

GAUNTLET OF FLAME

JVC PARRY



GAUNTLET OF FLAME

THE BLISTERING FORGE

Situated atop Mount Marazbor, an active volcano, is the dwarven lava-forge once known as Citadel Grungharaz. Once, this great armoury produced hordes of weaponry for dwarven regiments in far off lands, but now it has been taken over by rampaging fire giants. Are you capable of infiltrating the Gauntlet of Flame?

A 6-10 hour Dungeons & Dragons 5e adventure for 5th-10th level characters

by **JVC Parry**
editor **Ken Carcas**
cover art **Arcana Games**



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, Dungeon Master's Guide, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2016 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Tips for the DM	3
Adventure Background	3
Hooks	3
Opening	4
CITADEL GRUNGHARAZ	4
Citadel Grungharaz	4
General Features	4
Map - Ground Floor	5
Map - First Floor	9
GRUNGHARAZ MINE	11
General Features	11
Random Encounters	11
THE CAVES OF CUPRUMZEL	12
Opening	12
Map - Caves of Cuprumzel	13
General Features	14
THE VAULT	18
Opening	18
General Features	18
Map - The Vault	18
AMBUSHED!	21
OUTCOMES	21
APPENDIX A - GIANT TREASURE TABLE	22
APPENDIX B - STATBLOCKS AND NPCs	23
APPENDIX C - PLAYER HANDOUTS	25
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	26

INTRODUCTION

Gauntlet of Flame is a one shot D&D 5e adventure for a party of characters from 5th-10th level. It should take 6-10 hours to complete, depending on which elements you chose to use. It can be coupled with *Storm King's Thunder*, dropped into the *Forgotten Realms*, or your homebrew campaign.

TIPS FOR THE DM

As with any adventure, *Gauntlet of Flame* should be adapted to work for your group. If you don't like the way an element works, please feel free to change it. If encounters are too difficult for your players, remove monsters or replace them with an easier, but fitting foe.

Similarly, if you would like to adapt *Gauntlet of Flame* for your world, you can easily substitute appropriate plot hooks, NPCs and items.

In order to deliver an optimum experience for your players, it would probably be best to read the adventure, in full, before attempting to run it. There are traps and puzzles that you need to understand fully in advance.

In my opinion, players may need to level up during this adventure, but do so at the DM's discretion. They may not have achieved all the necessary xp from combat, but I would suggest rewarding players xp for solving puzzles to make up the difference.

Try to have fun running this adventure! It was highly enjoyable to create and play with my own group, and I hope that you can share in that experience!

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Hidden deep in the mountains lies an active volcano, known to most as Mount Marazbor. The lava which spews out of this geological behemoth has long been used by the dwarves of the region to power forges as unique as they are powerful. Over time, the dwarves built a citadel upon the side of the volcano; Citadel Grungharaz.

For centuries the dwarves worked in peace, forging some of the most masterful metalwork known, including magical blades whose ilk was unknown elsewhere. Over time, the dwarves grew wealthy and the strike of hammer on anvil waned. Now, only the best weapons and armour were to be forged, and only by master smiths. The dwarves became obsessed with the production of magical weapons, forming a great hoard of them in vaults deep beneath the earth. Rumour says that many of these still remain untouched from centuries past.

As the dwarves turned their gaze further down the volcanos veins, they could not see that the world around them was changing. Fire giants were entering their lands, drawn by Mount Marazbor and the promise it held. Before long they stormed the Citadel, taking the dwarves by surprise, and took it for their own. Any dwarves that survived were enslaved and forced down into their own mines to bring up ore for the giants. Since then, the Citadel has been reworked for the needs of the three fire giants that live there.

Much of the original architecture has been destroyed to make giant sized rooms, and a huge bronze throne sits atop the fortress, looking over the river of lava below. The mountain is rich in tin and copper, and its elemental nature made it a natural home of azers. These are the taskmasters of the dwarf slaves and keep them in line whilst the giants forge for themselves. As the giants are too large for the mines, they rely on the azers to supervise the subterranean networks, as well as help the fire giants forge more of them.

Unbeknownst to the giants, the enslaved dwarves have an ally within the mountain. A clan of kobolds that previously plagued the Citadel have had a change of alignment due to the birth of a copper dragon from an egg, which was previously presumed dead. Whilst somewhat of a trickster, this dragon is benevolent at heart, and provides the dwarves with food and magic items from its horde. Slowly, the dwarves are mustering the strength to overthrow their fire giant masters.

HOOKS

Hook 1: Shut Down the Forge

An army of villainous and tyrannical hobgoblins are marching upon the hometown of your players. Whilst the goblinoid host is on the move, it is vulnerable to breaks in supply lines. An NPC reveals to the players that the hobgoblins are due to receive a caravan of weaponry from Citadel Grungharaz within the next month, which will provide them with the siege weaponry needed to assault the town. The heroes must shut down the forge before these weapons can be made.

Hook 2: Zalto's Bane

If you would like to add this adventure to your Storm King's Thunder campaign, you can send the party rumours that an old dwarven Citadel, now fallen into the hands of rampaging fire giants, contains a weapon to which Duke Zalto is vulnerable. Zalto has sent these fire giants to ensure that no one gets their hands upon it. The weapon could be a Bolt of Slaying, with Zalto's name inscribed in dwarven runes upon its shaft, or perhaps a Giant Slayer axe, once wielded by an ancient foe of Zalto's.

Hook 3: Save the Slaves

Whilst travelling through the Forgotten Realms, specifically a mountain range such as the Spine of the World, or even a location in your homebrew world, the players encounter a group of escaped dwarf slaves from Citadel Grungharaz. They inform the party that they escaped from the ancient lava forge, which has since fallen into the hands of cruel fire giants. The remaining slaves are on the verge of rebellion, and perhaps one final push from a band of adventurers would turn the tide against their evil overlords.

OPENING

As the party reach the shadow of Mount Marazbor, they realise the true scale of the task ahead of them. Pyroclasts litter an ashen, sulphurous wasteland, streaked with veins of lava which pour from the volcano. Sat on the thickest of these streams is a towering black iron citadel. Even from this distance, a great grinding and clattering can be heard as the forge powers on. Giant bats have roosted in these jagged towers and flap around the lofty heights like crows over a corpse.

As the characters near Citadel Grungharaz, the heat becomes nearly unbearable (use the *Extreme Heat* rules; *Dungeon Master's Guide* p.110). The slow flowing streams of lava bubble and pop, throwing scorching droplets of molten rock through the air, singeing anything they come into contact with. Thankfully, the billowing smoke and sulphurous clouds emitted from the volcano allow characters to approach stealthily, all the way up to the great gates of Citadel Grungharaz with ease.

CITADEL GRUNGHARAZ

The following passages describe the lava forge of Citadel Grungharaz and any encounters that take place within its borders. Descriptive text to be read aloud to the players is contained in the grey boxes. Citadel Grungharaz is comprised of the Citadel itself and the mine beneath it, including both the Caves of Cuprumzel and The Vault.

CITADEL GRUNGHARAZ

Citadel Grungharaz is a large dwarven forge come fortress constructed of black iron, bronze and adamantine. It is built atop a wide stream of lava, whose flow powers the mill and whose heat allows for the smelting of incredible weapons and treasures. Currently it belongs to Ferrusnika, a fire giantess who has helped forged a small army of azers to keep her dwarf slaves in check, and ensure that she, her fire giant allies, and her workforce can continue to produce large quantities of quality armaments.



GENERAL FEATURES: CITADEL GRUNGHARAZ

As characters explore Citadel Grungharaz, keep in mind the following features:

Heat. Citadel Grungharaz is built upon a 50-foot-wide stream of lava which radiates intense heat. Any creatures unaccustomed to these tiring conditions must abide by the *Extreme Heat* rules (*Dungeon Master's Guide* p.110).

Ceilings. The ceilings of the Citadel are 35-feet-high.

Doors. Save the doors to area G2, G3, G4 and G7, all of the doors in Citadel Grungharaz are giant-sized. They are 20-feet tall and made of bronze panels, decorated with giant runes and faces, with handles 9 feet above the floor. A Huge giant has no trouble opening these doors. A smaller creature can attempt to open a door, provided that creature, or some other helpful creature, can reach the door handle and unlatch it. While the handle is unlatched, a creature must use an action to push or pull on the heavy door, opening it with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the door doesn't open.

Lava Stream. Flowing through the centre of Citadel Grungharaz is a 50-foot-wide stream of lava. Creatures falling into the lava become partially submerged, taking 10d10 fire damage per round. Any creature that starts a second turn within the lava risks becoming fully submerged. They must succeed a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or sink beneath the surface, taking 18d10 fire damage per round. On a success the creature remains partially submerged, and continues to take 10d10 fire damage per round. The lava flows at a rate of 5 feet per round from south to north and counts as difficult terrain.

Illumination. All the rooms in Citadel Grungharaz are dimly lit, either by giant torches set in sconces 12 feet off the floor, or by the lava stream.

