A PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME ADVENTURE FOR LEVELS 8 TO 12

# HALLS OF THE MOUNTAIN-KING



BRANDON HODGE BEN MCFARLAND DAN VOYCE MICHAEL FURLANETTO TIM & EILEEN CONNORS WOLFGANG BAUR

### DEEP UNDER THE MOUNTAIN AN ADVENTURE FOR 8TH TO 12TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Halls of the Mountain King is an homage to all the great delves, from the Mines of Moria on—with a few new twists. The dwarves of the Rygar canton were a hardworking group, mining ever deeper and pursuing ore into dangerous territory. This dungeon goes from a snowy mountaintop spire down through the great halls and works of a vanished clan, and into the depths of the earth.

Rumors of a huge gold strike lured miners and speculators into the mountain, but as winter came, the old mines grew deadly. The passes are snowed in. Airships failed to arrive with supplies. New monsters, a sinister brotherhood, and secrets locked away for centuries all boil to the surface in a series of challenging and original encounters. True heroes adventuring in the Ironcrag peaks will find out whether the easy money is, perhaps, not so easy after all.

17PM2



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### SUMMITS AND DEEPS OF THE IRONCRAG MOUNTAINS



BRANDON HODGE BEN MCFARLAND DAN VOYCE

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Against the Howling City Castles and Clan Lords Curing the Cursed The Agents of Greed

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## INTRODUCTION

### DREAMS OF MORIA

As far as I'm concerned, Tolkien invented the dungeon as we know it. Moria is by far my favorite section of *Lord of the Rings*, with its sense of a great civilization in decline, overrun by orcs, goblins, and the Balrog. A small band makes its way through to the other side against the odds—and the whole thing even starts with a secret door.

Man, I want to spring that adventure on some newbies. But alas, everyone already knows it, so I put forward dwarves, a gold rush, and a title as the starting point of this Open Design project.

Moria is excellent, but it was time for a new take on dwarves under the mountain. Little did I know just how different it would become.

The brainstorms on this project were phenomenal. As usual, you, dear patrons, surprised me with your embrace of some unconventional and even steampunkish elements from the very start.

Brandon Hodge put his Masonic and steampunk mark on this adventure, and yet that approach to the Halls seems so completely right in hindsight. When you think about it for a moment, dwarves are the warrior engineers of fantasy, and they are problem solvers. If anyone is going to ever start an Industrial Revolution it's going to be them.

Fortunately, in Zobeck, Volund is not a fan of mass production or spending too much time at the forge, so dwarves retain a few other characteristics. The other one that seems obvious in hindsight is their greed. I wasn't sure how well Mammon would work out (though I stumped for the evil SOB every chance I got), but greed and lust for wealth makes a much stronger theme than anything else I've seen in dwarven adventures before.

Thank you all for your comments, for your inspiration, and for your faith in this massive project.

And thank you most of all for surprising me with your insight into the heart of the mountain, a bit of territory I thought I knew so well.

Wolfgang Baur Kirkland, WA June 9, 2009



#### LOST MEMORIES



What a shame. There was a lot of RPG history that was haunting the halls of the old Open Design LiveJournal forums. There's a good chance the ghost of one of your favorite designers wandered through at one point or another. I spent my fair share of time there myself, and if you can't bring yourself to blame Wolfgang for letting me into the industry to rattle some chains, blame Adam Daigle.

Adam had been trying to talk me into getting involved with Open Design for a while, and he really started turning the thumbscrews as Halls of the Mountain King got started. He knew I'd played a lot of dwarves in my day, so he worked me hard. "You know what they should do, don't you?" I mused out loud on our drive. "It should be a dwarven citadel that has eaten itself from the inside out. Illuminati-style conspiracy theories. Secret society dwarves." It was his reply that got me: "Don't tell me. Sign up and tell them." It was one of those put-your-moneywhere-your-mouth-is moments, and he had me. So I signed up.

These were the days before Kickstarter, and patrons did more than just kick into the kitty and wait for the finished product. Instead, you paid your dues and everyone collaboratively designed the book from the ground up. You never knew what idea might get blurted out here or there and totally derail the best laid plans. And my very first post ever—in fact, my very first anything in the RPG freelancing world—did just that. Even though we can't revisit those forums, I know it was January 4, 2009 that I made my first post to Open Design, and the date has come to mark my anniversary as an RPG freelancer. And if you don't think I kept a copy, you'd be wrong:

I think the perfect villains are dwarves themselves. Corrupt, Warped, FREEMASON Dwarves. We're talking dwarven priests tuned up to 33 degrees, secret rituals and ruined temples, lots of signs and symbolic glyphs to be deciphered and ancient technology and lingering occult ritual energy to contend with, not to mention the cultists. Some deep, evil stuff long locked away and allowed to fester in its own filth.

There was more, and the post was pretty presumptuous. It was full of swagger borne entirely of naivety, or that enthusiastic confidence found only in the ignorant souls of those who have no idea what they're getting into. By all rights, patrons could have just disregarded a pompous post from the new kid that didn't know beans about freelancing. But it struck a nerve. It struck the right nerve.

I don't believe its overstating things to say that from the germ of that post, Halls of the Mountain King project was irrevocably changed. It didn't stop with those brainstorms. To my shock and amazement, I won the initial pitch round, and before I knew it, I was a paid RPG freelancer. I also received instant one-upmanship capital over my dear friend and incomparable author Richard Pett, who was runner-up that voting round, and who I'll never let live it down. I was hooked, and before the dust settled, I ended up writing a lot more.

It just took one post—one idea—to change everything. And I think that sums up the incredible experience of being a part of Open Design. Everyone got to play ball. One minute it's a Moria tribute, and the next you're elbows-deep in the clandestine manipulations of Illuminati dwarves. You're holding the outcome of those countless hours of amazing patrons collaborations—strange Mammon-worshiping cults, Watership Down-inspired automatons, bizarre puzzles, and dark secrets—and incredible adventures await! What are you waiting for?

> Brandon Hodge Austin, Texas

## THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GOLDEN CITADEL

by Wolfgang Baur & Brandon Hodge

### THE GOLDEN AGE

Long centuries ago, the dwarves of the Ironcrags discovered a rich vein of intermixed gold and mithral on a caldera they called Rygar, or "the high pass." They named the substance orichalcum, and mined plentiful veins of this precious ore, growing wealthy and building a vast set of mines, fortifications, and halls to house a kingdom known as the Golden Citadel. Of all the dwarven cantons, the Golden Citadel prospered and grew fastest. The dwarves carved the runes of the law on the pillars at the gates, they buried their dead in the vast deeps, honed their skills in working metal and stone, and in thanks gave offerings to the Spirit of the Mountain. All was well. For a time.

#### THE COMING OF MAMMON

As these riches flowed down from the Golden Citadel and into the surrounding lands, the arch-devil Mammon took notice. In jealousy, he corrupted the orichalcum of the citadel to carry a disease of greed and avarice to those possessing the ore, thinking that in this way, his corruptive taint could spread throughout the lands below the Ironcrags. In response, the slumbering Spirit of the Mountain awoke. Realizing Mammon's plot, the spirit drew the curse into itself and called out to those who dwelled within. Its deep voice resonated through the stone in warning, even as dwarven priests received strange auguries from Grajava, the Shield Maiden of Volund and patroness of Rygar.

## THE BIRTH OF THE BROTHERHOOD

Few dwarves could discern the voice of the mountain arising from the depths and the warning cries from on high, but a small group of wizards and priests of rare sensitivity heard the distant calls above the din of clanging hammers and bellowing forges in the halls of the Golden Citadel. Those mystics able to detect the resonance of the mountain and the prophecies of Grajava charged themselves with answering the voices and heeding their warnings. The king convened the seers as a special secret council.

The council commissioned the famed dwarven engineer Bartholomeus Lodoviceus to create an artifact, the Golden Bowl. This would enable them to more clearly act as mediums between their peers and the Spirit of the Mountain. Once they established communication, the messages from the Spirit of the Mountain's and Volund's emissaries were clear: the dwarves must cease mining the corrupted orichalcum that had brought so many fabulous riches to their people. Knowing their dwarven brothers would never willingly stop the extraction of the tainted ore, and with the corruption of greed beginning to swell in the hearts of their brethren, the seers used their influence over their people to mislead miners. They guided the miners away from the richest veins of orichalcum, while they bargained with the gold dragon Satarel to take custody of all the corrupt ore they could gather and protect it far away in her secluded hoard. Within a few short years, the wealth and prestige of the Golden Citadel began to wither.

Even as the citadel's fortunes waned, these new leaders among the dwarven people became unparalleled masters of their crafts, taking on apprentices and students. Guided by the Angels of Volund, and convinced that the morals and parables learned by all dwarves at work in the forge were the purest tenets by which dwarves could live, the seers soon rose in prominence and prestige. Their followers became a brotherhood seeking enlightenment and illumination from the founding masters. The group met regularly in assemblies called lodges, adding quasi-religious rituals and rites to its proceedings and initiations. Later masters began to call the founding mystics "the Old Masters."

## THE FALL OF THE GOLDEN CITADEL

The power of this new Illuminated Brotherhood successfully halted the spread of the corrupted gold, although the once-rich halls of the Golden Citadel now stood largely empty, with the exception of the aging Old Masters, their followers, and desperate dwarven prospectors. The call of the corrupted ore was great, however, and soon miners discovered previously disguised veins of ore and greedily dug them from the mountain.

As word of the renewed riches spread, great hordes of dwarves descended upon the quiet halls, refusing to heed the authority of the Old Masters. With the threat of the spread of orichalcum too great, the masters made the fateful decision to forever bar the gates and close off the lower mines from all intrusion. The masters gave warning, even as Bartholomeus crafted the impenetrable gates that would seal the Great Stair and lower holds. Those already fallen prey to avarice did not heed the warnings, and so their doom was sealed. In a great ceremony, the Old Masters used a powerful ritual of flaming stone pillars, books of arcane formulas, and golden sacrifices to forever lock the clockwork gates.

When the dwarves' diseased, tainted cousins dug their way to the surface, the Illuminated Brotherhood slew them in great numbers, or sent Satarel to drive them back below the earth. In time, the fallen brethren of the dwarves no longer cared to seek the light, but lived only among the bones of the earth, nursing their hate and following the call of strange gods toward madness.

#### THE ANGEL OF GRAJAVA

To prevent further bloodshed, Grajava herself offered a relic—a teardrop-shaped gem—that would purge the taint of Mammon from the mountain if sacrificed. With the slaughter already finished and the guilt of the act weighing heavily on the Old Masters, they chose to preserve the gem in the event that history repeated these unfortunate events. Some say that Grajava had proclaimed that her precious gift was only to be used if the tainted ore directly threated dwarven lives, which was not the case by the time the jewel was finally given to the Brotherhood. Others claimed that the sight of the massive sapphire enflamed the old masters with covetous greed, and they could not bring themselves to order its destruction.

A few in the brotherhood whisper that the old masters feared that the terrible secret of their betrayal of the diseased miners would come to light if the gem was used and the citadel restored. In any event, the power of the sapphire could not restore the forsaken and so the old masters placed the holy relic in a sacred shrine christened the Eye of Grajava and set guardians provided by the Spirit of the Mountain.

To prevent Mammonites from stealing the Teardrop, the Old Masters devised chambers of tests, known as the Sanctum of Assaying, to protect the entrance to the Eye.

By then, the Old Masters were infirm, and their followers sought to preserve them. Again the brotherhood called on the master craftsman Bartholomeus. He then crafted a set of six clockwork bodies to house the departing souls of the Old Masters so they might escape the mantle of death. Volund guided their souls into these new bodies, and each clockwork creation held the physical incarnation of a secret of the Brotherhood, so a record of the society's most precious secrets might always exist.

As centuries passed, the Illuminated Brotherhood fashioned the mountain into a reflection of its moral code and values, while protecting the shameful secrets of its history behind a series of slow revelations within itssociety. Small groups were eventually established in other dwarven communities, spreading their craft while at the same time gathering any corrupt ore that managed to previously make its way into the larger world—their hidden arts could tell fair ore from foul. The Old Masters succumbed to senility as the ages passed, and a new order took on their roles, locking away all but one. The symbols of their great crime against their dwarven brethren eventually formed the foundation of the esoteric symbolism of the Illuminated Brotherhood, while only those of the highest degree of enlightenment became aware of the true meaning.

Eventually, the Golden Citadel was abandoned.

#### THE PALADIN OF KHORS

One day, about a year ago, a human paladin of the sun god Khors returned to Zobeck. His warhorse was dead, his fingers frostbitten, and his eyes haunted by the loss of all his companions. In one hand, he clutched the straps of a bridle. In the other, he held a nugget of gold as big as his fist.

The paladin, Sir Ronceval by name, gave the gold to the Order of Undying Light for the relief of the poor, so prayers might be said for his fallen companions.

The story came out slowly: he and his allies went to investigate an abandoned dwarven citadel perched atop a smoldering caldera, and there they found the nugget. Perhaps, thought the paladin, gold returned to that oncerich mine or, better still, the paladin had discovered a new mother lode. And was not Khors the son of Volund?

Surely this was an omen from the divine.

#### THE GOLD RUSH

The rush to the Ironcrags was on, led first and foremost by the Many-Bearded Elder Madka Podpora, the high priestess of Volund in Zobeck. Donkey trains led dwarven expeditions many miles to stake their claims, and along with them came secret members and elders of the Illuminated Brotherhood. They did not go alone: hundreds of human miners and entire kobold mining gangs put their picks into oxcarts and set off for the western ranges.

They were not disappointed. Word filtered back of great volumes of gold, and the first shipment arrived at midsummer. The Golden Citadel would be restored! The Many-Bearded Elder declared the dwarven claim to its gold was secure and warned others not to trespass on their ancient privileges.

And yet, the lust for gold drove hundreds, perhaps even thousands, into the mountains. Merchants sent food and supplies after them, until the harvest season, when the first great storm blew in and snowed in the passes. Later travelers reported bitter cold and snows deeper than a man on horseback could ride through.

Since then, communication became sporadic, as a few daredevil airship captains braved the winter weather and mountain winds to bring news down and supplies up. Some miners starved, they say. Others report dangers on the roads and along the ridges: Ogres, bandits, werebears, and even ghouls and wights are said to rob or murder travelers on the road. Some consider these a travelers' tall tales, but just the same, no sane man travels the Ironcrag passes until summer.

#### WINTER IN THE HIGH PASSES

And now, a group of adventurers becomes involved in this tale of greed and dangerous riches. The resupply airship *Drake* is several weeks overdue and a magical message from the trapped inhabitants reports that the halls have turned dangerous: the Many-Bearded Elder murdered, dozens inflicted with a mysterious illness, and hundreds starving. The spring thaw is not expected for weeks, possibly more than a month, but a small group of selfless adventurers might take one of the last available airships to see the Golden Citadel for themselves and aid the trapped and desperate miners.

### MAJOR NPCS AND GROUPS

The PCs have the ability to meet, interact with, and aid the various groups fighting in a dwarven mountain citadel to possess, amass, abandon, or cleanse devilcorrupted gold.

#### THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN

**Description:** Faceless spirit that possesses and inhabits the mountain. Has an affinity for the dwarves who long ago gave it thanks for all the Mountain provided them. **Goal:** To contain the gold, even at the cost of lives. While it thinks of itself as a benevolent force saving the world from the taint, The Spirit of the Mountain is actually now a corrupted spirit who wants the gold for itself.

#### ILLUMINATED BROTHERS

**Description:** Dwarven Freemason types who know that corrupted gold exists, and whose forefathers purposely guided the dwarves away from the richest (corrupted) vein and sealed diehard dwarven miners (the "forsaken") in the mountain.

**Goal:** To cause everyone to abandon the gold, even at the cost of lives, because they know the effect the gold's corruption would have on the world, and to stop the Mammonites from ushering into the world an aspect of Mammon.

#### The Forsaken

**Description:** Originally dwarves who the Illuminated Brothers sealed in the mountain years ago, As a result, they are degenerate and insane. Also known as the derro. **Goal:** To kill dwarves and generally follow insane paths.

#### REFUGEES

**Description:** Human, dwarf, and kobold gold rushers and their suppliers trapped in the mountain by a winter storm. **Goal:** To escape the mountain and, preferably, take the gold with them.

#### MAMMONITES

**Description:** Agents of Mammon. **Goal:** To amass the gold into a pile big enough to usher into the world an aspect of Mammon.

#### THE GOLD DRAGON

Description: Satarel the gold dragon long ago helped the Illuminated Brotherhood seal the Forsaken in the mountain. She guarded an off-site pile of corrupted gold for ages, but she recently handed off the responsibility to her daughter, Bragollach. Bragollach is not corrupted but is very tempted and, by this point, very greedy.
Goal: Find out about more gold in mountain. Initially, inner struggle to either destroy or cleanse the remaining gold or possess the gold to "guard it as well."

After Mammonites pour molten corruption down Bragollach's throat, her goal becomes the same as the Mammonites: to fetch her treasure to amass all the gold into a pile big enough to usher into the world an aspect of Mammon.

#### CHAPTER ONE



## DARK WAS THE NIGHT, COLD WAS THE GROUND

by Brandon Hodge

Wealth, like withering fruit, became worthless when there was nothing left on which to spend it. Only with the onset of winter did we realize that gold—though we mined more than we could carry, could not be eaten...

Nearly two weeks ago, Albricius Everart returned to the Free City of Zobeck from the ruins of the Golden Citadel, high in the Ironcrag Peaks. While harbored there during the onset of a cruel winter, Albricius uncovered two ancient pillars in the secret storeroom of a dwarven inventor. The pillars contained the ancient schematics for the creation of a remarkable being. The designs were of a clockwork body, constructed ages ago to house the soul of a dying founder of a secret dwarven society know as the Illuminated Brotherhood.

Albricius knew the Brotherhood well—they were his enemies. He served the cult of the arch-devil Mammon that was slowly taking control of the dwarven fortress. The schematics in the pillars tempted the greedy Mammonite, as the creator had incorporated some cryptic knowledge into the gears and carapaces of the clockwork. Most importantly, Albricius recognized the designs of the creature chiseled into the hard marble of the pillar as the famous clockwork dwarf known as Rabscuttle, whom he knew to reside in Zobeck.

Desperate to return to the city and possess the secrets of Rabscuttle's clockwork body, Albricius booked passage aboard the supply airship *Drake* with two sympathetic Mammonites. During the journey, the cultists discovered the ship carried a heavy cargo of orichalcum, a corrupted gold ore precious to their unholy deity. The three conspired to poison the crew so that the cargo might be returned to the Golden Citadel. After this foul deed was accomplished, Albricius reconsidered sharing the secrets he carried, and so he murdered his collaborators before trekking back to civilization.

Albricius has spent the last several days locating and trailing Rabscuttle, who now works as an employee of the Splitrock Company. The doddering old gearforged is a fixture of the Gear District, running erroneous errands and delivering improper invoices for as long as anyone can remember. Albricius trapped the clockwork dwarf on the dark, winter streets of Zobeck. He hired three cultists

-From the journal of Jeraldi Hamhock, Ironcrag survivor

to steal away Rabscuttle's body and pry loose the secrets concealed in its gears and pulleys. The PCs become involved just as the cultists begin their grisly work.

#### Adventure Summary

In Zobeck, the characters rescue the gilded gearforged Rabscuttle from a group of Mammonite cultists. The rescue leads his grateful friends and company to hire the adventurers to take supplies to the struggling Golden Citadel via airship. On the journey to the citadel, several encounters raise suspicions that someone is sabotaging the resupply mission.

The PCs investigate the wreck of a gold-laden airship with a murdered crew, and a dwarf crewman tries to sabotage their own ship before they can arrive at their destination. Clues point to occult conspiracies between a group of Mammon worshipers and an opposed fraternity of dwarven craftsmen who are at odds over this ore.

The crew begins showing strange signs of illness similar to those found on the bodies of a derelict vessel (see page 26). Feverish, confused, and attacked by a giant, the crew crashes the wounded airship at the gates of the citadel. The player characters enter the fortress and find a large population of starving, sick, and freezing refugees splintered into many opposed camps and factions, some of whom have suffered abductions and disappearances.

As the PCs and the survivors of the crash enter this mining camp's society and debate ways to abandon the peak, a crewman goes missing and a set of sealed clockwork gates to the lower hold are destroyed. The PCs investigate and find a bizarre, ritualistic murder scene and evidence that the perpetrator was their sick shipmate, in the form of a golden wyrm. As the mystery deepens, a raiding party of stunted, mutated dwarves swarm out of the sundered gates, attacking the characters in a mad fury. This threat from below is momentarily deterred, but the surviving refugees need healing, food, and warmth, and larger dangers loom in the dark halls beneath.

#### PART I: NOT A SERVANT SO FAITHFUL HE FOUND

Halls of the Mountain-King begins on the frozen streets of Zobeck during a harsh winter that has shut down commerce and forced the citizenry to eke out a miserably cold existence. The PCs roam the dark, iced-over streets of nighttime Zobeck seeking warmth and shelter from the incessant, driving sleet. They then stumble into an unpredictable chain of events.

Rumors and stories of the recent gold rush have spread quickly through the city's taverns and inns. Whether the characters are just arriving in town or have been here for some time, allow them to catch up with recent events with a Knowledge (Local) Check:

#### TABLE 1-1: RECENT EVENTS

#### DC Knowledge (local)

14 Ever since Sir Ronceval returned to Zobeck clutching a king's ransom in one fistful of gold, settlers have been pouring into the Ironcrags from the city, trying to strike it rich quick. Before the winter storms blew in, many miners returned with pockets laden with gold.

Many more did not return, and dark rumors hint of the desperate measures those trapped in the Ironcrags take to survive. Deceit. Murder. Even cannibalism.

- 19 The only way to bring aid to the stranded refugees is by airship, and the news from the survivors was positive until the airship Drake failed to return several weeks ago. Another desperate expedition is being mounted, but hopes are not high. As difficult as it is to stay warm and find food in the city during this horrendous winter, many citizens of Zobeck have already assumed their relatives and loved ones trapped in the mountains are dead. Others cling to hope, knowing the Golden Citadel might provide refuge.
- 24 Many merchants of Zobeck have reported delirious, feverish customers are attacking peddlers and shopkeepers in the marketplaces in disputes over refunds for wildly outrageous claims, demanding their money back. Merchants say that some longtime loyal customers are the culprits, many of whom recently returned from the Ironcrags with more wealth than they could ever hope to spend. Some call it a plague of avarice.

#### **ENGAGING THE PLAYERS**

Most players want to care about the victims and hate the villains of an adventure. Consider introducing Clovis and Rabscuttle early to allow the adventurers to get to know the characters, and maybe even owe them a favor. Perhaps Clovis ferries them to Zobeck on a riverboat (after all, the *Manticore* and *Drake* need not be the only craft the Splitrock company owns), which allow the group to get to know Rabscuttle and his wacky ways as well.

If a GM knows he or she is going to run *Halls of the Mountain-King* later, introducing characters and rumors about the gold rush is a powerful technique. Furthermore, having NPCs known and liked by the party going to the Golden Citadel as part of the gold rush really makes the situation more emotionally powerful to players.

#### IT RANG IN ALARM In The Dead Of Night (el 11)

As the PCs trudge through the dark streets, emphasize the miserable weather conditions and frozen rains.

Through the penetrating cold and driving, frozen sleet, a deep hum resonates briefly along the dimly lit, empty street. It rises quickly and ends in a low, relatively quiet implosion. From an alley ahead, a metallic voice screeches in terrible pain, while several rough voices shout out, punctuated by dull, repetitive thuds.

A DC 22 Spellcraft check identifies the disquiet as a *clockwork curse* spell (see new spells, below). The spell disrupted Rabscuttle's (LN gearforged expert 7) moving parts, immobilizing him in a dark alley about 30 feet away. Any decent illumination reveals several golden gears scattered at the entrance to an alley nearby. A few moments later, the air is pierced with more sounds of violent struggle and strange metallic cries pleading for help.

When the PCs investigate, they see three hooded men assaulting a battered, immobile clockwork construct of rich gilding and antique design. Wielding stiff iron bars and wearing leering, distorted copper masks, they are prying the dwarf-like creature apart, scattering golden gears and flywheels. One of the men holds a dim lantern and sputters croaking commands in Dwarvish to the others between bouts of coughing. The hooded figures continue tearing and ripping at the helpless gearforged, who screams in great, agonizing wails.

The assault takes place near the far side of a dead-end alley 15 feet wide and 60 feet deep, abutted by shuttered, empty shops and homes. One cultist stands 25 feet from the back, between the approaching characters and the struggle. Unless the PCs attempt to quiet their actions, the cultists



turn to protect their prize. The intervening cultist shines his bullseye lantern at the approaching PCs. If the party is not carrying a light source, PCs are dazzled for 1d4 rounds (DC 15 Fort save negates). The area behind the cultist is plunged into darkness while he gives the interlopers a single warning as the others prepare spells to attack.

**Environment:** The alley is choked with trash and slick with ice. The weather is sleet (per the core rules). The cultist's bullseye lantern has a 25% chance of being extinguished each round, plunging the alley into darkness if no other light source exists.

#### Mammon Cultist

#### CR 8

Male Human cleric 8/rogue 1 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +6; Senses Perception +4 DEFENSE AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex) hp 64 (9d8+18) Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +10 OFFENSE Spd 20 ft. Ranged dart +8/+3 (1d4/x2) Melee light mace +8/+3 (1d6/x2) Special Attacks scythe of evil for 4 rounds, 1/day, sneak attack +1d6 Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 8th, +6 melee touch, +8 ranged touch): 4th—cure critical wounds (DC 18), divine power, images of great wealth (DC 18), rainbow pattern (DC 18), unholy blight (DC 18), 3rd-bestow curse (DC 17), blindness/deafness (DC 17), glyph of warding (DC 17) (already cast on purse), inflict serious wounds (DC 17), protection from energy 2nd— clockwork curse (DC 16) (already cast), cure moderate wounds (DC 16), hold person (DC 16), hypnotize (DC 16), owl's wisdom (already cast) 1st-bless, command (DC 15)cure light wounds (DC 15), entropic shield (DC 15), protection from good (already cast), sanctuary (DC 15) 0 (at will)—detect magic, read magic, light, stabilize STATISTICS Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 19, Cha 8 Base Atk +6; CMB +6 (+12 Disarming); **CMD** 18 (20 vs. Disarm) Feats Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +7, Climb -3, Diplomacy +11,

Escape Artist +3, Fly -1, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Ride -1, Sense Motive +9,

SQ aura (Ex), cleric channel negative energy 4d6 (2/day)

hell's corruption (4 rounds) (7/day) (Su), spontaneous

(DC 13) (Su), devil, envy variant channeling (±2 Profane),

Spellcraft +8, Stealth +9, Swim -3

Languages Common, Infernal

casting, trapfinding +1

**Combat** darts (12), *potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll of obscuring mist*, blue whinnis poison (1 dose); **Other Gear** light mace, masterwork breastplate, *boots of the winterlands, bag of holding I* (containing 500 gp), *coin of the miser (copper)*, copper mask of Mammon, holy symbol of Mammon, 100 gp

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura (Ex) The cultists have auras of evil and law.

**Cleric Channel Negative Energy (Su)** 4d6 (2/day) (DC 13), The cultist can channel negative energy to injure the living and heal the undead.

#### Combat

**Scythe of Evil (Su)** for 4 rounds, 1/day. A melee weapon you are holding becomes unholy.

#### **Tactics**

- **Before Combat** Spells cast in preparation for the ambush are marked and included in the stat block.
- **During Combat** As the PCs approach, the cultists abandon Rabscuttle and turn their efforts against the characters, concentrating on disarming and disabling the characters with *blindness, bestow curse, unholy blight*, and *hold person* spells. The cultists hope to discourage the rescuers so they can flee with the body of Rabscuttle. The cultists attempt to flank if forced into melee.
- **Morale** Cornered, the cultists fight to the death if they must, but flee if they can. If interrogated, the cultists reveal only that they were hired by a man named Albricius to abduct the clockwork for his golden plates, and know nothing else of the matter. They were paid well for their trouble.

#### **Clockwork Curse**

School Clockwork (evocation) Level: Cleric 2, Sorceror/Wizard 2 Casting time 1 standard action Components V,S Range Close (25 ft. +5ft. / 2 levels) Target One construct or clockwork being Duration Instantaneous Saving Throw None; Spell Resistance yes

An invisible force rips gears and sheets of plating from a construct or clockwork creature, doing 1d8 hp damage + 1 per 2 caster levels.

#### The Grandfather Clockwork

The ruined mess of the gearforged lies still in the rear of the alley, his parts mixed with trash. Despite his battered condition, he is alert, and the clockwork dwarf coos with each delicate gear and engraved flywheel recovered from the alleyway, admiring each piece of himself in wide-eyed, childlike amazement as if hypnotized. He seems oblivious to the fact that the parts even belong to him, and doesn't seem in pain or even distraught now that the attack is over. He is immobile without aid, and someone well versed in his construction is required to put the poor creature back together.

The unusual clockwork dwarf is badly wounded and can't move. Healing spells are fruitless, as so many of his scattered parts are missing that he is treated as unwound: immobile until repaired, a process that takes 4 hours (Zobeck Gazetteer 26) by someone trained in Craft (clockwork). Helpless without aid, the clockwork suddenly seems to sharpen his focus, and recognizes that he is gravely injured; it asks the characters to gather his strewn parts, but seems to have trouble recalling just where he belongs. A DC 15 Perception check successfully gathers up all of his gears and uncovers a courier satchel containing invoices and passage requests Rabscuttle was delivering for Splitrock Company. Rabscuttle remembers that the company is located in the Gear District near the Steamworker's Union, and can offer a 50 gp reward if the PCs simply carry him home.

Rabscuttle offers no explanation for the attack, merely stating that he was delivering documents to a customer and was lured into the alley by his friends.

The PCs may learn the name of Albricius Everart from the satchel's denial-of-passage contract, but if they investigate the nearby address listed, they discover an empty, uninhabited room adjacent to the alley where the attempted abduction took place. Albricius watched the failed abduction from nearby and, a coward at heart, could not bring himself to intervene. He fled the scene in fear without confrontation and hopes to claim his prize another time.

#### TICK, TOCK THEY WAIT AT THE DOCK

When the PCs head for the warehouse district to return Rabscuttle to his rightful owners, read or paraphrase the following:

With street lamps fighting a losing battle against the damp fog and chill of winter, the warehouses of Splitrock Company begin to stubbornly come into focus. In the central courtyard, an impressive wooden galleon hovers some 20 feet from the ground, held aloft by a series of cables and ropes tethered to a massive conical balloon as large as the galleon itself. The warehouses are a hive of frenzied activity. In every direction, dwarves hustle back and forth, sweating heavily despite the chill, loading large crates onto substantial wooden ramps and hoisting items via pulleys toward the cargo hold of the ship.

If the characters approach the docks with the body of Rabscuttle, several shirtless, tattooed dwarves stop in their tracks and stare in disbelief, their mouths agape. Without averting their gaze from the eyes of the characters or moving to assist, one dockworker lets out a shrill whistle. Moments later, a burly dwarven foreman



steps from the fog and lowers a folder of manifests, his eyes widening in disbelief.

#### CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN

Clovis Stonethrower (LG dwarf fighter 6) is both one of the owners of Splitrock Company and captain of the *Manticore*—the weathered airship currently being outfitted. He recently lost most of his company stake to a new senior partner, but has contented himself as dock foreman and ship captain for the company regardless.

Clovis is a proud, stout dwarf, but carries the burden of his past failures, especially the recent loss of the Drake, heavy on his shoulders. His slate blue eyes often display a resigned hesitation to take the chances he might have in his youth, and his brown beard and unkempt hair show a few more gray streaks than they should. Clovis is a talented pilot and navigator, and cares deeply for his ship and crew.

As Clovis questions the PCs on exactly how they came to rescue Rabscuttle, a gruff company doctor called Sawbones arrives and manhandles the clockwork. After a brief inspection, Sawbones assures those present that "The old boy will be rewound and causing trouble again in no time." Rabscuttle happily yaps away during the examination, just as naïve and oblivious as when the characters found him.

Clovis then turns to the PCs and says, "Thank you for coming to the aid of my old boy Rabscuttle here. You know, he's been here in the city with my family for many years—way back when we dwarves locked up the citadel when the veins ran dry. He's old even by dwarven standards. Wasn't anything like him 'til those other gearforged came along during the Revolt.

For the longest time we had clockwork mages and wizards poking and prodding him, trying to figure him out. Well, I ran them off, but before you knew it that Orlando fellow announced he 'invented' the gearforged. Well, I beg

#### TECHNOLOGY LEVELS AND CAMPAIGN FLAVOR

Many campaigns do not use clockwork magic and airships as found in the Zobeck campaign setting, and many GMs might shy away from such content. To suit the needs of your playing style, you can make a few changes.

The modified aerial galleons, as presented in this adventure, could be considered exceptional, prototype examples of desperate dwarven engineering to save their kin. As neither vessel survives the adventure, the status quo of your campaign's flavor is easily retained.

If gearforged are not prevalent, then again, Rabscuttle is an easy exception—an ancient construct of retained intelligence—hardly a stretch in a fantasy world where golems are common. to differ! Another fortune we Stonethrowers got cheated out of! And, speaking of fortunes—it's high time we talk about some proper compensation for your troubles."

Clovis's dying clan has long cared for the venerable, senile old gearforged. Observing the rambling clockwork dwarf, the captain sheepishly observes, "His watch might be wound, but it ain't keeping time." The mechanical marvel is his valued advisor, servant, and friend, though, and he is quick to defend Rabscuttle's dignity.

If the characters voice suspicions about Rabscuttle's abduction, Clovis claims the greedy men were out for revenge after he denied them passage to the citadel or were simply after Rabscuttle's valuable parts, noting that the clockwork is rather eccentric and not as well-made as newer gearforged constructs.

Rabscuttle has, after all, been in his family for centuries. "No time to worry about that now anyhow. We've got to get this old bird up and away. Say, you wouldn't be looking for a job, would ya'?"

Clovis invites the characters "into the warm belly of Splitrock" for a drink to stave off the cold, and to discuss some form of proper compensation for the PCs' deeds. Clovis becomes more and more impressed by the story of Rabscuttle's rescue. Since he is short on daring adventurers to protect his precious cargo during shipment, he offers the party a rich payment in return for "an investment of your time and energy" as escort for the *Manticore* on its trip to the Golden Citadel and back. He offers 5% of the total profits of the venture, which he thinks should be a substantial amount—an estimated 4,000 gold for the group—in exchange for a little guard duty.

The dwarf leans in close and whispers: "You've heard the tales of those settlers. We all have. They struck it rich up there, but they didn't prepare. Snowed in, you see? Worst in decades. Desperate. Dying. They're rich, but they can't eat gold! They'll pay whatever we ask, but we'll be fair and honest about it, and do a good deed to boot! We'll take the risk, and the reward!

"I'm sure you're familiar with the line of work, by the looks of you. We'll need you to protect the freight while the crew handles the flying. Usual stuff— rogue griffons, occasional giants, big birds -nothing a stout bunch like yourselves couldn't handle. We'll feed you and get you there and back safe, if you'll do the same for us. Besides, I think Rabscuttle likes you folks."

If the PCs agree to the terms, Clovis is thrilled and shakes their hands roughly, promising contracts in hand by morning if the party can be prepared to leave the following afternoon. He offers shelter in the company boarding house, which is quite accommodating, if not a little threadbare and rundown.

The following morning is a flurry of activity around the airship, and Clovis wakes the characters early with a fresh pot of some stout concoction. He encourages those who have any last-minute affairs to please attend to them promptly, and he puts the rest to work packing crates and loading cargo for the arduous journey. Early that



afternoon, with a meager crowd of onlookers braving the cold to see the ship off, the *Manticore* drops ballasts and begins the long journey into the Ironcrags.

### PART II: THE MANTICORE

Allow the characters to get acquainted with the curious and dynamic crew that operates the Manticore for the first couple days to set a rhythm (see A Day in the Life for more information). On account of unfavorable winds and the horrible weather, the journey takes one week, so the characters should experience the lively, chaotic life aboard the ship without forgetting the miserable weather and desperation to rescue the settlers before they starve. Clovis, Guigo, or even Rabscuttle should give the party a complete tour of the vessel and assign the PCs their rooms (Cargo Deck, Rooms 10 and 11). The ship is an old oceangoing vessel specially retrofitted for flight, lending a bit of familiarity to those accustomed to life at sea.

Fire of any type outside of the engine furnace is forbidden, and lamps with *continual flame* are used throughout the ship. An ever-present rumbling resonance comes from the steam engine that powers the vessel from the lowest deck of the ship.

#### A DAY IN THE LIFE

A typical day aboard the Manticore begins two hours before sunrise. In the dull gray of morning, the crew rises and takes breakfast in the mess—usually a thick porridge heated over the engine boilers by Guigo and a bitterly strong invigorating brew of tar-like consistency.

The furnace is then stoked and the gas bags filled, having been lowered in the evening to stabilize the ship's mooring. The lethargic crew chips accumulated ice from the ship's rails and spreads sand on the decks to provide sure footing. Ropes are secured, sails unfurled, and steering fins deployed as the Manticore and her crew comes back to life.

The PCs are assigned watch duty, two at a time throughout the day, primarily on the lookout for rocs and hungry griffons. A well-maintained ballista is mounted on the front forecastle to combat such intrusions, while three *potions of enlarge person* are openly stashed nearby to assist users in her operation. Lunch is taken on the hoof when Boso prepares sausage, chicken, or other simple foods easily consumed while working aloft.

The ship is anchored using ropes around an enormous boulder before sunset, as nighttime navigation is treacherous. Once the Manticore is properly moored, the crew takes a more complete meal of a spicy boar stew and coarse bread, afterward indulging in some robust camaraderie, gambling, and strong drink, before heading into the lower deck to sleep for a few hours before beginning the journey anew. Clovis requires at least one PC be on guard duty during these evening hours. A single dwarf crewman, usually Guigo or Otto, keeps the night watchman company. Clovis instructs the night guards to watch carefully from the deck for the distant fires of giant camps and listen for the particular cries of rocs and griffons, which have been known to attack at night when food is scarce.

#### CREW MEMBERS

Besides Clovis and Rabscuttle, 10 crew members currently serve on the Manticore, including two mates, a ship surgeon and the owner of Splitrock Company— Vianna Geldenhoff. Interactions with the crew should be lively in order to establish a firm emotional connection to losses suffered later. Rabscuttle should be inserted discreetly in these interactions in an effort to downplay his importance somewhat and take some of the emphasis off of the gearforged until his part in the story returns. The crew consists of the following colorful members:

Zangen Billens (LN male dwarf warrior 4): Proud, stoic, and rarely seen without his sooty mask, Zangen is the ship's engineer. He stokes the furnaces, primes the boiler, and sees to the overall safety of the complicated engines that fill the gas bladders and power the propeller.

**Bjorn "Sawbones" Burkhardt** (LN male dwarf cleric 6): "Sawbones" is the gray-haired, hardnosed surgeon of the Manticore, responsible for the health of her crew and passengers. Dour, short tempered, and aggressive, Sawbones often refuses to tend crewmen who are injured as the result of careless accidents. He says the suffering of such unfortunates helps prevent further incidents. Sawbones possesses an impressive reservoir of healing magic and is a skilled brewer and scribe, although he uses his Healing skill (+13) to tend most patients without spells. He remains a cleric undevoted to a single deity, as he has his entire life. His domains are Healing and Repose. Sawbones typically prepares:

3rd—cure serious wounds, remove blindness/deafness, remove disease

2nd—calm emotions, cure moderate wounds, delay poison, lesser restoration, remove paralysis

1st—cure light wounds (x2), deathwatch, protection from evil, remove fear

0— create water, guidance, mending, stabilize

In addition, Sawbones provides the characters with alchemical pills that alleviate the effects of high altitude. A creature who consumes a single pill becomes acclimated to altitudes as if it lived at high altitude for a month. **Giroldus Felsenfaust** (LN male dwarf expert 5): A shock of white-blonde hair and beard distinguish the helmsman, whose main responsibility is the piloting and steering of the vessel.

**Ansgar Flintknapper** (LN male dwarf wizard 5/ Illuminated Brother, Rite of Most Worthy Esoterics 3/ Silent Master 1): Taciturn, gruff, and entirely unfriendly, Ansgar does not speak at all. He seems to have little trouble communicating through perpetual sneers and scowls that he'd rather just be left alone to do his job as he mans the rigging and stokes the boilers.

There is no indication of his true nature as a secret member of the Illuminated Brotherhood or as a Silent Master of that group. His plans and motivations are outlined in the Sabotage section (page 27).

Vianna Geldenhoff (LG female young gold dragon, disguised as dwarf expert 6): Most recognizable by her monocle and dreadlocked blonde hair, Vianna is the kind yet professional new owner of Splitrock and has the ignoble job of company accountant, spending most of her days tracking inventory and cataloging revenue. The shortage of company workers has brought the normally reclusive dwarf here, and she is somewhat distant from the resentful crew (a few of the older dwarves consider it unlucky to have a woman aboard—the younger ones seem to want to court her). Vianna usually seems distracted and slightly perturbed. She wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.

#### VIANNA'S SECRET

When the gold rush started, a young gold dragon by the name of Bragollach had recently assumed her mother's role of protecting an ancient quarantined hoard of corrupted gold. Contacting Silent Master Bradobaraxas of the Illuminated Brotherhood, the two agreed that the dragon, with the help of an acquired shipping company, would supply the citadel with food and equipment, taking the corrupt ore back to the protective hoard.

Bragollach, disguised as the merchant Vianna Geldenhoff, then bought out the Splitrock Company, using their two airships to transport the corrupted gold from the Citadel and into hiding. There is some animosity between Vianna and Clovis, as he has yet to see the payoff of these resupply missions. Bragollach is quick to dismiss the accusations of paying off creditors and conceals the whereabouts of the gold through complicated bookkeeping. She is unaware that the Mammonites, through the spying of Matheus, know both her true identity and of her presence aboard the Manticore. **Boso Hammerfall** (LG male dwarf expert 4): Lively and humorous, the rigsman Boso usually has a bawdy joke to share when the captain is not within earshot. He acts as the midday and evening mate.

**Guigo Ironglove** (LG male dwarf bard 4): Guigo is entertaining and charismatic, beloved by all who meet him for his colorful language and inspiring collection of shanties. That he is missing an eye, a hand, and a leg from an unfortunate griffon attack doesn't seem to dampen his spirits as morning mate and night watchman.

**Otto Motzger** (LG male dwarf warrior 3): More ape than dwarf and ugly beyond measure, this lovable oaf spends his days climbing the rigging of the airship and hollering insults at the crew below. Immensely strong, he frequently shows off "Matta" and "Pompilina," his two named and tattooed biceps.

**Rabscuttle:** Rabscuttle is an ever-present personality aboard the Manticore, who often finds himself in the way of operations. The crew accepts the interferences as a fact of life and regard the old clockwork with the utmost respect. To add flavor to the characters' interactions with the gearforged, liberally use the Rabscuttle Interactions table.

Matheus Segelnetz (LE male dwarf cleric 4): Matheus is slender, tall, and wiry for a dwarf, recently hired on an earlier Golden Citadel journey to work a return trip as a carpenter and a rope and sail mender. No one suspects that he is a even a cleric, much less that he is a Mammonite cultist sent to spy on Vianna. He is the only person in the company aware of the owner's true nature.

**Brill Stamper** (LG male human expert 5): A salty and coarse former seaman, Brill spends most of his idle minutes reminiscing about his three lovely young daughters. The rest of his hours are spent cursing their mother for taking them from him.

**Mykrin Understone** (LN male dwarf warrior 4): Horribly scarred, terribly tattooed, and entirely toothless, with a patchwork of wiry tufts for a beard, Mykrin is never without his two trusty handaxes, "Olga" and "Bromhilda." Myrkin is disdainful of magic users, whom he refers to as "bazzakers." (a dwarven slur for arcanists and foolish magery generally).

**Brunerius Weitesland** (LN male dwarf expert 4): Exceptionally neat and tidy, Brunerius constantly bellows at the entire crew whenever anything is out of place or disorderly. His days are a flurry of cleaning and straightening.

#### **RABSCUTTLE INTERACTIONS**

Once per watch shift or whenever the PCs directly interact with Rabscuttle, roll 1d6 and consult the table. Feel free to repeat results, as it only adds to the surreal nature of dealing with a centuries-old senile clockwork dwarf.

Anytime Rabscuttle is aided closely, such as in results 2 and 4, allow the characters a DC 25 Perception check to notice the tiny, intricate engravings embossed on his gears, parts and plates, heavily worn by time. A DC 35

check hints that the symbols are instructions of some sort, but not even magic reveals their true meaning—*legend lore* reveals them as secret dwarven language, but not their meaning. A DC 30 Linguistics check reveals what seem to be directions to a location, although they are rife with esoteric symbolism and are contradictory and indecipherable in their current configuration. Clovis dismisses the markings as "decorations of a bygone era."

Roll	Result
1	Rabscuttle suddenly recognizes the characters as his saviors in the alleyway, falling all over himself to thank them for their aid and offering his services in exchange for their heroics. Suddenly coherent, he follows the characters around in admiration for the next several hours, trying to assist them, resulting in a $-4$ penalty on skill checks attempted during this time.
2	Rabscuttle approaches the characters with the slurried remains of one of the leftover crew meals clogged in the gears and pulleys of his face and upper torso. He sheepishly explains that he was hungry and felt compelled to eat. A DC 12 Disable Device check cleans the mess from his gears and cogs.
3	Rabscuttle suddenly mistakes the PC least like Clovis (such as a female or wizard) as the captain himself and addresses the character as such. He acts as if he has not seen his master in years. He tells embarrassing stories of incidents of Clovis's youth, such as wetting the bed or crying at the sight of his first elf.
4	A strange noise late one night in the galley reveals that Rabscuttle dismantled a large portion of his torso and is minutely examining his own scattered parts, cooing in wide-eyed, wondrous amazement over each one. Oblivious to the great harm he has inflicted, he proudly shows off his constituent components, which take four hours to replace with the Craft (clockwork) skill.
5	Rabscuttle suddenly scurries around the deck, grabbing and pawing at everyone's money pouches or bags, jingling the coins within. He cries out, "The ship's weighed down! We've got to gain speed! Everyone throw your gold overboard!"
6	One at a time, Rabscuttle bolts ahead of the characters and pantomimes opening a door for them to walk through, continuing this action for several minutes as the PCs work. Abruptly, he "slams" an imaginary door in the face of a PC before he can "enter." The gearforged then sneers and says, "Not all doors are meant to be opened, master."

#### A ROC AND A HARD PLACE (EL 9)

On the third day, just as the crew finishes lunch, the distracted sailors fail to notice a large shadow passing briefly over the bow of the ship. Allow any PCs on the top deck a DC 23 Perception check to see the shadow, cast by a large roc swooping down to collect some lunch of its own. Any characters who successfully spot the roc may act in the surprise round. The massive bird dives swiftly down from the cover of clouds above, spinning toward the ship before most of the crew realizes what is happening. The only clue, a piercing cry that chills the soul more than any winter wind, comes much too late.

#### Roc

CR 9

hp 160; Bestiary 1

#### Tactics

**Before Combat** The roc circles the ship in a blur of wings and feathers for 2 rounds from a distance of 160 feet before making a dive attack toward the ship.

**During Combat** The roc is not here for a fight–it is here to eat. Its initial dive attack sweeps past the ship and tries to snatch anyone within 15 feet of the ship's railing or on its rigging or masts. The dive attack action provides double movement, while Flyby Attack allows the roc to move, attack, and move again, the snatch attack dealing double damage.

### The Manticore & The Drake



The roc then spends 2 rounds regaining altitude before making another identical attack, repeating until it has snatched prey in each talon before retreating to devour the unfortunate victims.

Any captured prey dealing at least 20 hp damage is dropped to the rocks 80 feet below.

**Morale** The hungry roc attacks until it has snatched two victims or takes 50 hp damage, at which point it retreats to its nest.

The crew takes cover below decks or behind rigging, providing a +4 cover bonus against the attacks. The roc's formidable reach otherwise makes anyone remaining on the upper decks fair game, although you should choose expendable crew, such as Brill or Boso. Any characters or crewmembers you see fit can man the ballista to ward off the bird's attack.

Any crew members lost to the bird's attack are recognized for their service in a brief benediction by Sawbones. The survivors return to work in silence and have little to share until the following morning, at which point a tentative good spirit returns.

#### THE WRECK OF THE DRAKE (EL 10)

In the dawn mists on the fifth day of the journey, a harsh cry echoes from the top deck: "Captain! I think we've got our bird!" An almost identical airship flounders hopelessly in the distance, hovering at anchor and gently tugging against its moorings alongside a mountain peak, as the swift winds of winter batter the vessel. A long rope ladder dangles listlessly behind the ship, marking a trail through the snow below. As the Manticore approaches, a name can be made out painted in tall, golden letters along the bow. It is the *Drake*.

The *Drake* has been adrift for two weeks, ever since Albricius poisoned the crew and escaped with a portion of the corrupt gold on his way back to Zobeck. Clovis displays a grim concern at the sight of the bodies in the rigging and instructs the characters to investigate the fate of his company's ship. Grappling hooks are deployed and the ships are tethered, the crew waiting for the "all-clear" from the PCs.

Boarding the *Drake* requires a DC 15 Acrobatics or a DC 13 Climb check. Use of the Climb skill, which requires getting down awkwardly on all fours and clamoring across the moorings, results in an eruption of catcalls and laughter from the nervous crew. Any failure by 10 or more and the character loses his grip and falls, plummeting to the mountainside 80 feet below.

The Drake, like the Manticore, is an outdated cargo ship similar to a cog. Due to the Drake's partially deflated air bladders, the vessel shifts and sways. After the PCs spend several minutes onboard, they must succeed at DC 14 Fortitude saves or become sickened for the rest of the time they are aboard.

Allow the PCs to roam the ship freely to investigate the tragic circumstances of the airship. Clovis and crew wait impatiently for the all-clear from the characters,



#### MAIN DECK

After days of the constant buzz of activity aboard the Manticore, the Drake's decks are eerily silent. Slumped along the deck and hanging from the rigging are the unfortunate dwarven crew, their bodies rigid and lifeless, each rimed in hoarfrost. Besides the wind that whistles through the rigging, the only sound is the abrupt knocking of the stiff, frozen bodies, bumping the rails of the ship as it is carried by the occasional northern gust.

Five corpses are present on the top deck, all of which are iced over and frozen solid. Another body lies in the stairwell of the sterncastle. A bloody smear spreads beneath the accumulated ice, running from the sterncastle, over the steps, and down through the smashed cargo doors of each deck. Climbing this slippery cargo opening requires a DC 20 Climb check. A failure indicates the character loses footing and falls 20 feet to the steerage deck below, taking 2d6 hp damage.

If the PCs inspect the bodies carefully, they might determine the cause of death of the unfortunate crew. A DC 18 Heal check reveals the bodies actually died of poisoning, while a success of DC 25 or more reveals the symptoms of dark reaver powder (See Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rules). The deceased crewmen were at morning mess, as bowls of frozen porridge lay disposed or dropped nearby, barely eaten. Several dead crows litter the decks as well. An inspection of the porridge confirms the presence of a suspicious powder on a DC 23 Perception check.

Two of these crewmen display strange pus-filled sores on their arms and faces. A DC 25 Heal check confirms this is a symptom of disease, but not of any recognizable illness. When so examined, the pustules ooze an oily pus with an almost metallic sheen, like oil on water. The crewmen's frozen eyes have a similar cast to them.

#### 2. Captain's Quarters

With each icy gust, the door to the captain's quarters swings open or slams shut with a meaty thwack. The frozen body of a dwarf crewman blocks the portal to the dark room beyond, preventing the door from closing, although the constant slamming of the door has pulped his upper torso.

The crewman in the doorway was murdered, his body showing many puncture wounds. The furniture within was either ransacked or violently tossed about due to the airship's motions. The captain's log lays open on the floor, but a quick search reveals that many pages from the last several weeks have been ripped out. Without them, there is no way to determine crew count or passenger numbers. The body of Captain Stimme Amboschlag is not present. His is the half-eaten corpse in the steerage deck (see area 16).

#### 3. Forward State Quarters

A murdered family of five humans occupies this room, and a casual search reveals their throats were cut while sleeping. They do not display signs of illness or poison.

#### 4. Storage

This small storage room contains extra rope and canvas sail, as well as small quantities of tools. Nothing especially unusual or valuable.

#### 5. Mate Quarters

The first mate's room is a jumbled mess of clothes, bedding, and furnishings. No clues to be found here.

#### 6. The Chart Room

Nothing seems out of place in the chart room besides the normal dishevelment found throughout the rest of the ship, with maps, charts, sextants and compasses scattered in disarray. A DC 23 Perception check, however, reveals several empty packets of a dark purple powder. A DC 20 Heal check identifies it as dark reaver powder.

#### 7. The Galley

The body of a single dwarf crewman, identified as Broffo, is crumpled on the floor here, having died consuming his breakfast.

#### CARGO DECK

Unlike the Manticore's cramped and stuffed cargo hold, the upper bay of the Drake is largely barren, save for a few scattered tools and several damaged crates that might once have held supplies.

Dim gray light leaks into the cargo deck from the smashed bay doors above. Any characters succeeding on a DC 22 Perception check detect a shuffling in the deck below, followed by a thump, which sounds vaguely like falling ice. If the PCs investigate the noise, they encounter the frostgrenze in the Steerage Deck (see page 24).

In this main hold is a single body dressed as an arcanist. This was Belvedore, the company's sole aeromancer. His body is partially burned and he appears to have been severely bludgeoned. A DC 24 Spellcraft check reveals the material components of the *black tentacles* spell in his hand (an octopus tentacle).

A dwarf crewman lies dead at the bottom of the fore stairs, his bowl still in his hand and a spoon hanging from his rigor-hardened jaw. Nearly a dozen dead rats litter the floor near the stairwell, and the metallic tinge of spilled blood is heavy in the stale air below decks. A dark ichor has spread out from under each door here, staining the deck in a thick, viscous sludge. This was a crewman by the name of Malbic, who died of poisoning along with his mates. The rats died eating him.

#### 10. Crew Quarters

This room contains eight humans, comprising two families. The corpses are poorly dressed and seem to have been extremely malnourished, indicating they were probably refugees rescued from the Golden Citadel.

All here show signs of the unidentified illness. While two of the bodies succumbed to the illness, the others were murdered while they slept. A man and a woman both clearly died in a struggle, as they display extremely precise, scalpel-like cuts across their arms, face and neck.

#### 11. Crew Quarters

This room holds the bodies of nine dwarven passengers, malnourished and diseased like those in area 10. Four died fighting after being cornered in this room and bear the seared residue of intense heat (a DC 23 Spellcraft check confirms the wounds are consistent with a *searing light* spell or similar magical flame) and multiple small puncture wounds. A DC 14 Heal check finds the wounds have a distinctive blue hue, the tell-tale mark of blue whinnis poison.

#### 14. Crew Quarters

Most of the crew quarters and storage rooms of this area are empty and abandoned, the contents in disarray but nevertheless eerily familiar—mirror reflections of the lively halls and corridors of the Manticore.

The door leading to this chamber fails to yield if tested, as it is blocked by a heavy dwarven body. A DC 16 Strength check is needed to force open the door, revealing the corpses of two dwarven crewmen.

A DC 18 Perception check confirms that the two dwarves died in a fight. There is no trace of poison, but a DC 18 Heal check reveals the same strange symptoms seen on some of the crew above. One died of strangulation, while the other bled to death as the result of a series of puncture wounds caused by a small screwdriver, leaving little doubt that the two killed one another in a struggle.

A DC 17 Perception check reveals that one corpse has several rough gold nuggets lodged in his mouth, as if vomited up. A floor plank has been pulled up, revealing a small, tipped coffer. The distinctive gold ore, worth about 500 gp, is spilled onto the floor. These two dwarves can be confirmed as crewmen aboard the Drake.

In addition, consider placing Belvedore's spellbook here, especially if the PCs are short on magic or treasure. The book includes a selection of aeromancer spells up to 5th level (see Kobold Quarterly #7 or the Southlands hardcover).

#### STEERAGE DECK

#### 16. Cargo Bay

Many broken, empty crates lay scattered here in the dark recess of the lowest cargo hold. Two massive, iron-bound chests sitting back-to-back are the only intact items present. Below the cargo bay hatch lies the frost-rimed upper torso of a once-stout dwarf, his head cleanly severed from his body. The corpse has been eaten from the chest down; even the leg bones are gone.

This is the final resting place of Captain Stimme, and is the nest of a very old and grizzled chimera by the name of Frostgrenze. The chimera waits in the shadows, charging the party when the opportunity present itself.

CR 10

#### Frostgrenze

Advanced chimera CE Large magical beast Init +7; Senses darkvision (60 ft.), low-light vision, scent; Perception +13 DEFENSE AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, -1 size, +11 natural) hp 155 (13d10+78) Fort +15, Ref +10, Will +9 OFFENSE **Spd** 30 ft., fly 50 ft., (poor) Melee bite +19 (2d6+7), claws x2 +19 (1d8+7), gore +19 (1d8+7)Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. STATISTICS Str 24, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 8, Wis 17, Cha 14 Base Atk +13; CMB +21; CMD 34 (38 vs. Trip) Feats Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack, Iron Will, Multiattack, Skill Focus: Perception, Toughness +13 Skills Fly +6, Perception +13, Stealth +7; Modifiers +4 Stealth in winter conditions Languages Draconic SQ breath weapon (DC 21) (Su) SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Breath Weapon (Su)** (DC 21) Frostgrenze's breath weapon is a 20 ft. cone of cold, usable once every 1d4 rounds, that deals 6d8 points of cold damage and allows a DC 21 Reflex save for half damage.

The chests are not trapped. One is locked with a good lock (DC 30) and is so full it bulges nearly to bursting. A DC 18 Perception check reveals several scores in the wood, indicating that a small plank had previously been removed from the backside. Once the PCs open the chest, they can see that some gold was removed in this manner, with a cloth stuffed into the cavity and the plank replaced. Approximately 500 gp worth of the precious gold ore mined from the Golden Citadel has been removed (see area 5), and about 50,000 gp remain.



This is likely the party's first view of orichalcum, the brilliantly sheened, pure alchemical gold mined by the dwarves of the Golden Citadel and the impetus of the gold rush.

The other chest has been battered open and stripped of any wealth it once contained. Clovis and Vianna are visibly stunned at the amount of gold in the chests. If the other chest contained as much gold, it would have far exceeded the profits they hoped to garner for the expedition.

A DC 18 Perception check reveals the key on a golden chain concealed under the body of Captain Stimme.

A *speak with dead* spell cast on the captain or any crew members imparts similar information to that found in the captain's log (see the Captain's Log section).

The crew died eating morning mess. Some crew and passengers died in a struggle with the cultists and can describe them as a human and two dwarves wearing leering golden masks. Two of the bodies below the ship match their descriptions.

#### THE CLUES LAY COLD On The Peaks Below (el 8)

If the characters investigate the dragging rope ladder, or if they succeed on a DC 20 Perception check from the main deck of either ship, they see a valuable clue to the fate of the vessel on the peak below. The long rope ladder dangles from the forecastle and drags in the fresh snow of the peak far down below, tracing a circular trail in the snow. A flash of bright copper glints from the drifts, drawing attention to what look like two frozen bodies.

Any movement near these bodies attracts the attention of a remorhaz buried in the snow, totally concealed, 10 feet behind the corpses. It attacks when anyone approaches within 10 feet of the bodies. Treat the mountainside as steep stairs.

#### Remorhaz

hp 94; Bestiary 1

CR 7

#### Tactics

- **Before Combat** The remorhaz waits in the snow hoping to ambush approaching prey. It has total cover and can only be spotted on a DC 32 Perception, although a DC 17 Perception check reveals something large stirring beneath the snowbank, preventing surprise for characters making the check.
- **During Combat** The hungry remorhaz attacks ferociously with its bite attacks, attempting to grab opponents and use its swallow whole ability.
- **Morale** The remorhaz flees if reduced below a quarter of its hit points.

#### THE EVIDENTIAL CORPSES

Albricius murdered his two collaborators immediately after dispatching the crew. Their corpses lie buried in the snow of the mountainside near the dangling rope ladder.

Both are dwarven and wear familiar leering masks of beaten copper. They were not crewmen and were not aware of the motivations of Albricius in regards to Rabscuttle. In addition to white, furred robes, they each carry a sash containing concealed darts coated in blue whinnis poison and wear a brass, coin-like symbol with a devilish face in cast in relief. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) reveals these as holy symbols of Mammon.

A DC 20 Heal check reveals the cause of death to be skull fractures from a blunt object. If the corpses are successfully questioned via *speak with dead*, they reveal only that they knew they would be rewarded for returning such a sum of gold to their masters. The acolytes are unaware of the greater scheme at hand or why Albricius killed them, although they know he was on his way to Zobeck to seek out the whereabouts of some great treasure. If questioned about the nature of the cult in the Citadel, the acolytes reveal that unchecked greed has attracted the cold eye of Mammon.

Albricius neglected to retrieve the crew manifest and log entries his conspirators had collected from the captain's log. They can be found on one of the bodies, their contents detailed below. In addition, one of the bodies has several parchment rubbings of an engraved mechanical device—an armor-like plate and a few complicated gears. A DC 14 Craft (blacksmithing), Craft (clockwork), or Knowledge (engineering) check identifies these rubbings as having come from Rabscuttle, although they are oddly backwards, as if rubbed in relief. Several notes, scrawled in Dwarven, read: "Where is the Eye?" and "Tears wash away greed." These had been stolen from Albricius.

A very difficult Perception check (DC 35) of the area reveals almost 70,000 gp in orichalcum ore buried in the snow near the corpses. This orichalcum was removed from the empty chest in the ship's hold and is as much as the lazy Albricius was willing to remove.

#### The Captain's Log

The missing pages from Captain Stimme's logbook provide a valuable glimpse into the airship's fate. The journey is described in Dwarven with short, simple entries. The report from the Golden Citadel, which dates to almost three weeks ago, mentions a fairly desperate situation there.

According to the logbook, droves of refugees had been taken in by the dwarves as the winter storms increased and the passes snowed in. Apparently, the rescue efforts were coordinated by an exceptionally kind and generous man named Halston. Captain Stimme (who had been unknowingly charmed) dealt with Halston exclusively, turning a profit well beyond the expectations of the company. Some 130,000 gp was received for a shipment estimated at half that value.

Several dozen passengers are listed, including Albricius Everart. Most of the settlers intended to wait out the winter storms and return to their mines once the snows subsided. The ship also carried very ill passengers in quarantine (areas 10 and 11). Laden with gold, the Drake set flight again only a few hours after arrival, which Clovis notes as unusual.

From there, the entries grow shorter again, with little to report other than cabin fever and growing aggravation among the crew. The captain begins to worry when several of his crew contract the settler's illness, despite the care taken to quarantine the sick. The last entry reads: "A pall of discontent has fallen on the ship. Gorfred was confined to quarters. The crew is getting ill."

That evening, PCs who succeed at DC 25 Perception checks hear snippets of a heated argument in the captain's quarters between Clovis and Vianna. Vianna believes they should return to Zobeck immediately with the shipment and recovered cargo, while Clovis wants to go to the aid of his endangered kinsmen. The journey continues the following morning, and Vianna is not seen on decks after breakfast, as she sulks in her quarters.

#### PART III: We were dead Before the ship even sank

The Splitrock Company hired Ansgar Flintknapper during a recent supply run to the Citadel. Unknown even to Vianna, he was sent to secretly monitor the safety of shipments for the Illuminated Brotherhood.

Even he is not aware of the true nature of Vianna. A Silent Master of the Brotherhood, he understands the danger in allowing the orichalcum cargo from the Drake to be returned to the hands of the Mammonites in the Golden Citadel. To prevent the cult from acquiring this gold, he has made the fateful decision to sabotage and crash the Manticore to prevent the ship from ever reaching its destination.



