

URC1-05



# Mysteries of Crystal Springs II:

## Where is Nimar?

A One-Round D&D 3rd Edition LIVING GREYHAWK™ Adventure

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A return to Dosseldorf finds its mayor, the sorcerer Nimar, missing, and more strange events in the Crystal Springs. An adventure for levels 1-3



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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

## Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than seven players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

## Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

- 1-*No-vote scoring*: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
- 2-*Partial scoring*: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
- 3-*Voting*: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING™ adventure, it is expected that players will bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, a character sheet, and a LIVING GREYHAWK log sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer.

## LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

|     | <u>4 players</u> | <u>5 players</u> | <u>6 players</u> | <u>7 players</u> | <u>Lvl Cap</u> |
|-----|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| T1: | 4-12             | 5-13             | 6-14             | 7-15             | 4th            |
| T2: | 13-22            | 14-24            | 15-26            | 16-28            | 6th            |

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

## Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Destitute</b> | You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Poor</b>      | You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Common</b>    | You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.                                                                                           |
| <b>High</b>      | You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.                                                                                                  |
| <b>Luxury</b>    | You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week. |

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

| Lifestyle | Cost   | Skill Modifier |
|-----------|--------|----------------|
| Destitute | 14 sp  | -2             |
| Poor      | 43 sp  | -1             |
| Common    | 12 gp  | 0              |
| High      | 250 gp | +1             |
| Luxury    | 500 gp | +2             |

## DM Synopsis

### Mysteries of Crystal Springs

Crystal Springs is a hilly area in the County of Urnst marked by an abundance of strange brittle blue-veined crystal. It is located in the extreme southeast of the county, at the Nyronnd boarder. The waters of the Franz River flow from its crystalline hills. The origin of the area and its strange inhabitants is the stuff of rumor and conjecture, as are the powers that the crystals found at the springs may or may not have.

Dossleford is the nearest settlement to the springs. This small town sits along a low and rocky point of the Franz's flow, a point that has been utilized as a ford crossing for generations. The mayor of Dossleford, a sorcerer named Nimar, has lived in the town for many years, and spends much of his time researching Crystal Springs.

The Mysteries of Crystal Springs adventure series explores the nature of the springs, and gives brave adventurers a chance to have a hand in taming the dangerous inhabitants of the place.

In this part of the series the PCs will get their first inkling that the springs are actually a gigantic complex of crystalline chambers and passages that were once inhabited by a strange race.

In addition, forces from elsewhere in the county are seeking to use the powers of the Springs for their own evil ends, a fact that the PCs will eventually discover and deal with.

## DM's Synopsis

### Part II

*Mysteries of Crystal Springs: Part I* introduced the PCs to the town of Dossleford, its mayor Nimar, and the Crystal Springs area in general. In that adventure a large group of duergar had been paid by an agent from Radigast City to raid the surface. They used tunnels under the Crystal Springs as a base. The PCs stopped the initial foray of the dark dwur onto the surface.

The PCs could not explore the deeper recesses of the caverns in Part I because of a magical seal that was erected long ago to keep the denizens of the Underdark where they belong. The Duergar bypassed the seal using magical pendants given to them by the agent from Radigast City, but the PCs could not bypass the complicated locks in the first *Crystal Springs* adventure.

In this adventure, the PCs return to the Dossleford. Either Nimar has asked them to return to continue their investigation of the dark dwur invasion, or they are a new group of adventures who have come to Dossleford for whatever reason tickles their fancy. Nimar thought he'd have the puzzles of the plug solved by now. In truth, he did just open the plug, but made a mistake and was trapped in stasis as he unlocked the final lock.

In this adventure the PCs will rescue Nimar by venturing deeper into the caves, and retrieving a magic item that can dispel

the stasis, the *chime of portals*. They will also learn more of the conspiracy that put the dark dwur up to their invasion.

This scenario will be exposition and roleplaying at the beginning, a dungeon crawl in the middle, and a running battle at the end, ending with the plug slamming shut again. The final encounter sets the PCs up to return after Nimar has opened the seal again.

## Timeline Part II

**Introduction-Gathering in Weathertoe's.** The PCs gather in Weathertoe's to reminisce about their last adventure in Dossleford, and to hang out with Ronco and Melinda. They may be there to meet Nimar, but he is nowhere to be found.

**Encounter 1 – A Familiar Note.** Grinx, Nimar's familiar, suddenly appears in Weathertoe's with a scroll case tied to his back. The scroll is a message from Nimar that tells the PCs that something has happened and asks them to come to Crystal Springs.

**Encounter 2 - Travel.** It takes the PCs two days to travel to the plug. They can spend the night in a farmer's barn.

**Encounter 3 - The Plug.** The PCs find Nimar encased in some sort of crystal shell. He is able to ask the PCs to find the *chime of portals*. He believes the chime can set him free.

**Encounter 4 - Crystal Spiders.** The PCs come across the bodies of a number of dead dwur. The nearby spiders are hungry, and the PCs may become their next meal.

**Encounter 5 - Spying.** The group comes upon a group of duergar discussing their plans with a mysterious agent. If the PCs are stealthy they may learn some valuable information.

**Encounter 6 - Cave Trap.** The PCs travel through a cave infested with darkmantles. If they learned some of the information in Encounter 5, they might be able to traverse the cave safely. If not, they will have to use their wits to come through the cave unscathed.

**Encounter 7 - Carnage.** The group comes upon a duergar camp, which was recently wiped out by something nasty (xorn). They can dig through the remains, find the *chime of portals* and other items related to the seal. The PCs also may find more incriminating evidence that points to a conspiracy in the area. The xorn returns as they prepare to exit. A battle and/or chase ensues.

**Encounter 8 - Free Nimar.** The party can use the *chime of portals* to free Nimar.

**Conclusion - Back to Dossselford.** The PCs return with Nimar to Dossselford, and drink heartily at the Ticklish Trout. The local cleric, Kewana of Pelor, is there to patch up Nimar and the party

## DM Notes for Part II

The suggested lengths for each encounter are just that: suggestions. The times are suggestions based on the writer's playtest experience of how long the PCs should spend on each encounter. This will help you plan breaks, and let you know when you should start wrapping up an encounter in order to finish the adventure. Remember, don't ruin people's roleplaying by rushing them along, but know when to start wrapping up an encounter and move on.

## Player's Introduction to Part II

As winter slips her cool mantle comfortably around the shoulders of the County of Urnst, you have found your way to the remote town of Dossselford. Although it is far from the capital, Radigast City, and the bustling activity of the Nyr Dyv coast, Dossselford does have it's own rural attractions.

Located in the southeastern corner of the County of Urnst, Dossselford sits on the Franz River, which is the border between the County and Nyrond. Because of its location it is an important trade town. It is also the only major settlement for many miles, and so the local free peasants travel to Dossselford on a regular basis, sell their wares and buy the supplies they can't make at home.

Some of you are returning here to once again assist the town's mayor, the sorcerer Nimar, in stemming the tide of an imminent dark dwur invasion. Others have heard about the need for strong folk to keep the area safe and are visiting the trading town for the first time. All of you have heard increasing rumors that the source of the Franz River, the Crystal Springs, has mysteries of it's own.

Although the local tavern, The Ticklish Trout, is a fine establishment, each of you is currently browsing the overstuffed shelves of the renowned Weathertoe's general store and enjoying its comfortable atmosphere. Some of you chat with each other or the halfling proprietor Ronco Weathertoe and his charming daughter Melinda. The halflings welcome those who are returning to their town as both heroes and friends and those who are new with warm smiles and comfortable chairs close to the warming fire.

