

Chapter I - The River Shining

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"By Tymora, this is intollerable", Jobz sighed for the fourth time in an hour. Lying in a small rowing boat, one foot dangling over the side, Jobz was bored... totally and utterly bored.

It had sounded so very exciting when he joined. The Five Dragon's Mercenary Company were a band of outlaws of the most diverse plumage. Some were hardened killers, the type who would flay their own mothers for a silver or two. Others were dashing bravo's and men down on their luck. Like him they were looking for easy coin, refusing to wallow in the muck for a copper as commoners are prone to do.

The recruitment speech didn't mention all the waiting, though.

Granted, it started off quite exciting. Two tendays ago, Jobz and his men joined the others in a daring raid on the dwarven settlement of Grom's Bounty. Their lightning attack had left the dwarves reeling. Before the defenders realized, the group had captured two dozen healthy dwarves and had spirited them out of the town.

The rousing celebration that followed was everything Jobz wanted out of this life. Drink had flowed. His men had been happy and had toasted to his health. He had even caught the eye of one of the leaders of the Five Dragons, an elf woman known as 'the Witch'. During the night that followed, Jobz had learned her name, whispered between the silken sheets of her camp bed... Elara... she had been beautiful, not to mention quite limber...

Jobs sighed again. It had gone downhill from there. The second night some of his men had been on watch. Mugdurok the hulking leader of the company's warriors had caught them passed out from drink. He had slaughtered them where they lay snoring.

When Jobz confronted him, Mugdurok had laughed in his face. The hobgoblin had

mocked him for a weakling and held him responsible for the death of his incompetent men. They almost came to blows. Only the direct intervention of Elara and her dangerous brother had prevented Jobz from skewering the vile warrior.

The incident had sealed his fate. No more lightning raids or heart-stopping swashbuckling for Jobz and his men. They received new instructions: "Go and occupy the Stubborn Pony, the caravan stop north of Grom's Bounty." Mugdurok's written orders had been unkind to say the least. Jobz had sought out Elara, but she had been firm: There could be no further distractions.

All in all, the Stubborn Pony wasn't too bad of a place to be holed up. There was food, there was drink and there was shelter. There also was... absolutely nothing to do... As always Jobz had slept outside. When he was much younger he had been put in a barrel of living lobsters by his brother. Since that twisted prank Jobz hadn't been able to tolerate being indoors for longer than ten minutes.

Dwarven buildings were the worst in that respect. They were so plump and unmoving he felt like suffocating when inside. Behind the Pony was a small dock with a rowing boat the proprietor had used for fishing. It suited his needs perfectly and he had spent the last couple of days sulking there, away from his men.

Suddenly a shout from above, broke Jobz's gloomy reverie: "People on the road!" "Finally," the handsome man thought, "some excitement!"

Starting the campaign

The adventure can start on the road near Loudwater i.e. before entering through the gate. The players will eventually arrive in the Green Tankard as it's the only place where they can rent a room for the night.

You can choose to skip this phase and have the players start out in the Green Tankard.

Synopsis

Alistair's and Nasreen's child will start looking for their father. Gathering some family friends, they set out to the city of Loudwater, guided by a strange dream.

In search for clues the party will visit Velti'Enorethal, the old Elven School of Philosophy, ridding it of its monster population. Here the party finds the first 'Stone of Guardians Four', a mysterious ioun stone with a history.

In the Elven School the child will receive a new vision confirming her father has passed through the ruins recently. Continuing their travels, the party heads for the dwarven community of Grom's Bounty.

In the meantime, Nasreen Rensha's mercenary band, the Five Dragons, have stolen Derrobane from the statue of a local dwarven hero. The stout folk aren't able to get help due to a debilitating hostage situation.

Pursuing Alistair's trail and wanting to assist the people of Grom's Bounty, the party departs for the High Moor to free the hostages and recover the fabled axe.

Loudwater

Handout A – The Delimbiyr Vale

Handout D1 – Loudwater

Handout D2 – Loudwater Legenda

The Zhentarim

In the years leading up to the Giant Wars, the Black Network's influence over Loudwater and the surrounding region increased alarmingly. Decades of concerted effort culminated in the appointment of Telbor Zazrek, a Zhentarim agent, as High Lord of Loudwater.

Together with the nearby town of Llorkh, Loudwater became the artery through which the region's gold bled across the Anauroch, enriching Zhentil Keep.

The new High Lord's bland face and perpetually dimwitted expression made his opponents underestimate him on more than one occasion. When it

came to politics and scheming, Zazrek knew no rival, but confronted with the reality of rampaging giants, he failed the people of Loudwater utterly.

During the aforementioned war the otherwise reclusive stone giants of the Graypeaks tore up the Delimbiyr Vale, destroying every community they came across. When Loudwater came under siege by the forces of Deadstone Cleft, Zazrek panicked. Instead of sending envoys to talk to the giants and organizing the town to withstand a siege, he sent assassins.

The assassins infiltrated Deadstone Cleft and garroted the Stone Giant Thane Kayalithica in her sleep, sending her into the Dream World she so longed for.

Furious by the death of their leader, the Stone Giants bombarded Loudwater for days. Throwing boulder after boulder they leveled half the town. When their rage had cooled they retreated back to their halls in the Graypeak Mountains, leaving hundreds of Loudwater's citizens dead in the rubble.

During the chaos that followed, the Zhentarim took possession of the town's stores and left the people to starve. The unavoidable citizen's revolt was suppressed brutally.

The Giant Wars made Loudwater the last human bastion east of Secomber. With the passes to the east under giant control, its connection to Zhentil Keep was severed. As the people of the Delimbiyr Vale tend to do throughout history, they rebuilt.

Now, six years later, the town has more or less recovered. Trade is increasing, and people are able to make a living, but the Zhentarim taxes still weigh heavily on Loudwater and its people. Most of these taxes are used to train and support the Loudwater Militia, a small army founded to keep the city safe. In reality the Militia serves as much to police the populace as it does to guarantee its safety.

Zazrek wants nothing more than to forget those terrible events. He spends his time marinating in liquor and is hardly ever seen leaving High Lord's Hall. Day to day administration is taken care of by his right hand, Gauntlet Gopher Proudfish.

The Gardeners

After the failed citizen's revolt, The Gardeners was founded in utmost secrecy. The Gardeners is a group of people from all layers of the town's populace who use their particular skills, influence or wealth to aid the town and thwart Zhentarim control.

The leading members of the Gardeners are Sam Boatwright, Black Samson and Elise Whiteflower. The total membership of The Gardeners is probably close to a hundred people.

An outsider would describe the Gardeners as a clandestine town council, crossbred with a thieves'

guild. Residents of Loudwater would describe it as hope.

The Gardeners will become important in later chapters.

Loudwater's economy

Loudwater's economy hinges on farming, fishing, and the trade route running from Grom's Bounty to the Sword Coast.

Since the destruction of Llorkh, the dwarven mining community of Grom's Bounty has gained in influence. Their output isn't as voluminous as that of Llorkh was, but they make up for that in quality. Each and every piece of ore coming out of the dwarven mines is transformed into above standard arms, armor, tools or art.

The second export product that comes out of Grom's Bounty are the ales of the Pit Fiend Brewery.

After production these goods are stocked in the Stubborn Pony caravan stop, where it is picked up by traders who come and go by way of Loudwater. These same caravans supply Grom's Bounty with everything the community cannot grow or craft for itself.

Note: Zhentarim law weighs heavily on Loudwater and more so on its trade. **Everything purchased in Loudwater is at double the standard price due to unreasonable taxation.**

Impressions of Loudwater

Loudwater is a town whose wooden buildings are covered with ivy and hanging plants. Great green trees shade the cold waters of the Delimbiyr and well-tended flower beds and fruit bearing trees occupy every corner and nook of the city. It is one of these rare places where nature and civilization find harmony with each other.

The population of Loudwater consists mainly of humans and half-elves.

1. The town gates

Loudwater has three external gates. The East and West Gates see the larger part of traffic in and out of the city. The smaller High Forest Gate is mostly used by farmers and fishermen living on the north bank of the Delimbiyr.

The three gates are flanked by towers that rise 40 feet above the gate and are part of the 20 foot wall. They are staffed around the clock by a complement of six militiamen. Entry into the town is free, although traders have to pay 8 silver pieces per cartload that enters the city.

The gates are closed at night at which point no further passage is allowed until dawn.

The guards of Loudwater look at you with scrutiny verging on arrogance. Under an overcast sky you

pass through the gate and enter the town proper. Meandering lanes of green and houses covered in budding ivy speak of carefree times in the not so distant past.

At present Loudwater has the air of an occupied town. People do not walk in Loudwater, they hurry to get off the streets. You see evidence of a siege from which the town hasn't recovered yet. The walls are damaged severely in some places and a few ruined and burned out buildings are still vacant.

2. The Green Tankard Inn

A freshly painted sign depicting a green tankard swings gently on iron chains. Inside a middle-aged halfling woman is standing on the bar, playing a small wooden flute. The notes of a feisty tune carry clearly through the crowded, dark interior of the 'Tankard'. The end of her melody is accompanied by a smattering of applause before the noise of conversation picks up again.

One of the larger tables is occupied by a bunch of rowdy mercenaries engaged in a drinking game. The bar is occupied by some locals who are obviously well into their cups. On the wall is a wooden board containing the menu.

Handout 8 – Green Tankard menu.

At the bar

The halfling Elyse Whiteflower is the proprietor of the Green Tankard. She is also an information monger with ties to the Gardeners and a local fence.

The halfling proprietor of the Green Tankard, Elyse Whiteflower, wears her silver hair in a double braid. She calmly takes your measure as you approach the bar.

When the party goes up to the bar. Elyse Whiteflower will engage them in conversation.



Elyse Whiteflower

On the elven ruins

- You guys are adventurers, aren't you? I haven't seen you around here, which means you aren't licensed. I reckon you must be here to search for treasure in the ruins.
- The ruins are elven in kind. Ever so often some adventurers come by and try to clean out the place, but it never stays empty for long. We have a tradition here. See that wall over there? The one with all the tokens on it? Every treasure hunter that goes to the elven ruins leaves behind a token. If he comes back he takes his token down and the entire bar buys him drinks until he can't stand no more. See how many tokens are left unclaimed?
- Never has the fabled treasure of the elves been found. The last bunch went over there about a month ago and never came back.

If the players don't pick up on the possibility of visiting the elven ruins from the inn keeper, a heavily wounded gnome will stumble in a few hours later. His name is Welby Bluebottom. He is the only survivor of the archeological expedition into Velti'Enorethal. He

was captured by kobolds along with his uncle Ludikane Highspurs. After a month of hardship, he was able to escape.

He will beseech the players to rescue his uncle. If all else fails he will reveal the reason for the expedition: the Stone of Guardians Four. This artifact is ancient and powerful and must be worth a lot of money. He has no idea what it does though.

Quest – The perfumer's child

If asked about Alistair, **Elyse Whiteflower** has the following information:

A man of that description passed by my establishment, can't remember where he said he was going though. Then again, the glitter of gold always tends to jog my memory.

If the party offer her proper monetary incentive, Elise can tell them Alistair went to the elven ruins with the last bunch of treasure seekers. He didn't come back though and his mark is still on the wall. The child of Alistair will recognize the mark: a silken sash she gave her father a few winters ago.

If asked about Alistair, **Welby Bluebottom** can tell them the following:

Alistair joined our expedition just before we left Loudwater. When the monsters ambushed us, he saved everyone's life more than once. I doubt he made it out alive though, I doubt anyone made it out alive. I... I'm the only one left.

He can offer no clear description of the monsters. The closest he will come is dragon-kin (kobolds) and a being of smoke and fire (smoke mephit).



Tavern Brawl

A tavern brawl

Battle Map A – The Green Tankard

Encounter - Tavern brawl

Drunk patron (6), use statistics for commoner, MM p. 345. Note: The patrons use their fists instead of clubs.

Six drunken patrons start a shouting match with a couple of Flaming Fist mercenaries. They are accusing the Flaming Fist of being in service of the Zhentarim and want the party to pick sides. If the party doesn't comply they will have a fist fight on their hands. If the party happens to be overwhelmed the mercenaries help.

