

SWORDS OF THE MOONSEA

IAM PACE &
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SWORDS OF THE MOONSEA



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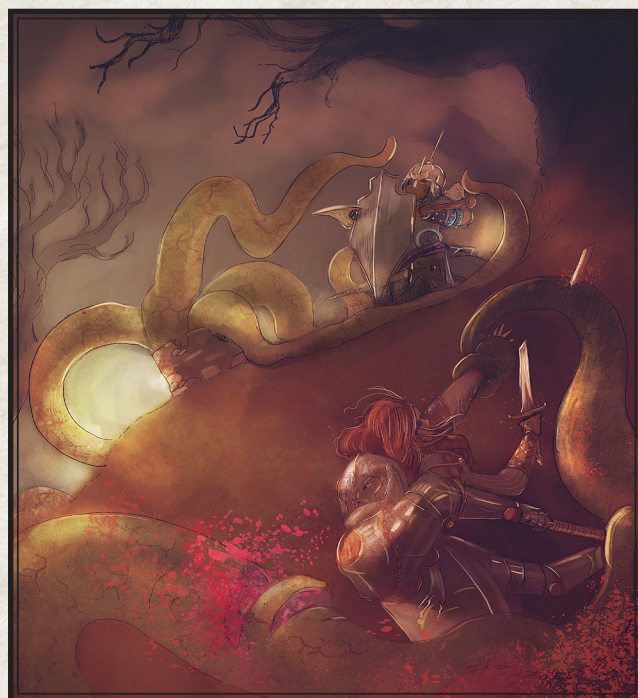
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On the front: Andrea Alemanno's art showing the owlbear hunt from the Dark Hunt.
On the back: Andrea Alemanno's illustration showing the battle of the White Well.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4

Instructions on how to intertwine these standalone adventures as an interlinked story arc or campaign, as well as insight into how they narratively fit together.

THE CORNFLOWER HIVE 7

What links an infamous Zhentarim mercenary with a brilliant but tormented artificer? To find out, the adventurers must break the goblinoid siege of the village of Westfir. After the bizarre goblins are defeated, the Cornflower Hive must be destroyed. Ultimately, what secrets are held in the grain mill by the Westfork river?

Optimized For: APL 3

THE WHITE WELL 39

The Gommurg Clan of hill dwarves rarely deal with outsiders. The dwarf clan's isolation has gifted them with great skill and wealth. Unfortunately, their pride has made them vulnerable to an ancient power confined centuries ago. An exile has magically foretold the clan's destruction. This diviner is the only one who knows how to stop the evil threatening the Gommurg.

Optimized For: APL 3

THE BARROWS OF SOLINA 55

Zhentarim traders. Shadowy figures roaming the fields near Hillsfar. How do these all relate? Everything traces back to the recently unearthed grave-barrows. After rescuing a caravan from undead attackers, the adventurers learn of an ancient danger.

Optimized For: APL 8

THE DARK HUNT 85

The village near Oreclasp Keep has been reporting brutal owlbear attacks that have left people missing or dismembered. Lord Oreclasp has placed a bounty for every owlbear beak brought to Oreclasp Keep. The villagers don't suspect the deeper problems brewing in the land.

Optimized For: APL 6

UNDER EARTH & STONE 105

A Mulmaster refugee named Ani Kuleimatt discovered references to a forgotten mine near the Moonsea, a mine rumored to produce an unexpected export. The adventurers are hired to locate the complex and secure its resources for the Mulmaster Diaspora.

Optimized For: APL 8

ADVENTURES & REWARDS

129

Adventurer's League guidelines for determining APL (average party level) and party strength, as well as instructions on how to convert earlier season Adventurer's League content to new rewards system.

Introduction

Instructions on how to intertwine these standalone adventures as an interlinked story arc or campaign, as well as insight into how they narratively fit together.

THE CORNFLOWER HIVE

ADD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE

Add a letter to Veshje's windmill laboratory in the last area of the adventure.

WHAT TO ADD

A letter to Veshje is discovered in the ruined lab. It is written in a delicate cypher. However, Veshje, in his haste and caring only for his quest, decrypted the message within the letter itself. It is a missive from a Zhentarim general named Nasreet (Zhentarim members recognize the name as belonging to a powerful and ruthless diviner). The letter details the resources devoted to Veshje's efforts and how Nasreet wishes to see more from her investment. While subtle, it is obvious Nasreet is circuitously blackmailing Veshje, threatening to cut off supplies for his search. In the letter, she indicates she needs a device potent enough to search the lower planes and describes the volatile, unstable magical process required to scry these hellscapes.

POST ADVENTURE

If this letter is brought to Crucia or the topic broached, she admits Nasreet's hand in most of the events, how Nasreet was purchasing Veshje's experimental results, and also how the diviner was supplying him with rare ingredients and exotic components. Nasreet is a power-hungry mage locked in a cold war with another powerful diviner named Lumin Fetterbond who lives in Hulburg as a high priest of Azuth. Crucia is wary of Nasreet's mercilessness.

THE WHITE WELL

ADD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE

A diviner named Lumin Fetterbond, archenemy of Nasreet and a powerful diviner in his own right, learns of the events of the Cornflower Hive and Westfir and reaches out to the adventurers responsible for saving the town and preventing the spread of corruption. A brief explanation can be provided when Lumin contacts the adventurers either through a magical or mundane message, but he more fully explains the current problem and his connection to events in person at his home in Hulburg.

WHAT TO ADD

He explains the adventurers have experienced a little of Nasreet's dark ambition with her callous manipulation of Veshje's grief and putting the whole area at risk for her own gain, a signature of her work. Nasreet is at it again, he explains, but this time she is not only striking those dear to Lumin but threatening all those around the city of Hulburg. Nasreet can't afford to attack him directly because of his own considerable influence, divination wards, and effective allies, but she can drain his resources and frustrate his efforts by putting those he cares about at risk.

POST ADVENTURE

After the events of the White Well, Lumin explains he'd like to work with the adventurers more, especially against Nasreet's machinations. However, she is a devious enemy with many resources at her disposal. Lumin suggests the adventurers continue their journeys and grow stronger before he contacts them again. Right now, they haven't accomplished enough to draw her attention, and they shouldn't do so until they have become more experienced.

THE DARK HUNT

ADD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE

After the adventurers reach 5th level or higher, Lumin contacts them with either a magical or mundane message.

WHAT TO ADD

Lumin explains Nasreet has sold dangerous information to a fiend, information her potent divinations have uncovered. She often uses what her divinations reveal to blackmail rivals or sell it to the highest bidder. In this case, the bidder was a vicious fiend who is paying for the information with an artifact Nasreet has sought for years. However, the stipulation is that the fiend will only pay after he accomplishes his goal. Lumin isn't sure what that is exactly, but his divinations indicate it is terrible, and puts the region around Oreclasp Keep and its sacred guardian in dire danger, whoever that may be. If they can foil this fiend, they not only safeguard the region but save this ancient guardian and prevent a powerful artifact from coming into Nasreet's possession.

BARROWS OF SOLINA

ADD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE

Not long after the the events of the Dark Hunt, Lumin contacts the adventurers again. He explains Nasreet, in her haste, was sloppy and failed to fully cover the magical trail of her divinations, allowing him to follow their arcane signature and peek at what she has been planning.

WHAT TO ADD

Nasreet is financing an archeological dig into a recently discovered barrow thought to hold important objects of power, including an artifact weapon. His own divinations indicate that disturbing this barrow would unleash a terrible peril. However, something dark and very old has cast its shadow over the area and appears to be watching the events with some interest. When Lumin felt that shadow, he silenced his divinations, so he didn't attract its attention.

POST ADVENTURE

After the heroes learn of the Harrowed King and Vorn-jolnir, Lumin asks them to help him prevent this Harrowed King from rising. While Nasreet is an ambitious and greedy murderer, the harm she can cause is far less than this insidious entity. Lumin will investigate more and contact the heroes when he has learned something helpful.

UNDER EARTH, UNDER STONE

ADD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE

Lumin once more reaches out to the heroes asking for their aid.

WHAT TO ADD

Refugees fleeing from war in Mulmaster need assistance. Also, his contacts and divinations have revealed that a dwarven priestess named Ani Kuleimatt is among the refugees and has discovered something important.

WHEN THE ADVENTURERS SPEAK WITH ANI KULEIMATT

She knows of a lost location where a weapon against the Harrowed King was being created. The entity known as the Harrowed King learned of the development of this weapon but could not locate the facility. All it knew was that it was tied to the dwarven kingdom of Vallahir, so it orchestrated a terrible war against the dwarves to weaken their defenses. Afterwards, its monstrous army systematically destroyed every settlement and temple in Vallahir. To this end, they were overwhelmingly successful, and the Harrowed King wiped out an entire kingdom.

While the Duindelve operated as a highly successful trade fort, that was never its chief purpose. Hidden deep

within the Duindelve's mine was a warded temple where a weapon was being forged. The fort functioning as a high-traffic trade fort to allow important materials and experts necessary to the construction of the weapon to be brought in without drawing too much attention.

WHO IS THE HARROWED KING

The Harrowed King was once an empyrean who was betrayed by the gods and sacrificed to cause a temporary ceasefire with the lower planes. After his death, he rose as a powerful undead creature but was eventually imprisoned in a glacier of frozen blood.

ADD IN WITH THE TRAVELER'S HEART

Found alongside the stone of controlling earth elementals in the Duindelve mine is a massive star sapphire. Within the gemstone are spinning constellations. This star-stone is connected to the essence of the Harrowed King. The giant sapphire must be taken to the Harrowed King's center of influence, the glacial prison of blood.

When brought within range and commanded to activate, the sapphire will call forth a magical storm that sears a mile-wide glyph of banishment into the land. As long as this massive glyph is carved into the earth, the Harrowed King is forced into another plane of existence, unable to enter or influence the Material Plane.

POST ADVENTURE

Lumin can magically veil the heroes as they travel to this location (which is a crimson glacier in the Galena Mountains). Random encounters may be provided, but such events should be limited as Lumin is a powerful cleric putting all of his magical prowess behind keeping the adventurers obfuscated.





The Cornflower Hive

What links an infamous Zhentarim mercenary with a brilliant but tormented artificer? To find out, the adventurers must break the goblinoid siege of the village of Westfir. After the bizarre goblins are defeated, the Cornflower Hive must be destroyed. Ultimately, what secrets are held in the grain mill by the Westfork river?

A Four-Hour Adventure for 1st-4th Level Characters



FarWest MiniCon

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO *THE CORNFLOWER HIVE*, A D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Tomb of Annihilation*™ storyline season.

The adventure takes place in the plains near Mulmaster, and focuses on assisting the farming village of Westfir with a tribe of goblin marauders.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Pereghost reforged the broken Zhentarim after the fall of Zhentil Keep, shaping the organization into the band of stalwart mercenaries they're known as today. But beneath the veneer of reputable sellswords are the cunning agents secreted away behind untold faces working on countless objectives to further the Black Network's influence.

One such agent and survivor of the battle of Zhentil Keep operates from the backwater of Westfir, a small village near Mulmaster that sits half-a-day's ride from a major trade route. The proximity to this traffic presents Crucia Cromhel with a tactical location for remaining out of sight while providing access to the communication channels she needs to send forth her orders. Crucia also chose the hamlet to keep an eye on an ingenious yet tormented artificer named Veshje Bel'Erin. The arcanist and his companions were members of the Knights of the Spiral Crown, a branch of the Order of the Unicorn, and fought for Crucia during Zhentil Keep's last days, saving her life during that fateful battle.

After the Keep's fall, Crucia adventured with the Knights for a time, exploring ruins and uncharted territories until Veshje's curiosity triggered a trap that teleported several companions into another plane. The Knight's banner was soon retired out of respect and Veshje withdrew to find a way to undo his terrible mistake. He setup a lab in an abandoned watermill to create divination devices to scour the Outer Planes. As old age overtook him, his repeated failures made him desperate and he became ever more reckless in his search.

His current scrying device is an alchemically fueled planar window, a one-way portal used to peer into the planes. He uses this in conjunction with another device empowering a *locate creature* spell. However, when the device opened a window into Demogorgon's Abyssal realm, something wasn't pleased about the intrusion. An explosion of Abyssal energy breached the portal and killed Veshje. A small rupture between the planes was left in the wake, and through this rift seeped the taint of Demogorgon's realm of ravenous jungles and giant beasts, polluting the river near the mill and mutating the plants and insects along

the banks. This same waterway feeds Westfir's crops. The residents themselves drink from a central well purified by an aquifer. Even the outlying farms have their own wells. Thus, the residents remained ignorant of the pollution's full effects and only viewed the abundance of plants and unusual insects along the river as a curious novelty—neat but not dangerous. The crops fed by the river have undergone the same change as those along the river, growing larger and larger from month to month for almost two seasons. Initially, this was viewed as Chauntea's blessing, a lucky bumper crop. Then the plants continued to bloom longer, produce more, and grow bigger with each passing month until they were unnatural in scope: pumpkins the size of carts, tomatoes the size of heads, cucumbers the size of logs.

Crucia is aware of Veshje's arcane activities and uses her Network contacts to supply him with the components and schematics for his pursuits. Every six months Veshje makes the journey to Westfir to pay invoices, retrieve supplies, and leave lists of materials needed to continue his quest.

Crucia is concerned for Veshje and his probable involvement in the strangeness, but his check-in is only a few weeks away. She is hesitant to send someone to his secret lab, as he'd see this gesture as nothing but an annoyance and interruption. The discoveries and inventions Veshje has made along his journey have made Crucia wealthy and prestigious within the Black Network. She wants to keep Veshje hidden and to herself.

Further complicating matters for Crucia is the Mulmaster Diaspora moving through the area in search of shelter and food. Crucia wishes to assist them in a way that will further the Zhentarim's goals. The refugees represent an exploitable workforce who will be indebted to her for helping them. Before the abnormal growth, she had begun plans to have Westfir take in the Diaspora to expand the village's farming productivity. The upsurge in exporting goods would increase traffic around the village and provide cover for her agents and smugglers.

Crucia sensed trouble in Westfir's strange happenings and contacted the Zhentarim with requests of assistance to study the changes. Her approach has two goals: inform the Network of a potential resource to be exploited and draw support to identify potential dangers to Westfir. Her efforts have proven too late. A number of remote farms have been raided, whole families taken.

Crucia's Zhentarim scouts have informed her of giant wasps flying through the area. Even more bizarre is that the wasps appear to be obeying goblins. Upon receiving this information, Crucia ordered the immediate evacuation of the village. However, this action had an unintended consequence—it signaled to goblins that Westfir was vulnerable. Crucia's scouts have warned her of an impending attack before they left to report to the Network proper. She has no choice but to stay in Westfir and fortify the town to give people time to flee. She lost one home when Zhentil Keep fell, she won't allow another to burn.

When the adventurers arrive in Westfir, Crucia asks them to help defend the village from the goblins and their wasps, investigate Veshje's lab, and then burn the wasp's hive, which rests in a cornflower field around Veshje's lab.

Unbeknownst to Crucia, soon after Veshje's death, a goblin named Skrek drank from the corrupted waters near the mill and felt Demogorgon's power, heard Abyssal whispers promising dominance and satiation. Skrek began worshipping the demon prince and spread Demogorgon's name to the rest of his tribe.

Through fiendish powers, Skrek magically compelled a nearby hive of wasps to imbibe the concentrated ichor of the Abyssal realm, which the goblins extract from the polluted river with crude stills. Directed by Skrek, the goblins have shown unusual patience and cunning, only killing those who wander too close to the hive and their activities.

And now, as the ravenous giant wasps emerge from their larval stage, the Wretched Knife goblins are ready to destroy Westfir and take the region.

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Cornflower Hive (KORN-flaawer HIEV). A hive of giant wasps near Westfir. Controlled by Skrek the goblin fanatic.

Drib (DRIB). The previous goblin chief of the Wretched Knife tribe, now second in command after Skrek.

Skrek (SK-rek). Goblin cult fanatic of Demogorgon. He usurped control of the Wretched Knife tribe from Drib.

Veshje (VESH-hay). A deceased artificer. His laboratory is tainting the Westfork river, which waters Westfir's fields.

Westfir (WEST-fer). A farming village near Mulmaster. Cozy and simple, mostly notable for giant crops.

Westfork (WEST-fork). A magically polluted river that starts in the Earthspur Mountains and flows into the Moonsea.

Wretched Knife (RECH-id NI-ev). A goblin tribe terrorizing Westfir. The Wretched Knife warriors ride giant wasps.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This section provides the DM a bulleted overview of how the adventure is most likely to play out.

Part 1: Surprise in Westfir. The heroes arrive at Westfir as people flee and Crucia prepares to hold off the monsters to buy time. Crucia has important information to relay to the heroes.

Part 2: Preparing the Village. After hopefully recruiting the adventures to her cause, Crucia asks them to prepare the village's defenses.

Part 3: The Siege of Westfir. The goblin forces arrive from both land and air. Complicating the siege is an outbreak of blights.

Part 4: Wretched Knife's Camp. The adventurers arrive at the goblin camp, which also guards Veshje's arcane lab and the wasp hive. There they battle Skrek and the fiendish wasp queen.

Part 5: Veshje's Laboratory. With the goblin camp cleared, the adventures must explore the lab and discover the arcanist's fate while stopping the Abyssal taint from polluting the land.

Part 6: Conclusion. Return to Westfir and Crucia with the results of the investigation and hive hunt.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Cornflower Hive starts with a goblin/giant wasp siege. The adventurers are entering Westfir when the attack begins. Some ideas for how and why the adventurers are in Westfir include:

Refugee Encounter. The adventurers are traveling the region and need to rest. While approaching Westfir, the adventurers encounter fleeing villagers. A goblin siege starts shortly after they arrive.

Diaspora. Adventurers with ties to Mulmaster or the Diaspora could be scouting for a place friendly to refugees. Westfir has plenty of farm work, and is welcoming to settlers. While visiting, the siege starts.

Faction (Emerald Enclave). Members of the Emerald Enclave could be asked via an *animal messenger* to investigate the unusual growth of produce coming out of Westfir. Something isn't right.

Faction (Zhentarim). The Zhentarim have sent the adventurers as reinforcements as per Crucia's request for assistance looking into the happenings around Westfir. The adventurers arrive as the siege begins.

PART 1. SURPRISE IN WESTFIR

It is morning, and the adventurers are preparing to arrive in Westfir. There is worry and unrest because of a recently slain goblin scout.

GENERAL FEATURES

Westfir's market has the following general features.

Terrain. Farmer's market stalls fill the village square.

The produce is gigantic, many times normal size.

Weather. It is springtime. The sky is overcast.

Light. Morning sunlight peeks through the clouds.

Smells and Sounds. The movement of many panicked feet and wagon wheels have left the air smelling of horse and mud, but underpinning everything is the heavy scent of produce from the abandoned market.

A. THE ROAD TO ELMWOOD

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

This encounter sets the stage for the goblin siege later. If the adventurers are already in Westfir, or if there is a strict time limit, skip this encounter.

Here, the adventurers get their first taste of Westfir's situation. A family of villagers are fleeing Westfir because of the goblins. Let the adventurers prepare for a surprise, and then read the following:

You've been on the road for several days, wending around the northern shore of the Moonsea. Fellow travelers and caravans are frequent on the road, which serves as a major trade route for the region.

A farmer's wagon is trundling towards you. A half-dozen human children sit in the wagon, some appear to have been crying. A small group of adults walk alongside.

The cart is filled with sacks and chests as well as several baskets of massive produce. The cucumbers are the size of logs and the beets are bigger than melons.

The simply-dressed humans eye you cautiously but eventually relax. A tall man with a leather hat waves, "Sorry 'bout taken up all the road, friends, but you might have to get used to it 'cause there are many more behind us. We've been ordered to 'evacuate home 'cause of goblin troubles," one man shouts out. "Better head back whilst you can."

THE FLEEING VILLAGERS

The farmers are an extended family of human **commoners**. These farmers all owned fields near Westfir. The five adults are cautiously friendly and relay the following information if asked:

- The village of Westfir is a few hours travel by horse just north of the main road.

- There have been giant insect attacks over the last ten-day and then raids from goblins on outlying farms started not long after that. A neighbor was slain by some creature a few days ago.

- And a goblin riding a great big wasp was shot down early this morning', just at dawn.

The mayor fled first, but the real leader of the village, although she won't say that, is still there handling the evacuation and defense. Her name is Crucia Cromhel. Most simply call her Cru, though. She is hard but honest.

If the adventurers ask about the unusually large produce, the farmer responds:

The vegetables and tomatoes have been growing larger over the last two seasons, or just about that. They don't taste no different and the animals seem fine, but insects along the river have gotten pretty big and a bit aggressive, but nothin' the kids and their slings haven't dealt with."

If the adventurers inspect the giant vegetables and produce either here or in Westfir itself, a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature or Arcana) check reveals the influence of weak transmutation magic with a faint, but harmless, Outer Planar aura.

The farmers consist of an older couple (the elders), their adult offspring, and the family's children. If treated with respect, the elders give the adventurers some strawberries for free, saying, "Bountiful Chauntea bless you."

ROLE-PLAY OPPORTUNITY

Fleeing Home. The farmers hide their fear behind a guise of courtesy. Even without a successful Wisdom (Insight) skill check, the adventurers can pick up on it.

B. A FINE DAY FOR A SIEGE

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

The adventurers arrive at Westfir's palisade after noon. Read or paraphrase the following:

You find yourself outside Westfir just after midday. The village gates are open, but hand-carts and wagons are positioned in place to barricade the road if need be. Men and women are frantically moving supplies and struggling to fortify the walls. A few families overburdened with possessions and provisions push past, fleeing the village with what they can carry.

A pair of commoners holding spears seem to be doing their best to direct another throng of people. At the center of the village stands an elderly, silver-haired half-elf shouting orders.

"No, no, don't put it there. Not there! Just stop. Let me do it," she yells at some farmers trying to setup defenses. She rolls up her sleeves and begins angling a palisade.

It's quite evident that the villagers are readying for an imminent attack.

The silver-haired woman is a half-elf named Crucia Cromhel. She is proprietor of Westfir's sole tavern and inn and shadowy leader of the settlement. While the village is supposedly led by an elected mayor, he was "evacuated" first for his protection. Crucia didn't want him in the way as she tried to handle the village exodus and defense in an organized manner. She still wears a badge of the adventuring group she traveled with, a unicorn's head signifying her connection with the old company. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check identifies the badge and some of the major exploits of the Knights of the Spiral Crown (see the entry for this in **C. Crucia Asks for Help**).

The center of the village is often used as a market, and mounds of massive produce have been left there as the literal tons of squash, tomatoes, and melons were too much to deal with.



C. CRUCIA ASKS FOR HELP

Read or paraphrase the following:

A haggard looking militiaman approaches her and points you out. The elderly half-elf brushes herself off and steps forward. She has the demeanor of one who is used to being obeyed without question. There is a hardness to her that stands in quiet difference to her age and lithe form.

"I'm Crucia Cromhel. Thank you. Your arrival is," she shrugs, "connected to something or someone, probably. Excuse my presump-

tion. So, what are you doing here?" She eyes you appraisingly, "You're armed a bit more than the farmers here. Are you looking for work by chance, maybe glory? I can offer both, at any rate. But before you say anything to that, we should talk. Privately." She shoos away the militiaman. "There are important things, things I don't care for others to learn. Morale around here is already in tatters without some jumpy farmer overhearing and exaggerating to his friends. We can talk while we walk, get the easy stuff out of the way.

"A goblin horde in control of a giant wasp swarm is gathering to destroy Westfir, or raid it. The difference isn't all that much, really. The past few months have seen a curious change in the land, specifically fast-growing plants and bugs. There had been reports of large insects, nothing bigger than a dog. Then those mean bastard wasps showed up and started hitting outlying farms, taking livestock and even villagers. People that I've known for years."

She sighs, "I am too old to lead a counter-offensive. My adventuring days are behind me. Yours are not. Good people are dead. Decent folk have been forced from their homes. When my scouts became aware of the growing threat, I ordered an evacuation, but that seemed to signal to the goblins our vulnerability. They have begun to gather to the northwest and I fear they will launch a full attack either today or tomorrow. Soon, at any rate, far too soon. There are still families packing to leave. And if the goblin scouts think you are armed reinforcements, they'll attack even sooner."

She turns to you. "Help me. Help this village." A half-smile touches her lips, "and you will find allies in places you least expect. A whole network, even. Once we get inside, I can tell you more, but first, look at this thing." Crucia takes you to a wagon covered by a tarp. Within is a strange goblin corpse.

Crucia shows the adventurers the corpse of the goblin scout. **The goblin has antenna, multi-faceted eyes, and a chitin-covered body.** On a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check, these wasp-like mutations are identified as Abyssal corruption.

A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the source of the demonic taint and the specific Abyssal realm, The Gaping Maw, domain of Demogorgon. This realm is a filled with ravenous, out-of-control jungles and insects; it is a predatory place where even the plants eat you.

After the adventurers have time to inspect the corpse, she motions them onwards. Crucia tells the adventurers the following as they walk to her office:

- This morning, one of the guards shot down a goblin that was riding a giant wasp. Rumors of these creatures have been jumping from farm to farm for a tenday or so without

any proof until people started going missing or turning up dead.

- Her scouts (Zhentarim agents) have located the hive up river, but the villagers lack the training and equipment to bring the fight to the goblins and wasps.

- A few months ago, the vegetables started growing larger and larger, surpassing all known records of such. During the same time, large insects began to appear, nothing too threatening until the wasps showed up.

- If adventurers are willing to help, Crucia greatly thanks them for their enthusiasm, but she needs to talk with them privately about a few concerns.

- Characters who are Zhentarim members, and makes this known to Crucia, have advantage on all rolls involving Crucia.

Crucia leads you to the only three-story structure within the village—Westfir’s tavern and inn, the de facto center of the settlement. The structure is relatively new, a few years, and has recent expansions made to it. An elaborately carved sign hanging above the entrance reads: “Hearth Hold Keep.” The inside is plush and well furnished, especially by the standards of such a small, out-of-the-way village.

She ushers you to the upper levels, both of which hold rooms for the inn as well as quarters for permanent cooks, maids, and servers. Then she leads you to the attic. The whole of this level has been converted to a comfortable and heavily decorated office lit by bobbing orbs and large windows overlooking the village.

Along the walls are the trophies and keepsakes of her career and adventuring days. Across one wall is a great banner, burnt and stained but still glorious. Opposite that wall is another banner of a rearing white unicorn over a blue background.

Crucia makes a nod to each banner in pride, “I once stood where you stand, well, not exactly this spot but before a person about to offer me a job for a reward, offering glory to face danger. Sorry if I seem overly flippant, stress and old age, I suppose.”

CRUCIA’S PAST AND THE BANNERS

Anyone proficient with Intelligence (Arcana) recognizes several custom, ornate *driftglobes*.

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check identifies the burnt banner as belonging to the Zhentarim from a century ago, back when Zhentil Keep existed.

A successful DC 14 Intelligence (History) check identifies the unicorn banner as belonging to the Knights of the Spiral Crown, an adventuring and mercenary band who ceased operating many decades ago. Give the adventurers **Player Handout 1**, in the Appendix. Some of their most notable achievements include the recovery of a *moonblade*, the destruction of a vampire lord, and crashing and destroying a flying ship. Crucia only smiles if asked about any of these events, and has a particularly sly grin if asked about the ship.

If asked about the banners, Crucia happily tells them the above historical details. In her old age, she has become

less secretive and more open. She is too old to care about playing the consummate spy all the time and adventurers hold a special place in her heart. She was one, and a group of them saved her life at Zhentil Keep. She takes pride in her history.

Crucia sits and pours herself a bit of something amber from a crystal decanter. She pours additional drinks in delicate cups and offers them to each of you. The drink is strong but flavorful. She sits, ready to speak.

“Alright, now to the hard stuff, the secret stuff. An agent of mine, a brilliant arcanist and artificer named Veshje Bel’Erin, has been operating upriver from Westfir in a hidden lab for some years. While his goal has always been the same, he has gone about pursuing it with different methods, discovering things along the way. His work has made me both wealthy and influential. But these aren’t his goals. Wealth, I mean.” She takes a sip. “This isn’t a story I am used to telling, especially to those who I do not know. However, time is short. If you’re willing to help, you need to know everything to maximize our chances of success.

“Some years ago, I joined an adventuring band called the Knights of the Spiral Crown. They were part of the Order of the Unicorn. A ridiculous name. A name for children, but the members were incredibly talented and brave individuals who saved my life on several occasions.” She is silent a moment, staring at the banner of the rearing unicorn.

“We were exploring some forgotten elven ruin when Veshje discovered a sleeping mythal woman in the stones. His curiosity got the better of him and he disturbed the dormant magic. Some spell awoke and stole away half our group.” She snaps her fingers, “Like that, just gone. We spent months trying to undo what had been done. Eventually I moved on. Veshje never did. He borrowed some money from me and set up shop not too far from here. He began scanning our world and then other planes trying to find our friends. He sells me his arcane notes, discoveries, and inventions and I provide him with the materials and support he needs to continue his search.

“What does this have to do with our current predicament? I fear my old friend Veshje may be behind it in some way. I do not know as I have not spoken with him in several months. He isn’t due to check in for at least a couple more weeks. And now, with all that is happening, I can’t spare a large enough group to check in on him. Sending anything but a score or more of armed men, or a small elite group, would be far too dangerous.”

Crucia has the following information and missions for the adventurers:

- She asks the adventurers to first and foremost defend Westfir, preparing the few who remain for an attack and setting up defenses.
- The heroes are then to seek out and destroy the Cornflower Hive and goblin village. Find the cause of the giant wasps and mutated goblins and end it. The source is probably at the hive itself, but there is no way to tell right now.
- Finally, the adventurers will need to go to the old watermill, which is the secret lab and home of Veshje, and see what is going on there, if the strange events are connected to the insular artificer or if he needs help. If something has happened to him, as she fears, the adventurers are tasked with retrieving what notes and devices they can carry back and destroying the rest, especially any links to the Zhentarim. If Veshje is fine, escort him back to the village, even if it is against his will, which it most likely will be.
- Technically Veshje is an agent of the Zhentarim. His research and experiments are funded by the Black Network and his discoveries, findings, and experimental devices go to them, specifically Crucia. It is how he pays her for what he needs to continue his search. Crucia doesn't want these events linked back to her or the Zhentarim. She can't afford it—the Zhentarim isn't fond of its agents causing region-wide calamities and drawing attention to its activities.

If the adventurers ask more about the lost members of the Knights of the Spiral Crown:

- They lost three members of their party while exploring an elven ruin. Veshje, the party's curious artificer, tampered with a sleeping mythal there. The magical ward activated and teleported his companions away. He blames himself. He spent many sleepless nights at the ruins trying to reverse the spell-ward and bring his friends back.
- Soon after he left a cryptic note about seeking redemption and vanished for a time. Crucia had little trouble finding him and his secret lab, though.
- Those lost in the accident were Tora Allowyn, a human druid, Cyril Kay (aka The Key), a halfling rogue, and Brigidan Dan, a human cleric of Torm. Those who survived were Crucia Cromhel, half-elf spy, Lady Elsbeth de Andri, a half-elf paladin of Torm, Althorial, a wood elf ranger, and Veshje Bel'Erin. The other two live on the Sword Coast near Baldur's Gate.

If Crucia is asked about the Zhentarim, or her part in it, she responds with pride about the history of the organization starting with the fall and change of the Black Network:

- The fall of Zhentil Keep was thought to be a fatal blow. And in some ways, the Zhentarim was destroyed, never again to be what it was, never again to stand with the prominence it once held; but in other ways, it became stronger, more widespread, more cunning and influential. When the Black Network's enemies sought to break its center, to sever the serpent's head, all they did was cause a hundred heads to grow in its place.
- The Pereghost from Darkhold is given much of the credit for saving and reforging the Zhentarim into what it is

now today. But in reality, it was a dozen leaders around the region that helped save it and remake it into what it is.

- If asked who the Pereghost is, she replies that the Pereghost is a suit of sentient haunted armor that chooses a new wearer when the time comes, or so she believes. There are many rumors surrounding that particular figure.
- She is but a humble member enjoying her retirement in the rural countryside, she says this with a wink.

Crucia doesn't bring up the Mulmaster Diaspora. There are already other things to deal with. If the adventurers ask, Crucia states that she is aware of them and their plight and was making arrangements for them to settle near Westfir and help with the farming and lumber work. There is, after all, an immense amount of food stock here.

ROLEPLAYING CRUCIA CROMHEL

Crucia is a veteran agent and ranking Zhentarim officer. She is stern and ambitious, but has a wry sense of humor. She also has a soft spot for adventurers. She was an adventurer in her youth and her daughter is one now.

Crucia herself is the child of a human warlord who was offered an elven royal bride to forge a political alliance. Technically, this makes Crucia a princess, but she abandoned home long ago. Eventually, her past would catch up with her and she would be forced to wed an elven noble. A daughter resulted from the union. She disappeared with her child and joined the Zhentarim.

After the fall of Zhentil Keep, she traveled with the Knights of the Spiral Crown. But she never ceased being a Black Network agent.

Crucia's main contact to the Zhentarim is actually her daughter, Selucia Tel'Seldarine, a high elf eldritch knight who takes after her mother both in her ambition and appearance. Crucia's daughter took her father's noble surname,

Quote: "I am too old for this, and I have things to do. Let's just pay some glory-hungry adventurers to do it."

DM ADVICE

Never Split the Party. Don't let the players split the party to attempt to accomplish everything at once. The players need to defend the village before traveling upriver.

Keep NPCs in the background. Crucia is a plot device, not a combat NPC. Feel free to narrate her actions during the siege, but the players are the heroes.

A Lot or a Little. There's a lot of roleplay content here. It's not expected nor necessary to use it all, but knowing the context and background can help explain plot points and NPC attitudes.

PART 2. PREPARING THE VILLAGE

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

The adventurers must rally Westfir and prepare to battle Skrek and his wasp-goblins.

A. FORTIFYING WESTFIR

Read or paraphrase the following:

Crucia leads you from the inn after a brief meal. She stands straight and appears stern as she gathers a few militia sergeants at the town's square where the market was abandoned. "Okay, brave people of Westfir, you dirt scratching stalwarts. A few meddling adventurers and would-be do-gooders," she winks at you, "have shown up in fittingly heroic timeliness to save us. If I were younger, I'd be properly swooning. But I am not, so I won't. Let's tell them what we have available for equipment and defenses and see what they have to say about our situation."

Behind her, many villagers are gathered. They watch you with a combination of fear and hope.

Crucia **asks the adventurers to capture at least one goblin alive** if possible, saying "Intelligence is as deadly a weapon as any sword or spell, and we need to know what the little monsters are up to, how they are controlling the wasps."

At this point, every adventurer makes a DC 12 attribute check, using an attribute of their choice. Adventurers with a military background (city watch, soldier, mercenary, knight, etc.) have advantage on this check.

For every success, the adventurers can implement one fortification action from the list below (see **Player Handout 2** for greater detail):

FORTIFICATION ACTIONS (SEE PLAYER HANDOUT 2)

#	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
1	Arm and Train the Villagers with Javelins	Arm villagers with make-shift javelins to make them more effective.	Reduces attackers, both on the ground and in the air.
2	Reinforce the Walls	Reinforce the palisade wall with carts.	Harder to breach palisades.
3	Evacuate Remaining Civilians to a Fortified Temple	Evacuate the children, sick, and elderly to the Temple of Chauntea.	Move all non-combatants to a stone temple.
4	Construct a Field Hospital	Set up a make-shift hospital.	Gives a healing ability.

5	Fire Proof the Village and Construct Ramparts	Fire proofs buildings and sets up ladders and walkways through the village.	Protects Westfir from fires and allows adventurers to move from roof to roof with ease.
6	Construct Sniper's Nest	Several seasoned hunters are placed atop Crucia's inn.	Reduces aerial attackers and slows goblins.
7	Boost Morale	A great show of skill or inspiring speech boosts morale.	Reduces infantry attackers.
8	Prepare a Smoke Screen	Build oil pits, creating smoke. The village is lightly obscured.	Reduces aerial attackers, gives disadvantage to attacks from aerial creatures.
9	Setup Traps	Dig spiked pits.	Reduces infantry attackers.
10	Construct Watchtowers	Place scouts on watchtowers.	Grants advantage on initiative checks.

This segment simulates fortifying Westfir, and is streamlined. If debate starts, give reminders that time is limited, both in and out of game.

As DM, you're empowered to allow fortification actions outside this list. The only guidelines are:

- Actions give small, cumulative advantages.
- Don't remove actions from the base list.
- One adventurer can only choose one action.
- Options cannot be duplicated.

NO LONG REST

Because of preparing the village for attack, the adventurers are only able to take a short rest.

MORE ACTIONS THAN ADVENTURERS

The Action List. There are more fortification actions than adventurers. This is intentional.

Role-Play Opportunity. This is a roleplay opportunity. Be aware of play time and player responsiveness, but if possible take the moment to have the villagers interact with the adventurers. Have the villagers respond with "Yes, milord/milady," or talk about fleeing their homes.

PART 3. THE SIEGE OF WESTFIR

Estimated Duration: 75 minutes

The goblin warband attacks at dusk, which is a few hours away. The first wave of goblin foot soldiers assails the palisades and gate. The goblins also attempt to burn Westfir down.

Immediately after the initial attack, Drib, the former goblin chief, and his wasp-mounted commandos fly into the village.

After the siege has started, goblin wasp riders attempt to use vials of concentrated Abyssal ichor to bring blights alive from the piled produce in the markets square.

GENERAL FEATURES

The goblin assault begins at dusk. The villagers have taken refuge in their homes, or the temple of Chauntea, if that was selected during the preparation step.

Terrain. As noted before, but just before dusk. The market and streets are empty.

Weather. The setting sun darkens the sky.

Light. It is dim light. Visibility is 60 feet. The area around the palisade is illuminated by torches.

Smells and Sounds. The crying of Westfir's children fills the air, mixing with the sound of prayers to Chauntea. The smell of produce is heavy throughout the village.

A. RESULTS OF FORTIFICATION

Use the following guide to determine the effects of fortifying the village. **Allied NPCs do not play any other role in combat.** This allows you to simplify while reflecting the fortification. However, it is important to describe events in a cinematic and dramatic fashion. For example, tell how the militia archers send deadly volleys into the goblins or how the goblins struggle to set fire to houses soaked in water. Each tactical choice should have an appropriate description for when it occurs. Short examples are provided, but describe each event in however way you feel it should be depicted.

FORTIFICATION RESULTS

#	SIEGE EFFECT
1	Remove two goblins from part B (halve a group), and remove one goblin boss and one giant wasp from Part C. <i>Well-timed volleys of javelins shatter a group of goblins breaching the wall. Moments later, a second volley brings down a giant wasp and its rider crashing to the street, the insects body riddled with shafts. A cheer goes up!</i>

2	Non-flying groups of attackers must make a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to climb the palisade. <i>The goblins expected Westfir to be a soft target, defenseless and rich with easy pickings. But now they struggle to breach the reinforced walls, yelling and hissing in frustration.</i>
3	Move vulnerable villagers to the temple. Earns extra reward after the siege. <i>The militia fights with raised moral knowing their loved ones are safely held in the stone Temple of Chauntea. Now they need but focus on the threat before them.</i>
4	An NPC rushes up and tends to the wounds of a hero. Anytime a hero is wounded during the siege, he or she may call for medical aid to immediately recover 2d4+2 hit points. Usable once each. <i>As the battle stretches through the walled village in pockets of violence, young men and women with white cloth tied around their arms dodge through the streets to bring succor to the wounded.</i>
5	Attackers are unable to start fires, and adventurers can move up and down and across buildings with ease (no Athletics checks to climb buildings or jump from roof to roof). <i>As a large farming village, Westfir has no shortage of barrels and buckets, many of which are now tactically placed to douse any and all fires. As a group of goblins, faces contorted in devious smiles, begin to burn a house, both the goblins and the flames are soon drenched.</i>
6	Remove one goblin boss and one giant wasp from Part C. Goblins move through the village as if it were difficult terrain as sniper fire keeps them ducking for cover. <i>Seasoned hunters are given all the arrows they need. From the rooftops, their precise fire keeps goblins diving for cover and skilled shots bring a wasp and its rider to the ground, dead before they hit the earth.</i>
7	Remove four goblins from Part B. <i>Through words and actions, your heroism has rallied the villagers to defend hearth and home. Knowing you stand with them, the villager fight with great bravery. They attack with such fierceness that the goblin marauders are taken off guard, who thought they were raiding an easy target.</i>

8	Remove one goblin boss and one giant wasp from Part C. Giant wasps and wasp riders have disadvantage to attacks. <i>Prepared pits of tar and wood send out thick plumes of black, choking smoke, screening the village from the areal harassment of the wasps. An unlucky wasp blinded by the smoke smashes into a palisade, impaling itself and sending the rider tumbling into the river.</i>
9	Remove four goblins from Part B. <i>The goblins rush forward hollering high-pitched battle cries, their eyes gleaming with bloodlust, that is, until the first tumbles into a spiked pit.</i>
10	Adventurers get advantage on initiative checks. <i>A hunting horn blares through the village. Three blasts echo. You and the defenders know where the attacks are coming from and prepare yourselves to meet the threat accordingly.</i>

B. THE GOBLIN ATTACK

Read or paraphrase the following:

From your position, you hear many voices chanting in the fields outside the palisade wall. The goblin cacophony grows louder and louder.

Sixteen **goblins** move towards Westfir, split into four equal sized groups. The assault starts at dusk before true nightfall. The giant wasps lack darkvision, but goblins are cowardly and are hesitant to attack in full light.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two groups of four **goblins** (eight total).
- **Weak:** Remove one group of four **goblins**.
- **Strong:** Add one group of four **goblins**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two groups of four **goblins** (eight **goblins** total).

GOBLIN TACTICS

The infantry goblins begin outside the northeast and southeast village walls, and spend their first actions climbing the palisade. Make one DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check for each group of four goblins. On a successful check, place that goblin group within the palisade wall. Rolling for goblin groups collectively is intended to help streamline combat.

A goblin group can either attack (melee or ranged), or attempt to scale the palisade as an action, but not both. If targets present themselves, the goblin foot-troops prefer to attack.

Once the goblins breach the wall, they spend their first

turn within Westfir lighting buildings ablaze. This takes an entire action of a group. The temple of Chauntea is fire-proof, but all other buildings are flammable unless the adventurers fire-proofed the village. Anytime a group of goblins is left unthreatened by melee or ranged attacks, including Intimidation checks, the goblins move as a group to set fire to a building. Goblins start the battle in groups of four (see **Adjusting this Encounter** sidebar).