In the hours before dawn, on the morning of the seventh day of the journey, the Silent Master rises and goes about his foul business. After preparing himself with spells and potions, he casts *hold portal* on the doors of areas 12, 13, and 14 of the cargo deck, trapping the eight sleeping crew members there before making his way quietly down into the engine room to set the boilers to dangerously explosive levels.

#### SABOTAGE! (EL 10)

Guigo is on the final shift of guard duty before dawn. As the dark of night gives way to the first gray glow of dawn, he nods to the PCs on watch and points to the roiling black clouds along the horizon. "Sure hope the ol' girl can make it to the Citadel before that storm reaches us!" Rabscuttle laughs as the disabled pilot leers with a hesitant grin and a nervous wink.

Suddenly, a great shudder jolts the anchored airship, and Guigo is knocked violently back and forward from the rails. The airship lurches before veering sharply starboard, leaning precariously as it gains momentum. The boilers are firing! Any characters present on the top deck must take a DC 15 Acrobatics check to avoid falling prone when the ship unexpectedly fires to life. Guigo hobbles to the ship's wheel and attempts to control the quickly spiraling craft while shouting, "Get down to the engines and see what's going on!"

Anyone present on the top deck 3 rounds after the initial lurch sees Clovis, Vianna, and Sawbones exit their quarters on the main deck and begin trying to control the vessel as best they can in the absence of the rest of the crew.

No matter the characters' whereabouts, you should call for initiative to give some order to the chaos that is about to result and to keep better track of player actions and movement. It also alerts PCs that there is something that they should be acting against. The sequence of events is somewhat mutable but should take 9-12 rounds before the boilers ultimately explode.

Sleeping characters below deck are instantly awakened by the sudden movement and are thrown from their hammocks and mats. Loud, metallic clangs ring through the steerage deck below, followed by the hiss of escaping steam rising up from the stairwell leading into the lowest hold near their quarters' doors. A DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) reveals that the boilers are firing at dangerous levels. Any characters succeeding on a DC 23 Perception check can hear the shouting and banging of the trapped crew trying to break out of their held doors.

#### INTO THE HOLD

When the characters open the door or peer below deck, a great rush of hot air blasts them from the stairwell. Something is going terribly wrong in the engine room. Any character on the cargo deck succeeding on a DC 21 Perception check catches a glimpse of the forceful splintering of the door to area 13, as Mykrin attempts to break out of the crew compartment.

PCs can assist the crew members trapped in their quarters, in the hope of bringing the careening vessel back under control. They can also or instead investigate the problems in the engine room.

Unlike the wreck of the Drake, the large cargo bay loading grates on the Manticore are securely fastened on both levels. If a PC insists on taking this route rather than the stairs, it takes four consecutive DC 18 Escape Artist checks (one per round) to unfasten the bindings, and a DC 25 Strength check to lift the heavy doors (treat as a wood portcullis in the *Pathfinder* Roleplaying Game Core Rules).

#### TRAPPED!

The PCs might also try to rescue the trapped dwarven crewmembers. To do so, they must cross the cluttered cargo bay (all movement considered squeezing) and break through the doors to the crew quarters, which include Boso and Otto in area 12; Mykrin, Zangen, and Matheus in area 13; and Brill, Brunerius, and Giroldus in area 14. Adjust for any losses to the roc. The break DC for the good doors of the Manticore is currently 23 due to the *hold portal* spell, with a hardness of 5 and 15 hit points.

Any dwarves who become aware of the rescue attempt shout, "Get down to the engines and see what's happening!" If the characters take this strongly worded hint, they should be penalized by 3 rounds on the Catastrophe Progression table.

Without player aid, Mykrin hacks his way out of area 13 in 6 rounds. Taking Strength and aid another actions into account, Otto can force open area 12 on a roll of 17-20 due to his high Strength, while the crew trapped in area 14 can break out with a roll of 19-20 each round. To avoid these rolls, just assume that the crew members of area 14 (Brill, Brunerius, and Giroldus) fail to escape and perish if the boilers explode.

Characters who opt to rescue the crew have probably saved their lives, but cannot prevent the explosion of the boilers in the engine room. On the 6th round, any crew members or characters in the immediate stern area (areas 12, 13, 14, and 17) are subject to the results of the explosion (see Explosion!).

#### DANGER IN THE BOILER ROOM

PCs can stop Ansgar by rushing through the disheveled lower cargo hold (treat all movement as squeezing) to the engine room (area 17) to investigate and, potentially, reverse the sabotage.

As the PCs descend the stairs, a loud barking erupts as Ansgar's *faithful hound* spell discharges and attacks. The spell is centered at the base of the stairs and lasts for 9 rounds once activated (+10 attack bonus; 2d6+3 piercing damage). The *faithful hound* can only attack adjacent squares from its placement at the base of the stairs and cannot move throughout the hold. A Perception check (DC 20+1 per 10 feet from the doorway) reveals the presence of the invisible Ansgar, who is currently disrupting the engines to set them to dangerous pressure levels. This check does not reveal his exact location— only that a creature is present.

The door to the engine room hangs loosely from its hinges, knocked asunder by the intense pressure of the coal-powered furnace. Over the din of an ominous, high-pitched squeal and through the hot gouts of steam, an invisible Ansgar swings a large wrench, crashing it dangerously onto a pressure release valve, severely denting the pipe and sending a shower of sparks dancing across the chamber. Red-hot iron rivets pop and ricochet from the large iron boiler as Ansgar swings again and again.

After several strikes, he drops the tool to the floor with a loud metallic clang and turns a large release valve, releasing another gout of pressurized steam. Ansgar can swing the wrench once per round and needs to strike the boiler four times before he can turn the release valve. Ansgar needs 2 rounds to turn the release valve enough to ensure the boiler's explosion, beginning the Catastrophe Countdown on the second round.

**Environment:** A character who enters the room wearing metal armor is affected as if by the spell *heat metal.* In addition, anyone breathing in the choking smoke and scalding steam without adequate protection (such as Zangen's gasmask) must make a Fortitude save each round (DC 13, +1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 hp fire damage, and anyone leaving the room for 1 round resets this save progression. The steam obscures vision, giving concealment (20% miss chance) to characters within it.

**Terrain:** Movement through the lower cargo bay is considered squeezing for Medium characters due to the disarray of boxes, crates and supplies. Ansgar cast a *grease* spell in the 10-foot area in front of the engine room door.

#### Ansgar

#### CR 9

Male dwarf wizard 6/rite of most worthy esoterics/ 3 silent master 1

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +7; Senses darkvision (60 ft.); Perception +10
DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +4 shield, +3 Dex, +1 deflection, +1 dodge)

hp 79 (1d8+9d6+30)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15, +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

**Defensive Abilities** defensive training, house not made with hands, lux e tenebris, neither naked nor clothed, sprig of Acacia; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Resist** fire 30

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft. **Melee** club +5 (1d6-1/x2)

Wizard Spells Known (CL 10th, +5 melee touch, +9 ranged touch):

5th—interposing hand (x3)

4th—greater invisibility (x2) (DC 19),

summon monster IV (x2)

3rd—heroism, hold person (DC 18), lightning bolt (DC 18), ray of exhaustion (DC 18)

2nd—acid arrow, cat's grace, false life, mirror image, resist energy

1st—grease (x2) (DC 16), mage armor, magic missile (x2), shield

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 15), *open/close*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 21, Wis 16, Cha 6 Base Atk +4; CMB +3; CMD 18

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus: Knowledge (Arcana), Still Spell

Skills Acrobatics +5, Appraise +7, Bluff +0, Climb +1, Craft (armor) +19, Craft (Stonemasonry) +19, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +0, Escape Artist +5, Fly +5, Heal +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (religion) +19, Linguistics +19, Perception +10, Ride +5, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +15, Survival +5, Swim +1

Languages Abyssal, Common, Cyclops, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Ignan, Infernal, Necril, Shadowtongue, Sylvan, Terran, Undercommon

**SQ** arcane familiar nearby; audi, vide, tace (Ex); deliver touch spells through familiar (Su); empathic link with familiar (Su); *for love of money* (3/day) (Sp); greed; hand of the apprentice (8/day) (Su); hardy +2; hatred; share spells with familiar; slow and steady; speak with familiar (Ex); stability; stonecunning +2

**Combat Gear** lesser metamagic rod of extend; **Other Gear** cloak of resistance +2, ring of protection +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Audi, Vide, Tace (Ex) The silent master may not make a single utterance or loses all illuminated brotherhood and silent master class abilities, including spell level increases gained through advancement in this class, and is then struck with a powerful *modify memory* effect that scrambles the moments of revelation to an extent that specific rites and mysteries cannot be recalled with any clarity. In return for the silence of secrets, the silent master gains the ability to understand any intelligent creature and communicate in return through glares, body language, and silent stares that grant a +5 inherent bonus on Intimidate checks. In addition, the silent master gains the Silent Spell feat, usable with no increased cost in spell levels.



- *For Love of Money* (Sp) (DC 20) Three times a day, Ansgar can mentally coerce an opponent to protect him just by looking into the target's eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that Ansgar must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not affected. Anyone Ansgar targets must succeed on a Will save or becomes unable to harm Ansgar and makes nearly every effort to prevent others from harming it as well. The affected target does not fight to the death, perform any obviously suicidal action, or draw attacks of opportunity if reasonably able to avoid them on behalf of Ansgar, but he does otherwise put Ansgar's safety and well-being above his own. The ability has a range of 30 feet.
- Lux E Tenebris (Ex) If Ansgar is affected by an enchantment and fails her saving throw, 1 round later he can attempt a second saving throw. If it fails, the spell has its normal effect.
- **Sprig of Acacia (Ex)** So secretive are the actions of initiates that if a brother is ever the target of a divination spell, or the target of bardic knowledge, Gather Information, Knowledge, or similar check and it succeeds by less than 10, the person making the check learns entirely false information.

#### CATASTROPHE PROGRESSION

Make the escalation toward catastrophe very obvious to the players, as well as the opportunity to reverse the sabotage and prevent impending disaster. If the progression reaches Round 5, make it clear that an explosion is imminent, and that anyone in the engine room is in extreme peril.

The countdown starts once Ansgar turns the release valve for 2 rounds. Unless the PCs move unusually slowly to the engine room, assume the countdown begins 6 rounds after you ask them to roll for initiative. If they delay going to the engine room despite your hints, push back the beginning of countdown, but make sure they have at least a few rounds in which to act once they arrive.

A DC 23 Disable Device or Knowledge (engineering) check made as a full-round action allows the character to shut off valves and release pressure gauges. This stops the countdown, buying the PCs an additional round to act. Even characters untrained in Knowledge (engineering) may attempt this check. Ansgar has set the catastrophe in motion, and unless characters counteract it, the countdown proceeds automatically each round.

Spells with the cold descriptor, such as *ice storm* or *cone of cold*, halt the progression for 2 rounds. They also pop rivets and bolts, causing 5d6 hp bludgeoning damage to all in the room (DC 18 Reflex halves) or adjacent to the door. A *pyrotechnics, create water* or similar spell without the cold descriptor cast at the furnace immediately quenches the flame (along with other listed effects of the spell) and resets the catastrophe progression to round 1. A *gust of wind* spell is insufficient to affect the protected flames of the furnace. Any fire spell cast within 20 feet

of the engine progresses the countdown by 1 round. Multiple cold spells cast in the same round do not stack their duration.

As long as Ansgar remains conscious, he uses his standard actions to undo any halting the PCs accomplish and push the catastrophe progression toward explosion. If he is defeated, the PCs can undo the sabotage without great effort.

#### Round Effect

- 1 A spray of boiling water erupts from the furnace, dealing 1d6 hp scalding damage to all within 10 feet who fail a DC 14 Reflex saving throw.
- 2 The blastpipe overloads and lets out a tremendous cacophony. All in a 20-foot radius take 2d6 hp sonic damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1 round.
- 3 The door to the firebox bursts open, filling the room with burning embers and dealing 3d6 hp fire damage to all those within the engine room. A successful DC 16 Reflex save halves this damage
- 4 The smokebox ruptures in an explosion of superheated acrid smoke, dealing 4d6 hp damage to anyone in the room or adjacent to the doorway (DC 17 Reflex halves).
- 5 Popping rivets and bolts fly in all directions, dealing 5d6 hp bludgeoning damage to anyone in the engine room or adjacent to the doorway. A DC 18 Reflex save results in half damage. Any characters adjacent to the door take half damage, or save for none.
- 6 Explosion! The boilers explode, dealing 8d6 bludgeoning + 6d6 hp fire damage to all within a 40-foot radius (DC 19 Reflex halves). A cave-in results as the stern crumbles.

#### **EXPLOSION!**

If the PCs fail to stop Ansgar (either by failing to stop him in the engine room or by simply not going down to it for 20 rounds), a tremendous explosion rips the ship asunder, sending shards of red-hot boilerplate and showers of hardwood splinters in all directions. The rear hull of the airship is blown to pieces as it violently collapses in a jumbled array of engine parts, support beams, nearby cargo, and dwarven crewmen unable to escape the compartments above.

The explosion destroys the stern sections of the two lowest decks (areas 12, 13, 14, and 17) and severely

#### NAVIGATING THE DYNAMICS OF THE ENCOUNTER

Several environmental factors contribute to the dynamic nature of this encounter. Assign a separate initiative count for the environmental effects of the engine room. The characters might face the following effects each round:

- The effects of the Catastrophe Progression, adjusted each round for player interventions.
- Concealment of steam creates 20% miss chance.
- Heat metal on characters wearing metal armor.
- •Steam inhalation (DC 13 Fort, +1 per previous check prevents) forces full round spent choking.
- Squeezing constricts all movement in the steerage deck (area 16)

damages the mate quarters and galley on the main deck (area 15 is destroyed up to the stairs). Characters in or adjacent to the engine room, Ansgar, and any dwarves in the crew compartments above take 8d6 points of bludgeoning damage and 8d6 hp fire damage from the explosion and subsequent collapse (DC 15 Reflex save halves). A character failing the save by 5 or more or reduced to fewer than 0 hp is thrown from the exploding wreckage of the ship, landing on the mountain side 80 feet below, taking falling damage as normal. Normal failure results in the character becoming trapped in the wreckage, where he is buried as if in a cave-in. Each square contains 500 pounds of debris and characters can free themselves with DC 18 Strength checks.

#### AFTERMATH

If the explosion occurred, the characters can shamble through the wreckage and witness the destruction.

Roughly 10 tons of cargo is lost (half of the original 20 tons). After careful evaluations of the damage by Clovis and his remaining crew, liftgas reserve tanks are recovered from the disarray of the cargo and the gas bags refilled.

The Manticore carries a complicated backup mechanism consisting of a winding lever, a central gear housing and a propeller. While it is an efficient machine, two crewmen must work in tandem to drive the propeller, and as there is a shortage of able bodies due to the explosion, the dubious honor falls upon the characters. While operating the crank, PCs must succeed on a Fortitude save each half hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or become fatigued.

#### The Secrets of Ansgar

With the crew compartment possibly destroyed in the blast, and Ansgar himself blown out and slain with the force of the explosion, investigation alone reveals the reasoning behind his sabotage. His body, if recovered, provides as many mysteries as it solves. Ansgar's body bears many unusual tattoos, including a set of fiery pillars and arcane symbols on his chest and relatively fresh and intricate tattoo of a crypt on his back. A DC 10 Heal check reveals that the crypt was applied within the last three weeks. Rabscuttle coos in awe of the elaborate design.

#### Ansgar's Bunk

If the crew quarters survived, the characters can search Ansgar's footlocker, which is fastened with a good lock (DC 30). In addition to the accoutrements of a normal crewman's footlocker, Ansgar's contains a pair of starkwhite cloth gauntlets neatly folded atop and a richly embroidered blacksmith apron, though it is obvious from the intricately fine quality that it was never intended for actual use. Beneath these items is a voluminous maroon robe trimmed with a belt of gold chain worth 20 gp.

The robe, apron, and gloves all display the flaming pillar and many other neatly worked and sometimes cleverly concealed esoteric symbols (some are duplicated on the tattoo on Ansgar's back). A *potion of invisibility* and an *elixir of sneaking* are tucked away under the garments with two identical empty vials found on Ansgar's bunk. At the bottom rests a black leather-bound book, a flaming pillar embossed in gold on its cover. This is Ansgar's personal

#### GOLD FEVER

Type disease, (contact); Fort Save DC 18 Onset: 1 day; Frequency 1/day Effect 1d6 wisdom damage.

Creatures carrying more than 20 gp worth of corrupted gold ore or in the prolonged immediate vicinity (30 feet) of more than 500 gp of orichalcum must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or become infected with gold fever after only 24 hours of exposure.

The disease causes a debilitating fever and disorientation on the first day, followed by the eruption of pustules when tiny gold flecks appear in the afflicted's eyes and under his skin the next. A delirious and unnatural compulsion to handle and possess gold follows on the third day. A creature whose Wisdom drops to 0 as a result of gold fever gains the goldveined template (see below). For every 100 gp value of corrupted gold over the initial amount that triggers the disease, increase the Fortitude save by +1, to a maximum of DC 23.



Clovis has no idea what to make of these events, and Vianna—along with most of the crew—is furious and saddened at any losses suffered by the crew. No one in the crew can identify the symbols on Ansgar's possessions.

If the Drake cargo was brought on board, all aboard the Manticore are subject to gold fever due to their proximity to the corrupted cargo, with a saving throw made each morning to resist the effects for another day.

Be as discreet about the illness as possible, and try to keep the disease—and especially its source—a mystery, and remain aware of the characters' ability to potentially thwart the illness with spells, although spells do not prevent further chances of infection.

**Cure:** The afflicted being must succeed on three consecutive Fortitude saves to flush the disease and become immune to future infections. Choose three surviving crewmen to become infected with gold fever. If they survived the catastrophe, Brill, Brunerius, and Giroldus are excellent candidates. If those members perished in the explosion, Boso, Otto, and Zangen are most likely to succumb to the disease. Disarm the characters' suspicions with offhand remarks, for only as they approach the citadel should the crew begin displaying the more advanced delirium that puts the ship in jeopardy.

Vianna contracts the disease immediately. It is crucial to the adventure that Vianna remain sick. If the characters cure her, she relapses the following day. Although the PCs only have a brief few hours to act in any case, Sawbones can certainly intervene if the characters become too cure-happy, as he prefers non-life-threatening illnesses to run their course—it toughens his crew. As the ship remains under his care, he sees to it that the characters defer to his decision until he decides his crew needs magical treatment.

#### THE CRASH AT THE GATES (EL 10)

As the seventh day progresses, the mood grows grim. The winds keep picking up and flurries of snow blow across the ship's bow and accumulate on the deck. The hours lost either repairing the boiler or relying on the manual propeller have cost the expedition valuable time, and the storm is catching up despite the crew and Cs' best efforts. Read or paraphrase the following.

The battle against the accumulation of ice is fruitless the weather is winning. An already powerful wind became unbearable, making it difficult to work and even more difficult to concentrate. Buffeted by the storm, the Manticore strains under the pressure. The crew scrambles to keep the airship aloft, while snow flurries make spotting the treacherous peaks difficult. Allow PCs on watch or working as spotters in the crows' nests to make DC 10 Perception checks (keep in mind the -8 penalty from the storm). The PC with the highest succeeding check is the first to see the Golden Citadel appear to the right of the ship. If none of the PCs are watching or they all fail the check, one of the other crew members spots the Golden Citadel instead. The crew, weary, sick, and exhausted, rises with a renewed energy when the cry goes out: "Captain Clovis! Citadel off starboard!"

The Golden Citadel straddles the thin rim of the caldera of an extinct volcano. Massive towers push skyward and a golden pallor gleams through the gray gloom.

#### The Snow on the Peaks

As the PCs peer through the increasingly heavy flurry of snow, allow for DC 20 Perception checks on the approach to the Golden Citadel (keep in mind the –8 penalty from the storm). A large bank of snow on the otherwise bare stone of the caldera seems to have taken some unusual form, like symbols or letters. Anyone proficient in Terran can read the word "cursed" mysteriously spelled out by the fallen snow on the peak below.

#### THE GIANT AT THE GATE

A ravenous frost giant has harassed the settlers at the upper gates of the Golden Citadel for the last two days. Unable to penetrate the stronghold, he sees the crippled and storm-tossed Manticore as an easy mark from which he can collect supplies and food.

Clovis notices that no mooring team is stationed on the docking tower and imparts this information in a curse-riddled yell to the crew. At this point, PCs and crew members on watch can make DC 5 Perception checks (keep in mind the –8 penalty from the storm) to see the frost giant down below, just as he picks up a boulder.

Even if someone sees the giant, the first boulder slams into the ship's hull just as a warning cry goes out. The pilot grunts and moans, straining to control the vessel, as the tremendous force of the hurled boulder jars the ship. Allow the PCs to roll initiative if they wish. The giant is 100 feet away on the side of the mountain.

#### THE STORM

The snowstorm currently tossing the ship imposes a –8 penalty on Perception checks. Ranged weapon attacks are impossible, except for those using siege weapons (including the ballista and giant-tossed boulders), which take a –4 penalty on attack rolls. The storm is accompanied by severe wind (per the Core Rulebook). In addition, spellcasters are subject to violent motion for the duration of the airship's troubles and must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + the level of the spell) or lose the spell.

#### Frost Giant CR 9

hp 133; Bestiary 1

#### **Tactics**

**During Combat:** The giant throws one boulder a round until the Manticore crashes or the PCs stop him. Assume his first two thrown boulders strike true, but make attack rolls thereafter (the Manticore has an AC of 4, but keep in mind the –4 penalty from the storm). Any successful hit automatically penetrates the ship's hull.

Morale: The proud giant is desperately hungry and unafraid to die.

At this point, nothing the PCs do can prevent the Manticore from crashing into the side of the mountain. How badly it crashes, though, depends on the PCs' actions and their successes and failures. The basic damage dealt to everyone aboard the ship when it crashes depends on if the PCs prevented the sabotage earlier: if so, the base damage is 6d6 points of crushing damage; if not, the base damage is 8d6. The PCs can reduce this damage by as much as 3d6 hp damage by their actions. In any event, a DC 15 Reflex save halves the damage.

For each round a character spends assisting the crew, whether on board or from the docking tower (assuming mooring ropes are dropped to the PC), allow that PC to make a DC 20 Escape Artist check to minimize the impact damage with careful bracing. If successful, the crashing damage is reduced by 1d6 points. If the PC fails by 5 or more, the damage is instead increased by 1d6 points.

After the giant's second boulder strikes the Manticore, the ship crashes into the mountainside 5 rounds later. For every successful boulder strike thereafter, the crash duration goes down by an additional round (thus, the giant can force the Manticore to crash in as little as 3 rounds). Every round the ship stays airborne, the pilot attempts a DC 20 Profession (airship pilot) check (Giroldus has a +10 bonus, while the best of other crew members is only a +3). If he succeeds, the pilot can counteract one boulder strike and keep the Manticore airborne for another round (to a maximum of 5 rounds after the giant's second boulder strike).

Characters on board might think to steer the ship's path into the attacking giant. The pilot of the ship can make DC 25 Profession (airship pilot) check to crush the giant. PCs can aid the pilot by makingDC 20 Disable Device or Knowledge (engineering) check, (each success grants the pilot a +2 bonus). A successful check crushes the giant under the ship as it crashes, dealing to the giant 8d6 hp damage (Reflex save for half ) and knocking him prone. Such an action negates any crash damage deduction actions taken by the characters up to that point, though. When the ship finally crashes, read or paraphrase the following.



The giant's boulders and the heavy winds are too much for the Manticore. The dirigible rips and liftgas rapidly evacuates the gas bladders as the ship quickly loses altitude. The damage and the storm have taken their toll on the vessel, and even as it disintegrates in midair, the walls of the docking tower loom ahead.

After the ship crashes, the giant continues attacking the surviving party and crew members. If the ship crushed the giant, he extracts himself on the following round and stands up. He then exacts his vengeance on the pilot and PCs.

#### AIRSHIP CRASH (CR 7)

When the ship crashes, everyone on board takes damage as described above. Those who fail their Reflex saves are buried in the resulting wreckage. Treat the crash site as a cave in (see Core Rulebook), except that each 5–foot square contains 1,000 pounds of debris and characters may free themselves with DC 20 Strength checks.



PCs can abandon ship before impact, but doing so might be even more deadly than simply riding the ship to its crash. A PC who jumps from the ship falls 2d4x10 feet, taking the appropriate amount of damage. Note that the fall is in midair, eliminating the chance for a monk to use slow fall. Once the character lands, he must immediately make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid 2d6 points of crushing damage from falling debris. The character lands a distance downhill from the crash site equal to twice the distance he initially fell.

Unless mitigated by some great magic, the crash destroys 5 tons of cargo that cannot be recovered, leaving either 15 tons (if the characters stopped the sabotage) or 5 tons (if Ansgar was successful). The ship comes to its final rest in a ruined heap between the airship docking tower and the guard tower that flanks the front gate (area 18), as noted on the map.

Delirious dwarven crewmen pick their way out of the wreckage, dodging giant boulder attacks as best they can. Once the giant is eliminated as a threat, the dwarves attempt to free the buried survivors and recover the bodies of the deceased. The storm rages, and although there is little time for grief, the survivors cry out in grief. Anyone who makes a simple DC 5 Survival check realizes that unless they all find shelter soon, there will be no survivors of the crash. Treat the storm as a blizzard (see PFRPG Core Rulebook ) with windstorm-force winds.

From between the imposing towers of the citadel, a massive gate moans as it slowly creaks open. Several dozen thin and ragged humans, some obviously afflicted and all armed, nervously shuffle through the massive gateway, staring at the scene in disbelief. One moves to the fore of the rabble and extends a nervous, shaking hand. As he approaches he says, "Thank the gods you've come. Thank the gods. May they have mercy on you all."

#### AFTERMATH

Casualties among the Manticore's crew are severe and depend entirely on fiat and the needs of later adventures. Rabscuttle and a sick Vianna survive for future adventures, as do Clovis and Sawbones. Matheus should survive to provide information on Bragollach to the cult, but it is not essential. Except for those you wish to save, the others perish.

The storm does not subside, and the PCs must get the remaining supplies indoors before they are buried in thick snow. The refugees help move the cargo, although many stop to gorge themselves on the spilled contents of some cracked crate or collapse in the wreckage from exhaustion. At some point, the PCs find the recovered chest from the Drake in the wreckage. An injured Clovis lays a firm hand on a character's shoulder and whispers, "We'd best leave that buried for now." He attempts to conceal the chest with wreckage and does not say no if the PCs offer to help. Shortly thereafter, night falls and the winds grow even fiercer.

#### PART IV: THE GREAT HALL OF THE GOLDEN CITADEL

In the chaos following the crash, the settlers bring in the supplies from the storm. As the final supplies make it inside, the PCs see that a dozen heavily armed guards have taken posts around the supplies, keeping the voracious rabble at bay. As the gates shut, the crowd parts and the charismatic Halston makes his introduction.

Halston is a man of incredible bulk with a humongous fat belly, and he frequently adjusts a pair of tiny spectacles at the end of his pudgy nose. He steps to the front of the crowd, bowing as low as his great girth allows. In a booming voice he calls out, "Welcome, my friends, to the Golden Citadel. My name is Halston. Captain Clovis! Captain Stimme said we should expect you! Please allow me to offer my services.

"As you can see, we do have a great many mouths to feed and the job can be somewhat... ahem... intimidating. My men and I have administrative services in place to see to the needs of all as best we are able. I am prepared to purchase your entire shipment at an extraordinarily generous sum so that we can help those who cannot help themselves."

The PCs certainly have a stake here, and may negotiate and weigh in on the transaction and the moral dilemma of selling food in front of hundreds of starving onlookers. As the owner of the cargo, Clovis is eager to sell it and leave the Golden Citadel. A DC 25 Sense Motive check reveals Clovis acts a little too eager to sell the goods to Halston, who used his eyes of charming. A DC 21 Spellcraft check identifies the magic used on the dwarf.

The merchant lord's gold collection effort is in serious jeopardy, and he offers 50,000 gp in gems and platinum per 5 tons of recovered cargo (50,000 gp for 5 tons or 150,000 gp for 15). This far exceeds Vianna's profit estimations and increases the size of the characters' cut too. Halston warns the survivors not to simply release the food to the public. Doing so likely leads to uncontrollable riots, with the formation of a black market for food. If the characters prevent Halston's acquisition of the shipment and reject his offer, he views them as enemies.

Vianna strongly urges the sale of the entire shipment, but requests payment in orichalcum, a suggestion that seems (with a DC 20 Sense Motive check) to make Halston very uncomfortable. While Vianna's insistence might have been a deal breaker for Halston if the crew had the means to leave, he relents, trusting that he can earn the money back by charging inordinate sums from the new arrivals for services and goods. If it looks like the deal is about to go through, read or paraphrase the following:

A cry goes up from the throng: "What are we waiting for? What about the starving poor?" A thin, clearly overtaxed

It is time to move inside.



man stumbles through the crowd, averting his eyes from the party with a downward cast. "Halston's prices are too high! How can anyone think of gold anymore? What of the poor? What of the sick? Please give us food!"

In response, Halston steps forward confidently, and his guards nudge the man back into the crowd. "You'll have to excuse Father Jappe. He is quite burdened by his ministrations to the sick, poor, and dying. Please tell us, Father Jappe—what of the dead? Where are their bodies? You have yet to offer satisfactory information. Do you truly think we believe they just got up and walked away, as you suggest? Hmmmm?" The gathered rabble responds with japes and jeers at the cleric, who leaves without response.

At that, Halston turns to the PCs and other survivors with a wide grin and the desire to close the deal. At this point, the characters are most likely unaware of the incredible inflation within the halls, but they might nevertheless try to convince Clovis not to sell the supplies to Halston. They can also take their cut in food rather than gold (at the credit of 10,000 gp per ton).

For purposes of this adventure, a ton of food can feed 100 people for one week without rationing. With morethan 400 people inhabiting the halls (both those in the upper halls and the dwarves and cult below), there are only enough supplies for 10 to 30 days, depending on the losses suffered in the crash and sabotage. With careful rationing, the food can last double this duration, although Halston cares nothing for conservation.

If Halston buys the entire shipment, the PCs soon learn of the inflation that runs rampant in the settlement and have to suffer the consequences of their greed. If they decline and start opening crates and passing out food for free, or turn the duties over to another, a riot might start (see the adventure hook, Riot!). In that case, prices plummet to only 100 times the standard costs (as presented in the CRB), but the PCs make a lethal enemy in Halston. His camp, as well as his cult, opposes the characters at every turn.

If the crew sells the entire shipment to Halston, Clovis gives the group their 5% share of the profits as agreed. In the aftermath of the crash, the PCs are free to do as they please. They might feel some loyalty to Clovis, and he certainly feels loyal to them.

#### The Gold Fever

Gold fever consumes the upper halls. No faction goes untouched by the corruption of the tainted gold–at least a quarter of the settlers are afflicted. At this time, no one outside of the cult knows that the gold is the source of the
disease, and most have simply accepted it as a physical manifestation of greed and a plague of the gods for their shallow materialism. In fact, the chosen term for the disease in the halls is "greed fever."

# THE ECONOMY OF STARVATION

The laws of supply and demand determine almost every NPC action in the refugee camps of the citadel. When the PCs arrive the cost of food is 1,000 times normal thanks to the greed of the merchants, who are loyal to the cult of Mammon. The prices stay at that level if Halston acquires the entire shipment. Presently, a common daily meal of stale bread and stew to feed a family of four costs 1,200 gp.

# THE REFUGEE CAMPS

The vast, cavernous Great Hall of the Golden Citadel is home to dozens of cold, hungry, and desperate miners and gold-rush fools. Since their arrival several weeks ago, the steady stream of hungry prospectors have faced more adversity from the inhospitable dwarves than from the outside storm itself.

Initially, the upper halls were kept warm by the Eight Great Pillars: great brass and iron columns intricately molded with bizarre symbolism and dwarven deities with glowing eyes and mouths, which are the warm chimneys of deeper forges (Area 39). Lean-tos, shacks, tents, and

# TABLE 1-5: DIPLOMACY

#### DC Knowledge (local)

# TABLE 1-4: INFLATED FOOD PRICES

Price
50 gp
300 gp
200 gp
100 gp
20 gp
100 gp
300 gp

hovels sprang up around these warm vents, each a faction of like-minded or opportunistic settlers and each with different circumstances, means, and motivations.

The various factions and camps are presented below. The upper halls are a home base for the characters, allowing them to rest and integrate into the complex society of the large group of desperate, stranded

- 16 Just after the departure of the Drake, dwarves arrested two human miners who were charged and publicly executed for the murder of the Many-Bearded Elder, Madka Podpora, leader of the dwarves. The dwarves disappeared, although some scouts report seeing their settlement deep below, where they have girded for war against some deep threat. Many believe the dwarves conceal massive hordes of food in the lower depths, and some desperate refugees seek out these caches in hopes of feeding their families.
- 18 Three tomb raiders recently explored a poisonous, acidic passage in the lower hold, seeking food, supplies, and wealth, but only two returned. Other refugees whisper that they murdered their companion in the darkness below. The two disappeared into the depths when the community turned against them. Miners also report that placing an ear against the stone walls on the second level reveals a distant howling resonating through the stone there.
- 20 At times, small groups of white-robed priests, including some who once lived in the upper halls, appear among the camps, seeking out select individuals and proclaiming to all the glories of riches and wealth and freedom from care.

They disappear soon afterward, leading converts to their cause below. These same priests confronted Halston after the Drake departed, and he afterward increased his prices, doubling them daily. His armed guard made it impossible to reason with him, and the riches gathered by so many desperate souls quickly changed hands.

22 Rumors hold that a brotherhood of strange, hooded Silent Masters infused with mystical power rule the dwarves. Their esoteric symbols are worked into the elaborate stonework of the Golden Citadel, and the more conspiracy-minded refugees happily point them out to PCs and extrapolate on the evil, thought-controlling meanings behind the bizarre runes, flaming pillars, and occult symbols. Other miners tell of vast caverns full of strange howling and glimpses of stunted humanoids in the lower holds.



individuals. Many adventure hooks are provided as springboards to further excitement, as well as sample NPCs who provide excellent flavor for the settlement. Some are kind and generous, others selfish and violent. Customize it to fit your style of group play.

## 21. Merchant Camps and Bazaar

Many of the settlers are secretly Mammonites with the foresight to hoard food and necessities in order to charge outrageous prices for these precious supplies. When the PCs arrive, the Mammonites charge more than 1,000 gold per day to feed a family. The merchant class here, including Halston, numbers only six individuals, although they buy the loyalty of a healthy retinue of bodyguards with full bellies. Each merchant retains at least six such guards (LE male and female human fighter 4) at any one time, bringing the number of their camp to more than 40 individuals. If confronted, they prattle on about "free markets" and "supply and demand" and cleverly sidestep the moral conundrums that result. This group controls the portcullis access to the lower halls (Area 31).

Halston the Just (LE male human expert 7, use Gamemastery Guide travelling merchant stats): Grossly obese, Halston's gaudy jewelry glints as he plays with the loose wattle under his multiple chins. His smug, purring voice and mouthful of gold-capped teeth make Halston look like a fat feline ready to pounce on wounded prey. The leader of the Inflationists, Halston is a recent convert of the Mammonites, who "coerced" him into joining them after he allowed so much orichalcum to slip out through the Drake. He is now loyal to the cult, funneling the vast sums of collected gold into the massive project in Heartsblood Forge (see Chapter 6). His eyes of charming help immensely in his effort. **Balin Krotov** (N male dwarf rogue 1): The voice, eyes, and ears of Halston, Balin has a tongue that likes to gossip, but useful tidbits slip only when the price is right. In the halls, Balin owes a hundred favors and likewise a hundred favors are due to him as he barters for food, materials, and rumors. If the characters seek goods in the halls, he can make the deal happen.

Adventure Hooks: If the PCs did not agree to Halston's initial terms or catch his attempted enchantment, the merchant pays a cohort to poison a portion of the food supplies with dark reaver powder in an attempt to recorner the market.

## 22. Firewood Hoarder Camp

In recent days, before the arrival of the frost giant at the gate, Jorgen and his group of ten heartless, hardened loyalists braved the harsh winter on the slopes to collect what little firewood was available at this altitude. The lumber is priceless since the elementals left the forges and the chimneys that radiated their warmth went cold.

A single day's worth costs 500 gp. Due to their forays into the lower halls to collect small flammable scraps for inventory, many refugees are openly hostile toward the firewood hoarders. They suspect their young sorceress set the elementals of the lower hold free, shutting off the warm chimneys and increasing the demand for fuel.

Jorgen Stravbard (N male dwarf warrior 4): A grizzled old miner, whose cries of "Well ye curs be durned" from behind his hired guards and roaring fireplace echo through the halls with each freezing settler seeking warmth. Five human thugs (LE male and female warrior 3) rotate guard duty to protect the merchant's inventory, and another four scoundrels (NE male human rogue 1), led by a young sorceress named Vanessi (NE female human sorcerer 4) round out the camp.

These scoundrels are Jorgen's gatherers, who sneak away late at night to explore the deeper halls for more fuel. These trips serve a double purpose, as Vanessi and her four devotees are Mammonite cultists who disrupted the elemental wards at the suggestion of a mysterious lurker known as the Journeyman (see Chapter 2).

Adventure Hooks: After the crash, the characters see Vanessi beguile one of the crewmen of the Manticore with a *charm person* spell to sell her boss the leftover supply crates. The potential source for free firewood from the crash signals the beginning of the end of Jorgen's profitable enterprise here in the halls.

Encountering Jorgen near his camp, the PCs may make DC 20 Perception checks to note that the dwarf tries to hide his secret passion—embroidering in needlepoint. Jorgen is quick to succumb to blackmail, lest his secret be revealed. In return for their discretion, he can confirm that Vanessi met with someone called the Journeyman, and the elemental wards broke shortly thereafter.



## 23. Kobolds (The Knucklebone)

Just as the human miners came to the Golden Citadel seeking aid, so too did some five dozen kobolds. Initially turned out by the dwarves, the kobolds nevertheless worked their way inside the citadel. Once they established a foothold, the tide of tiny, ankle-biting refugees was unstoppable. Led by Old Ossa, the "Squinting King," the kobolds wasted no time setting up a camp for the harlots, drunkards, and parasites that followed at a bar known as the Knucklebone.

After weaseling their way into the dwarven halls, Old Ossa and his gang swiftly installed themselves in the crumbling remains of the airship mooring tower. Using spare parts for silverware, propellers for benches, cut gasbags for tablecloths, and patch planks for tables and bars, they set up a makeshift tavern offering the very worst kind of cheap liquor, harlots of various races, and entertainments such as dire weasel fights, dogmole baiting, and bare-knuckle boxing.

Although loathed by the dwarves, Ossa's people held their own and the result has been quite popular, especially for those with gold to spend and a taste for gambling or violence. At all hours, a motley assemblage of tomb robbers, black marketeers, traitors, drunkards, and fools congregate in the Knucklebone, and roguish adventurers looking for contacts inevitably find themselves at Old Ossa's door. If the PCs need a guard to look the other way, a smuggled forsaken artifact, or just some decent food Ossa can supply it or else knows someone who can.

**Old Ossa, the Squinting King** (NE male kobold rogue 4/barbarian 2): King Ossa, also known as Old Ossa, is determined to keep the halls entertained. Hobbling and hoary, the Squinting King still maintains a gambler's love of life. His eyes glitter at any opportunity for profit or mischief and he can rarely resist a bet. Physically, he's an unimpressive, stooped, and venerable kobold with a severe squint, but what he lacks in appearance he makes up in bombastic bravado. Verbose and creatively abusive, Ossa's mocking tones are unmistakable.

Ossa's goals are to keep his business running and the halls stable and secure. He forged a formidable position in the underbelly of the halls and is not about to give it up to dwarves, forsaken, or Mammon himself. Despite the worsening situation it's become a point of pride for Old Ossa to leave only of his own volition and with bulging sacks of loot. This defiant attitude and drive for order is slowly turning him into a figure of authority among the refugees. He is earning their genuine respect and in return developing a paternal (if abusive) relationship toward his fellow squatters.

Lazy Toe-Belcher (LE male kobold rogue 4): Kicked out of Zobeck for his incessant need to construct annoying traps throughout the Kobold Ghetto, this talented kobold tinkerer joined the gold rush to find some shiny coin. He brought along his 16 offspring, and along the way he is training his fledgling swarm the fine art of trap-building, which they practice all over the halls much to everyone's annoyance.

Dalm Grendshood (LN male dwarf expert 3): Former Brewmaster in the halls, Dalm is now grudgingly partnered with the Knucklebone. He desperately seeks out any travelers who might spare some grain or hops, so he can continue his brewing duties. Dalm maintains a healthy colony of yeast but knows his future batches are doomed to fail without much-needed grain. Some customers claim Dalm hoards his ales and demand they be served, but Dalm retorts that they are not yet properly aged.

Adventure Hook: Captain Clovis calls on the characters to investigate the airship mooring tower to gather supplies and spare parts in a vain attempt to repair the Manticore and rescue as many refugees as possible. Unfortunately, most of the spare propellers, boilers, and steerage fins were dismantled and converted into bar furniture, fight cages, stills, and dancing poles for the kobold entertainment. Clovis's anger needs tempering, and any negotiations for the return of these vital supplies must be handled gingerly.

#### 25. Starving Masses Camps

These unfortunates either squandered their fortunes buying the dwindling and hugely inflated firewood and food from the Mammonites or never struck it rich to begin with. Making up the majority of the settlement, these people all tell the same sad tale of moving their families to the mountains in hopes of finding a new, fruitful life in the shadow of Mount Rygar. With the onset of winter, they discovered the worst qualities of human and dwarf. The starving masses number just over 100, although there were twice that in recent weeks. While all of this camp is starving, few of them are sick due to their lack of orichalcum. This might be notable because the camp stands next to the quarantine camp of the ill.

Adventure Hook: If the PCs investigate Albricius's former lodging, they discover more of the rubbings that match engravings, parts, and gears of Rabscuttle's body almost perfectly. Scrawled on these parchments, in Common, are the messages "They put it inside him, hidden in plain sight. The answer is the gears!" and "Tears of the Maiden will wash away the greed! The mountain cannot be cured of the curse it caught!"

## 26. Quarantined Sick Camp

Gold fever took hold of these unfortunate souls, and no one yet realizes that the corrupt gold is the cause. Many of those present in this foul-smelling camp were once part of the upper echelon of the settlers, but due to their illness their peers abandoned them completely. More go missing from this camp every day, as they succumb to the goldveined curse and, under the sway of Mammon, sneak into the lower halls at night. Some three dozen beds make up this camp, all of which hold sickly folk in various advanced stages of the illness. Both these unfortunates and the starving are tended with care by Father Jappe and his acolytes.

**Father Jappe** (LG male human cleric 7), Brother Yensal (LG male human cleric 5), and Brother Haywood (LG male human cleric 5): These priests of the Golden Goddess Lada bear a heavy burden, as they are the only ones who administer to the sick and keep the gold fever at bay and cast create food and water, which is hardly enough to sustain every parishioner in their flock. When they can, they briefly open up a small soup kitchen for the less fortunate. Even then, they cannot possibly meet the demand of their hungry charges.

Lisbet (CG female gnome expert 4): Lisbet is a lovely gnome with a gift for animal training. Father Jappe cares for her in exchange for the protection her guard animals provide. She leads a small pack of loyal dogmoles, a dire weasel, and her pet boar, Figgillin. The intimidating pack keeps thugs away, so only those in the greatest need are administered the charity of Lada. Dishonest interlopers looking for a free meal long ago learned not to try to take advantage of the clerics' generosity.

**Figgillin** (LE imp): Lisbet is absolutely unaware of her boar's true nature as an imp in the service of Mammon. The starving settlers would gladly devour the boar, but Lisbet fends them off. Figgillin is largely responsible for the distractions that allow newly goldveined to sneak off undetected in the night. Occasionally, the imp takes spider form and scuttles off to report on the camps to his true masters.

Adventure Hooks: Both of Father Jappe's acolytes go missing and he suspects Halston's guards are the guilty culprits. Halston has long wanted to shut down Jappe's weekly charity meals, and the absence of the brothers' *create food and water* spells puts a great strain on the poor, who must instead negotiate with the merchants for food. The characters witness the transformation of Figgillin, and can follow him into the second level forge (Area 39) for a liaison with a mysterious dwarven gearworker, who might be the infamous Journeyman.

Riot! Upset over the rumors of desecration of the dead or unfair food distribution, the weak, poor, and the starving take up simple arms (36 N male and female human commoner 1). They attempt to seize food for themselves from Halston and the Mammonites.

#### 27. Struck It Rich Camp

This once well-to-do faction set up a prosperous camp within the halls, but with so much hoarded wealth, gold fever took hold of this group faster than any other, drastically reducing their numbers. Their camp is now a fetid wasteland rather than the opulent and comfortable space of a few days before. The group consists of 20 humans of all ages and backgrounds, all squandering fortunes that could buy them palatial estates in Zobeck, on meager supplies and vital necessities. Due to their affliction, many camps believe that greed and selfishness are the real cause of the illness.

**Fiver Hazelwood** (CG male human commoner 1): An interesting character among this faction is a fresh-faced young orphan by the name of Fiver Hazelwood. This lovable scamp has endeared himself to these refugees with his cute hijinks and charming nature, and everyone makes sure he gets the best possible care and morsels of food. The "child," however, has everyone fooled—his real name is Mardibiddle Schumeli (CG male gnome bard 4), a rather clever gnome who is using his *hat of disguise* to pass himself off as a human orphan.

**Teskallarin** (CN male human adept 4): With his wild stare, unkempt attire and grubby nails, Teskallarin is an evangelical in the strictest sense. He spends more time ranting and raving from his primitive lectern against the rampant greed consuming the settlement than he does helping those in need. Spittle flies as he races through the camps, raising his bony hands to the sky and deploring the "plague of greed" gripping the pass for any reason.

Adventure Hooks: The kobolds discover Mardibiddle's ruse when a playful child of Lazy Toe-Belcher inadvertently removes his hat of disguise. The PCs may choose to protect the gnome from an enraged rabble determined to get its revenge on the "orphan" who took advantage of their generosity for the last several weeks.

#### 29. Dwarf Miners

## (Griffon Barding and Tack Warehouse)

For now, the dwarves remain largely out of sight, isolated in the lower halls with only the most tenuous control of their ancestral holdings. Many have succumbed to the greed of Mammon and gold fever, fracturing the original population. The murder of the Many-Bearded Elder brought further chaos to the miners, who have since had to deal with the increased exodus, the loss of control of Heartsblood Forge to a growing faction of cultists, and the bizarre appearance of the forsaken—an aggressive, corrupted race that strikes an uncomfortable chord of familiarity. The remaining dwarves who have not succumbed to greed and temptation number less than 100, and many of those joined the mining camps.

The dwarves are currently led by the Silent Masters of the Illuminated Brotherhood, who are usually dismissed as rumors of the more conspiratorially minded. Since the death of the elder, the leaders cut off the dwarven habitations from contact with the refugees. They hope to consolidate power internally before moving on to developing a plan to deal with the refugees and gold fever. As a result, the rampant inflation in the upper chambers goes unchecked, while the political shifting in the dwarfcontrolled lower halls forced many dwarven Mammonites into the open. When dwarven leadership forced their hand through revealing them, the Mammonites took control of the Heartsblood Forge by force.



The dwarven camps are currently accessible only through a heavily guarded stairwell in Area 29 of the upper halls, and the guards, led by Varden Redfel (NG male dwarf fi ghter 4/aristocrat 2), allow no one to pass for any reason. The former dignitary suites on the second level house four dozen dwarves, with another four dozen stationed near the Heartsblood Forge, where they fight sporadic battles to reclaim the territory controlled by the traitorous Mammonites.

Adventure Hook: In an attempt to control their stronghold, an armed retinue of 12 dwarves (LN male and female fighter 4) led by Silent Master Bradobaraxas arrive in the Great Hall and end the food hoarding immediately. Outnumbered by the merchants and their guards, the dwarves retreat under fire unless the PCs intervene.

## RABSCUTTLE

Partially constructed from corrupt gold ore, the eccentric Rabscuttle slides further into dementia and insanity, although many of his insane insights are based on memories and nuggets of truth. As the DM, attempt to work in all of the following events in the first few days after the PCs arrive at the citadel. Try to make these events as innocuous as possible, giving them nogreater or lesser attention than any other roleplaying encounter. Roll randomly for the order in which they occur or present them in any order you think best.

- 1 Rabscuttle wanders the halls alone, but speaks to the air around him, seemingly opening invisible doors and climbing nonexistent stairs, all the while addressing the deceased crew members of the Manticore by name. He appears to be giving a guided tour, pointing to various non-existent carvings and statues and giving apparently nonsensical explanations of their meanings, such as explaining that the statue of some long-forgotten dwarven king was his stepbrother, and that all those flaming pillars represent angels.
- 2 The PCs notice Rabscuttle has been standing inert before the massive, impenetrable adamantine doors that loom over the far end of the hall for hours. He simply gazes upward, and will do so for as long as he is left to linger. If approached by the characters, he replies: "Lives in metal? No, that's me. Lives in meat? No that's you. Ah, yes! Lives in STONE!" He knocks several times in an unusual cadence, waits for a reply that does not arrive, then returns to his day, offering no explanation.
- 3 Rabscuttle ascends Teskallarin's lectern in the Struck it Rich Camp and puffs up as if he is about to give some grand lecture to the gathered crowd of curious onlookers. For the next 10 minutes or so, he repeats lines like, "Hmmm... can't talk about that. No—can't talk about THAT, either. Can't talk about... that. Or that. Can't talk about that." He then spends about 5 minutes silently mouthing animated sentences, presenting a mute soliloquy before losing interest in his dwindling crowd.
- 4 Exasperated, Rabscuttle awakens the characters before dawn. He excitedly tells them, "You must stop the followers of the serpent queen! They seek to poison the liftgas and turn all of the fleshed-ones into snakes! Go to the liftgas caverns and take their relic of impurification! Go quickly, they plan to release the sibilant fumes. Thousands of our kind will perish!"
- 5 Rabscuttle wakes the PCs late one night by running a sharp rock across a rusty iron skillet while cooing and murmuring softly to the stone floor with rapt attention. The screeches are rhythmic but teeth-rattling. For those who can understand Terran, his cooing sounds equivalent to a gentle lullaby wooing the stone to peaceful slumber.
- 6 Rabscuttle screams in an unidentifiable tongue. He pantomimes being pinned, and pitifully accuses any who come to his aid of abandoning him. He cries out accusations such as, "Why won't you help me! I'm trapped! Pinned! Please take this stone from my legs, sir! It hurts! It hurts!" If the characters pantomime removing a great weight from his body, he calms down and forgets the incident almost immediately. Otherwise, after roughly 15 minutes, he falls silent, stands up, and walks away as if nothing happened.

# THE GREAT ADAMANTINE DOORS

The far end of the Great Hall features a set of delicately engraved great adamantine doors. They have no knobs, latches, locks, or handles and are flanked by two massive flaming pillars, similar to Ansgar's tattoos. These doors are impenetrable, carry a powerful forbiddance effect, and can only be opened through very specific means, outlined in Chapter 5, Into the Grand Lodge of the Old Masters (see page 102).

# OTHER AREAS OF THE UPPER HALLS

Many areas in the immediate vicinity of the miner camps are unused by dwarves and refugees alike. The Feast Hall (Area 28) and adjoining kitchen are good examples, although the massive stone tables are sometimes used as emergency beds when the number of sick and dying grows too great. The elemental-powered forges of the second level were built in antiquity as a place where dwarven craftsmen could show off their substantial skills to visiting dignitaries. When the elementals left the Hearthforges far below (see Roots of Madness, page 44), so too did these forges grow cold. As a result, the chimneys in the halls above no longer provide their warmth to the camps.

In the heyday of the Golden Citadel, areas 29 and 30 in the upper hall housed a mighty flock of griffon mounts used by the dwarves in an age before airships. The current occupants continue in this tradition, although the mounts are a far cry from their glorious ancestors. Only a half dozen mangy and mite-ridden griffons remain in area 30. They grow wilder each day, as they cannot hunt in the current blizzard and the dwarves leave them untended. Several griffons recently went missing from their stalls, and some dwarves are beginning to wonder where Brothers Haywood and Yensal acquire the meat for their weekly charity meals.

# PART V: THE OUTING OF BRAGOLLACH

While the PCs are distracted late on the second day after their arrival, the cult of Mammon makes its move on Vianna (Bragollach). If Matheus survived the crash, he is the spy who alerts them. Otherwise, a previous *sending* spell informed the cult of Vianna's actions.

The dragon, increasingly delirious from gold fever, wanders off early on the second day and is easily subdued by the cultists via a *charm monster* spell. The cult then escorts her down into the lower halls for an intricate binding ritual that also forces her to take her true form. The cultists command the dragon to sunder the Master Clockwork Gate and enter the forbidden areas of the citadel.

While the dwarves and the cult can access the lower levels through minor stairways, breaching the clockwork gate and opening the great stairs serves the cult in two ways. First of all, it is difficult for the cult to move large amounts of orichalcum down to their headquarters through the narrow passages they control. Secondly, breaching the clockwork gate will bring the predations of the forsaken down upon the trapped miners, hopefully drawing attention away from the cult itself. None of the minor passages down are accessible to the adventurers.

The cult ceases to use its hidden ways once the door is breached, and the dwarves will not reveal their secrets, even to others of their own race. However, there's a small chance to find it if the PCs use divination magic—such as *detect thoughts*—or a spell that locates a particular place.

The lively activities of the halls are interrupted by a tremendous reverberation from the lower hold. The citadel quivers as if some great knife has been dragged across the side of the mountain. The miners stare in stunned disbelief as the tremendous cacophony echoes in a teeth-rattling, bone-jarring chorus. A final metallic clang shakes the halls and quiet settles across the camps.

If the PCs investigate, they learn that the only way down available to them is through a locked and barred portcullis (Area 31) controlled by Halston's armed guards. These guards collect a toll from those seeking food in the depths but allow goldveined creatures to freely pass. When the PCs approach, Blithus the gatekeeper confronts them and demands payment.

Blithus tells the PCs the toll is 20 gp per person to pass through the gate (one way), and he only accepts orichalcum. If the PCs are still on good terms with Halston, he intervenes to give the PCs free passage through and back this one time as, he says, "a gesture of good faith." Otherwise, the PCs must pay. The PCs might consider forcing the gate, but make sure they realize that doing so would bring the entire merchant camp against them.

With a slight sneer as he accepts the payment, Blithus adds, "Going to fetch your friend, are you? She the one down there making all that racket? She didn't look too good when she passed by a half hour ago. Maybe you should bring her to see Father Jappe." If asked what he means, Blithus mutters about the "blonde dwarf woman who crashed with the rest of you" but he has nothing further of importance to say.

# THE HALLS BELOW

Descending into the lower hold, the characters enter the massive gateway chamber (Area 36). Unlike the exceptional stonework of the upper hall, this first chamber is rough-hewn. At the far end, three incredible clockwork and rune-graven gates are deeply inset into the stone.

The closest door to the stairs (Area 37) leaks noxious green gas that hovers in the space near the door. On the stone wall above, scribbled grafitti in dwarven says: "Danger! Poisoned Passage" and "Volund save us! Crying eyes are our salvation!" The Master Clockwork Gate (Area 38) is the largest of the gates, and has been severely damaged. After describing the area, read or paraphrase the following.



The larger middle gate was recently torn asunder, the once-magnificent gears bent and broken, engraved runes still smoldering. This is apparently the source of the recent pandemonium. A grisly scene is laid out before the gates. Several emaciated refugees are arranged in a circle on the stone floor, their throats slit and their chests exposed, displaying some bizarre rune carved into their flesh. Several small candles have burned to nubs near the bodies, and more runes—these smeared as if by some giant brush—are painted in what appears to be blood in the center of the group.

A DC 25 Spellcraft check reveals that some intricate binding ceremony took place here, and that many of these symbols match Ansgar's tattoos (a clever ruse by the cultists to shift blame to the Brotherhood). A DC 23 Perception or Survival check reveals that something very large moved through this chamber, although a *pass without trace* spell from a wand obscures the trail and prevents any further tracing of the creature's whereabouts.

## THE LONE SURVIVOR

As the PCs take in the scene, they see a wounded and hobbled man dragging himself across the floor from the forge area toward the stair. This is Ogdred, a Mammonite injured in the abduction and abandoned after being subjected to modify memory in order to provide a false cover story to anyone investigating the disappearance. The man looks witless but reveals the following false account of events when confronted.

"We were down here shuffling around for food when a dwarf came through, acting real strange and messing with that big gate. The poor girl looked terrible—definitely had the greed fever. We started talking to her, but she spouted out some gibberish and we couldn't move! She'd put some kind of spell on us! She tossed me aside like a rack of lamb, but took Gen there, then Yethris and those other two there and started carving them up with those weird symbols. I couldn't even scream.

She lit those candles and started muttering a bunch of funny words, then she just went wild and started changing! I mean, she started getting big. Real big. Before you knew it, she was growing a tail and wings and, well, I don't know how to explain this exactly, but she turned into a big 'ol dragon. You might not believe me, but she tore through that gate. Just peeled it like an onion. It made a terrible racket! When she was done, she changed back to the way she was and walked down those stairs, just as pretty as you please. Not long after that, all that howling started and, you know, I just don't feel right."



# The Forsaken (el 11)

A DC 15 Listen check does reveal a distant, but rapidly approaching, disconcerting howling that clouds the mind, emanating from the middle gate. Ogdred crawls toward the stairs in terror. The forsaken, long ago locked into the heart of the mountain, waited millennia for release, and they know the time has come. Allow the PCs 3 rounds to prepare themselves before the forsaken arrive.

The raiding party consists of nine forsaken soldiers. Three of these soldiers hold howlers on leashes, which they release as they near the sundered gates, charging into the room to confront anyone they see.

## Forsaken CR 4

Male Derro fighter 2 CE Small humanoid (derro) Init +6; Senses Perception +1 DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +2 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural) hp 47 (2d10+3d8+20) Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +6 Defensive Abilities bravery +1; SR 14 Weakness vulnerability to sunlight

# OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft. Melee shortsword +6 (1d4/19-20/x2) Ranged repeating light crossbow +7 (1d6/19-20/x2) Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6 Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3) At will—darkness, ghost sound 1/day—daze, sound burst STATISTICS

Str 11, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 5, Cha 16 Base Atk +4; CMB +3; CMD 15 Feats Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse Skills Climb -2, Escape Artist +0, Perception +1, Ride +0, Stealth +8, Swim -2 Languages Aklo, Undercommon SQ madness (Ex), poison Use (Ex) Combat Gear repeating crossbow bolts (15), medium spider venom poison (8 doses); Other Gear repeating light crossbow, shortsword, studded leather, buckler SPECIAL ABILITIES

Madness (Ex) These derro use their Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of their Wisdom modifier, and are immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a *miracle* or *wish* can remove a derro's madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma.

Poison Use (Ex) The derro do not risk poisoning



themselves accidentally while poisoning a weapon.

**Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex)** The derro take 1 point of Con damage after every hour they are exposed to sunlight.

#### **Tactics**

**During Combat** The three packmasters charge with the howlers and flank with them, while the remaining forsaken move within 30 feet and fire their crossbows. The archers rush to replace the fallen in melee. In addition, a single forsaken fires a weeping bombard (see Roots of Madness, page 44) from beyond the archer's position, hitting allies if he must. He has 4 shots, and the surrounding archers protect him in melee if approached.

Morale The forsaken fight madly to the death.

# Howlers (3) CR 3

hp 37; Bestiary 2

#### **Tactics**

**During Combat** The howlers charge, then flank with their masters in melee.

**Morale** Loyal to the end, the howlers fight until slain. If the forsaken perish first, the howlers flee.

# CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the gates sundered, the lower halls are now filled with the distant echoes of nearby howlers' insanityinducing caterwaul. Areas 35–41 remain inhospitable for the duration of the adventure due to the maddening effects the howls have on those in such close proximity.

The mountain's interior now lies open to both the PCs and to other interests within the citadel. Halston moves quickly to find a way to profit from this new development, increasing the fee to move through the portcullis at Area 31 to 100 gp per person, per trip. He sees no increase in profit from this move, however, as the people in the upper halls for the most part see no reason to travel deeper into the mountain.

Their distrust of the dwarves, fear of the noise that rent the clockwork doors, and outrage over Halston's fee increase kill the curiosity in most of the upper hall residents. Those few who do venture downward over the next few days do not return.



# CHAPTER TWO: ROOTS OF MADNESS

By Ben McFarland

# Adventure Background

"Dark was the Night" ends at a clockwork gate to the lower halls. Encamped in the upper halls of the Citadel, the human and kobold miners establish a truce with their dwarven hosts. An uneasy peace exists, but the lack of food and warmth for all threaten to shatter it. If the PCs are not yet 9th level at the end of Dark was the Night, they have enough down time between the events of that adventure and the beginning of this one.

Provide them enough additional adventures and side treks as needed to reach 9th level. The dwarves, kobolds, and humans brought together in the frigid upper halls should provide plenty of opportunities for adventure, especially as their resources, supplies, and food dwindle.

# Adventure Summary

This adventure takes the PCs into the mountain, where they find the ancient secret of Rygar's past and the cult that wants to decide its future—all while trying to save the recently arrived miners seeking shelter.

The PCs travel to the Hearthforges and meet the Fire Shepherd, learn of the false gearworker and his journeyman, discover the strange sickness that follows in their wake, and then plan to sabotage the connection between the Hearthforges and the Shank. Along the way, they may interact with Imperial ghasts, who lurk with unknown intentions. The forsaken constantly harass the PCs as they explore large sections of the Hearthforges complex, which is overrun and despoiled by the crazed and foul creatures.

In the depths of the Hearthforges, the PCs witness the Journeyman's corruption of the gold dragon Bragollach and the dragon's flight into the ventilation shafts leading to the Shank. After defeating the Journeyman and his co-conspirators and foiling the false gearworker, the PCs can help the Fire Shepherd restore the elementals to the Hearthforges. To do so, though, they must hold back a ravening mob of forsaken until the furnaces are lit. Their task complete, the characters return to the Citadel accompanied by the Fire Shepherd.

# TRACKING IMPORTANT CLUES

Several clues in this adventure and the prior one will be important in Chapter Three. These are listed here so that you are aware of their importance and can make sure that the party has a shot at finding at least some of them. The following tables outline where the various clues appear that the PCs might notice. In the tables, "DN" refers to Dark is the Night and "RM" refers to this adventure, Roots of Madness.

# PART I: THE UPPER HALLS

The leaders of the dwarven citadel and the miners camps realize that to stay alive, they need to restore the Hearthforges that recently went cold. Scouting indicates the elementals that provided the heat left the furnaces and are roaming one of the lower halls. Several priests of the Healing Goddess Lada ask the party to go to the Hearthforges, speak to the dwarves to determine why the elementals left their furnaces, and convince the Fire Shepherd to restore the truant elementals, while making sure that none escape to threaten the Citadel.

At the group's quarters, Varden Redfel (NG dwarf fighter 4/expert 2) approaches the party with Father Jappe (LG human cleric of Lada 7), Brother Yensal (NG human cleric of Lada 5), and Brother Haywood (NG human cleric of Lada 5) in tow. Redfel and the clerics bring a small meal of unspoiled food for the player characters and ask for a moment of their time.

Varden Redfel is a genial dwarf wearing a polished but tested breastplate. Redfel waits a moment for the clerics to distribute the food before he clears his throat and says, "I am Varden Redfel, First of the Stair Guard. I apologize for the intrusion. We come to petition you for a favor. I'm sure you've noticed that the halls have grown no warmer since the blizzard resumed. Indeed, as most of the fuel is spent, and the situation will only grow worse when hungry people grow cold and tempers flare." The air has certainly grown chill in the past few hours.