- You there, don't just stand there! Help me throw this mercenary scum out!
- Are you a coward or something? I'm betting you're a coward or a Zhentarim spy. Why don't you leave here spy! You don't belong here!

The Green Tankard is crowded. It's hard to get through to the bar, since this means squeezing in between some patrons. If the fight erupts with one or more players at the bar, they will be standing in a square also occupied by a patron, all attacks made in this way, on either end, are made at disadvantage.

Reward xp for each drunk defeated if left alive, random slaughter should go unrewarded, and will invite investigation and questioning by the Loudwater Militia.

Peaceful solution

Quest xp: If the party comes up with a solution that doesn't involve fighting or fleeing: 90 xp to be divided among the party.

If the players negotiate a peaceful solution; **charisma or strength (intimidation) DC 9** or **charisma (persuasion) DC 12:** Will calm the drunks down. It is easier to intimidate these drunks than to reason with them.

Flaming Fist mercenaries

One of the Flaming Fist mercenaries will buy the party members who participated in the fight a drink. They have a contract in the vicinity but aren't in the employ of the Zhentarim. They aren't allowed to say more on their assignment.

They introduce themselves as Sixtus, Sigmond and Tychon.

- It's hard to get a job here without an adventuring license. If a job pays more than 10 gold pieces a day, it can only go to licensed adventurers. The leadership of Loudwater

created this law to keep hired swords from staying in the city. Most adventurers don't want to pay for the license and go seek their fortune elsewhere.

- You can get an adventuring license at Loudwater Militia Headquarters. It's not cheap though (100 gp) But... few people will hire you without an adventuring license. They don't want to be accused of something called tax evasion.
- Of course, what isn't known at Militia Headquarters can't be taxed, really... It all comes down to asking price, demand and supply and all kinds of economic models I'm not smart enough to understand. What I do know is: there aren't all that much adventurers in Loudwater. The town's leadership likes it that way.

The billboard

A patrol man enters and nails a notice to a billboard next to the inn's door. The billboard contains a few proclamations.

Handouts 1 & 2 will be put up when the adventurers visit the Green Tankard for the first time.

Once they return from the elven ruins **Handouts 3 & 4** will be posted.

Handout 1

"Hardy folk wanted to take care of a vermin problem. Ask about it at the bar. No adventuring license required."

When the party enquires about the notice, they are referred to Black Samson, a man sitting at the end of the bar.

For more information on this quest see **Quest: Vermin Problem** below.

Handout 2

"Official notice. Taxation on wizardry in the city. Let it be known that the yearly impost on wizardly apprenticeship has been raised from 20 gold coins to 65 gold coins."

This piece of legislation is the indirect reason Aomnoar Sageblaze appears to have been kidnapped by the Hopeful Apprentices.

See below: **3. Loudwater Apothecary – Quest: Missing Wizards**

Handout 3

“Urgent! Bold adventurers wanted for search and retrieval mission involving missing members. Inquire at the Loudwater Apothecary. Reward 500 gold dragons. Adventuring license required.”

See below: **3. Loudwater Apothecary – Quest: Missing Wizards**

Handout 4

“Town officials require muscle for delicate assignment. No license required. Report to Loudwater Militia Headquarters”

See below: **7. Militia Headquarters – Quest: Behind on Taxes**

Black Samson

The town’s cooper, Black Samson, is a rich and influential businessman with a dozen hands in his service. He is also a leading member of the Gardeners. Part of that position means he is constantly looking to one-up the Zhentarim leadership of Loudwater.

This man is broad, jovial and boisterous. His dark hair and moustache are meticulously groomed and oiled into position. Past the black collar of his open shirt the jungle of his chest hair looms ominously.

Samson’s current mark is a warehouse, belonging to the Gnome Imam Brow, a local merchant who does business with Gauntlet Proudfish. Imam has his pet giant rats roaming the building, acting as guard dogs.

One of Imam Brow’s workers noticed a large shipment of weapons and armor arriving in the warehouse and reported this to Black Samson. Samson only has a couple of nights before the Gauntlet’s men will come and take possession of the weaponry.

Samson wants the players to get rid of the giant rats guarding the warehouse, so that he and his men can steal the weaponry and upset the Gauntlet’s plans. Of course he won’t admit his plan readily to strangers, so a little subversion is in order.

Quest: Vermin problem

Quest reward: 10 gp up front per person and 5 gold pieces per rat killed afterwards.

Black Samson will explain he owns a warehouse at the docks, but that he is losing money daily because of an infestation of giant rats in the building.

He will offer the party a handsome fee if they agree to help him with his vermin problem. He doesn’t need fancy adventuring licenses he just wants the job done. Samson will also give the party (a copy of) the key to the warehouse and directions.

Since giant rats are nocturnal he advises they head there come nightfall. Once they have killed the rats, they are to meet him at the Cooperworks for payment.

If anyone questions Samson’s offer; **Wisdom (insight) DC 14:** Something doesn’t add up, but you can’t put your finger on it.

Further information on this quest can be found below:
14. Warehouse

3. Loudwater Apothecary

Before Osageor Thunderpelt and his friend Aomnoar Sageblaze bought this place, it was run by a half-elven quacksalver called Brosha Manx. Over the years, Thunderpelt transformed the Loudwater Apothecary into a respected establishment, which doubles as an informal wizard’s guild.

From the outside this building looks clean and humble. As you enter the shop through the small, often-polished wooden door, you’re welcomed by the smell of hundreds of subtle scents, most of them belonging to the herbs drying from the ceiling. The apothecary looks a little preoccupied.

Osageor Thunderpelt

The Half-Elven apothecary wears dark brown robes draped across his slender shoulders. His long silver hair frames a willful face. The robe he wears is skillfully adorned with patches of red leather. Osageor Thunderpelt watches businesslike as you enter, his eyes betraying keen intelligence.

Quest: Missing wizards

Finding Lastvault and Sweetsong: Half of the agreed upon monetary award and 1250 xp to be divided among the party. Lastvault and Sweetsong will be encountered in Grom’s Bounty further in the chapter.

Finding Sageblaze: The rest of the agreed upon amount and 4500 experience points to be divided among the party. Sageblaze will be found in the Loudwater Sewers in the course of Chapter IV.

At the Loudwater Apothecary they receive a polite, yet reserved reception by Apothecary Osageor Thunderpelt. Since they aren’t licensed adventurers, he will need convincing, before he will accept their help.

You cannot expect me to pay 500 gold dragons for unlicensed adventurers! Lives are at stake here! Not to mention the fines involved!



Osageor Thunderpelt

Convincing Thunderpelt; **charisma (persuasion) DC 10**: Thunderpelt accepts, but at a reduced reward: The party can choose between 10 Waterdhavian harbor moons or 200 gold dragons as a reward. **Intelligence DC 10: handout 9**: More information on the mentioned currency.

If the party doesn't pick up the Missing wizards quest in Loudwater, they can do so when they encounter the mages incarcerated underneath Moradin's Hall in Grom's Bounty. At that point they will be offered 200 gold dragons upon the safe return of Aomnoar Sageblaze.

Note: If the adventurers choose the harbor moons as reward, they can trade those for 450 gold pieces with the quartermaster of the Waterdhavian contingent at the end of Chapter V. No other opportunities will present itself in this campaign.

Thunderpelt's tale

Myself, my colleague Apothecary Sageblaze, and two other scholars founded the Friends of the Loudwater Apothecary some years back. We are an informal gathering of likeminded scholars dabbling in the arcane arts.

About two tendays ago a group of youngsters, talented, I might add, arrived in town and sought us out to apprentice themselves. Normally we would be happy enough to see such promising, young students.

We could not accept them though, due to the recent rise in apprenticeship tax. The poor lads and lasses hardly had enough money to purchase passage

here. Normally we would have paid the tax ourselves. But the amount involved has become quite steep. They were fairly disappointed when they left.

A few days later, we noticed my colleague, Aomnoar Sageblaze, was missing. This isn't all that strange, since he often heads out without telling us. Most of the time this is in search of some ingredient for this or that experiment. This time is different though. In his house we found a note indicating he was kidnapped.

Lizbundo Lastvault and Bobiandra Sweetsong, the two other members of the Friends did some investigating and found an old merchant who had been on the road early that day. He said he saw a group of youngsters set off in the direction of Grom's Bounty. Liz and Bob set off after them, but I haven't heard from them for a whole tenday now. I would appreciate it if you would look for them and my friend Aomnoar Sageblaze.

If the party asks about the note: **Handout 6 – The Hopeful Apprentices.**

Sageblaze's house

If the players investigate Aomnoar Sageblaze's house, they will find no signs of a struggle. Several drawers were emptied, the clothes inside them gone, the wizard's staff and some of his books are missing too.

4. South Square

South Square's market is a good place for the players to stock up on provisions. **Because of Zhentarim taxation, all prices are double of those listed in the PHB.**

The center of South Square is dominated by a large fountain-fed cistern. Around it tents and carts form a small but busy market. Here the river merchants and local farmers come to peddle their wares under the watchful eye of an ever-present Militia patrol.

A small caravan, consisting of three horse-drawn carts, occupies the eastside of the market. The red-faced caravan master stomps past you after concluding a heated discussion with the leader of a Militia patrol.

If the players ask about the argument they just saw the last of, both the militiamen and the caravan guards can tell them something seems to be wrong at the dwarven community of Grom's Bounty, a few days travel to the east. What the exact nature of the trouble is none can

say, but they do know all trade with the town has ceased for the time being.

Note: The caravan master hails from Secomber to the west. He has been waiting on a shipment from Grom's Bounty for the last five days.

5. Garwan's Curiosities

Garwan's Curiosities used to be a fun place to spend an afternoon. Exotic baubles and interesting junk always seemed to find their way into the overstocked but cozy store. Since the previous owner died, his nephew Zark turned it into a pawn shop. A profitable business in Zhentarim occupied Loudwater.

The dwarf Zark is an untrustworthy character, but he has no love for the Zhentarim. After his uncle Garwan died in the stone giant bombardment, he vowed to help bring down the regime. His motives are selfish and based on revenge, since Zark normally doesn't care about anyone but Zark.

If the players are looking to buy weapons or equipment listed in the PHB, they can find them here at the standard price. These items are second hand though and will show some wear and tear.

Unbeknownst to the authorities Garwan's Curiosities is also a meeting place for The Gardeners. (See Chapter IV)

This small shop has seen better days. Where most buildings in Loudwater are meticulously cared for this one has been left to its own devices. Little can be seen of the blue painted wood as the structure seems to be losing a life and death battle with rampant ivy.

6. Loudwater Stable

The Loudwater Stable is a low wooden structure that houses horses and ponies to resupply passing caravans. The scent of manure is ever present in the building and on the stable hands who work there.

7. Militia Headquarters

The Loudwater Militia consists of 400 men and women, divided in patrols of 20. The Militia patrols in and around the town. One can encounter patrols as far as ten miles outside Loudwater if one sticks to the roads. Patrols never head away from the roads, by order of the Gauntlet.

The people living inside the patrolled area are relatively safe. Everyone else is on their own.

The Militia Headquarters is the unofficial power center of the town. It is a squat brick building that exudes an unbending air of formality. It also looks like it doesn't belong here as it is the only building in Loudwater not adorned with ivy and flowers.

Gauntlet Gofer Proudfish

Proudfish is a cruel man who revels in the power he wields. He has the Militia patrolling day and night. They weed out any resistance, real or imagined and create more of that same resistance in the process.

Gauntlet Gofer Proudfish is a fat, pudgy man, who keeps trying to cover himself with clothing that is obviously too small for his bloated body. As a consequence, he absentmindedly keeps pulling his pants up and his shirt down, with little to no success. He reminds you of a toad hiding underneath a lace handkerchief.

Quest: Behind on taxes

Quest xp: Getting the adventuring license from the Gauntlet before visiting the apothecary: 250 xp to be divided among the party.

Quest xp: Delivering the taxes to Gauntlet Proudfish: 3000 xp to be divided among the party.

Gauntlet Gofer Proudfish receives them with greasy and insincere enthusiasm.