Allow the players to introduce their characters to their adventuring companions. The PCs also should decide how they came to Dossselford, and may want to tell newcomers to the area about their last adventure in this area. For those PCs who played in

Mysteries of Crystal Springs: Part I, the answer is simple; Nimar asked them to come back.

Weathertoe's has a large fireplace with several overstuffed chairs arranged in front of it, and adventurers are encouraged to have a seat and stay a while to tell tales about their adventures.

Weathertoe's isn't very organized. Its wares are in piles of loosely assorted stuff. Many of the piles teeter near ceiling height. PCs trying to dig through the piles themselves risk heavy helmets or worse toppling down upon them. Ronco and Melinda know every pile inside and out, and can guide characters to anything they need. Weathertoe's has most items in the *Player's Handbook* for listed price, although Ronco likes to make deals (see his description below).

**Ronco Weathertoe** (male halfling Rog5; age 45; Bluff +5, Sense Motive +4): Ronco is a gregarious fellow, an ex-adventurer who settled in Dossselford to raise his family. He spent many of his later adventuring years travelling with Nimar, and knows the sorcerer well. Like most halflings in the County of Urnst, Ronco speaks with a thick Minnesotan accent (think *Fargo*, or better yet, *Drop Dead Gorgeous*). He has had many adventures, which included a great deal of dungeon delving. If the temple of Zodal is mentioned, he will let on that some of his cousins work there, and that his is a great fan of the priests of Zodal who "saved his bacon many times, don't ya know." If he notices anyone flirting seriously with Melinda, he will try to gently discourage things from going too far.

Ronco is well known for his strange bargaining practices. He loves to haggle and deal, and his bargains are multi-layered, sometimes arbitrary, and always very complex. Somehow his goods always end up with the buyer paying exactly the going price for the items (i.e. the *Player's Handbook* price).

**Melinda Weathertoe** (female halfling, Exp1; age 19; Perform (sing) +4, Spot +4, Search +4): Melinda helps her father run the store, and chafes under his protective "custody." She is very flirtatious, and that aggravates her father to no end. She tends to stick to the shorter males, especially halflings, but she will flirt with almost anyone in order to goad her father. She knows the shop very well, and can help anyone find anything in the big piles with no problems. Although she wants to break away from her father, she does love him dearly, and isn't sure that the life of adventurer is for her. (She's seen too many wounded adventures over the years). She is contemplating a career as a bard, but hasn't really put her heart into it as of yet. She does have a very nice singing voice. She really likes to bat her eyes, and is known for teasing adventurers mercilessly. She is an attractive halfling, and even humans find her proportions and wiggle pleasing. If there are any bards in the group, particularly any halfling bards, she will question them about the life of a traveling bard in the County of Urnst. Melinda also has a Minnesotan accent (see info for Ronco above), although it is a little less noticeable, since Melinda has lived among humans much of her life here in Dossselford.

## Encounter 2: A Familiar Note

**Suggested Length:** 10-15 minutes

You are enjoying your pleasant morning in Weathertoe's. Some of you are warming yourselves by the fire, others shopping the disarrayed piles of goods scattered throughout the store.

Suddenly, you hear a horrible meowing sound, and an orange cat jumps down from a rafter to the top of a nearby pile of torches. It nimbly jumps down collapsing the pile and then quickly pads over toward Melinda, meowing loudly. The falling torches start a chain reaction, and stuff from all over the store starts falling and rolling all over the floor.

As you try to maintain your footing throughout the mayhem, you notice that the cat has a scrollcase tied to its collar.

This is Grinx, Nimar's familiar. It has come to Weathertoe's by the commands of its master, who is currently imprisoned in Crystal Springs.

Grinx and Melinda are old friends, and he will look to Melinda for comforting after his harrowing travel from Crystal Springs. Melinda will call him to her by name, and pet him firmly. She will open the note, but give it to a PC to read, as she has her hands full with Grinx.

Once she is holding him, he will purr loudly.

The note, which is provided at the end of the scenario, is included here for your convenience.

Dear Friends:

If you receive this, then something has gone horribly wrong, and I am no longer conscious.

As I write this, I am working on the final phase of opening the seal that we found six months ago.

Please come to the cave in Crystal Springs with due haste, and if nothing else, return my body to Dossselford for proper burial.

Do be careful. If something was strong enough to overwhelm me, you should proceed with utmost caution.

Hopefully I was able to scrawl or otherwise seal a final message to you somewhere near where I fell.

Thank you, heroes,

Nimar

Assuming the PCs agree to help (perhaps after a bit of questioning) you can move on.

If need be Ronco will be happy to draw a rough map of where the PCs are going. This map is not provided in the adventure as it consists of rough scribbles and Ronco's verbal direction:

"Follow the river eastward until you see the springs, then find the big canyon and the wreck of the dark dwur camp, and go into the cave."

He also will provide a map of the caverns that Nimar gave him before he left—this map is provided at the end of the scenario.

As far as Ronco knows, not much has changed around the springs since the last time the PCs explored the area (if they played the first *Crystal Springs* adventure). He went there with Nimar right after the heroes left from their last excursion to make sure the dark dwur weren't back. He can also tell the PCs that the patrols in the area have been increased since they have left. Neither his and Nimar's outing nor the patrol reports have yielded any sign of the duergar.

Melinda does remember one person heading to the springs about a month ago. The man was carrying a very heavy chest, and wore his hood down the few times she interacted with him, but she does remember that he had a very smooth and cultured voice (the kind of thing a singer would notice). There was something she did not like about him, but she tends not to trust people who don't show their face: "It is just plain rude, don't ya know."

Ronco will give the group a *potion of neutralize poison* and five *potions of cure light wounds*. They are the only healing he has around, and Nimar may need all the help he can get. If Nimar does not need them, the PCs can use them if needed during their rescue mission, but only if Nimar doesn't need them.

If the PCs are split on whether or not they want to rescue Nimar (after all, there is thus far no mention of compensation for the mission) then Ronco will listen intently to any debate or conversation about the issue. He will not give out his healing magic to the group, but instead will place the bundle in the pouch of the PC who he considers the most honorable, trustworthy, and sincere in their desire to come to Nimar's aid. He also will place a little note detailing his opinions on how the items should be used.

## Encounter 2: Travel

**Suggested Length:** 10-20 minutes

Take some time to describe the winter countryside along the Franz. For the first half-day of travel the party will see various farms, a couple of hamlets, and at least one manor house off in the distance. Most of these are calm, cool and serene in their snug blanket of snow. Travel will be slow in the snowy shade, or muddy on the sunny trail along the river. The Franz rides low in its banks, awaiting the spring thaw to swell its flow.

By afternoon, farms and settlements are less and less frequent until it has been an hour or so since you saw the last cottage in the distance. By late in the afternoon a cold rain starts to fall and the temperature drops quickly. The wind cuts you to the bone as you realize that a serious storm is on the way. You feel the cold wind, and look at your gear with skepticism, wondering how well

it will protect you. You do see a small farm up ahead through the cold driving rain. There appears to be a light in the window.