"We need someone to go to the Hearthforges, in the roots of the mountain, and determine why the elemental furnaces no longer generate heat. Abelard, the Fire Shepherd, usually tends them with a cadre of devotees to Volund, but we've not heard back from either group we sent to investigate and fear the worst. Are you willing to go?"

Some probable questions, and their corresponding answers, follow:

What's it worth to you? Varden and the clerics grimace. The dwarf looks as if he's bitten into something foul. He answers, "Well, if you need pay we can work something out. We have plenty of gold to carry back to Zobeck, and we can trade with some of the craftsmen."



Brother Yensal adds, "Lada smiles on those who aid the suffering. You can count on our gifts and meager resources when you return."

Father Jappe says, "This duty would serve the whole population of the Citadel. It is the right thing to do. Do you really require pay to help those who cannot help themselves?"

Why us? Father Jappe answers, "You're as close to a neutral party as we have here. There's been some... strong discussion that perhaps the groups sent down the Great Stair were ambushed to weaken the positions of those who stayed behind. Ludicrous, but we need this and no one objects to your selection."

Redfel adds, "Captain Stonethrower mentioned that you acquitted yourselves quite well during the journey here. Since the other two groups disappeared, we think something dangerous is lurking in the deeper halls of the Citadel. We thought it best to send down veterans."

Who was in the other groups? Redfel answers: "We sent two small expeditions down to the Hearthforges. One of the Journeymen gearworkers led the first group. The second was a group of volunteers. Neither party has returned or sent word."

How do you even know anyone's alive down there? Did you communicate with them? Brother Haywood answers: "Our divinations show that dwarves still live within the Hearthforges, and that the Fire Shepherd is trapped inside, as well. Is not that enough?"

Elementals? Are they enslaved? Redfel answers: "The elementals entered into a bargain with the Lords of the Halls long ago. They are not enslaved, but must serve in the Hearthforges for some time to come. We know they left the furnaces because the air from the ventshafts is cold."

What do we need to do when we get there? How do we get elementals back to work? Redfel answers: "You must find Abelard. He has run the Hearthforges for generations and knows how to keep the Elementals in line. Whatever happened, it's keeping him from the furnaces."

How will we recognize Abelard? Redfel answers: "He's the senior cleric of Volund in the Hearthforges. You cannot mistake him."

What if we find treasure? Redfel answers: "Unless you take it from the corpse of some creature who is not a dwarf or from the Citadel, you can be certain it's an heirloom of our people. While we would not object to your using them to perform your duty, this place is our home; try to respect it. Do not worry about your reward; we will make sure you are fairly compensated."

Development: The emissaries ask the PCs to depart as soon as possible. The storm outside is growing stronger, and the upper halls are becoming even less hospitable. Varden Redfel provides a map of the route and enough foodstuffs for two days, as the trip down to the Hearthforges can take some time. Other considerations, like weapons, magic, or other specialty gear, is subject to the inflationary economy that grips the population.

# DOWN THE STAIR

As the PCs descend into the darkness of the Great Stair:

The passage spirals around a great open shaft, then becomes more of a tunnel—turning posts and corners, with the hum of the shank carried on gusts of cold wind. That wind is sharp enough to leave a hint of frost on beards and collars.

The stairs are abandoned but not empty. Vast halls and galleries stretch into darkness and show signs of old battles. Fragments of weapons, bits of shattered bones, and blasted marks of soot litter the path. An eerie silence hangs behind the soft drone of the distant dwarven gearworks.

# TRAVEL DOWN THE GREAT STAIR

Travel from the Citadel to the Hearthforges requires the better part of a day, including short breaks for rest and food. If the party decides to venture off of the Great Stair, Perception checks reveal one or more of the following.

# TABLE 2-1: SEARCH RESULTS

## DC Result

- 5 Graffiti. "The orichalcum—it destroyed us!"
- 7 Graffiti. "Balik, we're headed for the place we agreed. We wait until the supplies demand we go."
- **9** Graffiti. "Only the forsaken have a claim here anymore."
- **10** A skeleton behind some fortification, armored but unarmed.
- 11 Graffiti. "Neherak's Hall: Trespas<bloodsmear>ill be gutted!"
- 12 Scorch marks from a large fire.
- 13 Graffiti. "Mine mine MiNe MINE mine MinE! YOURS!"
- 14 A last stand—a broken-in door, skeletons with obvious wounds, and dark blood smears.
- 15 Graffiti. "This is Volund's punishment for us!"
- 16 Scorch marks, possibly from spells.
- 17 Graffiti. "Beware! They take prisoners, kill your wounded!"
- 18 Melted stone spots, possibly from spells.
- **20** Remnants of a previous trip—a cold fire circle and some trash. A DC 15 Survival check reveals that these remnants are recent.

# Author's Note: Building Atmosphere

This encounter showcases the initial descent into the ancient dwarven halls. The long-ago infighting is recorded in the graffiti of doomed holdouts and survivors; whatever happened here was desperate and vicious. Feed the players doubts to build on later in the adventure. Who built the Halls? Who should answer for the ancient tragedy, or are all survivors long dead?

Roughly six hours into the journey, read or paraphrase the following:

At long last you arrive at the end of the gallery that your map shows leading up to the Hearthforges. The air is warmer here, and a sliver of dull, copper-colored light glimmers up ahead.

A DC 10 Perception check reveals shouting, a terrible grinding sound, and screams of pain. It sounds like a battle is taking place up ahead. Allow the PCs to create battle plans or scout around. Once at least one PC moves forward to investigate, read or paraphrase the following:

This hall looks like some kind of bailey. Several broken barricades yet stand, partially dismantled and stained with long red splatters and smears along the walls and floors. A few bodies lay scattered and unmoving about the shattered fortifications.

The light from the chamber ahead grows stronger, and the sounds of battle grow louder. Now, the DC to hear the battle is reduced to 0. Allow those who move quickly to the door to make Perception checks on Table 2-2.

# TABLE 2-2: PERCEPTION

#### DC Result

- 15 None of these corpses are armed or armored, but they all show signs of participating in battle.
- 25 There are some loose leather straps and belts, all of which might be used on armor or weapons, but they appear slightly chewed.

Once the PCs move to the door, they reach Area 1 and the encounter there. For each round that the party delays, add another corpse of a dwarven forgeworker at the elder xorn's feet. These freshly killed goldveined dwarves are not scavenged by the elder xorn, and do not modify the EL of the encounter.

# PART II: THE HEARTHFORGE

The Hearthforge is the working section of the Rygar Halls where ore was smelted into metal; metal was worked into alloys; and goods were forged with fire, sweat, and magic. Much of this area has been a place for the forsaken and the fire elementals for decades, since the halls were abandoned. The presence of Abelard, the fire shepherd, kept the area from complete abandonment and decay.

Some encounters within the Hearthforges call for Perception checks. To simplify play, ask the players to roll eight Perception checks, then record their results for later use in the Hearthforges.

AC (High) 11, touch –1, flat-footed 11 (–8 size, –3 Dex, +12 natural)

AC (Low) 23, touch –1, flat-footed 23 (–8 size, –3 Dex, +24 natural)

## Ceiling Traps (5)

**Type** Mechanical; Perception DC 16; Disable Device DC 18 **Effects** trigger action (thunderstone, *shatter*, or *sound burst* within 10 ft.); Atk +20 melee (8d6, stone blocks; blocks passage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.square area);.

CR 6

The ceiling traps are marked "T" on the map outside areas 1, 10, 12, 15, and between 5 and 9. When triggered, each creates a deadfall of rock and debris that seals the passage. A thunderstone, or any other spell or effect that does sonic damage or causes an explosion (DM's discretion concerning other effects that might set it off) within 10 feet of the marked square activates the trap there.

# 1. Welcoming Party (el 11)

Approaching the Hearthforges, the PCs hear combat and see the signs of a limited siege—a series of broken barricades and finally, the smashed doors that lead into the Hearthforges. Advancing, they see a strange, golden elder xorn battling a pair of wild golden-eyed dwarves. At least a dozen corpses are underfoot.

As a PC crosses the threshold or attacks through the doorway, the dwarves notice, give a great shout, and turn their attention to the interruption. The dwarves operate a jerry-rigged molten metal sprayer. This requires a two-dwarf crew: one operating the sprayer and the other working the bellows pump.

Left unmolested by the PCs, the elder xorn kills all the dwarves without being wounded. He remains in the hall, consuming the molten metal sprayer until defeated by the PCs. In this case, award experience for an EL 10 encounter instead of an EL 11 and have the elder xorn vomit up an additional 8 gp of cursed gold when killed.

A lantern with *continual flame* provides illumination at the doors. The metal sprayer creates a burst of light that provides shadowy illumination in its area of effect while it is fired.





Molten Metal Sprayer: 15-foot cone or a 40-foot line; 2d6 + 2d6 fire; DC 18 Reflex halves; DC 15 Fortitude or entangled for 1d4 rounds. Roll 1d20 when fired. On a natural 1 it explodes, dealing 4d6 points of bludgeoning and 2d6 hp fire damage to any creature within 15 feet.

The sprayer is easy to figure out. Any character who examines or attempts to use it need only make a DC 7 Intelligence check. It fires for only 1 round unless a second person operates the bellows. Operating the bellows or the sprayer uses a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

**Terrain:** The area within 15 feet of the barricade is littered with rubble and corpses, and acts as rough terrain—the elder xorn ignores the rough terrain with its earthglide ability, but the dwarves utilize it, hiding behind barricades. There are 15 forsaken corpses and eight goldveined dwarf corpses. The elder xorn consumed the gold from any killed before this battle, so the only cursed gold available from this room comes from the two dwarves manning the molten metal sprayer and any corpses that result from earlier delays.

The ceiling is 30 feet high.

#### Goldveined Xorn, Elder

#### CR 9

NE Large outsider (earth, evil, extraplanar) Init +1; Senses all-around vision, darkvision (60 feet), tremorsense (60 feet); Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, -1 size, +16 natural) hp 130 (15d8+63 HD)

Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +11

**Defensive Abilities** 50% chance to ignore a critical hit; **DR** 5/bludgeoning, **DR** 5/silver or gold, **Immune** flanking, cold, fire, confusion and insanity effects; **Resist** electricity 10; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrow (20 feet) Melee bite +21 (6d6+7/x2), claw x3 +19 (1d6+7/x2) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th) 1/day—charm person (DC 12), rusting grasp Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 25, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +15 (+17 Bull Rushing); **CMD** 26 (28 vs. Bull Rush)

Feats Cleave, Diehard, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Appraise +18, , Intimidate +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +18, Perception +18, Stealth +14 Survival +18 (+20 following tracks or underground) Languages Dwarvish, Terran

**SQ** all-around vision, all that glitters, earth glide (Ex), fatal bequest, like treasure piled high, madness, strength of metal, the spaces between

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision The goldveined xorn can see in all directions and cannot be flanked.

**Earth Glide (Ex)** A goldveined xorn can glide through any sort of natural earth or stone as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves no sign of its passage nor hint at its presence to creatures that don't possess tremorsense. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a xorn moves the xorn back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

## Tactics

- **During Combat** While it likes to preserve as much of a meal as possible, the goldveined xorn uses its *rusting grasp* against heavily armed or armored foes.
- **Morale** The goldveined xorn is insane and fights to the death to garner more wealth.

#### Goldveined Dwarf Fighter 4

#### CR 4

Male Dwarf fighter 4 LE Medium humanoid (Dwarf) Init +6; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception -1 DEFENSE AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +2 Dex) **hp** 55 (4d10+20) Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +1 Defensive Abilities bravery +1, defensive training, ignore critical hits 50% chance; DR 5/bludgeoning, 5/silver or gold; Immune confusion and insanity effects OFFENSE Spd 20 ft. Melee +1 dwarven waraxe +7 (1d10+4/x3)Spell-like Abilities (CL 4th) 1/day—rusting grasp. STATISTICS Str 13, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12 Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 17 Feats Diehard, Improved Initiative, Power Attack,

- Toughness, Weapon Focus: Dwarven Waraxe, Weapon Specialization: Dwarven Waraxe
- Skills Appraise +7 Acrobatics +0, Climb -1, Craft (blacksmith) +7, Escape Artist +0, Fly +0, Intimidate +8, Ride +0, Stealth +0, Swim -1
- Languages Common, Dwarven
- **SQ** armor training 1 (Ex), greed, fatal bequest. hardy +2, madness, slow and steady, stability, stonecunning +2, strength of metal
- **Combat Gear** potion of resist fire 10; **Other Gear** +1 dwarven waraxe, +1 breastplate, cloak of resistance +1

Development: After they die, the elder xorn and the two dwarves vomit small pools of quickly cooling gold. This gold stays in liquid form for 2 minutes after death and then becomes a chip of solid gold. If the party delayed outside to search the bodies, add 2 gp of tainted gold per round of delay.

The lich hounds' lifesense ability keeps the Imperial ghasts aware of the party's presence once the PCs pass beyond the doors within the dwarves' barricade (see area 12 for ghasts and lich hounds). They know when the party approaches and are prepared when the PCs open the doors to area 12. The ghasts cannot be surprised.

#### Speak With Dead

If the PCs question these corpses using *speak with dead*, the dead have a +3 Will save against the spell. All of them can explain that a sickness infected the workers, and even those who seemed to improve one day woke insane the next. Before long, everyone was infected. The dead do not all know of the forsaken attacking, and most do not realize what the forsaken are, other than perhaps crazed dwarves.

Multiple *speak with dead* spells may be required to make the connection.

# SEEKING THE FIRE SHEPHERD

The first PC to approach the doors into the citadel hears a voice say suddenly in Common, "Hello? You there! Hello! I am Abelard—can you hear me? Come to the furnaces and free me! I hear you, you know. Come to the Chamber, set me free!"

The voice seems to originate out of thin air and belongs to the Fire Shepherd, speaking through one of the many tiny tunnels that honeycomb the Hearthforges. He gives his basic directions to the chamber, but he does not consider the characters' lack of familiarity with the area. While he can hear the PCs, he cannot guide them after they leave Room 1 unless they enter Room 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, or 13. If the PCs question him, see possible questions and answers in the Speaking with the Fire Shepherd section in Room 4.

Unless otherwise noted, the ceiling is 10 feet high in all rooms and the corpses bear the marks of gold fever infection.

#### 2. Warehouse Cavern

Crates fill this arched cavern. Three rows of wooden boxes stretch back into darkness.

The PCs can hear the soft chitter and squeak of a rat, but play up player paranoia if the PCs search through the crates. The PCs can find two recent corpses here, both dwarves caught in the western corners and stabbed multiple times. Their belt pouches are missing, and they wear blood-soaked artisan's outfits. The one in the southwestern corner has a gear from the Furnace Gear Chamber (Room 4) on a cord around his neck.

More than 75 crates are stacked up to the 15-foot high ceiling and contain enough food for 45 people for 14 days. Others contain a large amount of iron rod stock. The PCs can find mundane equipment here at your discretion.

#### 3. Main Furnace Chamber

A great network of huge air ducts enters this room from the western wall and feeds into the three enormous furnaces there. It continues overhead to the lone furnace on the eastern wall, and joins a junction that reenters the bedrock of the mountain. The furnaces are great rectangular constructions, crafted to resemble great towers, with the ducts shaped like billowing plumes of smoke. They sit, cool and unoccupied.

Smooth hexagonal paving stones cover the floor, and the stones are inlaid with silvery dwarven runes. The ceiling is 40 feet high. The runes spell names of previous Hearthforge workers. Prying them up requires 2 hours and recovers 200 sp worth of silver in total. A DC 20 Perception check reveals a gear for the Furnace Gear Chamber (Room 4) hanging on a hook beside the eastern forge.

From this room, the PCs can hear and attempt to speak to the Fire Shepherd.

## 4. Furnace Gears Chamber: The Broken Door

A short dogleg passage ends at a massive door, fashioned from an enormous cog mechanism. The door has more gears embedded within it, but they look sabotaged and broken.

The goldveined dwarves sabotaged the door and tore apart its inner workings in their greed.

A configuration of three slightly smaller gears thread this massive cog set on edge to act as a door.

A mechanism of hand-sized gears overlays part of it, apparently for unlocking and opening the door, but someone sabotaged it, leaving large gaps evident among the cogs.

As the PCs consider the door and its inner workings, the Fire Shepherd hears them and speaks up again. His voice sounds tinny and seems to come from above the door. "Hello," he says, "I'm glad you made it! I hope you can open the door, so we can speak face to face."

The PCs must rummage through the piled dead to find the parts to open it and release the Fire Shepherd. They can attempt Craft (trapsmith), Knowledge (engineering), or Disable Device checks to correctly judge what will be required to repair the door.

# TABLE 2-3: CRAFT, KNOWLEDGE, OR DISABLE DEVICE

DC Result

15 Several gears are missing, and perhaps another component.

- 20 Several gears are missing, and the handle.
- 25 Six gears and the handle are missing

# **OPENING THE DOOR**

The party can open the door by one of three methods, or a combination of all three, although they might possess other means of bypassing or opening it. For the purpose of opening this door, a successful skill check, *knock* spell, or charge from a *chime of opening* effectively counts as replacing two of the missing gears or one gear and the key handle.

Repairing the door by finding and replacing the six missing gears and key handle returns it to true functionality. The gears are scattered about the Hearthforges in Rooms 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 11. The key handle is located in Room 9.

Alternatively, the PCs can make five Disable Device DC 25 checks, each with an accompanying DC 23 Strength check. Up to three characters (who must be different from the character performing the skill check) can cooperate on the Strength check—one is primary and two assist.

Finally, the PCs can cast four *knock* spells or use four charges from a *chime of opening*.

If the PCs cut through or bust down the door instead, they face a steel door with hardness 8, 400 hit points, and a break DC of 32. The room's walls have a sheet of metal plating preventing *stone shape* or *passwall*. A permanent *hallow* with a *dimensional anchor* protects the room beyond, as well as the door itself. Other solutions might work at your option.

#### Speaking with the Fire Shepherd

The PCs might have some questions for the Fire Shepherd, Abelard Feuerhirte (LN male azer cleric 10 of Volund; see Appendix). Some likely questions and answers follow.

How do we open the door? "My divinations tell me that all the parts of the door mechanism are within the Hearthforges. Find them, repair the door, and it will open. Opening spells might work as well. If you tell me what it looks like now, perhaps I can tell you what's missing."

Abelard confirms the missing parts, describes them, and explains how to repair them if they are returned. This advice provides a +4 circumstance bonus on any Craft (trapsmith), Knowledge (engineering), or Disable Device checks made during the repair process.

Who are you? "I am Abelard, the Fire Shepherd, caretaker of the Hearthforges."

What does that mean? "It is my responsibility to watch after the fire elementals who keep these halls warm."

Why aren't they doing their jobs, then? "A powerful elemental, part stone, part fire, convinced them to abandon the Hearthforges after the dwarves gave in to madness. When I went to stop them, his gilded tongue deafened them to my logic."

How did you get trapped back there? "I came to direct the defense of the Hearthforges. As madness took the last of my assistants, they stole the gears and trapped me here."

Why did not you cure the madness? "At first, we took it for a normal sickness, and it spread faster than my spells could halt it. Then the forsaken attacked. That, combined with my entrapment, doomed the good dwarves here. I could only listen to what unfolded."

Can't you just cast a spell to escape? "Long ago, when we established this chamber, the Elders hallowed and warded it to provide a secure place where the defense of the Hearthforges could be safely and effectively coordinated. I cannot leave except by the door. We did not expect our own cleverness to turn against us. Had you not arrived when you did, I would have attempted to dispel the protective magics. I was loath to do so."

Why should we believe you? "You have nothing but my words to trust. True, this might be a clever ruse and I might be an awful evil sealed away, desperate for escape. But no abjuration magic wards the door. If I were some demon, the dwarves would have used more than a door and a magical anchor to bind me!"

A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that the Fire Shepherd seems sincere.



Once released, the Fire Shepherd explains that forsaken attacked his forge after his dwarven assistants got sick. Just before that, a gearworker and his Journeyman came asking about the Hearthforge and how it distributes heat through the ventshafts to the Shank.

Abelard did not trust them, though, as they asked questions to which they should have known the answers. The azer gave the gearworkers inaccurate directions. If the PCs leave the Hearthforge with the Fire Shepherd, he informs them that if they hurry, they can prevent the sabotage of the interface between the ventshafts and the Shank. If asked who the forsaken are, Abelard calls them "degenerate, filthy undermountainers, invaders of our realms," and refuses to speak further on the matter.

#### 5. Cistern Cavern

Two 20-foot-wide wells dominate this room. Their dark, glassy surfaces betray an occasional ripple from a falling drop of water. The two wells fill from a natural spring.

Overflow provides running water in the kitchen and infirmary (Room 8) and steam powered trip hammers in the maintenance forge (Room 6). The wells are 25 feet deep.

A dwarven corpse fouls the southern well; the back of his head is crushed, his pockets and boots weighed down with iron rod stock. His 4 gp of cursed gold sits on the well bottom between his feet as four small spheres.

#### 6. Maintenance Forge

A large forge and anvil dominate this square room. The upper half of a scorched body lies in the cooling forge cinders. Another lies over the anvil with a hammer buried in his ribcage. A third corpse hangs from the side of the workbench, her head pinched in a heavy vise.

The ceiling is 15 feet high in this room. The forge can be cleaned up and put to use, if needed. A set of masterwork smith's tools is available. A DC 15 Perception check reveals 8 gp of cursed gold on the floor. A control gear for the Furnace Gear Chamber (Room 4) is hidden in the pocket of the corpse draped over the anvil.

## 7. Dormitories

These rooms once housed 60 dwarves. When the PCs enter the first, read or paraphrase the following.

This small room has clearly been searched. Some doors are shut tight, others hang open, and a few are smashed open like a child's toy bank. The room holds a threetiered bunk bed, three footlockers, and a writing desk.

This area has two floors, identical to one another and one directly over the other. All of the rooms are identically furnished, although those behind smashed doors contain signs of a struggle, with furniture and clothing scattered and tossed about. These rooms have a total of 12 corpses and 6 gp of cursed gold scattered between the two floors. There are 20 total rooms. A DC 15 Perception check reveals a gear for the Furnace Gear Chamber (Room 4) on the desk of one undisturbed room.

#### 8. Infirmary

This long room once housed the sickened and injured. It contains nine beds, all covered with bloodstains. Two of the beds are overturned and eight corpses lie scattered in the wreckage.

Two doors stand open to the east. One is a supply closet, with ransacked pots, boxes, and pouches lying about the floor. The other is an office. The desk within is overturned as if to form a barrier to the door, although it looks as though it was split with an axe. Much of the office is splattered with blood.

The supply closet holds enough herbs for two masterwork healing kits and three antitoxin doses. Assembling them requires a DC 20 Heal check. A DC 15 Perception reveals a metal pan underneath one bed containing a cooled disk of cursed gold worth 5 gp, under which lays a gear for the Furnace Gear Chamber (Room 4).

#### 9. Kitchen

The kitchen is large enough to accommodate preparations for dozens of dwarves. In addition to the two doors that lead to the dining hall, a third door leads through a small passage into the cistern chamber. As the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

What was once a kitchen now serves as the final resting place for at least two dwarves. One is stuffed in a stone oven, booted feet hanging out the front.

The other lies slumped against a countertop, a vicious cleaver wound splitting his skull, his apron stained with dark, port-colored blood. Pots, pans, and cooking utensils of all kinds lay scattered around the room.

The sinks provide running water and the still-edible food can feed 10 people for three days. A DC 20 Perception check reveals the key to Room 4, which is stuffed in a sack of flour inside a cabinet. The dwarf on the floor has 2 gp worth of cursed gold in his pockets, and his hands are covered in flour.

#### 10. Dining Hall

The massive dining hall was the scene of intense but shortlived fighting. In better times, the hall could seat half the dwarves of the citadel, but now it merely hosts four corpses. As the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

Six enormous tables occupy the bulk of this room. Two tables are overturned, and the broken remains of benches and chairs lie scattered around the room.



Walking through the room reveals the four dwarven corpses spread throughout it. They remain where they fell, with two still gripping the knives they stuck into each other. Small lumps of cursed gold worth 14 gp lie about the room. The ceiling is 20 feet high.

# 11. Workshops

The doors to these two workshops bear the same label of "Workshop" in Dwarven. Both are equipped with fine sets of tools for many trades, all of which have been rifled through and cast aside. As the PCs enter the open room, read or paraphrase the following.

This room once obviously served as a workshop, likely well organized and tidy. Now, however, its tools are scattered in a terrible mess. Two dwarven corpses lay here, one with an awl stabbed through his eye and the other slouching against the far wall with a dark crimson smear behind his head.

The closed door is locked. Opening it requires a DC 15 Disable Device check or a DC 23 Strength check. As the PCs open the door, read or paraphrase the following.

This workshop looks very similar to the other, including the mess scattered about and the corpse of a dwarf. The dead dwarf is stretched out against one workbench, with a crossbow bolt in his belly. If the PCs search the room, they find cursed gold on the floor next to the corpse worth 3 gp. In his hand is one of the gears for the Furnace Gear Chamber (Room 4) and a light crossbow with a bolt loaded in it. The dwarven corpse has a bolt quiver on his belt with 7 bolts remaining.

# 12. Airshaft Bailey (EL 11)

Departing from the Hearthforges for the airshafts takes about 5 hours after the PCs pass another barricade this one facing away from them. The embossed metal door is closed and barred from this side, making it easy for the PCs to open. Any PC standing adjacent to the door before it is opened can smell the particularly foul stench of ghasts emanating from the other side with a successful DC 10 Perception check. Those with scent can automatically detect the smell.

A DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the odor as ghast stench. A DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check eliminates troglodytes as the source. A DC 23 Knowledge (planes) check eliminates hezrou as the source. Anyone who passes through the door must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become sickened for 1d6+4 minutes.

A DC 26 Perception check reveals that someone is whispering on the other side of the door. A DC 36 Perception check further reveals the words. If the listener who makes such a check can understand the language Darakhul, he understand the speaker to say, "Be ready, they're on the other side!"

Beyond the door stands an encampment manned by Imperial Ghouls hunting forsaken who captured several of their own kind. Since the ghasts and lich hounds can see in darkness, they do not bother to light the room.

The ceiling is 30 feet high, and the enclosed barricade requires a DC 15 Climb check to ascend. Failure by more than 5 indicates a slip and fall on the spikes studding the edifice, dealing 1d4 points of piercing damage. A wide step on the ghasts' side gives them the ability to attack over the barricade, which provides cover to those standing behind it.

As the first PC steps into the room, with or without a light source, one of the ghasts calls out in Common, "Hold! Stand fast in the name of the Empire of the People!" The ghasts hold their actions to see if the party attacks. Aside from the stench (which is not easily identified as originating with them), the ghasts' nature is not immediately obvious, as they wear armor and wield weapons.

The ghasts are not opposed to speaking with the party, although their initial attitude is unfriendly. Should the PCs decide to fight their way through, they face a hard-fought battle, as they must push against a fortified position held by an organized and prepared foe.

Improving the ghasts' attitude to friendly leads the barricade's leader, who spoke to the PCs originally, to offer a deal to the PCs. "We do not often deal with those we might better enslave," he says, "but perhaps we can help one another. If you can recover our fellows from the hands of the forsaken in the shrine to the south, we are willing to depart without battle, allowing you to continue on your way. Surely you would slay those who defile your shrines, regardless? Bring back our brothers unharmed, and we can all go our separate ways. Betray us and you will learn the true might of the Empire."

If the PCs agree, he provides a code word that an uncontrolled ghast recognizes as signaling an ally, and so does not attack. Choose a phrase or term incongruous with the nature of ghasts, such as "mercy" or "moderation."

#### Ghast Legionnaires (x5)

CR 6

Male ghast fighter 5 CE Medium undead

Init +3; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +10 Aura Stench (10 feet, 1d6 + 4 minutes) (DC 16)

## DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+8 armor, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 65 (5d10+2d8+21)

#### Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +6

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, channel resistance +2; **Immune** ability drain, bleeds, death effects, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, physical ability damage, disease, mind-affecting, non-lethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, undead traits OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft. Melee masterwork greatsword +13/+8 (2d6+7/19-20/x2), bite +8(1d6+2/x3)**Ranged** shortbow +9/+4 (1d6/20/x3) Special Attacks paralysis (1d4+1 rounds) (DC 16) STATISTICS Str 18, Dex 17, Con -, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16 Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 22 Feats Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus: Greatsword Skills Acrobatics +4, Climb +6, Escape Artist -1, Fly -1, Intimidate +11, Perception +10, Ride -1, Stealth +7, Swim +5 Languages Common SQ Armor Training 1 (Ex), Disease (DC 16) (Su) Combat Gear arrows (20); Other Gear +1 armor spikes banded mail, masterwork greatsword, shortbow SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Envenom weapon (Ex)** As a move action, the ghasts can cover a weapon with poison.

**Ghoul Fever (Su)** Bite-injury; save Fort DC 13; onset 1 day; frequency 1/day; effect 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid that dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight.

**Stench (Ex)** The stink of death surrounds ghasts. (Fort DC 15 negates, sickened for 1d6+4 minutes)

#### Tactics

**Before Combat** The ghasts prepare their weapons using the Envenom Weapon feat. They prepare two arrows and their greatswords, so the first attacks with those weapons can paralyze their targets.

**During Combat** The ghasts ignore all paralyzed foes until after combat. Until the PCs see them, the ghasts stand and make full-attack actions with their bows. Once the PCs indicate that they can see the ghasts (by shouting or attacking), the ghasts use the barricade as protection, dropping down to gain full cover as a free action and standing up to attack as a move action. If the ghasts paralyze at least half the party with their initial volley of arrows, they take move actions to use Envenom Weapon.

**Morale** The ghasts cannot leave comrades in the hands of the forsaken, and must go through the party to reach them.

#### Lich Hound

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**Development:** If the party negotiates and agrees to return the ghasts' comrades from captivity, the undead open the barricade and allow the PCs to pass. They are gone when the group returns from dealing with the gearworker and elementals. If the party completes the rescue, award experience for an EL 11 encounter.

CR 4

# 13. Shrine to Volund (EL 11)

As they pushed their way through the complex, the forsaken found this holy site dedicated to Volund. Their contemptuous ways led them to blasphemy. They are in the long, slow process of converting it to a site honoring Addrikah. The doors to the shrine are closed when the PCs arrive at them.

A pair of heavy metal doors, embossed with the holy horse and anvil of Volund, end this short passage. Scorch marks and long red smears leave terrible arcs along the walls. More wide, crimson smears stain the floor and lead inside.

A DC 20 Perception check reveals the presence of a lone voice beyond the door, while a DC 36 Perception check allows the PC to make out what is said. Unfortunately, unless that PC speaks Derro (the language of the forsaken) he cannot understand the words. If he can understand Derro, he hears the voice say, "Yes, like that. Prepare the corpses as it shows here. Perfect. For Addrikah!"

Unless the PCs all make at least a DC 10 Stealth check, the forsaken beyond the door hear the PCs outside and fall silent. The doors are not locked and push open with relative ease.

Opening the doors reveals a horrific sight. Bodies are strewn about in twisted poses, their hands and feet maimed and impaled with nails and spikes. A small pyramid of drying skulls and wilting purple organs is stacked to one side. A thick red slurry churns inside a large, glass-sphere alembic standing above the remnants of the cracked and sundered altar, around which flicker a half dozen lit candles.

The candles provide shadowy illumination for 5 feet around the altar. The ceiling of this once-grand room rises 30 feet. The overturned pews act as rough terrain.

As the PCs enter, a gore-painted forsaken woman drops a dwarven body into the enormous alembic, where the liquid froths and boils. At her feet, a gagged, armored male dwarf grovels, his blackened hands slapping the floor. A DC 23 Perception check uncovers the vague shapes of three forsaken marksmen hiding in the shadows.

Four bodies are positioned on the overturned pews, marked with an X on the map. If anyone approaches within 5 feet of a body, it explodes in a shower of gore and poisonous residue. Anyone adjacent to or within a square marked X when a trapped body explodes takes 1d4 hp damage and is poisoned with both bloodroot (Type poison (injury); Save Fortitude DC 12 Onset 1 round; Frequency 1/round for 4 rounds Effect 1 Con damage and 1 Wis damage; Cure 1 save) and greenblood oil (Type poison (injury); Save Fortitude DC 13 Frequency 1/round for 4 rounds Effect 1 Con damage; Cure 1 save ). A DC 16 Reflex save halves the damage, but as long as a character takes at least 1 point of damage, he is subjected to the poison.

The large sets of spheres make up an alembic of essential distillation, which was set up to convert bodies into useful slurry. The forsaken make use of the alembic if they completely disable the party. Forsaken turn captured characters into sludge within the alembic, starting with the largest creature first.

#### Indrecalla Bat-Eater CR 7

Female Forsaken derro cleric 5 CE Small humanoid (derro) Init +3; Senses Perception +4 DEFENSE AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, -1 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural) hp 51 (8d8+8) Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +12 **Defensive Abilities SR** 14 Weakness vulnerability to sunlight OFFENSE Spd 15 ft. Melee longsword +7 (1d6+1/19-20/x2)**Ranged** repeating light crossbow +5(1d6/19-20/x2)Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6, touch of chaos (4/day), vision of dadness (4/day) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5) At-will—darkness, ghost sound 4/day-touch of chaos, vision of madness 1/day-daze, sound burst Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5th, +7 melee touch, +5 ranged touch): 3rd—cure serious wounds (DC 14), rage 2nd—cure moderate wounds (DC 13), sound burst (DC 13), touch of idiocy (DC 13) 1st-bless, cure light wounds (DC 12), entropic shield (DC 12), lesser confusion (DC 12), protection from law (DC 12), 0 (at will)—create water, detect magic, guidance, resistance STATISTICS Str 13, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 20 Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 14 Feats Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics -6, Bluff +7, Climb -4, Escape Artist -6, Fly -4, Knowledge (Forbidden Lore) +2, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Perception +4, Ride -6, Stealth +3, Swim -4 Languages Derro, Undercommon SQ aura (Ex), cleric channel negative energy 3d6 (8/ day) (DC 19) (Su), cleric domain: chaos, cleric domain: madness, madness (Ex), madness variant channeling (±2) Profane), poison use (Ex), spontaneous casting Combat Gear repeating crossbow bolts (20); Other Gear repeating light crossbow, longsword, masterwork full plate SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura (Ex) Indrecalla has an aura of chaos and evil.

**Cleric Channel Negative Energy (Su)** 3d6 (8/day) (DC 19) Indrecalla can channel negative energy to injure the living and heal the undead.

Madness (Ex) Indrecalla uses her Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of her Wisdom modifier, and is immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a



*miracle* or *wish* can remove Indrecalla's madness. If this occurs, Indrecalla gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma.

- **Poison Use (Ex)** Indrecalla does not risk poisoning herself accidentally while poisoning a weapon.
- Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex) Indrecalla takes 1 point of Con damage after every hour she is exposed to sunlight.

#### Tactics

**During Combat** Indrecalla wants to capture prisoners, and so leaves incapacitated foes alone until after combat. If she cannot directly affect a PC with a spell, she moves closer to a marksman and supports him with buffing and healing spells.

Morale To maintain face, Indrecalla fights to the death.

#### Forsaken Marksman

CR 5

Male Forsaken fighter (archer) 3 CE Small humanoid (derro) Init +7; Senses Perception +4 DEFENSE AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural) **hp** 46 (3d10+3d8+12) **Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6 **Defensive Abilities SR** 14 Weakness vulnerability to sunlight OFFENSE Spd 15 ft. Melee longsword +7 (1d6+1/19-20/x2)**Ranged** repeating light crossbow +9(1d6/19-20/x2)Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6 **Spell-Like Abilities** At will-darkness, ghost sound 1/day-daze, sound burst STATISTICS Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 6, Cha 14 Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics +0, Bluff +4, Climb -2, Escape Artist +0, Fly +2, Perception +4, Ride +0, Stealth +9, Swim -2 Languages Derro, Undercommon SQ madness (Ex), poison use (Ex), trick shot: disarm Combat Gear repeating cross bolts (20); Other Gear repeating light crossbow, longsword, masterwork breastplate SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Madness (Ex)** Marksmen use their Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of their Wisdom modifier, and are immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a *miracle* or *wish* can remove a marksman's madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma. **Poison Use (Ex)** Marksman do not risk poisoning themselves accidentally while poisoning a weapon.

**Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex)** Marksmen take 1 point of Con damage after every hour they are exposed to sunlight.

**Development:** With the shrine clear and the elementals recovered, the Hearthforge's restoration can continue. Once the PCs resolve this encounter, they can move on to Restoring the Hearthforge, which also occurs in this room (see page 63). Two of the bound figures on the floor are the ghasts that the party of imperial ghasts is interested in.

#### Ghast Legionaires (2) CR 6, see room 12 above.

A large mural dominates the rear wall of this room. It shows a dwarf warrior maiden placing a glowing sapphire within a giant spherical ruby. The maiden is shedding tears as she places the blue gem within the red.

#### 14. Shrine Keeper's Quarters

This is the room where the shrine keeper slept and to which he often retreated to rest, relax, and—in his final act—die.

This sparsely decorated room contains a small shrine to Volund, a small writing desk and chair overturned and battered, and a thick red-and-gold curtain dividing the room. Rips in the curtain reveal a large shape behind it.

A bed stands behind the curtain and upon it sprawls the body of the shrine keeper, his neck slit from ear to ear. A DC 15 Perception check uncovers a holy symbol of Volund mixed in with the bed sheets.

## 15. Forsaken Bailey

The doors to this hall hang open, the bar shattered on the floor before them. Dried bloodstains and a few broken crossbow bolts lie splattered and scattered about the floor near the doors. A few shattered wooden planks and mortarless square stones here and there are all that remain of a barricade.

This ceiling of the long hall beyond the doors is 30 feet high. Read or paraphrase the following.

The room beyond is quite high, with a ceiling 30 feet high—and it stretches out over a large crowd of wildeyed forsaken, over 100 of them. At the southern end of the hall, an arched tunnel sinks further into the depths of the mountain.

The southern passage leads to the warrens of the forsaken, more than a quarter mile underground. The scope of this adventure does not include exploring the warrens, as they are little more than dozens of additional galleries, caverns, and caves filled with forsaken.

Discourage further exploration in this direction by indicating that the quality of workmanship noticeably drops once they leave room 15. If the PCs do insist on exploring, let them encounter increasing resistance from



the forsaken, who come at them in larger waves (but never with any usable treasure) until the PCs get the point and turn back.

#### Forsaken (200) CR 3

hp 17; Bestiary 1 (Derro)

# PART III: LIGHTING THE FIRES

The party reaches a split in the tunnel. Abelard offers to go check on the state of the elementals in the ruined Lower Market, confident in his ability to rebuke them, and suggests the party go stop the saboteurs. Abelard insists on remaining behind, if only to ensure that no one escapes to sabotage the Hearthforges further. He further insists the party rests, if it looks battered or the PCs seem tired and depleted. Emphasize to them that Abelard thinks it too dangerous to proceed in anything other than full capacity.

# R1. VENTSHAFT BOILERS (EL 12)

Clanking, roaring, churning machinery fills this room. The PCs can hear the echoing din long before they reach this point, but usually only as the faintest hum.

As they approach the door outside of this room, read or paraphrase the following.

The thrum of the machinery that has grown steadily louder for the past several minutes, emanating from the

room just beyond this large, open metal door. Beyond the door, several huge boilers connect to wide ducting and strange contraptions. Two large bellow-cramps alternately rise and fall. A small waterwheel and a stream of lava feed down portions of the wall, powering the odd gearworkings. The noise is deafening.

A DC 35 Perception check reveals the sound of voices from within, barely evident above the din and racket, while a DC 25 Perception check catches glimpses of nonmechanized movement within. Allow the PCs to take whatever precautions they choose, as the cultists cannot hear them. Unless the PCs take more than 30 minutes preparing, the events described here occur just as they enter. If the PCs delay for more than 30 minutes, the ritual is complete and Bragollach escapes, with the PCs only witnessing some parts of the events through the door.

The noise is so loud that PCs must make a DC 15 Perception check to communicate by voice (they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on any saving throw made against a sonic effect). Flickering, mirror-backed *continual flames* set in small recesses in the ceiling provide shadowy illumination throughout the room.

The ceiling here is 25 feet high. The boilers and their 5-foot-diameter filter ducts, as well as the ducts from the Hearthforges, rise to 20 feet, allowing for 5 feet of clearance above them. The 10-foot-diameter main duct into the airshafts is flush with the ceiling.

PCs can grab the spinning waterwheel, the rising and falling bellows, the ladders, the turning gears, and the piston arms with DC 7 Climb checks. If a PC fails this check





by 5 or more, however, he is crushed in the machinery and takes 6d6 hp damage (DC 15 Reflex for half). A successful Climb check puts the PC halfway up the room and requires a move action. From that position, a successful DC 12 Climb check lets the PC reach the tops of the boilers. Walking around on the 5-foot-diameter ductwork requires a DC 7 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping.

While the PCs are up in the machinery, a DC 15 Acrobatics or Climb check made during a move action allows lateral movement through the maze of gears, pistons, bellows, and belts. A PC who fails falls to the ground, taking 1d6 points of falling damage and ending his move action. Failing by 5 or more means the PC fell into the machine, taking 6d6 hp damage (DC 15 Reflex for half).

As a full-round action, a PC can open a steam release valve, creating a 15-foot cone that deals 4d6 hp fire damage and causing blindness for 1d4 rounds. A DC 18 Reflex save halves the damage and prevents the blindness.

## THE RITUAL

When the PCs arrive, the Mammonite cultists are in the final stage of conducting a ritual of transformation, seeking to turn Bragollach into a corrupted goldveined dragon. If the PCs act within 30 minutes of arriving, they can see the unplanned end of the ritual and Bragollach's escape.

Otherwise, they merely witness parts of the events described herein, as the machinery in the room does much to block their view. Unless the PCs intervene at some point, the Mammonite ritual ends as follows.

Bragollach, in the guise of a blonde dwarven female, sags in the arms of Hronagar the darakhul and Sebastian Ufastis. An erinyes stands behind them, and an older dwarf wearing the robes of a gearworker leers close to her. A kobold dances maliciously from foot to foot in his shadow while the Journeyman gearworker brings a steaming crucible held in tongs.

The older dwarf calls out, "Bring the blessing. The ceremony is complete!" At that, the erinyes pulls back Bragollach's head and pries open her mouth as the Journeyman gearworker pours the contents down her throat.

Hronagar and Ufastis callously drop her to the floor. Bragollach writhes and clutches her chest, then arches her back and screams again, opening her eyes wide. They glow with golden fury. The older dwarf stands over her, telling her to accept her transformation, while the kobold capers and leers next to him. Bragollach bellows defiantly, blasting the older dwarf and kobold with molten gold from her mouth, catching them unawares and melting their skulls and coating their upper torsos in a glittering death shroud. She completes her transformation and claws a narrow rent in the metal of an airshaft cover as she leaps inside and escapes.

The remaining cultists are dumbfounded for several seconds before the Journeyman gearworker says, "No matter, we can deal with her later. Let us finish our work here. Destroy it." With that, the four remaining conspirators turn with malicious eyes upon the machinery in the room.

Let the PCs arrive just as the doomed older dwarf says his piece and the journeyman gearworker pours the molten gold down Bragollach's throat. This allows them to see the most important part of the ceremony and prevents them from interrupting it early. If they charge into battle at that point, roll for initiative but place Bragollach at the top of the initiative order so she may breathe the molten gold onto the older dwarf and kobold without fear of striking an intervening PC.

Even if the PCs come to her rescue, Bragollach flies into the airshaft to sulk and fight off the effects of the cursed gold, leaving the PCs to their fates.

# Erinyes

hp 93; Bestiary 1

#### **Tactics**

- **During Combat** The erinyes takes to the air, flying on top of the boiler that feeds the airshafts. From there, she proceeds to Rapid Shot, or Shot on the Run, as she moves into position to use her rope against a spellcaster but always staying on top of the mechanisms.
- **Morale** The erinyes fights fearlessly until either Sebastian or both of the other two combatants fall, at which point she also flees out a ventshaft (although not the one Bragollach took).

CR 8

#### Journeyman Gearworker

#### **CR 7**

Male Dwarf bard 8

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +0; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception -1
DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor)

hp 74 (8d8+16)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5, +2 vs. poison, spells, and spelllike abilities

Defensive Abilities defensive training

#### offense Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 whip +9/+4 (1d3+3/x2)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance (move action) (21 rounds/day) countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate (DC 21), inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, *suggestion* (DC 21)

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th, +8 melee touch, +6 ranged touch): 3rd (3/day)—glibness, gaseous form, haste

2nd (5/day)—cure moderate wounds (DC 15), detect thoughts (DC 15), glitterdust (DC 15), invisibility

1st (5/day)—disguise self, hideous laughter (DC 14), grease (DC 14), expeditious retreat, lesser confusion (DC 14) 0 (at will)—daze (DC 13), detect magic, mage hand,

mending, message, resistance



#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 15/17 Base Atk +6; CMB +8 (+12 Disarm); CMD 18 (20 vs. Disarm) Feats Combat Expertise +/-2, Eschew Materials, Greater Disarm, Improved Disarm Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +13, Climb +11, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +10, Fly +14, Knowledge (engineering) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perform (dance) +14, Perform (oratory) +14, Ride -1, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +10, Swim +1, Use Magic Device +10 Languages Common, Dwarven SQ bardic knowledge +4 (Ex), greed, hardy +2, hatred, lore master (1/day) (Ex), slow and steady, stability, stonecunning +2, versatile dance +14 (Ex), versatile oratory +14 (Ex), well versed (Ex) **Combat Gear** -; **Other Gear** +1 whip, +2 chain shirt, boots of striding and springing, headband of alluring charisma +2

#### Tactics

**During Combat** The Journeyman uses Acrobatics to ascend and utilize the strange terrain. He tries to disarm the heavy fighters using his *rod of repossession* (which grants him a +4 bonus on disarm attempts, for a total of +17 with his whip).

**Morale** The Journeymen allows himself to be captured, if the PCs wish to take him prisoner. He sees no reason to fight to the death.

## Sebastian Ufastis

CR 7

Male dwarf sorcerer 8

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf) Init +4; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +2 DEFENSE AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 deflection) hp 61 (8d6+24) Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +10, +2 vs. poison, spells, and spelllike abilities Defensive Abilities defensive training; Resist fire 5 OFFENSE Spd 20 ft. Melee masterwork shortspear +4 (1d6-1/x2) **Ranged** masterwork light crossbow +5(1d8/19-20/x2)Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 8th, +3 melee touch, +5 ranged touch): 4th (4/day)— enervation 3rd (6/day)-dispel magic, suggestion (DC 17), lightning bolt (DC 17) 2nd (7/day)—create pit (DC 16), pyrotechnics (DC 16), scorching ray, touch of idiocy 1st (7/day)-grease (DC 15), mage armor, magic missile,

protection from good, ray of enfeeblement (DC 15), true strike 0 (at will)—daze (DC 14), detect magic, disrupt undead,

mage hand, mending, message, ray of frost, read magic



STATISTICS
Str 8, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16/18
Base Atk +4; CMB +3; CMD 14
Feats Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Improved
Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus: Ray
Skills Bluff +12, Knowledge (Arcana) +12, Sense Motive
+6, Spellcraft +12
Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon
SQ corrupting touch (4r) (7/day) (Sp), for love of money
(3/day) (Ex), greed, hardy +2, hatred, infernal, slow and
steady, stability, stonecunning +2
<b>Combat Gear</b> crossbow bolts (20), <i>necklace of fireballs I</i> ;
Other Gear masterwork light crossbow, masterwork
shortspear, headband of alluring charisma +2, ring of
protection +1
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Sp) Melee touch attack leaves target shaken and -2 save vs. enchantment spells for 4 rounds. Can be used 7/day.

For Love of Money (Sp) (DC 15) Three times a day, Sebastian can mentally coerce an opponent to protect him just by looking into the target's eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that Sebastian must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not affected. Anyone Sebastian targets must succeed on a Will save or becomes unable to harm Sebastian and makes nearly every effort to prevent others from harming it as well. The affected target does not fight to the death, perform any obviously suicidal action, or draw attacks of opportunity if reasonably able to avoid them on behalf of Sebastian, but he does otherwise put Sebastian's safety and well-being above his own. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Before Combat Sebastian casts mage armor before the ritual begins and has plenty of mage armor remaining when the PCs attack.

During Combat Sebastian tries to weaken the heavily armored fighters with empowered rays of enfeeblement, making them vulnerable to the Journeyman's disarms. He attempts to hit spellcasters with empowered touch of idiocy.

Morale Sebastian prefers not to be captured, but he prefers it to death and trusts he can escape.

#### Hronogar

CR 8

Male Dwarf Darakhul fighter 7 NE Medium undead (dwarf) Init +7; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +11 DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+9 armor, +4 shield, +4 natural +2 Dex) hp 60 (8d10+16) Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +8

Defensive Abilities bravery +2, defensive training; DR 5/ Magic, undead immunities

Weaknesses daylight

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee masterwork dwarven waraxe +15/+10 (1d10+10/ x3), bite +12/+7 (1d6+7 plus paralysis and disease) Special Attacks paralysis: (1d4+1 rounds, DC 15, elves are immune to this effect)

#### STATISTICS

Str 22/24, Dex 17, Con -, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 14 Base Atk +7; CMB +14 (+15 Sundering); CMD 26 (28 vs. Sunder) Feats Devour, Eater of the Dead, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron will, Lighting Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack -2/+4, Weapon Focus: Dwarven Waraxe,

Weapon Specialization: Dwarven Waraxe

Skills Acrobatics -2, Climb +5, Escape Artist -9, Fly -9, Intimidate +12, Perception +11, Ride -9, Sense Motive +7, Stealth -9, Survival +11, Swim -5

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ armor training 1 (Ex), greed, hardy +2, hatred, slow and steady, stability, stonecunning +2

Combat Gear -; Other Gear masterwork dwarven waraxe, masterwork full plate, masterwork tower shield, belt of giant strength +2

**Darakhul Fever (Su)** bite — injury; save: Fortitude DC 15, onset one day, Effect: 1d6 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; cure 2 consecutive saves

#### **Tactics**

- During Combat Hrongar tries to keep the attention of heavily armored fighters and uses a full +6 Power Attack against lightly armored foes. If he misses more often than hits, he halves the amount of his Power Attack. If he still misses, he drops it completely. He also tries to sunder spell component pouches.
- Morale Hronogar fights until destroyed, as he knows that captured undead tend to not survive long anyway.

**Development:** Only the false gearworker truly knew why they were attempting to perform the ritual. With him killed in such a way that not even speak with dead can extract information, the PCs learn nothing useful from any prisoners they might take.

Abelard arrives shortly after the battle, wearing a kilt of polished bronze, his great glaring eyes of melted copper taking in all details, and a brilliant flaming beard. He casts make whole on the rent in the air duct if the PCs don't do it themselves. He expresses his concerns about the dragon's presence in the vent, but he sees no easy way of extracting her.

# IF THE PARTY DELAYS

If the party insists on pursuing the Elemental Rebellion (see next section) before resolving this encounter, let them, but use Abelard to impress on them that such a decision is unwise. If the PCs choose that path anyway, they find this room quieted and heavily damaged. With minimal effort they notice the sprayed blast of nowcooled gold and the extent of damage to the machinery.

Abelard can repair all of the damage in the room with *make whole* and *mending* spells, but in order to prepare enough he must wait until the next morning. This displeases him greatly, and he makes no effort to hide his anger and disappointment. Thanks to the delay, the PCs do not learn the fate of Bragollach (although they do find a few small golden scales under the airshaft she uses to escape) or more about the nature of the saboteurs. Worse, the delay adds to the burdens of the starving populace, with 1d6 more people dying from the cold and hunger.

# R2. ELEMENTAL REBELLION (EL 12)

Abelard returns as the party recovers from the battle with the Mammonites. He found the elementals, loose in a lower hall but led by a corrupted elemental of both earth and fire. Abelard can round up the elementals, but he needs the PCs to deal with the ringleader while he is doing so. To ensure the PCs are protected, Abelard casts all of his protective and enhancing spells—primarily cool *fire shield* and *protection from fire*—on them before leading them into the next room.

Beyond the closed metal door, the PCs can only hear the roar of hundreds of fires. The door is warm to the touch but opens easily. When they do open it, read or paraphrase the following.

A domed ceiling roughly 40 feet high and supported by nearly a score of thick pillars caps this massive chamber. At the far side of the gallery stand the scorched remains of what appear to be market stalls, some more damaged than others. The entire chamber is awash in an eerie, dull orange light.

The light originates from three crowds of fire elementals gathered around Gefangak, a large elemental of cinders and charcoal who stands atop a great pile of burning timbers and glowing rubble in the center of the room. Gefangak calls out to the elementals around him, his great anvil-like hands outstretched and pleading to the others in a gesture of entreaty. He speaks Ignan in a crackling, roaring voice.

If a PC can understand Ignan, he hears Gefangak say, "We need not remain here any longer! See the greed that grips the dwarves? Why stay? Let us abandon our contract with them as they abandoned us and return to our true home!"

Abelard replies in Ignan, "Do not believe Gefangak, my friends! He is confused! His mind is filled with rage, uncertainty, and conflict! Return with me and let us continue our duty!"

Gefangak punctuates his retort with a breath of flame when he snorts, "Duty to whom? Service for what? Send your worst, azer. When I have crushed it, we will leave this place!"

Abelard turns to the PCs and, in Common, says, "I had hoped to reason with them, but it seems we have no choice. Only the death of that troublemaker can settle this matter."

The fire elementals are uncertain of what to do and remain neutral throughout this encounter, bunched into three groups. They neither participate in combat nor hinder the PCs except by creating the areas of great heat (see below). Abelard moves to one side of the groups and addresses the elementals while the PCs engage Gefangak. Elementals of all sizes watch and wait. Should a PC consider attacking them for some reason, the party finds itself suddenly opposed by hundreds of elementals, including at least two-dozen elder fire elementals. Unless they find a way to end a fight with fire elementals quickly, the PCs do not survive such folly.

Although battling Gefangak might seem like a relatively straight-forward decision to many, some PCs might justifiably agree with Gefangak, or at least want to more fully hear his side of the story. Rather than blindly rushing in to slay the enhanced elemental, they might wish to talk to him (see the Moral Dilemmas sidebar). Gefangak begins the encounter with an initial attitude of hostile. Bringing his attitude up to indifferent prevents combat, while making him friendly or helpful convinces him to lead the elementals back to the Hearthforges. As long as the elementals return to their duties, Abelard is content with the decision, and he asks the PCs to help him work out another contract with Gefangak and the elementals to prevent another occurrence in the future.

Award full XP for the encounter whether resolved by combat or diplomacy.

The three areas where the elementals congregate are intolerably hot. A character who enters or begins his turn in one of these areas suffers one of the following effects.

# TABLE 2-5: ELEMENTAL EFFECTS

#### Area Effect

- 1 DC 15 Fortitude save or suffer from a constant *heat metal* effect, beginning with the round 2 effects.
- 2 DC 15 Fortitude save or become fatigued. If already fatigued, become exhausted.
- 3 DC 15 Fortitude save or become desiccated, taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. A character who takes nonlethal damage greater than his remaining hit point total take lethal damage on the following round.



# MORAL DILEMMAS

Gefangak's cause is not an immoral one. He believes the dwarves, in their current greedy state, no longer honor the spirit of the agreement made so long ago. He thinks that leading the elementals to a planar portal and back to the Elemental Plane of Fire is the right thing to do.

The question put to the PCs, then, is whether the contract was violated. If the players care to, let them work out the answer with Gefangak. This can provide an excellent roleplaying encounter rather than a combat one. If the players show no interest in contracts and moral quandaries, let them decide the answer through combat.

Ultimately, whether or not Gefangak is right does not impact the larger story of Halls of the Mountain King, as long as the PCs can restore the escaped elementals to the Hearthforges.

A cool fire shield, protection from fire, or resist fire spell (or similar spell or effect)protects a PC from damage in area 1 and area 3 and the effects of area 2. An *endure elements* spell protects its recipient from the effects of area 2. Inside any of the areas of intense heat, the mist from an *obscuring mist* spell lasts only 1 round, while the effects of a *fog cloud* or *wall of ice* spell lasts 1 round per level. The fog from a *solid fog* spell lasts the normal duration and still imposes penalties on attack and damage rolls, but does not hinder movement.

The burning debris pile is rough terrain, and anyone who enters one of its squares or begins her turn in one of its squares takes 2d6 hp fire damage and must make a DC 15 Reflex save or catch fire. While standing in the burning rubble, Gefangak heals 1 point per round and receives a +2 bonus on any saving throw made against a cold-based attack. The high temperature areas do not heal Gefangak.

#### Gefangak The Upstart

Male Elemental, Magma, Elder

#### CR 13

Init +5; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +21
DEFENSE
AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 24 (+1 Dex, -2 size, +16
natural)
hp 195 (16d10+102)
Fort +16, Ref +6, Will +12
Defensive Abilities DR 10/-; Immune elemental traits,
bleeds, flanking, critical hits, fire, paralysis, poison,
precision damage, sleep, stunning
Weakness vulnerability to cold

N Huge outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, fire)

#### OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrowing (20 feet), earth glide
Melee slam x2 +25 (3d6+10)
Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.
Special Attacks burn (3d6) (DC 22), lava puddle (1/day)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 30, **Dex** 12, **Con** 23, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15 **Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +29 (+33 Bull Rush, Overrun); **CMD** 40 (42 vs. Bull Rush, Overrun)

- **Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Overrun, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Vital Strike
- Skills Climb +29, Diplomacy +14, Fly -3, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Perception +21, Perform (oratory) +18, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Dwarven, Ignan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Breath Weapon (Su)** Gefangak can breathe a 30-foot long cone of fire once every 1d4 rounds. Every creature in the area takes 10d6 hp fire damage (DC 26 Reflex for half).
- **Burn (Ex)** (3d6) (DC 22) If Gefangak hits an opponent or they touch him, he inflicts fire damage.
- Earth Glide (Ex) Burrowing leaves no tunnel or hole or evidence of the movement.
- Lava Puddle (Su) Once per day as a full-round action, a Gefangak can vomit forth a puddle of lava that fills its space to a depth of 2-3 inches and counts as difficult terrain. Any creature that moves through this puddle of lava takes 10d6 hpf fire damage per round of immersion.
- **Vulnerability to Cold** Gefangak is vulnerable (+50% damage) to Cold damage.

#### Tactics

- **During Combat** Once engaged, Gefangak attacks the most heavily armored character. If attacked with cold spells, Gefangak earthglides into the ground then shifts to full attack the caster, using Power Attack to its fullest to drop the spellcaster as quickly as possible. He attacks the caster until someone hits him either for more damage than the cold spell or with a different coldbased attack. If possible, Gefangak uses Awesome Blow or bull rush to knock foes into heat-effect areas or onto the pile of burning rubble.
- Morale Gefangak fights until destroyed or convinced to stand down.
- **Development:** If the PCs convince Gefangak and the elementals to return to the Hearthforges through diplomacy, grant them XP as if they defeated Gefangak in combat. In the end, regardless of how they do it, the PCs need to reheat the Hearthforges.

## Restoring The Hearthforge (el 12)

This encounter occurs in Room 3, but only after the PCs clear the cultists in Room 13. If the party did not search the room already, Abelard pauses at the junction of passageways, just outside and turns his head as if listening. PCs can also make DC 10 Perception checks

to hear the chanting occurring within the room. Abelard whispers, "Someone is in the Shrine to Volund! Please, go and secure the Shrine. I will guide the elementals to the furnaces and prepare the ritual."

Abelard leaves the PCs here while he goes to restore the elementals to the Hearthforges. He tells them to set up any defenses they want, as long as he can get back into the chamber. It takes Abelard 10 minutes to lead the elementals to the Hearthforges, restore them, and return to Room 13. About 5 minutes after he leaves, a great whoosh of air can be heard within the walls and after several more minutes a quiet hum of machinery begins in the distance, rising in volume until Abelard returns. The noise imparts a –5 penalty on Perception checks.

## PREPARING THE DEFENCES

When he returns, Abelard says, "I need to complete the ritual that bonds the elementals to the furnaces and allows them to burn hotter while drawing their sustenance from the mountain. I need you to guard the Hearthforges while I do so. If the forsaken are about, they might well attack."

Abelard gives the PCs 10 more minutes to finish setting up their defenses, giving them a total of 20 minutes of preparation time. Moving a barricade from Rooms 1, 10, or 12 takes four PCs 10 minutes each (using additional characters does not speed up the process). Setting up the tables from Room 10 or the beds from Room 8 takes four PCs only 5 minutes apiece. Let the PCs set up any other defenses they can think of, and allow them to be creative in their endeavors.

While the PCs busy themselves with final preparations, Abelard himself also prepares for what lies ahead. He moves to stand in front of the center furnace on the western wall and meditates. After 10 minutes of quiet contemplation, he turns to the PCs and says, "It is time."

# THE RITUAL

Abelard's ritual takes 10 minutes to complete, and the first wave of forsaken arrive 4 minutes into it. The forsaken come in three waves of 10. In each wave, two carry murderous bombards, two carry mindshatter bombards, and two carry sloughide bombards. Each forsaken with a bombard has one additional cylinder to reload the bombard. The forsaken equipped with bombards do not care if they hit their comrades. Each wave attacks 1d4 rounds after the previous wave is reduced to two or fewer creatures.

The PCs can end a wave quickly by destroying the keystone in the cistern passage—but doing so with any wave other than the third means the next wave breaks through 5 rounds later. Otherwise, the PCs must hold the line. The forsaken are desperate to stop Abelard, but the only way to do so is to kill or incapacitate him. He cannot fight back or defend himself without interrupting the ritual and is considered flat-footed for the entire encounter.

If the party sealed the passage outside room 11, the forsaken swarm out of either the cistern door or the main

entry passage. If all other routes are blocked to them, the forsaken swarm down the main passage.

CR 3

#### Forsaken (30)

#### hp 17; BESTIARY 1, p. 70 (Derro)

**Development:** Before departing, Abelard recommends sealing off the Hearthforges. He intends to teleport back in later with a group of dwarves to clear the cave-ins and collect any supplies.

With the Hearthforges lit and functioning, the party can ascend to the citadel with Abelard in tow and receive the cheers and accolades of dwarf and refugee alike. They are asked of their exploits, and Abelard recommends they share the news of the mobs of forsaken, the cultists' existence, and the corruption of Bragollach.

Something sinister is brewing deep within Rygar, and things will get worse before they get better.

## **CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE**

The PCs can enjoy some downtime before the events in "The Eye of Grajava." Use this time for side adventures if the PCs aren't yet 10th level, especially to answer some questions they might have about the Illuminated Brotherhood, the history of Rygar, the forsaken, and the source of the corruption that taints the Halls of the Mountain King.

Keep track of how much cursed gold each PC carries. Between the Hearthforges and airshaft saboteurs, more than 100 gp of cursed gold are in play, especially if the PCs delayed before the Welcoming Party encounter. Every day the PCs keep the cursed gold, those characters with 20 gp or more must make DC 18 Fortitude saves to stave off gold fever. See the Gold Fever sidebar on page 30.

Barring complete failure on the part of the PCs, Abelard returns with them and speaks highly of their actions, assuming they don't release the elementals. Using teleport, he returns to the Hearthforge periodically to check on its status.

If the PCs released the elementals from their contract, the Hearthforges do not produce enough heat to warm the structures of Rygar. After only a day, the citadel becomes a place of cold weather (DMG 302). This leaves many of the NPCs there fatigued and suffering from nonlethal damage. Abelard makes it known why the elementals no longer heat the Hearthforges, and the PCs can expect that every NPC in the citadel is at least indifferent, although most are unfriendly, and a growing number become hostile. Abelard reports the PCs' actions to the Brotherhood and attempts to find a way to summon new elementals to the Hearthforges.