If Westfir is set on fire, all ground movement within the village becomes difficult terrain because of smoke and flames. This applies to adventurers, non-aerial goblins, and the blights from **Part C**.

If the adventurers choose to, they can attempt to use their action to put out the fires. After three cumulative successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) checks, the fires are extinguished. Alternatively, first-level or higher spells that create water or cold, or do cold damage, can extinguish fires.

C. DRIB'S MARAUDERS

Two rounds after the attack begins, read or paraphrase the following:

A loud buzzing fills the twilight, and you see several giant wasps flying towards the village. Each wasp bears a goblin rider.

One wasp-mounted goblin stands out. The goblin has yellow stripes and bulbous eyes, and he is screaming orders. His wasp hovers a javelin's throw from the palisade.

The adventurers need to deal with Drib (treat as a **goblin boss**) and three **goblin bosses**, each mounted on a **giant wasp**.

The wasp-mounted goblin bosses close to melee range. The goblins then allow the wasps to act independently, only controlling them if necessary.

WASP LEADER DRIB

Drib is not open to persuasion, fearing Skrek's wasps more than the adventurers. But it is possible to intimidate or deceive Drib into delaying his attack by making an opposed Charisma (Deception or Intimidation) skill check versus Drib's Wisdom (Insight). If successful, Drib delays his assault for one round, then continues his attack. In true goblin form, Drib suspects betrayal and deceit at all times.

PYROPHOBIA AND UNCONTROLLED WASPS

If a rider is slain, at the beginning of its turn, the wasp must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated and hovering (unable to take actions or reactions) until the beginning of its next turn.

The Cornflower Wasps are frightened by fire. Any Cornflower Hive wasp that takes fire damage must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or else be incapacitated and hovering until the end of its next turn.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Replace two **goblin bosses** with two normal **goblins**.
- **Weak:** Replace one **goblin bosses** with one normal **goblin**.
- **Strong:** Add one **goblin boss** mounted on one **giant wasp**.
- **Very Strong:** Add one **goblin cult fanatic** mounted on a **giant wasp**.

D. BLIGHT SURPRISE

Two rounds after Drib and his marauders attack (four rounds after the infantry goblins begin to storm the palisade), read or paraphrase the following:

Amidst the battle, a goblin wasp rider darts to the town center and hovers just above the abandoned market before throwing down vials of something into the piles of produce below. The heaps of giant vegetables heave and undulate and then animate into vile blights, plant creatures shaped in the twisted effigies of people that shamble towards you.

Two **needle blights** and three **twig blights** crawl from the leftover produce and attack the inside of the fortified town. If not stopped, the blights break into nearby homes and attack the villagers with abandon.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak or Weak:** Remove two **needle blights**.
- **Strong:** Add two **twig blights**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **needle blights**.

Note: If the adventurers prove exceptionally effective and down all the wasps and goblin bosses before two rounds, have any infantry goblin dump the Abyssal sludge on the produce to bring the blights to life. Simply adjust the description above.

INTERROGATING THE GOBLINS

If a goblin is captured alive, it can be interrogated. On a successful DC 11 Charisma (Intimidation) check, the goblin starts talking:

- The name of the tribe is the Wretched Knife, but Skrek is going to have a vision to give the tribe its destined name blessed by Demogorgon.
- Skrek, their shaman and leader, cowed Drib, the previous chief, and moved the goblins to the old mill to protect it. There Skrek erected a strange shrine and began to breed wasps, making them grow larger with each new generation using Demogorgon's ichor.
- Skrek set up a basin to distill the ichor from the river

water near a human watermill. The ichor is the blood of Demogorgon (false, but it's what the goblins believe). He has been feeding this purified ichor to the wasps to make them grow big-big.

- Skrek has been giving the blessings of Demogorgon to the tribe. This bestows the wasp-like 'gifts.' He mixes wasp poison with purified ichor from the river to create a special tonic.
- Drib was sent to attack Westfir to capture more sacrifices for Demogorgon and food for the wasps and some horror in the mill. No one but Skrek enters the mill because there is something dangerous in there that kills. The goblins know nothing about a half-elf magic-user.
- Skrek is a herald of Demogorgon (this, too, is false).
- The wasps are dominated by Skrek, and without his power it'll be hard to control them.
- There is a beast of Demogorgon protecting the inside of the mill, slaying all who enter. The goblins are unsure of what is inside the mill.

Crucia turns pale and her shoulders sink when she hears about the watermill's connection to all of this. Her fears have been realized. "Veshje, you old fool, what have you done," she whispers to herself. Her eyes glitter with restrained tears.

AFTER THE BATTLE

If the adventurers are victorious, Crucia asks them to travel up the Westfork to Veshje's home to check on the arcanist, and stop the goblins and their wasps.

The village is silent after the battle. The militia stands bloodied and breathing heavily. Then, they erupt into cheers. One of the militia members approaches you. "By the gods, we did it! We drove them away! We could not have done this without you. Never, never did I think I would see such feats. You are heroic. That is the only word I have for what you did here."

While the farmers break out libations, Crucia makes her way over to you. She is bloody, her chain shirt torn. She waves away offers of help. "No time for that. This isn't finished. I need you to travel upriver, up the Westfork. Find Veshje. If one of his experiments isn't behind this, he might know what is. And after that, find these goblins, find this Skrek, and kill them all, burn them to the ground as they tried to do to us. No more, no more will I," she takes a deep breath, "sorry, bad memories of the siege of Zhentil Keep. Those moments still haunt me and this stirs up the past."

If the adventurers failed to protect the village in its entirety, such as allowing buildings to burn without intervention, Crucia remarks with sadness that she can't help but feel more could have been done. She had to use many of her healing potions to save those injured in the fires. **If Westfir was set ablaze or villagers were injured, reduce**

the reward Crucia gives the players by two *potions of healing*.

However, if the option to Evacuate Remaining Civilians to a Fortified Temple was chosen, the adventurers are not penalized for the damaged village as no one was injured. The adventurers are given the full reward of potions plus a *scroll of bless* from the temple.

“Westfir will reward you as we can. In the meantime, take this. You’ll need it more than I shall. My fighting days are done.” Crucia hands you a copper-plated javelin and a belt pouch. “Travel with luck, and if you can’t find that, travel with your wits,” she says with a wry smile. “And maybe one day you will find yourself standing where I am. Not exactly this spot, but you get the idea.” With a wistful gaze, she nods at you and walks away. “I have to get this place cleaned up.”

Crucia gives the adventurers her copper-plated javelin (a *javelin of lightning*). In the belt pouch are three *potions of healing* and a **parchment map** marked with the grain mill. Give the adventurers **Player Handout 3 (Crucia’s Map)**. **Remember to reduce the number of potions given if villagers were injured, such as from burning buildings or blight attacks.**

If the adventurers request it, the villagers will loan them a rowboat. The villagers won’t accompany the adventurers because they must clear the village, repair the wall, and escort people out. **Treasure**

The goblins have 100 cp, 40 sp, and 15 gp in total, and Crucia gives the adventurers three *potions of healing* and her *javelin of lightning*.



RIVER NEREID MEETING (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

A chaotic good **nereid** named **Umfula** dwells in the Westfork river. Umfula is dying from something in the water coming from upstream. She knows the source is the mill and that it is Abyssal in nature. The location of this encounter can either be along the river or a secluded pond depending on the travel method of the party. Simply adjust the description below accordingly.

As you follow the river, the strange happenings Crucia spoke of are becoming more evident. The plants along the riverbank grow unnaturally large and aggressive, fighting each other for every scrap of sunlight and space, enveloping one another in attempts to smother competition. Insects the size of dogs move beneath the thick underbrush, scuttling or fluttering away as you near.

As you pass by a deep, slow-moving section of the river, the surface has a thick, oily sheen. You hear a splash and a woman’s voice calls out to you in Common.

“Please. I beg you. Poison. In the river. I am drowning in my own water.”

Gliding to the shore is a beautiful fey woman with azure skin and green hair. She looks weak and sickly, though. Her skin appears discolored in places and her eyes are sunken. She holds her hands before you in a placating gesture.

A successful DC 10 Knowledge (Nature or Arcane) identifies her as a **nereid**, a peaceful water fey. She wants to know if the adventurers can save her. She is dying. If Umfula is asked what the problem is, she may respond accordingly with the following:

- This poison is coming from an old mill, slowly seeping into the water. Twisting the plants, the insects, and killing the fish and other aquatic life.
- I tried to ask for help but the farmers fear me. They think I will trick them into the water to drown and eat them. Their kind has long avoided the river because of my presence, so they dig deep wells to siphon the water from the earth.
- This poison, this twisting pollution, has an Abyssal taint to it. I am terrified.

If the adventurers ask how they can help, she may respond with the following:

- Journey to the mill if you are able, stop this vile filth from strangling the waterways. Please. For all the river life.
- If you command the powers to heal, of any sort, they may strengthen me long enough for someone to deal with the source of this Abyssal poison.

If asked about Veshje, she knows this:

- Veshje would often visit with me beside the river, talking of his adventuring days and of a quest to save his friends. But as the weeks became months and the months turned to years, he came less and less and seemed ever more sorrowful and lost. I miss him, and I hope he is safe.
- I can't check on him because the water near the mill is too tainted, but I fear for him.

If she is asked about the goblins or wasps.

- For several months now, at least a season, I have seen the goblins come and go from the river's edge, collecting water and capturing insects to take up river where I can no longer go because of the poison in the water.
- I have seen the wasps flying overhead for at least a full turning of the moon.
- The creatures are unaware of my presence.

Magical healing (such as the potions Crucia awarded), restorative magic, abilities that remove the poisoned condition, or spells that purge evil temporarily relieve the symptoms of the pollution and buys Umfula more time. If healed in one of these ways, she profusely thanks the adventurers and offers a single drop of fey-enchanted water. This droplet can be captured in a flask or waterskin, and is a *potion of water breathing*.

NO EXPERIENCE FOR COMBAT

Zero Experience. There is no experience point reward for attacking Umfula. Injuring or killing the nereid is both uncouth and unnecessary, if not outright villainous.



PART 4. THE GOBLIN CAMP AND THE CORNFLOWER HIVE

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

The adventurers follow Crucia's map upriver towards Veshje's home. Skrek moved the goblins to the area around the watermill. The goblins revere the site because it is the source of Demogorgon's taint. The ichor seeping from the Abyssal realm is the source of their power and control over the wasps, so the goblins guard and worship it. The wasp nest is also located within the fenced area of the goblin camp. The area surrounding the camp is trapped, and the goblins will fight to the death. Afterwards, the Cornflower Hive must be destroyed.

Area C on the Wretched Knife map is the abandoned mill (see **Part 5**).

GENERAL FEATURES

The goblin camp is a day's travel by foot and provides a long rest opportunity for the adventurers. The adventurers may also travel by raft or rowboat up the river, but the current makes the travel time the same. The entire area is a field of giant cornflowers stretching for hundreds of paces. The camp is located around the laboratory. The goblins venerate the site because it is the source of Demogorgon's taint.

The Wretched Knife camp is filthy. Refuse and garbage are strewn about, and the camp's odor can be smelled before the camp is visible.

Terrain. The Cornflower Hive stands in the center of the goblin camp while the watermill is sequestered off to the side by the river shore. There are many effigies and charms decorating the stone walls of the mill. The area around the tents is muddy. All the brush has been cut down for tinder. The grass and cornflowers grow as tall as a human. Nearby is a pond. The water in the pond is tinted red from the laboratory's pollutants.

Weather. It is cold. In the morning, dew glistens in the dawn's light. At night, there is thick mist. After sundown, the mist lightly obfuscates the area, reducing visibility to 60 feet.

Light. Sunlight breaks through the clouds.

Smells and Sounds. The disgusting scent of the camp is palpable before the camp itself is visible. Rubbish and filth are strewn all around the camp's tents.

A. APPROACHING THE GOBLIN CAMP

Read or paraphrase the following:

Cornflowers the height of a man fill the fields before you, stretching from the riverbank to the distant edge of the forest. Nestled in the blue of the blossoms is what can only be a goblin camp. There are about a dozen crude huts. Several are built in a fashion that attempts to mimic the shape of a hive but lacks the symmet-

rical elegance. At the center of the camp is the true hive of the giant wasps, a large structure of chewed wood pulp. Along the river beside the camp is the stone watermill, its wheel silent. There are many effigies and charms decorating the stone walls of the structure.

High-pitched voices speaking in yips and growls carry on the wind, coming from a ramshackle structure visible in the distance. From what you can see, the goblins all carry shortbows and nervously glance at the hive.

There are three **goblins** on a loose watch at each bridge of the camp (see **Wretched Knife Camp map**), for a total of nine **goblins** guarding the camp. Use the table below for the guard's activity:

WRETCHED KNIFE GUARD ACTIVITY

d4	DAYTIME	NIGHTTIME
1	The goblins are sleeping under the tall grass.	The goblins are playing dice for dead mice and feathers.
2	The goblins are amusing themselves torturing vermin.	The goblins are swilling grog.
3	One goblin is awake, the others are asleep nearby.	All the goblins are awake, singing songs in Goblin.
4	The goblins are digging a pit trap.	The goblins are gnawing animal carcasses

Unless the adventurers give themselves away, the goblins are distracted and make Wisdom (Perception) checks with disadvantage. If alerted, the goblins will let loose a staccato series of yelps to warn the camp.

The guards could attempt to lead the adventurers into the pit traps, but are more likely to flee deeper into the camp and alert Skrek, or hide and fire their shortbows. All the goblins carry shortbows as the wasps still make them nervous.

During the day, the goblins are asleep unless alerted by the guards. At night, they are dancing and praying to either the hive or the mill, depending on the omens set down by Skrek. When not worshipping, they are swilling grog and playing dice. Anyone watching the dice game realizes the goblins seem to be making it up as they play.

If the camp is alerted, or attacked at night, twelve more **goblins** appear from the huts to attack.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove three groups of four **goblins** (twelve total). No goblins appear if the alarm is sounded. How sad.

- **Weak:** Remove two group of four **goblins** (eight total).
- **Strong:** Add one group of four **goblins**.

• **Very Strong:** Add two groups of four **goblins** (eight goblins total).

Note: The goblins can be located wherever the DM can make the most interesting or most dramatic use of them.

PIT TRAPS

Each bridge side is surrounded by numerous **pit traps** hidden under grass fronds.

TRAP. EH, IT'S A HOLE!

Simple Trap (Levels 1-4 moderate threat)

The Wretched Knife tribe has been busy digging pits to catch food and interlopers. Each pit is 10-feet deep and lined with stakes.

Trigger. Stepping onto the grass covering triggers the trap.

Effect. The triggering character must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the 10-foot deep pit and takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and 5 (1d10) piercing damage from the spikes on the bottom of the pit.

Countermeasures. Each 10-foot wide pit is covered with matted grass fronds. Detecting it requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If successful, the dimensions of the pit can be discerned under the grass. The pits can't be disabled, but can be avoided or jumped over. The goblins know these traps, and avoid them.

B. THE CORNFLOWER HIVE

Read or paraphrase the following:

Bones and feathers litter the area around the hive, sticking out of the muddy ground.

A handful of crude shelters stand amidst the filth. A short distance beyond them is a gigantic wasp hive the size of a tavern.

The wasp queen and a few of her children are within the hive. Skrek is with the queen.

B1. DEMOGORGON'S SHRINE AND THE ICHOR

Near the center of the village is a small wooden shrine to Demogorgon. Read the following:

You notice a wooden building that resembles a shed without a door. Inside are clay icons of mutated wasp-goblins, various trinkets and baubles, and large copper pots and alembics connected by pipes. It looks like a crude alcohol still. A tap at the base of a copper pot drips a red syrup into a basin.

The basin is filled to the brim with thick, scarlet ichor. There is strange, crude writing scratched into the edge of the basin.

The ichor is the re-condensed Abyssal pollution from the mill. The clay icons show goblins in various states of mutation. The writing is in Goblin and Abyssal, and declares the shrine sacred to 'Demogorgon, the Great Changer.'

Proficiency with alchemist's supplies or a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies these stills as purifying the Abyssal ichor from the water for use by the goblins, to make the plant blights, grow the insects, and mutate the goblins themselves.

If nobody reads Goblin or Abyssal, the fiendish nature of the prayer is evident on a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check.

Adventurers drinking or coming into contact with the ichor must make a successful DC 10 Constitution save (DC 17 if it is drunk) or take 1d12 poison damage and suffer the poisoned condition for 24 hours. They also radiate an aura of evil to those who can sense it. Demogorgon does not bless foolish heroes.

TRAP. ABYSSAL MOONSHINE

Simple Trap (Levels 1-4 moderate threat)

The distilled ichor is volatile, and if the shrine or distilling equipment takes any fire damage, it explodes, flinging flaming debris.

Trigger. If the distilling equipment takes fire damage, it detonates.

Effect. All creatures within 20 feet of the shrine must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) fire damage from the explosion. Creatures take half damage on a successful saving throw. The shrine and distilling equipment are destroyed by the detonation.

Countermeasures. On a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check, the ichor and still are identified as volatile.

TREASURE

Within the shrine is a collection of brass and silver trinkets worth 30 gp total.

If the adventurers destroy the Cornflower Hive without engaging in direct combat with the goblins beforehand, **award each character 150 experience points.**



ATTACKING THE HIVE

The hive has AC 11, 60 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Every 15 hit points of damage to the hive causes one angry **giant wasp** to emerge. These wasps attack non-goblins first, but will attack Skrek and his goblins if no other creatures are within sight.

Any Cornflower Hive wasp that takes fire damage must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or else be incapacitated and hovering until the end of its next turn.

INTERROGATING THE GOBLINS

If a goblin is captured alive, it can be interrogated. On a successful DC 11 Charisma (Intimidation) check, the goblin starts talking:

- The name of the tribe is the Wretched Knife, but Skrek is going to have a vision to give the tribe its destined name blessed by Demogorgon.
- There is a beast of Demogorgon protecting the inside of the mill, slaying all who enter. The goblins are unsure of what is inside the mill.
- Only Skrek, Drib, and the chosen few can commune with the wasps.
- Skrek, their shaman and leader, cowed Drib, the previous chief, and moved the goblins to the old mill to protect it. There Skrek erected a strange shrine and began to breed wasps, making them grow larger with each new generation using Demogorgon's blood (false, but it is what they believe).
- Skrek set up a basin to distill the ichor from the river water near a human watermill. The ichor is the blood of Demogorgon (false, but it's what the goblins believe).
- Skrek has been giving the blessings of Demogorgon to the tribe. This bestows the wasp-like 'gifts.' Only the most loyal and strongest are selected.
- Drib was sent to attack Westfir to capture more sacrifices for Demogorgon and food for the wasps.

WHEN THE HIVE IS DESTROYED

With a whoosh, the hive collapses into itself. A number of giant wasps burst from the interior, crashing to the ground outside. The goblins who remain alive come out from hiding and flee the area.

You see a massive wasp take flight. It is far larger and more savage looking than any of the other wasps. Its pulsing, red eyes focus on you. Atop the great wasp is a goblin who also possesses strangely glowing eyes throbbing in sync with the wasp's visage.

This is Skrek, a **goblin cult fanatic**, riding the **queen giant wasp** (treat as a medium-sized **spined devil** with maximum hit points) and her three surviving **giant wasps**. If the queen wasp is slain, the remaining giant wasps disengage and flee.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **giant wasps**.
- **Weak:** Remove one **giant wasp**.
- **Strong:** Add one **giant wasp**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **giant wasps**.

RESTING NEAR THE HIVE

If the goblins are eliminated, it may be possible to take a short rest in the goblin camp before assaulting the hive. If the adventurers are severely weakened, allow them a short rest. Otherwise, there is a 50 percent chance that 1d4 hostile **giant wasps** exit the hive or return to the area during the short rest.

RUNNING THIS COMBAT

Skrek, Cultist of Demogorgon. Skrek rides the mighty wasp queen and casts spell from her back. He will attempt to keep her healed (he has *cure wounds* instead of *inflict wounds*) and cast protection spells on her (*shield of faith*) while attacking with a bonus action using *spiritual weapon*.

The Cornflower Hive. The goal is to destroy the hive, not slay every wasp. There are potentially dozens of giant wasps within the giant hive, so it's impossible to slay them all without destroying the hive.

Cunning Plans. It is possible to destroy the hive from a distance, avoiding combat. Use DM discretion, but allow plans that reduce direct conflict.



PART 5. VESHJE'S LABORATORY

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Veshje is deceased, slain by the explosion that damaged his device and left the planar window cracked open.

The lab resembles a grain-mill from the outside, but the interior contains strange alchemical equipment and an arcane circle. It once contained many comfortable and expensive furnishings, gifts from Crucia to keep the artificer living well. Now, though, everything is ruined, damaged in the destruction. Veshje kept extensive gardens inside to grow rare herbs and plants for his work. Now they are overgrown and unruly.

GENERAL FEATURES

Terrain. The interior was once richly furnished with carpets, cushioned chairs, and a fancy pot-bellied stove of dwarven make. Now the place is in disarray with everything soaked and burnt. The interior gardens are overgrown. They provide partial cover against ranged attacks.

Light. Inside the laboratory, the alchemical fluids glow with scarlet-hued light unless destroyed. The light makes the entire laboratory dimly lit.

Smells and Sounds. Even from outside, it smells acrid. The scent burns the nostrils, and creatures with keen senses try to avoid going near the building.

C1. OUTSIDE THE LABORATORY

Veshje's laboratory is housed in an old grain mill that stands on the bank of the Westfork (**Area C** on the Wretched Knife map). Read or paraphrase the following when the adventurers investigate the mill:

The walls of the mill are covered in goblin graffiti and hanging charms made from bones and sticks. The door to the laboratory is closed and piles of crudely made wards and offerings are set before it.

If adventurers speak Goblin or have the ability to understand any language, the graffiti and symbols are praises to Demogorgon and the wasps.

On a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, adventurers notice a steady stream of pungent red ichor seeping from the mill's foundation. The ichor then drains into the Westfork. The source of the pollution is within.

C2. VESHJE'S LABORATORY

The place is in complete disarray. Shattered glass and scorch marks mar the stone floor. Several upturned tables are pushed away from the center of the room, pressed against the wall. The position of debris indicates an explosion rocked the mill from within.

In the center of the room is a circle of carefully scripted runes. Some of the runes are

breached. From the circle, a scarlet ichor oozes from the ruptured symbols, seeping into cracks in the stone, seeping towards the river.

Next to the circle is a strange series of alembics and pipes damaged in the explosion.

In the east and north corners are what appears to have been interior gardens, but now they are thick and overgrown, reaching to the ceiling and climbing up the walls.

Inside the laboratory are two **vine blights** and a **bramble blight** (treat as a **scarecrow** with the plant creature type) hidden in the interior gardens. They have a passive Perception of 12. The plant-monsters are animated because of the magical pollution.

The blights wait for the heroes to start investigating or to come close before attacking.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **vine blights**. Add one **twig blight**.
- **Weak:** Remove two **vine blights**. Add four **twig blights**.
- **Strong:** Remove one **bramble blight** and two **vine blights**. Add one **shambling mound**.
- **Very Strong:** Remove one **bramble blight**. Add one **shambling mound**.

VESHJE'S CORPSE

When the interior of the mill is searched, **Veshje's skeletal corpse is found lodged under a workbench**. The half-elf artificer's remains are badly burnt. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that massive magical energies must have caused this, and he probably died at least five months ago.

LAB NOTES AND LETTERS

If the overturned workbenches are investigated, the adventurers find **a pair of laboratory journals** written in Common, a letter, and many artificer schematics. The journals have **sketches and notes about the alchemy lab and magical circle**. There is also **a large vellum map of the Outer Planes** with marks denoting searches and specific locations in fine detail.

On the workbench is a partially written letter. Only a page long, it is a will of sorts. Readers learn the following information:

- It is addressed to anyone who might find it. The letter details that Veshje was part of adventuring group called the Knights of the Spiral Crown.
- Veshje talks about how his actions caused a *plane shift* trap on a mythal to consume several of his friends. The laboratory's original purpose was to find his lost companions, who he considers family. He wasn't close to many, but he loved his adventuring band.

- Veshje mentions that the magical devices and circle have been searching the Outer Planes for signs of his lost friends for years.
- One of the journals reveals Veshje was depressed and desperate, and started to search several of the more dangerous planes.
- There is also a strange book with indecipherable script. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check reveals this to be Zhentarim code book to enable communication within the Black Network. That is all the book is by itself. Anyone who understands Thieves Cant, or who is a Zhentarim member, makes this check with advantage.
- There is a notepad with a list of needed materials, mostly rare arcane components and materials, such as mithral tubes, star sapphire dust, and obsidian spheres.

Give the adventurers **Player Handout 4**, in the Appendix.

THE ALCHEMICAL PROCESS

By spending 1 minute and making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Arcana) check, an adventurer begins to understand the alchemical device beside the portal. The arcane device was intended to power portals once opened and create a barrier between planes. A steady stream of Abyssal energy is pouring out of the magic circle and damaged barrier, condensing into a red ichor. *Detect magic* shows transmutation magic radiating from the viscous liquid.

Repairing the alchemical setup will stop the Abyssal condensation and stop the Westfork from being polluted. It can also trigger an unstable reaction from the unintended buildup as the device tries to deal with the unusual amount of planar energy and mend the barrier, detailed below.

TRAP. UNSTABLE REACTION

Magical Trap (Levels 1-4 dangerous threat)

Interfering with or destroying Veshje's alchemical setup causes an explosion of Abyssal energy.

Trigger. Meddling with the laboratory's setup without deactivating the Abyssal circle beforehand triggers the trap.

Effect. All creatures within the grain mill must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 17 (5d6) force damage from a wave of energy. On a successful saving throw, they take half damage.

Countermeasures. Disarming the trap requires 1 minute and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Arcana) check. Proficiency with alchemist's supplies gives advantage on this check.

THE ABYSSAL CIRCLE

The magic runes are repeated in two languages, Abyssal and Draconic. The sigils create a pinhole portal into the Abyssal plane, and the planar energy streams into the alchemical laboratory. *Detect magic* shows the circle itself is woven with abjuration and divination magic while the energy radiating from the rift is transmutation energy.

By spending 1 minute and making a successful DC 15

Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check, an adventurer grasps the purpose of the magic circle, and identifies the rune that provides arcane stability to the circle.

There is one specific rune that safely seals the extra-planar hole and stops the energy. If the adventurers erase or modify other runes, the energy flow ceases, but the circle emits a blast of energy.

TRAP. ABYSSAL EXPLOSION

Magical Trap (Levels 1-4 dangerous threat)

Incorrectly altering or destroying the Abyssal circle triggers an explosive blast.

Trigger. Incorrectly erasing the runes triggers the trap.

Effect. All creatures within the grain mill must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 17 (5d6) force damage from a wave of energy. On a successful saving throw, they take half damage.

Countermeasures. Identifying the correct rune to erase requires 1 minute and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check. Adventurers that can read and write Abyssal or Draconic have advantage on this check.

If the adventurers stop the alchemical pollution without triggering an explosion, **award each character 150 experience points.**

TREASURE

Amongst the workbench papers and tools is a **healer's kit**. If the alchemical process is stopped without activating the unstable reaction, three vials of **alchemist's fire** can be garnered from the alchemist's laboratory.

TOUGH FIGHT

Shambling Mound. The Strong and Very Strong adjustments for combat can lead to a challenging fight. Be cautious using the shambling mound's Engulf attack, as it can be lethal to lower level adventurers.

AFTER THE BATTLE

If the adventurers are victorious, go to Part 6, the conclusion.

PART 6. CONCLUSION

Estimated Duration: 10 minutes

If the Cornflower Hive and Wretched Knife goblins are successfully overcome, the adventurers are rewarded with a grand village celebration once they return to Westfir. Between dances, Crucia presents payment, a pouch of 500 sp and 200 gp.

As well, all the adventurers earn the **Goblinslayer** story award.

Read the following to the adventurers:

When you return to Westfir, you see Crucia yelling at the farmers. The repairs to the town are coming along quickly and those who fled have gotten word that it is safe to return. When you speak with her, she hides her deep sorrow at Veshje's fate behind a wry smile and a sardonic joke.

"Well, look at what the goblin dragged in." She nods at you. "You did it. Westfir is safe. The people can return home. The farmers can go back to scratching and picking at that dirt they love so much. And the Mulmaster refugees are welcome here. We can absolutely use the help. We have the food and we have been meaning to make large expansions to your humble hamlet.

"This is all thanks to you, you know." When it seems like she might become teary eyed, she laughs, "Not bad for a group of wannabe do-gooders. Not bad. But when I was younger, I would have done better." She winks at you. "Well, I need to get back to work. Please, know that you are welcome here. Always."

If the adventurers fail, Westfir is ransacked by the Wretched Knife tribe and falls under Demogorgon's control. The villagers flee, and the ruins becomes a haven for goblins and cultists.

REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

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

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Giant Wasp	100
Goblin	50
Goblin Boss	200
Goblin Cult Fanatic (Skrek)	450
Needle Blight	50
Nereid (Umfula)	0
Scarecrow (Bramble Blight)	200
Shambling Mound	1,800
Twig Blight	25
Vine Blight	100

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Destroying the Cornflower Hive	150
Stopping the pollution	150
Disarming the magical circle	150

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 900 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 1,200 **experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Crucia's reward	250
Drib and the goblin raiders	20
Shrine to Demogorgon	30

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

JAVELIN OF LIGHTNING

Weapon (javelin), uncommon

This javelin is a magic weapon. When you hurl it and speak its command word, it transforms into a bolt of lightning, forming a line 5 feet wide that extends out from you to a target within 120 feet. Each creature in the line excluding you and the target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 lightning damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The lightning bolt turns back into a javelin when it reaches the target. Make a ranged weapon attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes damage from the javelin plus 4d6 lightning damage.

The javelin's property can't be used again until the next dawn. In the meantime, the javelin can still be used as a magic weapon.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

This item can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

POTION OF WATER BREATHING

Potion, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

SCROLL OF BLESS

Scroll, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Goblinslayer. You rescued the people of Westfir and stopped the goblin menace. You may stay in the village of Westfir for up to 10 days at a wealthy lifestyle with no cost. You may also purchase non-magical adventuring gear (excluding mounts, weapons or armor) for 25% off the listed retail price in the PHB during one of these downtime days. More information can be found in **Player Handout 5**.

RENOWN

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Zhentarim faction members earn **one additional renown** for recovering Veshje's notes.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG).

APPENDIX. DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

Cornflower Hive (KORN-flaawer HIEV). A hive of giant wasps near Westfir. Controlled by Skrek the goblin fanatic. These wasps are normal cornflower wasps corrupted by Abyssal pollution.

Crucia (CREW-she-UH). An old half-elf mercenary and veteran of the Battle of Zhentil Keep. Crucia keeps a low profile and is the de facto leader of Westfir. Her full name is Crucia Cromhel.

Drib (DRIB). The previous goblin chief of the Wretched Knife, overthrown during Skrek's usurpation. Now second in command after Skrek. He fears Skrek and his wasps, and now follows Skrek's orders.

Skrek (SK-rek). Goblin cult fanatic of Demogorgon. He usurped control of the Wretched Knife tribe from Drib. Skrek is wasp-like, corrupted by the Abyssal taint flowing from Veshje's laboratory.

Veshje (VESH-hay). A deceased half-elf artificer. His laboratory is tainting the Westfork river, which waters Westfir's fields. Veshje sought to rescue three of his companions from the Outer Planes, but instead died after accidentally opening a portal to the Abyss.

Westfir (WEST-fer). A farming village near Mulmaster. Cozy and simple, mostly notable for giant crops. Westfir's crops are due to the taint flowing from Veshje's laboratory.

Westfork (WEST-fork). A magically polluted river that starts in the Earthspur Mountains and flows into the Moonsea. The Westfork River passes by an old lumber mill. This mill discharges Abyssal pollution into the water, where it feeds the crops downstream.

Wretched Knife (RECH-id NI-ev). A goblin tribe terrorizing Westfir. The Wretched Knife warriors ride giant wasps. Many of the goblins bear the mark of Demogorgon, and have wasp-like traits, including chitin, bulging/compound eyes, or antennae.

APPENDIX. UNUSUAL MONSTER/ NPC STATISTICS

GIANT WASP QUEEN (SPINED DEVIL)

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 35 (5d6+5)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 12 feet, passive Perception 12
Languages Infernal, Telepathy 120 feet
Challenge 2 (450 XP)
Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the devil's darkvision.
Flyby. The devil doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.
Limited Spines. The devil has twelve tail spines. Used spines regrow by the time the devil finishes a long rest.
Magic Resistance. The devil has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

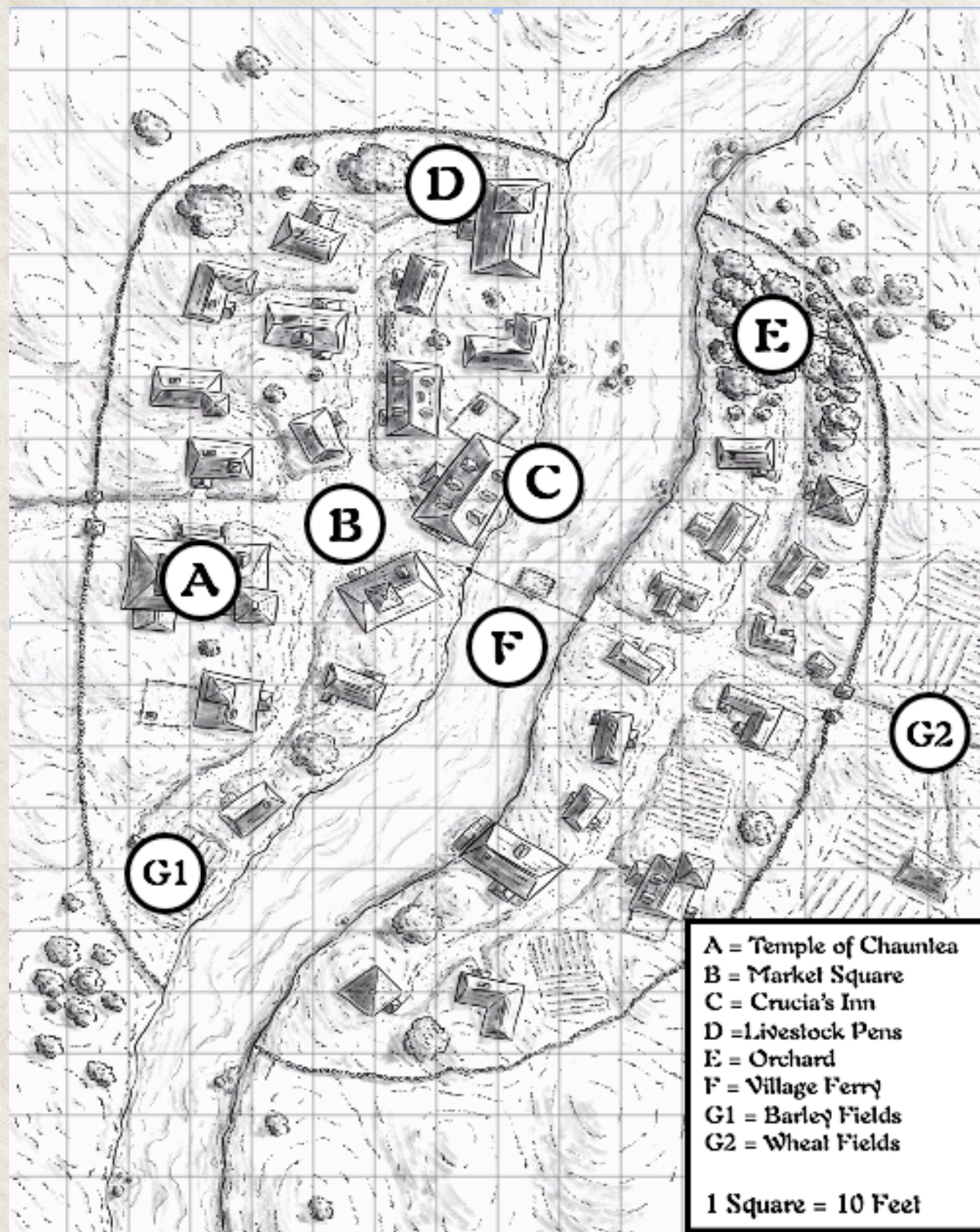
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The devil makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger or two with its tail spines.
Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) slashing damage.
Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.
Tail Spine. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/80 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

The giant wasp queen is treated as a medium-sized spined devil with maximum hit points. The spined devil's fork is treated as a non-poisonous stinger.

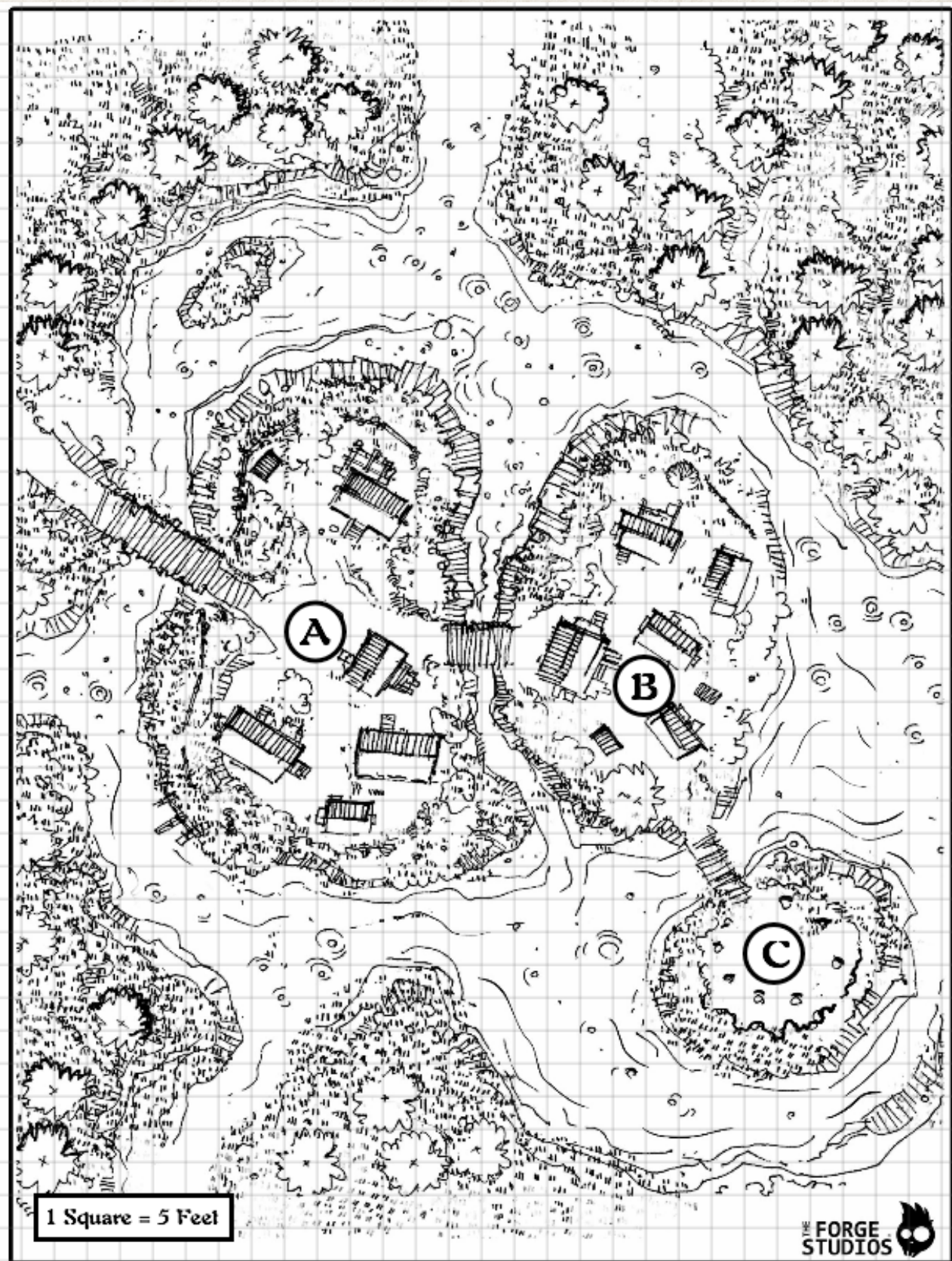
MAP. WESTFIR VILLAGE

(1 SQUARE = 10 FEET)



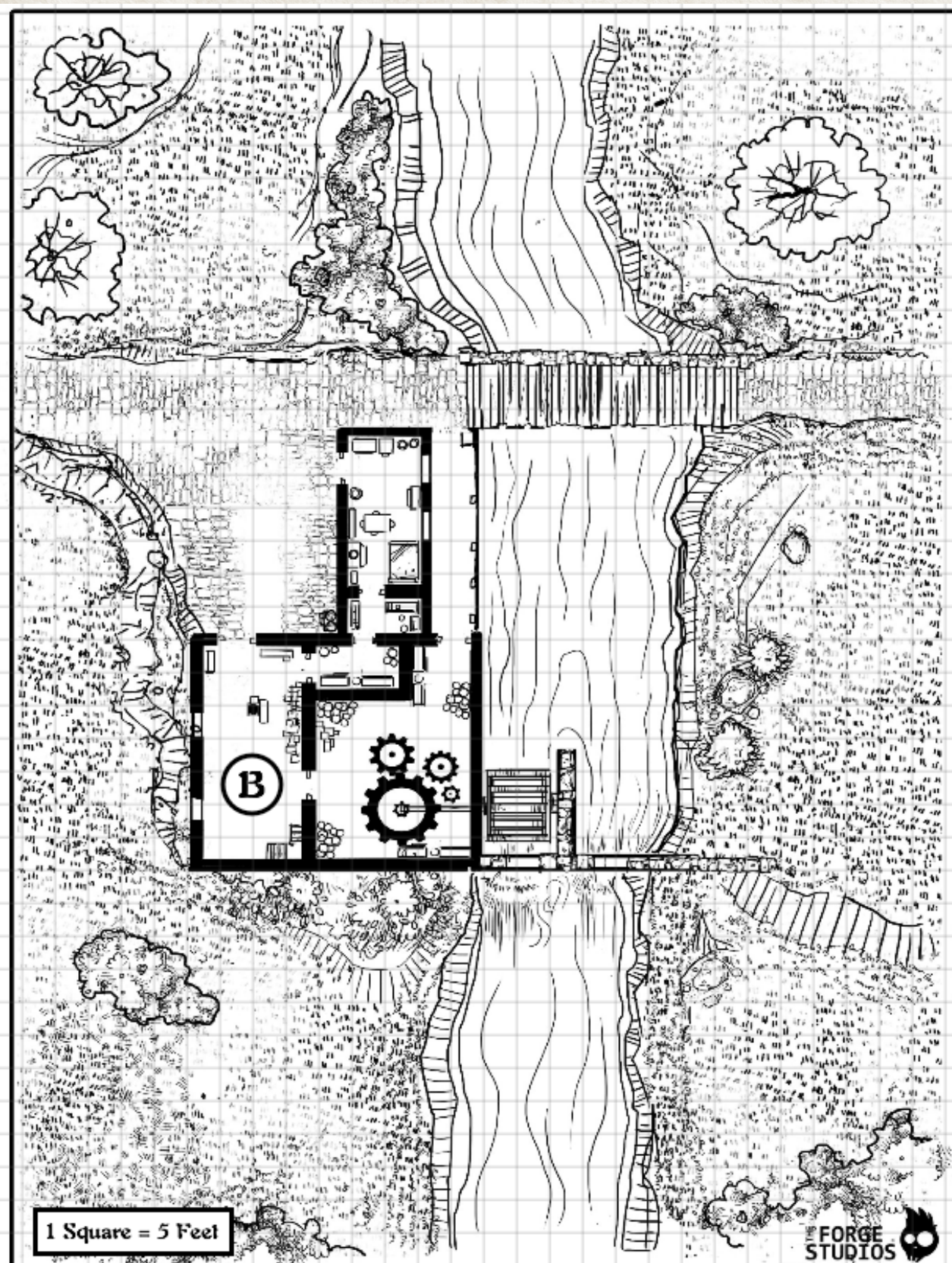
MAP. WRETCHED KNIFE CAMP

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)



MAP. THE MILL

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)



PLAYER HANDOUT 1. COAT OF ARMS



PLAYER HANDOUT 2. VILLAGE FORTIFICATION

For every success during Westfir's siege, the adventurers can implement one fortification action from the list below:

FORTIFICATION ACTIONS (PLAYER HANDOUT 2)

#	FORTIFICATION ACTION	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
1	Arm and Train the Villagers with Javelins	Arm villagers with make-shift javelins to make them more effective.	Reduces attackers, both on the ground and in the air.
2	Reinforce the Walls	Reinforce the palisade wall with carts.	Harder to breach palisades.
3	Evacuate Remaining Civilians to a Fortified Temple	Evacuate the children, sick, and elderly to the Temple of Chauntea.	Move all noncombatants to a stone temple.
4	Construct a Field Hospital	Set up a make-shift hospital.	Gives a healing ability.
5	Fire Proof the Village and Construct Ramparts	Fire proofs buildings and setups ladders and walkways through the village.	Protects Westfir from fires and allows adventurers to move from roof to roof with ease.
6	Construct Sniper's Nest	Several seasoned hunters are placed atop Crucia's inn.	Reduces aerial attackers and slows goblins.
7	Boost Morale	A great show of skill or inspiring speech boosts morale.	Reduces infantry attackers.
8	Prepare a Smoke Screen	Build oil pits, creating smoke. The village is lightly obscured.	Reduces aerial attackers, gives disadvantage to attacks from aerial creatures.
9	Setup Traps	Dig spiked pits.	Reduces infantry attackers.
10	Construct Watchtowers	Place scouts on watchtowers.	Grants advantage on initiative checks.