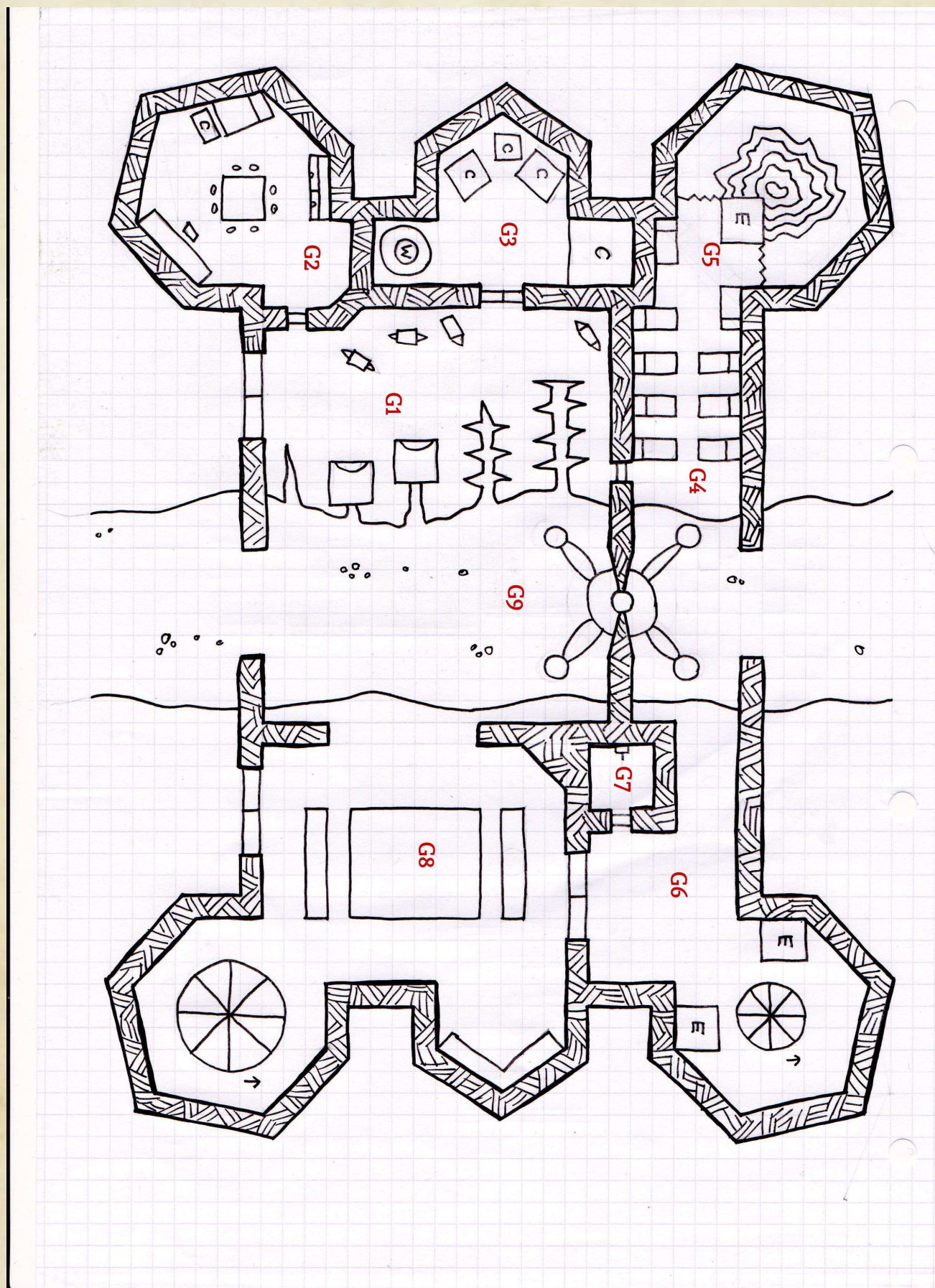
Oversized Furnishings and Objects. The furnishings and objects in areas G8, G11, G12, G13 are sized for giants. Exceptions are noted in the text. Furniture is typically twice as high, long and wide as its human-sized equivalent, and roughly eight times the weight. Small and Medium creatures can scuttle under and clamber over giant-sized furniture, treating the spaces they occupy as difficult terrain.

Stairs. The staircase in area G8A is sized for giants. Each step is 3 feet tall by 3 feet deep. Medium and smaller creatures treat the staircase as difficult terrain.

Noise. The constant hammering and grinding in Citadel Grungharaz mask most noises made within the fortress. Conversations can be had without alerting creatures in adjacent rooms, however shouting or combat will raise the alarm. Wisdom (Perception) checks made to listen in Grungharaz have disadvantage.

MAP - CITADEL GRUNGHARAZ GROUND FLOOR

1sq. = 5ft.



G1. SMELTERY

Intense heat blasts your bodies as you enter this room. The lava stream here has been tapped into by cut channels and adamantine forges. Several anvils are dotted on the western wall. There are a small group of dwarves at work in the room, dressed in scrappy shirts and heavy trousers.

This room is occupied by six dwarf slave **commoners** working the forges during the day, supervised by two **azers**. They do not notice the characters unless the characters deliberately draw attention to themselves, such as by shouting out. Across the lava stream, in area G8, are two **fire giants** who appear to be having a conversation whilst sitting at a huge table.

During the night the room is empty.

The azers attack characters as soon as they become obvious to them. If the fire giants notice the characters, they make their way to area G1 through the lava stream.

If the characters approach the slaves, they do not attack. Dwarf slaves are unrestrained, and could leave at any time, but know that they will only be killed by the fire giants. They are resigned to this fate, although some have hope. Characters that succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check are able to get information out of the dwarves concerning the state of affairs in Citadel Grungharaz:

- Citadel Grungharaz has fallen into the hands of fire giants, who have enslaved the dwarves as miners and smiths. They have been here for decades. Any dwarf who tries to leave only gets so far before they're squashed by a well-aimed pyroclast.
- The leader of the fire giants is named Ferrusnika. She is a harsh taskmaster, often scorning or even killing dwarves who step out of line. (Some dwarves may show burns upon their skin where they have been literally scalded by her fury).
- The giants have a dwarven ally called Gurdis Blazenstrike. She acts as an overseer for the giants and solves any petty issues in the forge. She is normally in her quarters (area G2) or watching the workers in the dressing mill (area G10).
- The giants are too big to fit down the mine, and Gurdis tends to watch over the surface works, so the fire giants forge azers from bronze to escort the miners down and keep them working as the giants require.

There is a 30% chance that any dwarf slave spoken to in the Citadel is a member of the Cabal of the Scale. They are marked by small brand mark in the shape of a scale just above the ankle. This mark is hidden from view unless revealed by the slave or unless a character succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. These individuals know the following information, although it requires a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to reveal it:

- Down in the mines there is a kobold lair, in which resides a young copper dragon named Cuprumzel. The kobolds that live in the mines used to be a pest, but are beholden to Cuprumzel. They keep the dwarf slaves healthy by bringing them additional mushroom food, and smuggling in the occasional magic item.

- With the help of Cuprumzel and her clan of kobolds, as well as the dwarves that have accepted her, the Cabal of the Scale are intending to revolt against their giant masters. Unfortunately, the dwarves need to dig the dragon out first, which isn't easy under the scorn of the azers.

G2. OVERSEER'S QUARTERS

A black iron table surrounded by velvet covered chairs takes pride of place at the centre of this room. On the far wall is a relatively large four poster bed, with a heavy looking bronze-barred chest at the foot.

If Gurdis Blazenstrike is not in this room, the door is locked. She has the only key. The door can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A successful DC 20 Strength check will break the door down.

There is a 50% chance that **Gurdis Blazenstrike (Appendix B)** is in this room during the day. She is either reading at the table or organizing her papers at the desk. She is aggressive toward anyone not from the Citadel who enters her quarters without permission, aiming to knock them unconscious and bring them to Ferrusnika. If slaves enter without permission, she orders them to leave, only attacking as a last resort. During the night, Gurdis is sleeping in her lavish bed.

Upon the desk are blueprints of the mines underneath the citadel, including the location of the Vault and the Kobold Lair (only the location is noted, not the maps themselves). Gurdis guards these plans closely. If she is not in the room they are locked away in her footlocker.

Treasure. The footlocker at the end of Gurdis' bed is locked and trapped with a poison needle (see *Sample Traps* in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Only Gurdis has the key, although it can be unlocked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. Inside are 850gp, 200sp and 120cp, as well as three 25gp gemstones. The mine plans may also be within.

Upon her person, Gurdis has three keys, one to her footlocker, one to area G2 and one to area V7. As well as her equipment and gear, she has a beautifully crafted dwarven helm, decorated with bronze filigree and tiny emeralds. She also has a belt pouch which contains 12pp, 105gp and a diamond (worth 100gp).

G3. STOREROOM

The doors to this room are guarded by two dwarf **berserkers** loyal to Gurdis Blazenstrike. They do not permit entry to anyone save those with written permission from Gurdis herself, which they take once provided and burn.

This large room is obviously used to store food, mining tools and mechanical bits and pieces.

Inside the room are another two **berserkers** loyal to Gurdis. They are there to ensure that slaves who are allowed in take only what their notes allow.

There are crates filled with hundreds of non-perishable rations, barrels of ale and trunks filled with miner's picks, sledgehammers and the like. One large crate is piled high with metal barrels. These are filled with unrefined ore, ready to be taken to area G10 for grinding and sorting. There is also a well in this room which provides clean, drinkable fresh water.

G4. SLAVE DORMITORY

This cramped room is filled with bunk beds. A cool breeze blows in from the west, but does little to mask the smell of sweaty dwarves.

During the day there are three dwarf slave **commoners** resting. They are snoozing in the bunks and don't notice anyone who enters quietly. See area G1 for information on interacting with dwarf slaves.

G5. MINE SHAFT

In the west of the dormitory is a fenced off area, with what appears to be a large wooden crate attached to a pulley system within it. As you approach, the cool breeze picks up, giving you brief respite from the intense heat of the lava forge. Peering past the iron railings, you can make out an incredibly deep mine shaft.

This room is always manned by the elderly Kildak Brawnanzil (LN dwarf slave **thug**) who operates the elevator. When the elevator is not in operation, he naps in a wooden chair.

When characters enter the room, the elevator is 1d10x10 feet below the surface. Operating the pulley to raise or lower the elevator requires a DC 10 Strength check. The DC for this check increases by one for each Medium creature in the elevator (two Small creatures count as one Medium creature for this purpose, one Large creature counts as four Medium), or for each space filled with goods. Up to eight Small creatures, four Medium creatures, or one Large creature can occupy the lift. It takes an action to raise or lower the elevator by 10 feet.

Kildak is a greedy miser, who cares little for his fellows, or their giant masters. He mostly grumbles about how heavy the elevator gets. Despite this, he can be bribed to operate the elevator with gems worth a total of 50gp or more. Alternatively, characters must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check to coerce him into working the pulleys.

Creatures that enter the mine should advance to "Grungharaz Mine".

G6. LAVA JETTY

Across the lava stream is a landing platform, as well as some empty barrels and wheelbarrows. A handful of dwarves stand about, either helping people across the lava, or operating the elevators in the far corner of the room. A bronze dwarf sheathed in flame appears to be commanding the slaves.