The neighboring mining community of Grom's Bounty has a legal agreement to pay our town a tithe. This year they are awfully late with their payment.

You are to go over there and remind Elder Anvilsplitter of our contract. He seems unable to part with his gold without this kind of prodding. Each year he forces us to send some muscle to bring back the town's due.

Once you have brought back the tithe I will generously reward you with an adventuring license. Oh... and one more thing, ask Anvilsplitter to send along the 'right' key this time.

Negotiating the price

If the players attempt flattery; **charisma (persuasion)**
DC 9: The adventurers are able to convince the Gauntlet to sweeten the deal.

If threatened, he will call in some guards (MM p. 347) before continuing the conversation.

The Gauntlet will drive a hard bargain. He will go as far as offering them an adventuring license before the journey and 25 gold dragons each on completion of the task i.e. when the taxes from Grom's Bounty arrive in Loudwater.

Officially the ledger will show that he paid the adventurers 75 gold dragons each, the rest serves to line his own pockets. Gauntlet Proudfish is the most corrupt person in the city and hated by even his men.



Gofer Proudfish

Adventuring license

The players can either negotiate an adventuring license with Gauntlet Proudfish or buy one. An adventuring license costs 100 gp and takes the completion of some paper work. Let the players fill out **handout 5 – Adventuring License**.

As long as the party is not in possession of an adventuring license, they will be having trouble finding legal mercenary work in Loudwater. If they do accept mercenary work and are caught, they will have to pay a 1000 gp fine. Which is a real nuisance come Chapter IV.

8. All Faiths Altar

The All Faiths Altar is a many-storied round building. It contains small altars dedicated to the non-evil deities of the Realms. Its open forechancel is a nightly refuge for beggars, drunks and travelers down on their luck.

The All Faiths Altar is taken care of by the people of Loudwater. No real priests are present. A rotation system ensures the building and shrines are maintained.

9. Docks Gate

The southern bank of Loudwater is defended by a 15-foot wall built to counter attacks from the river. The Docks Gate is flanked by two small towers that have a total height of 30 feet.

The Docks Gate is open day and night and allows passage between the two banks of the town by way of the Stoneshoulder Bridge. Six militiamen are posted here at all times, although they spend most of their time by the fireplace in the western tower.

Read the following to one of the players. Preferably the character that is most likely to be deterred by people with poor hygiene.

As you travel through the smaller Docks Gate a beggar grabs your hand. She pulls hard and sudden until you're staring directly into her unwashed, feverish face: "The birds, beware of the birds, for their beaks are sharp and their eyes hold madness! The birds, beware of the birds!"

The party will not be able to make much sense of the woman's ramblings and are not supposed to. The beggar woman has information to give to the party, but only after they've been asked to look into the murder of Black Samson in Chapter IV.

Once the party leaves they will hear her shouting behind them, repeating her feverish mantra over and over again... Beware of the birds...

10. Docks

The small docks of Loudwater are bustling with activity. Fishermen argue with merchants over the price of their catch, while river barges filled with trade goods navigate the wooden piers with expertise. A short distance to the west the Stoneshoulder Bridge spans the Delimbiyr to connect both river banks.

11. Watchful Turtle Tavern

The Watchful Turtle Tavern used to be a warehouse. It was named for the watching dragon turtles carved into the Stoneshoulder Bridge nearby. Very few residents of Loudwater visit the Watchful Turtle as it is the watering hole for the Loudwater Militia. Those residents who do are either gambling addicts or friends to the Zhentarim regime.

The Watchful Turtle Tavern looks like a warehouse, and that's exactly what it was before it was repurposed. The immense common room is centered around a simple square bar from which the patrons are served a dark flat ale. Most of the the rectangular tables are occupied by Loudwater's militiamen, who seem to claim the tavern as their own. At the far end of the common room a dozen patrons are concentrated around three big gaming tables.

Handout 40 – Watchful Turtle menu.

If the players visit the Watchful Turtle, they will be largely ignored by the other patrons. The Watchful Turtle has no rooms for rent. The serving staff will refer them to the Green Tankard if they ask for sleeping accommodations.

Two of the tables host a game of Swords, a card game; **Intelligence check DC 12:** wins a round. Wagers increase with increments of 5 gold pieces. The first round starts at 5 gold pieces.

The third table hosts a game of dice; **Charisma check DC 10:** wins a round. Wagers are as agreed upon by the players, but are never for an amount exceeding 20 gold pieces.

Cheating

Cheating requires a **dexterity (sleight of hand) check DC 10:** Upon success the player receives advantage on the next 1d4 gambling related rolls as long as he sticks to the same table. **Upon failure:** the offended player will

be caught and tossed out of the tavern, never to be admitted again.

12. High Lord's Hall

This walled manor is adorned with beautiful buttresses carved to resemble leaping trout. Traditionally it is the seat of the High Lord, a title which was hollowed out completely when the Zhentarim took over. Two small towers fly the colors of Loudwater, the triple white arches on a field of azure.

If the party has a rogue, he will get the chance to break into the High Lord's Hall during a solo session in Chapter IV.

13. Stoneshoulder Bridge

The Stoneshoulder Bridge spans the River Shining, connecting north and south banks with three sturdy and well-crafted arches. A thousand years old, its seamless stonework and artful sculptures are still an epitome of dwarven craftsmanship.

On the bridge itself a memorial stone can be found imbedded in the railing: "The great dwarven craftsman Iirikos Stoneshoulder of Ammarindar built this bridge across the Delimbiyr River in 149 DR for his elven friends, the Clearmoon family."

The Stoneshoulder Bridge has been vital to the growth and prosperity of Loudwater. It can therefore come as no surprise that the bridge is the dominant feature of the Loudwater coat of arms, where it is presented as three arches of argent (white) on a field of azure (blue).

Locals sometimes call it the Dwarven Bridge, or the Flying Fish Bridge, as the magic preserving the bridge causes the zzorp, a local brown-colored trout, to sail over the bridge, sometimes hitting passers-by in the process.

14. Warehouse

A decade ago warehouse space was hard to find in Loudwater. Goods travelling by boat or caravan often waited in the warehouses for a new owner to come claim them. With Llorkh lying in ruin, and Loudwater recovering from the giants' assault, trade is still picking up and warehouse space comes fairly cheap.

Quest – Vermin Problem

For more information see Green Tankard – Black Samson

Battle Map B – Dockside Warehouse

Encounter

Giant Rat (5), MM p. 327, treasure: 5 leather collars.

Each of the rats has a leather collar around its neck with a name tag. The names on the tags are Maximus, Minimus, Optimus, Pessimus, and Lecherous.

Treasure

Inside the warehouse the following items are stored:

- 5 crates of unremarkable liquor. (value 30 gp – 1 gp per bottle)
- 1 crate of Waterdhavian Zzar. (value 72 gp – 12 gp per bottle)
- 3 barrels of Pit Fiend Blonde Ale. (value 12 gp – 4 gp per 10 gallon barrel)
- 3 barrels of pickled fish. (value 6 gp – 2 gp per barrel)
- 1 chest of silver bars stamped with the arched bridge symbol of Loudwater (value 800 gp – 160 lb. of silver)
- 1 chest containing 2 bolts of black silk and 1 bolt of crimson silk (value 240 gp – 80 gp per bolt)
- 10 crates with short swords, light crossbows, leather armor, and shields (blue and white; adorned with the coat of arms of Loudwater: triple white arches on a field of blue).

15. Cooperworks

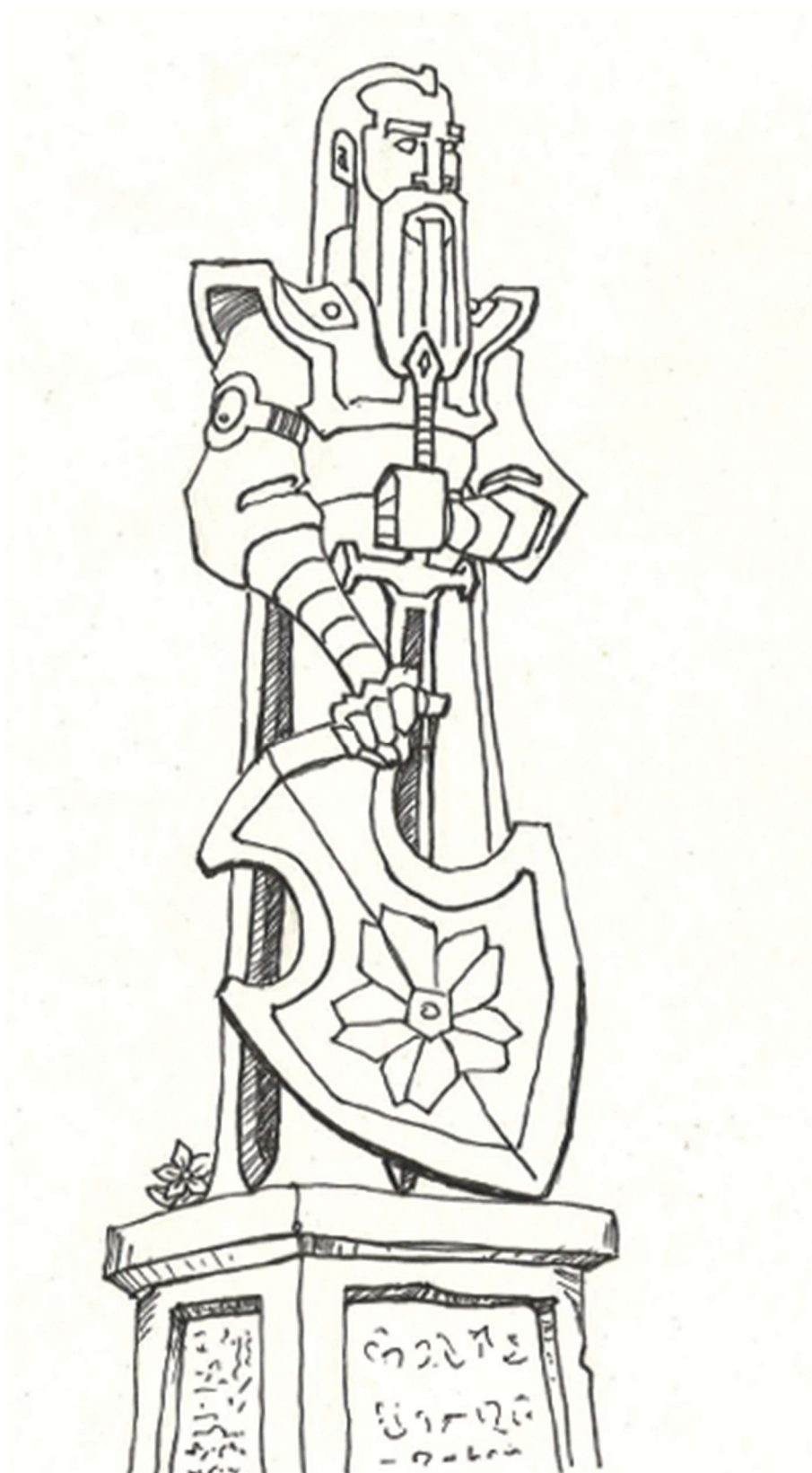
Neatly tended vine-covered walls and flower-adorned windowsills betray the love the proprietor of the Cooperworks holds for gardening. Through a barnlike gate, you see a dozen men busy with the manufacturing and repair of crates and barrels.

The owner of the Cooperworks is Black Samson (see Green Tankard). Samson can be found here if he's not found in the Green Tankard. His office is on the first floor of the building.

Prices of barrels and the like are double of those listed in the PHB due to taxes.

16. House of Endurance

A path traverses a lawn gnome filled garden towards the front door of a fieldstone lodge. Above the door a rough wooden sign names the place as 'House of Endurance'. A half dozen people are hanging around in the garden. Most of them seem to be down on their luck or outright poor.



Statue of Nanathlor Greysword

This cedar-shingled, fieldstone lodge used to be an eccentric inn, called the Enchanter's Ecstasy, and was filled with all kinds of minor magics.

A decade before the Giant Wars, the building came into possession of two priestesses of Ilmater, the sisters Tamata and Donra. The Crying God's religion didn't gain much traction until the Stone Giants multiplied the city's homeless and orphans overnight.

