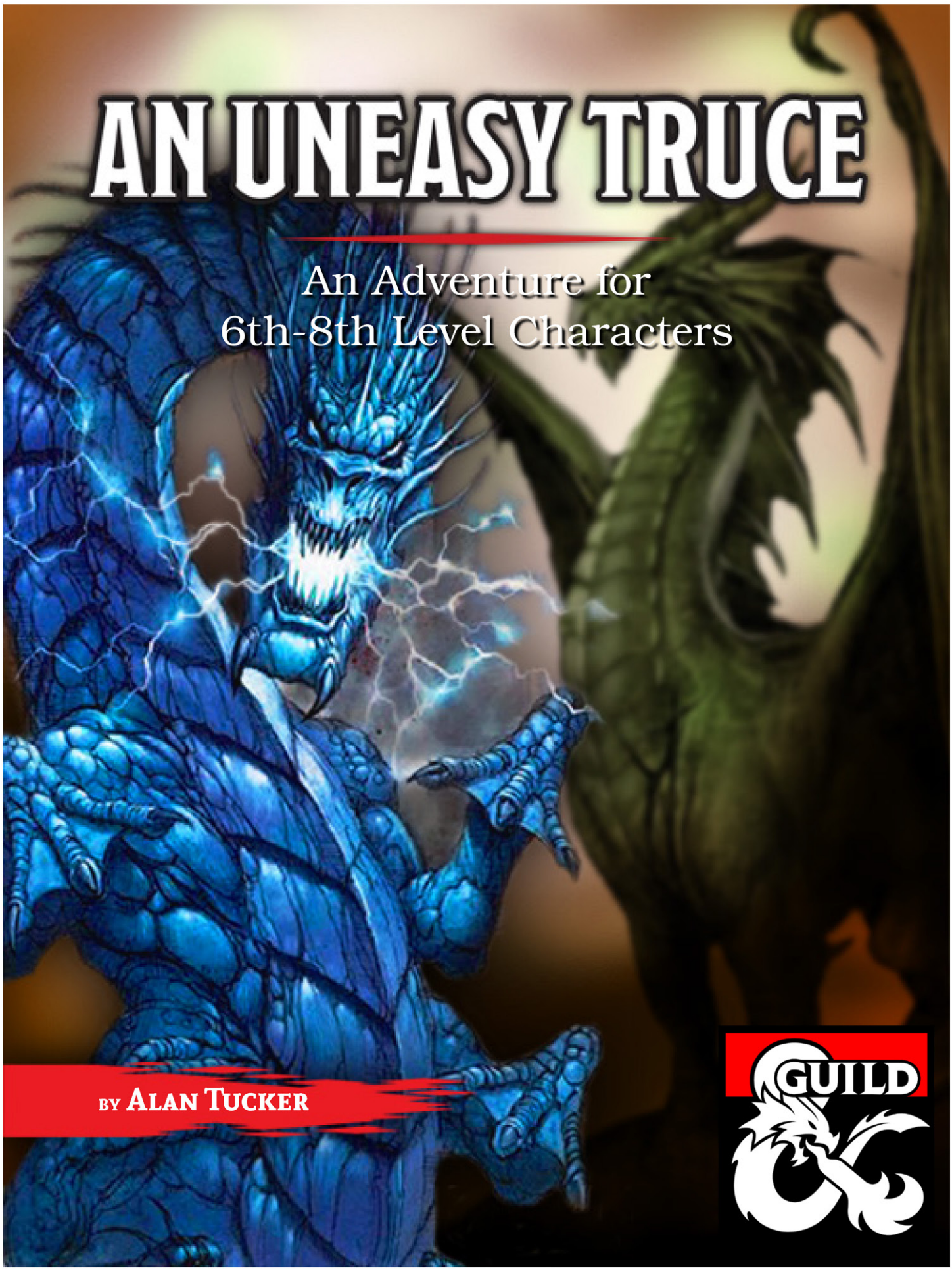
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AN UNEASY TRUCE

An Adventure for
6th-8th Level Characters



BY ALAN TUCKER

GUILD

AN UNEASY TRUCE

The town of Innisfall lives in the shadow of dragons, but has managed to broker a peace with them through the years and avoided outright destruction. Now, a dragon has been murdered and the visiting party of adventurers is accused of perpetrating the deed. Can our heroes prove their innocence and restore the uneasy truce the town has lived under for generations?

This adventure was originally made for a West Marches campaign, but is designed to easily fit into any standard fantasy setting. There are many areas to insert plot hooks for your own world or campaign.

A 4-hour adventure for 6th-8th level characters

BY ALAN TUCKER



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A Murder Most Foul

This adventure is designed to be flexible, depending on your party's power level and how you want to use the material. The **dragon**, Miritrix, can be used as an end boss for the adventure if your party is of higher level, but maybe not quite ready to take down an adult green dragon on their own. Miritrix could also be established as a reoccurring antagonist for the adventurers — you might even bump her up to ancient for that purpose if you choose — or you could substitute a dragon of your own if the party already has a draconic nemesis they've encountered before. The potential for negotiation and recruitment of allies is possible with both the **hobgoblin** camp and the **behir**, if the party chooses to follow that path. What better way to beat a green dragon than at their own game?

Who Are You, So Wise in the Ways of Science?

You Can Cut It With a Knife

It is evening and, after a long day's travel, the party has come to the small town of Innisfall, a crossroads between areas of mountain, swamp, and rolling grasslands that veritably teems with dragons. Surprisingly, the town has held its own in a place one might expect would be frequent hunting grounds for the dangerous lizards.

Many years ago, the town's elders managed to broker a truce with the dragons, saving the settlement from becoming an inviting buffet for the powerful beasts. In exchange for amnesty and protection from dragonkind, the residents of Innisfall pay a reasonable monthly tribute in livestock and coins, and discourage anyone from taking up arms against the dragons in the area, as adventuring types are often wont to do. As a result, the townsfolk are often wary and fearful any time a party of seasoned-looking strangers stops for a visit.

Unsurprisingly, the party's arrival is met with trepidation by the locals. While they appreciate the commerce that comes with adventurers, they fear the reprisal of their scaly neighbors if the tentative peace were ever broken.

The players can find out about the truce and most anything else they'd like to know about the surrounding lands from patrons at the local tavern. They can secure a room for the night and enjoy the local brand of hospitality — especially if they assure the townsfolk that they have no interest in hunting dragons. A pleasant night's rest is followed by an insistent pounding on the players' door in the morning...

> [Adventurer]! Wake up! The mayor is here to see you.

Downstairs, in the inn's common room, Mayor Celeste of Innisfall awaits the party's arrival. She is flanked by a number of the town guard.

If the players are the skittish type and decide to try sneaking out of town, they find more of the guards outside the inn, waiting for just such a move. The guards will not antagonize the party and insist the mayor only wants to speak with them.

Standing before a robust, elderly woman inside the tavern, she nods and addresses the party.

> "I received some very disturbing news this morning and I'm hoping you can shed some light on it." She produces a piece of parchment and slides it across the table. "Our dragon emissary seems to think you were up to no good last night."

The parchment is a fine vellum and the script written upon it is precise and without flourishes. It reads:

> Citizens of Innisfall, I give warning of a dark shroud about to fall over you and your kind. In the dead of night, a young copper dragon was brutally murdered in his lair and his treasure plundered by a band of ne'er-do-wells that I suspect is seeking shelter within your fair hamlet.
>
> If you wish to keep the peace between our kind that we have so generously abided by, you will deliver these miscreants for judgment at the Glade of Exchange in two days. Failure to do so will result in dire consequences for all who walk on two legs within these lands.
>
> — Miritrix, Duly Appointed Arbiter of the Innisfall Accords

After the party has read the note and, presumably, proclaimed their innocence, Mayor Celeste will hold up her hands and say:

> "I know you are not guilty of this act. We, understandably I think, tend to keep a close eye on adventurers, such as yourselves, that pay us the occasional visit here in Innisfall. I know you spent the night in your room[s] and could not have killed this dragon, however, I am now in the difficult position of figuring out how to best protect the town I've been charged with safeguarding. I certainly don't want to sacrifice innocent people to keep the peace, but if it comes down to pure mathematics... a handful of lives compared to several hundred..."

If the players offer to try to solve the mystery and bring the true murderer to justice, the mayor will happily accept their assistance. If they, however, seem ready to bolt, or take on the guards and cause a ruckus, she will say:

> Perhaps we can help each other out. I can provide a map to where this copper dragon's lair was— it had only recently established its home and we are made aware of all such happenings in our area in accordance with the peace agreement. Would you be willing to investigate this incident in order to clear your name and appease the dragons' sense of justice?

If the party is hesitant, remind them that, even if they escape the town, their names and faces will be known as outlaws, by both human and dragonkind, and things could become quite difficult for them. If they still won't take the bait, you can have them encounter the hobgoblins hauling a wagon full of the copper dragon's "treasure" back to their encampment and see if that piques their interest.

Assuming the players agree to the mayor's proposal, she will give them the map she mentioned and any basic supplies they might be interested in to facilitate their journey. She does not have access to potions or other exotic items the players might inquire about. The lair is about a half day's travel from the town.

The Scene of the Crime

The map from the mayor is accurate and easy to follow. The party arrives around midday, if they left Innisfall shortly after agreeing to help.

> The terrain is composed of grassy, rolling hills and the map leads you to a partially concealed cave that heads down into one of the taller hills. Several sets of tracks lead in and out of the dark opening.

Further investigation by anyone with the survival skill reveals dragon and humanoid tracks, as well as ruts made by wagon wheels. They all appear recent.

Map 1: Copper Dragon Lair

Area 1

> This open area, not far inside the cave, contains a simple broken bed and a smashed wardrobe. Wood splinters and the tattered remains of bedsheets and a straw mattress are scattered everywhere.

The young dragon had aspirations of attracting a bard or some other entertainer to live with him, and he had begun assembling a room where that person could stay. The hobgoblins did most of the damage here when they were looking for treasure.

Area 2

> Here is where the young dragon lived and died. As you move into the dark chamber, you see the lifeless corpse of the copper dragon. Its body about twice the size of a horse, the still form obviously underwent an enormous amount of physical stress before it perished.
>
> Strewn about the cave are a few loose coins— mostly coppers and few silvers. Otherwise, it appears empty.

Investigation checks can reveal the following information. Encourage players with other skills, such as **Medicine, Nature,** and **Survival,** to also engage in the search for clues.

- The body, although ravaged, does not appear to have been wounded by bladed weapons. **(DC 10)**
- Burn marks mar the creature's metallic scales in several places, as well as the cavern walls. **(DC 10)**



Map 1

Copper Dragon Lair

- Its midsection seems to have been crushed by a great force or weight. **(DC 13)**
- The stone floor around the body is pock-marked by drops of acid. **(DC 15)**
- A hint of an acrid smell lingers inside the cave, as if the very air had been burned. **(DC 18)** *Any players who wield lightning magic, or have been attacked by lightning before, can receive either a bonus to their roll, or roll with advantage, to discover this information.*
- The dragon's teeth are bloody, as if it had managed to do damage to its attacker(s), but the blood doesn't appear humanoid. It looks more like draconic blood. **(DC 20)**
- A secret door hides the entrance to **Area 3** on the map. **(DC 20)**

Acting on information it received, the behir slipped silently into the cave while the copper was asleep. The much bigger beast grappled and constricted the young dragon while blasting it with its lightning breath as often as possible. The dragon fought back with its acid breath and bit the larger creature, but soon succumbed to the behir's far superior strength.

A hobgoblin patrol, having heard the short but titanic struggle, reported back to their camp and an expedition was quickly mounted to see if they could reap some benefit from the conflict. They ravaged the cave, finding the dragon's distracting pieces of treasure (an assortment of coins and relatively inexpensive objects of art) and hauled everything back home in the wagon they brought. They did not locate the secret door to **Area 3**.

If the party has access to the *speak with dead* spell, or similar magics, they can learn that a huge beast attacked the copper in its sleep and that it breathed lightning before crushing the dragon to death in its coils. The dragon knows nothing about what happened to its treasure or what the beast was that assaulted it.