Despite his disappointment in them, Abelard asks the PCs to help him bring in new elementals, telling them that doing so will redeem them in his eyes and the eyes of their fellow refugees.

If the party acted without expectation of compensation, it is provided real rations to feed each member for three days and a token appreciation of 100 untainted gp each. Varden is willing to assist them in some requested



A large amount of foodstuffs exists down in the Hearthforges. If the party transports even some of it back to the citadel, their actions might affect later events depending on whether the characters donate or sell the surplus. If the PCs sell the food, they gain only the resulting gold. On the other hand, if the PCs donate the food, they gain considerable social capital— becoming popular and well liked by everyone except the foodhoarding inflationists (see area 21: Merchant Camp and Bazaar on page 36). The attitudes of all other NPCs increases by one step, to a maximum of friendly.

If the party successfully returned the captured ghast unharmed to the Imperial ghasts in room 12, the Watcher provides them with a useful gift. This could be a single gift for each member, such as a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, or a single *sustaining spoon* for the whole party. He delivers it silently in a canvas envelope, sealed with the skull emblem of the Empire of the Ghouls. Inside, along with the gifts, is a note, written in excellent calligraphy, that says simply, "Our thanks."

# APPENDIX A: The fire shepherd

Known throughout the Golden Citadel as the "Fire Shepherd," Abelard has roamed these halls for as long as any dwarf can remember. Loyal to the rulers of the halls and the dwarves who depend on forge-fires, Abelard commands the fire elementals that power the great forges of the Golden Citadel. He is their brother, their caretaker, and their shepherd. Abelard performs his duties humorlessly and with a deeply abiding reverence.

Long-forgotten contracts between the Illuminated Brotherhood and powerful elemental lords brought Abelard to the halls, and it has never occurred to the cleric that he should have any other purpose. He maintained the forges even during the centuries-long absence of his dwarven cousins. As he herds bound elementals from one forge to another, he always speaks to them in low, even tones, eyes averted in reverence.

Abelard prefers to guide his charges with promises of rich tinder, although he must occasionally rebuke them through his mastery of the Fire domain. Even more rarely, a disobedient elemental demands greater use of force, and Abelard must wield *Eiswasser*, his +2 frost scourge. On the rare occasions he must, he does so with great regret.

When the Golden Citadel faces threats from outside its walls or deep below its halls, Abelard is a fierce and merciless defender. He commands a full dozen Large elementals, including one elder elemental by the name of Gefangak (newly reconciled to its role as a servant of the dwarven forges). Abelard has promised to release them from their forge homes, so long as they first destroy those who dare invade the sanctity of the halls.

**CR 11** 

#### Abelard Feuerhirte

Male azer cleric 10 LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire) Init +0; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +8 DEFENSE AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +2 natural) **hp** 94 (2d10+10d8+24) Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +13 Defensive Abilities Resist fire 10; SR 13 Weaknesses vulnerability to cold OFFENSE Spd 30 ft., dimensional hop (100/day) Melee +1 frost whip, Scorpion +12/+7 (1d4+3/x2) Special Attacks agile feet (6/day), heat (1d6 fire) Spell-Like Abilities dimensional hop (100 feet/day in increments of 5 feet), fire bolt (6/day) Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 10th,+11 melee touch, +9 ranged touch): 5th —fire shield, flame strike (DC 18), insect plague 4th—cure critical wounds (DC 17), imbue with spell ability, neutralize poison (DC 17), wall of fire 3rd—cure serious wounds (DC 16), dispel magic, fly, protection from energy, stone shape 2nd—cure moderate wounds (DC 15), lesser restoration, locate object, make whole, resist energy, shield other 1st—bless, divine favor, entropic shield, longstrider, shield of faith, sanctuary (DC 14) 0—create water, detect magic, guidance, mending STATISTICS Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 17 Base Atk +9; CMB +11; CMD 21 Feats Combat Casting, Elemental Channel: Fire, Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Whip, Extra Channel, Power Attack, **Spell Penetration** Skills Acrobatics +2, Appraise +8, Craft (blacksmith) +14, Craft (smelting) +5, Diplomacy +9, Escape Artist -3, Fly -3, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +8, Ride -3, Stealth +2, Swim -1 Languages Common, Dwarven, Ignan SQ cleric channel positive energy 5d6 (8/day) (DC 18) (Su), cleric domain: fire, cleric domain: travel, fire bolt (1d6+5) (6/day) (Sp), fire variant channeling, spontaneous casting Combat Gear -; Other Gear +1 frost whip, Scorpion, +2 bronze breastplate SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Agile Feet (Su)** (6/day) For 1 round, Abelard ignores difficult terrain.

- **Cleric Channel Positive Energy (Su)** 5d6 (8/day) (DC 18) Abelard can channel positive energy to heal the living and injure the undead.
- *Dimensional Hop* (Sp) (at will) Teleport 100 ft./day (in hops of 5 feet each or any combination).
- *Fire Bolt* (Sp) (1d6+5) (6/day) 30' Ranged touch attack deals 1d6+5 Fire damage.
- **Heat (Ex)** (1d6 fire) Abelard generates so much heat that his mere touch deals additional fire damage. Abelard's metallic melee weapons also conduct this heat.
- **Vulnerability to Cold** Abelard is vulnerable (+50% damage) to cold damage.

# APPENDIX B: NEW ITEMS

A number of magic and mundane items appear in this adventure. They are collected here for ease of reference.

#### Alembic of Essential Distillation

Aura strong transmutation CL 11<sup>th</sup> Slot none; Price 25,000 gp; Weight 1,500 lbs.

This massive contraption of connected pipes and glass globes features a central sphere spacious enough to seal a large creature inside.

Activating this device requires a three-step process. First, the use must place a living creature within the alembic, then he or she must half-fill the spheres with water (about 200 gallons), and finally the center chamber must be heated to boil (this takes 10 minutes). It can be used once per day. A living creature inside the alembic when it is activated must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or take 5d6 hp damage each round until dead. Bodies of creatures killed within the alembic are converted to a sludge. Placing an already dead body into the alembic and activating it has no effect.

When utilized to render certain creatures, the resulting sludge can fill the canisters of derro bombards, negating the spell requirements and halving the cost for creation. The alembic can hold one Large, two Medium, or eight Small creatures at a time.

**Chaos Beast:** A single Medium chaos beast provides enough sludge for two *mindshatter canisters*, while a large chaos beast fills four.

**Humanoids:** Each Small creature produces enough sludge for two *murderous bombard canisters*, a Medium creature fills four, and a Large creature fills eight canisters.

**Oozes:** A Medium ooze provides enough sludge for two *sloughide bombards*, while a Large ooze fills four.

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *curse water*, *disintegrate*; **Cost** 12,500 gp;

#### Derro Bluetear Poison

Brewed from a potent combination of mineral toxin and vermin venom, derro bluetear, or weeping poison, is a powerful injected poison only made by derro elders and alchemists. It is named for the copious tears that its paralyzed victims shed, both when they are captured and when the derro begin their vile tortures.

#### **Derro Bluetear Poison**

Type Poison (injury); Save Fortitude DC 17
Frequency: 1 per minute for 6 minutes
Initial effect: 2 Dex damage;
Secondary effect: 1d2 Dex damage, paralysis for 1d6 rounds
Cure: 1 save; 750 gp.

#### Mindshatter Bombard

Aura faint necromancy; CL 9<sup>th</sup> Slot none; Price 2,750 gp; Weight 4 lbs.

This brass and crystal cylinder has a funnel on one end and a wooden plunger on the other. A vermilion solution sloshes and boils inside the canister.

As a standard action, you can fire the bombard in a 45-foot-long line, emptying the cylinder of the solution within. All creatures on this line must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d2 points of Wisdom drain, followed by another 1 point of Wisdom drain every minute thereafter. Once begun, the effect lasts for a victim until it makes two consecutive successful saving throws or its Wisdom is reduced to 0. A single successful saving throw prevents Wisdom drain for that minute. Those who fail and are reduced to 0 Wisdom enter a vegetative state, able to shuffle along if led.

Similar to the chaos beast's corporeal instability ability, a mindshatter bombard's Wisdom drain is not a disease, curse, or poison, and so is hard to remove. A *shapechange* or *stoneskin* spell does not cure an afflicted creature but does prevent Wisdom drain (and the need to make saving throws) for the duration of the spell.

A greater restoration, heal, or restoration spell removes the affliction, but a separate restoration is necessary to restore any Wisdom drain.

A mindshatter bombard is a single-use item. Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, baleful polymorph; Cost 1,375 gp;

#### **Murderous Bombard**

Aura moderate enchantment; CL 7th Slot none; Price 2,150 gp; Weight 4 lbs.

This crystal and brass cylinder is tipped with a silver funnel and sports a plunger on the opposite end. A gruesome crimson slurry sloshes inside with strange floating bits of ivory.



As a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, the murderous bombard creates a 40-foot line of spewed blood, emptying it of the slurry within. Creatures along the line must make DC 16 Will saves or suffer from a homicidal rage for 5 rounds.

A victim suffering from homicidal rage always attacks the nearest target (even allies) using the best items and tactics available. This murderous frenzy prevents spellcasting but not magic item activation requiring spell completion.

A murderous bombard is a single-use item.

**Requirements** Craft Arms and Armor, *confusion*, *rage*; **Cost** 1,075 gp;

#### **Rod Of Repossession**

Aura moderate Transmutation; CL 9th Slot none; Price 24,000 gp; Weight 5 lbs.

The appearance of this rod depends on the preferences of its crafter, but regardless of appearance, all rods of repossession bring items to their wielders' hands. As a standard action, three times per day, you can command the rod to draw an object weighing up to 25 pounds to itself from up to 30 feet away as a standard action. If you have a free hand, you can direct the object directly to it. Otherwise, the object adheres to the rod until removed or the effect is dismissed as a free action. An item adhering to the rod cannot be used and does not function while so adhered.

Clothing, cloaks, capes, belts, footwear, and all worn magic items automatically resist the effect. Other objects that are held, worn, or otherwise attended to receive a DC 20 Will save to resist the effect. You can use the rod as part of a disarm attempt, gaining a +4 bonus on the disarm roll. This is a part of the disarm action and counts toward the daily limit of the rod's power.

Requirements Craft Rod, telekinesis; Cost 12,000 gp.

#### Sloughide Bombard

Aura faint evocation; CL 3rd Slot none; Price 600 gp; Weight 4 lbs.

This brass and crystal cylinder has a funnel on one end and a wooden plunger on the other. The bombard is filled with a clear gelatin-like solution.

As a standard action, you can fire the bombard in a 45-foot line attack, emptying the cylinder of the solution within. Creatures along the line that fail a DC 15 Reflex save are paralyzed for 5 rounds and take 1d6 points of acid damage per round.

A sloughide bombard is a single-use item.

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *acid splash, hold person*; **Cost** 300 gp

# APPENDIX C : FEATS

The following feats appear in this adventure and are collected here for ease of reference. All of them originally appeared in Empire of the Ghouls.

## Devour [Monster]

Your bite strikes deep and your fangs tear flesh more readily than most, your foe's blood and vitality slurping up.

Prerequisites: Str 13, corporeal undead

**Benefit:** Whenever you successfully damage your opponent with a bite attack, your victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your HD + your Strength bonus) or take an additional 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

**Special:** Creatures immune to critical hits are immune to this feat. If you have the feat Eater of the Dead, you may regain 1d8+5 lost hit points if your victim takes Constitution damage.

#### Eater Of The Dead [Monster]

You can replenish your strength from the corpses of your enemies.

Prerequisite: Corporeal undead.

**Benefit:** As a full-round action you may feed from the flesh of a Tiny or larger corpse less than one week old. You consume residual negative energy from their death along with the flesh restoring 1d8+5 lost hit points. Each corpse can provide this benefit a limited number of times based on its size. Any undead using this feat on the corpse reduces the number of times it can be used by any other undead for this purpose.

**Corpse Size Uses** 

Tiny 1 Small 2 Medium 4 Large 8 Huge 16 Gargantuan 32 Colossal 64

# Envenom Weapon [Monster]

You can lick, slime, spit, or drool on a ranged weapon so it can deliver one of your extraordinary ability effects.

**Prerequisite:** Extraordinary ability normally delivered by a physical attack or physical contact, which allows a Fortitude Save to resist.

**Benefit:** As a move action, you may envenom a single weapon or missile you are holding. The weapon remains envenomed for 3 rounds or until it hits someone in combat, whichever comes first. When the weapon or

missile damages an opponent, the opponent is affected by your extraordinary ability as if you had delivered the attack in the normal fashion.

**Special:** If you have more than one qualifying ability you must choose only one to apply when using this feat. This feat does not work with breath weapons, gaze attacks, or any extraordinary ability that cannot be logically smeared on a weapon but otherwise meets the criteria. Ghouls can use this feat with paralysis, but not with ghoul fever.



# CHAPTER 3: The Eye of Grajava

By Michael Fulanetto

Not long after the orichalcum began to flow from the halls of the Golden Citadel, Mammon wove a powerful curse into the ore, such that a representative of the archdevil would appear if enough of it were collected in one place.

# Adventure Background

The Spirit of the Mountain realized the danger and, together with Grajava, Shield Maiden of Volund and patroness of Rygar, warned the dwarven priests of the Forge god. The priests formed a secret society, the Illuminated Brotherhood, and ruled the mountain from within as Silent Masters. They steered their brethren away from the veins of ore, while their gold dragon ally Satarel took custody of the cursed ore already dug from Rygar's roots. Over time, the dwarves largely abandoned the Golden Citadel, and the threat seemed contained.

Grajava herself offered a relic—the Teardrop—to purge the taint of Mammon, but the dwarves chose to preserve it rather than use it immediately. The abandoned mines and the cursed gold within were no immediate danger, and the old masters of the brotherhood looked upon the gem with greed in their hearts.

They placed the gem in a sacred shrine they called the Eye of Grajava and guarded it with a servant of the Spirit of the Mountain. To prevent Mammonites from stealing the Teardrop, the original Silent Masters devised a series of tests, known as the Sanctum of Assaying, to protect the entrance to the Eye of Grajava. The builder of this Sanctum—the priest who later became Rabscuttle instructed crafters of his future body to engrave the details of the sanctum's trials upon it, as a safeguard against his capture or death.

Over time, the details of the Sanctum of Assaying, Eye of Grajava, and Teardrop were lost to later Silent Masters. Now that the priests are desperate for help against the cultists, they see the fabled weapon left in the Eye as their best hope for victory and the PCs as their perfect pawns.

# Adventure Summary

The PCs discover that Rabscuttle's inner workings contain long-lost instructions for reaching the Eye of Grajava, a shrine containing a relic of great power. Following these clues, the party finds the secret chapter house of the Silent Masters and learns the hidden history of the Illuminated Brotherhood and the curse afflicting Rygar.

Passing into the Sanctum of Assaying, the PCs face guardians, traps, temptation, and betrayal by Mammonite infiltrators. Finally, they reach the Eye of Grajava, where they acquire the Teardrop from a representative of the Spirit of the Mountain.

Returning to the Forge of the Fire Blessing, the party must overcome a diabolical ambush in order to sacrifice the Teardrop and cleanse Rygar of Mammon's taint.

This is a trap and roleplaying scenario for four PCs of 10th level. The events take place after the Roots of Madness adventure.

# CLUES TO FINDING THE SECRET CHAPTERHOUSE

In the first two adventures, the PCs found many subtle clues that likely seem unconnected and random.

To begin this adventure the PCs need to have three pieces of information.

- 1. Something is wrong with the orichalcum ore and the Spirit of the Mountain.
- 2. The Eye of Grajava contains something important.
- 3. Rabscuttle contains the key to finding the Eye of Grajava.

The PCs might also be curious about the Illuminated Brotherhood, the Silent Masters, the cult of Mammon, the dragon, or the forsaken. Because the exploration of the Eye of Grajava helps explain all of these things, guide the party's investigations to focus on the three pieces of information above.

The clues are collected in tables 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3, ranging from the hardest to discover to the easiest. Skill checks need not be made if the players have already figured out the significance of the clue. Likewise, if the PCs have already deduced one of the facts, omit later clues related to that fact.

Divination spells can also help the party by providing missed clues, with higher-level divinations revealing multiple clues per spell. *Stone tell* and *commune with nature* are particularly helpful, granting extra clues because they connect directly with the Spirit of the Mountain. Note that both the Eye of Grajava and the Teardrop are warded against some divinations.

After the PCs discover that Rabscuttle contains vital information, they still must decode his internal writings with three DC 25 Linguistics checks. Dwarves gain a +2 racial bonus on these checks, while characters of any race can gain a +5 insight bonus for the use of *comprehend languages* and a +2 circumstance bonus if they have at least 5 ranks in Craft (clockwork), Craft (gearwork), or Knowledge (engineering). Because the PCs cannot know if they successfully decipher the meanings in the symbols and runes until it is too late, they cannot take 20 on these checks.

Rabscuttle's inner workings contain three pieces of information the PCs need: the existence of the Eye of Grajava beyond the Sanctum of Assaying, the location of the secret door in the forge leading to the sanctum, and the passphrase for the *forbiddance* effect protecting the sanctum.

His innards also contain five clues providing bonuses to skill checks: the order of actions required to open the puzzle doors; the nature of the gear key; the "Volund" password; the "Fire," "Smoke," and "Ash" passwords; and the guidance requirement.

See the list of clues on page 69 for additional clues the party may find.

What if Rabscuttle has been destroyed? Although some of the clues come from Rabscuttle's consciousness, all of the details of the Sanctum of Assaying are etched on the gears, plates, and components of his body. As a result, the party only needs the pieces of Rabscuttle, not his survival as a sentient being. If Rabscuttle has been completely destroyed, enough alternative clues exist to complete the adventure, although the sanctum presents a greater challenge. Getting Access to Rabscuttle

Clovis Stonethrower is Rabscuttle's official guardian. Parties on good terms with Clovis have no trouble "borrowing" the gearforged. Other groups should be able to bargain for access. If Clovis perished in an earlier adventure, the PCs could be named guardians of Rabscuttle if they remained on good terms with Clovis and other dwarves, thereby avoiding any problems.

# PART I: FIRST VISIT TO THE FORGE

Eventually the PCs should learn from the clues that the path to the Eye of Grajava leads through the Forge of the Fire Blessing. If they are stuck, the Silent Masters could become desperate enough to take the PCs into their confidence or Abelard could share memories of Silent Masters entering the Forge of the Fire Blessing through a secret door.

The PCs might have visited the forge before. In any case, the adventure proceeds more smoothly if they have a knowledgeable local guide on one of their trips before entering the chapter house. Either Abelard Feuerhirte or Varden Redfel make appropriate companions.

Abelard could ask for an escort to the forge to retrieve some belongings, while Redfel could ask for the party's help investigating reports of Mammonite spies or else accompany the party as far as the forge at the beginning of Roots of Madness. Read or paraphrase the following. The Forge of the Fire Blessing is a vast room of worked stone. One wall connects to the Shank. Stone wheels run up it, bringing quenching water and burning lava from the depths of Rygar. On a ledge perched halfway up another of the walls stands the Altar Forge of Volund, site of the most holy rituals to the forge god. After flowing around the altar-forge, the lava and water cascade down to the floor of the main hall, where they split into rivulets to supply each of the seven smaller forges. Chains hang from block and tackle on the ceiling, allowing even the largest forgings to be moved about the room with relative ease. Ventilation shafts pierce the walls, bringing refreshingly cool air to the temple. Three doors lead to rooms carved under the ledge.

The Forge of the Fire Blessing was once the greatest temple to Volund in the Golden Citadel. Several features of the room are important later (see Encounter 7), so make every effort to ensure that the PCs learn about them now. Most can be discovered by simple observation. The primary exception—the controls to the ventilation system—can be explained by the PCs' guide to the forge or by information in a room under the ledge. These rooms also contain vestments, tools, and other religious paraphernalia for ceremonies, as well as some personal effects of Abelard.

Finally, the walls of these side rooms are decorated with mosaics depicting the forge and the worship of Volund. Several mosaics provide clues describing the proper operation of the puzzle doors (see Puzzle Doors on page 75), showing clerics approaching an anvil and casting a spell. Another mosaic shows the location of the secret door to the chapter house (the beginning of the priestly procession in the other mosaics). A DC 15 Intelligence, Profession (blacksmith), or Knowledge (religion) check suffices to deduce the location of the secret door from the mosaics.

To reveal the secret door and allow entrance, characters must each intone a brief prayer to Volund while sacrificing precious metal worth at least 10 gp to the lava of the forge. Servants of deities other than Volund suffer no penalties for this action, except for servants of Mammon, who lose all class abilities until an *atonement* spell (CL 15th) returns them to Mammon's evil graces. Details of this sacrifice are available from Rabscuttle's etchings, through appropriate divination magic, or with a DC 30 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (local) check.

Note that the secret door is impossible to detect by mundane means until a sacrifice is made.

# Secret Chapterhouse (el 9)

Once the PCs make their sacrifices and prayers, the wall of the forge shimmers and a hidden door reveals itself. The door opens with a touch, revealing the Great Hall beyond. When the PCs look inside, read or paraphrase the following.

# TABLE 2-1: Something is wrong with the ore and the Spirit of the Mountain.

Clue	Scene	Primary Check	Secondary Check
"Cursed"	Crash at the Gates (DN)	DC 25 Perception	Terran
Orichalum ore causes gold fever.	Any with gold fever (DN)	DC 25 bardic knowledge	Knowledge (local)*
Cursed ore inside goldveined creatures.	Any with goldveined creatures (RM)	DC 20 Perception	DC 20 Knowledge (local)*
"The orichalcum— it destroyed us!"	Down the Stair (RM)	DC 20 Perception Dwarven	DC 20 Knowledge (local)*
"The mountain cannot be cured"	The Refugee Camps (DN) Albricius's lodging	DC 15 Perception	DC 15 Knowledge (religion)*

# TABLE 2-2: THE EYE OF GRAJAVA CONTAINS SOMETHING IMPORTANT

Clue	Scene	Primary Check	Secondary Check
Murals show a sapphire within a ruby	Hearthforges (RM)	DC 10 Perception	Dwarven Language*
Volund save us! Crying Eyes are our salvation	The Outing of Bragollach (DN)	DC 10 Perception	Dwarven Language*
"Tears of the Maiden will Wash away the Greed!"	The Refugee Camps (DN) Albricius's lodging	-	-
The path to the Eye runs through the Forge of the Fire Blessing	Rabscuttle	Linguistics DC 25	Dwarf Language*

# Table 2-3: Rabscuttle contains the key to finding the Eye of Grajava

Clue	Scene	Primary Check	Secondary Check
Writing on Rabscuttle's gearworks	Any when Rabscuttle is wounded or disassembled (DN)	DC 25 Perception	DC 25 Linguistics*
A silent master is surprised by the sight of Rabscuttle	Any with Silent Masters (Ansgar or Bradobaraxas)	DC 25 Sense Motive	-
Rubbings in Albricius's quarters match Rabscuttle's parts	The Refugee Camps (DN)	DC 20 Perception	DC 20 Craft (clockwork) Or Knowledge (engineering)*
"They put it inside him, hidden in plain sight"	The Refugee Camps (DN)	DC 15 Perception	DC 15 Knowledge (Religion)*

\* Or Intelligence or bardic knowledge check.

With a touch, the secret door opens to a vast, brightly lit great hall. The room is supported by pair after pair of pillars reaching upward to the ceiling high above. Covering every surface—even the checkerboard floor are the same esoteric symbols from the Upper Halls. The walls contain a number of normal doors, while opposite the entrance stands a large door of reddish-gold metal.

One of the Silent Brothers greets the PCs at the door. He is dressed in maroon robes trimmed in embroidered gold. This adventure assumes Bradobaraxas survived to this point and is the dwarf who greets the PCs at the door. If Bradobaraxas did not survive, use one of the other dwarves listed below.

Bradobaraxas beckons the PCs forward, using several solemn gestures that somehow communicate his desire to introduce them to his superiors. He leads them to a featureless orichalcum door. As Bradobaraxas approaches, the door splits into four quadrants with a slight click. The sections slide silently into the walls, ceiling, and floor. Read or paraphrase the following.

Beyond the door is a hidden temple 50 feet on a side and 20 feet high. Pillars support the ceiling and symbols cover all surfaces, just as in the Great Hall.

The floor is decorated in a mosaic showing dwarven priests of Volund carrying a sacred hammer across a forge and then using it to strike an anvil. The far 15 feet of the room is a raised dais, on which stands a small altar. Behind the altar is a carved orichalcum door.

On the dais stand three dwarves, two of whom wear the maroon and gold robes of the Illuminated Brotherhood. These three are the brotherhood's leaders, who have followed the party's progress through various divinations.

The main rooms of the chapter house are brightly lit with *continual flame* spells. The walls, floors, and ceiling are made of dressed stone of high quality. Doors are all of excellent quality, although none save the puzzle doors can be locked.

This entire level of the chapter house is protected by a variant *forbiddance* spell. Chaotic good creatures can enter without penalty, as can those carrying brotherhood fobs (magical or nonmagical) or those who sacrifice precious metal worth at least 10 gp while intoning a prayer to Volund (see Forge of the Fire Blessing). The current brothers do not know about the sacrifice key and never use the secret door to the forge, having another secret route. Although the brotherhood is lawful neutral, it chose chaotic good for the warding in order to maximize the effect on diabolists.

Bradobaraxas joins the other three dwarves on the dais and nods mutely to the party. With him are Most Silent Master Caradlather (LN male dwarf abjurer 5/illuminated brother of the rite of most worthy esoterics 5/silent master 3), who leads the brotherhood. Silent Brother Bradobaraxas (LN male dwarf illusionist 5/ illuminated brother of the rite of most worthy esoterics 5/Silent Master 1) sits on the Council of Masters.

Illuminated Sister Jorunn Flintknapper (female LE dwarf fighter 5/illuminated brother of the preceptory of the iron forge 3) is the sister of Ansgar (saboteur of the Manticore) and the leader of the Silent Masters' guards. She is also a secret member of the Mammonite cult (see Ambush at the Test of Lore).

The fourth dwarf is not a member of the brotherhood's leadership, but he seems to have a close working relationship with Jorunn. He is Paracelix Zhedan, who appears to be a diviner-for-hire, recently retained by the brotherhood to spy on the Mammonite cult. Secretly, Paracelix is a gilded devil polymorphed into dwarven form (see *Ambush at the Test of Lore*, page 75). Both Jorunn and Paracelix are the subject of *misdirection* spells cast by Paracelix.

If the PCs attack the dwarves, all but Jorunn and Paracelix flee, with Caradlather using *teleport* to return to the Upper Halls and report their treachery. Likewise, if the PCs see through Paracelix's deception and attack, the Silent Masters flee. In either case, the battle scheduled for the Test of Lore occurs here, leaving that room devoid of encounters.

**Development:** The Silent Masters are desperate and see the *Teardrop of Grajava* as their last hope, but they do not want to risk the few surviving brothers in the Sanctum of Assaying. They see the arrival of a party of adventurers who both oppose the cult and seek the Teardrop as divine providence. The Silent Masters want the PCs to retrieve the Teardrop to use against the cult, which benefits them all. In exchange, they offer to answer some of the PCs' questions. Caradlather does almost all of the communicating with the PCs. He uses a *minor image* spell to make letters of fire that communicate his more complex ideas.

Caradlather is silent and laconic by nature, but the recent events in the Golden Citadel have made him somewhat desperate. Caradlather also knows all the information in the Adventure Background (see page 67), although he does not reveal the origin of the forsaken or the fate of the old masters, and he truly does not know either the nature of the Teardrop or the true history of Rabscuttle. Caradlather's initial attitude is indifferent.

If the PCs offer to help bring down the cult, they gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks made to improve his attitude. Asking for payment gives them a -2 penalty. Intimidate checks automatically fail and move Caradlather one step closer to hostile. If reduced to hostile, he leaves, and Bradobaraxas continues the conversation, with an initial attitude of unfriendly.

Likely questions and Caradlather's answers follow. The friendlier he is toward the PCs, the more information he provides. Information marked as friendly or helpful is provided only if his attitude is at least that level, and more friendly attitudes also receive the answers for less
friendly attitudes. The entries marked as "opposed" require opposed Sense Motive checks; success reveals

that Caradlather is hiding something but does not reveal precisely what it is.



#### TABLE 3-1 CARADLATHER'S ANSWERS

Question	Answer		
Who are you?	"Caradlather, leader of the Silent Masters, hidden rulers of the Illuminated Brotherhood." <i>Friendly</i> : "We protect the world from the cursed orichalcum."		
What is wrong with the orichalcum?	"An archdevil cursed it." He punctuates this with a spit. <i>Friendly</i> : "It causes the plague you've witnessed." <i>Helpful</i> : "And the devil's cult wants to use it to summon him to Rygar."		
Which archdevil?	"The greediest of all, Mammon." <i>Friendly</i> : "Mammon's is the realm of greed and avarice."		
Why is your order so secret?	"So the cult does not know its opponents." Opposed.		
What is the Eye of Grajava?	"A shrine through the puzzle doors and the Sanctum of Assaying." <i>Friendly</i> : "It holds the . The sanctum tests your worthiness to wield it."		
What is the ?	"A great weapon." <i>Friendly</i> : "Particularly effective against Mammon, the archdevil who cursed the orichalcum." <i>Helpful</i> : "We no longer know its precise nature." Opposed.		
What do you want us to do?	"Get the Teardrop." <i>Helpful</i> : "And use it against Mammon."		
Who is the dragon?	"I do not know." <i>Helpful</i> : "We once had a dragon ally, but we do not know where she is." Opposed.		
What is Rabscuttle?	"A gearforged, apparently. I do not know why he carries our secrets." <i>Helpful</i> : "He resembles some ancient legends of prototype gearforged."		
What do you know about the puzzle doors?	"Not much." <i>Friendly</i> : "We can open those in the chapter house, although we have never been successful in opening the doors to the sanctum."		
Why are not you helping the refugees?	"Why should we?" <i>Friendly</i> : "They are infiltrated by the cultists." <i>Helpful</i> : "They are part of the problem—more miners means more ore."		
Where do you keep the cursed orichalcum?	"A safe place." <i>Friendly</i> : "We do not speak of that for fear of infiltration."		
Who are the forsaken?	"Who?" <i>Helpful</i> : "Dwarves who were punished for apostasy." Opposed.		
What happened on the <i>Manticore</i> ?	n "A misunderstanding." <i>Friendly</i> : "We had to keep the ore out of the hands of the cult." A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals that Jorunn is upset by the question. If confronted, she admits to being angry about her brother's death at the hands of the PCs.		

If the PCs wish to rest before attempting the puzzle doors, and they remain on good terms with Caradlather and the brotherhood, Caradlather offers them lodging in the chapter house. After the PCs leave, Jorunn and Paracelix monitor their progress, and enter the sanctum in pursuit of the PCs as soon as the PCs enter the Test of Faith.

#### PART II: THE SANCTUM OF ASSAYING

The Sanctum of Assaying was designed by the old masters of the Illuminated Brotherhood to prevent the cult and unauthorized members of the brotherhood—from reaching the Eye of Grajava. All walls, floors, and ceilings are made of dressed stone of excellent quality.

To prevent cultists of Mammon from reaching the Eye of Grajava, the entire sanctum is warded. A variant *forbiddance* effect (CL 15th) on each room wards all dimensional travel. Only creatures who open the puzzle door to a given room may enter that room. Those who manage to enter without passing through the appropriate puzzle door take 6d6 points of damage (DC 22 Will save for half). The rooms are also sheathed in six inches of lead, blocking spells of the scrying subschool from targeting the rooms or those within them.

The Sanctum of Assaying consists of three tests: the Test of Valor, the Test of Faith, and the Test of Lore. Puzzle doors separate the rooms.

#### PUZZLE DOORS (EL 8)

Six puzzle doors protect the secret chapter house and the Sanctum of Assaying. One leads from the Great Hall to the hidden temple, and opens with a touch. Two more lead to the lower council chambers of the silent priests. Although these two doors are not described in this adventure, their



codes are incredibly convoluted, reflecting the esoteric nature of the Illuminated Brotherhood.

Finally, three doors lead to the various rooms of the Sanctum of Assaying. When the PCs approach the first of the sanctum puzzle doors, read or paraphrase the following.

This door stands as a marvel of dwarven craftsmanship. The ten-foot-square door of refined orichalcum gleams in the magical light of the hidden temple. A series of scenes is carved in relief on the door's surface. At the top is a large hammer surrounded by scenes from a smithy preparing for work: flames dance in the forge fires as dwarves prepare tools and metal. At the edges of the door are carved pillars topped by mithral flames. The pillars rest on a vast relief anvil etched with another set of dwarven runes. The stone surrounding the door has been carved as well, continuing the scene depicted on the door.

The doors are 6 inches thick, with hardness 15, 200 hp, and a break DC of 30. They automatically close 2 rounds after being opened. The back sides of the doors are plain, with an engraved anvil in the center. Pressing that anvil opens the door. These doors were created from uncursed ore and so do not cause gold fever.

**Operation:** Four standard actions are required to open a puzzle door, and they must be performed correctly and in the proper order to avoid the door's trap (see Failure on next page). If the PCs decoded the instructions on Rabscuttle, they gain a +15 competence bonus on checks marked with an [R]. Dwarves gain a +2 racial bonus on all checks and worshipers of Volund gain a +2 sacred bonus on all checks. Note that these three bonuses stack.

Careful examination reveals the doors' hidden features. A successful DC 25 Perception check [R] reveals that the carved hammer rotates, and around it are the runes of the dwarven language; these runes are also carved on the anvil, and each of these runes can be depressed; and a gearshaped depression is hidden in the carvings on the door.

A DC 26 Perception check also reveals the trap detailed in Failure. Finally, a DC 26 Spellcraft check reveals the variant *forbiddance* effect cast on the puzzle door (see Sanctum of Assaying).

To discover the proper order of actions requires a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check; DC 25 Knowledge (engineering), Knowledge (local), or bardic knowledge check; or DC 30 Disable Device or Intelligence check [R]. Clues to this order can also be found in the Broken Door encounter in Roots of Madness (key before hammer), the mosaics in the side rooms of the Forge of the Fire Blessing (anvil before guidance), and the mosaic floor of the hidden temple (hammer before anvil). Each clue can be recalled with a DC 15 Intelligence check.

First, a gear-shaped key must be placed flat on a specific part of the carving and turned counterclockwise. On the sanctum doors this key is the central golden gear of Rabscuttle (or one of the other fellforged old masters);



with this gear removed a gearforged can follow simple directions but cannot speak or otherwise communicate. The location of the keyhole can be found with a DC 25 Perception check. The lock can be opened with the key, a *knock* spell, a *chime of opening*, or with a DC 30 Disable Device check. Using the key takes 1 round.

Second, the hammer must be turned to the proper runes to spell "Volund." The hammer points to a random rune when the party arrives. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion); DC 25 Linguistics, Knowledge (local), or bardic knowledge check; or DC 20 Intelligence check reveals this clue [R]. Depressing the runes takes 1 round.

Third, the runes on the anvil must be pressed in the proper order to spell "fire," "smoke," or "ash," depending on the door. "Fire" opens the first puzzle door. This echoes the central tenet of Volund's worship—that his followers "have no fear of fire, smoke, and ashes." A DC 20 Knowledge (religion); DC 25 Linguistics, Knowledge (local), or bardic knowledge check; or DC 20 Intelligence check reveals this clue [R].

Depressing the runes takes 1 round.

Finally, *guidance* must be cast on a person next to the door within a round of the anvil rune activation. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion); DC 25 Linguistics, Knowledge (local), or bardic knowledge check; or DC 20 Intelligence check reveals this clue [R]. A spellcaster can substitute another 0-level divination spell with a DC 10 Spellcraft check or a 0-level spell of another school with a DC 15 Spellcraft check. A DC 25 Use Magic Device check opens the door without spellcasting.

**Success:** Opening the door deactivates the wards on the next section of the sanctum, although only for those creatures passing through the doorway. Award ad hoc experience for a CR 8 encounter for the first door, but no experience for subsequent doors.

**Failure:** If the PCs fail any check, the puzzle door triggers an altered *word of chaos* trap.

#### Word of Chaos Trap

Type magic ; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 23 EFFECTS

**Trigger** special; **Duration** instant; **Reset** automatic **Effect** spell effect (*word of chaos*), CL 13 The puzzle door then resets to its initial state, and the PCs must begin again.

#### The Test of Valor (EL 10)

Once the PCs open the first puzzle door, they enter the Test of Valor. Read or paraphrase the following.

With a soft click, the orichalcum door splits into four quadrants. The gear key falls to the floor as the sections slide silently into the walls, ceiling, and floor. Beyond is a 15-foot-high passageway filled with thick black smoke, blocking vision completely beyond about 10 feet. Engraved in mithral on the floor are dwarven runes.

CR 8

The first room of the sanctum is a warren of tunnels filled with smoke. The dwarven runes read: "First, the faithful of Volund master flame and fear not fire, just as they fear not their enemies." This room tests the combat prowess of any who seek the Eye of Grajava.

This room is filled with smoke (as per Core Rulebook), which grants total concealment beyond 10 feet and concealment within that range. Creatures with the fire subtype (including all of the guardians) ignore all effects of the smoke—a PC with Knowledge (planes) or (arcana) realizes this with a DC 15 skill check. A DC 10 Perception check reveals the hissing and popping of multiple fires.

The starting locations of the room's guardians are marked on the map: FE is the greater fire elemental, F are the two fire mephits, and M are the two magma mephits.

Greater Fire Elemental	CR 9
hp 123, Bestiary 1	
Fire Mephits (2)	CR 3
hp 19, Bestiary 1	
Magma Mephits (2)	CR 3
hn 13 Bastian 1	

hp 13, Bestiary 1

#### **Tactics**

- **Before Combat** The magma mephits begin in their magma pool form.
- **During Combat** After the PCs pass the magma mephits, the fire elemental attacks from the front while the mephits use their ranged attacks from the rear.
- The elementals and mephits strike and move away, coordinating their actions in Ignan and using the visibility to their advantage. The mephits fly through the tunnels above the ceiling. When injured, the mephits use the fire elemental itself to activate their fast healing. The mephits do not summon more mephits.

Morale These guardians fight to the death.

**Development:** Every PC can attempt a DC 20 Intelligence check, with successful checks revealing Paracelix's scrying sensor.

At the other side of the maze is a second locked puzzle door. The carvings on the door and the surrounding alcove depict a bevy of blacksmiths hard at work within a smoky forge. This door opens just as the first (see Puzzle Doors), although the code word for this anvil carving is "Smoke".

#### THE TEST OF FAITH (EL 9)

When the second door opens, the gear key falls to the floor. Read or paraphrase the following.

Beyond is a 10-foot-high passageway extending into darkness. Engraved in mithral on the floor are dwarven runes.

The dwarven runes read: "Second, the faithful of Volund do not bow to the smoke of temptation, but rather seek their goal fearlessly and quickly, just as they shape metal fearlessly and quickly for the greater glory of Volund."

This room was designed to ensnare the greedy. PCs who proceed directly to the exit are unharmed by all but one trap. The main trap activates after 13 rounds, so track the number of rounds the party spends in this chamber. There is no illumination in this room. The secret doors can be found with DC 20 Perception checks.

#### **Traps and Treasure**

This room is filled with treasure to tempt and traps to punish those who enter it.

Incendiary Cloud Trap: The main trap in the chamber is an altered *incendiary cloud* trap that activates 13 rounds after any living or sentient creature enters the room. It is centered 25 feet away from the exit puzzle door. Characters next to the exit door are outside the area of effect of the trap; those 10 feet from the door gain a +5 circumstance bonus to their saves. The cloud stays in place for 2 rounds and then moves down the main corridor until its effects just reach the entrance door. It stays in that location for its remaining duration. If any living or sentient creatures remain in the room 5 rounds after the trap deactivates, it activates again, and this process continues until the room is empty of living or sentient creatures.

#### Incendiary Cloud Trap

**CR 9** 

Type magic; Perception DC 33; Disable Device DC 33 Effects

**Trigger** special; **Duration** 15 rounds; **Reset** Automatic **Effect** spell effect (*incendiary cloud*), 15<sup>th</sup>-level wizard, 4d6/ round, DC 22 Reflex save for half damage.

**Mind Traps:** Two mind traps (Kobold Quarterly #8) block the hallway. Although designed to look like deadly traps, these actually pose no physical threat to the party. They were placed in the corridor to raise the suspicions of any intruders and delay their advance.

Because no trap actually exists, Perception checks always fail.

The first trap (M1) is a conical pile of dust underneath an old white and gold robe. A DC 25 Spellcraft check determines that the dust was planted and was not the result of a *disintegrate* spell. The second trap (M2) is a cleanly beheaded skeleton underneath a slot in the ceiling. A DC 25 Heal check determines that the skeleton was not decapitated where it lies.

**Pit Traps:** The two pit traps in the main hallway (area 1) are standard pit traps. Note that there is no floor-level path remaining in the side corridors once the pits open.

#### Pit Trap

CR 4

**Type** Mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20 Effects

Trigger location; Reset Manual

**Effect** 80 ft. deep (8d6, fall); DC 20 reflex save avoids. Multiple targets (all in 5 by 10 ft rectangle)

Wide-Mouth Spiked Pit Traps: The two pit traps in the side corridors (area 2) are wide-mouth pit traps. Note that there is no floor-level path remaining in the side corridors once the pits open.

#### Wide Mouth Pit Trap

**Pedestal** Trap

#### CR 4

Type Mechanical; Perception DC 18; Disable Device DC 24 Effects

Trigger location; Reset Manual

Effect 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each)

**Trapped Pedestals:** Each of these bronze pedestals contains both an apparent treasure and a magical spell trap. Details on the various traps are available in the Core Rulebook. All traps are triggered by contact with the pedestal or the item on it.

Treasure

#### TABLE 3-2: TRAPPED PEDESTALS

Numbe	er	
T1	Energy Drain	Lyre of building
T2	Insanity mist vapor	Crystal hypnosis ball
T3	Flame Strike	Adamantine dwarven urgrosh
T4	Shocking Floor	Orichalcum chalice (worth 10,000 gp)
T5	Maximized Fireball	Bag of 1,000 pp
<b>T6</b>	Chamber of Blades	<i>Bag of devouring</i> with orichalcum ore lure
<b>T7</b>	Cone of Cold	Golden horn of blasting
<b>T</b> 8	Frost Fangs	Brooch of adaptation, as necklace

The adamantine urgrosh, orichalcum chalice, bag of 1,000 pp, and golden trumpet are masked by *veil* (CL 11th, DC 19) or *magic aura* (CL 11th, DC 14) spells to make relatively worthless items appear valuable. The items listed are what they appear to be to PCs who do not see through the illusions. In reality, they are wooden or low-quality iron items of no worth.

\*\* The *crystal hypnosis ball* is cursed to compel the user to do his utmost to purge the taint of Mammon from Rygar, even at significant cost to himself or others. This means that the user attempts to seize all corrupted orichalcum and destroy it, and works with all forces to this end, even against former allies. This curse can be removed by a remove curse or by successful *dispel magic* against a 20<sup>th</sup> level caster.

Ad Hoc XP Award: Award experience for the CR 9 *incendiary cloud* and two CR 4 pit traps, but not for the avoidable traps in the side corridors.

**Development:** Every PC may once again make a DC 20 Intelligence check to notice Paracelix's scrying sensor.

At the other side of the room is a third locked puzzle door. The carvings on the door and the surrounding alcove depict the end of the day at a smithy. Dwarves return tools to their holders and shovel ash from the furnaces. This door opens just as the first (see Puzzle Doors), although the code word for this anvil carving is "Ash".

#### Ambush at the Test of Lore (EL 10)

The third and final test awaits the PCs in this chamber. The test does not go as planned, however, as the PCs are attacked while they navigate the room. As the PCs open this third puzzle door, the gear key falls once more to the floor. Beyond is a dimly-lit room. If the PCs have darkvision or provide their own light source, read or paraphrase the following.

Beyond is a square room lit by magical flames topping carved pillars. Along the side walls, iron racks hold dozens of graven copper tablets, while in the center of the room sit an iron table and chair.

Directly across from the door is a bas-relief eye, fully five feet in diameter, carved in carnelian. Beneath the thin layer of dust on the floor you see inlaid mithral runes. More runes encircle the carved red eye.

The dwarven runes read: "Third, the faithful of Volund atone for the ashen sins staining their souls and the souls of their forefathers."

Originally, Rabscuttle or one of the other old masters inhabited this room, where they personally tested the knowledge of any who desired entrance to the Eye of Grajava. When the rest of the Silent Masters imprisoned the old masters, Rabscuttle escaped Rygar, leaving this room unguarded.

A DC 25 Perception check detects the sound of a trap activating 13 rounds after the PCs enter the room (though they do not know it is an *incendiary cloud* trap).

Let the PCs make this check each round until the door opens, although the DC increases by +1 every round after the second. The door opens 7 rounds later and the Mammonites enter.

#### Paracelix the Gilded Dwarf

#### CR 8

**hp** 95, *Midgard Bestiary*, p. 33 (gilded devil) **Other Gear** maroon and gold robes, nonmagical brotherhood fob

#### **Tactics**

- **Before Combat** Paracelix is still polymorphed into dwarven form. He cast *misdirection* on both himself and Jorunn, and already cast all of his *greater scrying* spells to follow the party's progress through the sanctum.
- **During Combat:** The two attempt to bluff the party into believing that they came to help. Once they reach flanking positions around a lightly armored PC, Paracelix attempts to dominate a PC who doesn't look like a spellcaster. Then they attack, concentrating on one PC at a time.
- **Morale:** Paracelix consumes his jewels to heal if reduced to 25 hp or less. If Jorunn has already fallen, he flees by foot if reduced to 10 hp or less. Otherwise, he joins her in fighting to the death. Note that he cannot *teleport* within the sanctum.

#### Jorunn Flintknapper

CR 8

Female dwarf fighter 6/illuminated brother of the preceptory of the Iron Forge 3 LE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +5; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception -1
DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+10 armor, +1 Dex) hp 85 (9d10+18)

Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +8 +2 vs. poison, spells, and spelllike effects,

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, defensive training, lux e tenebris, sprig of acacia

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft. **Melee** +1 silver dwarven urgrosh +17/+12 (1d8+10/x3)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +11/+6 (1d8/19-20/x2)

Str 19, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13 (+15 Sundering); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. Sunder)

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lunge, Power Attack -3/+6, Skill Focus: Craft (Weapons), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus: Dwarven Urgrosh, Weapon Specialization: Dwarven Urgrosh

Skills Bluff +9, Climb +1, Craft (gemcutting) +6, Craft (weapons) +12, Swim +1

Languages Common, Dwarven

**SQ** armor training 2 (Ex); arts, parts, and points; greed; hardy +2; hatred; house not made of hands; lux e tenebris; slow and steady; sprig of acacia; stability; stonecunning +2

**Combat Gear** crossbow bolts (20); **Other Gear** +1 silver dwarven urgrosh, masterwork light crossbow, +1 full plate SPECIAL ABILITIES

Lux E Tenebris (Ex) If Jorunn is affected by an enchantment and fails her saving throw, 1 round later she can attempt a second saving throw. If it fails, the spell has its normal effect.

**Sprig of Acacia (Su)** If a check of bardic knowledge, a Diplomacy check to gather information, or Knowledge check that succeeds by less than 10 is made to discover more about Jorunn, the person making the check learns entirely false information. Jorunn is immune to *speak with dead* and other post-mortem divinations.

#### Tactics

- **Before Combat** Jorunn already consumed a *potion of resist energy (fire) 30* and two of *cure serious wounds* to heal the damage from the *incendiary cloud* trap. She expended the final use of her *chime of opening* to pass through the sanctum.
- **During Combat** Jorunn and Paracelix attempt to bluff the party into believing that they came to help. Once they reach flanking positions around a lightly armored PC and Paracelix casts his *dominate person* spell, the two of them attack. They coordinate their attacks and positions, flanking with one another whenever possible.

Morale Dedicated to the very end, Jorunn fights to the death.

**Development:** The copper plates contain much of the secret history of the Illuminated Brotherhood, etched in Dwarven. DC 25 Perception checks reveal all of the information available from Caradlather as if he were friendly (see Secret Chapter House). DC 10 Perception check reveals the section labeled "Satarel" is empty. A DC 20 Perception check reveals that the section labeled "Forsaken" contains a random assortment of tablets, none of which actually mention the forsaken.

#### THE EYE GATE

The runes around the carved eye read, "Gather and prepare yourselves to enter the great shrine to the valorous Shield Maiden. Touch the eye together and allow yourselves to be transported." When all creatures in the room are touching the carving of the eye, they are teleported to the Eye of Grajava. If any creature in the room cannot be transported (because of a *dimensional anchor* spell, for instance), no one is teleported.

#### The Eye of Grajava (EL —)

Once all the PCs in the room touch the eye, it is quickly apparent to the PCs that they are somewhere else. Read or paraphrase the following.

Gone is the ever-present stink of unwashed bodies, the oily tang of forges, and the fine dust wafting upward from the mines. Instead, the air smells as clean as that outdoors, over the Ironcrags. The light here is cast in a red glow, as what appears to be a sphere of red glass encloses the area. Three bridges, evenly spaced around the sphere, rise to a circular platform in the center.

The Eye of Grajava is a spherical cavity in a vast ruby, fully 680 feet in diameter. At the center of the sphere stands a circular platform 100 feet in diameter supporting a large altar. Guarding the platform is Rygar, the Voice of the Mountain, an immense behir. Three 20-foot-wide bridges descend from and support this platform, ending at a 20-foot-wide catwalk that runs around the inside of the sphere at its equator. On one side of this catwalk is a carved red eye, in front of which the PCs appear. Opposite the eye is a carving of an anvil. The room is brightly lit by red-cast light diffusing through the ruby from all directions.

The Eye of Grajava is subject to the same CL 15th variant *forbiddance* effect as the Sanctum of Assaying and is further hidden from *discern location* spells by the combined power of the Spirit of the Mountain and the Shield Maiden Grajava. All details of the *Teardrop of Grajava*—save its existence and its use as a weapon against Mammon—are likewise shielded from divinations. Rygar can pass freely through the wards on the Eye of Grajava.

The carved eye in front of which the PCs appear is only a carving and does not function as a portal from this direction. The runes around the carved anvil read, "Rest and recover under the Shield of Grajava. Then gather and prepare yourselves to enter the great shrine to Volund himself. Touch the anvil together and allow yourselves to be transported." When all creatures in the room (save Rygar) are touching the carving of the anvil, they are teleported to the Forge of the Fire Blessing, as by the eye gate in Ambush at the Test of Lore (see page 75).

Rygar, the Voice of the Mountain, waits on the central platform and casts *detect evil* and *detect law* as soon as the PCs arrive (they can make Spellcraft checks as normal). Her initial attitude is friendly, although if she detects evil in even one PC she becomes unfriendly. If the majority of PCs are not lawful she becomes curious, as the PCs are clearly not members of the Illuminated Brotherhood, but her attitude does not change. If her attitude becomes hostile, she attacks. If the PCs improve her attitude to helpful, she gives them the *Teardrop of Grajava*.

As long as the PCs act politely toward Rygar, she welcomes their attempts at Diplomacy. Non-evil lawful

#### THE EYE OF GRAJAVA

1 square = 5 feet



PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on their Diplomacy checks, while evil PCs suffer a -10 penalty. Attempts at changing Rygar's attitude with Intimidate automatically fail and instead push her one step toward hostile.

Rygar claims to be an aspect of the Spirit of the Mountain. This ancient behir is a garrulous and relatively unbiased source of information about the history of the Golden Citadel. Her loyalty is solely to the Spirit of the Mountain, viewing the cult of Mammon as the ultimate enemy and the Illuminated Brothers as allies of questionable loyalty. She wanted to use the Teardrop centuries ago, was convinced by the old masters to wait to see if the Spirit of the Mountain could overcome the curse itself, though she suspects their greed.

Rygar begins by asking the PCs several questions in Dwarven. The answers she seeks are described after each question. Lying irritates her, and she uses her high Sense Motive skill to detect any deception. The PCs' answers determine her subsequent attitude to them. For every lie the PCs tell that she detects, her attitude moves one step closer to hostile. If the PCs say they work for Mammon, she immediately becomes hostile and attacks.

Who are you? Any true answer satisfies Rygar, so long as the PCs are not working for the Mammonites.

Why have you come to this twice-holy place, sacred to both the stones and the Shield Maiden? Rygar hopes that the PCs intend to save the Spirit of the Mountain from Mammon's curse. Acquiring the Teardrop is also an acceptable answer, as long as the PCs do not express a desire to keep or profit from it. If they do intend to keep or profit from it, and either admit as much or Rygar deduces it, treat this response as a lie for the purpose of changing Rygar's attitude.

Are you Illuminated Brothers? Rygar is merely curious, and does not care what the PCs say, as long as they do not lie.

Have the minions of Mammon finally penetrated the Citadel? The presence of Mammonites constitutes the imminent threat Rygar needs to release the Teardrop. If Jorunn appeared here, Rygar does not ask this question, since the answer is obvious.

What happened to that sesquipedalian bore, Satarel? If the PCs look confused or say they don't know who that is, Rygar adds, "Her dwarven form is tall and blonde and her natural form has a missing horn." If the PCs still express uncertainty, she concludes with, "She's a gold wyrm. I guess you have not seen her around? Given how much she loves the sound of her own voice, I suspect that if you had ever met her, you would have spent decades on the pleasantries alone.

The absence of Satarel—and the capture of Bragollach is another grave threat to the Spirit of the Mountain.

If Rygar is satisfied with the answers to these questions, her attitude shifts two steps closer to helpful, if it were not already. If she detected lies in the PCs, or they otherwise provided answers that displeased her, they must make Diplomacy checks to change her attitude. Once Rygar becomes helpful, she gives the Teardrop to the party and explains its use.

If the PCs arrive at the Eye before Jorunn catches up to them, she arrives a few rounds later and attempts to steal the Teardrop. In that case, Rygar fights to protect the Teardrop and attacks the gilded devil when its nature becomes clear. Fighting against the gilded devil grants a +5 bonus on subsequent Diplomacy checks. Otherwise, Rygar only helps parties who already improved her attitude to helpful.

This slithering, multilegged blue reptile has a fearsome head crowned with two large, curling horns.

#### Rygar

#### CR 11

Unique Female Divine Guardian Savant Behir Bestiary 1 and Advanced Bestiary N Huge magical beast Init +4; Senses blindfight, darkvision, low-light vision;

Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20 (-2 size, +12 natural) hp 95 (10d10+40)

Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +12

**Defensive Abilities** blessed fire; **Immune** disease, does not breathe, electricity, mind-affecting effects, poison, trip

OFFENSE

**Spd** 80 ft., burrow (20ft), climb (40 feet)

**Melee** bite +16 (2d6+10), constrict +15 (2d6+10), 6 rakes +15 (1d4+10)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (20-ft. line, 7d6 elec, Ref 18 half, evasion, grab, swallow whole (2d8+9, AC 16, 9 hp) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At-will—*dimension door* (within sacred site)

3/day—alarm, blacklight, detect evil, detect law, knock, mental alarm (2 used)

1/day—arcane lock, augury, clairaudience/clairvoyance, commune, dismissal (DC 15), hold portal, holy word (DC 15), true strike, vision, word of chaos (DC 15) STATISTICS

#### Str 24, Dex 11, Con 19, Int 17, Wis 24, Cha 12

Base Atk +10; CMB +19 (+23 Grappling); CMD 29 (can't be Tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Blind Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack -3/+6, Weapon Focus: Bite, Track

**Skills** Bluff +6, Climb +15, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +4

Languages Common, Dwarven, Ignan

**SQ** blessed life, bound to the faith, combat insight, deductive leap, sacred site, skill mastery [Linguistics, Disable Device, Knowledge (local—Ironcrags), Knowledge (nature), Sense Motive, terrain insight, uncanny dodge

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Ability Healing (Ex)** Rygar heals one point of ability damage per round in each damaged ability score.
- **Blessed Life (Ex)** Rygar does not age, breathe, eat, drink, or sleep.
- **Breath weapon** 20-ft. line, 7d6 elec, Ref half, every 1d4 rds. Creatures in area must make a DC 19 Reflex saving throw or take listed damage.
- **Combat Insight (Ex)** Rygar gains a +2 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls and a +2 insight bonus to AC against any creature she has watched in combat for at least 3 rounds.
- **Deductive Leap (Ex)** Once per round Rygar can choose to substitute her Intelligence modifier for the ability modifier usually associated with a saving throw she is about to make. The decision to use this ability must be made before the saving throw is rolled, and this ability can be used even if Rygar does not know the cause of the saving throw.
- **Grab** (**Any**) (**Ex**) Rygar can start a grapple as a free action if she hits with the designated weapon.
- Sacred Site (Ex) Rygar is charged with protecting the roncrags from harm. Should she ever leave the Ironcrag Mountains, she immediately loses the divine guardian template.
- Swallow Whole (2d8+9, AC 16, 9 HP) (Ex) Rygar can swallow smaller targets whole.



#### Tactics

- **Before Combat** Rygar uses two *mental alarm* spells a day in front of the entrance gate so that one is always active. Once anyone enters the Eye, Rygar casts *detect evil* and then *detect law*.
- During Combat Rygar uses *dismissal* against any opponents who appear to be outsiders, following with *holy word* or *word of chaos*. If she can catch several of her foes in a line, she uses her breath weapon. Otherwise, Rygar casts *blacklight* and uses her mobility to attack weakly-armored opponents first. She uses her deductive leap ability for Reflex saves.
- **Morale** Rygar fights to the death to protect the Teardrop of Grajava.

**Treasure:** On the altar rests the *Teardrop of Grajava*. This is an enormous flawless sapphire, roughly the size of a dwarf's head. A DC 20 Appraise check reveals that it is worth 100,000 gp. As a holy object of Volund, followers of his faith or that of his son, Khors, refuse to buy it, as do any good-aligned merchants who recognize its origin. See the Forge of the Fire Blessing (page 82) for the Teardrop's powers.

Also on the altar are the Writings of the Voice, a collection of observations and prophecies recorded by Rygar in her centuries of isolation. The copper tablets from the "Satarel" section of the Test of Lore are stacked next to the altar. If the PCs fight and kill Rygar instead of talking to her, they can learn all of the information otherwise gained through simple conversation with three successful DC 25 Linguistics checks.

Development: If Rygar becomes helpful and gives the Teardrop to the PCs, she explains its use. Given her extensive knowledge skills, Rygar should be able to answer other questions about the area and its history. Reveal any information the PCs might have missed before, although the origin of the forsaken and the fate of the old masters should remain unknown to the PCs for now. Some likely questions and her answers follow. What is the Teardrop? "This is the Teardrop of Grajava, the sorrow of Volund's Shield Maiden given physical form. She grieved for the corruption of the Spirit of the Mountain, and offered this gift to the dwarves." (Note that greedy responses from the PCs could change Rygar's willingness to help them.)

How does it work? "It is a weapon, albeit only in the mystical sense. If an intelligent creature sacrifices it freely—knowingly giving Although Rygar refuses to accompany the PCs, you could use her to help a party that finds itself in dire straits through poor luck. Such aid should only be available once, if at all. Alternatively, if the PCs' subsequent adventures involve the Ironcrags, Rygar can make an excellent recurring source of adventure hooks and information.

up a lifetime of riches in order to fight Mammon—then the Teardrop will purge the corruption from the Golden Citadel. The Spirit of the Mountain will be whole again, and it will purge the taint from its veins of ore. Also, the grace of Grajava will also cure those avaricious souls who fell victim to the plague. After that, it should be a simple matter to drive off the cult and round up the remaining cursed ore. Remember this, though—the sacrifice must occur on a holy altar of Volund within the Golden Citadel. Willingly break the sapphire on the altar and victory is at hand!"

Who are you? "I am Rygar, the Voice of the Mountain. I am a shard—an aspect, if you will—of the Spirit of the Mountain. I serve all the Ironcrags, really. When the dwarves shortsightedly—hmm, or was it greedily? refused to use the Teardrop, I volunteered to stand guard, and so I have for centuries. If the corruption of Mammon has spread as widely as it sounds, I might be the only uncorrupted part of the spirit left."

What is the Spirit of the Mountain? "Think of it as part deity, part elemental essence, and part location. It welcomed the dwarves to the Ironcrags, not knowing they would bring this infernal curse upon its roots."

What is Mammon's curse? "Ugh, devils—always concocting some overly complicated and overly showy plan to prove themselves. Mammon cursed the orichalcum lying within Mount Rygar. Lesser beings who are exposed to it succumb to their native avarice.

Initially, that appears to be a disease with gold-sheened pustules. Showy, right? Then the afflicted change into twisted, gold-veined mockeries. Horrible as that is, 'tis but a distraction. If enough cursed ore is gathered together, then an aspect of Mammon himself can be summoned to the Ironcrags. I'm sure the summoning itself would require the usual tedious rituals and sacrifices—which worthies like yourselves could stop—but as long as the orichalcum remains cursed, the threat of Mammon's arrival remains."

Who is the dragon? "Well, the dwarves had a problem. They could prevent their brethren from mining any more ore, but the orichalcum they already mined from Mount Rygar was a real danger—at any moment cultists could steal it and summon their sulfurous master. So the dwarves found an ally—the gold wyrm, Satarel.

To be fair, she had a sterling reputation for fighting evil, but only I appreciated the danger of having a dragon guard precious metals. Dragons are like magpies bred with xorn—sooner or later their greed for shiny things overcomes their supposedly good nature.

Anyway, Satarel took away the cursed ore and stood guard over it. If she's out of the picture, then her egg must finally have hatched. The daughter—Bragollach, I think they named her—was going to take charge of the cursed orichalcum. I certainly hope she's less long-winded than her mother."

What do you think of the Silent Masters? "The original lot was tolerable, I suppose. They did not appreciate my superior wisdom—witness their reluctance to use the Teardrop and their insistence on working with Satarel—and they hid something from me, I think. One day they suddenly stopped visiting. I know nothing of the modern group."

Rygar offers to watch over the party if the PCs look particularly beat up or if they fought off Jorunn in her presence. If asked, Rygar refuses to accompany the party. After they depart, she plans to make contact with the Spirit of the Mountain and help it recover from Mammon's curse.

Before the PCs leave, though, Rygar gathers them together and says, "The Mammonites are sure to know that someone has reached the Eye of Grajava—the wards are powerful, but so are the forces of the Greedy Prince. That gate will take you back to the Forge of the Fire Blessing. If I were you, I would gird myself for battle before I ventured forth, for cultists of greed might be lying in wait."

If asked for more details, Rygar uses *vision* to confirm the ambush, although she gains no details about its particulars. Rygar can also explain the operation of the ventilation system in the forge.

#### AFTER THE ADVENTURE

The precise location of the Eye of Grajava is unspecified. If you wish to remove the Eye from possible PC use after the adventure, perhaps the earthquake destroys it, Grajava moves it elsewhere to aid other dwarves, or the Spirit of the Mountain reabsorbs the Eye. You need not explain to the PCs why they cannot access the Eye of Grajava, merely that it is now inaccessible to them. You can allow them to investigate its disappearance if you like, leading to further adventures in the Ironcrags.

If, on the other hand, you prefer to leave the Eye of Grajava available for further adventures, you can place it somewhere convenient for the latter parts of your campaign. Some possibilities are:

- 1. The Eye is buried deep within Mount Rygar, and to reach it, the PCs must mine through the territory of the remaining forsaken and the Imperial ghouls
- 2. The Eye is easy to find, but remains sacred to followers of Volund, and PCs who exploit it face the ire of pious worshippers
- 3. The Eye is easy to find, but any attempt to profit from it causes Mammon's curse to return
- 4. The Eye is not within Mount Rygar at all, and is instead in a location more convenient to your plans.