Larf Cobblersen, who came to the edge of civilized Urnst to start anew, owns the farm. He lives here with his wife, Anel, who moved here with him from Brotton, and his two sons, Mager and Folum, both of whom were born here. Larf distrusts strangers. He is wanted in Brotton for theft and constantly fears that someone will find him and haul him away from his new crime-free life. Thus, he tries to keep his face turned away or in shadow while the PCs are in his presence. If pressed, he will show his face to them, and they will not recognize him. Even if there are law enforcement officers from Brotton among the PCs, Larf's crime was so small that everyone has forgotten it. It lives on only in Larf's guilty conscience. Anel, on the other hand, misses the company of other people and will welcome the party with open arms. After the party is invited in, Anel will recognize those who stopped the duergar invasion in *Crystal Springs: Part I*. The boys will want to know all about the PCs' adventures and ask swordsmen among the PCs if they will show them how to wield a sword. Anel will treat the party as very important visitors. Larf scowls at the more knightly looking members, concerned that they are here to take him away from his family.

Anel will offer a simple meal of turnip soup to the PCs, along with some freshly baked bread. She will then insist that the PCs spend the night in the barn. Larf puts up some argument, but in the end yields to his wife's wishes. Do not spend too much time on this encounter, especially if the party has already done a lot of roleplaying with the Weathertoes.

**Development:** If asked about Nimar Anel will say:

Well, there was a stranger that stopped here about a month ago. I think he was headed toward the Springs. He was very stern and curt, and he demanded that we serve him. We were happy to do so as any good family would for a traveler, but he lacked courtesy. He kept his hood down the whole time, but I could feel his perpetual scowl. The boys were very frightened of him.

If asked for anything else she can remember about him:

Well, now that I think about it, he had a very large ring on his right hand with some sort of crest on it that I couldn't make out—some kind of bird I think.

That's all she can remember. She doesn't know what kind of bird it was, and doesn't remember any other details.

Note that if no one asks about anything strange, Larf will grumble about "all the strangers that have been through here lately" as a way to introduce the topic.

If the group treats the Cobblersens respectfully, they will be treated well in return. If not, they will be rushed out of the house as quickly as possible. Also, if a good impression is made, the

Cobblersens will help the PCs in the future. If any PC makes a spectacularly good or bad impression, be sure to write up the PC and player's name and information and send it to the Triad for inclusion in a future scenario or newsletter.

The next morning, the PCs will reach the edge of Crystal Springs some time around midmorning. The hills and spires, boulders and gravel are all made of brittle blue-veined quartz. The edge of the area is well defined—the crystals just coming right up out of the snowy dirt. There is little vegetation within the crystal area, and the snow has completely melted off the crystals themselves. The battle against the duergar, detailed in the first *Crystal Springs* scenario took place in a 200 foot-deep canyon within the crystal area. At the far end of that canyon are the remains of the duergar encampment. This area of the canyon is littered with the remnants of thick black tents and the remains of a gigantic wheeled black crossbow. There is nothing of value here. If a tracking is attempted (DC 10), the only tracks lead to a cave beyond the tents. They are of a human male (Nimar).

The party should head directly to area J, but in case they wish to explore, the details of the areas explored in *Crystal Springs Part I* are given. Make it clear to the PCs that they need not explore these caverns. Ronco has provided a map to the location of Nimar. Do not waste time on this area unless the PCs really want to re-explore what they have already been through. Assume that all of the monsters present in these caves in the first *Crystal Springs* are now gone.

Unlike most caverns, this one is almost too well lit, and you have to squint to keep your footing on the polished crystal floor. You are pretty sure that trying to run on this would be impossible.

**A.** This area is filled with many stalactites and stalagmites. Water trickles down the walls of this cavern by way of hundreds of small holes. The entire floor is submerged with water. The water is as deep as three feet in some places, and as shallow as one in others. There are many deep sinkholes concealed beneath the slow-moving water.

**B.** The passage splits here around a huge column of crystal that must reach through to the surface, since it is dimly lit from within. On one side of the column there is a 7-foot deep pool, and the other hooks around the column and continues south, with a fork that heads east toward area C.

**C.** Off to the side of the main cavern, separated by a short waterfall over large hunks of broken crystal, is a 2- to 3-foot deep pool. The walls of the cavern above the pool are similar to those in area A.

**D.** Just before this area, the floor rises above the level of the water, and little waves lap against the floor. There is a thick vein of iron ore running through the crystal which starts just outside this area and runs along the wall into this area.

E. This area is an empty cavern.

F. There is an open, 25-foot long passage leading up from the main cavern that rises out of the water and into this area. This area was a torture chamber and prison for those the duergar found sneaking about their hole or within the Crystal Springs area. They converted the cavern to this purpose months ago, and it has been abandoned since the dark dwur were forced to leave the caverns. There are six sets of manacles chained to the wall. Another feature of this cavern is a thin crevasse that winds up to the surface and provides ventilation for the fires the duergar once lit here.

G. This smooth-walled natural crystal chamber (roof 7-feet high on average), is roofed in a gleaming mess of needle-like stalactites over a damp floor.

Any PC searching the area might (Search, DC 20) find a small crawlspace (area H) entrance on the southeast wall. From this crawlspace the PCs can feel a faint breeze and hear the sound of running water.

H. This is a narrow and damp crawlspace. It is slimy with muck and follows a twisting path. Medium-sized characters wearing any armor better than studded leather will have to remove their armor to squeeze through, and packs will have to be pushed ahead of the character. Toward the east end of the crawlspace the PCs will see a flickering blue and white light, and the sound of running water becomes much louder there.

I. This huge cathedral-like cavern contains one of the springs that feed the Franz River. Water gushes up from the floor at the far end of the chamber. Beyond the geyser is a hole and beyond that hole the cavern continues.

On the roof of the chamber there is a forest of multicolored stalactites of varying shapes and sizes—from thin straws to huge fluted deposits—and most reach down to touch a corresponding stalagmite, thus forming distorted pillars and columns. The walls of the cavern are lined with fantastic glistening translucent calcite deposits that are shaped by nature into strange forms and grottoes. Water drips continuously from the roof and runs in small rivulets down the walls.

J: A 6-foot by 30-foot corridor that terminates in a large (60-foot diameter) cave. At the far end of the cave is a strange door (see Appendix A: The Plug for description).

Proceed to Encounter 3.

## Encounter 3: The Plug

**Suggested Length:** 10-15 minutes

Use this description when the party enters area J of Encounter 2.

You arrive at the circular door that seals the upper caverns from the lower world of the Dark Dwur. That door stands wide open. Nimar clearly succeeded in opening the seal. Beside the door is a large crystal pillar that wasn't there before.

Looking closer, you see that Nimar is encased inside the pillar, which apparently is some sort of crystal prison. It is difficult to see clearly through the thick crystal, but you think that his eyes are moving.

The creators of the door designed a final magical trap into its lock that Nimar failed to fully understand; anyone opening the door without the proper key (i.e. an amulet or the *chime of portals*) would be encased in crystal. Nimar had managed to avoid all the other traps, but fell to this final one. He is encased in a nearly unbreakable crystal.

The crystal encasing Nimar is light blue and rather thick. The PCs would have to dig at least one foot just to get to Nimar, and even if they could, doing so may collapse the entire crystal, which could either hurt or kill the sorcerer. Upon closer inspection, the PCs might find (Search, DC 12) that there is a point at the top where the crystal is clear and only about an inch thick. At the top, the crystal is pocked with tiny holes that let air in and out. The crystal in this area has a hardness of 8 and 12 hp. The clear crystal area is about two inches, much too small to get Nimar out, but once the party breaks through this area, they will be able to speak with him. Nimar's voice is weak. He has been trapped in the crystal for two days. He has not had food or water and is unable to move.