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Area 3

Behind a well-hidden secret door (a successful **Intelligence (Investigation) DC 20 check** to discover) lies the dragon's true treasure room. Inside are bags and chests filled with coins (7,000 silver; 1,850 gold; 120 platinum) and a few other items of interest: a **Broom of Flying** and **Bracers of Archery**. There are also two **Potions of Healing** and a **Potion of Climbing**. The DM should feel free to substitute other items suitable for the campaign. Lastly, there is a pair of **Eyes of Charming**, which Miritrix had an interest in.

Treat With a Dragon

Once the players have finished their investigation and step outside, they are greeted with an imposing sight…

Vibrant, emerald green scales glint in the sunlight before you as you step from the darkness of the cave. A head the size of a war horse rises up slightly on your approach, baring teeth like short swords.

"I see you've come looking for any treasure you might have missed the first time around."

Miritrix is not interested in a fight, but she will defend herself *(MM page 94)* if the party insists on attacking her. She will first use her **frightful presence** to discourage such actions, then take a couple of hits from the adventurers before using her **wing attack** and flying away if the party refuses to talk. Liberally use her legendary resistances to enable her escape.

She saw the opportunity to quietly eliminate a metallic dragon from the area — without breaking the accords — by giving the whereabouts of its new lair to the behir that also resides nearby. As a bonus, a party of adventurers happened to wander into Innisfall at just the right time to put them on the trail of the behir — giving her the chance to either eliminate the potentially dangerous beast, or destroy the adventurers. Either outcome is a win in her mind.

Miritrix heard the young copper had come across the **Eyes of Charming** and she concocted a plan to acquire them as a present to one of her followers. She is delighted at how her machinations have unfolded thus far, with the exception that the magic item hasn't been located.

If the party stops to engage in conversation or protest their innocence, she will see what information she can tease out of them. Upon hearing their evidence, she will say:

"I'm not inclined to believe you, but if you truly did not commit this crime against a dragon, you have until the morning after tomorrow to prove your innocence. If you cannot, and do not then present yourselves for judgment at the Glade of Exchange, Innisfall will suffer mightily for your actions."

After delivering this message, she will fly off and wait to see what happens.

On the Hunt!

At this point the players have two obvious options: 1) Follow the wagon tracks back to the hobgoblin camp, or 2) Try to track the behir back to its lair. The first option is by far the easiest as the wagon tracks are not difficult to follow. The behir, on the other hand, requires a successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Survival) check** to track.

Fortunately, the hobgoblins know of the behir and where it resides.

The Stuff Was Just Sitting There

The wagon tracks lead to the hobgoblin camp, only a mile or two from the copper dragon's lair.

Map 2: Hobgoblin Camp

> Ahead lie a number of crude huts and buildings, nestled against the side of a large hill. On the left side sits a stable of sorts but, instead of horses, you see a group of **dire wolves** resting comfortably. In the middle of the encampment is a five-foot wide fire pit and what looks like a stone well. A few hobgoblins, including a couple of youngsters, move from building to building, apparently going about their daily chores.

If the party is spotted, the hobgoblins will sound the alarm and prepare to defend themselves. They know they are likely no match for a well-armed band of adventurers, as their number includes their mates and children.

Rufus, the **hobgoblin captain**, will attempt to parlay if possible. He knows full well what adventurers are capable of and wants no part of tangling with a group that's bent on destruction.

If asked about the copper dragon's lair, he will admit to plundering it, although what they found was likely not worth gaining the dragons' ire and he is quite worried about that possibility. The loot is being kept in the cave behind the camp **(Area 6)** and Rufus will turn it over to the party if they promise not to tell the dragons of his people's actions after the copper dragon died.

If the party still thinks that the hobgoblins had something to do with the dragon's demise, Rufus will explain about the "wingless blue dragon" he and his people have occasionally offered meat to in hopes that when the creature "grows its wings back" it will appreciate what they've done and befriend them. Rufus will gladly lead the adventurers to its lair so they can "talk" to it.

If blood lust overcomes the players and they eradicate the hobgoblins, they can still find a crude map in Rufus's hut **(Area 5)** that shows where they have been dumping animal carcasses to earn the goodwill of the behir.





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Map 2

Hobgoblin Camp

Hobgoblins

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil (MM page 186)

Armor Class: 18 (chain mail + shield)
Hit Points: 11 (2d8 +2)
Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target, *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Populate the camp with 7-10 regular hobgoblins and 7 non-combatant mates, some of which have children with them. If stats are necessary for the mates and children, use the **Commoner** statblock *(MM page 345)*, with the addition of the hobgoblin **Martial Advantage** trait and darkvision 60 feet.

Hobgoblin Captain (Rufus)

Medium humanoid, (goblinoid) lawful evil (MM page 186)

Armor Class: 17 (half plate)
Hit Points: 39 (6d8 +12)
Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, Rufus can deal an extra 10 (3d6) damage to a creature he hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of Rufus that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. Rufus makes 2 greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target, *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Leadership. For 1 minute, Rufus can utter a special command or warning whenever an ally he can see within 30 feet of him makes an attack or saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll, provided it can hear and understand Rufus. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time.

Area 1

Stables with four dire wolves inside. The wagon is also stored here.

Dire Wolf

Large beast, unaligned (MM page 321)

Armor Class: 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points: 37 (5d10 +10)
Speed: 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses: passive Perception 13
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The dire wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The dire wolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Area 2

Common clearing with a fire pit and a stone-rimmed water well.

Area 3

Barracks for the unmated hobgoblin fighters. Contains a number of cots and equipment trunks.

Area 4

Standard hut for the mated pairs of hobgoblins. All of the 10 feet x 10 feet huts here are this same type of hut. They have simple furnishings and little of value other than some basic equipment and maybe a few coins.

Area 5

Rufus's hut. The leader has a slightly larger abode, but it is not really better furnished. He does have a desk where he keeps some notes and simple records of things they have done and seen. One thing that stands out is a crude map of what looks like the local area. Marked on the center is the hobgoblin's camp, near one edge is clearly a symbol for Innisfall, and towards the opposite side are drawn a few trees surrounding a plain black dot. In the upper right corner of the paper

is a tally indicating the number 17. Rufus has some extra mundane equipment and a total of 57 gold and 19 silver among his belongings.

Area 6

This cave is where the hobgoblins have stored their loot from the copper dragon lair, as well as dry goods, foodstuffs and other odds and ends. They made off with most everything in the main cavern where the dragon died, totaling 9,000 copper, 2,000 silver, and 250 gold pieces, as well as five pieces of artwork worth 25 gold each. If it means his camp going unnoticed by Miritrix and the other dragons, he will be happy to turn the loot over to the party in exchange for their word to keep quiet about where they acquired the treasure.

The Belly of the Beast

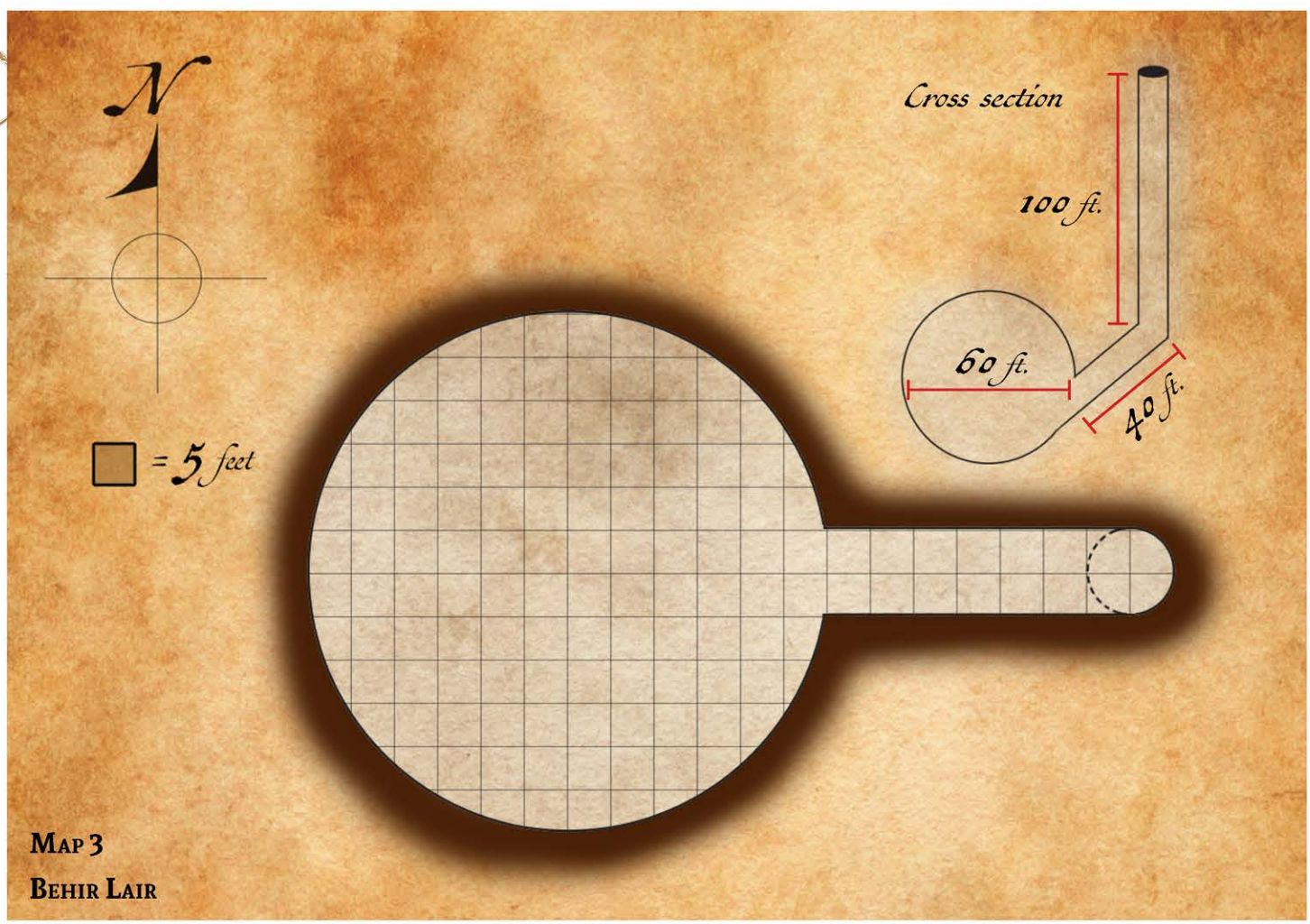
Whether by tracking, talking to Rufus, or finding the map in his hut, the party has found their way to the lair of the behir, slayer of dragons!

Map 3: Behir Lair

The behir has spent a long time crafting and perfecting its home. The beast is as comfortable climbing as it is walking and its lair reflects that quality. The main chamber is a sphere about 60 ft. in diameter. A few bones litter the bottom, but otherwise is it clean and relatively smooth. Any character without a special ability to climb will be able to make it no more than 15 ft. up any side unaided. The tunnel leading down is a 10 ft. wide, vertical tube about 100 ft. long, which the behir can just squeeze through with normal movement. The sloped portion is 40 ft. long, slanted at about a 45 degree angle. The entrance is concealed by a few evergreen trees and several bushes.

The behir is by no means a scholar, but knows its own abilities extremely well. Its breath weapon, size, and climbing prowess are perfect for this kind of environment and it will use its skills to maximum advantage.

Also, if there was any doubt at this stage, the behir exhibits a wound on its shoulder consistent



Map 3
Behir Lair

with the bite of a young dragon. If you feel the behir will be too strong for the party, you can lower its hit points as a result of the injury from its tussle with the copper dragon.

Assuming the party has avoided fighting Miritrix and negotiated with the hobgoblins for information, they will likely be spoiling for a fight at this juncture. At the DM's prerogative, however, the behir may take the opportunity to speak to the adventurers (in draconic) and offer them the chance to turn back, either before or during the battle, and even possibly offer to aid the party in an attempt to slay Miritrix. Behirs live to kill dragons, but Miritrix is too powerful for this behir to fight on its own. It has been content with the hobgoblin's offerings of food lately, but may see this as an opportunity to strike at Miritrix.