PLAYER HANDOUT 3. CRUCIA’S MAP



PLAYER HANDOUT 4. VESHJE'S LETTER

Many years I have been looking. I thought to give up. I can't. I won't.

How can I? They're lost because of what I did.

The others will never forgive me. She will never forgive.

I must look.

I don't have the courage to face them.

But, if something should happen to me during my search, I hope this, one day, will be found and brought to them, to the Knights of the Spiral Crown in Suzail.

My name is Veshje Bel'Erin and I was part of an adventuring group, friends with some of the most incredible and brave people I have ever, or will ever, meet.

Three of them vanished—four of them died—because of me, because of what I did.

I watched them get swallowed by a portal conjured by an old and dying mythal I tampered with in that cursed elven ruin.

I killed them.

Tora Allowyn

Cyril Kay

Bradigan Dan

They're dead because of me.

And I search.

For them. For my salvation.

V

PLAYER HANDOUT 5. STORY

AWARD

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

GOBLINSLAYER

You rescued the people of Westfir and stopped the goblin menace. You may stay in the village of Westfir for up to 10 days at a wealthy lifestyle with no cost. You may also purchase non-magical adventuring gear (excluding mounts, weapons or armor) for 25% off the listed retail price in the PHB during one of those downtime days.

PLAYER HANDOUT 6. MAGIC ITEM

During this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

JAVELIN OF LIGHTNING

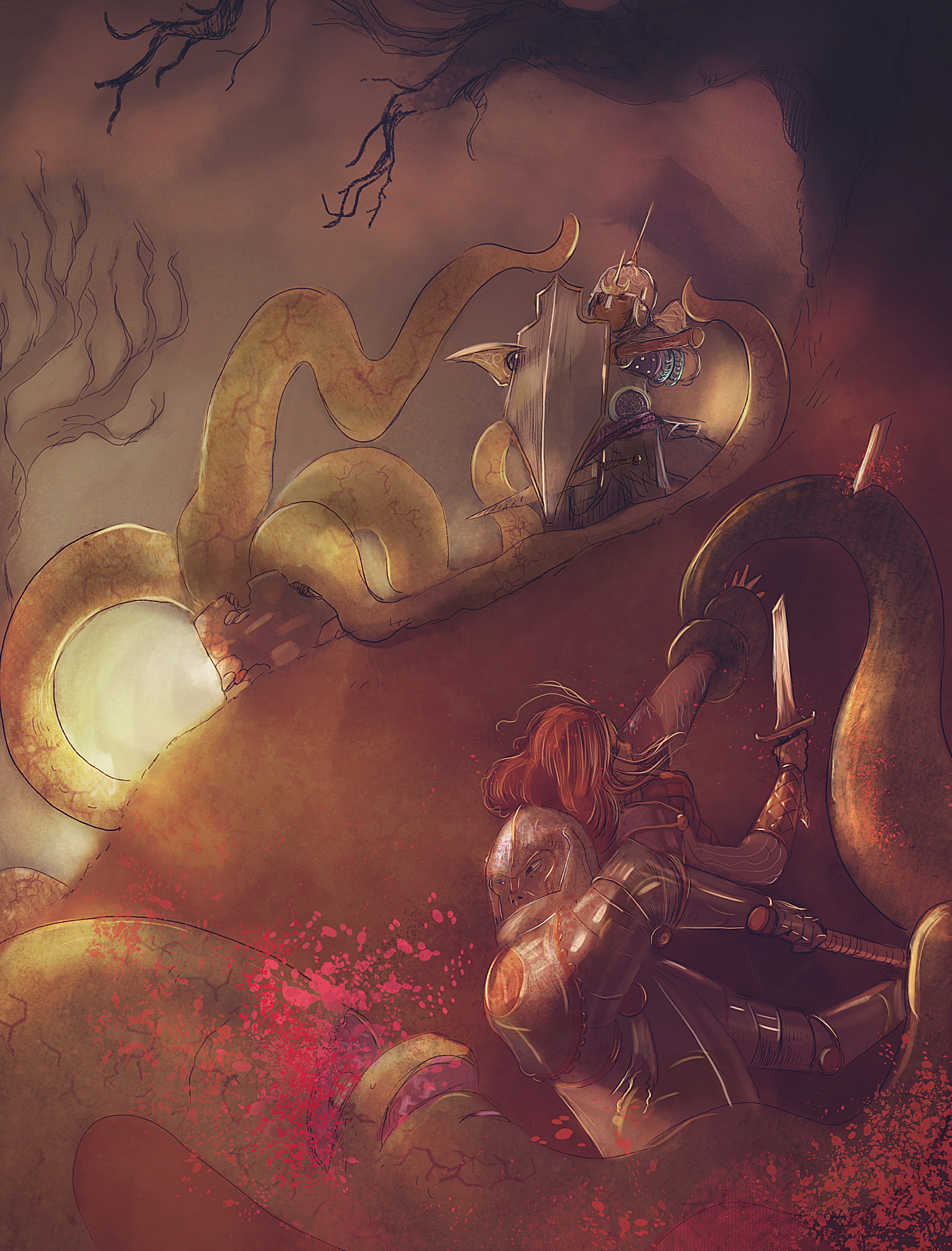
Weapon (javelin), uncommon

The shaft of this javelin is crafted from fine ash wood while the rune-etched point is shining copper. The air smells faintly of ozone when it is thrown.

This javelin is a magic weapon. When you hurl it and speak its command word, it transforms into a bolt of lightning, forming a line 5 feet wide that extends out from you to a target within 120 feet. Each creature in the line excluding you and the target must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 lightning damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. The lightning bolt turns back into a javelin when it reaches the target. Make a ranged weapon attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes damage from the javelin plus 4d6 lightning damage.

The javelin's property can't be used again until the next dawn. In the meantime, the javelin can still be used as a magic weapon.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.





The White Well

The Gommurg Clan of hill dwarves rarely deal with outsiders. The dwarf clan's isolation has gifted them with great skill and wealth. Unfortunately, their pride has made them vulnerable to an ancient power confined centuries ago. An exile has magically foretold the clan's destruction. This diviner is the only one who knows how to stop the evil threatening the Gommurg.

A Two-Hour Adventure for 1st-4th Level Characters



IAM PACE & WILLIAM MURAKAMI-BRUNDAGE

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE WHITE WELL, A D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE ADVENTURE, part of the official D&D Adventurers League organized play system.

This adventure is designed for three to seven 1st–4th level characters, and is optimized for five 3rd-level characters. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place in the foothills of the Galeana Mountains, near Hulburg, in the Moonsea region. It is designed to take 120 minutes to play.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

THE HUNGER OF HADAR CANNOT BE SATIATED. Its endless reach stretches out across the void. Faerûn and beyond are merely feasts before its eyeless, formless spawn.

— Elminster, “Old Ones and Where to Find Them”

In the foothills of the Galeana Mountains lives the Gommurg, a reclusive clan of hill dwarves. The Gommurg are insular, even for dwarf-folk, and marry predominantly within their own borders, though they occasionally wed foreign dwarves of noble blood to maintain healthy lines, diplomatic neutrality, and trade pacts. The Gommurg rarely deal with outsiders, treating all others with aloof suspicion. Their extreme isolation has gifted them with long years of peace, great wealth, and prowess forging and carving metal and stone.

However, the Gommurg’s fortune is tied to a sinister and alien object. Within the clan’s territory is the White Well, a cursed pit dedicated to Hadar of the Endless Hunger. The same power infusing the Well has given birth to rich veins of adamantine in the rocky hills, which attracted the Gommurg centuries ago to build their homes near the vile edifice and mine the deposits. During all those long years of prosperity, the Well has sat undisturbed and silent except for one tragic event.

Then fifty years ago, a young dwarf who showed too much interest in the lands outside the clan began to condemn Gommurg xenophobia and their superstition of the White Well. To dispel the clan’s fear of the Well, the dwarf attempted to open it but was caught and banished.

This exile now lives by the name of Lumin Fetterbond and has been studying divination magic within the temple of Azuth during the decades since his banishment. He has become a master of the divine magical arts as well as a scholar of many languages and cultures, pursuing the desire that saw him forced from his home and family those many years ago.

Using his divinations, Lumin has determined that the destruction of the Gommurg is imminent. Even in exile, he still deeply cares for his clan and family. Lumin hires the adventurers to intervene and save his people. Lumin’s powerful divinations predict the Well will be breached in

two days during a celebration of the Highharvest, so all haste must be made to the village, either to warn them or save them.

What Lumin can’t see is how the Well will be opened. Nasreet Olim, Lumin’s arcane nemesis and rival, has hired the Dun Bregan Mòrag, a band of orog mercenaries infamous for their brutal loyalty to the highest bidder. Under her arcane direction, a detachment of orogs plan to infiltrate the Gommurg territory and attack the White Well, unsealing it and unleashing whatever waits inside on the unsuspecting dwarves.

The players arrive the same day the raid occurs but hours after the White Well has been opened. The orogs have been devoured by the manifestations of Hadar’s Hunger, terrible oozes, that slept within the Well. During the day of the moot, the dwarves remain largely unaware of the peril they now face because the guards responsible for protecting the Well were slain before they could alert the clan. One dying guard made it to the entrance of Gommurg territory to leave a message in desperate attempt to warn anyone. His partner was supposed to alert the clan but never made it.

Now, the village is threatened by far worse than orogs. These foes are stranger and more dangerous, merciless and implacable. They do not sleep nor think, but move ever onward propelled by an unending compulsion to consume. The players are faced with the dual task of saving the villagers and destroying the oozes. Once the village is saved, the adventurers must travel to the White Well and reseal it. After the Well is shut, Lumin sends a letter of gratitude to the party and a tidy sum while the clan rewards them with an *adamantine chain shirt*.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Magical Allies. If the party contains an arcane caster, Lumin sends the mage or sorcerer an invitation. He instructs the group to meet him at the market square at high sun, and then invites them to his manor nearby.

Thick Blood. If the group contains a dwarf, Lumin sends a mundane messenger with a note in Dwarvish to meet at his abode, a palatial manor near the market square of Hulburg.

Harper Agent. If the group contains a Harper, Lumin sends a message beseeching the agent and calling upon his or her reputation as a champion of good deeds. In return, Lumin offers in return important information and resources to both the adventurer and organization.

Emerald Enclave. Lumin sends an animal with a message explaining that events are transpiring that threaten not only an entire clan of dwarves by also all the wilderness around the disaster that will occur.

Order of the Gauntlet or a paladin or a cleric in the party. Lumin sends a mundane messenger with a secured note in a lockbox explaining that a great and ancient evil will be released that will threaten many lives, including Lumin’s family.

The Stars are Aligned. Otherwise, it can be assumed Lumin portends that the adventurers will be able to cause his desired course of action, and sends them either a mag-

ical message or a parchment note, delivered to whatever lodgings the adventurers are staying in.

Just There for the Party. Additionally, the character or group could just be coming to Hulburg to enjoy the celebrations when Lumin divines their importance and prowess and contacts them with an invitation to stay at his manor for the festival, if they help him with something incredibly important.

PART 1. FETTERBOND CALLS

Once the adventurers are introduced to Fetterbond, they travel to his manor home near Hulburg's bustling market. The Highharvesttide celebration is being prepared and is just a few days away starting on the 30th of Eleint. All mundane goods and *potions of healing* are available for purchase because of the market.

Hulburg is a bustle of preparation and excitement for the yearly celebration of the harvest. The holiday also marks a time of travel before winter sets in. Along the streets, many stalls and booths are selling local and exotic goods, and every corner seems to hold a group of performers. While busy and full of energy, the place is peaceful.

Entering Fetterbond's manor, you notice that his home is ornately decorated. A silver-rimmed mirror covers one foyer wall, and plush cushions and chairs fill his lounge.

Fetterbond, a middle-aged dwarf in embroidered robes, offers a carafe of mulled mead and smiles wanly. "I've got an errand that needs some attention. Have you ever heard of the White Well?"

Lumin is a skilled divine servant of Azuth, the god of knowledge, and often knows things about people. Feel free to play up how Lumin knows about past adventures, old grudges, valuable treasures, and general character background traits with little effort. Part of this is Lumin's insight into people, but the larger factor is his divine magic.

Lumin has a desperate timeline, and is open about the mission. He explains the peculiarities of the Gommurg clan, his exile, his magical studies, and that the White Well will be opened in the future. He also explains that the White Well is a danger to his people and all the other people who live around the Galena Mountains. Lumin relates the following information about the White Well:

- The White Well will be unsealed by Nasreet Olim, Lumin's wizard nemesis. Nasreet is a powerful halfling diviner, and has harbored a grudge against Lumin for more than twenty years. Lumin thwarted Nasreet from obtaining a valuable earth elemental spellbook two decades ago. This is the same elemental codex as the one featured in DDEX02-16, *Boltmeister's Book*.

- The Well contains evil, and Lumin has assessed that something vile will spew forth if unsealed. Lumin suspects that the Well has a fiendish origin, but the actual source of the Well's power is unknown. Its alien nature inhibits his divinations.

- The Gommurg hill dwarf clan resides in the foothills near the White Well. This clan is reclusive, and rarely friendly towards outsiders. They are skilled craftspeople, but rarely trade with non-dwarves. As guardians of the Well and the region's adamantine ore, they consider outsiders to be problematic, and typically refer to non-dwarves as

"Strange Folk," or "Other Folk."

- Lumin was exiled a half-century ago from the clan for wanting to serve Azuth and study the outside world. Lumin was also ostracized because of his brash nature and devotion to a foreign deity. Lumin caused strife and havoc in the village, riled its elders, and attempted to open the White Well. His troublesome nature meant that the clan made the difficult decision to oust him forever.

- The adventurers must pass through the Gommurg village to reach the White Well. Per Lumin's augury, if the Well is not sealed within four days, the village will be destroyed. The village is two days from Hulburg, and the Well is one day beyond the village.

- The Well will be opened near a seasonal feast time that lasts several days celebrating the Highharvesttide. Much of the clan is gathering in Gommurghall, the feast-hall. The clan elders are probably unaware of the imminent danger from the Well. They are vigilant, but the Well has not been opened in centuries, and in that faded past, it cost the clan dearly to reseal it.

Fetterbond offers a payment of 250 gp. Payment will be rendered once the adventurers return and Fetterbond can use his scrying to ascertain that the White Well has been sealed. Lumin is willing to pay 100 gp up front, but only if the adventurers demand it.

To assist, Fetterbond offers to give a map of the area, drawn from his divinations over the last tenday. He also gives the adventurers two *potions of healing*.

He sends the adventurers off with the following note, "Make sure to seal the Well before four sunrises pass. My magic shows that the omens turn stark and foul after that. Take this map, and may your travels be auspicious!"

ROLEPLAYING LUMIN FETTERBOND

Lumin is an advanced servant of Azuth and a diviner. At the same time, he senses immense danger from Nasreet, his nemesis, and fears that this is a delaying action.

As a middle-aged dwarf, Lumin is 125 years old. He still has the strong bones and beard of dwarf-kind, but has recently become slower of body. Intellectually, he has an excellent memory and deep knowledge about divining.

Lumin has several political allies that depend on his portents and auguries. He is well invested in Hulburg's cultural scene, but cares deeply for the Gommurg who exiled him decades ago.

Quote: "I did it for my clan. I did it for the Gommurg. I fear I have failed them."

THE TRUTH ABOUT LUMIN FETTERBOND

Lumin Fetterbond was once a member of the Gommurg, and understands the clan is in dire need. Fetterbond suspects that the Well contains a problem of fiendish origin. His augury shows a seething mass overtaking the village. At the same time, Lumin is furious with Nasreet. It should be obvious there is a potential magical war brewing between these two powerful diviners.

Fetterbond has the best interest of his people at heart, but is unable to assist directly. Lumin assumes Nasreet will

open the Well as a trap or diversion, and so he is preparing to take the next steps against her. Keep in mind that these spell casters have been playing a long, slow game with pawns and allies for decades, and have embroiled many actors over tens of years.

Nasreet is a staunch Zhentarim member and ally of Xanathar, the beholder overlord of Waterdeep's black markets and thieves' guild. Her family has long served the Waterdeep nobles in one service or another.

Lumin struggles to be ethical with his divinations, while Nasreet often sells her discoveries to the highest bidder. To Nasreet, the future is just business, and Lumin is an opponent to be nullified or eliminated. Nasreet is prevented by measures and countermeasures, such as Lumin's foretelling and his protection by the Temple of Azuth. The same is true for Nasreet. Her powerful sponsors and alliances make her a difficult target.

Ultimately, Lumin wants to protect his people and magical prowess. He lives a glorious life as one who can tell the future. He fears that Nasreet is ahead of him tactically, but is unable to scry and discover what she is planning. He knows that Nasreet owns an *amulet of proof against detection and location*, and would love dearly for this amulet to fall into his hands or be otherwise disposed of. At the same time, this blind spot makes Lumin wary, so he is slow to act.

PART 2. THE GOMMURG LANDS

Finding the Gommurg territory is relatively easy using Fetterbond's map. For story continuity, it can be assumed that the adventurers arrive the evening of the second day after departing Hulburg, regardless of the travel method.

Adventurers who make a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Nature) check or have a Passive Perception of 13 or higher spot markings along the rugged trail. The markings are in Dwarvish script, stating: "All boots towards Gommurghall." Another set of hastily painted marks reads: "The Well is open. Flee if you must; fight if you can."

A dead dwarf guard lies near the boulder. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check shows the guard has been stabbed by a bladed weapon, but there are also strange acid burns marring the dwarf's armor.

Dwarvish runes are written on a pair of large stones. A set of runes is scrawled onto one boulder in Dwarvish script. More Dwarvish runes, roughly marked in charcoal or ash, adorn another boulder.

A dead dwarf is sprawled across the rocks nearby. The air is rank with a stench like brimstone.

Fetterbond's map contains two noteworthy landmarks, Gommurghall (the moot hall of the clan) and the White Well. The Well lies beyond the village by a day's travel, and Fetterbond made it clear that the adventurers should stop by the village and introduce themselves to the clan elders. The clan is reclusive, but not hostile.

The lands of the Gommurg span 30 miles from the main village, but the dwarves often range farther afield to graze livestock, gather raw resources, or trade goods. The Well was opened with the holiday approaching and the dwarves distracted.

Much of the clan is gathering in Gommurghall and is unaware the guards have been slain and the Well is opened. The guards sent to relieve the night shift were killed by the oozes and undead. Now everyone just assumes the night shift is safely asleep, resting before the celebration, so not seeing them is normal.

GENERAL FEATURES

The foothills of the Galena Mountains have the following general features:

Terrain. Slow rolling hills with occasional small streams and light scrub trees.

Light. There is bright sunlight during the day, and the moon shines through the clouds at night.

Visibility. The hills allow decent visibility, especially once the adventurers are at a higher elevation. At dawn and dusk there is fog that lightly obscures anything beyond 60 feet.

Sounds. Songbirds, insects, and barking squirrels provide a constant noise. The hills grant advantage to Wisdom (Perception) checks made by hill dwarves.

Smells. The smell of mist, pine, and cedar dominates the hills.

THE GOMMURG VILLAGE

The Gommurg hills are dotted with boulders, shrubs, and hardwood trees. There is one main arterial path that leads to the village. Read the following if the adventurers succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check:

The well-traveled path leads in the direction of Gommurghall, the moot-hall of the clan. Numerous small but wide boot prints mark the path to the meeting hall. The Gommurg seem to be traveling hastily.

Alongside the smaller prints are those of something much larger and heavier. These other marks are at least human-sized.

The main trail leads directly to the front of Gommurghall, where the village elders were preparing for their seasonal feast before the ooze attack. Now, the clan is forced to defend their moot hall, the feast a distant memory.

APPROACHING GOMMURGHALL

Gommurghall is the central meeting place for the clan. Because of the feasts associated with the harvest festival, most of the clan has gathered here to share stories and prepare for their celebration. At the same time, the oozes from the Well have come to the village. The adventurers arrive just after the initial ooze attack. By acting quickly, the villagers can be saved and the oozes thwarted.

The elders did not know exactly what is inside the White Well beyond its association with Hadar and its merciless, ravenous nature. The Gommurg's ancestral tasks include ensuring that the Well is sealed and that Hadar's power and influence cannot be unleashed. Unfortunately, Nasreet's orog mercenaries snuck past the Gommurg guards using her guidance and, again using her divinations, breached the vault protecting the Well and unsealed it during the dark hours of the morning on the first day of the moot. The guards and patrol for the White Well were slain in secret by the mercenaries, who were in turn slain by the oozes from the Well. The rest of the clan is unaware of the creeping danger approaching their moot.

It is getting near dusk when the adventurers arrive at Gommurghall. The elders had been readying the moot when the oozes attacked:

The moot-hall is a grand structure wrought of what appears to be seamless stone, yet it is not. The blocks comprising the structure are carved with such keenness as to fit together without lines or gaps, and decorating the walls are great images of gods and heroes, set with carved quartz and polished bronze.

The scent of acid and rot fills the air near Gommurghall. A group of dwarf warriors are embroiled in a battle against a seemingly endless sea of roiling, green ooze. As you watch, one guard dwarf is overwhelmed. The ooze sweeps

him off his feet, and he vanishes into its depths.

Within the oozing mass, the dwarf's face appears beneath the surface. A hand reaches out towards you, and then collapses into a bubbling mass of flesh, blood, and bone. With a silent scream, the dwarf disappears again.

The village is under attack by a mass of two **ochre jellies** from the White Well.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak.** Remove all the **ochre jellies**. Add three **grey ooze**.
- **Weak.** Remove all the **ochre jellies**. Add five **grey ooze**.
- **Strong.** No change.
- **Very Strong.** Add two **ochre jellies**.

If any of the adventurers speak Dwarvish, they can understand the dwarves, whose Dwarvish dialect is heavily accented. Otherwise, the dwarves speak an archaic Common that is hard to understand.

Complications add jeopardy to the Gommurg Village Encounter, and place the villagers in danger for the first three rounds of combat. Use the following instructions to resolve:

- Use the Complications table to determine the situation. Do not repeat complications.
- To aid a villager, an adventurer uses the Help action during that round. Simply declaring the use of the Help action and moving to their location is enough to neutralize the threat.
- If not helped by the end of the round, the villager must attempt a death saving throw. A single failure results in the death of a villager. Do not track successes. During combat, a villager remains in jeopardy until aided by an adventurer.
- Complications start at the beginning of the encounter. At the top of each round, a new villager is in danger until four rounds pass.

COMPLICATIONS

d6	COMPLICATION
1	In the ruckus, an elderly villager is accidentally pushed into range of an ooze.
2	A table has overturned onto a dwarf, and an ooze is nearby.
3	A dwarf has climbed atop a table to avoid the oozes and is an easy target.
4	During the chaos, a village elder stumbles into the central fire pit and is now ablaze.
5	A rack of kegs is knocked over, trapping the villager against the walls of the moot-hall.
6	Two villagers smack into each other, leaving one of them prone next to an ooze.

You are also free to create complications of your own if none of the above fit the situation. There is no penalty for failing to save villagers, but this is not readily known.

AFTER THE MOOTHALL BATTLE

If the adventurers are successful in defeating the oozes, the elders thank them. Obrix, the chief elder and king, steps forward and speaks for the village. He relates the following

- The Clan is grateful to see the Strange Folk this day. The elders recognize the oozes as extensions of the will and hunger of Hadar. This can only mean one thing — the Well has been opened.
- The clan cannot send any warriors with the adventurers because the village could still be attacked. At this point, the adventurers are the only hope of saving the ancestral hall of the Gommurg.
- The dwarves are cautious of the danger the Well represents and have constructed a great vault reinforced with adamantine around it. The clan has not left because they mine the rare veins of metal throughout the area around the Well and guard the region from the horrors within. It is the land's wealth and the burden of their stewardship that keeps them here.
- A massive door kept locked by a clockwork mechanism seals the vault.

If the adventurers ask about the White Well, Obrix has the following answers:

- The White Well is an ancient prison that predates the clan. Centuries-old stories detail a mysterious battle against The Endless Devourer and Hadar's hunger being constrained within the Well. Hadar of the Endless Hunger is an Old One from before the time of the gods. It is symbolized by tentacles, cold, and rot.
- The Clan has undertaken the duty of guarding the Well to prevent Hadar's influence from growing. This ancestral task has been rewarded by centuries of crafting and mining. The villagers prefer to be left alone or even forgotten by the outside world, so they can be uninterrupted in their tasks.
- The Galena Mountains near the village contains adamantine veins and abundant minerals. They suspect that what fuels the Well may be responsible for the rich deposits of adamantine.
- When the Gommurg first discovered this isolated region and its wealth of resources, they also discovered the Well and opened it. It took many dwarven lives to undo that mistake.
- If the Well is closed it may weaken what has already come out.

If the adventurers mention Lumin's task, Obrix also tell them the following:

- "I was going to ask why your appearance here today was so fortuitous, what caused you to grace us with your presence. I am glad Lumin still thinks of us."
- "Keeping the White Well sealed is an ancestral duty. The elders do not know how to open the Well, and nobody

in the village has ever tried, except a dwarf fifty years ago. This dwarf, who now goes by Lumin Fetterbond, was exiled for his actions. Even though Lumin was repentant, clan law forced his exile. Our laws are important and exist for everyone's safety."

- "Lumin will always be of the clan, Gommurg blood will always flow through him. And while he may never return, this does not mean we cannot accept invitations from him and visit. It does me proud to know he is well and still cares for us. And with all that has happened, it may be time to see past our own borders to the wider world. We can't keep the White Well safe and secured alone. Not anymore."

If the players mention Lumin's nemesis, Nasreet the diviner, was the cause of this, Obris may respond with the following:

- Obris sighs deeply. "We do not blame Lumin for this. He acts in what fashion he sees as best. He foiled his enemy, who is clearly an unlawful individual. She is responsible. No, we do not blame Lumin."
- "Nasreet's meddling would also explain how the White Well's vault was breached. The vault was crafted to withstand incredible forces, both magical and mundane, but not the devious mind of a patient diviner."

As the adventurers want to reseal to the Well, Obris will give them a *potion of healing* to help them prepare. Obris stresses that time is short, and if the Well is not resealed, Gommurghall and even Hulburg could be imperiled. He also explains that resealing the Well will drain whatever came out.

PART 3. THE WHITE WELL

The White Well stands on the hillside, a day's travel away from Gommurghall. Between Fetterbond's map, the Gommurg hunting trails, and the Well's dim but persistent glow, it is relatively easy to find. Read or paraphrase the following:

A great vault of metal and stone riveted with bands of adamantite waits atop a hill. What were once massive doors of iron are now fallen, their clockwork guts spilled upon the ground.

The White Well glows within. The edifice is a pristine structure of alabaster shimmering with an opalescent light in the dimming sunlight. Even enclosed in the vault, it was sealed with a secondary measure, a large grey stone inscribed with Dwarvish sigils. Now, the massive stone cap is askew, pushed onto the ground near the Well. It probably weighs thirty stone or more.

The hillside is silent as you approach. You see a steady stream of multi-colored mist flowing forth from the Well's opening. The clearing around the Well has been stripped of all ground vegetation. Nothing moves. All is still.

On the ground, you can see corroded bits of steel and brass mixed in with the skeletons of

large, tusked humanoid and the remains of a dozen dwarf guards who died defending the Well. Whatever group opened the Well did not escape unscathed.

Along with the protective runes, a Dwarvish inscription reads: "Hadar's hunger is sealed within." The stone cap weighs 400 pounds, and is not easy to lift or move.



SEALING THE WHITE WELL

When the White Well was opened, it let loose the malignant force within, which took the form of a nearly endless blob of multi-hued oozes. Whatever dark power inhabits the Well has taken hold of the corpses of those slain by the oozes, making vile puppets of them. Around the vault is a black pudding and three orog corpses stripped of flesh that rise to fight the interlopers (treat as minotaur skeletons. The minotaur gore attack instead represents the Well's imbued energy of the undead orogs). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) skill check will correctly identify the ooze types and differences between jellies, even given the fact that the oozes are differently colored.

If the Well is sealed before or during combat, or before all the foes are defeated, the oozes and skeletons immediately weaken and have disadvantage on all attacks and saving throws. However, anytime an adventurer approaches within 10 feet of the Well, a tentacle sprouts from the impenetrable darkness within and attempts to club and pull at the hero. These aren't meant to be a true threat, but a cosmetic effect of the Well. Each tentacle has AC 10, 5 hp, +0 to hit (reach 5 feet), and inflicts 1d6 bludgeoning damage. One tentacle sprouts for each character within 10 feet of the edifice, but they don't return once destroyed. Describe them as trying to drag the adventurers into the Well, but they do not actually grapple the adventurers.

If an adventurer examines the Well with magical means

or with the appropriate knowledge, it radiates a swirling mixture of terribly potent necrotic and conjuration magic. It is wrought of an otherworldly material to imprison something powerful and alien.

As the oozes spew forth from the Well and crawl closer to the you, faces and hands emerge from the shimmering, shapeless masses. Soundless screaming and grasping fingers stretch out from the protoplasmic blobs. The orog mercenaries, now reduced to bones by the ravenous slimes, rise before you covered in a sheath of glistening gel, the spaces between bones now filled with hungry ooze instead of flesh and blood.

At the same time, a bleak, keening scream sounds from the depths of the Well. It fills your bones with cold terror.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak.** Remove all the undead orogs (**minotaur skeletons**); remove **black puddings**. Add three **grey oozes** and three **skeletons**.
- **Weak.** Remove all the undead orogs (**minotaur skeletons**). Remove **black pudding**. Add three **grey oozes** and six **skeletons**.
- **Strong.** No change.
- **Very Strong.** Add three undead orogs (**minotaur skeletons**).

THE SCREAMING OF THE WELL (FRIGHTFUL PRESENCE)

The Well radiates a Frightful Presence while open because of an alien, unholy yowl that emerges from deep within. Each creature within 30 feet of the Well who can hear the screaming must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. Undead and oozes are immune to this effect. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Well's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours. If anyone gazes into the Well, he or she sees only total darkness, but feels a bitter coldness and hears a cacophony of soft whispers and slurping noises. No light, magical or otherwise, can illuminate the interior of the Well.

METHODS TO SEAL THE WHITE WELL

There are a few ways to reseal the Well. The simplest method is to lift the cap back over the opening. A levitate spell or other magical effect may also be useful. Other methods include:

Arcane lock. *Arcane lock* will tightly seal the Well once the cap is placed over the top. *Arcane lock* specifically requires an object to be closed. That said, *arcane lock* would

allow the adventurers to place nearly any large-sized flat object over the Well and permanently seal the Well shut.

Brute Strength. A successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check will shift the stone cap enough to close the Well. Using a crowbar-like tool will give advantage. Doing so requires being within 5 feet of the Well.

Masons' tools. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check using masons' tools will find a leverage point that allows the cover to be replaced.

Levitation or magical lifting. The Well's cap can be magically lifted if a strong enough magical spell or effect is used. This can make replacing the cap easier. In this case, a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check can maneuver the stone cap into position and close the Well.

Vault mechanics. Within the vault is an array of strange and intricate clockwork mechanisms. A character who makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence check recognizes and understands how to use a device for lifting and securing immense weights. While damaged by the orog attack, a second successful DC 12 Intelligence check allows it to be repaired enough to place the stone.

Other ideas. Be willing to allow other options to close the Well. Ultimately, success (and the fun of the adventure) hinge on resealing the Well. Just feel free to make the players sweat a little in doing so.

Attacking the Well directly. The Well can be hurt but not damaged as it regenerates, looking like ice accumulating over time to reform its shape. Damaging the strange structure results in the Well screaming loudly and stuns the tentacles for a turn. The Well has a 15 AC but can't be destroyed through mundane means. Damage only stuns the tentacles.

With a loud boom, the White Well is closed. The endless flow of viscous oozes abates and the screaming is silenced. The world becomes quiet and still once again.

Then, from the edge of the forest, a small group of Gommurg moves warily forward.

"All hail, and many thanks," greets the elder dwarf while striding forward with an outstretched hand. Behind him the dwarf warriors let loose a valorous cheer. The clan strikes up a deep-throated chant and lifts you onto their shoulders.

"Today, you are dwarves. Today, you are all Gommurg!" With that, a hearty cheer echoes around the glen.

Each character receives 150 experience points for sealing the White Well. Also, there are 30 gp and 100 sp scattered amongst the pouches of the orog corpses who unsealed it.

After the Well is sealed, Obrix steps forward and invites the heroes to a celebration within the sacred and secret clan keep, an offer never given to non-dwarves. The keep is cleverly hidden and, in dwarven fashion, immense, with grand halls, ornate pillars, and glittering decorations.

A great feast is provided in honor of the adventures and Obrix rewards the players with an *adamantine chain shirt*, stating: “May this armor stand you in good stead. May its enduring links symbolize our friendship.” As well, Obrix swears an oath of friendship with the adventurers if they are willing. This oath takes place before the Axe of the Great Moot, at the Clan’s holy shrine to Moradin.

CONCLUSION

If the White Well was sealed and the Gommurg village saved, a dwarf footman loyal to Lumin seeks out the adventurers within the next two days. This footman delivers a pouch of 250 gp and a long, rambling letter. The letter alternates between Dwarvish and Common script. Between the mead blotches and the questionable penmanship, it is apparent that Lumin was drinking while composing it. If the adventurers did not receive the magical armor from the village elder, Lumin’s servant also brings the *adamantine chain shirt* when delivering the reward.

Lumin’s letter details his history with the Gommurg, his exile, his battle with Nasreet Olim, and his fears that the adventurers are merely pawns in a chess game that Lumin is slowly losing (feel free to summarize the ‘The Truth About Lumin Fetterbond’ section for the players). He expounds at some length on his arduous divine training in the Temple of Azuth, and constantly refers to his “omens.” He also makes it clear that he is aware of the Gommurg Clan’s gratitude, and knows the role the adventurers played in solving the chaos.

If the adventurers failed to seal the Well, Lumin sends a letter with one sentence, written in Dwarvish: “Hadar hungers for you.” There is no monetary reward, nor an explanation.

DEVELOPMENT

It is likely that the adventurers will be considered heroes for assisting Fetterbond in his deed. If the adventurers successfully sealed the Well and defeated the oozes in the Gommurghall Encounter, the party gains the Divine Portents story reward.

The question remains of how to handle Nasreet Olim. By helping Lumin, the adventurers have now taken sides in a slow-simmering magical duel. If the adventurers can prevent this strife from reaching a boiling point, they may bring peace between the two diviners. Otherwise, there is a strong chance that Nasreet will seek revenge against the adventurers.

REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

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

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Black Pudding	700
Grey Ooze	100
Minotaur Skeleton	450
Ochre Jelly	450
Skeleton	50

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Sealing the White Well	150

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 450 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 600 **experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Fetterbond's reward	250
Treasure around the White Well	40

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

ADAMANTINE CHAIN SHIRT

Armor, uncommon

This magical chain shirt is crafted from adamantine, and is made with superb dwarf craftsmanship. The description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, common

This item can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

STORY AWARDS

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Divine Portents. For saving his clan and resealing the White Well, you have earned the gratitude of Lumin Fetterbond, a powerful dwarf diviner. You can request that Lumin cast *augury* to help you see the future at the beginning of an adventure. This spell casting favor can only be used once.

RENOWN

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG).

APPENDIX. NPC SUMMARY

Lumin Fetterbond (LU-men fet-ter-BOND): A dwarf diviner and exile of the Gommurg Clan. Lumin has been involved in a wizard war against Nasreet and her pawns, but he is slowly losing ground to Nasreet's machinations.

Nasreet Olim (naz-RIT oh-LIM): A halfling diviner and nemesis of Lumin. Nasreet was thwarted decades ago, and she has been waging a shadowy war against Lumin and his allies since then.

Gommurg (GOH-muh-ergh): Outlander Dwarf Clan and guardians of the White Well, a repository and bulwark against the evil powers of Hadar the Hungry, an Old One.

Hadar the Hungry (HAH-dahr): An Old One that manifests as an endless mass of black roiling tentacles. Hadar is characterized by hunger, cold, and rot.

Obrix (OH-bricks): Elder of the Gommurg, and speaker for the clan.

PLAYER HANDOUT. MAGIC ITEM

ADAMANTINE CHAIN SHIRT

Armor (chain shirt), uncommon

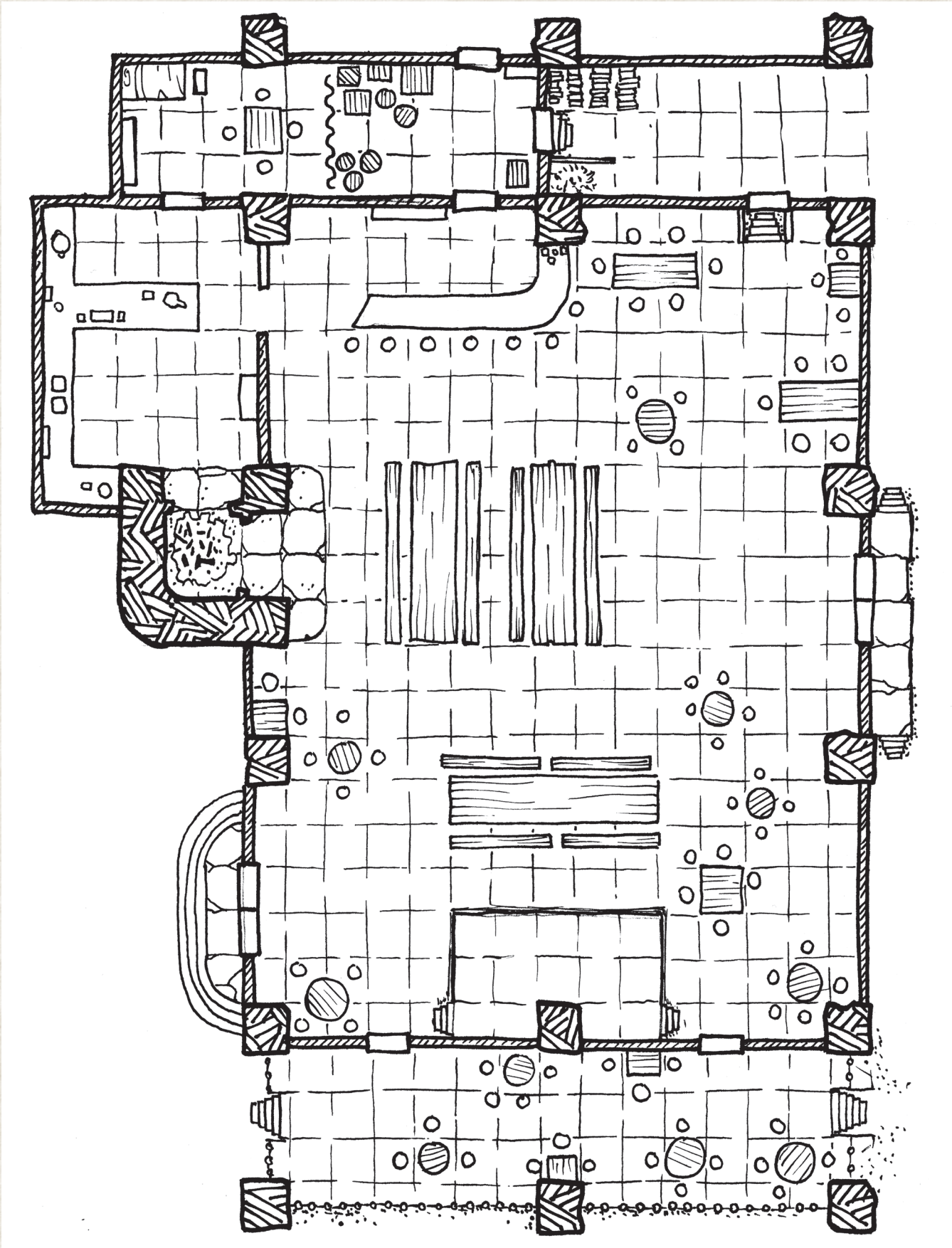
This superbly crafted chain shirt exhibits the hallmarks of dwarven craftsmanship.