"Thank you. I appear to be rather stuck, and I'm afraid you will be unable free me without magical help. I should have listened to Trular. Now, I'm going to need those magical chimes that he mentioned."

At this point, the party should have a number of questions. Nimar will gladly answer any and all, although he would appreciate a drink first.

- **Who's Trular?** A Diviner who assists me from time to time. Unfortunately Trular is "away for a while, far from here." (Trular cannot be contacted in this scenario).
- **What did Trular tell you?** Many things, but most important was "He who opens the portal must have the keys or chimes".
- **What are the chimes?** I wish I knew. In the runes on the door they are called the *chimes of the seal*. From what I understand, they, or some other special keys are needed to safely open this seal. I am hoping that they can also free me from this prison.
- **Do you know where the chimes or keys are?** Trular said that the duergar probably have them now. They were constructed long ago by those who built the seal. Hopefully, they are down below.
- **How many duergar are below?** I don't know. Try to avoid as many direct fights as possible. Discretion may be the best

tactic. If the duergar have them, they are probably in the possession of the chief priest or shaman. I wish I had more precise information.

Nimar will continue to answer questions as best he can, and he will eventually fill in any information that the party does not ask about. Nimar will stress to the party that the caves below are most likely very dangerous and it will be best to avoid combat whenever possible.

After the party decides to continue, they will notice a stairway leading down into the darkness past the plug. Apparently the passages below aren't lit by the translucent crystal as are the upper caves. The PCs will need a light source. The stairs are clearly not naturally occurring, but seem to be formed of a darker version of the same crystal as they caves they are in.

After the PCs are ready to move on, Nimar loses consciousness. He will appear to be mumbling something incomprehensible as he blacks out.

## Encounter 4: Crystal Spiders

**Suggested Length:** 15-20 minutes

You carefully move down the stairs, alert for who knows what kind of horrible dangers you will find below. On the way down you note the walls and steps are carved from a very smooth polished smoky crystal. It takes a while, but you reach the bottom of your careful descent.

At the bottom, in the dim light, you see a dark dwur standing some 20 feet down the passage!

The duergar the PCs see is not alive. The corpse is suspended in a crystalline web spun by a crystal spider. This female and her young recently moved up into this passage from their own home in the depths below. They have not eaten since they drained the duergar three days ago. A squad of duergar was sent up to check on the status of the surface three days ago, and one of them was captured and eaten. The other two retreated. The dwur captain's husk remains in the web, where he was snared while scouting ahead of the group. The remainder of the squad retreated to a room deeper in the complex (Encounter 5). They are too far away to overhear a combat in this area.

The web is extremely hard to see in the dim light (Spot, DC 21), and extends completely across the corridor. The dwur was snared as he was walking forward, and since the cocoon around him is also completely transparent, at first glance he still looks like he is walking forward.

Very bright light (such as a *flare*, *fireball*, or the like) will lower the DC to spot the web to 16.

The staircase opens into a 10-foot wide passage that is about 40 feet long. The web is about halfway along the passage. The spiders have hollowed out niches in the ceiling of the passage directly above the web, and are hiding there, ready to pounce.

The web can be cut, but it takes a PC 2 rounds to cut a hole just big enough to move through due to the extreme stickiness of the strands. A successful Reflex save (DC 15) is required when passing through such a hole to avoid being caught and stuck in the web for a round. Anyone thus caught who is shoved through from behind will end up fully gripped in the web, requiring a successful Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 17) to escape.

If anyone attacks the dead dwarf with a melee weapon that weapon will become stuck to the web, and it must be freed (Strength check, DC 15). Note that ranged weapons fired will appear to have the usual effect, whisking through the sticky strands because of their small size and increased velocity.

The spiders will remain hidden in their niche until as many characters as possible are involved with the web. They will then descend on the group, with the mother choosing the most heavily armored member of the group as her target.

PCs looking up can make a Spot check (DC 21) to detect the spiders, but it is difficult since the spiders blend in with the ceiling.

Searching the bodies will yield 6 gp of County mint, and a stone medallion. The stone medallion is one of the keys for the portals in the Crystal Springs. They are currently attuned to dark dwur and will not function in the hands of PCs. Because of this the PCs cannot use the key to break Nimar out of his prison.

**Crystal Spider notes:** These are Monstrous Spiders (MM p. 210) that have been mutated by their exposure to the strange crystals of the springs. They are almost completely translucent, and their inner workings are completely displayed, including their glowing green poison sacs. Their chitin is studded with bits of black crystal.

### Tier 1 (EL 1)

**Medium-Size Monstrous Spider (Crystal)** (1): CR 1; Medium-Size Vermin; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +4 melee (1d6+poison, bite) SA web, poison; SQ vermin; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0

Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

**Skills:** Climb +12, Hide +10, Jump +0, Spot +7; **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

**SA Poison (Ex)**—DC 14; Initial and secondary damage 1d4 Str; **Web (Ex)**—spiders can lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size.

**SQ Vermin**—immune to mind-influencing effects.

**Small-Size Monstrous Spider (Crystal, young)** (1): CR 1/2; Small-Size Vermin; HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); Atks +4 melee (1d4+2+poison, bite) SA web, poison; SQ vermin; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0

Str 7, Dex 17, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

**Skills:** Climb +10, Hide +14, Jump -2, Spot +7; **Feats:** Weapon

Finesse (bite).

SA *Poison* (Ex)—DC 11; Initial and secondary damage 1d3 Str; Web (Ex)—spiders can lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size.

SQ *Vermín*—immune to mind-influencing effects.

## Tier 2 (EL 4)

**Medium-Size Monstrous Spider (Crystal)** (1): Use stats above.

**Small-Size Monstrous Spider (Crystal, young)** (4): Use stats above.

## Encounter 5: Spying

**Suggested Length:** 10-20 minutes

As you travel down the corridor beyond the spiders, the crystal changes color to a more yellowish hue. The yellow crystal gives off a faint and eerie yellow light that makes you all appear jaundiced. Still, it is just enough light to see by. Twenty feet past the spider webs the tunnel opens into a rough-hewn natural cavern.

A successful Listen check (DC 16) reveals the sounds from a conversation ahead.

Proceeding forward, you see a squad of duergar standing in a group toward the back of the cave. There are more than a dozen of them. They all look nervous, and some glance briefly toward your direction, but the yellow light seems to prevent them from spotting you. They do not notice you—yet. Some of them are enlarged, and pace around toward the back of the group. There are two exits from the cave. One is just inside the cave off to the right, the other is behind the squad.

Assuming that the party does not immediately declare that they are attacking, the PCs have a chance of picking up a conversation between a duergar sergeant and someone in the shadows. Have each PC make a Listen check. Depending on the roll, provide the following information. The pair is conversing in common, although the duergar speaks in thick Slavic-type accents.

From your position near the dark dwur, you see a tall, cloaked figure in the shadows near the exit on the other side of the cavern. You cannot make out his face due to the hood pulled down over his face. He is talking to one the Duergar.

Listen DC 10:

Cloaked Figure: “Barok, shouldn’t we go back to your camp?”

Duergar: “What, and tell the big boss that we weren’t able to kill spiders? I have already been shamed. Those foul humans beat me. He would kill me for sure.”

Cloaked Figure: “Then help me get past the spiders and out of here.”

Duergar: “Did you see what those things did ta th’ captain? No way we will fight them! The captain also had only way to open the door.”

Listen DC-12:

Cloaked Figure: “Alright, I have to get out of here and report back. If you want your money, we’ll have to go back and get a ballista to kill those bugs. I’ll keep your boss from killing you outright.”