Nowadays all that is left of the Enchanter's Ecstasy's original concept is a multi-colored army of garden gnomes beleaguering the lodge and entry path.

Renamed the House of Endurance, the lodge has become a refuge for the poor and downtrodden of the city. In the evening distribution of food is organized by attending priests of Ilmater and by night beds are provided for those who have no place to sleep.

17. Commons

This open meadow has no real defining features. In the past it was used when the High Lord held tournaments or when a passing carnival pitched its tents. Now it is mainly occupied by grazing sheep.

18. Statue of the High Lord

A bronze statue of a regal, disciplined warrior occupies the corner of these two streets. At the foot of the statue lie a dozen or so evening primroses in varying degrees of freshness.

This statue is of Nanathlor Greysword, the hero who liberated Loudwater from the tyranny of the Rensha family more than 150 years ago. He is also the first person ever to hold the position of High Lord. All these years later he is still remembered with respect, bordering on reverence.

For more information on these yellow flowers see **Chapter IV – Notes**.

19. Sam's Boats

The sound of a man sneezing explosively is the first impression you get of Sam's Boats. The second is the sweet smell of fresh saw dust. Everywhere on the working benches are small boxes containing screws, tools and pieces of wood.

Sam is an elderly man with a thinning blaze of white hair combed to one side. His blue eyes sparkle with a sense of humor only known to those who have lived long enough not to take anything

too seriously anymore. Pinned to the side of his dark knitted woolen cap is a small yellow flower.

Sam Boatwright is one of the leading members of the Gardeners. He is a retired harper that settled in the town of his birth, only to discover it had fallen under the Black Network's influence in his absence.

Sam is no longer a young man and prefers offering advice to taking direct action himself. He is well-liked by all, but his words of wisdom often go unheard when placed next to the boisterous initiatives proposed by Black Samson.

20. Floodgate Control Building

This building holds the mechanism operating the floodgates in the Loudwater sewers. Every so often these gates are opened allowing water from the River Shining to rush in and purge the sewers of detritus.

This building will be mentioned during the exploration of the Loudwater sewer system in Chapter IV. It will become significant in Chapter V, during the siege of Loudwater.

21. Abandoned Warehouse

Due to the exorbitant taxes collected by Loudwater's officials, trade has never recovered from the Giant Wars. Many warehouses stand empty and can be purchased cheaply if one would be so inclined.

Buying a warehouse on the docks costs 700 gold pieces.

22. Burnt out building

The devastation left behind by the Giant Wars has not been fully erased from the city scape of Loudwater. Several buildings were left burnt down and without a clear owner. None has claimed them since.

If someone were to start building here, nobody will object. When the project is half finished (and not before!) a low-level official will show up, demanding they pay for the land before continuing the work. Since nobody owns the land, it is property of the town of Loudwater. The fee is 400 gold pieces.

If the players decide to build a house in Loudwater after the conclusion of Chapter V, they get the land for free and a house warming party to boot.

24. Main sewer entrance

This sewer entrance becomes critical to the defense of the city during the siege in Chapter V.

Exploring Velti' Enorethal

Loudwater was originally founded around the Elven School of Philosophy, Velti'Enorethal. The school was built thousands of years ago near the north bank of the River Shining. When the elves finally abandoned Loudwater, Velti'Enorethal was surrendered to the forest.

The building is now a kobold infested ruin, attracting fortune seekers and would-be adventurers alike. If one leaves Loudwater through the High Forest Gate and follows the wall to the west, one will discover the remnants of an elven road heading northwest by north. Following this road for half an hour, leads you through a lightly forested area to the Elven School.

Any local can tell the party how to get to Velti'Enorethal. None will want to take them there though.

See the **Dungeons Booklet** for a complete description of Velti'Enorethal.

The Stubbhorn Pony

The Stubbhorn Pony is an inn and caravan stop, built by the dwarves of Grom's Bounty to make trading with Loudwater easier. Here the sturdy dwarven ponies are switched for large working horses and carts to bring the dwarven trade goods to Loudwater.

Some time ago a band of Five Dragon mercenaries took residence here, halting all traffic. They are led by a man named Jobz. More details on their motivation can be found in the description of Grom's Bounty later in the chapter.

Nearing Grom's Bounty, you arrive at the Stubbhorn Pony: a caravan stop on the southern bank of the River Shining. The inn and accompanying buildings wrap around a small central courtyard, where some men are sharing supper, seemingly preferring an open fire to the inn's kitchen.

From here on out the dirt road transforms into a well-maintained flagstone road of dwarven making.

The dirt road from Loudwater changes into a flagstone road when it reaches the Stubbhorn Pony.

The Stubbhorn Pony consists of a small inn, a warehouse, a dock for fishing and a stable. All of the buildings are made of stone, the dwarven craftsmanship obvious.

The dwarves installed a lookout post on top of the inn after the original caravan stop was destroyed by stone giants on their way to attack Loudwater.

Stubbhorn Pony Lay-out

Battlemap F – The Stubbhorn Pony

The Courtyard

The dusty courtyard is surrounded on three sides by buildings. A path leads down to water level between the inn and the warehouse. A rowing boat is moored here at a wooden dock. Jobz sleeps in this rowing boat at night.

The thugs have made a bonfire in the middle of the courtyard. During the day Jobz and four of his men can be found here.

The Stable

The easternmost building is the stable. The horses were chased off by the human occupants to ensure the dwarves have a hard time finding help.

The warehouse

The northernmost building is the warehouse. It stands empty right now. On the desk a ledger can be found, detailing transactions of the last few months. Normally shipments were handled every couple of days, until two tendays ago, when they just stopped.

The inn

The westernmost two-story building is the inn. It is also the caravan master's dwelling. The first store is made of brick, the second store is a steel and glass dome, from which the caravan master can watch the road.

The ground floor

The ground floor contains a large fire place for cooking, and a table with four chairs. A few cots allow travelers to bunk down. A stone staircase leads up and down.

The top floor

A glass and steel dome was constructed on top of the stone building. A steel balcony runs around the dome, allowing anyone in the dome to go outside and walk around its circumference.

Inside the dome is a large spyglass on a tripod. It can be positioned anywhere in the dome. The only other pieces of furniture are a comfortable leather chair and a small chest which is used as a foot stool. A fireplace warms the dome in wintertime. A stone staircase leads down.

Wisdom (perception) DC 10: The footstool is actually a small chest.

In the chest is a brass rod which has the ability to shoot a flare, to warn the dwarves of imminent danger. The Rod of Flare is charged with a preprogrammed *silent*

image which mimics a large explosion of fireworks once between long rests.

The cellar

This square cellar contains nothing more than a simple bed, some old, yet comfortable chairs, a chest probably for clothes, and a cupboard. On the south wall, facing the comfortable chairs, is a collection of shriveled leather scraps nailed to the wall surrounding the drawing of a dwarven woman.

These are the living quarters of the caravan master. The chest contains clothes. The cupboard contains some food, a few bottles of Lucky Coin Flamebeard (as mentioned in handout 11) and a rarely used washing bowl.

Examining the drawing; **Wisdom (perception) DC 10:** On the back of the drawing you can find the name Mora Stoneguard and a date three years ago.

Examining the scraps; **Wisdom (medicine) DC 10:** These seem to be humanoid ears of some sort, a dozen in total. **Beating DC 15:** These are smoked kobold ears.

Quest - Bounty hunting

Quest reward: Bringing a kobold's left ear to the caravan master: 10 gp reward.

A few years ago, the caravan master's wife was killed by kobolds. Since that moment he has been paying adventurers and bounty hunters to bring him kobold ears. The caravan master nails all kobold ears he collects onto the wall inside his living quarters, next to a portrait of his wife.

If the party meets the bounty hunter in the random encounters or talks to Stoneguard about the collection of kobold ears in his cellar, they will be able to do some bounty hunting themselves.

The Five Dragons lookout

A group of Five Dragons thugs have installed themselves in the inn. They sent the caravan master to Grom's Bounty. He can be found at the Lovely Coin.

Uncharacteristically these men don't kill when they don't have to. This is because of the leadership of Jef 'Pretty Boy' Jobz. Jobz is a handsome man in his mid-twenties. He fancies himself a dashing rogue and lets most of his victims live so they can spread his legend.

Due to a severe case of claustrophobia Jobz prefers to eat outside and sleep in the docked rowing boat, claiming the rocking of the boat helps him sleep.

Jobz is a tall and dashing man. His handsome smile and lively green eyes must have been responsible for quite a few broken hearts in the past. Dressed

well in fine white linen, Jobz would look better on stage than in these surroundings.

The Five Dragon thugs will not hinder or rob the players, but they will be unforthcoming with information. They claim they found the building empty and have lived here for the last couple of days; **Wisdom (insight) DC 10:** These men are hiding something.

It's conceivable the adventurers spend the night at the inn and have a fun evening with Jobz and his men. This, however, will not alter the final outcome.

Quest - Eliminating the Five Dragons lookout

Later in the adventure Steelfold will ask the party to dispose of the Five Dragons lookout posted here. If at least one of the thugs is left to roam freely, the hostages kidnapped from Grom's Bounty will be found dead at the end of Chapter III.

More details on the completion of this quest can be found in **Chapter I - Grom's Bounty – Underneath the Hall of Moradin.**

Encounter

Jef 'Pretty Boy' Jobz, NPC's & Mobs, treasure: 12 ep, **handout 7 - letter to Jobz, handout 10 – Five Dragons medallion.**

Five Dragons thug (7), use bandit statistics, MM p. 343, treasure: 14 sp, 14 sp, 11 sp, 16 cp, 13 sp, 14 gp. 15 sp.

Tactics

Avoiding detection:

If the party chooses a stealthy approach; **group effort dexterity (stealth) DC 10:** to avoid detection. If they received the crudely drawn map from the caravan master, they know the safest approach, giving everyone **advantage on this check.**

If the party doesn't use stealth on their approach, they will be ambushed by Jobz and his men. The thugs are using the spyglass on the top floor of the caravan master's dwelling to watch the road.

Jobz and five of his thugs will attack from the bushes alongside the road. The last two bandits will attack from the first floor balcony, using their light crossbows.

Wisdom (perception) DC 11: to avoid being surprised.

During the day:

If the party manages to sneak up during the day, Jobz and three of his men will be around the fire in the courtyard. Two thugs will be in the glass dome on the first floor of the inn, manning the spy glass. The last two bandits are fishing at the river.

If the party attack the men in the courtyard, the men in the dome will exit unto the balcony and use their light

crossbows to attack the party on the same round. One round later the two bandits from the river appear on the scene.

At night:

Five of Jobz' men will be asleep in their own bedrolls on the ground floor of the inn. The last two will be in the glass dome on the first floor of the caravan master's dwelling, manning the spy glass.

If the party manages to sneak up to the inn at night, Jobz will be sleeping out of sight in the rowing boat. Once the party attacks he will sneak up on them and join the fight. Jobz doesn't believe in running as long as any of his men are alive. He believes in honor among thieves.

Letter to Jobz and Five Dragons medallion

Jobz will be carrying a letter of instructions and a medallion allowing them to pass the Flaming Fist mercenaries guarding the Old Lake Trail south of Grom's Bounty, as detailed in **Chapter I – Grom's Bounty – Passage to the High Moor.**

Showing the medallion to the mercenaries allows the party to easily bypass the Flaming Fist check point. The letter will give the party an idea on where to go next.

The Five Dragons medallion will be recognized by the children of Alistair as being the symbol of the old mercenary company their parents were part of.

Returning to Elder Anvilsplitter

Once the party returns from the Stubborn Pony, they will meet with Elder Anvilsplitter and Grygus Steelfold. After a short confirmation that everything went according to plan (or not!) Kromdir will tell them about the Old Lake Trail, leading south to the High Moor Plateau.

The party will receive any equipment and rations they request, as long as the total sum doesn't exceed 200 gold pieces.

Crossing the town on their way south, they will discover the corpses of two spies hanging from the Tooth. Dwarven justice is swift.