This suit of armor is reinforced with adamantine, one of the hardest substances in existence. While you're wearing it, any critical hit against you becomes a normal hit.

This magical chain shirt is crafted from adamantine, and is made with superb dwarf craftsmanship. The description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

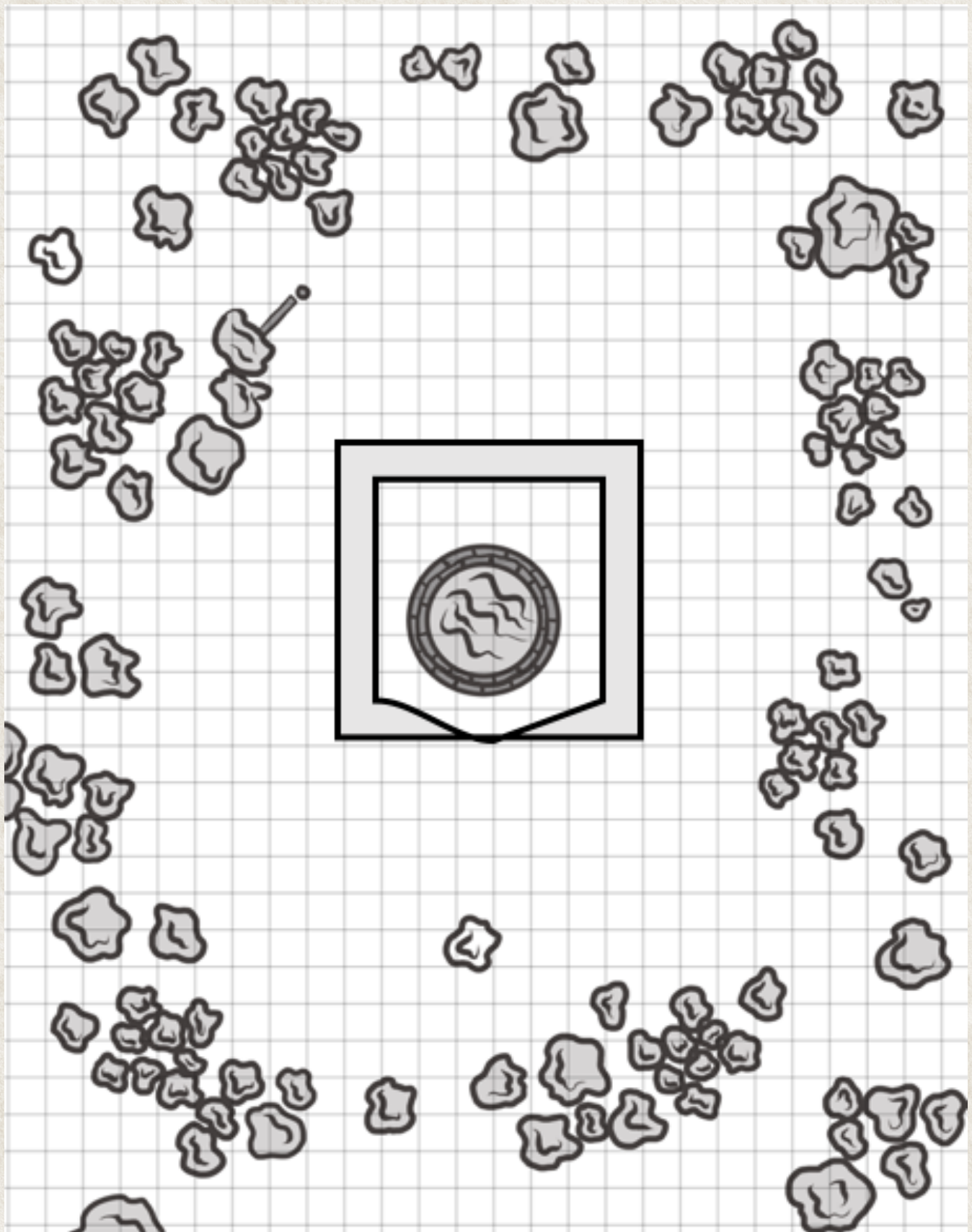
APPENDIX. GOMMURGHALL

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)



APPENDIX. THE WHITE WELL

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)







The Barrows of Solina

Zhentarim traders. Shadowy figures roaming the fields near Hillsfar. How do these all relate? Everything traces back to the recently unearthed grave-barrows. After rescuing a caravan from undead attackers, the adventurers learn of an ancient danger.

A Four-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



IAM PACE & WILLIAM MURAKAMI-BRUNDAGE

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO *THE BARROWS OF SOLINA*, A D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Tomb of Annihilation*™ storyline season.

This adventure takes place in the farmland and foothills around Hillsfar, as well as involving exploration into grave barrows.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

ADVENTURE PRIMER

“ALISANDRA SOLINA, our Lady of Dawnfire, favored of the sun, our Lady of Grace, touched by the divine, may her spirit endure, may her deeds persist untarnished, unbroken, unforgotten.”

– *Tomb of Solina*

BACKGROUND

THE SHORT OF IT

A Zhentarim expedition learned of a tomb south of the Moonsea belonging to a deceased order of paladins known as the Dawnfire Knights, once led by the paladin lord Alisandra Solina.

Unbeknownst to the living, imprisoned within is a death giant warlock named Vornjolnir who seeks to free himself. He has twisted the spirits of the knights buried there. And when the Zhentarim unearthed the mausoleum to loot its treasures, they weakened the wards binding the dead. The knights rose in vengeance to slay the intruders and all associated with them, regardless of innocence. The surviving Zhentarim agents fled, hoping to escape with their stolen goods.

Vornjolnir is growing in strength, seeking a way to escape while the undead knights hunt the stolen relics. And while they are twisted in death, single-minded in their vengeance, a part of them remains, waiting to be reminded of who they were.

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Barrows of Solina (SOUL-lean-uh). The magical complex built into the ground to house the final remains of the Knights of Dawnfire, a paladin order, and the body of the monsters they vanquished in their last battle.

Alisandra Solina (Al-is-on-draw SOUL-lean-uh). The aasimar paladin lord who wielded the powerful artifact holy sword Dawnfire and led the templar order The Dawnfire Knights.

Vornjolnir (VORN-yol-nir). A frost giant raider who became a warlock dedicated to an imprisoned entity only known as the Harrowed King. After Vornjolnir was slain, he was raised as a death giant before his imprisonment.

The Harrowed King. A mysterious entity imprisoned in glacier of blood and surrounded by a magical blizzard to ward against intrusion.

Grindan (GRIN-dan). A neutral human wizard and Zhentarim agent in disguise.

Brandel (BRAN-del). A chaotic neutral half-elf rogue and fellow Zhentarim agent and long-time partner-in-crime of Grindan.

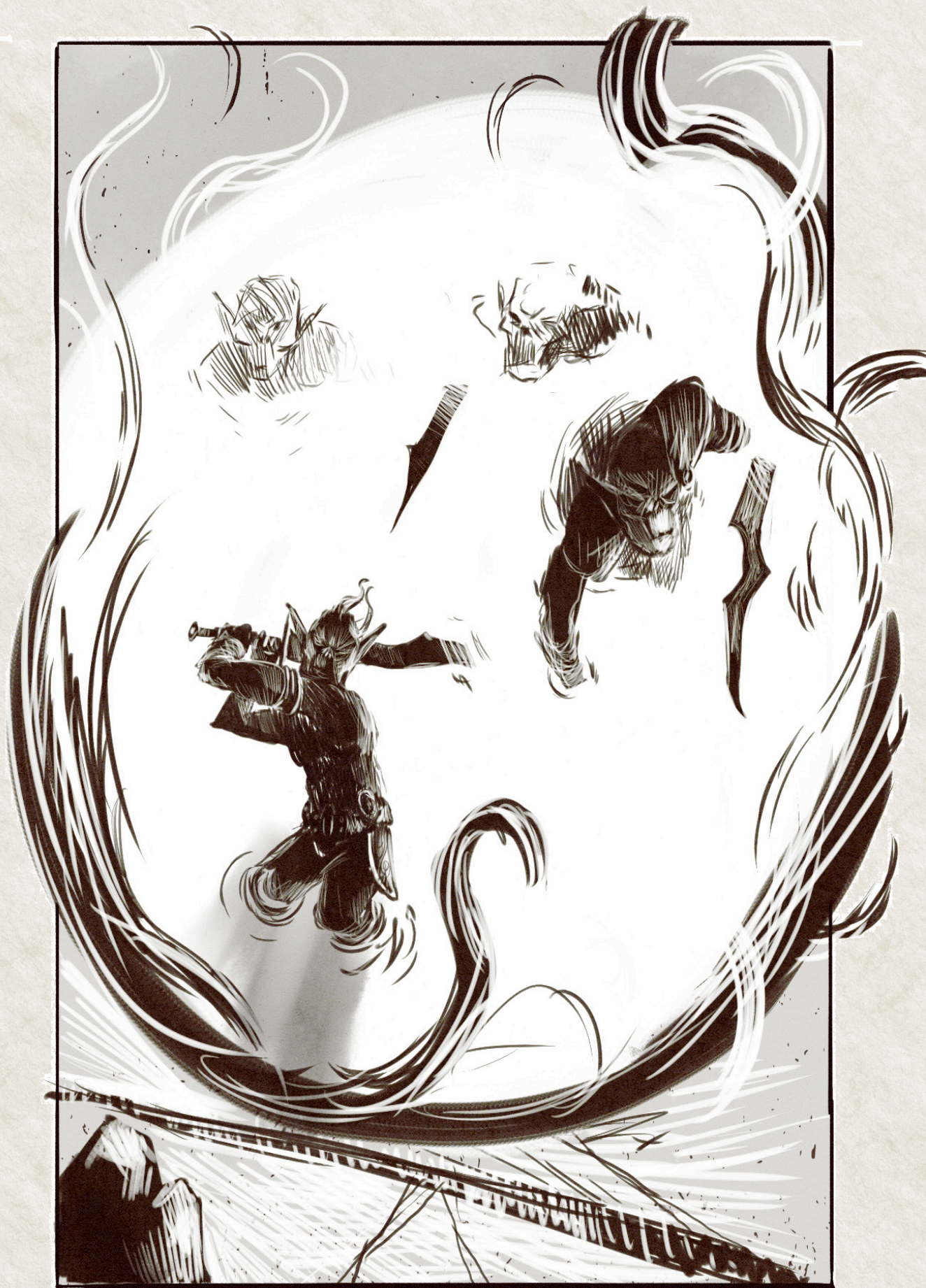
THE LONG OF IT

Alisandra Solina was the leader of a paladin order called the Dawnfire Knights, named after Solina’s holy sword. The order was tasked with locating dangerous objects such as the magical remnants of Netheril and Narfell, and destroying them if possible or imprisoning them if not. Their temple of Cear Coron Llachar, Bright Crown Citadel, served as a vault for the dark relics collected during their crusades.

While the knights forayed into the Anauroch, Damara, and Narfell, they campaigned primarily around the Moonsea—the Cormanthor Forest and the Earthspur Mountains. In the latter, they encountered frost giants raiding the lowlands. The company vanquished the giants and secured the region. However, one of the marauders, a frost giant named Vornjolnir, survived and swore vengeance upon the order.

Vornjolnir traveled the mountains in search of allies and crossed into a terrible blizzard to stand upon a lake of frozen blood. There he made a warlock pact with a creature called the Harrowed King, a dread thing imprisoned in a glacier of red ice somewhere in the Southern Galena Mountains. Empowered and emboldened, the giant rallied monsters from the mountainous region and marched once more across the lowlands, razing settlements and capturing slaves to lure out the knights. While the giant thought his conquests were for himself, the Harrowed King subtly manipulated the giant’s course to search for the relics needed to free itself.

Solina and her templars ambushed the giant’s war band south of the Moonsea between the rivers Lis and Duathamper. The battle was fierce, and many knights fell before the invaders were routed and Vornjolnir slain. In the aftermath, Solina found strange items among the raiders’ supplies, objects of unknown origin: an obsidian cube with inexplicably seven sides, a misshapen bronze orb that vibrated like a heartbeat, and a large skull with gems for eyes and teeth. The paladins gathered the unsettling relics to destroy them, but such a threat to the keys provoked the Harrowed King. That night the King raised Vornjolnir as a death giant and unleashed an army of the dead on the paladins. Weakened and beset on all sides, Solina unraveled the power of the Dawnfire sword, shattering its blade in a storm of light and engulfing the battlefield in flames. The knights were consumed with the undead host.



After the terrible clash, the allies of the order entombed the paladins near the battlefield with the remains of the giant as a symbolic gesture of the knights continuing their watch over evil even in death. However, this was more literal than anticipated as entombed with them were the relics recovered from the battlefield, the objects sought by the Harrowed King, who continues to seek freedom.

The relics were unable to be taken to the warded vaults of the Bright Crown as not long after the fateful battle with the frost giant, the citadel was destroyed by a monstrous host led by a strange warlock. The destruction of the keep was so complete nothing of it was left, not a single foundation stone. The barrows are all that remains of the Dawnfire order.

For centuries, the barrows of Solina slept hidden and silent. The death giant stirs but remains trapped by the wards placed throughout the barrows. Over the centuries, though, the defenders have been corrupted, their oaths twisted as they became bound to their rotting bodies by the malignant will of Vornjolnir. Despite the giant's influence, he has yet to break the barrows' wards.

Farmers in the region unearthed part of the barrows while clearing a field for crops. Rumors spread from there until a curious Zhentarim agent named Nasreet investigated the area's history. After what was discovered, she dispatched agents to locate the barrows' resting place and the magical armaments within, such as Solina's sword, Dawnfire.

The expedition breached the barrows into the underground tomb complex and begun retrieving the armaments. With the wards weakened by the intrusion, undead began to stir and the paladins rose as vengeful revenants and slaughtered or captured the trespassers.

In a curious symmetry of fate, Vornjolnir does to the paladins what the Harrowed King once did to him — manipulating the will of others to gather the Harrowed King's relics. The knights, now twisted in death, only have the desire to regain what was stolen, but part of them does remain, waiting to be reminded of who they were.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Harrowed King is not featured in this adventure nor are his relics. Barrows of Solina is the first adventure in a linked series dealing with this mysterious entity.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure is broken down into four parts:

Part 1. The adventurers rescue a caravan from undead attackers and discover the existence of ancient barrows recently unearthed.

Part 2. The adventurers come across the caravan wreckage of less fortunate merchants circuitously involved with looting the grave barrows.

Part 3. Traveling overland, the adventurers arrive at the Cord farmstead, where they learn about farmers who have been taken by the undead.

Part 4. Entering the barrows, the adventurers interrupt the undead Solina conducting a trial. Afterwards, the

adventurers must destroy the wards. This triggers repercussions from Vornjolnir, a powerful undead giant.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Traveling to and Fro. The adventurers are traveling to Hillsfar, or are otherwise in the southern Moonsea region, when the adventure begins.

Zhentarim (Faction Assignment). As a veteran Zhentarim agent, you are informed of Nasreet's operation to loot the barrows of treasure, and the expected trouble with the undead. Your job is to destroy the scroll containing Nasreet's orders to the expedition. She does not want the Zhentarim's reputation damaged by the deaths of farmers and merchants, and she doesn't want the Black Network blamed for awakening the undead. The adventurer knows that Grindan and Brandel are loyal agents and will cooperate, especially if they know the character is a Zhentarim member. Speak with them to locate the papers and books.

PART 1. THE DREAD AMBUSH

STORY BEATS

As the adventurers travel, they come across a large caravan being ambushed by revenants at dusk. During the battle, the undead reveal bits of information. In the aftermath, the adventurers speak with Captain Aurn and Grindan, where they receive important information on the events of the barrows and the fabled Dawnfire sword.

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

The events start with the heroes traveling a road in the southern Moonsea north of the Cormanthor Forest. An increase in pirate activity has seen many merchants turn to the old roads circling the sea. The exact direction and destination are up to you. It is left open-ended so that you may fit the adventure into an existing campaign.

GENERAL FEATURES

The long road of the Southern Moonsea has the following features.

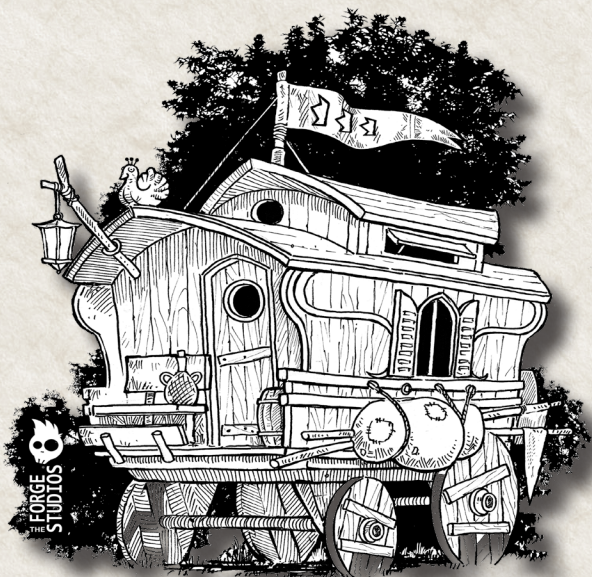
Terrain. The area is comprised of rocky hills and narrow roads while the sea can be spotted to the north and the Cormanthor forest to the south.

Weather. The weather is warm but often wet in the morning with a heavy fog clinging to the lands between the forest and sea.

Light. Twilight leaves dim conditions past 60 feet. It is bright during the day and dark during the night.

Smells and Sounds. The scent of the sea makes it this far inland, the sharpness of salt and fish mixing with the smells of plants and earth.

Activity. During the last few days, there have been several other groups moving along the road, mostly armed merchants or nomads.



A. THE BESIEGED CARAVAN

Read the following:

The day grows late as you make your way by road across the Southern Moonsea region upon a trade route connecting Hillsfar with Mulmaster. A beautiful sky of stars is slowly unfurling.

The road itself has become increasingly rough, causing the route to wind around or over tall hills and rocky protrusions. Periodically, as you crest the knolls, you can see the glittering waters of the Moonsea to the north, the setting sun casting its colors across the flashing waves. To the south of you is the edge of the Cormanthor forest, an ancient woodland holding dead kingdoms and lost wonders. It is a great boundary to another world that encompasses all to the south.

As you ascend a tall hillock, shouts and panicked screams are heard ahead on the road, which narrows sharply between large hills.

A caravan comprised of five wooden-roof wagons, each pulled by two horses, is stalled in the narrow pass between the rocky hills.

The lead wagon appears stuck. Shadowy figures cloaked in tattered black robes menace the driver and passengers. Two horses are dead in their bridles and numerous guards lie motionless.

As the rearmost wagon begins to slowly pull away from the convoy, drivers struggling to get the horses to walk backwards in their bridles, more figures in ragged black come into view on a path thirty feet up the cliff face and begin to climb down towards the rear wagon.

As the day approaches its end, the sun slipping into the west, yelling is heard ahead. A caravan of five covered wagons is being assailed and bottlenecked in a narrow pass by two groups, each consisting of two **wights** and one **revenant**. One group assaults the front of the wagon column while the other attacks the rear. They seek the tomb treasures stolen by Zhentarim agents. The agents are disguised as merchants who joined this caravan. The road is far too narrow for the wagons to turn around.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove one **revenant** from each group.
- **Weak:** Remove two **wights** from each group.
- **Strong:** Add one **wight** to each group.
- **Very Strong:** Add one **revenant** to each group.

Note: Remember there are two groups, one assaulting the front wagon and the other assailing the back wagon in the column.

THE CARAVAN TRAVELERS

There are twenty terrified caravan travelers (**common-ers**) aboard the wagons, spread equally among the wagons. The caravan guards have all been slain except for two, Captain Aurn and Yvette Mirin.

BATTLEFIELD OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

The bulky wagons clog the narrow lane and make movement on the road difficult terrain. A clever and acrobatic adventurer may quickly jump from wagon roof to wagon roof to get to the front in short order. The train of five wagons stretches 120 feet (that includes the two horses pulling each wagon).

Jumping from one wagon to the next requires a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If adventurers use the dash action while leaping, they make the check with disadvantage.

There is a ledge running the length of the northern cliff 30 feet above. It stretches beyond the length of the convoy in both directions. Adventurers can climb up, run the length, and then drop down behind the attackers, or simply fire down at the attackers. Although, it is likely the wagons provide a good degree of cover.

The 30-foot cliffs require a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to scale. The north cliff is 50 feet tall and flattens at the top while the southern cliff is 30 feet tall and flattens at the top. Checks to climb any of the cliffs are DC 12.

The undead prefer to target the caravan members, as they are the suspected grave robbers. If any undead are adjacent to the caravan and make a successful attack roll against AC 10, they automatically slay a caravan member. There are twenty caravan travelers aboard the wagons (see **The Caravan Travelers**, above).

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Interacting with the Terrain. Make it clear to the adventures that terrain elements are available to interact with, including the cliff, ledge, wagons, and wagon-rooftops.

Undead Attacking Merchants. The DM may describe the undead attacking the merchants in whatever manner fits their play style. Examples include dragging merchants from the wagons or hacking them down as they try to run.

THE MOTIVATIONS OF THE UNDEAD

The undead have been sent to bring “justice” to the thieves and retrieve the items stolen from the barrows. Even though only the disguised Zhentarim agents are guilty, the mere association is reason enough for the undead to punish and slay everyone present.

The undead are merciless foes, fighting to the end. The undead speak as they fight, and can be conversed with during combat, revealing information pertaining to who they are and why they are here. However, they cannot be dissuaded. Even if the adventurers discover Grindan has the Dawnfire sword and return it to the undead, the undead may still seek to punish those involved (DM’s discretion). However, if the DM opts for a peaceful resolution (any-

thing is possible), the adventurers should still be asked to return to the barrows to speak with Solina and then seal it to keep Vornjolnir’s influence from spreading.

If the undead are peacefully negotiated with, award full XP for this encounter. In this case, the adventurers are asked to travel to the barrows after speaking with the caravan.

If the adventurers quickly slay the undead and then kill Grindan, have the undead remains hold, or the merchants provide, clues of the barrows’ location.

When the adventurers engage the undead, read or paraphrase the following:

With raspy, dry voices the undead warn you away, “Come not between us and those who we hunt.

“We deliver justice, for these greedy mortals have dared transgress against us. All who aid them are guilty. Our actions are holy, our mission sacred. It is our duty to guard the relics lain down in the barrows.

“All who would compromise our duty are to be purged. We are the Order of Dawnfire, led by our Lady Alisandra Solina.”

After the undead speak in combat, adventurers can make a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) roll to notice the undead are distracted and perhaps disoriented. This can be exploited later in the adventure when the adventurers get a chance to remind the undead of their mortal lives by reciting the ideals of heroic chivalry (see **The Hall of Remembrance**).

A cleric of Torm or Helm, or anyone making a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Religion or History) check, recalls the following about the Order of Dawnfire:

- The Order was mostly composed of paladins who sought to gather and secure evil relics and defend the settlements around the Moonsea.
- The order was named after the sect’s powerful holy sword and their keep, a bronze citadel that would blaze at sunrise. The leader’s name was Alisandra Solina. The paladins were sometimes referred to as the Knights of Solina or Dawnfire Knights.
- The order was wiped out six centuries ago fighting a frost giant leading a war band from the Galena Mountains. Oddly, the old chronicles mentioned the battlefield being littered with undead yet there were no known practitioners of arcane or divine arts among the frost giant’s band.
- Solina’s holy sword, from which the order took its name, had its blade shattered during the fateful battle. The hilt is rumored to still hold powerful magic.



UNDEAD REINFORCEMENTS

Incorporeal undead reinforcements arrive three rounds after the adventurers engage in combat. The dusk has grown dim enough to rob the world of sunlight.

Read the following:

The sun dips below the horizon and the shadows deepen and spread. The shadows then move, taking on humanoid shapes.

One **wraith** and five **specters** appear. Where the incorporeal undead attack is up to the DM. They can assault the rearmost wagon in the convoy, the front wagon, or they can be split between the two. Go with what would be most dramatic without overwhelming weak or wounded characters.

Also, if the party is doing quite well, the **wraith** can raise additional **specters** from the slain caravan guards. There are twelve dead guards. These additional undead don't grant more experience points, but this may thematically increase the tension of the encounter. The battle concludes when all the undead are vanquished. The undead fight until destroyed.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove five **specters**.
- **Weak:** Remove three **specters**.
- **Strong:** Remove five **specters**. Add two **wraiths**.
- **Very Strong:** Remove five **specters**. Add three **wraiths**.

SEARCHING THE UNDEAD

The arms and armor worn by the undead are of an ancient design and features symbols of a blazing sun behind a drawn sword. Their equipment is old and has no value.

TRACKS

If an adventurer investigates the northern ridge above the wagons, the undead ambushers left tracks, which lead to the Cord farm and the barrows.

SURVIVING MERCHANTS

Award an additional 25 experience points for each survivor of the undead attack on the caravan. There are twenty potential survivors for a total of 500 potential experience points.

B. THE AFTERMATH

After the battle, read or paraphrase the following:

Even with the undead vanquished, the terrified merchants are lighting lamps and torches all around the area as they move to fix the lead wagon and remove the dead horses. A woman kneels by one of the dead guards and weeps. Two men approach you. One is a middle-aged heavyset fellow with more moustache than face and the other is a younger man wearing chain armor with the symbol of Zhentarim.

The older man speaks first: "Oh, goodness," he says, his moustache quivering. "You saved us!" The younger man visibly cringes at the other but says nothing for the moment, leaving the older man to speak. "I am the master of this caravan, Albric Von Howtz, at your service."

He bows as much as his girth allows. "This here is my guard captain, Callan Aurn," the captain salutes you but remains silent. "A reward! Yes! A reward is in order, my new friends. Anything else would be rude, just uncouth." The captain groans as the caravan master shuffles off to his wagon.

When Albric is far enough for words not to reach, the captain speaks, "Thank you for your assistance. I fear what would have happened without your intervention. Those creatures ambushed us here, which was cunning."

"I dread to think how long they had been stalking us and planning this assault. I don't think this attack was one of opportunity, but specifically targeting us. I am not sure why, though, but I have my suspicions."

Before Captain Aurn can say more, Albric returns heaving a chest. "Yes, a proper reward, then." Albric sets the chest on the tailgate of a wagon and carefully unlocks it. He begins to

count out silver trade bars, handing them to you one at a time. Captain Aurn doesn't look pleased by the behavior.



The caravan master offers 400 gp in silver trade bars for the rescue, counting them slowly from a chest. On a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Albric can be convinced to pay the adventurers an extra 100 gp. After Albric pays the adventuring, he immediately tries to sell them *potions of healing* for 65 gp each (he can sell five total).

Albric doesn't know much of the current events as he is being left in the dark by the Zhentarim guards and undercover agents. He knows the same information as the rest of the caravan (see **Questioning the Merchants** below).

The weeping woman is a half-elf named Yvette Mirin and she is the last of the Zhentarim guards under Captain Aurn. She mourns her twin brother, Vinn Mirin. She asks if the adventurers can do anything for him. If there is a divine caster among the adventures who offers last rights to the deceased, Captain Aurn and Yvette profusely thank them, and Yvette gives the adventurer a ring, which is worth 250 gp. The adventurers should gain inspiration for this deed, and they gain advantage on all social rolls while interacting with the caravan members, except Grindan (see below).

If the adventurers raise Vinn from death, the DM can grant inspiration. They are also rewarded an additional 300 gp. All the members of the caravan respond in awe, treating the adventurers with reverence.

Captain Aurn asks to speak with the adventurers in private as soon as its convenient.

ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY

Captain Aurn, Grindan, Yvette Mirin, and the caravan. The caravan and associated persons are relatively friendly and happy to cooperate, even Grindan under certain circumstances. This encounter is designed to allow the players to move through the caravan and interact with NPCs. Award inspiration for good role-playing.

QUESTIONING THE MERCHANTS

The adventurers can go about asking questions of the other caravan members. They know the following:

- They are carrying quality goods, such as cloaks made from griffon feathers or leather from chimeras. The goods have been already contracted and they can't sell any to the adventurers.
- They have traveled out of their way to meet with a second caravan for some reason. They don't know why or what was traded. Three new members joined. Captain Aurn spoke with them privately for some time. The captain came away looking angry. That was a day ago, and now they've been ambushed by undead.
- The new members kept to themselves and what they brought was immediately put inside one of the wagons. The merchants don't know much beyond that.

Captain Aurn wishes to converse in private. If he is allowed to, read the following:

"There is another caravan that might be in danger. You see, we, uh," he scratches the back of his neck, "we met with a smaller merchant convoy and traded goods with them and picked up three additional members. The circumstances around this were unusual, but I am not sure why. Maybe it's a gut feeling, but when you are in dangerous places, trust your instincts."

Captain Aurn goes on to share the following:

- "The second caravan is led by Ragin Olwynson, a seasoned merchant familiar with the region. Ragin told me that he retrieved supplies from a farmstead not far from here. I think he said it was owned by the Cord family. They were heading towards the Moonsea, to take a road that follows the shore." Captain Aurn gives the adventurers directions.
- "Ragin also picked up six additional members. Three of them would go on to join Albric's convoy, our convoy, a day later, a day before this ambush."
- "The boss of the group of the three that joined us is named Grindan. He is a secretive sort of person. I don't trust him."

If pressed further and a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check, or if the adventurers have raised Vinn, Captain Aurn reveals he is hiding something out of guilt and fear and he explains the following:

- "A group of Zhentarim agents disguised as Mulmaster archaeologists were undergoing a secret operation in an out-of-the-way farmstead. They were led by an agent named Grindan."
- "Grindan is alive, hiding as a merchant within this caravan."
- "I think that Grindan and his fellows may have caused this tragedy to befall this convoy."
- "I am a Zhentarim member, but my loyalty is always to the caravans I am contracted and trusted to guard."

• “From what little I’ve been told and what I have put together, Grindan and his men unearthed something near the Cord family farm, and now the undead are after them and anyone with them. I don’t know what they unearthed, only that Grindan’s instructions came from high-up in the Zhentarim hierarchy. You should speak with him.”

GRINDAN’S MASQUERADE

Grindan (neutral human **mage**) is disguised as a merchant. If an adventurer reveals to him that he or she is a Zhentarim agent, he furtively gives the Zhentarim signal. Otherwise, Grindan thinks these would-be heroes might clean up the undead mess and cooperates. After all, why turn down free help from do-gooders?

You approach a lone figure sitting at the front of a wagon busying himself with a loop of rope. His youthful face is clean-shaven, and his long hair is held in a ponytail. There is a subtle azure glow surrounding him.

A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the spell to be *mage armor*. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that Grindan is a mage who pretends to be a merchant.

Grindan reveals the following information:

- The Zhentarim learned of the location after investigating rumors that had spread from passing merchants by farmers and hunters in the area.
- He had been ordered by Nasreet, a powerful diviner within the Zhentarim, to gather loyal operatives to locate and breach grave barrows and retrieve the relics within.
- Nasreet had trained Grindan and his lieutenant Brandel on the wards and traps she expected them to find. He had been given extensive supplies, including thousands of gold worth of magical equipment—mostly potions and oils—to see to the success of the operation. Most of it was used during the excavation or taken by fleeing agents.
- Nasreet’s previous experiences with such places had left her anticipating undead within the barrows, but the sheer power and number of the creatures had taken the expedition by surprise. They were quickly overwhelmed and only a few escaped with grave goods. He and the other survivors are following orders, splitting up and heading to the docks in Mulmaster.
- The other half of the expedition joined a smaller caravan. The leader of the other group was a half-elf named Brandel. They are probably in terrible danger.

If asked about the undead or the grave barrows, Grindan explains the following:

- The barrows are the resting place of an order called the Dawnfire Knights, named after their leader’s holy sword. Their leader was a paladin named Alisandra Solina.
- The Dawnfire Knights were tasked with destroying and capturing sinister magic items left by evil empires such as Narfell, Nardusk, and Netheril. The order was destroyed in a terrible battle with a frost giant death shaman named Vornjolnir (this isn’t fully correct, but no one is aware of

the Harrowed King’s influence on both past and present events).

• Not long after the fateful battle with the giant, the temple fortress of the Dawnfire Knights known as Bright Crown Citadel was razed. The temple also served as a vault that housed the dangerous items the order couldn’t destroy. As far as Nasreet is aware, the barrows are all that remains of the Dawnfire Order, the Knights of Solina. Because of this, Nasreet believes that a few objects of power gathered by the knights were buried with them, as they could not be taken to Bright Crown.

• The objects carried from the barrows were mostly ornamental treasures, filigreed antique arms and armor. However, there were a few items of interest split among the fleeing operatives: a perfect cube of obsidian with inexplicably seven sides, a misshapen bronze orb that vibrated like a heartbeat, a large skull with gems for eyes and teeth, and an ancient sword hilt of orichalcum encrusted with a ruby cut in the shape of a blazing sun.

Grindan also explains why the Zhentarim agents can’t simply return the grave objects to appease the undead:

- Even if the stolen items were gathered and returned, Grindan doubts it would make a difference because he believes something was wrong with the place before it was even unearthed. As they worked on the excavation, the place seemed wrong, too cold, too dark before they even breached the buried doors. Maybe something put in there with the knights corrupted the place, rotted it from within.
- As Grindan had mentioned, Nasreet believed Narfell or Netheril objects made it into the barrows with the bodies of the knights. There may be some truth to this as the wards were already weak when they broke in.
- Clearly something was wrong before they got there. He mentions some of the Harrowed relics (the cube, the heart, and the skull), saying how they seemed eerie.
- “There appears to be something of the knights left within the undead. During the skirmish at the barrows, the undead demanded the surrender of my companions, capturing them alive. The undead that ambushed the caravan here didn’t ask us to yield. Whatever is darkening them is growing.”

After the adventures speak with Grindan, or if the interaction stalls or starts to become violent, Captain Aurn interrupts (it is his job to keep Grindan safe) with a request to the adventurers to locate the other caravan and then check on the Cord farm or go directly to the source of the undead and confront it. Grindan also mentions that there is a shortcut that circumvents the Cord farm if the adventures wish to go directly to the barrows.

THE RELICS AND FUTURE ADVENTURES

There are mentions of curious relics that were stored in Solina’s barrows. These relics tie into other adventures and are not immediately relevant. These references help create continuity between adventures and storylines.

As the DM, redirect the adventurers so they stay focused on the task at hand. If necessary, explain that the relics are long gone (or even the meta-role of the other relics).

GRINDAN'S GIFT

Read the following:

Grindan peers at you with a somber expression. He reaches into his coat and hands you something heavy wrapped in silk. Within is an ancient sword hilt of orichalcum. In the pommel is a ruby cut in the shape of a blazing sun.

"This is it," Grindan says with a sad smile, "The goal of the whole operation. This broken thing. I am sure there is a metaphor or irony in that, but," he shrugs, "such things tend to be lost on me."

"This is her sword, you know. Alisandra Solina's fabled weapon. Once it was an incredibly powerful artifact. Even broken as it is, it still holds such power." He looks at it with longing, his eyes glinting from the light bouncing from its ruby. He sighs, "Take it. Use it to end this. The Zhentarim really isn't what it used to be. We have some noble blood in us still."

Captain Aurn nods approvingly at him.

Grindan goes on, fear in his voice, "But, you need to know that something is wrong with the barrows. It isn't merely the undead, as bad enough as that is. A growing malice clings to it, warping it. And that isn't the only thing, either." His voice seems distant, "I saw her, you know, Alisandra Solina adorned in ceremonial white armor and wearing a helmet set with her visage. I watched her in all her beautiful armor slaughter my friends, dragging those who lived into the darkness of the barrows. I ran. I left them. Please, make this right."

The Dawnfire sword was once an artifact of power. Even with its blade shattered, the sword is a *sun blade*; the gem in the pommel sheds dim light in a 10 radius when within 60 feet of undead. This is addition to the illumination spread by the *sun blade*.

Grindan also gives the adventurers a *potion of superior healing* to help them.

Any dwarf, anyone proficient in smith's tools, or anyone who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check knows that orichalcum is a gold-colored bronze alloy used long ago, mainly for coins of long-dead empires.

ZHENTARIM FACTION ASSIGNMENT

If asked about Nasreet's orders, he says that the orders were carried by Brandel because the oaf forgets things so often and needs to be frequently reminded.

TREASURE

The adventurers gain possession of the *sun blade* and a *potion of superior healing*. They also are paid 400 gp for saving the caravan (with a potential of 100 gp extra), and/or Yvette Mirin's ring, worth 250 gp. If the adventurers raise Yvette's brother from death, they are rewarded an additional 300 gp.



PART 2. THE WRECKAGE

STORY BEATS

The adventurers discover the destroyed merchant caravan and learn of those who have been taken hostage.

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

The adventurers can take a long rest before the next encounter. The second caravan, which has been attacked and destroyed, is a day and half away.

GENERAL FEATURES

The trade road has the following features.

Terrain. The terrain here continues to be rough and hilly. The road is packed dirt.

Weather. It is springtime. The sky alternates between sunshine and light rain in the afternoon with heavy foggy in the morning.

Light. It is bright during the day and dark at night with a beautiful sky of stars.

Smells and Sounds. The scent of the land is strong along the road, the smell of plants and damp earth.

You haven't seen anyone else since the assault on the caravan, which is now making for safer lands after your intervention.

As you descend into a shallow valley, the cloying stink of death drifts to you.

Ahead is a grizzly scene of slaughter—brutalized bodies litter the churned earth by several wagons. Most of the bodies have been shredded, but a few have no wounds beyond a face rigid in horror.

The entire caravan has been ransacked. There are smashed kegs and torn sacks piled at the bases of the three wagons.

An undead host from the barrows set upon these merchants. The undead were looking for stolen treasures, particularly items associated with the Harrowed King's binding as Vornjolvur himself is still compelled to seek them and now so too are the fallen knights through the death giant's will.

TRACKS

There are obvious footprints traveling down the road and dragging someone or something from the caravan wreckage. They are heading through the Cord farm to the barrows.

- A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies distinct patterns in the blood-soaked mud around the wagons. Along with the frantic boot prints of the merchants and guards are the tracks left by four armored warriors.

A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check immediately notices a few things.

- While the goods and supplies have been strewn about

and ransacked as though violently searched through, nothing appears to have been taken, including valuables.

- There are eleven bodies, and all seem unduly brutalized. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check shows that several people were slain by bladed weapons and shredded by bare hands, their flesh torn.

- A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that the bodies without wounds have had their life drained from them by undead creatures.

THE WAGONS

All the wagons are marked with the brand of a Zhentarim merchant company that operates around the Moonsea. Aboard the lead wagon are papers authorizing the movement of goods, specifically silk. They are made out to a man named Ragin Olwynson and Co.

THE CARGO LEDGER

Near one of the bodies is a ledger listing the caravan's merchandise, supplies, and members. There are thirteen names listed but there are only eleven bodies at the massacre. The ledger mentions going out of their way to rendezvous with another caravan to sell supplies and pick up three new members including someone named Brandel.

THE WAGONS

It appears the wagons have been ransacked, their gear and goods tossed to the ground. The wagons had been carrying numerous barrels of wine and kegs of brandy, but they have all been destroyed.

The horses are found not far off, spooked and a little battered but healthy. It looks like they broke free from the wagons during the battle. There are seven of them.

TREASURE

There are seven riding horses, and enough feed for several days fodder per horse. There is also 100 gp worth of undamaged trade goods (silk, brandy, etc).

PART 3. THE CORD FARM (OPTIONAL)

STORY BEATS

The adventurers come to the Cord farm and learn of the missing Cord children, Sofia and Caleb, the events that have transpired in the area with the “archaeologists” and the neighboring farms and families.

Estimated Duration: 20 minutes

GENERAL FEATURES

The Cord farmstead is comprised of several buildings—house, barn, bathhouse, granary, and windmill—built in a verdant valley surrounded by tall hills. The Cormanthor forest looms not far away.

Terrain. Tall hills rise around a shallow valley of rich soil.

Weather. The sky is overcast early in the day that burns off in the afternoon. Heavy fog clings to the hills all morning.

Light. Bright during the day, dark during the night (with occasional dim light from the moon).

Smells and Sounds. The smell of damp earth and grass.

The undead retinue is comprised of three **revenants**. They have captured the two caravan leaders and are taking them back to Solina for questioning and judgment. The paladins’ perceptions and oaths are warped, and they believe they are acting justly, even as they slaughtered the caravan.

The grave barrows aren’t far from the Cord family farmstead and the undead have been moving within view of the family house. They have been active for three days and during that time they captured two members of the Cord family who had trespassed near the barrows (see **The Zhentarim Strategy**). Solina is holding them until formal execution.

You follow the trail for several hours. It then diverges from the main road and heads south towards the Cormanthor forest, that seemingly endless expanse of ancient woods. The terrain becomes progressively rougher. You travel for half a day until you see tall hills forming a sort of shallow valley of rich soil. Nestled there is a farmstead. You see a large house, a barn, a bathhouse, a granary, and a windmill. There appears to be a couple of small sheds between the larger buildings. The place is eerily still except for the squeaking of the windmill.

As you near, you see men and women come out of the house and load stuff onto the wagons. A few stand watch, nervously wielding scythes or pitchforks, but some are wearing short swords or holding crossbows. None of them have armor and some appear to be crying. An unarmed old man with a pipe is directing the

activities.

When they see you, they stop loading the wagons and gather around, looking tense. The old man with the pipe holds his hands out in greeting and approaches.

There are ten family members working together to hurriedly load the wagons. After seeing undead moving near the farm during the night, and having two family members disappear, the Cord family is preparing to flee.