Listen DC-17 (They will notice gesture even if they miss the roll):

Duergar: “All right, but we’re going the long way.” He motions to the exit on the far side of the cave from you. “I’m not going back to camp that way.” He points at the passage inside the cave to your right. “Even if you take the right path those things sometimes still fall on you. Ugh.”

Listen DC-19 (quieter)

“Fine – I’m leaving. You get the chime from your boss back at your camp, and use it to continue your raids. You will be paid in full when the raids actually happen.”

Listen DC-20 (whisper)

Duergar: “The big boss says that you pay us much to attack surface folk, but I don’t think it’s enough. If I ran the clan, we wouldn’t work with surface scum like you! Hrumph. For now we go.” The cloaked figure hands something to the dwarf.

Listen DC-25 (under breath comment)

Cloaked Figure: “You had better do better than last time. His lordship does not appreciate failure.”

After the conversation, the dwur become organized and head down the passage away from the party. Tell the party that there is no light down that passage. The cloaked figure will be blocked from missile fire at all times by *enlarged* duergar. He will lead the group down the passage.

If the party chooses to attack, they are in for a rough time of it. The duergar will consider this an invasion and fight to the death.

The cloaked figure is also using *alter self* to keep his features hidden. His hands are gloved, and no ring can be seen. He will run, and drink a *potion of invisibility* at the first sign of combat. UNDER NO CONDITION IS HE TO BE CAUGHT. Make up whatever abilities and resistances for the figure you need to ensure he gets away. If the party follows him, they will find a series of dead-end corridors. The crystal floor is too hard to show tracks, and he leaves no sign of passing.

Let the party wander around for a while. They will notice that the sounds of the dwur fade as they travel farther and farther away (as time allows), then have them end up at Encounter 6. The passages beyond the initial cavern are totally dark, so the party will be easy targets of attack because their light source will be easily spotted. They won’t be attacked, but you can bring up the pos-

sibility to make them nervous.

If the PCs decide to attack the duergar, they are in for a hard fight, use the stats below:

### All Tiers (EL 10)

**Duergar** (15): CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (dwarf); HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +0 (Dex); Spd 15 ft.; AC 16 (+4 scale mail, +2 large shield); Atks +1 melee (1d10 [crit. X3], dwarven waraxe) SQ Duergar traits, Spell-like abilities, darkvision 120 ft., Light Sensitivity AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0

Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

**Skills:** Appraise +2, Craft (metalworking +2, Listen +3, Spot +3); **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Alertness.

**SQ:** *Duergar traits* (Ex)—+4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks; Immune to paralysis, phantasms, and magical or alchemical poisons (but not normal poisons); Listen +1, Spot +1 (racial bonus); *Spell-Like Abilities* (Sp)—1/day: *Enlarge* and *invisibility* as a 3rd-level wizard; these affect only the duergar and whatever it carries; *Light Sensitivity* (Ex)—Duergar suffer a –2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls, saves, and checks in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Possessions:** dwarven waraxe, scale mail (dwarf-size), large shield

**Duergar Sergeant, male dwarf, Ftr2:** CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (dwarf); HD 2d10+4; hp 16; Init +0 (Dex); Spd 15 ft.; AC 18 (+6 chainmail, +2 large shield); Atks +4 melee (1d10+1 [crit. X3], dwarven waraxe) SQ Duergar traits, Spell-like abilities, darkvision 120 ft., Light Sensitivity AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +2

Str 12, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

**Skills:** Appraise +2, Craft (metalworking +2, Listen +3, Spot +3); **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Alertness, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Power Attack, Iron Will.

**SA** *Duergar traits* (Ex)—+4 racial bonus to Move Silently checks; Immune to paralysis, phantasms, and magical or alchemical poisons (but not normal poisons); Listen +1, Spot +1 (racial bonus); *Spell-Like Abilities* (Sp)—1/day: *Enlarge* and *invisibility* as a 3rd-level wizard; these affect only the duergar and whatever it carries; *Light Sensitivity* (Ex)—Duergar suffer a –2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls, saves, and checks in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell

**Possessions:** Dwarven waraxe, chainmail (dwarf-size), large shield, 12 gp.

## Encounter 6: Cave of Darkness

**Suggested Length:** 10-15 minutes

The walls and floors of the passage you are following are gradually turning a dirty green color. About 20 feet ahead of you, the passage opens into a very large rough cavern with green stalagmites climbing up toward the ceiling.

### Spot Check DC 19 from here:

The surface of the stalagmites appears to be moving.

If one of the PCs made their spot check they should be ready for trouble when they enter the chamber. The middle of this corridor has several crystalline darkmantles hanging from the ceiling (Spot DC 21—the darkmantles are effectively taking 10). They feed on the crystal beetles that scurry about, which, in turn, survive by eating the lichen that feeds on the green crystal. The stalagmites in this chamber give off a dim green glow.

A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals an exit to the room about 100 ft. directly across the cavern from the entrance. A wide path leads from one egress to the other.

There is a rough, narrow path (Spot check, DC 13) around the right-hand side of the cavern. If the PCs travel upon that path they will avoid going directly under the darkmantles. Still, if the PCs use this path to traverse the cavern half of the darkmantles for the respected tier may attack, but not at once. If the party is extremely cautious, quiet, and perhaps turns off their lights while moving through this area, there will be no chance of attack. Use your judgment in determining whether or not some of the predators attack the PC.

The beetles crawling upon on the stalagmites are what make those rock formations appear to move. The crystal beetles are very hard to see, since they are almost entirely transparent. If one of the beetles is touched, it will open its wing-case and fly off, emitting a high-pitched glass-on-glass grinding sound. If more than three of these beetles are touched (if someone falls bodily against a stalagmite, tries to attack one, etc.) then all the beetles nearby will fly off in a cloud, and a horrible cacophony of screeching. Such a disturbance will attract the darkmantles, which will then attack anything in the area of the disturbance. If the PCs are careless or clumsy while traversing this narrow path, they can stumble into a stalagmite and disrupt the beetles. Use your judgment when this happens, but give a Balance check (DC 15) to determine success or failure. If the group is being careful, they should be fine. If they are pulling a wagon, or something similar, things could go awry. If one of the party members is excessively large, it will be a tight squeeze.

This chamber's exit leads into a smoky crystal corridor, in which the PCs will need a light source to see. It goes on straight for as far as the PCs can see from its entrance.

**Crystal Darkmantle notes:** These creatures have the same stats as normal darkmantles (MM p. 39) that have been mutated by their long exposure to the crystalline environment of the Springs.

They are a smoky quartz color and texture, with glowing red eyes and white-crystal studded tentacles.

**Tier 1 (EL 2)**

**Darkmantle (Crystal)** (2): CR 1; Small-Size Magical Beast; HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); AC 17 (+1 size, +6 natural); Atks +5 melee (1d4+4, slam) SA Darkness, improved grab, constrict 1d4+4; SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0

Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +5; Feats: Improved Initiative.

SA: *Darkness* (Su)—Once per day a darkmantle can cause *darkness* as the spell cast by a 5th-level sorcerer. It most often uses this ability just before attacking; *Improved Grab* (Ex)—To use this ability, the darkmantle must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict; *Constrict* (Ex)—A darkmantle deals 1d4+4 damage with a successful grapple attacks.