There are five dwarf slave **commoners** in this room during the day. There are 3 on the jetty by the lava, who help people across. There two by each elevator operating the pulleys. These are both connected to a pair of elevators. The elevator to the south of the staircase comes down, whilst the elevator to the west of the stairs goes up. These are used to transport barrels of ore and other goods up to the next floor (area G10).

The fiery dwarf is an **azer**, a creature forged in the heat of the lava from bronze to supervise the dwarf slaves. If the azer believes it can battle the characters effectively on its own, it will do so. If not, it will run to area G8 to alert the two fire giants there.

G7. LAVA MILL OPERATING ROOM

The room to this door is locked with a heavy iron padlock. It can be opened with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A successful DC 20 Strength check will break the door down.

Inside this cramped, steamy room is a whole host of pipes, faucets, valves and gauges. These all come together on the western wall at some sort of interface. There are a pair of levers, painted red, in the middle of the mess of pipes.

These levers control the lava mill (area G9). The right hand lever can be used to grind the mill to a halt, as several iron bars slide down from the roof and prevent it from turning. This prevents creatures from crossing the lava stream (area G9), and also halts the millstone in area G10. This prevents the ore from being crushed and sorted and effectively halts production until it is turned back on. The lever on the left is an emergency release lever, which disengages the metal arms holding the lava mill in place. This will permanently halt production in Citadel Grungharaz (see Hook 1). To decipher what these levers do requires a successful DC 20 Intelligence check.

Pulling either of the levers draws attention to characters in this area as the effects are instant. Fire giants, azers or dwarves loyal to them in areas G1, G4, G6, G8, G9 and G10 realise something is up, and head to this area to apprehend the culprits.



G8. GIANT'S HALL

Giant-sized furniture fills the room. A huge table and pair of benches take up the center, an enormous desk occupies an alcove and in the southeast corner is a huge spiral staircase of polished black granite.

During the day there are two **fire giants** in this room. They are typically engaged in conversation about the workings of the mine or watching the dwarf slaves in area G1. The fire giants are immediately aggressive to intruders, and they will show no mercy. Rather than greatswords, they wield glaives. They have a +11 to hit, dealing 24 (3d10 + 7) slashing damage on a hit. They have a reach of 15 feet whilst wielding the glaives. If the chance arises, these giants delight in using their polearms to shove creatures into the lava stream.

Atop the desk are giant-sized plans of the mine (similar to those in area G2). They are around 15 feet wide and 10 feet long.

Treasure. Both fire giants have belt pouches, the size of small sacks, which contain 1d4+1 100gp gems. You may roll 1d4 times on the Giant Treasure Table (Appendix A) per giant.

G9. LAVA MILL

In the middle of the scorching lava stream is a huge adamantine structure, which turns slowly as the lava courses past it. The central pole is held upright by a pair of metallic jaws. Around the base of this structure, above the turbine, are four arms which hold platforms raised above the lava. You notice a few dwarves loading goods onto these and using them to travel across the stream.

This mill is used to power the grindstone in area G10 and carry slaves and goods across the lava stream. Creatures can step onto the mechanism from area G1, G4 or G6. Hopping on requires a successful DC 5 Dexterity check. On a fail, the creature slips and falls into the lava (see General Features). This check can be made with advantage if another creature assists. Getting off does not require a check.

The mechanism turns at a speed of 10 feet per round, taking 3 rounds to move an item from area G4 to G6 for example.

If a creature is moved against its will whilst on the mechanism, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or slip from the moving platforms into the lava.

G10. DRESSING MILL

A deafening grinding sound fills this room, and echoes throughout its vaulted ceiling. A host of dwarf slaves, supervised by two fire giants and several blazing bronze dwarves are picking and sieving the ore being crushed by the massive millstone.

There are eight dwarf slave **commoners** in this room sorting ore. They are supervised by four **azers** and two **fire giants**. The azers and fire giants instantly attack intruders. The slaves are forced to assist in the attack. Characters can dissuade slaves from attacking by succeeding on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. This takes an action, and can be made with advantage if the characters promise their liberation.

There is a 33% chance that **Ferrusnika (Appendix B)** is in the room with the other fire giants. She has two *potions of healing* in her belt pouch.

There is a 50% chance that **Gurdis Blazenstrike (Appendix B)** is in this room. She is managing the slaves working at the millstone.

This room is used to crush unrefined ore from the mine. Dwarf slaves then pick or sieve out impurities, which are loaded into wheelbarrows, sent down the elevator to area G6 before being deposited in exhausted tunnels of the mine. The purified ore is stored in trunks on the southern wall, before being taken down to area G1 for smelting.

The northwest corner of the room drops down to area G5. Creatures who fall or are pushed down this must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a success they manage to land to one side of the mineshaft 40 feet below, taking 4d6 bludgeoning damage. On a failed save, the creature falls down the shaft an additional 1d10 x 10 feet, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage for each additional 10 foot fallen.

See area G1 for information on interacting with dwarf slaves.

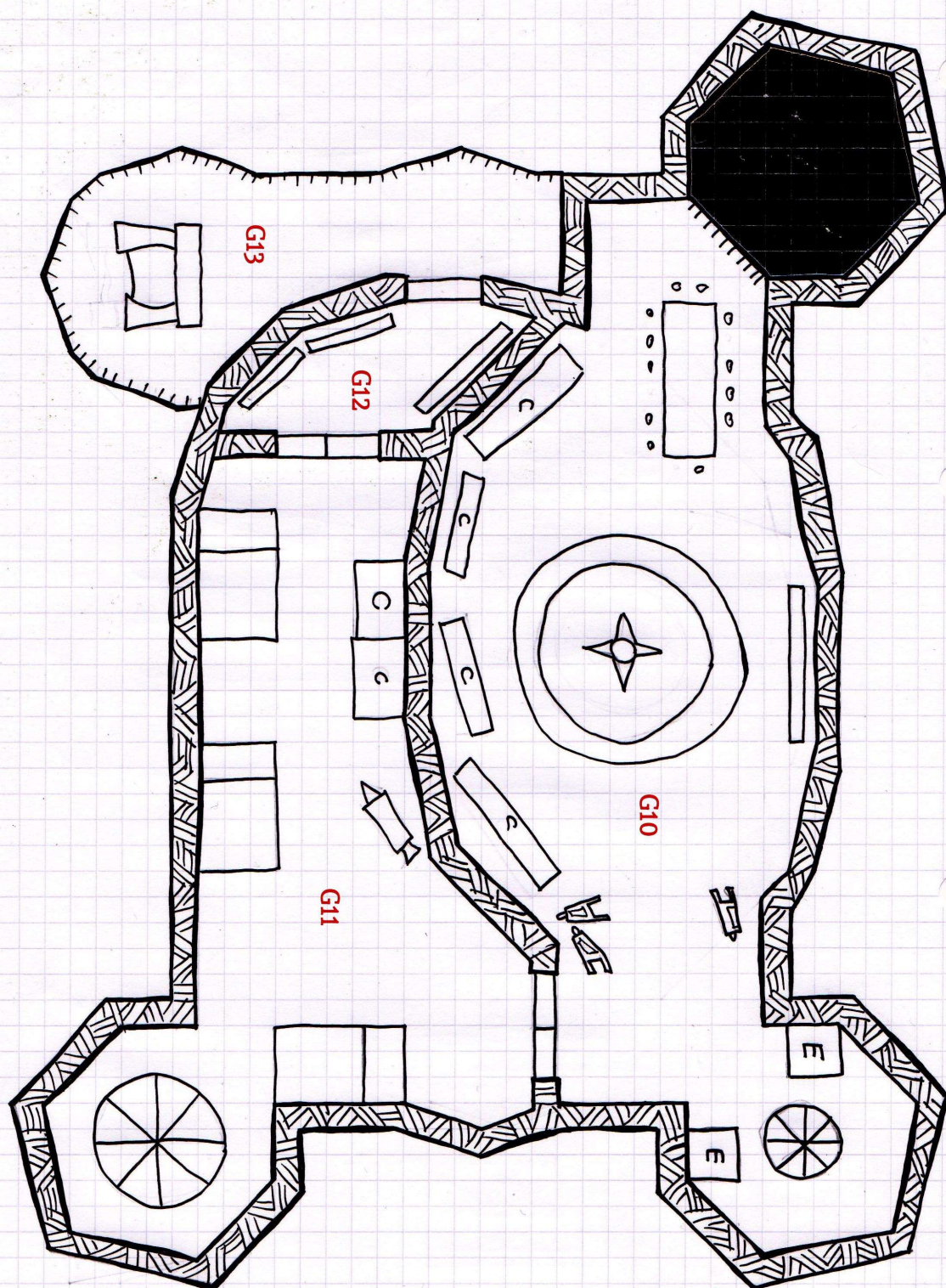
Treasure. The fire giants in this room both have belt pouches containing 1d6+1 50gp gems, and 2d10gp. The chests are unlocked; each contains 1d10 x 10lbs of iron ore (worth 5cp per pound). The rack on the north wall contains 3 giant sized decorative adamantine swords, inlaid with gemstones (they weigh 60lbs and are worth 400gp each).

Ferrusnika has a belt pouch containing 120gp, 50sp and 1d4+1 100gp gems. She also has any unconsumed potions of healing. If using Hook 2, she has note from Duke Zalto, thanking her for storing 'the weapon' in the vault beneath the Citadel. You may roll 1d4 times on the Giant Treasure Table (Appendix A) per giant.



MAP - CITADEL GRUNGHARAZ FIRST FLOOR

1sq. = 5ft.



G11. GIANT'S QUARTERS

Pride of place in this enormous room is a huge anvil, covered in runes which throb with an orange glow in the dim light. This same light illuminates two gigantic bunk beds on the southern wall, and a more lavish bed covered in black furs on the east. Beside the anvil are two huge wooden chests.

There is a 33% chance that **Ferrusnika (Appendix B)** is in this room working with an azer to create more azers to join her force. Scattered around the anvil are a bronze arm and head. She has two potions of healing in her belt pouch.

The **azer** wields Ferrusnika's forge hammer, used to create others of his kind. This is a *warhammer of smiting* (see *mace of smiting*).

This room is the sleeping quarters for the giants. At night, they can all be found slumbering here.