The Cord patriarch, Grandfather Murry, hails them over:

“You don’t look like them archaeology folk causing trouble. Still, though, you’ve chosen a sore time to visit our farm. I am afraid we can’t offer much hospitality. My kin have been taken and strange things are about. We’re off to Hillsfar to find help. And I caution you to leave this place too.” He sighs. “It has been a hard few days, and I forget my manners. What can we assist you with?”

He knows the following:

- Just before dawn, he and his family witnessed several armored figures pass by the farm towing two disheveled men.
- A month ago, Murry’s son Murph was working a field with thick topsoil near some hills when he unearthed carved stone. Rumors grew and spread from harmless conversation with neighbors. A week ago, a score of men showed up claiming to be from an archaeological organization in Mulmaster. They rode towards the forest border, to the largest hills in the area. They were well geared and brought in boxes of supplies. They were there for a week, coming and going until, three days ago, they fled.
- During their time here, the archaeologists would visit and make extravagant offers for provisions or tools, paying many times their value. They also bragged about having found a massive treasure hoard, too much for them to carry and that the farmers in the area could have what they wanted.
- Two young family members, Sofia and Caleb Cord, were spying on the operations. They had described digging into the side of the largest hill near the woods, not too far away. They excitedly talked about seeing lots of lights of unusual colors. They haven’t been seen in two days. Murry fears the worst.
- After the archaeologists fled, the Cord family began to see strange, silent figures moving through the night, following the direction of the fleeing archaeologists. Right before morning, they could be seen coming back, often dragging people along with them.
- The Cord’s farm is the closest to the excavation site. The Hardens and Shepherds are also near, but they evacuated a day or so ago. The Cord family is the last to flee. If the adventures offer to find the missing Cord members, Grandfather Murry offers the adventurers a 100 gp reward to look for Sofia and Caleb.

THE ZHENTARIM STRATEGY

The Zhentarim posed as archaeologists from Mulmaster as they operated in the area. The operation was conducted with the prediction that the undead would most likely pursue the grave-robbers, so the Zhentarim agents attempted to scatter the grave goods to as many people as possible to spread thin the efforts of the undead and buy the agents more time to flee the area. This strategy including tricking the local farmers into visiting the excavation site and taking objects left there from the Zhentarim's exploration of the tomb or buying farm goods at prices too low to ignore. This, predictably, resulted in the kidnapping and execution of a number of innocent farmers in the area.

TREASURE

Grandfather Murry offers the adventurers a 100 gp reward to look for Sofia and Caleb.

PART 4. THE BARROWS

STORY BEATS

The adventurers come to the barrows where they find the remnants of the Zhentarim dig site. From there they either peacefully go into the barrows to take part in the trial or fight their way in to rescue the accused. After which they are informed of Vornjolnir's corrupting influence and the wards that must be destroyed to collapse the barrows on the waking death giant, who sends a dreadful creature to stop the adventurers.

The undead have begun to purge the earthworks, campsite, and excavation machines from around their barrows.

GENERAL FEATURES

The terrain around the barrows is a set of five artificial knolls evenly placed around a massive hill, the northern face of it excavated to reveal stone pillars and two bronze doors. They are open.

Terrain. The terrain is damp with tall grass. There are five steep hills surrounding at equal increments a massive hill at the center.

Weather. The sky is overcast with light drizzle.

Light. Gloomy during the day and utterly dark at night with no moon or starlight.

Smells and Sounds. During the day, the area is rich with bird sounds, especially crows. At night, the hooting of owls, squeaking of large bats, and chirping of insects fills the dark.

A. THE OUTER BARROWS

(NOT ON BARROWS MAP)

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

At the edge of the deep wood rises six great hills, steep and covered in thick grass. Five of the hills circle the largest, which is immense and topped with a crown of standing stones.

Littered about the area are smashed boxes, scattered supplies, collapsed tents, and even a broken pulley system for shifting heavy objects. The grassy ground has been churned to boggy mud from extensive foot traffic.

The northern face of the large hill is excavated to reveal stone pillars and two bronze doors. They are open.

Tracks: The undead tracks lead across the muddy ground to the south, heading for the north face of the large, central hill. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check indicates that the numbers have not changed, and the two caravan members are alive, for now.

There are a number of empty potion and oil bottles. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals bottles that once contained *potions of healing*, a *potion of*

giant strength, and residue of *oil of slipperiness*. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the *oil of slipperiness* was used in conjunction with the *potion of giant strength* for part of the excavation. These vials are now empty.

Searching the camp produces a *potion of superior healing*, 40 days of rations, 30 torches, a barrel containing enough oil for 10 oil flasks, a thieves' kit, a set of mason's tools, 6 vials of holy water, 200 feet of rope in 50 ft segments, and a few tents and bedrolls. The rest of the gear is too damaged to be of use or recovered.

A *detect magic* spell or ability indicates powerful necromantic energy pouring from the barrows. There is also evidence of other magic in the area, possibly residue from spells cast by the Zhentarim excavation team.

TREASURE

As noted above, searching the camp produces a *potion of superior healing*, 40 days of rations, 30 torches, a barrel containing enough oil for 20 oil flasks, a thieves' kit, a set of mason's tools, 6 vials of holy water, 200 feet of rope in 50 ft segments, and 3 remaining tents and 12 bedrolls. The rest is destroyed.

Alternatively, a DM may simply provide 50 gp worth of nameless supplies, 6 vials of holy water, and the *potion of superior healing*.

SOLINA'S TRIAL

The undead still hold a fragment of the paladins they were in life. Solina is proceeding over a trial for those captured by her revenants. Ragin Olwynson, Brandel, and Sofia and Caleb Cord are being tried as minions and conspirators of Vornjolnir, and as thieves and trespassers. Should they be found guilty, which is highly likely, the punishment will be death (See **Trial of the Dead** below for further information).

APPROACHING THE ENTRANCE

Read the following:

The heavy bronze doors are caked with dirt. Once, long ago, they must have shone intensely. Embossed into them are an upraised sword set before a blazing sun. They are unsealed now, forced open.

Behind the doors is a dark tunnel, lightless and chill, with a clinging fog seeping out.

Faint words can be heard echoing from the darkness, thick with antiquated pronunciation, and with them can be heard pleas for mercy in Common.

A successful DC 11 Intelligence (History) check reveals the heavily accented words to be that of a judge commencing a trial (See **Trial of the Dead**).

TRIAL OF THE DEAD

Read the following upon a successful History check:

You immediately notice that the system of justice is hundreds of years old. It appears to rely on patronage, meaning that someone isn't worthy of being given a defense unless others step in to risk themselves to attest to the person's character. Those who vouch on behalf of the accused become culpable as well and share in the punishment. This form of justice was to ensure that only the innocent would be vouched for as those who testified for the guilty would be punished as well.

These trials are often overseen by a triumvirate, three judges, who listen to the accused and decide on the severity of the punishment.

This system of justice is famous, or infamous, for its use of judicial champions and trials by combat, its use of weregild, and its use of *zone of truth* and mind reading as last resorts.

The justice system's fine points:

- Anyone can volunteer to argue in defense of the accused but he or she will suffer the same punishment should the accused be found guilty.
- Anyone can volunteer to take the place of the accused.
- Anyone can ask for the trial to be done by combat with the accused selecting a champion.
- Werigild (literally 'man gold,' payments to those offended by another) is accepted in this form of justice.

B. THE INNER BARROWS COMPLEX

Estimated Duration: 50 minutes

The barrows complex is an ancient stone dungeon set with powerful magic wards and made by expert masons. However, the disruptive presence of Vornjolnir has caused the stone to crack and open up, flooding part of the complex in his efforts to escape.

GENERAL FEATURES

The barrows are centuries-old structures with magic woven into their stones.

Terrain. The stonework is masterful, built to endure. But despite the best efforts of the builders, unquiet earth has shifted and cracked passages, causing portions of the walls to collapse.

Weather. The interior of the barrows is icy cold and filled with a chill mist.

Light. The frost-fog makes conditions dim, even with torches and lanterns or a *light* spell.

Smells and Sounds. Indiscernible whispers are heard in the fog along with the trial proceedings.

THE DESECRATED BARROWS

The barrows are imbued with the unseen traces of ancient evil. A *detect evil and good* spell cast within range reveals its presence.

DESECRATED GROUND

Undead standing on desecrated ground have advantage on all saving throws.

A vial of holy water purifies a 10-foot-square area of desecrated ground when sprinkled on it, and a *hallow* spell purifies desecrated ground within its area.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE BARROWS

Two **revenants** wait 20 feet into the barrows, flanking the entrance tunnel. They don't immediately attack unless threatened or they catch someone sneaking in or lying. The first adventurer taking objects or entering the tomb without permission becomes a target of vengeance by all **revenants** within the barrows.

Muddy tracks enter the barrows. Some are scraped across the stone, as if someone was being dragged.

Voices echo deep from within. The words becoming clearer as you near. From what can be discerned, a criminal trial is being conducted.

Two armored figures stand motionless twenty paces into the barrows. They watch you with burning eyes but don't move. In hollow, deathless voices they ask simultaneously, "Who disturbs our trial? Hast thou come to speak on the behalf of the accused? Speak boldly, that we may hear thee."

Allow another DC 11 Intelligence (History) check to reveal the information on the trial (See **Trial of the Dead**). Alternatively, if the adventurers ask the guards what is going on, the guards can relay the information found in the **Trial of the Dead** section.

PARLEYING WITH THE UNDEAD

The adventurers can peacefully parlay with the undead and join the trial as part of the defense or as silent watchers. If they do so, they are escorted to **Area C. The Hall of Remembrance**, where they are told to wait while a guard goes and speaks with Solina. One guard remains to watch the adventurers. The adventurers are permitted to walk around the hall and study their surroundings, even interact with it to a certain extent (such as **Sir Colville's riddle**). During this time, an adventurer could sneak away to spy on the undead but warn the adventurer of the consequences of being caught for the whole party.

After a few minutes (exact time is up to the DM), the guard returns and escorts the adventurers to Solina and the trial.

If the adventurers attack, the guards defend themselves

and reinforcements (see the **Undead Reinforcements** section) appear in two rounds, instead of 1 minute.

UNDEAD REINFORCEMENTS

Undead reinforcements appear 1 minute after combat with guards starts, or any part of the barrows is noticeably looted (**Sir Colville's riddle** treasure does not count). Two **revenants** and three **wights** charge the adventurers. The undead are dressed in archaic armor.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **revenants**. Add one **wight**.
- **Weak:** Remove two **revenants**. Add three **wights**.
- **Strong:** Add one **revenant**. Add one **wight**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **revenants**.

C. THE HALL OF REMEMBRANCE

This is the largest room within the barrows. It is extravagantly carved with beautiful murals and engravings.

This grand room was built to honor and remember those who have died in the battle against tyranny and villainy. Ten great pillars stretch to touch the ceiling, which holds an elaborate mural of the higher planes, of deities and heroes looking down and welcoming the way to their halls. The pillars are rare blue marble and carved to represent the ten ideals of heroic chivalry. Along the walls are glittering bronze tablets engraved with the names, titles, and feats of those laid to rest here.

It appears this room flooded at some point and the chillness of the barrows froze the water. The floor is covered in a thick sheet of red ice, making movement difficult. The surface glitters and shimmers in whatever light touches it, spraying prismatic and crimson refractions across the walls and ceiling.

Most of the northern wall is collapsed except for a small section containing a heavy stone plinth before it. There are also stone altars towards the back of the chamber against the east and west walls depicting a rising sun.

The chamber is approximately 35 feet wide (east to west) and 55 feet long (south to north).

The altars against the east and west walls depicting a rising sun are the **ward stones** keeping the barrows intact. These are two of the three **wards** Solina will ask the adventurers to destroy at the end of **Part 4**.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recalls the ten ideals of heroic chivalry (paladins and those with the appropriate background automatically succeed on this check): bravery, justice, mercy, honesty, perseverance, empathy, temperance, discretion, selflessness, and humility.

If these are mentioned to the undead and a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check made, the undead cease fighting the adventurers as the knights are reminded of the ideals they valued in life and can either return to rest or assist the adventurers (such as in the fight against Vornjol-nir's minions), DM's discretion. In either case, award full experience for the encounter.

Anyone with stonemasonry, proficiency in mason tools, or making a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices that the extensive damage to the stonework and cave-ins are caused by unusual forces, not the geological shifts or wear of time. The place for the barrows was well chosen for the structure to endure. No natural events have caused the damage.

A *detect magic* followed by a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals sources of ward energy coming from the altars on the east and west walls of this chamber that weave a web throughout the barrows. They are fluctuating oddly, which might explain the undead as the wards were designed to keep the living out and the undead in. It would take a long time and expensive parts to repair.

The red ice also emits necromantic energy. A *consecrate* spell or holy water removes the necromantic taint and the red color.

Here are a few samples for the bronze tablets:

- "Odaenathus Kayn, guardian of the green glade, friend of the fey, bearer of the Emerald Sword of Summer. Single handedly slew the young green dragon Crinnanmorax, and defeated the Unseelie champion Shay Duindae tel'Orin."
- "Varisha Vihara Karith, first drow knight of the order, exemplar and greatest of us during her time, inheritor of the Moon Tear Crown. Huntress of glabrezu and vanquisher of he whose name shall be forgotten."
- "Jalin Majere, spellfire wielder, and consummate pessimist, may the lessons you learned with us guide you on whatever plane you find yourself wandering."

Also written along the wall is the story of the fall of Bright Crown Citadel, the orders castle and the vault where the dark objects they recovered were stored. It mentions how not even a single foundation stone was left as though the temple fortress had simply ceased to exist.

When the adventurers approach the plinth, read the following:

The plinth in the back of the room appears to be an offering by an ally of the Dawnfire Knights. It says, "To those who have shown us the way with their deeds and deaths, we honor thee." And it is marked by the name of Sir Colville, grandmaster of the Delian Order, chronicler of 'Thief' and 'Priest.' Beneath is the riddle of the Delian order: "If thou are to keep this, thou must first give it to me."

If magical detection is used, the plinth radiates both strong abjuration and evocation magic. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices dangerous runic

markings. The plinth is trapped, and anyone giving a wrong answer to the riddle triggers the trap.

The answer to the Sir Colville's Delian riddle is for an adventurer to give his or hers word, oath, promise, etc. The plinth contains a secret compartment that opens when the riddle is answered correctly. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check locates the secret compartment. In this case, it requires a successful DC 16 thieves' tools check to open, which triggers the trap.

Within the secret compartment are two *scrolls of daylight*, an ornate silver lamp, and a non-magical silver martial weapon (this would typically be a silver longsword, but the DM can instead choose a martial weapon usable by the adventurers).

MAGICAL TRAP. GLYPH OF WARDING

Magical Trap (Levels 5-10 deadly threat)

The plinth is protected by runes that activate a *glyph of warding* and radiates both abjuration and evocation magic.

Trigger. Any creature who fails to answer the riddle correctly, or who opens the compartment before giving his or hers word, oath, promise, etc., triggers the trap.

Effect. A series of fiery explosions detonate in the chamber, filling **Area C**. Each creature in the area must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save. A creature takes 31 (7d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful save. The explosion alerts any remaining undead within the barrows. The explosion does not harm the room but can harm the undead.

The *glyph of warding* fades after activation or when the riddle is answered correctly.

Countermeasures. Answering the riddle or a successful *dispel magic* can deactivate the *glyph of warding* (cast as a 5th level spell slot).

TREASURE

If the secret compartment is found, the adventurers obtain two *scrolls of daylight* and a silver martial weapon. The ornate silver lamp is worth 100 gp.

D. ANTEROOM AND STATUE OF SOLINA

Read the following when the adventurers enter this small anteroom before the stairs down:

The apartment before the circular chamber holds an elegant statue of a beautiful woman wearing plate armor and wielding an intact Dawnfire. The statue is wrought of blue electrum and the plate armor is unmarred alabaster. She holds the sword raised above her head pointed towards the sky and gazes gently forward.

The base of the statue reads: "Alisandra Solina, our Lady of Dawnfire, favored of the sun, our Lady of Grace, touched by the divine, may her spirit endure, may her deeds persist untarnished, unbroken, unforgotten.

The lives she saved were countless.
The peace she brought was enduring.
The evils she slew were legion.

Her star was brightest, a light undimmed and undaunted even in the darkest of times, in the most dangerous of nights."

The words of the trial echo up from below, clear and cold. Beneath them can be heard faint crying.

E. THE STAIRS

The circular central room of the barrows leads down into a chamber where the senior members of the Dawnfire Knights were entombed, including Alisandra Solina.

The stairs are cracked and chipped but appear solid. They wrap around the chamber, which is a tall cylinder empty in the middle. Below you is a room more splendidly inscribed than any other thus far seen. The walls are plated with polished bronze, which are etched with electrum.

F. THE SARCOPHAGI AND TRIAL

When the adventurers enter the trial chamber, either escorted or not, Solina greets them and offers a chance to prove the innocence of the accused by a trial by combat, paying wergild, or arguing on behest of the accused.

Even if the adventurers have battled their way here, Solina will not immediately attack but attempt to speak with them and give them a chance to prove their innocence and the innocence of the accused. If the adventurers refuse, cast spells, or attack, she and her knights attack (see **Adjusting the Fight** below). If she is defeated in this way, her armor drops to the ground and her spirit speaks (go to **After Solina's Challenge**, which should be modified to reflect this outcome).

Give the adventurers **Player Handout 1**, and read the following when the adventurers approach the circular room:

This level is comprised of two closely connected chambers. The first holds a grand sarcophagus of bronze. Against the northern wall is a stone altar of a rising sun.

In the next chamber are three figures standing motionless in front of three ornate sarcophagi of bronze. One is wearing ceremonial armor of electrum and alabaster with a full-faced helm shaped as the visage of the beautiful woman portrayed by the statue in the apartment above this chamber. The other two figures are wearing ceremonial bronze armor studded with carnelian gems.

You see the accused standing in a corner flanked by two undead guards. There is a middle-aged man in rich attire nervously stroking an

intricate beard beside a young half-elf in black leather and two teenagers, who are huddled together.

All of them look terrified. The half-elf notices you as you enter and forces a smile, "I see more condemned have joined us. It is always nice to be dying in good company."

The teenagers whimper at this and the middle-aged man glares at him. "Sorry, Olwynson," the half-elf says to the man, "I didn't think it would go this far." The other man shakes his head.

The woman in the electrum armor turns to face you. In a voice vibrant and strong even in death, she asks, "Hast thou come to speak on behalf of the accused? Step forward and speak. Be warned they are charged most direly, and you will share their fate if found guilty.

"What say thee?"

On this level is another altar of a rising sun that is the third **ward stone**.

If the adventurers refuse, have Solina warn them they will face the wrath of herself and her knights. If they continue to refuse or openly cast spells, Solina attacks with her knights (see **Adjusting the Fight** below). If the adventurers accept, read the following and proceed with the trial:

The figure in the electrum and alabaster armor nods for you to take your place beside the accused.

"The four here, Ragin Olwynson, Brandel Grey, and Sofia and Caleb Cord, stand accused of heinous deeds and foul pacts with dark things. Each has been found meddling with the holdings of the Dawnfire Order, trespassing on sacred burial grounds, sacrilege and vandalism against the resting place of crusaders, theft of tomb objects, and trafficking in such items.

"Such actions can only be driven by worship and fealty to Vornjolnir, our ancient enemy who rose in undeath and still seeks to undo what we have done.

"You can choose trial by argument, trial by combat, or to pay weregild for absolution of thine crimes."

TRIAL BY ARGUMENT

The adventures arrive just as the four NPCs are being sentenced to death. The adventures can intervene on their behalf and argue to have the NPCs released.

Winning the argument against Solina's triumvirate is framed as a debate for simplicity and ease of play. The judges make accusations (the supposed crimes) and the adventures simply punch holes in their poor logic. Once an adventurer fields a counter, he or she then attempts to make a successful DC 16 Intelligence (History and Religion) or Charisma (Persuasion) (adventurer's choice) skill check to

show the triumvirate that they are mistaken. Good role-playing or knowledge of law or related history should earn inspiration. The undead don't care about Intimidation and being caught lying would end the trial with a loss. A daring adventurer could attempt to make a successful DC 18 Charisma (Deception) skill check, but warn the player of the consequences of being caught.

The adventurers may either take turns arguing a point (a group check using a relevant skill) or pick a character as lead arbiter and assist him or her with the Help action. Spells can be used but require a successful DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to hide the spell being cast, but if anyone is caught doing so, the trial ends in a loss and the heroes are attacked. Solina clearly explains this to the adventurers.

Solina may sternly warn them once if so caught before attacking (DM's discretion).

A *zone of truth* spell cast before Solina and the judges forces them to accept the innocence of the Cord siblings and Olwynson. However, Brandel would be found guilty with this method. The adventurers would have to do a trial by combat to force Brandel's innocence.

SOLINA AND THE TRIAL

The trial is a roleplay method to resolve this conflict. If the adventurers prefer trial by combat, outright melee, or paying the weregild, those are all options.

As always, assess the route that your group prefers.

ROLEPLAYING ALISANDRA SOLINA

The corrupting influence of Vornjolnir and the Harrowed King's relics have twisted Solina's perceptions and beliefs.

Solina switches between being a diligent moral authority and a perverse torturer, sometimes in the same sentence. She is mostly unaware of the change, but mortal observers immediately notice she's internally conflicted.

Quote: "Punishment is justice for the unjust; that which is not just is still law."

Solina and the undead do not distinguish among the merchant, the Cords, or the Zhentarim agent in terms of culpability—all appear to be guilty in their eyes.

This is what the Cord siblings (Sofia and Caleb Cord), Ragin, and Brandel stand accused of the following:

- Trespassing on sacred grounds.
- Theft and sacrilege.
- Cavorting with dark powers to free Vornjolnir.
- If found guilty for any of these crimes, the only just punishment is execution.

Argument points the adventures may field include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How sacred can these forgotten grounds be with so many undead frolicking about? Travelers, explorers, and farmers have been moving through the location of the barrows for centuries. Are you going to say all of them are guilty? How can the Cord siblings be guilty by simply living close to a place that is hidden?
- Many caravans move through the area, buying and

selling all sorts of products. Any number of them could have obtained items from here any number of ways. Are all guilty by the mere fact of being in the wrong place at the wrong time? Is that justice?

- The Cords and Ragin would have no way to knowing if anything was stolen. The land is littered with ancient ruins, especially so close to Cormanthor Forest. Farmers and even city-folk frequently build walls and homes from the stones of previous empires.
- By your broad definition of theft and trespassing, many scholars, archaeologists, and explorers would be violators, which simply isn't the case. The past must be learned from, or would you have us repeat the mistakes of Netheril?
- The historical duties of the Dawnfire were battling evil and securing dangerous magical objects from the remains of Narfell and Netheril. Why are you butchering petty thieves?

FIRST ROUND

On a success, Solina says that you make valid points, one she, for some reason, did not come to herself. She seems concerned, and a little bewildered.

On a failure, Solina is unconvinced and mentions as much.

SECOND ROUND

On a success, she mentions your words ring true, yet something feels wrong, something she cannot place, but she wills you to proceed in the name of justice.

On a failure, Solina denounces the attempt as frivolous and time wasting, questioning the honor of your efforts.

THIRD (FINAL) ROUND

On a successful, Solina commands her soldiers to stand down, and orders the release of the prisoners. She appears conflicted, and turmoil is audible in her voice.

On a failure, she nods solemnly and explains that you have failed. She and the other judges remain unconvinced of their innocence and that you shall be condemned with the guilty to just execution for the safety of all. Minions of Vornjolnir cannot be permitted to operate less harm befall the innocent, as it did in days gone by.

If the trial results in failure for the adventurers, one adventurer can instead elect to have a trial by combat to decide the innocence of the accused.

The accused commoners will flee the barrows once combat begins, or if they are found innocent. The undead would rather target the adventurers than the commoners and will not take opportunity attacks against the commoners.

After the trial, see **After Solina's Challenge**.

ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY

The Trial of the Dead. Running a verbal trial can be difficult. Be willing to avoid it and use a trial by combat if your group would prefer that resolution. A verbal trial can be fun if done well and with preparation.

WEREGILD (OPTIONAL)

The adventurers can pay the debt of the accused. Solina states that the price of freedom is 200 gp per head.

If the adventurers pay the weregild, Solina orders her revenants to release the prisoners, and then turns to speak with the party. See **After Solina's Challenge**, below.

TRIAL BY COMBAT

Should the adventurers choose a trial by combat, the adventurer they choose as champion will be dueling Alisandra Solina herself (a powerful **revenant**, see **Adjusting the Fight** for the duel). Even as undead, she is powerful, and this is apparent. Give the adventurers ample warning that the battle is not for the inexperienced or unprepared.

The battle is a one-on-one combat. It ends when one combatant is reduced to zero hit points. The duelist may use spells and consumable magic items. Allies may also secretly assist the duelist, but warn of the consequences of being caught.

If the adventurer loses the duel, all the living within the barrows are expected to accept their punishment—execution.

At zero hit points, Solina recovers to 1 hit point and yields, go to **After Solina's Challenge**. If the battle goes badly for the hero, or drags on too long, the other adventurers may join in. If they choose to, progress the events to an all-out battle with the other undead joining to support Solina.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT (SOLINA'S DUEL)

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative. In all cases, Solina has sworn vengeance against her target (see the **revenant** ability).

- **Very Weak:** Solina has 100 hit points.
- **Weak:** Solina has 130 hit points.
- **Strong:** Solina has 160 hit points and advantage on attacks.
- **Very Strong:** Solina has 190 hit points, and has advantage on attacks, initiative, and saving throws.

Should the adventurers instead fight their way to the trial and interrupt it with violence, Solina (a powerful **revenant**, see **Adjusting the Fight (Solina's Duel)**) and the judges (two **revenants**) attack with their guards (two **wraiths**). This also occurs if the duel is interrupted or an adventurer who is not a duelist is caught casting spells. Solina may sternly warn them once if so caught before attacking (DM's discretion).

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **revenants**. Remove two **wraiths**. Add four **wights**.
- **Weak:** Remove two **revenants**. Add two **wights**.
- **Strong:** Add one **wraith**.

- **Very Strong:** Add two **wraiths**.

AFTER SOLINA'S CHALLENGE

If the adventurers have simply slaughtered their way through the tomb and attacked Solina, what she says should reflect this.

Should Solina be defeated by combat, the adventurers pay the weregild, or the adventurers win the trial, read the following:

In a sad, empty voice, Solina says to you, "I do not understand this. Thou have proven thine selves, yet I feel compelled to execute thee. This is not right. Something," she seems to struggle, "something is wrong. I sense Vornjolnir's influence. Even now my great enemy fights me. Please, destroy this place. Bury us all and make sure his corruption is trapped here with him and he never rises. Seal him beneath stone and time.

"Please, guard yourselves and make haste. I do not know how long I can stave off his compulsions. I can hold back my knights, but Vornjolnir controls the darkness here, the things that lurk there."

Her voice eases, "I sense the Dawnfire. I am glad the blade has found worthy hands at last. Strength yet remains within. Use it to purge this corruption taking hold of our resting place. Use it to bring light to dark places and the downtrodden.

"Go, and may the dawn find thee, always."



Vornjolnir's blind desire to crack upon the barrows and free himself will be his undoing as he has also made the tomb fragile and the wards volatile.

Solina explains the following:

- There are three stones powering the wards and that they can be overloaded if damaged or disrupted.
- Some of the relics kept here have been infecting Solina and her legion in an unusual way.
- The power left in the Dawnfire can override the wards and stop the influence of Vornjolnir and the alien artifacts that have been kept here.

OVERLOADING THE WARDS

There is **one ward stone** in the crypt and **two ward stones** in the Hall of Remembrance. There are three stones in total; all must be destroyed to collapse the barrows.

Damaging the ward-stones is one way to destroy them. The ward stones have AC 10, 30 hp, and immunity to psychic and poison damage. Otherwise, touching the Dawnfire *sun blade* to a ward, or making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, can cause a ward stone to detonate. Possessing stonecunning or proficiency in mason's tools provides advantage on skills checks and attacks against the wards.

With each successful check, Vornjolnir yells out in rage. Read the following after the first ward stone is destroyed:

An imperious voice echoes within your mind: "Mortal wretches, your efforts will avail you not. I am Vornjolnir, the Foe-hammer of Galena. I defy death; I defy you. I destroyed these knights as I have destroyed countless others, and I will crush you. I am the hand of the Harrowed King who awaits my return. I am his watcher, I am his wrath, I am his warlock for he has blessed unto me immortality."

Read the following after the second ward stone is destroyed:

Again, the telepathic voice goads you: "Such desperation. Such fear. Struggle as you must, fight as you can. Death is all there is for you, unless you yield. Surrender and I will grant you the honor of serving as my immortal champions. I offer this once, so consider with what little wisdom your misbegotten kind can muster."

When the heroes reach the final stone, Vornjolnir summons his power to bring forth a terrible **devourer** to stop the heroes. It emerges from the darkness, hungry for souls. Read the following when the adventurers reach the final ward:

With a hateful tone, the voice peals within your mind, "My awakening is certain. I will hunt your descendants and make of them my lifeless slaves. Now face a champion of the Harrowed King, Lord of the Bleeding Throne."

From the darkness roils a mass of black flies and blood, which coalesces into a large form.

The stomach of the bloated thing's body pulsates, and within its belly writhes the bodies of the damned.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove one **devourer**. Add one **bodak** with 90 hit points.
- **Weak:** Remove one **devourer**. Add two **bodaks**.
- **Strong:** Add one **bodak**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **bodaks**.

VORNJOLNIR'S DARK WILL

Vornjolnir's malignant will empowers his minions. Until the ward stones are destroyed and the barrows collapsed, the death giant's minions, the devourer and bodaks, have advantage on all saving throws.

Also, his minions gain the following characteristic: **Legendary Resistance (3/Day)**. If a devourer or bodak fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Read when the adventurers successfully destroy the last ward stone and leave the barrows:

As you flee the barrows, the terrible, grating, deafening sound of cracking rock shakes the earth as the six hills collapse. Magical energy sparks and dance around the area.

The stones atop the large central mound explode in a shower of molten rocks. A great gust of dust and debris bursts into the air, leaving the area in a choking storm of grit. Blue fire on the burning mounds gives the dust cloud a strange azure color.

Soon everything is quiet and the fires fade leaving a field of rubble.

If Brandel or the villagers are still alive and have fled the barrows, read the following:

"By Helm's eye," Brandel says. "You did it!"
"Aye," offers Ragin Olwynson. "You did. I thought we were dead for sure. But, but you came and saved us. I don't know what to say. I have never seen anything like what you've done today. Your actions, your deeds are those for the pages of books and songs of bards."

The Cord siblings give you a shaky bow, "Thank you," and run off towards home.

"Well," Brandel laughs. "I think they have the right idea. Let's get out of here."

After his rescue, Brandel will turn over **Nasreet's orders** if asked. The adventurer carrying Dawnfire hears Solina's voice on the wind, thanking them.

Each adventurer earns the **Solina's Blessing Story**

Award (Handout 2).

CONCLUSION

The commoners are thankful to have survived their ordeal. With Solina's barrows sealed once more, the Order of Dawnfire once again slips into the annals of history.

Grindan and Brandel, if they survive, report the presence of Solina's barrow to their Zhentarim contacts. Likewise, Captain Aurn spreads the tale of how the adventurers stopped an undead scourge.

The slumber of the Harrowed King has been disturbed, and that shadowy force now stirs in the veil beyond worlds. Likewise, the death giant Vornjolnir has likely marked the adventurers for retribution and seeks to free his master.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

For more trouble caused by Nasreet, see The White Well (Tier 1), and for more intrigue with the Zhentarim, see The Cornflower Hive (Tier 1). To find out what happened to the Niss Arcindal, the seven-sided obsidian cube, see the Ashen Scar (Tier 1). To visit the infamous market fortress of Glip Dak in Thar, see The Black Market of Glip Dark (Tier 1). To find out what happened to the Bright Crown Citadel, home of the Dawnfire Order, seek such answers in The Lost Citadel (Tier 1 and Tier 2).

REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

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

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Bodak	2,300
Devourer	10,000
Revenant	1,800
Specter	200
Wight	700
Wraith	1,800

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Rescuing caravan survivors	25 per survivor

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 4,500 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 6,000 **experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Caravan Reward (Extra)	100
Caravan Reward	400
Raising Vinn Mirin	300
Farmer's Payment	100
Ransacked Caravan Goods	100
Yvette Mirin's Ring	250

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

DAWNFIRE (SUN BLADE)

Weapon (longsword), rare (requires attunement)

This orichalum hilt projects a bluish-white radiant blade when activated. The gem in the pommel sheds dim light in a 10 radius when within 60 feet of undead. This is addition to the illumination spread by the *sun blade*.

This item appears to be a longsword hilt. While grasping the hilt, you can use a bonus action to cause a blade of pure radiance to spring into existence, or make the blade disappear. While the blade exists, this magic longsword has the finesse property. If you are proficient with shortswords or longswords, you are proficient with the sun blade. See **Player Handout 1** for more details.

POTION OF SUPERIOR HEALING

Potion, rare

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

SCROLL OF DAYLIGHT

Scroll, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RENOWN

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Members of the Zhentarim that retrieve and destroy Nasreet's orders earn **one additional renown point**.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG).

APPENDIX. DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

***Alisandra Solina* (Al-is-on-draw SOUL-lean-uh).** The aasimar paladin lord who wielded the powerful artifact holy sword Dawnfire and led the templar order The Dawnfire Knights. She worked for a ki-rin, hunting down the corrupting items left by Narfell and Netheril.

***Vornjolnir* (VORN-yol-nir).** A frost giant raider who became a warlock dedicated to an imprisoned entity only known as the Harrowed King. After Vornjolnir was slain, he was raised as a death giant before his own imprisonment.

APPENDIX. UNUSUAL MONSTER/ NPC STATISTICS

BODAK

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (-3)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)	12 (+0)	12 (-0)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, the languages it knew in life

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aura of Annihilation. The bodak can activate or deactivate this feature as a bonus action. While active, the aura deals 5 necrotic damage to any creature that ends its turn within 30 feet of the bodak. Undead and fiends ignore this effect.

Death Gaze. When a creature that can see the bodak's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the bodak, the bodak can force it to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw if the bodak isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, unless it is immune to the frightened condition. Otherwise, a creature takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against the bodak until the start of its next turn. If the creature looks at the bodak in the meantime, it must immediately make the saving throw.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The bodak takes 5 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Fist. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

Withering Gaze. One creature that the bodak can see within 60 feet of it must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

DEVOURER

Large fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+0)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (-3)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The devourer makes two claw attacks and can use either Imprison Soul or Soul Rend.

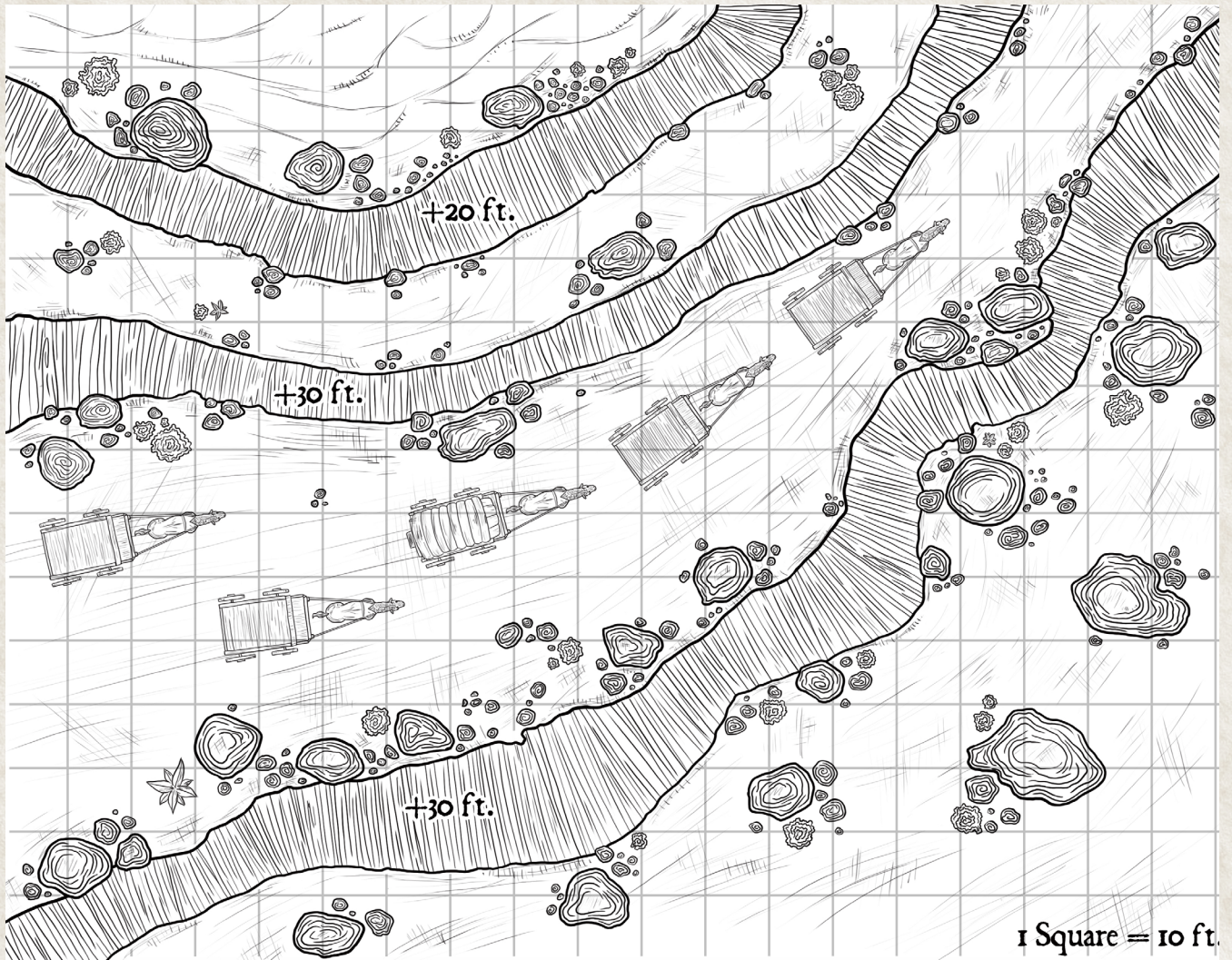
Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage.

Imprison Soul. The devourer chooses a living humanoid with 0 hit points that it can see within 30 feet of it. That creature is teleported inside the devourer's ribcage and imprisoned there. A creature imprisoned in this manner has disadvantage on death saving throws. If it dies while imprisoned, the devourer regains 25 hit points, immediately recharges Soul Rend, and gains an additional action on its next turn. Additionally, at the start of its next turn, the devourer regurgitates the slain creature as a bonus action, and the creature becomes an undead. If the victim had 2 or fewer Hit Dice, it becomes a zombie. If it had 3 to 5 Hit Dice, it becomes a ghoul. Otherwise, it becomes a wight. A devourer can imprison only one creature at a time.

Soul Rend (Recharge 6). The devourer creates a vortex of life-draining energy in a 20-foot radius centered on itself. Each humanoid in that area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Increase the damage by 10 for each living humanoid with 0 hit points in that area.