Behir

Huge monstrosity, neutral evil (MM page 25)

Armor Class: 17
Hit Points: 168 (16d12 +64)
Speed: 50 ft., Climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills: Perception +6, Stealth +7
Senses: darkvision 90 ft. , passive Perception 16
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The behir makes two attacks: one with its bite and one to constrict.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 17 (2d10 + 6) slashing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 16) if the behir isn't already constricting another creature and the target is restrained until the grapple ends.

Lightning Breath (Recharge 5-6). The behir exhales a line of lightning that is 20 ft. long and 5 ft. wide, dealing 12d10 damage. Dexterity save for half (DC16)

Swallow. If its bite attack is successful against a medium or smaller creature the behir has grappled, that creature is swallowed and suffers 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the behir's turns. While swallowed, the target is blinded and restrained. Only one creature can be swallowed at a time. If the swallowed creature inflicts 30 points of damage, or more, in a single turn, the behir must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or regurgitate the swallowed creature 10 ft. away and the creature is prone.

Aftermath

Making the Exchange

If the players succeeded in either slaying the behir, or making it an ally, and recovering the copper dragon's treasure, they can return to Innisfall with the news to the mayor.

If confronted with the evidence of the missing treasure and the dead behir, Miritrix will, grudgingly, admit the party's innocence and spare the town her wrath. Her main objectives accomplished— the deaths of the young copper and the potentially dangerous behir— she is pleased with the outcome of her manipulations. If she managed to somehow gain the **Eyes of Charming** she sought initially, all the better.

Miritrix may even allow the party to keep some, or all, of the coins they retrieved as a "thank you" for keeping to the accords.

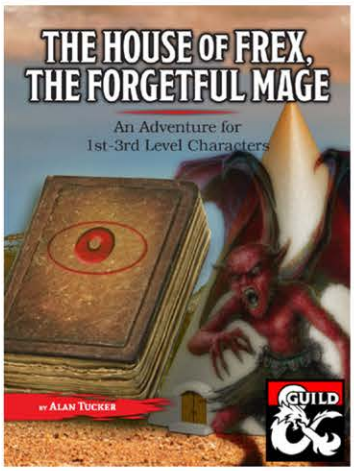
If a battle royale between the players, the behir, and Miritrix comes about from the meeting, the DM can consult pages 93-95 of the MM for stats on an appropriate age green dragon to use for the fearsome Miritrix.

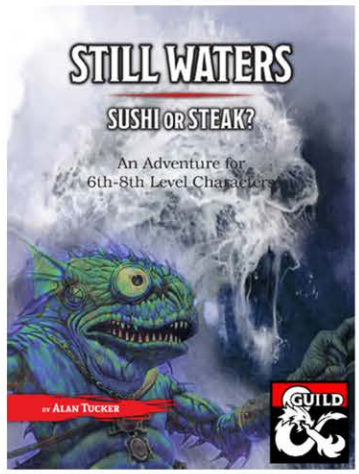
Regardless of the outcome, the politics of the land are bound to change after someone openly challenges the dragon and her authority.

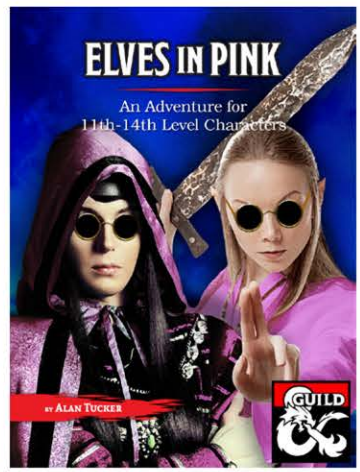


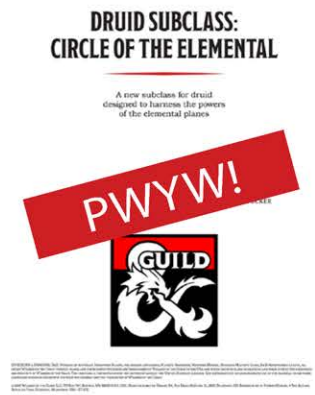
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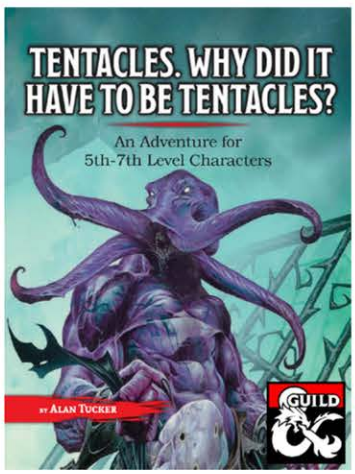
Alan Tucker also writes fantasy and science fiction novels and you can find links to all of his books *(several are FREE!)* at **www.AlanTucker.net**