## THE FORGE OF THE FIRE BLESSING

1 square = 5 feet



#### Sacrifice

The cult learned that the Teardrop needs to be taken to the Altar-Forge but does not know the Teardrop is a gemstone. Instead, the cultists assume they seek a powerful magic weapon. The PCs must fight their way to the Altar-Forge through several cultists and their diabolic allies. After using the gate in the Eye of Grajava, the PCs are teleported directly to the Forge of the Fire Blessing.

#### Forge of the Fire Blessing (el 14)

The PCs appear in the Forge of the Fire Blessing just outside the secret door to the chapter house. Feel free to refresh the memories of your players by rereading the read-aloud text in the section, First Visit to the Forge (page 68).

The forge is dimly lit by the lava. Unless another light source is present all creatures have concealment from the PCs. Characters with darkvision or low-light vision can see as normal for those abilities. Note that all the devils can see perfectly in darkness.

All four doors in the forge—including the secret door to the chapter house—are under the effects of *arcane lock* spells cast by Tarisaul (CL 10th). One of the passageways leaving the room was blocked by an ancient earthquake, while the other leads to the Great Stair.

Seven forges stand on the lower level while the Altar-Forge sits on the ledge. One Medium or smaller creature can stand on each of the lower forges, and two Medium or one Large creature can stand on the Altar-Forge, gaining the +1 bonus to melee attacks for fighting from higher ground.

One side of the chamber connects to the Shank. Creatures can ride the wheels carrying water or lava to or from the ledge; the trip requires a DC 10 Dexterity check per round for 3 rounds. Failure leads to a fall of 1d6x10 feet in the first and third rounds or 1d8x10 feet in the second round. Falls in the third round leave the creature on the ledge if he started on the floor, or on the floor if he started on the ledge. The heat of the lava wheel deals 1d4 hp fire damage per round to anyone on it. Creatures on one wheel can engage those on the same wheel in melee combat, but not those on the other wheel.

The thin layers of lava in the troughs deal 2d6 hp fire damage per round of exposure. Half damage continues for 1d2 rounds after exposure. Total immersion is impossible, and merely passing near the lava deals no damage.

The water troughs are 1 foot deep. If mixed with the lava—by destroying a trough (10 hp, hardness 5), for instance—the water generates a 10-foot-wide cube of steam, which provides total concealment and deals 1d6 hp fire damage to anyone within the steam. The steam dissipates in 1d3 rounds, unless the lava and water continue to come into contact.

Chains hang from the ceiling down to 5 feet above the floor of the room. Except for the 10 feet nearest each wall, everywhere in the chamber can be reached by the chains. A DC 15 Climb check is required to climb up or down the chains, while creatures can hold at one height with one DC 5 Climb check per round as a free action. Creatures can swing on the chains with DC 10 Strength checks and leap from chain to chain with Acrobatics checks (DC 10 + 10 per 5 feet of horizontal distance + 5 per 5 feet of change in height). Characters can use Acrobatics checks to drop from the chains.

Ventilation shafts cover the ceiling and outer walls of the room, except for the Shank wall and the wall segments where the doors, secret door, and passageways enter the chamber. These shafts contain magically bound spirits of air and cold. Each round, each 10 foot square of wall or ceiling can generate one of the following effects at CL 10th, directed straight ahead: gust of wind, obscuring mist, sleet storm, or wind wall. These effects are triggered as swift actions through prayers to Volund, and DC 15 checks of Knowledge (religion) or (arcana) may reveal that the walls have such bound powers linked to Volund. There is one such command word combination for each wall segment for each spell, but the pattern of prayers is simple enough that any creature with at least an 8 Intelligence can remember it. Any shaft can be commanded from anywhere within the forge. Dispel magic suppresses the effect of a given shaft as if it were a magic item.

The PCs are blocked from reaching the Altar-Forge at the top of the room by a handful of devils and Mammonite cultists. Tanya Hrovitz leads this particular group of Mammonites. She is a thin, middle-aged woman wearing brightly polished armor and wielding a richly filigreed flail. Off to her side is Tarisaul Eris, a brownhaired man with a pudgy face and a short-cropped beard. He wears expensive robes and a bored expression.

One hamatula and one kyton guard the entrance to the forge and another pair guards the secret door. Tanya stays near the Altar-Forge as a last line of defense, while Tarisaul and the two remaining kytons wait at the top of the stairs. Tarisaul destroyed the top of the stairs with *stone salve*. The cultists discussed their tactics before the PCs arrive, so their initial actions proceed without any direction from Tarisaul, the leader of this group.

Note that none of the cultists are initially aware of the ventilation system, but they avoid the affected squares once they realize the threat. They do not use the ventilation system against the PCs.

If the cultists learn the true nature of the Teardrop (through overheard PC conversation, for instance), they look for and focus their attention on the holder of the gemstone.

CR 9

#### Tanya Hrovitz

Female human cleric 10 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +1 Dex) hp 73 (10d8+20) Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +14

#### offense Spd 20 ft.

- **Melee** +1 wounding flail +10/+5 (1d8+2/x2)
- **Special Attacks** charming smile (DC 20), dazing touch (8/ day), scythe of evil for 5 rounds (1/day)
- **Spell-Like Abilities** charming smile (10 rounds/day) (DC 20, CL 10), dazing touch (8/day)
- **Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 10th, +8 melee touch, +8 ranged touch):
- 5th—dispel good (x2) (DC 20), flame strike (x2) (DC 20), righteous might (DC 20)
- 4th—*dimensional anchor* (*x*3), *unholy blight* (*DC* 19)

3rd—dispel magic (x2), invisibility purge, speak with dead (DC 18), suggestion (DC 19)

- 2nd— *calm emotions (DC 18), cure moderate wounds (DC 17), lesser restoration, shield other, spiritual weapon, zone of truth (DC 18)*
- 1st—charm person (DC 17), entropic shield (DC 16), forbid action (x2) (DC 17), murderous command (x2) (DC 17), sanctuary (DC 16),
- 0 (at will)—detect magic, detect poison, read magic (DC 15), resistance (DC 15)

STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 17/21, **Cha** 16 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

- **Feats** Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Improved Channel, Iron Will, Spell Focus: Enchantment, Weapon Focus: Flail **Skills** Acrobatics -2, Climb -2, Diplomacy +11, Escape
- Artist -2, Fly -2, Heal +13, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +11, Ride -2, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +12, Stealth -2, Swim -2

Languages Common

- **SQ** aura (Ex), cleric channel negative energy 5d6 (6/day) (DC 20) (Su), cleric domain: charm, devil, envy variant channeling (±3 profane), hell's corruption (5 rounds) (8/ day) (Su), spontaneous casting
- **Combat Gear** +1 wounding flail, +2 Breastplate; **Other Gear** +4 headband of inspired wisdom

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura (Ex) Tanya has an aura of evil and law.

- **Charming Smile (Sp)** (DC 20) Use *charm monster* as a melee touch attack.
- **Cleric Channel Negative Energy 5d6 (Su)** (6/day) (DC 20) Tanya can channel negative energy to injure the living and heal the undead.
- **Dazing Touch (Sp)** (8/day) Melee touch attack dazes target.
- Hell's Corruption (Su) (5 rounds) (8/day) Touch attack inflicts -2 save vs. your spells and take the worse of 2 rolls for skill checks.
- **Scythe of Evil (Su)** (5 rounds) (1/day) A melee weapon you are holding becomes unholy

#### **Tarisaul Eris**

Male Human wizard 10

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex) hp 61 (10d6+10)

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +8

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee dagger +5 (1d3/19-20/x2)

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 10th, +5 melee touch, +8 ranged touch):

5th— feeblemind (x2) (DC 21), telekinesis (DC 20), teleport 4th—black tentacles (x2), dimension door, fire shield,

stone shape

3rd—*dispel magic* (x2), *fly, haste* (x2)

2nd—arcane lock (x3), spider climb (x2), whispering wind 1st—animate rope, expeditious retreat, magic missile (x5) 0 (at will)—detect magic, mage hand, open/close, read magic STATISTICS

#### Str 10, Dex 14/17, Con 12, Int 17/21, Wis 13, Cha 8 Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Great Fortitude, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus: Enchantment, Spell Penetration
Skills Diplomacy +5, Fly +12, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (local) +18,

Linguistics +18, Perception +5, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Ignan SQ bonded object: ring (1/day) (Su), *change shape* (10 rounds/day) (Sp), opposing schools illusion and necromancy, physical enhancement +3: dexterity (Su),

telekinetic fist (8/day) (Sp)

**Other Gear** +4 *headband of vast intelligence, platinum mask,* bonded ring

SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Bonded Object: Ring (Su)** Use object to cast any spell in your spellbook 1/day. Without it, Concentration required to cast spells (DC20 + spell level).

**Change Shape (Sp)** (10 rounds/day) Use *beast shape II* or *elemental body I* as a spell-like ability.

Telekinetic Fist (Sp) (8/day) 30' ranged touch attack, 1d4+5

**Development:** The Mammonites try to prevent any PC from reaching the Altar-Forge. If one PC is incapacitated, they attempt to ransom that PC's life for the Teardrop. If the PCs agree, the Mammonites leave the helpless PC unharmed but return to the Heartsblood Forge with their prize. Recovering the Teardrop is outside the scope of this adventure, but see Heartsblood Forge for more information.

A PC can sacrifice the Teardrop as a standard action by breaking it either with a held weapon while it rests upon the Altar-Forge or by striking the Teardrop against the Altar-Forge itself. The PC may also attempt to shatter the

**CR 9** 

Teardrop against the Altar-Forge by throwing the gem at it. In that case, the PC must make a ranged touch attack against the Altar-Forge (AC 2) The PC suffers the normal -4 penalty for an improvised weapon, and the Teardrop has a range increment of 10 feet.

If this attack fails, use the splash weapon rules to determine where the Teardrop lands. As a divine relic, it is impervious to damage from falling, lava, or other environmental hazards, but as it was meant to be broken on the Altar-Forge, it breaks if the PC's aim strikes true.

If the PCs sacrifice the Teardrop, the human cultists retreat and return to their base in the Heartsblood Forge, leaving the devils behind to punish the PCs for their selflessness. If the PCs leave the room with the Teardrop, the Mammonites remain here to block access to the Altar-Forge.

#### **CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE**

If the PCs sacrifice the Teardrop, it shatters in a rapidly expanding sphere of cerulean light. As this sphere passes through Mount Rygar, visible to all within the Golden Citadel, the magical light purges the unmined orichalcum of Mammon's curse. Mined ore is outside the influence of the Spirit of the Mountain, and so is unaffected. All creatures afflicted with gold fever are cured completely, although they are subject to re-infection by cursed ore. Goldveined creatures are unaffected. The change in the unmined ore awakens the Spirit of the Mountain. As a reward for their sacrifice, each PC gains Volund's Boon—a permanent inherent +1 increase in an ability score of his choice. PCs who died in the final battle in the Forge of the Fire Blessing are returned to life through *true resurrection*, but do not receive the ability boost. Interpret this reward in the way most favorable to the PCs—for instance, if a PC gains Volund's Boon but later dies in combat, allow the player to choose between keeping the ability boost and gaining the true resurrection.

If the PCs do not sacrifice the Teardrop now, they have other opportunities to do so later, although they forever lose their chance at Volund's Boon. The sacrifice of the Teardrop must occur on an altar holy to Volund within Rygar; such altars are located in the Forge of the Fire Blessing, the Ash Chapel in Deeper Darkness, and the Prime Anvils in Heartsblood Forge. The PCs can deduce that a given altar is appropriate with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check, with worshipers of Volund gaining a +10 circumstance bonus on this check. The greed of the PCs' choice (or the victory of the Mammonite cultists, if the PCs were prevented from sacrificing the Teardrop) resonates in the corrupt ore, and the Spirit of the Mountain begins to awaken.

In either case, the actions of the PCs awaken the Spirit of the Mountain. Allow the party time to rest and heal (but not more than 12 hours). Afterwards, the walls of the Golden Citadel begin to mutter in Terran, "The curse, the curse!" Soon thereafter, the Spirit of the Mountain cries out and Mount Rygar shakes. Deeper Darkness has begun.





#### CHAPTER 4:

# DEEPER DARKNESS

#### By Tim & Eileen Connors

The Spirit of the Mountain still thinks of itself as the benevolent spirit it once was. It tells itself that the world depends on it to quarantine Mammon's cursed gold. But this old motivation died long ago.

The devil's curse snaked through the mountain's veins and twisted the spirit's soul. Greed, not benevolence, drives the Spirit of the Mountain to contain the corrupted gold, and it suffers no one to escape the mountain with even an ounce of its precious metal. For what the Spirit of the Mountain calls the "greater good," everyone in the Halls of the Mountain King must perish.

#### **ADVENTURE SUMMARY**

Desperate to contain the corrupted gold, the enraged mountain spirit rumbles to life. The polished ceilings of the Upper Halls crash to the floor in great shattering chunks, burying gold-rushers, crushing supplies, and trapping everyone inside the ancient dwarven citadel. Explosive gases rise through newly opened rifts and fill the halls from bottom to top. A sustained screech echoes from the mountain's belly as the water-driven shank that distributes power and circulates air grinds to a halt.

The entombed dare not dig out for fear that a spark from a glancing pick ignites the collected gas and incinerates everyone. To get the air flowing and the gases dispelled, the PCs must brave the deeper darkness and repair the Shank. The earthquake collapsed the main tunnel to the Shank, but the Illuminated Brothers describe a dangerous alternative route.

The PCs must take the Great Stair to the longabandoned Royal Residences. In this massive complex, forsaken and their dogmole juggernauts patrol the darkness. At the Ash Chapel of Volund, slaves of the forsaken, a curtain of lava, and a test of Volund stand between the PCs and the entrance to the Royal Crypts. In the catacombs of the dwarven kings, thoqqua spring from holes like hot bullets and xorn earth glide under the PCs' feet. On the scrimshawed skeletons of Illuminated Brothers, the PCs discover an alternative way out of the mountain and a secret shame of the brotherhood.

As the PCs descend farther, hewn halls give way to natural caverns. Deep in the mountain, water rages past a waterwheel that the earthquake disconnected from a 100-foot-tall oak shank. Before the PCs can turn the massive water gate to divert the flow long enough to repair the connection, the Spirit of the Mountain takes one final step to stop them. The shank's support structure, wooden catwalks, and steel scaffolding rip from the walls and transform into a colossal Spirit-possessed bipedal construct that swings massive chains and log-sized pipes at the PCs.

Deeper Darkness is a dungeon crawl adventure suitable for four PCs of 10th level. The events of this adventure take place after the Eye of Grajava adventure.

#### PART I: THE UPPER HALLS

After the Eye of Grajava adventure, the PCs likely return to the Upper Halls. This adventure assumes the PCs are in the Great Hall in the Upper Halls when the quake hits. Give them the opportunity to rest and recover their resources before bringing down the ceiling. The PCs have few opportunities to rest without consequence during the course of this demanding adventure.

#### THE QUAKE (EL 10)

The encounter begins with shudders and groans from the living stone of Mount Rygar. Begin combat with the first shock of the quake, and have the mephitis appear on their next initiative step, rising from the floor. A group of nearby refugees suffer attacks from the mountain as well, and the adventurers can choose to attempt a rescue.

This encounter occurs in the main chamber of the upper halls.

There are 7 refugees scattered around the battlemap. Use commoner statistics from the *Gamemastery Guide* or Miner (commoner lvl 3) statistics from the *NPC Codex*. Refugees will either stand still in terror or run about, avoiding mephits and searching for safety. Feel free to have these NPCs be friends or acquaintances of the party.

At the beginning of each round for 6 rounds, select a PC or refugee. The quake attacks the square that PC begins the round in. The Spirit of the Mountain invested some of its power into the mephits, making them immune to the attacks of the hazards.

Treat the quake as an event that occurs on an initiative of 18. It acts as a 15-ft. radius burst that attacks each creature within range at +15 for 4d10 hp bludgeoning damage and *entangles* a PC that fails a reflex save of DC 19. If you can mark the battlemap, or have tokens, areas already hit by the quake become difficult terrain for the remainder of the fight.

A successful DC 24 Knowledge (dungeoneering or engineering) check reveals the next space to be attacked by the quake. If this occurs after the quake has gone for the turn, randomly select an individual on the battlemap



#### TOP FLOOR



#### BOTTOM FLOOR





at that point and tell the player who succeeded on the check where the quake will occur.

A DC 25 Perception check identifies a safe area (2-4 squares total) such as near a pillar or under a doorway, GM decides. A character in such a spot receives a +4 to their AC and reflex save against the quake. Consider 5 feet out from each pillar and next to each doorway a safe space.

Mephits rise from the ground on their first initiative after the quake hits. They can make a full move and attack on their first round.

#### Dust Mephits (3)

hp 27; Bestiary 1

#### OFFENSE

Melee 2 claws +5 (1d3)

**Breath weapon:** 15-ft. Cone of dust (1d4 slashing damage and sickened for 3 rounds, reflex DC 13 for half damage and not sickened.)

#### Tactics

**During Combat** Mephits attack with their claws and use their breath weapons as often as possible (once every 1d4 rounds).

#### Earth Mephits (3)

.

CR 3

CR 3

hp 33; Bestiary 1 Offense

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d3+3)

**Breath weapon**: 15 ft cone of rocks (1d8 bludgeoning damage)

#### Tactics

**During Combat** Mephits attack with their claws and use their breath weapons as often as possible (once every 1d4 rounds).

The quake and the mephits' attack lasts for mere seconds, but it is more than enough to cause destruction throughout the Great Hall. Fallen debris extinguishes all natural fires, leaving the Great Hall in dust-choked darkness. The muffled screams of the buried fill the air.

When the ceiling collapses entirely, the PCs and other survivors find themselves lying prone in a maze of crawlspaces and fallen pillars. Massive ceiling slabs lie just inches above their heads. If the PCs shed light or can see in the dark, read or paraphrase the following. Otherwise, describe just the sounds of the falling ceiling and the echoes of frightened screams:

What was once a soaring ceiling is now a mosaic of cracked stone slabs precariously balanced 30 feet from the ground by pillars leaning against each other at haphazard angles. Every few seconds, the tremendous overhead weight kicks a pillar aside and the whole ceiling slips a few feet further down before catching again. *Everywhere, screams of pain and calls for help issue from billowing clouds of dust.* 

All told, the earthquake kills half of the refugees and obliterates 3/4 of the already meager food and water supplies. Hundreds of tons of rubble block the exits from the citadel, making areas of the upper halls impassable. Everyone is now trapped inside the mountain.

**Rescuing the Quake Victims:** Keep the battlemap out, and place 1 additional NPC on the map per party member. Fallen stone pins them to the ground, and one randomly selected NPC has lost their leg and will bleed to death in 3 rounds. If possible, these should be NPCs that the PCs know well. The PCs will have to decide who to attend to first, and how to get the NPCs free.

The following skills can be used to free trapped NPCs:

- Acrobatics or Escape Artist (DC 21)—You squeeze through the spaces made by fallen beams and rock slabs to pull a victim free and to a healer.
- •*Knowledge (dungeoneering) or (engineering) (DC 20)* You shore and reinforce unstable cavern locations to help the NPC return to be healed.
- •*Heal (DC 18)*—You treat the injuries sustained by a trapped individual as other workers dig at the debris.
- *Diplomacy or Intimidate:* (DC 20) You either yell at or gently convince other survivors to help dig out the pinned victim.
- *Perception (DC 20)* You find victims under the rubble by hearing their cries, and are able figure out how to free them.

A spellcaster can cast spells such as *telekinesis* and *stone shape* to help, roll a Spellcraft (DC 15) for each spell to see if it helps.

If the PCs save their number or more of survivors in 4 rounds, they will enjoy a +5 to all diplomacy checks involving refugees in the halls. A major NPC may also loan the party a magic item or provide a +3 bonus to future Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks with other NPCs in the citadel as a reward for rescue. PCs who ignore all NPCs never forget this moment, for the NPCs' beseeching faces and outstretched arms haunt the PCs' dreams (and possibly their waking lives).

If PCs seem especially callous, they may suffer a penalty on interactions with survivors (either -5 or -10 to Diplomacy and Bluff) for the rest of the adventure.

#### EXPLOSIVE GAS

The survivors eventually gather in an area where the ceiling held firm, although its floor did not fare so well. Explosive gases rise through newly opened rifts and slowly fill the Upper Halls.

Sensing the humanoids still alive in the halls, the Spirit of the Mountain rages again, and a second tremor rocks the mountain's core. A sustained screech echoes from the mountain's belly where the water-driven shank that distributes power and circulates air grinds to a halt. If the Spirit of the Mountain cannot crush the interlopers, it intends to suffocate them instead.

Given time, the entombed could dig out, but dwarven penitents (named for the crawling posture they assume when burning dangerous gases from the heights of chambers) warn the huddled survivors that a spark from a glancing pick could ignite the collected gas and incinerate everyone. The dwarves legislate an immediate fire ban, and in the darkness, surviving humans begin to panic. After a quick discussion, the remaining dwarves and humans with any degree of authority quickly discuss their options. They conclude that there is one way out of this dilemma: to get the air flowing and the gases dispelled, someone (and at this point they unanimously indicate the PCs) must brave the deeper darkness and repair the Shank. And they must hurry. It is only a matter of time before the refugees are squeezed between gas filling the Upper Halls and twisted creatures rising from the lower ones.

Allow the PCs to discuss their options with the NPCs and to try to uncover what information they can. Diplomacy checks can reveal a bounty of information. PCs who attempted to help the refugees gain an automatic +5 bonus on their checks (making some information all but automatic), +2 for each NPC they rescued.

Members of the Illuminated Brotherhood attempt to solicit promises from the PCs to never reveal any secrets discovered in the crypts. If the PCs request a guide to the Shank, the near-panicked, non-combatant Brother Sigil reluctantly volunteers. Be sure to kill him in the next encounter.

If the PCs request a map, Sigil draws them a crude map of the Royal Residences—a square with Xs marking the locations of the Great Stair and the Ash Chapel of Volund. Centuries have passed since any Illuminated Brother knew how to enter the Royal Crypts, what the layout of the Royal Crypts is, or how to enter the caverns. All that remains is Sigil's fragmented knowledge that these areas once connected.

#### KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON

If the PCs dally, perhaps to rest and recover spells before heading for the Shank, antsy dwarves periodically urge them into action. Even if the PCs threaten them, they return with thinly veiled excuses. An old man approaches the PCs to pray over his saviors. A young woman comes to show the face of a child whose life depends on the PCs' success. All remind the PCs of the consequences of inaction and procrastination with as much politeness as they can muster.

Before the PCs leave, a man named Roen approaches with swollen eyes and a curious glass. Silver filigree surrounds the glass's mirrored surface, and when the PCs gaze upon it, it ripples into a dark scene featuring a crushed body. Roen tells them that the image is always that of the last possessor of the glass. Presently, it shows

#### TABLE 4-1: DIPLOMACY

#### DC Result

- 0 Deep in the mountain, a subterranean water wheel turns a massive, vertical, metal-banded, oak shank that distributes power throughout the halls. Various levels of the citadel use its power to drive bellows, pump water, power fountains, and even play carillon music. All levels require it to circulate air.
- 5 Dwarven penitents estimate that the Upper Halls have no more than 48 hours of breathable air. After that, short-term survival depends on marshalling the refugees deeper into the mountain.
- 10 Scouts report that the quake destroyed the path to the Shank (the leftmost stair of Area 4 on the Second Hall Level), but rumor has it that the Illuminated Brotherhood knows of an alternative route.
- 15 Despite reproachful stares from his brethren, a frightened Illuminated Brother named Sigil divulges the alternative route to the Shank: Down the Great Stair, into the abandoned Royal Residences, under the Ash Chapel of Volund, through the Royal Crypts, and into the caverns below the citadel.
- 20 Long ago, a creature burrowed from the caverns into the burial chamber of six revered Illuminated Brothers. The creature's tunnel connected the Royal Crypts to the caverns below the citadel. Of the six bodies, five were subsequently moved to an undefiled resting place within the Royal Crypts. The sixth brother was lost to the creature.
- **30** The bones of the six brothers are said to "collect the hidden shame of the brotherhood."

his dead wife in the Great Hall, and he can bear to look upon it no more. He offers to loan the glass to the PCs, so they can see him while they are away to monitor the refugees' situation. If they take it, the image of the crushed wife ripples into an image of Roen bursting into tears. Treat the glass as a crystal ball whose subject is always the previous creature to possess the glass willingly. The current possessor cannot hear the subject and cannot see a subject on another plane.

In 12 hours, the glass shows Roen and the refugees coughing through cloth handkerchiefs in the Upper Halls. In 24 hours, it shows Roen and other refugees descending the lift to the Second Hall Level. In 48 hours, it shows Roen helping lame and sickened refugees down the steps leading to the Lower Halls. In 50 hours, the glass shows images in flashes: silent close-up screams, forsaken, cruel weapons, and—finally—Roen's dead face in the dirt.

With just 48 hours to repair the Shank, the PCs have a budget of two rests for this adventure. If your party consists of six or more PCs, consider halving the timeline and giving them just one rest before the Second Hall Level fills with gas. During all rest periods, the grind of shifting stone, the rising smell of sulfur, and the sound of distant liftgas explosions remind the PCs that while they recover, the sands of the hourglass drain.

#### PART II: THE ROYAL RESIDENCES

To reach the Royal Crypt, the PCs must descend the Great Stair, enter the Royal Residences (at area A), and make their way to the Ash Chapel of Volund (area E). They might have a dwarven guide or a hand-drawn map of the Royal Residences, and this is critical, because the entire 600-foot-by-400foot pitch-black complex is overrun by forsaken.

#### INTO THE DARKNESS

The Royal Residences are a long-abandoned, longforgotten masterpiece of negative space. Everywhere that there is now air, there was once rock. A century of labor carted it all away, and what remains—the floor, the 60-foot ceilings, the floor-to-ceiling stone buildings, the pillars, the fountain bases—is all one continuous stone. Even the extravagantly carved stone furniture inside the buildings is an extension of the walls and floor. All buildings stand three stories tall, feature complex facades, and offer arched entrances with fluted legs. Windows and second story balconies are common. If you wish to increase the difficulty of the adventure, the forsaken utilize secret tunnels above the ceiling or below the floor to pass between adjacent buildings.

Condensation and slime cling to the walls and lie in thin sheets on the floor, making running hazardous (DC 5 Acrobatics check every time a creature uses its full speed in a move action to avoid falling prone). Disturbing sounds—hordes of squeaking bats, screaming children, tortured cries—created by the *ghost sound* ability of the forsaken—constantly echo through the darkness of the complex.

#### DUNGEON DENIZENS (EL VARIES)

Run this section of the adventure in a freeform style. Treat the Royal Residences as one giant room where distance, darkness, and blocked lines of sight separate the PCs from a fractured horde of adversaries. The Royal Residences map in the Appendix (page 90) indicates the initial positions of all dogmole patrols, forsaken gangs, and savant shriekers. Each of these group'ss stat blocks lists its tactics both before and during battle.

A strategy of stealth and sniping repays PCs who pass through the Royal Residences. PCs who do not know where the crypt is, who insist on using light, or who do not move with stealth encounter resistance. Every time a dogmole patrol or forsaken gang detects and engages the PCs, an EL 8 battle begins. Unless the PCs dispatch these foes quickly and make a clean break, another nearby EL 8 patrol or gang arrives and joins the fray.

Such reinforcements arrive every 1d4+2 rounds, up to three times per battle, thereby escalating each fight to a maximum of EL 12. More groups do not join the battle because they consider the PCs doomed or because they entertain a petty rivalry with forsaken already engaging the intruders.

#### FORSAKEN RIVALS

Two rival forsaken groups vie for control of the Royal Residences. The Red Eyes have scooped phosphorescent pus from fire beetle glands and used it to paint overlarge red eyes on their faces. This gives them a +1 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks but frequently reveals their position in the darkness granting a +2 bonus on Perception checks made to see them). They paint the same false eyes throughout the complex—on balconies, on walls behind open doorways, on pillars, and elsewhere—to frighten their rivals and disguise their dwindling numbers. Each Red Eye member fights with an insane ferocity to prove to his



comrades that he deserves to replace their dead leader.

The Red Eyes' rivals have no name—only a common disease and a mad affinity. Covering the skin of their face, chest, and arms are hundreds of bloody potholes, each containing a wriggling bot fly larva. Atop these, dozens of bats perch, jostle, and stretch their wings like some hellish black leather coat. In a dead quiet room, the sound of the bats' tongues eating worms and licking blood sometimes give away the position of the host forsaken (granting a +2 bonus on Perception checks made to hear them). What twisted ecstasy these grinning forsaken gain from their pets is quite unknowable to the sane observer, but a symbiosis does evidence itself. As a full-round action, a bat-coated forsaken can throw his bats into the face of a foe up to 10 feet away (DC 12 Reflex save or be blinded for 1 round). These forsaken use ghost sound to create the sound of squeaking bats, give away a false position, and encourage their quarry into an ambush.

The PCs are equally likely to encounter Red Eyes or their bat-coated rivals. Neither group ever reinforces the other.

To liven up an encounter, have the PCs interrupt a battle between the two rival groups, turning the encounter into a three-way bloodbath.

#### Dogmole Patrol (EL 8)

These wandering patrols typically consist of the following beings.

Dogmole Juggernaut	CR 6
hp 85: Midgard Bestiary p 36	and the second

CR 3

#### Forsaken Riders (3)

hp 16; Bestiary 1 (derro)

#### **Tactics**

- **Before Combat** Dogmole patrols move at 30 feet per round and take random turns at intersections. Blindsight and scent allow the dogmole juggernauts to detect any PC within 30 feet.
- **During Combat** Juggernauts attack with the ferocity of rabid animals, beginning with a bull rush and overrun if possible. Forsaken riders leap from the juggernauts' mangy flanks with short swords drawn. If the juggernauts attempt bull rushes, the riders' initial leap attacks are considered charges.



One of the forsaken riders has Ride +4 instead of Stealth +8 and the Mounted Combat feat instead of Improved Initiative. He may make a DC 10 ride check once per round to avoid a successful hit to the dogmole.

#### Forsaken Gang (EL 8)

Forsaken gangs move less than the dogmole patrols, choosing to let opponents come to them.

#### Forsaken (5)

CR 3

hp 16; Bestiary 1 (derro)

#### Tactics

- **Before Combat** Forsaken gangs (darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1) initially remain stationary. When they detect a target, they close to melee range, leveraging their Stealth (+10) to remain unseen
- **During Combat** Forsaken gangs soften enemies with *sound burst* if at range but within 30 feet. As they close, one forsaken places *darkness* upon a pebble and tosses it among their opponents, while the rest close to blind-fight. Once engaged, they enter melee with wild abandon, attacking with short swords and giant stag beetle mandibles (treat as scimitars) with equal proficiency.

#### Savant Shriekers (EL —)

These bizarre creatures act as living alarms. They do not move from their indicated positions.

#### **Derro Fetal Savants (4)**

CR –

Midgard Bestiary p. 31 These derro fetal savants lack the soul exchange ability.

#### Tactics

#### **Before Combat** The savants still make excellent watchdogs. The forsaken set each caged savant (darkvision 60 feet, Perception +6) in a wall nook, where they are considered hidden (Stealth +0).

Whenever one detects a PC, it babbles and violently shakes its cage, alerting all dogmole patrols and forsaken gangs within 100 feet of the intruder.

#### A. THE GREAT STAIR

As the PCs descend the Great Stair, they hear the *ghost sounds* created by the forsaken of screaming children, squeaking bats, and maddened laughs echoing from the Royal Residences. When they get to the landing, read or paraphrase the following.

The Great Stair reaches a landing where twin statues of ten-foot-tall dwarves in dress armor flank a large open arch. Beyond the arch, a dark complex beckons.

#### B. UNDERMOUNTAIN SQUARE

Stone buildings surround a central square where two massive pillars, carved to look like well-muscled dwarven forearms, stretch to the ceiling. Their great stone hands hold aloft the bottom half of a 100-foot diameter stone globe that merges into the ceiling at its equator.

#### C. ROYAL BALCONIES

Each of these two buildings features numerous windows that face the fountains and pillars of Undermountain Square. The best view, however, can be found from a second-story balcony that cantilevers an incredible 25 feet toward the square. Viewed from the balcony's railings, a stone hand of the square's forearm pillars appears to offer the privileged spectator the great stone world it holds.

#### D. THE FORSAKEN POOL

Black water half-fills a 50-foot-by-100-foot artificial pool. Enormous shelf fungi grow from the sides and reach for the center, where bodies float face down in a field of oily black muck. Two piers extend into the "water" but a rope of intestines blocks passage.

The forsaken frequent this old pool to discard their dead and the unused body parts of torture victims. PCs who probe the pool discover dead forsaken, thoqqua entrails, and otyugh feet.

The oily black muck that covers most of the pool is an elder black pudding. It attacks anyone who walks on a pier or looks over the pool's edge.

CR 12

#### Elder Black Pudding

hp 290, Bestiary 1

The pudding has no treasure.

# E. THE ASH CHAPEL OF VOLUND (EL 10, 4, AND 11)

The Ash Chapel sits upon a raised platform with steps on all sides. There are no windows. On the north side, a set of great stone double doors stand closed. Inscribed on the doors, above inlaid iron anvils, are the phrases, "Fear not flame" and "Fear not ash." Metal spikes driven into the floor ensure that the unlocked doors do not open outward as they should. Tortured screams and wailing sobs issue from inside.

Ceremonial ash covers the floor of this once Royal Chapel. At the far end, a massive Anvil-Altar sits in front of a curtain of magma that drips in viscous chunks from the 60-foot-tall ceiling. From the center of the room, 10 wailing dwarf-things rise from the floor. Where once they had arms, only bloody-stumps twitch in shoulder sockets. Thick black thread snakes in and out of their skin, stitching the head, hide, and tentacles of a living otyugh over each of their heads and down their backs. The dwarves' horrified faces look out of gnashing otyugh maws, and they laugh and cry from inside their stitched-skin helmets. As the spiked tentacles of their worn creatures flail, the maddened dwarves beg for mercy and close to attack.

This age-old holy place is now where the forsaken weave black thread and foul magic upon their slaves. If a dwarven refugee with whom the PCs previously interacted went missing from the Upper Halls, consider reintroducing him here as a begging otyugh-stitched slave to increase the horror of this encounter.

# Otyugh-Stitched-SlaveCR 3N Medium aberrationInit +0; Senses Darkvision; Perception +9DEFENSEAC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 natural)hp 48 (6d8+12)Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6Immune diseaseOFFENSESpd 30 ft.Melee bite +4 (1d4), constrict +4 (1d6), 2 tentacles +0(1d6)Special Attacks grab

STATISTICS

Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6 Base Atk +4; CMB +4 (+8 Grappling); CMD 14 Feats Alertness, Toughness +6, Weapon Focus: Tentacle Skills Perception +9, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +6 Languages Common SQ disease (DC 14) (Ex) SPECIAL ABILITIES

Filth Fever (Ex) Bite-injury; save Fortitude DC 14; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; effect 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Grab** (Ex) You can start a grapple as a free action if you hit with the designated weapon.

**Traps:** Behind the altar and just inches from the wall, magma falls in a 10-foot-wide sheet from the ceiling. The magma curtain deals 2d6 hp fire damage per round of exposure plus an additional 1d6 points of fire damage for each of the subsequent 1d3 rounds.

Occasionally, it clumps and parts as it falls, and allowing DC 20 Perception checks to notice a decorative metal plate on the wall behind it. This plate is 5 feet tall and molded to look like a dragon's glaring face. A small door covers the dragon's mouth and conceals a white-hot furnace with a metal handle at arms-length inside it.

If a PC reaches an unprotected arm into the furnace, he experiences excruciating pain as the skin of his hand and forearm sears, blisters, and burns away. He takes 3d6 hp fire damage per round. In the face of such agony, he must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save to keep his hand in long enough to grasp and pull the handle. A PC who fails the check withdraws his arm. The successful PC pulls

#### TABLE 4-2: METAL SPIKE DAMAGE

Time to Unequip	Piercing Damage per Round
Free action	1d4
Full-round action	1 <b>d</b> 4
Move action	1d4
Full-round action	1d4
1d4 + 1 minutes*	1d8
1 minute*	1d6
	Free action Full-round action Move action

\* someone doing nothing else can help remove armor from up to two others in half the normal time.

the handle, causing stone slabs to retract in the chapel's floor and form a spiral staircase to the Royal Crypts. Whether the PC retracts his unprotected arm voluntarily or otherwise, he finds it instantly magically healed of the furnace's points of fire damage.

PCs naturally immune or resistance to fire can pull the handle without much effort.

If the PC puts anything else in the furnace or magically protects himself before sticking his hand in the furnace, he triggers two traps before he gets a chance to pull the handle. The first trap consists of sharp metal tines that shoot from the inner walls of the furnace, dealing 3d6 points of piercing damage. Unless the target makes a DC 28 Reflex save, the tines pin it in place and subject it to prolonged exposure to the furnace's intense heat. A successful DC 20 Strength check rips the pinned object free and deals it 1d4 hp slashing damage.

The second trap causes metal tines to grow from all metal objects in the chapel at the rate of 1 inch per round. The effect lasts 6 rounds before reversing at the same pace. The Anvil-Altar becomes a porcupine of metal quills. Spikes grow from the PCs' metal weapons and shields. Metal armor becomes iron maidens. Magic items that succeed on DC 20 Fort saves avoid this magical effect. Consult the following table for the time required to remove weapons and armor and the damage dealt every round such items are held or worn.

#### Furnace Pin Trap

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 25 EFFECTS

CR 4

**Trigger** proximity; **Duration** see above; **Reset** Automatic (1 minute)

Effect Atk metal tines +24 melee (2d6) plus pin (see above).

#### Metal Quills Trap

Type magical; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

**Trigger** visual; **Duration** 12 rounds (see above); **Reset** Automatic (12 rounds) **Effect** magic; see above.

PART III:

### THE ROYAL CRYPT

Unlike the polished surfaces and wide expanses of the Upper Halls and Royal Residences, the Royal Crypts are rough-hewn and close. Stale air pools in the nostrils, and dust puffs around footfalls. Recesses in nearly every wall form shelves where the bones of ancient dwarves lie in disarticulated repose. These 6-foot-tall recesses stack four high, and anyone succeeding on a DC 10 Climb check can scale them to within reach of the 35-foot ceiling. There is no light. There are no sounds.

If Sigil is alive and still with the party, he refuses to enter the Royal Crypt and indicates that he shall wait for the PCs up above, guarding their rear from anyone who might try to sneak in behind them. No form of coercion short of *dominate person* can force Sigil to join the party down below, and later encounters all assume he is not present.

#### **1.** Crypt Antechamber

The spiral stair curves down from the Ash Chapel, pauses at a landing, and then splits into two parallel staircases that proceed another 15 feet down. Between these twin stairs and directly in front of the landing, a statue of Volund stands on the lower level, its chin and arms raised to accept the newcomer.

Two more statues stand side by side deeper in the room. The left statue is a larger-than-life dwarf dressed in stone military regalia and posed in a battle stance. The statue on the right depicts a simply attired dwarven miner with a pick at his feet and a large nugget held aloft in both hands. Between the statues, an arched entry to another room beckons.

#### 2. HOT BULLETS (EL 9)

Recessed shelves line the north side of this hall. At the hall's midpoint, a passage proceeds north down a flight of steps. All along the south side of this hall, gray-black smoke and the hiss of steam issue from numerous holes, each the size of a dinner plate. As the PCs pass, read or paraphrase the following.

Five-foot-long worm creatures, segmented and glowing red, spring from the holes like hot bullets. Steam rises from their bodies, and their front tips glow like orangewhite arrowheads.

#### Thoqqua (10)

hp 22 Bestiary 2

#### Tactics

CR 11

- **During Combat** Treat the initial attack of these ten thoqqua as a charge. The thoqqua work together to attempt to flank their foes and try to swarm around only one or two opponents at a time.
- **Morale** Desperate for nourishment, the thoqqua fight to the death.

#### 3. Greedy Xorn (el 11)

A ten-foot-wide staircase descends into a square room with a recessed floor. Wide, open arches on the other three walls each lead to a shallow nook where a stone sarcophagus rests. In the western nook, the sarcophagus lid is thrown aside.

Four xorn squabble over the grave goods found within the sarcophagus. Even if these xorn become aware of the PCs, they remain content to fight among themselves over their find. Their elder xorn mother recognizes the threat posed by the PCs, though, and when the PCs arrive she is earth gliding to a point under their feet. The PCs likely have no way of detecting her presence until she attacks.

#### Xorn, Elder

Female Xorn, Elder
N Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)
Init +1; Senses all-around vision, darkvision (60 ft.),
tremorsense (60 ft.); Perception +12
DEFENSE
AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, -1 size, +16
natural)
hp 94 (7d10+56)
Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +7
Defensive Abilities DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune flanking,
cold, fire; Resist electricity 10
DFFENSE
Spd 20 ft., burrowing (20 feet)
<b>Melee</b> bite +13 (6d6+7), 3 claws +13 (1d6+7)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.
STATISTICS
Str 25, Dex 12, Con 25, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14
Base Atk +7; CMB +15 (+17 Bull Rushing); CMD 26 (28
vs. Bull Rush)
Feats Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack -2/+4,
Toughness +7
Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +12, Disguise +9, Fly -1,
Intimidate +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12,
Perception +12, Stealth +7, Survival +12
Languages Dwarven, Terran
<b>SO</b> earth glide $(Ex)$

1. CRYPT ANTECHAMBER 2. HOT BULLETS 3. GREEDY XORN 4. THE ILLUMINATED STAIRS 5. SCRIMSHAW SKELETONS 6. THE DELVER'S HOLE

10

7. CAVERN ENTRANCE 8. The geode 9. Through the ceiling 10. The shank

ROYAL CRYPTS

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1 Square = 10 ft.

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**All-Around Vision** The elder xorn can see in all directions and cannot be flanked.

**Earth Glide (Ex)** The elder xorn can glide through any sort of natural earth or stone as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves no sign of its passage nor hint at its presence to creatures that don't possess tremorsense. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a xorn moves the xorn back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

#### Tactics

**During Combat** The elder xorn plans to kill the PCs first and eat all of their metal afterward. She uses power attack until she fails twice times in a row. Thereafter, she makes more accurate regular attacks.

**Morale** Once reduced to 40 hit points, she retreats by taking a 5-foot step into the earth. Still desperate for the PCs' metal, she follows them underground, earth gliding until some opportune moment when she can make another surprise attack, preferably against a lone PC or when they face some other foe.

#### Xorn, Average (4)

CR 6

hp 66 each; BESTIARY 1

#### Tactics

- During Combat If the PCs threaten these xorn or reduce the elder xorn to half her hit points, they each sink into the floor, earth glide to advantageous positions, and erupt to attack. These xorn are only interested in defending themselves and eating all of the PCs' precious metals, including weapons, armor, and minerals. They attempt to take metal weapons, necklaces, and other loosely secured items via disarm attacks. If they take something tasty, they eat it as a standard action. This automatically destroys nonmagical items; a magic item must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save (its unattended save bonus equals 2 + half its caster level) to avoid destruction.
- **Morale** Extreme greed and insatiable gluttony drives the xorns' actions, and clever PCs can distract them with discarded metal or turn them against each other by pointing out how much more food one has over the other.

The xorns fight over two sets of dwarven plate armor. The PCs can compose only one set (16,500 gp value) from what remains. Minor gemstones, worth a total of 400 gp, are scattered upon the floor like crumbs.

#### 4. The Illuminated Stairs (el 6)

A grand set of steep stairs narrows as it descends to a set of double-doors. Four statues of dwarves, two on each side of the stairs, stare at each other from recesses in the walls. A flaming pillar is carved into each of the stone double-doors (hardness 8, hp 60, Break DC 28 [DC 38 with arcane lock]). The doors are locked by *arcane lock* and protected by a *glyph of warding*. A DC 20 Perception check notices that the carvings of all four statues include a necklace with a mnemonic fob charm—a clue that these statues are Illuminated Brothers.

Anyone who attempts to pass through the doors triggers the *glyph of warding*. Creating a pillar of flame using a mnemonic fob—an item that only Illuminated Brothers typically possess—acts as a password to safely bypass the glyph.

#### Glyph Of Warding Trap

Type magical; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28 EFFECTS

CR 6

#### Trigger spell; Reset None

**Effect** *Glyph of warding* [blast], 16<sup>th</sup> level cleric, 8d8 sonic, DC 14 Reflex save half damage; multiple targets (all within 5 feet); bypass (see above)

#### 5. Scrimshaw Skeletons (el 11)

Unlike the rough-hewn halls of the crypt, this chamber features intricately carved walls and a polished floor. Every line is precise. Every shelf is perfectly balanced to stand the test of time. In the center of the floor, a ring of tile encircles a mosaic trowel.

On each side of the chamber, three tall arches lead into burial nooks. All six nooks hold a closed stone sarcophagus. Atop one sarcophagus is a dark polished stone. Dwarven skeletons rest atop the other five. Each skeleton's teeth are closed tight on a gleaming sapphire, and every inch of their skull and bones is covered in scrimshawed writing.

The scrimshaw skeletons are those of revered Illuminated Brothers of highest station. Six bodies were originally interred in Area 6 (just beyond this chamber's south wall), but a delver dug into the chamber and collapsed the floor. One of the bodies was lost to the delver's corrosive slime. The dwarves moved the remaining five to this redecorated antechamber. The polished stone on the sixth Brother's sarcophagus is a *stone of weight*.

A truly observant PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check notices that the south wall of this chamber is actually composed of four pieces of stone, dropped into place and joined with expert skill to seal off area 6. The PCs must break through this wall to get to the original burial chamber on the other side.

The stone wall separating this chamber from the original burial chamber is 1 foot thick (hardness 8, hp 90, Break DC 35).

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), or bardic knowledge check realizes the scrimshaw writing tells a story, possibly of great importance given the detail involved. A single DC 25



Linguistics check (or *comprehend languages*) is required to make sense of all of the symbols.

As soon as a PC attempts to read, attack, or otherwise disturb a skeleton, though, the skeletons rise up as one in choreographed motion. As they stand up, they crush their sapphires with their teeth and wrap their knuckles around flaming battle axes that appear in their hands.

The skeletons summon their weapons from some distant cache via *instant summons*. They attack immediately, preferably from atop their sarcophagi, granting them the +1 bonus for higher ground.

The light from their battleaxes casts jittering, wiry shadows upon the walls behind them. These dark shadows represent the shame from the Illuminated Brotherhood's past. At the end of the first round, the shadows of all remaining skeletons peel up from the ground, detach from their owners, and glide with crackling negative energy toward the nearest PC. If the PCs destroy a skeleton, that skeleton's shadow dissipates, but the PCs gain no XP for the shadow.

Only those PCs who manage to hold the skeletons still and scrutinize the tiny scrimshaw text can read the etched writing. Each full-round action spent reading a pinned or otherwise immobilized skeleton reveals one fact (in the order presented in the table). The destruction of a skeleton erases the next unread fact from all skeletons, leaving each with an identical patch of bleached bone.

#### SCRIMSHAW FACTS

- 1. The Illuminated Brotherhood learned that Mammon corrupted gold in the Ironcrags.
- 2. In league with the Spirit of the Mountain, the Brotherhood steered its dwarven clansmen away from the richest veins.
- 3. The Brotherhood sealed the Great Doors to the citadel when the dwarves abandoned the fruitless mines.
- 4. A band of dwarves refused to leave the citadel.
- 5. This band dug deep and embraced the corruption of Mammon.
- 6. When the corrupted dwarves attempted to dig out of the mountain with their tainted gains, the Illuminated Brothers drove them back inside and sealed them in, knowingly dooming them to darkness and madness. Thus birthed the forsaken. If the PCs read this fact, the shame of the Brotherhood is revealed, and all attacking shadows reattach to their owners as normal non-threatening ones. (Grant the PCs experience as if they defeated the shadows in combat.)
- 7. Vague but true directions to the site where the forsaken attempted to exit the mountain centuries ago.



#### Scrimshaw Skeletons

#### CR 5

NE Medium undead

Init +4; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +8
DEFENSE

#### DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 natural)

**hp** 69 (3d10+2d8+20)

Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +5

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, defensive training; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *flaming dwarven waraxe* +12 (1d10+10/x3); or 2 claws (1d4+3)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 23, **Dex** 10, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16 **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Cleave, Furious Focus, Improved Initiative, Power Attack -2/+4, Toughness +5, Weapon Focus: Dwarven Waraxe

Skills Climb +13, Perception +8, Stealth +7, Swim +11 Languages Common, Dwarven

**SQ** armor training 1 (Ex), greed, hardy +2, hatred, slow and steady, stability, stonecunning +2 **Gear** +1 *flaming dwarven waraxe* 

#### Shadows (5)

#### CR 3

#### hp 19 each; Bestiary 1

The PCs find the following items inside the sarcophagi: two potions of shield of faith +4, four potions of cure serious wounds, a ring of the ram, an immovable rod, a lyre of building, an elemental gem (earth), an arcane scroll with four spells (transmute mud to rock, wall of force, wall of iron, wall of stone), an adamantine battleaxe, and gems, jewelry, and coins worth 3,615 gp.

Once the PCs dispatch the skeletons and the chamber goes quiet, read or paraphrase the following.

The faint pummeling of fists on stone comes from deep inside the south wall. A moment later, the sound stops and a ghostly set of corroded arms reaches through the wall, stretching and straining forward as if the body they connect to is stuck behind in the stone.

When the skeletons rose, so did the ghost of the Illuminated Brother whose body was lost to the delver's corrosive slime. This ghost poses no threat to the PCs. It merely wishes to escape the chamber of its defilement and abandonment. The wall that separates it from its brothers presently holds back the ghost like a supernatural cage. If the PCs break through the wall, the corroded ghost races through the hole and dissipates mid-room, at last entering its final rest.

#### 6. THE DELVER'S HOLE

Numerous fifteen-foot-tall arches lead to burial nooks on three walls of this empty chamber. A ten-foot-diameter hole drops through the floor of the eastern nook. Through it, moist air flows up, carrying the unmistakably sweet smell of carrion into the chamber.

The centuries-old delver's hole falls 30 feet down into the darkness of Area 7. Its smooth sides make climbing extremely difficult, requiring a DC 25 Climb check to navigate safely.

#### PART IV: The Caverns Below

Unlike the squared, hewn walls of the Royal Crypt, the caverns below have never felt a dwarven chisel. Twisting paths of natural crevices wind and double back like a blind man groping for a way out of the mountain. Mineral rich water slides down the walls, and the slow heartbeat of it dripping from stalactites to stalagmites echoes in the distance.

The only light in the caverns comes from the occasional phosphorescent puddle where glowworms slither and albino crabs crawl. Although no extraneous tunnels appear on the map, feel free to expand the caverns by adding them wherever desired.

#### 7. CAVERN ENTRANCE

After dropping 30 feet, the vertical hole pauses at a landing, tilts to a 45 degree angle, and slides further into darkness. After the tilt, the PCs can navigate the hole with relative ease. Here and there, it elbows into steps. Any PC who succeeds on a DC 10 Climb check traverses the 50' length and reaches a natural cavern with normal footing.

#### 8. The Geode (EL 11)

When the PCs reach the base of the natural stairs that lead into this cavern, they come to a final blind turn. A pale blue glow thrown from the cavern dances on the walls of the turn. Nearby carrion reeks. When they turn the corner, read or paraphrase the following.

This cavern resembles the inside of a massive geode. Myriad eight-foot long crystals jut in all directions. There is no floor, just the acute angles at which the razor-sharp edges and slippery sides of the crystals come together. The cavern itself is squat, rising to barely double the height of a human. It stretches out of view to the west. A powerful phosphorescent light rises through the crystals and bathes the entire cavern in an eerie glow.

Movement over the severely obstructed, slippery surfaces of the crystals requires a DC 15 Acrobatics check. PCs who succeed move at half speed for 1 round.

The large crystals provide cover against ranged attacks. Inadequate footing severely hampers all creatures attempting melee attacks. Unless a creature has 5 or more ranks in Acrobatics, it is considered flat-footed at all times in the room. Whenever a creature takes damage, it must succeed on another DC 15 Acrobatics check to remain standing. Falling prone deals

1d6 hp slashing damage (the creature does not take bleed damage from this fall). Beneath the crystals, three 20-footdiameter cavelight mosses flood the floor. The bases of the crystals rise through the creatures as if through lace. One cavelight moss fills the cavern's center; the other two flank it. A DC 20 Perception check is required to notice that a lacey moss lies under a layer of collected dirt and spores. The mosses sit perfectly still until they attack. As the first PC reaches the midpoint of the first moss (about 25 feet into the chamber, measured from the stairs), that moss attacks. The other two mosses writhe in anticipation of a meal.

#### Cavelight Moss (3)

CR 6

hp 76; Midgard Bestiary p 19.

9. Through the Ceiling

When the PCs drop down or peer into this room, read or paraphrase the following.

Stalactites and stalagmites reach for each other in this cavern of pools. A single path leads from the north to south end, snaking around pools and over natural bridges along the way. Here and there, tiny cave worms drip their mucous lines from the ceiling, hoping to catch a hapless insect.

PCs who fail by 4 or less make no progress that round. PCs who fail by 5 or more fall, take 1d6 points of slashing damage, and bleed 1 point of Constitution damage per round from blood loss. The bleeding can be stopped with a DC 15 Heal check or the application of at least 1 point of healing magic. The phosphorescent light throws the PCs' bloody reflections on a thousand glass planes, but provides plenty of light.

In the south end of this chamber, water spills through a natural conduit to another cavern (Area 10). Looking down the 5-foot-diameter hole, the PCs see that the hole drops 10 feet before popping through the ceiling of the 70-foot-tall cavern below. They also see a wooden catwalk bolted 30 feet below their current position (50 feet above Area 10's floor). Centuries of dripping water have disintegrated the wooden boards directly below the hole and left only its metal scaffold frame. It is impossible to climb down to the catwalk, but a PC descending a rope (Climb DC 5 if knotted, 15 if unknotted) can swing himself to a section of catwalk that still has its boards.

#### 10. The Shank (EL 14)

This massive kidney-shaped cavern is roughly 100 feet wide, more than twice as long, and nearly as tall. Two wooden catwalks supported by steel scaffolding fasten to the walls and encircle the space. One catwalk stands a little higher than halfway above the ground, and the other stands half as high at the first.

On the south side of the cavern, at its midpoint, a ladder connects the two catwalks to each other and the ground. Numerous chains and ropes connect to winches and hang from one level to the other.

The room stretches 100 feet wide, 250 feet long, and 70 feet high. The higher catwalk is 50 feet above the floor and the lower is 25 feet.

At ground level, a torrent of water rages into this cavern's north end. A gate funnels the flow into the northernmost of two artificial canals. Both canals head west, but the northern canal races the water past a massive waterwheel. The wheel appears designed to spin a 100-foot-tall, 20-foot-diameter metal-banded oak shank set in the floor and rising up through the ceiling. Presently, the waterwheel is disconnected from the shank and freewheels at an awkward angle. Some of the catwalks' boards are missing, rotten, or loose. Any PC who moves faster than half speed must succeed at a DC 14 Reflex save. If he fails, his weight suddenly splinters boards, and he falls 25 feet down to either the catwalk below or to the ground, where he takes 2d6 points of falling damage.

Both canals are 10 feet deep. The water in the northern canal is considered rough water for the purposes of Swim checks.

#### The Spirit Takes Form

As the PCs traverse the top-level catwalk, the Spirit of the Mountain rages. In a desperate effort to prevent the PCs from repairing the Shank and saving the refugees (who, the spirit thinks, want the corrupted gold for themselves), the Spirit of the Mountain invests all its hatred, all its greed, and all its taint into this final battle.

Read or paraphrase the following.

A quake rocks the cavern. Loose boards fall like missing teeth from the catwalk. The pins holding the scaffolding and catwalks to the walls screech as they rip out. Chunks of the upper catwalk break from adjacent sections and hang limp. Other sections break away completely, crashing upon the lower catwalk and pulling it down too. All PCs must succeed at DC 20 Reflex saves to dive to a safe section of catwalk. PCs who fail by 4 or less find themselves dangling over the edge of the catwalk by a rope or chain. PCs who fail by 5 or more fall 25 feet to the lower catwalk, taking 2d6 points of falling damage, and must save again to avoid falling from the lower catwalk.

Before the PCs can take further action, the corruption running through the Spirit of the Mountain pulses from the cavern's walls and into the catwalk superstructure. The quake subsides but the catwalks continue to shake.

Large sections of catwalk and steel scaffolding rip from the walls with supernatural force. Instead of falling down, the entire connected mess gathers, folds, and transforms itself into a colossal bipedal creature. The monstrosity of steel pipes and wooden planks stands more than 60 feet tall. It swings a foot-thick braided chain in one hand and raises a log-sized steel pipe in the other. Winches on its head lower its metal jaw and it screams with a voice of steel on steel.

PCs who ended up on a safe section of catwalk are now stranded on one of a dozen random catwalk islands, 5-foot-wide sections disconnected from each other but still anchored to the wall. The rest of the catwalk superstructure has integrated into the animated scaffolding's body. PCs who ended up dangling from catwalk ropes take a wild ride when the scaffolding animates. Their ropes now attach to sections of catwalk integrated into the creature's torso and arms, and the danglers swing in wide arcs around the creature's body.

**Dangling from the Colossus:** Each round, a dangler must succeed on a DC 17 Strength check to continue holding onto a rope connected to the creature. Those who fail fly off at great velocity, taking 1d8 hp falling damage per 10 feet of height, and landing 1d6x10 feet away (use the splash weapon rules to determine where the PC lands). A PC who hangs on can climb up the rope and onto the creature if he succeeds on a DC 24 Climb check.

**Riding the Colossus:** PCs who mount the creature, jump onto it, climb up its innards, or otherwise ride the animated scaffolding must make DC 19 Acrobatics checks each round to avoid falling off.

**Fighting the Colossus:** PCs of size Large or smaller may occupy the same space as the animated scaffolding. Such PCs may not take a withdrawal action. Two or more PCs in the scaffolding's space provide each other (and all allies outside the scaffolding space) with the benefit of flanking. If the scaffolding moves out of a space occupied by a PC and does not take a 5-foot step or withdraw action, that PC gets an attack of opportunity. Because the animated scaffolding's weapons are part of its body, they are considered natural weapons and part of its natural reach. The scaffolding creature can attack all foes up to 30 feet away, including those in its own space.