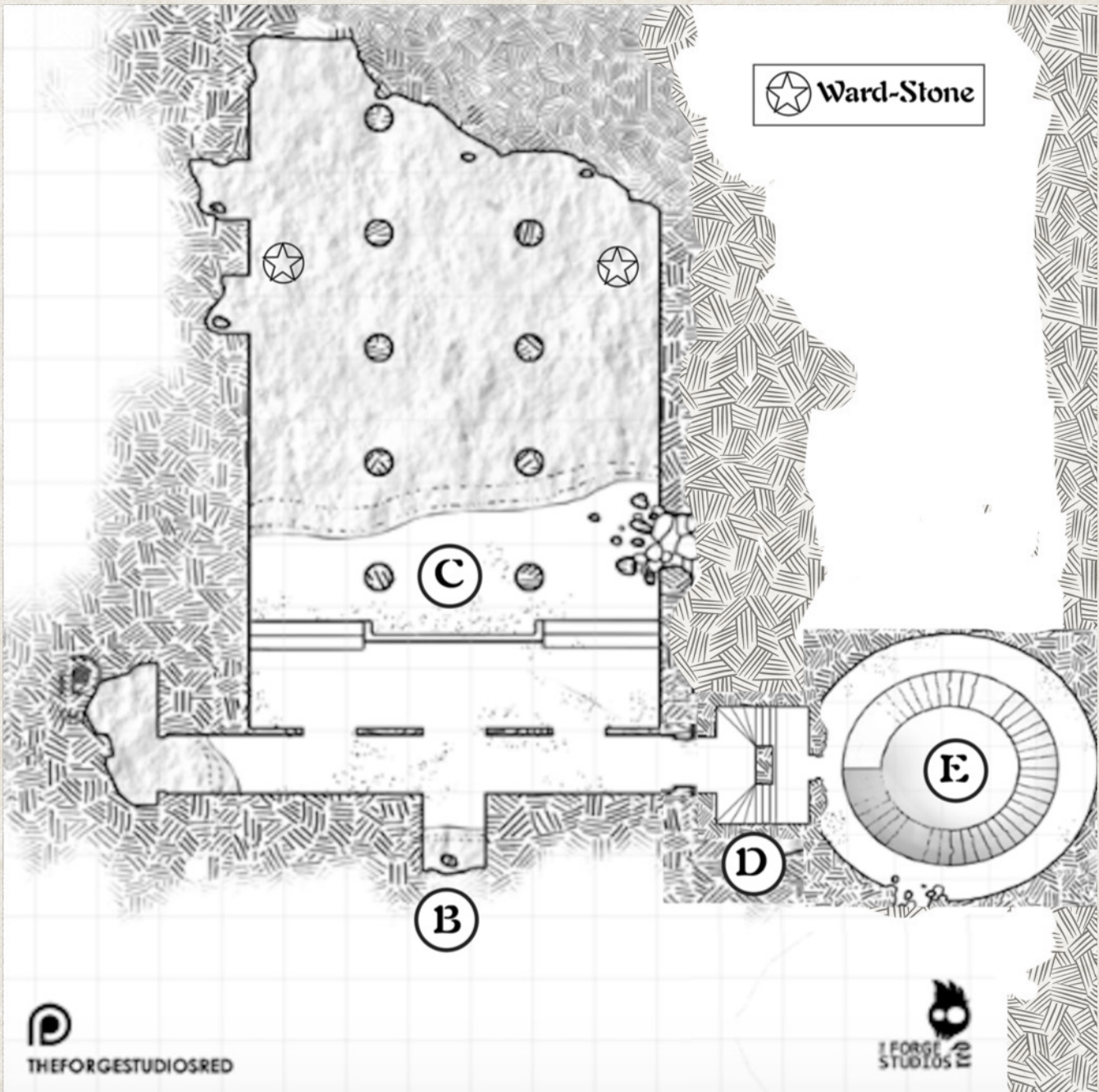
APPENDIX. CARAVAN MAP

(1 SQUARE = 10 FT)



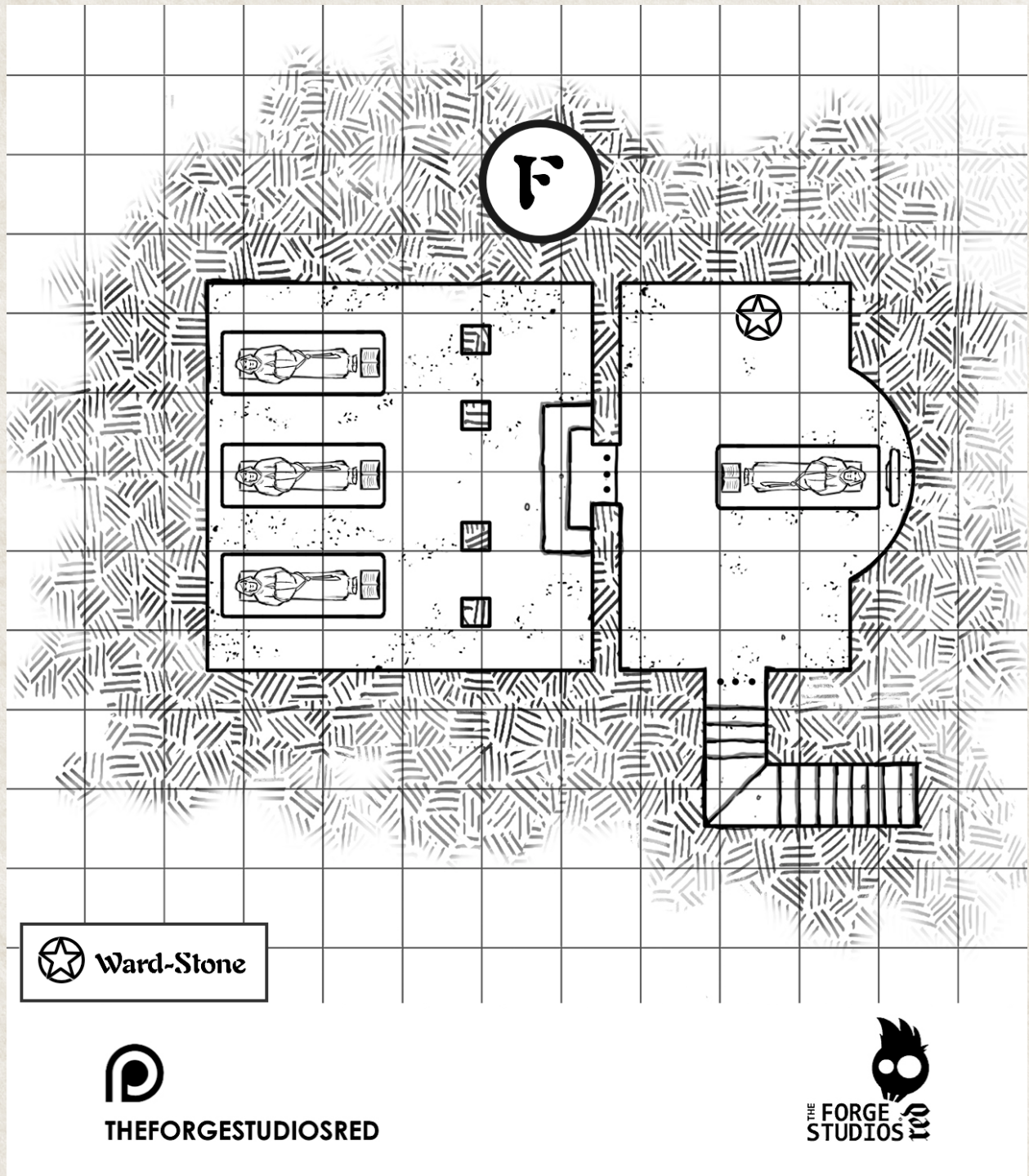
APPENDIX. BARROW MAP

(1 SQUARE = 5 FT)



APPENDIX. CRYPT MAP

(1 SQUARE = 5 FT)



PLAYER HANDOUT 1. MAGIC ITEM

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

DAWNFIRE (SUN BLADE)

Weapon (longsword), rare (requires attunement)

This orichalum hilt projects a bluish radiant blade when activated. The gem in the pommel sheds dim light in a 10 radius when within 60 feet of undead. This is addition to the illumination spread by the *sun blade*.

This item appears to be a longsword hilt. While grasping the hilt, you can use a bonus action to cause a blade of pure radiance to spring into existence, or make the blade disappear. While the blade exists, this magic longsword has the finesse property. If you are proficient with shortwords or longwords, you are proficient with the sun blade.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon, which deals radiant damage instead of slashing damage. When you hit an undead with it, that target takes an extra 1d8 radiant damage.

The sword's luminous blade emits bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. The light is sunlight. While the blade persists, you can use an action to expand or reduce its radius of bright and dim light by 5 feet each, to a maximum of 30 feet each or a minimum of 10 feet each.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2. STORY

AWARD

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

SOLINA'S BLESSING

In the event that you come across Vornjolnir's machinations or the Harrowed King's relics, know that Solina's blessing is upon you.





The Dark Hunt

The village near Oreclasp Keep has been reporting brutal owlbear attacks that have left people missing or dismembered. Lord Oreclasp has placed a bounty for every owlbear beak brought to Oreclasp Keep. The villagers don't suspect the deeper problems brewing in the land.

A Two-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



PDXAGE

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO *THE DARK HUNT*, A D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE ADVENTURE, PART OF THE OFFICIAL D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE ORGANIZED PLAY system.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 6th-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

This adventure takes place in and around the Oreclasp Keep hunting estate, several days from Elmwood. It is designed to take 120 minutes to play.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The unicorn's horn holds a potent magic. It can purge toxins, cure diseases, mend mortal wounds. But there is a temptation to all that power. When a unicorn's horn is severed, malignant and terrible things can be born from the golden spiral. If the horn should fall into the hands of one of the Lords of Darkness, horrific things are destined to occur.

—Aya Glenmiir, Celestials and Faerûn

Oreclasp Keep is a hunting estate two days east of Elmwood in the southern Moonsea region. Lord Oreclasp, an elderly dwarf and retired warrior, oversees the grounds as part of his duties to Queen Dagnabbit of Mithral Hall.

While the keep watches over a wide swathe of forest and oversees expansive hunting grounds, the true purpose of the keep is to guard a sacred location kept secret by the Oreclasp family.

The nearby village is plagued by brutal owlbear attacks, savage killings that have left bodies dismembered and people missing. While the hunting demesne has dealt with aggressive animals and monstrosities before, these attacks have become alarmingly frequent. Oreclasp was quick to put forth a bounty on these creatures in hopes of combating the menace while he seeks advice and devises a more permanent solution.

Then, in the middle of this ordeal, Lord Oreclasp changed, becoming uncharacteristically distant and impatient all while the owlbear attacks increased in both frequency and savagery.

The real trouble is that a **cambion**, Glimmercoal, has stolen Lord Oreclasp's form and usurped control of the manor. Glimmercoal infiltrated Lord Oreclasp's keep in the guise of a diplomat from Mithral Hall, offering the dwarf a magical ring as a reward for his service to the Queen. Then over the course of several days, the devil charmed or murdered the Lord's retainers and slew Oreclasp in secret, capturing the dwarf's soul in the *ring of mind shielding*. Glimmercoal then donned the ring and used *alter self* to assume the form of Lord Oreclasp. The trinket can be turned invisible while worn and now protects the cambion from detection.

Glimmercoal's main goal isn't to kill the dwarf lord or take the keep, although he's accomplished both, but his

true desire is to assassinate an elder unicorn who visits the nearby woods and use her murder to finish a curse that was started centuries ago with the death of her mate. It is the site of the unicorn's death that the keep and the Oreclasp bloodline protects.

Glimmercoal has been using a pack of devious **bearded devils** to hunt down and kill anyone who could interfere. The bearded devils have taken advantage of the owlbear infestation by disguising their grisly executions as animal attacks.

Now, with everything coming to fruition, Glimmercoal shapes and exploits the scar left in the land by the murder of the unicorn those centuries ago. As the curse awaits the final sacrifice, its influence is felt as the keep's inhabitants have been wracked with horrible nightmares that started soon after Glimmercoal arrived and awoke the dormant curse. The dark enchantment weakens the will and mind of those afflicted, leaving the residents unwilling to investigate the cause, going about their duties in a fugue state of despair.

The sequence of encounters is not mandatory, and if Glimmercoal's plans are thwarted early, the unicorn can still be rescued from the bearded devils. Likewise, even if the unicorn is saved and Glimmercoal is slain or driven off, the bounty for the owlbears is still available. This could require adaptation from the DM. Likewise, if play time is short, the owlbear bounty can be omitted or the unicorn can be encountered without fiendish pursuers. The key encounter is with Glimmercoal the cambion.

THE UNICORN

A unicorn named Goodberry makes her home in a secluded grove upon the preserve. She is ancient and makes periodic pilgrimages near the keep to honor the memory of her love, a unicorn assassinated centuries ago by devils who sought to murder the pair of unicorns as part of a ritual.

Now Goodberry is reticent and insular, but can be petitioned for assistance, usually at the behest of the Queen of Mithral Hall, who sends only those who are worthy and in need of advice or healing. She doesn't suspect the events unfolding around her. A priestess of Tymora named Shin who serves at the keep has become apprehensive of Lord Oreclasp and has contacted the unicorn to meet with her for advice and help.

Glimmercoal has sent his servitors, the pack of **bearded devils**, to follow Shin and slay the unicorn. After the adventurers thwart the fiend's evil plans, Goodberry informs them that something is wrong in Oreclasp Keep, and directs the party to investigate.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Owlbear Hunt. If the party contains a ranger or druid, Lord Oreclasp could have sent a request for assistance. The request would have been sent prior to Glimmercoal's usurpation, and now Glimmercoal is trying to deal with this turn of events without raising suspicion.

Harpers. The manor's land sits on the site where Goodberry's mate was slain centuries ago by a fiend, and this traumatic event left a lingering curse on the land. The Harpers are vigilant against evil arising again in the recesses of the forest. Any Harper agents could have been sent to speak with Goodberry and assess the state of things.

Emerald Enclave. The Emerald Enclave dispatches the characters in answer to Lord Oreclasp's request for assistance with the dangerous owlbear intrusion into the woods, which is upsetting the estate. However, all other communication from the dwarf lord has stopped.

Lord's Alliance. Lord Oreclasp is a mighty warrior and adventurer who has retired to his family's keep as vassal of Mithral Hall. He has always been prompt and consistent with communications with the Lord's Alliance but has missed two communiques. This is odd for the old dwarf lord.

Queen Dagnabbit. If the group has ever been in contact with Queen Dagnabbit or her allies, someone from the dwarf kingdom may have sent a letter requesting assistance with Oreclasp's owlbear infestation (dated prior to Glimmercoal's take-over of the keep). Likewise, a letter may have directed the adventurers to ask a favor from Goodberry the unicorn.

PART 1. GOLDWYN FARMS

The rolling fields of wheat and oats, barley and hops are punctuated by tall windmills. These farms extend for miles along the border of the great woods, feeding and supplying Oreclasp Keep. The geography makes the fields a gusty place, the tall grains often flowing in winds that fuel the many mills. The only road to Oreclasp Keep goes through the heart of these farms where a small village rests.

As you enter Goldwyn Village, you are greeted with a somber sight, a funeral conducted in haste. Beside four empty graves are four blood-splattered sheets covering the unmistakable forms of bodies. The gathering is unusually small, half a dozen red-eyed mourners.

The funeral is being overseen by a young initiate with the assistance of a gravedigger. If approached and asked, the initiate offers the following information:

- My name is Davith Miller. I am an initiate of Tymora. I am only overseeing this because my senior, priestess Shin, was killed last night.
- Late in the evening we were attacked by owlbears. They left tracks. No one saw them though, but they have been troubling the area for almost a tenday now. And in that time more than a dozen people have been killed or have gone missing. Counting last night, more than eighteen lives have been lost in ten days.
- Lord Oreclasp has put out a bounty of 50 gp on every owlbear beak, payable upon delivery to Lord Oreclasp himself.
- Shin's body is not counted among the ones here. She was dragged away. Everything about this is strange. From what I understand, owlbears are not stealthy hunters, yet they made little noise until it was too late.
- One other person was taken, Oreg, a halfling ranger who works as a huntsman for Lord Oreclasp. He was a close friend of Shin's and traveling with her.

If Davith is asked about anything out-of-the-ordinary happening:

- Shin was troubled and preparing to leave early today to seek guidance about something. I do not know what. I am sorry. I know this often seems the case, but I am only an initiate.
- The old forest around the hunting estate has been eerily quiet. There are few animals and the place seems darker, the shadows deeper.
- Those coming from the keep express a nervousness about the place, as if the grounds were haunted. There have been almost no travelers to the keep in the last several days, and the few who have returned talk about being plagued by terrible dreams.
- Strange and dangerous creatures do find their way into the hunting estate's woods. There have been past troubles with wyverns, manticores, owlbears, griffons, and even rumors of a displacer beast.

The adventurers can ask to inspect the bodies. A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check demonstrates the proper respect and the initiate and the mourners do not mind.

The bodies appear badly clawed by a large beast. However, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the claw marks are hiding wounds made by a large, bladed weapon.

Davith indicates where the attack took place, the edge of the village bordering the great wood. The backdoor of a lodge has been smashed by an incredible force. There are claw marks all along the door frame and inside across the walls.

The place is in complete disarray, beds are overturned, furniture is splintered, and there is dried blood smeared all about. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check indicates that there are indeed owlbear tracks but they are covering smaller, taloned humanoid prints. A failure on this roll only reveals the owlbear prints. If the second prints are discovered and relayed to Davith, he begs the adventurers to set out immediately to see if Shin still lives.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check shows nothing of value appears to have been taken from the lodge, only scattered about or knocked over.

If the adventurers wish to ask around more, there are few people left. Most have moved a safe distance from the region during these ferocious attacks. A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check gathers some tidbits of information from villagers:

- Lord Oreclasp rules this region, tithing the farmlands, but in return he maintains the roads with dwarven engineering and guard patrols. When the owlbear attacks started a tenday ago, he immediately put a bounty out to try to slow the problem and buy time to contact the druidic Circle of the Forest.
- Lord Oreclasp has a single child, Lady Hoff Oreclasp, a new initiate and cleric of Moradin.
- As far as anyone knows, no bounty hunters have shown up nor have any rangers or druids come, but the bounty is real.
- Lord Oreclasp was slain during an owlbear hunt years ago, but raised from the dead. He hates the beasts.
- No one has seen Lord Oreclasp outside the keep since the attacks started.
- A dwarven ambassador arrived from Mithral Hall a tenday ago to reward Lord Oreclasp for his service. No one saw the ambassador leave after arriving. There is, after all, only one road and it goes through the village.
- There is a legend of a mystical guardian who lives deep at the heart of the ancient wood.

Only supplies with a cost less than 25gp may be purchased here, such as rations, rope, oil, medical kits, and mundane tools.

Following the tracks is a simple affair, as whatever is responsible for this did not care to hide its tracks. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival), Intelligence (Investigation)

check, or Wisdom (Perception) check continues to uncover owlbear tracks pressed over the talon-footed humanoid prints. There is dried blood along the trail.

PART 2. INTO THE WOODS

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE OUTER WOOD

The forest and the hunting grounds within have the following general features:

Terrain. The outer wood is composed mostly of young trees clogged with underbrush. The woodlands, except for directly near the trails, are difficult terrain because of the thick undergrowth.

Light. The trees don't block the sunlight. At night, moonlight illuminates the forest floor.

Visibility. Visibility is decent. Range of sight varies between 60-120 feet.

Sounds. Eerily quiet except for a few insects and the occasional bird. A forest this dense and large should be filled with raucous noise, sounds of small birds, squirrels, raccoons, and a multitude of other animals. But it isn't.

Smells. The air is sharp with the smell of pine needles, with an occasional whiff of animal spoor or a late-blooming bush.

ACTUAL OWLBears

As the adventurers progress into the thick woods, a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check indicates large predators have been hunting throughout this area while a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check indicates the upturned trees, shed fur and feathers, and droppings are all signs of owlbear activity. The bloody trail from the village continues this way. With the amount of blood seen, things look bad for Shin. No Medicine check is required for this knowledge. However, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check discovers bloody hand prints grasping at trees and on rocks. Someone made it this far alive. The strange, taloned humanoid prints hidden under the owlbear tracks are also still present.

The owlbear den is located several hours within the woods in the depression of a dry river bed. The path leads to a ledge overlooking the den and then stops. A musky, animal odor permeates the depression and at the bottom of the ledge is more blood with a smeared trail leading into a cave as if something had been dragged. A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check shows the owlbear tracks stop here on the ledge but the humanoid ones continue deeper into the woods, and someone or something is being careful to hide the prints.

Unless the adventurers make a successful group DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check, the owlbears come out of the den to inspect the noises and scents.

Inside the den is one adult **owlbear**, as well as five juvenile owlbears (treat as **brown bears**).

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak.** Remove two juvenile owlbear (**brown bears**).
- **Weak.** Remove one juvenile owlbear (**brown bear**).
- **Strong.** Add two juvenile owlbears (**brown bears**).
- **Very Strong.** Replace juvenile owlbears (**brown bears**) with owlbears.

Another adult **owlbear** returns to the nest two rounds after melee starts, engaging the adventurers from behind. This owlbear was out foraging for food nearby and is part of the pack. On a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Nature) or Wisdom (Perception) check, the adventurers are not surprised, and are aware of the additional owlbear the round before it arrives.

Within the den are several partially consumed humanoid bodies, among other remains. Two bodies immediately stick out from the rest as being fresh, killed mere hours ago. One appears to be a child, but on closer inspection is a halfling in green garb while the other is a half-elf woman wearing a tattered robe. The woman must be Shin, the priestess who served Oreclasp Keep while the other can only be Oreg, the halfling ranger who accompanied her. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Investigation) check identifies that they were slain by a bladed weapon. The bodies are also covered with bite and claw marks from the owlbears.

Tucked away and hidden in Shin's clothes is a small diary written in Common. Read or paraphrase the following:

The priest's diary is written in Common. The small cloth-bound book narrates the daily life of the clergy of Tymora. Most of the diary entries are about weddings and funerals. The journal's tasseled bookmark indicates the last tenday. The very last entry contains a hand-sketched map of the hunting preserve with a mark deep in the woods, labeled 'Goodberry' in Common.

"Lord Oreclasp has been acting out-of-character for our gruff, old Lord. Where once he was stern and sincere, he has become impetuous and mocking, where once he was stoic and concerned, he has become flippant and cruel. And everyone in the keep has been reporting nightmares, terrible dreams that leave them fatigued. The cook reports that the larder has been tainted by something as milk curdles, meat rots, and grains decay. Even the damn beer has gone sour.

"I believe these are connected. What fool wouldn't? These evil dreams have made the keep's people easy to control, I think. No one seems to see the strange changes overtaking our Lord.

"He keeps fiddling with his finger, as if wearing a ring that isn't there, and if he catches you looking, he becomes angry. He has also shown a sudden and intense interest in the rumors of a unicorn who lives in the woods, questioning anyone who might know. I didn't show him

my map. I am afraid to, but he might already suspect by the way I keep avoiding him and the subject.

"I tried to pray for him to be cleansed, for any dark spirit or curse to be lifted from him, to wipe away magic that may be influencing his mind, but each time I drew close enough to cast the prayer, Oreclasp almost became violent with me.

"I must leave and ask Goodberry if she knows what may have happened. Perhaps what had occurred at the keep's location those centuries ago has suddenly been awoken by something. The tragedy still echoes in these woods.

"Oreg suspects something, too, and he will join me. He is excited to meet the unicorn. He has heard legends of such beings his whole life and partly became a ranger to meet one. I am happy for him. But I am also afraid. Oreg has been a good friend to Oreclasp for years, and now anyone close to the Lord is either acting oddly or dead.

"I hope the unicorn can help. I must hurry my meeting along with the unicorn sooner than what would be safe. But I can't help but shake this feeling I am being herded."

If the adventurers search the den, there are a total of seven bodies, all mostly eaten. The villagers said at least eighteen people have been killed or have gone missing. Not all the lost bodies made it here, apparently. There are also a few pieces of discarded gear strewn about by the feeding beasts. Most of it is broken, but a silver holy symbol of Tymora (amulet), a healer's kit, two daggers, and a dozen arrows can be scavenged.

With the map in hand, the adventurers, assuming they spotted the hidden tracks on the ledge, note that the covered tracks head towards where the unicorn's lair is marked on Shin's map.

If Shin and/or Oreg are returned to life, they offer to assist the party (Shin is a chaotic good **priest**, and Oreg is a chaotic good **scout**. Both suffer all the applicable debilitating effects of being raised from the dead). They beg the party to save Goodberry, fearing trouble for the unicorn.

Shin is a young and athletic half-elven woman with long auburn hair tied into an elaborate braid. A scar from her death now mars her cheek, and recent events have left her amber eyes haunted.

Oreg is a young, sandy-haired halfling with a contagious smile and warm laugh. However, current events have left him deeply shaken and unsure of the world.

Otherwise, if the adventurers refuse help, Shin and/or Oreg attempt to reach a temple of Tymora near Elmwood. Once there, they warn the temple leaders that there are fiends afoot in the forest, and that the owlbeasts are a ruse.

The adventurers can either go to the keep with what information they have or follow the map and tracks deeper into the woods towards the unicorn's grove. Ideally, the adventurers choose to go farther into the forest.

THE PATH FORWARD

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE OLD WOOD

The forest gives way to the ancient woodlands within, a place where great trees stand quietly, and have done so for centuries. Few know of what waits within. The ancient wood has the following general features:

Terrain. Little underbrush grows between the magnificent trees. The forest floor is covered with ferns and moss, with a few gentle brooks trickling along.

Light. There is some sunlight during the day, when it can break through the forest canopy. At night, diffuse moonlight barely illuminates the forest floor.

Visibility. Visibility is minimal. Range of sight varies between 30-60 feet.

Sounds. Whatever threat has pervaded the young wood has yet to reach this far. The place is full of animal sounds, birds, insects, and other, stranger beasts.

Smells. The air is crisp with the smell of damp moss and ferns.

THE HUNTERS

As the adventurers proceed, the change in the forest is noticeable. The young trees give way to the old, massive evergreens now dominating everything. The dense undergrowth thins to moss and ferns and lichen. There are no hunting trails here. No one dares to do so.

As the adventurers travel deeper into the old wood, they might hear the struggle between the unicorn and devils. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check alerts the adventurers to the chase going on and gives them two rounds to prepare. Soon the party spots Goodberry momentarily. The unicorn appears wounded, deep cuts mar her silvery-white flank. Chasing the beautiful creature is a pack of three **bearded devils**, who are hooting and howling in frenzied pursuit. These creatures are obviously malicious, and can be identified as devils on a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) skill check.

The forest fills with guttural whoops and yells in a strange tongue. Across the forest floor, barely visible between great trees, leaps a majestic white creature resembling a horse with a gleaming, golden horn. The unicorn's flanks heave and blood flows from several wounds.

Chasing the unicorn is a group of scarlet-skinned, bearded humanoids. The pursuers howl amongst themselves, waving sinister-looking iron halberds and flicking the air with elongated, black tongues.

In your mind, you hear a maiden's voice. "Please, help me. These fiends are upon me and I tire!" With that, the unicorn turns and heads directly towards you, followed by her hunters.

THE INFERNAL CHANT

Anyone who is fluent in Infernal, or can comprehend all spoken languages, realizes that the devils are singing a kind of wicked chanty.

Bits of the chant include "Oh, pretty mare, no more will you be fair. We'll eat your flesh and bash the rest," and "Spatter, splatter, muck and mire. We'll roast her bones with Nine Hell's Fire."

THE DARK HUNTERS

Goodberry is outside of her lair and thus has no Legendary Actions to utilize. As well, she has exhausted her daily *teleport* ability. She is injured and panicked. Because of this, she heads directly towards the adventurers, hoping they can aid her.

There are three **bearded devils** who immediately attack the adventurers. They cannot be parlayed with and fight to the death. Goodberry flees well away from the melee, but will risk getting close to mend wounded adventurers with her Healing Touch ability. She will assist in combat if more than half the party is dead or disabled. Goodberry is injured and has 40 hit points remaining. If she falls below 20 hit points and the party appears vanquished, she will Disengage and flee into the woods, returning only if the fiends are vanquished.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak.** No change.
- **Weak.** No change.
- **Strong.** Add one **bearded devil**.
- **Very Strong.** Add two **bearded devils**.

Once defeated, the bearded devils violently vanish but leave behind the owlbear paws they used to cover their tracks. These devils are responsible for the slain villagers. After tormenting and slaying the poor commoners, the fiends deposit the bodies near the owlbear den. The owlbears, being mere monstrosities, haul the corpses back to their den and eat them.

GOODBERRY THE UNICORN

Goodberry is ancient and has seen several kingdoms rise and fall in the ever-cyclical patterns of Faerûn. She typically avoids the world outside the old wood, but she makes exceptions for folk who are both pure of heart and strong of will.

Goodberry was magically contacted by the priestess Shin, who beseeched her for help and advice about what has befallen Oreclasp Keep. Shin's description of what of events set a seed of fear within the heart of this immortal creature, for she dreads the return of the devils responsible for the murder of her love those centuries ago.

Goodberry had agreed to meet Shin but only if the priestess and her friend Oreg, the halfling ranger, would make

the journey into the deep wood and her glade. However, she sensed Shin was in danger and left her grove to meet the priestess and ranger halfway and guide them back. Shin and Oreg never came. Instead, the bearded devils arrived and gave chase.

ROLEPLAYING GOODBERRY THE UNICORN

Goodberry is ancient and watches over the preserve. After the death of her mate, she has become more elusive and wary. She remains a strong, stabilizing celestial presence in the forest. While kind, polite, and patient, she is also distant and often seems lost in deep thought.

She was trying to meet with Shin when Glimmercoal's minions found her.

Goodberry prefers to listen via telepathy before introducing herself, when she has a choice.

Quote: "Few things give me fear like a hunting party of devils. It has been centuries since I have seen their ilk here, in my forest, and only tragedy came with them."

CELESTIAL INSIGHT

After the fiends are defeated, Goodberry approaches the adventurers. She may spend the rest of her Healing Touch uses now, if she has any remaining.

Goodberry relates what she knows about Glimmercoal and the fiends. Read or paraphrase the following:

Again, you hear the maiden's gentle voice ring forth in your mind: "Thank you. What you have done is not only for me, for those terrible things would have used my death to bring such horrid misery. Thank you, mortals. I will never let your deeds be forgotten. But please, there is more. The threat still lingers. The darkness still grows. We must hurry.

"I have felt a terrible shadow creeping through the woods. It is a darkness I have not felt for such a long time, and one I have long dreaded. This infernal blight appeared during the last full moon. That is the time the dreams started filling the nighttime air.

"The power continues to spread. The entire keep is under the sway of something. Please, you must confront whatever is behind this. Something is rotten within Oreclasp Keep."

Goodberry will not risk her life going close to the keep. There is too much at risk should she fall. She will help them however she can and retreat to her grove, or farther away to a place more hidden.

If the adventurers ask the unicorn what is happening she can provide some answers:

- She left the safety of her grove to meet with the priestess Shin, who sought aid about the festering corruption.
- From what Shin described in her brief communications, Goodberry fears Oreclasp is possessed. There must be a vile artifact controlling him somewhere in the Keep.
- These fiends must have been hunting her for days,

killing those who grew suspicious. Someone or something at the keep might have directed them, but she isn't sure. Goodberry reasons the fiend's failure tracking her down eventually made them use Shin and Oreg as bait to lure her out.

- Shin's map came from the directions Goodberry relayed to the acolyte through magical communications.

If they ask about her, she can tell them:

"Hundreds of years ago, my life-mate was brought low in a fiendish trap. That foul moment has echoed in my heart and soul ever since. I fear these monsters seek to finish the deed and unleash the unrelenting power of their infernal ritual."

Goodberry can inform the adventurers of some specifics:

- Goodberry believes that considering the nascent state of the ritual, a *dispel magic*, *remove curse*, or similar spell or ability can free people from the effects of the enchantment.
- Whatever is causing this comes from the keep, or someone at the keep.
- The keep stands at the site of the murder of Goodberry's mate, and is a locus for the curse.

After the discussion, Goodberry touches each adventurer with her horn, giving them a magical boon. This boon gives Advantage on saving throws against charm and curse effects for the next 24 hours, and removes any curse or charm effect that may be present when the boon is bestowed.

Now the adventurers must solve what is happening within the keep. The journey back is blessed by Goodberry, and is without incident, even serene, as the sun is bright and warm, birds sing loudly, flowers bloom, and plump berries and ripe fruit appear in abundance. All adventurers earn *Ally of the Forest* as a Story Award.

PART 3. ORECLASP KEEP

GENERAL FEATURES

The dwarf-built keep has the following general features:

Terrain. Fine dwarf craftsmanship shows in every detail of the keep's walls. It is not drafty like a human-built structure.

Light. There is ample sunlight during the day, filtering through many windows and archways.

Visibility. The keep sits on a knoll, and is slightly elevated above the land. At dawn and dusk, there is some fog that lightly obscures anything beyond 90 feet.

Sounds. The keep is mostly quiet. There is little ambient noise from outside during the day. At night, the inside of the keep is often pierced by moans from the residents' nightmares.

Smells. The smells of the forest, cooking, and an occasional lit fireplace fill the keep.

Oreclasp Keep owes fealty to the dwarf lords of Mithral Hall, and acts as a vassal and hunting preserve. The keep itself maintains a small garrison of soldiers, and sits on the edge of an ancient forest. Tactically the keep is an outpost, but a few lords of Mithral Hall occasionally seek out Goodberry's aid. The unicorn's presence is not common knowledge. Once nearby the keep, the adventurers may report directly to Lord Oreclasp.

THE CURSE OF ORECLASP

The people within the keep look exhausted and frightened. If divine sense or a similar ability is utilized, the entire keep radiates as, respectively, fiendish and evil. Because of a few factors, magic will not be able to pinpoint Lord Oreclasp as a fiend. Instead, the whole keep is tainted by a fiendish presence. Specifically, Glimmercoal (the **cambion** masquerading as Lord Oreclasp) wears a *ring of mind shielding*, which protects him from detection of his creature type, detection of his alignment, or telepathic communication (unless he allows it, which is unlikely).

The adventurers must make a successful DC 15 Wisdom saving throw every time they complete a long rest in the keep. Failure means that the target is cursed. The cursed target cannot heal damage or remove exhaustion during a rest, only via magical means. The curse lasts until it is lifted by a *remove curse* spell or similar magic, or until Glimmercoal is driven away.

SICKNESS AND HEALTH

First and foremost, if Shin or Oreg is with the adventurers, the guards immediately notify Glimmercoal (in the guise of Lord Oreclasp), who issues a command to his troops to launch an attack. Glimmercoal knows that his ruse is up if the adventurers are accompanied by either of these two.

Otherwise, once the adventurers arrive at the keep, they are greeted by four solemn and tired guards who say little

and take the adventurers to wait for a meeting with Lord Oreclasp. They tell the adventurers that the Lord is preoccupied with matters of importance and it will be hours before he can see them. The guards are completely charmed and cursed so they're oblivious to the evil around them. They are also extremely taciturn, and answer very little, but if pestered, they can answer the following depending on what they're asked:

- Normally, Majordomo Toth Oreclasp would greet you formally, but she is dead. She died seven days ago to an owlbear attack while outside tending her herb garden. A new person can't be elected until the mourning is over.
- Majordomo Toth was a close friend of Shin and Oreg.
- Lady Hoff Oreclasp has sequestered herself in the Temple of Moradin here at the keep. She has been fasting and praying for days now. If the adventurers ask to see Hoff, the guards refuse, saying she can't be disturbed in her meditations.
- Everyone has been having bad dreams, but it is just the nature of the stress with dealing with too many outsiders and frequent owlbear attacks.
- We've seen nothing strange in the keep or with Lord Oreclasp. The Lord works very hard to protect all of us and does not need outsiders taking his time.
- We're stationed at this keep in service of Oreclasp and Mithral Hall. Our families live in the village, but have been evacuated because of the severity of the attacks.

If asked about Shin or Oreg they use present tense, as they are unaware of their deaths:

- Shin is a priestess of Tymora assigned here by her family. She is a half-elf from a merchant house allied with the dwarven kingdom of Mithral Hall. She is supposed to serve three years at the keep before returning home.
- Oreg is a halfling ranger who serves as Lord Oreclasp's game warden, leading hunting parties and keeping track of the movements of herds. He is a close friend of Shin and Toth.
- Shin and Oreg left yesterday in a hurry to Goldwyn village. We don't know why.

If asked about the deaths they can list a few from the keep's small court:

- Toth Oreclasp, the majordomo, was killed in her garden by owlbeats seven days ago.
- Stori Oreclasp, the local priest of Moradin, was killed in his bed by owlbeats ten days ago. Nothing suspicious about that. Owlbeats can climb and sneak, right? (This demonstrates how charmed the guards are.)
- Marm Candlewick, the royal cartographer, was killed six days while traveling to Goldwyn to pick up paper.
- The ambassador from Mithral Hall vanished eleven days ago. We presume he was killed by owlbeats. That would make him the first victim. The ambassador gave Lord Oreclasp something little from a small lockbox. They did not see what it was.

The list goes on. Almost anyone who could resist Glimmercoal has been killed. Make up what names or ranks you

feel are necessary.

The adventurers will be waiting until dusk; on a successful DC 16 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) skill check, the adventurers convince the guards to admit them swiftly. In this case, Intimidation checks are made at disadvantage.

Even though the keep is plagued with sickness (and is cursed), the keep's inhabitants seem oblivious. Everyone inside is subtly controlled by fiendish powers. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check shows that whatever troubles the guards is not any type of common or uncommon sickness.

Remove curse, dispel magic, or something similar cast on a guard brings the watchman out of his or her stupor. In this scenario, the guard leaves the keep as swiftly as he or she can, wanting nothing more than to check on family and report the terrible things happening at the keep to Mithral Hall. The guard explains while leaving that the priest's death seemed suspiciously timed with the onset of his nightmares, and that Stori certainly was not killed by owlbears. Also, Lord Oreclasp is not himself. If the other guards see one of their own cured, they flee to report to Lord Oreclasp, who orders an attack on the players.

WHAT IS THE CURSE?

The curse is an infernal ritual. It is not complete, but once completed, it crawls over the land bringing sickness and undeath, warping the minds and wills of those who fall in its shadow. It causes the following effects:

Disorientation. Disadvantage to all Wisdom saves.

Magical Exhaustion. Damage and exhaustion can only be healed through magical means, not short or long rests.

Sleepless Rest. The mind is filled with terrible dreams that cause a level of exhaustion every ten days until death.

Graveborn. If something living dies within the realm of the curse once it is fully enacted, it rises as undead.

Removing the Curse. The curse lasts until broken, which involves slaying the caster and/or a *wish*.

LORD ORECLASP

As the adventurers approach the keep, Lord Oreclasp orders a footman to bring the adventurers to his chambers to receive the bounty. This is the **cambion** Glimmercoal, who is planning on tying up loose threads by killing the adventurers. Glimmercoal has little to lose from this. His ultimate goals are to kill the unicorn and empower the nascent curse left by the murder of Goodberry's mate years ago.

ROLEPLAYING LORD ORECLASP/GLIMMERCOAL

Glimmercoal the cambion has usurped Lord Oreclasp's place, and captured the true Lord in the cambion's *ring of mind shielding*. He is devious and cunning, merciless and sadistic; he's a devil. Even in Oreclasp's form, much of his malice and ire spills forth.

Glimmercoal seeks to fully awaken and strengthen the ancient curse dormant in the land. He is willing to carry his charade to a point, but is short tempered. If the adventurers

let on they have discovered the ruse, or directly confront Glimmercoal, he will launch an attack.

Quote (Glimmercoal, as Lord Oreclasp): "I hate trouble. I hate owlbears. And owlbears mean trouble, so I loathe those monstrosities even more."

Lord Oreclasp/Glimmercoal stands in his meeting chamber, along with his soldiers. At first, the cambion (in the guise of Lord Oreclasp) is openly taunting of the adventurers, accusing them of killing villagers and plotting to usurp control of Oreclasp Keep. If he has the opportunity, he will attempt to use his *fiendish charm* on one of the adventurers, and then orders his soldiers to attack. Glimmercoal will shapeshift back to his true form immediately before combat ensues.

Lord Oreclasp's flesh begins to melt and churn, shifting and roiling. A sulfurous smell hits your nostrils, as the dwarf noble shapeshifts into a crimson-skinned, long-horned fiend wielding a matte-black rapier.

"By the Hells, that dwarf form is dull and boring! Come, there will be blood on my blade tonight!" The vile figure screams. "Slay them! Slay them all!"

Glimmercoal is a **cambion**, and there are four **veterans** aiding him in the ensuing fight. These veterans are thoroughly charmed by his power and continue to fight even if they take damage. If Glimmercoal is slain, the mind-control ends and the veterans yield or flee. Likewise, if *dispel magic* or other similar magical effects are used on the veterans, they regain their senses and flee the battle.

Glimmercoal fights until death, knowing that he has failed to unleash the curse. He anticipates retribution upon return to the Nine Hells. The cambion wields a magical, fiendish *rapier of life stealing*. Upon Glimmercoal's defeat, he uses his fiendish powers to destroy the magic of his *ring of mind shielding*, but lacks the energy to destroy the Rapier of the Dark Huntsman as well.

ADJUSTING THE FIGHT

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak or Weak.** Remove the **veterans**. Add four **bandit captains**.
- **Strong.** Add two **veterans**.
- **Very strong.** Add three **veterans**.

If Glimmercoal is defeated, his body dissipates in a burst of foul smoke, and his magic ring and rapier clattered to the ground.

As the mortal blow strikes the fiend, his body rapidly dissipates into a reeking cloud of green smoke. His last words echo against the walls: "You will reap nothing from my defeat. I'll send this gullible dwarf to oblivion." With the last strength of his mortal form, Glimmercoal

removes the ring and crushes it. He tries to smash the blade of his sword against the stones but is too weak.

With a metallic clatter, the fiend's black-bladed rapier, as well as a ring, tumble to the ground. As the vapors clear, you see that the ring has been sundered, the bauble melted and cracked.

Lord Oreclasp's spirit is not destroyed with the ring but freed. It was a lie from the defeated devil, a desperate bluff to trick the adventurers. What remains of the *ring of mind shielding* is a couple of cracked rubies and smoldering metal. Even destroyed, the ring radiates a waning fiendish aura. All adventurers earn the Story Award: **Glimmercoal's Ire**.

THE SOUL IN THE RING

Once Lord Oreclasp's soul is freed, Lord Oreclasp can be returned to life via *raise dead* or *resurrection*. Oreclasp's daughter and heiress, Hoff Oreclasp, arranges for a cleric of Moradin to return her father to life. Hoff will then bestow the non-magical remains of the ring to the adventurers as a reward. The jewels from the ring are worth 100 gp. If the bodies of Shin, the acolyte, or Oreg, the ranger, have been recovered, the two are also returned to life.

If the ring remains with Glimmercoal, Lord Oreclasp is tortured for centuries, as he is bound within the ring.

Each character receives **250 experience points** for freeing Lord Oreclasp's soul from Glimmercoal's power and helping to restore Lord Oreclasp to life.

CONCLUSION

As a reward, Lord Oreclasp (or his daughter) gives the adventurers a satchel with 400 gp, and insists that the characters stay for a feast in their honor. The curse of nightmares is lifted once Glimmercoal is defeated.

The nobles also make good on the owlbear bounty, paying 50 gp per owlbear beak. The juvenile owlbears are counted as adults for this purpose.

Lastly, the adventurers are given Glimmercoal's *rapier of life stealing*.

Each character receives **200 experience points** when the curse is lifted.

DEVELOPMENT

The adventurers have potentially made two allies: The Oreclasp noble house, and Goodberry the unicorn. At the same time, they have earned the enmity of Glimmercoal. Like all fiends, the cambion will never forget nor forgive a grudge.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their character's rewards on the adventure log sheet. Give your name and DCI (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Bandit Captain	450
Bearded Devil	700
Brown Bear (Juvenile Owlbear)	200
Cambion	1,800
Owlbear	700
Veteran	700

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Remove the curse on the Keep	200
Restore Lord Oreclasp to life	250

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 1,500 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 2,000 **experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Glimmercoal's ring	100
Lord Oreclasp's reward	400
Owlbear bounty	50 per owlbear

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to the system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RAPIER OF THE DARK HUNTSMAN (RAPIER OF LIFE STEALING)

Weapon, rare (requires attunement)

This matte-black rapier does not reflect light. It radiates a faint fiendish aura, and turns chill to the touch when within 30 feet of a good-aligned cleric or paladin. Once attuned, the wielder often feels hungry, even if they have just eaten. However, when the life stealing power is used, the wielder experiences an invigorating euphoria and feels satiated. The blade glows dully when it has fed. The description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

This item can be found in **Player Handout 1**.

STORY AWARDS

The characters can earn the following story awards during play.

Glimmercoal's Ire. The adventurers have earned the ire of Glimmercoal the cambion for slaying his mortal form. In encounters with Glimmercoal in the future, he will seek to magically control and/or destroy adventurers with this Story Award over any other potential target.

Ally of the Forest. Goodberry the unicorn owes the adventurers a favor. During a short or long rest, the unicorn's blessing causes a magical bush with 10 berries to grow near the adventurer's camp or abode, as per the *goodberry* spell. Cross this Story Award off once it is used.

PLAYER REWARDS

The characters earn downtime and renown in accordance with the guidance prescribed by the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Members of the Emerald Enclave earn one extra renown point for rescuing Goodberry.

Members of the Lord's Alliance earn one extra renown point for discovering what happened to Shin, the missing acolyte.