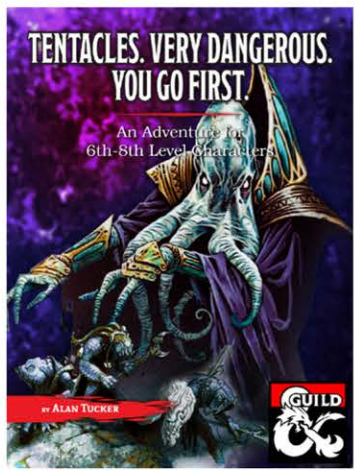








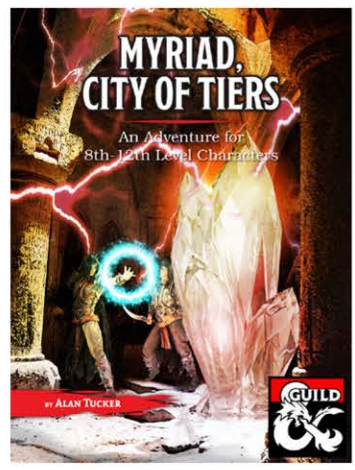






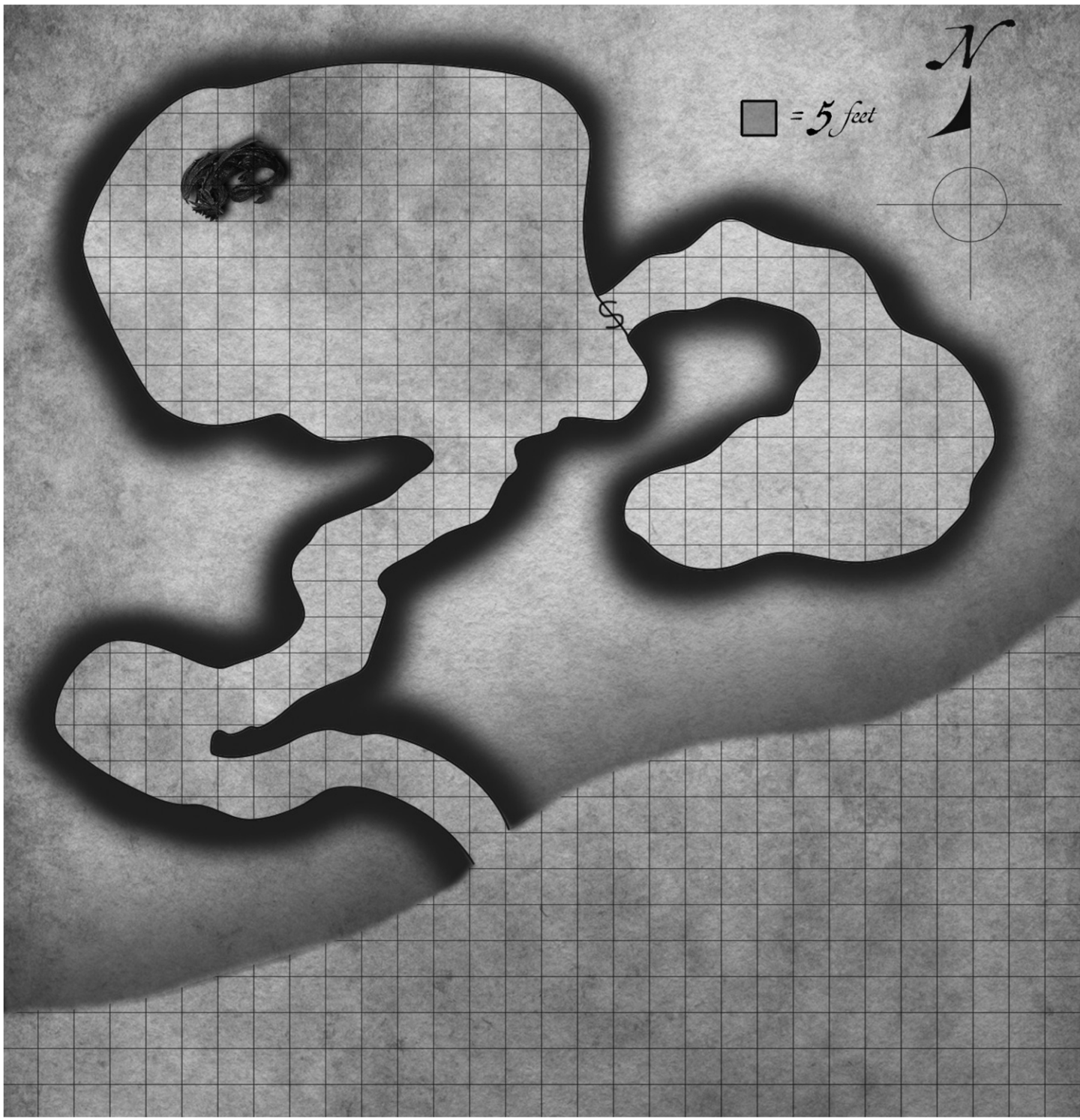




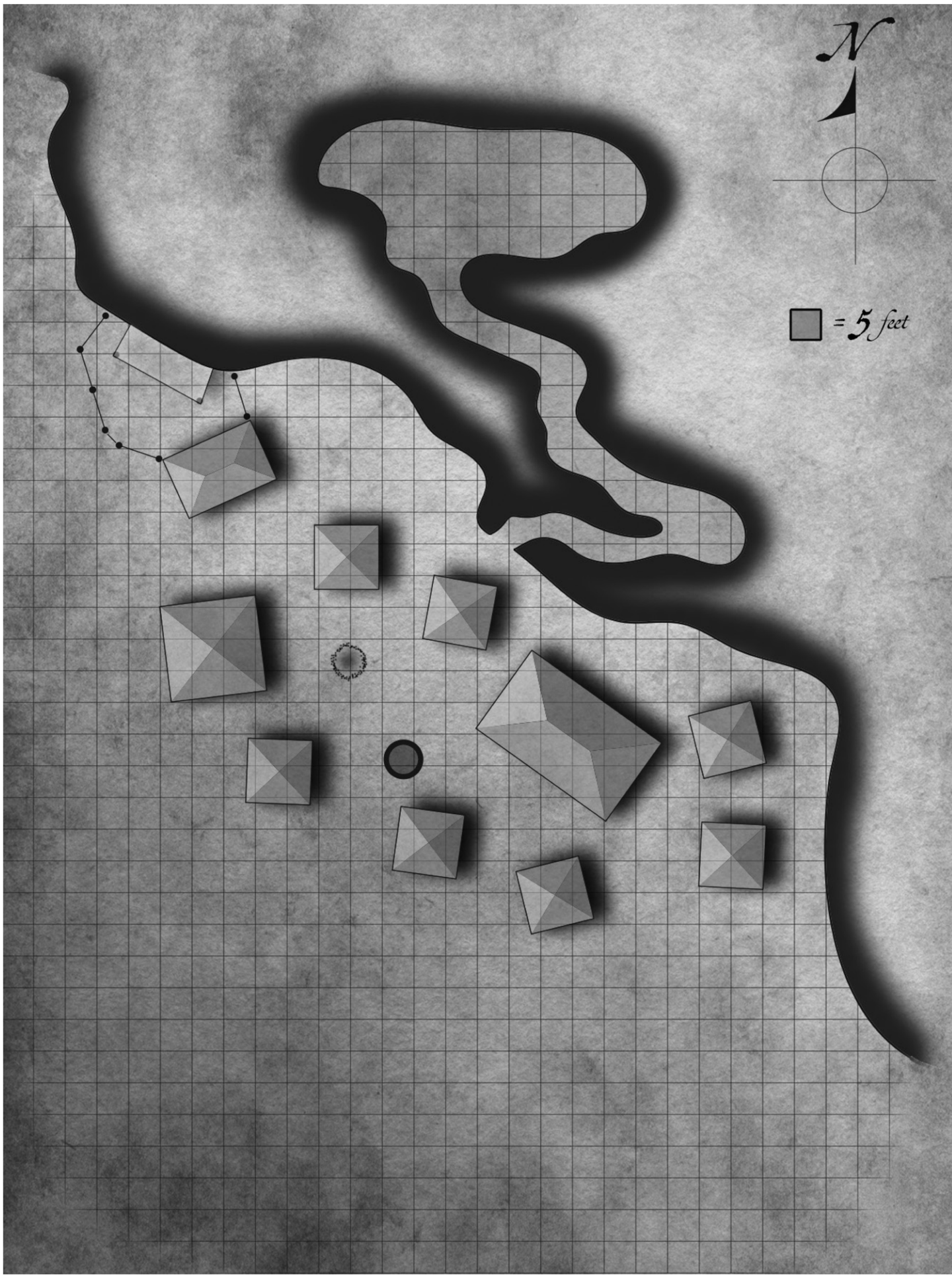


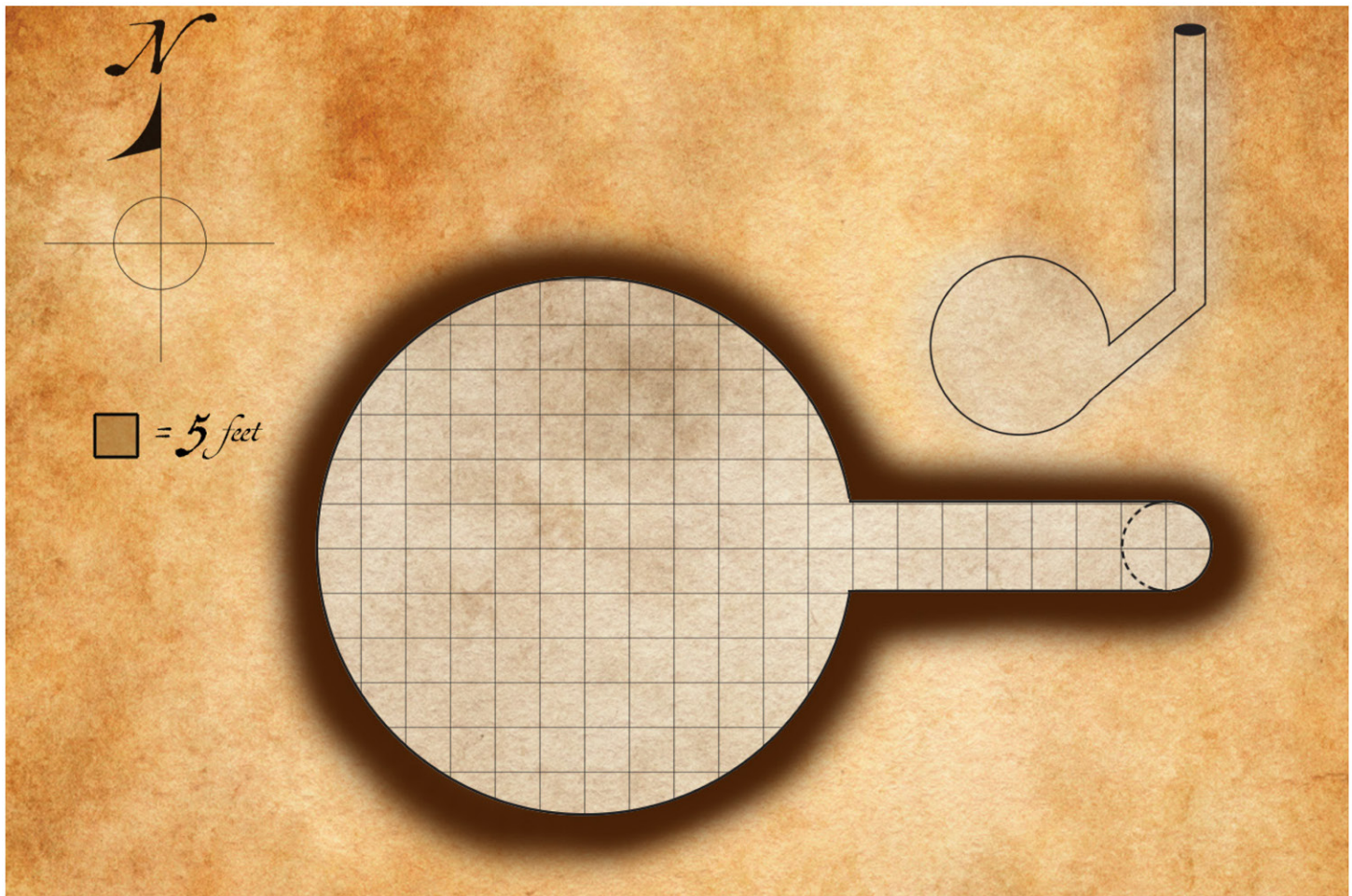


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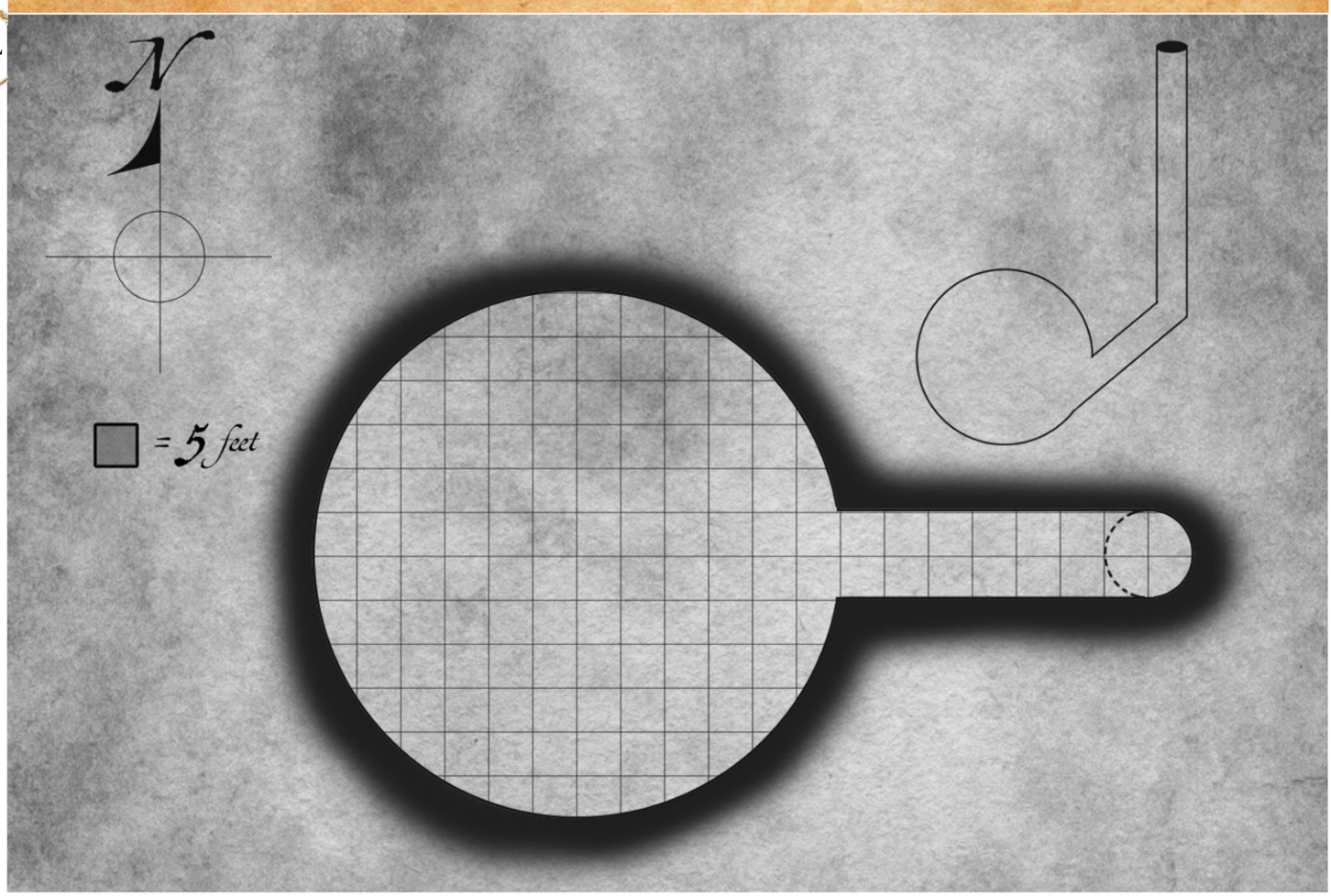

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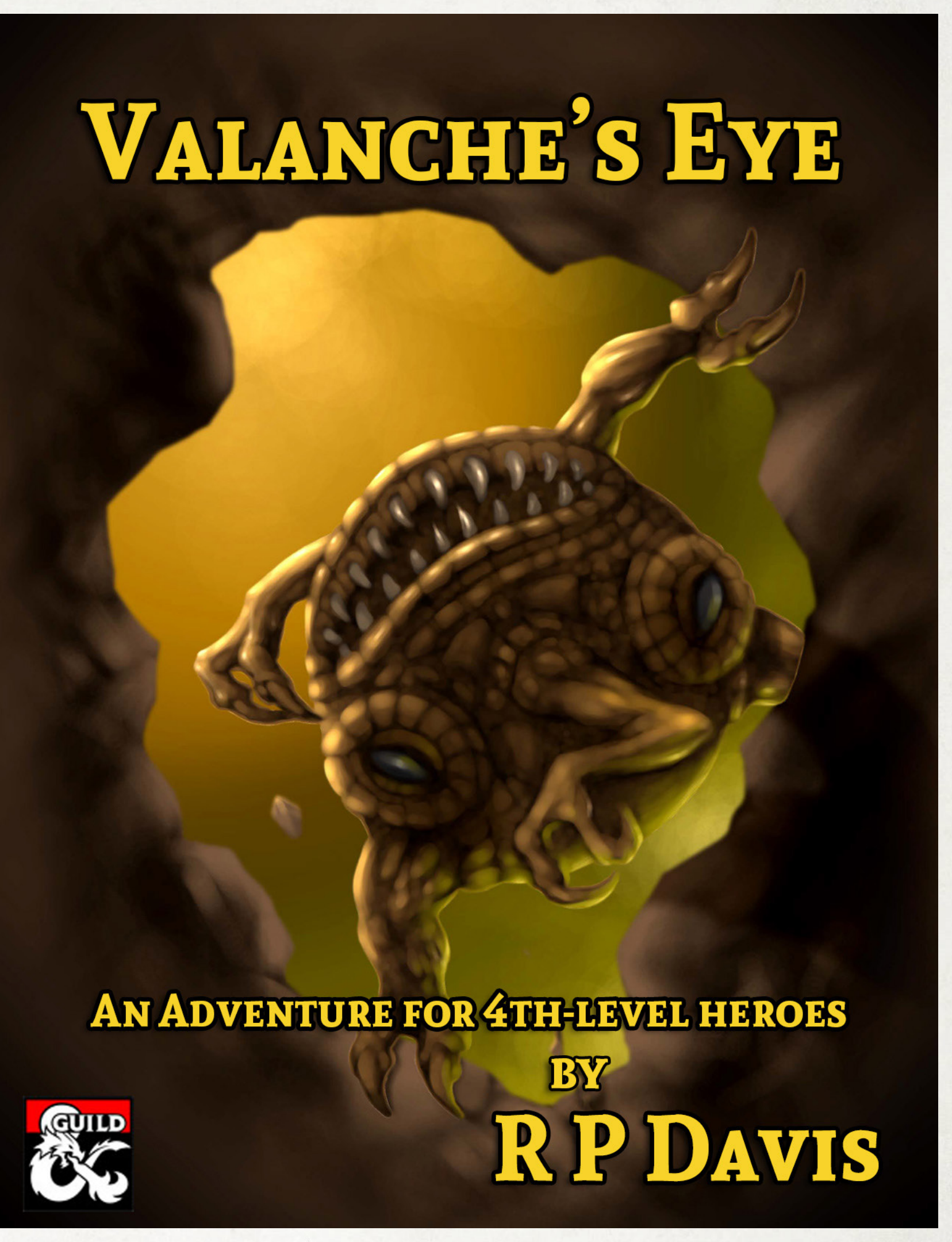

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Valanche's Eye



An Adventure for 4th-level heroes

by

R P Davis

Welcome!