**Tier 2 (EL 4)**

**Darkmantle (Crystal)** (4): Use stats above.

**Encounter 7: Carnage**

**Suggested Length:** 20-30 minutes

The corridor continues for quite a distance. Its long path is marked with numerous short dead-end passages branching off from the main passage. Many of these tributaries are collapsed, but others are sealed with crystalline plugs similar to the plug Nimar opened. After traversing ten minutes, the PCs find the following:

A pair of dead duergar lay face-down on the crystal floor in the passageway ahead. The arm of one of the dwarves is around the shoulders of the other. One dark dwur appears to be missing a leg, and a large hole has been gnawed into the backside of the other. Apparently neither was injured enough to keep them from getting this far before they collapsed. A thick bloody trail leads down the corridor away from you.

Both duergar are dead, but each is still slightly warm. One of the dwarves is carrying 6 gp, all of County mint. Neither carries any weapons, and both of their suits of dwarf-size scale mail are ruined.

If the PCs follow the blood trail, read or paraphrase the following:

The trail of blood leads another hundred feet beyond the bodies and into another large chamber.

As you approach the chamber, you can see that the soothing gray crystal walls of the chamber are splashed bright red with the blood of over two dozen dark dwur. Each dwarf has been ripped apart, and their bodies are strewn about the cavern. Tables and chairs, as well as pots, pans, and chests are tossed here and there. Sometimes the dwarves' bodies pin the debris, sometime the

opposite. You see two other exits from the room, one to the right, and one up and to the left. Both are walled in smooth gray crystal, with level floors and arched ceilings.

The duergars were killed by a group of xorn. The xorn were servants of the race that once inhabited the springs. These xorn have always lived on the Prime Material Plane (thus technically they are aberrations rather than outsiders), and like most of the creatures here, have taken on crystalline characteristics. The duergar accidentally made camp near a xorn hatchery. A small group of xorn adults eventually came and slaughtered the duergar when the dark dwur stumbled into the passage that held young xorn.

At this point, the PCs may want to ransack the camp. Describe the carnage as vividly as possible to plant the idea that whatever did this to the duergar, could come back at any moment. Also, you may want to tell them that this looks as if it might be the duergar base camp, and if they left the dark dwur from Encounter 5 behind them, those dwarves might be heading this way eventually. The camp is a disaster and the bodies are only slightly warm. A successful Heal check (DC 15) reveal that the duergar have been dead for several hours. Searching the camp is a slow and grisly task (taking at least 15 minutes to search through the carnage thoroughly—i.e., normal spot checks—or an hour and a half to take 20), but eventually they will find the following:

- The Duergar appeared to be getting ready for another assault on the surface. The PCs will find tents, masks with small eye slits (to keep out the sunlight), and two demolished ballistae. There are also 10 shortswords and 10 suits of dwarf-sized leather armor that can be easily salvaged.
- There are maps that show the area that surrounds Crystal Springs, but strangely, they show only of the County of Urnst areas, not the Nyrond areas. They appear to be of human manufacture (i.e., they are labeled in common).
- Treasure (amount depends on highest Search roll, take only the items listed at the highest roll, don't total them)  
 Search 10 – 50 gp, 30 sp, 50 cp  
 Search 12 – 75 gp, 50 sp, 100 cp  
 Search 15 – 100 gp, 70 sp, 120 cp, 1 50-gp ruby.  
 Search 20 – 120 gp, 100 sp, 160 cp, 2 50-gp rubies, 1  
 Search 25 – 150 gp, 120 sp, 160 cp, 2 50-gp rubies,  
 1 75gp diamond,

On the commander's body, the PCs will find 5 amulets (the 'keys'), a velvet-lined walnut box with a set of silver chimes in it, and a book in an unknown tongue. The amulets are the keys that the dark dwur had been using to reach the surface, the chime is the *chime of seal*, and the book is written by the race that once inhabited the Crystal Springs. The book looks of very different manufacture from the keys and the chime (which were made by the race that sealed off the Springs long ago). The book is super-thin and contains milky-white crystal sheets bound with smooth teal crystal sheets that seem surprisingly strong. It is totally unintelligible to anyone in the party, regardless of skill or spell.

Taking 20 is a dangerous prospect for the PCs. The xorn will return within 20 minutes, and if any duergar are left from Encounter 5, they will return 10 rounds after that fight begins. For the search roll, it is best to go with the results of one roll using the cooperation rules (*Player's Handbook*, p. 62) and using the chart below to see what the PCs find during the search. If the PCs hit DC 20 in their search they will also find a xorn leg, which was severed during its fight with the duergar.

If the PCs are around when the xorn return, give them a chance to flee (at that point they have only found the chime and 100 gp), but they will miss out on the majority of the treasure.

If the PCs decide to stay and fight use the stats for the xorns found below, and the stats in Encounter 5 for any returning duergar.

**Crystal xorn notes:** This is a normal xorn (MM p. 187) that has been mutated by long exposure to the crystalline environment of the Springs. It is a dark jade color and texture, with glowing yellow eyes and redcrystal-studded arms.

### Tier One (EL 3)

**Xorn (Crystal):** CR 3; Small-Size Aberration; HD 3d8+6; hp 15 (wounded, max 19); Init +0; Spd 20 ft., burrow 30 ft; AC 23 (+1 size, +12 natural); Atks +6 melee (2d8+2, bite), and +4 melee (1d3+1, 3 claws); SA Burrow; SQ Immunities, Resistances, Half Damage from Slashing, All-Around Vision, Tremorsense; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

**Skills:** Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Move Silently +3, Search +3, Spot +8; **Feats:** Multiattack.

**SA: Darkness (Ex)**—A xorn can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no normal tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or sign of its presence. A move earth spell cast on an area.

**SQ: Immunities (Ex)**—Xorns are immune to cold and fire; **Resistance (Ex)**—Xorns have electricity resistance 10; **Half Damage from Slashing (Ex)**—Slashing weapons deal only half damage to xorns, with a minimum of 1 point of damage; **All-Around Vision (Ex)**—Xorns' symmetrically placed eyes allow them to look in any direction, bestowing a +4 racial bonus to Spot and search check. Xorns cannot be flanked; **Tremorsense (Ex)**—Xorns can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

### Tier Two (EL 5)

**Xorn (Crystal) (2):** Use stats above.

## Encounter 8: Free Nimar

**Suggested Length:** 10-15 minutes

When the PCs return to Nimar, they find him still unconscious.

If the PCs ring the chime, the crystal encasing him will melt away, and they can carry the sorcerer off. If they strike the chime on the crystal, the crystal will shatter, causing 1d4 (Tier 2: 1d6) points of damage to everyone within 10 feet of it, Reflex save DC 15 for half. Strangely, Nimar takes no damage from this explosion of crystal.

The amulet keys have been attuned to the duergar, so the PCs will not be able to use them to open Nimar's prison.

Even after he is freed from the prison Nimar will still be unconscious. He is currently stabilized at -5 hit points, and will remain that way until he is healed. As well, the crystalline prison also deals temporary Intelligence ability damage, and Nimar is currently at 0 Intelligence, which is the reason why he blacked out to begin with. The ability score damage is more than the party will probably be able to heal, so more than likely Nimar will stay unconscious until the he and the PCs reach Dosseldorf. Once the party decides to return to Dosseldorf, proceed to the conclusion. If they wait for more than a half-hour in this area with the plug open, a swarm of xorn attacks them. The xorn use the exact same tier structure as Encounter 8, but a new group enters the area every other round until four groups (either 4 or 8 xorn, depending on the tier, will appear within 8 rounds) are in the area. If the PCs attempt to flee, allow them to do so. The xorn are more concerned with driving out the threat to their territory and young than actually killing intruders this far from their hatchery.