Proceed to 8. Passage to the High Moor

Grom's Bounty

Handout E – Grom's Bounty

Grom's Bounty is a community in distress. Two tendays ago twenty-four dwarves were kidnapped in the night by Nasreen's Five Dragons mercenaries. They were marched south into the High Moor to dig out the lost sarrukh enclave Ssufaxuss. If not rescued, the dwarves will die there.

At the same time the Five Dragons mercenaries stole Derrobane, the axe of the town's hero, Grom Anvilsplitter. This axe is a weapon devoted to Moradin and was needed to break the seals that prevent entry into certain parts of Ssufaxuss.

All that was left from that faithful night, was a note warning the dwarves that they would not see their kin alive again if anyone left Grom's Bounty.

A few Five Dragons mercenaries were left behind at the 'The Stubborn Pony' and in the town itself to watch the dwarves for any sign of treachery.

The Anvilsplitters

Grom's Bounty is led by Elder Kromdir Anvilsplitter, son of the deceased hero Grom Anvilsplitter, father of Stern Anvilsplitter, grandfather to Gromson Anvilsplitter.

Both Kromdir and Stern are clerics of Moradin, Gromson is a skilled blacksmith, specializing in dwarven armor. He is one of the dwarves kidnapped by the Five Dragon mercenaries.

1. The Lovely Coin

The Lovely Coin is a squat red granite building. The inn looks so sturdy a god could step on it and hurt his foot. A cast iron placard resembling a large coin is embedded in the wall above the steel door.

As you enter the crowded tavern, you are welcomed by overall sullenness. The owner is engaged in conversation, but still manages to welcome you with a nod. Behind him the wall is decorated with adventuring memorabilia, making it clear he is - or was - a skilled monster hunter.

Dwarves seem to be the primary clientele here, although a single half-elf can be seen at the end of the bar. Nobody seems to mind you entering. Misery, after all, loves company, like a dwarf nursing his ale.

Handout 11 – The Lovely Coin menu

The patrons of the lovely coin will redirect any queries about the men at the Stubborn Pony towards the caravan master (see below). They refuse to talk about the hostage situation and will either tell the adventurers that all is well in Grom's Bounty or that they should mind their own business.

At the bar

Grygus Steelfold, a retired adventurer, claims to have survived the breath of a dragon because he saw a shiny platinum coin on the ground and bent over to pick it up. The rest of his party was allegedly incinerated from the waist up.

After this ordeal Steelfold vowed never to call a place his home anymore unless it could withstand a dragon's attack. Thus, he built the Lovely Coin.

Underneath the Lovely Coin is the brewery where Steelfold makes his excellent Pit Fiend beer. The brewery is his pride and passion and he is more than happy to talk about all kinds of beer and ale and the procedures for making them.

Steelfold is more than willing to chit chat with the party, even talk a bit about his previous adventuring career.

The dwarf running the Lovely Coin has a narrow face. His red, long hair is pulled back into a single braid. Fire has left a mark on his right cheek, narrowly avoiding his big, flaming beard. His eyes shine like blue marble as he casually dualwields two tankards overflowing with dark, foaming ale.

If asked about the men at the Stubborn Pony, he won't reveal any clues about what's going on here, only general information. Glad to get them out of his hair, he will point the adventurers towards the caravan master.

Wisdom (insight) DC 12 reveals he's ill at ease despite his jovial behavior.

Quest – The missing mages

More details on the completion of this quest can be found in **Chapter I - Loudwater – Loudwater Apothecary**.

If asked about the missing mages, Steelfold will deny ever seeing the missing mages; **Wisdom (insight) DC 9**: He is probably lying.

Quest – The perfumer's child

Following information will be volunteered freely:

Alistair visited the Lovely Coin about a tenday ago. He talked a lot about his child(ren) back home and was looking for information about his missing wife. He left after a single day, following a vision he had, which steered him towards the High Moor. The High Moor is a very dangerous place, so he's probably dead by now.

The caravan master

Caravan master Romnik Stoneguard is nursing his injured pride over a tankard of ale. He would prefer taking an axe to the men occupying the Stubborn Pony, but he has no choice but to leave them be.

Romnik will try to convince the players that the men at the Stubborn Pony are the new caravan masters who took over after he retired. He is a poor liar and a worse actor; **Wisdom (insight) DC 7:** The caravan master is lying. Doubting his story will have him sweating and telling them:

Ugh, who am I kidding... I'm bad at this kind of charade. Anyways, it don't matter. You're stuck here now, just like the rest of us. Them is watching us. If anyone tries to leave... You shouldn't be talking to me though... them might be watching.

If the caravan master is pushed and the role-play is appropriate; **Charisma (persuasion) DC 12:** convinces him to tell the truth:

There was a break-in in the Hall of Moradin not long ago. The statue of Grom Anvilsplitter, a deceased hero, whom the town was named after, was defiled and hostages were taken. If anyone leaves town the hostages will suffer. Is all I know...

If the players start asking around about the hostage situation they will be arrested by Stern Anvilsplitter, as described in **Chapter I – Grom's Bounty – Gate to Grom's bounty.**

Quest - Eliminating the Five Dragons lookout

More details on the completion of this quest can be found in **Chapter I - Grom's Bounty – Underneath the Hall of Moradin.**

If asked or appropriate Stoneguard can provide following information:

He used to have a spyglass to watch for trouble. The thugs probably use it now to watch the road.

He will also draw them a map: **Handout J – A crudely drawn map;** this map gives the party an idea on how to best approach the Stubborn Pony unseen, as described in Chapter I – The Stubborn Pony.

Jack Morgan

There is a single half-elf in the Lovely Coin, sitting at the far end of the bar. He is called Jack Morgan and he is a farmer. **Wisdom (insight) DC 10:** He looks miserable.

Jack doesn't know anything about the hostage situation. He is too engrossed in his own problems to notice the

dwarves are acting differently. He hasn't tried to leave town yet. Once he does he will be confined.

Quest - The Morgan horse

Quest xp: Giving Jack enough money to buy a new draft horse or giving Jack a new horse: 500 xp to be divided among the party.

More details on the related quest, Prancer's Faith, can be found in **Chapter II – The High Moor – Black dragon.**

Prancer, the family horse, has disappeared from the pasture and Jack has no idea how to support his family anymore.

If the party needs to find Jack Morgan or his family, they can find his farm an hour's travel east of the Stubborn Pony. Any resident of Grom's Bounty can point them in the right direction.

There are no further details provided in this module concerning the Morgan family farm.

2. Gate to Grom's Bounty

The gate to Grom's Bounty is solid, like the dwarves who built it. The bridge leading up to it spans a deep crevice and the town proper is surrounded by high peaks on all sides. Grom's Bounty seems an easy place to defend in case of war. Several heavily armored guards watch you impassively as you pass them by.

Encounter

Stern Anvilsplitter, Dwarven cleric of Moradin, NPC's & mobs.

Dwarven guards (5), use guard statistics, MM p. 347. Substitute spears with maces.

The players will be allowed to enter, but not to leave Grom's Bounty. If they attempt to leave they will be stopped at the edge of town. A patrol of five armed guards, under the leadership of Stern Anvilsplitter will surround the party.

I'm sorry, but I must ask you to relinquish your weapons and come with me. My father, Elder Anvilsplitter wants to meet with you.

Conditions of surrender

Stern will not let the party hold on to any weapons or spellbooks. He will give his word their items will be relinquished to them later on. The party is searched by the guards.

He will not answer any questions but will state that if they come peacefully and act honorably everything will become clear soon.

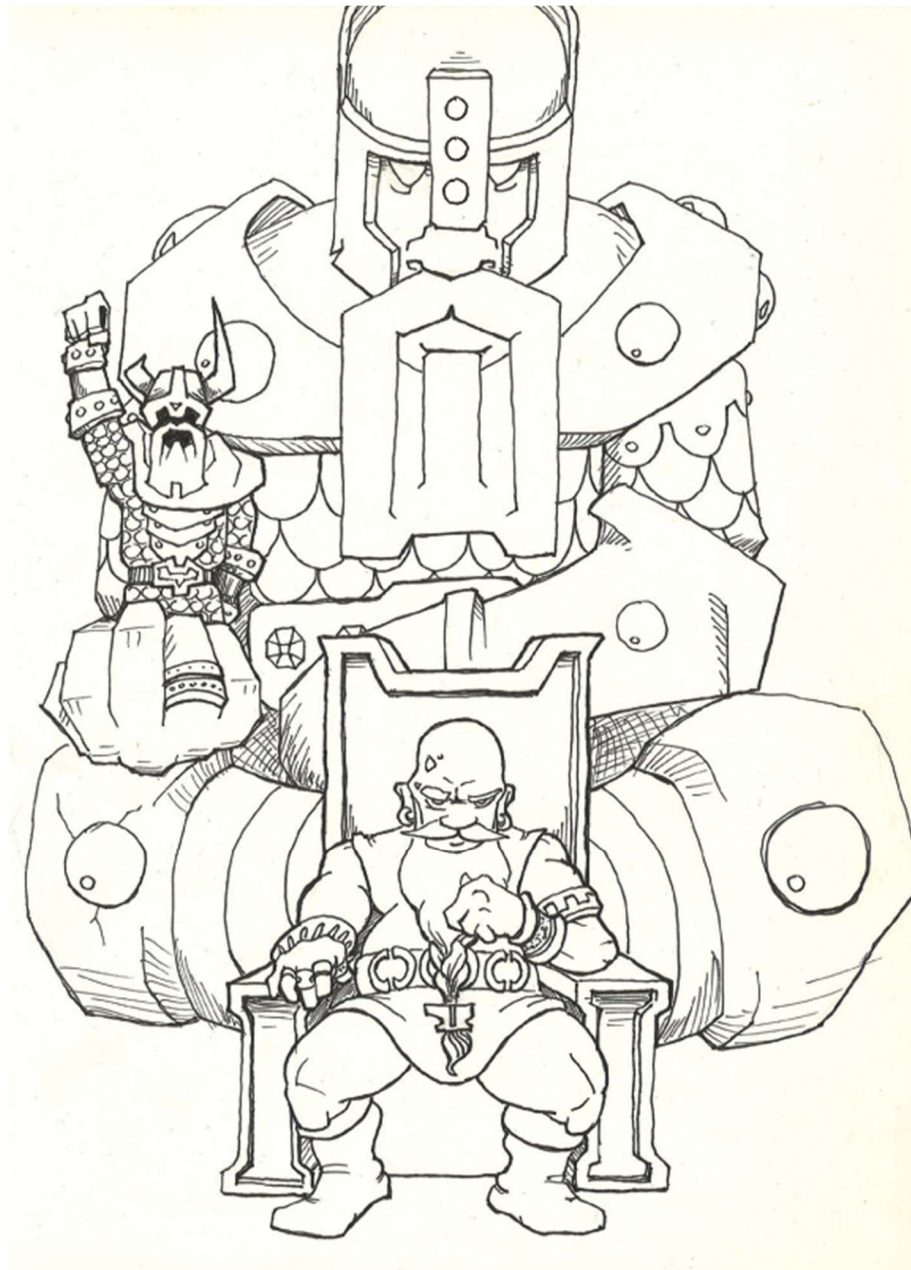
Trying to hide something small from the guards;
dexterity (sleight of hand) DC 12.

Resisting arrest

If the adventurers resist arrest, a fight will ensue between the party and the guards. No experience points will be awarded for this fight.

The guards will be surrounding the party at the beginning of combat. Stern will be outside the surrounding circle.

Each round after the first 1d4 dwarven guards will arrive to join the fight.



Elder Anvilsplitter

3. The Hall of Moradin

If the adventurers enter the temple of Moradin, they find it empty. Once they are escorted here by Stern Anvilsplitter, Elder Anvilsplitter will be present with a dozen guards.

This impressive granite hall is the center of Grom's Bounty's worship. The inside is dark and cool, the ceiling low and heavy, and the pillars supporting the construction as broad as the tallest of oaks.

A brazier filled with charcoal is burning in front of the sitting statue of Moradin, the town's patron. At the right hand of Moradin stands a smaller statue, depicting a fierce dwarf in full battle dress.

Elder Anvilsplitter

Bald as a rock and sporting a broad and luxurious beard, Kromdir Anvilsplitter strikes an imposing figure.