Valanche's Eye is an adventure for experienced players and Tier 1 characters. It is set in Eastbrook, a town on the frontier of the Thunder Peaks. For more about Eastbrook, see the author's other titles on DMs Guild.

The adventure can be easily dropped into any setting, provided it has a village on a frontier. It is also suitable for convention play.

Mechanics

This adventure is designed to be played using only the D&D 5th Edition Player's Basic Rules Version 0.3, the Dungeon Master's Basic Rules Version 0.4, and the System Reference Document. Of course the Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, and Monster Manual contain all the information required and more, and you are encouraged to use them to their fullest extent.

Damage is listed thus: 4 (1d6) – this means you can either simply impose 4 points of damage or roll 1d6.

Monsters are highlighted in **bold**, e.g., **wight**. Full monster stat blocks are included in an Appendix at the end of the adventure for your convenience.

Magic items, spells, and magic effects are highlighted in *italics*. New magic items and spells, if any, are included in an Appendix at the end of the adventure for your convenience.

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Important game terms are given in bold italics, like ***Inspiration*** or ***difficult terrain***, to ensure you know when a game term is being referenced, and so you can look up that particular rule before play begins to ensure you're familiar with it.

Warning!

The encounters in this adventure have been calculated assuming a well-balanced party of six 4th level adventurers. The encounters are designed to reward clever play and punish the unwary. If your players are used to heedlessly rushing headlong at problems, their characters will very likely be quickly slain.

It is assumed that "well-balanced" means the core party roles of Warrior, Arcane magic-user, Rogue, and Divine magic-user are filled. The adventure is specifically designed to have something for every role to do. A party which lacks any of these roles **will** have a tough time.

If your party is larger or of a different level than that indicated, the adventure is likely still useful. Simply consider increasing or decreasing the amount of foes the characters will face – if the encounter calls for 2 monsters, for instance, add another. Alternately, add a second wave of foes to a battle.

Non-combat encounters are also provided. They are crucial to the successful completion of the adventure. You may judge success without reference to die rolls, of course, though success/fail mechanics are provided should you wish to use them. The mechanics are listed as "DC [number] [skill] check," e.g., "**DC18 Wisdom (Perception) check**."

General Notes

- Please familiarize yourself with the adventure by reading it **thoroughly** before play. The wise DM knows what is going on so she can improvise if need arises.
- To assure ease of use in play, print the pages containing the adventure proper double-sided, and print the pages with monster statistics, maps, and player handouts single-sided.
- Maps, important NPCs, new and unique magic items, and new and unique monsters are found in Appendices at the end of the adventure.
- Mini-maps with DM-specific information are provided in-line with the adventure text.
- Feel free to embellish the read-aloud text as you see fit.

Valanche's Eye

The earth never tires,
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first, Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first,
Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop'd,
I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell.

—Walt Whitman, "Song of the Open Road"

The bucolic town of Eastbrook presents several ways to get the PCs hooked into the quest, though a hook has been scripted into the adventure (see below).

The quest itself is simple: Find out why Flynansbick's Cut is suffering such awful earthquakes. That will require traveling through the Thunder Hills to the base of the Thunder Peaks, exploring the mine, defining the problem, and figuring out how to solve it.

See the Eastbrook PDF for full description of the town and its environs. If you omit Eastbrook, feel free to use the location you already use for your milieu.

Background

Flynansbick's Cut is a gem mine. A decade ago, a gnome prospector named Flynansbick Knonkkimaag ("friends call me Flyn") went into the wilds of the Thunder Hills, sniffing for gems. He was gone two years and everyone wrote him off as dead.

One day he returned with a raw emerald crystal the size of his forearm. Suddenly everyone was interested in him again, but he refused to divulge the location of his lode. He sold a portion of his emerald to fund a larger expedition to what he called his "Cut." A few weeks later, he set off in a five-wagon caravan with two dozen other adventurous gnomes.

Since then a variety of gems have made their way down the Foamwater to Eastbrook, and thence throughout the Dales and Sembia.

Since the gnomes hit their mother lode, elementals are breaking through from the Elemental Planes. Some are minor and relatively harmless, and the gnomes have little difficulty slaying or banishing them to their home planes.

A tenday ago, however, a **xorn** wandered into Flynansbick's Cut. To a xorn, such a rich lode was as an eight-course feast to a starving person. But the xorn did not wish to simply slay the gnomes, even if it could, for though monstrous to eyes from the Material Plane, a xorn is not inherently evil.

The xorn therefore hatched a scheme where it would frighten the gnomes away: It waited until Flyn mined a particularly large sapphire, then shook the entire mine complex.

It knew the gnomes spoke some Terran, having listened to them working. When it shook the mine, it thundered in a loud voice phrases such as "you took my eye" and the name "Valanche," hoping the terrified gnomes would flee, thinking they had awoken some horror.

The gnomes indeed fled, but only to the surface, where they camped. Flyn sent a messenger to Eastbrook while the rest of the gnomes remained outside the mine, making plans and brief forays into the Cut, only to be shooed out again by minor elementals, quaking earth, and falling stone.

This may appear to the players to be a simple, in-and-out, bash the bad guy and get paid adventure. But the end is not so simple, because there is no bad guy: Just two entities trying to live and make a living.

Setting the Hook

In Eastbrook: The party are contacted in their lodgings in Eastbrook by Flyn's messenger, Jorni. If the party contains a gnome character, Jorni is a distant relative who begs piteously for help, because "your cousin Hen – you remember Henamzick – he's up there shivering with cold waiting for help." Something along those lines.

Not Eastbrook: The party are traveling through the wooded foothills of a mountain range when they encounter a disheveled gnome. You guessed it: Jorni.

Either way, Jorni begs their assistance, flattering the characters that they are the only hope this poor clan of destitute gnomes has to survive, much less reclaim their home. If pressed for payment, he promises 500gp per character in rough gemstone ore.[1]

[1] This isn't as bad for your campaign economy as it sounds. Disposing of rough gem ore isn't as easy as selling cut gems. They'll need to travel to a significant urban area to do so, which ought to be a quest in itself.

Departure

The party can find any adventuring supplies they need in Eastbrook.

Jorni insists the expedition leaves as soon as possible, and agrees to lead them to Flynansbick's Cut. He insists the party have a pony and cart, if not horses for each member (including him).

The Journey with Jorni

The trip takes four entire days from Eastbrook, with arrival at the Cut mid-morning of the fifth day. Even though the distance to be traveled is not very long, the route is circuitous both due to terrain – forested foothills – and Jorni's misdirection, an attempt to keep the Cut's location secret from prying eyes.

If not using Eastbrook, make the trip from your location take as long.

The first night and day of travel is uneventful, as the party travels through well-settled lands, beginning with farmsteads and transitioning to flocks of sheep on gentle, rolling hills.

When they break camp after that first night, they find themselves entering the Wild. From here the party may begin to randomly encounter things. Roll 1d6 twice per day and twice per night; on a result of 1, a random encounter has occurred. Roll 1d6 again and consult the following tables.



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Note: Once any encounter is experienced, it will not be experienced again. Treat any duplicate result as "no encounter."

Table 1. Road Random Encounters - Day

1d6 result	Encounter
1	Lizardfolk (12)
2	Centaurs (3)
3	Bandits
4	Faerie Grove
5	Flock of Goats
6	Wyvern

Table 2. Road Random Encounters - Night

1d6 result	Encounter
1	Wights (3)
2	Bandits
3	BEARS.
4	will-o-wisps (4)
5	Hobgoblins
6	Elves

Lizardfolk – The heroes are accosted by a patrol of lizardfolk, who do not attack. Instead, they make signs of peace. If any hero speaks Draconic, they explain that their tribe has been troubled lately by attacks from a tribe of **centaurs**. They ask the heroes for help in defending themselves. If no hero speaks Draconic, they make signs and draw pictographs in the soil; the characters can decipher this information with a successful **DC12 Intelligence check**.

Centaurs – A trio of centaurs ride into view. They do not attack unless threatened. Each carries a slain lizardfolk draped across its back.

Bandits –The party is ambushed by a band of cutthroats who demand ransom: Their money and magic items, plus any riding and/or pack animals, in exchange for their lives. There are 16 **bandits** led by 2 **bandit captains**. If the party put up a fight, the bandits flee if one of the captains or if more than half their number (8) is slain.

Bears! – The road crosses through a cut between two sloping, mossy banks. When the lead hero reaches the center of the cut, a brown bear cub tumbles down the embankment to a stop at the character's feet. The cub sits up, paws at the character's knees, and starts to bawl piteously.

Then the party hears a deep, rumbling roar from the trees to their left. Immediately thereafter, they hear a deeper, more rumbling roar from the woods to their right. Mama Bear and Papa Bear are missing Baby Bear, and unless the heroes quickly run away from the cub, they'll be attacked.

Elves – In the deep of night, the character on watch hears the sound of owls hooting to one another across the forest. If the party is comprised of mostly good members, a wood elf **scout** calls quietly to alert the heroes to her presence. The elves, a squad of 6 **scouts** plus their leader, Ashryn, are hunting the band of hobgoblins. If the party has not encountered the hobgoblins, Ashryn warns them about the raiders.

Faerie Grove – The party stumbles on an ancient stone circle where a half-dozen fey creatures with gossamer wings flit about trailing sparkling silver dust. If unmolested, the creatures will not hinder the party; indeed, once introduced they are friendly, especially if the party contains any druid or ranger characters of good alignment. Should they require it, the creatures can cast the *cure wounds* spell using a 1st-level spell slot on any one wounded party member.

Flock of Goats – The party rounds a bend in the road to find their way blocked by a flock of 16 **goats** shepherded by 8 **giant goats**. The goats stubbornly refuse to move. A hero who succeeds on a **DC 15 Animal Handling check** can get them out of the way. A hero who fails the check by 5 or more causes the flock to attack.

Hobgoblins – A raiding party from a tribe in the nearby mountains, this strike unit of 8 **hobgoblins** is led by a **hobgoblin captain.** They are traveling with stealth. If the heroes are traveling, and are not being particularly stealthy in their travel, the hobgoblins attempt to ambush them. If the heroes are camped for the night, the hobgoblins attack without warning, using their ranged attacks before closing to melee.

Wights – The party's camp is stealthily attacked by 3 wights, which creep through the underbrush until they are within melee range of the character on watch.

Will-o-Wisps – While encamped, invisible floating will-o-wisps are drawn by the heroes' mortal warmth. When they are close enough to use their ***Shock*** attack, the hero on watch is ambushed.

Wyvern – The heroes hear a leathery flapping from overhead, and look up to spy a wyvern flying 50 feet above them. If they don't go out of their way to attack it, it ignores them.



The Cut

Arrival

On arrival at the Cut, the party is hailed by a small group of hardscrabble, rag-tag gnomes. The gnomes are clearly homeless, their clothing tattered and their beards in disarray. Despite this, they are armed with intricate crossbows of fine workmanship. Read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a clearing in the forest with a ring of tents surrounding a campfire circle with a cunningly-designed metal cooking apparatus over the coals. A cauldron steams, and you smell beans and bacon.

Before you is a rock outcropping, under which is a cavern entrance. Wisps of smoke or steam billow from the mine entrance every few seconds.

Gnomes surround you, eyes glittering. There is at least a dozen gnomes, all asking questions and thanking you and continuing arguments with each other. The chatter is really something to hear, hard to keep track of unless you're a gnome yourself.

A commanding voice orders silence, and the nattering immediately ceases.