Treasure. The two wooden chests are not locked, but require two people to open them (in the same fashion as a giant door, see General Features). Within are piles of giant clothes, as well as one giant suit of chain mail (worth 375gp). Sat atop these are three *potions of diminution*, which the giants use to get into the mine as a last resort.

The right hand chest has a false bottom, which is noticeable with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. It takes a DC 12 Strength check to lift the wooden board. Beneath this is a large diamond worth 300gp and a five gold ingots (each weighs 25lbs and is worth 1,000gp). You may roll 1d4 times on the Giant Treasure Table (Appendix A) per giant.

G12. ARMOURY

Huge floor to ceiling racks of weaponry tower above your heads. These giant weapons are forged to perfection. They appear razor sharp and have runes and engravings adorning the blades and spikes.

This room plays host to two **hell hounds** which belong to Ferrusnika and the other fire giants. They willingly attack any creature other than the fire giants and azers, focusing on those who seem weakest. They will attempt to ambush the party. Roll a Dexterity (Stealth) check for them, contested by the characters passive Wisdom (Perception) scores.

Treasure. This room is filled with giant weapons on racks. There are two greatswords (250gp each), two glaives (100gp each) and a morningstar (75gp).

G13. THE BRONZE THRONE

You emerge from the intense heat of the citadel and are greeted by a no less stifling wind. From this height you can see miles and miles of the volcanic landscape. Lava streams wind their way through the rock, sculpting the earth with their immense power. Round the corner is a colossal bronze throne, polished to perfection, so that each flat surface resembles an amber mirror.

During the day there is a 33% chance that **Ferrusnika (Appendix B)** is sitting here, viewing the mountainous world which she has conquered. She has two potions of healing in her belt pouch.

The throne itself is magical, and burns with a searing heat, which can be detected with a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Anyone other than Ferrusnika who touches this throne must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 17 (3d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. As well as this, a shape materialises within and bursts out of the throne. The figure enters the Material Plane as a hostile **fire elemental**, which immediately attacks whoever summoned it. This effect only triggers once, and the heat from the throne dissipates one minute after the elemental leaves it. After the elemental has been destroyed, it collapses in on itself in a ball of smoke, from which drops an *elemental gem; red corundum*.



GRUNGHARAZ MINE

The mine beneath Citadel Grungharaz is where most of the dwarf slaves that belong to Ferrusnika reside. Any among them who are master smiths remain above the surface, but any dwarf who could not pull their weight was sent down the mine, to scratch out the veins of copper, tin, gold, iron and adamantine below. These poor souls are driven on by heartless azers, who push the slaves close to death in the search for more metal.

GENERAL FEATURES: GRUNGHARAZ MINE

As characters explore the mine, keep in mind the following features:

Dimensions. The dimensions of the mine change throughout. Some are large natural caverns, others are tiny carved out tunnels through which even the smallest dwarves have to crawl. Whenever an encounter occurs within the mines, roll on the Mine Locations table.

Light. No areas of the mine are lit. Since miners are not permitted to work down here without the supervision of the azers, they are never in need of light sources whilst working.

Interconnected Tunnels. Without the aid of a map, characters struggle to navigate the twisting tunnels of the mine. Whenever characters wish to find a location within the mine, such as the elevator shaft to the surface, the Caves of Cuprumzel or The Vault, they must make a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check to determine which way to go. On a success, the characters arrive at their desired location after 1d4 hours. On a fail, the characters wander aimlessly for 1d4+1 hours. The check can be made with advantage if the characters have a map, or some other means of finding the desired location.

Random Encounters. Spending time down the mine draws the attention of its denizens. Consult the Random Encounters table for more information.

ENTERING THE MINE

In order to enter the mine, the characters must descend using the elevator (area G5).

Slowly but surely, you descend into the depths of the volcano in the somewhat rickety wooden elevator. As you sink into the earth, the light and heat begins to fade. Eventually you are in pitch black, and the sweat on your bodies chills you.

Characters have multiple opportunities to step off of the elevator and into the mine tunnels, ultimately, their choice of platform is inconsequential.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

For every 4 hours that the characters spend down the mine, roll on the following table;

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d10	Encounter
1-2	Mining Contingent
3	Escaped Slaves
4-5	Kobolds
6-7	Elementals
8	Xorn
9	Caves of Cuprumzel*
10	The Vault*

Encounters marked with a * occur in their own locations, do not roll on the table below.

MINE LOCATIONS

d10	Location
1-2	10-foot-wide and tall tunnel
3-4	Roughly circular natural cavern dotted with stalactites and stalagmites, 40 feet in diameter and 30 feet tall
5	5-foot-wide and tall tunnel, with 1d6+1 2-foot-wide and tall offshoots leading to dead ends after 10 feet
6	Roughly rectangular natural cavern, 30-feet-long, 20-feet-wide but only 5-feet tall
7	Huge roughly circular cavern around 80 feet in diameter and 40 feet tall, with a pool of lava taking up around 25% of the ground space
8	60-foot-diameter circular cavern with a 60-foot-deep and 20-foot-wide chasm splitting it in half, two 5-foot wide rope bridges cross it
9-10	Four 10-foot-wide stone staircases, joined by 10-by-10-foot platforms, descending down 40 feet

MINING CONTINGENT

The party hear the sound of workers up ahead, and a light is visible from the source of the noise. Around a bend in the tunnels are 2d6+2 dwarf slave miners (**commoners**) equipped with miner's picks and sledgehammers. For every four slaves there is one **azer** supervising the work. If disturbed, the azers will attack, forcing the slaves to join in. The slaves can be discouraged with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check.

See area G1 for information on interacting with dwarf slaves.

Treasure. The miners have a stash of 1d10 x 10lbs of ores with them (worth 5cp per pound). The azers have chainmail pouches which contain 1d4 25gp gems.

ESCAPED SLAVES

From around the next bend stumble a group of 1d6+1 escaped dwarf slaves (**commoners**). They plead for your protection against the azers that are chasing them.

After 1 round, a light appears from the direction they are approaching. After another round, 1d4+1 **azers** arrive and attack, aiming to kill the players and retrieve the slaves.

See area G1 for information on interacting with dwarf slaves. If any of the slaves are members of the Cabal of the Scale, they can escort the party to the Caves of Cuprumzel.

KOBOLDS

The sound of skittering footsteps ahead alerts the party to danger. Ahead are a group of $1d8+3$ **kobolds**. There is a 25% chance of either a **kobold inventor** or **kobold scale sorcerer** being among the group.

The kobolds will attempt to surprise the party if at all possible, either by hiding behind stalactites, or sneaking into the shadows.

If the party are accompanied by a member of the Cabal of the Scale, they kobolds do not attack, instead pulling the party in the direction of the Caves of Cuprumzel.

Treasure. Each kobold has $1d4$ pilfered gold pieces. The whole host has $1d4+1$ bronze dragon scales (worth 50gp each). Double this if there is a scale sorcerer with the group.

ELEMENTALS

As if emerging from the volcano walls itself, a group of minor elementals suddenly swarms the tunnels ahead. Roll of the following table to determine which variety of elemental appears;

d6 Elemental

1-3 $1d6+3$ **magmings**

4-5 $2d4+2$ **magma mephits** and half their number of **smoke mephits**

6 $1d4$ **fire snakes**

XORN

A slight rumbling and crunching noise pervades through the stone walls around the party. Suddenly, a hungry **xorn** bursts out of the rock closest to the player with the largest quantity of gems. It holds out a gem in one of its own hands, glares at the player, points to the gemstone and, indicating where they are located on the player, beckons to the player to hand them over.

If the players can cough up 500gp worth of gemstones, ore, coins or other treasure the xorn chuckles to itself, scoffs the lot and then retreats back into the rock. If they cannot muster the treasure, or if they attack, the xorn attacks back. It will attempt to kill one player, steal their jewels and then flee.

CAVES OF CUPRUMZEL

The party emerge into a large cavern, lit by veins of glowing precious metal. At the rear of this cavern is a dark hole leading further in; deep scratches cover the rock around it, and rubble lies on the floor. Continue onto the Caves of Cuprumzel.

THE VAULT

After following a relatively wide tunnel down for some time, the party are confronted by a huge set of bronze doors, lit on either side by the sculpted face of fire giants, flames burning in their mouths. Continue onto The Vault.

THE CAVES OF CUPRUMZEL

Buried deep in the lava-filled belly of Mount Marazbor is a series of caves in which Cuprumzel, a young copper dragon, lairs. This benevolent dragon is a prankster, but wishes to help free the dwarf slaves. Unfortunately, Cuprumzel was born within the caves, after being cared for by the clan of kobolds for many decades. Not fully understanding the growth of dragons, they kept her in her birth chamber, worshipping her as a goddess, which allowed her to grow too large to leave the caves.

After a time, the dwarves uncovered the caves. At first, they tried to remove the obnoxious kobolds, but realized something was afoot after the creatures began bringing them food to help them survive under the giants.

Some dwarves decided to investigate further, risking their lives by slipping from the azers' gaze and digging out the cave entrance to discover what lay within. These dwarves branded themselves, quite literally, the Cabal of the Scale.

Eventually the dwarves uncovered the unfortunate Cuprumzel. She promised to help them rebel against their giant overlords if they would continue to dig her out.

OPENING

The party emerge into a large cavern, lit by veins of glowing precious metal. At the rear of this cavern is a dark mouth leading in; deep scratches cover the rock around it. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that these are from picks and sledgehammers.