Beneath his simple rust-colored clothes, his thick arms still ripple with the muscles built by a lifetime of war. Around his neck he wears a heavy silver symbol of hammer and anvil.

Intelligence (religion) DC 15 reveals the symbol around Kromdir's neck not only marks him as one of Moradin's faithful, it also marks him as part of the order of the Hammers of Moradin, an elite military order devoted to defending the dwarven race. For dwarves; **The DC drops to 10.**

When the party is led before Elder Anvilsplitter in the Hall of Moradin he questions them thoroughly.

So what is your business in our town? You're not by any chance more 'merchants' wanting to buy our 'wares'?

Elder Anvilsplitter is contemplating whether the party is the answer to the town's problems and seeks to take their measure.

On top of the questions here, this is a nice opportunity to ask the players about their past and allowing them to present part of their adventuring motivation and background.

If the players speak truly he will treat them with sufficient respect.

If they lie; **Charisma (deception) DC 17:** The lie isn't perceived. **Upon failure** the Elder will start interrogating the lying party member about his life, but not before casting *read thoughts*, **wisdom saving throw**

DC 16. The Elder can cast *read thoughts* twice between long rests.

Quest – Returning the hostages

More details on the completion of this quest can be found in **Chapter I - Grom's Bounty – Underneath the Hall of Moradin.**

"I gather you are curious about my summons." The ancient cleric darkens as anger takes hold of him.

"Two tendays ago this temple was defiled! Derrobane, the very weapon clenched by the statue of my father was taken from its resting place and two dozen of our kin were kidnapped! Woe upon them that's did it! In Moradin's name and by my father's memory they will be found and punished to the full extent of our laws!"

The ancient cleric seems to glow with a palpable aura of power, dimming the hall around him.

After a few seconds his anger recedes, and he sighs. "I sometimes forget I'm not a young man anymore. This was left at the base of the statue." Elder Kromdir hands you a note.

"So you see, you are not to leave Grom's Bounty for the time being.

I will offer you a choice. If you swear you will not leave until given permission, I will provide for pleasant accommodations for you to rest and you will want for nothing. I'll even compensate you with 10 gold pieces a day for your trouble. If you refuse, you will be in chains until this situation is resolved. Yours is the choice."

Handout 35 – Jobz' note to Grom's Bounty

If they protest or offer help:

"I cannot run the risk of letting you run free. The people that did this are keeping an eye on us, they will show no mercy."

Wisdom (insight) DC 14: During this last proclamation, Elder Anvilsplitter speaks more loudly than he needs to.

Quest - The missing wizards

More details on the completion of this quest can be found in **Chapter I - Loudwater – Loudwater Apothecary.**

The wizards searching for Aomnoar Sageblaze pretended to be merchants when they entered the town

looking for the missing apothecary. Obviously, the dwarves saw through this poor disguise. Both are incarcerated beneath the temple. The dwarves don't believe they are dangerous. The wizards are kept locked up to prevent them from leaving Grom's Bounty and thereby endangering themselves and the hostages.

If the adventurers ask about the missing wizards, Kromdir will tell them they are kept below the temple and that they will soon be able to meet.

Quest – Behind on taxes

More details on the completion of this quest can be found in **Chapter I - Loudwater – Militia Headquarters**.

Did you know the tax you've come to collect, is about the only thing making things livable in Loudwater? Without it, the damned Zhents wouldn't even be able to maintain their docks. Of course without our trade, they would barely need them anyway –snorts- The Proudfish will get his ridiculous tax, as soon as the situation here is resolved.

Once the party has dealt with the hostage situation they are allowed to take the strongbox containing the taxes to Loudwater.

Kromdir Anvilsplitter is well aware the taxes are unreasonably high, but the dwarven community can afford to pay them. What's more, because the Zhentarim controlling Loudwater need the dwarven trade, the dwarves aren't taxed as high as others would be.

What most people don't know is that Kromdir isn't without a wry sense of humor. Each year he has his best people construct a strongbox to carry the tax. The dwarves make it a sport to make the box as impervious as possible. In their forgetfulness, however, they neglect to deliver the right key. Each and every time.

The first time this happened the Loudwater officials demanded a new key be made, for which the dwarves promptly charged a hundred gold pieces. The second time no such demand was made. It takes the Loudwater officials the better part of a tenday to pry the thing open.

Finishing up

When the players return from the Ziggurat, they are allowed to take the strongbox to Loudwater. If they ask for the right key, they will receive it, if they brought the hostages back safely. If not, they will receive a fake key.

Kromdir Anvilsplitter will have them count the amount, totaling 7502 gold coins, which the dwarves have minted especially for the purpose of paying the tax. The

coins weigh exactly the same as a gold dragon and have a jeweled dagger stamped on them.

Intelligence (religion) DC 15: The coins are stamped with the symbol of Abbathor, an evil dwarven god who is known as the Great Master of Greed. **For dwarves the DC is 5.**

If the party ask any resident of Grom's Bounty why they would put the symbol of an evil god on the coins, they explain: The symbol of Abbathor warns others of our kind to expect treachery or dishonesty when dealing with Loudwater's officials.

This information will become significant in Chapter IV when the players are solving the murder of Black Samson.

Concluding the meeting

Once the conversation with Elder Anvilsplitter is concluded the party is taken underneath the temple.

4. Underneath the Hall of Moradin

You are led from the Hall of Moradin through a staircase in one of the massive pillars. The next half hour is spent wandering through old mining tunnels crisscrossing the foot of the mountain. You realize the passages underneath the temple are a veritable maze.

Finally, you arrive at what looks like a small dwarven bastion, complete with stone gates and bristling with defensive equipment. By your estimate it is large enough to house several hundred people. A carved stone reveals the small fortress bears the name 'Karat Aslin'. A few minutes later you are ushered through a steel-enforced stone door. A loud booming sound announces that this is your final destination, the way is closed behind you.

You are standing in a small furnished hall. Wall to wall carpet gives it a cozy feel. Several comfortable leather armchairs are arranged around the burning fireplace at the end. A large dining table holds an array of pungent cheeses, dark loaves and a decanter filled with frothing ale.

Bookcases line the left wall from top to bottom, its content topic of heated discussion for the middle-aged man and woman standing next to them. That is, until your sudden entry interrupts them.

Elder Anvilsplitter had hoped to use Lizbundo Lastvault and Bobiandra Sweetsong to send a message or get help. Their bungling ways convinced him that they couldn't help tie each other's shoelaces. So now he just put them where they can do the least harm.

Door: Steel-enforced stone, closed, bolted from the outside, **strength (athletics)** DC 30, AC 18, hp 27 (6d8).

Quest - The missing wizards

Bob and Liz are excited to see new folk but can't do a lot to help. The wizards explain they got in this predicament looking for their missing friend Aomnoar Sageblaze (see **Chapter I – Loudwater - Loudwater Apothecary**)

They realize now they aren't suited for the adventuring business.

"We suspect our friend Aomnoar Sageblaze was taken by the same men that kidnapped the dwarves. If you would be a good chap and free him, we could certainly spare a pretty penny upon your safe return in Loudwater."

Having already picked up the quest

If the party states they were sent by Thunderpelt, Liz gives his signet ring to the party as proof that they are alright. Handing this ring to Thunderpelt at the Loudwater Apothecary and assuring him they are safe, will count as finding and returning Lastvault and Sweetsong, for the purpose of completing that part of the quest.

The wizards aren't planning on returning to Loudwater at this point. They are far too busy rummaging through the small but unique library.

The library was the property of the elven sorcerer Malisander, who used to be a travelling companion of Grom Anvilsplitter, hero of Grom's Bounty.

Picking up the quest here

If the party hasn't picked up the quest in Loudwater and agrees to finding Sageblaze, Bob and Liz will offer 300 gold dragons. They will insist on seeing the party's adventuring license, however. If the party is unlicensed:

"The law is very clear, residents of Loudwater aren't allowed to hire unlicensed adventurers. We can offer you 200 dragons upon the safe return of our friend. The rest of the bounty will go towards paying the fines."

Convincing them that the laws of Loudwater don't apply, since they are in Grom's Bounty; **Charisma (persuasion)** DC 12: to receive promise of the full reward.

Steelfold's visit

After initial introductions are made, Steelfold, the proprietor of the Lovely Coin, comes and visits the party. He enters, pours himself a drink and sits down to talk.

Convincing the party

It is quite possible the party will feel outraged and is inclined to react stubbornly. They have been unjustly treated. These same people are about to ask for – and even demand – their help. If you need help in handling this situation refer to the sidebar on the next page.

Quests – Eliminating the Five Dragons lookout & The dwarven hostages

If the party **returns the hostages**, they will receive the agreed upon payment: 3000 xp to be divided among the party.

If they **return with Derrobane**, they will get a 250 gold dragons bonus each and 1500 xp to be divided among the party.

The mission is to get the hostages back and recover the axe Derrobane. The hostages are more important than the axe.

The dwarves offer to pay the adventurers a thousand gold pieces for acceptance of this mission. This is a small fortune, but they are desperate. Of all the dwarves no more than a handful are able to brave the High Moor. If these people left though, they would risk leaving the town defenseless against reprisals from the Five Dragons. If the party haggles; **Charisma (persuasion)** DC 15: If needs be they dwarves will double the amount offered.

If the party accept, Steelfold outlines the plan.

I will smuggle you out of Grom's Bounty through the mines. The enemy has eyes everywhere, so you will have to act quickly.

First, you'll need to double back to the Stubborn Pony and take care of them thugs holed up there. At the same time Kromdir and some o' the lads will take care of the spies in the town proper. Make sure none of them weasels escape, or it will mean death for our kinsmen.

You will need to find out where those thugs came from and track them back to their hidey-hole. We are positive it lies somewhere to the south in the High Moor. You will have to hurry: the lives of the hostages are at stake.

Steelfold will guide the party through some more passages and into a secret tunnel that leads to the road

outside the Lovely Coin. After a few hours they reach the surface. It's dark outside.

Come and see Kromdir once you've taken care of the thugs at the Stubborn Pony. Good luck!

Letting the hostages die

At some points in the story it is stated that certain actions will result in the death of the dwarven hostages.

If the DM judges the party is procrastinating unnecessarily he can decide the same consequence applies.

However, as long as the party is questing in the High Moor and doesn't exit, it shouldn't count as procrastinating.

Sidebar: Handling angered player characters

To placate the party, you should start by letting them voice their anger. (This is true in RL as well)

Let Steelfold invite them to speak their mind. After they have been able to rage a bit, they should calm down and be more prone to rational thought. Use the following arguments:

- The dwarves don't really have a choice. What would the players suggest they do?
- How can the party expect the dwarves to take a risk with the lives of their family and kin?
- We know it's hardly fair, we're prepared to compensate you royally for your bother.
- Kromdir reacted the way he did because he's being watched at all times.

Once the party is ready proceed by having Steelfold explain his plan.

If the party keeps on being unreasonable, force their cooperation. The dwarves are out of options and the party is still their best chance to get the hostages out alive.

Present Steelfold's plan as an ultimatum instead of a request. Make it clear that this deal is their only chance for freedom. The dwarves have no real alternative, reasoning they need thugs to take care of thugs.

- Elder Anvilsplitter will put a *geas* on them, ordering them to do 'whatever it takes to deliver the hostages back safely'.

- If the party refuses to accept the *geas*, split them up and put the pressure on them separately. Remember that some of them will probably accept a sizeable bribe, some of them will accept it as their only way to regain their freedom. Let the convinced players convince the more stubborn ones. I suggest you get creative.
- Characters that keep refusing to help an entire town rescue their family, should be left to rot in the dungeons.

5. Thurgot Silverthumb's Emporium

Silverthumb's Emporium is a squat yellow brick building, which serves as the town's only general merchant.

Thurgot sells common items as found in the PHB. He doesn't sell weapons and armor, since those are sold at the Melters.

6. The Tooth

In the center of Grom's Bounty a large rocky needle can be found towering over the other buildings. It is said this monolith is a petrified chip of Gruumsh's tooth that broke free when Moradin's hammer caught him in the jaw. This doesn't explain, however, why two young dwarves can be seen racing each other to the top, their companions cheering them on below.