"Are these the ones, then, Jorni?" says the voice gruffly, and a sturdy, elderly gnome steps forward.

This is Flyn. Flyn always introduces himself by his full name, Flynansbick Knonkkimaag. If there is a gnome or dwarf in the party, he addresses that character, ignoring the Biggers, as he calls them,[2] unless forced to acknowledge their existence. Keep this in mind when role-playing Flyn.

When asked for an explanation of what's going on, Flyn launches on a deadly tedious lecture on geology:

"What happened?" he asks. "It's simple. Listen:

"As any gem prospector knows, emerald deposits form in areas of contact metamorphism, where granitic magma serves as a source of beryllium, and nearby carbonaceous schist or gneiss serves as a source of chromium or vanadium. The emeralds form in the schist or gneiss or in the margins of a nearby pegmatite.

"In the case of my mines, these conditions were exacerbated by links to the Elemental Planes, in this case Earth and Fire and Water, clearly positively impacting the enhanced size of the crystalline deposits in my lode.

"You see, emeralds form in either pegmatite deposits or hydrothermal veins in metamorphic environments. In a hydrothermal vein, hydrothermal fluids have escaped from magma. There is a hydrothermal vein here, as evidenced by the steam continually being generated. Observe; you can see it there. In fact, the steam issuing from the vent is what called my attention to this location in the first place.

Luckily, we are equipped to harness the power of the hydrothermal vent, and have been using the steam to power the mechanical apparati with which we extract the raw crystals from the granitic substrate."

Unless restrained, he drones on like this for quite some time.[3]

Flyn re-tells the story of what went wrong as the gnomes say they experienced it, should the party require a re-telling.

Flyn assigns one of his crew to go along with the party (whether or not the heroes agree).

This gnome is not pleased:

"Who, me?" he cries. "I don't want to go back down there!"

---

[2] With abject apologies to the memory of Sir Terry Pratchett.

[3] Click here for more geologist's babble, should you want more. Prepare for massive boredom, unless you also like geology or you're a masochist for session prep.

"You know the Cut as well as I," replies Flyn. "And you speak Terran. You are the best candidate."

The gnome 'volunteer' looks wretched. He takes off his cap and wrings it between his hands. "Well, I guess that's settled," he says to you. "My name is Kneundefinedagbert Zimteem. You biggers can call me Bert. When do you want to start?"

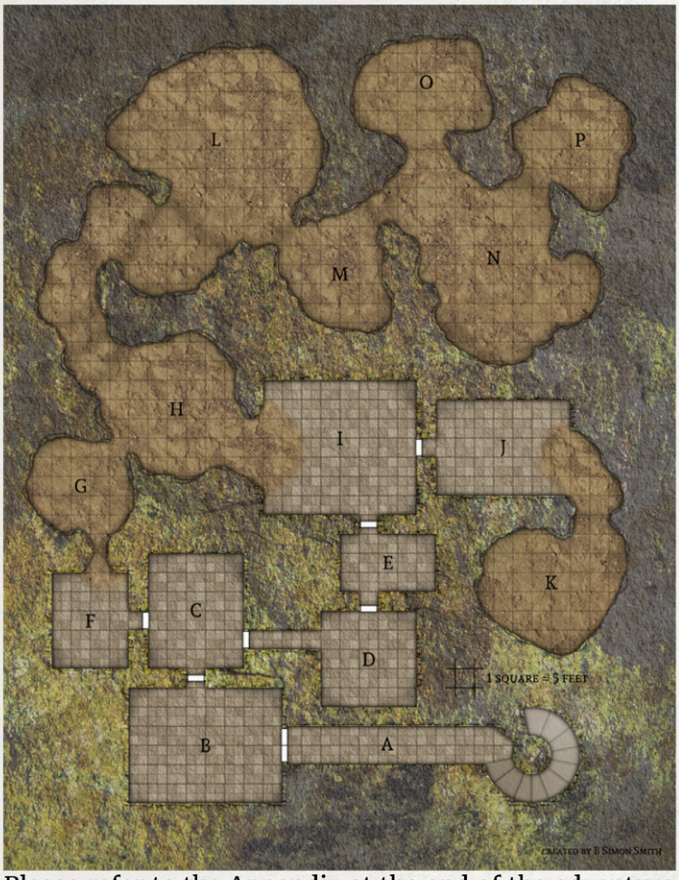


Bert is a whiny, petulant little sod who would rather be anywhere than here. He joined the mining crew three months ago, and was heartily sick of it a week after signing. But a six-month contract was a six-month contract, and as he doesn't get paid until the termination of the contract he can't very well just quit.

His left hand is bandaged from a wound sustained while fighting an elemental deep in the Cut.

Bert is eternally grateful to any character who magically heals his wound. Any character who does so gains, if she wishes, an NPC follower loyal only to her. He gladly abandons his contract to accompany his savior, though he complains incessantly about losing out on the money. Bert remains loyal to that character unless she is personally cruel to him or her companions are cruel to him and she does nothing to stop them.

Inside the Cut



Please refer to the Appendix at the end of the adventure for a full-sized map.

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Large creatures cannot enter the Cut at all. The passages are too low and too narrow to accommodate them.

Exploration & Investigation

Area A. Entry Hall.

The stairs circle around a central shaft.

The mine entrance gives onto the head of a stair hugging the walls of and circling a deep shaft. Warm air and steam gust past you. The stairs are slippery and gnome-sized, and there are no railings. An elaborate system of pulleys, ropes, chains, and buckets is fixed into the stone roof of the shaft and drops into the gloom below.

Medium creatures must be careful on the stairs; creatures moving faster than a careful walk must succeed on a **DC12 Dexterity saving throw** or fall 1d4 x 10 feet and take 4 (1d6) damage for every 10 feet they fall. The shaft is 40 feet deep.

When the characters reach the bottom of the shaft:

When you reach the shaft's base, you can see the other end of the lift apparatus. Pipes lead to metal boxes with intricate valves and gauges; steam hisses from ventilators on the apparatus. An archway leads west. All the surfaces you can see are worked stone, more like a dwarf settlement than a mine.

All surfaces are granite. Squared areas are worked; cavern areas are more-natural mine workings. Doors are rough-hewn wood from the forest above. Worked areas are lit by tethered driftglobes which flicker to life when a creature passes them.

If the characters marvel at this, Bert explains:

"Oh, yes," Bert says. "We've been here quite a while, you know. We tired of living above-ground in tents quite quickly, so we began shaping the exhausted mine chambers into living spaces."

Each of the worked chambers has a fireplace with a coal scuttle. Coal is worked from a vein in Area K, off Area J. Some rooms have steam radiators. The floors in these areas are dead level, comprised of flagstone tiles laid over mine tailings; the gnomes dumped rubble into the chambers and leveled off the dump to make the floors. Bert readily agrees that the gnomes have thought of everything.

Walking down the hallway, you notice the ceilings change height erratically, from higher than normal for humans and elves to where humans and elves must stoop or bump their heads.

Bert proudly explains that was a natural consequence of mining the vein and making the floor level. If the characters are all Dwarves or smaller creatures, it will make no difference in the adventure. If, however, the party contains characters of taller stature, it might.

If at any time a creature taller than Dwarf is forced to move more quickly than a walk, that creature must

succeed on a **DC10 Dexterity saving throw** or bash her head on a bit of low ceiling, taking 4 (1d6) points of bludgeoning damage.

Area B. Common Room.

Boxes, crates, and barrels of supplies, as well as racks of tools, are neatly stacked along the walls of this room. The western wall is dominated by a hearth with cooking implements in and around it. Wooden trestle tables and benches are set up in the center of the room. The floor is paved with flagstones and covered with rushes.

Some of the tools can be used as weapons in a pinch. A mining pick can be used; treat as a ***war pick***, but reduce the damage die to 1d6.

Characters poking around the room will arouse the anger of the four coal-black **dust mephits** who dwell in the hearth.

Area C. Living Quarters.

There is a small hearth in the northwest corner of this room, with a coal scuttle alongside. The room is snug and warm, probably due to the coil of copper pipe which comes from the floor of the room near the hearth and snakes its way along the walls before exiting near the doorway to the common room. Wisps of steam hiss from joints in the piping.

Bunk beds line the walls, with bedding scattered around the floor. Some of the bedding is charred, some torn and tattered.

There is a strange glow from the hearth; no gnomes have dwelt here for days, so any coal fire must surely have burned out.

The glow is from the four **magma mephits** living in the hearth. A round after the party engages with the magma mephits, six **steam mephits** burst from the pipe and join the fray.

Area D. Living Quarters.

This room is virtually identical to Area C, except the copper pipe is installed along the west and south walls.

Otherwise it is devoid of interest.

Area E. Lavatory.

This rectangular room stretches away to the east. A pair of washing basins is installed at gnome height on the west wall. To the east is a curtained alcove.

The curtained alcove hides a two-seater toilet. Lids cover two holes cut into a simple board suspended over a fissure leading to a magma vent deep below. The gnomes reasoned the waste would simply be burned away. While this reasoning was sound, the rain of sewage has severely annoyed a tribe of fire elementals who live in the molten rock.

Characters opening a lid are ***surprised*** when eight small elementals leap out and attack. Treat the fire elementals as **magmin**.



Area F. Boiler Room.

Most of this room is taken up by a massive iron and copper apparatus. Liberally festooned with valves and gauges, it hisses and clanks like a living thing. Pipes of various diameters emerge from it and disappear into the walls.

Bert explains that this is the steam collector which powers the site. (Characters who succeed on a **DC 12 Investigation check** will figure out its purpose as well.)

The apparatus covers the entire floor except the squares immediately adjacent to the north and east walls. It was built over a vent which, when it initially ruptured, badly burned two gnomes. Flyn had the idea to harness the boundless energy of the steam and use it to work the mine.

The apparatus requires constant maintenance. As it has been untouched for ten days, it is in a delicate state of equilibrium. If it is touched by anyone other than its engineers, the two of whom are outside the mine at the campsite, there is a 75% chance it will violently vent steam. If it does so, any creature in the room must make a **DC12 Dexterity saving throw** or suffer 10 (2d10) hit points of damage. A hero can make a **DC 15 Investigation check** to determine how to keep the apparatus from venting. A hero proficient with *thieves tools* or *tinkers tools* can make a **DC 15 Dexterity check** to keep the apparatus quiet.

Area G. Mine.

Mine caverns are not lit at all. Illumination must be provided for characters lacking darkvision. *Driftglobes* can be attuned and brought along, should the characters think to do so. Under no circumstances do the gnomes allow the characters to keep a *driftglobe*.

Roughly hewn by the picks of the gnomes, this cavern yet glitters with gems in the curved wall to the west. The floor and ceiling both slope away from where you're standing. Scaffolding of roughly-cut tree branches rises up that west wall. Ropes, buckets, and tools are scattered about. Piles of rubble litter the floor. There are stalactites hanging from the ceiling.

Three of those stalactites are raw forms of **gargoyles**. Characters carefully studying the stalactites spot the elementals' glittering eyes on a **DC20 Perception check** and recognize them as creatures. Recognizing them for what they are is a **DC20 Nature check**.

The elementals cannot fly, and do not attack until a creature passes directly beneath them, in which case they drop onto the target creature:

Drop. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, one creature directly underneath the elemental. Hit: 9 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. Miss: The elemental takes half the normal falling damage for the distance fallen. (3d6/2)

Area H. Mine.

The uneven floor is piled high with rubble and mining detritus. Your light glints off thousands of twinkly points, gems glittering like stars. Wooden scaffolding reaches up toward the domed ceiling.

As you enter the chamber, a massive mound of rubble roars its anger and rises, bits of rock and rubble assembling themselves into an elemental of earth lumbering at you!

The entire floor of this room is difficult terrain due to the rubble. The **earth elemental** the characters have encountered is less strong than usual, with only half its hit points. It's only worth half the XP, too.

Also in this room are the bodies of two gnomes who were killed battling this elemental. This elemental is also the monster from which Bert received his wound. After the heroes defeat the elemental, Bert begins a keening lament for his fallen friends. He demands the heroes vow to avenge their deaths.

Bert remembers this vow at the Conclusion of the adventure, and holds the heroes to it.