## Conclusion Back to Dosseldorf

**Suggested Length:** 5-10 minutes

You drag yourselves back to Dosseldorf, worn and weary with Nimar in tow. As you reach town, you are greeted with shouts of concern as villagers swarm around you and their wounded mayor. They guide you beneath a brightly painted sign of hands tickling the belly of a rainbow trout and then into the Ticklish Trout.

Inside, the local priestess, Kewana of Pelor, looks up from her ale as you enter. The people of the town bring Nimar to the priest. Kewana immediately begins to examine him.

While Kewana works, Yurj the Tickler brings you a round of what he believes to be your favorite drink, mumbling that it is on the house. Within moments you are pestered for the story of what happened by some young townfolk.

After about half an hour, Kewana tells everyone that Nimar is in bad shape, and that he is still in need of serious healing. She kneels on the beer-soaked sawdust-covered floor, her fine traveling robes instantly coated with the stuff.

"Pelor hear the prayers of your daughter for this man who means so much to so many."

She places her hands on him, and light flows from her into

Nimar. After a few moments, Nimar's eyes open and he speaks, "Oh, and be careful, I think I saw a xorn through those quartz windows a few days ago."

Apparently he was continuing his final words before he fell unconscious.

He sits up and looks around quickly, taking in the surroundings. "Oh, well, looks like everything's fine then. Just leave me the keys and the chime and I'll be fine." He promptly slumps back onto the table.

At this point, Kewana will verify that Nimar is just sleeping. She then offers to heal any wounded PCs with *cure serious wounds*. She is not powerful enough to *raise dead*. Nimar will need lots of rest to return to full strength (or Intelligence, as the case may be).

Ronco promises to send a letter to the PCs when Nimar is up and about again, or if the dark dwur look like they are on the move again.

Note that the party should leave the book, the chimes, and the keys here for Nimar. They cannot decipher the book, and no certificate is provided for any of those items.

**Kewana** (female human, Clr6 [Pelor]; Heal +11)

**Yurj the Tickler** (male human, Rgr4). Yurj is the proprietor of the Ticklish Trout, the inn and tavern in Dossselford. Yurj is an expert fish tickler, and keeps a tank of trout behind the bar to practice on, and serve to his customers. Not known as a stunning conversationalist, Yurj is a superb listener, and grunts appropriately in almost any conversation. He has a thick Slavic accent (a Schwarzenegger accent will do). He lived in the Flinty Hills for many years before deciding that although he liked to be alone, the life of a solitary ranger was a little too much solitude. He likes to try to guess people's favorite drinks, but rarely gets it right.

**Nimar, Mayor of Dossselford:** male human (Flan-Suel mix), Sor10; Knowledge [arcana] +17, Knowledge [nature] +10, Knowledge [religion] +8, Knowledge [Urnst] +9): Nimar has kind of a crusty English accent. He really likes women, and will often stare at the females of a group while talking, even if responding to a question from a male. However, he really prefers to look and not touch (they might distract him unduly from his work), and will get flustered if a female PC gets too close.

He is nice enough, but tends to have a distracted air while listening to people. He doesn't mince words, and will not hesitate to interrupt people to cut to the heart of what they are saying, while up to that point not seeming to pay attention at all. While not precisely arrogant, he is the mayor and a powerful sorcerer, and is used to people respecting him, despite his slightly batty air. He has a good sense of humor, and likes to crack jokes.

He is a powerful sorcerer, and adventured for many years (the last few with Ronco) before retiring to Dossselford to devote his time to investigating Crystal Springs. He became the mayor by accident about 15 years ago, when a horde of orcs attacked the vil-

lage and he took them out nearly single-handedly. The citizens of Dossselford like him because he is strong enough to defend and lead the community, enforcing justice when need be, and stays out of their hair the rest of the time.

## The End

## Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

### Encounter Four

Overcoming the crystal spiders 100 xp

### Encounter Five

Overcoming the duergar 100 xp

### Encounter Six

Overcoming the crystal darkmantles 100 xp

### Encounter Seven

Overcoming the crystal xorn 100 xp

### Encounter Eight

Freeing Nimar 50 xp

Total experience for objectives 450xp

Discretionary roleplaying award 0-50 xp

**Total possible experience 500 xp**

session of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

### Encounter One

1 *Potion of neutralize poison* (750 gp, \*, liquid, glass and stopper, common).

5 *Potions of cure light wounds* (50 gp each, \*, liquid, glass and stopper, common).

### Encounter Four

6 gp.

### Encounter Seven

up to 150 gp, 120 sp, 160 cp, 2 50-gp rubies, and 1 75 gp diamond.

### Conclusion

One influence points with Nimar, Ronco and Melinda.

## Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.

Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.

Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items that are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the pos-

## Appendix A: The Plug

**Note:** The following is a description of the Plug found in the caverns of Crystal Springs. During the adventure the plug has been solved and sits open, the following is a full description of the plug for the DM to use if the PCs want more information about this complex, but now open, door.

The passageway dead-ends into an ominous sight. The natural curve of the passageway tapers here, down to only about 15 ft. across. After 10 ft. the narrowed area stops in a solid brazen wall. Set within the wall is a circular door 6 ft. in diameter. The door projects a good 4 ft. out from the surface of the door. The hinges rest firmly on your side of the door, atop the frame. The door has no handle. Engraved on its surface are 7 concentric rings of stone. Each is made from a different metal, save the inner-most ring, which is made of marble. From the center are bands of steel, iron (only slightly rusted), copper (greened with age), silver and a blue-steel-colored metal.

The wall itself is bronze and the outer-most ring is made of mithral. PCs can learn more about each ring and the wall by examining it more closely. The rings form a multi-part lock, which needs to be correctly solved in order to provide passage. There is a short cut to this that allows the duergar to pass. This requires a magic amulet of passage (which is applied to the center stone). These are rare as they needed to be cut from the same stone the core was made of. Each “tumbler” needs to be solved from outside in before the next inner tumbler is attempted. Failure to do so causes the attempting character to suffer the wrath of the tumbler attempted.

### The Wall

Set into the wall at about four and a half feet in height from the floor on either side of the door are a small square quartz crystals about 3 inches tall and 6 inches in width. Looking through the quartz, you see a distorted image beyond depicting a long tunnel stretching into the vast darkness. Oddly, through the crystal, you can see the vastness of the cavern as though there were some bright light. Long shadows stretch down the corridor from the stalagmites, though oddly, there are none within several score feet of the doorway.

What the PCs are seeing is a “peephole” used by the duergar for monitoring the passageway. Above and below each peephole is a section of wall, which has had *daylight* cast upon it and then ensorcelled with *permanency*. The duergar themselves know of its existence and shield their eyes from the harsh light the door projects.

### Mithral Ring

The blue-steel-colored ring has the twelve mountains enameled onto its surface. Each is slightly different. All the mountains' bases touch the outer edge of the ring. They are clockwise from top: a bare mountain, a mountain spouting a dark cloud, a moun-

tain with a hammer at its center, one which is snow-capped, a spindle of great height, an old worn-down peak, a mountain with a spider at its core, a mountain with an eye at its heart, one containing a candle, one lined with great pines, a mountain-top shrouded in clouds and a jet black peak. Sculpted hammers and long swords are placed along a radius around the ring on short poles, forming convenient handholds.