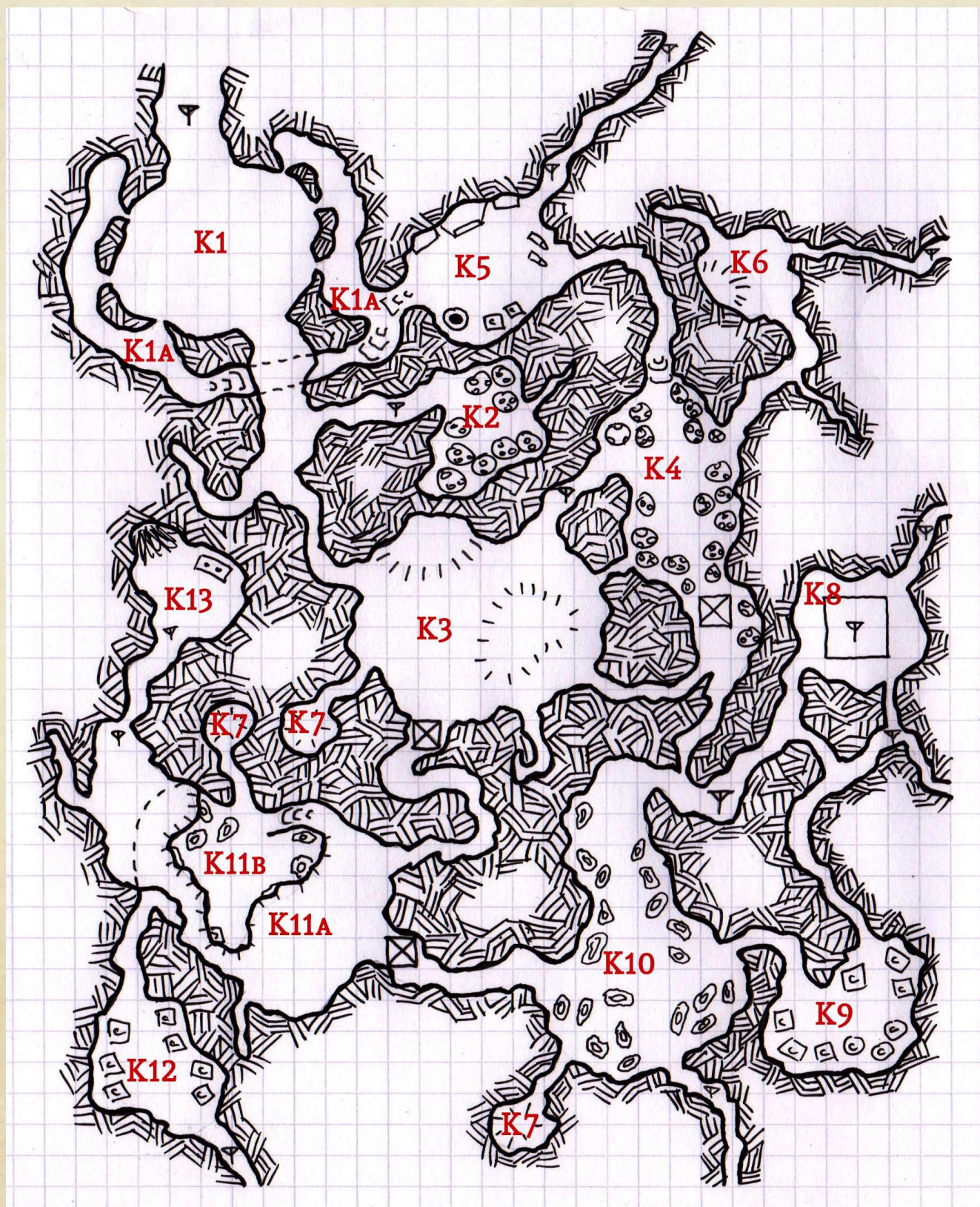
A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the sound of skittering footfall in the caves beyond.

If the party are accompanied by a member of the Cabal of the Scale, the kobolds within do not attack the characters. If the party came unaccompanied, the kobolds assume that they are trying to attack Cuprumzel, and defend her with their lives.



MAP - CAVES OF CUPRUMZEL

1sq. = 5ft.



GENERAL FEATURES

As characters explore the Caves of Cuprumzel, keep in mind the following features:

Tunnels. All of the tunnels that connect the caverns in the kobold lair are winding and narrow. Small creatures can walk through the tunnels with ease, but Medium or larger creatures must squeeze (*Player's Handbook p.192*).

Light. Unless stated otherwise, the tunnels and caverns within the lair are unlit. The kobolds use their darkvision to see.

Escape Tunnels. There are six escape tunnels which link the cave system to other areas of the mine. Each of these is fitted with one or more Collapsing Roof traps (*Dungeon Master's Guide p.112*).

Traps. Each time the characters travel across a trap trigger, you should roll on the Kobold Traps table to determine the variety of trap. Trap triggers are marked on the map with a Ψ. The exceptions are pitfall traps (Simple Pit, *Player's Handbook p.122*) marked with ☒, and escape tunnel traps (see above).

Edible Fungi. Edible fungi are abundant in the Caves of Cuprumzel, specifically in areas K2 and K4. Characters can attempt DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) checks to forage here.

KOBOLD TRAPS

d6 Trap

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Oil Barrels |
| 2 | Crate of Centipedes |
| 3 | Green Slime Pots |
| 4 | Falling Net |
| 5 | Eversmoking Bottle |
| 6 | Poison Darts |

OIL BARRELS

This trap uses a trip wire to open barrels of oil hidden in the ceiling of the caves.

The trip wire is 3 inches off the ground and is pinned into the cavern walls by shards of metal. The barrels are embedded in the ceiling, and disguised with mud. The DC to spot the tripwire or barrels is 10. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools breaks the trip wire harmlessly. A character without thieves' tools can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers.

When the trap is triggered, the barrels open and empty their contents over a 10-foot-square area. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or become covered with greasy, flammable oil.

Creatures covered with oil must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw when attempting to move, or fall prone. Moving at half speed prevents creatures from having to make the save.

Any creatures that take fire damage whilst covered in oil are ignited, as if by alchemist's fire (*Player's Handbook p.151*). If this happens, the oil is expended on that character.

It takes 10 minutes to wash the oil from a creature using an alcohol based solvent.

CRATE OF CENTIPEDES

When a creature steps on a pressure plate, swarms of centipedes are catapulted from spring-loaded crates.

The pressure plate looks superficially similar to the cavern floor. The crates are built into the cave walls and covered with cobwebs or mud. The DC to spot the pressure plate or crates is 15. Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating. Somehow locking or barring the crates prevents the centipedes from being launched.

The trap activates when more than 20 pounds of weight is places on the pressure plate, releasing two **swarms of insects (centipedes)**.

GREEN SLIME POTS

A thin sheet of mud-covered metal conceals large clay vats of green slime (*Dungeon Master's Guide p.105*).

The DC to spot the trap is 12. Anyone stepping on the metal sheet instantly falls through, and lands in a 1-foot-deep vat of green slime, which then adheres to them.

FALLING NET

See the Falling Net trap (*Dungeon Master's Guide p.122*).

EVERSMOKING BOTTLE

This trap uses a sticky cord of spider silk to pull the cork from an *eversmoking bottle* (*Dungeon Master's Guide p.168*).

The strand of silk dangles from the ceiling, adhering to any Medium or larger creature that walks beneath it. Once stuck to the creature, any movement away from the strand causes a stopper to be pulled from an *eversmoking bottle* pasted into the ceiling with mud.

The DC to spot the silk thread is 20. If noticed, the silk can easily be avoided.

The *eversmoking bottle* can be recovered if dug out of the ceiling.

POISON DARTS

See the Poison Darts trap (*Dungeon Master's Guide p.123*).



KOBOLDS AND TRAPS

As soon as a trap in the cave system is triggered, kobolds in adjacent areas instantly know thanks to the sounds of the trap activating, or the cries of startled adventurers.

The kobolds know which traps are where, and are prepared to respond accordingly. If adventurers become covered in oil, the kobolds have already ignited their sling bullets in advance. They have coated the inside of their slings with dragon scales to prevent charring. If an intruder becomes paralysed thanks to the venom of a centipede, they are the targets of the kobolds attacks. If an *eversmoking bottle* is popped, at least one kobold has poured ball bearings onto the cave floor.

In short, exploit these traps for all they are worth!

K1. PIN CUSHION PLAZA

Stooping through the low entrance, what little light makes it into the cavern causes the floor to glitter. Looking closer, you can see that the floor is covered with tiny copper scales.

The kobolds of the Cuprumzel harvested her shed scales, as well as their own, and worked them into the muddy ground here. This should hopefully act as a distraction.

The walls of this cavern are in fact constructed of thin clay. Characters can discern this with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Each 5-foot section of wall has AC 13 and 10 hit points. A section of wall can be broken down with a successful DC 13 Strength check.

K1A. BOLT HOLES

Hidden behind thin false walls of clay are six **kobolds** equipped with light crossbows (+4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage).

There are 6 holes through which these kobolds can fire. They cannot be hit whilst concealed in this way.

K2. MINOR MUSHROOM FARM

Before you lies a small cavern filled with bulbous mushrooms. It smells peaty and damp.

This cave is lit by bioluminescent fungi which lines the walls, shedding dim light over the mushrooms.

Concealed beneath the peaty floor of this cave are hundreds of caltrops (*Player's Handbook p.151*). The kobolds are too light to sink into them, and thus use this area as a sanctuary, hiding between the mushrooms.

K3. CENTRAL MINE

Squeezing down the tight tunnel, you emerge into a blissfully roomy space. Two large, deep pits fill most of the cavern.

If they have not already left to ambush trapped characters (see Kobolds and Traps), there are five **kobolds** hidden in each pit, as well as one **kobold scale sorcerer** in the larger pit. Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 12 or higher can hear their breathing.

The kobolds will attempt to surprise the intruders. If they are outnumbered, they will run down the tunnels to area K4, using the traps and tight quarters to their advantage.

K4. MAJOR MUSHROOM FARM

Various different species of mushroom are flourishing in this cavern, lit by bioluminescent fungi which is spread across the walls like cobwebs.

This room has a concealed pit trap within (see General Features). On the edge of this pit trap, the kobolds have cultivated a **violet fungus**, which lashes out at characters dropped into the pit.

Tending to the fungi are five **kobolds**. They may be joined by any of their kin fleeing from area K3.

K5. KILN AND WORKSHOP

A warm glow and sounds of hammering up ahead put you on your guard. As you make your way into the cavern, you see a hulking suit of armour bashing away at an anvil.

This room has a kobold-sized kiln fed by lava bubbling up from below. It is here that the kobolds construct their traps and the other trinkets they hold dear.

Working in this room are two **kobolds**, a **kobold inventor** and his **animated armour** (a gift from Cuprumzel). The animated armour tries to interpose itself between the characters and the inventor, allowing him to use as many 'inventions' as possible. The other two kobolds help by bringing things to the inventor.