Area I. Workroom.

This room appears to be the transition from factory to mine. Racks of mining tools and piles of raw gem ore compete with workbenches where the gems are extracted from the rock. Roughly finished gems are nestled in straw-lined wooden crates ready to be nailed shut for shipment.

There is nothing threatening in this room. Characters may be tempted to help themselves to the shiny things, but if Bert is with them he tries to prevent such looting if he can.

Note: The gnomes know to a single carat how many gems are in production. If the characters manage to get out with gems, the gnomes discover their theft within a day of their leaving the Cut. Flyn himself appears in the town within two days of the party's return, with two assistants bearing reams of paperwork in a donkey-cart, and file suit with the authorities for the return of his property. He accuses the characters of theft and breach of contract, and mulcts them for heavy damages. He at the least insists his property be returned. Failing that, he sends agents to follow the heroes wherever they go. Gnome thieves can be very annoying.

Area J. Workshop and Forge.

Dwarves and humans aren't the only people who know how to forge. This room is where the gnomes maintain their tools and equipment.

Dominated by massive forge along the north wall, this room has all the tools necessary to make and maintain tools. A hissing copper pipe system branches off to machinery designed to improve the efficiency of the workshop, including an automatic bellows to blow air into the forge's fire and several pneumatic machine hammers. To the east, a cavern leads into black gloom, and coal spills out of that area. The forge still glows. In the southeastern corner of the room is an altar.

When the characters enter the workshop, mephits leap out from everywhere and attack.

4 **steam mephits**

4 **dust mephits**

4 **magma mephits**

The steam mephits burst from the pipes, the dust mephits from the coal chamber, and the magma mephits from the forge.

The altar is used by the gnomes in several rituals. Any character proficient in Religion can see the altar is a holy area dedicated to Flandal Steelskin, the gnome god of mining, smithing, and metalworking, and to a lesser extent Garl Glittergold.

Upon the altar is a silver bowl and matching ewer capable of magically transforming holy water into *potions of healing*. A character proficient in Religion recognizes this. Any hero of good alignment capable of casting divine spells can spend a spell slot while pouring water from the ewer into the bowl, magically imbuing the water with the powers of a *potion of healing*.

This process can be repeated as many times as the hero has spell slots, and one potion is created for every spell slot spent. Only *potions of healing* can be made, regardless of what level spell slot is spent. The potions can be removed from the area and retain their potency, but if the ewer and bowl are moved farther than 10 feet from the altar their power is forever lost.

Bert knows this, and takes a dim view of anyone who suggests taking the bowl and ewer away.

Area K. Coal Vein.

This is an active coal mine. Once the dust mephits are dealt with in Area J, there is nothing of interest here.

Area L. Mine.

The uneven floor is piled high with rubble and mining detritus. Your light glints off thousands of twinkly points, gems glittering like stars. Wooden scaffolding reaches up toward the domed ceiling.

Across the room, you see the most monstrous thing you have ever beheld – it is a marvelous creature, with three arms and three legs, the arms long and tipped with vicious-looking talons. It has a great, gaping mouth atop its head, lined with dagger-like teeth, and stone-lidded eyes glitter at you. It waves its arms, bellows in a primordial language, smashes the



scaffolding, and dives into the stone floor as if it were water before swimming away to the southeast. As it does so, the cavern violently quakes, and stone falls around you.

The entire floor of this room is difficult terrain due to the rubble.

Valanche is swimming further into the mine. He hopes the quake – and bellowing "Come to me my servants" in Terran – will chase away these squishies.

Creatures transiting this room must make **DC10 Dexterity saving throws** or be struck by falling stone for 4 (1d6) points of bludgeoning damage.

If the heroes balk at chasing Valanche, Bert dances about, screeching, "After it! After it! Do your work!" at them.

Finding Valanche

Areas M, N, O, and P are virtually identical. The characters chase Valanche through each of them, and must make the same **Dexterity saving throw** as in Area L in each.

Valanche is a **xorn**, a creature from the Elemental Plane of Earth. Valanche is not interested in fighting the characters. If they insist on giving battle, he asks them to stop, and indicates his wish to communicate.

If the characters parley, he tells his side of the story. If the characters speak no Terran, Bert grudgingly translates.

Key Points:

- Valanche is lost and hungry. He does not wish to slay gnomes or anyone else.
- If he cannot go home, he would like nothing more than to live in peace.
- He does not know why he is on this plane, nor does he know why or how the lesser elementals have come.
- If he is permitted to stay and feed a reasonable amount, he is prepared to defend the gnomes from the lesser elementals. He made this offer to Flyn, but was rejected.

Important Note:

This is the turning point of the whole adventure. Neither Bert nor the other gnomes knew of Flyn's refusal to deal with Valanche. Bert is very upset to learn it. Two gnomes died battling lesser elementals. But for Flyn's greed, their deaths could have been prevented.

If the characters persist in their attack, Valanche defends himself, summoning six lesser earth elementals to assist him (treat as **gargoyles**). This will surely pound the characters into paste, as it is about 5 times the maximum of what they can handle. If this happens, you have an excellent opportunity to explain to the players the lesson they should have learned about parleying as they roll up new characters.

If the characters agree to carry Valanche's message to Flyn – and Bert insists on that if they don't think of it – Valanche agrees to wait peacefully for their return.



Concluding the Adventure

When the heroes carry Valanche's message to Flyn, they discover a different side to the prospector.

Back on the Surface

If the heroes don't think of it first, Bert prompts them to give Flyn the list of Valanche's demands.

If the heroes omit the part about Valanche offering to protect the gnomes in exchange for a diet of gems, Bert angrily reminds them of their vow.

Flyn at first strenuously denies Valanche's story. Bert leaps to the heroes' defense if necessary, claiming he was there.

The heroes notice grumbling and scowling from the other gnomes. A clever hero will attempt to rally the other gnomes, all of whom knew and were friends of the dead miners. A successful **DC 10 Persuasion check** (or impassioned speech) brings the gnomes to the brink of revolt.

When the revolt becomes apparent, Flyn grudgingly backs down and agrees to the deal. He insists on writing up a massively intricate contract. Valanche cannot read it, of course, but (perhaps naively) trusts the characters to work in his best interest.

The heroes may insist on personally delivering the contract to Valanche. If so, they meet him without difficulty and he makes his mark. In any case, Flyn glares daggers at the heroes while their pay is counted out, and sends them on their way as soon as possible.

The characters will have to use the cart to get their raw gem ore back to town. Flyn keeps his word on their payment, at least, though they have made an enemy.

Getting Back to Town

Should the characters have not resolved the side quests outlined in the Random Encounters, the trip back is an excellent opportunity to do so. Resolving the conflict between the centaurs and the lizardfolk won't be easy.

As stated in the footnote above, we recommend you do not allow the characters to realize the full gold-piece value of their ore. During their downtime they can have it refined into valued gems – actual treasure. After paying the craftsmen and incurring other losses inherent in turning gem ore into jewels, they will net 50% of what Flyn promised.

Future Eventualities

Though he has signed a contract, Flyn will constantly seek ways to rid himself of Valanche, perhaps enlisting the aid of other adventurers.

Depending on how the party treated Bert, he may or may not remain the servant of his patron character. If they treated him well, he remains, in essence becoming a member of the party. This earns him a share of loot and XP. If they treated him poorly, he remains at the mine. If he remains at the mine, and Flyn betrays Valanche, Bert uses his contacts in Eastbrook to report this perfidy to the characters, enlisting their aid (and causing another adventure!).

Valanche is an excellent recurring ally to the characters. Perhaps he saves their bacon in a cave somewhere when they're on a different quest. Just when they're about to be smashed into paste, he swims up through the stone and saves them. Use this sparingly, however, as players don't like such *deus ex machina*.

Rewards and XP

The simplest method is simply to advance the characters to the next level (story award). For example, if they're 3rd level, advance them all to 4th. Otherwise, total the XP for the creatures they defeat and divide it among the party members.

If the heroes successfully negotiate a truce between Valanche and Flyn, award an extra 500XP per character.

If the heroes successfully negotiate a truce between the lizardfolk and centaur tribes, award an extra 200XP per character.

Author's Note

"Valanche's Eye" was inspired by a desire to write an adventure which blurs the line of who the bad guy actually is, or indeed whether or not there's a really tangible villain. It takes the "patron hires adventurers to clear dungeon" trope and twists it – the patron turns out to be a pretty rotten bastard, and the monsters in the dungeon are just trying to live their lives. It starts when gnome gem-miners strike the mother lode of emeralds and sapphires, only to find themselves run off their claim. First they accidentally broke through to the Elemental Planes of Earth and Fire, and mephits burst out to annoy them. When they were just about done dealing with the mephits, they disturbed an earth elemental who just wants to be left alone, and emeralds are its favorite snack. The mine boss hires the adventurers to come kill all the elementals. But should they? I hope this adventure allowed your players to explore this concept.

About the Author

R P Davis is a freelance writer, editor, and adventure designer. He's been a tabletop gamer the entire time he's been sentient, and a role-playing addict for more than 30 years. In that time he's written countless things, from simple spell effects to D&D campaign worlds to complete role-playing games. Most of it sucked, but he likes to think he learned from the process. You can find him at The DM's Guild, his website, and on Facebook.

If you liked this work, please go to the DM's Guild to rate and review it. That's how people like me figure out what people like you enjoy. Help us give you more high-quality entertainment!

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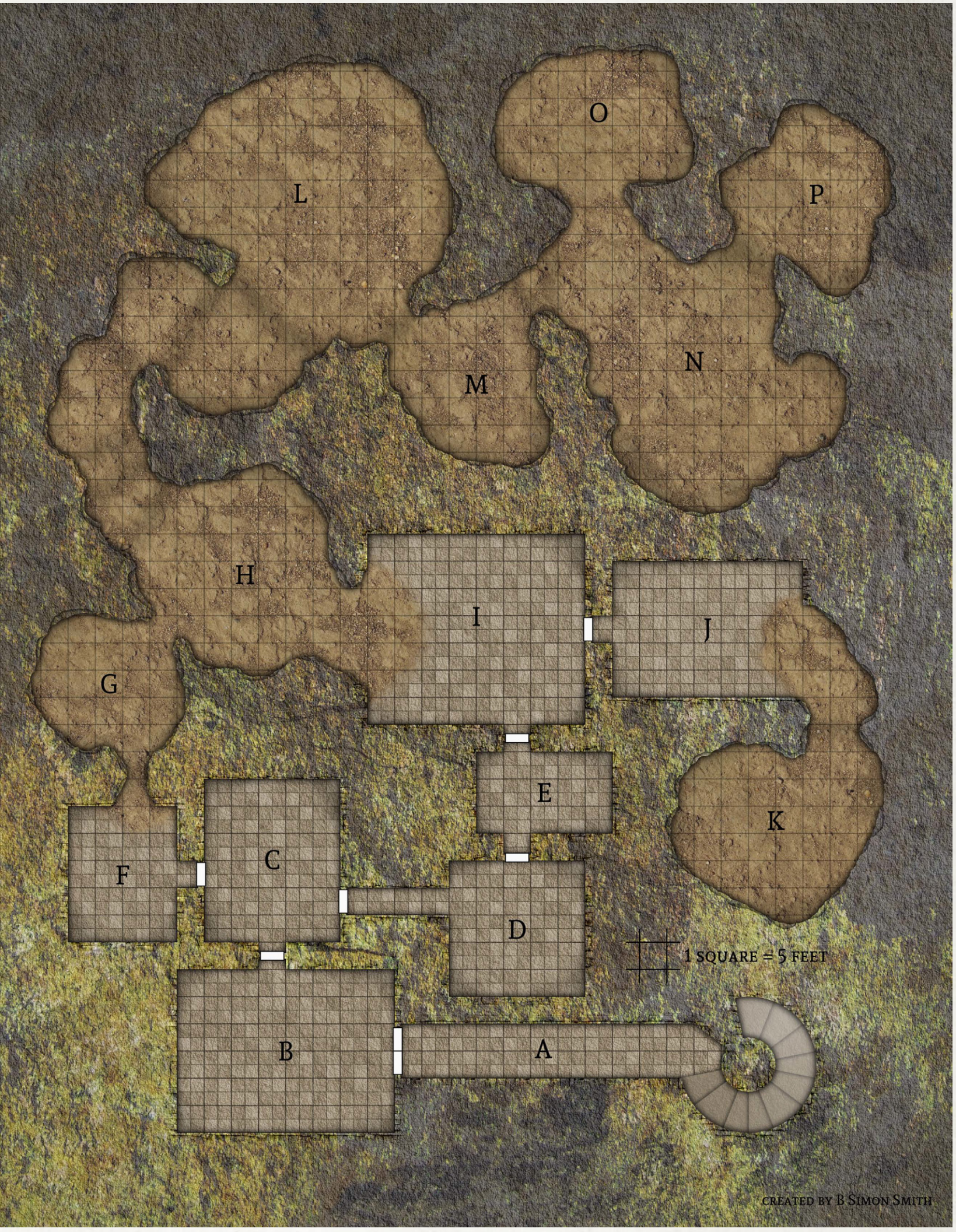
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1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
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CREATED BY B SIMON SMITH