#### Animated Scaffolding Colossus CR 14

#### Animated object (colossal)

LE Colossal construct

**Init** -3; **Senses** darkvision (60 ft.), low-light vision; Perception -5

#### DEFENSE

AC (High) 11, touch –1, flat-footed 11 (–8 size, –3 Dex, +12 natural)

AC (Low) 23, touch –1, flat-footed 23 (–8 size, –3 Dex, +24 natural)

hp 330 (13d10)

```
Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +7
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**Defensive Abilities** construct traits (+80 HP), hardness 10; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, bleeds, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, death and necromancy effects, disease, mind-affecting, non-lethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft. **Melee** constrict +38 (4d8+15), or slam +38 (4d8+15), or trample (DC 38) +38 (4d8+15) **Space** 30 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft. **Special Attacks** grab

STATISTICS	
Str 30, Dex 4, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1	
Base Atk +36; CMB +54 (+58 Grappling); CMD 6	1
Feats none	
Skills Stealth -19	
Languages none	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	

- Armor Class (Ex) The animated scaffolding's various pieces are tougher and more tightly packed in its lower half (from the ground to 30 feet above), giving it a natural armor bonus of +24. Its upper half (30 feet to 60 feet) is less well-protected, and only has a natural armor bonus of +12.
- **Constrict (Ex)** As a full-round action, the animated scaffolding can wrap its ropes and chains around anyone who rides it, dealing 4d6+15 crushing damage. If the target is hanging from a rope, the animated scaffolding automatically hits. Constricting other riders requires a successful touch attack. It can target up to three riders.
- **Convulse** (Ex) As a free action once per round on its turn, the creature can convulse with such force that riders must make an immediate DC 25 Acrobatics check to avoid falling. PCs who fail by 4 or less find themselves dangling from swaying ropes connected to the lurching monstrosity. See Dangling from the Colossus.
- **Grab (Colossal) (Ex)** The animated scaffolding can start a grapple as a free action if it hits with the designated weapon.
- **Trample (Ex)** The animated scaffolding can trample creatures of size Huge or smaller, dealing 4d6+15 points of crushing damage. Any number of creatures within 30 feet of the animated scaffolding and within 20 feet of each other can be trampled at once. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the creature can attempt DC 35 Reflex saves to halve the damage.

#### Tactics

**During Combat** The animated scaffolding targets PCs standing on isolated sections of catwalk first. It deals with riders by convulsing to shake them off and then trampling them as a standard action. It ignores dangling PCs, but if they attack it while dangling, it constricts them. In the absence of targets, the animated scaffolding lurches toward the Shank and begins attacking it so that no one can ever repair it. Assuming the scaffolding deals average damage on every hit, it takes 60 rounds (6 minutes) to destroy the Shank.

**Morale** The corruption of the Spirit of the Mountain possesses the scaffolding and fights to the end.



#### THE SHANK

The Shank itself is the colossal trunk of a once-mighty oak tree 20-feet thick (AC 2; hardness 5; 2,400 hp; Break DC 50).

**Repairing the Shank:** In the north end of the cavern, on a thin island between the two canals, a winch connects to a series of oblong gears and pulleys.

By cranking the winch for one minute, a PC can lift the water gate into the air and drop it down again to redirect the water flow to one canal or the other. If the PCs direct the water to the southern canal, the northern canal drains, the water wheel stops spinning, and the PCs gain enough space to begin repairing the wheel-to-Shank connection.

The 30-foot-diameter water wheel weighs 4 tons, and the PCs must carefully lever it back into place. The job requires pulleys, winches, and sweat. It takes a total of 12 hours to gather the equipment from the colossus's heap, repair the necessary parts, rig them together, and use them to reconnect the water wheel to the Shank.

Every contributing PC who has at least 5 ranks in Profession (engineer) or Knowledge (engineering) reduces the time by 2 hours.

#### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs reconnect the water wheel and redirect the water to the northern canal, the rushing water smashes into the wheel and sprays everywhere. A few moments later, the Shank begins to turn slowly in its base.

If the PCs repair the Shank, the bellows in the old forge, the fountains in the Royal Residences, and the air circulatory system throughout the complex start working again. In a few hours, the explosive gases collected in the Upper Halls dissipate to safe levels. The PCs successfully neutralize the imminent threat of suffocation, and the refugees can begin the long, slow process of digging their way out of the mountain without risk of explosion.

If the PCs die, selfless dwarven penitents crawl through the Great Hall to the Griffon Tower and sacrifice themselves in an explosion that rips a new exit from the mountain. A fireball races through the Upper Halls and Second Hall Level, consuming the explosive gas and scorching everything in its wake. When it is over, the citadel's Griffon Tower welcomes silently falling snow and the next set of PCs to the scene.



# HALLS OF THE MOUNTAIN KING

#### CHAPTER 5:

# THE GRAND LODGE OF THE OLD MASTERS

#### By Brandon Hodge

Events of the Grand Lodge of the Old Masters occur after the adventure Deeper Darkness. Old mysteries and older shames come to light in this adventure, and pave the way for the campaign arc's conclusion in Heartsblood Forge. If the PCs are not yet 11th level, delay the beginning of this adventure and allow them to perform a few side tasks until they earn enough experience to gain a level.

#### Adventure Background

Long ago, the six Old Masters of the Illuminated Brotherhood, the founders of the organization, devised a means of attaining immortality. Bartholomeus, one of the greatest craftsmen of the time, constructed golden clockwork bodies to house the souls of the Old Masters, and so the Brotherhood's founders achieved immortality.

Time passed and gave rise to complacency, and the Old Masters lost control of the Brotherhood they founded to newly illuminated Masters. As the years dragged on, the sextet lost their relevancy and were shut away in a room, neglected and mostly forgotten.

Mammon's taint infected the Spirit of the Mountain and, ever so slowly, it befouled the souls of the five Old Masters who remained behind (the Stonethrower Clan having smuggled out Rabscuttle before this terrible fate).

#### Adventure Summary

Following the events of Deeper Darkness, the PCs return to the ruined Upper Halls to find a small group of survivors investigating a previously unknown doorway now exposed by the earthquake. Exploring the chamber beyond, the party discovers a long-sealed repository of Illuminated Brotherhood artifacts and galleries of the secret society's history, as well as the caretaker of the museum: the stonedead gearmaster Bartholomeus, creator of Rabscuttle and the clockwork doors. Through interaction with the lich-like dwarf, the PCs learn of secrets concealed by the adamantine doors of the Grand Hall as well as the means to pass through the portal and obtain them.

Armed with this knowledge, the party ventures into the depths of a sealed-off, partially collapsed mineshaft to reach the control mechanism that unlocks the otherwise impenetrable doors, all the while fending off the forsaken who rule this "poisoned passage."

Reaching the control mechanism, the players must use teamwork to navigate a poison gas chamber while dodging the many dangers that lurk within. Once they work the controls, the PCs return to the surface to enter the Grand Lodge of the Old Masters, where they must overcome riddles, guardians, and traps to finally encounter the corrupted founders of the Illuminated Brotherhood and the secrets they keep.

#### PART I: OUR WEALTH WAS WRITTEN INTO WORDS

The PCs return to the ruined Upper Halls, which are still wracked by distressing tremors and aftershocks. While most survivors hail the PCs as returning heroes and saviors, one group is distracted by something else entirely. These survivors are gathered around a deep crack in a wall of the former merchant camp (Area 21) that appeared after the earthquake. Several surviving refugees investigated the crevice and report that there seems to be the outline of a previously hidden door set into the wall, now crooked and disturbed from its frame. The miners are unable to open it. Choose a bold survivor to relate this discovery to the party. If the PCs investigate, read or paraphrase the following.

A large crack has opened up the stone wall here, and indeed there appears to be the outline of a hidden door, now visible due to the terrible shifting of the mountain. There does not appear to be any obvious mechanism to open the portal.

A DC 25 Perception check uncovers a tiny golden gear inset into the stone. When turned, the gear unlocks the door, which nonetheless must still be forced open with a DC 16 Strength check.

#### A CABINET OF CURIOSITIES (EL 12)

Beyond the door lies a long-sealed chamber, well lit by *continual flame* in a damaged fireplace. The earthquake uncovered this forgotten repository of Illuminated Brotherhood artifacts and galleries of the secret society's history. Bartholomeus Lodoviceus spent decades scouring the citadel for any trace of Brotherhood knowledge, collecting every decaying scrap, every crumbling book, every memento of the organization. Displays of ancient



ceremonial uniforms, disintegrating tomes, and rotting tapestries were arranged with great care, evident even after the earthquake's destruction.

In some instances, entire blocks of stone engraved with symbols of the flaming pillar and barred doors were chiseled from their original settings and placed in this chamber. The esoteric symbolism of the secret society is etched into every stone surface of the room, predominantly scenes of morality for those seeking knowledge and enlightenment. Dusty scrolls, tapestries, and tomes display indecipherable arcane formulas and diagrams that seem to illustrate the construction of not only physical creations, but also the less tangible lessons that such artistic pursuits teach the creator.

Two stone pillars are also in this room. Unusually embossed, they seem to carry not the usual symbols, but rather deeply inset engravings of gears, wheels and armor-like plates. A DC 12 Knowledge (engineering), Craft (blacksmithing), or Craft (clockwork) identifies these indentations and the markings around them as metalworking molds. In fact, some of the plates and gears they contain are quite familiar, and match parts and pieces of Rabscuttle. They are the partial molds with which his body was constructed, and several sections match any rubbings found on the bodies of cultists encountered in Zobeck, in the quarters of Albricius, or near the Drake's wreck.

A tall golden suit of armor rests in a stone and glass display case near the fireplace, partitioned from the rest of the room by a line of velvet ropes. The massive, beautifully engraved plate armor is sized for a troll. A DC 20 Perception check reveals that it is some sort of automaton, with clockwork gears visible in the seams. This is an inert shield guardian, identifiable by a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check. Originally constructed by the guardian Bartholomeus for the Old Masters, it now holds the chest piece amulet that controls the creation.

A massive ceremonial chair carved of solid stone is near the fireplace and faces the door, etched with the tools of the stonecutter's craft. The seat is covered in a crumpled collection of recognizable accoutrements of Brotherhood ritual dress—an embroidered apron, soiled cloth gauntlets, a dirty sash, a gilded robe, and a belt of chain, all moldering atop a mound of hard, stony earth. A great blacksmith's hammer lies discarded on the floor nearby. A large ceremonial breastplate, golden and square and unlike anything the PCs have yet seen, tops the heap. It is segmented into 16 squares.

Each square is adorned with a single rune or symbol, and large half-spherical gems of various colors top each one, magnifying the character beneath.

A DC 20 Linguistics check, *read magic*, or *comprehend languages* properly interprets the symbols as numbers in the following grid.

1	14	14	4
11	7	6	9
8	10	10	5
13	2	3	15

This artifact is a +2 breastplate, but more importantly it is a ceremonial adornment of a 33rd-degree Silent Master that also serves as the shield guardian's controlling amulet. Each row, column, and diagonal carries the symbolic sum of 33, as does the sum of the four corners.

If any attempt is made to remove the breastplate or the hammer, to interfere with the remains, or if the chair or shield guardian are approached, the dirt slowly shifts and takes humanoid form. Bartholomeus Lodoviceus, the ancient architect of the clockwork doors and creator of the gearforged bodies of the Old Masters, is still here, now an ancient stone-dead dwarf. Read or paraphrase the following.

The fine dirt and grit heaped upon the great chair begins to shift and flow, quickly taking a humanoid form, filling out the tattered clothing and adornments found on the seat there. The gentle shifting of silt confers the still countenance of an earthen dwarf, bits of refuse and spider webs interrupting the otherwise perfect dusty rendition.

A shudder knocks loose dirt to the floor, and gemlike eyes pop open and scrutinize the surroundings with a furrowed earthen brow. Teeth of stone seem to chew the air, as the creature sits upright on the chair.

Bartholomeus is an ancient dwarven architect, engineer, and inventor who refused to participate in the hall's first exodus, having since achieved the lich-like state of stone death. Although once the great mind behind the creation of the clockwork gates, the dwarven gearforged, and the preservation of the Old Masters, Bartholomeus long ago succumbed to the corruption of the mountain and the temptations of Mammon. He spent countless hours roaming the abandoned halls, greedily acquiring the forgotten knowledge of the Brotherhood and storing it in this secret chamber.

Creaking uncomfortably in his seat and leaning forward, his stone jaw opens for the first time in ages to speak to those before him as spiders scurry and crawl all over his earthen skin. Bartholomeus asks in a low, slow, and resonate tone, "Who seeks Bartholomeus, and what would you have me do?"

Bartholomeus addresses the PCs as a proud caretaker, shuffling slowly from his seat and pointing out the meanings of symbols the party might find interesting,



such as the recurring display of symbolic doors matching the impenetrable adamantine portal seen in the Great Hall. He encourages the PCs to research the nearby codices, and hints at the marvels the Grand Lodge contains that he longs to visit again, although his current state no longer allows him to roam as he once did. Information in the Appendix about the Brotherhood should be liberally distributed here.

Bartholomeus's initial attitude is friendly, but after each question the PCs ask, he slides toward hostility.

At some point, the senile creature realizes he isn't even talking to members of the Illuminated Brotherhood, at which point he becomes hostile and attacks. The base number of questions the PCs can ask is ten before Bartholomeus attacks. If a dwarven PC asks the questions, he can ask three additional questions before Bartholomeus turns hostile. In addition, the PCs may make one DC 25 Diplomacy check to ask two more questions of Bartholomeus before he loses his patience and attacks. If the PCs do not ask enough questions to anger him, Bartholomeus becomes indifferent to them and they may look through his collection at their leisure, with him offering random and unbidden insights into the chamber's holdings.

#### **REVELATIONS OF BARTHOLOMEUS**

Focus on providing the hook for this adventure through Bartholomeus, with the intention of luring the PCs down to the Poisoned Passage to unlock the adamantine doors and beyond them to discover the council chamber of the Old Masters. Bartholomeus tends to meander on his own throughout the chamber and discuss topics of interest to himself anyway, ignoring questions that do not interest him.

**On Albricius**: Bartholomeus can confirm that several weeks ago, he caught two masked dwarves and a human in the chamber taking rubbings off of a nearby pillar. They ran away before he could pursue. He admits, though, that in any case, his "old bones of earth and silt can't move that fast, anyhow."

**On the Golden Armor:** The stone-dead dwarf seems to disdain the display case, calling the armor a failure. He explains that he sought to create a protector for the Old Masters of the Brotherhood, but that it was a mere automaton and had no soul. The lessons he learned in its creation led to great innovative breakthroughs in other clockwork creations.

**On Rabscuttle and the Creation Pillar:** Bartholomeus does not remember any names, so mention of "Rabscuttle" stirs no memories. He does reveal, however, that he perfected a technique for creating new bodies for dying dwarves, and that the blessing of Volund allowed their souls to make the transition into clockwork bodies. Because he long ago forgot, in no way does he reveal that the bodies he constructed were masters of the Brotherhood or that more than one exists. If shown Rabscuttle, Bartholomeus focuses on his memories of the techniques of the construction and forging of the body, and talks about the clever inclusion of symbols and maps on the creation with pride. He does not



seem to remember what the maps led to or even that Rabscuttle is a living being, manhandling the gearforged as if Rabscuttle were a piece of hot metal on an anvil. He ignores Rabscuttle if the gearforged addresses him and instead gives the other PCs a peculiar look, like a veterinarian annoyed by a barking dog.

Rabscuttle, for his part, does not remember his creator either, although he shakes Bartholomeus' hand heartily as he marvels in familiarity at the objects of the chamber the names and lesson of each revelation just on the end of his tongue, just out of reach of his senile mind.

**On Doors:** The crowning achievement of Bartholomeus was his clockwork and adamantine doors: "The ones that hide secrets worth keeping." He discusses at length the incredibly tough construction of the adamantine doors. "Have you tried to get past them? You can't! I dare you! Impossible! You've got to unlock them, first! And you can't speak to the mountain unless you get by them! You want to speak to the mountain, do you not? The Old Masters can stop these tremors! You've got to get past the poisoned passage to open them!"

In his excitement, Bartholomeus strides throughout the chamber, pointing out the various door symbolism rife in Brotherhood allegory. He proudly exclaims how each door featured in the numerous tapestries and codices are all his creations, although representations of the unique adamantine doors seem the most prevalent.

He also has dark thoughts about the ultimate use of those doors to seal away his cousins, who, like him, refused to leave the citadel. His memories are faint about these events, but he can reveal that he never intended for his doors to be used to lock away these forsaken brethren, and could not blame them for not wanting to leave the halls. He carries some guilt for his contribution to this crime.

The Old Masters: If questioned about the Old Masters, Bartholomeus points out a tapestry depicting six dwarven statues, each aflame with the Fires of Knowledge and wielding various implements and symbolic tools of the order. Each a master craftsman in his own right, the founders of the Brotherhood passed on their knowledge to their dwarven brethren and allowed the Golden Citadel to flourish.

Eventually, even the succession of dwarven kings bowed before their enlightenment, and the Old Masters ruled the citadel from beyond the adamantine doors, where they communed with the Spirit of the Mountain through the power of the Golden Bowl to seek guidance in their endeavors.

The Golden Bowl: Bartholomeus makes constant reference to a golden bowl, calling it, "the prettiest, most perfect thing you ever saw." The bowl rests beyond the adamantine doors, which were built to protect the device, housed within a special well. The well was used for sacrifices to Rygar, in order to summon the Spirit of the Mountain. He concludes by saying, "You have more questions? You'll have to speak to the mountain. Listen to the silt. All the answers to why are behind those doors."

The Poisoned Passage: The dwarf points to a tapestry that shows a dark cave, billowing with clouds of acid, and mentions "dark tunnels of forbidden knowledge." He relates how his people first called upon him to stem the flow of a deadly gas that seeped from a mine, the explosion that rocked the citadel, and how he saved his people by creating a gate to cap the destroyed tunnels. In his ramblings, he also mentions an airlock to access the mines, "because the only way to unlock the doors was down there."

He further explains that the controls to open the adamantine doors were originally in a lower chamber for defensive purposes, but now the airlock must be navigated and the poisonous gas chamber crossed to reach the controls and unlock the door. The PCs have seen the door sealing off this area before, which is at Area 37 on Level 2 of the citadel.

**Further Questions**: If the PCs start to inquire on topics other than the proud accomplishments of Bartholomeus, he becomes annoyed, and steers the conversation back toward doors and the secrets they guard. If pressed, he becomes hostile and attacks.

**Conclusion:** The PCs should learn that the adamantine doors in the Upper Halls conceal a secret lodge as well as an important artifact known as the Golden Bowl that once allowed the Old Masters to summon the Spirit of the Mountain and communicate with it. With the tremors of the earthquake as constant reminders of the wrath of the Spirit of the Mountain, the characters soon realize that the chamber beyond might be their only chance to negotiate with the spirit to stop the tremors and prevent further collapse. They should now know that the only way to open the doors to the Grand Lodge is to descend into the Poisoned Passage, an area created when a violent gas pocket erupted in the mines of the lower ward. They must go past the airlock sealing off this area and operate the controls found there.

As the PCs continue to tour the chamber with the dwarf, he becomes increasingly taciturn and suspicious. Eventually, he turns on them and begins demanding explanations: What are they doing here? Who are they? What do they seek? Why don't they stop these tremors? Madness and greed well up inside the suddenly hostile creature, and the once forthcoming inventor attempts to destroy the party.

As his mind snaps and he turns on the PCs, he seizes his great hammer in his stony fists, and the golden automaton bursts through its glass cage in his defense.

#### Bartholomeus

Male stone-dead dwarf fighter 5/illuminated brother, preceptory of iron forge 5

LN Medium outsider (earth)

Init +0; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +7

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+8 armor, +1 Dodge, +5 natural)

hp 103 (10d10+30); shield other

Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +7

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +3, defensive training

#### offense Spd 20 ft.

- **Melee** +2 adamantine warhammer +18/+13 (1d8+11/×3); or power attack with +2 adamantine warhammer +14/+10 (1d8+17/×3)
- Special Atk stone touch +16 touch (Fort DC 16)

Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 10

- Base Atk +10; CMB +14 (+16 Sunder); CMD 24 (26 vs. Sunder)
- Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Skill Focus: Craft (Clockwork), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus: Warhammer, Weapon Specialization: Warhammer
- Skills Acrobatics -1, Appraise +11, Climb +3, Craft (blacksmith) +16, Craft (clockwork) +22, Disable Device +7, Escape Artist -1, Fly -1, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Perception +7, Ride -1, Sense Motive +7, Stealth -1, Swim +3

Languages Common, Dwarven

**SQ** armor training 2 (Ex), greed, hardy +2, hatred, slow and steady, stability, stonecunning +2

**Combat Gear** -; **Other Gear**+2 adamantine aarhammer, +2 breastplate;

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Adverse Ballot (Ex) Once per day, Bartholomeus may "recast" his fate and reroll one roll that he has just made. The result of the reroll must be taken, even if it's worse than the original roll.
- All Seeing Eye (Ex) Bartholomeus can no longer be flanked. This defense denies rogues the ability to sneak attack the character by flanking him, unless the attacker has at least four more rogue levels than Bartholomeus, who uses his class level to determine his equivalent rogue level.
- **Stone Touch (Su)** As a standard action while in homunculus form, Bartholomeusmay make a touch attack against a living creature. If it succeeds, its target must immediately succeed on a Fort save or be turned to stone. This effect can be reversed with *flesh to stone* or any other effect that reverses petrification.
- **Fettered:** Bartholomeus is attached to the repository. He cannot leave this location. See the Floating the Stone Ritual section for more information.

Non-Death Bartholomeus is not slain when his homunculus

is reduced to 0 hit points, disintegrated, or otherwise destroyed. Rather, his soul retreats into the fettered location and must reconsolidate itself in 1d10 days. During this time, Bartholomeus is totally isolated from the world and cannot perceive or interact with its surroundings at all. He loses all other special qualities during this period.

**Sprig of Acacia (Su)** So secretive are the actions of initiates that if Bartholomeus is ever the target of a bardic knowledge, Diplomacy check to gather information, Knowledge, or similar check and it succeeds by less than 10, the person making the check learns entirely false information. This secrecy carries over even into death: Bartholomeus gains immunity to *speak with dead* and other similar divinations cast after the brother has passed beyond the veil.

Stone Homunculus Bartholomeus usually does not have a corporeal body but may form one from the earth and stone of his fettered location once per day. This body looks just like the dwarf did in life and is used by Bartholomeus to interact with the world around him, including wielding weapons or objects. His belongings are formed with the homunculus. Such items can be taken from the dwarf while the homunculus is intact, but once it reverts to it's constituent elements, the items disappear as well and reform the next time the he creates his homunculus.

#### Tactics:

- **During Combat** Bartholomeus alternates among his stone touch attack, and damaging or sundering power attacks with his +2 adamantine warhammer. He stays adjacent to the shield guardian at all times to grant the -2 penalty on all enemy attacks. Neither Bartholomeus nor the shield guardian cross the threshold of this room if the party chooses to flee. He is quick to use his adverse ballot ability on a failed roll.
- **Morale** With the knowledge that only his form, not his spirit, can be destroyed, Bartholomeus fights until his homunculus body and possessions crumble into their constituent earth and ash.

#### Shield Guardian Suit of Armor

CR 12

N Large construct

**Init** -1; **Senses** darkvision (60 ft.), low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 8, flat-footed 24 (-1 Dex, -1 size, +16 natural) hp 101 (13d10); fast healing 5

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4

**Defensive Abilities** Construct Traits (+30 HP), **DR** 10/ adamantine and bludgeoning; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, bleeds, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, death and necromancy effects, disease, immunity to magic, mind-affecting, non-lethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning
# OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft. Melee 2 slams (2d10+7) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Special Attacks cursed wound, haste

#### STATISTICS

Str 24, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1 Base Atk +13; CMB +21; CMD 30 Feats -Skills Stealth -5 Languages -SQ find master (Su), guard (Ex) SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Cursed Wound (Ex)** The damage the shield guardian deals doesn't heal naturally and resists magical healing. A character attempting to use magical healing on a creature damaged by the shield guardian must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check, or the healing has no effect on the injured target.

- **Find Master (Su)** As long as a shield guardian and its amulet are on the same plane, the shield guardian can locate the amulet's wearer (or just the amulet, if it is removed after the guardian is called).
- **Guard (Ex)** If ordered to do so, a shield guardian moves to defend the wearer of its amulet. All attacks against the amulet wearer take a -2 penalty when the shield guardian is adjacent to its master.
- Haste (Su) After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a shield guardian can haste itself once per Day as a free action. The effect lasts 3 rounds and is otherwise the same as the spell.
- **Immunity to Magic (Ex)** A shield guardian is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance.
- Shield Other (Sp) The wearer of a shield guardian's amulet can activate this defensive ability as a standard action if within 100 feet of the shield guardian. Just as the spell of the same name, this ability transfers to the shield guardian half the damage that would be dealt to the amulet wearer (note that this ability does not provide the spell's AC or save bonuses). Damage transferred in this manner bypasses any defensive abilities (such as immunity or damage reduction) the golem possesses.
- **Spell Storing (Sp)** A shield guardian can store one spell of 4th level or lower that is cast into it by another creature. It "casts" this spell when commanded to do so or when a predefined situation arises. Once this spell is used, the shield guardian can store another.

#### Tactics

**Before Combat** The shield guardian stands inert in its display case until called upon by Bartholomeus when his attitude shifts to hostile.

**During Combat** The shield guardian intervenes in combat by immediately initiating its *shield other* ability on its master. It remains adjacent to Bartholomeus to give opponents a -2 penalty on attacks made against the stone-dead dwarf and nearby opponents. This shield guardian currently stores no spells.

**Morale** The shield guardian knows nothing of retreat or mortality and fights until destroyed. It falls inert if Bartholomeus is reduced to 0 hit points, since its controlling amulet temporarily discorporates.

As explained under the stone homunculus ability, the possessions of Bartholomeus discorporate along with his form, including the *shield guardian amulet*. Despite the apparent wealth contained in the room, a DC 20 Perception check and a DC 15 Appraise reveal the gaudy gold artifacts of the Illuminated Brotherhood—gold trimmed vestments, gem-encrusted chalices, silver medals of commendation, brass tablets and copper plates (all adorned with the esoteric symbols of the Brotherhood)—are only worth 1,500 gp. Only a single book remains intact among dozens of volumes pertaining to clockwork construction and maintenance. This reference is a *flesh golem manual*.

# PART II: THE POISONED PASSAGE

The PCs should easily locate the door to the Poisoned Passage, as they know its existence and location. They pass the clockwork door whenever they enter the lower halls of the citadel and faced the forsaken there for the first time.

# THE CLOCKWORK DOOR (EL 7)

Cogs and gears litter the floor surrounding the great clockwork door. Since the sundering of the central clockwork door in this lower ward, the forsaken took a number of steps to ensure they are never again trapped beneath the halls. After their initial assault, a small band sneaked here and disabled the door leading into the Poisoned Passage, an area they long ago claimed. The crafty creatures reconfigured the clockwork gears of the door in hopes that only they might open it, although a DC 25 Disable Device check can make sense of the bizarre arrangement of gears and unlock the door.

In addition, the forsaken rigged the gears of the door to spring out as poison darts if tampered with.

#### Fusillade Of Greenblood Oiled Gears

#### Type mechanical; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 25 EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect Atk +18 ranged (1d4+1 plus poison, poisoned gears, treated as darts); poison (greenblood oil; Type poison (injury); Save Fortitude DC 13 Frequency 1/round for 4 rounds Effect 1 Con damage; Cure 1 save); multiple targets (1d8 sharp gears per target in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area)

CR 7



# 2. TRAP **3. COLLAPSED ROOM**

(PARTIAL COLLAPSE) 6. DERRO TUNNEL 7. EQUIPMENT ROOM

SECTION 10. BELLOWS/AIRLOCK CONTROL ROOM

12. POISON GAS-FILLED MINE STATION

# **1.** The Poisoned Passage

Once the PCs open the clockwork door, read or paraphrase the following.

The distant howling that prevents habitation of the lower halls is much louder here—a droning distraction that muddles the mind and dulls the senses. A moist, cloying green vapor hovers low over the floor and clings to every surface of the passage, stinging the eyes, irritating the skin, and piercing the lungs. A thick, green sludge on the floor, ceiling, and walls of the stone hallway drips down with a faint, sickening plop. The corridor displays a massive amount of damage, obviously from an explosion, and the tunnel is collapsed in many areas.

The Poisoned Passage is what remains of a large mine and lower substation where a particularly rich vein of orichalcum was extracted. One of the earliest discovered veins, this area was once used as a nexus of communications between the upper and lower citadel and included a master control panel for other parts of the halls, including the levers to unlock the doors to the Grand Lodge above. Centuries before the fall of the Golden Citadel, a group of miners accidentally excavated a massive pocket of highly compressed, poisonous gas that subsequently exploded upon release, collapsing most of the mine shafts and the operations area. In fact, so great was the devastation that the entire citadel had to be

# POISON GAS RESIDUE

The slick, olive-colored film is a contact poison. This film covers every wall, door, and object in the area, including the control panel, so great care must be taken to prevent contact with the virulent substance (a DC 20 Disable Device check cleans a 5-foot square area in 10 minutes).

# Poison Gas Residue

Type poison; Save Fortitude DC 14. **Frequency** 1/minute for 2 minutes Initial Effect 2d6 acid damage; Secondary effect 1d2 Con damage; Cure 1 save

It becomes inert roughly 10 minutes after being removed from the poisonous halls, at which time it dries. The poison gas that hovers in the hallways and beyond the airlock is not flammable.

abandoned due to the pervasive gas until a solution could be found. To answer this crisis, Bartholomeus invented and constructed the airlocks, which provide access to the vital controls left in the areas while keeping the poisonous vapors at bay.

The passages leading to the airlock chamber are treacherous. The forsaken invaded these tunnels from their nearby Howling City, traversing the mist with alchemical items and setting traps in the hallways to drive



out any interlopers who dare to enter. Residue of the surrounding gases lingers throughout these hallways.

A thick green mist settles on the floor of the area, although it is inert enough that its acidic qualities are irritating but not damaging. The accumulated scum that layers the walls and objects of this area in poisonous filth is another matter (see below).

In addition, once the PCs pass through the clockwork door, they are subject to the distant sounds of the forsaken howlers, the wails of which echo throughout these chambers.

Howl (Ex) All beings other than outsiders that hear the creatures' howling for an hour or longer are subject to its effect. Anyone within hearing range of a howler for a full hour must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or take 1 point of Wisdom damage. The save DC is Charisma based. The save must be repeated for each hour of exposure. This is sonic mind-affecting effect.

# 2. The Collapsing Corridor (el 8)

The forsaken set a trap to warn them of approaching intruders. They rigged a very unstable wall to collapse if the area is not properly navigated.

#### **Collapsing Wall**

CR 6

Type mechanical; Perception DC 14; Disable Device DC 16 EFFECTS

#### Trigger proximity; Reset none

Effect Atk +20 melee (8d6, stone blocks, plus poison); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. Area)

Any PC hit by this trap is also affected by the poison gas residue (see sidebar).

# 3. Collapsed Room (EL 9)

Once the PCs enter or look into this room, read or paraphrase the following.

This rubble-filled room displays the massive devastation that long ago wrecked these chambers. Patches of slime drape the floors and ceiling, while a slime-encrusted dwarven skeleton is half-buried in the stones of the collapsed wall, his iron helm crushed. The golden hilt of his finely-wrought sword protrudes from the rubble, flames dancing lightly along the visible portion of the blade, casting shadows at weird angles throughout the room.

This area is actually a cleverly-constructed trap set by the forsaken. Five patches of green slime grow on the ceiling throughout the room and blend in so well with the surrounding sludge that it takes a DC 20 Perception or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check to pick them out. The enticing sword is the subject of *magic aura* and *continual flame* spells to appear as a *flametongue*.

In fact, the "sword" is simply an intricately fabricated plug for a gas leak emanating from a fissure beyond the The poisonous fumes in areas 3, 6 and 12 were long trapped in a highly compressed gas pocket far below, spreading catastrophe throughout these tunnels when the dwarves inadvertently mined too closely. The thick fumes provide concealment as fog (*Core Rulebook*).

The poison gas is poisonous (like burnt othur fumes) and acidic.

Obviously, the fumes are unbreathable, and any unprotected creatures introduced to the gas immediately suffer the effects of suffocation. The gas is not flammable or combustible.

Poison gas; (**Type** poison (inhaled); **Save** Fortitude DC 18 **Frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds

*Initial Effect* 1 Con damage; *Secondary Effect:* 1d3 Con damage plus 1d6 acid damage per round and slowed as solid fog while exposed) *Cure* 2 consecutive saves

rubble. Even if the gas pocket it contains is discovered, it is incredibly difficult to remove the sword without also releasing the high-pressure poison gas from the fissure. Once removed, the false sword's true nature is obvious.

#### **Poison Gas Pocket**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31 EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; Reset none

Effect multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius cloud dissipates in 10 rounds); never miss; Poison gas; (Type poison (inhaled); Save Fortitude DC 18 Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds Initial Effect 1 Con damage; Secondary Effect: 1d3 Con damage plus 1d6 acid damage per round and slowed as solid fog while exposed) Cure 2 consecutive saves

# Glyph Of Warding (Blast)

CR 4

CR 9

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28 EFFECTS

#### Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 5th-level cleric, 2d8 acid, DC 14 Reflex for half); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.);

# 5. The Antechamber (el 12)

The forsaken guards of the Poisoned Passage chose this room to stop the party's intrusion. The forsaken use a combination of foul-tasting antitoxins and crudely constructed gasmasks to navigate the poisonous passages from their Howling City to these safer chambers, although these precautions do very little to protect against the high pressure gas chamber the airlock cordons off from the rest of the mines. They prepared to confront the party and are ready to defend their territory to the death.

As the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

Heavy mist swirls lazily about the floor of this chamber, occasionally interrupted by small, brief jets of the sickly green vapor from concealed fissures in the walls and floor. Old mining equipment and ore carts—rusted, pitted, and deteriorating in the corrosive environment lay scattered in disarray throughout the room. Many of the walls are collapsed into rubble, although a roughly hewn tunnel, thick with poison gas, leads downward into the darkness below.

Four forsaken soldiers are stationed in area 7 with one savant casting spells from the room beyond. One of these forsaken soldiers wields a murderous bombard. The remaining forsaken soldiers protect the other sorcerer positioned near the fissure opening at area 6, one of which carries a weeping bombard (lich dust variant). The sorcerer stationed here bears the fetal savant. In addition, the forsaken brought two ferocious dogmole juggernauts, which rest near the rubble pile, eager to protect their masters.

# Forsaken (8)

CR 3

CR 7

hp 25; BESTIARY 1, p.70 (derro)

#### Tactics

**During Combat** Three forsaken soldiers charge into melee from each group and attempt to flank the party with weapons coated in greenblood oil, while the two remaining forsaken fire their bombards from a distance, charging into melee to replace fallen comrades or when they deplete their canisters.

Each bombadier carries two shots.

Morale The maddened forsaken fight until killed.

# Forsaken Savants (2)

Male Derro sorcerer 5
CE Small humanoid (derro)
<b>Init</b> +6; <b>Senses</b> Perception +5
DEFENSE
AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +4 shield, +2
Dex, +1 size, +2 natural, +1 deflection)
<b>hp</b> 45 (3d8+5d6+8)
<b>Fort</b> +3, <b>Ref</b> +4, <b>Will</b> +11
Defensive Abilities SR 14
Weakness vulnerability to sunlight
OFFENSE
<b>Spd</b> 20 ft.
<b>Melee</b> quarterstaff $+5 (1d4/x2)$
Special Attacks acidic ray (7/day), long limbs +5', sneak
attack +1d6
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5)
At will—darkness, ghost sound
1/day—daze, sound burst
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th, +7 melee touch, +7
ranged touch):
2nd (5/day)—frigid touch, see invisibility, spectral hand,



#### touch of idiocy

1st (7/day)—chill touch (DC 15), enlarge person, mage armor, shocking grasp, shield 0 (at will)—acid splash, daze (DC 14), detect magic, open/ close, read magic, touch of fatigue (DC 14) STATISTICS Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 5, Cha 18 Base Atk +4; CMB +3; CMD 16 Feats Blind-Fight, Eschew Materials, Expanded Arcana: Sorcerer, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse Skills Fly +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Perception +5, Spellcraft +4, Stealth +10 Languages Derro, Undercommon SQ aberrant, madness (Ex), poison use (Ex) Gear quarterstaff, +1 ring of protection SPECIAL ABILITIES Aberrant Increase the duration of [polymorph] spells by 50%.

Acidic Ray (Sp) (7/day) Ranged touch attack deals 1d6+2 acid damage.

Long Limbs +5' (Ex) The forsaken savants' reach for melee touch attacks increases +5'



Madness (Ex) Forsaken savants use their Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of their Wisdom modifier, and are immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a miracle or wish can remove a forsaken savant's madness. If this occurs, the savant gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 p

Poison Use (Ex) Forsaken savants do not risk poisoning themselves accidentally while poisoning a weapon.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex) A forsaken savant takes 1 point of Con damage after every hour it is exposed to sunlight.

# Tactics

- Before Combat The sorcerers cast protective spells on themselves as well as spectral hand in preparation to unleash touch spells effectively from a distance. In addition, they drank potions of mirror image.
- During Combat The sorcerers concentrate on using touch spells via spectral hand, with particular attention to using touch of idiocy on warriors in hopes of making possession by the fetal savant easier.
- Morale The sorcerer not carrying the fetal savant fights madly to the death. The fetal savant bearer, however, tries to flee down the fissure with his charge if his companion drops or he takes damage equal to more than half his starting hit points.

Derro Fetal Savant	CR 7
hp 7; Midgard Bestiary p. 31	
Dogmole Juggernauts (2)	CR 6

Dogmole Juggernauts (2)

hp 85; Midgard Bestiary p. 36

# **Tactics**

- During Combat The dogmole juggernauts are exceptionally loyal to their masters, and charge the PCs as soon as possible, attempting bull rushes and overruns.
- Morale The dogmoles, loyal to the end, fight to the death.
- Forsaken Gasmask: These ill-fitting, barely functional gasmasks provide their wearers with a +5 circumstance bonus on saving throws made against inhaled poisons for a total of 30 minutes.

# 6. DERRO TUNNELS

The pile of rubble near the fissure opening is trapped to collapse in case the forsaken need to cover their escape. In their madness, a forsaken might choose to collapse the wall on himself if he thinks he can harm numerous enemies by doing so.

# **Collapsing Wall**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 14; Disable Device DC 16 EFFECTS

#### Trigger proximity; Reset none

Effect Atk +20 melee (8d6, stone blocks, plus poison); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. Area)

Any PC hit by this trap is also affected by the poison gas residue (see sidebar).

If the players investigate the passages leading to the Howling City, they find themselves deterred by the noxious fumes, which resemble the poisonous gas chamber fog (see the Poison Gas sidebar), with the exception of the slowing quality. The treacherous home city of the forsaken stands more than a quarter mile down these passages. Expand or define the Howling City in any way appropriate to your campaign, or else simply dissuade the PCs from investigating it.

# 7. GUARD STATION

Once the PCs defeat the guards in area 5 and look into their room, read or paraphrase the following.

This room is a disheveled mess of habitation, serving as guard quarters, kitchen, hearth, and home for the acidscarred forsaken stationed here. Pervasive litter lies scattered throughout the room, with piles of rusted junk made apparently as maddened attempts at artistic decoration. Rough mats of woven cave moss fibers make do as beds.

Beyond the normal accoutrements of habitation by the forsaken, there appears to be little of value here, although a DC 23 Perception check uncovers a worn effigy of Volund worth 100 gp. A stack of used scroll parchments used as a pillow contains one scrap still holding a stone shape spell. Two spare bombard canisters (weeping); a tarnished, beetle-shaped pin (a golembane scarab); and 10 forsaken gasmasks (see left) round out the room's treasures.

# 8. RUINED WAYSTATION (EL 6)

A patch of tangled, feathery cavelight moss frames the door to this room, giving off a faint illumination. As the PCs approach it, the glow intensifies as dusty motes fall from it and drift to the floor in a muted sparkle of luminescence. A DC 18 Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check correctly identifies cavelight moss for what it is. The forsaken allowed it to prosper here and learned to bypass it by feeding it scraps.

#### **Cavelight Moss**

hp 76; Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, p. 19

CR 6

#### **Tactics**

- **During Combat** The cavelight moss relies on its strength and sticky tendrils to constrict and drain its victims of their strength before consuming them. When engaged by several foes, a cavelight moss grabs one combatant with a tendril while lashing out at the others to maximize its potential meal.
- **Morale** A cavelight moss has little chance of escaping an attacker and, as such, fights to the death.

This chamber contains items salvaged from the ruins, including raw orichalcum ore worth 1,700 gp; a masterwork adamantine heavy pick; a valuable collection of golden gears and cogs worth 800 gp; six canisters for forsaken gasmasks; and a carefully decorated dogmole skull encrusted with semi-precious gems and clockwork castoffs worth 200 gp to an eccentric buyer. A small gypsum container holds two applications of *stone salve* and is hidden among the collapsed rubble of this room, requiring a DC 25 Perception check to locate.

# 9. Collapsed Tunnel

This section of tunnel caved in enough to block Medium or larger creatures and require even Small creatures to squeeze. Removing enough debris to allow Medium creatures to pass requires four successful DC 15 Strength checks. Each Strength check requires 10 minutes.

Failure by 5 or more causes part of the tunnel to further collapse, adding one additional Strength check to the total needed to clear enough space.

# **10.** The Control Room

The trauma from a massive explosion is evident all throughout this chamber. Most of the stout stone walls shifted and settled in the centuries since, forming deep cracks that just barely contain the poisonous fumes beyond. Inset into the far wall of the chamber is a circular brass door 10 feet in diameter and 8 inches thick. The door rolls into a recess in the surrounding rock. A small, iron-rimmed porthole of thick glass in the middle of the circular door looks into the airlock beyond, revealing an identical door and porthole beyond.

A set of various pressure gauges and stiff iron levers, along with simple, pictographic instructions, fills one wall of this room. The handles of a large bellows pump sprout from the stone floor within, with a worn leather hose snaking to the wall and into the gas chamber beyond. Two airtight suits hang on hooks flanking the door. The suits are composed of thick but pliable leather, iron reinforcements, and heavy copper helmets with small glass portholes in the front.

The pictograms were originally easily deciphered and contain numerous warnings about the toxic nature of the gas beyond. Lewd vandalism and graffiti, written by the forsaken in Dwarven, now cover most of the signs, warning of the dangers and madness of being trapped

# AIRLOCK OPENING INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Worker to put on suit and secure helmet. Two crewmen prime air pump to clear airlock by working bellow handles in back-and-forth action.
- 2. Open outer door with marked lever. DANGER! Only worker in secure suit should enter airlock.
- Outside crewmen close outer airlock door with marked lever. Inside worker opens inner airlock door from inside chamber using properly marked lever.
- 4. Inside worker enter chamber and turn right. Close inner airlock door with properly marked lever. Attach hose there to proper socket on face of helmet to provide air. Proceed carefully while working in chamber.
- 5. Prevent snagging hose in hazardous environment. DANGER! Low visibility!
- 6. Outside crewmen work pump by operating bellow handles to provide fresh air to inside worker. Use marked lever to open door when airlock secure.

behind closed doors. The control panel is covered in poison gas residue (see the Poison Gas Residue sidebar).

A DC 18 Linguistics, Knowledge (engineering), or Intelligence check correctly interprets the airlock opening instructions.

Working any lever to open an airlock door is a standard action. Failure to disconnect the hose from the helmet before re-entering the airlock results in it being kinked and trapped in the door, leaving the wearer with a 3-round supply of air. It takes 2 rounds of pumping to clear the airlock of poison gas with the pump mechanism before a worker exits the chamber, otherwise a 20-foot burst of pressurized poison gas affects all within range of the outer door when it opens.

#### Poison Gas Pocket

Type mechanical; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31 EFFECTS

CR 9

Trigger proximity; Reset none

Effect multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius cloud—dissipates in 10 rounds); never miss; Poison gas; (Type poison (inhaled); Save Fortitude DC 18 Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds Initial Effect 1 Con drain; Secondary Effect: 1d3 Con damage plus 1d6 acid damage per round and slowed as *solid fog* while exposed) Cure 2 consecutive saves

Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31. See the Poison Gas sidebar for more information.

**The Airtight Suits:** The suits were specially constructed to provide access to the important controls locked beyond the airlock. There are two suits present, resembling antique diving suits made of thick, magically enhanced leather augmented by a metal collar which securely fastens a large, heavy copper helmet.



# TABLE 5-2: AIRTIGHT SUIT

Heavy Armor			Max Dex Penalty	Spell	-		· ·
Pressure suit	200	+6	+1	30%	20	15	40 lb.

The suits radiate abjuration magic and fit any Medium creature.

The bulkiness and thickness of the suits, as well as the metal fittings, require the heavy armor proficiency to don without penalty and insulate their wearers from all gas damage while whole. In addition, the suits are enhanced to provide protection from acid and *freedom of movement* to counteract the slow effect of the noxious fumes.

Unlike armor, however, the suits were not constructed to withstand the rigors and stress of combat, and take non-bludgeoning and non-crushing damage equal to that dealt to their wearers (the suits take only half damage from bludgeoning and crushing damage).

A punctured suit retains the *freedom of movement* enhancement but leaves the wearer vulnerable to some effects of the gas, the effects increasing with every 5 points of damage the suit takes. The enhancements fail completely if the suit is reduced to 0 hp, destroying it (a suit has 30 hp). If the connecting air hose is significantly punctured,

# TABLE 5-3: DAMAGE

#### Damage Effects:

0-4	Immune to poison and acid, +6 AC, –6 armor check penalty, 30% spell failure
5-9	+5 save vs. poison, 1d2 acid dmg/rnd, +5 AC, -5 armor check penalty, 25% spell failure
10–14	+4 save vs. poison, 1d3 acid dmg/rnd, +4 AC, -4 armor check penalty, 20% spell failure
15–19	+3 save vs. poison, 1d4 acid dmg/rnd, +3 AC, -3 armor check penalty, 15% spell failure
20-24	+2 save vs. poison, 1d6 acid dmg/rnd, +2 AC, -2 armor check penalty, 10% spell failure
25-29	+1 save vs. poison, 1d8 acid dmg/rnd, +1 AC, -1 armor check penalty, 5% spell failure
30+	Suit destroyed. Full effects of fumes and acid. Freedom of movement ceases.

the wearer only has a 3-round air supply before the effects of suffocation begin (See *PFRPG Core Rulebook*).

Due to the bulkiness of the suits, a character can wear light armor under them without additional penalty, but only the greater armor bonus of the two applies.

As soon as the first PC puts on a suit, two others must man the pump to provide him with air. Roll for initiative and begin tracking the number of rounds it takes for the PCs to activate the door controls in area 12.

**The Air Pump:** The pump requires a two-man team to properly operate, each crewman working one end of the seesaw of the bellows handle to provide clean, fresh air to the workers wearing the suits. A stout hose (AC 7+ suit wearer's Dex modifier; hardness 3, 10 hit points) runs from the pump and into a socketed recess on the wall, feeding the other end of the 150-foot-long coiled hose on the far side of the airlock. Working the pump also clears the poison gas from the airlock in two rounds. Without pumping, suits only have 3-round air supplies.

# 11. THE AIRLOCK CHAMBER

To protect the upper chambers from the spread of the deadly gas, the dwarves built a failsafe into this door. The outer door can only be unlocked and opened from the outside, while the inner door can only be unlocked and worked from inside the airlock and the greater chamber. They are constructed so that only one door can be open at any time, and from different locations, in order to prevent sabotage. A series of four consecutive successful DC 55 Disable Device checks can change these failsafes.

# 12. The Poisoned Chamber

Once the PCs make their way through and beyond the airlock, read or paraphrase the following.

The chamber beyond the airlock is littered with the remnants of previous mining operations. Visibility is extremely limited due to the green, poisonous vapor, although many light stones provide ample, if muted, illumination. Several air hoses are neatly coiled near the door. Creaks, screeches and other unusual, unidentifiable noises resonate throughout the chamber. Mining carts, torn and jagged rails, rusted lanterns, picks, shovels, and hammers all lay in scattered disarray, pitted and useless.

# **Running the Airlock**

Players do not like to split the party, and they might take extreme measures to magically circumvent lack of breathable air, no communication, impenetrable doublelocked doors, acidic fumes, deadly poisonous vapor, and the slow effect of the gas, just to keep the group from splitting up. However unlikely, groups who concoct such solutions should reap the rewards of such innovation and be fairly allowed to proceed. For those without such resources, you must deal with a split party, as there are only two suits available to enter the dangerous chamber safely. This is by design, and can be run a number of ways if you want to maximize the surprise and impact of the hidden creatures that lurk in the mist, especially the deception of the returning mohrg.

You can split the players into two groups and place them in separate rooms until the mohrg makes his appearance, at which point the table can be recombined and the attacks both inside and out run concurrently. Alternatively, careful word choice, clever timing, and deceptive descriptions can fool even the most suspicious party, allowing you to keep all party members at the same table without splitting them up.

It is suggested that you wait until the suited PCs are on the return trip after operating the door lock. As the belker prepares to make its appearance inside, let the pump operators reach their own conclusions as the inner door opens and the concealed mohrg knocks on the glass. Even the players of the returning characters might assume their trial is over and you are wrapping up the events! At this point, if the pump operating characters are fooled, stay in initiative and roll for the belker and mohrg.

*Continual flame* spells provide illumination to the light stones. The coiled air hoses stretch to 150 feet, but three of the hoses that lead off into the chamber have been severed. The oppressive, cloying dampness weighs heavily on those in the chamber, and visibility is severely hampered, as per the *fog cloud* spell.

The jumbled mess on the floor makes the entire chamber difficult terrain. In addition, a number of obstacles spring up at random intervals, threatening the safety of the workers as well as the vulnerable suits protecting them. The following hazards act in many ways like traps, although they are consequences of the environment and were not deliberately set. Most of these events can affect flying PCs as well. Any attacks that deal piercing or slashing damage to a character deals an equal amount to the suit (see the Airtight Suit Damage sidebar). Add events to create drama and tension, but avoid killing a PC with a hazard.

#### Rusted Equipment Collapse CR 1

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 15 EFFECTS

#### Trigger location; Reset None

**Effect** Atk +10 melee (2d6, jagged metal); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares)

#### **Rolling Rocks**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 27 EFFECTS

CR 2

**CR 1** 

**Trigger** location; **Reset** None **Effect** Atk +10 melee (2d6, rock);

#### Jagged Rail Shifts

Type mechanical; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** None **Effect** Atk +10 melee (2d6/ x3, jagged metal)

#### Rocks from the Ceiling

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25 EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset None

**Effect** multiple targets (all targets in two adjacent 5-ft. squares, 3d8, rock)

#### **Released Winch Chain**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 23 EFFECTS

#### Trigger Location; Reset None

**Effect** multiple events (tripping and melee attack); Atk +15 melee touch (trip), Atk +15 melee (2d4+2, rusted chain) If the tripping attack succeeds, a +4 bonus applies to the spiked chain attack because the opponent is prone.

The Control Panel: The control panel that operates the adamantine doors in the Upper Halls stands at the back of the chamber. Many complicated levers and switches adorn the pitted and rusted interface. Some of these levers and switches power the airship dock functions, release pressure in the Upper Halls chimneys, and control several lifts and rails that are in areas too damaged for the controls to affect anything. A DC 17 Perception check locates a series of pictograms that identify the proper door mechanism, which can be discerned with a DC 12 Wisdom check. The rusted lever requires a DC 17 Strength or Disable Device check. Shifting the lever unlocks the doors in the halls above.

The Air Pump: The characters operating the pump do not have an easy time of it, either. Operating the antique pump is incredibly strenuous work, and a PC can only work the pump for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score before he begins to tire. Once a PC pumps for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check at the beginning of his next turn to continue pumping. If he fails, he takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and becomes fatigued. Eliminating the nonlethal damage also eliminates the fatigue.

Thereafter, he must make a check every 5 rounds, and each additional check increases the difficulty by +1. If a fatigued PC continues pumping and fails a second check, he becomes exhausted and can no longer pump. A PC who rests for 10 rounds can resume pumping as though he had pumped for 0 rounds.

In addition, the machinery is altogether unreliable, and every 2d4 rounds a mishap occurs, creating a few moments of havoc (for three-character parties, roll once every 3d6 rounds; for parties larger than six, roll every 1d4 rounds). All of these events halt airflow until they are addressed and corrected.

# TABLE 5-4: MACHINERY MISHAP!

#### D6 Event

CR 2

CR 2

- 1-2 Detached hose! Air supply is interrupted. A DC15 Dexterity check replaces the hose in its socket.
- 3-4 Leak! The imbalance causes one bellow to rip, disrupting the mechanism until repaired. A *mending* or *make whole* spell immediately repairs the damage. Otherwise, patching a bellow requires 1d6 rounds of work.
- **5–6** Jam! The device jams, requiring a DC 20 Strength check to dislodge the bellow handles before operation can continue.

# The Fiends in the Fog (el 10)

After the PCs traverse the poisonous gas chamber and operate the lever to unlock the door, they must again navigate the treacherous terrain back to the control room. Emphasize the claustrophobic confines of the damp suit, the unusual noises that echo throughout the chamber, and the oppressive mist that conceals it all.

Perception checks in this environment are fruitless, due to the concealment of the gas, but the characters quickly become aware of a belker that makes its home in the mist. It attacks when the lead character reaches the middle of the room on his return trip.

CR 6

# Belker

hp 68; Bestiary 2

# Tactics

**During Combat** The belker attacks in a blur of wings, claws, and teeth, attempting to rip and tear the protective suit in order to use its smoke claws ability. The belker attacks while solid until the suit takes a total of 15 points of damage (from its attacks or environmental hazards), at which point it assumes smoke form and enters the suit, using its smoke claws ability to rend the character within.

Morale The ravenous belker attacks until destroyed.

While the suited PCs deal with the smoky menace within area 12, the PCs left in the control room (area 10), hear the inner airlock door open. A suited creature shuffles through the inner door, closes it, and with a gloved hand taps on the porthole glass, motioning to open the outer door. Hide as best you can that this creature is not one of the PCs returning to the airlock.

This creature is all that remains of a human tomb robber who entered this chamber weeks ago in search of riches. When he was attacked, his friends at the pump abandoned him. Slain by the belker, the poisonous mist of



the chamber infused him with a foul sentience, rising as a morhg that now inhabits the suit. The cunning morhg attempts to trick anyone outside into letting him out of the airlock, tapping patiently on the glass but allowing the remnants of the fog and a subtle turn of his helmeted head to conceal his true nature. His suit currently has 15 points of damage, calculated as appropriate on the table above.

In addition, this particular morhg is immune to the acid effects of the fog. Because the morhg's undead existence is so inexorably tied to the suit he wears, he suffers no ill effects from wearing the suit, but he does gain the suit's armor bonus to Armor Class.

#### Morhg

# CR 8

AC 29, touch 14, flat-footed 25 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +9 natural) hp 91; *Bestiary 1* 

#### Tactics

**During Combat** The morhg uses it slam attack exclusively, as its paralyzing tongue is blocked by the helmet. When the suit takes a total of 30 points of damage, it falls apart, allowing the morhg the use of his tongue attack.

**Morale** The morhg attacks until destroyed. If the characters defeated the forsaken guards, traversed the treacherous airlock, overcame the threats of the poisonous chamber, and manipulated the controls found there, the adamantine doors above are unlocked. The secrets they conceal await.

# PART III: THE GRAND LODGE OF THE OLD MASTERS

When the PCs return to the Great Hall, they find the adamantine doors to the Grand Lodge are now unlocked, although with the structural damage of the earthquake, it takes a DC 20 Strength check to swing them open.

# The Great Doors

These doors and the Grand Lodge chambers beyond are enhanced with a *forbiddance* effect (CL 15th) and are sealed against all planar travel into or within the chambers, including all teleportation spells, plane shifting, astral travel, ethereal travel, and all summoning spells. Such effects simply fail. The Well is exempt from this effect. The alignment restriction effects long ago faded away, and all may now pass freely.

# **32.** The Receptory (cr 12)

When the PCs open the adamantine doors, read or paraphrase the following.

Beyond the doors is a once magnificent chamber, now ruined by the earthquake and the ages. Brotherhood symbolism adorns every surface, from the intricately carved pillars to the massive dais and throne that dominate the north wall. The floor of the chamber is constructed of alternating black and white marble tiles in a disorienting checkerboard arrangement.

Posted just above eye level along the periphery of the room are more than two dozen stations—each a colorful, framed mosaic depicting some allegorical or metaphorical lesson to members of this secret society. The six embossed pillars do not support the arched ceiling of the room, but rather stop just short of the ceiling, each topped with a flickering orange flame. Two large statues flank a passageway leading away from the chamber toward a smaller set of adamantine doors otherwise matching those leading into the room.

This chamber was originally designed as the upper throne room for the dwarven kings, but over the years, the successive rulers' devotions to their secret society transformed the chamber, until the Brotherhood completely took over the rooms and suites. Members of the Council of the Old Masters then sat upon the throne to address members of the Brotherhood. Chunks of toppled pillars and fallen ceremonial sconces riddle the floor and lie scattered about, making the entire room difficult terrain.

Most of the treasures here decayed beyond value long ago, although five golden curtain rods and various golden vessels, silver badges, engraved cups, golden chains, and other gaudy Brotherhood paraphernalia lie scattered about. The rods are worth 100 gp apiece and the paraphernalia is worth a total of 2,000 gp.

The Mosaic Stations: A total of 33 delicately designed tiled mosaics adorn the walls. Framed in gilded settings, each mosaic is approximately 3 feet square and labeled with a golden plaque beneath. The tiled pictures depict allegorical scenes of dwarven life, mythology, and legend, with each selection filled with symbolism and obviously important posturing of the subjects' actions within. The entire dwarven lifespan is depicted, with each subject growing in knowledge, wealth, age and adornments as the mosaics progress.

These mosaics metaphorically depict the 33 degrees on the Path to Illumination. Some of the more important degrees are described here, but feel free to add additional descriptions if your players seem curious.

**1st Degree:** A naked, blind, and crippled dwarven child wanders through a dark, smoldering cave clutching a blunt chisel and broken hammer. A light shines far in the distance.

**5th Degree:** A young dwarven smith holds a pair of metalworking tongs in denial away from his body, while his other hand clutches a golden medallion within the flames of a hot forge. Several blindfolded dwarves stand



beside, threatening the smith with bared axes.

**17th Degree:** Clad in rich red robes lined in white fur, a dwarf stands before a set of silver doors. A scroll lies at his feet. His gloved left hand holds a key placed within one door, while his right hand thrusts a large book into the fires of a flaming pillar adjacent to the doors.

**21st Degree:** A dwarven stonemason stands atop a massive pillar, constructing a nearly-complete statue of a king out of stone blocks. An intense fire burns from within the statue, and the dwarf is preparing to trowel mortar into the final opening and place the last stone. The mason's apron and gloves are dirty with labor.

**33rd Degree:** A dwarf with eyes and hair ablaze with the fires of knowledge is seated on a throne before a set of fully open silver doors, a shattered pillar in ruins about his feet. He holds a silver chisel and a golden hammer and wears a golden plate across his chest composed of 16 squares, each carrying a numeric symbol (the plate matches the *shield guardian amulet* worn by Bartholomeus).

# THE GUARDIANS AND THE RIDDLES THEY KEEP

Two large stone statues flank a passageway leading to a set of tarnished doors. The statues are sculpted in white marble as great perching creatures with winged leonine bodies and rams' heads. They stare forward, mute and stoic. On the floor between them is a slightly raised 4-foot-by-4-foot grid composed of 16 tiles, each 1 foot square and displaying a single esoteric symbol.

The statues are actually criosphinxes in a special stasis that keeps them inert and ageless until their protections are required. They guard the doors leading into the Council Chambers. When anyone approaches within 10 feet of the statues, the criosphinxes awaken. Their eyes and mouths open, ablaze with fire, and they speak the following riddle in tandem in a dated dwarven dialect.

"One by one in fives and threes, brothers pass through strange degrees. When flesh and blood fail but the spirit remains, which degree must all someday obtain?"

When they finish the riddle, the criosphinxes' eyes and mouths close and the symbols on the grid begin to glow with a faint light similar to that of the criosphinxes' mouths and eyes. In addition, the pillars flanking the adamantine door beyond burst into flame.

The floor grid contains a magic square of 16 digits, arranged so that, with careful intuition, all columns, rows, four-square diagonals, and corners add up to 34. To cross this threshold, the PCs must correctly guess the answer to the riddle. In a secret society where the highest degree a living member might obtain is the 33rd, it stands to follow that the next rank—the one obtained by all when "flesh and blood fail but the spirit remains"—is death, the 34th degree.

In order to open the door without incident, the PCs must first correctly interpret the symbols on the grid, equating them with numbers, then step on the symbols corresponding first with "3" and then "4" as their answer. Doing so opens the door and maintains the stasis on the criosphinxes. Failure to do so properly animates the creatures, who immediately attack.

A DC 25 Linguistics check properly interprets the symbols as numbers, as do either *read magic* or *comprehend languages*. The numbers are arranged in the following manner.

# TABLE 5-5: RIDDLE GRID

16	3	2	13
5	10	11	8
9	6	7	12
4	15	14	1

The tiles are raised about 1 inch above the floor. When stepped on, a tile lowers level with the floor and clicks, springing back up when released. If the correct answer is given in proper sequence ("3," then "4"), all tiles lower flush with the floor and the doors swing open, resetting only when the doors close automatically a minute later. If at any point an incorrect tile is pressed (either on the first step or any subsequent steps), the character making the erroneous step must succeed on a DC 22 Fortitude save or become attached to that tile, immobilized, for 1d4 rounds. The character can act normally but cannot move from his position by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell. Even attempting to remove his footwear does not free the character of his immobilization.

If an incorrect answer is given, allow the party DC 25 Perception checks to detect a subtle change in the criosphinxes. Those who succeed can take part in a surprise round as normal, while those who fail are surprised when the criosphinxes attack.

If the PCs defeat the sphinx guardians, the squares reset but the doors do not open. The sequence of grid events repeats (including the immobilization effect), resetting after two incorrect tiles are depressed, until the correct answer is given.

#### Sphinx, Criosphinx (2)

CR 11

# Male Sphinx, Criosphinx

N Large magical beast Init +2; Senses darkvision, low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, -1 size, +13 natural) hp 129 (10d10+60) Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +7 Defensive Abilities fortification

# OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor) **Melee** 2 claws x2 +15 (1d6+16), gore +16 (2d4+16/19-20/2)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

# Special Attacks swooping sharge, stasis

Spell-Like Abilities speak with animals (constant)

**Str** 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** 21, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15 **Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +21 (+23 Bull Rushing); **CMD** 33 (35 vs. Bull Rush, 37 vs. Trip)

- **Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (Gore), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapon Focus (Gore)
- **Skills** Bluff +12, Fly +3, Intimidate +18, Perception +12, Stealth -2

Languages Common, Sphinx

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fortification** (Ex) The stone-like nature of the sphinxes allow them a 25% chance to ignore any additional damage from a sneak attack or critical hit, taking only normal damage instead.
- **Freeze (Ex)** These sphinxes have a special *stasis* ability that holds them in an inert statue form until a creature submits an incorrect answer.
- **Swooping Charge (Ex)** On a charge, deal double damage with gore, triple if flying and drop at least 20 ft.

# **33.** The Antechamber

Once the PCs make it past the criosphinxes and enter the room beyond their riddle, read or paraphrase the following.

Like the floor of the Grand Lodge, the antechamber is tiled in a checkerboard pattern. Six pillars once rose from the floor here, although only five still stand, all stopping short of the ceiling and flaming with a continuous fire. The walls are heavily draped in red velvet curtains flecked with gold dust that might once have formed discernable pictures. The banners hang like shrouds from golden rods and chains.

Fallen stone blocks litter the floor and appear to have crushed several rows of stone pews. Three large, raised steps lead to a set of stone doors engraved with silver and gold symbols of the tools of the craft of the Brotherhood, such as the trowel, the hammer, the chisel, and the book. These doors are not flanked by the usual flaming pillars.

These stone doors (leading to area 34) are protected by an *arcane lock* cast by a 10th level caster. Carefully chiseled in the stone tiles before the door is a small, coinshaped recess, engraved with a depiction of the flaming pillar. The circular recess is inset into the middle of a larger, 2-foot square indention in the floor. The key to opening this door lies in the mnemonic fobs carried by the Illuminated Brotherhood. If the disc is removed and placed in the circular recess, a pillar springs into existence and the doors open for as long as the pillar remains.