Should things turn sour for the kobolds, they flee from the caves out the escape tunnel. If the animated armour is still around, they order it to bust open the kiln, bursting lava into the room. Any creature within 10-feet of the kiln must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5d10 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Treasure. On the desks on either side of the kiln are covered with odds and ends, roll 1d4+2 times on the Trinkets table (*Player's Handbook p.160*). As well as this, there are two vials of acid, one flask of alchemist's fire, one hunting trap, one bag of ball bearings, a *potion of poison* and a *figurine of power (onyx dog)*. Many of these may have been used by the kobold inventor.

K6. CLAY MINE

The orange mud of this cave indicates an abundance of clay. Clearly the kobolds have been digging it up.

There are two **kobolds** in this room who flee out the escape tunnel if outnumbered.

There are several kobold-sized shovels and pickaxes strewn about, as well as a bucket filled with clay.

Treasure. One of the kobold miners here managed to find a gemstone (worth 25gp) whilst digging. They hid it in the north-eastern crack of the cave, hoping to gift it to Cuprumzel at a later date.

K7. DEEP PIT TOILETS

These small cave offshoots are used by the kobolds as toilets.

If adventurers enter these tiny caverns, undiscovered kobolds, or those that previously fled, might hide by the entrance hoping to jump characters as they emerge. They may even throw ball bearings, **swarms of insects (centipedes)**, or alchemists fire down the tunnels to trap the adventurers in.

K8. SPIDER SALON

The cavern ahead appears empty, although it's hard to tell through the twisting tunnels.

The centre of this room is part of one huge trap. The kobolds have coaxed a **giant spider** into this cave, and fattened it up to keep intruders out of their lair.

The trapped square is covered with a near invisible layer of spider silk, connected to a larger web which extends up the walls and to the roof where the spider waits. The spider itself is entirely concealed by an overhanging rock, but the silk can be noticed with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

This spider has been fattened up by the kobolds, and has the following changes to its stat block:

- The spider has 50 hit points.
- The spider's poison is more potent thanks to being fed poisonous fungi by the kobolds. Its poison damage on the bite attack is 18 (4d8).
- As an action, the spider can release a swarm of insects (spiders) from beneath its abdomen. Alternatively, these baby spiders escape when the giant spider is killed.

The kobolds have masterfully woven the silk threads across the ceiling to areas K9 and K10. They have connected it to bells in these areas, and will assist the spider if needed.



K9. ROOT CELLAR

Crates and barrels in this room have been dug into the ground, small holes in the walls let in a constant flow of cool air.

There are two **kobolds** in here organizing food into the dug-in containers. If outnumbered, they flee to area K10. The kobolds may not be here if the trap is triggered in area K8.

There is a small bell in this room, connected by silk threads to the trap in area K8.

Treasure. The kobolds use this room to store their food, the cool air keeping it preserved. There are crates filled with roots, mushrooms and insects. Characters can retrieve a total of 20 rations from these containers.

K10. CENTRAL SLEEPING AREA

This large cavern is filled with shallow pits. Little trinkets, scraps of cloth, scales and other trinkets litter the floor.

This room is filled with ten sleeping **kobolds**, unless they have been awoken by the bell connected to area K8.

Characters that succeed on a DC 8 Dexterity (Stealth) check can pass through this chamber without waking any of the slumbering kobolds.

Treasure. As well as 1d4+2 trinkets scattered on the floor, several kobolds have little gemstones and shiny scales in their pits. Characters must succeed on DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks to pinch these without waking kobolds. They can do this five times, gaining an item worth 10gp each time.

K11. EGG HATCHERY

This room is comprised of the hatchery itself; a lowered cavern filled with dung, rotting mushroom stalks and eggs, as well as an overlooking natural balcony.

K11A. BALCONY

A large shelf of rock forms a natural balcony, overlooking a chamber beneath. The shelf narrows to a ledge along the southwest wall, leading to another cave. To the north, the shelf forms a natural staircase leading down.

There are six **kobolds** on the balcony, watching over the eggs and dumping more dung on them to keep them warm. On the far side of the balcony are two **kobold dragonshields** (of copper descent, resistant to acid damage).

The kobolds will defend their eggs with their life, but the dragonshields are more worried about defending Cuprumzel, who is trapped in area K13. Kobolds may try to shove characters off the ledge into area K11B.

Medium or larger creatures moving across the ledge must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall down to area K11B.

K11B. HATCHERY

The overwhelming stench of decomposing organic matter makes you gag as you descend to the hatchery.

Creatures entering this area for the first time must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 10 minutes, and spend its next turn incapacitated whilst vomiting. Creatures that succeed on the save are immune to the stench for 24 hours.

Tending to the eggs buried under the rotting plants and dung are four **kobolds**.

K12. TREASURE TROVE

Hidden down a narrow tunnel behind the egg hatchery is a small cavern filled with ramshackle chests and trunks.

There are six containers in this room and one mimic. All of the containers are unlocked, but half of them are trapped with Poison Needle traps (*Dungeon Master's Guide* p.123).

Treasure. Each container holds something different:

- 2d4+4 trinkets
- 2d6 10gp gemstones
- 2d4+2 scales (worth 10gp each)
- Stolen Dungeoneer's Pack
- 1d10+5 rations of dried mushroom
- One decorative warhammer inlaid with dwarven runes in gold leaf (worth 750gp)

K13. CUPRUMZEL'S THRONE ROOM

Squeezing down a narrow passageway brings you to a small cavern. Piled high in the room are incredible treasures in gold and silver. Lazily sprawled out atop it's hoard is a dragon with copper coloured scales and a mischievous grin.

It is within this tiny chamber, which was once the throne room of the kobold chieftain, as well as a shrine to Kurtulmak, that Cuprumzel, the **young copper dragon** is forced to reside. The kobolds that raised her did not realise how large she would grow, and thus she is stuck here until the Cabal of the Scale are able to dig her out.

Cuprumzel is a mischievous dragon, and delights in seeing the characters get caught in the traps that the kobolds have fashioned. Even if she is escorted out by them, she does not warn the characters of the numerous tripwires and pressure plates scattered throughout the caves, feigning ignorance if the characters enquire.

If the characters have slain the kobolds on their way in, Cuprumzel is woeful and in tears. Depending on your preference, she may attack the characters, believing them to be evil. If not, Cuprumzel can only be consoled by the promise of release from this prison.

In order to release Cuprumzel from her cavern, the characters must enlarge the tunnels connecting areas K13, K11, K3 and K1 in some fashion, magical or otherwise. Alternatively, they may cast spells such as gaseous form or *enlarge/reduce* to help Cuprumzel escape. They may have also picked up the *potions of diminution* from area G11 of Citadel Grungharaz.

Cuprumzel's main aim is to help free the dwarves that are enslaved by Ferrusnika and her band of fire giants. Her allies within the dwarf network are the Cabal of the Scale, who will get the other slaves to flock to her side, should she manage to escape, and assist in the slaying of the fire giant overlords. Any kobolds left in the cave system travel with Cuprumzel to the surface if this occurs.

Treasure. Should things go south with Cuprumzel, she sits of a hoard of treasure, totaling 210cp, 510sp and 150gp. Buried in the coins are 6 rhodochrosite (worth 10gp each), 2 carnelians (worth 50gp each) and 3 ambers (worth 100gp each). Cuprumzel's hoard also contains a spattering of magic items, which she bequeaths to the players as a reward for helping her escape; 3 *potions of healing*, 1 *potion of heroism* and a *lantern of revealing*.

Cuprumzel's hoard lies beyond the old throne and altar to Kurtulmak. Upon this altar is a small gold idol of the kobold god (worth 750gp) as well as a silver bowl (worth 250gp) filled with 870cp. The kobolds actively try to stop characters taking the idol of Kurtulmak.

AMBUSHED!

See "Ambushed!" (p.21)



THE VAULT

Built by the dwarves of old to store their most precious treasures, this vault is protected by a host of magical and mundane traps, locks and wards. Before this, any wishing to open the vault must find it. Dwarves are renowned for their ability to disguise and conceal doors in the walls of caverns and on the side of mountains.

Ferrusnika and her giant kin are well aware of the mine, but are unable to get down to it, being of such great stature. Even using magic to render their frames more suitable is dangerous; who knows how long a potion will last! Because of this, the giants rely on their allies within the dwarf community. Gurdis Blazenstrike is solely in charge of access to the vault. Few other than her know of its location, and only her and Ferrusnika know how to enter without triggering the many traps that guard it.

OPENING

You emerge from the mines into a relatively airy chamber, lit by a dim, blue-white glow from a cavern to the east. The cave in which you stand has a high ceiling, from which water falls in droplets.

GENERAL FEATURES

As characters explore the vault, keep in mind the following features:

Climate. The vault is chilly and damp thanks to the dripping ceilings.

Light. Except where specified otherwise, the tunnels and chambers are dark.

V1. MAIN CAVE

Dim light from an eastern cave illuminates the towering stalagmites which stud this cavern.

Water droplets drip down from the ceiling high above. Scattered on the cavern floor are a few items.

This cavern has a 60-foot-high ceiling, which is not visible in the dim light shed from area V2.

Lurking atop the three largest stalagmites and the two natural rock shelves, at a height of 60 feet, are **cave fishers** (five total). These creatures are visible to characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 15 or higher.

The creatures have their filaments extended, awaiting unwitting prey. If any of the cave fishers manage to land their filaments on a creature, all of them swarm to attack it.

Treasure. Scattered on the floor between the three large stalagmites are a handful of items; a belt pouch containing 25gp, 11sp and 3cp, a dagger and a half-burned torch. These have been dropped by previous cave fisher prey.

V2. CRYSTAL CAVERN

Unless the characters have already met and fought a **xorn**, there is one in this area. If present, the characters hear an occasional crunching, followed by minutes of grinding.