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

Bert

CHARACTER NAME

4 Thief			
LEVEL & CLASS		PLAYER NAME	
Outlander	Gnome, Rock	2,700	6,500
BACKGROUND	RACE	EXPERIENCE	Next Level

STRENGTH 0 (10)

DEXTERITY +3 (16)

CONSTITUTION +2 (15)

INTELLIGENCE +3 (16)

WISDOM +1 (12)

CHARISMA -1 (9)

PROF

○ 0 STR		● +5 INT	
● +5 DEX		○ +1 WIS	
○ +2 CON		○ -1 CHA	

RESISTANCES

Adv. on Int/Wis/Cha saves vs. magic

SAVING THROWS

PROF EXP

●	+5	Acrobatics (Dex)
○	+1	Animal Handling (Wis)
○	+3	Arcana (Int)
●	+2	Athletics (Str)
○	-1	Deception (Cha)
●	+5	History (Int)
○	+1	Insight (Wis)
○	-1	Intimidation (Cha)
●	+7	Investigation (Int)
○	+1	Medicine (Wis)
○	+3	Nature (Int)
○	+1	Perception (Wis)
○	-1	Performance (Cha)
○	-1	Persuasion (Cha)
○	+3	Religion (Int)
●	+5	Sleight of Hand (Dex)
○	+3	Stealth (Dex)
●	+5	Survival (Wis)
●	+5	Thieves' Tools (Dex)

SKILLS

25 MAXIMUM HIT POINTS

+2 PROFICIENCY BONUS

14 ARMOR CLASS

Temporary Hit Points:

CURRENT HIT POINTS

+3 INITIATIVE

SUCCESSES ○○○

FAILURES ○○○

DEATH SAVES

LEVEL	DIE	USED
4	d8+2	

HIT DICE

ENCUMBERED 15 ft

25 ft

SPEED

AC		DESCRIPTION
11	Armor	Leather
	Shield	
3	Dex	○ Medium Armor ○ Heavy Armor
	Magic	
	Misc	
	Misc	

ARMOR

INSPIRATION

ABILITY SAVE DC

FEATURE	MAX	RECOVER	USED

LIMITED FEATURES

PROF

ARMOR
● Light ○ Medium ○ Heavy ○ Shields

WEAPONS
● Simple ○ Martial ● Other Weapons:
Hand Crossbow, Longsword, Rapier, Shortsword

LANGUAGES	TOOLS & OTHERS
Common	Thieves' tools
Thieves' Cant	Type of musical instrument
+1 from Outlander	Tinker's tools
Gnomish	
Terran	

PROFICIENCIES

ACTIONS	BONUS ACTIONS	REACTIONS
	Cunning Action	
	Fast Hands	

ACTIONS

11 PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

Darkvision 60 ft

SENSES

NAME	TOTAL
Bolts	20

AMMUNITION

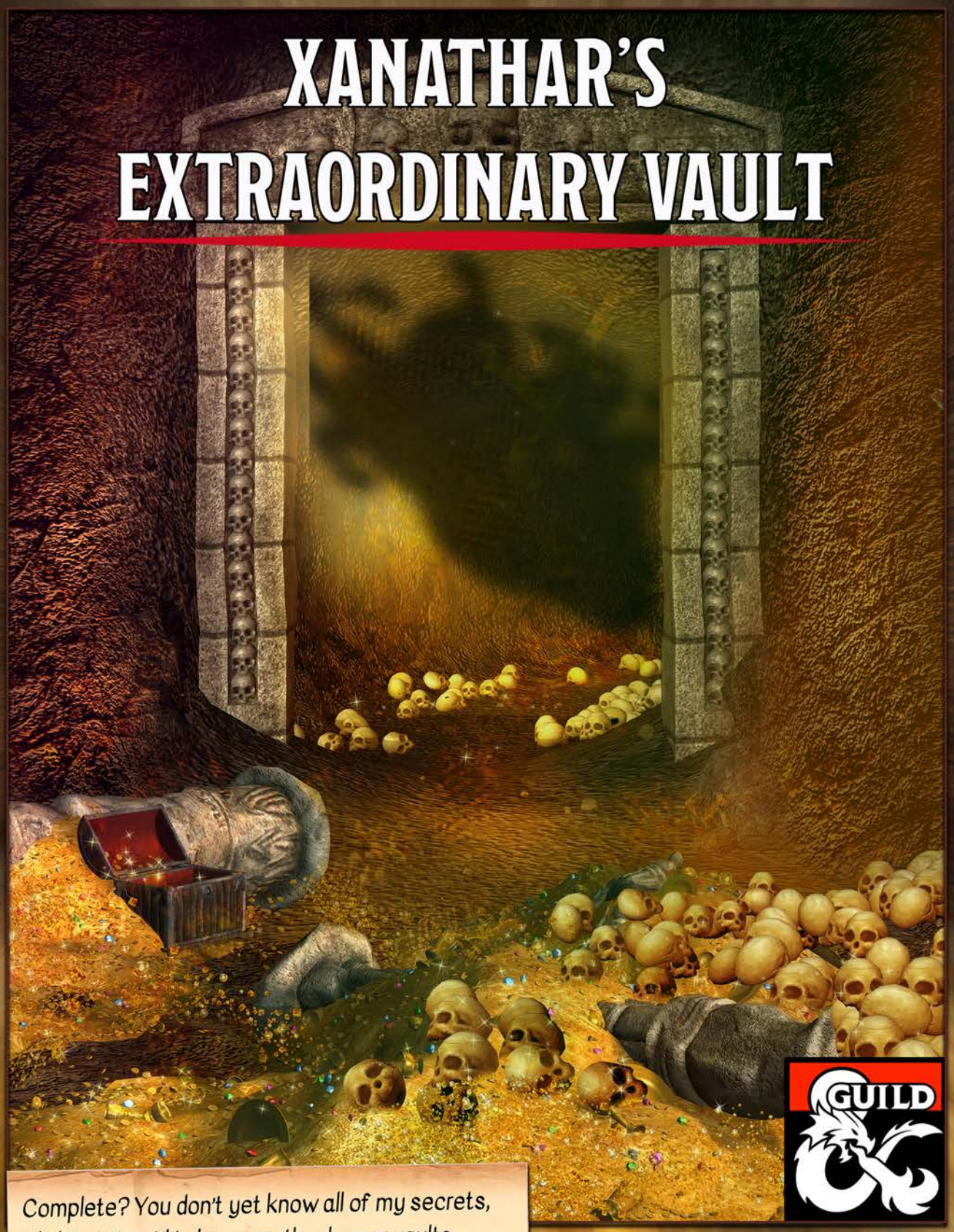
NAME	TOTAL

AMMUNITION

ATTACK NAME	PROF	ABILITY	RANGE	TO HIT	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE
Light Crossbow	✓	Dex	80/320 ft	+5	1d8+3	Piercing
Ammunition, loading, two-handed						
DESCRIPTION						
Dagger	✓	Dex	Melee, 20/60 ft	+5	1d4+3	Piercing
Finesse, light, thrown						
War pick		Str	Melee	0	1d8	Piercing

ATTACKS: WEAPONS & CANTRIPS

XANATHAR'S EXTRAORDINARY VAULT



Complete? You don't yet know all of my secrets, Slink! Wait until I show you the deeper vaults...

ONLY ON DMs GUILD



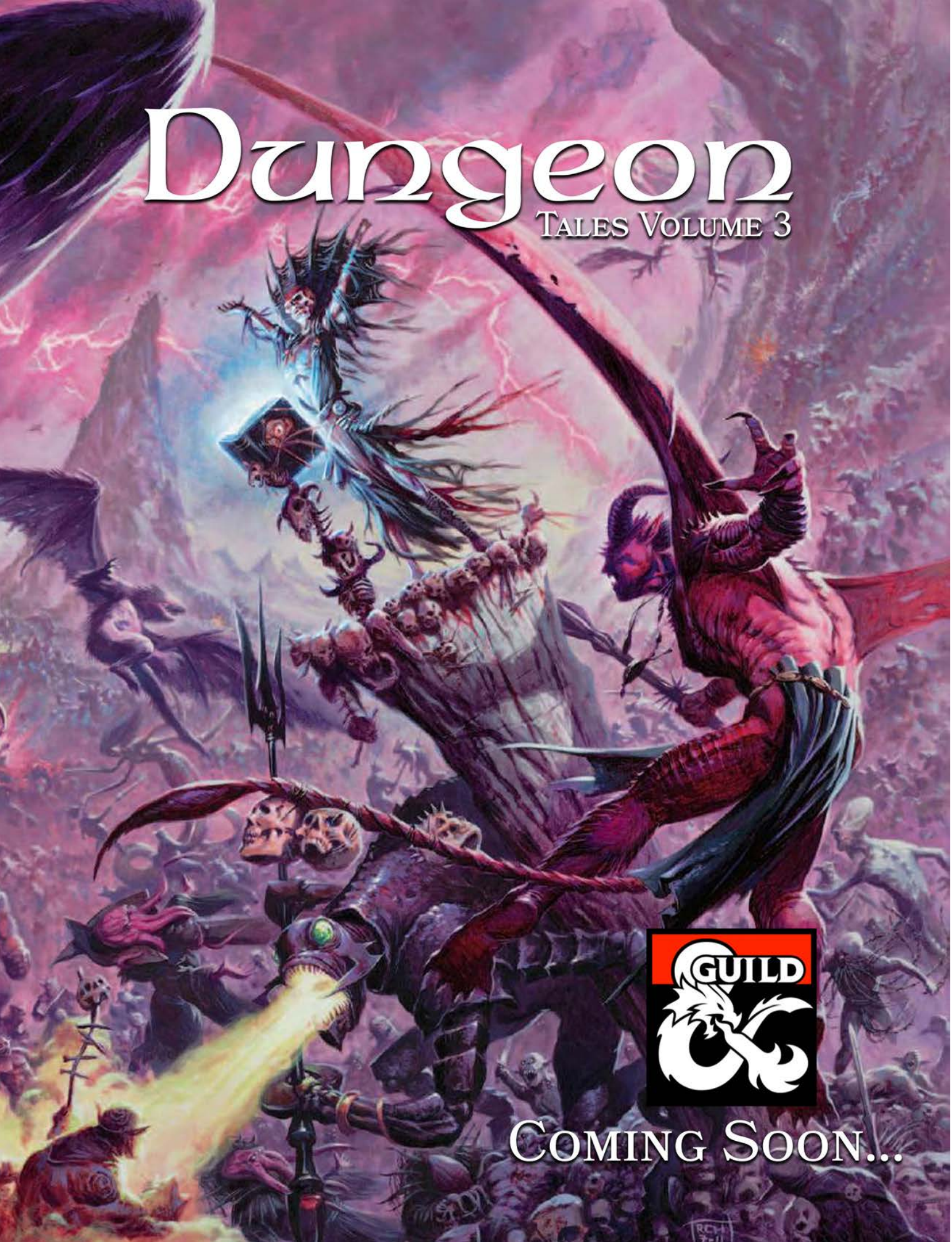
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Dungeon
Tales Volume 3
GUILD
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