DM REWARDS

In exchange for running the adventure, you earn XP, gp, and downtime days in accordance with the guidance prescribed by the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPENDIX. NPC SUMMARY

Glimmercoal (GLIM-mehr-coal): Glimmercoal is a cambion who seeks to restore an ancient curse upon the land. To do this, he needs to obtain Goodberry the unicorn's horn.

Goodberry (GUD-berry): An ancient unicorn who dwells near Oreclasp Keep. Goodberry's mate was killed by fiends centuries ago, and she loathes and fears devils.

Lord Oreclasp (LORD OR-clasp): Lord Oreclasp is the stern leader of Oreclasp Keep. He was killed by Glimmercoal while wearing a magical ring, and now his soul resides within Glimmercoal's ring, where Lord Oreclasp is subjected to the fiend's vile thoughts.

Oreg (OH-reg): The halfling huntmaster of Oreclasp keep. Close friend of Shin.

Shin (SH-in): Shin is a priestess who serves Oreclasp Keep on behalf of Mithral Hall's leaders. Shin and Oreg were killed by Glimmercoal's devils while seeking help.

APPENDIX. UNUSUAL MONSTER/ NPC STATISTICS

CAMBION (GLIMMERCOAL)

Medium fiend, any evil alignment

Armor Class 19 (scale mail)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6, Int +5, Cha +6

Skills Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fiendish Blessing. The AC of the cambion includes its Charisma bonus.

Innate Spellcasting. The cambion’s spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The cambion can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *alter self*, *command*, *detect magic*

1/day: *plane shift* (self only)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cambion makes two melee attacks or uses its Fire Ray twice.

Rapier of Life Stealing. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage. If Glimmercoal rolls a 20 on the attack roll, that target takes an extra 10 necrotic damage, provided that the target isn’t a construct or an undead. Glimmercoal gains temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt.

Fire Ray. Ranged Spell Attack: +7 to hit, range 120 ft. one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Fiendish Charm. One humanoid the cambion can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the cambion’s spoken commands. If the target suffers any harm from the cambion or another creature or receives a suicidal command from the cambion, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the target’s saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the cambion’s Fiendish Charm for the next 24 hours.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1. MAGIC ITEM

RAPIER OF THE DARK HUNTSMAN (RAPIER OF LIFE STEALING)

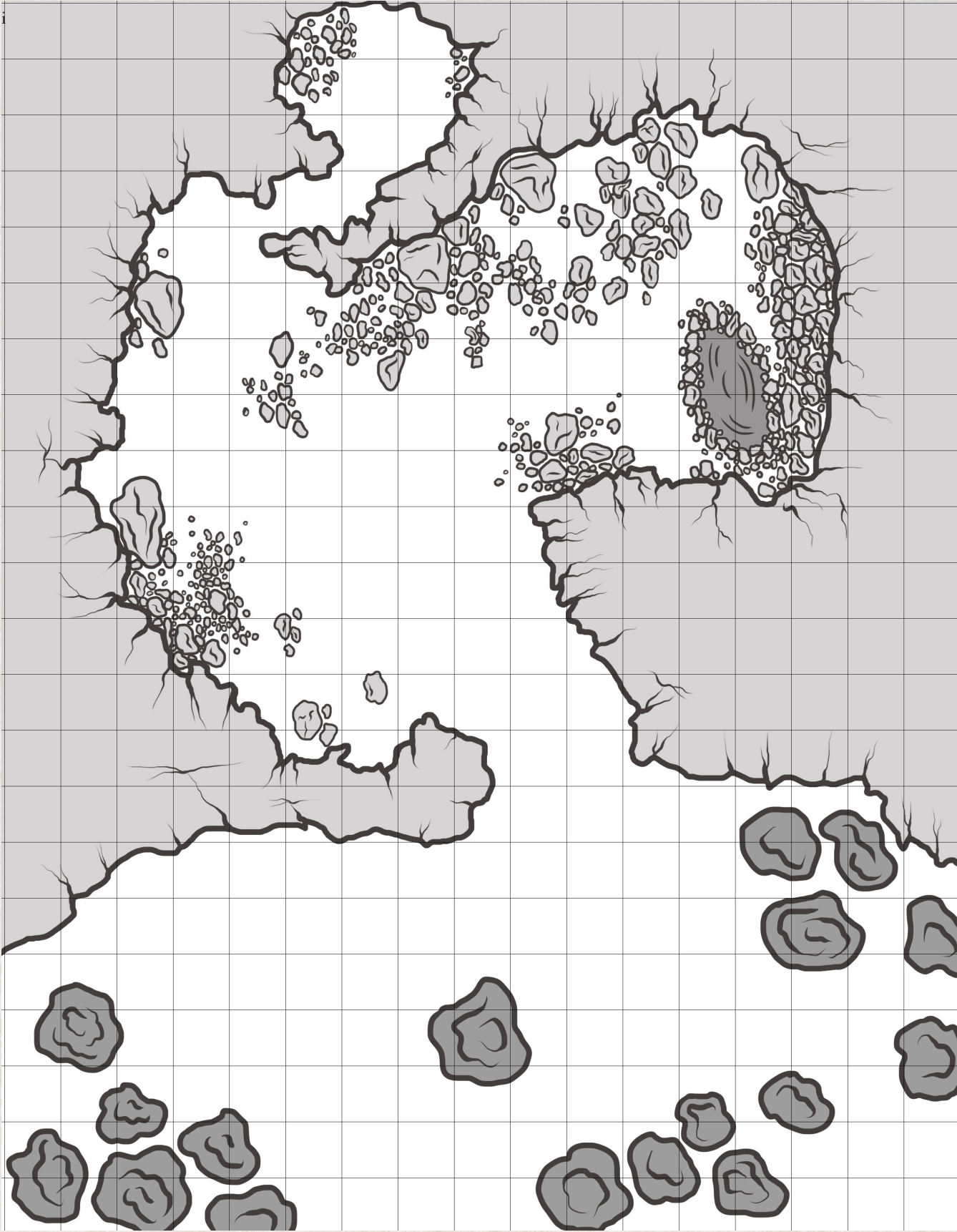
Weapon, rare (requires attunement)

When you attack a creature with this magic weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, that target takes an extra 10 necrotic damage, provided that the target isn't a construct or an undead. You gain temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt.

This matte-black rapier does not reflect light. It radiates a faint fiendish aura, and turns chill to the touch when within 30 feet of a good-aligned cleric or paladin. Once attuned, the wielder often feels hungry, even if they have just eaten. However, when the life stealing power is used, the wielder experiences an invigorating euphoria and feels satiated. The blade glows dully when it has fed. The description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

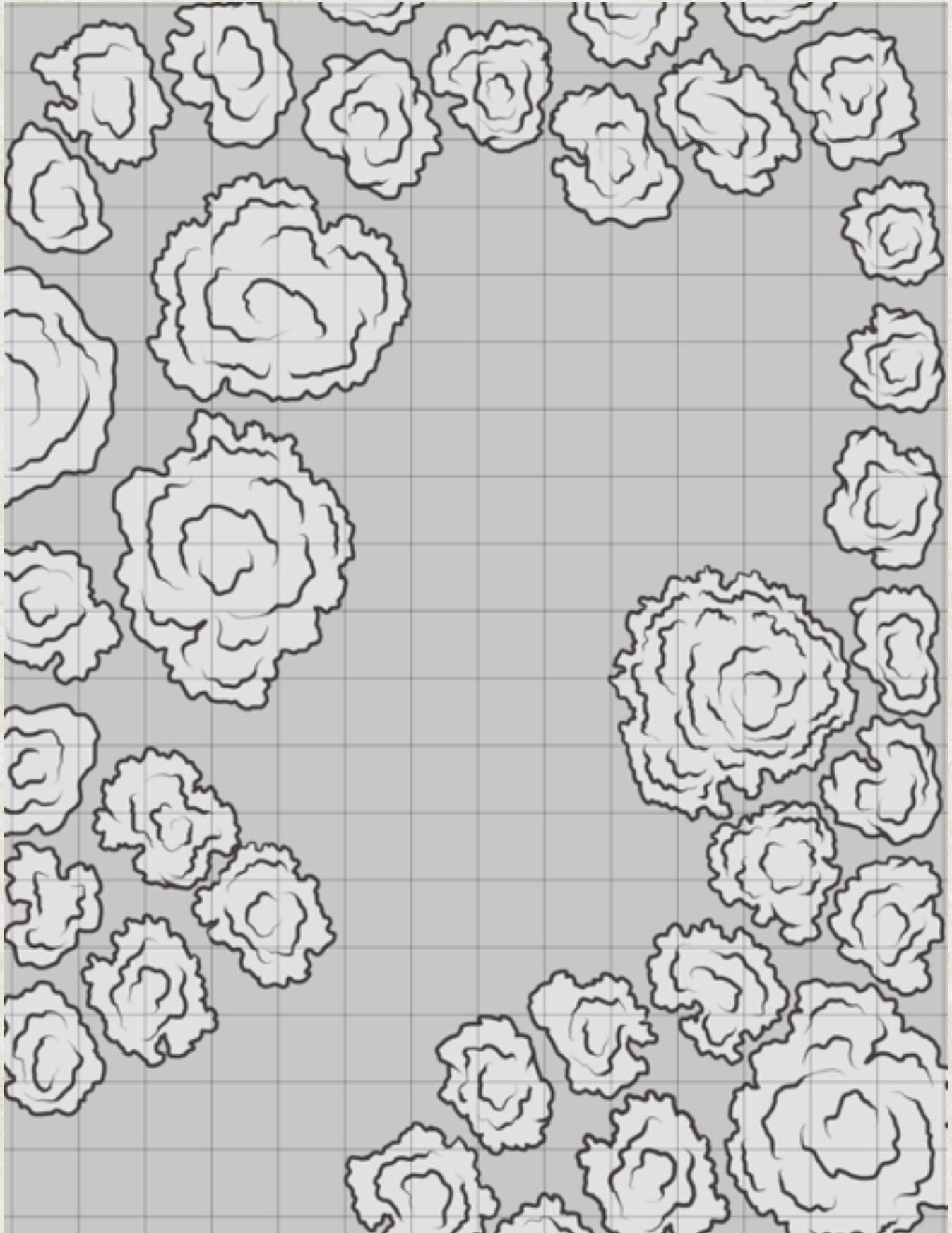
APPENDIX. OWLBEAR DEN MAP

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)



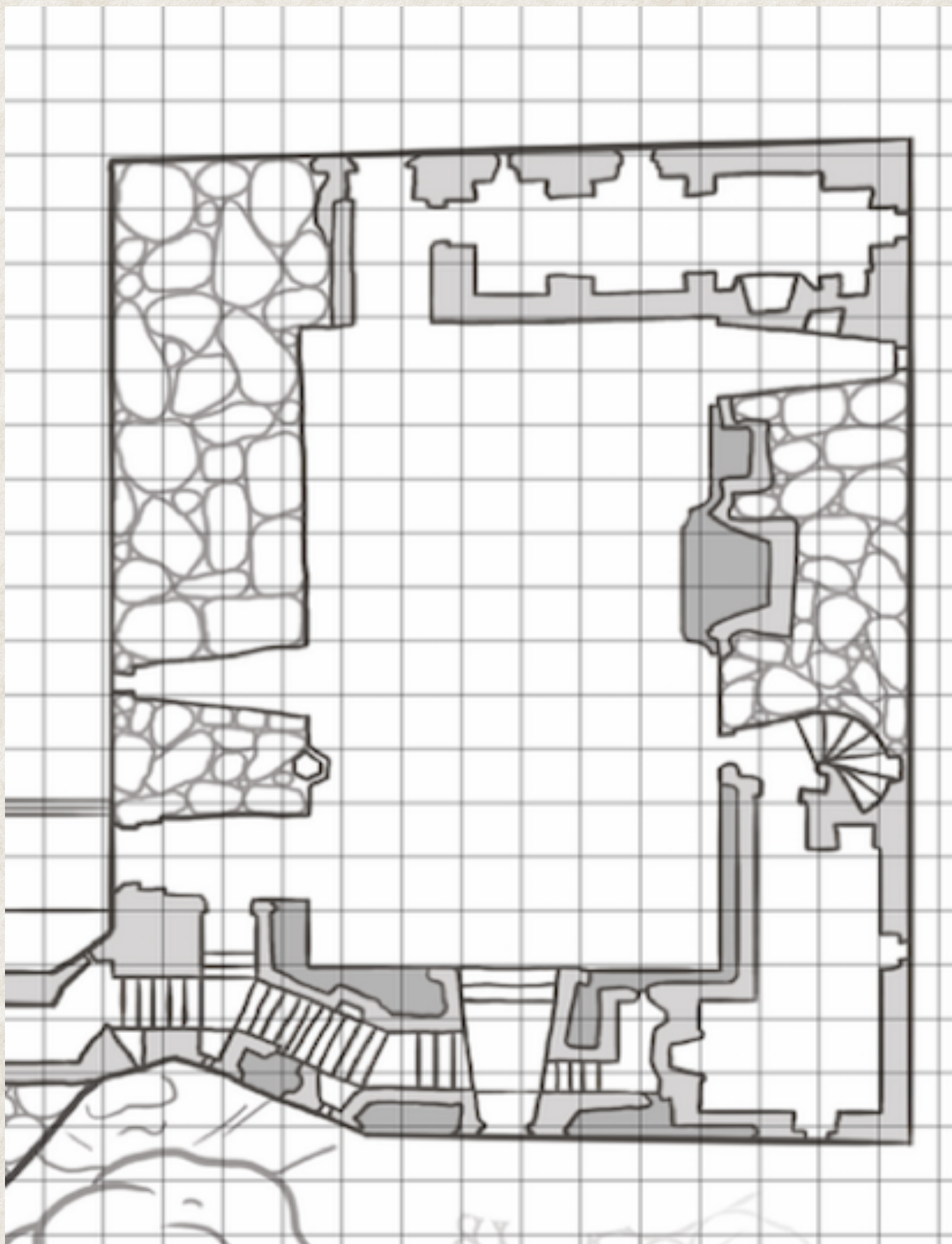
APPENDIX. UNICORN GLEN MAP

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)



APPENDIX. ORECLASP KEEP MAP

(1 SQUARE = 5 FEET)









Under Earth & Stone

A Mulmaster refugee named Ani Kuleimatt discovered references to a forgotten mine near the Moonsea, a mine rumored to produce an unexpected export. The adventurers are hired to locate the complex and secure its resources for the Mulmaster Diaspora.

A Two-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



FarWest MiniCon

IAM PACE & WILLIAM MURAKAMI-BRUNDAGE

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO *UNDER EARTH AND STONE*, A D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Tomb of Annihilation*™ storyline season.

This adventure is set in the area north of Mulmaster, between the Vercy Woods and Galena Mountains. It features an abandoned dwarven copper mine that will be repopulated by Mulmasterites.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th-10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

ADVENTURE PRIMER

This section provides the adventure's background, a list of prominent NPCs, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks that you can use to introduce your players' characters to the action.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Duingrim dwarves were a small and relatively poor clan with few renowned ancestors by dwarf standards. They became a vassal of the mountain kingdom of Hara Vallahir when that wealthy realm financed and supplied a Duingrim expedition. The clan chose the remote land between the Vercy Woods and Galena Mountains.

Initial prospecting uncovered only copper, but the find was great enough to draw the clan's attention. They set pick to stone in a narrow valley near the Vercy Woods and founded the Duindelve mine.

They soon realized the craggy hills of the region were honeycombed with caves, some worming far below the surface into the Underdark. As the dwarves worked, they opened and connected dozens of caverns and discovered many natural splendors, but failed to find the valuable deposits the region was renowned for—silver and bloodstone.

As they dug, miners reported giant spiders and web-filled chambers in the deeper tunnels. Operations were halted as scouts assessed the danger. While dwarven priests detected faint amounts of Underdark *faerzress* pervading parts of the mine, the most unexpected discovery was how meek the spiders were. The large arachnids seemed docile and expectant of the dwarves as though waiting for something. The clan gathered to discuss the vermin, how to effectively clear them and their webs. Most voted to simply seal the infested sections unless they contained ore. As the clan discussed the issue, a curious Duingrim bard used her magic to speak with the spiders. She discovered they were a domesticated breed escaped from the drow city of Maelimydra, where they had been reared for both their silk and ritual purposes. Their docility was a consequence of their selective breeding and captivity. The bard suggested keeping the spiders as livestock and harvesting their silk. The

dwarves scoffed, "Such things aren't proper for dwarves." However, the miners had made it clear how difficult the webs were to clear from the passageways. The only thing that could reliably do so was fire, which is a hazard in areas of poor ventilation beneath the earth.

Begrudgingly, the clan accepted the idea, but there were many grumbles—"What kind of dwarf keeps spiders and weaves silk? Such things are for dishonest drow and humans who don't know any better." But the silk textile proved valuable for both its texture and durability, and the Duingrim began exporting a variety of products. Soon the clan had repaid their debt to Hara Vallahir and the Duindelve became both a trade post and a settlement.

To honor the Duindelve, Vallahir gifted the clan a powerful item called the Zanderonn, an object capable of controlling the earth. The copper mine was eventually closed, passages were sealed behind gates and rock falls to keep the settlement safe. Ettercaps had begun to infest the deeper tunnels. What space remained within the mine was dedicated to spider hatcheries and the growing of giant, edible mushrooms for food and export. The spiders themselves were fed goats grazed in the nearby hills.

As the Duindelve grew and flourished, orcs and giants began sacking Hara Vallahir's settlements and outposts. The king sent out a decree recalling isolated communities to the mountain city for protection. With little choice but to obey, the Duingrim clan hesitantly closed the doors to their home, left guardians and traps, and moved their families to the fortress city of Vallahir. The stronghold fell soon after and the dwarves were put to the sword or enslaved. The Duindelve became lost, just another ruin littering the history of Faerûn.

Six centuries after the destruction of Vallahir, war once more consumes the Moonsea. Mulmaster has lost half its population to the strife. Many were killed while fleeing their homes and many more succumbed to the proceeding famine, yet there is still a large refugee group seeking food and safety, the Mulmaster Diaspora.

One of these refugee groups is led by a young dwarf named Ani Kuleimatt. Kuleimatt is a priestess who discovered references to a copper mine north of Thar near the Vercy Woods. The mine was part of a fortified settlement called the Duindelve, which was a center for silk and food. The Duingrim clan was listed as a vassal of the dwarf realm of Hara Vallahir, a kingdom destroyed centuries ago.

Kuleimatt immediately dispatched scouts to search for signs of the lost mine complex, but her scouts never returned. Her brother, a seasoned adventurer, led a party to find them. He, too, did not return. Now Ani Kuleimatt wishes to hire the adventurers to locate the missing dwarves and secure the Duindelve, making it once again safe to inhabit for the Diaspora.

LOCATION AND NPC SUMMARY

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Ani Kuleimatt (ANEE KUEL-e-mat). Ani Kuleimatt is a dwarven historian and priestess who lived in Mulmaster.

She wants to reestablish the Duindelve as a dwarven settlement and home for the Mulmaster Diaspora.

Duindelve (due-in-DELV). A centuries-old copper mine north of Thar. Duindelve means “Traveler’s Mine,” and it was a trading hub for silk textiles and giant, edible mushrooms.

Mulmaster Diaspora. The Diaspora is a loose confederation of refugees from Mulmaster. These Mulmasterites left the city because of war and other troubles, and seek to relocate elsewhere.

The Traveler’s Heart. A sphere forged of sky-fallen ore. It harbors great magic and controls the mine’s elementals. Proper name in Dethek is “Zanderonn.” It was a gift to the Duingrim clan from the kingdom of Hara Vallahir in honor of the clan’s great progress and wealth.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This section provides the DM a bulleted overview of how the adventure is most likely to play out. Part 2 and Part 3 can be played in either order. Give the players the option to explore either the Duingrim complex or mine, and if play time allows, they can complete both.

The adventure is broken down into 3 parts:

Part 1. The adventurers meet with Ani Kuleimatt and are briefed about Duindelve. Ani offers a reward if the adventurers can clear the complex and copper mine of hazards. She also gives the history of Duindelve and mentions the Traveler’s Heart, an elemental stone.

Part 2. The adventurers explore the Duingrim complex and shrine to Marthammor Duin, the clan’s patron deity. Inside are valuables, dangerous traps, and stone golem guardians. The golems can be deactivated using the Traveler’s Heart, found inside the mine.

Part 3. The adventurers travel into the Duindelve’s copper mine. Within the mine are bound earth elementals, giant spiders, and an ettercap tribe led by an ettercap alpha.

Also within the mine is a deadly trap that protects the Traveler’s Heart. If the adventurers obtain the stone, they can make Duindelve habitable again.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Most good-aligned adventurers should be willing to help the Diaspora. Mulmaster’s refugees are depending on heroic measures to save them. Specific tie-ins and adventure hooks include the following.

Ani Kuleimatt. Ani Kuleimatt will directly seek out the adventurers because of their renown. Anyone with a reputation of slaying giants or dragons will be called upon as heroes.

Thick Blood. Dwarves can be called upon by Ani Kuleimatt to aid the Diaspora and restore the Duindelve to glory. Alternatively, dwarven kingdoms and leaders may beseech the heroes to aid their wayward kin.

The Order of the Gauntlet. Reestablishing a dwarven settlement near the Moonsea and exploiting the Duindelve’s resources will benefit the Order and strengthen civilization within the region.

The Harpers. While Ani Kuleimatt is not a Harper, her knowledge has assisted them in the past. Her goals overlap with Harper ideals. High-ranking Harpers can send a secret message to fellow agents instructing them to work with Ani Kuleimatt.

The Zhentarim. The Black Network is always eager to make connections and deals that will further the Zhentarim’s aims. Assisting the Diaspora and gaining access to the rare resources of the Duindelve falls in line with their ambitions.

Folk Heroes Needed. This mission is perfect for folk heroes, as it directly aids the commoners of the Moonsea.

PART 1. ANI KULEIMATT'S QUEST

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

The adventurers are called upon by Ani Kuleimatt, who was poring over old records and travel journals searching for a place of shelter and respite for the refugees. The dwarven historian discovered references to the Duindelve in an old trade ledger. It is a mine worked long ago by a single clan, who were, oddly enough, known for their weaving of exotic silk.

Kuleimatt had sent a group of scouts to assess the mine's condition and current inhabitants but they never returned. Her brother then led a group to find them. This group also never returned. Now Kuleimatt has turned to others for aid in this desperate time.

She asks the adventurers to travel towards the Duindelve, discover the whereabouts of the two missing groups, and ensure that the complex is viable for the dwarves of the Mulmaster Diaspora. She offers a reward composed of her remaining family wealth and gives a short historical account of the settlement. She is currently residing in a camp of Mulmaster refugees.

GENERAL FEATURES

Ani Kuleimatt's tent, and the refugee camp itself, have the following general features.

Terrain. The camp is crowded, but orderly. It is composed predominately of dwarves with a few humans and halflings.

Weather. It is warm. The morning fog and dew has evaporated, and few clouds dapple the sky.

Light. Sunlight shines through the tent door.

Smells and Sounds. The air is heavy with the scent of damp earth as many feet have turned up the ground. There are a few smoky fires as families share what little food they have.

A. ANI KULEIMATT AND THE DIASPORA

To begin, the adventurers arrive at Ani Kuleimatt's shelter within the Diaspora's tent city. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk through the refugee camp, you see families huddled around small fires beside tattered tents. Parents hold children crying from empty bellies and adults struggle to scavenge what they can from the wilderness around them. You are led to a large patch-work tent.

Within are several dwarves, all appear exhausted and starved. Those who have taken the responsibility of leadership in this desperate time are the first to give their meager rations to the sick and young. One of the leaders, a young female dwarf dressed in tan robes, rises to her feet and greets you.

"I am Ani Kuleimatt," she hesitates, "regretfully, I have neither mead nor ale to offer you.

Hopefully that will change soon. Please sit, I have a request to make."

She sits herself once you look comfortable. You also notice that their inability to provide hospitality deeply shames the dwarves. Guest hospitality is an important dwarven tradition, especially when asking for help.

She clears her throat, "A party of hunters and scouts were sent to investigate an abandoned settlement and mine called the Duindelve. I discovered mentions of it in an old trade ledger. The complex is supposedly located somewhere between the Vercy Woods and the West Galena Mountains.

"This group is late reporting back by almost two tendays. My brother, Osgrim Kuleison, left with a group to find them. That was nine days ago." She pauses, her expression sad. "I know you have your own concerns and you owe me nothing, but Osgrim took the last of our most able warriors with him. Can you seek to discover his fate, not matter what it may be? I can offer you the remaining wealth of my family, the last gold of the Kulei clan." She says this with tired resignation.

Ani Kuleimatt (an **acolyte** of Dugmaren Brightmantle) wants the adventurers to go to the Duindelve and discover Osgrim's fate, and possibly secure the trade post for the refugees. She knows the following:

- In the past, she worked as a historian in the Mulmaster archives. When she was forced to flee home, she took her most valuable possessions—books. Within an old merchant's journal, she found references to the Duindelve, a settlement and mine cradled by hills of stone between the West Galena Mountains and Vercy Woods. She still has the log.
- The merchant mentioned in the journal that he saw the dwarves use a spherical stone called the "Zanderonn," or "Traveler's Heart" in Common, move rock as if it were mere piles of clay and summon and control beings of earth.
- The Duindelve was a thriving settlement. The other records from that time mention a war involving Hara Vallahir. Most dwarven provinces were vassals of that kingdom and were oathbound to send assistance. Adventurers may make DC 15 Intelligence (History) checks to remember that Hara Vallahir was wiped out in a war fought against an alliance of monsters, orc raiders and giant warlords. Hara Vallahir was the name of the kingdom while Vallahir was the name of its mountain fortress capital.
- While the Duindelve was listed as a mine, their chief export was a strong, exotic silk sold in bundles of brightly-dyed textile or weaving. They also sold a number of goods made from this durable silk, such as clothing and rope.

If the adventurers ask to see the merchant's journal, she shows them. It is written in antiquated Common. A successful DC 16 Intelligence check (those with backgrounds

such as sage take the check with advantage) reveals some useful information:

- The mine produced high-quality silk in large quantities from domesticated giant spiders.
- The mine subsided off of giant mushrooms that were fast growing and, according to the merchant, tasty and could be made into a number of food items.
- A magical stone could be moved around the Duindelve to activate and deactivate different functions and the stone guardians.
- The stone is magically protected.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- The adventurers are to make Duindelve safe again. The Mulmaster Diaspora needs homes.
- Find what happened to the scouts and Osgrim.
- Secure a source of food.

OSGRIM AND SCOUTS

If asked about the scouts or Osgrim's group, she may respond with the following:

- The original party of scouts and hunters was three in number and led by an experienced tracker named Halwen Thorison.
- Osgrim is a paladin of Moradin and a seasoned explorer who returned to Mulmaster to assist the refugees. He took two other warriors with him.
- The adventurers are welcome to keep anything of value they find.
- Kuleimatt has a good idea of the mine's location after further research with the merchant's journal.

PROVIDING FOOD

Adventurers providing food with *create food and water* or other viable methods are greeted as heroes. The food is used to feed the young and elderly.

A dwarven father approaches you and politely asks to shake your hand. "I wish we had more to offer, but I hope a humble dwarf's gratitude is enough for now. Keep the clan name Grungison in mind. We were once renowned crafters and smiths, and we will be again. Find my family then, even if it's my grandkids, we will repay you your kindness in appropriate dwarven fashion."

Providing large quantities of food earns the immediate gratitude of the Diaspora. These methods include a ranger hunting game for the Diaspora, purchasing or donating rations or foodstuffs, using magical spells or abilities, or other applicable means. The dwarves are starving, so food is incredibly valuable to them:

- The adventurers have advantage on social rolls while interacting with the dwarves.
- The adventurers may buy gear from the dwarves at 50 percent of the normal price for this adventure. The Diaspora is poor, but dwarves are resourceful and ingenious,

and can offer any item normally priced under 10 gp at half price.

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- The adventurers may buy gear from the dwarves at 50 percent of the normal price for this adventure. The Diaspora is poor, but dwarves are resourceful and ingenious, and can offer any item normally priced under 10 gp at half price.

TREASURE

Ani Kuleimatt offers the adventurers her remaining wealth, 250 gp, if they can clear the Duindelve for habitation. On a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, she is willing to advance the adventurers 50 gp for supplies.

APPROACHING THE DUINDELVE

Once the adventurers arrive at the Duindelve, they can explore the trade complex and mine in any order. Ani Kuleimatt does not know what to expect within.

Give the adventurers the choice whether to explore the Duindelve's living quarters or mine first.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Ani Kuleimatt. At this point, the adventurers are the Diaspora's only hope. While proud, Ani Kuleimatt is also quietly despairing for her people and Mulmaster.

ROLEPLAYING ANI KULEIMATT

Ani Kuleimatt is a priestess of Dugmaren Brightmantle and a scholar first and foremost. Leadership has been thrust upon her, a responsibility that weighs heavily upon her young shoulders. She is resourceful and wise, but also shy, as years spent in the quiet solitude of libraries has made her unaccustomed to dealing with others.

She deeply cares for the Diaspora, and she can't help but blame herself for every setback and hardship, even when much is out of her control.

Quote: "The tales of tragedy and triumph I have spent my life researching have done little to prepare me for the practicalities and challenges of true leadership."

PART 2. THE TRADE POST

TRAVEL TO THE DUINDELVE

Travel north to the Vercy Woods should be covered as a description of the journey. However, if play is not constrained by the two-hour limit, random encounters can be used along the way.

Ani Kuleimatt's map is expertly drawn and intricately detailed, crafted from the many sources she knew and her keen memory. The map is sketched with such care it is almost a work of art. The success of your travels will dictate the fate of the Diaspora and the Kulei clan.

The weather is chill but calm, with overcast skies in the morning and evening. Following the map, the journey is relatively easy despite the rugged terrain of stony hills and tangled woods. By the start of the fourth day, you have come to the location most likely hiding the abandoned mine complex and adjoining structures, and—hopefully—the missing dwarven expeditions.

ENTRANCE. OUTER TRADE POST WALL

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

The trade post was inhabited by the dwarf clan, and contains a shrine to Marthammor Duin. It is protected by magical glyphs and a pair of stone golems.

The dwarven trade-hall is in ruggedly good shape for having been abandoned six centuries ago.

GENERAL FEATURES

The trade post has the following general features.

Terrain. The complex is built into the side of a large hill with a 20-foot tall camouflaged wall on the open side. The craftsmanship of the tradehall is typical of dwarven stonework.

A conifer forest surrounds the compound for hundreds of yards until it connects with the forest proper, which is a mix of tall pines and thick cedars.

Weather. Fog lingers from dusk to dawn. Rain is common at night, but the daytime has fair weather.

Light. Sunlight breaks through the clouds. At night, the moon is obscured by fog and rainclouds.

Smells and Sounds. It smells of pine and cedar. The forest is filled with bird song with the occasional animal call.

As the adventurers approach the trade post, read or paraphrase the following:

The outer walls of the Duindelve stand as a looming mass of stone fashioned with such precision that the lines between the granite blocks cannot be seen. Much of the structure blends seamlessly with the natural rock of the steep slopes around it, forming a cliff face. If Ani's

map wasn't so careful, you may have walked past without noticing the structure, seeing, instead, only a weathered cliff face. The compound sits within a crescent-shaped hill with the wall enclosing the open side.

As you approach, there are outcroppings atop the wall, battlement towers disguised as jutting rocks. You also see climbing ropes flung over the fortifications.

You did not see any gate or door, but, judging by the rest of the structure, the entrance is most likely hidden.

The **trade post walls** are 20 feet tall, and the two watch towers are 40 feet high (20 feet above the trade post walls).

Tracks: There are noticeable prints in the dirt going to the wall where the ropes hang. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check discerns that two groups of dwarves moved through the area several days apart. The tracks lead towards the ropes and stop there.

HIDDEN ENTRANCE

The gate is disguised and the lock hidden. A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) or DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals both the concealed gate and lock mechanism, which can be picked with a successful DC 16 Dexterity ability check with thieves' tools. Also, the gate can be forced open with a combined Strength of 50. Otherwise, an adventurer can climb the wall on a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, and release the gate using the **lever** on the inside of the gateway. When the lever is activated, read the following:

A mechanism hidden within the gatehouse rumbles to life, opening the massive gate with a groan that echoes throughout the compound.

AREA A. TRADE POST COURTYARD

As the adventurers enter the interior of the trade post, read or paraphrase the following:

The Duindelve courtyard resembles a small, compact village. Time has brought low the wooden buildings, which are now heaps of rotting timber. There are no wood structures that survive. Part of the settlement is an open market of empty stone booths and tables.

Bas-relief sculptures wrought of verdigris copper adorn the interior walls and depict dwarves drinking, brewing, and mining.

Within each watch tower along the wall is a spherical brass beacon. The beacons emit a green ray of light into the hillside. The emerald-hued beams illuminate several large archways beyond the trade post in the courtyard.

Within each watch tower stands a large, spherical brass

signal beacon mounted on a pivoting stand. Each beacon's beam is aimed at the entrance to the Duindelve mine and the Duingrim living quarters. They are angled inward so they are not seen from the outside until turned.

THE MAGICAL BEACONS

The beacons are brass spheres filled with a *continual flame* spell and polished to a mirror sheen on the interior. At dusk or night (or in non-magical darkness), the signal beacons can send a ray of bright light 120 feet. The light from a beacon can be seen for miles, and Morse Code-style messages can be sent by shuttering and unshuttering the beacon. If the beacons are dismantled or disassembled, the *continual flame* ceases.

The Duindelve was renowned for its silk. The stalls along the northern wall were dedicated to silk goods and the giant mushrooms grown within the mine.

There are about a dozen collapsed cottages and support buildings, such as a stable and an inn for visitors. There is little in them but piles of splintered lumber and crushed furniture.

THE DUINDELVE PROPER

Tracks: A successful DC 12 Survival (Wisdom) check identifies dwarven tracks several days old entering the Duindelve proper, the **Southern Entrance**. They only go one direction.

Upon the carved face of the hill are two grand entryways into the earth. Flanking the archways are copper statues of dwarven miners gazing with satisfaction over the courtyard.

The north archway is far larger than the right and has rusting mine tracks running out to a collapsed wooden building. The south entryway is narrow and snakes into the stone with sharp turns.

THE NORTHERN ENTRANCE

One feature you immediately notice about the northern entrance is the thick strands of web stretching across the tunnel. Some of it has been recently cleared away.

The passage gently angles down 50 feet into the hill and comes to a wide landing overlooking an immense cavern. The cavern is of uncarved stone and stretches north into the darkness. The mine tracks take a sharp turn from the landing to hug a path along the wall and descend into the northern cave, trailing out of sight.

Below the landing is an open area with a stone door on the east side, right across from the ledge.

From the landing, a passage crawls south to connect with the right entryway.

Following this way leads to either **Area B. The Spider-Silk Looms**, if the adventurers chose to go east through the door at the bottom of the landing, or to **Area G. The Mine Entrance**, if the adventurers desire to go north into the immense mine cavern.

THE SOUTHERN ENTRANCE

The southern entrance appears to be a natural cave worming through the stone. It is 10 feet wide and about 15 feet tall. There is a branching line that shifts north to connect with the left entranceway and the landing overlooking the great cave of the mine proper.

This passage has been cleared of webs.

As you follow the passage east, it opens up into a magnificent room.

Following this way leads to the meticulously chiseled stone of the Duindelve shrine room. **Go to Area C. Marthammar's Shrine.**

The **tracks** of the dwarven scouts go this way.

AREA B. THE SPIDER-SILK LOOMS

The hall leading to this chamber is engraved and decorated with spiders playing harps woven in their webs.

Within the chamber itself are four great looms of stone set into the floor and a dozen dusty crates sitting in the corner of the room.

There are four magically powered **spider-silk looms**. Each loom is larger than a wagon, constructed of stone, and built into the trade post floor. On a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check, the machines are identified as spider-silk looms that weave giant spider silk into textiles.

Detect magic reveals the looms are enchanted with transmutation magic.

REPAIRING THE LOOMS

With an hour's work and a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check, all the looms can be restored to full working status. Rock gnomes and dwarves make this check with advantage. Using *mending*, *fabricate*, *stone shape*, or similar magic can also repair the looms.

If the looms are repaired, read the following:

The looms rumble to life, animated by some unseen magic. The shuttles begin to clack, the arms moving back and forth quickly and precisely. After several minutes of loud clacking, the looms stop.

It appears the process is mostly automated but lacks the material it was supposed to weave and bundle.

If the looms are restored to functionality, **award each character 200 experience points.**

TREASURE

There is a stack of heavy wooden crates in the corner marked with the sigil of Clan Duingrim, which is an upright pick in front of a boot. All but one is empty. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the crate with three silk rolls in it. Each **spider-silk brocade** is five feet long, three feet wide, weighs 5 pounds, and is worth 100 gp.

AREA C. MARTHAMMOR'S SHRINE

Read or paraphrase the following description:

This spacious room is made in the grandiose style of dwarves and stretches high above to a vaulted ceiling. There are murals on the floor, walls, and ceiling of dwarven heroes.

The southern side of the great hall appears to have been undergoing expansion but was never finished.

There are numerous alcoves along the walls. Within each recess is a detailed dwarf statue emblazoned with copper. Runes are carved at the base of each sculpture.

A beautiful altar of glittering quartz stands at the back of the room. Upon it sits an unlit silver lantern and a stone tablet. The altar's front is also adorned with sigils. Sitting on a ledge behind the altar is a small stone box.

There are multiple doors and an open passage along the north side of the chamber as well as double doors on the south side. These doors are open.

Anyone capable of reading Dwarvish can identify that **the statues are depictions of Moradin and the dwarven pantheon.** Otherwise, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check will identify the statues.

THE SILVER LANTERN

The lantern is unlit, and does not have an oil reservoir. On a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check, the subtle markings of a *glyph of warding* can be seen upon the lantern.

TRAP. GLYPH OF WARDING

Magical Trap (Levels 5-10 dangerous threat)

This lantern is protected by a *glyph of warding*, and radiates both abjuration and evocation magic.

Trigger. A sentient creature touching the lamp without having sung the hymn to Marthammor Duin, or dispelling the glyph, triggers the trap.

Effect. A thunderous boom erupts in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on the lamp, destroying the lamp. Each

creature in the area must make a successful DC 15 Dexterity save. A creature takes 6d8 thunder damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful save. The explosion alerts the residents of the Duindelve.

Countermeasures. Singing the hymn carved upon the altar will dispel the glyph. Otherwise, a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) skill check or *dispel magic* can deactivate the *glyph of warding*.

RIDDLE

Inscribed in Dwarvish on the front of the altar is a well-known hymn to Marthammor Duin, the dwarven god of travelers. Singing the hymn with a successful DC 13 Charisma (Performance) skill check causes a *continual flame* to begin burning within the lantern. It also deactivates the *glyph of warding* upon the lantern.

THE STONE TABLET

The stone tablet bears the liturgy and creed of Marthammor Duin, which is written in Dwarvish, elegantly carved, and weighs 20 pounds.

TREASURE

The **finely-wrought lantern** is worth 250 gp, and the *continual flame* lasts until dispelled. The **stone tablet** is worth 150 gp to an interested buyer, such as a library, art collector, or historian. The small stone box contains a *scroll of speak with animals*.

AREA D. THE FIRESEED DISTILLERY

Tracks: A successful DC 14 Survival (Wisdom) check identifies dwarven tracks entering the shrine and going into the distillery. They lead to a rack, which has several missing bottles. The tracks then head out and go north, towards the mine.

The stone doors on the south side of the great shrine hall are ornate and adorned in copper and portray dwarves brewing. There is a huge sigil on the doors. One of the doors is open. It leads through a short hall to a main section filled with copper distilling equipment: pipes, vats, furnaces, and holding tanks weave a metallic jungle through the interior.

Connected the distillery is a warehouse of sorts filled with dozens of racks, some holding dusty bottles.

The sigil warns that no fire should be brought beyond this point under threat of severe punishment.

The vats and tanks are empty and ring with a dull echo if disturbed. There are ten remaining bottles of **aged fireseed liquor** on the racks, dated from 871. The Duingrim had planned to return home. The drink is quite strong and flavorful, and a dwarven favorite.

TREASURE

Each of the **ten bottles of aged fireseed liquor** weighs 5 pounds and is worth 20 gp.

AREA E1. THE LARDER

The stone door is locked. A successful DC 14 Dexterity ability check with thieves' tools check opens it, or a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

There is a copper Dwarvish sigil on the door. The room seems unnaturally chill and hooks hang from the ceiling. There are also shelves carved into the stone, a few jars and pots rest in them. The room otherwise appears empty.

For those who speak Dwarvish, the sigil indicates food storage. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) recalls that evocation magic is used to chill larders such as this. *Detect magic* identifies a faint evocation magic pervading the room to keep it cold.

AREA E2. THE KITCHEN

The room has several counters and tables. Against one wall is a large iron stove for baking beside a large fireplace for roasting. There are a number of rotting wooden cupboards and shelves.

For those who speak Dwarvish, the sigil indicates feasting.

This room has entrances to both the north, connecting with adjoining passages, and south, connecting with the shrine. Neither door is locked and both doors hold the same Dwarvish sigil in copper.

TREASURE

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds 20 gp worth of silver cutlery (actual silver). Any character declaring that he or she searches the drawers automatically finds these items.

AREA E3. THE RESTROOMS AND BATHHOUSE

This door is made of marble and has no lock. The depiction on the surface is that of an underground waterfall.

The first thing you notice is the gurgle of running water and a damp coolness on your skin. A natural spring pours from the east wall and runs along a decorative channel on one side of the room before it drains into a grate in the corner. The room is quite large and the stone is ornamented with quartz and marble. There are

two large but empty baths. Against the north wall is a heavy iron boiler with pipes going into the ground beneath the baths. Against the south wall are four toilets separated by folding screens.

While the room is gorgeous, there is nothing of value.

There are disguised mechanisms to control and channel the water, to empty and fill the baths, toilets, and boiler. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check finds the mechanisms.

ENTRANCE TO HALLWAY OF E4 AND E5

Read or paraphrase the following:

At the entrance to this hallway are two fearsome looking statues made in the likeness of giant dwarven warriors. Between them is a plaque that bears Dwarvish runes and an image of a stone pick. Below the plaque on a plinth is a shallow basin formed of strange, dimly glowing metal.

This long hallway itself is inscribed with carvings showing stories of dwarven mythology, heroes battling dragons and giants atop mountains. The eyes of the figures seem to glitter and shine. The images are decorated with polished quartz.

There are five doors within the hall, two on each side and one at the end. The door at the end is copper-plated. The four doors along the walls all carry the same dwarf sigil while the copper-plated door at the end has a different one.