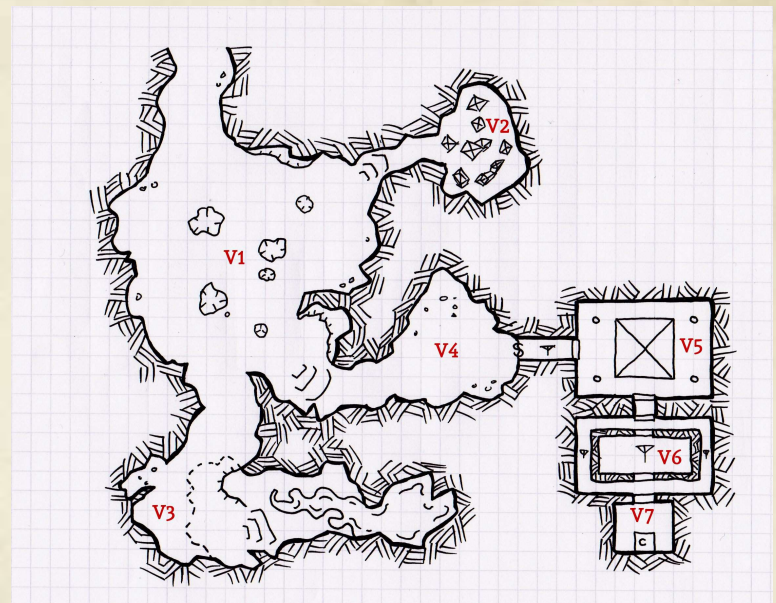
As you descend the natural staircase, the dim glow becomes stronger. There is a blue glint to it which masks everything in dreamy light. Eventually, the tunnel opens up into a small cavern, filled with glowing pale-blue crystals.

There may be a **xorn** in this room, happily munching away on the crystals within. If disturbed, it attacks the character with the highest value gemstones, or the most money. Refer to “Xorn” (p.12) for more guidance. If reduced to half health, the xorn will earth glide out of the cave system, and may, at the DM’s discretion, be met later in a random encounter.

The crystals themselves are valuable; a large crystal can be smashed into smaller shards which can be sold. This can be achieved with a successful DC 13 Strength check using a miners pick, sledgehammer or similar item. Alternatively, dealing 18 damage to a crystal (AC 13) will shatter it. Each crystal shatters into 1d8+5 pieces, worth 25gp each. These shards emit bright light in a 10-foot-radius and dim light in a 20-foot-radius beyond that. Characters with these shards are always prime targets for xorn attack.

MAP - THE VAULT

1sq. = 5ft.



V3. SLIME POOL

The cavern ahead consists of an overhanging shelf of rock, which looks down upon a slime filled chamber. The slime appears incredibly viscous, oily and purple-red in colour.

The slime in this room is not a natural ooze, mould or slime. This can be detected with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check. The slime is actually a magical creation of the dwarves who created the vault known as an **arcane ooze** (Appendix B).

The oily-ooze will only animate once it is attacked. Characters can wade through the ooze if necessary, counting its space as difficult terrain. If a character is in the ooze's space when the ooze animates, that character is considered grappled.

Hidden within the ooze is a large copper key. This can be spotted with a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. Retrieving the key from the ooze requires a successful DC 15 Strength check, on a failed check, the ooze animates and attacks. This key opens the secret door in area V4.

V4. FALSE CAVERN

The tunnel ahead slopes down into an empty cavern. The dripping of water from behind you fills the chamber with a seemingly endless echo.

This cavern is not natural. It has been sculpted by the expert hands of dwarven stone masons centuries ago to hide the entrance to their vault. This deceptive work can be noticed with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. Dwarves have advantage on this check. The same check also reveals the secret door on the eastern wall.

In front of this secret door is a *glyph of warding*, detectable with a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check, cast by the vault's original owners. The glyph activates if any character other than a dwarf descendant of the Blazenstrike family steps upon it. Once triggered, it casts the spell conjure elemental, causing an **earth elemental** to burst from out of the floor. Whilst being summoned, the spell earth tremor is cast from the elemental.

The earth elemental's command is to do nothing other than guard the secret door. If the elemental is killed, it's body crumbles into a pile of sand, which then spells out;



Characters who can read dwarvish script can translate this to;

'It can quench, but not your thirst, It maintains gears, but tastes the worst'

The answer to this riddle is 'Oil', which should lead the characters to investigate the arcane ooze in area V3, within which is the key to the secret door.

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the secret door reveals to characters a shallow cut keyhole in the centre of the door, around the size of a human hand. Tracing this with your finger causes the stone to disappear, revealing a true keyhole. The key to this is in the arcane ooze in area V3.

SECRET CORRIDOR

If characters manage to open the secret door, they can progress through the corridor.

The stone door swings aside, revealing a narrow, dark corridor. As you step into it, the echoing drops from the main cavern become almost deafening.

The dwarves that created the vault worked the chamber walls in such a way that the acoustics of the place amplify the dripping from area V1.

There is a pressure plate in the centre of the corridor, disguised as a floor tile, the DC to spot it is 15. The trap activates when more than 20 pounds of weight is placed on the pressure plate, causing the walls to slam shut. Each creature must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw (add 1 to the DC per foot to the nearest door, to a maximum of 20). Characters take 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. Characters that succeed are ejected from the corridor via the nearest door, whilst those that fail are stunned for two minutes whilst the walls withdraw and the trap resets.

Wedging an iron spike or other object under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating.

On the walls of the secret corridor are more dwarven runes;



Characters who can read dwarvish script can translate this to;

'If you speak my name, I vanish'

Characters must create silence in this tunnel to unlock the doors between area V5 and V6.

This can be achieved by catching the drops in a way that muffles their noise, such as in cloth or sponge. Magic which controls water could also be used.



V5. VAULT ANTECHAMBER

There are four pillars in the room, each of which has a small gemstone, located about 6 feet up the pillar. These gems are magic items, which project an illusion of treasure above the pit trap. These gems can be seen without a check, a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that they are projecting the illusion, the same check reveals that the treasure is illusory.

A huge pile of treasure sits in the centre of this room. There are thousands of gold pieces, bronze goblets inlaid with emeralds, silver coated greatswords, thick chains of precious metal and other priceless trophies.

Beneath the illusory treasure is a locking, spiked pit trap (*Dungeon Master's Guide* p.122-123). The treasure itself disappears as soon as someone tries to touch it, or if any of the pillar gems are broken or removed.

There is a stone door in the southern wall, which is locked. There seems to be no physical way to unlock or open it. In order to open it, the riddle in area V4; Secret Corridor, must be solved.

The gems in the pillars are red, green, blue and yellow.

V6. LAVA TRAP

The chamber before you contains what appears to be a room constructed of adamantine. On either side of this room are narrow passages, the floors of which are covered with vicious looking razorblades.

The chamber is 35-feet-wide, 20-feet-long and 35-feet-tall. The adamantine room is 25-feet-wide, 10-feet-long and 20-feet tall.

The narrow corridors to either side of the adamantine room are covered in razor blades (indicated by the trap trigger icons), which cover 5 by 20 feet of ground, the razors also cover the top of the adamantine room. These areas can be treated as if under the *spike growth* spell.

The adamantine room has a *glyph of warding* inscribed upon the floor, noticeable with a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The glyph activates if any character other than a dwarf descendant of the Blazenstrike family steps upon it. When triggered, the glyph casts the *arcane gate* spell, opening one portal 10 feet above the character, on the ceiling of the adamantine room, and one within a lava lake above. This causes lava to pour into the room.

Creatures within the adamantine room must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw (add 1 to the DC per foot

to the nearest door, to a maximum of 20). Characters take 55 (10d10) fire damage on a failed save. On a successful save, characters jump out of the room and avoid the damage. If the doors to the room are left open, lava begins to pour out and fill area V6.

The door which leads to area V7 is locked with an ancient and complex dwarvish lock. The façade of the door is a complex series of copper gears, cranks and pulleys surrounding four bronze pots. Each pot is a different colour; red, green, blue and yellow. These correspond to the gems in the pillars in area V5. If a gem is put in the wrong pot, sparks fly out of the machinery, blinding the target for a minute.

Once the gems are in place, a character must make a DC 14 Intelligence check to work out which gears to operate in order to uncover the door behind.

After the true door is revealed, characters must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to crack the complex lock within.

Characters may have acquired the key to area V7 from Gurdin Blazenstrike, in which case they can unlock the door without the final check.

V7. VAULT

Finally, you emerge into a small room, lined with lead which are engraved with dwarven motifs and runes. Cut into the lead, and taking up a majority of the wall space are incredible portraits of the Blazenstrike ancestors, which reveals a layer of gold beneath. These enrapturing etchings naturally lead the eye towards a solid gold chest, set upon a marble plinth. Set on mounts to either side of this are a majestic looking battleaxe and an ornamented suit of dwarven armour.

Such is the arrogance of the dwarves, that the chest itself is neither locked nor trapped. The battleaxe and plate armour are also unprotected.

Treasure. The battleaxe is a giant slayer with the minor property 'war leader' (*Dungeon Master's Guide* p.143). Any character wielding it is automatically identified as an enemy by giants. The plate armour is *dwarven plate* with the 'confident' quirk (*Dungeon Master's Guide* p.143). Within the solid gold chest are 2,100pp, 14,000gp, 8 gemstones worth 500gp each, a small gold idol of Moradin (worth 750gp), a silver chalice set with moonstones (worth 750gp) a *ring of regeneration*, +1 *studded leather armour*, a *staff of striking* and a *ring of shooting stars*. The chest itself is incredibly valuable (worth 2,500gp), but is very heavy, weighing 50 lbs.



AMBUSHED!

If you really want to test your players, now is the time! After they emerge from the Caves of Cuprumzel, or The Vault, you can throw an extra challenge at them, provided that some of the NPCs from Citadel Grungharaz are still alive.

Whilst travelling through the mines, the characters were noticed by a group of dwarves loyal to Gurdis Blazenstrike. These dwarves reported back to her (or Ferrusnika if Gurdis is dead), and they have sent a force down the mines to deal with the intruders.