# The Secret Room (EL 4)

The secret door to this room is a missing 5 foot section of wall replaced with a mimic in a stony form. Allow the PCs to make Perception checks against the mimic's Disguise skill (+13) to realize something unusual about the texture of the wall. The mimic attacks only when someone approaches this specific section of wall to search or investigate.

CR4

# Mimic

hp 52; Bestiary 1

# Tactics

**During Combat** The creature attacks with its slam to adhere to any nearby victims. It then attempts to crush them.

Morale The ravenous mimic fights until killed.

The room the mimic protects took a heavy pounding from the earthquake. Once a comfortable library and lounge for discussion of the path to Illumination, it is now little more than a trash-strewn room destroyed by a partially collapsed ceiling and the passage of too many years. The crumbled remains of rotten furniture litter the floor and most of the books here long ago decayed beyond worth.

A mosaic depicting barred doors is flanked by flaming pillars crafted into the floor, and was damaged only minimally in the earthquake. In addition, a bureau contains a Brotherhood Codex (see Dwarves of the Ironcrags Gazetteer) with spells up to 4th level, as appropriate for the campaign.

# 34. CHAMBER OF THE OLD MASTERS (EL 12)

This was once the chamber where the six founding council members of the Illuminated Brotherhood met with their brethren. As old age set in, the founders and their followers sought immortality for the masters, and the great craftsman Bartholomeus constructed the golden clockwork receptacles that would house the souls of the dwarves.

After several centuries, newly illuminated Masters slowly took over the secret society, and the Old Masters, as they were then known, became mere ornaments. Neglect and the corruption of the mountain weighed upon them, senility crept into their preserved minds, and their souls soured. Only Rabscuttle, smuggled away by the Stonethrower Clan, escaped this fate. The new Silent Masters barred this chamber, locking in the founders and repeating a cycle of history begun by the Old Masters themselves.

When the PCs open the doors to this chamber, read or paraphrase the following.



Beyond the doors stretches a large, circular chamber. A massive stone well sits in the center of the room, filled with a dark glittering dust of finely ground granite. An ill-formed arm, composed of the fine grit, rises from the center of the well, holding aloft a simple golden bowl. Past this unusual setting, a stepped platform leads up to an immense carved and curved stone podium. Golden plaques engraved with esoteric script appear evenly spaced on the face of the dais.

The pervasive corruption of the Old Masters taints this once sacred chamber, which is under the effects of an *unhallow* spell. The *unhallow* spell has a *bless* spell tied to the site, further bolstering the Old Masters.

# The Well and the Golden Bowl (EL 5)

A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the Golden Bowl as an offering plate, and a DC 15 Perception check reveals some small crumbs of gold dust settled at the bottom of the receptacle. The well itself radiates strong conjuration magic. Placing gems or uncorrupted valuable metals worth at least 100 gp in the bowl causes it to sink into the earth and summon a large earth elemental. What happens next depends whether the PCs have already properly sacrificed the Teardrop.

# Already Sacrificed

If the Teardrop was already properly sacrificed, the earth elemental speaks to the PCs with the authority of the Spirit of the Mountain. It stares forward without expression, and suddenly bellows in Terran: "The Old Masters call and the Old Mountain answers."

The earth elemental here is more lethargic and cryptic than Rygar, the behir oracle encountered in Eye of Grajava (see page 78). Its initial attitude is indifferent, and regardless of character efforts, its attitude does not improve (although failed checks can make its attitude worse). Answers to any questions the PCs ask seem disconnected and disinterested. The elemental speaks with a similar tone and inflection as the behir, although more monotone and with no emotion. Possible questions and their answers follow. The elemental speaks only in Terran, although it understands Dwarven.

**On the Tremors and Aftershocks:** "The mountain shudders as the messenger says, "There is much corruption in the heartsblood of Rygar. A graven image with corruption in its belly stands there, where the sickness has taken form."

**On the Sacrifice of the Teardrop**: "You mistake the symptom for the disease. The sickness is rooted deep in my heartsblood. It tears flesh from me for its womb of infernal gold and it would be born into your world."

**On the Location of the Heartsblood:** "Betwixt blood of earth and liquid air."

On the Fate of the Old Masters: "The Old Masters were locked away behind hard doors and cold stone, their souls left to sour."

The elemental gives similar cryptic references to the cult's machinations and idolatry in the Heartsblood Forge, but it speaks of little else. Once the PCs run out of questions, the elemental settles back into the well without a farewell. The earthquake tremors subside for the next 48 hours.

# Not Yet Sacrificed

If the Teardrop remains intact, or if the PCs sacrifice corrupted ore here to summon the elemental, the Spirit of the Mountain, as well as this messenger, remain corrupt. The arm holding the bowl suddenly and violently lashes out, tossing the bowl at the nearest PC (or one at random if several are close to it). The arm has a +12 bonus on this attack and deals 2d8+7 points of damage if it hits.

The following round, the elemental arises as a move action and attacks anyone within reach for 5 rounds. Once summoned, the elemental attacks the party ferociously, lamenting in Terran the "greed and path of selfishness" taken by the PCs for refusing to calm the disquiet of the tremors. The elemental is obviously hostile at this point, but it can be made indifferent with successful Diplomacy checks (remember to take into account the limited time the PCs have).

#### Large Earth Elemental

CR 5

hp 68; Bestiary 1

#### **Tactics**

**Morale** If the PCs properly summon the earth elemental and it remains indifferent toward them, or if they summoned it with cursed metal but made it indifferent through Diplomacy, the elemental helps them fight off fellforged attacks (it cannot leave this area, though). After 5 rounds, or once the elemental is defeated, it settles back into the well, at which time the stone arm recovers the bowl and returns to its state of rest. The elemental can be re-summoned with another donation, at which point it reappears with its full complement of hit points.

If a PC picks up the bowl, the arm reforms as before, sans the bowl. At some point in the next 24 hours, though, when the PC isn't paying attention, the bowl suddenly fades from his possession and reappears here as before.

Regardless of how many times the PCs summon and defeat the elemental, grant them experience only for the first time they do so.

# The Council Podium (EL 12)

The immense stone podium rises some 8 feet from the floor and is carved out of the solid rock of the mountain. Two stone steps lead up to the front of the podium, and a set of stairs provides entry behind from each end. If the PCs ascend these stairs onto the podium, they can make opposed Perception checks (against +11 Stealth bonus of the fellforged) to see several slumped forms in the shadows of the structure. The bodies of the fellforged lay here, inert, behind the cover of their old officiating dais, until the presence of the living awakens them from their unquiet rest. As long as at least one PC thoroughly investigates the dark podium or succeeds on his Perception check, read or paraphrase the following.

Several slumped forms lie crumpled and battered on the dark floor behind this raised podium. Each form looks like Rabscuttle, dismantled again, with gears and cogs scattered in disarray around it. The gearforged bodies smoke slightly, as if recently burned.

Once one of the PCs stands adjacent to one of the fellforged, their gears and flywheels suddenly spin to life, and the creatures quickly rise. Any PC who can see the fellforged can make a DC 25 Perception check to act on the surprise round (the round the Old Masters stand up). The fellforged speak to one another in harsh metallic voices in a forgotten secret language (*comprehend languages* or *tongues* allow PCs to understand that the fellforged are coordinating their tactics). Although they share the construction and form of Rabscuttle, these creatures burn with a blackness and seep a dark oily miasma—a sour malevolence felt palpably throughout the chamber.

Unlike the fellforged sometimes found in the back alleys of the Gear District of Zobeck, where errant wraiths sometimes find discarded clockwork bodies to inhabit, the Old Masters are the result of centuries-old dwarven souls in stoutly-forged clockwork bodies slowly souring with the progress of eons. Specially constructed as they are to house the spirits of the dead, these fellforged frames hold trapped souls cursed with an immortality and an imprisonment they cannot escape. The orichalcum present in their gears and flywheels, along with the oppressive call of the mountain's corrupting radiation, twisted these once-proud beings into hateful, spiteful creatures willing to destroy even their own bodies to see life extinguished.

The only means of separating the spirits from their receptacles is through powerful turning attempts, which expel the spirit from the clockwork but leaves the sour soul free to roam as a wraith. Even reducing their bodies to 0 hit points does not free the souls from their mechanical prisons; they merely lay motionless, forever trapped in cursed gears.

The *unhallow* spell in the chamber gives the Old Masters a +2 deflection bonus to AC against attacks made by good-aligned creatures and a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws made against effects created by goodaligned creatures. In addition, the Old Masters are under the effects of a *bless* spell, granting them a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls.

CR 5

# Fellforged, Dwarven Old Masters (5)

hp 53; Midgard Bestiary, p. 48



# Tactics

**During Combat** The Old Masters attack furiously, utilizing tactics to support one another with flanking and close to attack with their violent escapement ability and touch attacks. One fellforged purposefully summons the Spirit of the Mountain's incarnation with a fistful of corrupted gold gears, causing the berserk elemental to attack randomly for 5 rounds.

**Morale** The Old Masters, so disdainful of this existence, now hate life and fight until destroyed.

CR 5

# Wraiths (5)

hp 47; Bestiary 1

# Tactics

- **During Combat** Once expelled from their clockwork bodies, the wraiths seek to drain the life force of nearby combatants with their Constitution drain ability.
- **Morale** These miserable souls fight until their sad existence finally ends. Evenly spaced behind the podium stand six stone seats, corresponding to the six gold plaques on the face of the dais, although only five of the sitters are here. The plaques are written in an archaic form of Dwarven, and even a dwarf needs to make a DC 15 Linguistics or Intelligence check to understand them. Each plaque bears a name with an often long and grandiose title.

From left to right, the titles and names are as follows. Grand Illuminated and Worthy Founder Albertus Christopholus Most Illustrious and Knowledgeable Master Daigilius Adamandorax Mastermind of the Sanctum and Sealer of Gates Verubious Rabscuttle Wise Gearfitter of the Hidden Works Mersicus Ailessoxan Master Keeper of the Most Worthy Esoterics Loremus Ipsumius First Ascendant of the Righteous Enlightenment Girtson Rokthemin

One name among those six should stand out to the PCs. If they later bring Rabscuttle to the council chamber, his sanity and memories return briefly, and he becomes suddenly stoic, well spoken, and wise. He can recount the history of the Old Masters and how their power among their followers was usurped by the Silent Masters, who took over the Brotherhood. Locked in this dark chamber, the once-pure souls of the Old Masters were left to sour and rot in their immortal mechanical bodies. Only he was saved, smuggled from the citadel by the Stonethrower clan and forgotten over time.

Rabscuttle recounts the guilt and shame of his part in the final locking of the clockwork gates. It was he who used flaming pillars in the sealing ceremony, which at once became a powerful symbol to the dwarves who knew of the significance of these objects. He imparts knowledge of the mountain's history, the cryptic clues not gained by the party from the earth elemental, or hints to a particular problem or reward. Use Rabscuttle to fill in any holes in the party's knowledge of the history of the complex or the preceding events, before he reverts to his senile old self and forgets the entire episode.

# 40. The Lower Brotherhood Lodge

The area from Room 40 and beyond is left undefined to allow you to customize as you feel appropriate. These suites were once the royal lodgings for the upper citadel, but as the authority of the kings gradually shifted to loyalty to the secret society to which they belonged, the chambers were yielded to the group and modified into use by the Illuminated Brotherhood.

The rooms should reflect this opulence, but can be inhabited by any creatures you see fit to include. If you lack the time or inclination to customize, leave the chambers as they are—decaying former residences, dusty, cold, and abandoned.

# CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The Golden Bowl is the ultimate purpose for the PCs to undertake the perilous journey into the Grand Lodge, and once they arrive and receive answers to their questions, their work here is done. Fighting the Old Masters is not a necessary event, although it is a likely one.

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# CHAPTER 6: HEARTSBLOOD FORGE

By Dan Voyce, with Simon Clements & Michael Furlanetto

In the ruins of the Upper Halls, clearing rubble and extracting the dead slowly continues. Two unfortunate facts soon become apparent. First, many people seem to have simply vanished, their bodies and many of their possessions gone. Second, more than one colonist was killed not by falling stones, but by a cut throat. When the PCs exit the Grand Lodge, if they are not careful, they too might find their throats in jeopardy.

# Adventure Background

The soul of Rygar, its beating heart and pounding blood, can be found in the blazing depths of its oldest smithy. Here, Grajava forged the alliance between the dwarves and the mountain, sealing the covenant with creations of the Prime Forge, forgeworks imbued with Volund's power.

Built around liftgas-impregnated water and magma that sparkled with traces of adamantine, the forge combined divine might and the raw energies of the Spirit of the Mountain to create potent artifacts. It was among these craftsmen that the organization later known as the Illuminated Brotherhood first took shape, and they feel the forge's loss as an unforgivable affront. Mammon, meanwhile, considers it the perfect venue for his rise to power—a symbolic and literal corruption of Rygar's soul, enslaving it for the glory of Hell.

By this point, the PCs should know that Mammon is the root of all their woes. They might have freed the Spirit of the Mountain and learned the truth behind the forsaken, but the dragon Bragollach has fallen to corruption and the cult of Mammon has quietly gathered enough cursed orichalcum to draw its master into the world. Of course, things might not have gone quite so smoothly. If the PCs were unable to sacrifice the Teardrop at the Forge of the Fire Blessing, the mountain remains corrupted and Mammon is poised on the brink of victory. The party might need an alternative location to sacrifice the Teardrop or an opportunity to steal it back from the cult.

Either way, the cult's headquarters is the natural target.

# Adventure Synopsis

The PCs are pressed into service once more. If the party carries so much as a single piece of orichalcum, it is beset by a group of devils and Mammonites intent on claiming every bit of the cursed metal to summon their archdevil master. If the party carries no orichalcum, no devils find them to start—the PCs are more likely to find the devils.

The PCs descend into the Lower Halls, where they pass through the Trochil Gate and come upon the site

of a slaughter. Numerous forsaken lie dead in a room containing a water-rise. The survivors provide precious few clues, but as the PCs make to depart, they once again meet an old opponent. The ghost of the journeyman gearworker they slew earlier appears and tempts them to quit their errand and leave. When the PCs refuse, they are beset by several hidden fellforged.

Descending through the water-rise, the PCs must overcome several guardians at the entrance gate to the Heartsblood Forge complex and work their way through the new home of the Mammonite cult. Along the way, they encounter a vampire noblewoman who they can make into an ally if they choose to parley.

They can also recover the account books of the cult, which reveal the names of its supporters. Bragollach, once their ally in her dwarven disguise, stricken mad by Mammon's avarice plague, now opposes their progress through the complex in her true, draconic form.

At last, the PCs reach the Prime Forge, where they must deal with an incarnation of Mammon himself.

# PART I: THE UPPER HALLS

The truth behind the missing residents and slit throats lies with the cult of Mammon. Many of the Mammonite cultists quietly retreated to Heartsblood Forge even before the earthquake, and the rest disappeared in the ensuing chaos. They took with them every speck of cursed orichalcum in the Upper Halls, killing anyone who refused to part with it. If the PCs still carry any of the tainted mineral, they too receive a visit from the cult.

# A GRIM TITHING (EL 1)

Charged with recovering all cursed metal from the Upper Halls is a gilded devil who calls himself Mr. Purse. If the PCs carry even a single coin of orichalcum, they receive a visit from him shortly after returning to the Upper Halls, following their actions in Grand Lodge of the Old Masters. Two cultists of Mammon and a pair of chain devil bodyguards he calls Mr. Cuff and Mr. Bridle accompany Mr. Purse. All three devils are disguised in winter garb and voluminous cloaks, and the kytons carry backpacks filled with chains.

The PCs spot Mr. Purse and his entourage at work while traveling to and from the Lodge of the Old Masters. This is a good opportunity to bring back enemies who survived previous battles, replacing the generic guardsman cultists



with Hronagar Corpsegrinder or Sebastian Ufastis from "Roots of Madness" (see page 59 and 58), Jorunn Flintknapper or Tanya Hrovitz from "Eye of Grajava" (see page 67), or Vanessi and her thugs from "Dark was the Night" (see page 36 for Vanessi).

Mr. Purse is not interested in killing the PCs, only acquiring their orichalcum. If they cached it, he uses divinations and spying to find it. If one or two PCs carry the metal on their person, he attacks them as soon as he can catch them alone. If this fails, he tries kidnapping a PC or NPC to bargain for it.

#### Mr. Purse, Gilded Devil

CR 8

CR 6

hp 95, Midgard Bestiary, p. 33

#### **Tactics**

- **During Combat** Mr. Purse opens with betrayal of riches and invokes liar's largess if he's been able to trick anyone into accepting a gift.
- **Morale** If Mr. Purse recovers all the orichalcum the PCs carry, he departs soon thereafter, leaving the kytons and cultists to make a fighting withdrawal. Otherwise, he fights to the death for Mammon.

Mr. Cuff and Mr. Bridle, Kyton (2)

hp 60; Bestiary 1

# Tactics

- **During Combat** Mr. Cuff and Mr. Bridle throw down their packs on the first round and use the contents for their chain dancing ability. They attempt to trip and disarm their enemies.
- **Morale** Unwavering in their dedication, the chain devils fight to the death. On the other hand, if Mr. Purse recovers orichalcum and departs, the kytons make a fighting withdrawal.

CR 8

# Mammon Cultist

Male Human cleric 8/rogue 1 LE Medium humanoid (Human) Init +6; Senses Perception +4

DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex) **hp** 74 (9d8+18)

Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +10

OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft. **Melee** light mace +8/+3 (1d6/2)

**Ranged** dart +8/+3 (1d4/x2)

**Special Attacks** scythe of evil for 4 rounds (1/day), sneak attack +1d6

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 8th, +6 melee touch, +8 ranged touch):

4th—cure critical wounds (DC 18), divine power, images of great wealth (DC 18), rainbow pattern (DC 18), unholy blight (DC 18)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *glyph of warding* (DC 17) (on purse - see Cupidity domain, page 146), *mother stone* (*Deep Magic*, page 208), *protection from energy* 

2nd—cure moderate wounds (DC 16), hold person (DC 16), hypnotize (DC 16), owl's wisdom, shatter (DC 16) 1st—bless, command (DC 15), cure light wounds (DC 15), entropic shield, protection from good, sanctuary (DC 15)

0 (at will)— detect magic, light, read magic, stabilize

**STATISTICS** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 19, Cha 8 Base Atk +6; CMB +6 (+8 Disarming); CMD 18 (20 vs. Disarm)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Expertise +/-2, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Toughness +9, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +7, Climb -3, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +3, Fly -1, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Ride -1, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +8, Stealth +9, Swim -3

Languages Common, Infernal

**SQ** aura (Ex), cleric channel negative energy 4d6 (2/day) (DC 13) (Su), devil, envy variant channeling (±2 Profane), hell's corruption (4 rounds) (7/day) (Su), spontaneous casting, trapfinding +1

**Combat Gear** dart (12), blue whinnis poison (1 dose), potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll of obscuring mist,

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**Other Gear** light mace, masterwork breastplate, *boots of the winterlands, bag of holding I* (containing 500 gp), *coin of the miser* (see Appendix A, page 145), holy symbols of Mammon, copper masks of Mammon, 100 gp in a bag protected by *wealth ward* (blast glyph, DC 17)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura (Ex) The cultists have an aura of evil and law.

- **Cleric Channel Negative Energy (Su)** 4d6 (2/day) (DC 13) The cultist scan channel negative energy to injure the living and heal the undead.
- Hell's Corruption (Su) (4 rounds) (7/day) Touch attack inflicts -2 save vs. your spells
- **Scythe of Evil (Su)** for 4 rounds (1/day) A melee weapon you are holding becomes unholy

#### Tactics

- **During Combat** The cultists try to stay between the majority of PCs and the devils, as a first line of defense.
- **Morale** As long as at least one devil remains in the fight, the cultists fight to the death. Otherwise, they attempt to retreat or, if the way is blocked, surrender.
- **Treasure:** Mr. Purse wears an untainted golden necklace adorned with precious stones worth 1,000 gp, three sapphires each worth 250 gp, and 250 gp in untainted coins. He also wears a *glove of storing* used to quickly grab cursed orichalcum and carries a pair of tarot cards from a *deck of illusions*: the Queen of Swords and Seven of Staves.

# Once More Unto the Breach

The party might already be pursuing the cult on their own, but if they need a nudge in the right direction, either Clovis or one of the NPCs from Roots of Madness can act to spur them on. These patrons have nothing but gratitude to offer the PCs at this point, although they can impress on reluctant characters the need for a final resolution.

The PCs can uncover the location of the Mammonite base in various ways. The most likely sources of information are summarized here.

**Divination:** Both Volund and the Gear Goddess consider the cult's activities a heresy to be stamped out, and no god wants Mammon's avatar loose in the world. Clerics of those two deities who attempt to divine the cult's headquarters find their divination spells are automatically successful and unusually clear.

**Illuminated Brotherhood:** The Brotherhood longs to see the cult removed from Heartsblood Forge. If neutral or friendly toward the party, the Brotherhood might simply tell the PCs where to find the cult. **Interrogation:** If the PCs capture a cultist, see the Interrogating a Cultist section in the *Dwarves of the Ironcrags Gazetteer*. Perhaps more easily, the PCs can simply cast *speak with dead* on a cultist's corpse.

**Rabscuttle:** Since the earthquake, Rabscuttle intermittently mutters, "My heartsblood is tainted by infernal ash. They see my brothers naked in bronze at the silent room..."

**The Spirit of the Mountain**: If the PCs managed to summon and converse with the Spirit of the Mountain at the end of Lodge of the Old Masters, it gave them a significant clue to the cult's location. If your players seem frustrated by the confusing and cryptic answers provided, allow their characters to make DC 17 Intelligence checks for a clue.

**Dwarves:** Any surviving dwarf from the Golden Citadel can direct PCs to Heartsblood Forge: descend the Great Stair, go through the Lower Hall, and take an elevator down the water-rise. The hall is the site of the main forsaken encampment, but there have been no incursions into the Upper Halls for some days. The refugees hope this means the forsaken have suffered at least as much as themselves in the quake.

# PART II: THE LOWER HALL AND THE TROCHIL GATE

Located some way below the Upper Halls, the Trochil Gate was the citadel's original entrance. Less prestigious than the Upper Halls, the gate nonetheless served as a busy hub for miners, trappers, merchants, and traders. The gate was sealed by the Brotherhood during the abandonment and remains closed and warded to this day. For the last few months, a forsaken army has used it as a staging ground.

The door from the Great Stair leads into a stepped cavern, with each step about 10 feet higher than the last. The rotting remains of carts and cargo dot the floor, alongside debris created by forsaken and chunks of fallen rubble.

The entire area is under the effects of a *desecrate* spell, which confers a -3 penalty on turn undead checks throughout the Lower Hall. All undead also gain a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws.

# LH1. MULE PADDOCKS

The lowest level was used for unloading caravans and contains corrals that once held pack mules and ponies, as well as the mechanism to turn the Trochil Gate.



# THE LOWER HALL AND THE TROCHIL GATE

1 square = 5 feet



# LH2. THE TROCHIL GATE

This area is under the effect of a *guards and wards* spell (CL 20th; PFRPG Core Rulebook). Fog obscures all sight: A creature within 5 feet has concealment, while those farther away have total concealment. In addition, a creature has a 50% chance of going the opposite direction he wants to at every intersection.

A marvelous feat of ancient artifice, the Trochil Gate is one of the great engineering wonders of the world. A central shaft turns orichalcum walls that control access to the citadel, herding visitors to the Lower Hall, to beneath a guard station for questioning, or into a dead-end laced with traps and murder holes. The door is strong enough to resist a dragon's breath or the battering of a storm giant, and the tons of orichalcum used in its creation make the gate priceless. Despite centuries of forsaken attack it shows only the slightest damage.

The Trochil Gate (hardness 20, 960 hp; Break DC 60) has no lock. Nonetheless, the door is currently immoveable, the great cogs that drive it damaged beyond repair.

# LH3. THE PILLARS OF LAW

A carved dwarven face stares imperiously down at visitors as they approach the entrance, which is flanked by Rygar's Pillars of Law. White runes on black stone make the citadel's laws plain to all who approach, magically translating their words for visitors.

Soldiers once watched from behind the eyes of the dwarven face, and the mouth serves as a murder hole to dispatch boiling lead onto approaching enemies. The arch, pillars, and face are all covered by a thick layer of ice.

# LH4. CABLECART STATION

This area is under the effect of a *guards and wards* spell (CL 20<sup>th</sup>). Read or paraphrase the following.

A huge iron wheel and the remains of thick steel cables dominate this chamber, which once opened to the air but has since partially collapsed and is blocked by ice.

From here, cable carts once trundled up and down the mountain on toothed tracks, raised and lowered by engines connected to the Shank far below the mountain.

# LH5. THE ORE EXCHANGE

Ore, finished goods, cattle, and foodstuffs were all traded here. The auctioneer's podium leads into an office and storeroom, then out to the water-rise.

# LH6. THE WATER-RISE (EL 14)

Liftgas-impregnated geysers thunder upwards like reverse waterfalls. The southern shaft is blocked by a cave-in, but the northern one remains open. An elevator platform moves on a toothed track, powered by the water-rise and controlled by wheels and levers on the platform.

The open, northern shaft leads to Heartsblood Forge. Although the lift itself is functional, the machinery to power it has recently been sabotaged (see Down The Water-Rise, page 128).

The Fate of the Fallen: The PCs' initial examination of the room reveals more graffiti like that seen near the Hearthforges (see Roots of Madness) and, more importantly, the bodies of forsaken scattered throughout the hall, along with a few live ones huddled about.

As the PCs approach their destination, though, they notice the unpleasant smell of something rotting mixed with the acrid stench of smoke and burnt meat. Read or paraphrase the following.

The Lower Hall has become a charnel house. Every space is scattered with bodies, wreckage, or smoldering fires. Something has torn the forsaken army into bloody chunks.

Only a handful of living forsaken huddle here, and they clutch numbly at the bodies of their former comrades, seemingly oblivious to the presence of the PCs. The forsaken thoroughly desecrated this area before they were slaughtered and it radiates a moderate aura of evil and necromantic magic. The dark souls of many derro still inhabit their corpses, and these pitiful creatures exist now as allips.

PCs can investigate unmolested, at least until they attempt to leave (see A Deal with the Devil, below). Allow the PCs to make a variety of skill checks in order to discern what happened. Table 6-1 explains various skills and the information PCs can uncover using them.

**Questioning the Forsaken:** Interrogating the survivors requires a Diplomacy or Intimidation check to pierce their shock and insanity. A DC 27 check coerces a survivor to mutter in Dwarven, "The gold came alive and took them into the dark, where the mother croons and the gibber soothes. Father Gold is coming soon, she sang from our bones."

A DC 32 check forces a survivor to cry out in Dwarven, "Demons with golden faces! The shining juggernaut! They took everything and flew down to Hell on a fountain of blood. Yellow blood for the golden god! I'm faithful and was spared!"

*Speak with dead* provides similar results, but each question has a cumulative 10% chance of conjuring forth an allip from the body.

A Deal with the Devil: As the PCs finish their investigations and turn to leave, an old adversary reveals himself. The ethereal face and familiar sly smile of the gearworker journeyman the PCs slew in the halls above

Skill	DC	Result
Heal	20	The bodies are all forsaken. They were slaughtered around the time of the earthquake.
	25	They were burned with magical fire and torn apart by a large beast. Some victims were finished off with weapons.
Perception	19	The PC thinks he hears whispering, but cannot make out its source.
	23	Faint whispering emanates from the mouths of several corpses.
	25	The character is affected by the babble ability of an allip (BESTIARY 3 p.12 ).
Survival (with Track)	20	Here are several boot prints belonging to a Medium creature, as well as signs of a large clawed beast.
	27	The beast was a Large quadruped moving somewhat clumsily, as if encumbered.
Sense Motive	20	The surviving forsaken are in shock.

glides into view from the darkness. His spectral body still bears the wounds dealt to him. He holds up his ghostly hands and says, "I come in peace. We should talk. How are my murderers today?"

The journeyman is here to tempt the PCs, promising great rewards if they abandon their quest. Ultimately, only you know what might truly tempt the PCs, but the offer amounts to a wish for each PC. If you are lost for ideas, one of the following might be appropriate.

- Return a companion or loved one to life.
- Reveal a long-hidden secret or piece of lost lore.
- Feed the entire population of the Upper Halls and provide everything required for them to survive until spring.
- Gain the services of a regiment of infernal legionaries
- Gain the character's weight in gold
- Gain a permanent +10 bonus on Profession (gambler) or Appraise checks.
- Gain 13 years of prosperity for the character's family, home city, or other group.
- · Gain a promise that Mammon will undo one misfortune (as per wish spells) for the character if called upon.

If any PC agrees to the deal, a sweltering heat passes through the room and anyone of good alignment knows as instinctively as breathing that something wicked has stepped into the world. When the heat-haze passes, the deal-making PC vanishes, appearing back at the alley in Zobeck where the party first encountered Rabscuttle.

As well as possible consequences to his alignment and mortal soul, the PC automatically gains a geas to stay away from Mount Rygar and a tattoo of Mammon's symbol over his heart. Devils gain a +4 bonus on attack rolls against the PC, and the same bonus on save DCs on magic item effects, spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities they use on the PC. A devil gains a +4 bonus on caster level checks made to penetrate SR against the marked creature.

The Devil Spurned: PCs who refuse the journeyman's offer encounter the cult's second line of defense-a group of fellforged that have tried to stay concealed near the water-rise, cloaked in deeper darkness and silence spells. These fellforged vaguely resemble Rabscuttle and the Old Masters, but their bronze features have a devilish cast and their bodies gleam as though newly forged. Tenebrous vapors lick around their gaping clockwork mouths and from every joint and gear comes a frightful shrieking, as if each movement caused the creatures utter agony. As if in answer to their cries, shadowy allips start to rise from the open mouths of corpses all around the PCs.

The area is under the effects of a *desecrate* spell, which confers a -3 penalty on turn undead checks throughout the Lower Hall. All undead gain a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. Thanks to the desecrate spell, the undead in this chamber all gain additional hit points (included in the hp totals below).

# Journeyman's Spectre

CR 5

CR 5

Fellforged (10)

hp 53; Midgard Bestiary, p. 48

# SPECIAL ABILITIES

hp 52; Bestiary 1

These fellforged are possessed by allips rather than wraiths. They lack the Constitution damage ability and instead have the following.

Screeching Gears (Su) Allip-occupied fellforged constantly shriek and pipe in a frightful cacophony. All living creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 15 Will save at the start of the combat. Characters who fail are shaken for 2d4 rounds.

#### Tactics

During Combat The fellforged advance on the PCs from the direction of the water rise and enter melee as quickly as possible. Allips rise up from forsaken corpses at the rate of 1d6 per round, until 24 allips have risen. If a fellforged's possessing spirit is exorcised, another allip takes its place next round (assuming any allips remain).

**Morale** Fearless in undeath, all of these foes fight until final doom befalls them.

**Down the Water-Rise:** The southernmost column of the water-rise is blocked by rubble from the earthquake, but the other remains clear. Water blasts upwards around the elevator, which is docked at this level. A series of wheels and levers on the platform control its ascent and descent, but activating them merely produces screams of tortured machinery. The fellforged sabotaged the platform's mechanism and the lift does not work without repairs.

Fixing this machinery is a complex skill check that requires six successes before three failures. Each check requires 1 round and subjects the character to attacks of opportunity. Both pieces of machinery are damaged, so PCs can work in two groups to get the gears operational. Three failures result in the machinery becoming permanently unusable.

The following skill checks (at the list DCs) can be used to repair the machinery: DC 25 Craft (clockwork), DC 30 Disable Device, or DC 25 Knowledge (engineering). If the party lacks all these skills, they cannot repair the machinery except through magic (see below).

Plundering a fellforged corpse (requires a DC 15 Perception check and 1d6 rounds) provides extra materials to work with, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on any one check. In addition, a PC who makes a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check can elect instead to grant a +2 circumstance bonus on the next two Craft (clockwork) or Disable Device checks made by allies. A DC 18 Perception check reveals one of the removed pieces of machinery nearby, which grants a +4 circumstance bonus on the next Craft (clockwork) or Disable Device check, but there are only two pieces to be found.

Magic can make this process much easier. A *mending* or *make whole* spell counts as an automatic success as do *analyze device, animate construct,* and *repair metal* spells (see *Deep Magic* or the *Zobeck Gazetteer*). With a successful DC 15 Craft (clockwork) check to create the correct part, a *fabricate* spell can also create a success.

**Development:** Once repaired and activated, the platform descends at a speed of 1 foot per round. The platform's controls can pause this journey but not reverse it. If the PCs are unable to fix the machinery they must find another way of navigating the 100-footdeep shaft. The Climb DC is 27. A deep pool at the bottom of the shaft cushions any fall. Treat any fall as 20 feet shorter than it actually is to account for the cushioning effects of the water below.

# PART III: Heartsblood forge

Heartsblood Forge stands at the mountain's spiritual heart, above a churning sea of magma known as the Well of Fire. Once home to master smiths and Illuminated Brothers, the cult of Mammon now defiles its sacred forges, crafting unholy symbols and infernal artifacts.

The walls and floors in Heartsblood Forge are made of superior masonry. Unless otherwise noted, all doors are unlocked iron doors. Most are decorated with brass, bronze, copper, and steel. The walls are periodically set with glass pots containing immature cavemoss, which give off shadowy illumination throughout the entire chamber. Many cavemosses have outgrown their jars and dust the ground below with luminous spores. Infernal prayers echo through the corridors, mixing with the rhythmic clunk of machinery and an occasional tortured scream. All Perception checks are made with a -4 penalty.

The entire forge area is under a *desecrate* effect (CL 15th), cutting off its divine connection to Volund. Everywhere but area HF16 radiates faint evil.

**Speaking Tubes:** Each of these wall-mounted racks, labeled in Dwarven, connects to a specific room. The speaking tubes consist of two flared bronze funnels (one for speaking, one for listening) attached to segmented pipes running through the walls. A cork-mounted whistle can be inserted into the speaking tube to alert a room to incoming messages. PCs can use speaking tubes to make Perception checks into the location each tube connects.

**Steam Pipes:** The forge is dotted with thin metal pipes (hardness 6, 4 hp) carrying liftgas steam. Puncturing a steam pipe creates a 20-foot radius cloud of scalding steam that obscures vision as fog (20% miss chance) and deals 1d4 hp fire damage per round.

The steam dissipates in 2d4 rounds.

Steamblast Trap

**Steam Whistles:** These inverted cups mounted on stems scream shrill notes (and puffs of steam) when their chains are pulled. They are loud enough that one can be heard from anywhere in the forge area (no Perception checks necessary).

CF	R	1

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 35 EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Duration** 2d4 rounds; **Reset** Automatic (1 minute)

Effect scalding steam (10-ft radius below grate), 3d6/round for 2d4 rounds, DC 21 Reflex save half damage.

# THE HEARTSBLOOD FORGE

1 square = 5 feet



# Sounding the Alarm

If the alarm is raised (via steam whistle or shrieker) most cultists make for HF13. Urzana and Palnitoke secure HF10 and HF12, while groups of eight Golden Guardsmen take up positions at the entrance and outside the Prime Forge. The main gate is closed and the mechanism dismantled by redcloak kobolds, trapping the PCs within.

As soon as she becomes aware of intruders, Bragollach goes looking for the PCs. She stalks the corridors calling out for them to show themselves. If she or other cultists locate the PCs and make the location known, a third unit of eight Golden Guards moves to corral the characters between their tower shields and the dragon's maw.

# HF1. BASE OF THE WATER-RISE (EL 3)

The base of the water-rise is a mass of thundering geysers. The platform the PCs ride comes to rest level with a corridor covered in mold and giant mushrooms, shuddering from the constant impact of water. The floor of the shaft is 15 feet further down, filled with churning water to a depth of 10 feet.

There are actually two exits from this area. In addition to the obvious exit, a hidden egress exists. Below the corridor, half-concealed by spray, a small barred opening leads into the slag pits. It's visible only on a successful DC 32 Perception check.

In addition to Perception checks, PCs can learn a little more about their immediate area by succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering), which reveals that some of the giant mushrooms in the area are actually shriekers. A DC 30 Perception reveals the noise of machinery and what sounds like the grunting of a pig.

Finally, a character who succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check uncovers numerous boot-prints and a few animal tracks weaving through the carpet of fungus. Many people have passed this way, and they all took the same narrow path. Further, if the PC makes a DC 25 Survival check, he also sees that the most recent tracks are metallic or metalshod feet heading toward the water-rise.

Moving through the shriekers requires a steady nerve and careful estimation of distance. The first character through must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check and a DC 25 Perception check to avoid setting them off.

Subsequent characters can follow in his footsteps and need only make the Acrobatics check. A character who succeeded at the DC 20 Survival check gains a +5 circumstance on his Acrobatics check to navigate the area and need not make a Perception check, even if he is the first one through.

**Shrieker:** This human-sized purple mushroom emits a piercing sound that lasts for 1d3 rounds whenever there is movement or a light source within 10 feet. This shriek makes it impossible to hear any other sound within 50 feet. The sound attracts nearby creatures that are disposed to investigate it. Some creatures that live near shriekers learn

that this noise means there is food or an intruder nearby.

# HF2. MAIN GATE (EL 13)

If the PCs navigate the fungus patch without setting off the shriekers, read or paraphrase the following. If they do raise the alarm, the ettin is alert and looking for them through the bars, while the kobolds have their crossbows cocked and ready to fire.

Giant bronze lanterns flank the entrance to Heartsblood Forge, its rune-carved arch edged in silvery metal. The points of a raised portcullis are visible above the doorway.

The runes above the gate read, "From faith and heartsblood comes the glory of our people. Work well, crafter." A steam whistle is mounted by the entrance. The lanterns shed bright light in a 30-foot radius.

Pacing this chamber is an ettin in gleaming golden armor. A pair of redcloak kobolds sit astride dogmoles and, in contrast to the giant, they sit neatly at attention, their eyes glitteringly alert. The kobolds try to keep their back to the lanterns but still suffer a -1 penalty on Perception checks because of the brightness.

CR 12

# Ghrysigor

#### Male goldveined fiendish ettin

CE Large humanoid (giant, evil, earth, extraplanar) **Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision (60 feet), low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 8, flat-footed 22 (+6 armor, -1 Dex, -1 size, +8 natural)

hp 89 (10d8+26)

Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +6

**Defensive Abilities** 50% chance to ignore a critical hit; **DR** 10/good, 5/magic, and 5/silver or gold, **Resist** cold 15, fire 15; **Immune** confusion; **SR** 15

# OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft. **Melee** 2 flails +15/+10 (2d6+9/x2)

**Ranged** javelin  $\pm 10/\pm 5$  (1d8 $\pm 6/x^2$ ); or masterwork net  $\pm 15$ **Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks smite good (1/day)

Spell-Like Abilities

1/day—rusting grasp

3/day-for the love of money (DC 13)

# STATISTICS

Str 23, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 13

Base Atk +9; CMB +16 (+18 Overrunning); CMD 25 (27 vs. Overrun)

**Feats** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Net, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics -4, Appraise +11 Climb +3, Escape Artist -4, Fly -6, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +5, Perception



+13, Ride -4, Stealth -8, Swim +3 Languages Giant, Kobold SQ superior two-weapon fighting (Ex) Combat Gear javelins (×2), masterwork net; Other Gear flail, masterwork breastplate

SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Fatal Bequest** As he dies, Ghrysigor vomits forth 10 gold-tainted gold pieces.

*For the love of money (Sp)* (DC 13)As a standard action, Ghrysigor can make a gaze attack that requires one target to pass a Will save or become unable to harm Ghrysigor for 1 day. The target also attempts non-lethal methods to defend Ghrysigor if the save is failed.

Smite Good (1/day) (Su) +0 to hit, +13 to damage.

Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex) Ghrysigor fights with a flail or javelin in each hand. Because each of his two heads controls an arm, he does not take a penalty on attack or damage rolls for attacking with two weapons.

**Before Combat** Ghrysigor paces restlessly before the doors. He bullies lower ranked cultists passing in or out.

**During Combat** In the first round he makes an off-hand throw with his net, then switches to 2 attacks per round with his flail. He uses smite good on any obviously good opponent.

**Morale** If reduced below 20 hp, Ghrysigor retreats through the archway and activates the portcullis. Then he moves to the nearest steam whistle to sound the alarm.

#### **Redcloak Riders**

#### **CR 7**

Male Kobold fighter 3/sorcerer 6

LE Small humanoid (reptilian) Init +3; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural)

**hp** 51 (3d10+6d6+9)

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1; **Resist** fire 5 **Weakness** light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee masterwork lance +8/+3 (1d6/x3)

**Ranged** +1 light crossbow +11/+7 (1d6+1/19-20/x2) w/gravity bow and flame arrow: (1d8+1 + 1d6+1 fire) **Special Attacks** Magic Claws (4 rounds/day)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 6th, +7 melee touch, +10 ranged touch):

3rd (3/day)—*flame arrow* 

2nd (5/day)—mirror image, resist energy, scorching ray 1st (7/day)—burning hands (DC 13), gravity bow, mage armor, magic missile, true strike

0 (at will)—acid splash, daze (DC 11), mending, message, disrupt undead, ray of frost, touch of fatigue (DC 11) **STATISTICS** 

**Str** 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16 **Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Elemental Focus: Fire, Eschew Materials, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload: Light Crossbow, Vital Strike

**Skills** Fly +5, Handle Animal +8, Perception +9, Ride +15, Stealth +11

Languages Draconic

**SQ** armor training 1 (Ex), draconic heritage: red dragon (Fire)

Gear +1 light crossbow, masterwork lance

SPECIAL ABILITIES	SPECI	AL	AB	ILIT	IES
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**Draconic Heritage**: Red Dragon (Fire) +1 damage per die for [Fire] spells.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex)** dazzled as long as they remain in bright light.

Magic Claws (Su) (4 rounds/day) Magic Claw attacks deal 1d4 damage.

Vital Strike standard action: x2 weapon damage dice.

#### Dogmole Mounts (2)

**hp** 19, *Midgard Bestiary* p.35 These mounts are combat trained.

#### Tactics:

**Before Combat** The redcloak riders cast *mage armor* before their guard shift, giving them an AC of 20. If they become aware of the party, they cast *flame arrow* and *gravity bow* in that order. Finally, they will cast *mirror image*.

**During Combat** The riders use *scorching ray* against fighter-types for 4d6+4 fire damage due to their red dragon heritage, and use their crossbows against more lightly armored targets- especially spellcasters. They move and vital strike if necessary, otherwise doubleattacking with their rapid reload. Remember they get a +1 to hit within 30 feet.

**Morale** If Ghrysigor is downed, or they are reduced to 15 or less hit points, the redcloak riders flee through the door, drop the portcullis and sound the steam whistle.

Each round, make a single DC 0 Perception check for the Golden Guardsmen in area HF3, with a total penalty of -11 on their check (-4 for two sets of closed doors, -3for distance, and -4 for the environmental effects of the Heartsblood Forge area).

**Treasure:** Ghrysigor is covered with gaudy jewelry worth 1,000 gp. A pouch at his belt holds the key to the Doorkeeper's Chamber (HF4), two *potions of reduce person*, and four cards from a *deck of illusions* (Nine of Staves, Page of Staves, The Chariot, and Four of Pentacles). One of the kobolds has a *coin of the miser* (copper, see Appendix A).

# HF3. GUARDROOM (EL 11)

A steam whistle is mounted on a pipe opposite the door to this chamber. This room houses the Golden Guardsmen. There are always eight Golden Guardsmen on duty, ready to respond to trouble. If any major NPCs escaped the PCs earlier, one of them waits here, eager for a rematch with the party.

#### Golden Guardsman (8)

#### CR 5

Male Human cleric 4/fighter (phalanx soldier) 1/ranger 1 LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

- AC 23 (25 from shield wall), touch 10, flat-footed 23 (25) (+9 armor, +4 shield +2 shield wall)
- **hp** 57 (2d10+4d8+18) with **DR** 5/piercing from *defending glyph*
- **Fort** +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6 (shake it off **Fort** +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10)

#### OFFENSE

#### Spd 20 ft.

STATISTICS

Melee masterwork yrident +8(1d8+3/x2)

**Ranged** composite longbow. (Str +2) + 5(1d8+2/x3)

Special Attacks touch of evil 2 rounds (5/day)

- **Spell-Like Abilities** *touch of evil* 2 rounds (5/day), *touch of law* (5/day)
- **Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 4th, +8 melee touch, +5 ranged touch):
- 2nd— align weapon, defending glyph (already cast, Deep Magic, page 154), hold person (DC 14), spiritual weapon

1st— cure light wounds (DC 13) (x2), magic weapon,

protection from good, shield of faith

0 (at will)—guidance, light, resistance, virtue

# Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8 Base Atk +5; CMB +8; CMD 18

- **Feats** Quick Draw, Shake It Off, Shield Wall, Toughness +6, Weapon Focus: Trident
- **Skills** Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +10, Sense Motive +9, Survival +9
- Languages Common, Infernal
- **SQ** aura (Ex), cleric channel negative energy 2d6 (2/day) (DC 11) (Su), cleric domain: Evil, cleric domain: Law, favored enemy: humanoids (Human) (+2 bonus) (Ex), envy variant channeling (±1 Profane), spontaneous casting, track +1, wild empathy +0 (Ex)
- **Combat Gear** arrows (20), **Other Gear** masterwork trident, composite longbow (Str +2), full plate, tower shield

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura (Ex) The golden guardsmen have auras of evil and law.

- **Cleric Channel Negative Energy** 2d6 (2/day) (DC 11) (Su) The golden guardsmen can channel negative energy to injure the living and heal the undead.
- *Touch of Evil* 2 rounds (5/day) (*Sp*) With a melee touch attack, target is sickened and counted as good aligned for the purpose of [Evil] spells.

Touch of Law (5/day) (Sp) A d20 roll becomes 11.

- **Group Gear** one guardsman in each unit of eight carries a caster's shield instead of his tower shield, imbued with *scorching ray* (CL 9th). Each unit also carries scrolls of *dispel magic, divine power*, and *zone of truth*.
- **Before Combat** Golden guardsmen cast their *defending glyphs* prior to combat. If more than one round is available to prepare, Golden Guardsmen take a move action in formation toward their foes and use their standard action to cast defensive spells in the following order: *magic weapon, shield of faith,* and *protection from good.*
- **During Combat** Golden Guardsmen typically fight in two ranks of four. The second rank reinforces the first with cure spells, *hold person*, and *spiritual weapons* or longbow attacks, and stand ready to replace wounded comrades in the front line. The second rank does not hesitate to drop their bows and move into melee combat. If a spellcasting opponent makes himself known to the cultists, those in the second row focus their attacks and spells at the spellcaster.
- **Morale** Convinced of their superiority and assured their sacrifices buy them prestigious afterlives, golden guardsmen fight to the death.

# HF4. DOORKEEPER'S CHAMBER

A steam whistle is mounted on a pipe opposite the door to this chamber. The door is locked (Disable Device DC 35), but Ghyrsigor has the key. When the PCs open the door, read or paraphrase the following.

This room is buried under layers of tarnished armor, filthy clothes, discarded food, and other rubbish. Here and there, an item of gold or silver sparkles amid the detritus. An ancient-looking forge-hammer, locked between the lips of a hideous stone face of a decrepit female elf apparently growing out of one wall, dominates the treasures of this room.

A rack of speaking tubes connects to HF6, HF10, HF12, HF13 and HF14.

The stone face's jaws are locked tight around the hammer, with a *wail of the banshee* trap upon it that activates if anyone not of LE alignment touches the hammer. The noise automatically alerts Ghrysigor (HF2), the golden guardsmen (HF3), and Bragollach.



CR 6

CR 1/4

#### Wail of the Banshee Trap

CR 10

Type magical; Perception DC 37; Disable Device DC 37 EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset Automatic

**Effect** (*wail of the banshee*, 17th-level wizard, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); multiple targets (up to 17 creatures)

**Treasure:** A DC 19 Perception check reveals a Large masterwork repeating heavy crossbow with (5) *sleep bolts* (as *sleep arrows*) and (5) +2 *unholy bolts*. The hammer on the wall is Masterstrike, an ancient relic of Volund.

# Relic: Masterstrike

NG intelligent +2 holy returning throwing warhammer Int 17 Wis 10 Cha 17; Ego 17

Senses darkvision 60 ft., hearing

**Communication** speech; **Languages** Celestial, Dwarven, Sylvan, Terran

Lesser Power craft (anything) +13; assists user on craft rolls

Purposes craft masterwork items, protect Heartsblood Forge

Dedicated Power spell-like ability 3/day—true strike

Unless the PCs appear to be cultists, *Masterstrike* immediately pleads for help. Once in the hands of a PC, it demands proof the character is not in league with Mammon, requiring either a Bluff or Diplomacy check opposed by Masterstrike's +3 Sense Motive. The promise of killing cultists grants the PC a +2 bonus on his check, but if he fails to at least attack the next cultist found, *Masterstrike* attempts to dominate him.

If unconvinced, it attempts to dominate its wielder as often as possible.

*Masterstrike* has the solemn demeanor of an ancient pontiff and often quotes Volund's teachings. It can provide PCs with details of the forge's layout (including HF16) and history. *Masterstrike* claims to have been wielded by Grajava herself and to have forged the Prime Forge from the mountain's fiery heartsblood. The forge's desecration makes it burn for vengeance against Mammon's servants.

# HF5. Smelting Chamber (EL6)

This extremely hot room contains the forge's smelting operation, which still runs perfectly to this day. As the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

This workroom contains every tool, machine, and component required for smelting. The machinery moves with clockwork precision and the forges glow, heated not by coals but vents of magma. Glowing molten metal pours out of buckets suspended from rattling chains and into barrel-shaped vessels. Cooling molds throw steam into the air and waste materials are sluiced away into gratings in the floor. A steam whistle is mounted on one of the pipes. This room counts as a very hot environment (CORE RULEBOOK 444). Immersion in molten metal deals 20d6 hp fire damage per round, followed by 10d6 damage for 3 rounds after exposure ends.

The machinery here is non-magical and is being guided around by a kyton using chains and pulleys that crisscross the 20-foot high ceiling. The web of chains provides partial cover to the devil. A DC 25 Perception check is needed to reveal its presence. There are enough chains for the devil to attack characters anywhere in this room and up to 20 feet beyond the doorways.

#### Kyton

hp 60; Bestiary 1

# HF6. Assembly Room (EL 6)

This workshop is dedicated to the production of constructs based on Rabscuttle's blueprints. The cult plans to unleash a horde of fellforged on the Upper Halls—a golden army to accompany Mammon's avatar into battle. A central table is surrounded by elaborate machinery and workbenches filled with bronze and steel parts. Several dozen kobolds are crammed in here and hard at work, busy assembling some kind of construct. On the wall opposite the entry is a speaking tube connected to HF4.

# Kobolds (35)

hp 4; Bestiary 1

**Treasure:** Scattered around the workshop are 10 sets of masterwork artisan's tools and a pair of *goggles of minute seeing*. Pinned to one wall are etchings taken from Rabscuttle's schematic pillar in Bartholemeus' lair.

Stashed in the kobold tunnels are silver nuggets worth a total of 2,000 gp, a *gold coin of the miser*, and three cards from a *deck of illusions* (Strength, Five of Cups, Six of Pentacles).

# HF7. THE ARMY OF BRONZE AND GOLD

This large room is devoid of furnishings or fixtures. It is far from empty, though.

Gleaming constructs stand in neat rows, each bronze face a mask of infernal wickedness. They stand at attention like perfect soldiers, not an inch out of alignment.

These 30 inanimate fellforged are newly created. Their shells are complete but their clockwork hearts and damned souls are not yet in place. Mammon promised that any loyal cultist who falls in battle will be restored to eternal life in one of these clockwork warriors.

# HF8. STOREROOM

Both doors to this chamber are locked (Hardness 8, hp 60; Disable Device DC 29, Break DC 30). The stone giant Anak (HF11) and the gilded devil Palnitoke (HF12) have the keys. This room is piled high with chests and boxes spaced between stacks of processed iron ore. PCs can load themselves down with largely worthless iron and help themselves to any kind of common equipment that costs less than 50 gp. Also present are 100 newly forged holy symbols of Mammon and ten sets of cult regalia with gleaming copper masks.

**Treasure:** Buried among the supply of bandages and medicines are two tubs of *restorative ointment*, requiring a DC 20 Perception check to uncover.

# HF9. JANGLING CELLS (EL 9)

This converted smeltery is unlit, but light is visible from HF10. Five cages dangle from the ceiling, holding captive chokers. Another choker hunches beneath the bars of the slag grate in this room, crooning soulfully at its fellows. A steam whistle is mounted on one of the pipes here.

#### Kyton (2)

#### CR 6

CR 4

hp 60; Bestiary 1

#### **Tactics**

**During Combat** The chain devil offers the chokers their freedom if they kill the PCs. He lurks, hidden, in the web of gears. He can move up to four cages each round to bring their inhabitants within reach of a PC.

#### Barbarous Goldveined Chokers (6)

Male Choker barbarian (brutal pugilist) 2 CE Small aberration (earth, evil) Init +6; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +1 DEFENSE AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 size, +4 natural) **hp** 55 each (2d12+3d8+25) Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +6 Defensive Abilities 50% chance to resist a critical hit OFFENSE Spd 30 ft., climb (10 feet) Melee tentacle  $\times 2$  +12 (1d6+7) and constrict +12 (1d4+7) Space 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Special Attacks grab, strangle Spell-Like Ability (CL 4th) 1/day—charm person (DC 10), rusting grasp

#### STATISTICS

Str 20/24, Dex 14, Con 17/21, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 9 Base Atk +4; CMB +10 (+14 Grappling); CMD 20 Feats Diehard, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural

Attack: Tentacle, Skill Focus: Stealth

**Skills** Appraise +2, Climb +22, Fly +4, Stealth +13, Survival +5

Languages Undercommon

**SQ** fast movement +10 (Ex), quickness (Su), rage (9 rounds/day) (Ex), savage grapple (Ex), strength surge +2 (1/rage) (Ex)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fatal Bequest If killed, the chokers vomit 5 gp of tainted gold.

**Grab** (Ex) The chokers can start a grapple as a free action if they hit with their tentacles.

**Quickness (Su)** A choker is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra move action during its turn each round.

**Rage** (Ex) (9 rounds/day) +4 Str, +4 Con, +2 to Will saves, -2 to AC when enraged.

**Savage Grapple (Ex)** Grapples always provoke AoO from the chokers; halve grapple penalties.

**Strangle (Ex)** Chokers have an unerring talent for seizing their victims by the neck. A creature that is grappled by a choker cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

**Strength Surge** +2 (1/rage) (Ex) Once per rage, add +2 to a Str check, CMB or CMD.

# Tactics

**During Combat** The chokers lunge at anyone they can reach (other than Urzana, if she enters the room), rattling their cages, thrashing, and howling. If they are released from their cages, the chokers turn on the chain devil and try to kill him.

**Morale** Overcome with gold lust, the chokers fight to the death.

# HF10. LABORATORY

Dissected corpses, bubbling solutions, and half-finished constructs all compete for space here. Urzana uses the lab to create undead and fellforged and refine the goldvein plague into ever more virulent strains. A speaking tube connects to HF4.

#### Countess Urzana Dolingen Of Morgau CR 11

Female Human Vampire wizard 10

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human) Init +7; Senses darkvision (60 feet); Perception +11 DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, +1 dodge)

hp 102 (10d6+50); fast healing 5

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4;, **DR** 10/ magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

Weakness vampire weaknesses

#### offense Spd 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +7 (1d4+3)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night (1/day), create spawn, *dominate* (DC 21), energy drain (2 levels) (DC 19)

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 10th, +7 melee touch, +8 ranged touch):

5th—call of the grave (DC20, Deep Magic, page 138), suffocating void (DC 20, Deep Magic, page 250), symbol of pain (DC 19), wall of force

4th—fear (DC 18) (×2), fire shield, ice storm

3rd—deep slumber (DC 16), halt undead (DC 17), lightning bolt (DC 16), ray of exhaustion (DC 17), slow (DC 16)

2nd— blindness/deafness (DC 16), command undead (DC 16), ghoul touch (DC 16), invisibility, scorching ray, spectral hand

1st— cause fear (DC 15), chill touch (DC 15), magic missile, reduce person (DC 14), ray of enfeeblement (DC 15), shield 0 (at will)—disrupt undead, mage hand, prestidigitation, touch of fatigue (DC 14)

#### STATISTICS

#### Str 14, Dex 17, Con -, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 18 Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 21

Feats Ability Focus: Dominate, Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Disruptive Spell, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus: Bluff, Spell Focus: Necromancy, Spell Mastery, Spell Specialization, Toughness

Skills Bluff +20, Craft (alchemy) +14, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +13,Knowledge (nobility) +13, Perception +11, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +11

Languages Common, Ankeshelian, Draconic, Nurian, Infernal

**SQ** bonded object: amulet (holy symbol of the red goddess) (1/day) (Sp), change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*) (Su), gaseous form (Su), grave touch (6/day) (Sp), life sight (10 rounds/day) (Su), opposing Schools (conjuration, divination), shadowless (Ex), spider climb (Ex), specialist wizard (necromancy)

**Combat Gear** metamagic rod of maximize, potion of inflict moderate wounds **Other Gear** amulet, ring of sustenance, robe of bones

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Blood Drain (Ex)** Suck blood with a Grapple check (1d4 Con drain) to gain 5 hp
- **Bonded Object: Amulet (Su)** (1/day) DC 20 + spell level to cast spells without the bonded object. Once per day, Urzana can cast any spell in her spellbook for free.
- **Change Shape (Su)** (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*) Urzana can change into a dire bat or wolf.
- **Children of the Night** (Su) Call forth rats, bats or wolves as a standard action, 1/day.
- **Command Undead (Su)** (6/day) (DC 19) Channel energy can take control of undead.
- **Create Spawn (Ex)** Opponents killed by energy drain rise 1d4 days after burial.

**Dominate (Sp)** (DC 21) As dominate person spell, takes standard action.

- **Energy Drain (Ex)** (2 levels) (DC 19) Foes hit take negative levels; Urzana gains 5 temp hp for each drained.
- **Fast Healing 5 (Ex)** Urzana heals 5 damage every round if she has greater than 1 HP.
- **Gaseous Form (Su)** Assume gaseous form at will (as the spell).
- *Grave Touch* (Sp) (6/day) melee touch attack, shakes then frightens target.
- Life Sight (Su) (10 rounds/day) Blindsight 10'+ to detect living and undead for 10 rounds / day.
- **Shadowless (Ex)** Urzana casts no shadows and shows no reflection in a mirror.
- **Spider Climb (Ex)** Urzana can climb sheer surfaces as though under the effects of a *spider climb* spell.

Vampire Weaknesses (Ex) Certain items or actions can ward off Urzana (garlic, symbols of a sun god), while others destroy her (daylight).

# HF10A. URZANA'S RETREAT

Urzana (or rather, her servants) expended great effort to make this chamber not just livable, but luxuriously comfortable. Read or paraphrase the following.

Thick carpets and draperies obscure the stonework, trinkets and treasures dot the room, and the chamber is dominated by a throne-like chair flanked by two lifesized statues of jackals—one made of ebony, the other alabaster. Books sit on a table near the chair, beside which an ornate brazier sends scented smoke spiraling lazily into the air.





A tiny crack here leads into the slag tunnels beneath the complex. The crack is far too small for even Diminutive creatures to traverse, but Urzana makes use of the crack if she chooses or is forced to assume gaseous form.

**Treasure:** A DC 32 Perception check reveals the Empress card from a *deck of illusions* lodged in a crack in the corner of the room. In addition, Urzana keeps her spellbook in this room, which contains all her prepared spells, plus *animate dead*. Held within her spellbook is an arcane scroll containing *create undead*, *legend lore*, *stone to flesh*, and *tongues*.

Among Urzana's less valuable knickknacks are a jeweled golden goblet worth 2,000 gp, gothic silver jewelry worth 500 gp, and the cards Two of Cups, Nine of Pentacles, Queen of Staves, and Temperance. Among the reagents here are three vials of blue whinnis poison and four of dark reaver powder. **Development:** The Countess is a Morgau noblewoman forced into exile after an attempted coup against her brother. She serves the cult as an expert in magic and a guide to the kingdoms beneath the earth, but her position is a precarious one. She guided the Mammonites into the citadel from below, negotiating passage through the subterranean empire of the ghouls, and has also researched the goldveined plague and crafting fellforged for the cult. She's not a worshiper of Mammon, though, and knows she becomes expendable once the avatar emerges from the golden idol. If the PCs find a way to uncover this and play on it, Urzana is a potential ally.

# HF11. Mess Hall (el 11 or 8)

This former smeltery was converted into a kitchen. Pots cook over hot coals and dirty dishes are heaped in smelting pots, and a steam whistle is mounted to one of the pipes. An iron spit skewers the glazed carcass of a steaming roast in the center of a long table. A slate board written on with chalk mounted to one wall reads, in Common:

TODAY: GRIFFON TOMORROW: REFUGEE

The mess hall is run by Wynkyn, an imp with a genuine flair for catering. He's assisted by Anak, a captured stone giant. Enslaved by the cult and brainwashed long ago, Anak obeys instructions numbly.

If the alarm has not been raised by this point, the eight cultists are just tucking into a hot meal after an exhausting shift in the Prime Forge, otherwise they set up to prepare for an ambush.

Golden Guardsmen (8)	CR 5
<b>hp</b> 57; HF3	
Wynkyn the Imp	CR 2
<b>hp</b> 16; Bestiary 1	

# Anak the Blind

hp 102; Bestiary 1 (stone giant)

**Treasure:** Wynkyn carries a *platinum coin of the miser*. Anak has a set of keys to HF8. Two of the guardsmen carry tarot cards from the *deck of illusions*, the Ace of Cups and Five of Staves.

CR 8

**Development:** If the fight lasts longer than 3 rounds, the inhabitants of HF13 hear it and come running.

If Wynkyn is killed, Anak curls into a fetal ball. He expects nothing but abuse from all around him and suspects a trick if the PCs try to befriend him. Anak's initial attitude is unfriendly, but if made at least friendly, he helps the PCs however he can. Anak knows that a spy of the Silent Brotherhood infiltrated the forge several months ago, hiding in a secret room, but not where the chamber is or what became of him.

# HF12. THE LIBRARY (EL 8)

The library's double doors are made from petrified wood stained with iron oxides in angular patterns of red, brown, and orange. Runes carved above read, "The Book is the Anvil of Knowledge." If the alarm has been raised this door is locked (Disable Device DC 34) and protected by a *hold portal* spell cast by Palnitoke (CL 7th).

When the PCs open the door, read or paraphrase the following.

Half a dozen tiny spheres float in mid-air, spotting the otherwise dark chamber with pools of illumination. Beneath them, long tables are flanked by threadbare chairs. Shelves of petrified wood line the walls, their contents quite varied—books, sheets of metal, ceramic tablets, and the occasional mechanical object all share space here.

All manner of books, manuscripts, schematics, and other materials cover the shelves, and all are treated with *unguent of timelessness*. Most are written in Dwarven, others in Celestial, Draconic, or Infernal. Few are written in Common or Elvish. The floating globes shed shadowy illumination throughout the room, each in a 5-foot radius. The rest of the room is dark. Speaking tubes connect to HF4 and HF14.

At the far end of the room a small figure is hunched over a pile of books, making occasional tuts and exasperated mutterings. Once the PCs approach or otherwise can see Palnitoke, they may make Knowledge (planes) checks to identify him.

A silent *alarm* covers a 20-foot radius directly in front of the doors and mentally alerts Palnitoke if the PCs enter this area.

#### Palnitoke, Infernal Bookkeeper

# per CR 10

hp 95, MIDGARD BESTIARY, p. 33 (gilded devil)

**Treasure:** Palnitoke carries the keys to this room and the ore store, and a masterwork quill made from the feather of a fallen angel that grants a +2 profane bonus on Linguistics checks to forge documents and worth 200 gp. Beside him on the desk is a jeweler's loupe and in a drawer is some *unguent of timelessness*. He carries the tarot cards Ace, Knight, and Page of Pentacles.

Three tomes in the library might interest the PCs. They can find these books with a DC 22 Perception check.

The Cult Accounts: A massive tome protected by the spells *phantom trap, explosive runes*, and a *sepia snake sigil*. It is written in coded Infernal, with vital portions hidden by *secret page* and *illusionary script*. A DC 32 Linguistics check unravels the code. PCs can learn the cult's income and outgoings, an approximate tally of their total treasure, and the locations of secret chapels in several nearby realms.

**Palnitoke's Notebook:** These notes represent months of work by Palnitoke cracking the Brotherhood's codes and symbols. It grants a +4 bonus on Linguistics checks made to figure out their messages. It also makes reference to a secret chamber somewhere in the forge, containing the "bronze schematics," but its location is never mentioned, as Palnitoke has not found it.

Infernal Contracts: These scrolls of cured derro-skin detail souls recently sold to Mammon. Names include Halston the Just, Vanessi and her thugs, Sebastian Ufastis, and Gefangak the Upstart.

**Development**: Mammon demands that every copper spent by his worshippers be accounted for, and it is Palnitoke's job to see that the cult's labyrinthine accounts are kept in order. Palnitoke loathes this assignment, believing it suited to a devil of lesser ability.

He continues to look for a loophole out of his contract and might collude with the PCs if they approach him diplomatically. His initial attitude is indifferent.

# HF13. THE HALL OF APPRENTICES (EL 10)

A door of filigreed adamantine 4 inches thick (hardness 20; hp 160; Disable Device DC 30, Break DC 45), its surface carved with anvils, hammers, and other symbols of the forge (see HF14), leads to this chamber. Runes on the arch above read, "The finest steel begins with raw iron." Speaking tubes connect to HF4 and HF14.

If the alarm is not yet raised, the PCs can clearly hear the clash of arms from within even before they open the door. Members of the Golden Guard are sparring here, with several cultists making bets on the outcomes. If the alarm was raised, the cultists wait inside, ready to ambush.

#### Golden Guardsm<u>en (8)</u>

CR 5

**hp** 57; HF3

# Tactics

- **Before Combat** If the PCs set off the alarm in the complex, the guardsmen line up opposite the door, draw their bows, and ready actions to fire upon any non-cultists who open the door.
- **Treasure:** Three of the guardsmen carry tarot cards from the *deck of illusion*: the King of Staves, King of Swords, and Ace of Staves. In addition, among the four of them they carry 500 gp in coins.

# HF14. The Hall of Masters (el 14)

A door of filigreed adamantine (Hardness 20; hp 160; Disable Device DC 30, Break DC 45), its surface carved with anvils, hammers, and other symbols of the forge (see HF14), leads to this chamber. It is protected by an *arcane lock* spell that can be bypassed by touching specific symbols in the correct order. Only Bragollach and (unknown to her) Palnitoke know the combination. Runes on the arch above read, "Mastery is not the end of the journey but the beginning."

Speaking tubes connect this room to HF4, HF12, and HF13. This room once housed the private forges of the master smiths. Bragollach claimed it as her lair recently. Once the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

The walls of this richly decorated forge-room contain numerous niches, each housing a small forge, anvils, and racks of tools. Like a golden carpet lay coins, jewelry, candlesticks, statuettes, and countless other precious things spread throughout the room.

A magical trap covers the treasure pile, activating if a creature other than a dragon sets foot among the hoard.

#### Golden Curse Trap

Type magical; Perception DC 34; Disable Device DC 34 EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** Automatic **Effect** (flesh to stone, modified to make the victim into pyrite, CL 13th, DC 19 Fort resists);

If the PCs reach this far without anyone raising the alarm around them, Bragollach is here. Otherwise, she prowls the Prime Forge. Bragollach now wears golden armor that crawls with infernal runes and is secured so tightly that her scales are cracked and bloody. Foam flecks her mouth, and bloodshot madness fills her eyes.

Bragollach is a creature of passion—and that passion is avarice. Weighed down by cursed armor and driven mad by gold fever and Mammon's whispering, her natural draconic greed was corrupted into a rabid belief that every precious thing in the world belongs to her. Bragollach's noble nature rails against the madness, and she's not yet beyond redemption.