The Summitseekers are a group of young adventurous dwarves, who test their daring by climbing the Graypeak Mountains. The other dwarves think they are a bit bonkers and are probably right. In the past, however, these young mountaineers have warned Grom's Bounty of an impending raid by hill giants, resulting in the successful defense of the town, a fact they never forget to mention.

The Summitseekers consists of four members. Horlim and Rarefud Snowboulder are brothers and lead the group, they are the ones cheering. The other two members are the beardslings Ulik Copperhelm and Gragbum Stonedge, they are the ones climbing.

The challenge

The Snowboulder brothers like to challenge people to a climbing race. First to reach the top of the Tooth is the winner.

If any party member accepts the challenge, a friendly wager of 100 gp per person is suggested.

Let the player throw 1d4 to determine the competition.

- On a result of one, he races Horlim (athletics +5).
- On a result of two, he races Rarefud (athletics +6).
- On a result of three, he races Ulik (athletics +4).
- On a result of four, he races Gragbum (athletics +5).

The dwarves **let the player decide** if he wants to use a harness or not. The dwarves have one he can use. The dwarves don't use a harness, since it hampers their movement.

Climbing with a harness means the player can't fall; **strength (athletics) DC 12**

Climbing without a harness; **strength (athletics) DC 8**: Failing two checks in a row, means falling down.

The first one to make **five successful checks reaches the summit** and wins the race. Each successful check means the climber advances 15 feet.

The dwarves are so practiced in climbing that they can reroll failed climb checks, but not natural 1's, and must use the new roll. The dwarves climb without a harness.

Darwinian Note: Yes, this could result in a player falling to his death. Who in his right mind would climb a monolithic needle reaching 75 feet into the sky, without a climbing harness?

Cuddly DM's note: If the DM is inclined to keep Grom's Bounty's streets free of blood and guts, one of the dwarves might save the day by using a *ring of catching*. This ring allows the wearer to catch a falling person as if casting the *feather fall* spell.

7. The Melters

Following the road leads you into a large cavern. The heat of the place immediately bears down on you. Huge, barrel-shaped furnaces are stoked to melt the ore mined in Grom's Bounty's mines.

Dozens of dwarves are busy weighing ore, feeding the furnace, loading carts and hammering all sorts of shapes out of dark metal. Several passages lead deeper into the mountain. In the back of the cave a huge steel door is guarded by four tough looking dwarves.

Background information

This installation is called the Melters and houses the miner's collective with the same name. The Melters are led by Gromson Anvilsplitter, son of Stern Anvilsplitter. Here the miners come to smelt the ores they dug up from the mines. The idea is to sell their goods as a collective in places like Loudwater, Secomber and Waterdeep and afterwards divide the profits fairly among everyone involved. The Melters also run the Stubborn Pony on the southern bank of the Delimbiyr.

If the adventurers address anyone here, they will be referred to Garmon of the Scales, Keeper of the Ledger.

The vault

In the back of the cave is a huge steel door that leads to Grom's Bounty's vault. Here they keep everything the Melters make as well as the town's treasury.

Storage: Since the Stubborn Pony hasn't been operational for two tendays, wares have been piling up. Several cartloads of goods can be found here.

Mainly arms, armor, iron trade goods, steel bars (2d100; 1gp each), a few dozen silver bars (4d12; 20 gp each) and some mithral (enough to make a medium sized weapon, a shield or a helm).

Treasury: The town's treasury consists of three steel bound chests filled with gold, silver, gems and some magic items.

16000 gp, 130000 sp, 2 x Black opal (500 gp each), 2 x Blue sapphire (600 gp each), 2 x Emerald (400 gp each), 2 x Opal (350 gp each), Star ruby (1500 gp), Yellow sapphire (800 gp), Wand of Web, Adamantine Armor (splint), Cloak of the Bat, Necklace of Prayer Beads (4 beads), Figurine of Wondrous Power (ebony fly)

Door: Large steel, double door, locked, **dexterity (thieves' tools) DC 25, ability strength DC 30**, AC19, 28 hp (5d10).

Encounter

Dwarven guards (4), use guard statistics, MM p. 347, Substitute spears with maces.

The door is open during the day but guarded at all times. **Wisdom (perception) DC 5**: Next to the door hangs a brass horn.

If attacked the dwarves will try to sound the alarm by blowing the brass horn. 2d4 rounds later Stern and his patrol will arrive. (See **2. Gate to Grom's Bounty**)

Garmon of the Scales, Keeper of the Ledger

Garmon is the man to speak to if the party want any information on the Melters. He will gladly speak of the organization since he is genuinely proud of what dwarves can achieve when they work together.

Garmon is responsible for weighing each contribution and taking it down in the giant ledger he has on his desk. He is also responsible for dividing the profits afterwards.

If the adventurers want to buy weapons or armor, or anything made out of metal, they can speak with Garmon.

If the party needs anything special commissioned, Garmon will take a down payment of 30% and refer them to Gromson, the best smith in town and by extension the best smith of the region.

Garmon has **charisma (persuasion) +6** for the purpose of haggling prices.

Gromson Anvilsplitter

Gromson can be found here once the party has rescued him in Chapter III. Before that time, no goods can be commissioned at the Melters.

8. Passage to the High Moor

Note: Exiting Grom's Bounty to travel to the High Moor, the adventurers will take the Old Lake Trail to the south, as marked on the map.

Note: The High Moor is a plateau. There is a significant difference in height between this plateau and the surrounding lands.

The entire northern edge of the High Moor is a steep rock face, making it difficult to travel between the High Moor and the regions north of it.

The plateau slopes down towards the south (outside the scope of your travels) where it levels off into the neighboring lands.

It takes a day and a half travel between Grom's Bounty and the encounter with the Flaming Fist, as described below.

Travelling through the mountains south of Grom's Bounty you find yourself facing the cliff that is the northern border of the High Moor.

As the hours bring you closer, you are humbled by the sheer size of the red granite wall and you wonder how you will ever get up there. When you finally reach the base of the cliff you notice the banner of the Flaming Fist streaming above what appears to be a small camp. Behind it a passage leads into the rock.

The tunnel leading into the cliff ascends at a steep angle. Eventually it surfaces at the bottom of a shallow sinkhole. A rope ladder allows the players to climb upwards.

Nine Flaming Fist mercenaries guard this passage. Nobody is to pass if they don't have clearance. Luckily Tychon, one of the mercenaries the party befriended at the Green Tankard, is in charge here.

"I don't want to fight you guys. We had fun at the Green Tankard and if I am to kill people I have fun with... now where's the sense in that? I can't let you pass, however, so I guess we're at a stalemate."

Quest – Getting into the High Moor

Quest xp: Gaining access to the High Moor: 500 xp to be divided among the party.

There are several ways of passing the check point:

Showing the medallion

If the party shows the 'Five Dragons medallion' they got from Jobz, Tychon will be visibly relieved. He lets them pass and even offers to share the camp site. It doesn't matter whether Tychon believes them part of the Five Dragons. He is looking for an excuse to avoid a conflict with people he likes.

Since the party is carrying the medallion, Tychon has no qualms about revealing what information he has:

- They were hired by a hobgoblin called Mugdurok in Baldur's Gate.
- There is a Five Dragons camp at the edge of the lake.
- They are paid to keep anyone from entering the High Moor, unless they show the mark of the Five Dragons mercenaries.
- The motivation of their employer is unknown to them, but it's an easy job that pays well.

Persuading the mercenaries

Tychon, use Flaming fist sergeant (1), NPC's & mobs.

Flaming fist mercenaries (8), use guard statistics, MM p. 347.

Trying to persuade the mercenaries; **charisma (persuasion) DC 10:**

"Well, one of you could duel me. The winner gets his way. That way at least I can say we tried stoppin' ya."

The rules will be explained by one of Tychon's men:

No magic can be used during the duel. This is not a duel to the death. If you knock your opponent out, you win.

If the players kill Tychon, the other mercenaries attack.

The stealthy approach

Sneaking past under the cover of night is possible, but difficult; **dexterity (stealth) group effort DC 15** or be noticed.

The climb

If the party doubles back and asks the Summitseekers for help the dwarves will be glad to assist (See **6. The Tooth**). The Summitseekers know of a chimney leading 60 feet up the cliff and ending near the entrance to a passage. This passage leads to the bottom of an old sinkhole. One edge of the sinkhole has collapsed into a pile of rubble which can be easily climbed all the way up the High Moor plateau.

Making the climb up the chimney assisted by the Summit Seekers and with the required equipment; **Strength (athletics) DC 15 at advantage without the chance of falling**. The players will need to make this check several times, as they need to climb 60 feet up at half speed.

If unassisted the party can only find the chimney with a **wisdom (survival) check DC 25**. Making the climb up the chimney unassisted and without the required equipment; **Strength (athletics) DC 15. Upon failure:** The party member falls of the cliff. The players will need to make this check several times, as they need to climb 60 feet up at half speed.

Making the climb any other way is impossible and will lead to the death of any characters foolhardy enough to try.

Entering the High Moor

Whether the players use the chimney-route, or travel through the passage, they will enter the High Moor and Chapter II will begin.

Delimbiyr Vale mechanics

The road between Loudwater and Grom's Bounty follows the River Grayflow, a tributary of the River Shining. Since the first settlers came to the area, the River Shining, also known as the Delimbiyr, has had an important influence on the people that lived here, providing sustenance, and a means of transport.

The river is navigable by barge once you go past Loudwater towards the west. To the east of Loudwater small fishing boats can still be used until you reach the Stubborn Pony. Past the Stubborn Pony the river becomes too wild to travel.

Fixed, random and special encounters

During each day the party can travel up to 24 miles in normal terrain such as roads and 12 miles in difficult terrain such as forests or hills.

The scale at the bottom of **Handout A – The Delimbiyr Vale** can be used to determine the distance the characters can travel on the map.

You will find the routes most commonly travelled during chapter I in the table below.

Each day the party will roll a d20 for random encounters. This happens once during the day and once at night. (**Table 1: Delimbiyr Vale Random Encounters**)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Time travelled</u>
Between Loudwater and the Prancing Pony	96 miles	4 days
Between Loudwater and Velti'Enorethal	2 miles	Half an hour
Between the Prancing Pony and Grom's Bounty	10 miles	Half a day
Between Grom's Bounty and the Flaming Fist Camp	40 miles	A day and a half

The value of special encounters

The special encounters listed in the following pages serve to create atmosphere. They are the best way to illustrate the difference between travelling along the Delimbiyr and travelling though the High Moor or the Southwood.

Dungeon Masters who like to bring this kind of atmosphere to life in their sessions, can choose to **handpick and use a special encounter each session.**

Death by random encounter

Depending on the level and number of party members, random encounters can be quite deadly. If you feel the party can't handle a certain encounter, it is best to tone the encounter down. A campaign ending by random encounter is hardly a fulfilling campaign.

One way to tone down an encounter is by dividing the monsters in waves to allow the party to defeat them more easily. Another one is to reduce the number of creatures or opt to choose a less dangerous encounter by moving down in the encounter table.

You can also mislead your players by keeping the DC for the survival roll (see **Note on survival**) hidden from them and letting them escape unwinnable encounters by allowing survival checks to pass anyway. Just don't forget to describe these encounters, since moments like these create a lot of atmosphere and help bring your campaign to life.

Note: The maximum encounter values listed in the table are there to help you gauge the difficulty of random encounters. They are the adjusted xp value of the

encounter should the maximum number of creatures be rolled. See DMG p. 82 for more information on this topic.

Note on survival

If the party is led by a character with the **wisdom (survival) skill**, they can attempt to avoid random encounters (but not special encounters).

The DC of this skill check is 5 + the roll made to determine the exact encounter on tables 3A, or 3B.

Example:

- The party enters a hex on the road to Grom's Bounty and rolls for a daytime encounter. The result of the roll is 18, a random encounter in Delimbiyr Vale.

From table 1: Delimbiyr Vale Random Encounters

1d20

17-19 Encounter: Table 3A + 3B: Delimbiyr Vale

- The DM checks the appropriate table (Table 3A) and rolls the required d20, coming up with a result of 5, which means the party encounters two kobolds.