Depending on how challenging you want the encounter to be, and on who the characters have already killed, you may have them fight a combination of the following:

- **Gurdis Blazenstrike (Appendix B)**
- Four dwarf **thugs** loyal to Gurdis (from the mines)
- Two **azers** acting as Gurdis' bodyguards
- One **fire giant** shrunk down to Medium size by a *potion of diminution* (provided these have not been stolen from area G11)

OUTCOMES

Depending on the circumstances of the characters' arrival at Citadel Grungharaz, they may have achieved any number of the following:

- Slain Ferrusnika and her fire giant allies, effectively freeing the dwarves from slavery.
- Killed or captured Gurdis Blazenstrike, assisting the dwarves attempt to overthrow their giant masters.
- Freed Cuprumzel, the young copper dragon, from her imprisonment, and used her allies in the Cabal of the Scale to overthrow the fire giants.
- Raided the vault for ancient dwarvish treasure.
- Hook 1: Shut down the lava forge by destroying or disrupting mine operation.
- Hook 2: Recovered the giant slayer or other such items from the vault.
- Hook 3: Liberated the dwarf slaves from their captors.

Hook 1. If the party managed to destroy or shut down the forge in some way, they may have thwarted the goblinoid host which threatened their home town, or at least bought enough time for themselves to mount a prepared assault upon the hobgoblin leaders.

Hook 2. If the party uncovered the vault and stole the ancient dwarven weapons, they should be far better equipped to deal with Duke Zalto and his family. They may have also slain Ferrusnika, one of his most powerful allies.

Hook 3. Hopefully the characters managed to free as many slaves as possible, perhaps all of them, with or without the aid of Cuprumzel. If Cuprumzel is freed, she graciously thanks the party before making her way to freedom.



APPENDIX A – GIANT TREASURE TABLE

d20	Treasure
1	An obsidian letter opener with an amber hilt.
2	Huge, thick chain engraved with giant runes.
3	Bag of bronze azer parts.
4	Necklace made of iron ingots.
5	3-foot-tall idol depicting Surtur.
6	Brass drinking horn inlaid with rubies.
7	Copper mouth harp.
8	Armlet made of dwarf-sized pick axes.
9	A human-sized cauldron used as a drinking cup.
10	Steel skinning knife with an ivory handle.
11	Hell Hound toy made of charred wood.
12	Wyvern skull.
13	Blanket made of giant goat hides.
14	Bag of dented dwarven helmets.
15	Smoking pipe.
16	Chain mail pouch of iron, polyhedral dice.
17	Empty wooden barrel.
18	Half empty cask of ale.
19	Bellows made of dire wolf leather.
20	Smith's hammer with silver filigree.



APPENDIX B – STATBLOCKS AND NPCs

Here follows the additional creature statblocks required to run this adventure, as well as a few details on the personalities and appearances of the important NPC's.

ARCANE OOZE

Huge ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 95 (10d12 + 30)

Speed 20ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	5 (-3)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages understands Dwarven but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amorphous. The pudding can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the ooze or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the ooze corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the ooze is destroyed after dealing damage.

The ooze can eat through 2-inch thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

Flammable. If the ooze is subjected to fire damage, it ignites. At the start of each of the ooze's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 10 (3d6) fire damage, and flammable objects within 5 feet that aren't being worn or carried ignite. A creature that touches the ooze or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Spider Climb. The ooze can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Actions

Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. **Hit** 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage. In addition, nonmagical armour worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armour is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Reactions

Spell Reflection. If the ooze makes a successful saving throw against a spell, or a spell attack misses it, the ooze can choose another creature (including the spellcaster) it can see within 30 feet of it. The spell targets the chosen creature instead of the ooze. If the spell forced a saving throw, the chosen creature makes its own save. If the spell was an attack, the attack roll is rerolled against the chosen creature.



FERRUSNIKA

Huge giant, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 200(16d12 + 96)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	9 (-1)	23 (+6)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +11, Perception +6
Damage Immunities fire
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Giant
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The giant makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit* 28 (6d6 + 7) slashing damage.

Lava Sprayer. This weapon has 3 charges. As an action, you may expend one charge to fire this weapon. This shoots lava in a 5-foot-wide, 50-foot-long line. Creatures in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (5d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

FERRUSNIKA

Duchess of the fire giants of Citadel Grungharaz, Ferrusnika is a volatile and dangerous foe. She has no time for the whimpering of slaves, preferring to destroy the weak than nurse them back to health. She is liberal with beatings and truly sees humanoids as inferior.

Ferrusnika has an intimidating, broad shouldered frame. The sides of her head are shaved, leaving a thick, blazing orange braid wound atop it. She has a heavy brow, defined cheekbones and tends to grimace. Numerous piercings adorn her face and ears made from precious metals, engraved with incredibly intricate giant motifs and runes.

Mounted on her back, she wields a makeshift weapon used to shower foes with searing lava. She takes great pleasure in using this piece of unusual weaponry as often as possible.

Ferrusnika has nearly mastered the craft of azer-forging with her magic forge hammer, learning from one of their kind she enslaved.

GURDIS BLAZENSTRIKE

Medium humanoid (mountain dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (splint and shield)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances poison
Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Dwarven Resilience. Gurdis has advantage on saving throws against poison, and resistance to poison damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The veteran makes two warhammer attacks.

Anvilshatter. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 9 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

GURDIS BLAZENSTRIKE

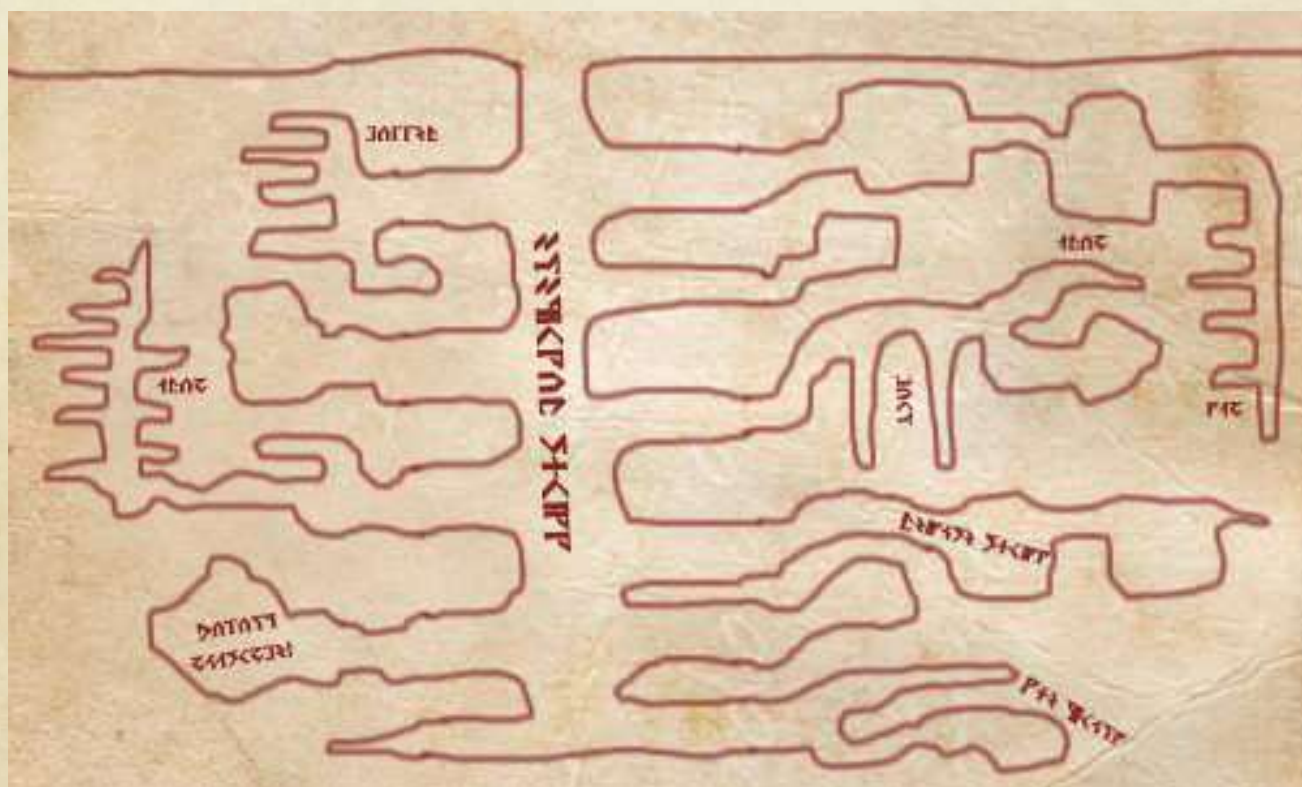
Descended from the ancient Blazenstrike family, rightful owners of Citadel Grungharaz, Gurdis is considered a traitor by many of the dwarves under her command. Although not pleased by this, Gurdis is no stranger to gritting her teeth and bearing the weight of her failures. Before they were murdered by Ferrusnika and the giants, her family shunned her for being rash and hasty, which often incited brawls between her siblings.

In a bold drive to seize some power for herself, Gurdis put herself forward as the overseer of the mine and forgeworks after the giants attacked. Although she must bend the knee to Ferrusnika, she believes she has salvaged some of her families' dignity by remaining 'Queen' of the Citadel.

Gurdis has tan skin, shiny black hair and a burn mark along her right jawline. Even in the heat, she wears the armour of her ancestors, which bears the Blazenstrike Hammer emblem. She wields this hammer, known as *Anvilshatter*.

APPENDIX C - PLAYER HANDOUTS

Here are some handouts you can print and cut out to give to your players. They represent the mine blueprints available in areas G2 and G8, and riddles from area V4. The plans have notes in dwarvish, these show the locations of the 'kobold nuisance!', 'the vault' and notes on the minerals available. These may be fun for the players to decipher, but have no real impact on the game.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank all the artists who allowed me to use their work on this project!

Arcana Games (Cover & Page 24)

<http://www.dmsguild.com/browse.php?author=Arcana%20Games>

KlaussVega (Page 4)

<http://klaussvega.deviantart.com/>

Ahmonza, Gwynn (Page 7)

<http://ahmonza.deviantart.com/>

Jacob E Blackmon (Page 8)

<http://prodigyduck.deviantart.com/>

Henry Peters (Page 10)

<http://htkpeh.deviantart.com/>

Bezduch (Page 20)

<http://bezduch.deviantart.com/>

易成龙Yichenglong1985 (Page 21)

<http://yichenglong1985.deviantart.com/>

Wagner Chrissante (Page 7)

<https://chrissante.artstation.com/>