The outer-most tumbler was a gift from the elves of the Gnarley Forest for holding their dark brethren in their depths. As a remembrance of this gift, the dwarves made the solution to the exterior ring be a forest-covered mountain, symbol of dwaven and elven unity. The tumbler needs to be rotated clockwise so that the forest-covered mountain is at the bottom of the tumbler. If the tumbler is rotated counter-clockwise, the whole tumbler will become very cold, causing 2d4 points of damage and a reduction of 4 points of Dexterity and a –2 penalty to Strength for the next two weeks. This is caused by the skin of the affected freezing solid to the wheel and needing to be sloughed off. Healing cures the damage, but only *restoration* will correct the stat damage sooner. This can be avoided at a Reflex save of DC 20.

### Silver Ring

This tumbler is intricately and deeply carved with a pattern of two interwoven snakes. The carved snakes are biting each other's tails and each is pointing in a different direction. One snake is carved as having fangs, the other isn't. The two heads are about a quarter of a circle apart from each other, at about 4 and 8 o'clock on the ring.

The challenge here is considerably simpler than one would think and over-thinking the problem is the true challenge. The engraved snakes can be used as handholds to rotate the ring in either direction. This ring rotates counter-clockwise and need only be rotated such that one but not both heads of the snake pass the 6 o'clock mark twice (two full revolutions). If anything else is attempted the person turning the snakes will take 3d4 points of damage from a spray of acid being shot out from under the scales of the snakes (Reflex DC 18 halves). This will also do another 2d4 damage the next round and a d4 damage the following round. This will fire if the mithral ring isn't set properly when this ring is attempted or if this ring is mishandled in any way (rotated incorrectly, or in the wrong direction).

### The Copper Ring

This ring is bare of all etchings and engravings of any kind. Though greened with age, its surface is unmarred save for the presence of 6 deep depressions set equidistant around the ring. This is a different sort of challenge, one that will be very difficult to solve. In order for this ring to be passed, it need only be rotated clockwise and will stop on its own after a 1/2 turn. The difficulty is getting the ring to turn. The holes provide a place to insert something for leverage. Each hole is 1-1/2 inches in diameter and 7 inches deep. When attempting to turn the wheel, a

small current is run through whatever is placed within. The end effect is based off of what they use as a lever. If it doesn't occupy 90% of the hole's diameter the wheel won't turn, with no further effect. Otherwise, if the substance is wood, it will smolder and burst into flame and the PCs will have to clear the rubble from the hole before continuing. If the substance is flesh, the creature will suffer 1d6 points of damage from the current. If the substance is a non-conductive metal, the metal will heat up as per a *heat metal* spell. If the substance is a conductive metal, it will get a tingling feeling to it and anyone holding on and pushing will have their hair stand on end, but it will push. If the PCs attempt to push it the wrong way or if the outer two rings aren't properly handled, each hole will release a *lightning bolt* (as if cast by a 5th-level wizard and conducted through any valid lever), which will strike the closest grounded character in front of the door. Usually this will be three of the bolts hitting each of the two characters in front of the door, but this is DM adjudicated.

In a natural crevice in the wall some 25 ft. back, there are a 6 copper poles 1-1/2 in. diameter and 2 ft. long. These are hidden from sight and will only be found with a dedicated search (1 minute/5 ft.) of this area.

## Iron Ring

The iron ring is rimmed with rust though it is still solid and strong. Its surface teems with images of dwarves at work. Examining the graven images more closely, you feel confident that many of them depict hammer-wielding dwarves that would prove effective handholds for moving the ring. Others depict the dwarves wielding axes that would be more uncomfortable to use. The duergar believe their race is both strong and crafty and this ring embodies both those attributes. Turning the ring is simple to do for one with the strength. It is a DC 26 Strength check to turn the wheel and at most 3 humans or 4 dwarves or Small creatures can get on it at once. The craftiness of this ring is that the ring breaks the previous alternation of directions, as it also should rotate clockwise, like both the ring outside of it and the ring inside of it. Failure to rotate it correctly or if the exterior rings are not correctly positioned at the time will cause the images of the dwarves to animate and take a swing at the turners before returning to their inanimate state. Each person attempting to help turn the door will have 4 attacks on them from dwarf statuettes. These attacks are all at +7 to hit and do 1d4+2 points of damage. The first time the dwarves animate, they get surprise in their attack. Holding a dwarf with an axe to turn the wheel causes 1d3 points of damage in the act of turning, but if the dwarves animate, that one won't attack (leaving only three attacks on that character).

## Steel Ring

The first ring around the marble core is a steel ring with 4 deep depressions in it. Each is large enough to fit a man's fist into and each has a handle deeper within it to grasp. Each depression has

a lip on it, which makes it difficult to see what lies within except for the large handlebar.

The steel ring is part of the iron ring's craftiness. It too turns counterclockwise, though it requires only a DC 18 Strength check to turn. Turning it the wrong way is hazardous. There is a metal iris, which will enclose itself around the offending character's wrist, holding them in place. Rot grubs will pore out of the workings of the inner machinations and onto the character's flesh. The iris will then hold the character for a round before releasing them. At this point, the 2d4 grubs will have entered the character's flesh and be writhing up their arm, moving to the chest. This will take 3 rounds to get to the torso and another two to reach the chest before they burrow inward. Half the grubs will go via the character's front and back. Each round the character will need to make a Fortitude save at DC 15 or convulse wildly as the grubs ride and eat nerve pathways, causing violent sensation through the afflicted parts of the body. Until the last round, they are visible under the skin and can be stabbed through it (doing \_ damage to the infected character as well as to the grubs) or flame can be applied, causing the death of up to 1d4 grubs (all on one side of the arm/body). This method leaves the dead grubs in the body. Each grub has 1 hp.

If the wheel is turned properly, it stops itself after one full revolution and keyhole in the core opens (see below).

## Marble Core

The marble core is well polished, and unlike the surrounding rings, does not appear to rotate. In the center of the core are two concentric depressions. The outer depression is circular and about 4 inch in diameter. The inner depression is a quarter inch deep and key shaped. It would appear as though it slides back by some mechanism. Most eye-catching are the deeply engraved images surrounding the depressions. They are a deeply knotted pattern of lines, patterns over patterns over patterns that seem to ebb and flow, writhing around each other. Snakelike, they entwine, drawing the viewers eyes into their web, calling, pulling the viewer to them.

Surrounding the core is a *symbol of insanity*. The character examining the hole must make a Will save at DC 21 or be *feeble-minded*, staring deeply into the symbol and not wanting to move. If the outer rings are all properly maneuvered, the keyhole opens, allowing a key to be inserted. This is a standard lock, though well made. It is DC 24 to pick. Anyone attempting to do so needs to make a Reflex save at DC 21 or look at the *symbol*, requiring a save for that. This interrupts the attempt to pick the lock and the character will have to start again from scratch whether or not they succeed.

The dwarves have a limited number of amulets carved from the same stone as the core was. These stone amulets can be placed in the center of the core (usually without looking) and automatically open the plug.

## Player's Handout: Note tied to Grinx

Dear Friends:

If you receive this, then something has gone horribly wrong, and I am no longer conscious.

As I write this, I am working on the final phase of opening the seal that we found six months ago.

Please come to the cave in Crystal Springs with due haste, and if nothing else, return my body to Dossselford for proper burial.

Do be careful. If something was strong enough to overwhelm me, you should proceed with utmost caution.

Hopefully I was able to scrawl or otherwise seal a final message to you somewhere near where I fell.

Thank you, heroes,

Nimar

## The Entrance Cavern