Carved into the plaque is a saying in Dwarvish: "I hold the traveler's heart; enter not upon pain and death." The **plaque** contains a clue on how to avoid the dormitory guardians.

The dwarves of the Duindelve did not leave their home undefended all these years. The two basalt statues are **stone golems** tasked with defending the settlement against all non-dwarf interlopers.

If a non-dwarf enters any of the dormitories (**Area E4 and E5**), the two **stone golems** animate and attack. If any of the adventurers are carrying the **Traveler's Heart** (the *stone of controlling earth elementals* from the adjacent mine), the stone golems do not animate.

Once activated, the **stone golems** follow and continue to attack until the entrance of the Duindelve mine. Once all non-dwarves have left the area, the golems return to their resting stations outside the dormitories, but will immediately reactivate to attack invaders who return into the Duin-grim living complex. If attacked, the **stone golems** activate and defend themselves.

If the **Traveler's Heart** is placed within the basin, read the following:

A cloud of yellow vapor streams from the eyes and mouths of the basalt statues standing guard in the hall. At the same time, the statues briefly glow. The vapor wafts out of the hall.



After this, the golems are deactivated. This makes the residential halls safe for inhabitation.

If the party **returns to Ani Kuleimatt** with the **Traveler's Heart** without deactivating the golems, the Diaspora can find the deactivation method.

If the golems are deactivated by the adventurers without destroying them, **award each character 1,000 experience points** instead of the combat experience for the golems.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

Very Weak or Weak: One of the golems will no longer activate. Remove one **stone golem**.

THE METAL BASIN

On a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check, the basin is identified as forged from meteoric ore.

This meteoric ore is identical to the metal that the **Traveler's Heart** is forged from. It is affixed to the plinth, but can be broken loose with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. The basin ceases to function if removed. This means that if the basin is broken loose before the golems are deactivated, they can no longer be deactivated via this method.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Stone Golems. The golems are a deadly fight, and direct combat may result in one or more characters dying. As DM, don't be afraid to take this step. The party has options to avoid this battle and/or deactivate the golems.

AREA E4. THE SILVER QUARTERS

The doors to the four common rooms are not locked. Each room is empty save for the furniture.

Each room appears to be the sleeping residence of a family. Old wooden bunks separated

by silken drapes are still present as well as dressers, desks, mirrors, bookshelves, and the various comforts of a well-furnished room. Unlike the wooden structures outside, these have borne the passage of time well.

For those who speak Dwarvish, the sigil indicates a place of rest and family.

TREASURE

The silken drapes, while worn, can be sold. They weigh 25 pounds each and are worth 50 gp apiece. There are two in each room for a total of eight between all the silver dorms.

AREA E5. THE GOLD QUARTER

The stone door is locked. A successful DC 14 Dexterity ability check with thieves' tools check unlocks it, or a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Once, long ago, this chamber must have been magnificent in its rich furnishings. There is finally made furniture and silken tapestries and rugs covering the walls and floor. A silent fireplace looks out darkly over the room. On a shelf, next to an old lamp, is a jewelry case.

For those who speak Dwarvish, the sigil indicates the burden of governorship. This chamber was home to the ruling family of the Duingrim.

TREASURE

Within the jewelry case are 18 quartz dragon-eye beads worth 10 gp apiece. They appear to be pieces being readied to decorate the murals and statues of the Duindelve.

AREA G. THE MINE ENTRANCE

Read or paraphrase the following:

The massive cavern leading north from the landing has been worked by tools but had yet to be carved into proper dwarven tunnels for homes and businesses. Two stone pillars heavy with copper iconography stand within the tunnel leading to the true entrance of the mine. A number of messages are scrawled across the metal plates.

The Dwarvish runes read "Duindelve," which translates to "The Traveler's Mine" in Common. Below that is **the mine's motto**: "The traveler's heart shines brightly for our kin." The copper-plated pillars also tell the story of the Duindelve and the Duingrim's finding of the place and their discovery and breeding of the docile spiders. There is much space left on the pillars as the dwarves thought their story would go on for much longer.

PART 3. THE DUINDELVE MINE

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

The Duindelve mine stretches into the hillside. It used to be a functioning copper mine and yielded a fair amount of ore before the mine was shortened and converted to rearing spiders and growing mushrooms.

Inside the mine are feral giant spiders dominated by a clan of ettercaps. When the dwarves lived here, the spiders were livestock, taken care and bred for their valuable silk. The spiders proved to be oddly intelligent and could repeat stringed instrumentals by playing the specialized strands within their webs.

Currently, the mine is filled with spider webs, giving the spiders and spider-kin an edge.

The ettercaps are led by a hulking ettercap nicknamed Shrull. While the spiders are not immediately hostile, Shrull and the ettercaps attempt to attack with surprise. If the ettercaps are defeated, the spiders will cease attacking unless pursued.

GENERAL FEATURES

The mine is heavily infested with giant spiders and ettercaps. Unless otherwise noted, all areas within the mine are filled with webs.

Terrain. Past the entrance, the interior of the mine is filled with spider webs. The webs are difficult terrain and lightly obscure the area. All creatures with web sense are immediately aware of intruders that touch any webbing unless precautions are made, such as a druid wild shaping into a spider.

Each creature that starts its turn in the webs or that enters them during its turn must make a successful DC 11 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained as long as it remains in the webs or until it breaks free. A creature restrained by the webs can use its actions to make a DC 11 Strength check. If it succeeds, it is no longer restrained.

The webs are flammable. Any 5-foot cube of webs exposed to fire burns away in 1 round, dealing 2d4 fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the fire.

Weather. The dwarf mine is underground. It is cold and damp inside.

Light. The inside of the Duindelve is dark. Adventurers cannot see without darkvision or a light source.

Smells and Sounds. Slight rustling and chittering can be heard. This is the arachnids and ettercaps. On a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check, the sounds can be identified as arachnids. The sounds of the ettercaps are not distinguishable from giant spiders. The giant spiders, unless frightened or hurt, play special silk strands woven to sound like a harp. They are mimicking a song passed down from their mothers, a song learned from the dwarves.



AREA A. INTO THE MINE

Read or paraphrase the following:

The passage is narrow and follows a set of large stairs descending deep into the stone. There are thick web strands crossing from floor to ceiling and from wall to wall.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The strands of web slow down movement. Treat the area as **difficult terrain** that **lightly obscure** the area.

A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the following:

- There are disturbances in the webs with fresh ones woven to replace the damaged or broken strands.
- On the dusty floor of the mine are boot-prints heading deeper in.

A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies faint amounts of *faerzress*, a magical radiation from the Underdark caused by elven mythals put into place to keep the sinister creatures of that realm from teleporting out. Over time, the mythals have bled magic into the land.

AREA B. THE OLD COPPER MINE

Read or paraphrase the following:

The passage opens into an immense space 100 feet across, 150 feet long, and 50 feet tall. The webs continue clogging the ceiling and draping the walls. Strands cross your path. Overhead, the webs are so thick in places it looks like clouds hugging the roof. A breeze flows through the cave, disturbing

the webs. You can swear you hear harp music coming from within the mine. The longer you spend here, the clearer the harp sound becomes, drifting throughout the tunnels.

There is a section of destroyed webs and blood-stained stones. Nearby are two dead creatures that look to be the cross between a spider and a man.

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check identifies these dead creatures as **ettercaps**.

This is where the ettercaps ambushed and killed **Osgrim** and his companions. Osgrim dispatched two ettercaps before he was overwhelmed. The first scout group was taken quickly without any ettercap losses, but Osgrim was fiercer.

A successful DC 16 Intelligence (History) check reveals the sound to be part of a dwarven folksong. Dwarves make this check with advantage.

AREA C. THE SPIDER DEN

Read or paraphrase the following:

The webs are so dense here that you cannot see the stone of the cave, not even the floors or walls. It is like the whole passage is that of some great funnel web spider's nest, not but a tunnel of woven silk.

The eerie, throbbing music ceases as you grow closer.

There are seven **giant spiders** in this room, as well as three **swarms of insects**. The swarms are composed of giant spider hatchlings.

Two giant spiders are creating harmonic music using strings of spider silk. These were learned long ago and passed down through mimicry by the spiders. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Religion or History) check identifies this as the string section of an altered dwarven folksong.

The current matriarchs do not understand its connection to the old dwarven handlers. However, the spiders do have a positive association with the images of dwarves and dwarves themselves as well as drow as that has been magically bred into them long ago by their first caretakers, the drow of Maerimydra.

The giant spiders initially attempt to hide within the recesses of the spider webs, and do not attack unless an ettercap from **Area D** commands them to do so, or the spiders are attacked or take damage.

FERAL SPIDERS

The giant spiders in **Area C** are the feral descendants of Duindelve's domesticated spiders. The dwarves who lived here raised giant spiders for their spider silk. These silky threads were used in the trade post's looms, and produced beautiful textiles.

The spiders are not innately hostile and seem almost friendly towards any dwarves or drow.

- Once the ettercaps are eliminated, remaining spiders will attempt to hide or flee.

- If combat hasn't ensued, the spiders can potentially be relocated or domesticated. On a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, the giant spiders and spider swarms can be guided to leave their abode. If adventurers can speak with the spiders, they can also convince the arachnids to become silk-weavers for the Diaspora dwarves. Dwarves and drow, or anyone with a background involving the Underdark, make this check with advantage.

- Anyone making a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes that the spiders were once domesticated, and pose less of a threat than other residents of the mine.

ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY

The spiders are still docile. The drow had magically bred it into this species hundreds of years ago and it still runs strong from generation to generation. Two-legged creatures easily imprint on the arachnids as 'friendly.'

SPEAKING WITH THE SPIDERS

- Adventurers using *Speak with Animals* (such as the scroll found near Marthammor's shrine) or similar magic can speak with the spiders. Dwarves, drow, druids, and rangers have advantage on social rolls with the spiders. The adventurers can convince the spiders to leave the mine or become domesticated for the Diaspora dwarves. They also learn the following:

- There are big stone beings in the mine. They're usually quiet, as far as walking rock go. Touching the mushroom forest makes them mad.

- The two-legged spiders are the masters of the web (this is about the ettercaps in **Area D**).

- Stout two-legged creatures with wagging beards came to our home not long ago. The ettercaps ambushed and ate them. We hid. We do not like violence with two-legged creatures. We are fond of those who walk on two legs. We always have been. It is a memory in our blood.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the adventurers parlay peacefully with the spiders and either convince them to leave or work for the Diaspora, **award each character 500 experience points** instead of the combat experience points.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Domesticated Spiders. Combat is an option here, but encourage the players to think outside the box a bit. Give a gentle nudge towards non-hostile resolution, or perhaps drop hints about the spider's more passive nature.

Negotiating with the Spiders. Using *Speak with Animals* or other communicative spells or abilities may be beneficial when dealing with the spiders. In case of excellent role-playing, grant advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to convince the spiders to relocate or work with the Diaspora.

AREA C1. SPIDER'S LARDER

The spider's cocoons are stored here. Read or paraphrase the following:

A dozen or more cocoons hang from the webbing here. They range in size. Some are cat- or dog-sized, while others are as large as an ox. None of the cocoons are the shape of a dwarf.

Within the cocoons are a dozen various dead and/or paralyzed wild animals. Notable paralyzed, but still alive, animals include four **giant fire beetles** and two **giant bats**. These animals will recover from their paralysis given enough time.

Cutting the animals free does not provoke attacks from the spiders, but it does immediately alert the ettercaps, who will attempt to stealthily attack the party (see **Area D** for details).

AREA D. SHRULL AND THE ETTERCAPS

Read or paraphrase the following:

The webs here take on a slightly different appearance and the cocoons here have an unnerving shape, a familiar shape, the shape of dwarves.

A soft, repetitive 'shh-roll' sound can be heard, but the source is not immediately apparent.

The sound the adventurers hear is the chitin plates of the hidden **ettercap alpha**, nicknamed 'Shrull,' rasping together.

There are six **ettercaps**, led by this **ettercap alpha**, in **Area D**. If the adventurers have touched any webs throughout the mine, the ettercaps are aware of the intruders. In this case, they attempt to hide and launch an ambush. Any ettercap has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks because of the webs.

Within the cocoons are six dead dwarves including the **shriveled body of Osgrim**. He carries a **silver warhammer**, a crossbow, and an **ornate quiver** with 10 *bolts +1*. Around his neck is a **silver pendant of Moradin**. These dwarves were liquefied and sucked dry days ago, so *raise dead* or other restorative magic fails.

ETTERCAP ALPHA

The ettercap alpha is an ettercap with 72 hit points.

TREASURE

The dwarf's non-magical ornate quiver is worth 50 gp, and his silver pendant is worth 50 gp. His silver warhammer is still serviceable and is worth 70 gp if sold.

ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **ettercaps**.
- **Weak:** Remove one **ettercap**.
- **Strong:** Add two **ettercaps**.
- **Very Strong:** Add one **ettercap alpha**. Add two **ettercaps**.

DEVELOPMENTS

Once combat ensues, the **ettercap alpha** will attempt to order an attack from any remaining **giant spiders** and/or **swarms of insects** from **Area C**. If the adventurers and spiders had a positive encounter, the spiders do not heed the orders of the ettercaps. However, if the adventurers missed that encounter, or treated the spiders poorly, both the giant spiders and swarms follow the commands of the ettercap alpha and attack the party.

If more than half the ettercaps or spiders are slain, the giant spiders and swarms will attempt to flee, balking the ettercap's commands.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Ettercaps. The ettercaps have an Intelligence of 7, so should be played as cunning, but they're not master tacticians. At the same time, play to their strengths by using webs in combination with the poisonous bite. Things become more hazardous if the adventurers haven't properly dealt with the spiders in **Area C**.

Negotiating with the Ettercaps. Ettercaps do not speak any languages and are not beasts, so *speak with animals* or other communicative spells won't work.

AREA E. THE ELEMENTALS AND THE MUSHROOM FARM

Read or paraphrase the following:

The cavern is massive and stretches more than 100 feet with a roof that is 60 feet high. The floor of the chamber is damp soil with a great forest of mushrooms growing from it. Strangely, the forest is lined in neat rows. Each mushroom is a dozen feet tall and must weigh several hundred pounds.

What looks like an animated pile of rubble in the shape of a dwarf stands between the rows of giant mushrooms and appears to be gently trickling water on them.

These three **earth elementals** were once summoned to help with prospecting and mining, but after the mine was closed, the dwarves put the elementals to work on the mushroom gardens. Even after the dwarves left, these elementals remained here, bound because of the power of the Traveler's Heart. The device's power is greatly magni-

fied by the nexus of runes woven into the Chamber of the Heart (**Area G**) by the dwarven priests. This allowed them to summon multiple elementals for an indefinite amount of time.

Area E is not filled with webs, because of the occasional movement of the elementals. The other residents of the mine learned many decades ago to not bother the elementals.

At this point, the elementals have slowly toiled for six centuries and have kept the mushroom gardens in good health, protecting and tending to them. The earth elementals are angry because of their lengthy servitude, and will attack if threatened or if the mushrooms gardens are interfered with without permission from the elementals. Otherwise, the elementals continue their labor.



ADJUSTING THIS ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak:** Remove two **earth elementals**.
- **Weak:** Remove one **earth elemental**.
- **Strong:** Add one **earth elemental**.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **earth elementals**.

ROLEPLAY OPPORTUNITY

The elementals are stern and stoic but also rigidly polite. They are friendly to dwarves, gnomes, or clerics of a deity associated with earth or stone. They give fair warning to intruders not to damage the mushroom gardens.

If anyone speaks Primordial, Terran, or any other elemental dialect, the elementals politely explain the following in a deep, rumbling voice:

- The elementals are bound to the mine by a magic stone that conjured them from the Plane of Elemental Earth many years ago. The patron god of the mine is an ally of an earth prince these beings serve.

- The elementals have been in the mine for so long tending to fungi, which they don't fully understand, that they would be grateful for release. However, a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) roll can convince the elementals to remain and help the Mulmaster Diaspora. Dwarves or any earth-oriented clerics or druids gain advantage on this roll. While they owe nothing to the Diaspora, seeing these new dwarves safely settled here would complete their duties to the missing Duingrim.

- Their master, one of the dwarves from the trade post, told them to 'wait and protect and tend to the gardens,' but then she never returned.

- They also warn the adventurers to not disturb their work.

If asked about the music or what else is inside the mine, the elementals respond with:

- The music comes from large spiders attempting to mimic the string instruments the dwarves used to play.
- Cracks in the seals to the lower levels have let in a number of strange creatures, but they are often eaten by the nest of spider-men.

If asked about the dwarven scouts or Osgrim, the elementals are unaware of the scouts as the dwarves never made it this far into the mine. The ettercaps ambushed them before they reached this chamber.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the **Traveler's Heart** is removed from **Area G**, the earth elementals continue to toil in the mushroom garden. The adventurers will have an opportunity to parlay with them (see **Roleplay Opportunity**, above). Aggressive actions or meddling in the fungal garden will be met with unchecked elemental fury.

If the adventurers convince the earth spirits to stay and assist the Diaspora, they remain in the gardens working.

If the elementals are released or allied with instead of being destroyed, **award each character 750 experience points** instead of the combat experience points.

AREA F. HEART'S DOOR

Beyond the stone entrance door of **Area E** is the home of the **Traveler's Heart**, a *stone of controlling earth elementals* that binds the mine's elemental and golem protectors.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You stand before a towering archway holding massive basalt doors. The double-doors bear a single sigil at their center and a stone rod as thick as a dwarf's leg lays across them like a bar across gates before a siege.

OPENING THE HEART'S CHAMBER

The sigil is a Dwarvish rune that reads "**Zanderonn**," which translates to "Traveler's Heart" in Common.

Opening the door to **Area E** requires a successful DC

25 Strength (Athletics) check. Using a crowbar or other appropriate tool gives advantage. Otherwise, a combined Strength of 40 can dislodge the stone rod. Either brute-force method requires 1 minute per attempt.

A successful DC 18 Dexterity ability check with thieves' or a successful DC 18 skill check with mason's tools will find the fulcrum point and open the door.

Other entrance methods could include a *knock* spell, *oil of slipperiness*, a *chime of opening*, or other applicable spells or effects.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

The Door. The adventurers should not be thwarted by the door. It's meant to be a small challenge, not an adventure ending doorway.

Adjusting the Difficulty. If the adventurers do not have a combined Strength of 40, and have no other resources to open the door, the DM should adjust the combined Strength requirement as needed.

AREA G. CHAMBER OF THE HEART

Read or paraphrase the following:

As the basalt doors silently open, there is a rush of air into the room beyond. Apparently, the chamber has not been opened for some time.

There are no spider webs in the domed chamber beyond. The smooth walls, floor, and ceiling are covered with carved runes and pictographs. These sigils begin to pulse with a sapphire light.

In the center of the half-domed chamber is a plinth. Upon the plinth is a perfect sphere of strange metal about the size of a shotput or orange. The sphere pulses a blue glow in rhythm with the other light.

The dwarves of Duindelve did not leave the Traveler's Heart unprotected. The Chamber of the Heart contains a **crisscrossing, invisible mesh of light beams**, and if the beams are crossed, a *glyph of warding* will activate.

This room is free of the webs that fill the Duindelve, and is lit with bright light because of the glowing runes.

THE LIGHT BEAM TRAP

The sigils and runes emit an **invisible mesh of light beams**. Any creature or object physically crossing a beam activates the *glyph of warding* embedded into the floor and walls.

TRAP. GLYPH OF WARDING

Magical Trap (Levels 5-10 deadly threat)

The chamber is protected by runes that activate a *glyph of warding*, and radiates both abjuration and evocation magic.

Trigger. Any creature or object that crosses one of the invisible beams triggers the trap. Note that using *mage*

hand to move the *stone of controlling earth elementals* will trigger the glyphs if any beam is crossed.

Effect. A series of fiery explosions detonate in the chamber, reaching past the doorway. The explosions fill all of **Areas F and G**. Each creature in the area must make a successful DC 18 Dexterity save. A creature takes 10d8 fire damage on a failed save, or half damage on a successful save. The explosion alerts any remaining residents of the Duindelve. The explosion does not harm the *stone of controlling earth elementals*, but drains the wall's runes, which dim but remain glowing.

The *glyph of warding* remains even if the Traveler's Heart is removed from the plinth.

Once activated, the glyph is exhausted. It is the last barrier of defense for the Traveler's Heart, and can only be activated once.

Countermeasures. If the invisible beams can be perceived via *see invisibility* magic, a *lantern of revealing*, *fog cloud*, or similar spell or effect, then a successful DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check will allow an adventurer to reach the plinth without activating the glyphs. Another successful DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to return safely from the plinth.

If an adventurer cannot see the invisible beams, but suspects there is a trap and moves with caution, allow a successful DC 18 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check with disadvantage.

A successful DC 16 *dispel magic* can deactivate the *glyph of warding* (cast as a 6th level spell slot).

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Light Beam Trap. The trap is a variant of the classic spy movie laser beam hallway, where the spy needs to evade a mesh of invisible laser beams. If the party wafts chalk dust, sand, or creates mist or fog, the beams are visible. Walking into the chamber may result in severe damage or death, but savvy adventurers should be naturally suspicious.

TREASURE: THE TRAVELER'S HEART

The pulsing sphere on the plinth is the **Traveler's Heart**, a *stone of controlling earth elementals* and the magical force that binds the earth elementals and stone golems protecting the Duindelve.

The stone is not affixed to the plinth, and can be picked up or dislodged freely. It is made of meteorite ore, weighs 5 pounds, and radiates a dim sapphire glow.

Once removed from the plinth, the stone's glow ceases. The rest of the runes and glyphs in **Area G** remain active and continue to emit light.

See **Player Handout 2** for a description of the **Traveler's Heart**.

THE CHAMBER'S RUNES

The runes are in Dwarvish, Giant, and pictographs. Being fluent in either language, or a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check, allows an adventurer to learn the Duindelve's story.

- The runes include tales of Marthammor Duin and his adventures before and after he became a dwarven god. On a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check, the adventurer notices the repetitive phrase of “**stepping through beams of light.**”

- On a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) skill check, adventurers realize that **the runes are emitting a magical ward** composed of invisible beams, and that the wards trigger an explosion.

- The arachnids initially were exterminated on sight, but eventually the dwarves realized the spiders had been domesticated already for their silk. The dwarves captured the remaining spiders for breeding.

- The spiders demonstrated an ability to mimic sounds by playing web-strands like a harp. Several dwarves dedicated themselves to being ‘spider wranglers’ and discovered the arachnids could learn and repeat simple music.

- The runes in Giant are a litany of frost giants that the dwarven warriors of Duindelve slew over several centuries.

DEVELOPMENT

If the *stone of controlling earth elementals* is obtained without activating the explosive glyphs, **award each character 500 experience points.**

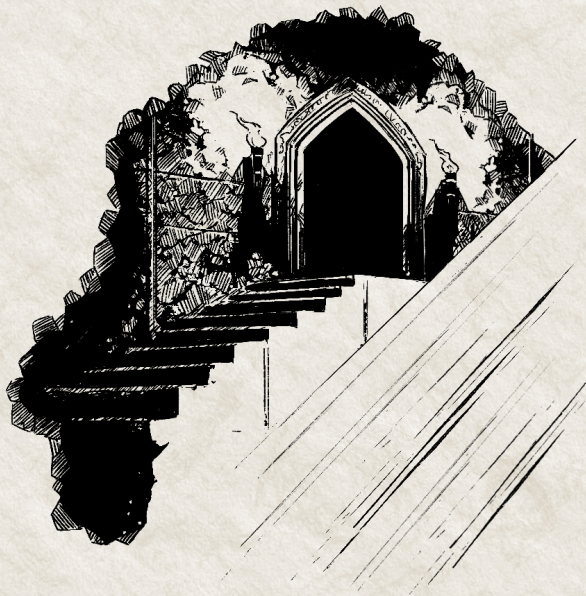
CONCLUSION

The adventurers return to the Diaspora with good news: the Duindelve has been located and secured, as well as a source of food—the giant mushrooms.

Sadly, Osgrim and the others did not live, but they have been avenged.

Ani cannot thank you enough. Yours and Osgrim’s visages will be added to the Duindelve. You are true heroes.

If the fireseed is mentioned, the dwarves shed a few tears and lick thirsty lips.



REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

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

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Earth elemental	1,800
Ettercap	450
Ettercap alpha	700
Giant spider	200
Stone golem	5,900
Swarm of spiders	100

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Activating the silk looms	200
Deactivating the stone golems	1,000
Not activating the Heart's glyphs	500
Releasing the earth elementals	750
Working with the spiders	500

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 2,250 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 3,000 **experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Aged Fireseed Liquor	200
Ani Kuleimatt's reward	250
Dorm's dragon-eye beads	180
Loom's spider-silk brocade	300
Osgrim's ornate quiver	50
Osgrim's silver pendant	50
Osgrim's silver warhammer	70
Shrine's finely-wrought lantern	250
Shrine's stone tablet	150
Silver Dorm's silk drapes	400
Silverware	20

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to

decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

TRAVELER'S HEART (STONE OF CONTROLLING EARTH ELEMENTALS)

Wondrous item, rare

If the stone is touching the ground, you can use an action to speak its command word and summon an earth elemental, as if you had cast the *conjure elemental* spell. The stone can't be used this way again until the next dawn. The stone weighs 5 pounds.

The Traveler's Heart is a perfectly smooth sphere the size of a small shotput or orange, forged of meteorite iron. The person possessing the Traveler's Heart has the **Delver** ability while holding the stone: While underground, the bearer of this item always knows the item's depth below the surface and the direction to the nearest staircase, ramp, or other path leading upward.

This item can be found in **Player Handout 2**.

SCROLL OF SPEAK WITH ANIMALS

Scroll, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

CROSSBOW BOLTS +1

Ammunition, uncommon

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

During this adventure, the characters may earn access to the following downtime activity:

The Silk Trade. For a cost of 5 downtime days and 25 gp, the adventurer may have either fine silk clothing or a spider-silk rope made in Duindelve.

The silk clothing is dyed in bright colors and is the highest quality.

The non-magical spider-silk rope is 50 feet long, has the same tensile strength as hemp rope, and weighs 2 pounds.

More information can be found in **Player Handout 1**.

RENOWN

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM REWARD

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG).

APPENDIX. DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

Ani Kuleimatt (ANEE KUEL-e-mat). Ani Kuleimatt is a dwarven historian and priestess who lived in Mulmaster. She wants to reestablish Duindelve as a dwarven trade outpost and home for the Mulmaster Diaspora.

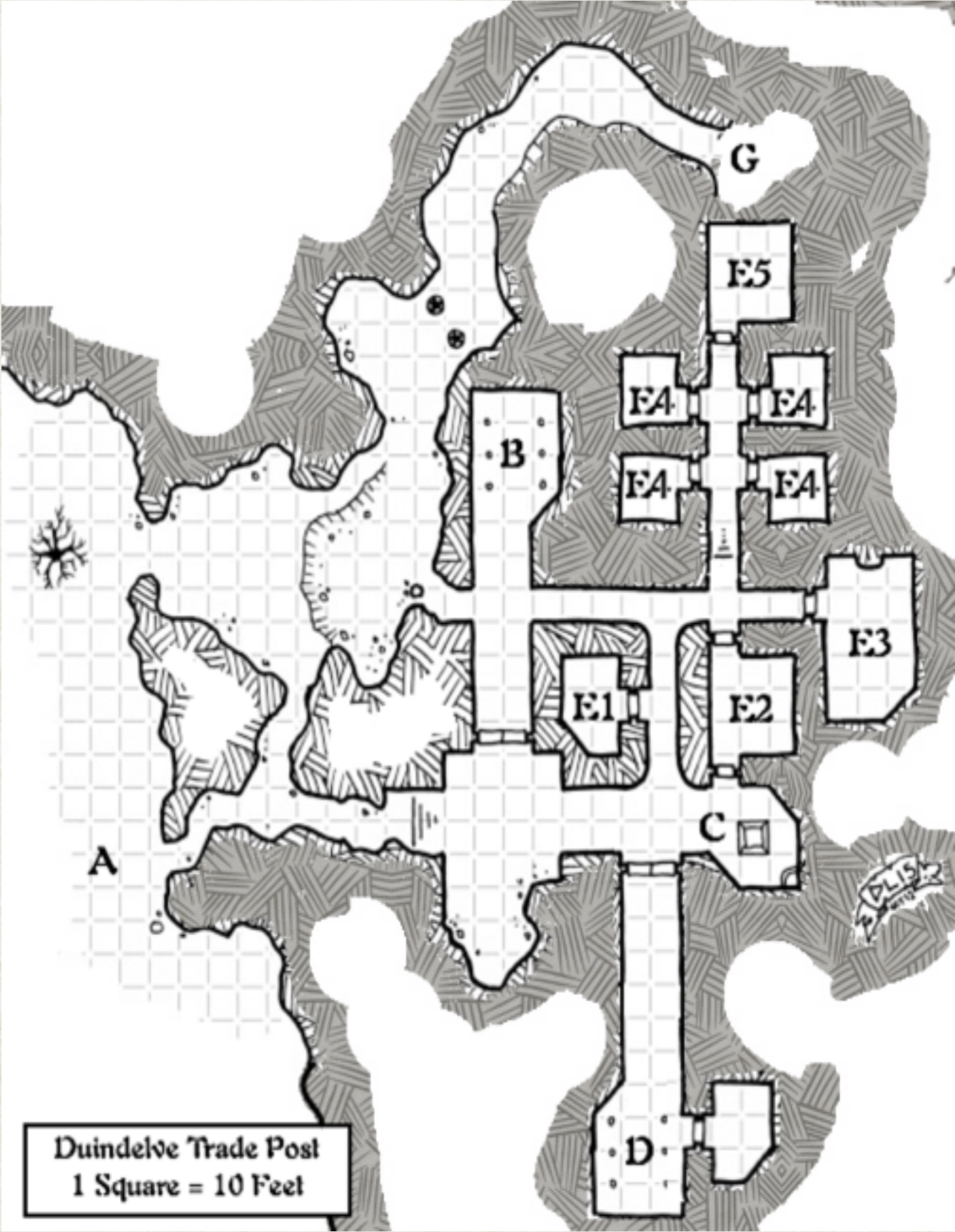
Duindelve (due-in-DELV). A centuries-old copper mine north of Thar. Duindelve means “Traveler’s Mine,” and it was a trading hub for textiles and ore.

Mulmaster Diaspora. The Diaspora is a loose confederation of refugees from Mulmaster. These Mulmasterites left the city because of war and other troubles, and seek to relocate elsewhere.

The Traveler’s Heart. A sphere forged of sky-fallen (meteorite) ore. It harbors great magic, and controls the mine’s elemental guardians. Proper name in Dethek is “Zanderonn.”

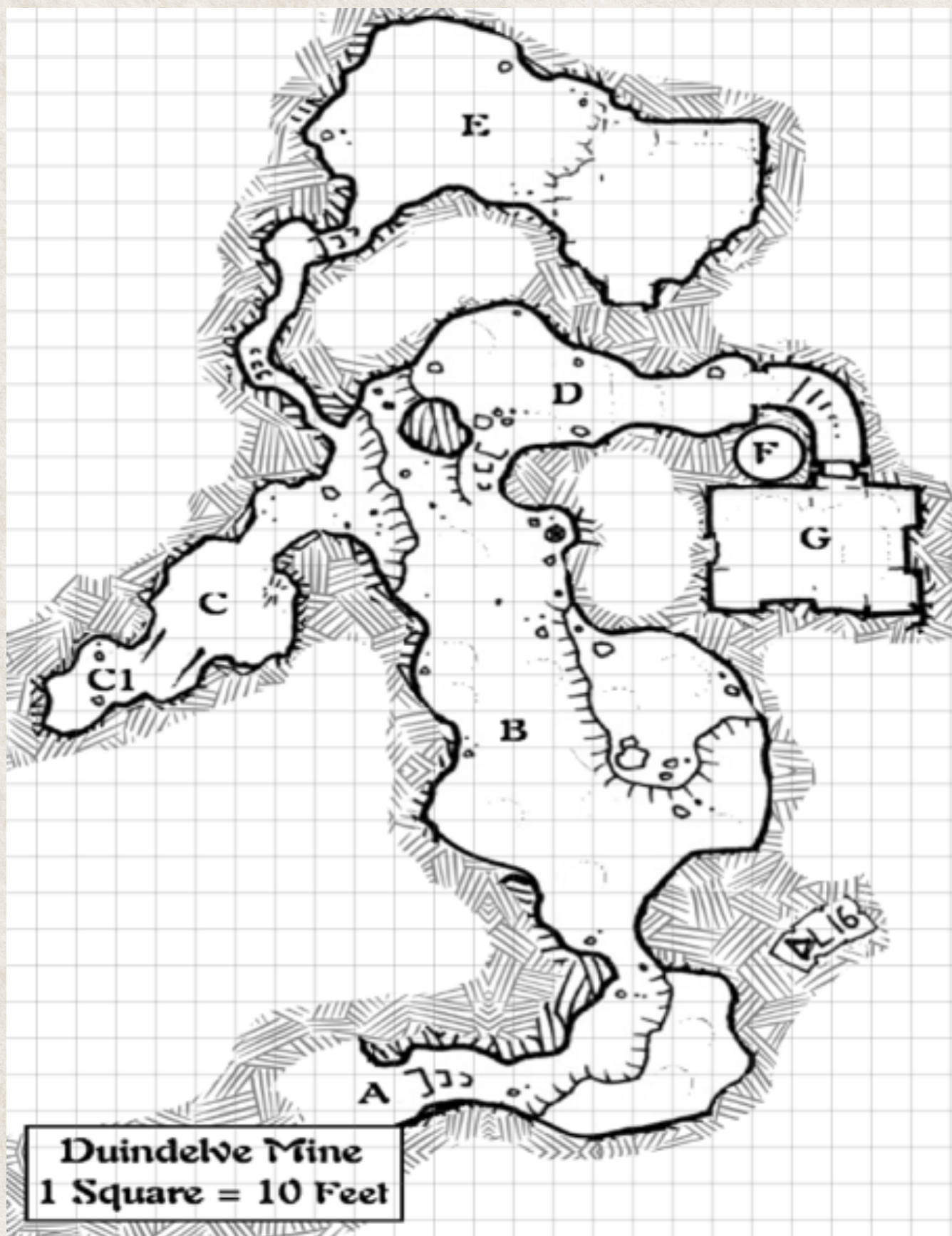
MAP. TRADE POST

(ENTRANCE OUTSIDE OF MAP; SCALE 10 FT.)



MAP. DUINDELVE MINE

(SCALE 10 FT.)



PLAYER HANDOUT 1. DOWNTIME

ACTIVITY

During this adventure, the characters may earn access to the following downtime activity.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITY

The Silk Trade. For a cost of 5 downtime days and 25 gp, the adventurer may have either fine silk clothing or a spider-silk rope made in Duindelve.

The silk clothing is dyed in bright colors and is the highest quality.

The non-magical spider-silk rope is 50 feet long, has the same tensile strength as hemp rope, and weighs 2 pounds.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2. MAGIC ITEM

During this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

TRAVELER’S HEART (STONE OF CONTROLLING EARTH ELEMENTALS)

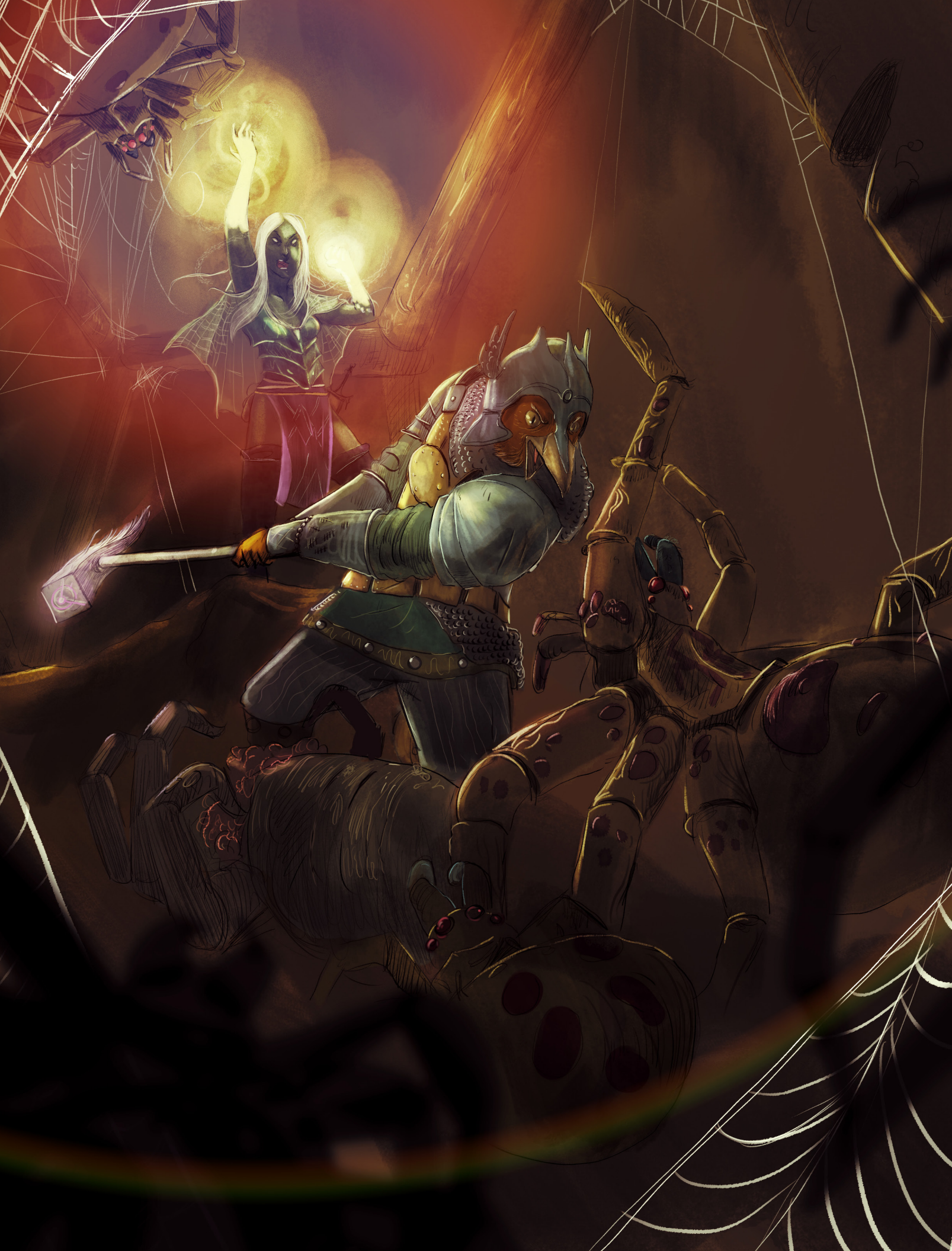
Wondrous Item, rare

If the stone is touching the ground, you can use an action to speak its command word and summon an earth elemental, as if you had cast the *conjure elemental* spell. The stone can’t be used this way again until the next dawn. The stone weighs 5 pounds.

The Traveler’s Heart is a perfectly smooth sphere forged of meteorite iron, the size of a small shotput or orange.

The person possessing the Traveler’s Heart has the **Delver** ability while holding the stone: While underground, the bearer of this item always knows the item’s depth below the surface and the direction to the nearest staircase, ramp, or other path leading upward.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*.



Adventures & Rewards

Adventurer's League guidelines for determining APL (average party level) and party strength, as well as instructions on how to convert earlier season Adventurer's League content to new rewards system.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURES

THESE ADVENTURES PROVIDES SUGGESTIONS IN MAKING adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the party strength for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party	Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than		Very Weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent		Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than		Average
5 characters, APL less than		Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent		Average
5 characters, APL greater than		Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than		Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent		Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than		Very Strong

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.

Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive

Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

PLAYING THE DUNGEON MASTER

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your players (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

CONVERTING ADVENTURES

For later season Adventurer's League games, rewards are distributed at the end of a play session using the following guidance:

ADVANCEMENT CHECKPOINTS

Characters playing in a hardcover adventure earn one checkpoint for each hour played in pursuit of the adventure's stated goals (rounded down). Other adventures award checkpoints as determined by their season:

SEASON 8 AND LATER

The characters earn one or two checkpoints for each story or bonus objectives they complete depending on the adventure's duration—as directed by its adventure's reward section.

SEASONS 7 AND EARLIER

The characters earn one checkpoint per hour spent playing the adventure (to a maximum of the adventure's duration in hours).

TREASURE CHECKPOINTS

Characters playing in a hardcover adventure earn one treasure checkpoint for each hour played in pursuit of the adventure's stated goals (rounded down). This reward is doubled for tier 3 and 4 characters. Other adventures award checkpoints as determined by their season:

SEASON 8 AND LATER

The characters earn one to four checkpoints for each story or bonus objectives they complete determined by the adventure's duration and tier—as directed by its reward section.

SEASONS 7 AND EARLIER

The characters earn one checkpoint per hour spent playing the adventure (to a maximum of the adventure's duration in hours). This reward is doubled for tier 3 and 4 adventures.

GOLD AND MUNDANE TREASURE

Any entry of a treasure or award with a monetary value is ignored. Other mundane equipment can be used (but not sold) by the characters until the end of the session but is lost at the end of the session. Some nonmagical items encountered in hardcover adventures may be unlocked for purchased using treasure checkpoints. The ALCC will contain adventure-specific information regarding these items as well as when to award rewards that serve as exceptions to this paragraph. Any spellbooks recovered by the characters may be kept by one character at the table (determined randomly in case of contention).

MAGIC ITEMS

Unless stated otherwise in the ALCC, magic items specifically mentioned in an encounter become available for the characters in some fashion, depending on its type:

CONSUMABLE MAGIC ITEMS

Potions, scrolls, and magical ammunition are kept and divided among the characters—encouraging equitable distribution. If more than one player wants an item and the disagreement can't be resolved, determine the item's owner randomly (such as by rolling a die).

Permanent Magic Items. Permanent magic items aren't kept; they're instead unlocked for purchase.

STORY AWARDS/EFFECTS/ITEMS

Characters may acquire special items or effects (mundane or magical) that are essential to a hardcover adventure's storyline that are only useable of in effect during sessions of the adventure in which they're awarded. These are identified in the Adventurers League Content Catalogue.

AWARDING DOWNTIME

Characters earn five downtime days for every two advancement checkpoints they earn.

AWARDING RENOWN

Characters earn one renown for every four advancement checkpoints they earn.