Table 3A: Random encounters: Delimbiyr Vale by day

1d20	To avoid the random encounter; wisdom (survival check) DC 5 + random encounter roll	Max encounter value
5	2 Kobolds	75 xp

- The DM determines the DC of the check required to avoid the encounter. Which is 5 + the roll on table 3A = 10.
- The player leading the party rolls a survival check with a result of 20, which is a Success.
- The DM describes how the party encounters the kobolds but spots them first.

Note: at this point the party can decide to interact with or ambush the kobolds at their leisure. They managed to avoid running head-on into the encounter but are still left a choice.

Table 1: Delimbiyr Vale Random Encounters

1d20	Situation
1-16	Nothing happens
17-19	Encounter: Table 3A + 3B: Delimbiyr Vale
20	Table 2: Special encounter

Table 2: Delimbiyr Vale Special Encounters

1d6	
1	The soothsayer
2	The storm
3	Peasants, villagers or town folk
4	The bounty hunter
5	The sword master
6	The traveling wizard

Table 3A: Random encounters:**Delimbiyr Vale by day**

1d20		Max encounter value
1	1 Giant wolf spider	50 xp
2	1 Boar	50 xp
3	1 Giant badger	50 xp
4	2 Bandits	75 xp
5	2 Kobolds	75 xp
6	2 Giant crab	75 xp
7	1 Black bear	100 xp
8	1 Swarm of insects	100 xp
9	1 Worg	100 xp
10	1d2+2 Bandits	200 xp
11	1d2+2 Kobolds	200 xp
12	1 Harpy	200 xp
13	1 Brown bear	200 xp
14	1 Giant toad	200 xp
15	2 Swarm of insects	300 xp
16	2 Worg	300 xp
17	1d2+2 Giant wolf spider	400 xp
18	1 Ankheg	450 xp
19	1 Ogre	450 xp
20	1 Ankheg	450 xp

Table 3B: Random encounters:**Delimbiyr Vale by night**

1d20		Max encounter value
1	1 Giant wolf spider	50 xp
2	1 Skeleton	50 xp
3	1 Zombie	50 xp
4	2 Bandits	75 xp
5	2 Kobolds	75 xp
6	2 Giant crab	75 xp
7	1 Black bear	100 xp
8	1 Swarm of insects	100 xp
9	1 Worg	100 xp
10	1d2+2 Bandits	200 xp
11	1d2+2 Kobolds	200 xp
12	1 Ghouls	200 xp
13	1 Brown bear	200 xp
14	1d2+1 Zombies	300 xp
15	2 Swarm of insects	300 xp
16	2 Worg	300 xp
17	1d2+2 Skeletons	400 xp
18	1 Ankheg	450 xp
19	1 Ghast	450 xp
20	1 Ankheg	450 xp

Special Encounters

1. Soothsayer

You come upon a colorful scene. Next to the road on the bank of the river stands a gipsy cart. Its wood work is painted in bright white and blues.

Nearing it you notice the faint smell of jasmine blanketed by a stronger scent of smoke. Under a canopy sits a dark-skinned man on a large pillow, playing a long necked string instrument. In front of him three cushions are arrayed. A pot of rosy pale tea stands ready on a small table in the middle.

The man nods and smiles and beckons you to take place on the pillows before proceeding with his music. The tune is haunting and melancholy and reminds you of your home in the desert... wait what?

Background

The man is Mah Zix'Ihin a genie trapped in a lamp. The lamp was tossed upstream into the river ages ago. The current has brought it near Loudwater. The constant flow of the river's water has disturbed the elemental magic trapping the genie inside but has affected his power as well. A few weeks ago, Mah discovered he could project some form of illusion onto the river bank and has been waiting since, hoping to trick someone into freeing him.

Mah Zix'Ihin's design

By asking the party to fetch water he tries to trick them into fishing the lamp out of the river. By telling them to rub the tea cups, he tries to make them rub the lamp and make a wish. Exposure to the water has made the genies power wane so any wishes made will have a reduced effect. His ultimate goal is to fool the party into making three wishes, which will free him from his bond.

Playing out Mah Zix'Ihin's gambit

The man keeps on playing the instrument until the players interrupt him, which could take hours. When they do interrupt him, he smiles and apologizes. He then asks them if they would like some tea.

If the players are suspicious; **Wisdom (insight) DC 15:** You don't trust this man.

Rubbing the lamp

He asks if someone could haul some water from the river, while he gets some cookies. After which he makes tea and offers them cookies.

He explains that the tea cups are magical, if the tea is too hot, rubbing the cup suffices to cool its content.

The tea - of course - is too hot to drink comfortably until the cups are rubbed.

Making a wish

He now declares that he will read the future of anyone willing. He will use some grand gestures and will **ask the player some random stuff first**, for instance the name of his mother, his favorite pet, etc. ...

He claims he needs these questions answered to identify the thread of the person's fate in the tapestry of time. In truth it's a diversion to prepare for his real question:

Tell me your heart's desire.

If the person refuses to share this, he will shake his head, tell the player that there can't be a clear reading without trust and moves on to the next player.

If the player answers, resolve as described below and ask again

Any other wish you hold dear?

After which you should resolve again and ask again. Or move on to the next player if the questioned player declines. Remember the genie's goal is to get three wishes answered, it doesn't matter who rubbed the lamp, or who makes them.

As soon as three wishes are resolved Mah Zix'Ihin starts laughing maniacally and fiery tears start to roll from his cheeks, after which the wagon and the genie fade out like a mirage, never to be seen again.

Resolving wishes

After a wish is made Mah Zix'Ihin will flip a card of a tarot deck and read the characters fortune. Choose the wish closest to the ones listed below to determine which tarot card is revealed. Read the fortune for the player to hear and apply the consequences as described.

Wish	Tarot Card	Consequence
Wealth	The Deck of Many Cards “Fortune hides her face while casting the dice, you are to lose and to gain and soon.”	The character loses an important or cherished item of the DM’s choosing. Soon after the character comes into some unexpected funds (1d10x100gp) this could be from an inheritance, winning lottery ticket, unexpected find. Note: if you can’t think of a cherished item to take away, remember that a missing shoe, miles from the nearest cobbler, can feel like a disaster.
Fame	The Helm of Brilliance “Wherever you go it will be your destiny to stir emotions.”	The character is inexplicably hated by one an important NPC and loved to the extreme by another. DM’s choice.
Love	The Succubus “An unknown love will enter your life soon.”	A baby is left with a note addressed to the player. The town harlot becomes chaste and chases him all over promising undying devotion. Stray dogs follow the player wherever he goes. Pick one or all of the above. DM’s choice.
Justice	The Paladin “The law will have his due, before the next moon’s cycle ends.”	The character will be charged with a crime of the DM’s choice in the weeks to come. If the character is actually guilty of a crime, use that one. Unless the crime is a serious one, a fine might be enough to solve this.
Power	The Wild Mage “You will become more powerful than you ever were.”	After every long rest, the character rolls a d20. Whenever the result is even, he gets a +2 bonus to proficiency until the next long rest has passed. Whenever he rolls an odd number he gets a -2 penalty. This effect lasts for 2d6 days.
Vengeance	The Poisoned Well “Vengeance will be yours within a week’s time.”	A letter arrives with a death threat. This could be from a lover spurned, a storeowner that blames the adventurer for his bankruptcy, a husband that blames a failed marriage on the character. A few days later an assassin will try to kill the character. Note: If no possible scenario comes to mind, you could use Imam Brow, the owner of the warehouse the players burgled. (See quest: Vermin Problem)

2. The storm

Quest xp: Saving both children: 500 xp to be divided among the party.

Quest xp: Saving all three people: 750 xp to be divided among the party.

A storm catches them unawares on the road. Within minutes the party is drenched. A little while later they hear a crash. In the middle of the river an uprooted tree has crashed into a fishing boat. The boat is sinking. Three people can be seen on deck: a man and two children.

Let the party figure out for themselves how to handle the situation. The boat is lying wedged against the trunk in the middle of the river, at 60 feet from the river bank.

If the man or his children end up in the water unsupported, they will be swept away and drown in 1d4 rounds.

Some possible checks

Throwing a rope in the storm across that distance is almost impossible; **Dexterity (athletics) DC 20 at disadvantage**. Weighting the end of the rope before throwing; **DC lowered by 10**.

Climbing across a rope; **Strength (athletics) DC 15**.

Swimming while being pulled in by rope; **Strength (athletics) DC 10**.

Swimming at half speed; **Strength (athletics) DC 15**.

Rescuing someone in the water or swimming encumbered by a drowning person at half speed; **Strength (athletics) DC 20**.

Darwinian Note: People die, you can't save them all.

3. On the road

The players encounter some locals on the road. As DM you determine which of the following scenarios to use.

- The party encounters peasants going to or returning from the market. They might have some food for sale.
- The party encounters villagers or town folk visiting relatives or heading to town on errand. Depending on where they are from (Grom's Bounty or Loudwater) they can share gossip from the information section.

4. Bounty hunter

The bounty hunter is called Kernwell. He is out hunting kobolds. He will tell the party the caravan master at the Stubborn Pony pays well for kobold ears.

5. The Swordmaster

Vheomar, the wandering Swordmaster, lives by his blade. He will offer to fight anyone for a bag of coins provided they wager him 10 gp. The bag contains 113 gp. He is a sore loser but a fair one. Fights are not to the death.

Encounter

Vheomar, Veteran, MM. p. 350

6. Traveling wizard

Zeberdaeus the Hedge Wizard will cast cantrips and 1st to 3rd level spells for a price. He will also let players copy cantrips and 1st to 3rd spells out of his spellbook on the same conditions. There is a 25% chance he has the spell the player is looking for.

- Cantrip: 25 gp
- 1st level spell: 50 gp
- 2nd level spell: 300 gp
- 3rd level spell: 1000 gp

Gossip

Following information can be used to fill out any conversation the party has with an NPC at the cited location.

Loudwater

- There is an old elven building nearby that is supposed to be infested with all kinds of critters. The place has been picked over by adventurers many times over during the last centuries.
- Thunderpelt, the apothecary, is really desperate to get his friends back.
- It's been a while since anyone from Grom's Bounty passed by the Green Tankard.
- The Gauntlet is a greedy and cruel man, flattery is his weak spot though.
- Elyse Whiteflower, proprietor of the Green Tankard, is connected to a local thieves' guild.
- Telbor Zazrek, the High Lord, did something to upset the stone giants a few years ago. He was responsible for the death of hundreds of people.
- All the High Lord does nowadays is drink. Proudfish is the man in power in Loudwater.
- Both the High Lord and his Gauntlet are Zhentarim puppets.
- If asked: Nobody in Loudwater, really remembers seeing Alistair.

Grom's Bounty

People in Grom's Bounty don't want to talk to strangers. They remain fairly silent until the hostage situation is resolved. If a local is judged friendly toward the party, he might engage in small talk, but reveal nothing significant. Once the hostage situation is resolved they might divulge certain information.

- Grygus Steelfold used to be an adventurer. When he's really into his cups he talks about dragons and how the Lovely Coin was built to withstand them.
- Elder Anvilsplitter is a stern but fair man. He is the youngest son of Grom Anvilsplitter, our town's founder. Grom used to travel with a bunch of heroes, but Elder Anvilsplitter knows the story better. Anyway, after Grom and his friends found a rich deposit of ore nearby, he decided to retire.
- A year ago, some halfling adventurers set out into the Moors. Only two came back, torn and bloody, babbling a tale about a shadow in the night. They stopped to buy some supplies and just kept on running saying the Blackfang was going to get them.
- The axe wielded by the statue of Grom Anvilsplitter was one of the heroes' own weapons. According to legend he found the axe they call Derrobane in the Underdark. The other one, Stonewalker, was fashioned by the hero himself. His grandson now wields it.
- Gromson Anvilsplitter is the Elder's grandson and the best smith in the region
- Those young lads busy climbing the Tooth are bonkers. They spend most of their days braving one mountain top or another. Elder Anvilsplitter allows them their shenanigans because they warned everyone of a band of hill giants trying to find a way into the town a few years ago. Which, I might add, they spotted entirely by accident.