The PCs can bring Bragollach temporarily to her senses by casting *calm emotions* or by success with a DC 43 Diplomacy check. By using a spell, Bragollach remains in her right mind for the spell's duration, while Diplomacy calms her inner turmoil for 1 round plus 1 round per point by which the PCs beat the DC. Distraught by her corruption, she refuses to linger in the forge or go near Mammon's avatar, but otherwise helps the PCs however she can. Gold fever shortly thereafter torments her again, and to avoid falling into Mammon's grasp once more, she departs the forge.

#### Bragollach

#### CR 14

CR 8

# Female Juvenile Gold Dragon

LE Large dragon (earth, evil, fire)

**Init** +1; **Senses** blindsense, darkvision, low-light vision; Perception +25

#### DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, -1 size, +16 natural) hp 161 (14d12+70)

#### Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +15

**Defensive Abilities** strength of metal; **DR** 5/silver or gold, 50% chance to ignore critical hits; **Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep

Weakness vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE Spd 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft. Melee (all with 4 points of Power attack) bite +18 (2d6+25) or gore (armor of the geldwyrm) +18 (1d8+25), and claw  $\times 2 + 18 (1d8 + 17/19 - 20/x2)$  a and tail slap + 16 (1d8 + 25) and wing  $\times 2 + 16 (1d6 + 8)$ Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Special Attacks breath weapon (40-ft. cone, 8d10 fire, every 1d4 rounds) **Spell-Like Abilities** At will—bless, detect evil 3/day-detect gems 1/day—rusting grasp Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd, +18 melee touch, +14 ranged touch): 1 (7/day)—divine favor, mage armor, shield 0 (at will)-detect magic, disrupt undead, mending, slap (see Deep Magic, page 239), stabilize STATISTICS Str 29, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 20 Base Atk +14; CMB +24; CMD 35 (39 vs. Trip) Feats Alertness, Critical Focus, Diehard, Improved Critical: Claw, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike Skills Diplomacy +22, Fly +12, Heal +21, Knowledge (local) +21, Knowledge (nobility) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +21, Stealth -3, Swim +34 Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic SQ change shape (humanoid or animal, polymorph) (3/ day) (Su), fatal bequest (Su), for love of money (3/day) (Ex), madness (Ex), weakening breath (DC 22) (Su) Gear armor of the geldwyrm

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Breath Weapon (Su)** (40-ft. cone, 8d10 fire, every 1d4 rounds, Ref half) (DC 22) Using a breath weapon is a standard action. Bragollach can use her breath weapon once every 1d4 rounds, even if she possesses more than one breath weapon. A breath weapon always starts at an intersection adjacent to Bragollach and in a direction of her choice. If a breath weapon deals damage, those caught in the area can attempt Reflex saves to take half damage. A dragon can use its breath weapon when it is grappling or being grappled.
- **Change Shape (Su)** (humanoid or animal, polymorph) (3/day) Bragollach can change her form.
- **Detect Gems (Sp)** Bragollach can detect gems three times per day. This functions as *locate object*, but can only be used to locate gemstones.
- Fatal Bequest (Su) As she dies, Bragollach vomits forth 14 greed-tainted gold pieces.



# Armor of the Geldwyrm

The *armor of the geldwyrm* is a suit of spiked half-plate draconic barding for a Large creature. Its helmet features a horn-like blade that allows the wearer to make a gore attack in place of its bite attack. This attack deals 1d8 points of piercing damage, doubled on a successful charge. *Armor of the geldwyrm* magically changes size to accommodate any size of dragon, and also changes to appropriate armor or barding when the wearer uses its alternate form ability.

Once donned, the *armor of the geldwyrm* cannot be removed without first applying *remove curse*. It is also impregnated with goldvein sickness. The wearer must save against infection every day and the plagueinfused metal counts as 500 gp of cursed gold.

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor; **Price** 3,000 gp; **Weight** 100 lb.

For the Love of Money (Sp) (DC 21) Bragollach can mentally coerce an opponent to protect her just by looking into his eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that Bragollach must use a standard action, and those merely looking at her are not affected. Anyone Bragollach targets must succeed on a Will save or become unable to harm her and makes nearly every effort to prevent others from harming her as well. The affected target does not fight to the death, perform any obviously suicidal action, or draw attacks of opportunity if reasonably able to avoid them on behalf of Bragollach, but he does otherwise put her safety and well-being above his own. The ability has a range of 30 feet and can be used up to three times per day.

Weakening Breath (Su) In addition to a cone of fire, Bragollach can breathe a cone of weakening gas. Creatures within the cone or take 4 points of Strength damage (Fort save DC 22 half).

**Treasure:** Bragollach claimed most of the cult's treasure as her personal hoard. It amounts to 200 pounds of gold ingots, coins, and raw ore worth 10,000 gp. The hoard also contains a pile of 10 masterwork dwarven urgroshes and 10 masterwork breastplates.

Scattered throughout the hoard are the segments of a full suit of dwarven plate. On a shelf sits a copy of Mammon's unholy scriptures, an unholy symbol, and a *phylactery of undead turning*. Bragollach's hoard hides four tarot cards from the *deck of illusions*: the Two of Pentacles, Two of Staves, Emperor, and High Priestess. If the PCs lost the Teardrop in Eye of Grajava, it too is here, serving as a gleaming capstone of the hoard.

Finally, Bragollach herself wears the *armor of the geldwyrm* (see below).

# HF15. A Shrine Defiled (el 8)

The first time the PCs look into this room, read or paraphrase the following.

A massive statue of Grajava stands opposite doors of bronze and electrum. Someone vandalized the statue, painting her face with crude "makeup" and hammering gold coins into cracks in her stone flesh. Her broken hands are outstretched but whatever they once held is gone. Streaks of mineral water drip from a ring of stalagmites around the statue's head. Grajava's ruined face seems to be weeping.

Religious frescos once covered the walls, but they have been thoroughly vandalized. Large golden icons of Mammon now adorn the walls. PCs who pass this area more than once might notice (with DC 19 Perception checks) the slow spread of Mammon's features and iconography throughout the room.

A DC 25 Perception check reveals, on the wall behind the statue, the tiny words "Audi, Vide, Tace" ("Hear, See, Be Silent") written using Dwarven runes on one of the stones. This marks the mechanism for the secret door to area HF16.

The bronze and electrum doors (Hardness 10, 10 hp; Disable Device DC 45; Break DC 28) leading to HF17 are locked. Their surface once depicted Volund's face but as Mammon's power grows, the archdevil's grinning visage slowly replaces the smith god's features. Dwarven runes above the doors read, "Fire burns at the heart of our community. Here shall the master set down his artifice with good runes, and the wise shall know the path to travel."

Six formidable locks prevent access to the Prime Forge, although Mammon can open and close the doors as a swift action merely by concentrating. Each lock has a set of images carved around it: crafting tools, dwarves with linked hands, flames, celestial figures, runic patterns, and galloping horses. Trying to force the doors or failing an Disable Device check on any lock triggers the magical trap placed on the door.

#### Prismatic Spray Trap

CR 8

Type magical; Perception DC 35; Disable Device DC 39 EFFECTS

**Trigger** break attempt or failed Disable Device; **Reset** Automatic

**Effect** spell effect (*prismatic spray*, CL 13th, varied saves DC 20 [see spell description])

If a PC places *Masterstrike* or *the Teardrop of Grajava* into the statue's hands, Grajava's power temporarily breaks through the desecration of its shrine. The ravaged statue of Grajava shudders suddenly to life, its fist closing around the offering as it staggers from its podium. With every step, pieces of its body slough off, but it makes unerringly for the bronze and electrum doors. With a mighty blow it smashes them open and collapses there in a pile of rubble.

If PCs offered *Masterstrike*, the hammer is visible in the rubble. Sacrificing the Teardrop here is the same as sacrificing it at the Forge of the Fire Blessing, cleansing the Spirit of the Mountain of its Mammonite taint.

# HF16. THE SILENT ROOM

This room was a meditation chamber for the ancient masters of Heartsblood Forge, all of whom were members of the Illuminated Brotherhood. Permanent *silence* and *nondetection* spells (CL 18th) blanket the entire room, and unlike the rest of the complex it remains *sanctified* (CL 18th). The chamber is unlit. When the PCs are able to look around the chamber, read or paraphrase the following.

A single carving adorns the center of each of this chamber's seven walls: a compass, three cogs, an anvil of flame, an adze, a flint, a broken pillar, and a ribbon. In the center of the room stand four bronze pillars covered in intricate carvings.

Between them is the base for another, but it stands empty. Hunched in one corner is a dwarven corpse in robes of maroon and gold, one finger pressed to its lips as if requesting silence.

The corpse is Brother Uldricus of the Illuminated Brotherhood. He is wedged in the corner between the symbols of the flint and the ribbon. Grasped in his desiccated hands are a sprig of acacia and five large keys. His body is immune to *speak with dead*.

The symbol of the ribbon radiates moderate universal and faint illusion (glamer) magic. If touched by a nonevil character, it activates a variant *magic mouth* spell that produces coded text that appears on the wall rather than spoken words. A DC 29 Linguistics check translates the text as, "The power of the keys remains pure and will aid us in the Prime Forge. The giant might also help. Good luck my brothers, know that I was faithful to the last"

The PCs recognize the various symbols in this room as minor icons of the Illuminated Brotherhood. A DC 29 Knowledge (local) or bardic knowledge check reveals the meaning of the symbols: The compass represents order; the cogs, the Brotherhood's three orders; the anvil of flame is passion; the adze is power; the flint, history; the pillar represents preparation; and the ribbon symbolizes their oath of silence. A DC 29 Knowledge (engineering) check reveals that the carved pillars contain the blueprints for the Old Masters (see *Grand Lodge of the Old Masters*, page 102).

**Treasure:** Brother Uldricus holds the keys to the Prime Forge. Each key bears the name of one of Volund's domains in Celestial, and radiates a moderate aura of good. The keys can serve as divine foci for clerics of Volund. To a church of Volund, the keys are worth 1,000 gp, but to anyone else they are worth only 300 gp.

# HF17. THE PRIME FORGE (EL 10+ AND 13+)

Once the PCs breach the door from room HF15, read or paraphrase the following.

A giant golden statue looks imperiously over the Prime Forge. The statue is not an icon of Volund, however, but a grinning infernal dwarf. Flanked by silver pillars spiraled by blue-white flame, the statue looks down on the Great Forge and the six mighty anvils surrounding it. Steam and a red glow rise from a narrow moat around the Great Forge dais. The walls are hung with Mammonite symbols, gleaming with unnatural brightness from every corner of the room.

The cultists attack when they become aware of enemies in the chamber. As soon the battle breaks out, the voice of Mammon fills the room, seeming to emanate from every coin, gem, and piece of precious metal in the chamber. The voice exhorts his allies, urging them on and promising ever-increasing rewards for whomever brings down the PCs.

Treat Mammon's urging as the inspire heroics ability of a 15th-level bard. Mammon targets a different ally each round, granting a +4 dodge bonus to AC and a +4 morale bonus on saving throws for 5 rounds.

CR 5

#### Golden Guardsmen (8)

hp 46; HF3

**Development:** Once the PCs deal with his minions, Mammon turns his attention to the PCs, saying, "Ah, adventurers: looters, pillagers, killers for hire. My favorite kind of people. It seems some vacancies recently opened in our ranks. Can I interest your resourceful group in a very profitable position?"

Allow the PCs to banter with Mammon for as long as you wish. By this point in the campaign, you should have a fairly good idea of what motivates each character in the party. Use some of that information to your advantage, and let Mammon tempt some of the non-good PCs with whatever it is they seek, from power (both within and outside the cult) to wealth (his specialty) to comfortably settling down with family (of course, Mammon might require such a character to occasionally come out of retirement for him). A PC taking up Mammon on his offer can radically change the dynamics of the party, to say nothing of how the adventure arc concludes. This possibility lies outside the scope of this adventure, but see Concluding the Adventure for directions regarding Mammon's victory.

It is far more likely, however, that none of the PCs believe Mammon or are willing to sacrifice their souls for what he promises. Once he believes he has no chance of tempting the PCs, or if they attack the idol in the chamber, Mammon decides to take more direct measures. His voice suddenly falls silent without any farewell, and as



the PCs (and their players) wonder what has happened to it, read or paraphrase the following.

The statue at the back of the chamber glitters suddenly as if hit by bright sunlight and its surface peels away like gold leaf. In moments, a whirlwind of sparkling gold flecks surrounds it. With a ponderous thud the figure steps off its plinth, golden statue transformed into gold-skinned giant. Gems mottle its flesh in serpentine patterns, rubies fall from its smiling lips, and its eyes glow like infernal emeralds. Diamonds and platinum coins fall like sweat from its flesh.

Mammon says to the PCs, "Before you raise your hands against me, know this: The first weapon that wounds me shall be utterly destroyed. The first spell that harms me shall be lost to you forever. He who stands aside from this fight will gain all that the others lose. This is the word of Mammon, your glorious and immortal mountain king."

As befits an archdevil's appearance, there is more here than meets the eye. The PCs are actually facing two enemies: one physical and one not. The golden giant is a corrupted shard of the Spirit of the Mountain, its body twisted by goldvein. Filled with pain and madness, the shard simply wants to lash out at everything around it, but it does not control its own limbs. A sliver of Mammon's will possesses the shard, whispering lies to it, prompting it ever forward in battle. A successful *dispel evil* forces Mammon from the shard for 24 hours.

#### Mammon-Possessed Shard of the Mountain CR 13

LE Huge fey (earth, evil) Init +0; Senses low-light vision, tremorsense 120 ft; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (-2 size, +20 natural) hp 172 (15d6+120)

Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +16

**Defensive Abilities:** 50% chance to ignore critical hits, elemental anatomy; **DR** 20/magic and 5/gold or silver; **Immune** poison, sleep, paralysis, disease, nausea, fatigue, exhaustion, energy drain, spells and spell-like abilities below 3rd level; **SR** 25; **Weakness** possessed

#### OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

**Melee** (with 4 points of power attack) slam ×2 +18 (2d6+18)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** golden grasp (DC 25), plutokinesis (DC 26)

#### **Spell-Like Abilities**

3/day—for love of money (DC 26) 1/day—rusting grasp

# STATISTICS

**Str** 30, **Dex** 10, **Con** 26, **Int** 28, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 29 **Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +26 (+28 Bull Rushing,+28 Disarming); **CMD** 36 (38 vs. Bull Rush38 vs. Disarm) **Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Diehard, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Disarm, Improved Natural Attack: Slam, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quick Bull Rush

Skills Appraise +24, Bluff +27, Diplomacy +27, Fly -4, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +24, Knowledge (engineering) +24, Knowledge (local) +27, Knowledge (nature) +27, Knowledge (religion) +24, Perception +25, Profession (lawyer) +22, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +24, Stealth -8, Use Magic Device +27

Languages Common, Darakhul, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Ettin, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Orc SQ bejeweled (Ex), fatal bequest (Sp)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Bejeweled (Ex)** Coins, jewelry, and precious stones drip constantly from the avatar's flesh. A character may spend a round gathering up the wealth (equal to a Dex check  $\times$  100 gp), but every piece carries the goldveined disease.
- **Elemental Anatomy (Ex)** The shard is a living creature formed from elemental materials. It is immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, disease, nausea, fatigue, exhaustion, and energy drain. It has enough humanoid mind and anatomy to be affected by critical hits, effects requiring a Fort save, death from massive damage, nonlethal damage, stunning, ability damage, ability drain, and death or necromancy effects.

**Fatal Bequest (Sp)** At it dies, the shard creature vomits forth 15 greed-tainted gold pieces.

*For Love of Money* (Sp) (3/day) (DC 26) The shard creature can mentally coerce an opponent to protect it just by looking into his eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the shard must use a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the shard targets must succeed on a Will save or becomes unable to harm the shard and makes nearly every effort to prevent others from harming it as well. The affected target does not fight to the death, perform any obviously suicidal action, or draw attacks of opportunity if reasonably able to avoid them on behalf of the shard, but he does otherwise put the shard's safety and well-being above his own. The ability has a range of 30 feet and can be used up to three times per day.

**Golden Grasp (Su)** (DC 25) One per day, as a standard action, Mammon (as the shard) can turn a living target into an inanimate statue of solid gold with a melee touch attack. A DC 25 Fort save negates (save DC is Constitution based).

Plutokinesis (Su) Mammon (as the shard) can control valuable objects (precious metals, gems, masterwork items, and magic items) similar to the *telekinesis* spell. He can fling objects with a +17 attack modifier and

# GRAJAVA'S AID

If the PCs sacrificed the Teardrop during Eye of Grajava or in area HF16, or do so now by smashing it against an anvil or dropping it into the lava, Volund's shieldmaiden lends them her power for the final fight. While the shieldmaiden does not physically appear, the presence of her divine power is enough to weaken Mammon's grasp of the mountain and its shard. As long as at least one PC remains in the room, fighting, modify the encounter in the following ways. If all of the PCs flee or are defeated, the shieldmaiden departs and does not return.

# Effects of the Shieldmaiden's Presence

- 1. PCs become immune to the golden touch of the Mammon-possessed shard and gain +5 sacred bonus on saving throws made to resist its other magical powers.
- 2. Exiled from its mother spirit, the Mammonpossessed shard loses its elemental anatomy and becomes vulnerable to poison, paralysis, and other ills while in or on Mount Rygar.
- 3. The Mammon-possessed shard loses 30 hp from its total.

deal damage up to 1d6 points per 25 pounds. Mammon can hurl creatures that weigh up to 500 lb if they are carrying or wearing more than 50 lb of valuable objects (including armor), although a DC 26 Will save negates the effect on a character or held item.

**Possessed (Su)** The corrupted shard radiates an overwhelming aura of law and evil. It cannot pass a *magic circle against evil* (or law); enter an area warded by *forbiddance*; or possess, exert control over, or physically attack the recipient of *protection from evil*.

# Tactics

- **During Combat** Mammon uses *for the love of money* on the party's most able warrior and *rusting grasp* and golden grasp on other melee combatants. He prefers to grapple opponents, tearing them limb from limb or hurling them into the Well of Fire or the pillars of flame. If pressed, Mammon pushes PCs away with plutokenesis before sinking into the earth using earth glide.
- **Morale** Unconcerned for the shard's wellbeing, Mammon fights to the death. As it takes damage, more of the shard's true form is revealed, until the avatar's features are a horrid amalgam of golden dwarf and plague-ridden elemental.



# The Slag Pits

Beneath the forge exists a series of tunnels that carry waste runoff. The cramped, uneven tunnels are lined with mineral waste—streaks of bauxite, copper, and other minerals stain the walls and pollute the lukewarm water that gathers in toxic puddles. Sulfur encrusts cracks that periodically vent scalding steam, and the air is stiflingly hot, especially near the Well of Fire.

These tunnels are not an important part of the complex, and they play no part in the adventure unless Urzana takes gaseous form and flees her retreat in HF10. She keeps a carefully hidden secondary coffin down here for just such an occasion.
#### **Environmental Conditions**

The tunnels pose the following environmental challenges.

- **Cramped Conditions:** Medium and Large creatures must squeeze, while Huge and larger creatures simply cannot fit in the tunnels. Large slashing and bludgeoning weapons cannot be used at all, and characters using Medium slashing or bludgeoning weapons take a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls.
- **Heat Danger:** The tunnels are very hot (per the *PFRPG Core Rulebook*), forcing characters to make a Fort save each hour or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage.

#### SP1. ENTRANCE (EL 9)

The air is cooler here, where the slag pits meet the base of the water rise. While the area is still considered very hot, PCs can rest safely here once they defeat the chokers.

A pack of goldveined chokers live here and follow any creatures (including the PCs, but not Urzana) who pass through the area, waiting for an opportune time to strike deeper in the complex. When Urzana first moved into the complex and established her secondary coffin in these tunnels, she dominated these chokers. They serve her now as guardians and stalk PCs who intrude in their domain. If the PCs attack Urzana or her coffin, or stop to rest, the chokers attack.

#### **Barbarous Goldveined Chokers (6)**

hp 32; HF9

#### SP2. BASKING POOL (EL 8)

This pool and the Well of Fire are fed via the same lava tube, which branches in two some 100 feet below this level. Although they fear the xorns that make their home in the chamber containing the Well of Fire, a handful of magma mephits call this pool home. Falling into lava deals 20d6 hp fire damage per round, and 10d6 hp fire damage for 3 rounds after exposure ends.

#### Magma Mephits (6)

hp 13; Bestiary 1

## SP3. THE WELL OF FIRE (EL 12)

Crumbling walls allow heat from this chamber to spill out into the tunnels beyond this chamber. Miniscule flecks of adamantine sparkle in the walls. The PCs can move directly into the Prime Forge through here, but the temperature becomes extreme heat (dealing 1d6 hp fire damage per minute) and the climb DC of the crumbling walls is 32.

A pair of goldveined elder xorn swim in the Well of Fire, keeping watch for adventurers and Volund's elemental servants. The two xorns make for an EL 12 encounter.

#### Goldveined Elder Xorns (2)

hp 130; Roots of Madness (Welcoming Party, page 46)

## SP4. CRACK IN THE CEILING

A crack in the rock here leads up to HF10. Urzana's coffin is carefully hidden in this area, requiring a DC 39 Perception check to find.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The entire adventure arc rests upon the PCs' success or failure in this final adventure. If the PCs defeat Mammon in the Prime Forge, they become heroes of the citadel and the surrounding lands. If they fall, their failure is not limited to their own deaths, but instead encompasses an

entire region for years to come.

#### Failure!

If the PCs are defeated, Mammon's cult soon conquers Mount Rygar and all who refuse to bow before him are killed. Any surviving PCs end up dangling in HF9, although Lady Urzana might free them if they agree to escort her to safety. The cantons mobilize their armies as soon as word spreads of Rygar's fate, but by then the cult is too firmly entrenched. Only a permanent siege of the mountain conducted by all the neighboring cantons and their allies holds Mammon's cult in check. Years, perhaps decades might pass before a band of heroes successfully brings down the Hellish hordes, but until then Rygar becomes a blight on the world.

#### Victory!

The shard is the anchor that allows Mammon to remain in the mortal realm. Once the PCs destroy it, the archdevil's psyche is swiftly drawn back to Hell. As the shard's body crumbles, an infernal vortex greedily sucks up the tainted ore and the gold and gems shed by the avatar, before vanishing in a burst of hellfire. Mammon's last act is to deliver a dire threat, his voice echoing through the forge.

"Do not think that you have seen the last of me, mortals. Steal but one copper, scorn one beggar's plea, plunder a single tomb for naught but greed, and we shall meet again. My eye is upon you and Mammon does not forget!"

Surviving cultists (including those who once were a part of the refugee camp) flee once Mammon is banished, and the refugees can reclaim the Lower Hall and Heartsblood Forge. Much work must be done if the refugees hope to survive until spring, but no more significant dangers remain. When the thaw comes, the dwarven cantons send reinforcements to the citadel and the PCs are hailed as saviors. When the shrine in Heartsblood Forge is repaired, their images are added to the frescos alongside those of Volund and Grajava.

Rewards offered to the PCs include a powerful magical weapon forged on the Prime Forge to replace any

**CR 10** 

CR 4

CR 3

destroyed by the avatar, and the chance for PC wizards and clerics to study with the cantons' most puissant mystics. Many refugees swear oaths of eternal friendship with the adventurers, and their families shower the characters with gifts, business opportunities, and offers of marriage. Impressed with the PCs' efforts, the Illuminated Brotherhood might even offer them membership. The only limits to the dwarves' generosity are *Masterstrike* and the *forge keys*, which they politely insist must be returned to Heartsblood Forge.

With Heartsblood Forge up and running again, each PC is also given a specially crafted adamantine hammer in commemoration of their deeds. Marked with the PC's name and the seal of Rygar, an adamantine hammer gives a +3 bonus on Diplomacy checks made with Ironcrag dwarves. Perfectly balanced to each character's grip, these hammers reduce any nonproficiency penalty a PC might have using it by 4 (effectively eliminating the penalty).

The material value of the hammer is 4,000 gp.

## FURTHER ADVENTURES

Once the PCs are bored with victory feasts and pats on the back, there are plenty of loose ends they might follow.

## Against the Howling City

All those forsaken must have come from somewhere and it's up to the PCs to find out where. Deep in the lightless expanse beneath the citadel exists a city where the forsaken gather to gibber and wail and worship the primeval dark. The citadel cannot afford enemies massed on its doorstep, and so turns once more to its saviors to end the forsaken menace forever. The Many-Bearded Elder may also remain alive and tormented by the Forsaken in the Howling city. Details of the city may be found in *Kobold Quarterly* #11.

## CASTLES AND CLAN LORDS

With a citadel to be rebuilt, repopulated, and ruled, dwarven adventurers might well think about putting down some roots. They do not get to enjoy a quiet life, however, as they must politick with vying clan lords, put kobold kings in their place, and open trade relations. Some might even aspire to use their newfound fame to be named Many-Bearded Elder, or even king.

## CURING THE CURSED

Sadly, freeing the mountain from Mammon's grasp does not cure those who became goldveined creatures. If she lives, Bragollach is among those still inflicted with devilinduced madness. Only powerful magic can cure her, but when a gold dragon's distraught mother begs for aid, what's a hero to do?

## THE AGENTS OF GREED

Armed with Palnitoke's account book, the names and locations of a dozen devil-worshipping cults are available to the PCs. Paladins and would-be inquisitors can spend months kicking down doors and making the world a better place, while slyer types might use what they learned to infiltrate the cults and relieve Mammonites of their treasures.



## APPENDIX A:

# THE CULT OF MAMMON IN THE GOLDEN CITADEL

Sometimes called the Counters, the Lucre-Talliers are a cult devoted to the worship of Mammon in the Ironcrags and surrounding territories, including Allain, Morgau, Triolo, Srevresta, and Zobeck.

## THE COUNTERS

The Lucre-Talliers wear gold-trimmed robes of white and cover their faces with masks of beaten coins, with the value of the coins reflecting a given member's status within the cult. Members who must hide their allegiance often use cultist's clasps to store their robes and masks. Those tasked with gathering the cursed orichalcum prevent gold fever with loupes of the black market fence. The goldveined template is seen as a special sign of Mammon's favor, and so is reserved for cultists who have distinguished themselves in the eyes of the cult's leaders.

Lucre-talliers favor flails, darts poisoned with blue whinnis, and heavy armor. They use dark reaver powder whenever it is practical to eliminate their enemies.

## ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

The Lucre-Talliers are organized into the pyramid structure typical of cults of Mammon. The Plutocrat Szarabajka led the cult until Bragollach recently deposed him. Palnitoke the gilded devil and Ghyrisigor the Ettin reported directly to him, and now answer to Plutocrat Bragollach.

Below the Plutocrat are the Platinum Scepters—Jorunn Flintknapper, Tarisaul Eris, Albricius Everart, and the False Gearworker. The Golden Chalices—Hronagar Corpsegrinder, Tanya Hrovitz, Halston the Just, the Journeyman Gearworker, and Sebastian Ufastis—obey the Platinum Scepters. Reporting to the Golden Chalices are the Silver Swords, who include the Golden Guardsmen, the erinyes, various kobold rogues, and other nameless cultists. At the lowest level of the cult are the Copper Masks, such as the Redcloak Riders and various poor and hungry beggars recruited in any village or at the entrance to any mine.

## **RECENT HISTORY**

Szarabajka first fell into the worship of Mammon in his homeland of Allain, west of the Ironcrags. While searching through some of Mammon's hellish vaults, he learned of the ancient curse on the ore buried in Mount Rygar. Szarabajka traveled to the Ironcrags with Palnitoke the gilded devil, where he discovered that Satarel had since passed the burden of guarding the cursed orichalcum to her daughter.

Reasoning that the younger dragon might be more susceptible to corruption, Szarabajka decided the time to activate Mammon's curse was at hand. First, he corrupted a member of the Illuminated Brotherhood, making Jorunn Flintknapper the third member of the conspiracy. Next, he recruited the rest of the Scepters and Chalices (save Halston), burrowing into the depths of Rygar with the aid of Countess Urzana Dolingen of Morgau.

Until Bragollach killed him, Szarabajka had big plans to expand the worship of Mammon in the Ironcrags and beyond.

## THE CULT IN THE GOLDEN CITADEL

Victory seems imminent for Mammon's cult in the fallen canton of the Golden Citadel. The cursed orichalcum flows readily into the hands of the cult and its members, and the avatar of Mammon seems on the brink of marching into the Upper Halls of the Golden Citadel, signaling the arrival of a glorious age of avarice, profit, and plenty. The Mammonite cult calls this event the Accession and works toward it with fevered piety.

This cell of the cult is mainly comprised of dwarves, humans, and kobolds, many of whom hold positions of prominence in the refugee camps of the Upper Halls. Most came to the citadel as cultists of Mammon already, while others were simply tempted by promises of food, wealth, or power. Roughly one cultist in six belongs to this latter group, not yet fanatical enough to die for the cause and willing to surrender if offered the chance. The others fight to the death, both to prove their loyalty to their dark lord but also as a practical alternative to capture and possibly revealing information via torture or other means of persuasion.

Uncovering information about the cult of Mammon proves exceedingly difficult without actually joining it. Attempting to infiltrate the cult without joining is dangerous, as showing too much ignorance about the cult's activities and purposes arouses suspicion.

Rightfully paranoid, Mammonite cult leaders in the citadel created a series of test questions to administer to anyone who acts suspiciously. These questions are generally fairly easy for true cultists, but outsiders frequently struggle with answering them. The teachings of Mammon (see the Liturgy section under Mammon, the Archduke of Greed) are often put as questions asked to flush out imposters and infiltrators. A Knowledge (religion) check reveals the



proper answer. With a DC 20 result, the character guesses enough of an answer to pass the test, although the test-giver remains suspicious and might ask another question. With a DC 30 result, the character knows the proper answer and can deliver it without hesitation, convincing the test-giver of his authenticity.

## A GAME OF CARDS

Many cultists of Mammon within the Golden Citadel carry cards from a tarot *deck of illusions*, one of the possessions of Szarabajka not claimed by Bragollach.

The cards are traded for gold and favors, and have become a second currency among the cult. They are loath to use them, preferring to retain their value for trade. A character speaking with a cultist of Mammon within the Golden Citadel gains a +3 circumstance bonus on his next Diplomacy check if he offers a tarot card as a bribe.

## NEW DOMAIN: CUPIDITY

Granted Power: You gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls made to disarm an opponent. Add Sleight of Hand to your list of cleric class skills.

- 1. alarm
- 2. *hypnotic pattern* (shifting colors are of precious metals and gems)
- 3. glyph of warding
- 4. *rainbow pattern* (pattern comprised of golden strands and precious gems)
- 5. *song of discord* (spell effect looks like gold coins falling from sky)
- 6. flesh to stone (stone looks like gold but is worthless)
- 7. guards and wards
- 8. iron body (body turns to gold instead of iron)
- 9. sympathy

#### Coins of the Miser

These items, unique to the cult of Mammon, are crafted from specially minted coins threaded on a leather or metal band. One side portrays a handsome merchant, while the other shows a horn of plenty overflowing with jewels. The unholy symbol of Mammon is hidden on each side. Each coin has a reminder of Mammon's teachings inscribed around the horn of plenty.

A coin of the miser hardens and lightly tints your flesh in the color of the coin, granting you a natural armor bonus. Additionally, once per day as a standard action, you may cast a spell sacred to Mammon granted by the coin. The specific natural armor bonus and spell depend on the type of the coin you possess.

Coin	Natural Armor	Spell	CL	Aura	Market Price
Copper	+1	charm	3rd	Faint	2,400 gp
Silver	+2	person hypnotic	6th		10,200 gp
Silver	12	pattern	oui		10,200 gp
Gold	+3	glyph of	9th	-	23,500 gp
		warding			
Platinum	+4	rainbow	12th	-	42,200 gp
		pattern			
Orichalcum	+5	charm	15th	-	66,200 gp
		monster			

Variable transmutation and enchantment; CL varies; Craft Wondrous Item, spell as appropriate, *magic vestment*.

## **APPENDIX B:**



## THE MOST HONORABLE AND RIGHTEOUS FRATERNAL ORDER OF ILLUMINATED BROTHERS

The Most Honorable and Righteous Fraternal Order of Illuminated Brothers, or the Illuminated Brotherhood as it more often called, is an ancient dwarven secret society that seeks to promote fellowship, personal enlightenment, and skilled craftsmanship among its members.

Originally formed to protect dwarven trading secrets and strengthen moral character among members, the esoteric society is open to all dwarves who qualify and seek perfection in their chosen craft, from magical arts to metalworking to personal achievement. The society can be found in any settlement with a significant population of dwarven craftsmen, and most groups operate under the moral codes of the Great Founding Fathers while operating with independent jurisdiction and welcoming members of other groups openly.

Members congregate weekly in great meeting halls to share knowledge and study their unique system of principles, veiled in lessons of morality taught through symbolism and allegory, which they call the Craft . As members learn these lessons and apply them to their livelihoods, the brotherhood awards them progressions of accomplishment known as degrees, of which there are 33. Rare indeed are those who attain such high standing within the organization, and few members ever reach the 20th degree, much less the 33rd.

Historically, the order discouraged clerics in the society, many of whom look with disdain on the quasi-religious rituals and initiations the brotherhood performs. Some clerical leaders in the past deemed heretical the members' pledges of loyalty to other members, superseding loyalty even to a deity. In more recent years, however, the entry of priests into the Rite of Most Worthy Esoterics has increased, and as a result the vague pledges to "a higher deity" are shifting to honoring specific dwarven gods.

Many high-ranking members of dwarven society, including some kings, count themselves among the ranks of the Illuminated Brotherhood. Rumors and legends of the mysterious society persist, with outsiders often accusing the order of hiding terrible secrets and negotiating behind-the-scenes manipulations of craft guilds and government.

## LODGES

Divided into three orders, members meet in secret assemblies known as lodges, a name also frequently given to the meeting halls themselves. The centerpiece of dwarven life in many communities, these great halls are extravagant and often gaudy displays of the rich excesses of the brotherhood. Tessellated checkerboard tiles typically cover the vast expanse, and massive, intricately embossed pillars burning with *continual flames* loom threateningly over the secret proceedings.

Great steps lead to carved chairs of heavy stone perched atop the dais of the council of silent masters who officiate the congregations. The esoteric symbolism of the secret society is etched into every stone surface of the chamber, predominantly scenes of morality for those seeking knowledge and enlightenment.

Immense libraries of secret lore contain ancient scrolls and tomes that provide arcane formulas and diagrams illustrating the construction of not only physical creations, but also the less tangible lessons that such artistic pursuits teach the creator.

#### THE ILLUMINATED BROTHERS

Heavy tapestries or delicately designed mosaics serve as "morality stations" for members and metaphorically depict the 33 degrees on the path to illumination.

Such stations reflect allegorical scenes of dwarven life, mythology, and legend, and are filled with symbolic posturings of the subject's actions within. The entire dwarven lifespan is usually depicted, with each central protagonist growing in knowledge, wealth, age, and adornments as the mosaics progress.

## DRESS AND CEREMONIAL ATTIRE

Outside their lodges, members of the order go to great lengths to conceal their membership in the brotherhood to outsiders, especially non-dwarves, and appear as ordinary members of their professions. Only the most subtle hints of their involvement might give away their membership to other brothers in the society. Often, a simple ring embossed with a runic "B," a belt of golden chain, or a spinning fob are the only indication of membership. In addition, members know certain markers, most predominantly secret handshakes and





specific cadences tapped out by the hot hammers of the forge, that broadcast their membership to other initiates of the order.

Within a lodge, however, gaudiness of ceremonial dress is far more common, and the allegorical and mythical elements of a brother's training takes physical embodiment in his adornments, medals, and uniforms. Many brothers wear rich robes of maroon velvet lined with thick ermine and held tight with belts of golden chains. White-gloved gauntlets and pure white blacksmithing aprons lined in gold trim and festooned with symbols of the brotherhood display order, degree, and privilege among brothers. Dangling from their chain belts hang numerous small ceremonial tools and implements, such as trowels, small picks, and adamantine hammers. As members rise in degrees, more sashes, medals, and adornments stack upon those of previous degrees, until high-ranking brothers become absolutely encrusted with gaudy adornments.

## PROCEEDINGS

Members congregate weekly in elaborate ceremonies staged in the central hall of their local lodge, known as the Great Hall. Here, new members are initiated with mysterious rites that depict the metaphorical journey of the ignorant craftsman toward enlightenment, while awards of higher degree and honors are granted to members for achievements in the craft . The brotherhood elects new officers at these gatherings, and also promotes members and recognizes master works in individual craft s, all under the quiet eyes of the silent masters of ceremony. These quasi-religious proceedings are shrouded in mystery, and few outsiders can comprehend the strange morality plays, ceremonial theater, and secret rites that elevate members.

When important decisions must be made in council, controversies within the lodge are discussed and voted upon after vigorous debate and lengthy, weighted argument. Occasionally, charitable events are staged for the immediate family of members, and individual orders sometimes use the halls for private committees, craft studies, and lessons and seminars pertaining to their specific interests and pursuits.

## MUTUAL RECOGNITION

A member of the Brother may make a verbal challenge to a dwarf who is a traveler and may be a member of the Brotherhood.

It goes as follows: "It is hard to be a stranger far from home."

The possible brother should then give the response "One is never a stranger when traveling with an illuminated mind."

#### Symbolism

The brotherhood relies on symbols, taken from blacksmithing and stonecutting, to illustrate the attainment of knowledge and the long journey from the darkness of ignorance toward illumination. While a member might learn numerous symbols as he progresses in degrees, only the most prominent and universal follow, listed in order of decreasing importance.

Flaming Pillar of Knowledge: The most important and pervasive of brotherhood symbols, the flaming pillars are significant in the locking and unlocking of the doors of hidden truth and the key to seeking enlightenment. A lone, unlit pillar represents a single dwarf seeking fellowship in the darkness of ignorance, while flaming pillars, typically embossed with a runic "B," represent ascendancy toward illumination—a dwarf crowned with the fires of enlightenment. Shattered pillars represent death and final ascendancy. The pillars have their origin in rituals of the distant past, when dark dwarven secrets were forever locked away with their use in forgotten ceremonies.

**Codex of Secret Memory:** Often displayed shrouded in symbolic flames of knowledge, books and codices are the source of arcane secrets and concealed brotherhood rites and rituals. Open, the books represent the sharing of knowledge among members of the fellowship.

Closed, the books denote mysteries, obscure knowledge, or truths yet to be uncovered.

The Doors of Hidden Truth: Barred and shut doors both symbolically and realistically represent concealed secrets, ignorance, or close-mindedness. Open doors are usually depicted as burst asunder with the flames of enlightenment. Steps preceding doors marked with the runic "B" symbolically welcome all who seek illumination to simply knock and ask for guidance.

Hammer of Righteousness: The hammer is viewed as the unyielding guiding force, divine or otherwise, that shapes the dwarven people and beats the rough, raw ore of the young and ignorant apprentice into sharp, finished blades of master craftsmen. Crossed, two hammers denote fellowship in this ascendant path.

Anvil of Fortitude: The anvil is the symbol of the lodge, the foundation of fellowship upon which the hammer might mold the ignorant apprentice toward enlightenment. Sundered anvils represent failure, betrayal and jealousy.

**The Golden Chain:** The binding links of fellowship are symbolized by the chain, which is never shown broken. A golden chain represents the brotherhood view of, "once a brother, always a brother."

**Forge of Illumination:** The tempering flames of a roaring forge represent the cleansing divine guidance and burning desire for perfection of craft inherent in the dwarven people.

## **RITE OF MOST WORTHY ESOTERICS**

Lvl	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells/day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Sprig of Acacia, craft of 1 <sup>st</sup> degree	+1 level of existing class
2	+0	+0	+0	+3	Craft of 1 <sup>st</sup> degree	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Craft of 2nd degree	+1 level of existing class
4	+1	+1	+1	+4	Craft of 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree	+1 level of existing class
5	+1	+1	+1	+4	Craft of 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree	+1 level of existing class

## PRECEPTORY OF THE IRON FORGE

#### Lvl BAB Fort Ref Will Special

1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Sprig of Acacia, craft of 1 <sup>st</sup> degree
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Craft of 1 <sup>st</sup> degree
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Craft of 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Craft of 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Craft of 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree

## LODGE OF TROWEL AND CHISEL

#### Lvl BAB Fort Ref Will Special

1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Sprig of Acacia, craft of 1 <sup>st</sup> degree
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Craft of 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Craft of 2 <sup>nd</sup> degree
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Craft of 3 <sup>nd</sup> degree
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Craft of 3 <sup>rd</sup> degree

Flames of Enlightenment: Flames represent knowledge, enlightenment, and illumination, pushing back the oppressive darkness of ignorance. Flames are pervasive in brotherhood symbolism, and usually appear in tandem with other symbols to denote the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge, and the discovery of secret lore. In most instances, a naked hand fearlessly thrust into flames represents a dauntless pursuit of brotherhood mysteries.

The Pick, the Trowel, the Tongs: These tools represent the craft of the miner, the stonecutter, and the blacksmith, the three primary craft s of the dwarven people. They correspond symbolically with the three primary orders of the lodge, who wear the tools as badges of office. The pick stands for those most worthy esoterics, who mine the deep mysteries of arcane and divine knowledge. The trowel (usually paired with a chisel) represents those skillful brothers who seek pureness of thought and mind to attain perfection in action. Lastly, the tongs denote inclusion in the preceptory of the iron forge, where dwarves seek to attain physical perfection in their craft.

**Numerology:** Important numbers in the brotherhood are one (representing the self, also usually representing ignorance or lack of fellowship), three (fellowship, one's order, and desire to obtain knowledge), and five (master works, fraternity, lodge, community, and family).

Meetings among peers are often referred to by members of a congregation as "five and one and also three," which also serves as a popular password.

There are a total of 33 degrees within the brotherhood, with 34 representing the final degree all must one day obtain—death. This number is usually displayed with a skull and crossbones, a shattered pillar, or a coffin. Magic squares are also a popular display of important symbolic numbers, especially magic squares where each row, column, and diagonal carries the symbolic sum of a significant degree of the craft. These squares are often cleverly concealed in brotherhood artifacts.

## RANK, ORDER, AND DEGREE

The pursuits of individual brothers vary widely, and members are free to pursue the path of knowledge and enlightenment as they most see fit. In this way, members can choose among three orders within the lodge, each concentrating on a different path to illumination: The Rite of Most Worthy Esoterics encourages the development of arcane and divine enhancement and the study of the high art of magic; the Preceptory of the Iron Forge focuses on strength of character and body; while the Lodge of Trowel and Chisel seeks to hone the mental and physical skills of members to become exemplars of the dwarven race.

Members of the three orders seek knowledge and wisdom in their own way, unrestricted by the progress of other members. Specific numbered degrees are awarded as members pass through stages of initiations through different orders and post significant achievements in their Craft. In this way, individual progress through the



degrees of the organization is hard to define by those not knowledgeable in the esoteric rites of the society. Even members are hard pressed to explain the complicated rituals that allow a brother to advance from one degree to the next, as even those taking similar paths along this journey find themselves awarded different degrees and honors. Degrees are always awarded progressively, so that higher degrees confer more ranks and authority than those lower. The highest degree attainable by a normal member of the Illuminated Brotherhood is 30, as the three highest degrees are reserved for silent masters.

## ILLUMINATED BROTHERHOOD Prestige Classes

Many, but not all illuminated brothers belong to one of several prestige classes that reflect the highest ideals of the brotherhood. The illuminated brother prestige class is actually 3 subclasses, which are relatively easy to enter.

The silent master prestige class, on the other hand, is both far more exacting in its requirements and much more restrictive in the abilities it grants.

**Illuminated Brother:** Known simply as "brothers" to other members of this secretive society of skilled craftsmen, members of this group specialize in 3 prestige classes known as "orders." They have shown the moral, fortitude, talent at craft , and strength of character to undergo initiation into the Fraternal Order of Illuminated Brothers.

The organization fosters personal growth through allegorical lessons and protects the secrets of dwarven craftsmanship through degreed initiations. Those wishing membership must be invited by their peers and display certain personal characteristics while seeking to hone their craft and perfect their skills in stone and metalworking. Members promote respect, admiration, and support to fellow initiates of the order.

Prospective members, once accepted into the brotherhood, must apply for an order within the lodge. Each order presents different challenges and rewards for its members, and membership is denied if an applicant is not deemed worthy. The Rite of Most Worthy Esoterics is reserved for those practicing arcane and divine magic. Non-spellcasting but studious brothers in good standing could conceivably pursue this path, but they gain no spellcasting ability by doing so. The Preceptory of the Iron Forge attracts blacksmiths, smelters and metalworkers, as well as warriors seeking an edge in martial skill, while the Lodge of Trowel and Chisel is most apt for stonemasons and cutters, as well as those seeking to enhance skills of body and mind. It is from this last order that members skilled at espionage are developed and put to use by the brotherhood for the gathering and protection of society secrets.

Entry into each order is a matter of pursuit, background, and taste, and while characters may multiclass as they see fit, they must begin each order at 1st level, with the approval of their silent masters.

#### Hit Die (based on Order)

Rite of Most Worthy Esoterics: d4 Preceptory of the Iron Forge: d10 Lodge of Trowel and Chisel: d6

**Requirements** To qualify to become a Most Honorable and Righteous Member of the Fraternal Order of Illuminated Brothers, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment Any lawful.

Skills Craft (any two) 5 ranks in each. Feats Skill Focus (Knowledge) [any individual Knowledge skill]

Race Dwarf

**Class Skills** The Illuminated Brother's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (all skills taken individually) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills taken individually) (Int), Linguistics, Perform (Oratory, Sing and Act) (Cha), Perception (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Use Magic Device (Cha),

#### Skill Points at Each Level

Rite of Most Worthy Esoterics: 6 + Int modifier Preceptory of the Iron Forge: 4 + Int modifier Lodge of Trowel and Chisel: 8 + Int modifier **Sprig of Acacia (Su)** So secretive are the actions of initiates that if a brother is ever the target of a bardic knowledge, Diplomacy check to gather information, Knowledge, or similar check and it succeeds by less than 10, the person making the check learns entirely false information. This secrecy carries over even into death: the brother gains immunity to *speak with dead* and other similar divinations cast after the brother has passed beyond the veil.

## CRAFT OF ORDERED DEGREES

At Each level, an illuminated brother is initiated further into the secret rites and privileges of his order and may choose one craft from the level-permitted degrees below. He cannot choose the same secret twice, but may choose freely from craft secrets of lower degrees.

#### Crafts of 1st Degree

Arts, Parts, and Points (Ex) The brother gains any one feat for which he meets all prerequisites.

Ask, Seek, Knock (Ex) An illuminated brother can call on the order's information regarding various topics, just as a bard can with bardic knowledge. The brother adds his class level and Intelligence modifier to the check, which functions otherwise exactly like a bardic knowledge check, and stacks with bardic knowledge and similar abilities derived from other sources.

**Clandestine Cowan (Ex)** The brother is versed at intruding where unwanted. Add Disable Device and Stealth to the brother's class skills. **Fiat Lux et Lux Fit (Ex)** Brotherhood motto meaning "Let there be light, and there was light." Three times per day, a flash of wisdom grants a +5 check on any one Knowledge or Craft skill check.

House Not Made with Hands (Ex) Choose a saving throw. The illuminated brother gains a +2 bonus on all saving throws of the chosen type.

**Neither Naked nor Clothed (Ex)** Always defended, the brother gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC.

**Temple of the Body (Ex)** The illuminated brother gains +3 hit points.

**Tessellated Pavement (Ex)** The brother gains an additional 5 feet to movement.

The Attentive Ear (Ex) Careful study has rewards, and the brother immediately gains 5 skill points, which may be spent as normal.

#### Crafts of 2nd Degree

Adverse Ballot (Ex) Once per day, the illuminated brother may "recast" his fate and reroll one d20 roll that he has just made before the GM declares whether the roll results in success or failure.

The result of the reroll must be taken, even if it's worse than the original roll.

**Duly and Truly Prepared (Ex)** An illuminated brother can react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. As per uncanny dodge, he retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. He still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. If the brother already has uncanny dodge from a different class he automatically gains all seeing eye (see below) instead.

I Am That I Am (Ex) Followers of this craft stack previous class levels and illuminated brotherhood levels for the purpose of one of the following: determining the extra damage granted for sneak attack, favored enemy bonuses, bardic music, or unarmed strike damage. Each selection of this craft can apply to a different type of progression.

**Perfect Points of Entrance (Ex)** Due to the obscure, esoteric nature of his allegorical, metaphorical, and ritualistic retraining, the brother adds +5 to Spellcraft DCs to identify spells he casts.

In addition, he gains a +2 bonus on Spellcraft checks made to identify spells being cast by others.

Lux E Tenebris (Ex) If an illuminated brother is affected by an enchantment and fails his saving throw, 1 round later he can attempt his saving throw again. He only gets this one extra chance to succeed at his saving throw. If it fails as well, the spell's effects occur normally.

Lvl	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells/day
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Audi, Vid <mark>e</mark> , Tace	+1 level of existing class
2	+0	+3	+0	+3	Desires Shall Fail	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+3	+1	+3	Doors Shall Be Shut	+1 level of existing class

**Stand To and Abide By (Ex)** The brother gains a +1 bonus on all attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws when within 30 feet of another brother.

**Sword Pointing to the Naked Heart (Ex)** The brother becomes enlightened in the ways of combat, gaining a +1 competence bonus on all attack rolls.

#### Crafts of 3rd Degree

All Seeing Eye (Ex) The illuminated brother can no longer be flanked. This defense denies rogues the ability to sneak attack the character by flanking him, unless the attacker has at least four more rogue levels than the brother, who uses his class level to determine his equivalent rogue level. If the brother already has uncanny dodge from a second class, he automatically gains all seeing eye instead, and the levels from the classes that grant uncanny dodge stack to determine the minimum rogue level required to flank the character.

**Circumambulation (Ex)** The brother can flank enemies from seemingly impossible angles. He can designate any square adjacent to himself as the square from which flanking against an ally is determined (including the square where he stands, as normal). He can designate the square at the beginning of his turn or at any time during his turn. The designated square remains his effective square for flanking until he is no longer adjacent to it or until he chooses a different square (at the start of one of his turns).

The brother can even choose a square that is impassable or occupied.

**Distressed Worthy Brother (Ex)** The study of metaphor and allegory are so inured that the brother can use some skills reliably even under adverse conditions. On gaining this ability, he selects a number of skills equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with one of these skills, he may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

Hele (Ex) The brother trains his mind and body to protect himself from scrying, gaining SR equal to 15+ class level against all divinations, similar to a permanent *nondetection* spell.



**Hoodwink (Ex)** A properly trained brother can use the Stealth skill even while being observed. As long as he is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, the brother can hide himself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. He cannot, however, hide in his own shadow.

## SILENT MASTER

As typical members of the brotherhood seek to attain perfection in mind, body, and craft, others seek enlightenment through the rich history of the order and the deeper understanding of their dwarven character. Those rising to such a high degree eventually assume the rare mantle of leadership termed silent mastery.

Most brothers who pursue this path are accomplished and knowledgeable seekers of lore and masters of high arcane arts. In the more recent history of the society, many clerics and priests have assumed this rank as well, attempting to turn members away from heretical pledges to an anonymous higher power and toward the more clearly defined worship of Volund. This turn has caused some conflict and consternation within the ancient order.

Silent masters delve into the dark secrets held by the order so the secrets might, in turn, pass on to successive generations. The more such members learn of the true nature of their dwarven heritage, the history of their society, and the revelations that led to the formation of their organization, the more drawn into the brotherhood they become, so that many are rarely seen outside their lodges. So dark are some of these secrets that those who ascend to this high rite are struck with both a natural and magical silence that, if ever broken, strips them of power and memory.

The three highest degrees (31st, 32nd, and 33rd) are reserved for the silent masters. There is typically only one silent master of each degree per order in any given lodge, and they officiate all proceedings, rites and rituals in an uncanny, impenetrable silence. If a second silent master ascends within a lodge, he either leaves the lodge to serve in another canton or else forsakes gaining the degree and instead waits until the current silent master abdicates or dies.

#### Hit Die d8

**Requirements** To qualify to become a silent master of the Most Honorable and Righteous Fraternal Order of Illuminated Brothers, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills Craft (any two) 10 ranks in each Class Illuminated brother prestige class (any order)

level 5th

Race Dwarf

#### **Class Skills**

The silent master's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (all skills taken individually) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills taken individually) (Int), Linguistics, Perform (Oratory, Sing and Act (Cha), Perception (Int), Sense Motive (**Wis**), Spellcraft (Int), Use Magic Device (Cha)

Skill Points at Each Level 6 + Int modifier

#### **Class Features**

All of the following are class features of the silent master prestige class.

Audi, Vide, Tace (Ex) The secret knowledge learned in this rite is so severe that an oath of silence is undertaken. The silent master may not make a single utterance or loses all illuminated brotherhood and silent master class abilities, including spell level increases gained through advancement in this class, and is then struck with a powerful modify memory effect that scrambles the moments of revelation to an extent that specific rites and mysteries cannot be recalled with any clarity. In return for the silence of secrets, the silent master gains the ability to understand any intelligent creature and communicate in return through glares, body language, and silent stares that grant a +5 inherent bonus on Intimidate checks. In addition, the silent master gains the Silent Spell feat, usable with no increased cost in spell levels and no increase in casting time for spontaneous casters.

**Desires Shall Fail (Ex)** At 2nd level, the silent master gains protection from all devices, abilities, effects, and spells that influence the mind. This ability shields him against all mind-affecting spells and effects (although the silent master can selectively allow powers or spells to affect him). The ability even foils *limited wish* and *wish* used to mentally influence a silent master.

**Doors Shall Be Shut (Ex)** The 3rd-level silent master is protected from all devices, abilities, effects, and spells that reveal location. This ability protects against information gathering by divinations or effects that reveal location. The ability even foils *limited wish* and *wish* used to gain information about the silent master's location. In the case of *scrying* that scans an area the silent master is in, the effect works, but the silent master simply is not detected. Divination attempts that are targeted specifically at a silent master do not work.

## **BROTHERHOOD ITEMS**

Through the years, the brothers of the Illuminated Brotherhood created new items both magic and mundane to aid them in their mysterious practices. Some of the most common and useful of these items are described here.

#### **Brotherhood Codex**

Aura Moderate transmutation; CL 7th

Slot none; Price Price 10,500 gp + cost of spellbook; Weight 4 lb.

These specially prepared spellbooks serve members of the Illuminated Brotherhood as keys to the cabalistic secrets and occult rituals of their secret order. They are disguised as high-quality spellbooks and perfectly suitable as such; as a result, many owners are naively unaware of the powerful secrets the book contains.

The unorthodox hand gestures and high degree of allegorical and esoteric symbolism shown in the spells increases the Spellcraft DC by +5 to learn, decipher, prepare, or copy any spell from this source.

Every third page is affected by a *secret page* spell, concealing society mysteries of initiation, profane rites, and arcane gestures meant to raise the consciousness of the member. No password exists to circumvent the secret page. Rather, the true nature of these pages is revealed only by thrusting the book into the symbolic fires of the Pillars of Enlightenment. For this reason, most society members carry a mnemonic fob to do just that. Even when so revealed, the confusing symbolic nature of the texts requires a DC 25 Linguistics check to interpret. *Read magic* only grants a +2 circumstance bonus on this check, while *comprehend languages* provides a +5 circumstance bonus.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *secret page*; **Cost** 5,250 gp +  $\frac{1}{2}$  cost of spellbook;

## Mnemonic Fob

Aura Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Slot none; Price 1,400 gp; Weight—

This small bauble consists of a flat crescent binding a small disc that freely spins in its housing, each side intricately etched with an incomplete pillar and pyre.

Once per day, the owner may spin the disc as a standard action and concentrate on the resulting illusory flaming pillar, enabling him to recall any one 1<sup>st</sup> level spell he previously cast.

In addition, the owner may remove the disc from the fob and place it on the ground. Speaking a command word creates a 5-foot-tall flaming pillar of intricately carved stone, providing light as a *continual flame* spell. The pillar lasts for up to 20 rounds per day, although the rounds need not be consecutive. Touching the brass embossed "B" of the pillar returns it to disc form.

ONSTRUCTION

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, *major creation*, Cost 700 gp. Price 1400 gp. Weight 1 lb.

## APPENDIX C:

# NEW TEMPLATES

Two new creature templates are particular to the Ironcrags, or at least most commonly found there.

## GOLDVEINED TEMPLATE

"Goldveined" is an acquired template that can be added to any animal, dragon, magical beast, humanoid, giant, outsider, or vermin (referred to hereafter as the "base creature").

A goldveined creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type** The creature's size and type remain unchanged, but it gains the evil and earth subtypes.

**Spell-Like Ability** A goldveined creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher can cast *rusting grasp* as a spell-like ability once per day. Caster level equals the HD, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

**Special Qualities** A goldveined creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature, and gains other special qualities depending on its Hit Dice, as indicated on the following table. Except where noted, the abilities are cumulative; a goldveined creature with 5 HD gains the *charm person* spell-like ability, damage reduction, fatal bequest, and strength of metal. Caster level equals the creature's HD, and the save DCs are Charisma based.

#### **HD** Abilities

1+ DR 5/silver or gold; fatal bequest; madness3+ Strength of metal

5-6 1/day—charm person (spell-like ability)

7–9 What's yours is mine (replaces *charm person*)

10+ For love of money (replaces what's yours is mine) 12+ SR 10 + creature's HD

Fatal Bequest (Su) Upon death, a goldveined creature

vomits forth greed-tainted gold pieces equal to its Hit Dice. **For Love of Money (Sp)** A goldveined creature with 10 HD or more gains this ability instead of *what's yours is mine*. With this ability, a goldveined creature can mentally coerce an opponent to protect it just by looking into his eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the goldveined creature must use a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the goldveined creature targets must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 creature's hit dice + Int modifier) or becomes unable to harm the goldveined creature and makes nearly every effort to prevent others from harming it as well. The affected target does not fight to the death, perform any obviously suicidal action, or draw attacks of

opportunity if reasonably able to avoid them on behalf of the goldveined creature, but he does otherwise put the goldveined creature's safety and well-being above his own. The ability has a range of 30 feet and can be used up to three times per day.

**Madness (Ex)** A goldveined creature uses its Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of its Wisdom modifier. It is immune to *confusion* and *insanity* effects and cannot be restored to sanity by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell.

**Strength of Metal (Ex)** A goldveined creature with 3 HD or more has a 50% chance to ignore a critical hit.

What's Yours is Mine (Sp) A goldveined creature with 7–9 HD gains this ability instead of its *charm person* spell-like ability. With this ability, the goldveined creature can vomit forth a 30-foot line of gold-flecked spittle once per day. Creatures struck by the line must make Will saves (DC 10 + 1/2 creature's hit dice + Int modifier) to resist succumbing to insatiable envy. A struck creature who fails his save attempts to take some item of value he

can see in possession (worn, held, or equipped) of the ally closest to him, moving in as close to a direct line as possible toward his target and attempting disarm and grapple checks (only) to acquire the item. If the creature struck removes the item from its target, he drops it as a free action and attempts to take another item.

In order of preference, the stricken creature attempts to acquire a magic weapon, gold pouch, known permanent magic item, known single-use or charged magic item, spell component bag, or other item worth at least 10 gp. If the stricken creature's target carries more than one of a type of item from the list, he attempts to remove all such items (in a random order) before moving to the next type of item on the list. A stricken creature acts this way for 2d6 rounds or until he takes (and drops) 1d4+1 items.

**Abilities** A goldveined creature gains a +2 inherent bonus to Charisma.

**Skills** A goldveined creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher gains Appraise as a class skill, and gains a +3 bonus to all such checks.

**Feats** A goldveined creature gains Diehard as a bonus feat.

**Environment** Any underground or mountain.

**Organization** As the base creature. **Challenge Rating** HD 10 or less, as

base creature + 1; HD 11 or more, as base creature +2.

Alignment Any evil.

## STONE DEAD TEMPLATE

"Stone-dead dwarf" is an acquired template that can be added to any still-living dwarf (referred to hereafter as the base creature). Gaining this template requires the dwarf to complete the Floating the Stone ritual. The stone-dead dwarf uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type** The creature's type changes to outsider (earth). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

Armor Class Natural armor improves by +5.

Attack A stone-dead dwarf gains a slam attack as a primary natural weapon if it animates a body for itself. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A stone-dead dwarf fighting without weapons uses a slam when making an attack action. If armed with a weapon, it uses the weapon as its primary attack along with a stone touch (see below) as a natural secondary attack, provided it has a way to make that attack (either a free hand or a natural weapon that it can use as a secondary attack). **Damage** Stone-dead dwarves have slam attacks that deal 1d6 points of damage.

**Special Attacks** A stone-dead dwarf retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains the stone touch ability as well. Save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Stone Touch (Su)** As a standard action, a stone-dead dwarf using its homunculus form may make a touch attack against a living creature. If it succeeds, its target must immediately succeed on a DC 15 Fort save or be turned to stone. This effect can be reversed with *flesh to stone* or any other effect that reverses petrification.

**Special Qualities** A stone-dead dwarf retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those described below.

**Fettered** A stone-dead dwarf is attached to a specific location. This location is usually a place holy to dwarves or of supreme significance to the dwarf in question. The stone-dead dwarf cannot leave this location. See the *Floating the Stone Ritual* section for more information.

**Stone Homunculus** A stone-dead dwarf usually does not have a corporeal body but may form one from the earth and stone of its fettered location once per day. This body looks just like the dwarf did in life and is used by the stone-dead dwarf to interact with the world around it, including wielding weapons or objects. If the dwarf undertook the Floating the Stone ritual with belongings, these are also present upon the homunculus. Such items can be taken from the dwarf while the homunculus is intact, but once it reverts to it's constituent elements, the items disappear as well and reform the next time the stone-dead dwarf creates its homunculus.

**Non-Death** A stone-dead dwarf is not slain when its homunculus is reduced to 0 hit points, disintegrated, or otherwise destroyed. Rather, the stone-dead dwarf's soul retreats into the fettered location and must reconsolidate itself in 1d10 days. During this time, the stone-dead dwarf is totally isolated from the world and cannot perceive or interact with its surroundings at all. It loses all other special qualities during this period.

**Abilities** Increase from the base creature as follows: Str+4, Wis +2.

**Skills** Stone-dead dwarves have a +8 racial bonus on Perception and Sense Motive checks.

Organization Solitary.

Challenge Rating Same as the base creature + 2. Treasure None. Alignment Any Advancement By character class; Level Adjustment —.

#### Floating The Stone Ritual

A dwarf becomes a stone-dead dwarf by surviving the Floating the Stone ritual. During this ritual, the dwarf lies down in the place where he wishes to fetter his soul. The area must be sanctified with a *hallow* spell cast by a dwarven cleric of a dwarven deity. The dwarf attempting the ritual attunes himself to the earth and stone of this place and initiates a test of willpower with the fettering site to see if it accepts him. Once the test begins, the dwarf melds into the earth and loses 1 hit point per round until he accumulates enough successful Will saves or dies. The dwarf cannot turn back—he either becomes a stone-dead dwarf or simply becomes entombed and dies.

Every round he remains alive within the earth, the dwarf performs a Will save (and can do nothing else), with the DC determined from the following table.

Location Size	Base DC
Small room (up to 100 square feet)	25
Large room (up to 1,000 square feet)	35
Series of rooms (up to 10,000 square feet)	45
Small cavern system (up to 1 mile long)	55
Large cavern system (up to 100 miles long)	65

The following modifiers can alter the base DC.

Condition	DC Modifier
The location is sanctified to the dwarf 's deity	+5
The location is sanctified to a different deity	-2
Clerics of a different deity assist (per cleric)	+1 (max +5)
Clerics of the location's deity assist (per cleric)	+2 (max +10)
The dwarf sacrifices wealth to the location's deity. (per 1,000 gp)	+1 (max +20)
The dwarf brings magic items with him (per 10, 000 gp value)	+1 (no max)

To become stone-dead dwarf, the dwarf must accumulate a number of successful Will saves equal 30– his Constitution score before he dies. If he fails in this, his body and gear are absorbed the location and are forever lost. No mortal magic, not even a *wish* or *miracle*, can restore the dwarf.

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